

enrichment

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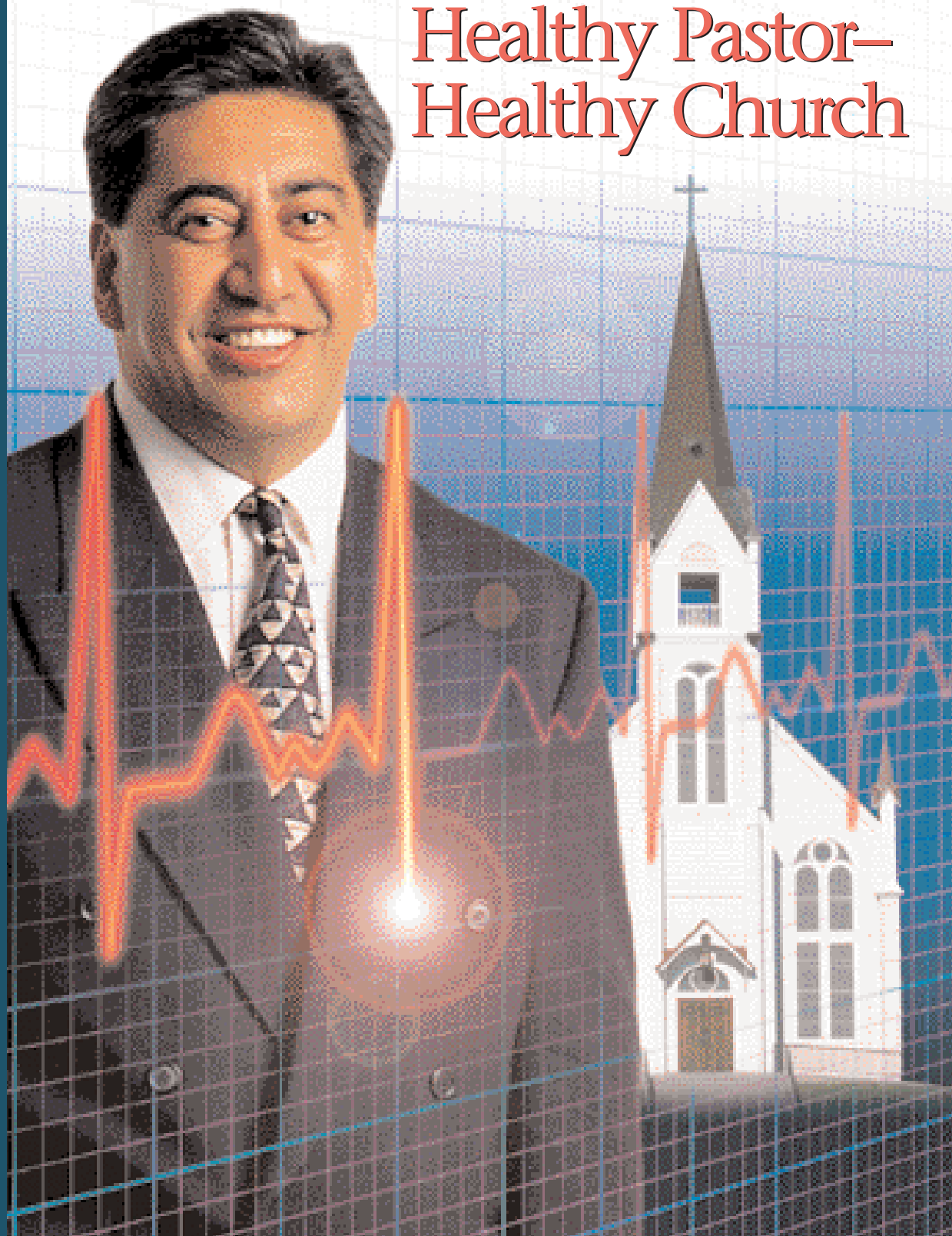
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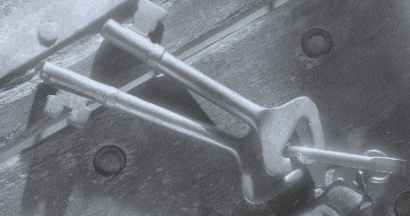
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Healthy Pastor— Healthy Church





ministry matters

BY GARY R. ALLEN

Healthy Pastor— Healthy Church

A direct correlation appears to exist between the overall health and well-being of the pastor and the health of the local church. Seldom is there a thriving, growing church without a vibrant, effective pastor. Many factors influence the health of the local church, but the health and well-being of the pastor is a primary influence. As the leader, he or she is the key to setting the tone of the congregation.

HEALTHY PASTOR

Pastors are leaders. They are called, prepared, and placed by God in the local church as leaders. Leaders are out in front because they see over the horizon, they discern the will of God, they understand their culture, they grasp a vision, and they motivate others to follow them. They exemplify authenticity, integrity, character, and maturity. Such leaders are not perfect, but they maintain high personal and leadership standards that become the benchmark for those who follow them.

It is essential that the pastor, as a lifelong learner, continually improve his or her personal, family, and ministry skills. In this age of the specialist, the pastor must balance the major areas of personal life, family life, and be a generalist in ministry. These are great expectations, but feasible with God's help.

When you volunteer to be a pastor/leader, you place yourself in a very demanding role. But there is joy, reward, and fulfillment in being a servant of Jesus Christ and influencing

others to excellence in godly living and personal development.

Some pastors resist the stringent expectations of leadership and wrongly assume that perfection is the goal. Being a healthy leader is not a matter of perfection, but of excellence. Excellence is doing your best even when circumstances seem to be against you. The healthy leader looks beyond the immediate circumstances and leads people through those circumstances to significant accomplishment. Today, more than ever, people are looking for leaders to guide them through difficult and painful times and make meaning out of chaos.

Leaders can demonstrate unhealthy characteristics, too. They may underestimate themselves, have low self-esteem, and feed on anything that affirms their inadequacies. All of us have limitations, but it is important to distinguish between personality defects and character flaws that can render a leader ineffective. Personality defects can be recognized and corrected. Character flaws are usually willfully chosen negative behaviors used to coerce and manipulate others.

HEALTHY CHURCH

Leadership is ultimately more about "them" (both those in and outside the church) than it is about "you" as the leader. God has placed you as a leader in His church. While He has chosen you and given you the privilege of a personal relationship with himself, it is the church that is His emphasis. Leaders are given to the church "to prepare God's

people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12, NIV).

"What is a healthy church?" A healthy church is a growing church. However, not all growing churches are necessarily healthy. A healthy church reaches people, wins them to Christ, discipled them, and releases them back into their community to reach others and repeat this cycle.

One of the best resources for measuring a healthy, growing church is *Natural Church Development* by Christian Schwarz. In his research of 1,000 churches (large and small), on five continents, and in 32 countries, he found 8 characters common to all churches that were growing. It is well worth your time and effort to study Schwarz's material.

A healthy church is not a perfect church but it is effective in accomplishing the Great Commission. Every community of faith is going to have its difficult people and organizational problems. But when it remains focused on its mission, discipled believers, and facilitates leadership development, it will be healthy.

This issue of *Enrichment* addresses the elements contributing to the health of the pastor and the local church. We hope it enriches and encourages you in your personal, family, and ministry life. **E**

Gary R. Allen, D.Min., is executive editor of *Enrichment Journal* and national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.





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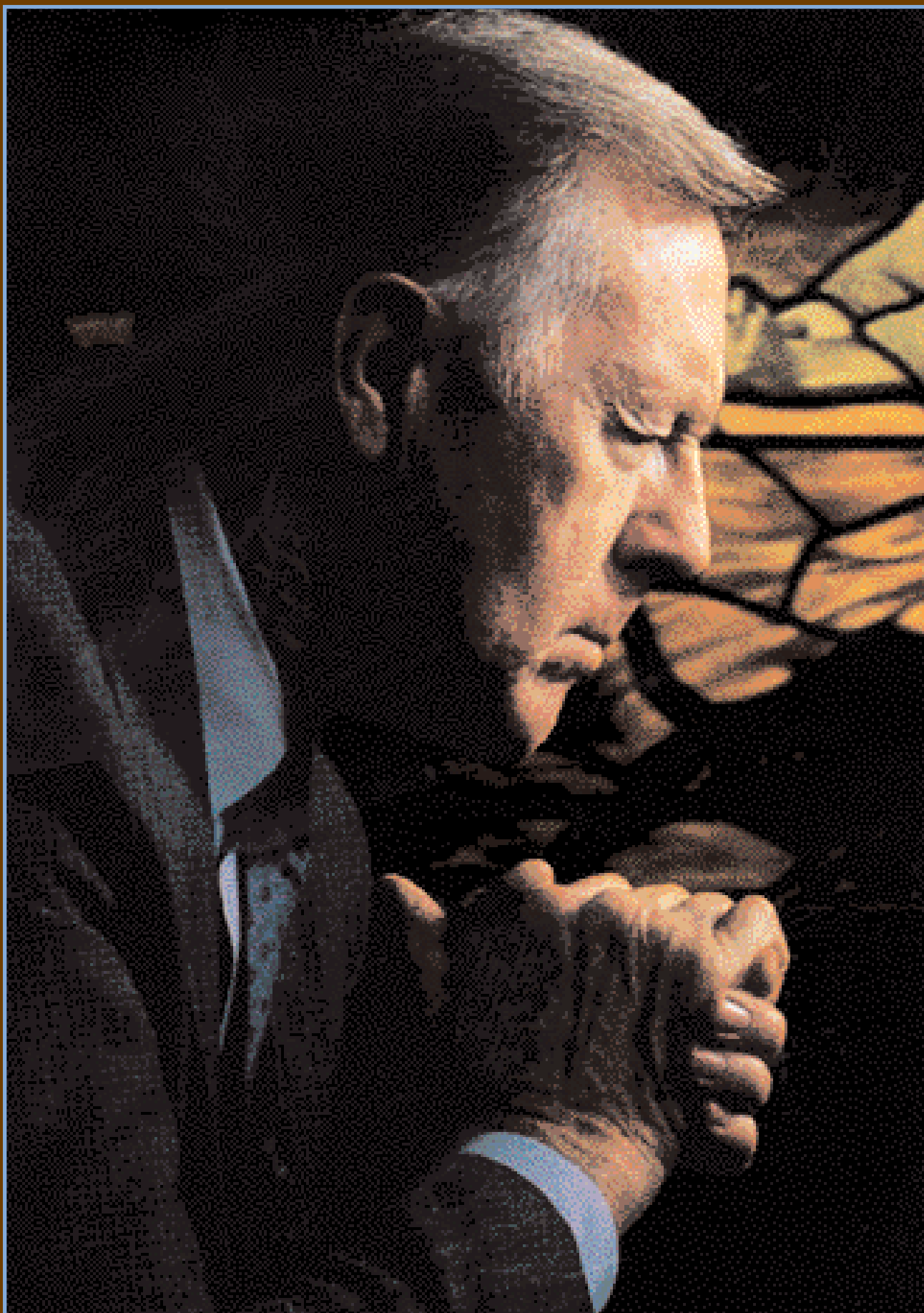
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MINISTRY FOR A LIFETIME:

Disciplines of a Healthy Pastor

IF PASTORS DON'T MAINTAIN SPIRITUAL VITALITY, THEY
WON'T BE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH.

As a pastor, district official, and as general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Thomas E. Trask knows the importance of being a healthy pastor. His love for the Word of God and his many years of fruitful ministry have provided the basis for his own personal life and his desire to see other ministers grow in their relationship with Christ and in their ministries. In this article, General Superintendent Trask shares his heart and passion concerning how pastors can become spiritually healthy and have an effective ministry.

This article is excerpted from his latest book, *Ministry for a Lifetime*, available from Gospel Publishing House. To order, call 1-800-641-4310 and ask for item #03 6226, \$5.95.

Years ago, when I started in the ministry, an old-time preacher gave me some advice: "Ask God to put you on a schedule," he said, "then keep that schedule." So for 44 years, I've had a schedule. I spend from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. in devotions and prayer. Of course, my schedule is interrupted at times, and that routine is broken. But the discipline comes in when I put myself back on that schedule.

STUDY OF THE WORD

Every minister must make time for devotion and study of God's Word that is not just for sermon preparation. This

is where our souls are fed. From that time of meditation and study comes revelation. I usually keep a notepad beside me, because the study of God's Word brings revelation and births a subject or message in my spirit.

In recent months I've been reading the Epistles. I read one of them once or twice a day for a full week. It's amazing the truths I've discovered that I had missed over the years. I thought I was

becomes the application to a situation. We must not confuse these two. They must be distinct. It's vital that we understand how the Spirit works in these two ways.

The version of the Bible you use is a personal choice. The important thing is to find the discipline to live in the Word of God. Then the Word of God begins to live in you. Scripture says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so

Pentecostal pastors have such a great advantage in knowing and appreciating the person and work of the Holy Spirit, because out of this comes the gifts of the Spirit—the spirit of discernment, the word of knowledge, and other gifts.

acquainted with all the content, but out of that repetitious reading and study come revelation. And that's where messages are born. That's discovery of God's truth.

There is a difference between illumination of the Word and quickening of the Word. When you're in the Word and in prayer, the Spirit illumines truth to your mind. When the Word is quickened, we not only understand it, but it stirs us in a way that goes beyond illumination. Illumination is the unveiling of revelation; quickening

deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22*). As propagators of the Word, we must be doers of the Word ourselves. How can we preach something we're not doing? There must be no dichotomy in this matter. We can't preach one thing but live something else. That contradiction is never pleasing to God.

PRIVATE PRAYER

Another aspect of personal devotions is spending time alone with God in private prayer. We pray and then let

God speak to us. In this essential time of prayer, we're not involved merely in the mundane. We are involved in spiritual matters. We're responsible for the spiritual life of the church. If pastors don't maintain spiritual vitality, they won't be sensitive to the needs of the church.

Each minister must decide how much time to spend alone with God. But I can tell you, 10 minutes in the Word and 10 minutes in prayer will not be sufficient to maintain the spiritual life needed to minister effectively.

There has never been a day in which leadership in the church needs to be endowed with God-given wisdom more than today. The complexities of people's lives and the responsibilities of ministry are great. But when we have God-given wisdom, the Spirit can empower us. He knows the answers that we don't. Prayer is making ourselves available to Him in His presence and saying, "Lord, I need Your help."

As Pentecostals, we are especially blessed in this aspect of prayer. Jude 20 says, "praying in the Holy Ghost" (KJV).

The apostle Paul wrote, "For anyone who speaks in a tongue . . . utters mysteries with his spirit" (1 Corinthians 14:2). We need times in our prayer lives when the Spirit comes upon us. Sometimes we'll groan, or pray in tongues, or feel travail. That's what we call "praying through." In prayer, the Spirit gives us enlightenment and insight. Pentecostal pastors have such a great advantage in knowing and appreciating the person and work of the Holy Spirit, because out of this comes the gifts of the Spirit—the spirit of discernment, the word of knowledge, and other gifts. These are for facilitating the work of the ministry, and we need the Holy Spirit's enablement.

FASTING

Every minister ought to have a set time of fasting. I've practiced regular fasting throughout my ministry. A person can also fast things other than food. Fasting is the discipline of denial that brings us closer to God. The enemy will do everything in his power to keep us from

fasting, praying, and studying the Word of God. It is easy to find an excuse or rationale for neglect: "I'm involved in the Lord's work. I'm doing the work of the ministry." Yes, but where do you find your power for ministry? It comes from time alone with God. Our example is Jesus, who often withdrew from the crowds to be alone and pray.

We must have adequate rest so the spiritual man can remain alert and sensitized. Some people can get by with 5 or 6 hours of sleep at night; others need more. No one should come under condemnation because he or she needs more rest than someone else. When fatigue becomes a factor in your life, you will become irritable and impatient with people. You'll lose your sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. You won't have the love you once had for God's Word and His work.

WITNESSING

We must see people as the Lord sees them—lost and going into eternity. Our ministry springs from that consciousness of the lostness of humanity. Then there will come a passion to speak to men and women and warn them. Ministry becomes more than just a pulpit responsibility, but rather something we live with every day of our lives. We see men and women as lost. Whether they are casual acquaintances or friends, business acquaintances or those we meet only once, we not only see them as lost, but we respond by witnessing to them. We tell them about Jesus Christ and about hell and eternity. Who knows what the Holy Spirit is already doing in their lives? Who knows for what purpose God caused your paths to cross? We need an awareness that the Spirit is already working in people's lives. Then we come with a sensitivity to the work of the Spirit and join with the Spirit's witness to people.

A passion for the lost comes out of an intimate personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. You will not fellowship with the Lord without the disciplines of Bible study and prayer. You will not come into close fellowship

with Him without gaining His passion for the lost.

Personal evangelism needs to be a part of a minister's lifestyle. Someone once said, "You win them to yourself. Then you can win them to the Lord." I've seen that happen. If my contact with other men can win them to me, they will have confidence in me. They'll know that what I say to them comes from a love for them, not out of duty.

Relationships must be built. Pastors find the majority of opportunities to witness among people with whom they do business on a day-to-day basis outside the church. Many people today in high positions of business and government are lonely and hurting. The way to win them is to befriend them. Then, when crisis comes in their lives, to whom do they turn? They will contact you immediately. Then it is your opportunity to say, "You need the Lord." You've already planted the seed and have been watering it. Now the time has come for that seed to produce fruit.

Patience is an important part of the process. Fruit doesn't grow overnight; it takes time. Scripture teaches that some plant, some water, but God gives the increase. We must do our part in the planting and watering, but only God can save. At times I have wondered, *Did I fail when a business acquaintance slipped into eternity without receiving Christ as Lord and Savior?* That's a heavy responsibility. I want to be able to look back and say, "Lord, I witnessed to him. I told him. I warned him. I loved him. I did all I could."

A pastor who wants to see his or her congregation be soul winners must first model soul winning. What the pastor is, in time, the congregation will become. A healthy church must be a soul-winning church, and it begins with the pastor. **e**

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



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

interview

WITH JOHN LINDELL
AND JOHN PALMER

The Challenges and Rewards in Becoming a Healthy Pastor



JOHN LINDELL



JOHN PALMER

Knowing how to direct meaningful and redemptive ministry to the church and unchurched has vexed many Spirit-filled pastors and church leaders for decades. No wonder pastors are flocking to pastors schools and conferences, reading books and articles, and consulting so-called experts for answers like never before. If we are not careful, we can easily allow the proverbial cart to get ahead of the horse and sanction methodology and program for personal piety and individual responsibility.

The pastor must first and foremost care for his or her own body, mind, and spirit before providing any meaningful, long-lasting, life-changing ministry to others. The natural outcome of a healthy pastor will be a healthy church.

Enrichment's managing editor, Rick Knoth, visited with John Lindell, senior pastor of James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri, and John Palmer, senior pastor of First Assembly of God, Des Moines, Iowa, to discuss health-related issues for the pastor and the church. Their heartfelt thoughts will both inspire and challenge you to reach new levels of health in your own life and ministry.

DEFINE A HEALTHY PASTOR AND A HEALTHY CHURCH. CAN YOU HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER?

LINDELL: You can't for very long. As the leadership goes, so goes the church.

To have a healthy church you must have a healthy pastor—somebody with integrity, not only encouraging the church, praying out biblical mandates from the Lord, but living them out in life. As pastors do that, then it flows out of their leadership into the church. A healthy church carries out the mandates of the Lord's Word.

PALMER: If a healthy pastor stays long enough, the church will become healthy. What is a healthy pastor? A healthy pastor has a solid identity. Not just knowing who he or she is as a pastor, but also as a person. A healthy pastor has a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

A healthy pastor is also in touch and comfortable with his or her emotions. I recently talked with a pastor who had a moral failure that took him from the pastorate of a thriving church. He said, "My emotions got me into trouble." A healthy person is in touch with and comfortable with his or her emotions.

Also, a healthy pastor has a positive outlook toward life and others—a person who lives with biblical priorities of God first, family second, and ministry next—not just telling people what to do, but living out those principles.

A healthy pastor is committed to being in meaningful, healthy relationships. He cannot be a healthy pastor if he does not have a healthy marriage. If he is single, he needs to seek out healthy, meaningful relationships. A healthy pastor is one who loves God and who genuinely loves people.

And finally, a healthy pastor has a private life, but not a hidden life. We

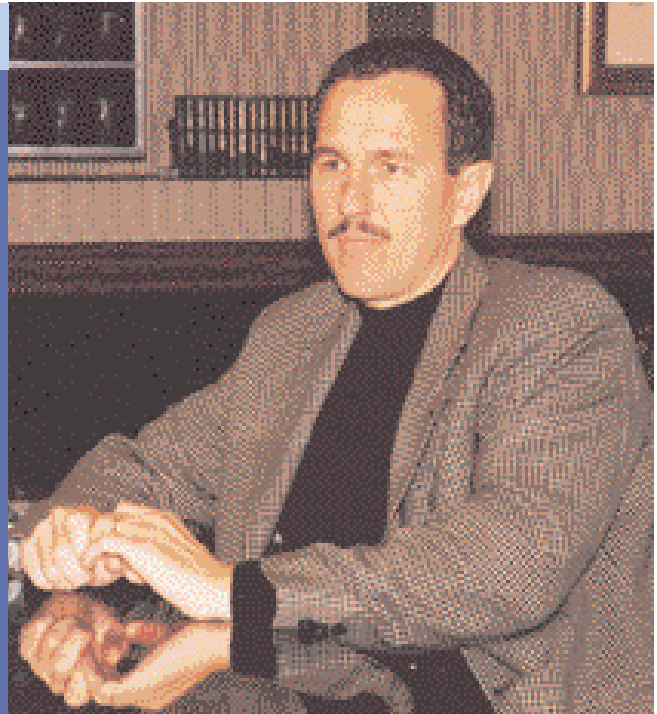
anybody else (including myself). We need to serve the Lord first and let what we do flow out of a service to Him versus perceived needs.

Sometimes our perception of the needs can distract us from following the Lord's heart for us. If our heart is right in following Him, then He will work through us as we are doing things that require our attention. He will multiply our effectiveness. This is

someone for me to visit his or her family members in the hospital. But I do it to honor and please the Lord, not to please that family member. It makes all the difference in our motivation.

In Colossians 3:17,23, Paul said, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the

To have a healthy church you must have a healthy pastor—somebody with integrity, not only encouraging the church, praying out biblical mandates from the Lord, but living them out in life.—Lindell



all need a private life. We need to get away. We need a place where we can be ourselves and not have to talk to anybody. We need time to relax, rest, and be with our family and a time to be alone.

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FOLLOWING JESUS AND SERVING THE DEMANDS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH. HOW HAVE YOU RECONCILED THE TWO IN YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY?

LINDELL: It amounts to being careful in our walk with the Lord and walking humbly before Him. My walk with the Lord includes being sensitive to His presence, to His working in my life. I also need to make sure that in all things God has priority in my life versus serving the congregation or

where many pastors make a mistake, spending so much time trying to become effective leaders, when the heart of the issue is where our heart is with the Lord. If we will put our priority there, the Lord will make up for our deficiencies. There's still a place for self-improvement, but sometimes we get the cart before the horse.

PALMER: The apostle Paul dealt with the issue of serving God and serving the church. Galatians 1:10 says, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ."* That's powerful. Whatever I do, I need to do it to please God. What I do may please others. For example, it may please

Lord, not for men." This is why we need to resist the notion that we are hired. We are called to be servants of the Lord. If we seek to please God and are successful at that, we will meet most people's expectations.

My personal mission statement is, "To follow, know, and please Christ." That has become my passion and ministry. When people ask, "How can I pray for you?" I say, "Pray that my ministry and my life will please God." If it does, most likely it's going to please the board and the church.

HOW HAVE YOU BALANCED THE DEMANDS OF MINISTRY AND THE NEED TO GROW SPIRITUALLY?

PALMER: The demands of ministry are a threat not only to our spiritual life, but our emotional and relational

health as well. In the book, *Pastors at Risk*, H.B. London says of an unnamed New England pastor: “To a great extent I am a victim of expectations, my own and others. Many of us who preach grace as a way of life do not practice it in relationship to our ministerial tasks. We are more eager to please people than we are to rest in the fact God wants to use us the way we are. We preach grace and practice the theology of works.”

To balance the demands of ministry with the need to grow spiritually,

day, so I ask my secretary to cancel or postpone any appointments I have because I really believe God is calling me to pray. By responding to the Spirit in those moments, I keep my relationship with Jesus at the forefront and put that above the demands of ministry.

I recommend the book, *Tyranny of the Urgent*, by Charles Hummel. Every once in a while I reread it. He’s the one that popularized the saying, “Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important.”

your life for God to move. In the last year I’ve learned to create margins in my schedule. I purposely leave room in my schedule to address the unscheduled things that come up during the day. I’ve found that by building margins into my schedule I’m able to evaluate what’s coming up and how I need to use my time. As a result, I’m more effective in the places where I’m giving my time. I’m not feeling this crushing weight that sucks the life out of you when there are so many more demands than you could possibly ever meet.

A healthy pastor has a positive outlook toward life and others—a person who lives with biblical priorities of God first, family second, and ministry next—not just telling people what to do, but living out those principles.—Palmer



I first make sure I have a daily appointment with Jesus. Mark 1:35 says, “Very early in the morning . . . Jesus got up . . . and went off to a solitary place . . . where he prayed.” Protect your daily time with Him.

The other is to hold myself accountable to read and study the Word. I have an accountability partner, but ultimately I must hold myself accountable to read and study the Word. That’s how I balance the demands of ministry with the need to grow spiritually.

Every once in a while I’ll be in morning prayer and the Lord will say, “I want you to spend the day in prayer.” I had not planned to pray all

LINDELL: Andrew Murray says, “Hurry is the enemy of all prayer.” It’s easy to fill our day with all the things that vie for our time. There are so many seeming emergencies and demands we think they require our immediate attention. Having a daily time with the Lord is the key.

Many pastors make the mistake of scheduling their days so tight there’s no wiggle room. When there’s no room to flow with the interruptions of a day, stress begins to build and you feel harried, hurried, and rushed. If that goes on long enough, you begin to resent the business and schedule.

Bob Rosen said to set aside time in

HOW DO YOU MEASURE YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL HEALTH? WHAT SPIRITUAL MARKERS HAVE YOU PLACED IN YOUR LIFE THAT HELP KEEP YOU ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

PALMER: I ask myself seven questions to take my spiritual temperature: Am I being honest with God and myself? Do I love God’s Word? Am I praying faithfully? Am I looking for opportunities to share Jesus’ love with others? Do I hate sin? Am I obeying the greatest commandment, to love the Lord with all my heart, soul, and mind? Am I looking for Christ’s return? I encourage my congregation to ask themselves these same questions.

LINDELL: This is such a personal, individual question, and it depends on how a person approaches life, to some extent—their personality and their makeup. For me it boils down to a couple of things. I'm not a real long-range kind of guy. When I evaluate my week, I ask myself if I have spent both quality and quantity time with the Lord. Do I have an appetite for the things of God?

Second, am I able to quiet my heart before the Lord? I found I can go days and put in my time with the Lord, having my prayer time and reading the Word. But my heart becomes cluttered, and I'm not able to quiet myself with Him. When I sense that coming on, it's time for me to find extra time to fast and seek Him to make adjustments so I can be effective.

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH DAY TO DAY STRESS?

LINDELL: I feel less stress when I pray. Beyond that, I feel better when I work out. Also, everybody needs at least one day in seven where they are freed from the demands of the ministry they're leading or of which they're a part. And hopefully on that day they are with their family—building life-giving relationships. There are certain people who, by virtue of being with them, give life. Stress is released when you get together and laugh, have fun, and nurture those relationships.

PALMER: I want to tack on a different idea to my answer by affirming the need for stress and pressure in our lives. Stress and pressure can be positive. Obviously, we can't live under intense pressure all the time. But pressure and stress are good in many regards. Diamonds are produced from coal that outlasts the pressure. How we stand up to pressure and stress in large part determines how effective we are going to be over the long haul, because there is a certain amount of stress that is unavoidable. I don't

think in terms of eliminating stress or relieving stress as I do in managing it.

I'm not able to manage stress as well if I'm tired. It doesn't hurt me to go to bed earlier and get extra sleep. I also find reading helps, in addition to recreation and exercise. I don't necessarily read something heavy or theological. Just reading the newspaper helps relieve some stress. I find that having more than 1 day off helps. This may be hard for bivocational pastors. At times I need 1 1/2 to 2 days where I can get away. I don't need this extra time off every week, but there are times I need to have a little more time to unwind and let my inner man relax, get away, do nothing, maybe go fishing with my kids.

WAS THERE EVER A TIME YOU WOULD HAVE CHARACTERIZED YOURSELF AS BEING UNHEALTHY—EITHER SPIRITUALLY, PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, OR IN YOUR MARRIAGE OR FAMILY? WHAT BROUGHT YOU BACK TO HEALTH?

PALMER: Yes. I remember a time in Athens, Ohio, when I was discouraged—I was totally spent emotionally. I will never forget the Saturday I sat in my office and cried for almost 8 hours. I couldn't prepare a message. I couldn't pray. I turned on some worship music and cried. I was suicidal. I didn't go to the point of planning my death, but damaging thoughts were rampant in my mind. That day was my low point.

I went to a fellow pastor and spoke with a Christian counselor to process and work things out. I spent more time with God. At that stage in my life, I totally lacked confidence not only in myself, but in God. I was close to leaving the ministry and the Assemblies of God. My recovery came through the process of sharing with my wife, praying together, holding steady, and not doing anything rash. I lived day by day. There wasn't a particular moment when I came out of that low state; it took time.

About 4 years ago I realized I was

into some really unhealthy work patterns. I had taken on too much. I was not being effective. I had to refocus and reprioritize. I talked to my wife and eliminated things out of my life. I went to my accountability team and said, "Help me. I can't do all these things well." Stress was really beginning to affect my emotions. I was becoming depressed. I didn't have the joy of the Lord. As I took some of those steps—reprioritizing and refocusing—I was able to bring it back to a manageable situation. I still don't get everything done, and my desk has more things on it than I can do, but I'm managing the ministry much better.

LINDELL: I can relate to John's experience at Athens. When I was pastoring a home missions church in Overland Park, Kansas, there came a point where we had done everything we knew to do, but it wasn't working. I felt like a failure. I felt like quitting the ministry, which was unhealthy in and of itself. God did a lot of good out of that. When things aren't going well ministerially, the enemy takes opportunity to beat us with a stick. But God helped me through that low time.

I had another low point when we came through our recent building program, which had a lot of challenges. To compound the stress, at that same time we had some key staff transitions, resulting in an increased workload for me. To find the right people, bring them in, get them trained, and walk them through the transition was a very difficult time in my life.

Everything at the church was going great, but personally I felt like I was riding downhill on a sled going faster and faster, and I was going to crash at the bottom. I was trying to figure out how to get off the sled before it crashed. My wife and I talked about it and decided this can't be God's plan.

First, it doesn't matter if everything professionally is successful, experiencing continual, intense stress wasn't the way I wanted to live. I realized my

spiritual life wasn't helping—I was burned out and felt overwhelmed. A numbness had set in. I was unable to respond appropriately. I knew I was in trouble when I could watch the Lord move at our church, but not really care because I was so tired. For a few months, I made the mistake of sitting in neutral, just thinking I'd get over it. I thought I needed a 2-week vacation. But with long-term stress, a 2-week vacation isn't going to solve the problem. A vacation can recharge your batteries to a certain point, but they can be depleted so easily because you don't have any reserves.

Thankfully, I had built relationships before this. Relationships are critical. If you haven't built them before a challenging time, you're not going to have the strength or ability to build them when you really need them. My "faith friends" knew me well enough, understood me, and loved me. They were wise, and I could trust saying to them, "Here's where I'm at," and they weren't going to see me as a failure. I dialogued with them, and through developing a plan I had hope that things could change.

I began to explain to the people

around me the changes I was going to make in my schedule and the reasons why. I enlisted the help of people to protect my schedule. I realized that a part of my plan was going to involve a greater amount of time with the Lord.

Many times we want God to miraculously and immediately deliver us. But God wants to discipline us—not in the sense of punishing us—but training us and helping us grow stronger. It's a journey I've been walking the last several months, and it's been wonderful. It's taken me weeks and months, but I'm walking out of that extremely challenging, stressful time.

SOME MINISTERS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PUT THEIR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY BEFORE THE CHURCH. FIRST, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THE MINISTER WHO IS IN THIS SITUATION? SECOND, HOW ARE YOU NURTURING HEALTH IN YOUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY?

PALMER: If we don't put our priorities in order, God will allow a tragic event to help us to do so. It's my responsibility—not my deacon board's or my wife's responsibility—to put my

private life and my priorities in order as it relates to my family.

Some practical things have helped us in our home. We take time away from the church. We put our children ahead of our congregation. There were times in my ministry when I was supposed to be home with my children, but somebody from the congregation expressed a need and I called home and said, "I won't be able to come home. I need to spend time with so and so." In many instances, I was wrong. There are emergencies that come up, and my children understand those. But I really need to make that commitment to my children.

I remember a time when we had planned to take a family vacation, and a couple asked me to marry them. I looked at my calendar and told them I had a commitment that day.

They asked, "What do you have to do?"

I replied, "I've made a commitment to my family."

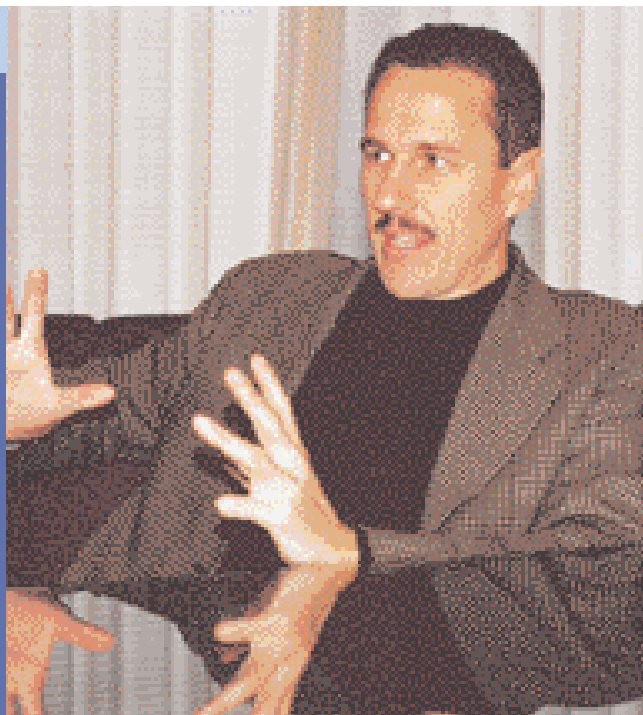
They said, "Can't you change it?"

I said, "Yes, I could, but I'm not going to. My wife doesn't have another husband and my children don't have another father. I've got to honor that commitment."

To balance the demands of ministry with the need to grow spiritually, I first make sure I have a daily appointment with Jesus.—Palmer



When there's no room to flow with the interruptions of a day, stress begins to build and you feel harried, hurried, and rushed.—Lindell



Being firm like that was hard for me early in my ministry. I felt compelled to always be there when somebody expressed any kind of need.

About a year ago, my wife called me at 5 p.m. and said, "John, I've got a babysitter for Bethany tonight. I need to spend time with you."

I looked at my appointment book and said, "I have a deacon board meeting tonight. I'll call you right back." I called Wayne and said, "I need to spend the evening with Debbie. She knows I have a board meeting, but says we need to be together. She's never done this in 20 years of ministry. We can cancel or postpone the board meeting, or you guys can meet without me."

Wayne responded, "Why don't we do it without you?"

So Debbie and I went out to eat. We were less than a mile from the church, eating dinner, while the board was meeting. Not every pastor can do that. Probably in some cases with the volatility in churches, it's better for the pastor to postpone the meeting. But I use that example to say that we need to be sensitive to our family. If we're there for them when they really need us, they're not going to feel bad the other times when we need to be away from them.

LINDELL: My philosophy with my kids is this: I go to their games, they come hear me preach. It's a give-and-take thing. Our family understands there's a sacrifice that goes both ways. There are times when your family needs you and times when the church needs you. The pastor has to teach the church it's not the pastor's responsibility to be everywhere, every time, for everything. That's unreasonable.

My wife, Debbie, has said, "It's a constant challenge you can't escape. There's going to be that constant tension of being with the church and being with your family. A lot of people make the mistake of not seizing the moments they do have."

Families would do a lot of good turning off their TVs and relating to their kids. Our kids like to sit in the family room and talk with us (my kids are 14, 15, and 16). The other night we were all lying around talking from 9:30 to 11. Times like this help my children and my wife know they are my priority.

HOW CAN PASTORS PROTECT THEIR SEXUAL INTEGRITY?

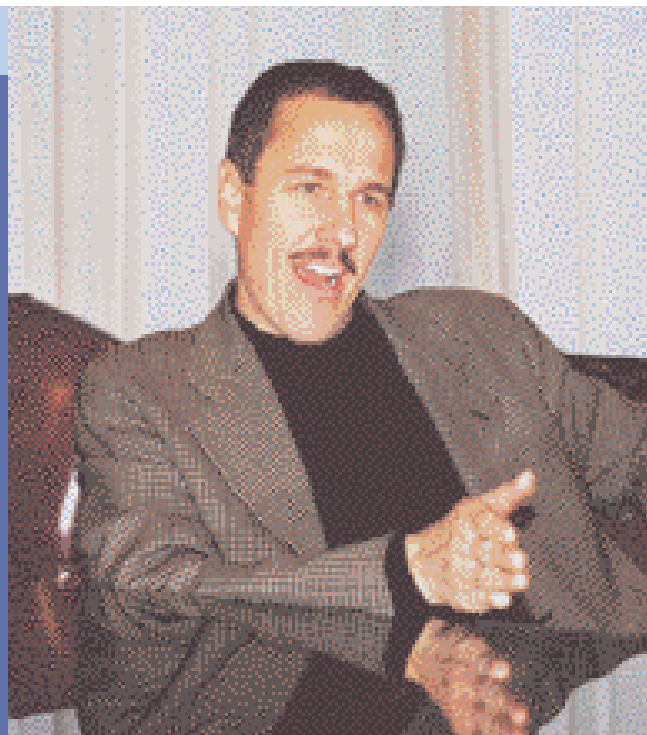
LINDELL: Spending time daily with the Lord in prayer and the Word is important. You also need to have

people with whom you are willing to be transparent. I have a daily devotional life, and I am accountable to people who ask me the hard questions. They're not intimidated by my position. They see me beyond the office of pastor, and they don't make assumptions.

PALMER: Job 31:1 says, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl." Psalm 101:3 says, "I will set before my eyes no vile thing." It's important to realize the seriousness of sexual sin. We need to admit that our position as pastor, and our charisma and talent, will not override the spiritual damage sexual sin inflicts, not only in our spiritual lives, but in the lives of others as well. We need to police our thoughts and bring every thought into captivity. We need to flee immorality.

There are clearly two fronts to the battle: the spiritual front that's fought in the spiritual realm and then the physical front that's fought with our will and discipline. We need to block our eyes from the sensual and starve the mind of fantasies. That's how we flee. Those aren't always easy. I recommend Fred Stocker's book, *Every Man's Battle*. His second book, *Every Woman's*

**We began in the Spirit
and we can only be
sustained in doing
God's work through
the Spirit.—Lindell**



Desire, is the sequel. He's writing a third book, *Every Young Man's Battle*. Fred and his wife, Brenda, are extremely open.

RICK WARREN IDENTIFIES FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY CHURCHES: A LONG-TERM PASTORATE, CLEAR PURPOSE, STRONG ORGANIZATION, AND A CLEAR TARGET. RESPOND TO HIS FINDINGS.

PALMER: I don't feel as strongly as Rick Warren does about a healthy church having strong organization. But I agree with the other three and have identified several others as well.

A healthy church has a clear, Christ-centered mission or vision that relates to the Lord's clear purpose—to reach lost people. A church may be growing but not necessarily healthy if they're not reaching lost people. A healthy church is discipling saved people. A healthy church is mobilizing the laity for effective life-giving ministry. The effectiveness of our churches can be measured by the ministry of our people during the week in their places of influence and work rather than by the number of people who gather for services. A

healthy church is spiritually renewed, as evidenced by prayer. A healthy church has a deep love for each other, as evidenced by a growing sense of community. And, finally, a healthy church is unified.

LINDELL: Unity and prayer are important. If you don't have unity, you don't have much. When it comes to clear purpose, you can have a clear purpose, but is it biblically defined?

The only other characteristic I would add is an openness to a reliance on the Lord as opposed to a reliance on human techniques. It's easy to reduce church growth to a formula or to a series of marketing techniques. You can draw a crowd and gather a group, but have you really advanced the Kingdom? We want results and numbers, but that's dangerous, because you can have a crowd and not have a congregation. We began in the Spirit and we can only be sustained in doing God's work through the Spirit.

SELF-DISCIPLINE IS AT THE HEART OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HEALTHY PASTOR. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A PASTOR WHO IS

UNDISCIPLINED? WHAT STEPS CAN HE OR SHE TAKE TO CHANGE THAT?

LINDELL: When we lack discipline in any area of our lives, it affects every other area. You can't compartmentalize your life and say you're undisciplined in only one area. If you're undisciplined in your eating, invariably it's going to affect other areas of your life, spiritually and mentally. Lack of discipline in any area is detrimental to establishing a spiritually disciplined life. If I have a lack of discipline in an area, I need to admit it and allow someone to hold me accountable. It's not just feeling bad about it—it's establishing a plan to remedy the problem. Paul told Timothy to follow him as he followed Christ.

PALMER: I'm drawn to Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Run in such a way that you can get the prize." I encourage people who are trying to develop discipline to view themselves as world-class athletes. Paul said everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training (verse 25). If I'm going to develop discipline in my life, I need to view myself as a world-class

athlete. They don't eat whatever they want. They don't exercise only when they feel like exercising. They are on a regimen. Many of them have trainers.

In verse 27, Paul said, "I beat my body." That's not real encouraging, but if we're going to develop discipline, there's going to be some pain.

The other thing Paul talked about was having his eyes on the goal. He said he was not just beating the air. He wanted to reach the prize. He didn't want to be disqualified for the prize. In Philippians 3:14, Paul talked about going for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We need to keep our eyes on that goal.

WHAT FINAL THOUGHTS CAN YOU SHARE WITH MINISTERS WHO MIGHT BE STRUGGLING WITH HEALTH ISSUES IN THEIR LIFE, MINISTRY, AND CHURCH?

PALMER: First, remember that by His stripes we are healed. That's not just the physical, but the spiritual, emotional, and mental relationship. Jesus is our Healer.

Second, God often uses those close to us to help in that healing process. When my son, Jonathan, was

younger, he got a splinter in his finger. His mom sterilized a needle and tried to get the splinter out. As she did, he began to cry, and his wiggling made it impossible for her to get the splinter out of his finger. I put Jonathan on my lap, put my arms around him, and held his finger real tight for about 5 seconds. Debbie was able to extract that splinter. When he found the splinter was gone, he jumped off my lap and went back to playing. About 4 hours later Jonathan came up to me with this huge grin and said, "Dad, my finger is better. God healed my finger, and you and Mommy helped Him." I've never forgotten that. This illustrates that God is the one who does the healing, but He uses people to encourage and help us. In fact, those people provoke us a bit, and through all of those processes, God heals. There's no situation you're facing that God cannot heal if you submit to His lordship and submit to loving and accountable relationship.

LINDELL: We're all a work in progress, and as we behold the Lord, we're transformed from glory to glory.

We need to do our best, but even our best is never going to make us perfect. God has chosen the weak and the foolish things to confound the wisdom of the wise. The enemy likes to remind us of our inadequacies. He likes to make us feel that because of those inadequacies, we are disqualified. That's not to justify somebody wallowing in a state of sickness in terms of being a healthy pastor. But at the same time, when we've done all we can do, we're still going to fall short of perfection.

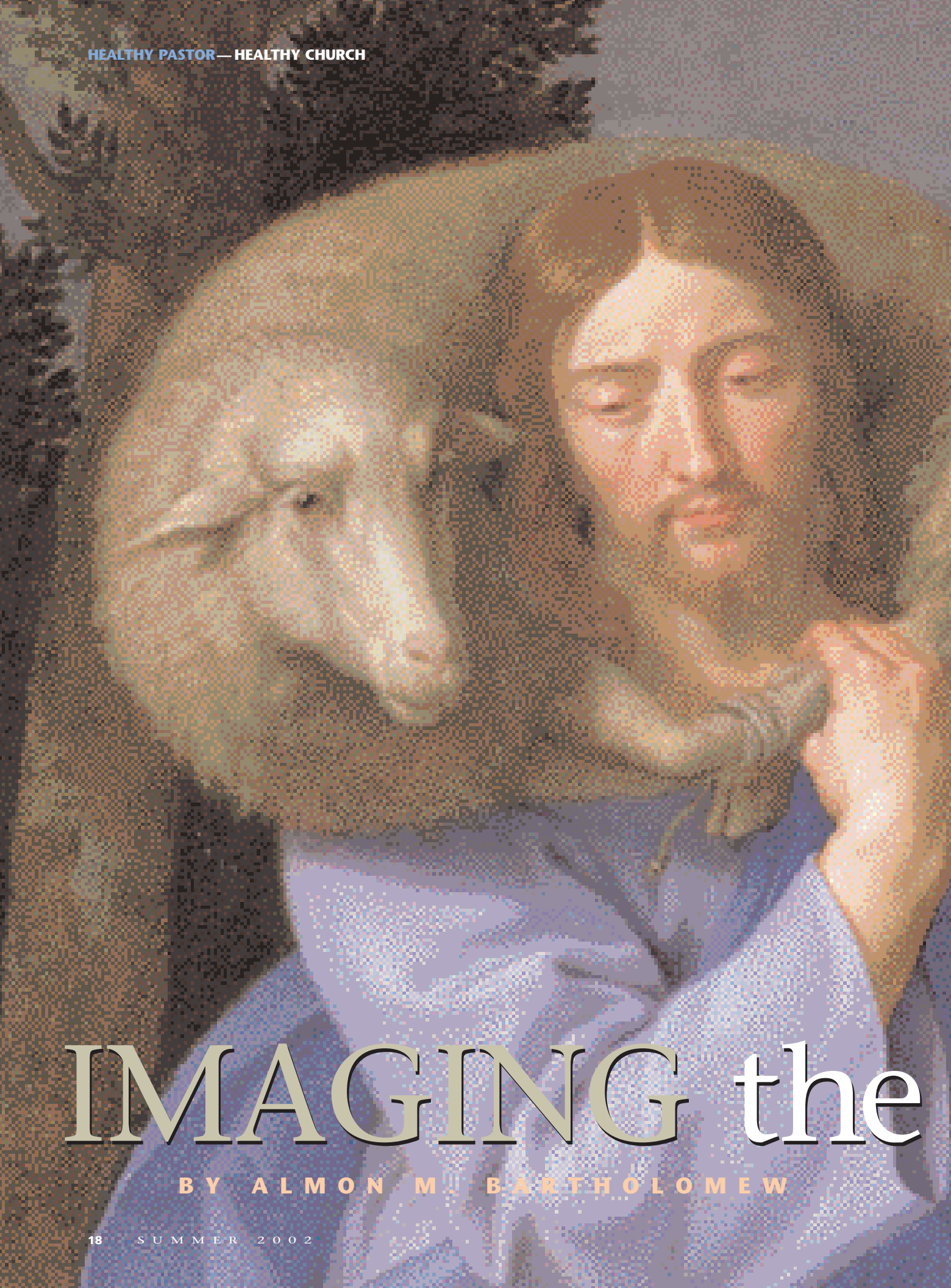
Thankfully, we have a Lord who is able to take our efforts, feeble and frail as they are, and endure them with His power. Plus, we have this treasure in earthen vessels. What am I? Paul said he was only a clay pot with a treasure inside. So, to those who aren't where they want to be, or maybe aren't where they should be, look to the Lord. He'll help you in those moments of inadequacy. When we are weak, I'm thankful He's a strong God. **e**

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

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not my deacon board's
or my wife's responsibility—to put my private
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HEALTHY PASTOR—HEALTHY CHURCH



IMAGING the

BY ALMON M. BARTHOLOMEW



THIS ARTICLE FOCUSES

ON ONE ASPECT OF THE

THEME—A HEALTHY

PASTOR IS SOMEONE

WHO IS CHRISTLIKE. OUR

FLAWLESS MODEL IS JESUS

CHRIST, THE GREAT

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Christ Model

The vital signs of spiritual life both within the life of the pastor and the church must include the clarity with which the likeness of our Lord is genuinely mirrored.

In the first chapter of Genesis, trees, grass, every moving creature found in the heavens, the earth, and in the sea reproduced after its own kind. The divine design is for each healthy generation to give healthy life to each succeeding generation.

The healthy pastor—healthy church theme embodies the same principle. There is a direct correlation between a healthy pastor and a healthy church. If the principle “each producing after its own kind” is vital, consider the potential this holds for the church of today and tomorrow.

This article focuses on one aspect of the theme—a healthy pastor is someone who is Christlike. Our flawless model is Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep (His Church). It is imperative that the image projected from this model be readily identified in the pastor, an undershepherd of God’s flock. The quintessential expression of that leadership image will have a profound effect on the personal and corporate life of the church. Its absence distorts and destroys Christ’s intended purpose for His body. The vital signs of spiritual life both within the life of the pastor and the church must include the clarity with which the likeness of our Lord is genuinely mirrored. This reflection takes on a threefold casting:

THE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

It will take more than a shallow, surface-type experience to internalize the principles of Christ. The acquisition and development of these come from practicing intimacy with God. I have always been intrigued and awed by the title of Thomas a’Kempis’ book, *Imitation of Christ*. The text, written by this German-born monk in the 15th century, has deeply impacted the Christian world, especially the leaders of the Reformation—including Martin Luther. Its biblical foundation of the divine love principle, rooted in the very nature of God, becomes the ceaseless motivational force of the Christian life. Every level of human function is sanctified by that special grace. The life of Christ is replicated in the life of His servants.

This type of authenticity is much needed in ministry today. It is acquired by digesting and assimilating the Word of God. Its growth is enhanced by time spent in His presence. It takes on the Christ image as one follows Him step by step.

The apostle Peter’s admonition is basic to this orientation. In the first chapter of his second epistle, he encourages his readers to true life and godliness achieved through God’s power emerging in a life of glory and virtue.

Through God’s “great and precious promises,” we become “partakers of the divine nature” of Christ (verse 4). In the process we are immunized from the corrupting power of a world laden with lust.

King David said, “Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11). The blessed man of God in the first Psalm who flourishes as a tree planted by the water delights and meditates day and night in the Word of God.

When Ezekiel was commissioned to prophesy, he was given a scroll of Scripture and commanded to devour it. This is how he reported it: “Then he said to me, ‘Son of man, eat this scroll . . .’ So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth. He then said to me: ‘Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them’ ” (Ezekiel 3:3,4, NIV). When God prescribes His Word for the soul, do not accept a generic substitute.

In John 17, Jesus pronounced His disciples clean through the Word He had spoken to them. He further said, “Thy word is truth.” The intimate time these men spent listening to Him teach, watching Him as He walked among all kinds of people and functioned in ministry, left an indelible stamp on them. There is no shortcut to becoming like Christ. The same disciplines that shaped

The outward signs of hospitality, self-control (self-discipline), humility, and preaching sound doctrine models discipleship to the people who receive God's message.

the lives of the first disciples must be at work in Christ's servants today.

Our identity with Christ grows as we spend time in His presence. The 12 disciples spent 3 years in that daily encounter. They observed His life of prayer. They witnessed His powerful works. They heard His dynamic preaching and His unmatched teaching. They learned from His example in life, His people-handling skills, whether among friends or foes. They fed on His values. It was an intimate, absorbing, life-changing relationship.

Today we do not have the privilege of walking in His visible presence. However, we do have available to us the presence of the Holy Spirit, who takes the things of Christ and shows them to us. He has come to make Christ known. The apostle Paul captured this process in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory" (NIV). Christ is being formed within us. The Amplified Bible makes clear that not only shall we bear the image of Christ in the life to come, we are to bear His image in our present world: "And just as we have borne the image of the [man] of dust, so shall we and so let us bear the image of the [Man] of heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:49).

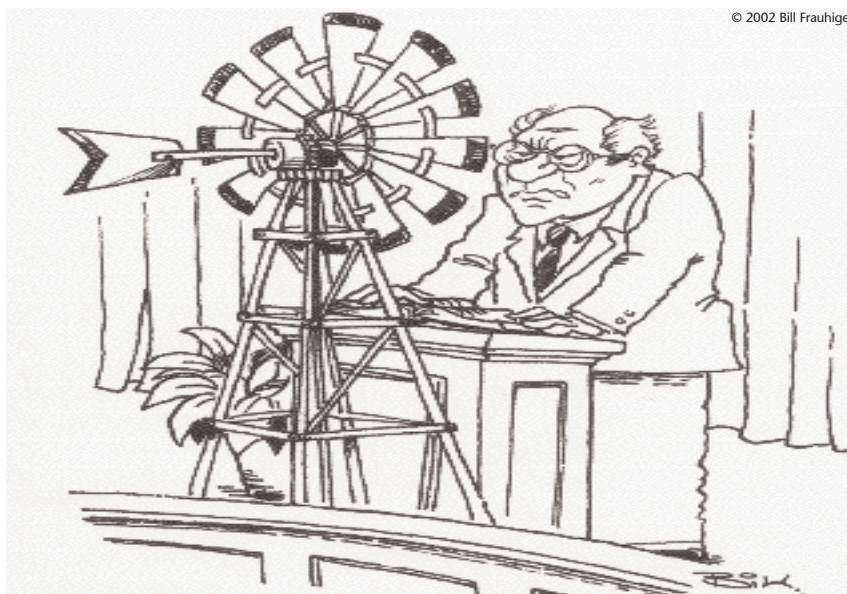
EXTERNAL DEMONSTRATION

The internal, spiritual development of the healthy pastor will be reflected outwardly. This brings us to the external demonstration of Christ's likeness, which is essential to effective ministry.

A phrase often quoted when I was growing up is this: "All wool and a yard wide." It depicted a genuineness encompassing one's life. A quilt may have a pretty face, but you don't know what it has been stuffed with. Christ must be seen through every layer of one's life. We need something more than a thinly

veiled appliqué. Scripture is plain, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Jesus also had something to say about expressions of the heart: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). He further said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19). Maintaining of a healthy heart is a prerequisite to a healthy ministry that will produce a healthy church.



Although intended to be a gesture of good stewardship, the attempt to harness Pastor Bellows' preaching prowess to make electricity for the church was received with mixed emotions.

IS THERE A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN A HEALTHY PASTOR AND A HEALTHY CHURCH?

There is no disconnect between what the pastor receives from the resources he taps and the ministry flowing from a pastor to his congregation. What he is filled with is what he spills out. Stanley Cohen, professor at Glassboro State College in New Jersey, in his course, "Psychological Foundations of Education," said: "It is impossible to convey information without conveying values." This statement is worth pondering. A minister does not teach, preach, or administrate in a vacuum. What enters the inlet gate, passing through the pastor's person, will also pass through the outlet gate. The people in his charge will be the recipients of that ministry, be it pristine or tainted. The health of the local church relies heavily on the spiritual health and resources of its pastor. Testimonies to this abound.

We were blessed to have three pastors in our home church during the 37 years that covered our growing up years and maturing process in early ministry. Each had a profoundly positive effect on us. None of them had a hint of scandal or compromise. They were outstanding students of the Word and taught us well. They were spiritually minded and conveyed it to us. They were gifted in people-handling skills and able administrators in the church. Beyond all of this, while modeling ministry before us, they were genuinely humble. Not one of them seemed aware of the depth their ministries and persons brought to bear on us. During that period, more than 15 young people were called into and pursued full-time ministry. Healthy pastors produced a healthy church.

—Almon M. Bartholomew, Queensbury, New York

What are those ingrained traits of character so evident in Jesus, and so needed in we who have received His call? The fruit of the Spirit enumerated by the apostle Paul certainly must be numbered among them. The Galatians 5:22 list includes: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

gentleness, and self-control" (NIV).

First Peter 5 exhorts the elders to be true, care-giving shepherds—patterned after the Jesus model—to the flock of God. This service is not to be undertaken as a drudgery and joyless duty, but with willingness. It is with a keen awareness that we want to please God,

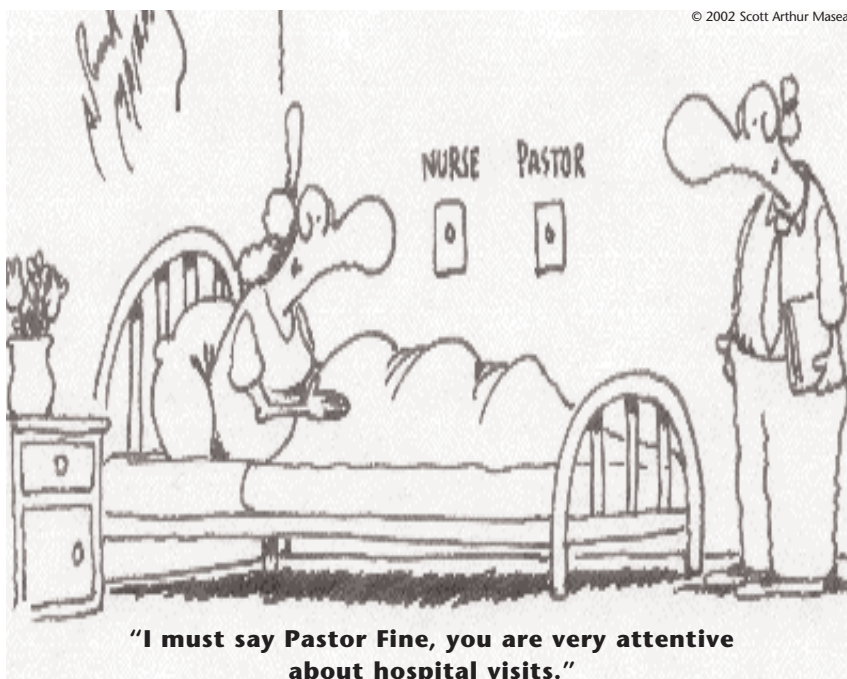
since it is He who has called us. There is no place for greed or money grubbing. We are to serve eagerly, not lording it over God's flock. He reminds us that payday will come at Christ's appearing.

Both apostles, Paul and James, liken God's servants as "husbandmen" (KJV). The NIV translates this word "hard working farmer." Second Timothy 2:6 tells us that this industrious farmer must be the first partaker of the crop. While this has the connotation of receiving benefit from the harvest, it also suggests he must partake of the same spiritual food fed to his flock. In James' reference, the farmer is urged to show patience until the harvest has reached maturity. Lessons drawn from both passages demonstrate conduct of the husbandman.

Paul had a potent antidote for dealing with contentious persons. Too often ministers deal with people at the same level and with the same vindictiveness that has been shown toward them. This escalation will destroy the work of God. In these situations, Paul prescribes good, preventative medicine for he who would be a healthy pastor: "The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them into a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:24–26, NIV).

Paul, writing to Titus, continued his instruction: "Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick tempered, not given to much wine, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain" (Titus 1:7, NIV).

Each of the apostles emphasize patience in times of suffering, deprivation, and hardship. The outward signs of hospitality, self-control (self-discipline), humility, and preaching sound doctrine model discipleship to the people who receive God's message. These make the gospel ring true.



The pastoral epistles are filled with sound instruction for the servant of God who would faithfully and effectively demonstrate this faith. We will not make disciples unless we live out the gospel ourselves. Paul understood this when he wrote to Timothy and said, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience" (2 Timothy 3:10).

ETERNAL DYNAMIC

Having internalized the faith in our spiritual development, having demonstrated the faith externally to the world, our ministry must also possess an eternal dynamic. The word *dynamic* is used purposefully. Ours is not a passive faith, locked in the inertia of tradition. It is alive, it moves, and it achieves.

This dynamic was at work in the Book of Acts. The Kingdom grew from 120, to 3,000, to 5,000, to multitudes—from the capital of Judaism to the capital of the Roman Empire and the then-known world in one short century. And this was done without the high-tech systems we are accustomed to today. Servants of God had an intimate walk with God that manifested itself outwardly and shaped the eternal destiny of millions, including those brought into the Kingdom in the passing centuries.

The Church endured a period of time known as the Dark Ages. In it the Church experienced ill health spiritually. Spiritual health began to return to the Church universal during the Reformation and in the dynamic revival and renewal movements that have followed. The return opened the door for millions to be swept into the Kingdom as the gospel encircled the globe. If we are to see this redemptive ingathering swell and increase, it is imperative for the Church to experience vibrant, spiritual health. Healthy ministers of the gospel are key to fulfilling this mission.

As we focus on the eternal quality of this dynamic, it leads us to the enduring effectiveness of the gospel and its messengers. In John 15, Jesus advised

NO SHORTCUTS TO BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

There is no shortcut to becoming like Christ. While in New Jersey in the 1960s, we laid to rest 27 senior members. These were the praying, tithing, compassionate, committed, mature saints of the church. Not unlike many pastors in this situation, I voiced my complaint to the Lord. "These are among the best people in the church. I'm going to miss them so much." Then I asked, "Lord, why are they so difficult to replace?"

He seemed to speak to my heart, and say, *It takes a long time to grow them.*

We live in the day of instant everything. We are called to be saints, but this process doesn't happen overnight. General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, is credited with saying, "It is the nature of fire to make everything it touches like itself. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that 'Our God is a fire!' " As pastors, we must be in touch with the fire of His presence and allow Him whatever time it takes to make us like Him.

Another word picture fits very well. One doesn't need to tell salt brine what to do. It will do what is in its nature to do. In the pickling process, cucumbers are immersed in the brine and its seasonings. In due time, the effect of the brine does its work. Astonishingly, cucumbers become pickles. However, one does not put cucumbers in the brine Monday night and pull out pickles Tuesday morning. The process must be completed. How we need to marinate in the presence of God. There are no shortcuts on the way to becoming like Christ.

—Almon M. Bartholomew, Queensbury, New York

His followers that He had ordained them to bring forth fruit, and this fruit should remain.


In another metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3, Paul likened God's servants to wise master builders. He also told us that we are "laborers together." He emphasized the importance of building a superstructure worthy of the foundation already laid—Jesus Christ. This Church is being built to last for eternity.

We can't afford to be shoddy in our workmanship. In fact, Paul said it all would be subjected to the fire test. If our materials are "wood, hay, and stubble," they will be consumed. Only "gold, silver, precious stones" will endure. Pastors need a healthy view of the eternal consequence of their labors. It is hard to improve on the verse, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past; Only what's done for Christ will last."

How can this dynamic count now for eternity? Jesus charged us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He clearly instructed us to make disciples of these converts. The apostle Paul laid it out well to Timothy: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in

the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:1,2). There must be a continuum from one generation to another. This is the nature of the eternal dynamic.

The Great Physician is present to bring healing. Let us bring our lives to Him for careful examination. In Jeremiah 8:21,22, the weeping prophet took up God's lament, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

Pastors, we are physicians of the soul. It is imperative for us to be in robust spiritual health if we are to answer the plea found in Jeremiah. The key to a healthy church is a healthy pastor. 

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Anthrax & Antidote

Becoming Biblically Wise in Times of Spiritual Terrorism

Anthrax. In the days following the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, we heard daily reports about the spread of anthrax. An “innocent” white powder; spores in the air that were inhaled; a brush on the skin that went undetected; microscopic portions that can hide undetected, and later seriously injure, even kill; an innocuous letter (from a child?) becomes another plot of terrorists. A nation rushes to another alert, not knowing whose life will be threatened next. Powdered sugar is suspect.

B Y D A V I D W . A R G U E



Anthrax is not unlike the spiritual terrorism the people of God face every day. What seems innocent, turns deadly. What is hidden, later destroys. The “angel of light” actually bears the plots of hell.

And what is our defense? How can the pastor maintain spiritual health in the face of the insidious schemes of an invisible enemy? How can he* protect his people from the insidious attacks of a ruthless enemy? The answer: pastors must become biblically wise.

Let me suggest some ways I have learned as a pastor that strengthen my spiritual health and the spiritual health of my people.

THE BIBLICALLY WISE PASTOR RECOGNIZES THE SOLID FOUNDATION IN GOD’S WORD

The comprehensive lab to ferret out any spiritual danger and to help maintain spiritual health at all times is the Word of God. The Word tells us: “Lean not on your own understanding.” “Do not be wise in your own eyes,” but “fear the Lord” and “keep my commands in your heart” for “this will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones” (Proverbs 3:7,1,8).** The expert analysis, the psychological theory, the how-to formulas of popularized wisdom may actually lead us into misdiagnosis and creeping death.

Today, 1,000 new books have been published, and a myriad of information has been posted on countless Web sites. I will come to know only a miniscule portion of even the relevant things for ministry available today. But I do not despair or fear that I will fall prey to the sickness of our times. Instead, I take comfort in knowing that as I personally grow deeper in God’s Word—and lead others into the wisdom of the Book—the Word in itself has the ability to bring me, and every person to whom I minister, to a place of being “thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).

In a culture where the rapidity of change and the tensions in our world promote fear, stability and calm reign

within when I remember that “the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever” (1 Peter 1:24,25).

THE BIBLICALLY WISE PASTOR RECOGNIZES THE AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION OF GOD’S WORD

I am a pastor. I am a generalist in many ways. I am responsible to be aware of my world, observe the patterns of our culture, and think through issues intelligently. My primary call and responsibility, however, is to be a person of the Word. If the Word is not my primary foundation, and instead becomes one resource among many, then I have failed both the people I serve, and even more, the God who called me and gave me His Word.

How easy it is to become familiar with the Word of God. How easy it is to cease to see it for what it is—the very words of God to keep our lives, and those of the people we serve, robust, and healthy.

“The Bible is the Word of God. He spoke it. It issued from His mouth. The term *inspiration* means neither that God breathed into the human authors to heighten their perception of truth, nor that He breathed into their writings in order to somehow change human prose into divine poetry, but rather that the words they spoke were actually breathed out of His mouth. The emphasis is not on the transformation of truths, which were already there (in the minds or words of the prophets), but on the origination of truths which were not there until God thought and spoke them.”¹

I recently read Psalm 119 to catalog all of the descriptive words and phrases the Word uses to describe itself in that Psalm. Among the dozens of expressions are these: precepts that are to be fully obeyed, decrees, commands, the laws that come from your mouth, the way of truth, your righteous laws, (what is) eternal and stands firm, (what makes) me wiser than my enemies, fully trustworthy, thoroughly tested, forever right, (what) lasts forever.

THE BIBLICALLY WISE PASTOR RECOGNIZES THE NEED TO BE IMMERSED IN GOD’S WORD

Without question, the proper understanding and administration of God’s Word is the key to the transformation of people to the authority that drives back the forces of evil, and to the authenticity of a church standing in prophetic boldness before this culture.

As pastor, my enduring and most critical calling is to “let the word of Christ dwell in [me] richly as [I] teach and admonish” (Colossians 3:16). As I make that my primary objective, as Christ promised, the Word will permeate everything I think, say, and do. My mouth always will speak from that which fills my heart (Matthew 12:33–37).

I can take a diagnostic reading of my life and the people I pastor by asking: How much does the Word enter into the flow of the conversations we share? Is Scripture consulted only in teaching times, or is it permeating my/our thinking to the point that its truths, phrases, and promises become a part of the interactions we share?

When I set forth truth in any format, I must make certain that what I am advancing is the counsel of the Word. I must not use Scripture to authorize my own wisdom about a matter. I must let Scripture set the tone and provide the focus for what I believe.

The only way this will happen is if I love God with my whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and regularly sit under the counsel of Scripture. I must teach those who follow me to do the same.

In conversation, counsel, and public prayer I will move people toward spiritual health as I exhibit a continual reliance on the Word of God as the way I maintain spiritual health and strength.

“The research suggests that most people’s worldview is little more than a collection of fragmented ideals mindlessly adopted from pop culture. Only one out of three adults read the Bible and only one out of 10 study it. It’s no wonder Americans have tremendous spiritual

hunger, but no consistent spiritual growth.”²

For a long time, the analogy the apostle Paul cites has been my mental picture of what I am doing at the start of most days. He writes that Christ cleans up the Church and makes her holy “by the washing with water through the word.” This Word-washing brings forth radiance, removes stains and blemishes, and brings the Church to be “holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:26,27).

At the start of most days I take a shower in the Word. For a long time I have made a practice to simply read on and on—book after book in the Bible—in a continual process of letting the whole counsel of God shower down on my mind. I don’t try to read through the Bible in a year—though that can be a worthy objective. Instead, I read and let the Bible read through me. This is a process that moves me at varied paces. At times, I read slowly. In other contexts, where there is repetition or the theme of the book is less applicable to my journey at the time, I read rapidly.

Reading and reflecting on Scripture is always accompanied by using pencils of various colors. Throughout all of Scripture I trace themes and key concepts. Doing such engages the heart and mind. It produces contextual reading—reading theologically. I often jot questions, reactions, and ideas in the margins. Expression continually deepens the impression of the Word on my mind and frequently fashions the mode of my prayer.³ On and on, day after day, the Word washes over my soul, scrubbing off the cultural anthrax that could otherwise bring its creeping disease, even death.

The awesome cleansing power of the Word was proven to me one summer during my college years when I worked at a steel mill. The crew I was assigned to was so filthy-mouthed that, in spite of my desire to be salt and light to them and enter into lunchtimes with them, I finally felt I had to withdraw during lunchtime and try to regain my inner stability. So, I began to eat in a quiet place, my

pocket New Testament in hand. As I ate, I simply read. With systematic precision, I discovered the scrubbing, cleansing power of the Word as it washed my mind from the filth and prepared my spirit to go back on shift with fresh, spiritual health to share.

As I finish my own reading of each book in the Bible, I enter the month and year after the last verse. The long list of dates now bears witness that my journey in the Word is continual and meaningful. I know too that my whole person is being exposed to the whole counsel of God.

THE BIBLICALLY WISE PASTOR RECOGNIZES THE NEED TO EXPOSE HIS PEOPLE TO GOD’S WORD

From my personal time in the Word come ideas that bring the church into the flow of the whole Word. Here are a few ways my personal time in the Word has shaped my sermons.

- I issued a Bible-reading challenge to the church by distributing an empty chart full of tiny indexed squares, one box for each chapter in the Bible. Each box was to be colored following a code as successive chapters were read. The conclusion of the reading through Scripture brought this surprise: each

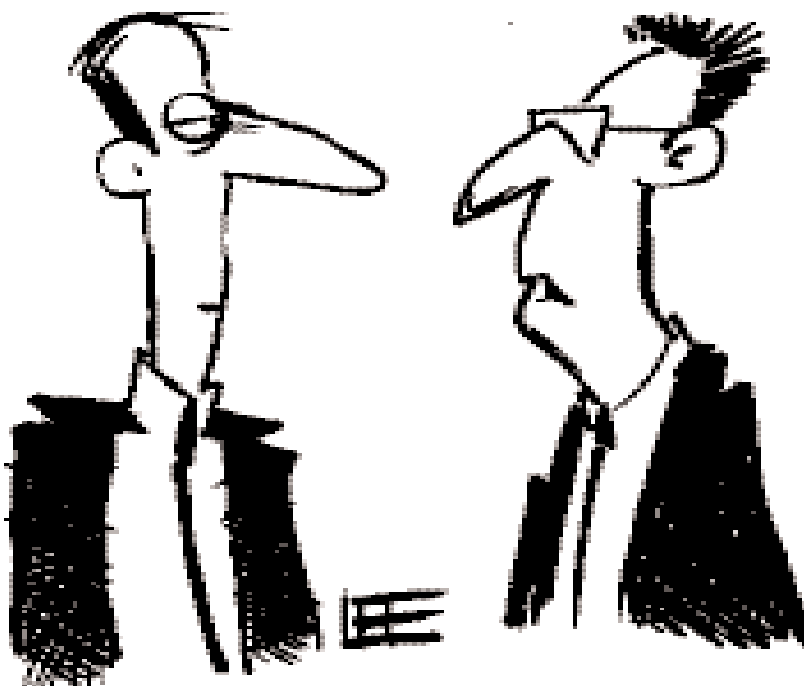
person had fashioned in his or her coloring a simple portrait of Christ. My people received two messages. Along the way, we had Bible readers’ parties to celebrate our progress and share our joy.

- A recent summer series, “Majors From the Minors,” focused on discovering and applying to our culture the most central theme in each of the Minor Prophets. I asked the congregation to read the next book under study. “Read all the footnotes too,” I advised, “and see if you come up with the same theme I do.”

- A series from the Book of Proverbs focused on unscrambling the great treasures of wisdom that are interwoven throughout that book. I gave the people the title in advance and asked them to read for themselves and ferret out all the verses from that great book that applied to that theme. “See if you agree with me,” I challenged them.

- The public reading of the whole Bible prior to the first meeting in our new auditorium sent a message to the whole church that every page of God’s Word is inspired and holds truth for all of us. What healing came to some who discovered that their assignment was to read the long lists of difficult names. It seemed to them that the Spirit said within, *You see now how much I care*

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“Good sermon, Pastor. You made a lot of sense and you backed it up with solid scriptural research. But I still want a second opinion.”

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY PASTOR

- Healthy ministers respect authority (Titus 3:1).
- Healthy ministers are not afraid to counsel and to take advice of others in the church. A healthy minister would never state: “No one is going to tell me what to do.” Nor, would he even feel that way. Healthy ministers don’t feel they have a corner on God’s will.
- Healthy ministers are ready to help. They are patient and caring.
- Healthy ministers will never malign another person. They will not insult or speak evil of others. They will not use the pulpit to get back at others.
- Healthy ministers are not contentious. Someone has said, “An uncontentious person is one who would not mind selling his pet parrot to the town gossip.” A healthy minister will not gloat over the mistakes and scandals of others. He will not “feel good” when others fail.
- Healthy ministers are gentle (Titus 3:2). Gentleness is the ability to be flexible when needed, yet showing consistent strength. A good example is Jesus and the woman at the well. He demonstrated gentleness to the woman without condoning what she had done. He was exacting in His moral expectations.
- Healthy ministers are kind (Titus 3:4). Ministers must be Christlike. Jesus was kind. There is no excuse for unkindness.
- Healthy ministers will grow. They will grow in leadership skills and in their personal spiritual walk with Christ. They will be willing to learn from others—younger or older, less educated or more educated.
- Healthy ministers will have a place to retreat. Jesus knew when it was time to rest. Every minister needs a place where he can go to preserve his own judgment and sanity and receive a fresh word from God.
- Healthy ministers must have a sense of humor. Ministers must not take themselves too seriously. They must be able to laugh at their own humanity.
- Healthy ministers will know they do not have an answer for everything and everybody. There is nothing wrong with saying, “I don’t know.”
- Healthy ministers will not be preoccupied with suspicion and resentment. They cannot afford the feeling: “They’re out to get me”—even if they are. They must not nurse negative feelings that will produce misery.
- Healthy ministers have learned how to forgive. They cannot erase the memory of hurts, but they must forgive.

—Brooks Faulkner, *LifeWay Christian Resource’s* senior LeaderCare specialist, Nashville, Tennessee

about everyone. I care about you, too. Others were deeply moved as entire families came to read together. Little children were led in their reading by instructive parents.

- I challenged the church to read the Book of Acts and make two kinds of marks in the margin: a circle (o) by every verse that indicates that God loves every person and offers salvation in Christ to all, and a star (*) beside every verse that states that Christ is the only way to God. There is, in fact, “no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The two concepts of universality (o) and particularity (*) sit side by side

throughout the book.⁴ This is a most valuable study throughout all of Scripture to guard our minds against the trend to subtly affirm all faiths as somehow moving everyone toward one God and one eternal destiny.

It is always a challenge to maintain personal and private integrity in Scripture when faced with the continual demands of public ministry. Among the most helpful marriages I have found between my personal journey in Scripture and my public teaching of a text has been to briefly study and journal through a biblical text as a part of my own daily time in the Word, well in advance of when I will be teaching it.

A helpful method I often utilize involves reading the passage carefully and thoughtfully, making notes of key concepts and words, writing out my own random ideas and thoughts, and asking the hard questions that might come to mind. Then I come up with the basic idea of the passage. A one-volume commentary on the Bible is useful as a check to make certain my thinking is headed in a sound direction.

Finally, I seek to apply the truth of that passage to my own life. This approach yields a personal journal that details my own authenticity in thinking about the Word and describes my own journey in response to the Word. This process produces more reflective thought (free from the pressures of deadlines) and ample personal illustrations (from a text already personally experimented with and learned from). My teaching from this passage can then ring with greater authenticity and depth.

A word about interpreting Scripture is important. A rule of thumb: if you are citing a verse, read the chapter it is found in, making sure you have the context in hand.⁵ If you are teaching a chapter, read the section of the book it is found in. Always read widely for the context.

Recently I was startled by this verse: “Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish” (Proverbs 31:6). In pencil, I wrote in the margin: “not a good verse for the city mission!” But then I noted the context. The context indicates that those who rule must stay clear of wine so they will rule well and not forget what God wants them to do. The advice, which at first appeared to be shocking, actually comes as evidence of the misfortune of those who are perishing and in anguish. It is not the counsel of Scripture for those who want to walk in a pattern of wise living and ruling.

We are all called to be expositors of God’s Word. “Preach the Word” (2 Timothy 4:2) is the charge that Paul gave to Timothy, and that all pastors have received from Christ, the head of the Church.

This teaching of God’s Word is called

exposition—a speaking that brings forth the meaning that is in the text. Too often, however, our teachings can be characterized as imposition rather than exposition.

Imposition occurs when our thought is what leads us, and the Word of God is marshaled behind it. Imposition leads easily to placing our burdens on people. Exposition, because it is founded in God's character and nature, will lead to the burdens being His and also being "light" (Matthew 11:28–30).

The last thing I do each week in preparation to preach is to draft an outline of the notes I will use as I instruct the church in the truth of Scripture. This outline is given to everyone who comes. In these notes are the outline of what I will preach, and the key text or texts that I will cover. I normally put far more biblical material and reference into the notes than I can possibly cover. I want the church to know what a rich treasure the Word of God is. I want them to take the notes into their personal life and look up more and more of God's Word for themselves. I make the notes rather complete in basic form (no fill-in-the-blanks) so I can move with latitude and freedom, in and beyond the notes. The high value of following


the spontaneity of the Spirit can be preserved. Most of all, I want all who come to worship to have in hand evidence that this church is being built on the Word of God.

For each time I have spoken to this church, I have added to a teaching index that now comprises a small volume in my study. Each entry begins with the date, then the text, then the key truth that was presented. Periodically, I review this flow of teaching. I ask myself:

1. Am I giving the church I pastor the whole counsel of God?
2. Am I balancing between textual exposition that moves successively through a book of the Bible, and the need to address pressing topical matters of study? (I vary the approach here, reserving the option to break from longer textual studies to cover pressing issues not in focus in the text we happen to be currently studying.)
3. Am I adequately addressing the central doctrines of the church? (Idea: How about taking our Statement of Fundamental Truths and putting the index number of the specific doctrine alongside the list of sermons and texts that represent what you have taught? Are you covering the essentials?)

4. Am I addressing topics that are pressing in our culture and giving the church the chance to think biblically about them? (Idea: Take a volume, such as *The Complete Guide to Everyday Christianity*—IVP, 1997, edited by Robert Banks and Paul Stevens, and browse the index. Doing this will give you a quick read on significant practical issues that your congregation may be facing. Are you teaching with breadth?)

CONCLUSION

Biblical health for your church flows out of your own health in the Word of God. Anthrax, terrorism, fear, uncertainty—all have their antidote in the Word of God. Be a practitioner of the Word so this verse may be written about the people within the reach of your ministry: "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; He rescued them from the grave" (Psalm 107:19,20). 

David W. Argue is senior pastor, Christ's Place, Lincoln, Nebraska, and executive presbyter for the North Central Region.



*Inclusive of both men and women pastors.

**Scripture references are from the New International Version.

E N D N O T E S

1. John Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 92.
2. George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, (Nashville: Word, 1998), 135.
3. Recently I read through Psalms and marked every place where the major names and characteristics of God could be found—the descriptives of who He is in His own nature. That now provides a marvelous base for prayer in faith, and entering His gates with thanksgiving.
4. I have placed one of these marks in the margins of Acts 27 times.
5. How important it is to do this with a verse such as Philipians 4:13.



"I read a chapter in Swindoll's latest book that was word for word from your sermon."

Are You Fit To Be Tied...

Staying Emotionally

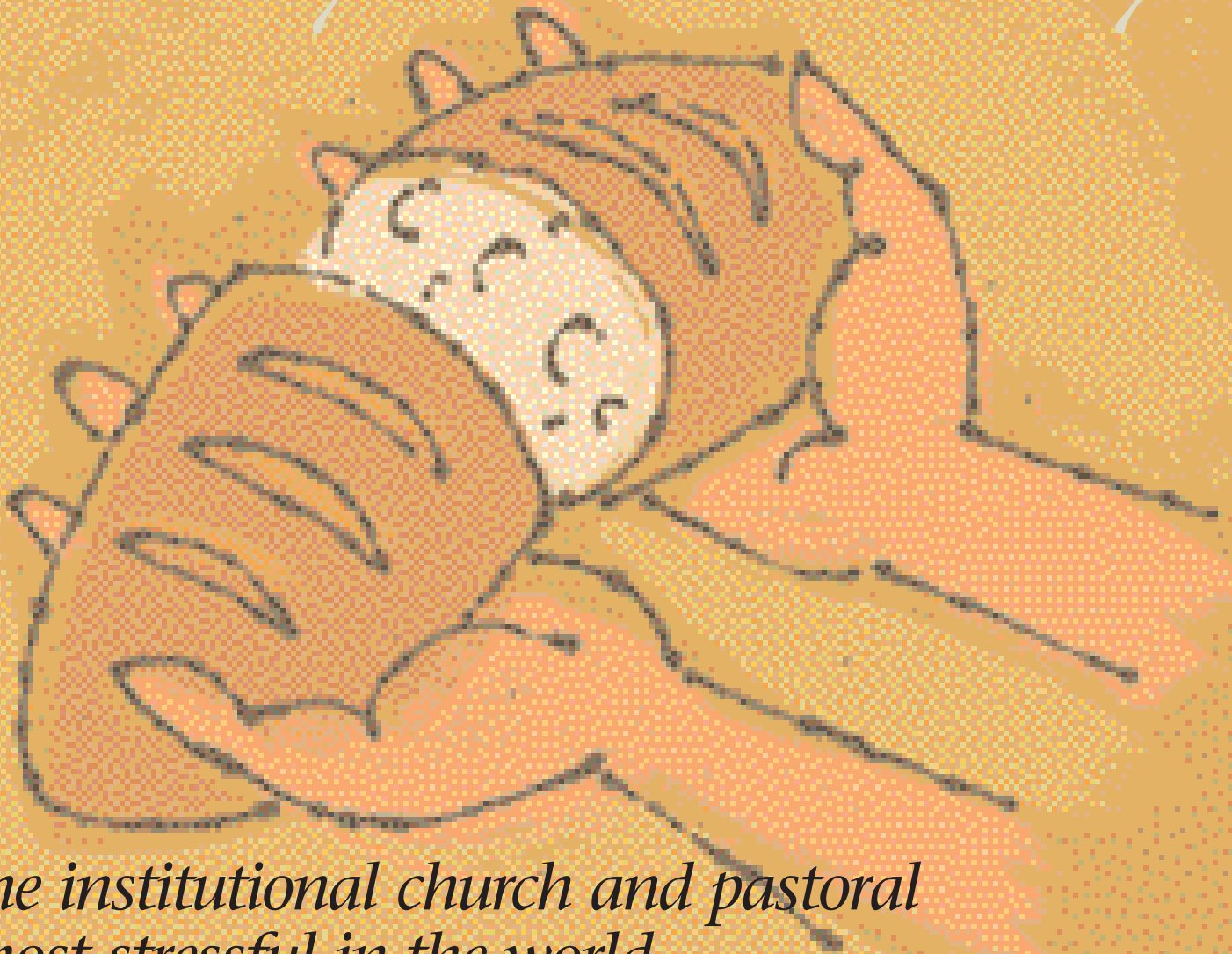


*The helping professions—including
ministry—are among the*

B Y R I C H A R D

Or Fit To Serve?

Healthy in the Ministry



*the institutional church and pastoral
most stressful in the world.*

D . D O B B I N S

Nothing is more critical to the mental health of the church than the mental health of the pastor. Healthy churches are led by emotionally, physically, and spiritually healthy servants of the Lord. Just as a family is no stronger than the marriage on which it is built, a church is no more healthy than its leader. This article takes a brief look at what makes a pastor emotionally healthy.

The distance they put between themselves and others is often seen as part of their devotion to God. Other ministers try to deal with their own neurotic, crippling guilt through ritual religious behaviors. None of these problems are beyond the touch of God's healing power if we are willing to see and know ourselves "as others see us"¹—especially as God sees us—and seek His help so we might become more like Him.

by surrounding himself with staff members who are strong where he is weak so there is competent leadership in all areas of ministry.

BURNOUT—ONE SIGN OF BEING OVERSTRESSED

On fire . . . or burning out?

One sign of emotional burnout is the loss of our usual energy level and the loss of a sense of idealism and purpose.

While God's work and His call on your life are never stressful, the institutional church can stress a pastor to death: of a heart attack, stroke, or occasionally, even suicide.

HEALTHY PASTORS MUST BE MENTALLY HEALTHY

The helping professions—including the institutional church and pastoral ministry—are among the most stressful in the world. Stress can be defined as the rate of the wear and tear of life on a person; the black lung disease of the helping professions. And while God's work and His call on your life are never stressful, the institutional church can stress a pastor to death: of a heart attack, stroke, or occasionally, even suicide. Healthy pastors leading healthy congregations don't die of stress-induced conditions.

SOURCES OF STRESS FOR THE MINISTER ARE INTERNAL, EXTERNAL, AND PROFESSIONAL

A landmark Menninger Foundation study in the 1970s found three common sources of stress for Protestant male clergy that still hold true today:

- *The minister himself.* A pastor's own personality may make it difficult for him to relate to himself or to others. Some ministers are narcissistic. They need to be looked up to and admired by others, but they experience enormous difficulty being really close to anyone.

- *Every minister in that study perceived himself to have a painful, unhappy marriage.* Divorce was seldom an option, because in most instances, it would end the minister's career. Neither the minister nor his spouse were willing to take such a drastic step. I cannot overstress the importance of taking good care of your marriage. Be willing to seek help if you need it and determine to meet the needs of your marriage. It's an invaluable investment for your emotional health and the overall health of your ministry.

- *Ministers perceived their greatest stress came from demands made on them by their duties within the local congregation.* Much of this stress originates in the many roles a pastor is expected to perform: he is preacher, confessor, teacher, administrator, and shepherd to his congregation. Most ministers are more comfortable in some roles than others, yet feel the need to excel in all of them. Some are best in interpersonal, one-to-one, or small-group situations; others shine brightest in pulpit ministry; still others are best at administration and organization. No pastor is equally skilled in all the duties assigned to the leader of a church. He needs to compensate for this

Some who are experiencing burnout are troubled by physical problems such as ulcers, frequent and/or debilitating headaches, backaches, frequent colds, or sexual problems. These are early warning signs of impending burnout. No one in the ministry is exempt from stress, and its effects will spill over onto your spouse, your children, and inevitably onto your congregation.

One of burnout's early predictable stages is *overenthusiasm*—unrealistic goals with unrealistic plans for achieving them.

Stagnation is also symptomatic of burnout: ministry loses much of its thrill and becomes a mundane task.

Frustration is stagnation's twin brother: the pastor begins to feel incompetent. In this mental condition, he may lash out at others and act or speak inappropriately to his spouse, children, and/or members of his congregation. When this happens, much of the mental energy he has must be used to mend fences. Everyone involved is diminished in ministry potential until the issues are resolved on both sides. One side must seek forgiveness; the other side must extend it.

Apathy is common in burnout:

ignoring and avoiding ministry tasks. From returning phone calls to preparing sermons, nothing can engage your attention. You just don't care about the mail, phone messages, or the Sunday morning worship service.

Finally, there is *intervention*: the decisive action—at any point—to break the cycle.

Two important characteristics of burnout

Burnout is, first of all, highly contagious. Your staff and your congregation are at risk of catching burnout symptoms—unrealistic goals can cause them to burn out. If you are frustrated, stagnated, and/or apathetic in your life and ministry, you will soon find yourself at the head of a frustrated, stagnated, apathetic church.

Second, the stages of burnout are neither linear nor inevitable. A person may go through the same two or three stages several times on any given job—like going through a revolving door over and over—and never experience all of them.

Burnout: The beginning of the end or the end of the beginning?

Burnout can be the terminal illness of one's ministry: the beginning of the end. Or it can lead to the *birth process* of what God has really called that minister to do: the end of a false start and the beginning of "rest for your souls" under a yoke that is "easy" and a burden that is "light" (Matthew 11:29,30, NIV).

Winston Churchill cautiously defined one of the turning points of World War II as "not the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."² Determine to put an end to the beginning signs of burnout before they consume you and your ministry. Here are some ways to grow through and out of burnout so God and His kingdom are glorified and enlarged through the ministry of an emotionally healthy pastor and a healthy church:

- *Enthusiasm needs to be tempered by realism.* Encourage people you trust to administer reality checks when the

situation warrants. In your devotional prayer life, ask God to help you be realistic about what you can and should do.

- *Stagnation is best met by roiling the waters.* Further education and mental activity—formal or informal—often do the job and present creative new ways to approach ministry tasks.

- *Frustration creates energy.* Learn to recognize frustration in your life and ministry and determine to channel the energy it creates toward positive, needed change.

- *Apathy can be turned into involvement.* Ask God and a trusted friend or two to help you rediscover your love for pointing people to the love of God.

It is difficult for men to admit they need help. Everything from asking directions to admitting we have a family problem confronts us with our need for other people—but we prefer to think we are self-sufficient.

This is an even bigger problem for pastors. They isolate themselves from other ministers—the very people who would understand them best—because they are in competition with them. Don't be afraid to seek out one or two other ministers with whom you can have a mutually supportive friendship. I heard one pastor say he often drove to a town about an hour from home and went into the confessional booth of a Roman

Catholic church just to have that kind of conversation with a fellow cleric. We should not be that frightened of each other. We need each other's moral, professional, and spiritual support.

MANAGE STRESS BEFORE IT REACHES BURNOUT

Keep your balance.

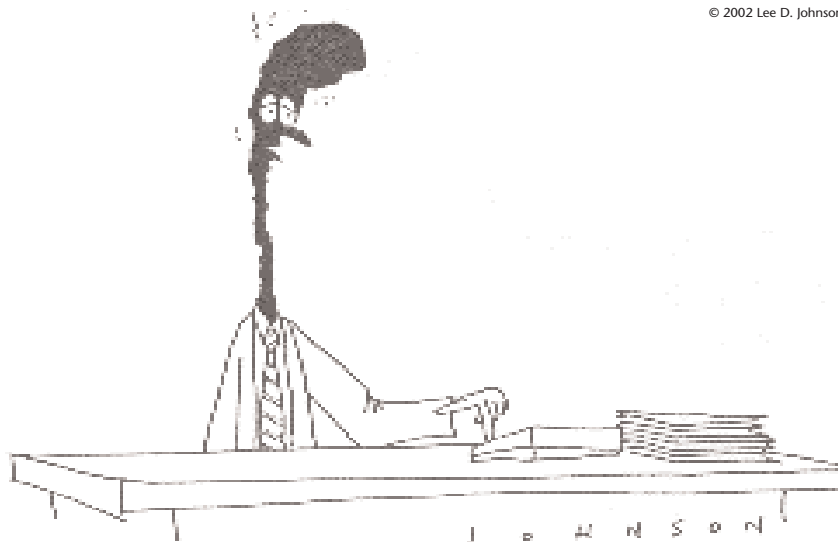
A limited amount of pressure is necessary in life. This optimal level of stress—*eustress*—keeps us at peak performance levels. *Eustress* is clinically defined as, "A balance between selfishness and altruism, through which an individual develops the drive and energy to care for others."³ We must learn to worship, work, play, love, and care for our personal and family needs in balance. The stress of an all-work-and-no-play lifestyle not only "makes Jack a dull boy," it leads to spiritual, physical, and emotional bankruptcy—and burnout.

Cast your cares on the Lord.

One of the most effective stress-management tools you can develop is "casting all your care [your stressors; your anxieties] upon him [God]; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7, *self-translation*). Many years ago God helped me formulate a way of casting my cares on Him that has taken immeasurable ministry stress out of my life.

First, ask yourself whether you can do anything about the particular

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"Miss Sobba, please cancel all my appointments for the rest of the year."

situation. If you can, then pray about your course of action and initiate whatever action needs to be taken.

If you can't do anything about it now, but believe you can take action in the future, make a note in your appointment calendar on the date when you

the healing that comes from verbalizing your innermost thoughts in the presence of One you can trust; One who loves you.

2. In prayer, focus emotionally on the painful event or relationship. Allow the feelings originally generated by the

this until the burden lifts and you are emotionally relieved.

3. Meditate in the presence of God for a new interpretation of the event or situation that will hurt less. The Holy Spirit will bring appropriate passages of Scripture to your mind. The words of a

One of the most effective stress-management tools you can develop is "casting all your care [your stressors; your anxieties] upon him [God]; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7, self-translation).

can take action. In the meantime, commit the matter to prayer.

If you can't do anything now or in the future, consider who else might be able to do something. Contact him or her about it.

If you cannot do anything about the problem and cannot find anyone else who can, then commit it to the Lord in prayer and move on to issues you *can* do something about.

This is how you cast your cares into the Lord's very capable hands. Teach your congregation to approach this Scripture in this way. Without breaking anyone's confidence, give examples of how others have cast their cares on the Lord. Explain how *you* have had to cast some impossible situation into the Lord's hands—and the peace it ultimately brought.

Learn how to pray through the "slings and arrows"⁴ aimed at you.

God's Word, prayer, and meditation are your God-given weapons against becoming consumed with and/or bitter over the hurt and anger that often come with pastoral ministry. There are four steps to praying through your emotional pain.

1. In prayer, focus intellectually on the event or relationship that is causing you pain. Tell God honestly what you think. He already knows—but you need

hurt to surface and be expressed. You may find yourself weeping as you express these deep feelings, so find a time when you can be alone. Continue

trusted friend may address your need. The words of a beloved hymn may come to mind. You may realize the level of pain being experienced by the person

PEAK PERIODS OF MINISTERIAL STRESS

The times of greatest stress for parsonage families are: the first 5 years after ordination, 8 to 12 years after ordination, and 20 years after ordination. What makes these times so stressful?

The first 5 years after ordination ministers are usually in their late twenties and early thirties. During this time, ministers are likely to be acquiring the skills of their calling and going through the adjustment period in their own marriage. Both of these experiences can be stress producing. Marital needs for intimacy and ministerial ambitions for success are often in conflict.

Eight to 12 years after ordination the ministry couple is coming to terms with the stresses of parenthood. Finding time for the children among the flurry of church activities can be difficult. The pastor has to determine how many of those activities are absolutely necessary. This is usually a matter of highly subjective pastoral judgment. The wise pastor opts in favor of his marriage and children.

When the minister's wife has been active in church life, the physical demands of children may require her to take a leave of absence from her church activities until the children are older. Many husbands are insensitive to this need and see it as an indication the wife's commitment to ministry is lacking. This attitude leaves the minister's wife feeling abandoned in parenthood and resenting her husband.

Twenty years after ordination the ministry couple is dealing with midlife issues. There is no mystery as to why this is listed among the most stressful years of the minister's life. In addition to the usual midlife issues, the tendency of churches to show a preference for younger pastors who have some experience begins to limit the ministry couple's future opportunities.

Staying emotionally healthy in the ministry is quite a challenge. Successfully facing the ministry requires that pastors focus on staying spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy.

—Richard D. Dobbins, Akron, Ohio

STAYING EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY

No one following Jesus has ever had a nervous breakdown, and no one doing the will of God has ever gone to pieces. However, ministers can emotionally wreck themselves and ruin their marriage by working for the institutional church.

Here are some things you can do to stay emotionally healthy in the ministry:

1. PRACTICE “CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM; FOR HE CARES FOR YOU” (1 PETER 5:7, NKJV).

After all, Jesus said this is His church (Matthew 16:18). Catch yourself saying, “My church”; and, “My people.” Many things that happen in a church are beyond our control, but not beyond His. This is why He can reassure us, “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30).

2. BECOME AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EVENTS OF YOUR LIFE AND YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THOSE EVENTS.

A brief trip to a courtroom during a trial will teach you there is more than one way to view any set of facts. Lawyers are trained to help people see the same set of facts in different ways. The prosecutor interprets them to make the defendant look guilty. The defense counsel interprets them to protect the innocence of his client.

You live with your interpretation of the events of your life, not with the events. Practice various ways of interpreting them and notice the different feelings each invokes. Develop a habit of placing the most constructive possible interpretation on the daily events of your life.

3. DISCIPLINE YOUR THOUGHTS.

Paul provides a practical filter for helping us do this, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

—Richard D. Dobbins, Akron, Ohio

who caused your pain and find both relief and God-given compassion for the one who has hurt you. Test all options against what you know to be true in God’s Word. Anything that is of God will

with the new, less hurtful interpretation gained by praying through. Write it in a journal and date it to help fix it in your mind. Praise God for the new insights He has given you.

prayed through when the new meaning for an old hurt is mentally and spiritually comfortable. You can act and react appropriately and productively in your life.

The emotional strength that comes from your close relationship with the Lord will help you manage the fact not everyone in your congregation is going to like everything you do. Not everyone liked what Jesus did. Many were threatened by the truths He taught and still others dismissed them as unimportant. Some publicly jeered and taunted Him. He knew before He came to earth that would happen, and His close relationship with the Father supported Him when others failed Him. He also knew—and reminded others—that He had to be busy with the task His Father had given Him (Luke 2:49). He stayed focused on His relationship with the Father and on His kingdom tasks.

The above is still good advice for God’s servants. Focus first on your relationships with God, yourself, your spouse, your children, and family; then on the ministry task to which God has called you. This ordering of priorities will help you maintain the balance necessary to be the stress-free, healthy spiritual leader of a healthy congregation.

Guard your thought life.

Men of God by the thousands have become trapped in pornography, especially on the Internet. This is the most

The emotional strength that comes from your close relationship with the Lord will help you manage the fact not everyone in your congregation is going to like everything you do.

be life enhancing and healthy for you and your congregation in the long run.

4. Determine to replace your old, hurtful interpretation of the event

You may need to repeat these steps several times in the process of praying through, but the end result is worth the effort. You will know when you have

common temptation facing believers in the new millennium. It is of staggering proportion. Never assume that as a minister you are beyond the reach of

the thoughts, ideas, urges, and fantasies that Satan directs to the mind of each believer. Be careful of all your entertainment choices.

Filter your thoughts through the strainer Paul offers: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are

life enhancing, ministry enhancing, light rather than burdensome, and easy to bear rather than causing pain and heartache.

Stay in touch with God every day through times of personal prayer and Bible reading *in addition to the time you spend studying God’s Word and praying on*

ministry lead others in growing healthy churches for the glory of God.

Finally, remember what He has lovingly promised you: “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:30); He assures us of a “sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7), and His prayers on our behalf (Luke 22:32). He does not send

God’s Word, prayer, and meditation are your God-given weapons against becoming consumed with and/or bitter over the hurt and anger that often come with pastoral ministry.

just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Through this filter come only those thoughts, ideas, urges, and fantasies that God through the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. They are creative, productive,

the job. Guard your mental health against the devastating effects of stress, unresolved guilt, or difficult personal and interpersonal issues by leading a balanced life. With God’s help, learn how to pray through life’s hurtful times, and cast your cares on the Lord. In this way, you equip yourself to be a joyful, healthy pastor whose life and

us into the ministry unequipped. Rather, He promises to meet all of our mental health needs and more. When we are in a right relationship with Him, ourself, our spouse, our children, and our work for Him, we are in the best possible position for healthy ministry—to grow a healthy church for His glory. **e**

KEYS TO EMOTIONAL SURVIVAL

Maintain spiritual well-being. Daily prayer, Bible study, and regular Christian fellowship help us grow spiritually and maintain our foundations.

Learn to depend on others. We all need others to help us maintain our emotional health. This can be done through accountability groups, friendships with other ministry families, and shared responsibility. (If we serve others, they will want to serve us.)

Accept personal limitations. People who commit themselves to ministry are often high achievers and/or highly sensitive. Learn to recognize signs of overwork and learn how to pace yourself. Know your capabilities and set boundaries.

Learn to expect and cope with change. Few things in life remain stable. We constantly change our position, portfolio, financial status, and friendships. Cultivate that which is stable in your life such as devotions, sleep, exercise, fun, vacation, family mealtimes, etc.

Cultivate meaningful leisure time. Most high achievers enjoy work and take little time for pleasure. We all need to know what activities refresh us emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Make sure to spend adequate leisure time engaged in those activities.

Evaluate. At regular intervals, take time to evaluate spiritual and practical goals and priorities. To do this, get away on 1- to 3-day retreats, sometimes alone, at other times with other leaders in your ministry.

—Wayde I. Goodall, senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Richard D. Dobbins, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and founder and clinical director of EMERGE Ministries, Akron, Ohio.



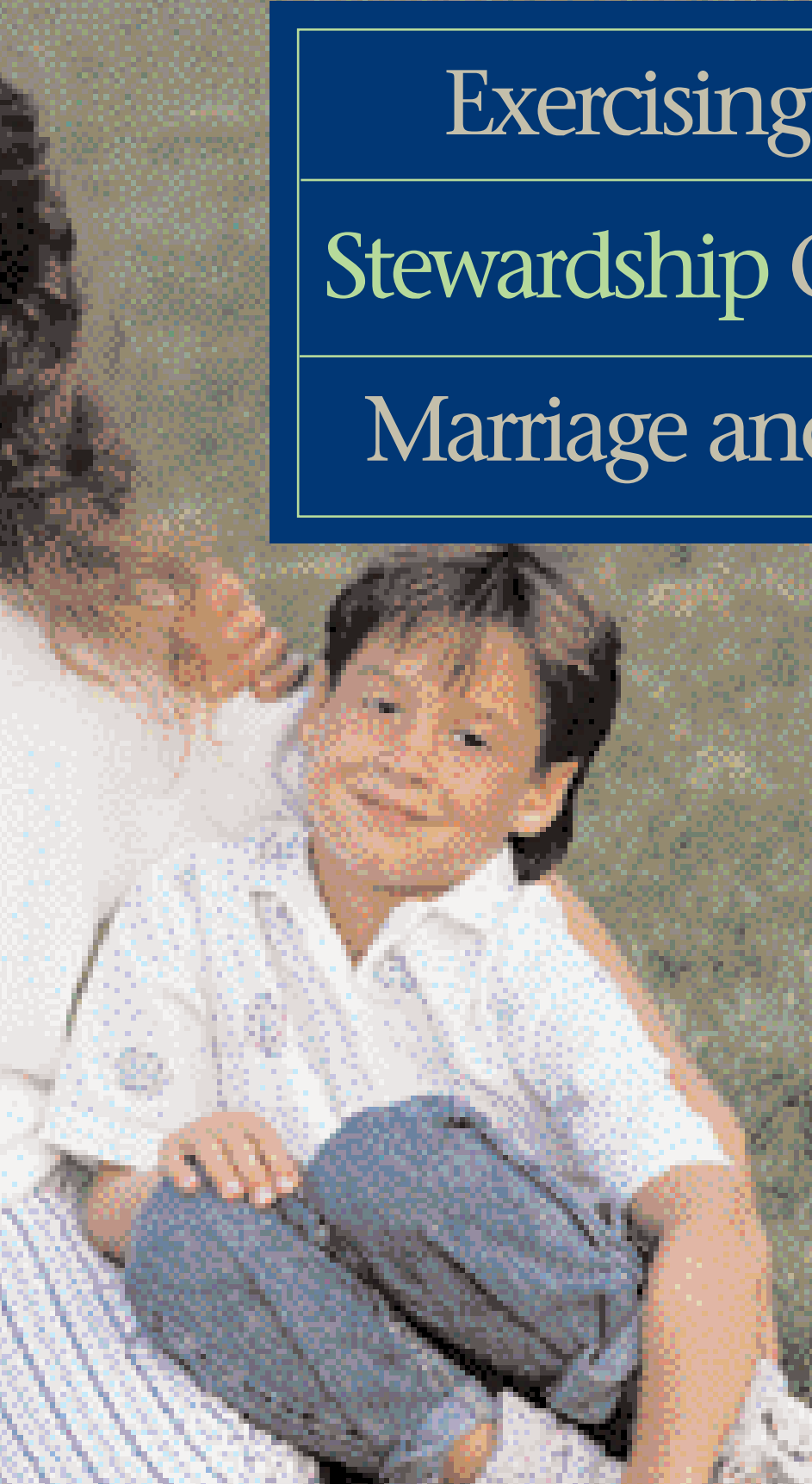
E N D N O T E S

1. Robert Burns (1759–96), Scottish poet. Excerpt from closing lines of, “To a Louse: On Seeing One on a Lady’s Bonnet, At Church” (1786). Burns’ poem is about the lice on a woman’s bonnet and in her hair; and the fact she is unaware both of their presence and that every time she turns her head, they are being flung onto others around her. “O wad some Power the giftie gie us To see ourself as ithers see us! . . . What airs in dress an’ gait wad lea’e us, An’ ev’n devotion! [sic].”
2. Speech at the Lord Mayor’s Day Luncheon, London, November 10, 1942.
3. Kenneth N. Anderson, ed., *Mosby’s Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health Dictionary*, 5th ed. (St. Louis: Harcourt, 1988), 595.
4. *Hamlet*, 3.1.57



BY WAYDE & ROSALYN GOODALL

Exercising Good Stewardship Over Your Marriage and Family



Bill Hybels, pastor of one of the largest churches in the United States, wrote, "Lynne and I have never hidden the fact our marriage requires a tremendous amount of work—more than many marriages do. We have been married for nearly 2 1/2 decades, and still it seems we have to struggle for every tiny step of progress we make on the path toward marital joy. Personal woundedness, personality differences, and pressures of a highly visible lifestyle compound our challenges. But we pray, we talk, we seek counsel, we discipline ourselves, we grow, we change, we promise, we apologize, we confess, we adjust our expectations, we remind ourselves of our commitment, we look to the future, and we refuse to give up. We are in this marriage for life—we have chosen to stay with the spouse 'of our youth'—and we thank God for each step that brings us closer to rejoicing."¹

I appreciate Bill's transparency. It does take work to build and maintain a healthy marriage. Sadly, some ministers and spouses do not have healthy marriages, and they do not seek help. Pastors and their spouses are not open with fellow ministers concerning

Hopefully, we also realize that one of the greatest weapons we have to fight this attack on the family is the uncompromising Word of God. Most churches, however, do not have in-depth programs to address the needs of hurting families or to enhance the health of strong families.

marital challenges. They are afraid their friends will talk to others, or the district leaders will find out and their careers will be jeopardized.² Ministers and their wives privately live in pain because they mistakenly believe ministers and their marriages must be perfect.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HEALTHY MARRIAGE OF THE MINISTER AND A HEALTHY CHURCH
Most ministers realize that the American

family is in trouble. We have read the statistics and seen the reports. Hopefully, we also realize that one of the greatest weapons we have to fight this attack on the family is the uncompromising Word of God. Most churches, however, do not have in-depth programs to address the needs of hurting families or to enhance the health of strong families.

The National Association of Evangelicals uncovered an interesting

finding. They found that “few pastors indicated having taken significant steps to help people whose families were in trouble, even though they also said that family disintegration is a relatively common problem in their congregations.”³ Why?

Gary Sell, in his book, *Family Ministry*, gives one probable reason. “The answer is no doubt complex, but one report speculated that many pastors’ families are in so much trouble that the pastors avoid the subject of family. If this is true—if pastors are afraid to tackle family issues lest they call attention to their own ailing home life—it may tell us more about congregations than about pastors. Perhaps pastors are threatened by the widespread attitude that falling short in family life is less tolerable than other failures. We permit our leaders to preach and teach about prayer, evangelism, and other ‘spiritual’ matters without expecting them to have mastered them. Yet we may not allow them to struggle as spouses and parents.”⁴

Unless the pastor has a healthy marriage, he will probably not provide the teaching and resources needed for his people to develop healthy marriages. If what Sell says is true, pastors need to strengthen their own marriages as a model and as an encouragement to those in their congregations who need to strengthen their marriages.

What do we do? Since ministers have the same difficulties in life as the people we serve, we need to find ways to communicate, discipline our kids, deal with conflict, stress, illness, tragedy, pain, and disappointment. We must also work toward building a healthy marriage.

PROTECTING MINISTRY MARRIAGES
Ministers’ marriages have many of the

HOW TO GROW IN YOUR MARRIAGE AND YOUR MINISTRY

“Your attitudes and thoughts must be constantly changing for the better” (Ephesians 4:23, *Living Bible*).

THREE AREAS TO FOCUS ON:

1. GROW DEEPER IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE.

“Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52, NIV).

“Take the time and trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit” (1 Timothy 4:7, *Phillips*).

“Live in harmony with each other. Don’t try to act important, but enjoy the company of ordinary people” (Romans 12:16, *New Living Translation*).

2. GROW DEEPER IN YOUR SUPPORT OF YOUR SPOUSE.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10, NIV).

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord” (Colossians 3:18, NIV).

“Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them” (Colossians 3:19, NIV).

“In response to all he has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good” (Hebrews 10:24, *Living Bible*).

“Encourage one another and build each other up” (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NIV).

3. GROW DEEPER IN YOUR SURRENDER TO GOD.

“The more you grow like this, the more you will become productive and useful in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8, *New Living Translation*).

“I identified myself completely with him. Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion” (Galatians 2:20, *The Message*).

—Wayde I. Goodall, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

same issues as other marriages, but they also have unique battles that add to the challenge of developing a healthy marriage. After 25 years of pastoral ministry and after listening to hundreds of ministers and spouses express marital concern, we have discovered that much of the pain in ministers' marriages comes from eight issues. Identifying the issues that challenge ministry marriages and developing a strategy to fight them are necessary for building and maintaining healthy marriages. Here are the eight areas that will help pastors build a healthy marriage and family in the parsonage.

1. Keep your family, not the church, a primary focus in your life. Next to your relationship with Christ, the next most important relationship a minister has is with his or her spouse and children. Most ministers work hard at what they do. Like executives, they put in an average of 55 or more hours a week. Being on call 24/7/365 and trying to be prepared to meet the needs of people is demanding. Jesus did not ask you to do the work of ministry without paying

attention to your family or personal needs for rest, refreshment, and renewal. The context of Scripture exhorts you to focus on finding balance. Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30, NIV).

2. Learn to deal with unrealistic expectations. Some in your congregation feel you work for them. Many ministers are concerned about losing their jobs, so they permit unrealistic expectations from their parishioners to invade their personal lives. Finding balance between what you can and can't do, learning how to delegate and to whom to delegate, are critical for a healthy life. Jesus sometimes walked away from ministry responsibilities for personal refreshing. You must develop that ability as well. Although "crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses . . . Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:15,16, NIV).

3. Anticipate criticism. When you lead, you will be criticized. Jesus was. The disciples were. All leaders are. Sometimes criticism is given in a mean-spirited

manner and is not warranted. You need to learn to not take this criticism personally, and to walk away from it without letting it affect your spirit. Some critics need to lighten up, and some of those being criticized need to toughen up. Sometimes criticism contains truth. All of us have blind spots, and it's good to listen to our critics. Instead of letting criticism drive you into depression, realize that criticism can provide you opportunity to grow.

4. Keep your calendar under control. If you do not control your time, someone else will. Late night meetings can go on night after night. Block off time on your schedule for family nights and date nights with your spouse. Tell those who want to schedule a meeting that you have an important appointment on those nights. It's true. Who is more important than your family?

5. Learn how to manage stress. Stress will eventually affect your marriage. In the United States, 30 million men describe themselves as being stressed-out.⁵ In ministry, you go through times of intense stress. Learning coping techniques is critical if you are going to find a balanced life that includes a healthy marriage and a faithful career in ministry. Seasoned ministers have often found good ways to handle stress. One Christian psychologist who works with burned out ministers gives these five ideas to avoid burnout:

- Learn that you can't do everything.
- Pace yourself.
- Delegate.
- Take time for rest.
- Listen to your body.

Caring people are usually the ones who burn out. As a minister, you are in the care giving business.

6. Learn to cope with economic restrictions. Approximately 64 percent of Assemblies of God pastors serve churches of 99 or less people. Many have economic restrictions and live on tight budgets. Some might need advice from a Christian financial planner to

HOW TO KEEP THE MINISTRY FROM KILLING YOUR MARRIAGE

HAVE A REALISTIC PERCEPTION. I AM:

- an ordinary person (John 6:1–13, NIV).
- a capable person (Philippians 4:13, Amplified).
- a secure person (Jeremiah 17:5–8).

ASK YOURSELF THE RIGHT QUESTIONS:

- Do I know when to say yes?
- Do I know when to say no?
- Whose voice am I listening to, God's or man's?
- Can I accept criticism, both professional and personal?

RECHECK YOUR LIFE'S PURPOSE:

- Who am I trying to please?
- "So we make it our goal to please him" (2 Corinthians 5:9, NIV).

ANTICIPATE DIFFICULT MINISTRY EXPERIENCES:

- Keep a Kingdom perspective.
- "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20, NIV).

—Wayde I. Goodall, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

adjust their spending or develop a budget. Others might even need to find a way to meet the needs of their families through tentmaking—working at a nonministry second job.

7. Keep yourself sexually pure and avoid compromising situations. It's not unusual for people in your congregation to admire, and at times more than admire, the pastoral couple. Be cautious about this and listen to your spouse, because he/she might be sensitive

the greatest weapons the enemy uses against ministers is discouragement. Times of discouragement come with the occupation. If you're not careful, discouragement can be a crippling problem in your ministry and your marriage. You need to develop a big-picture mentality—understanding that God is at work—even when the tough times make it hard to see Him. Peter wrote, "The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will

issues. Parents need to focus on five major areas in child rearing: love, example, discipline, consistency, and the father's involvement in the family.

Love: Mothers and fathers must love each other and their children. Our love for each other needs to be obvious to our children. Our love for each child needs to demonstrate the characteristics found in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.

We have often told our congregation that our children are just like theirs. The

Just as there are unique issues ministry couples face to keep their marriages healthy, developing and maintaining healthy relationships with our children present parents with a whole new set of issues. Parents need to focus on five major areas in child rearing: love, example, discipline, consistency, and the father's involvement in the family.

to someone of the opposite gender who has improper feelings. Ministers also need to rely on the opinion of their wives when they counsel women in the congregation. Most of the time counseling people of the opposite gender should be done as a couple.

8. Learn to deal with discouragement.

A wise missionary told me that one of

himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" (1 Peter 5:10).

PARENTING AND THE PARSONAGE

Just as there are unique issues ministry couples face to keep their marriages healthy, developing and maintaining healthy relationships with our children present parents with a whole new set of

fact ours are related to the pastor doesn't take away their normalcy and need to grow as people. It also doesn't insulate them from normal issues that any young person faces in life.

Example: We are an example to our children in the way we act, react, the things we say, attitudes we have, and emotions we display. How we model the Christian life in front of our children will have great influence on how they choose to live their lives. Children learn from what we do, not from what we say.

Discipline: Everyone needs boundaries, limitations, and guidelines. Discipline provides fences in life. Discipline involves giving instruction about right behavior, not just wrong behavior. Discipline needs to be fair, timely, consistent, and with both parents in agreement. Every child has a different personality. We may need to use different kinds of discipline for each child.

Consistency: We not only need to be consistent in our discipline, we need to be consistent in our love for each other (husband and wife) and our children. If

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**"It's Humility Week, Pastor.
The board decided to bring you down off your pedestal."**

we are consistent, we are predictable. Our children will know how we will act and react to certain kinds of behavior (good and bad). Irrational, emotionally out of control, and surprising behavior on the part of the parents encourages dysfunction in not only the child's life, but also the family's.

The father: In one study involving 994 couples with children, researchers found that children who spent more time with their fathers had fewer behavior problems. In another study involving 14,700 teenage girls, researchers found that the closer a relationship a girl had with her father, the more likely she was to delay sex and the less likely she was to use drugs and alcohol (Elias 1998).⁶

The busy pastor is often the absent father. It is critical that the father (pastor, missionary, or evangelist) be involved in his or her child's life. This includes discipline, spiritual direction, and educational, sporting, and other recreational activities.

Someone asked, "How do you spell love to a child?"

The answer, "Time."

Your marriage and family is an example to the people you serve. One of the greatest things you can do as a minister is to demonstrate how a healthy family functions and how it respects all members. You are not perfect; your marriage is not perfect; your children are not perfect. However, when your family has a higher priority than your ministry, you show the people you serve the importance of family life.

"Family," in the words of one social scientist, "is the most profound of all influences on who we are and what we do." He explains, "The families to which we are born and those in which we live as adults shape us from birth to death. They are the immediate cause of our best and worst times. No other association links us with one another as family does, and none is more influential."⁷ If this is true, your marriage and family have an incredible influence, not only on you, but on those you serve.

The people in your church are desperately looking for a good example for

MAKING YOUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WORK

Even though clergy divorces are fewer than in other professional marriages, the rate of clergy divorce is rising. What is responsible for this?

The most frequent cause is marital infidelity. The minister becomes involved with someone else. When the minister's wife leaves him for another man, the most frequent complaint given is the minister's preoccupation with his work. In either event, the underlying cause is not enough time together—too much time apart.

When a minister spends 12 to 14 hours a day on the job, there isn't enough time and energy left to invest in the marriage and children. High-energy time is spent away from each other. The couple who deprives each other of high-energy time is defrauding each other . . . stealing from each other the time and energy necessary to put together a healthy marriage. Paul warned that this sets up both partners for temptation (1 Corinthians 7:5). Then, it is just a question of who the enemy will get to first.

Some ministers find it difficult to put their marriage and family in their priorities before the interests of the institutional church. Sometimes it helps to remember Paul's admonition that the pastor is to model the Christian life others are to follow (1 Timothy 3:1–5). By being a loving, sensitive spouse, the minister shows other couples how they should treat each other.

Pastors who organize their work well find very few times when their work conflicts with their family life. The wise pastor keeps his family life free from unpleasant conversations about church problems. If parishioners interrupt your family time with innocuous phone calls, gently encourage them to place their routine calls during office hours. Let them know you will always be available for emergency calls at home.

You might say something like, "It's a joy to pastor people as considerate as you. You know I want to be with you when there is an emergency in your family because I'm your pastor and I love you. However, your love for me and my family is shown so practically in the fact you won't interrupt our family life for matters that can be taken care of at my office during the day."

—Richard D. Dobbins, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and founder and director of EMERGE Ministries, Akron, Ohio

their own marriage and family. Staying healthy (or getting healthy) in this area of your life will pay rich dividends for all involved. **e**

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God, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Rosalyn has served with her husband in ministry for over 25 years.



E N D N O T E S

1. Bill Hybels, *Making Life Work* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 136.
2. Even in extreme marital difficulty, our districts are available to assist the minister. I

have witnessed numerous occasions when district officials demonstrated tremendous generosity and understanding.

3. Ted Ward, "Report of the Task Force on the Family of the National Association of Evangelicals" (1988), 1.
4. Charles M. Sell, *Family Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 14.
5. Richard Swenson, M.D., *Margin: Creating the Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves You Need* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1992). Dr. Swenson is the director of the Future Health Study Center in Menomonie, Wisconsin.
6. Stephen A. Grunlan, *Marriage and the Family: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House 1999), 242.
7. Steven L. Nock, *Sociology of the Family* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1987), xi.

A portrait of a smiling man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. A red heart rate monitor line is overlaid across the lower half of the image, passing behind the title text. The background is a blue grid pattern.

BETTER Leadership Through Better Physical Health

BY JAMES W. LONG, JR., M.D.

Imagine being in the prime of your life, admired as a leader, responsible for a thriving, dynamic ministry, and gifted with an incredible family. Truly, you have been blessed.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, the “big one” hits, and you begin experiencing a life-threatening heart attack with excruciating chest pain, extreme shortness of breath, profuse sweating, and overwhelming nausea. As your body reactions intensify, your emotions are assaulted. The initial waves of fear are replaced by panic as a hundred questions race through your mind about your own future as well as the futures of those who need you so much—your family and church. And then, somewhere in the course of events dawns the realization that you had not done all you should have to prevent this. Out of those thoughts arise guilt and depression, coupled with a sense of failure for those you have let down.

Impossible, you say. Don’t count on it. Or, maybe I should have said, “Don’t bet your life on it.”

Let me share with you my perspective as a heart surgeon. My work includes combating death and disability due to heart disease with the most advanced therapies and technologies available. It also includes fundamental approaches to preventing heart disease by providing my patients with knowledge, inspiration, and motivation to change their lifestyles. (The latter process should sound quite familiar to spiritual leaders.)

Heart disease is no respecter of age. Too many of my patients are still in the prime of their lives. And too many suffer big enough heart attacks to induce disability if not death.

Let me illustrate. George was only 46 when he had his heart attack. Shortly after it started, he began slipping into life-threatening heart failure. Angioplasty to open up his coronary arteries was not enough to reverse the heart

attack. Soon, even large amounts of heart-stimulating medications were not adequate to sustain the failing heart and prevent shock.

I rushed George into the operating room to implant an artificial heart assist pump. He recovered, but his heart did not. While artificial heart pumps are fast becoming the standard of care to give people quality of life, heart transplantation is still the leading therapy for irrecoverable heart failure. George underwent surgery again 6 months later to receive a heart transplant. For nearly a year surrounding these experiences, George’s life was on hold until he could put the pieces back together, allowing him to become productive again.

To put this into perspective, George is one of the fortunate among those who experience abrupt heart attacks at a young age. (Lest you think George is an exception, the average age of people receiving artificial hearts from me is 50.)

What can you do now, before it is too late, before your dynamic, productive life is compromised?

BE AWARE OF THE THREATS TO YOUR HEALTH

Cardiovascular disease, America’s No. 1 killer, is amenable to prevention. To capitalize on that opportunity, we need to understand the factors that contribute to coronary artery atherosclerosis, the most prevalent and most preventable form of heart disease.

Following is a compilation of the important risk factors for developing cardiovascular disease. While these factors clearly contribute to cardiovascular disease, they are not exclusive to cardiovascular disease; they also underlie other important conditions adversely affecting overall health.

Being overweight

Obesity is an immense problem, a nationwide threat. At least 60 percent of

people are well over their ideal body weight. Obesity is a rapidly growing threat to health. Over the last several decades, the problem of being overweight has worsened by 20 to 25 percent with no end in sight. Children are affected as well as adults, and childhood risks often carry into adulthood.

While physiologic and genetic factors influence the process, being overweight is most often the result of improper diet, improper eating habits—including overeating—and inadequate physical activity.

Prior to the era of modern science, obesity was considered primarily an inconvenience of configuration and size. This is illustrated in an unusual, descriptive way in the narrative about Eli, the leader of Israel for 40 years. When troubled by bad news, Eli “fell backward from his seat . . . broke his neck and died . . . for he was . . . *very fat*” (emphasis mine, 1 Samuel 4:18*).

Today, we know that being overweight is a major risk for poor health, and not just because of physical limitations. Being overweight raises the risk of developing heart disease by two to fourfold. Other conditions made worse by obesity include high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, cholesterol abnormalities, gall bladder disease, arthritis, respiratory problems, sleep disorders, and several types of cancer. Medical procedures, such as surgery, are made more challenging, and often more risky by obesity. Superimposed on the medical issues is the myriad of social consequences of obesity.

Added to the risks of excessive weight alone is the presence of an abdomen protuberant with fat. Men who have waists greater than 40 inches, and women with waists larger than 35 inches, are at even greater risk than predicted simply by weight.

There is a tendency to discount the importance of being overweight relative to other factors that adversely impact

RISK OF DEVELOPING HEART DISEASE, DIABETES, OR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE BASED ON WEIGHT FOR A GIVEN HEIGHT

Weights listed are the cutoff points at which a range of higher weight for a given risk factor is entered. **Example:** If you are 5 feet (60 inches) and weigh 128 pounds, your body mass index is 25. You are considered **overweight** and have an **increased** risk of developing heart disease. The higher your weight for any given height increases your BMI and your risk factor.

			RISK *	Increased	High	Very High	Extremely High
			CLASS	Overweight	Obese I	Obese II	Extreme
			BMI	25	30	35	40
HEIGHT			WEIGHT				
Ft	+ Ins	Ins					
5	0	60	> 128	> 154	> 179	> 205	
5	1	61	132	159	185	212	
5	2	62	137	164	191	219	
5	3	63	141	169	198	226	
5	4	64	146	175	204	233	
5	5	65	150	180	210	240	
5	6	66	155	186	217	248	
5	7	67	160	192	223	255	
5	8	68	164	197	230	263	
5	9	69	169	203	237	271	
5	10	70	174	209	244	279	
5	11	71	179	215	251	287	
6	0	72	184	221	258	295	
6	1	73	190	227	265	303	
6	2	74	195	234	273	312	
6	3	75	200	240	280	320	
6	4	76	205	246	288	329	
6	5	77	211	253	295	337	
6	6	78	216	260	303	346	
6	7	79	222	266	311	355	
6	8	80	228	273	319	364	

* Risk of DM II, Hypertension and CVD, relative to normal weight

—Adapted from National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults*, 1998.

health, such as smoking. A recent study by the RAND institute, however, concluded that “obese adults have more chronic health problems than smokers or heavy drinkers.” This finding should be eye-opening in environments where the use of tobacco and alcohol are condemned, but obesity abounds.

Sedentary lifestyle

Exercising has become a high-profile

activity in our society. Flashy jogging outfits, personal trainers, and health club memberships have become familiar icons of the devoted.

Despite the exuberant, if not sometimes excessive commitment of some, it is estimated that 35 to 55 percent of adults of various age ranges, social classes, and sex are sedentary with essentially no leisure physical activity.

Physical inactivity is associated

with a 1.5 to 2.4 times increased risk of developing heart disease. That risk is comparable to that observed for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or cigarette smoking. Inactive people have a 1.3 to 1.5 times greater chance of developing high blood pressure.

Studies have demonstrated that even moderate intensity exercise, such as walking, is associated with a reduction in heart disease and stroke.

High or abnormal cholesterol and lipids

High levels of cholesterol represent a clear risk for cardiovascular diseases. Several types of cholesterol have been recognized. Low levels of “good cholesterol”—HDL-cholesterol—and high levels of “bad cholesterol”—LDL-cholesterol—add to the risk, as does another category of circulating fatty lipids—triglycerides.

Being overweight and having inappropriate diets that contain too many fat calories and/or particularly worrisome types of fat, including cholesterol and saturated fats, are the usual causes of high cholesterol. Occasionally, genetic predisposition can be an important factor.

High blood pressure

High blood pressure is often described as a silent killer because it insidiously promotes the development of heart and vascular disease, increasing risk for heart attacks, strokes, and failure of the circulation. While most cases of high blood pressure have no single cause, being overweight, inactivity, and dietary indiscretion certainly contribute.

Diabetes

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death by disease in the U.S. Seventy-five percent of diabetes-related deaths are attributable to cardiovascular disease. In fact, those with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have heart disease than people without diabetes. In addition, having Type 2 diabetes increases heart attack risk as much as heart disease does for a person without diabetes. People with diabetes tend to experience several metabolic abnormalities that

TESTING FOR DIABETES

FASTING PLASMA GLUCOSE TEST

The fasting plasma glucose test is the most common and the preferred way to diagnose diabetes. It is easy and convenient. Patients are asked to fast overnight (at least 8 hours). A sample of their blood is drawn at the doctor's office and sent to the laboratory for analysis. Normal fasting plasma glucose levels are less than 110 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dl). A person whose plasma glucose levels are between 110 (mg/dl) and 125 (mg/dl) is said to have prediabetes. Fasting plasma glucose levels of more than 126 mg/dl on two or more tests on different days diagnose diabetes.

RANDOM PLASMA GLUCOSE TEST

Random blood samples (if taken shortly after eating or drinking) may be used to test for diabetes when symptoms are present. A blood glucose level of 200 mg/dl or higher indicates diabetes. This needs to be reconfirmed on another day with a fasting plasma glucose or an oral glucose tolerance test.

—For more information, visit your doctor or the American Diabetes Association Web site: www.diabetes.org.

contribute to an increased risk of heart disease including obesity, high blood pressure, increased blood clotting, increased levels of proteins associated with atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), and insulin resistance. (See the above sidebar, "Testing for Diabetes.")

Genetic predisposition

Family history of premature coronary artery disease is a factor in cardiovascular disease. Of concern are people with a family history of heart attack or death due to heart disease in fathers or male first-degree relatives at 55 years of age or younger, or similar episodes in mothers or female siblings age 65 or younger.

MANAGE YOUR RISK WELL AND BE REWARDED

There is no time like the present to take control of your health. The rewards of successful management are immense while the consequences of failing are staggering.

Given what is at stake, why do people fail to manage their risks? There are three reasons: (1) inadequate knowledge on which to base change, (2) insufficient motivation for self-control, or (3) ineffective approaches and execution.

Knowledge

Today, inadequate knowledge about health risks may be a reality for those who don't read, don't watch TV, don't listen to the news, don't talk to friends and family, don't see doctors, or don't use the Internet. But for everyone else, information and tools are widely available. The American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institutes have assembled scientific and educational materials and launched full-scale public education campaigns. (See "Health Related Resources" sidebar, page 53.) Tools for determining and managing risk are available on the Internet and for handheld PDAs. Doctors and other medical professionals are better prepared to help. Educators and advisors are becoming widely available. In this era, one almost has to deliberately avoid exposure or access to information.

Motivation

I can expect a high rate of success with lifestyle modification from those who feel threatened by an unexpected diagnosis of heart disease, those who have just been through open-heart surgery, or those who have narrowly escaped death. But the price for waiting until such motivators of behavioral modification occur is often unacceptably high. I witness a lot of damage that results in disability or early death that occurred needlessly because people mismanaged their health by failing to proactively control their risk. As much as I would

like to believe that emphasizing the benefits would be sufficient motivation, fear of harm is often more influential. I say, "Whatever it takes." Fortunately, for those who need to sense fear in order to become motivated, there is plenty to fear if risk is not properly managed.

Approach and methods

After being armed with sufficient knowledge and motivation to change, next comes implementation. Finding the most efficient, least stressful, and most effective approaches is not always easy. But with adequate motivation and resources, those who are driven succeed. Here are a few tips.

Control your weight

To determine whether your weight is a risk factor, look at the table in the sidebar "Risk of Developing Heart Disease, Diabetes, or High Blood Pressure Based on Weight for a Given Height." If your weight falls above one of the cutoffs listed, you bear a degree of risk proportional to the magnitude of your weight within one of four risk categories.

Weight control begins by setting a goal to reduce your weight to first lower and then eliminate your risk of developing heart disease. To lose weight, one needs a diet that is individually planned to reduce one's usual caloric intake by 500 to 1,000 kcal/day. This should be an integral part of any program aimed at achieving a weight loss of 1-to-2 pounds per week. The use of a moderate reduction in caloric intake is designed to achieve a slow, but progressive weight loss.

Most weight loss occurs because of decreased caloric intake. Sustained physical activity is also helpful in the prevention of weight regain.

Exercise

You don't have to become an athlete or fanatic to benefit from exercise. In fact, too much of a good thing may be harmful, especially for those who exercise sporadically and with inconsistent intensity. Sophisticated monitoring and

UNDERSTANDING CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

High blood pressure signals a higher risk of heart attack. It is important to have your cholesterol levels checked regularly and discuss them with your doctor. Your doctor can explain to you your total cholesterol, HDL and LDL cholesterol, and your triglyceride readings.

TOTAL BLOOD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS:

(mg/dl means milligrams per deciliter of blood)

Less than 200 mg/dl = Desirable

200 to 239 mg/dl = Borderline High Risk

240 mg/dl and over = High Risk

HDL CHOLESTEROL

HDL stands for high-density lipoprotein. HDL is considered “good” cholesterol because it seems to protect you from heart attack. The higher your HDL, the better.

You can raise your HDL by losing excess weight and being more active. Making healthy lifestyle changes to raise your HDL will reduce your risk of heart attack.

HDL-CHOLESTEROL LEVELS:

(milligrams per deciliter of blood = mg/dl)

Less than 35 mg/dl = High Risk

More than 60 mg/dl = Desirable

LDL CHOLESTEROL

LDL stands for low-density lipoprotein. This is the main carrier of harmful cholesterol in your blood. A high level of LDL means a higher risk of heart disease.

LDL-CHOLESTEROL LEVELS:

(milligrams per deciliter of blood = mg/dl)

Less than 100 mg/dl = Those diagnosed with coronary heart disease or diabetes

Less than 130 mg/dl = Desirable

130 to 159 mg/dl = Borderline High Risk

160 mg/dl or higher = High Risk

TRIGLYCERIDE LEVELS

Most body fat comes in the form of triglycerides. Butter, margarine, and vegetable oil are also triglycerides. Being overweight and having diabetes or other disorders can result in high triglyceride levels. It's not clear yet whether triglycerides are a risk factor for heart disease or not.

Less than 150 mg/dl = Normal

150 to 199 mg/dl = Borderline High

200 to 499 mg/dl = High

Greater than 500 = Very High

—For more information, see your doctor or visit the American Heart Association Web site: www.americanheart.org.

exercise algorithms exist to guide the driven. For most, pushing to the point of comfortable fatigue, with some sweating and hard breathing over 20-to-30 minutes of exercise 3 to 5 times per week is just fine.

Besides the direct benefits for health and conditioning, exercise, at least to a moderate level, is often an important part of weight control. Staying fit is important for everyone. Exercise is also a way to reduce stress.

Cholesterol and abnormal lipid control

Abnormal cholesterol and similar fatty compounds can be detected with blood work. (See sidebar “Understanding Cholesterol Levels.”) Such testing should be performed during periodic physical exams, especially once midlife is reached. Those with a family history of severe lipid abnormalities should be evaluated early in life.

In the absence of any known coronary artery disease, weight control and diet modification to reduce fat and cholesterol intake may be all that is required. Failing that, medications may be necessary. For those with known coronary artery disease, the newer cholesterol-lowering medications (statins) offer proven benefit, even after cholesterol becomes normal.

High blood pressure control

The most effective management of high blood pressure begins with its diagnosis. Therapy is almost always effective, starting with reducing salt intake and evolving to medications as needed. Close monitoring, sometimes with home equipment, facilitates long-term control.

Diabetes control

For the majority of those with diabetes—in particular those with the most common Type 2, also referred to as adult onset—factors such as being overweight and dietary indiscretion are initial targets for effective control. If that is not adequate, medications, oral agents, and/or insulin are necessary. Careful monitoring and medical supervision are essential.

Family history

Rebirth to acquire a new set of genes is obviously not possible, and genetic engineering solutions are not yet available. The best way to neutralize a strong family history of health problems is to undergo early medical screening and work diligently to control all other risk factors.

HEALTH-RELATED RESOURCES

For more information concerning physical health, visit the following Web sites:*

AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION

www.diabetes.org

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

www.americanheart.org

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH

www.nih.gov/health/exercise/

NATIONAL HEART, LUNG, AND BLOOD INSTITUTE

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

The following provide Scripture-based programs for healthy living:

FIRST PLACE

7401 Katy Freeway, Houston, Texas 77024
800-727-5223 or 713-688-6788
www.firstplace.org

FIT4

LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention
One LifeWay Plaza
Nashville, TN 37234
615-251-2000
www.lifewayonline.com/health/index.cfm

**Obtaining information from these Web sites is not intended to replace regular checkups by your physician.*

Contact your physician prior to beginning any physical-exercise program.

BE AN EFFECTIVE LEADER AND EXAMPLE

The importance of health management for one's own well-being is obvious. For those who are in position to exercise spiritual leadership, this process takes on new meaning. Motivation moves

beyond just a personal desire to avoid early death or disability. Motivation begins to stem from:

- a sense of spiritual and moral responsibility.
- a desire to avoid an adverse impact of one's own ill-health on people for whom that person feels responsible. What would your family and church do if you were severely disabled or died from a heart attack?
- a desire to be productive, optimized for efficiency and effectiveness.
- the joy of being consistent with balanced attention to all those factors important to an abundant life.
- a desire to inspire others to be the best they can be, complete and balanced whole beings.
- an interest in making your own life qualified to be a living example of the benefits of self-control and personal discipline.

The well-informed of the world consider health essential to a full, abundant life and want to be inspired. Those less

informed are in need of instruction.

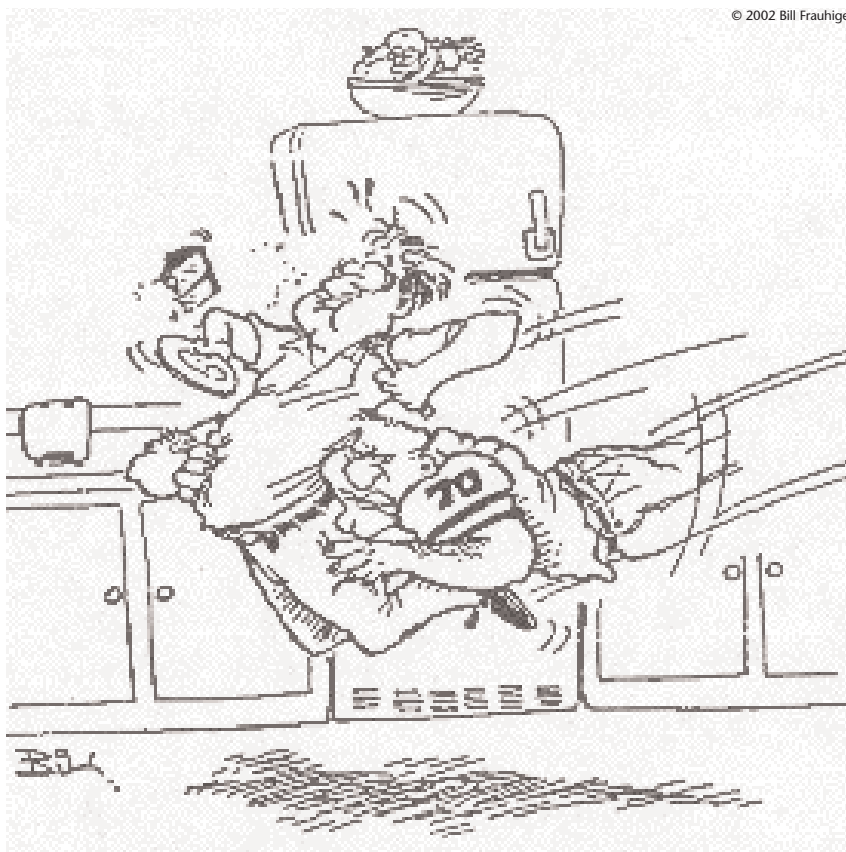
The world is waiting to be taught and inspired by exemplary leaders who are made better because they practice better health.

The apostle Paul said it well: "So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I am not like a boxer who misses his punches. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:26,27). **e**

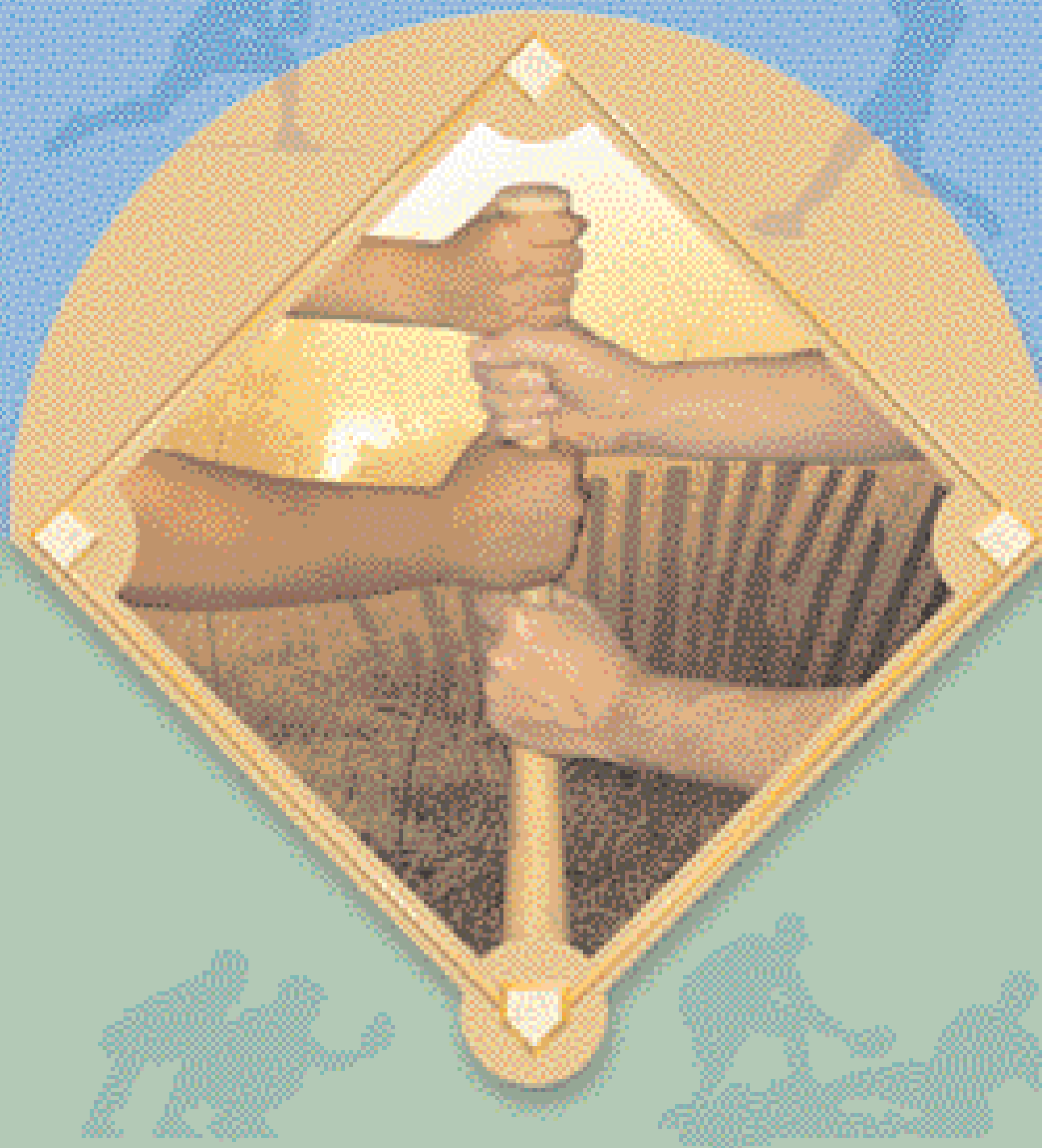
James W. Long, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., is a heart surgeon who lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. He is director of the Utah Artificial Heart Program in Salt Lake City and leads a team that is developing a revolutionary magnetically suspended, artificial heart pump.



**Scripture references are from the New Living Translation*



Pastor Rick Cummins—consciously breaking his vow to the Lord that he'd reduce his intake of sweets—forgets that his accountability partner is his eldest son and star linebacker, Bubba.



B Y R I C K W A R R E N

WHO'S ON FIRST?

GUIDING YOUR MEMBERS
INTO GREATER MATURITY

IF
YOU WANT A
HEALTHY CHURCH, THEN YOU
MUST BECOME A HEALTHY PASTOR WHO
TEACHES THE NECESSARY SKILLS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
AND MINISTRY. A HEALTHY PASTOR NURTURES A HEALTHY
CHURCH BY CREATING AN INTENTIONAL, WELL-
PLANNED SYSTEM FOR UNCOVERING, MOBI-
LIZING, AND SUPPORTING THE
GIFTEDNESS OF ITS
MEMBERS.

Napoleon once pointed to a map of China and said, “There lies a sleeping giant. If it ever wakes up, it will be unstoppable.” Today, the American church is a sleeping giant. Each Sunday church pews are filled with members who are doing nothing with their faith except keeping it.

The designation *active member* in most churches simply means those who regularly attend the church’s services and financially support the church. Not much more is expected. But God has far greater expectations for every Christian. He expects every Christian to use his or her gifts and talents in ministry. If we can ever awaken and unleash the massive talent, resources, creativity, and energy found in the typical local church, Christianity will explode with growth at an unprecedented rate.

The greatest need in evangelical churches is the release of members for ministry. George Gallup discovered that only 10 percent of American church members are active in any kind of personal ministry. He also discovered that 40 percent of all members have expressed an interest in having a ministry. They would like to be involved in ministry, but they have never been asked, or they don’t know how.

A pastor who intentionally equips God’s people for Christ’s mission demonstrates a quality of ministerial health that is essential to effective

ministry. A healthy pastor nurtures a healthy church by creating an intentional, well-planned system for uncovering, mobilizing, and supporting the giftedness of its members. People must be given a simple process they can follow that will lead them to deeper commitment and greater service for Christ. They need a track on which they can move forward.

GET THEM INTO THE BALLGAME

At Saddleback, we call the process that leads people into a deeper commitment and greater service for Christ our Life Development Process. By using the baseball diamond as a visual illustration of where people are in their spiritual progress, people can know how far they’ve come and how far they have to go.

Do you remember Abbott and Costello’s famous routine, “Who’s on First?” Many churches have no idea who’s on first or any other base—where their people are in their spiritual progress. At Saddleback, we know exactly who’s on first, on second, on third, and who has made it home. We celebrate every time someone moves forward to the next base. This encourages commitment.

We use the baseball diamond as an analogy for growth because it is universally understood in America. People can easily understand how we want them to mature by assigning a milestone of

spiritual growth to each base. We explain to our members that our goal is to help them move around the bases of life. We want each of them to score.

We also explain that you don’t get credit for runners left on base at the end of the inning. For that reason, we have assigned a staff pastor to each of the bases: membership, maturity, ministry, and missions. Each pastor serves as a base coach—someone who helps the runners make it safely to the next base.

At first base, we teach the basics of membership; at second base, we teach the basics of spiritual discipline; at third base, we teach people how to identify their S.H.A.P.E. for ministry (see sidebar, “Ministry Is the Expression of My Shape”); and when they hit home plate, we get members involved in missions. Our entire structure is purpose-driven, designed to nurture a healthy church. This is one of the key roles of the pastor.

YOUR COACHING MUST PROVIDE APPLICATION

Many churches make the mistake of emphasizing Bible knowledge to the exclusion of teaching the practical application of that knowledge. For instance, church members are made to feel guilty for a weak prayer life, but no one explains how to make a prayer list, how to praise God’s character by using His names, and how to intercede for others.

Exhortation without explanation leads to frustration. Whenever we exhort people to do something, we are responsible to explain how to do it.

If you want a healthy church, then you must become a healthy pastor who teaches the necessary skills for Christian living and ministry. Remember that skill, not dedication, is the key to effectiveness at anything. “If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success” (Ecclesiastes 10:10*).

Here are five questions you need to ask about your Christian education program:

1. Are people learning the content and meaning of the Bible?
2. Are people seeing themselves, life,



“That’s not what I meant by giving of your time!”

MINISTRY IS THE EXPRESSION OF MY SHAPE

S.H.A.P.E. is an acronym I developed to explain the five elements that determine what a person's ministry should be. Every believer is uniquely shaped for a particular ministry.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: The Bible clearly teaches that God gives every believer certain spiritual gifts to be used in ministry (Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4). However, spiritual gifts are only one part of the picture. Spiritual gifts are often overemphasized to the neglect of other equally important factors. Natural abilities you were born with also come from God. So do your experiences and inborn personality traits. These factors were also planned by your Creator. Spiritual gifts reveal a part of God's will for your ministry, but not all of it.

HEART: The Bible uses the term "heart" to represent the center of your motivation, desires, interests, and inclinations. Your heart determines why you say the things you do (Matthew 12:34), why you feel the way you do (Psalm 28:7), and why you act the way you do (Proverbs 4:23).

Another word for heart is *passion*. There are certain subjects you feel passionate about and others you could care less about. Some things turn you on while other things turn you off. That is an expression of your heart. God had a purpose in giving you your inborn interests. Your emotional heartbeat reveals an important key to understanding His intentions for your life. Don't ignore your natural interests. People rarely excel at tasks they don't enjoy doing. High achievers enjoy what they do.

ABILITIES: These are the natural God-given talents with which you were born. Some people have a natural ability with words—they came out of the womb talking. Other people have natural athletic abilities—they excel in physical coordination. Exodus 31:3 gives an example of how God gives people "skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts" to accomplish His purposes. In this case, it was artistic ability to be used in building the tabernacle. It's interesting that musical talent is not listed as a spiritual gift but it certainly is a natural ability God uses in worship.

PERSONALITY: God has not used a cookie cutter to create people. He loves variety—just look around. God made introverts and extroverts. He made people who love routine and those who love variety. He made some people thinkers and others feelers. Some people work best when given an individual assignment while others work better with a team. We need all kinds of personalities to balance the church and give it flavor. Your personality will affect how and where you use your spiritual gifts and abilities. Two people may have the same gift of evangelism; but if one is introverted and the other is extroverted, that gift will be expressed in different ways.

EXPERIENCES: God never wastes an experience. Romans 8:28 reminds us, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." At Saddleback, we help people consider five areas of experience that will influence the kind of ministry for which they are best shaped: (1) Educational experiences: What were your favorite subjects in school? (2) Vocational experiences: What jobs have you enjoyed and achieved results while doing? (3) Spiritual experiences: What have been the meaningful or decisive times with God in your life? (4) Ministry experiences: How have you served God in the past? (5) Painful experiences: What are the problems, hurts, and trials you've learned from?

God sovereignly determined your shape for His purpose, so you shouldn't resent it or reject it. "What right have you, a human being, to cross-examine God? *The pot has no right to say to the potter: 'Why did you make me this shape?'*" Surely a potter can do what he likes with the clay?" (Romans 9:20,21, *The Jerusalem Bible*). Instead of trying to reshape ourselves to be like someone else, we should celebrate the shape God has given to each of us.

—Rick Warren, Saddleback Valley Community Church, Lake Forest, California

and other people more clearly from God's perspective?

3. Are people's values becoming more aligned with God's values?

4. Are people becoming more skilled in serving God?

5. Are people becoming more like Christ?

If you convince people of the importance of scoring, and you give them a coach at each base, it's much easier to get people to home plate. Likewise, if you lead people to commit to growing spiritually, teach them some basic habits, and give them guidance as they progress around the bases, you can

expect to see them grow.

DON'T PUT A PITCHER IN THE OUTFIELD

One of the most common excuses people give for not getting involved in ministry is, "I just don't have any abilities to offer." Nothing could be further from

MYTHS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Maturity Myth #1: Spiritual growth is automatic once you are born again. A lot of churches believe this myth because they have no organized plan for following up new believers and no comprehensive strategy for developing members to maturity. They assume Christians will automatically grow to maturity if they attend church services.

The truth is that spiritual growth is intentional. It requires a commitment to grow. A person must want to grow, decide to grow, and make an effort to grow.

Maturity Myth #2: Spiritual growth is mystical, and maturity is attainable by only a select few.

The truth is that spiritual growth is very practical. Any believer can grow to maturity if he or she will develop the habits necessary for spiritual growth. Paul often compared training for the Christian life to the way athletes prepare themselves and stay in shape. We need to take the mystery out of spiritual growth by breaking the components down into practical, everyday habits.

Maturity Myth #3: Spiritual maturity can occur instantly if you just find the right key. Many sincere Christians spend their entire lives earnestly searching for an experience, a conference, a revival, a book, a tape, or a single truth that will instantly transform them into a mature believer. Their search is futile.

The truth is that spiritual growth is a gradual process of development. There are no shortcuts to maturity.

Maturity Myth #4: Spiritual maturity is measured by what you know. Many churches evaluate spiritual maturity solely on the basis of how well you can identify Bible characters, interpret Bible passages, quote Bible verses, and explain biblical theology. While knowledge of the Bible is foundational to spiritual maturity, it isn't the total measurement of it.

The truth is that maturity is demonstrated more by behavior than by beliefs. The Christian life isn't just a matter of creeds and convictions; it includes conduct and character.

Maturity Myth #5: Spiritual growth is a personal and private matter. This is an American aberration from the truth. The idolatry of individualism in our culture has influenced the way we think about spiritual growth. So much of the teaching on spiritual formation is self-centered and self-focused, without any reference to our relationship to other Christians. This is completely unbiblical and ignores much of the New Testament.

The truth is that Christians need relationships to grow. We don't grow in isolation from others. We develop in the context of fellowship.

Maturity Myth #6: All you need to help you grow is Bible study. Many evangelical churches have been built on this myth. I call them "classroom churches."

The truth is that it takes a variety of experiences with God to produce true spiritual maturity. In addition to Bible study, it takes worship, ministry, fellowship, and evangelism experiences. In other words, spiritual growth occurs by participating in all five purposes of the church. Mature Christians do more than study the Christian life—they experience it.

—Rick Warren, Saddleback Valley Community Church, Lake Forest, California

the truth. National studies have proven that the average person possesses from 500 to 700 skills.

The real problem is twofold. First, people need some process to identify their skills. Most people are using abilities they are unaware they have. Second, they need a process to help them match their abilities with the right ministry.

There are people in your church with abilities that are not being put to use: recruiting, researching, writing, landscaping, interviewing, promoting, decorating, planning, entertaining, repairing, drawing, and even feeding. These abilities should not be wasted. "There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:5).

Your placement process should focus

on empowering people, not filling positions. Focus on the shape of the individual, not the needs of the institution, and you'll have a much higher success rate with those you place in ministry. Remember, ministry is about people, not programs.

HOW MANY BASEBALL TEAMS DO YOU SEE JUST MEETING?

The average church would be healthier if it eliminated half of its meetings. It would definitely allow more time for ministry and relational evangelism. One of the reasons church members don't witness to their neighbors is this: They don't know their neighbors well enough because church members spend much of their free time attending church meetings.

The most valuable asset people can give to your church is their time. Since people have less discretionary time, we need to make sure we use their time in the best way when they offer it. If a layman comes to me and says, "Pastor, I have 4 hours a week to give to my church in ministry," the last thing I'd do would be to put him on some committee. I want him involved in ministry, not maintenance.

Teach your people the difference between maintenance and ministry. Maintenance is church work: budgets, buildings, organizational matters, etc. Ministry is the work of the church.

If you are serious about mobilizing your members for ministry, you must streamline your structure to maximize

ministry and minimize maintenance. The more organizational machinery your church sets up, the more time, energy, and money it takes to maintain it. That is precious time, energy, and money that could be invested in ministry to people instead. The kind of structure your church has does not cause growth, but it does control the rate and the size of your growth.

THE BEST WAY TO LEARN THE GAME IS TO PLAY IT

Once people begin serving in ministry, they need on-the-job training. On-the-job training is far more important and effective than preservice training. At Saddleback, we require only minimal preservice training. We feel that people don't even know the right questions to ask until they are involved in ministry. In our church we want to involve people as quickly as possible in ministry. A long, drawn-out, preservice training course causes most people to lose their initial enthusiasm. We wear them out before they get started. People who are willing to train for 52 weeks before beginning to serve are usually not very effective when they finally start serving. They tend to be professional students who enjoy learning about ministry more than doing it. We want people to dive in and get wet. Then they are highly motivated to learn how to swim. The best way to begin is to begin.

A GOOD COACH CONTINUALLY RENEWS THE VISION

Pastor, keep the vision of ministry before your people. Communicate the importance of their ministries. When you recruit people for ministry, emphasize the eternal significance of ministering in Jesus' name. Vision motivates people; guilt and pressure discourage people. Help people see they're investing for eternity, and there's no greater cause than the kingdom of God.

Never try to motivate people for ministry by using guilt or pressure. They will resent serving instead of being inspired to serve. Explain that ministry is an

opportunity to make a lasting difference in the world. It is a privilege God has given us.

At Saddleback, our vision for maturity is very clear: to bring glory to God by presenting Jesus Christ with as many Christlike disciples as we possibly can before He returns.

Do not hesitate to challenge people to a big commitment. Help people see the big picture. Motivation is intrinsically tied to significance. When people see the significance of a great cause, they want to be involved.

I've often said to the members of our congregation, "Imagine dying, and 50 years from now somebody in heaven comes to you and says, 'I want to thank you.'"

"You reply, 'I'm sorry, I don't think I know you.'"

"Then they explain, 'You were a lay minister at Saddleback. You served and sacrificed and built the church that reached me for Christ after you died. I'm in heaven because of you.'"

"Do you think your effort is worth that?"

If I knew a more significant way to invest my life than in service for Jesus Christ, I'd be doing it. There is nothing more important. I do not apologize for telling people that the most important thing they may do with their lives is to

join Saddleback church, get involved in a ministry, and serve Christ by serving others. The effect of their ministry for Christ will outlast by far their career, hobby, or anything else they do.

The best-kept secret in the church is that people are dying to make a contribution with their lives. We are made for ministry. The church that understands this and makes it possible for every member to express his or her shape in ministry, will experience amazing vitality, health, and growth. The sleeping giant will be awakened and it will be unstoppable. **e**

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Lake Forest, California. Beginning with just his wife, Kay, in 1980, the congregation now averages 15,000 attendees at its 5 weekend services. Rick is also the author of four books, including The Purpose Driven Church, which has sold over 1 million copies in 18 languages. Over 175,000 pastors from over 100 countries have attended a Purpose-Driven Church Seminar. Rick is also the founder of Pastors.com, a global Internet community for those in ministry. The site features a free, E-mail newsletter, "Rick Warren's Ministry Toolbox."



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



"That's why I hate to bring Philbert on pledge Wednesdays."

BY STEPHEN A. MACCHIA

Becoming a HEALTHY CHURCH

What will it take for your church to become a healthier church? Given the realities of your particular ministry setting, how will you begin that process? If you were to start that process today, what would it look like? Who would be included? What topics and issues would you explore? How would you define your anticipated results for the near and distant future? These are the questions effective leaders in the church are asking themselves.¹

For more than 2 decades, I have observed leadership teams wrestling with strategic issues and ideas in an exhilarating manner. Leaders love to talk about the latest trends affecting ministry. They enjoy discussing what others are discovering and implementing in local churches. The disconnect comes, though, when they start looking at their churches and try to determine which of the brightest and best ideas will apply.

When leadership teams select from the menu of offerings without first looking at their church, they, in essence, abort the planning process without really getting started. It's great to learn how others are leading their churches, what principles are guiding their

thought processes, and what programs are emerging for ministry. But when you do that without first searching for God's unique agenda for your church, you are limiting what He has in mind for you and your congregation.

DISCOVER YOUR THUMBPRINT

Every local church has a unique thumbprint given by God. In your pursuit of church health and vitality, you need a discovery process that uncovers that uniqueness. When you discern this uniqueness, celebrate this distinctive. In response, develop plans, programs, and ministry opportunities that express the unique persona of your people.

Imagine there were no resources available for cloning programs from church A into your church. What if you were to wipe your library clean of every available resource that serves as a how-to guide for doing every imaginable area of ministry? Could you survive for a month or a year without attending another conference and collecting another new training manual for your already loaded shelves?

What do you think would happen if you could stop the conveyor belt of ideas from infiltrating your mailbox

and cluttering your mind with every conceivable ministry's latest and greatest ideas for you to buy and implement in your local church? What if you chose today to say no to another appointment with someone outside your church who needs a few minutes of your time to share his or her latest ministry resource with you? Is it possible for you to hop off your treadmill for a few months to assess your church's current health without considering anyone else's ideas for how you should be leading your church into greater health and vitality?

I guarantee that if you step away from the incredible demands biting at your ankles each day, and start asking the hard questions about your uniquely God-ordained thumbprint, your ministry will never be the same again.

WEIGH IN, PLEASE

The last time I went to my doctor for my annual physical, the nurse greeted me with a smile and politely invited me to weigh in. The last thing I wanted to do was divulge something as personal as my weight to a complete stranger. I reluctantly stepped on the scale (after taking off my shoes, watch, sport coat, and tie, and removing my wallet from

A Holy Spirit-directed process of discovering



God's unique thumbprint for your church must include hope for tomorrow.

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

Extensive research, more than 100 church visits, in-depth Bible study, concerted prayer, and dialogue with hundreds of church leaders has led Vision New England to the exciting discovery of the 10 characteristics of a healthy church. A healthy church is prayerful in all of the following aspects of church life and ministry, is reliant on God's power and the authority of His Word, and values:

1. God's empowering presence. The healthy church actively seeks the Holy Spirit's direction and empowerment for its daily life and ministry.

2. God-exalting worship. The healthy church gathers regularly as the local expression of the body of Christ to worship God in ways that engage the heart, mind, soul, and strength of the people.

3. Spiritual disciplines. The healthy church provides training, models, and resources for members of all ages to develop their daily spiritual disciplines.

4. Learning and growing in community. The healthy church encourages believers to grow in their walk with God and with one another in the context of a safe, affirming environment.

5. A commitment to loving and caring relationships. The healthy church is intentional in its efforts to build loving, caring relationships within families, between members, and within the community.

6. Servant-leadership development. The healthy church identifies and develops individuals whom God has called and given the gift of leadership and challenges them to be servant leaders.

7. An outward focus. The healthy church places high priority on communicating the truth of Jesus and demonstrating the love of Jesus to those outside the faith.

8. Wise administration and accountability. The healthy church utilizes appropriate facilities, equipment, and systems to provide maximum support for the growth and development of its ministries.

9. Networking with the body of Christ. The healthy church reaches out to others in the body of Christ for collaboration, resource sharing, learning opportunities, and united celebrations of worship.

10. Stewardship and generosity. The healthy church teaches its members they are stewards of their God-given resources and challenges them to be sacrificially generous in sharing with others.

—*Reprinted from Becoming a Healthy Church Workbook, by Stephen A. Macchia. Used with permission*

my back pocket) and weighed in. The only consolation was the nurse was a complete stranger, unable to share such confidential information with anyone but my doctor.

It's not that I'm overweight. It's just that weighing in was the opening exercise of that less-than-pleasant annual drill of activities at my doctor's office, and I wasn't thrilled about it. But through the weighing-in procedure, I began a process that unveiled the true picture of my current health. The doctor needed this picture before he could tell me how to become a healthier person.

At the end of my physical exam, I had confidence I had been inspected from head to toe by an expert in his field. He gave me encouraging news about my physical condition, and he made specific suggestions about some follow-up tests he wanted me to take, explained a new medication he was prescribing, and mentioned another specialist he recommended I see. He didn't point at pictures of other people he wished I looked like, and he didn't compare me with other patients with different ailments. He focused on my health, and with great empathy, made some

excellent suggestions for me to follow.

I followed my doctor's advice. As a result, I am feeling better than ever, with renewed energy for the days ahead. I was invigorated by the visit with my doctor and what he had to say. Even though it complicates life a bit, with some of my new discoveries and restrictions, I feel prepared to face the days ahead with a remarkable zest for life.

In a similar manner, by completing some basic team-enhancing planning exercises, you too will feel better about your church. As you define your realities together, focus on discovering prescriptive measures best suited for your unique design as a church. The process of exploring topics that are relevant to your current ministry context and setting priorities for the months ahead will be exhilarating if you are willing to take that first step and weigh in.

DIAGNOSIS/PROGNOSIS

Weighing in is just the first step in the process. If you recall from your own physicals, there are also the blood pressure and temperature checks, blood and urine tests, and a multiplicity of other routine exam procedures designed to proactively address apparent or potential physical concerns. It is far better to be ahead of the curve on such matters than to be forced to react to crises and emergencies later.

Our son, Nathan, has been to Children's Hospital in Boston dozens of times over the past several years. He is routinely checked regarding his unique condition that has evidenced itself in a weak and sickly tibia in his right leg. The orthopedic surgeons have been wonderful for Nathan. They not only diagnosed his illness, but they provided prognoses for his future that offer hope and promise—despite his significant health challenges.

There is a huge difference between diagnosis and prognosis. Diagnosis is "the art or act of identifying a disease from its signs and symptoms; investigation or analysis of the cause or nature of a condition, situation, or problem."² Whereas prognosis is "the act or art of

foretelling the course of a disease; the prospect of survival and recovery from a disease as anticipated from the usual course of that disease or indicated by special features of the case in question.”³ Diagnosis focuses on the present facts; prognosis provides information about the future.

In southern Connecticut, along one of the major interstate highways, there are three billboards that express the difference between diagnosis and prognosis. These billboards not only describe the difference between these two terms, they give hope to each patient depicted on them. Regardless of the condition of the debilitating disease, the prognosis for their future is hope-filled. By going to the medical center being advertised on the billboards, you not only receive treatment for your diagnosed ailments, you also are given hope for your future. Even if the diagnosis is devastating, the medical personnel are committed to helping their patients by giving a prognosis that includes some sense of hope.

And so it is with your church. Regardless of the current health condition—the diagnosis—of your church, a healthy prognosis for your future that is filled with hope will give your congregation renewed energy for the future.

A Holy Spirit-directed process of discovering God’s unique thumbprint for your church must include hope for tomorrow. He is the Great Physician in this process, overseeing your health checkup—with His eyes, ears, and heart wide open to your needs and aspirations. He will not leave you or forsake you throughout this process. He will hold you securely in the palms of His hands as He leads you every step of the way. By His strong, guiding hand, the journey will be made all the richer. Trust Him for a hope-filled prognosis, even when the diagnostic elements of dialogue and assessment become tiresome in unpackaging the truest picture of your current reality.

THE PROCESS

Once you have decided to begin the

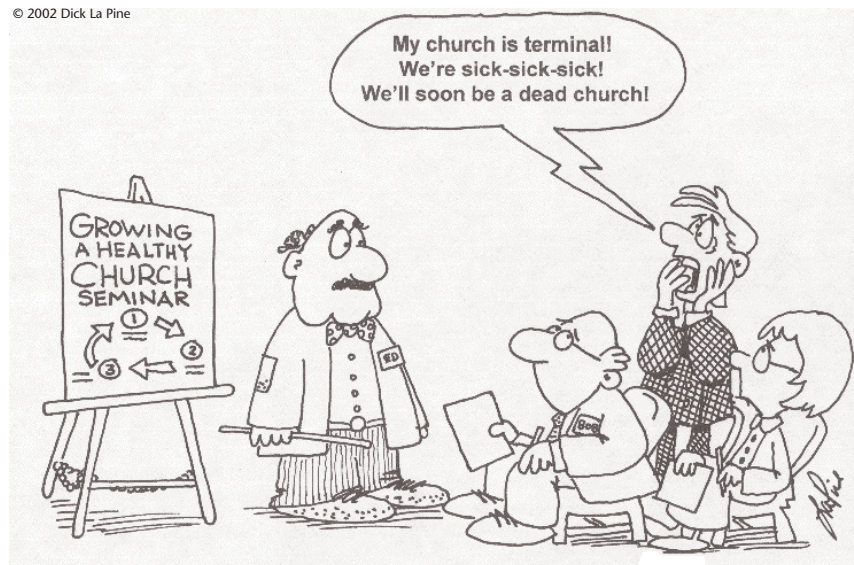
process of discovering God’s unique thumbprint for your church, you will need to be cheered on to victory. I wish I could be there for you as you begin the process with your leadership team and congregation. If I were there, I would remind you of several important ingredients to the experience you are about to share.

A long-term process

Discovering God’s unique thumbprint for your church is long-term. You will work at it intensively for the first 4 to 6 months, but it doesn’t end there. The initial stages of this discovery process are critical to the success of the total experience, but they do not constitute the sum total of the process. What’s essential for every leader involved is to embrace the magnitude of the process with growing excitement for the results that will be experienced along the way. Don’t let seeds of discouragement, disappointment, or discord be planted in the hearts and minds of the key leaders involved. Even though the process is long-term, it is also:

- joy-filled.
- faith-based.
- vision-focused.
- team-centered.
- Christ-honoring.
- Spirit-led.

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“The Growing a Healthy Church Seminar receives a dose of Pastor Rudy, renowned for his church-growth hypochondriac condition.”

A Spirit-directed initiative

The planning process can be described by a series of seven key questions that need to be answered by every leadership team. Getting your team to agree on the answers to these questions may or may not be simple, depending on the specific circumstances and the health of the relationships between the leaders in your church. The plans you agree on together—under the leadership of the Holy Spirit—will shape your church’s effectiveness in the months ahead. The seven major questions that must be answered by you and your church leaders are:

1. *Spiritual Needs Assessment.* What are the greatest spiritual needs of our church and community?
2. *Strengths and Weaknesses.* What are the greatest strengths and weaknesses of our church?
3. *Opportunities and Threats.* What are the most significant ministry opportunities for and potential threats to our church, given the answers to the first two questions?
4. *Ministry Options.* What appear to be the most viable options for strengthening the ministry of our church?
5. *Ministry Platform.* What is the primary ministry platform on which our specific ministries should be built? Included in the ministry platform: statement of faith, vision, mission, philosophy, and ministries.

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- Reprinted from *Becoming a Healthy Church Workbook* by Stephen A. Macchia.
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6. *Ministry Goals*. What are the goals the Holy Spirit is leading us to strive for to enhance our church's ministry over the next year? the next 2 to 3 years?

7. *Action Steps*. What action steps must we accomplish to achieve these goals?

A committed team

The more your team is involved in this

journey of discovery, the more you will ultimately get out of this process. The more they own the process, the greater the impact will be as a result. Choose together to stop (at least for the time being) looking over your shoulder at other, more successful churches, and look instead to God for His design for your local church. As a result, find

freedom in Christ to be and become all He intends for you in the fulfillment of His thumbprint within your church.

A discerning leader

After you discover your unique gifts and abilities as a congregation, the time will come to turn to books, attend conferences, consider ministry experts, and consult training manuals. At this time you will realize that every good idea will not necessarily be the best idea for you and your church. Become a discerning leader; pick and choose what best fits your ministry today and what will be most needed for the future. Don't assume that every resource will work until you first attempt to identify your greatest needs and priorities. Then, choose resources that meet these needs and solidify these priorities so your ministry effectiveness quotient increases significantly in the months ahead.

THE GOAL

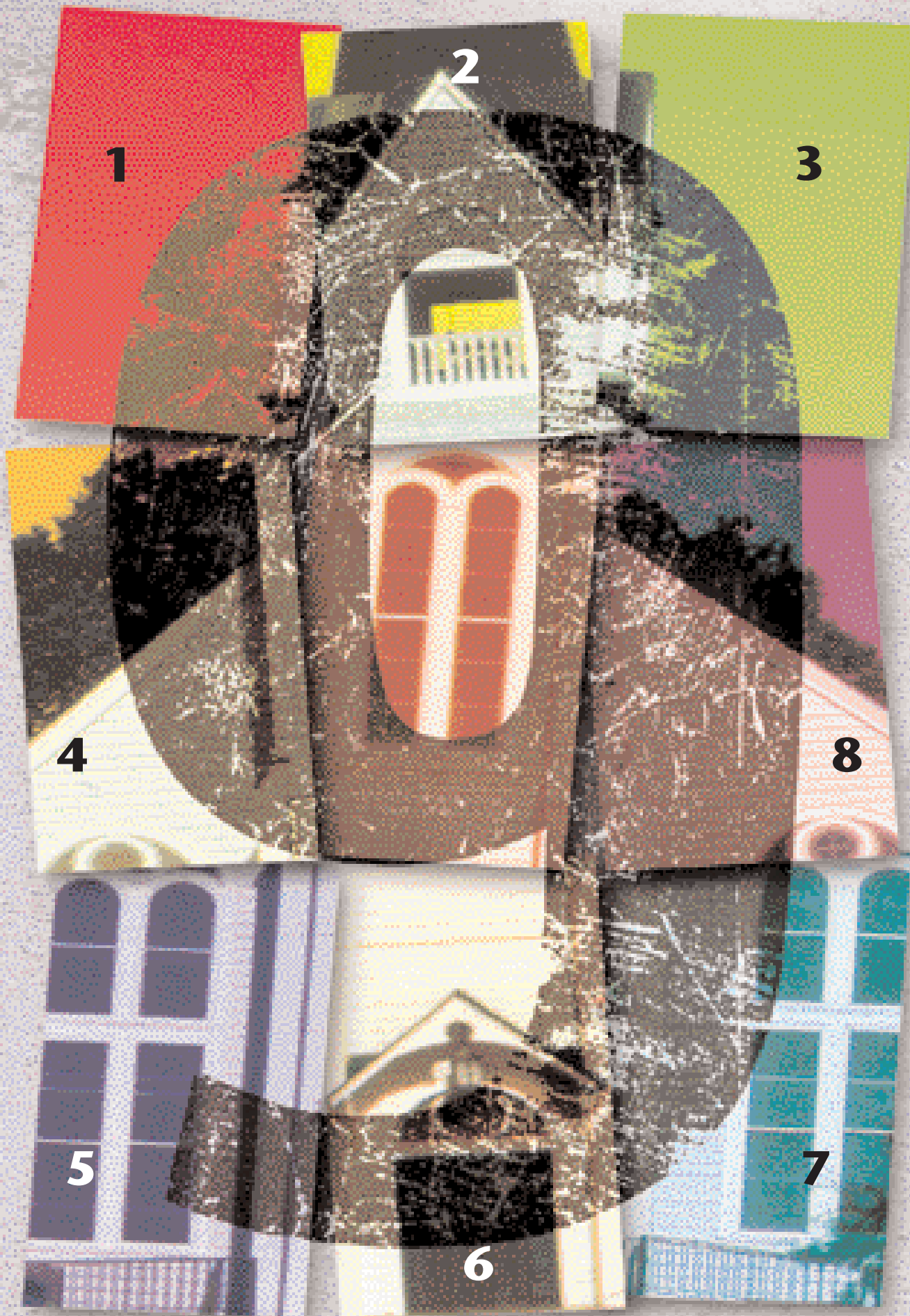
All along the way, keep your goal in front of you—to become a healthier church. The healthy church is God's church, fit for worship, relationships, and service that honors Him and builds His kingdom. If changed lives are your bottom line in ministry, then take one step at a time as you think and act strategically—all for His glory and for the expansion of the church of Jesus Christ. 🙏

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E N D N O T E S

1. These questions are explored in *Becoming a Healthy Church* (Baker, 1999) and *Becoming a Healthy Church Workbook* (Baker, 2001) by Stephen A. Macchia. This excerpt is from *Becoming a Healthy Church Workbook*.
2. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* Unabridged (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1963), 622.
3. *Ibid.*, 1812.



I receive numerous letters from church leaders all over the country concerning the challenges churches face these days. Sometimes the letters are written to share good news about ministry victories; other letters describe the heartbreak and hardships resulting from well-intended but ineffective ministry.

The issue at hand is how to be effective in ministry. A ministry is effective when lives are transformed and people are constantly enabled to become more Christlike.

Some churches have discovered how to become effective in one or two dimensions of ministry. It is very unusual to find a church that has developed a truly holistic ministry—effective in the six dimensions of ministry that constitute a complete church.

Nine Habits of Healthy and Highly Effective Churches

What are those six dimensions? They are the very aspects that characterized the Early Church: worship, evangelism, Christian education, community among the believers, stewardship, and serving the needy. When a church is doing superb work in each of these elements of ministry, it is truly being the Church that Christ intended us to be.

One of the ministry secrets among highly effective churches is reliance upon good habits. Healthy churches have a transforming impact on people's lives because they have developed habits that facilitate specified ministry outcomes that are consistent with Scripture and that emphasize life transformation.

B Y G E O R G E B A R N A

If God has called your church into existence, then He intends to bless it. While you cannot imitate everything that a highly effective church does and expect to be similarly life changing, *understanding these nine principles of ministry and adapting them to the unique vision and resource base God has given you will enable your church to become healthy and highly effective.*

1 ENSURING THAT LEADERS DIRECT THE CHURCH

Having studied thousands of churches across America, I am similarly struck by one of the requisite habits of highly effective churches: they are led by strong leaders. Churches that are serious agencies of life transformation have leaders who possess:

- a vision of what they seek to create;
- a respect-based relationship with a team of competent colleagues;
- effective communication skills;
- a strategic mind and purposeful courage;
- an unquenchable passion about the outcome to which they are committed.

To be an effective leader, one must be called by God to lead, possess the character of a person of God, and demonstrate a group of competencies that result in leadership. A leader implements the gift and ability to lead

by motivating, mobilizing, resourcing, and directing people to pursue a jointly shared vision from God.¹

Change is one of the most difficult realities for any group of people to embrace, but it is also one of the elements that most directly influences the personal and spiritual growth of the group. Leaders are integral to the health of a group because they are the chief change agents, motivating the group to view change positively and to invest themselves tirelessly in intentional and strategic changes.

The leaders/pastors of highly effective and healthy churches demonstrate this endless instigation of change. From service to service, event to event, meeting to meeting, and sermon to sermon, they relentlessly introduce productive changes. Some of those changes are imperceptible, others are monumental—but a common denominator among all of these pastors is their commitment to creating a congregational culture that is addicted to fruitful change.

One of the most impressive and important elements of leadership in highly effective churches is that most of the leadership comes from the laity. Every highly effective church is able to exploit opportunities and overcome obstacles because of the depth of its lay leadership.

God has provided His church with an abundance of leaders. Contrary to the perception reflected by the question asked by many pastors—*Where are the leaders we need to do effective ministry?*—there are literally millions of lay leaders sitting in the pews in the churches across America anxious to serve by leading.

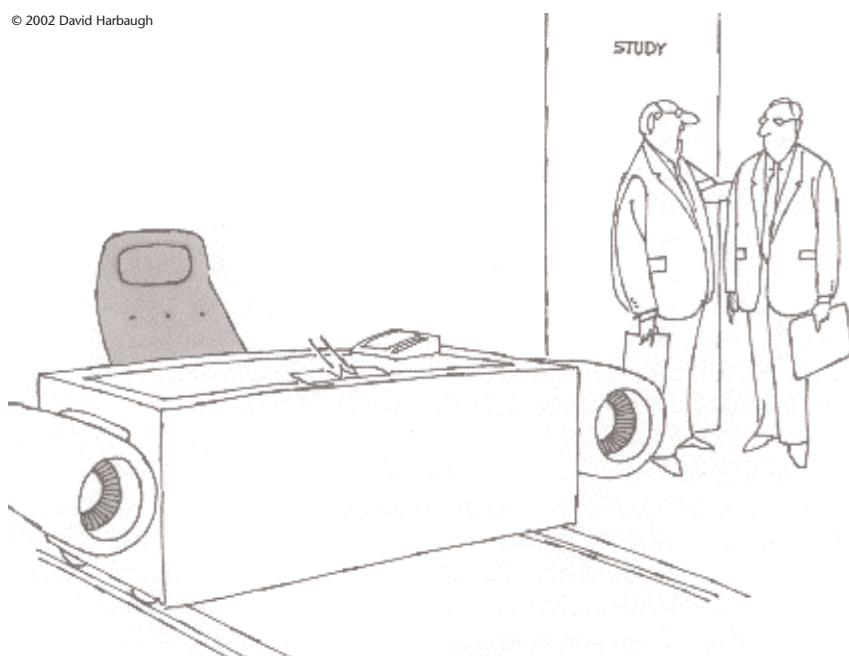
This goes back to one of the hallmarks of effective pastors: they invest themselves in the lives of congregants who are, at their core, leaders and who desire the opportunity to serve God and His people through leadership. It is the willingness of pastors to identify and nurture the leadership abilities of others that enables them to be effective as pastors.

You can overcome many deficiencies in a church's ministry and organization, *but you cannot compensate for the lack of good leadership.* Nothing will cripple or even destroy a church more completely than the absence of effective leadership.

2 STRUCTURING THE CHURCH FOR IMPACT

One of the least appealing activities for many ministry leaders is creating form and structure within the organization they run. Identifying roles, creating systems that facilitate growth, establishing a viable corporate culture, instituting policies—this is not the stuff that most leader/pastors live for. However, every great leader we have studied—from corporate CEOs to successful entrepreneurs to noteworthy leader/pastors understands that unless he/she designs the structure of their organization appropriately, he/she has hindered the potential of that entity.

Highly effective churches cannot be agencies of transformation unless they are structured to facilitate effectiveness. Since every church has a different vision, different resources, and different ministry opportunities, the exact nature of the structure and operational mode differs. But, again, highly effective churches had some important common traits regarding structure.



"We give every new pastor a week to improve the membership."

A related strategy for promoting constant ministry involvement is to decentralize the decision-making process. One of the most amazing revelations from my research was that in the typical church, the pastor is intimately involved in most, if not all, of the ministry's decisions. In the highly effective churches, however, the leader/pastor has the final say on all of the major ministry decisions, but is literally uninvolved in the vast majority of decisions made in the ministry.

No organization becomes and remains successful unless it constantly scrutinizes its own performance. Continual self-examination is a hallmark of highly effective churches. Rather than avoid the tough questions, they invite them. Instead of silencing critics, they encourage them to voice their concerns (as long as it is done in a positive, constructive manner). While many churches deny change on the grounds that the congregation is growing numerically or that the people are pleased with how things are going, highly effective churches never rest on their past or present performance because they are driven by God's vision for the ministry's future. The vision invariably challenges the church to blaze new trails and accomplish more than it has already achieved.

Structure exists to foster ministry impact, not to impair it. Therefore, constant self-assessment is a necessity, but what you evaluate, how you interpret the evaluation data, and how you administer change will determine the health and growth potential of your ministry. You only improve that which you measure, and the results of those measurements are meaningful only if your measurement criteria coincide with your vision, your values, and a passion for excellence.

BUILDING LASTING, SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS

A recurrent theme throughout the history of the Church is that of creating a loving, caring community. The story of the Early Church recounted in Acts

emphasizes the importance of relationships among believers. Jesus' ministry was a model of commitment to fellow believers: He did everything with the family of faith. He ate, talked, traveled, and ministered with His disciples. He did more than simply talk about love for others; Jesus personally modeled it and consistently arranged situations and opportunities for His faith-circle to deepen and demonstrate their love for each other.

To underscore the importance of relationships, highly effective congregations place the vast bulk of their numerical-growth efforts into relational marketing. Instead of seeking to attract visitors to the church through impersonal means such as direct mail advertising, radio commercials, TV ads, or highway billboards, these churches seek numerical growth by having the regular attendees personally invite friends to show up with them.

When highly effective churches welcome a newcomer to the community of faith, the "stick rate" (the probability of retention) of those people is higher than the norm. This is explained primarily by one factor. The visitor came because of a preexisting personal relationship with someone who was part of the church, and he/she returned because of the emotional safety and security visitors experience, facilitated by that initial relationship. Visitors immediately feel they are actually part of the church because they are already relationally tied to the church.

FACILITATING GENUINE WORSHIP

Our surveys among regular church-going adults indicate that one-third of those people have never experienced God's presence. Half of all regular church-going adults admit that they have not experienced God's presence any time during the past year. How is it possible that a God who so desperately wants to love and be loved by His creatures seems to be in voluntary seclusion?

For the church leaders responsible for enabling people to worship God with all their heart, mind, soul and

strength, worship means creating an environment in which people can personally and intimately connect with God to glorify, honor, and bless Him. For highly effective churches this has meant a reengineering of how the worship service is designed, how it is carried out, and how it is evaluated.

Part of the challenge for these churches has been to ensure that those developing or leading the worship event are sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and willing to follow the Spirit's promptings. In practical terms this means entering the service with a well-conceived agenda of how the service will proceed, but being willing to stray from that agenda if there is a true sense that God would be better honored or served through some alternative effort.

ENGAGING IN STRATEGIC EVANGELISM

Highly effective churches treat evangelism like every other task they face: It must be studied, the action options must be analyzed and compared, direction from God must be earnestly sought, choices must be made, people must be informed and prepared, and then the plans must be put into practice.

The key to understanding evangelism in highly effective churches is to realize that they define success in evangelism as intelligently taking advantage of every reasonable opportunity to evangelize that God provides to them. Humans do not convert nonbelievers; only the Holy Spirit can do that. Consequently, our responsibility is to serve as capable conduits of God's love through a clear expression of the gospel. Whether or not the person accepts Christ is beyond human control.

To maximize the probability of a nonbeliever accepting Christ, healthy, highly effective churches teach that the foundation of viable evangelism is relationships. These churches encourage people to be intentionally networked to nonbelievers and to build true friendships with those people so when a good opportunity to share Christ occurs, they have the *credibility* and

trust in place to support their presentation of the gospel.

6 FACILITATING SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGICAL GROWTH

The Christian church seeks to be many things, but among the most important of its functions is to develop people. If life transformation is the essence of the task facing the local church, then theological education is certainly a core element within that challenge.

Highly effective churches do not perceive Christian education to be an ancillary option. Working hard at comprehending Christian theology and its personal implications is viewed as a necessary component in the development of each believer. These churches are preparing people for spiritual battle and for a personal renaissance that is founded upon a deep, stimulating, consistent, and revolutionary faith system.

Highly effective churches do not undertake Christian education, discipleship, and faith development simply because they are traditional activities of a church. These churches implement a systematic educational approach to address two primary ends: to ensure that each person has a realistic opportunity to become a complete believer (a comprehensively mature Christian), and to facilitate the development and use of a biblical worldview for decision-making.

7 HOLISTIC STEWARDSHIP

Highly effective churches define stewardship in terms of managing all of the resources that have been entrusted to us by God. All things are His, but He has appointed us to be the guardians of His estate. We have free reign with those resources, but will ultimately be held accountable to Him according to the guidelines provided in the Bible.

Effective churches go to great lengths to integrate biblical perspectives and principles on stewardship into all teaching. The underlying motivation is that stewardship is a behavior, but like any behavior, it is driven by values and assumptions. Consequently, these churches work hard to include a

stewardship mind-set into the various lessons taught within the church.

By incorporating stewardship concepts into lessons on other topics, the congregation is not only reminded about the breadth and importance of stewardship but is also exposed to ways of interrelating key faith perspectives of thinking and living in a comprehensively Christian manner.

8 SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Several years ago we conducted a nationwide survey among people who never attend church. We asked many questions including what types of churches would be most appealing to them if they decided to visit a church. One of the most common responses was they would seek a church that was committed to helping people outside the church who needed care and consideration.

Unfortunately, we have also discovered that churches talk a better game than they live when it comes to social service ministry. For instance, we found budgets for community ministry are slim to invisible in all but the most unusual of churches. Further, a minority of church-goers volunteer their services to their church—and very few of those people invest themselves in

ministry geared to people outside of the congregation. As much as highly effective churches are dedicated to meeting the needs of people outside their community of faith, even those churches struggle to maintain a reasonable balance between focusing on the needs of congregants and addressing the needs of outsiders.

Everyone develops personal comfort zones within which they operate. Those comfort zones are not harmful—unless they become so solidified that they preclude personal growth. Highly effective churches, in the desire to strike an ever-changing but viable balance between inreach and outreach, seek to have their people continually expanding or at least reshaping their ministry comfort zones.

Highly effective churches combat people's tendency to avoid the discomfort of personal growth by creating an environment that makes such growth virtually inescapable. It seems that these bodies usually follow a four-step process to facilitate influential community service ministry:

1. they give permission and encouragement to engage in social service ministry;
2. they allow their people to grow through experience, inducting the

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"At least now our church has a small group."

WHAT IS “EFFECTIVE” MINISTRY?

In our culture it is easy to get confused about what effective ministry looks like at the grassroots level. Our interviews with pastors and laity confirm that there is a tremendous degree of confusion about the practical meaning of effective ministry. For instance, we know that many Christians believe that each of the following is an indisputable mark of an effective church:

- having a sanctuary filled with 1,000 (or more) people at the weekend service;
- raising a million dollars a year (or more) for the church’s ministry;
- donating a half-million dollars or more annually to global missions;
- adding buildings or constructing a new campus with at least 100,000 square feet of ministry facilities;
- sending church choirs to sing in churches, community events, and on school campuses throughout the nation or overseas;
- broadcasting the church worship services throughout the city, region, or country;
- offering a wide range of Christian education classes and ministry programs;
- having high name awareness in the community at large;
- adding 100 (or more) new members in a year.

Contrary to popular opinion, these scenarios do not necessarily reflect a church that is truly effective. If effective relates to personal commitments and activities through which people become more Christlike, the situations just described do not automatically signal either corporate or personal spiritual health.

Attendance figures, square footage, staff size, annual operating budget, and the like are simplistic, sometimes misleading measures that overlook the most important aspect of any ministry—the hearts of the people. There are many churches that offer a smorgasbord of ministry events and meetings but in which the participants are simply going through the motions.

—Reprinted from *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches* by George Barna.

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option of “failing with dignity”;

3. they position people’s shortcomings in service ministry as a process of discovery;

4. they motivate their people to continue to engage in service ministry, even if their prior experience was unsuccessful.

At every step along this path—even in the wake of misspent money, unproductive time, or disappointing results—the lay ministers were applauded for their efforts and encouraged to hang tough. Rather than focus on inadequate results, these churches find ways to build up their lay ministers, including acknowledgment of the fact some of Jesus’ own ministry efforts did not appear to bear positive, tangible results.

EQUIPPING THE FAMILY

Building up Christian families is one of the most desperately needed—and most daunting challenges facing the Church

today. Every day the mass media provide new and frightening evidence of the dissipation of emotionally healthy families as well as the demise of the values and lifestyles typically associated with such families. Behaviors such as divorce, homosexual relationships, cohabitation, and giving birth without marriage have become commonplace in America. Meanwhile, there are signs that as our culture continues to reinvent itself, and the role of churches is further challenged and repositioned, the family unit will play a much more significant role—perhaps even the dominant role—in the spiritual growth of the family’s members. We must therefore determine how well prepared families are to handle the increasing pressures, temptations, and ministry opportunities that will be cascading upon them.

Highly effective churches believe that for a family to be healthy and

functional, it must possess the tools required to completely address the various challenges, opportunities, or conditions that are likely to face the family. This means that the task for the church is to teach a family to identify its own needs and how to meet them, to provide families with the skills and knowledge required to meet those needs, and to help families achieve the self-confidence required to implement solutions.

CONCLUSION

If God has called your church into existence, then you may be assured His intention is for the church to flourish and not to flounder. In His Word He assures us that He will never abandon us and that He will always provide what we need when we seek to do His will for His purposes. Does that mean that victory will come easily? It rarely does. Does that mean that the path to victory will be clear? It rarely is. Does that mean we can sit back and wait until He makes miraculous things happen so our church becomes highly effective? Absolutely not. He endowed us with brains, language, energy, and many other resources so we can apply ourselves to the challenges of ministry and—with His guidance and blessing—see His will and His people prevail. **E**

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For a fuller treatment on this subject and practical suggestions for developing a healthy and effective church, order The Habits of Highly Effective Churches by calling 1-800-641-4310. A Highly Effective Church Inventory (Diagnostic) for evaluating your church can be ordered from Barna Research Group at: www.barna.org, or by calling 1-805-658-8885.

E N D N O T E

1. Barna, George. *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville: Word Books, 1998), 106.

interview

WITH DOUGLAS WEISS

Ministering to Victims of Cyber Porn



DOUGLAS WEISS

To equip ministers to deal with the growing problem of cyber porn, the Church Development and Education Team of the Northern California-Nevada District of the Assemblies of God hosted an interview between Gene Roncone, team director, and Douglas Weiss, a nationally known Christian author and therapist. Weiss has appeared on many national television and radio shows. He has authored several books including, Partners: Healing From His Addiction, Beyond Love, and Steps of Hope. Weiss is a licensed professional counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist, as well as a licensed chemical addictions counselor. He is currently the executive director of Heart-to-Heart Counseling Ministry in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

This interview deals with common questions pastors have about ministering to victims of cyber porn and provides helpful books, resources, and advice. It should be noted that both the topic and material discussed in this interview could be considered objectionable. However, considering the seriousness and relevance of the topic, we understand that the issue cannot be successfully addressed without giving Weiss the freedom to confront the matter head on.

HOW IS SEXUAL ADDICTION TODAY RELATED TO SEXUAL ADDICTION IN THE PAST?

WEISS: There is nothing new about sexual addiction. Genesis 39:7–19 gives a classic example—exemplified in Potiphar's wife—of

how the sex addict acts out. In verse 7, she looked at Joseph as a sexual object. She made him an object to please her lustful desire rather than someone created by God. Sex addicts see others as objects, not as people. This is where sex addiction starts.

Second, Joseph knew adultery was against God (verse 9). But Potiphar's wife didn't think about God once she started pursuing Joseph. In the same way, the sex addict shuts out God once he* begins to focus on his next victim. This is why it is imperative that a person stops lustful thoughts before these thoughts become fantasy and before he pursues the chance to act on these thoughts.

Notice Joseph's age. He is a teenager. This is when sexual addiction attempts to snare most men. If it can trap them then, much of what God has intended for their lives will be forfeited. Joseph was attacked daily. The sex addict, and even our own sexual addiction, will try to talk to us every day (verse 10). But the start of recovery is also a daily resistance of not hearkening to the addiction.

In verse 11, Potiphar's wife set the scene so she would be alone with Joseph. The sex addict does two things: He becomes familiar with the regular routine of his victim and attempts to act out with his victim after the addict has isolated her away from others.

The garment by which she caught Joseph may have been symbolic of his leadership in the house (verse 12). She attacked

that which was probably precious to him. Most sex addicts intuitively know where their victims are vulnerable—low self-esteem, or if they are not being given enough attention. In early recovery, the sex addict will deny he planned his acting out, and with whom he acted out, if it is more than masturbation. After sobriety, he does get the awareness of the plan he pursued.

The addict does not take responsibility for his behavior (verses 13–20). Instead, he plays the victim. This is a hallmark of a sex addict, especially one about to get caught. The sex addict also blames others: “She came after me first.”

strongly impacted self-assessment of sexual experience. Subjects reported less satisfaction with their intimate partner’s affection, physical appearance, sexual curiosity, and sexual performance proper. Subjects assigned increased importance to sex without emotional involvement.”²

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF SEX ADDICTS?

WEISS: Sexual addiction is a learned behavior. Examples in 2 Samuel 11 and 1 Kings 11:1–6 of David’s sexual acting out with Bathsheba and Solomon’s sexual excessiveness show that David stopped doing what

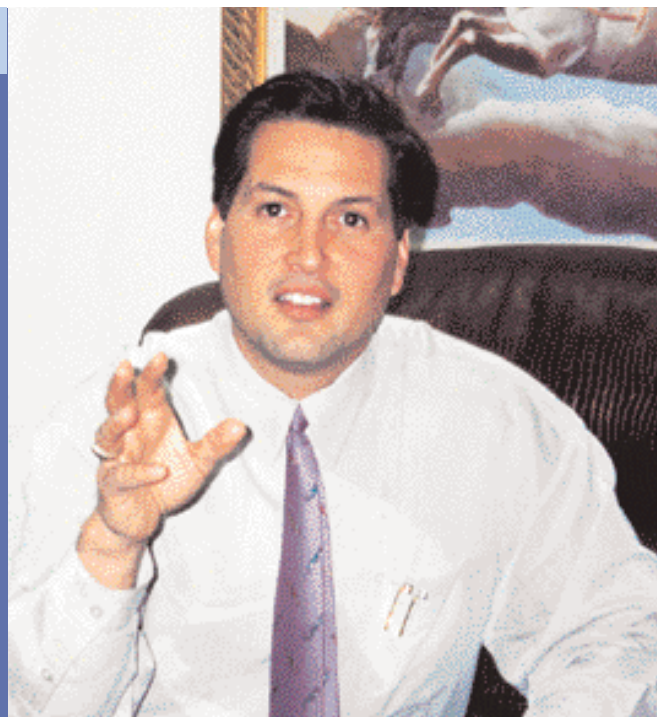
addicts come from severely dysfunctional families. Eighty-seven percent have another addiction of some type in the family. Ninety-seven percent were emotionally abused, 81 percent were sexually abused, and 73 percent were physically abused.

WHAT ARE SOME FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN MINISTERS?

WEISS: In 1991, John Thornburn conducted research concerning contributing factors regarding extramarital sexual activity in a random sample of 500 male Protestant ministers across the country. The

When attempting to identify the sources of thoughts, attitudes, and feelings that strengthen the addiction’s hold on them, the sex addicts with whom we worked most commonly cite one or more traumatic events during childhood.

—Weiss



WHAT ARE SOME SCIENTIFICALLY MEASURED EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY?

WEISS: In his book, *Don’t Call It Love*, Patrick Carnes said, “Two highly relevant facts emerged from our study of sexual addiction. First, among all (sex) addicts surveyed, 90 percent of the men and 77 percent of the women reported pornography as significant to their addiction. Second, for some, the costs were staggering.”¹

Zillman and Bryany also reported in an article entitled “Pornography’s Impact on Sexual Satisfaction” that they “exposed 160 male and female students and nonstudents to videotapes featuring common, nonviolent pornography. Exposure was in hourly sessions in 6 consecutive weeks. Exposure

he was told to do by God. David stayed in Jerusalem instead of going to war. This is what started his preoccupation with Bathsheba. David’s impulsive act did have sexual consequences in his family, especially in Solomon. It is common for a sex addict to have a family history of indiscretion. If you ask him, it is not uncommon for his dad to have had an affair or a pornography collection. This will not always be the case, but it does commonly exist. This knowledge can help the addict better understand his behavior, although he is solely responsible for his adult choices.

A national survey by Patrick Carnes of 600 recovering sex addicts also supports this trend. His research revealed many sex

survey sought to investigate three areas: factors that might influence pastoral infidelity, factors contributing to sexually compulsive attitudes and behaviors, and ministers’ emotional investment in extramarital sexual relationships. Five factors were distinguished in predicting at-risk pastors. Those five factors include: a family origin history of addiction; marital adjustment; sexual attraction and arousal in a ministry context; feelings of low self-esteem; and the consumption of pornography.

When attempting to identify the sources of thoughts, attitudes, and feelings that strengthen the addiction’s hold on them, the sex addicts with whom we worked most commonly cite: one or more

David's sexual acting out with Bathsheba and Solomon's sexual excessiveness show that David stopped doing what he was told to do by God.

—Weiss



traumatic events during childhood—usually involving death, divorce, abuse, or victimization; parents who were uncommunicative or frequently absent from the home; families in which affection, encouragement, and trust were virtually nonexistent, while criticism, harsh punishment, and rigid—though unwritten—rules were ever-present; and prohibitive messages about sex, primarily from parents.

HOW DO PEOPLE'S ADDICTIVE DRIVE TAKE THEM HOSTAGE AND HIJACK THEIR SENSE OF SELF-CONTROL AND MORAL JUDGMENT?

WEISS: A sex addict's brain has been conditioned neurologically to his behaviors. Many sex addicts were exposed to pornography at a young age and began to masturbate and/or fantasize with it. Every time the addict ejaculated, he sent a rush of chemicals to his brain called *endorphins* and *enkephalins*. The brain, as an organ of the body, has no morality. It simply knows that when it gets a rush of what I call *brain cookies* (or chemicals), it feels good. The rush could be from heroin, sky diving, sex, or cocaine. But whatever has caused the rush, the brain, as an organ, does not have a moral dilemma on how it got this rush. After frequent ejaculations brought on by acting-out sexually, the sexual addict begins to develop neurological pathways

in the brain. The brain, as an organ, adjusts to getting its neurological need met by the cycle of going into a fantasy state and 20 to 30 minutes later sending the brain a rush of “brain cookies” through ejaculation.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR PASTORS TO KNOW HOW TO MINISTER TO THE SEX ADDICT?

WEISS: Many pastors are not prepared to deal with one of society's fastest-growing social problems. An Internet survey of 1,800 clergy from 6 denominations showed that 29 percent of men in the church have sexual-addiction issues; pastors spend 14 percent of their counseling time with sexual-addiction issues; 61 percent of pastors said their education did not prepare them for this aspect of ministry; 77 percent of the pastors said they had no continuing education in counseling those with sexual addiction; and 84 percent of pastors said they would be supportive of a Christian support group in their church for those with sexual addiction if they were asked by a church member to start one. Those responding to this survey had an average of 14 years of experience in ministry. Seventy-two percent were senior pastors, 13 percent were associate pastors, and 15 percent identified themselves as other.

AFTER REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS, HOW CAN PASTORS GIVE SEX ADDICTS PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY?

WEISS: Recovery from sexual addiction has some basic principles that, when applied, help the sexual addict sustain his recovery program. Early recovery is not simply understanding the facts, nor is early recovery simply talking about sexual addiction. Recovery goes much deeper than simply talking about what was done in the past. Many Christians may talk about getting better. The Prodigal Son, whose riotous living probably included sexual addiction, did not get better or restored when he realized he was in a bad condition. He had to consistently walk back to his father to get the blessings of his freedom after weeks or months of walking. Then the party started, but not before.

There are five commandments to overcoming sexual addiction that are simple and can be used much like a checklist you put on your wall or mirror at home. Have those you are counseling write down the commandments and check them off if they have done them today, this week, this month, and during the first 90 days. This behavioral checklist for the recovering sexual addict can assure him that he is putting behavior toward recovery, as opposed to simply coming to an understanding about his sexual addiction.

Coming to an understanding is not the

only answer for the addict. He may have been in pain for years, and he may have repeated his behaviors hundreds of times. When the five commandments are put in place, it gives the addict an action plan so he can arrest the addiction he has been struggling with for so long.

These five commandments are: *Pray*: Pray in the morning asking Jesus to keep you free today. *Read*: Read the Bible and read freedom-related material. *Call*: Call someone in your group to check in with during the day. *Meetings*: Attend every meeting possible. *Pray*: Pray in the evening thanking God for keeping you free today.

This checklist will help an addict monitor his behaviors toward recovery. Remind the addict to only believe behaviors when it comes to recovery. Addicts need to understand they shouldn't talk themselves into believing that if they feel free, they are. When they behave free, they will be free.

To recover from sexual addiction, a person must retrain his or her brain to not connect the fantasy world with brain cookies. To stop this biological cycle the sex addict has been involved in—sometimes for as long as 10 to 50 years—he will need a biological reconditioning cycle.

Have the addict place a rubber band on either wrist and when he starts to objectify, fantasize, or have sexually inappropriate

thoughts, snap the rubber band on the inside of his wrist. This sets up a cycle in the brain that says *fantasy=pain* instead of *fantasy=pleasure*. The body is designed to avoid pain, so this will reduce the number of fantasies he has and eventually lessen his sexual thoughts so he can focus on his recovery. An addict can also memorize and quote appropriate Scriptures to strengthen his spirit, but using the rubber band reconditions his brain.

The average person who is consistent with this reconditioning exercise finds about 80 percent of the fantasy lifestyle subsides within the first 30 days. If continued throughout the first 90 days, he will find intruding thoughts are minimal and manageable with other exercises discussed in this interview. This is a great exercise to truly take your thoughts captive. Everyone deserves a clean thought life and a retrained brain, and with consistency, he can have it.

It is also important to help the addict remember what the addiction took from him and its terrible cost to his life and family. This realization can truly be painful and feelings of sadness will accompany this realization. Although at the moment he may not feel this pain and discomfort, there will be days when his addiction will try to get him to forget the cost. If his addiction can

get him to forget this pain and discomfort, it will be easier to talk him into another ride on the sexual-addiction train.

The pain and discomfort of what his addiction has cost him will help him be committed to his recovery. In the hopes of strengthening his recovery and giving him one more tool by which to recover, encourage him to capture this moment of pain to help rescue him in the future. Tell him to use the back of a business card and write the word *cost* at the top, along with what his addiction has cost him and what it could cost him 5 years from now. Tell him to write some notes only he can understand and place this card in his billfold. When his addiction tries to lure him into acting out, tell him to pull out the card and talk back to the addiction. Having the facts puts truth on his side so he can escape a relapse in the future.

There are some resources pastors can recommend to addicts to help with their recovery. *Steps to Freedom: A Christian 12-Step Guide* is a Christian approach to the 12-step program. This book guides the reader through the 12 steps of recovery that have been helpful for many people with addictions. This book is specifically written for the person desiring recovery from sexual addiction. The other helpful resource is *101 Freedom Exercises*:

The brain, as an organ of the body, has no morality. It simply knows that when it gets a rush of what I call brain cookies (or chemicals), it feels good.

—Weiss



Christian Guide for Sex Addiction Recovery. This is the best single resource for the Christian who desires to know what he needs to do to get and stay free from sexual addiction. This book contains 101 exercises that have already helped thousands obtain their freedom from sexual addiction.

There are several other ways pastors can help recovering addicts maintain their recovery between sessions. In the addict's active sexually addicted lifestyle, he rarely thinks of the pain he is causing himself or anyone else. In recovery from sexual addiction, when the addiction talks to the sex addict, it will tell him: a

picture themselves getting picked up by the police. For others, their worst picture is getting kicked out of the house for good, seeing their children's faces when they leave, seeing their spouse cry, hearing a judge say "no visitation privileges," the loss of a job, risking AIDS, or even abortions. These are only a few experiences. Those you are counseling may have one or more painful moments.

Have him write down these experiences, picture them in his mind as vividly as he can, and feel the feelings of pain. Tell him to practice this picture in a public place two to three times a day for 3 days. Rehearsing these images and feelings will

addicts to access many of these technologies and pornography. Several approaches can be used to help protect those who have begun to get caught up in cyber porn. First, they need to place their computer in a public place instead of behind closed doors or away from public accountability. Second, use software that is available to block 90 to 95 percent of the cyber porn. Surf-Watch, Net Nanny, Cyber Patrol, and others are available through most computer stores. People can also use an Internet service provider that filters out sexually related sites. Third, stop using the Internet completely for 30 to 90 days and then install a filtering program to provide a safer environment.

Recovery from sexual addiction has some basic principles that, when applied, help the sexual addict sustain his recovery program.

—Weiss



little bit won't hurt; or who will know?; you can act out just one more time; you are sober enough; it won't affect your recovery. These and many other lies try to maximize the current benefit to him (it feels good) and minimize the long-term effects. (This could be the beginning of a 2- to 10-year binge, and he will lose his marriage, business, and possibly contract a sexually transmitted disease.)

Sexual addiction is crafty. Another tool that has helped recovering addicts to maintain recovery is locking in a negative experience—almost memorizing it. This maximizes the pain and minimizes the pleasure to act out. For some sex addicts, they might

make him ready to beat the addiction when it starts talking to him.

WHAT PRACTICAL THINGS CAN HELP PROTECT PEOPLE FROM HAVING A RELAPSE INTO SEXUAL ADDICTION ON THE INTERNET?

WEISS: Sexual addiction keeps up with technological advances. First there were drawings, then photographs, 8 mm films, videos, and now we have CD ROMS, cyber-sex computer pornography, and even virtual reality sex. These new technologies can be highly addicting and isolating. They need to be addressed for the sex addict.

The Internet provides an outlet for sex

Fourth, if continuing relapses occur, stop using the Internet all together. Fifth, use an E-mail-only Internet service provider.

WHY CAN'T THE ADDICT'S RECOVERY BE CONFINED TO HIS EXPERIENCE AT THE ALTAR? WHY IS THERE A NEED TO INVOLVE OTHERS IN HIS RECOVERY?

WEISS: Some sins are so crippling an addict needs the help of others to be delivered. In 2 Kings 5:9–14, Elisha told Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan and then he would be healed. Naaman did and he was healed. In John 9:1–8, Jesus put mud on the man's eyes and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man did this and

SEXUAL ADDICTION RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR MEN

Steps to Freedom: A Christian 12-Step Guide for Sexual Recovery.

Colorado Springs: Discovery Press, 1997.

The Final Freedom: Pioneering Sexual Addiction Recovery.

Colorado Springs: Discovery Press, 1998.

The Final Freedom Audiotape set.

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Colorado Springs: Discovery Press, 1997.

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RESOURCES FOR WOMEN

Now That I Know What Should I Do? (video).

Partners: Healing From His Addiction. Colorado Springs: Discovery Press, 2001.

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Colorado Springs: Discovery Press, 1996.

How To Love When It Hurts So Bad (workbook and audio).

She Has a Secret: Understanding Female Sexual Addiction. Colorado Springs:

Discovery Press, 2000.

Secret Solutions Workbook.

MATERIALS FOR MARRIAGE AND YOUTH

Intimacy: A 100-Day Guide to Lasting Relationships. Orlando: Siloam Press, 2001.

Pathways to Intimacy (audiotape set).

Good Enough to Wait (video).

The Best Sex of Your Life for Men Only (video).

The Best Sex of Your Life for Women Only (video).

Shepherding Your Son Sexually (video).

VIDEOS FOR COUNSELORS

Passion for Purity.

Ministering to the Sexually Addicted.

Sexual Intercession.

—Doug Weiss, Ph. D.

he was healed. These are two illustrations of how God involves the person needing healing in the process.

Many addicts want a quick fix, but they need to be involved in the process of healing from sexual addiction. Sallie Swisher recently said in the *The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*, "We surveyed 248 counselors . . . regarding their perceptions of the nature and treatment of sexual addiction/compulsivity. A combination of individual and group

therapy was most often suggested. Strategies most often recommended for treatment of sexual addiction included cognitive restructuring, defining behavioral boundaries, empathy, positive self-talk, and recognizing and avoiding high-risk situations." *The Journal of Treatment and Prevention* also reported, "This week more than 40,000 persons will attend a local peer group made up of persons struggling with the consequences of sexually damaging behaviors."

IN SEXUAL ADDICTION, THE ADDICT SEES OTHERS IN A DEMEANING WAY INSTEAD OF THE WAY JESUS SEES THEM. HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THIS?

WEISS: When a sex addict looks at someone in a sexual way, he is objectifying this person. He needs to see this person as someone who has feelings. This individual may have children and/or parents who love her. She may have been badly hurt by someone in the past. She is not a car the sex addict can look at and compare shapes and proportions to determine her value, nor some picture to be scanned into his video world so he can manipulate her into his sexual fantasy world. Pastors need to encourage the addict to pray for others and ask God to protect them, their spouse, and children. This will help the addict put others in a relational context instead of an object context. This prayer may help them break up the fantasy otherwise known as the "bubble" of addiction before it fully forms around him. It may give his mind the freedom to get back to healthier thinking.

Addicts must understand that the individuals they objectify are persons God created. God thinks highly of them. Ask the addict how he, as a father, would feel if he saw someone looking at his precious child in a lewd or sexual manner. Would he not feel sick and then angry? The sex addict must understand that God is the Father of the individual he is looking at, and no matter how attractive that person is, God has feelings about that person. The addict should be taught to pray for others so they will be on the right side of God. **E**

HOW CAN MINISTERS STRUGGLING WITH SEXUAL ADDICTION GET HELP?

WEISS: By visiting our Web site at www.sex-addict.com or calling Heart-to-Heart at: 1-719-278-3708.

E N D N O T E S

1. Patrick Carnes, *Don't Call It Love* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 57.
2. D. Zillman and J. Bryanny, "Pornography's Impact on Sexual Satisfaction," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 18, No. 5 (1988): 438-453.

**Could also apply to women.*

interview

WITH RON MCMANUS

Center for Leadership and Church Development



RON MCMANUS

The need for well-trained pastors and church leaders in the Assemblies of God has never been greater. Ron McManus, president of the new Center for Leadership and Church Development, discusses in this Enrichment interview the long-term benefit of the center to pastors and other church leaders.

WHY DID THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD ESTABLISH THE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH DEVELOPMENT?

McMANUS: We are dealing with a leadership crisis in the Assemblies of God. We need to better prepare pastors to lead churches. No church will grow past its pastor. If we are going to grow churches, we must grow pastors.

Our focus will be on the practical training that pastors desperately need and take it to the next level. Second, we want to give pastors the tools to grow and develop their lay leadership to mobilize a body of believers in every community across this country, impacting these communities and touching people with the power of Jesus Christ. If we can take the 83 percent of our churches that are under 200 and see 50 percent of those churches move to the next level, then we will see a revolution in the Assemblies of God that will touch and impact this country.

WHERE WILL THIS CENTER BE LOCATED?

McMANUS: It is going to be a center without walls that will become a resource for pastors and churches. Pastors and districts can call us to access resources. The center will have a Web site. We exist to serve the ministries at Headquarters that are already in place.

WHAT WILL THE CENTER PROVIDE FOR OUR PASTORS AND CHURCHES?

McMANUS: First, the mission of the center will be dedicated to developing leaders in Assemblies of God churches. The center will provide help in four different areas:

1. We will provide resources for leaders. We will be a clearinghouse for resources that pastors need to help them in their ministry. We will not create all those resources, but pastors can come to us to get information about resources. We will help them know what is the best material on the market in what they need. We will create some resources as well. We want to help pastors know what is available.
2. We will continue to offer conferences and seminars for leaders, pastors in our Fellowship, district leaders, and Headquarters leadership growth and

development. We want to strengthen the leadership of our Fellowship and churches.

3. We exist as a catalyst to the vision process for the Assemblies of God in the next 10 years. We will be involved in the strategic planning process with our leadership and will also resource our districts by helping them lay out a plan for growth and development of their pastors and churches over 5 or 10 years.

4. We will focus on church health and growth. We will be involved in the

umbrella for everything related to church health, church growth, and church leadership development.

WHAT LED YOU INTO THIS MINISTRY?

McMANUS: I served at Headquarters leading the workers training program for the Assemblies of God for 7 years. This is where my passion for leadership training in the local church began. In 1981, I accepted a pastorate in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, a church with about 250 people. There I began to

life of a pastor. I have a passion to place tools in the hands of pastors that took me years to learn. Many pastors drop out of the ministry because of the high level of frustration. Many pastors feel they are inadequately prepared to do what they are doing.

Last year I left Equip to have a broader role with the INJOY Group, another ministry by John Maxwell. I work with denominations to help them revitalize and turn themselves around. I've been working with our Fellowship

We will focus on church health and growth. We will be involved in the revitalization of churches and church ministries. —McManus



revitalization of churches and church ministries. We will facilitate the plateaued and declining churches of our Fellowship to turn those churches around.

WHEN WILL THE CENTER BEGIN ITS MINISTRY?

McMANUS: The center will be launched in September 2002. We have been working with districts with the Foundations of Leadership program for 4 years. We will expand from what we've already done. We also plan to connect the various ministries at Headquarters with our districts and churches—from church planting to revitalization to leadership development. The center will be a catalyst for what everyone is doing, forming an

implement what I believe are the biblical principles for church growth and development. For 16 years we worked that plan and learned a great deal about church health and church growth. When I left 4 years ago, the congregation numbered about 3,000.


I left my pastorate to lead a ministry begun by John Maxwell called Equip, a nonprofit ministry dedicated to training and equipping leaders. We train leaders internationally, in the urban centers of America, and on college and seminary campuses. We come alongside pastors and churches to help them to effectively do what God has called them to do.

For a long time I felt there are some keys that can make a difference in the

and other Pentecostal groups to help them with the growth and development of their churches and pastors.

HOW CAN SOMEONE RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTER?

McMANUS: They can call my office at Headquarters. We will soon have a Web site: leadership.ag.org.

We will also sponsor regional leadership conferences around the country. The Web site will give information on that also. 

An abridged version of this interview first appeared in the December 30, 2001, Pentecostal Evangel. Hal Donaldson, editor in chief of the Evangel, conducted the interview.

Living in the Presence of God: A Theology of Spiritual Formation

B Y E D G A R R . L E E

What the minister does is an urgent and important matter. Misguided and uninformed activity, even if sincere and energetic, will quickly put a promising career on the rocks. With these dangers in mind, pastoral theology and professional training are designed to prepare the minister to do the right things with reverence, dignity, and competence. Modern leadership theory and administrative training have also been a boon in preparing men and women for Christian service. Without doubt, clergy are better educated than ever to undertake the multifaceted challenges of modern ministry.

Prior to the question of what the minister does, and how he or she does it, should be the question of who the minister is. Is there a mature Christian spirituality at the minister's very core that gives meaning, purpose, and a sense of direction to all that must be done? Is he consciously a man of God, or is she a good example of a woman of God? Do ministers go about their work with a sense of the presence of God in all they do?

As we work to upgrade the professional education and skills of the minister, we must give renewed attention to his or her spiritual formation. A basic approach is to focus anew on the nature of the meaning of the presence of God in the life of the Christian in general, and the minister in particular.

BIBLICAL PRECEDENTS

Great and godly leaders in Scripture had a profound sense of living and serving in the presence of God. Moses, faced with the daunting challenge of leading his immature nation through difficult

and unforgiving terrain to a yet unseen Promised Land, implored God, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us?" (Exodus 33:15,16).^{*} "Presence" in this passage is the Hebrew word *panim*, that literally means "face." This is a picturesque way of depicting God's favor and nearness. Moses' relationship with God was so personal and intimate that Exodus gives us this striking memory, "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend" (33:11). In fact, Moses' face became radiant from exposure to the divine glory and had to be veiled as he moved among the people (34:29).

New Testament leaders also had a distinct sense of the presence of God. Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God; Paul was caught up to paradise for one of his many revelations from the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:1–4). Confident of God's work through his own person, Paul wrote to the Romans that he longed to "impart . . . some spiritual gift" to make them strong (Romans 1:11). In closing this letter, he added, "I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ" (15:29). To the Corinthians, he preached "with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Corinthians 2:4). As an apostle, he was, on the one hand, conscious of being weak, but on the other, aware of Christ's power in him (2 Corinthians 12:9). The aroma of his Damascus Road experience lingered throughout his life and ministry (Acts 9:1–9). Where Paul was present as a gifted and yielded

vessel, God was also present and working in a special way.

Moses and Paul were called and gifted for powerful prophetic ministries unique to their periods of salvation history. They exercised certain foundational and revelational prerogatives we do not—and should not—expect. However, much of their example is to be imitated, their teachings are to be put into practice in life and ministry, and their passion to know and please God is communicable. Inspired by their longing for the presence of God, we can examine Scripture to see what may be legitimate expectations for God's presence in our own lives and ministries in the 21st century.

A REGENERATING PRESENCE

Our first knowledge of the abiding presence of God comes through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. As unbelievers, we "were dead in . . . transgressions and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) and estranged from the presence of God. While we were conscious from time to time of His inner conviction, the Spirit first entered our lives at our confession of sin and acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior. Jesus taught Nicodemus, and us, that it is necessary to be "born again" by the work of the Holy Spirit: "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:6). The Holy Spirit moved supernaturally within the body of the Virgin Mary to conceive Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 1:18,20; Luke 1:35). The same Spirit, who is the actualizing presence of God in our lives, acts within the human person who trusts Jesus as Savior to effect new birth.

Paul's language of God's presence and work in the Christian life is similar to that of Jesus. He, too, spoke of a regenerative work of God termed a "washing of rebirth" (*palingenesis*) and renewal (*anakainōsis*) by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). Peter wrote about it in his letter and likewise described it as "new birth" (*anagennao*) into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). Paul shifted the metaphor in the Corinthian correspondence, but spoke of the same reality when he described believers as "a new creation" (*kainē ktisis*) (2 Corinthians 5:17). As new, regenerate persons, the Spirit, who gives us spiritual birth, is resident within.

AN ANOINTING PRESENCE

Christians often use the word anointed to denote that certain persons have an apparent touch of God on their lives enabling them to preach and teach, or even pray for people in a way that brings a sense of God's presence and activity on their behalf. In keeping with Old Testament precedent, anointing may denote God's commissioning and

from Old Testament precedent, use it for setting apart (ordaining) apostles or other Christian workers for ministry. Rather, the idea of anointing shifts from that of a chosen few to that of an anointing for every believer. Paul used the verb *chriō* only one time and in precisely this sense, "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed (*chriō*) us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 1:21,22). Thus every believer is anointed. John also used "anointing" to describe the Spirit's work in every believer, but emphasized the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit to bring truth and certainty. "But you have an anointing (the noun, *chrisma*) from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth" (1 John 2:20). Then he added, "the anointing (*chrisma*) you received from him remains in you . . . his anointing (*chrisma*) teaches you about all things" (2:27). In several ways, the New Testament reminds us that all believers, including those called to ministerial leadership, have an anointing from God

(Matthew 3:16), the "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9), or the "Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19)—and dwelling continuously in His people who have become His physical tents. Theologically, we need to remember that where one member of the Triune Godhead is, the others are present also. Their personalities are distinct, but not separable in the human sense of separate persons.

Paul expressed the reality of God's indwelling presence as the everyday language of living in a house. He wrote to the Romans, "the Spirit . . . is living (*oikeō* 'to live in a house') in you" (Romans 8:11). Making the point even more dramatic, Paul pointed out to the Corinthians "you . . . are God's temple (*naos*) and . . . God's spirit lives (*oikeō*) in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16; cf. 6:19). Paul could have chosen the word *hieron* that speaks of the entire temple complex with its various courts and subsidiary structures. However, he chose *naos*, the word that denotes the very temple itself, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place where the shekinah, the glory cloud of God's presence, dwelt. He is powerfully expressing the reality that God's presence lives continuously in believers both as individuals and as a corporate body.

Inspired by their longing for the presence of God, we can examine Scripture to see what may be legitimate expectations for God's presence in our own lives and ministries in the 21st century.

equipping of a person for special service. Thus, Jesus announced to His neighbors in Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed (the verb, *chriō*) me to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). Just as Samuel anointed David and the Holy Spirit came upon him in power (1 Samuel 16:13), Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit to begin His own ministry of preaching and demonstrable works of power (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32–34; Acts 10:38).

The verb *chriō*, "to anoint," is nearly always used of Jesus (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; Hebrews 1:9). New Testament writers do not, as might be expected

associated with the arrival and continuing presence of the Holy Spirit.

AN INDWELLING PRESENCE

There is an incarnational principle at work in Christian faith. John reported of Jesus, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling (*skenoo*) among us" (John 1:14). The verb that John chose under the Spirit's guidance means "to live in a tent." God chose to dwell for a time in a normal human body among other human beings, fallen though they were. Now absent in body since His ascension, Jesus is present in the person of the Holy Spirit—who just as easily can be called the "Spirit of God"

AN AFFIRMING PRESENCE

A theological tradition given to thinking about God in terms more rationalistic than devotional frequently misses, or devalues, a basic scriptural truth. When believers trust in Christ and receive Him into their lives, He convincingly communicates to them that what Scripture describes is indeed occurring within them. His presence is not some ethereal reality that cannot be sensed in a meaningful way. As Paul described it to the Romans, "you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:15,16). We know that we are Christians not merely by conformity to an historic tradition; we also know it in a warmly personal and assuring way

because of the very real presence of Christ by His Spirit in the inner sanctuary of our lives.

Scripture refers to this reality in other ways as well. Thus, Paul, in writing the Corinthian and Ephesian letters, talked about the way in which God and/or Christ anointed us and sealed us with His Spirit, who is placed in our hearts as a “deposit” (*arrhabōn*, ‘pledge’ or ‘guarantee’), “guaranteeing what is to come” or, “guaranteeing our inheritance” (2 Corinthians 1:21,22; Ephesians 1:13,14). Paul deliberately used the word *arrhabōn* in both texts. While he is certainly describing a divinely accomplished reality above and beyond whatever human emotions that action may engender, this is nonetheless a real presence of the Spirit that powerfully affirms the faith of the believer.

A SANCTIFYING PRESENCE

The Spirit also has an important role in effecting sanctification in the believer. In Paul’s words to the fractious and occasionally loose-living Corinthians: “But you were washed, you were sanctified (*hagiazō*), you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). The activity of the Spirit in sanctification occurs too frequently in the New Testament to be overlooked. The Gentiles, for example, are to be an “offering acceptable to God, sanctified (*hagiazō*) by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:16). To the Thessalonians, the Apostle wrote, “God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying (*hagiasmos*) work of the Spirit” (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Peter reminded his charges that they were “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work (*hagiasmos*) of the Spirit” (1 Peter 1:2).

While some may be tempted to obscure these passages by interpreting them as an objective, juridical act of God in which He declares us to be sanctified—and God does view us that way in Christ—they make it clear that the Holy Spirit has worked and is working to effect in us a meaningful separation

from sin and dedication to God. The Spirit has a well-defined role in convicting humankind of sin (John 16:8) and leading God’s people to the Truth (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20). It is He who gives us that inner sense of well-being with God that follows confession and forgiveness.

AN ENERGIZING PRESENCE

A major focus of Jesus’ instructions to His disciples is their need of power for service. Jesus reiterated the Gospel promises of baptism in the Holy Spirit with the assurance that the moment of fulfillment was near, “For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5; cf. Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). Jesus also associated Spirit-baptism with the power (*dunamis*) required to be His “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The dramatic events of the Day of Pentecost fulfilled the promise as God the Holy Spirit came to the temple of His waiting people, attested by the phenomena of theophany: the sound of a violent wind and the appearance of tongues of fire (Acts 2:1–3). The 120 “began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled (*apophthengomai*) them” (Acts 2:4). The verb translated “enabled” denotes prophetic inspiration and indicates the internal presence of the Spirit quickening their speech.

This same power moved Peter to deliver his sermon (the verb *apophthengomai* is also used in 2:14 where it is translated “addressed”) and explain that what people are seeing and hearing is the fulfillment of Joel’s promise of an eschatological outpouring of God’s Spirit that would enable His sons and daughters to prophesy. Luke understood that such activities as speaking in tongues and witnessing for Christ, among others, are expressions of that prophetic promise. God’s indispensable power and presence, without which they cannot successfully serve, has come to His people.

It is apparent from Scripture that the

power Jesus spoke about is not an impersonal force. Rather, it flows from God who is himself present in the human psyche by the Holy Spirit. The personal side of the divine presence is also seen in Jesus’ promises in the Gospel of John, that He would send “another Counselor (*parakletos*) to be with you [the disciples] forever—the Spirit of truth . . . he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16,17). The future tense “will be in you” is undoubtedly an expectation of Pentecost. Paul was gifted for ministry “through the working of his power” (Ephesians 3:7) and prayed that all his readers might know “his incomparably great power for us who believe” (Ephesians 1:19).

A CHARISMATIC PRESENCE

Despite a host of biblical references to God’s power and activity, the potential of the Holy Spirit’s presence is neglected in many circles. God desires to work through responsible human beings by His Holy Spirit. Gideon, a reluctant and rather unlikely Old Testament hero, is illustrative. As the biblical account puts it, “the Spirit of the Lord [Yahweh] came upon Gideon” (Judges 6:34). Only then did Gideon achieve his astounding victories over Israel’s oppressors. The translation “the Spirit . . . came upon Gideon” is not inaccurate, but it fails to convey the power of the Hebrew verb *lābash*, which means “dress” or “be clothed.” This verb suggests that the Spirit of the Lord clothed himself with Gideon. When the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in His people, it is power that flows from the personal presence of the Almighty within them.

In the New Testament, while the Holy Spirit may work sovereignly apart from any human instrumentality, the Spirit’s power is usually transmitted through the church by means of the gifts of the Spirit. After Pentecost, believers found themselves in a church, newly equipped with a full range of spiritual gifts enabling both the Twelve and others to do extraordinary things in their witness for Christ. They provided wise leadership (Acts 6:1–6), delivered

inspired and powerful sermons and public apologies (Acts 4:8ff.; 6:10), worked dramatic healings (Acts 8:7; 14:8–10), gave accurate prophecies about the future (Acts 20:23; 21:4,10,11), and performed many signs and wonders (Acts 2:43; 5:12–16; 6:8; 8:6,13; 19:11,12). The ministry of the church may even be said to be charismatic since it relies on the charismata, the gifts of the Spirit.

Paul provided a rationale for the Spirit's charismatic ministry by giving several lists of charismata in his letters (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:8–11; Ephesians 4:11; cf. 1 Peter 4:10,11). These lists are apparently not intended to be comprehensive. Music and craftsmanship, for example, are not found. Among the charismata, Paul identified “miraculous” gifts that are by very nature spontaneous and occasional (1 Corinthians 12:8–11). He also included as charismata the more “ordinary” gifts that are resident and constant in believers as teaching, serving, acts of mercy, administration, and so forth (Romans 12:6–8). Paul made it clear that the Holy Spirit sovereignly gives one or more of these gifts to every believer (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10,11)—both clergy and laypersons—for the work of the ministry. The Spirit both gives the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7) and energizes them in their operation (1 Corinthians 12:6). Where the presence of the Spirit is cherished, He will illuminate and activate His gifts.

A FRUITFUL PRESENCE

The presence of God in the believer also has to do with fruitfulness. Using common images of the vineyards through which He and His disciples regularly passed, Jesus taught, “If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit” (John 15:5). He undoubtedly is thinking of both the fruitfulness of a maturing, godly character and the fruitfulness of their witness; the immediate context puts a great deal of emphasis on obedience to His commands and love for both God and neighbor. Not surprisingly, Paul connects fruitfulness in

character development with the indwelling wisdom and energy of the Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22,23).

In the Ephesian letter, there is an imperative for believers to be “filled with the Spirit” with striking results of charismatic praise and worship, as well as a lifestyle of gratitude and submission (Ephesians 5:18–21) that ripples throughout society (Ephesians 5:22 through 6:9). A parallel passage in Colossians says much the same thing, but there notes that it is the “word of Christ” that dwells in us richly so we can wisely teach and admonish one another in Spirit-filled praise and worship. To have the Spirit of God filling us is also to be engaging the Word of God that is constantly directing us toward true worship, more loving service, and greater conformity to the will of God in all relationships.

Jesus, in His vine and branches imagery, made it clear that even the fruitful branch vitally joined to the vine must continue to be pruned “so that it will be even more fruitful” (John 15:2). Fruitfulness and sanctification go hand in hand. They are two sides of the same coin. The Spirit of God as the agent of the Great Gardener of the church is always attempting to apply the Word of God and prune away the dead branches of sinful thoughts, attitudes, and acts so the divine life can produce more fruit.

A REVELATORY PRESENCE

The presence of God in the person of His Spirit implies self-disclosure. What the Triune God first reveals is himself. The Creator wishes to be known by the creature and to have His ways known and imitated. To this end, Paul prayed that the readers of the Ephesian letter “may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you [they] may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”

(Ephesians 3:18,19). He also asked that God would “fill you [the Colossians] with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Colossians 1:9).

Wisdom and knowledge are an essential part of what God reveals to His children, and this language is often found in the New Testament. “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better,” Paul wrote (Ephesians 1:17). Significantly, Paul made reference in that passage to the three persons of the Godhead, all of whom are purposeful in their oft-stated desire to know and be known by men and women.

Those filled with the Spirit of God may also be privy to supernaturally given insight that guides Christians in their personal and corporate journey on behalf of the people of God. Peter apparently knew supernaturally that Ananias and Sapphira had lied to the Holy Spirit in misrepresenting their gift to the church. Certainly, he could not otherwise have predicted that their deaths would follow (5:1–11). An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip directing him to the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26). The Lord spoke to Ananias of Damascus in a vision telling him about the newly converted Saul of Tarsus and instructing him to pray for his healing (9:10–19). Similarly, Peter, after receiving a puzzling vision, was dispatched by the Spirit to the house of Cornelius (10:1–23). The scriptural examples of such communication may be multiplied many times over.

Spirit-filled persons may also be recipients of particular inspiration for their worship gatherings. Common to the Corinthian contributions was what Paul termed on three occasions a “revelation” (1 Corinthians 14:6,26,30), obviously something the Holy Spirit directly communicated through them for the edification of the church. It is important to point out that these revelations were not intended to have the status of Scripture, but were instead to be tested

by Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:29,37). We understand them to be subordinate revelation, but they are nonetheless authentic communications by the Spirit to the local gathering of the people of God for their immediate guidance and edification. For example, Paul reports he went to Jerusalem to address the thorny issue of Jewish/Gentile relationships in response to a “revelation (*apokalupsis*)” (Galatians 2:2). The Spirit was present and active all through the Acts narrative granting knowledge, wisdom, and direction to the efforts of the Early Church (cf. Acts 8:26; 10:9–23; 13:2; 15:28).

A PRAYING PRESENCE

The Holy Spirit within us has a special affinity for prayer. “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests,” Paul wrote (Ephesians 6:18). He used the same phraseology when discussing praying in tongues, “I will pray with my spirit . . .” (1 Corinthians 14:15). Toward the end of the biblical canon, Jude inserted this reminder, “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith

of spiritual disciplines in which the Spirit can energize our prayers. The converse to Jude’s exhortation is plain. If we do not pray in the Spirit, we do not build ourselves up in our most holy faith.

A DEPARTING PRESENCE

One of the most sober and unforgettable scenes in the Old Testament is Ezekiel’s vision of the glory of God departing from the temple in Jerusalem. The sin of “the house of Israel and Judah” had become so great that it could indeed be said, “The Lord has forsaken the land” (Ezekiel 9:9). As Ezekiel observed, the glory of the Lord rose from above the cherubim in the Most Holy Place and moved to the threshold of the temple (10:4). Then as the cherubim took wing, the glory of the Lord rose from the threshold, sat above the cherubim, and moved away to the east (10:18,19), not to return until the time of renewal and restoration (43:1–5).


The presence of God is a holy presence. The one who lives within is the Holy Spirit, and He is not comfortable with sinful thoughts, attitudes, or acts.

3:22–30; Luke 12:10), apparently with immediate reference to the way His opponents were ascribing His work to the evil one. In the aftermath of his sin with Bathsheba, David was terror-stricken at the prospect of the Spirit’s departure from his life: “Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11).

CONCLUSION

In an affluent, upwardly mobile society such as that of 21st-century America, a growing professionalism in the Christian ministry is inevitable. At its best, such professionalism implies that ministers are well-educated in their theological tradition, well-trained in the professional skills needed for their work, and guided by a high standard of ethics. Mastery of the science of leadership and cultivation of the requisite relational skills will enable us to respond to societal trends and grow larger and healthier churches. Surely Pentecostal ministers ought to be consummate professionals.

Healthy professionalism, sadly, can degenerate into what is often called the professionalization of the ministry. That term is frequently used to denote that clergy have learned well how to manage the institutional church but have lost the reality of God’s presence. They may almost unwittingly crowd out the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit and merely maintain a “form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:5).

A healthy antidote to sterile professionalization is what the 17th-century Christian mystic, Brother Lawrence, called “the practice of the presence of God.” Scripture provides a dynamic theology of God’s presence. We pray that the Holy Spirit will use these truths, ignite a passion for God, and make His presence a powerful and communicable reality that will transform our ministries. 

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

As we work to upgrade the professional education and skills of the minister, we must give renewed attention to his or her spiritual formation.

and pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20). The Spirit also helps us in our weaknesses by His personal intercession for us with “groans that words cannot express” (Romans 8:26), which many understand to be our fervent prayer in tongues.

The Spirit will not by himself create a vibrant prayer life. There is the anticipation of cooperation from the human side. As Jude put it, “build yourselves up in your most holy faith.” While the Spirit is poised to assist, even moving us toward prayer, it is quite clear that Jude calls for responsibility and initiative on our part. Much as Jesus regularly sought a place of prayer (Luke 4:42; 6:12; 9:18), we must create and maintain a pattern

In the Old Testament, great leaders learned, to their sorrow, that the presence of God could be withdrawn. Samson, after repeated immoral acts and betrayal of his Nazarite vow, found in the heat of battle that “the Lord had left him” (Judges 16:20). The epitaph of Saul’s reign is, “Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him” (1 Samuel 16:14). New Testament writers remind us that the Spirit of God may be lied to (Acts 5:3), resisted (Acts 7:51), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19, KJV), and insulted (Hebrews 10:29). Jesus also spoke of the possibility of blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:32; Mark

And He Gave Some To Be Pastors....

BY ANTHONY D. PALMA

Surprisingly, the word “pastor” (Greek: *poimēn*), when used of a human spiritual leader, occurs only once in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11). Yet today, it is commonly used for a minister of the gospel, and especially for the spiritual leader of a congregation. I suggest several reasons why the word does not occur frequently in the New Testament. This article will deal with most of them.

1. The word *poimēn* means “shepherd.” Since shepherds were so common in the biblical world and in the Scriptures, first-century readers would have no problem making the transition to a metaphorical and spiritual application of the word.

2. God himself in the Old Testament, and Jesus in the New Testament, are portrayed as spiritual shepherds. By application and implication, virtually all that is said about them as shepherds serves as a model for the New Testament pastor.

is said of one would be applicable to the others. The New Testament has much to say about the last two terms.

OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

Beginning with Abel (Genesis 4:2), shepherds are a common figure in the Old Testament. It is not surprising, then, that the Old Testament often portrays God as the Shepherd of His people¹ and the people as His flock.² The overall picture of God’s activities in relation to His flock includes providing shelter, watering, feeding, leading, caring for, watching over, rescuing and gathering them, protecting them, bringing back the strays, and carrying lambs in His bosom. The general picture that emerges is that God’s people are completely dependent on Him for their existence and welfare.

Of prominent Old Testament shepherds who became leaders of God’s people, such as Moses (Exodus 2:15-3:1) and Amos (Amos 7:15), the one of

shepherds (Luke 2:8-11). Very appropriately, Jesus, the promised Davidic shepherd, was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. Almost unnoticed in the Nativity account is a portrayal of Jesus as Shepherd. Matthew, quoting from Micah 5:2, calls Jesus the one “who will be the shepherd [*poimaino*, the verb form of *poimēn*] of my people Israel” (Matthew 2:6, NIV).³ It was common for “pastors” in biblical times to picture a ruler as a shepherd, so the term sometimes had a dual meaning.

This dual meaning applies to the return of Jesus. The verb *poimaino* occurs three times in the Book of Revelation in relation to Jesus. Paradoxically, the Lamb “shall be their shepherd [literally, ‘shall shepherd them’], and shall guide them to springs of the water of life” (7:17). He will “rule [literally, ‘shepherd’] all the nations with a rod of iron” (12:5; 19:15, NASB).⁴

The Gospels present Jesus as the consummate Shepherd who has compassion on shepherdless sheep (Matthew 9:36); goes after lost sheep (Luke 15:4); reaches out for sheep not of His fold (John 10:16); recognizes and calls His sheep by name (verse 3); leads them (verse 3); and lays down His life for them (verses 11,15,17). In this last connection, He may be called the smitten Shepherd (Matthew 26:31; compare Zechariah 13:7). And in portraying himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14), it seems Jesus is contrasting himself with the worthless shepherds of Israel described by Ezekiel (34:1-10).

Jesus is also called the Great (*megas*) Shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:20) and the One Shepherd (John 10:16; compare Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24). Peter

A chief duty of a pastor is to nurture and feed the flock by teaching and expounding the Word of God.

3. Though the word *pastor* occurs only once, numbers of New Testament passages use words and thoughts that relate specifically to the qualities and work of this spiritual leader.

4. The consensus of New Testament scholars is that the terms *pastor*, *overseer/bishop* (*episkopos*), and *elder/presbyter* (*presbyteros*) are virtually synonymous and interchangeable. What

special significance is David (Psalm 78:70-72). The coming Messiah, depicted as a shepherd, will be a descendant of David (Ezekiel 34:23; 37:22,24).

JESUS THE SHEPHERD

In New Testament times, shepherds were not highly regarded. It is surprising, therefore, that the angel’s announcement of Jesus’ birth was made to lowly

calls Jesus the chief Shepherd (*archipōimēn*—1 Peter 5:4). These designations suggest that Jesus must be the example for all pastors (that is, spiritual shepherds) to follow.

An unusual combination of terms calls Jesus “the Shepherd and Guardian [*episkopos*]” of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). The phrase could be translated Guardian-Shepherd. *Episkopos* is often translated as bishop or overseer; it can involve the ideas of watching over and protecting. This pair of terms has special significance when applied to leaders in the church, since both Paul and Peter emphasize these two aspects of the ministry.

PAUL AND PASTORS

In the leadership gifts the ascended Christ gave to the Church, Paul speaks of “pastors and teachers [*tous poimenas kai didaskalous*]” (Ephesians 4:11). Equally competent scholars debate whether Paul is speaking of two distinct callings or whether he means something like “teacher-pastors.” A chief duty of a pastor is to nurture and feed the flock by teaching and

to “be on guard . . . for all the flock” (NASB). But the fuller statement is, “Be on guard for yourselves and for

as overseers” (NKJV, NIV). Jude, by contrast, speaks of ungodly leaders who are men “caring for [*poimainō*] themselves”

What God requires of leaders in the church, He himself has demonstrated throughout Scripture.

all the flock.” The well-being of the flock depends on the well-being of the shepherd.


PETER AND PASTORS

Jesus’ interchange with Peter recorded in John 21:15–17 is worthy of considerable study, but we restrict ourselves to the elements related directly to this topic. Jesus commanded Peter to both feed (*boskō*—verses 15,17) and to shepherd (*poimainō*—verse 16) the flock. It seems that Jesus went from a specific function of the spiritual shepherd (feeding) to the more inclusive function of tending to the needs of the flock. The objects of His care are called both the Lord’s lambs (*arnia*—verse 15)

(verses 12,13) and who will come under divine judgment. Peter, on the other hand, points to the Chief Shepherd who will reward His faithful undershepherds (1 Peter 5:4).

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Those serving in a pastoral role do well to remember that the sheep are God’s flock (Acts 20:28) and that Jesus referred to this flock as “my lambs” and “my sheep” (John 21:15–17). The undershepherd’s love for the Lord will express itself in faithfully taking care of the Lord’s flock.

What God requires of leaders in the church, He himself has demonstrated throughout Scripture. What more noble examples for the pastor to follow than those of the chief shepherds of the Old and New Testaments? 

The undershepherd’s love for the Lord will express itself in faithfully taking care of the Lord’s flock.

expounding the Word of God. This is why a distinctive qualification of an elder is that he be “able to teach [*didaktikos*]” (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:24, NIV). Other translations or interpretations of the word include “a skilled teacher,” “skillful in teaching,” “competent to teach,” and “apt to teach.”

When Paul addressed the Ephesian men at Miletus, he brought together the three interchangeable concepts of pastor, elder, and overseer. In Acts 20:17, the men are called elders. Paul tells them that the Holy Spirit has made them overseers of the flock, which they are to shepherd (verse 28). We note that Paul here exhorts them

and His sheep (*probata*—verses 16,17). I do not think Jesus meant for Peter or for us to determine some profound difference between His lambs and His sheep. The change is for literary, stylistic reasons.⁵

Peter surely had this incident in mind when he exhorted “the elders among you” to “be shepherds of God’s flock,” calling on them to do it voluntarily, with eagerness, not for sordid gain, and not “lording it over” the flock (1 Peter 5:1–3, NIV). Some of the best manuscripts include in verse 2 the participle *episkopountes*, a verb form of *episkopos*, translated as “exercising oversight” (updated NASB) or “serving

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E N D N O T E S

1. Genesis 48:15; 49:24; Psalm 23:1; 80:1; Ezekiel 34:11,12.
2. Psalm 28:9; 74:1; 77:20; 78:52,53; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; Isaiah 40:11; 49:9; Jeremiah 13:17; 23:2,3; 50:19; Ezekiel 34:31; Micah 7:14; Zechariah 10:3.
3. Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.
4. This last concept applies also to overcomers (Revelation 2:26,27).
5. This may also be true of the use of the two verbs for “feed” and “shepherd,” and probably is also true of the two synonyms for the word “love” in this context—*agapaō* and *phileo*.

Are You a Victim of the Curse of Cynicism?

BY RICHARD L. DRESSELSHAUS

Cynicism is a sickness of the spirit that is epidemic. It strikes the seasoned saints—the ones who have given so much, those who have served with distinction, and on whom the church has depended.

Let's check on the history of this debilitating and destructive malady of the human spirit. Interestingly, the record reaches back to our first parents.

Do you remember the serpent's question: "Did God really say . . . ?" It's the sarcasm, the insult, the curl of his lips, and his blatant arrogance that betrays the insidious approach. Let your imagination go for a moment. Is it adding too much to reconstruct what the serpent might have been thinking as he posed the question? *Sure, Eve, I know all about this God. I once worked for Him. In fact, I elbowed my way clear to the top. I was in the inner circle, so I really know what He's like. In fact, I once heard Him say, "I . . . am a jealous God." And at another time: "You shall have no other gods before me." No, ma'am, I've gotten too close to the top. I've seen too much. He's*

question, the tone of voice, the suspicion and sarcasm, the offensive arrogance. May we let our imagination go again: *Oh, if you just knew our brother like we do. He looks best from a distance. You get too close, and you discover his lust for power—he's got to be in control. Yes, we've just seen too much.*

Absalom is another case in point. Listen to his revealing conversation as he stands by the city gate and competes with his father for the affections of all Israel: "What town are you from . . . look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to help you. If I were appointed judge in the land . . ." It's the same thing all over again. It's the way he said it—the sneer and glee, the snide and demeaning mannerisms, the way he tossed his hair, the sarcasm, the arrogance. I think I can fill in the blanks on this one as well: *If you just knew Dad like I do. You see, I know all about the shenanigans in the palace. If you only knew. It's best to stay clear of good ol' Dad . . .*

foolish talk about a Kingdom. The Messianic boasts. The God-playing. You just don't know Him from up close. It's the sneaky way He speaks. The disgusting smile. The betrayal, conniving, sarcasm, and unfathomable arrogance.

That's enough history. Yes, cynicism is written over its very pages. As Webster's describes it, cynicism includes a distrust of the motives and sincerity of others. Our brief review of witnesses, though hardly exhaustive, makes the point. The disease of cynicism is deadly—terribly so.

Cynicism is the soil in which the root of bitterness grows. It is the malady of the soul that eats away at authentic spirituality. It is the disease of the spirit that neutralizes impact, steals joy, invalidates witness, and puts faithful servants on the shelf of uselessness.

This is the plague that strikes the insiders—the persons with longevity. Those who have given so much. Good people. People with a big heart. But sadly, people who now have become obsessed with the sincerity and motives of others.

Sour. Bitter. Disillusioned. Cynicism has done its deadly work. Conceived in hell, the spirit of cynicism strips away every vestige of blessing from the life of a saint.

One note of clarification. There is a kind of "playful cynicism," or "well-intended sarcasm" that is innocent enough. This explains why the readers of leadership journals never miss the cartoons. They are designed to help us laugh at ourselves in a positive and uplifting way. "A cheerful heart is good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22*). It is good to laugh at ourselves. It is the

**I know of nothing more
hazardous, destructive, debilitating, and
deadly than cynicism.**

got a huge ego problem. No, never again. I've had it.

Then, there is that most shocking and unbelievable attack against the leadership of Moses by his own kin, Miriam and Aaron: "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" It's the very same thing—the way they put the

One final witness. Listen to Judas Iscariot: "The ointment could have been sold and given to the poor. . . ." "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over . . ." "Greetings, Rabbi!" But there is more—if we just let loose our imagination: *You see, I'm an insider. I've seen it all. The monetary waste. The*

emotional release consistent with a healthy life.

But I'm talking about something else. "Oh, yes, I was once a vital part of the church. You could count on me to be present at every service, take my turn at any task, and support the work of the church in every way. But was I ever thanked? Appreciated? Honored? Of course not. And further, I think I just got too close to the inside. I saw all the

walk in truth. Their world is distorted and confused: "I've thought this for a long time, and now I know it's true." Conjecture, suspicion, and emotion become reality. What a dreadful eclipse of truth.

4. Cynicism feeds on accumulated grievances and perceived inequities. Here is the lingo: "I've just heard and seen too much. Been too close to the

If you watch any person long enough, even the most saintly, you will eventually be disappointed.

inequities, the weaknesses, and the hypocrisies. So, don't count on me. I've just seen too much."

I know of nothing more hazardous, destructive, debilitating, and deadly than cynicism. Again, it is the soil in which the root of bitterness grows. It is the vicious and insatiable thief of the believer's joy.

HOW DOES CYNICISM WORK?

What really goes on in the heart and mind of the cynic?

1. Cynicism shifts the focus from God to people. Here's a sure prediction: Take your eyes off Jesus Christ, and in time you will turn into a cynic. A preoccupation with the motives and sincerity of others will become for you an obsession. Here is a deadly shift in focus that poisons the human spirit.

2. Cynicism puts service to God on a compensatory basis. Cynics look for a payoff. They are takers—not givers. They watch out for No. 1. They look for commendations and honor. They are easily slighted, and then offense becomes a way of life.

3. Cynicism elevates suspicion to reality. Cynics question the sincerity and motives of others and then equate their suspicions with reality. Cynics refuse to

top. I suppose it's the buildup over time." For the cynic, the slightest perceived infraction becomes a cause for offense. Here is a downward spiral that feeds on itself until there is no longer a clear sense of reality.

5. Cynicism is a slippery slope that leads to spiritual defeat at every level. Here is the dreadful formula: A little pride, a little arrogance, a little suspicion, a little bitterness, a little sarcasm, and soon the insidious arm of cynicism has put a death grip on the spirit. Every aspect of life and service then becomes

choked and poisoned by the ravages of this deadly disease. Subtly and treacherously, it draws the very lifeblood from its victims.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

What is the remedy for this devastating peril?

1. Keep your eyes on Jesus. As a boy working on an Iowa farm, I learned the only way to plow a straight furrow was to pick out a tree at the far end of the field and never take my eyes from it. The power of cynicism is broken by a steady and sure focus of affection on Jesus Christ.

2. Don't put your expectations on people. If you watch any person long enough, even the most saintly, you will eventually be disappointed. Only Jesus is worthy of emulation. He alone can stand the scrutiny of every observation and never disappoint.

3. Get your affirmation from the impact of an obedient life. Cynicism and obedience are antithetical. A life nurtured by obedience will never yield to cynicism, sarcasm, and any of its deadly allies. Its joy and fulfillment will be found in humble and purposeful obedience.



"And this is Dick Bishop. He's our expert multimedia coordinator."

4. Learn to spot cynicism in its infancy. Keep an eye out for the very first evidence of a spirit of cynicism. Nip it in the bud. Refuse to let it take root in your heart. Renounce it before it can fasten its grip on your spirit. Do it resolutely in Jesus' name.

Over my years of pastoral ministry, I have watched the spread of this deadly disease among the people of God. I have watched children's workers yield

Lord gradually become consumed and obsessed by the perceived insincerity and ill motives of others. Impact and influence are forfeited. They are victims of the curse of cynicism.

I could go on—and so could you—with the sad and tragic list of those who have succumbed to the ravages of cynicism, and in doing so, have forfeited the positive influence of their lives and ministries.

**A life nurtured by obedience
will never yield to cynicism, sarcasm, and
any of its deadly allies.**

to cynicism and lose their influence and the impact of their ministry.

I have watched choice young people become the victims of cynicism and never really develop the potential of their lives in service to the Lord.

I have watched choice saints of the

A PLEDGE OF INTEGRITY


Are you becoming just a little more cynical as time passes? Are you increasingly more sensitive to matters of motive and sincerity? Do you recognize a gradual buildup of resentment and skepticism in your heart? If so, join me in this pledge:

1. I will not be sidetracked by standing in judgment over the motives and sincerity of others.

2. I will not allow myself to be derailed by the perceived inequities and inconsistencies of others.

3. I will not tolerate the slightest evidence of cynicism and sarcasm in my heart.

4. I will not surrender my joy by entertaining questions and quandaries about the motives and sincerity of those around me.

5. I will keep my eyes on Jesus—the Author and Finisher of my faith. Paul's words put it right: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). 

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

The Sermon—a Weekly Dose of Compressed Dignity

BY CRAIG BRIAN LARSON

I went to the home of a woman who attended the church I pastored. When I walked into the flat, her husband—a gaunt shell of a man, his substance sucked out by whiskey—was asleep on a cot in the living room. His skin was yellow. When he awoke and we met, his voice was rumbling and harsh from smoking, and frighteningly loud. His eyes had something hateful about them that made my blood run cold. This was the demanding, abusive man whom the woman in our church tried to placate day after day. She had told me chilling stories about him.

They lived on welfare, and their house had poverty written all over it. In the dirt yard lay an abandoned tire. The kitchen floor sloped steeply, and the gloomy walls needed paint. In the living room, the fabric on the arms of the chairs was worn through, a chair or two tilted due to a missing leg, and the

gratitude as she grabbed my hand before she left for home.

No matter what our station, daily life in a fallen world is a walk through a gauntlet of belittlement. Those who attend our churches are bombarded daily by false values and beliefs that cheapen God's creation, by personal slights and insults, and by Satan's accusations. Their minds are assaulted by scabrous images in the media and by profanity that is objectionable to God because it debases His creation. Your members are subject to sins that mar God's image within them. They suffer distorted self-images that contradict God's truth. After such a week, it's a wonder that a person can walk into church with any sense of worth (and the faces of many confirm this).

But then they hear anointed preaching, and gravity reverses as people sense

Life. The sermon appeals to the will, treating people as responsible agents whose choices matter forever. The sermon preaches Christ Immanuel, forever hallowing human flesh, the second Adam who will one day resurrect believers into His likeness. A sermon is the most intense dose of dignity any person can receive.

Sitting through a quality sermon is something like ascending the Mount of Transfiguration. Prior to that moment, Jesus resembled any other man. He looked, dressed, and groomed himself like a common man. But on the Mount of Transfiguration, His appearance changed to fully display His divine nature. The glory of God radiated forth, His face blazing like the sun and His clothes becoming heavenly white. The curtain was pulled back, revealing reality. During a sermon, we are in a sense transfigured. Our true dignity from God shines forth.

Nothing else in life treats a man or woman in a way that assumes greater worth or higher powers. There is no more costly gift I could have given that downtrodden woman than my best, and God's best, in a sermon. It is a weekly dose of compressed dignity. **e**

No matter what our station, daily life in a fallen world is a walk through a gauntlet of belittlement.

cushions gave no support. Mousetraps were everywhere. The place was dimly lit by bulbs that could not have been more than 40 watts.

But each week something happened in the life of this woman that elevated her to a higher, brighter plane. She would come to church and hear a sermon. That sermon was nothing less than a condensed dose of dignity that saved and ennobled her battered spirit. I saw the tears of

the upward pull of heaven. The sermon reveals God's character—the One who infuses all life with meaning and majesty. The sermon tells who we are in God's sight: created in the divine image, beloved beyond description, destined for glory. The sermon uncovers sins—then announces how to be redeemed. The sermon honors the morality that exalts humankind. The sermon assumes that people can think and discern about life and the Book of

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Hiring Church Members?

B Y S T E V E M A R R

Should you hire a member of the congregation to work in the church office? That's a dilemma for many pastors or boards, but it doesn't have to be a snare. As long as you hire based on sound principles, the outcome can be favorable.

Hiring a member of your congregation can have its advantages. Presumably, you will already know this person and have insight into his or her gifts and abilities, demeanor, spiritual maturity, and ability to maintain confidences and avoid gossip. This can alleviate many potential problems. On the other hand, if you hire someone for the wrong reasons and it later becomes apparent the person does not fit the position or has insufficient job skills, or if this person's feathers get ruffled, the entire congregation can become embroiled in the situation. As tensions mount, the potential increases for a backlash, hard feelings, and other repercussions.

DEVELOPING A JOB DESCRIPTION

Hiring a church member presents a risk, but the difficulties can be

skills and competencies required for the job. Sadly, most churches either have vague job descriptions or none at all.

To avoid problems and pitfalls, write a complete description of the duties, responsibilities, and expectations for each position. Review the office workflow for a month and make notes as you go. Discuss these job descriptions with other staff members, church board members, and members of the congregation whose business and management experience might be helpful.

FILLING THE POSITION

When an opening in the office occurs, follow an orderly process in filling the position. Consider candidates from inside and outside the church. Hiring only members of your congregation limits the talent pool and may leave you with little room to maneuver if no members fit the needs of the position.

When you advertise, make it clear that the position is open to all qualified applicants. Some members might believe they should be the only ones

distribute copies of the job description to all interested parties. A well-written job description will clearly enumerate the required skills and aptitudes. Be realistic—based on the salary, hours, and other demands—but establish a minimum standard of qualifications in advance, and stick with it. No matter how much urgency you feel to fill the position, do not hire anyone who fails to meet your minimum requirements. Lowering your standards will come back to bite you every time, especially if you hire a church member.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

When interviewing, be honest and forthright with every candidate. Don't string anyone along. It's always better to explain to people where their qualifications fall short, and thank them for expressing interest, than to raise expectations—even by silence—only to douse them later. If you know right away that someone doesn't fit, be courteous enough to say so immediately.

At the outset of your interviews, explain the job requirements and disclose any additional strengths or skills you would prefer. Ask questions about the candidate's experience and skill in each key area of responsibility, and discuss any areas where he or she falls short. Identify strengths, but be careful not to make commitments. At the end of the interview, give each applicant an opportunity to add any additional information. This eliminates the possibility that applicants will leave the interview feeling as though they

To avoid problems and pitfalls, write a complete description of the duties, responsibilities, and expectations for each position.

minimized—and the blessings maximized—if church leaders will establish and follow an orderly hiring process. The first step is to develop a job description and determine the

considered, so nip that potential conflict in the bud by clearly announcing your intentions up front. Nobody likes surprises.

Before you schedule any interviews,

didn't have a chance to fully express themselves.

Always thank candidates for their interest in the job, and tell them when you will make your decision. Above all, keep your commitments and close the loop with every applicant, especially those you choose not to hire.

developed earlier in the hiring process. James Dobson, from Focus on the Family, warns that our feelings will fool us every time—and he's right.

2. Don't allow pressure or the opinions of other members to dictate your choice. Your responsibility is to lead, not to make everyone agree with you.

person's financial need.

4. Before you hire someone, use sound judgment in determining whether the person is capable of handling confidential information and withstanding the pressure of staff responsibilities. Some excellent church members are unable to separate issues and maintain discretion.

Ultimately, developing a solid evaluation and selection process—including well-written job descriptions—will help you determine whether hiring a church member will work or whether you're better off looking outside the congregation. **e**

Lowering your standards will come back to bite you every time, especially if you hire a church member.

Before you hire a member of your congregation to work in the church office, consider these four essential keys:

1. Don't allow your personal feelings to influence your decision. Always follow the objective standards

3. Don't allow financial need to be the deciding factor. Make your decision based on the applicant's qualifications. If you hire based on need, not only will you have a poor staff member, you may be blocking God's plan for meeting that

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Lessons From the Upper Room

BY GREG ASIMAKOULOPOULOS

There I was, standing in the room where many scholars believe Jesus served the Last Supper to His disciples. My heart raced with excitement. I was standing in the room where Jesus spent His final hours with His dearest friends before He was betrayed, beaten, and brutally executed.

I tried to picture where Jesus reclined at history's first Communion table. I forced myself to imagine where the Twelve reclined around the lamb, vegetables, fruit, bread, and wine. I imagined their mood, body language, and contained apprehension. Although those in my tour group were boisterous and talkative, I shut them out and entered into my own attempt at time travel.

As I think about my graduate studies in Jerusalem 20 years ago, a simple but profound thought lingers: *It's not the size of the gathering place that matters, it's what happens inside.*

If you have traveled in the Holy Land, it is likely you visited the stone home near Mount Zion—one of the two places where, people believe, Jesus might have gathered with His disciples to celebrate the Passover meal. I can't cite the exact dimensions, but the Upper Room I visited wasn't much more than 400 square feet.

In that small Upper Room, Jesus washed proud feet as a way of modeling how to serve one another. In addition to feeding His followers a sacred feast, it may have been in this room where—after His resurrection—He breathed on His disciples and brought new life through the Holy Spirit. A small place, but a place of grace where God chose to manifest

himself in a big way.

Perhaps you preach in a sanctuary that may not be much larger than that ancient Upper Room. If you are like me, you have done your share of feeling resentful (or at least insignificant) because of the size of your church. But I want to challenge those feelings. I have found three reasons to be grateful for the ministry that happens when pews are few.

1. The size of the congregation is not as important as the sighs made in worship. When there is a genuine sense of the presence of God, there are bound to be multiple sighs. John wasn't concerned about there being only 13 of them together in the Upper Room. Because he was lost in wonder, love, and praise, his gaze was focused on Jesus. The rest was but a blur. He didn't mind that the room was a fraction of the size of the synagogue in which he had grown up. The only dimensions John was aware of were the expanding ones of his grateful heart.

Some of my most memorable times in worship have been in the small churches I have served. Many times I have wanted to fall on my knees, not count heads. The Lord was there; that's what mattered. Or, as one poet has so aptly expressed it:

*With wordless sighs my spirit prayed
Transcending thoughts that seemed to
fade*

Of things I felt I had to do

Or stressful fears in which I stewed.

In worship Jesus owned my gaze.

With outstretched hands I lifted praise.

It mattered not who stood with me.

The Lord alone I longed to see.

When you think about Jesus' promise about being present when "two or three are gathered in my name," you probably don't think of Phoenix First Assembly or Willow Creek. It's a lot easier to visualize what Jesus meant when you are part of a congregation where the focus is on Him and not the overwhelming sense of being part of a crowd.

With that in mind, we need to plan our worship services with Jesus as the guest of honor. David Mains, a noted revivalist, suggests we have an unseen guest in our churches each Sunday. He visualizes the Savior seated in the front row of the sanctuary. "If the living Christ promised to be with us," Mains says, "then we should let the reality of His promise dictate how we prepare, what we say, and how we act."

In our announcements, transitions between choruses, pastoral prayer, and sermon, we should call attention to Jesus, who is present and worthy of our attention. When our eyes are fixed on Him, we will be surprised how little we focus on attendance or facility issues.

2. The measurable ministry that happens in a room matters more than the measurements of the room. It is true that Jesus spent time in Galilee teaching the masses on the grassy hill-sides. But He also taught Martha—in her Bethany home—to be more like her sister. Remember the time He led a Bible study in a living room while a group of guys proved their expertise in skylight construction?

Jesus spent the majority of His time ministering in small groups and in

small settings. Those occasions lent themselves to His personalized approach to ministry. If Jesus had sat in on C. Peter Wagner's church-growth classes at Fuller Seminary and heard the reasons why shepherds need to become ranchers, I think He would have had a tough time. For Him, effective discipleship was more apt to occur in a cluster than in a crowd.

In the Upper Room, Jesus seized the opportunity to calculate the servant quotient in His disciples. Using the measuring stick of His own example, He showed them they didn't quite measure up. With a towel cinched around His waist, the Lord painfully took to task the men He undeniably loved. It was a good thing the room was small and the numbers few.

Cleaning clocks (as well as washing feet) calls for an intimate setting. Because the crowd was small, Jesus knew He had gotten His point across. Not only was hand-to-foot contact made, eye contact was made as well.

One of the most enjoyable things I do each week is mow my lawn, and the reason is a strange one. It is one of the few tasks in ministry where I have a defined area in which I can see immediate results for my efforts. In a similar way, ministry done in a smaller context often yields the satisfaction that you can communicate effectively, and through feedback, can track results.

Why not celebrate the size of the facility God has given you by thinking of it as a place where you and your people can see themselves as the family of God? To that end, we should not shrink back from small-group settings, but multiply them. Add small group opportunities in your weekly schedule, such as a weekly men's prayer meeting before work, a prayer time in your study before services, a midweek lunch and sharing time with senior adults, and midweek home groups. Whenever you can, move activities to smaller rooms to create a more intimate atmosphere.

3. The ability to touch matters much more than programs. Jesus allowed John to draw close for some TLC. He must have sensed the young brother of James needed personal attention.

Jesus talked with the burly ex-fisherman and predicted he would chicken out when the rooster crowed. He then proceeded to pin Peter to the mat as He called into question a cocky (yet false) bravado.

Jesus touched the core of Judas' hypocrisy when He brought his secret out into the open and called for a primitive form of congregational discipline.

There in the room where Jesus hosted His farewell dinner, the setting was personal enough to do more than just model a protocol for Communion services. He did one-on-one pastoral care. Whereas one-on-one pastoral care may be rare in a large church, it remains the strength of church settings in which many of us find ourselves.

In the three churches I pastored, I found great delight in the hands-on opportunities smaller congregations afforded: Taking time for pie and coffee after taking a shut-in grocery

shopping; having breakfast with a man contemplating leaving his wife; sipping tea with a widow imprisoned by the bars of depression; even having a heart-to-heart talk over lunch with a man who refused to forgive someone who had wounded him and had expressed genuine remorse.

We fail to experience all the Lord has for us when we forget that Upper-Room-size churches lend themselves to meaningful meals. Besides the joy that comes from personal (often informal) Communion services, is the rush that comes from breaking bread (or baking it) with individuals who are struggling with a broken heart, attempting to keep a broken marriage together, or breaking down mentally.

Whether or not you ever take a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and see the Upper Room, the lessons you can glean from that small place can enrich your ministry with new ways of appropriating grace in a setting that's not all that big. **e**

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"Did you know he was with the vice squad when you asked him to be a greeter?"

When Choosing a Model for Music Ministry

BY TOM MCDONALD

After 20 seasons of ministry in my home church, Trinity Assembly of God, Baltimore, Maryland, I accepted a pastoral assignment with Jack Hayford and The Church on the Way, Van Nuys, California. I understand transition is a part of a minister's life, but this relocation was giant: east coast/west coast, suburban setting/urban setting, moderate-sized church/megachurch.

Nothing, in terms of culture, was to be the same. My family and I were being sent into a new land. We were on a mission. We needed to rely on Jesus.

Depending on Jesus during transition is the single best choice a worship leader can effectuate. When everything around us changes, the Bible clearly states, "Jesus Christ is the same" (Hebrews 13:8*), and when He enters our environment we become "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37).

As I interface with worship leaders, music ministers, and staff pastors, I regularly note a similar frustration. The obstacle in contemporary church life is not mastering midi (musical instrument digital interface), but managing people. Effective people skills may be as valuable for a music pastor as the gift of perfect pitch for an opera singer.

Leadership skills are frequently ignored because church musicians are often employed for their talents, and developing a musical gift presupposes years of self-discipline, focused practice, and a minimum of social interaction. In a ministry situation, however, success is usually the result of servant leadership, not spectacular musicianship.

Hence, at the midpoint of my ministry, I say to all musicians (choral

conductors and worship leaders alike), learn from Jesus' model: interact as He interacted, pray as He prayed, value people as He valued people.

Because Jesus understood the profound dimensions of servant leadership, He was a patient peacemaker who had a clear perspective based on proactive interpersonal relationships.

JESUS MODELED PATIENCE

Matthew 9 gives a touching account of the Master effectively interacting in needy situations. The implications for worship leaders are enormous. Picture Jesus walking along that crowded street. The press of ministry was intense. So much to do. So little time. Suddenly, a gesture of inquiry. The touch. The pause. The compassion. The miracle. Then He went on.

Ideally, we want to react similarly. Yet, in the rush of a Sunday schedule, it is easy to hurry out of the service to attend to our responsibilities and brush off someone's need for a pastoral touch. No matter how busy we are, as leaders we should walk slowly through the sanctuary following a service or concert, looking for opportunities to pray with, encourage, or simply greet people. Jesus took time, even at inopportune moments, to minister grace. He was patient with people.

The rehearsal provides another stellar opportunity to grow in patience and move in ministry. When musicians gather to practice, mistakes will occur, but browbeating your musicians only fuels the fire. When we pause to worship, pray, and invite Jesus to reframe attitudes and enhance skills, the tough notes become easy to remember and

the syncopated rhythms begin to flow freely. Prayer changes things. Jesus modeled the prayerful life.

JESUS MODELED PEACEMAKING

Most people handle conflict poorly. When the storms of life occur, the world turns to violence or addiction. Jesus offers a different paradigm for resolving conflict and responding to crisis.

While the disciples and Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee, a sudden storm arose that caused havoc and disoriented the disciples. When they woke Jesus, He "rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39, KJV). If Jesus is in your boat, you have nothing to fear. His words still calm the seas.

At some point in your music ministry, a storm will blow in on your choir or worship team. Resist fear. Call on Jesus. Recall His comforting words, "Peace, be still."

A storm billowed at a most unexpected time for me: a Christmas cantata. The choir was on, singing the first of six sold-out presentations in the stately downtown symphony hall. The selection ending the first half was "Bethlehem Morning." Tenor Mack Hayes had just sung it flawlessly. Tumultuous applause followed. We left the stage, energized from the experience. Suddenly, walking downstairs to the rehearsal hall, Mack suffered a brain aneurysm and fell unconscious.

My dilemma was multifaceted. The choir had to sing again after intermission, and we had five more performances. Who would sing the solo? I knew enough about group dynamics to address the choir in

deliberate, even tones. Yet, what I said emanated from the Holy Spirit. I carefully encouraged the choir to focus on the audience of unsaved souls. So ended Friday night.

Saturday, I arrived at our sanctuary early to pray. While in prayer, I felt led to change the first half finale. The choir responded positively, although it meant quickly learning another song. On Sunday, we met before the matinee, and I announced Mack's death, which had occurred earlier that morning. With God's help, we sang before thousands with dignity and composure. Jesus calmed the sudden storm and sent His peace.

I have often reflected on that experience. So much could have fallen apart if I had surrendered to the emotion of the moment. I found strength in prayer. Jesus was with me—in my boat—and the choir willingly submitted to the call for overriding the human perspective and the desire to grieve immediately, focusing instead on their mission to minister.

The reason Jesus had power over storms was because He maintained constant communication with the Father. When a storm blows in over your ministry ensemble, be a peacemaker. Pray. Your renewed perspective will enable you to handle the crisis successfully.

JESUS MODELED PERSPECTIVE

Perspective is the art of seeing a plan, philosophy, or interpersonal relationship clearly. It is objective knowledge of right and wrong amid fluid variables. Pilots revere perspective and fear its polar opposite—vertigo.

In ministry the way to ensure proper perspective on tasks and personnel is to measure our responses against the changeless Word. We slip from anointed perspective into vertigo when we react to criticism or competition in kind. The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30) has helped me maintain a holy perspective—valuing others and guarding my tongue even though my flesh longs to react.

The parable teaches a timeless, core value for music pastors. Even though people want to compete with us, our

mission is not to compete with them. We are responsible only to do the best work possible with what God has invested. Another colleague's choir size is irrelevant. God's only concern is how healthy and happy our choristers are. Maintaining a godly perspective requires discipline.

We must regularly weed the garden of our minds—a slow process—which is accomplished by waiting on God. Only He can truly illuminate motive. Allow Him to show you your frailty regarding your relationships. Getting along with the body of Christ is central to our witness. Forgiving offenses is the key to success and the way toward proactivity.

JESUS MODELED PROACTIVITY

Developing a proactive mind-set regarding the concept of forgiveness is a big factor in ensuring one's longevity in ministry. Those who forgive will last. Those who fail to forgive will lose. Reality dictates that sooner or later, someone will disappoint you. The range of disappointment may vary from innocuous to severe. The antidote is always the same: forgive.

Jesus' shining example of forgiveness is chronicled in Matthew 14. The occasion was the beheading of His beloved cousin, John the Baptist. The Scripture

notes that instead of revenge, Jesus brought hope. He willed to proactivate goodness. Jesus was not selfish or indulgent. He did what was best for the Kingdom regardless of the personal cost. Living in the spirit of forgiveness is a healthy habit and something worthwhile to model.

As you choose models for ministry—those whose music and approach to ministry you affirm—remember Jesus' example. Trends are important; truth more so. Jesus is Truth, and modeling His gentle, forgiving way will help us minister His grace and wholeness on sunny days or on stormy seas.

As you learn a new worship chorus this month, may I suggest meditating on this older, yet viable one as well:

"To be like Jesus,
To be like Jesus,
All I ask to be like Him.
All through life's journey,
From earth to glory,
All I ask to be like Him." **E**

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**Unless noted, Scripture passages are from the New International Version.*

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"I can't agree with your stand on musical instruments in worship. I'm going to set up a separate fellowship over there."

Needed: Healthy Churches and Healthy Disciples

B Y L E R O Y R . B A R T E L

Everyone wants to be a part of a healthy, effective, growing church. Healthy churches are growing churches. Growth for these churches is not a program. It is the result of a natural life dynamic within the body of Christ that is birthed by God, but also nurtured by church leadership.

The church must never carry out its ministry based on hunches or guesses. It must not prize novelty or independent

(*koinonia*) implies participation. The word was used to express the close-knit relationships that exist within the Spirit-filled membership of the body of Christ, the church.

Acts 2:42–46 expresses in exciting terms what fellowship generated by the Spirit meant for the Early Church. It was the context in which people learned the Christian life. It was the dynamic that characterized their Lord's

the family of God through new birth. The goal for the people who know Christ is for them to become participating, growing members in a local congregation.

Healthy congregations work hard to make disciples within a context where all of the biblical purposes find appropriate expression.

innovation. A church must not try to create its own self-understanding without consulting the clear teaching of Scripture. The ministry, programs, and strategy of the local church must be driven by biblical purposes.

What is a healthy church? It is a church in which all of the biblical purposes find expression in an appropriate equilibrium.

Healthy churches reproduce themselves. Healthy churches produce healthy Christians. And healthy congregations work hard to make disciples within a context where all of the biblical purposes find appropriate expression (Ephesians 4:14–16; Colossians 1:10–12).

What are the biblical purposes that find expression in a healthy church?

1. Fellowship—Membership

The basic meaning of the Greek word translated “fellowship” in our Bibles

Supper celebrations, fellowship meals, and prayer meetings. It produced a common and reciprocal attitude of selflessness and generosity within the church. Fellowship, for them, was not limited to a single day of the week, but characterized and seasoned all their relationships. Fellowship enriched their worship and provided the warm, caring context that attracted people and in which they discovered Christ (John 13:34,35).

The fellowship of the Early Church was not a blindly tolerant, anything-goes atmosphere. First John 1:6,7 clearly indicates it was characterized by tough love, truth, and practical discipleship. It required reconciliation and mutual concern. Fellowship is never easy. It never comes by accident. It always requires effort (Ephesians 4:3).

Fellowship has always characterized the church. The goal is that the unconverted will become a member of

2. Discipleship—Maturity

It is not enough for people to come to know Christ as their personal Savior. Jesus calls them to discipleship (Luke 9:23,24). The church must do all it can to help new Christians develop the habits of life that will ensure their spiritual growth and victory (Bible reading and study, church attendance, prayer, financial stewardship, etc.). They must acquire a working knowledge of the Bible and basic Christian doctrine. Every believer needs to be involved in the kind of systematic Bible study, within a fellowship of friends, that Sunday school provides. Believers must acquire the knowledge that matters most—the knowledge of God—in increasing measure (Philippians 3:7–11; Colossians 1:9–11).

The local church today should be as intentional and earnest in its response to the teaching mandate (Matthew 28:18–20) as the Early Church. Just as earnestly as they preached, they taught. They did not let new believers drop through the cracks and out of sight in a few weeks. They monitored their spiritual development closely. Discipleship was not optional. Any talk of conversion without discipleship would have been incongruent and irrational to them. Discipleship involved all ages, groups, and stages of spiritual development (2 Timothy 3:14–16). Disciple-making involved everyone and continued “until . . . all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God

and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13*)."

3. Service—Ministry

Jesus taught His disciples that significance was to be found in serving. When the disciples exhibited a competitive spirit, Jesus insisted that greatness in His kingdom was not to be found in position, but service (Matthew 20:20–28). The word most often translated “ministry” in the New Testament does not have as its foundational meaning public performance in the church, but humble service, such as waiting on tables. Jesus, just before His death, provided a supreme display of the significance of service—He washed His disciples’ feet. Then He told the disciples, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). Discipleship is never complete until people are involved in service.

The New Testament clearly teaches that every believer has gifts and abilities given by God (Matthew 25:14–30; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4–7; 1 Peter 4:10). According to Ephesians 4:11–16, a key responsibility of church leadership is to help believers discover and identify their God-given abilities and gifts and then help them develop and use them in ministry. The church has a responsibility to assist with gift identification, training, and placement in ministry. Each believer, however, has a personal responsibility to develop and use God’s gifts conscientiously, for the benefit of others and the welfare of the church (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 14–27; 1 Peter 4:10,11). When this happens, the entire church benefits. There is unity, blessing, and growth—in fact, the church increasingly becomes all that God intends for it to be (Ephesians 4:12–16).

4. Evangelism—Mission

Evangelism has always been esteemed as a central purpose within the Pentecostal church. It is the purpose on which all other purposes for the church are

predicated. From the very beginning it seemed that every Holy Spirit-baptized believer viewed himself or herself as a preacher. It seemed as though the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer inevitably expressed itself in evangelistic fervor.

The evangelistic purpose of the Church is the direct consequence of the Great Commission given by Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–20; Luke 24:46–49; John 20:21,22). Evangelism is rooted in the gospel—the marvelous story of Jesus (His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the Father’s right hand). It is the story of Christ who “came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

The Holy Spirit’s empowerment is first and foremost an empowerment for effective witness (Acts 1:4,5,8). The Book of Acts in the New Testament is the exciting and incredible record of evangelism in the power of the Holy Spirit by the Early Church. The Pentecostal experience is as essential for effective evangelism today as it was in the first century.

The Great Commission, fueled by Pentecostal passion, has resulted in missionary enterprise and passion around

motivated and guided by the Holy Spirit (John 4:19–24). This, for them, is much more important than location, physical position, set practices, religious formulas and liturgy, or set times (i.e., the religious calendar).

Our worship gatherings should be centered in Christ, and regardless of the nature of the occasion, characterized by an awareness and acknowledgement of God’s presence among His people (Matthew 18:20; 1 Corinthians 5:4). There should always be an awareness and responsiveness to the presence of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal worship. Gatherings should be highly participative and characterized by sensitivity to the outsider, appropriate controls, and Christ-honoring decorum (1 Corinthians 14).

Music and songs have been a worshipful expression to God from Old Testament times. The Early Church spoke to one another with “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”—singing and making music in their hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). We should follow their example.

Although music and singing is appropriately used in worship, it must never be considered synonymous with worship.

**The fellowship of the Early Church
was not a blindly tolerant, anything-goes
kind of atmosphere.**

the world. Pentecostal churches have always been missionary churches. Believers, regardless of age or vocation, should be led to missionary awareness. They should be encouraged to prayerfully consider the part they can play in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth (2 Corinthians 5:14–21).

5. Worship—Magnification

One of the central purposes of Pentecostal churches is worship. Pentecostals not only believe God should be worshiped because of who He is (i.e., His revealed character—according to truth), but also with a spirit

Worship includes a wide variety of things—our words spoken to God in prayer and praise, our thoughts fixed upon His truth and character, our lives given to Him in worshipful commitment, our bodies lived in godly purity and service, our days and hours honoring His will, our gifts offered to God in loving praise and thanksgiving. May we never reduce the breadth and grandeur of worship by simply equating it with a single aspect of worship.

Prayer is a critical aspect of the local church’s ministry. The quality and quantity of its prayer will become the

measure of its spiritual vitality.

The Early Church was characterized by its prayer. They prayed about everything—the selection of leaders (Acts 1:24; 6:6; 13:3), during persecution (Acts 4:24–30; 12:5,12), and before they ministered to the sick (Acts 9:40; 28:8). They prayed continually. They prayed

Stewardship begins with the acknowledgement that everything belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). It sees tithing (the return of 10 percent to the local church) as an appropriate and worshipful response to God (Malachi 3:8–10; Proverbs 3:9–10). Stewardship also extends itself beyond tithing, to

church, they make that church healthy and effective. A church that emphasizes only one or two of the purposes limits its ministry and becomes dysfunctional. In the same way, an effective and maturing Christian is one in whom each of the purposes finds appropriate and balanced expression. On the other hand, a dysfunctional believer is one who has majored on a few pet purposes and neglected the others. What the local church is in macrocosm, individual believers become in microcosm. We need healthy churches in order to produce healthy, effective disciples. **e**

The church must do all it can to help new Christians develop the habits of life that will ensure their spiritual growth and victory.

personally and corporately. Their leaders gave themselves to prayer (Acts 6:1–4). Paul believed the Holy Spirit would provide supernatural help when Christians were at a loss how to pray (Romans 8:26,27). If the church today is to impact its culture as the Early Church did, it must be a praying church.

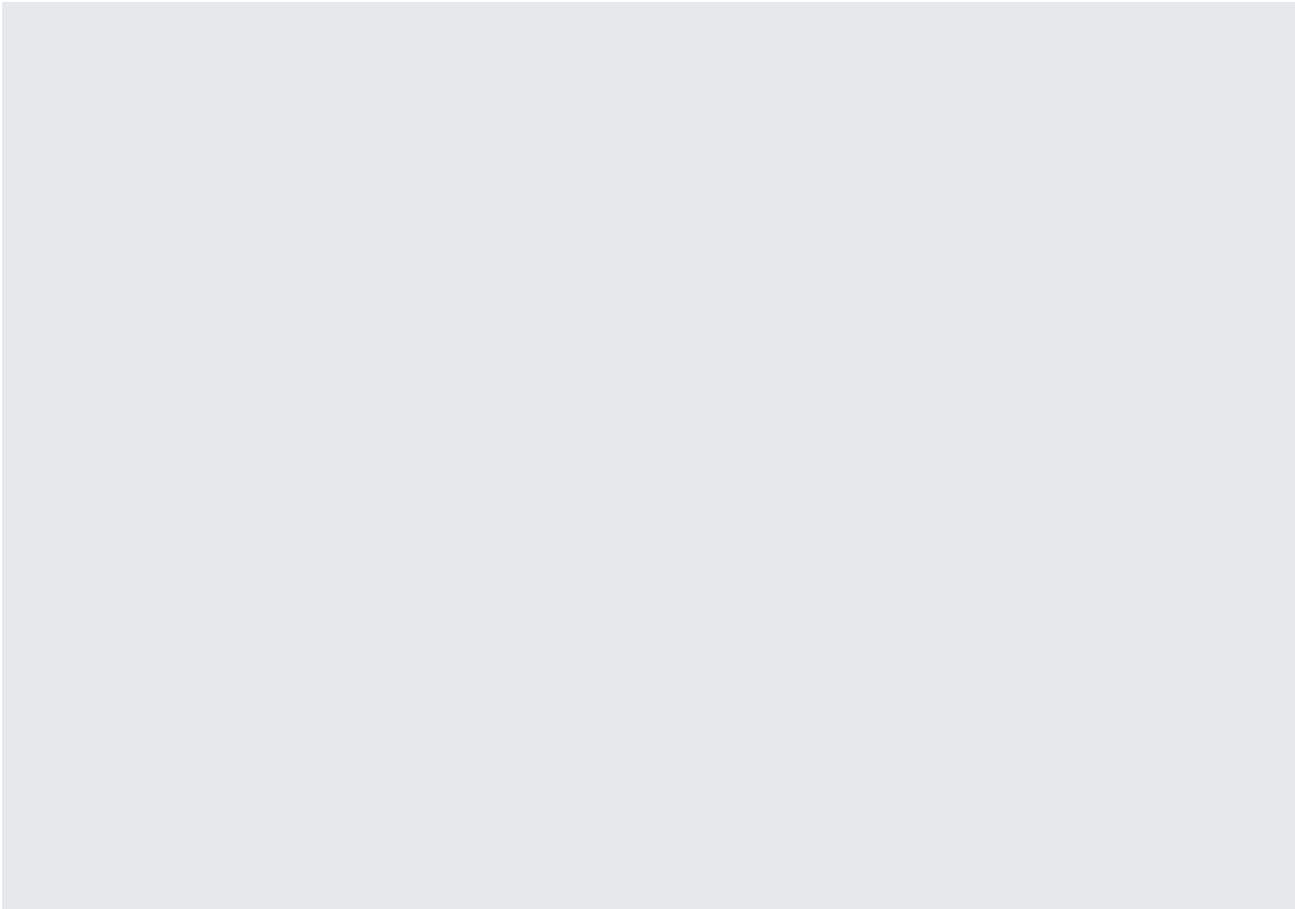
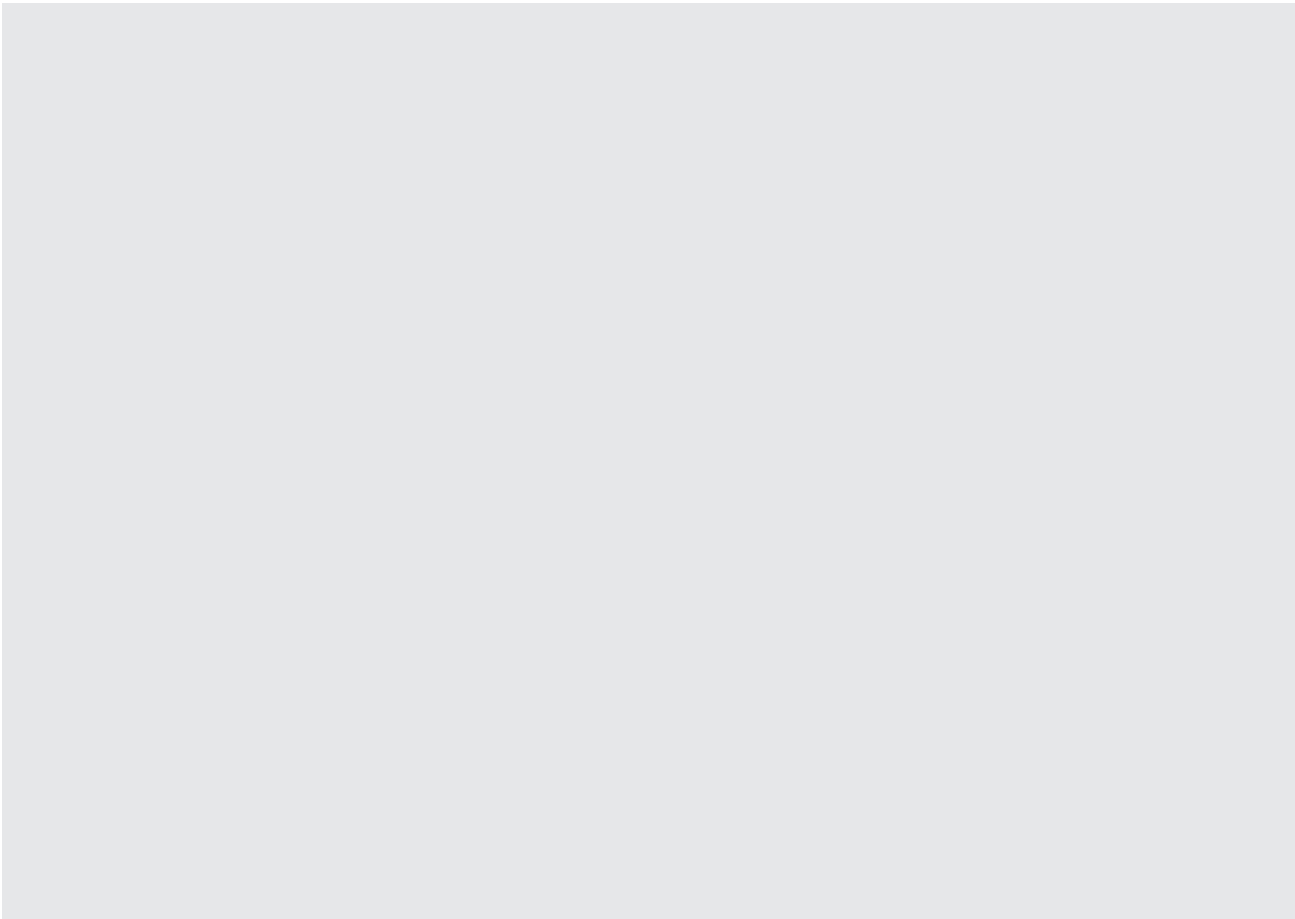
Stewardship is a form of worship. However, it is also a responsibility.

generosity expressed in offerings given to meet special needs (1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 8:1–15; 9:6–15; Philippians 4:10–20). Stewardship falls short, however, if it does not ultimately honor God in everything (Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

None of the biblical purposes are negotiable—all are essential. Where they all find expression in a local

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



Our Changing Culture— a Threat or an Opportunity

BY DAVID J. MOORE

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Our nation is becoming more multicultural every day, and at a pace that has surpassed all estimates. According to the 2000 census, the population increased by 36.2 million people between 1990 and 2000. Seventy-three percent of this increase was in ethnic-minority people. One-third of our population is ethnic minority. Whites are the minority in seven states (California, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas). One in every nine citizens today was born outside the United States. One of every eight in the U.S. labor force is foreign born.

How are these demographic changes affecting churches in the Assemblies of God? In 1990, ethnic-minority congregations comprised less than 20 percent of our churches. Today, they have increased to 27 percent. If this trend remains constant, by 2010, one out of every three churches will be ethnic minority.

A closer look at this 10-year window is revealing. Majority-white churches

through 1999, then dropped by 9. It should also be noted that 58 churches listed as predominantly “white” are Anglo-immigrant groups who do not speak English in their services.

America is *not* a melting pot of many nations where every group blends into one dominant culture. It is a mosaic of many cultures where each group is retaining its own distinctive character while functioning within the overall framework of the larger society. It is a dynamic that is new both in nature and degree. It also comes at a time when our traditional base (majority-white churches) is in decline. We are facing new and different challenges that are threatening our security and forcing us to rethink some of our assumptions.

CHANGING PROFILE OF IMMIGRANTS

One assumption we need to rethink is that these new immigrants will embrace our culture and lifestyle in the same way as immigrants in previous years. Why? Because the profile of immigrants has

readily adapt to our culture. But since 1965, only 15 percent have come from Western Europe, while 85 percent of immigrants have come from Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. They bring with them ideals that are much more dissimilar in nature and expression, making their adjustment more difficult.

CHANGING AMERICAN VALUE SYSTEM

Another assumption we need to rethink is that American values, as most of us know them, will continue their dominance in a rapidly changing society. Not only are immigrant groups finding adjustment to American culture more difficult, they are finding it difficult to know just what they are adjusting to.

American culture is in the midst of fundamental change. Culture is no longer defined by the largely white, middle-class values that have been imprinted on all of our institutions, including the church. According to Thomas Friedman, author of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, white, middle-class values are being supplanted by an emerging global worldview at odds with many assumptions of our past. Friedman states:

“The slow, fixed, Cold War system that has dominated our thinking since 1945, a system built around the division and walls of the Cold War, is being replaced by a system built around integration and webs. While the defining measurement of the Cold War system was *control*, the defining measurement of the new system is *speed*.”

The division and walls of the old system came to be personified by flow

America is not a melting pot of many nations where every group blends into one dominant culture.

increased by 137 for the first 3 years, then dropped by an average of 57 churches per year through 2000. Since 1990, we have added 936 ethnic-minority congregations, while losing 205 majority-white congregations. Multicultural churches (those with no single majority) increased by 187

changed dramatically since 1965, when the Immigration Act was amended to open the doors to people of all nations without regard to preference.

Prior to 1965, 80 percent of immigrants came from Western Europe. These people had similar values and traditions that enabled them to more

charts, lines of authority, and numerous other management practices designed to bring structure and maintain control in virtually every area of America life. However, the faster, more relationally oriented new system, with the enabling force of the Internet, is rapidly breaking down the *structure, conformity, and inflexibility* of Cold War thinking on which the old system operated. The old system, characterized by *mistrust, suspicion, competition, and detachment*, contrasts sharply with the new system characterized by *openness, vulnerability, cooperation, and acceptance* of individual differences. Those threatened by this new system have tended to only see its negative aspects, while overlooking the pitfalls of the old system that have led many in the church to adopt a fortress mentality, emphasizing protection and preservation at the expense of acceptance and inclusion.

We cannot hope to bring people to Christ and retain them in our churches by using methods based on assumptions that don't apply in a post-Cold War world. Why is it that the segment of our Fellowship with the least sophisticated strategies and the fewest resources are showing the only gains? For one, their shared experiences make them vulnerable and dependent on each other, while feeling disconnected with those of us who struggle to see their less structured approaches to governance and ministry as viable. How can we explain that in the last year alone majority-white churches and those with no single majority reported over 420,000 conversions, while both their combined Sunday morning attendance and total number of churches declined?

Could it be that we are pouring new wine into old wineskins? Are we trying to solve today's problems by applying strategies based on Cold War principles that are out of step with today's realities? If so, Jesus warned that "the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17*). Just as

with Galilean fisherman and Jewish tradition, when worldviews and cultural expectations conflict, something has to give. In the New Testament church, Gentiles represented new wineskins. They were preserved because Jewish church leaders did not require them to be circumcised and to incorporate Jewish culture and tradition into the

subtle and not so subtle ways, we have marginalized many of our constituents by aligning ourselves so strongly with a conservative political agenda.

NEXT GENERATION

There is hope for the future. Next generation Americans have more in common with ethnic minorities than they do

We cannot hope to bring people to Christ and retain them in our churches by using methods based on assumptions that don't apply in a post-Cold War world.

expression of their Christian faith. Many ethnic-minority people, as well as younger generation Americans with a developing global worldview, do not have the same kind of structured thinking about church polity as middle-age and older white Americans. May we be as discerning as our first-century church leader counterparts who did not require conformity to culture and tradition as part and parcel to acceptance in the church.

IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

In addition to the changing profile of today's immigrants and worldview changes within our own culture, we also need to rethink some of our assumptions about political ideology. Ask yourself how you feel about issues such as gun control, social assistance, affirmative action, immigration quotas, and the death penalty. Would it surprise you to learn that many ethnic minorities and the younger generation of all cultures within our churches, who oppose abortion as vehemently as any of us, view conservative positions on social issues, such as those mentioned above, to be just as much a devaluation of human life?

Certainly God does not require Pentecostal believers to conform to a specific political profile any more than He requires ethnic minorities and the younger generation to conform to a specific cultural profile. Yet, in so many

with my generation. They are more relational, are not as rigid and structured in their thinking, are more informal, value teamwork, and are more comfortable making consensus rather than majority decisions. In *The Millennium Generation*, LeFever and Boden make this observation about the younger generation:

"They process information differently from their parents. Older generations tend to think linearly, while this generation is able to 'parallel' think. Young people's patterns of thinking tend to look like a mosaic rather than a straight line. They have the ability to jump through various clusters of information before a conclusion emerges. It allows for greater creativity along the way. In view of these developments, the church must be ready for change."

Like all generations, our youth are reflecting the face of their society. They are more accepting of others and less inclined than my generation to judge on appearance and to impose cultural and ideological viewpoints on others. They are not bound by traditional ways of thinking and can more readily adjust to new and different approaches. We need to see our youth as innovators, not rebels. We need to make room for them and provide affirmation and encouragement, while allowing the Holy Spirit to light a fire in their hearts. They hold the keys to the effective ministry we are finding so elusive in a nation confused and out of sync with anything we have ever

understood as normal or appropriate.

For those of us in authority today, there is a need to allow God's Spirit to open our eyes and our minds so we can become sensitized to the needs around us as we model the kind of servant leadership necessary in preparing these youth to minister to contemporary America. We can view our changing culture as a threat or an opportunity. If we see it as a threat, we'll fight uphill and polarize ourselves. If we see it as an opportunity, we'll preserve the wine-skins and see our hope for revival realized.

Now, some will say, "Wait a minute. Why should we be expected to make all the adjustments? Don't ethnic minorities and those with this new, global worldview have a responsibility to understand and accept some of our ways of thinking?"

To this I have two comments. One, when Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some," he placed no obligation on the part of the one he was willing to

become. Second, are we not responsible only for what God asks of us? Others will answer to Him on the basis of their own experience.

Were it not for immigrants who have successfully planted churches to reach their own people in America, we would have experienced a net loss of total churches, as well as constituents, over the last 10 years. Why does it concern me that our Pentecostal message is having the least affect on those who have lived here the longest? My answer: It is not the ethnic minorities, and it is not the creative, next generation thinkers—growing churches through nontraditional methods yet largely avoiding participation in our governance—who must legitimize themselves in our eyes. It is we who struggle to free ourselves from principles based on Cold War thinking who must legitimize our methods in their eyes if we hope to keep them.

OUR RESPONSE

What should we do?

1. Exercise care in discerning the

difference between biblical truth and worldview.

2. Render irrelevant any expression of our Pentecostal faith that considers only middle age and above, white-American values.

3. Recognize that saying we're not prejudiced is not enough. We will be defined not by what we say but by our actions.

4. Accept believers without forcing them into a white, middle-class cultural or political profile in their thinking.

5. Recognize and affirm leaders within Pentecostal fellowships who may march to a different beat.

6. Be willing to listen to and learn from those with different cultural experiences and worldviews rather than presuming that our way is always the best way. **e**

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

Fund-raising Versus Friend Raising

B Y R A N D A L L K . B A R T O N

Many in ministry consider raising funds a carnal exercise, a distraction from ministry, something they would rather avoid. Some pastors never develop their resource development efforts beyond passing the offering plate. Worse yet, some don't even like passing the offering plate, putting virtually no prayer, planning, or purpose into what should be an act of worship and an opportunity for stewardship education.

Ask yourself: *When was the last time I personally (not through the pulpit, telephone, or a letter) met with someone, shared a specific financial need for ministry, and asked the individual to prayerfully consider helping to meet that need?*

If your ministry needs support, but you are not personally challenging people to support that ministry vision, you could be missing the biblical pattern of "friend raising" and settling for the inadequate exercise of fund-raising.

Consider these two keys that will unlock the financial resources God has available for your ministry.

KEY #1—MAKE IT SPIRITUAL

You must believe people are stewards of resources that already belong to God. Not understanding this biblical truth leads to a reluctance to ask for financial support. Most in ministry have an upside-down theology on asking people to give. The normal mindset is, "Our ministry needs to raise money." The biblical truth is—your ministry doesn't need money; God already owns it all. The needy person isn't the church, the ministry, or the missionary. God has created man with a need to give. Your ministry only provides the opportunities to exercise that need.

Is exercising that need to give good for the giver?

Paul put it this way to Timothy: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth . . . Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share" (1 Timothy 6:17,18*).

Consider these wonderful promises and benefits for the giver:

Proverbs 3:9,10—The giver will have his barns filled with plenty: "Honor the Lord with your wealth . . . your barns will be filled to overflowing."

Malachi 3:11—The giver will be called blessed: "I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit."

2 Corinthians 9:8—The giver's needs will be met: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

The biblical pattern of friend raising is a spiritual journey as we instruct and encourage all believers to be a conduit for resources to flow into Kingdom purposes.

KEY #2—MAKE IT PERSONAL

People give primarily because of who asks. Your first reaction might be that it should be the cause. However, people like to give to people, not institutions; faces, not places. Jesus (Luke 8:1–3), the disciples (Matthew 10:5–15), and the apostle Paul (Romans 15:24; 2 Corinthians 1:15,16) all relied on personal resource-development efforts.

Why is the personal touch so critical?

- It encourages people to pray for your needs and the needs of the ministry.

- It allows the ministry vision to be communicated with passion.

- It encourages a personal relationship to develop and grow.

As William P. Dillon said in his book, *People Raising*:

"People give to people.

People give to people they know.

People give to people they know and trust.

People give to people they know, trust, and care for."

Which of the following would you choose in raising support for a project?

- Mail a letter to 5,000 people who might be interested.

- Call 500 of your acquaintances.

- Personally visit 50 friends who care for you.

The last option should always generate substantially more ministry support. More important, you will truly be engaging in the ministry of friend raising—raising friends for prayer; raising friends who will strengthen your ministry vision; raising friends who will invest their God-given resources to meet your ministry's financial needs and in turn be personally blessed.

When you become involved in fund-raising, you are looking for a gift. When you engage in friend raising, you can truly say with the apostle Paul, "Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account" (Philippians 4:17). **e**

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

Hang Up and Drive!

What Pastors Need To Know About Cell Phones

B Y R I C H A R D R . H A M M A R

Cell phones are gadgets that many pastors couldn't do without. They are small, inexpensive, convenient, and allow pastors to stay in touch with their office and receive important messages. But few pastors have considered the tax and legal implications of using these devices. This article addresses some of these concerns.

TAX ISSUES

Pastors need to understand that the tax code imposes stricter substantiation requirements on the business use of cell phones. Why? To be sure they are being used for business purposes. Think about it. You may be using a cell phone provided by your church, but who's to say that you are using it for business purposes? You may be using it most of the time to talk with your spouse or kids.

The church provides the phone.

Many churches provide their pastor with a cell phone and pay all the monthly service charges. The big question here is whether those monthly charges paid by

phone must be required for you to properly perform your duties as pastor, and it must be provided to you for a substantial "noncompensatory" business reason such as immediate accessibility in the event of an emergency. Most senior pastors can easily meet this test. Note that the income tax regulations state that an employer need not "explicitly require" the employee to use a cell phone to meet the "convenience of the employer." However, a resolution of the church board to the effect that a cell phone is being provided to certain employees to enable them to properly perform the requirements of their job would increase the likelihood that the IRS would consider a cell phone to be for the employer's convenience. We recommend this practice.

2. Adequate records showing the business use of a cell phone are required in order for the church to reimburse these expenses under an accountable arrangement. You must keep a diary, log, or other record documenting the duration

church can reimburse only the business-use percentage of each bill, or it can pay the entire amount. If it pays the entire amount, then the reimbursements in excess of substantiated business use represent taxable income.

You're probably thinking, *Is he crazy? Keep records of every call I make all year? No one in his right mind would do that!* After all, the cost of cell phones and monthly usage fees have dropped so significantly that many church leaders have concluded that it is just not worth spending countless hours each year coming up with the required amount of substantiation. Here is some good news—while the IRS does not allow the cost of cell phones to be estimated, it does permit "sampling." This means that you may maintain adequate records for part of a year and use those records to substantiate the amount of business expense for the entire year if you can show that the period during which you kept adequate records was representative of your expenses for the entire year. Our recommendation is that you keep records documenting the total use of your phone for a month or quarter, and the business use of the phone during the same period. You can then compute a "business use percentage" that can be applied to your cell phone charges for the remainder of the year.

Keep in mind that if the IRS determines that you have not adequately accounted for the business use of your phone, then it will consider the church's reimbursement arrangement to be "nonaccountable." The result? All of the monthly phone bills paid by the church for the entire year go right on your W-2 as taxable income. And, you will not be

Pastors need to understand that the tax code imposes stricter substantiation requirements on the business use of cell phones.

the church represent taxable income to you. Obviously, you don't want them to be, and they aren't, so long as you meet the following conditions:

1. The cell phone must be for the "convenience of your employer" and be required as a "condition of your employment." These conditions are basically the same. The idea here is that the cell

and business or personal nature of each call. From this data the church can determine the "business use percentage" (the percentage of total phone time that is devoted to business). This percentage is multiplied times each monthly bill, and the resulting amount is not reported as taxable income since business use has been properly "accounted for." The

able to claim a business expense deduction since you have inadequate records. This may not be a big deal with cell phone rates fairly low, but it is something you should understand.

You purchased your own cell phone and pay the monthly charges.

What if you purchased your own cell phone and pay your monthly service charges with no reimbursement from the church? This is not a common arrangement, but it does happen. There are two points to keep in mind. First, you can deduct the full cost of your cell phone in the year you bought it (no depreciation over several years). However, you must use the phone more than 50 percent of the time for business, and your actual deduction is the cost of the phone multiplied times your business use percentage. Second, the tax treatment of monthly service fees depends on (1) who pays the bills, and (2) if the church pays the bills, whether it does so under an accountable or nonaccountable arrangement. If the church pays the bills under an accountable arrangement, the church's reimbursements are not reported as taxable income to you. If nonaccountable (you do not adequately account to the church for your expenses), the church's reimbursements must be reported as taxable income to you. This same rule applies to any reimbursement of personal cell phone use in excess of substantiated business use. If you pay the bills, you can claim a business expense deduction (computed on Form 2106) for the business use of the phone if you have adequate records to prove the business use percentage of the phone, and you meet the "condition of employment" test (defined above). Remember, your deduction is limited to the business use percentage multiplied times all monthly charges.

LEGAL ISSUES

Pastors should be aware of the following legal concerns associated with the use of cell phones:

A vast and growing number of Americans have cell phones, and

frequently use them when they drive.

It is now common to see drivers driving recklessly while talking on a cell phone. Some employers have been sued because of injuries resulting from an accident caused by an employee who was chatting on a cell phone. Some states and cities have enacted laws restricting the use of cell phones by drivers. More will do so. Several studies

have documented the risks associated with cell phone use while driving.

The risks associated with the use of cell phones while driving are astronomical, and the benefit is minimal. It is difficult to imagine an emergency that would be so urgent that a driver could not pull off the road to make a call. With regard to incoming calls, the driver should simply hand the phone to another adult in the vehicle, or pull off the road periodically to check for messages. Here are my recommendations:

1. *It is certainly a good practice to have a cell phone available on any vehicle that is being used to transport minors to or from a church activity.* A cell phone can be invaluable in the event of an emergency. However, the driver of the vehicle should be barred from using the cell phone while driving the vehicle. Calls can be answered or placed by another adult on the vehicle. This policy should apply to the use of any vehicle to transport minors, whether or not owned by the church.

2. *The same policy that applies to the use of cell phones while transporting minors should apply to the transportation of one or more adult passengers.*

3. *The use of a cell phone by a church staff member while driving a car on church business should be discouraged, if not prohibited.* If the phone has a "voice mail" feature, a missed call that must be

returned a few minutes later when the driver reaches his or her destination ordinarily will not create a problem. Some churches may want to make this rule less restrictive by allowing use of cell phones while driving in the event of an emergency. Other churches will want to eliminate any restrictions on the use of cell phones by church staff members while driving. In such cases, churches at a minimum should require that the phone

Here is some good news—while the IRS does not allow the cost of cell phones to be estimated, it does permit "sampling."

be used in "hands free" mode, and appropriate devices to permit such use should be provided. Any "less restrictive" policy should be applied only to church staff members while driving alone, and not to drivers of children or adults.

Cell phone conversations are not confidential.

It is easy for others to eavesdrop. This raises an important question concerning the application of the "clergy-penitent privilege" to conversations conducted over a cell phone. In all 50 states, the clergy privilege applies only to communications that are "confidential." Does this mean that conversations over a cell phone can never be privileged? No court has addressed this question. However, to eliminate any doubt, ministers may want to refrain from engaging in confidential spiritual counseling over a cell phone. Ministers who receive a call on a cell phone from a person seeking spiritual counsel should ask the caller to call back on a landline. **e**

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Daniel Rowland and the Great Awakening—the Fiery Preacher of Wales

BY WILLIAM P. FARLEY

Many think of Wales as the land of revivals. This little land's first taste of God's power was the Great Awakening in 1740–42. The prominent leader in that work was the little known Daniel Rowland (1713–90). What Jonathan Edwards was to New England's Great Awakening, Rowland was to Wales.

The power and anointing on Rowland's preaching were nothing short of phenomenal. After hearing him for the first time, Howell Harris, a fellow minister, noted in his diary, "I was last Sunday at the Ordinance (communion) with brother Rowland where I saw, felt, and heard such things as I can't put on paper any idea of. The power that continues with him is uncommon."¹ Harris then tries to describe the scene, but gives up in verbal exasperation, realizing the inadequacy of words to describe the felt power of God's manifest presence.

This power in Rowland's ministry was the norm not the exception. For example, early in his ministry, while reading the Anglican church liturgy² "an overwhelming force came upon his soul as he was praying . . . 'by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial, by thy glorious resurrection and ascension'. . . . As he uttered these words, a sudden amazing power seized his whole frame; and no sooner did it seize on him, than it ran instantly, like an electrifying shock, through all the people in the church, so that many of them fell down on the ground where they had been standing in a large mass together, there being no pews in the church."³ (The demand to hear his preaching was so great, the pews had been removed so more people could crowd in.)

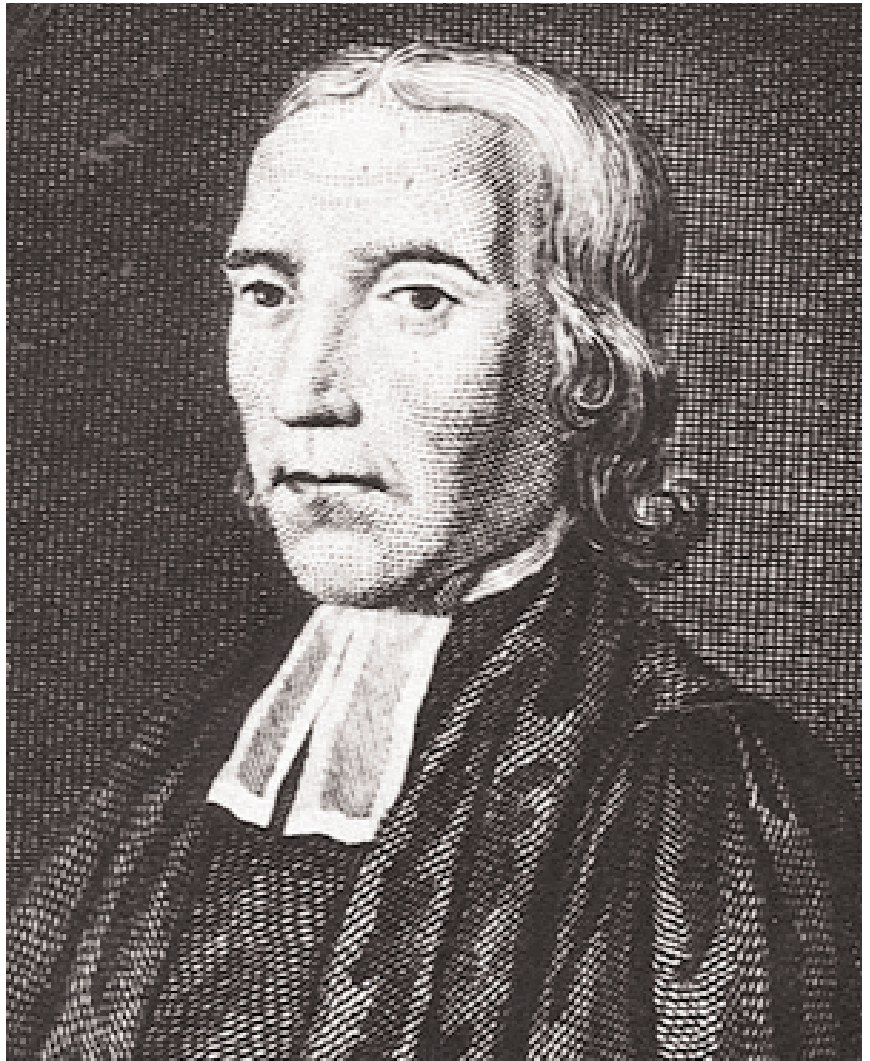


Photo furnished by William P. Farley

George Whitefield, one of the great preachers of history, recorded that under Rowland's ministry "he had often felt his heart burn within him, and had never forgotten the sight of some ten thousand people (open air) during the preaching of a sermon by Rowland crying 'glory', 'praise,' and ready to leap for joy." Thirty years later another eye witness remembered him and claimed, "Surely he is the greatest preacher in Europe."⁴

Long after Rowland's death, the

famous Welsh minister, Christmas Evans, also an eyewitness in his youth to Rowland's ministry, wrote, "Rowland was a star of the greatest magnitude that appeared in the last century in the Principality, and perhaps there has not been his like in Wales since the days of the apostles."⁵

Daniel Rowland was first and foremost a preacher. An amazing spiritual power followed his ministry. Thousands were converted, and God brought

thousands more to maturity under his searching ministry. “The effect of Rowland’s ministry . . . to his life’s end was something so vast and prodigious, that it almost takes away one’s breath to hear of it,”⁶ reflected J.C. Ryle in 1870. A Birmingham minister, who came accidentally to a place in Wales where Rowland was preaching to an immense open-air crowd, wrote: “I never witnessed such a scene before. The striking appearance of the preacher, and his zeal, animation, and fervour were beyond description. Rowland’s countenance was most expressive; it glowed almost like an angel’s.”⁷

Perhaps more than anything else, his greatest recommendations are the sacrifices that people would make to hear him. We will go to great lengths to get in on God’s presence. We might even fly cross-country in a warm, comfortable jet to hear someone preach under God’s anointing. But people walked 40 and 60 miles—a 2- to 3-day journey—across the rugged Welsh mountains, even in winter, to sit under the power of Rowland’s preaching. “The people on these occasions would go together in companies, like the Jews going up to the temple feast in Jerusalem, and would return home afterwards singing hymns and psalms on their journey, caring nothing for fatigue,” commented Ryle.⁸ Nothing can explain these exertions but the manifest presence of God.

All of this from a man who did not go to college—at a time when nearly all ministers graduated from Oxford or Cambridge—and who never held a higher position than assistant pastor. Who was Daniel Rowland and what can we learn from his life and testimony?

BIOGRAPHY

Very little is known about his youth and conversion. After his death, Lady Huntington gathered all of his letters and papers, planning to write his biography, but she died before the work could be done. These materials have been lost to posterity.

Daniel was born in 1713 in Cardiganshire, Wales, to his 54-year-old

father, the village rector. At age 20, he was ordained into the Church of England. Ryle testifies he was “very adroit and successful in all games and athletic amusements, and as ready as any one, after doing duty in church on Sunday morning, to spend the rest of God’s day in sports and revels, if not in drunkenness.”⁹ He was not yet converted.

At this time his preaching was a dismal failure—testifying that his natural gifts alone could not explain his later tremendous success. As he preached his heart out, his congregation got smaller and smaller. Finally, in desperation he went to hear the great evangelist Griffith Jones. Noticing Rowland’s obvious conceit and worldliness, Jones stopped in the middle of his sermon, pointed to Daniel, and prayed that God would convert him and use him to reach the lost. God heard Jones’ prayer.

That same year, 1738, when Rowland was 25, his life and ministry passed through a complete spiritual transformation. We know none of the details, but the effect on his ministry was astounding. Where people before avoided his church, they now came in droves. “The churches where he

followed Rowland as he labored faithfully in Wales. He preached in his church and the churches in the surrounding country on a regular basis. During his life he brought almost 100 young men into the ministry.

HIS PERSECUTIONS

God’s anointing often brings persecution. Hecklers threatened him, ruffians threw excrement at him while he preached, and numerous death threats were made against his life.

Jonathan Edwards’ congregation rejected him, and in the same way the Church of England rejected Rowland. Rowland was ordained a curate—assistant pastor—to his brother, John. Because the bishop feared Rowland’s popularity and spiritual power, he was denied his own parish. At age 50, after 30 years of faithful service (still a curate), the Church of England ejected him from his pulpit. Church officials had the effrontery to deliver the notice during his Sunday sermon. He read it and then submissively asked the congregation to accompany him outside. He finished his sermon in the open air rather than disobey the bishop’s demands by preaching in the bishop’s building.

Daniel Rowland was first and foremost a preacher. An amazing spiritual power followed his ministry.

preached were now crowded to suffocation,” notes Ryle.¹⁰ Not only were the churches filled, but the churchyards. People were unable to get inside.

For the next 4 years, Rowland preached a legalistic gospel, lacking a full understanding of God’s love. Even then God used him greatly. Then in 1742 (the height of the Great Awakening), he received a revelation of God’s love. His preaching softened and an additional dimension of power attended his work from that day forward.

From 1738 to 1790—52 years—crowds hungry for God’s presence

The people were furious. They built a chapel for Rowland, an unusual thing to do in those days, since all churches in England were state funded. There he drew huge crowds until his death, 27 years later. When he died in 1790, all of Wales mourned the loss of a great spiritual father.

LESSONS FOR TODAY’S MAN OF GOD

We can learn several lessons from Rowland’s life. First, is the need to wed spiritual power and orthodoxy. Rowland was self-educated, but educated he was. His sermons are peppered with

references to the Early Church fathers, Augustine, Calvin, and others. One of today's great problems is the split of power and orthodoxy. Not so with Rowland. He was always first a man of the Word and second a pursuer of experience.

The second lesson we learn from Rowland is that to the degree we possess God's power, we will suffer. Many were jealous of Rowland. Others did not understand him. Anyone who seeks God's power should be clear about this principle: the greater the anointing, the greater the spiritual resistance experienced.

Third, Rowland's life demonstrates the supremacy of spiritual gifting and calling over ecclesiastical accreditation. Here was a man with no title higher than assistant pastor who was probably the most effective spiritual leader in Welsh history. Rowland's life proved Proverbs 18:16, "A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers him into the presence of the great" (NIV). In Rowland's case, the gift was the presence and power of God. These always open doors otherwise locked. Pursue God. His presence and power will give

you all the promotion you can handle. If you get promoted for any other reason, it will leave you unsatisfied.

Fourth, Rowland teaches us the importance of preaching. He let nothing stand between him and the pulpit. He noted preaching was the work of Jesus, Paul, and the apostles. He carried a great conviction that it was "the work" that mattered. He refused to let counseling, administration, and church business get in the way of sermon preparation. He continually read, enriching his mind with the writings of the 17th-century Puritans. He read men like Charnock, Baxter, Owen, Sibbes, and Bunyan. The supernatural focus of their writings infused Rowland with the glories of eternity—necessary fodder for every great preacher.

Finally, we learn that humility and self-denial are precedents to spiritual power. According to Ryle, "he had a deep and abiding sense of his own sinfulness, weakness, and corruption, and his constant need of God's grace. On seeing a vast concourse of people coming to hear him, he would frequently

exclaim: 'Oh, may the Lord have mercy and help me, a poor worm, sinful and dust and ashes!' "¹¹

God, raise up men and women of Daniel Rowland's stature in the church of today! **e**

William P. Farley Pinnacle Communications, Spokane, Washington. For His Glory, by William Farley, can be ordered from Pinnacle Press, P.O. Box 8146, Spokane, WA 99203.

E N D N O T E S

1. Eifon Evans, *Daniel Rowland* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth), 5.
2. At the time most Welshmen were Anglican. Separate nonstate-affiliated denominations were just beginning to appear.
3. Evans, 50, 51.
4. *Ibid.*, 1.
5. *Ibid.*, 2.
6. J.C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1978), 186.
7. *Ibid.*, 205.
8. *Ibid.*, 186.
9. *Ibid.*, 183.
10. *Ibid.*, 184.
11. *Ibid.*, 211, 212.

In Control Where It Counts

B Y D E A N N A S H R O D E S

Ugh! Things feel so out of control!" As a pastor's wife, have you ever lamented this? If so, you're not alone. A recent survey showed that pastor's wives feel a general lack of control over their life situations. When I heard this, I felt comforted that I wasn't alone. I don't believe this is a perceived lack of control; I believe it is reality.

Family finances often have us feeling out of control. Do you cringe when the congregation reviews your salary package at the annual business meeting? This annual ritual leaves many wives feeling embarrassed, somewhat violated, and yes, out of control. The lack of privacy is one area in the ministry that can go beyond our comfort zone.

Pastoral transitions can also leave us feeling out of control. Matters about the church-owned parsonage can leave a pastor's wife feeling completely out of the loop. Many pastors' wives are not allowed to select their own colors or the paint on the bedroom walls. The church people have already determined this before they arrive.

GOD'S REASSURING VOICE

Discouraged about my seemingly out of control life, God spoke to me. First, He reassured me that He was in control. Second, He told me He had given me control in areas that really counted. Hearing this was puzzling. Then God began to show me that I was not left without choices in life. In fact, He had given me choices in abundance.

God has given me control over my relationship with Him.

In 1 Samuel 30:6, we read that David encouraged himself in the Lord. It seemed all was against David. His followers were

even talking about stoning him. Learn from David's example. He took the initiative and evidently spent time alone with God to receive the strength he needed. Without time spent in the secret place, we will feel even more out of control than we really are. Everything flows out of our intimate time with God.

God has given me control in taking care of myself physically.

In the last presidential election, reporters were uncovering every seemingly possibly personal detail about the candidates. After receiving a copy of the candidates' schedules, reporters discovered that George W. Bush took an hour for jogging every afternoon. They asked him, "You leave work every afternoon for an hour. Should we take that to mean you are a lazy candidate?"

He replied, "No, you should take that to mean I place a priority on caring for myself physically and am in the best shape possible to become the President of the United States."

If the President can find time to keep himself physically fit, can't we? For me, this means eating right, getting proper rest, exercising, and having regular check ups.

God has given me control over my emotional needs.

God has created us as emotional beings with emotional needs. Sometimes negative emotions rise to the surface as we deal with life and ministry. It is crucial that we have a safe place to reveal those emotions and deal with them. There is nothing like the friendship of another woman in ministry who can listen and understand, without judgment. I once heard a speaker at a conference say,

"The weight of the pastoral ministry defies explanation to those who are outside of it."

My husband and I have learned to meet new ministers and cultivate friendships. Sectional and district meetings have been a priority for us. God has brought us wonderful friends through these times of fellowship.

For the more serious challenges in life and ministry, I am grateful for EMERGE Ministries. Through their pastoral counseling line at 1-800-867-4011, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST, Monday through Friday, you can receive the highest professional care from those who know the burdens of the pastorate.

God has given me control in following His call to be a pastor's wife.

Many key people are in our church, but I am unique in that I am called as the one to be wife to the pastor. No one else in our church is called to this role. By my actions and attitudes, I can be a support to my husband, or a negative drain. This is a choice I am given each day. I have learned that the key to a healthy marriage is unconditional love, servanthood, and liberal doses of forgiveness. If my marriage fails, it is not my church's fault. God has given me control in making my marriage relationship a priority. For me, this means prioritizing time to communicate, going on regular dates, using our answering machine to screen calls so we can have uninterrupted time together, and choosing to minister to my husband first.

God has given me control in deciding to be a godly mother.

Dr. Laura Schlessinger says that there is one job in which we can never be

replaced—that of mother. She’s right. God has blessed my husband and me with three children. No matter what other things in my life may be dictated by others, I wake up each morning knowing that I have a ministry in impacting three lives for Jesus.

I have control in setting the tone for our home. While our husbands are leaders in the home, a woman’s attitude sets the climate. God has given me control in making our home a loving, peaceful, creative, and warm place.

God has given me control in spending wisely.

Although church people may know the details of our salary, they don’t control how we spend it. These details are private. We can be wise or foolish in our spending. We have the privilege of tithing, giving offerings, and paying our bills on time. Although others may set and publicly disclose our church salary, they are not our source.

God has given me control in continual growth and learning.

It’s been said, “When you’re through learning, you’re through!” We are

always in process, on a journey. God is sometimes more interested in the process than He is in the destination. One of the major ways we grow is through reading. Leaders read, and readers lead. It is up to me to grow. For me, this means taking advantage of a wide variety of books, tapes, videos, conferences, and seminars.

God has given me control in avoiding bitterness.

Bitterness does not destroy what it is poured out on, only the vessel in which it is contained. When we choose to be bitter, we only destroy ourselves. Many times those we are bitter at don’t even realize it, nor care. Bitterness negatively affects our physical bodies and our spiritual well-being. God has given me the choice, the control, to become bitter or better.

God has given me control over my time.

We are all given 24 hours every day. In my personal life, family life, and church life, God has entrusted me with my own schedule. As an influencer, I have responsibility not only for my time, but also for my children’s time. For the

peace and general health of my family, limiting my children to one sport a season and one musical instrument at a time is necessary. Combined with school and church activities, this is more than enough. It is better to do one or two things with excellence than ten things poorly. Controlling my time improves as I increase my organizational skills, listing what I would like to accomplish each day, and trying to simplify wherever possible.

God has given me control of my attitude.

We may not be able to change or control circumstances, but there is one thing we can change—ourselves. God expects us to have self-control. One day I was frustrated with several situations. I could do nothing to change all the problems, but I realized I could change myself. If nothing else, I was better equipped to deal with the ongoing challenges.

What does all this add up to? A lot of control—more than I ever thought I had, and in ways that really count. **E**

Deanna Shrodes is an Assemblies of God minister and a pastor’s wife. She and her husband live in Manchester, Maryland.

Coping With Conflict

BY SUZANNE JORDAN BROWN

I'm never going to be a pastor," Peter declared. "You trust people and they treat you dirty."

I gazed in shock at my 9-year-old's unhappy, bitter face and felt a sudden wave of guilt. The fiery trial I was experiencing was so painful I had forgotten there were others in the family who might be feeling the heat.

"I never thought the Smiths would leave," he muttered.

"I never thought they would leave either, Son," I answered.

It was true. Donna was my best friend. She and Cliff had been in the church for as many years as my husband, Paul, had been the pastor—14 to be exact. They were our most loyal supporters and closest coworkers.

Donna joined in with complaints—some valid and some petty, but all presented in a condemning manner.

I was devastated. How could people we trusted act so venomous? How could our most loyal church members suddenly betray us? I was so stunned I never gave a thought to our children, who could easily hear the loud, angry voices through the thin walls of our small house.

Paul was hurt, but continued with his busy schedule of serving, as usual. Not me. For days I was lost in a fog of depression. Could I ever trust anyone again? Was I doomed to go friendless through the rest of my life?

I moped around until Peter's evident bitterness shook me out of my pit of self-pity. Then I saw that our other three

growing up years.

"How did you react when there was conflict in the church?" I asked him.

"I never noticed. My folks never talked about church problems in front of us."

I saw the wisdom in that. After all, some problems are parent-sized, too big for kids to handle. But that didn't help much in our case. They were all too aware of the situation. What could I do about it now? I asked a friend for advice. He had grown up in a parsonage, and now pastors a church himself.

"Kids pick up on your reactions," he told me. "Dad and Mom didn't talk about church conflicts in our presence. When we had to know, Dad was very calm about it. He said that serving the Lord wasn't always easy, and there would be people who let us down. Dad said, and showed by his actions, that God was faithful and would help when we hurt."

That really made me squirm. No wonder my kids had taken the Smith situation so hard. We should have explained the situation to them calmly, giving them as much information as they needed, and no more. Instead, we had left them to form their own conclusions from things they overheard. Besides, I had done nothing but cry and mope for days.

I didn't want them to be bitter, though, so I decided to pull up my socks and project a right attitude, regardless of what I really felt.

The next day I made waffles—a traditional celebration breakfast.

"What's the occasion?" the kids asked.

"I've just decided not to worry any more about the Smiths," I told them. "We're here to serve the Lord, not to

How could people we trusted act so venomous? How could our most loyal church members suddenly betray us?

Then Cliff disagreed with a doctrinal stand Paul was taking. Soft spoken and gentle as Paul is, he never backs down over what he feels to be the truth in God's Word. One dreadful night the situation came to a head. Donna and Cliff came to our house determined to settle the issue. When they were faced with scriptural reasons they could not refute, the disagreement moved from doctrinal to personal.

"You are too narrow and legalistic," Cliff said, pacing angrily across our living room. "We don't think we're being fed spiritually. We're going to leave and find a church that meets our needs."

children were hurting, too. At 11 and 13 years of age, Paul, Jr., and Beth were at particularly vulnerable stages. Even 7-year-old Becky was aware of the conflict. Yet, I didn't know what to say. I didn't want my children to become bitter, like so many other PKs I had known, but I didn't know how to help them cope.

The parsonage had been like uncharted waters to me. My parents weren't in church when I was growing up, and I attended only when someone invited me. I hadn't the least idea how to relate to these PKs of mine. So I went for reinforcements. Paul's family, unlike mine, were faithful in church all his

win a popularity contest. People may disappoint us, but God never will. So why should we worry about it?"

The children responded with smiles of relief and ate their waffles with obvious enjoyment. Of course, they watched to see if my improved attitude would last. I made a point of being cheerful and going about the work I had been neglecting. To my surprise, I found that as I acted cheerful, I began to feel more cheerful. I realized that the words I kept repeating about the Lord's faithfulness were true. My business was to serve Him, and serving Him was, in itself, enough reward for me.

All seemed to be well, until a new problem surfaced a few weeks later. Becky, our youngest, suddenly developed a mysterious stomachache that reappeared every Sunday.

"What's the matter?" I asked, confronting her at last. "You've always liked Sunday school before. Is it your new teacher?"

"Sort of," Becky admitted. "I like her, but what if she doesn't like me?"

Puzzled, I asked her to explain.

"Well, Mrs. Smith was my teacher before, and she said sometimes that I talked too much in class. Then they got mad and left. Maybe if I hadn't talked so much, she wouldn't have left."

The problem suddenly came into focus. Kids have a tendency to assume the blame for things happening in their world. We see it often in children of divorce. "If only I behaved better," they say, "maybe Daddy wouldn't have left."

Now we saw that tendency in our daughter.

I reassured her the problem had nothing to do with her.

"But why are they so mad at Daddy?" she asked, her big blue eyes shining with tears.

I took a deep breath, prayed for wisdom, and plunged into an explanation. "Sometimes when people are faced with things they don't want to believe, they look for reasons not to believe it. If they can't find any, they get mad at the messenger telling them those things. People were angry with the prophets and the

apostles. They even got mad at Jesus. Daddy understands there will be people who are upset with him sometimes, too."

She seemed to accept that explanation, and soon the Sunday morning stomachaches were a thing of the past.

One more repercussion came of the Smith ordeal. Paul, Jr., had grown up from nursery days with Johnny Smith. They were in the same class at school, played on the same ball team, and shared the same group of friends. When Johnny's parents left the church, taking Johnny with them, Paul felt the vacuum. He also didn't know what his relationship with Johnny should be.

"I guess I can't have Johnny over for my birthday party," he said one day.

"I don't know why not," I replied. "The problems his parents had were with your dad—not you. I'm sure he would like to come."

"But, I feel like a traitor being friends with Johnny when his parents hurt you and Dad so much."

"You don't need to take up a defense for us," I reassured him. "God has given us the grace to forgive them. You don't need to worry about it. We want you to be friends with Johnny just as you always have been."

"I guess I'll call and invite him now," he said, obviously relieved.

Although there were a few awkward situations along the way, he and Johnny remained good friends until the Smiths moved to another state and all contact with the family was eventually lost.

Many years have passed since the Smith incident. Although we have had less than our share of troubles (thanks to Paul's gentle leading of his flock) there have been the inevitable hurts along the way.

Just the other day he came in with a familiar discouraged slump to his shoulders. "I'm afraid we're going to lose the Martins," he said.

Immediately I felt a rush of anger. Here was another family we had carefully trained and nurtured spiritually, only to have them leave when things didn't go their way. I felt like throwing a pity party and inviting all my friends.

Fortunately, by now, I know better. If I want my children to cope, I'll have to lead the way by coping myself with forgiveness and faith. It doesn't get easier with practice, but responding in a way pleasing to God saves a lot of heartaches—for myself as well as for those important people living with us in the parsonage. **e**

Suzanne Jordan Brown is a pastor's wife who lives in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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What Can We Expect From the Class of 2002?

B Y R O B E R T H . S P E N C E

The class of 2002 is celebrating commencement. In a very real sense, the members of this class are ready to “commence” the work they have been preparing for over a period of years. These new graduates include those with high school diplomas, others with diplomas and certificates from community colleges and technical schools, as well as those who have received degrees from colleges, universities, and seminaries. All who have completed courses of study deserve our congratulations.

Included in the class of 2002 are hundreds of new graduates from Assemblies of God colleges. As they leave our campuses, they will have opportunities to assume roles of leadership in our churches and communities.

most effective pastors, youth ministers, evangelists, or missionaries they can possibly be. They are eager to move into the harvest field.

When we consider these recent Bible or pastoral ministries graduates assuming a role of leadership in the church, what can we expect from them? As we see them in our pulpits and leading our youth groups, working with our children, or directing our music, what do we know about them?

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE CLASS OF 2002?

For the most part, they are young. Those enrolled in Assemblies of God colleges are predominantly comprised of the traditional 18-to 22-year-old age group.

We will understand these new graduates better if we consider what was happening in our world during the years they were growing and maturing. For example, they will have little recollection of the Reagan era. They were so young when the Soviet Union broke apart that they have no personal awareness of the Cold War and cannot remember the threat of nuclear war. The Vietnam War is ancient history to them, taking its place alongside previous conflicts like World War I, World War II, and the Civil War. On the other hand, they have had to adjust to living with the uncertainties created by terrorist activity and the fear of biological and chemical warfare.

These new graduates may not grasp the significance of the expression, “You sound like a broken record,” because they probably never owned a record player. An eight-track tape player is a relic of the past, as are 78s, 33s, and 45s. The compact disc is all they’ve ever known. They have always had answering machines, VCR’s, and cable television. A black-and-white television with only 13 channels could have been something in Thomas Edison’s laboratory, so far as their experience is concerned.

Who are these new ministers and church leaders, and what can we expect from them? Even though they have not had the same life experiences as their predecessors, they do bring a deep commitment to fulfilling God’s will in their lives and in their ministries. Many have faced personal challenges and financial struggles that have helped them understand the grace and provision of the Lord. They have had the benefit of

Let us not forget the class of 2002 is here because we prayed for them. We asked the Lord to send forth laborers, and He has.

With the advantage of an educational experience with a Christian worldview, those who believe that God has directed them into the business, educational, or professional world will find innumerable occasions to be light in a darkened world.

Throughout our history, Assemblies of God Bible institutes and colleges have helped prepare those who have sensed a distinct call from our Master for full-time service in the church. The class of 2002 includes scores of men and women who have spent these recent years in both formal and informal courses of study preparing to be the

Consequently, typical new graduates will be in their early twenties. Many of them have already submitted themselves to their respective district credentialing committees for ministerial recognition. They are carefully planning for the time they will be ordained.

Beginning pastors are often sensitive about their age. If there is concern about their lack of experience, they can draw strength from Paul’s advice to Timothy, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12*).

outstanding men and women of God who have been their instructors and their mentors. They have been influenced by anointed speakers in the college chapel services.

These new graduates desire to be servant leaders. They understand that servanthood is a sign of strength, not weakness. Following the example of the Master, they know that servanthood needs no announcement.

These recent years of preparation have helped the class of 2002 establish their priorities. Those who are joining the ranks of Assemblies of God ministers have found inspiration in the way Jesus chose His disciples and worked with them. Careful study of the life of Jesus has helped them see the importance of the time that was set aside for teaching the disciples both by word and example. They have come to rely on the ministry of the Holy Spirit to help them with the doubts and fears, the guilt and resentments that have been a part of their spiritual journey.

THE CLASS OF 2002 HAS AN APPRECIATION FOR THE WORD OF GOD.

Their years of intense Bible study have extended beyond the mere gathering of facts. Blessed with learning aids and computer capabilities that earlier generations could not have imagined, our new graduates have been able to access the earliest manuscripts of Scripture and benefit from language study that reinforces available translations.

Gifted Bible teachers in their respective schools have encouraged, first of all, their devotion to the God of the Word to help students understand the Word of God. With the benefit of books, commentaries, and study guides from competent authors, our new graduates are prepared to share their knowledge of the Word and help those to whom they are ministering.

THE CLASS OF 2002 HAS AN AWARENESS OF THE WILL OF GOD.

The class of 2002 has come to realize that God has a special plan for every

person. Furthermore, they know that the will of God in their lives must begin with them *being* the kind of persons God wants them to be as they begin *doing* what God wants them to do.

The selection of a college to attend, a course of study to pursue, and decisions regarding ministry opportunities to pursue have provided occasions for discerning the leading of the Holy Spirit and having assurance of being in the will of God. They realize that a knowledge of the Word of God is their very best preparation for pursuing His will. In those situations where a particular Scripture may not be available to give a precise answer, they have learned to accept the counsel of those whom God has brought into their lives to offer advice.

THE CLASS OF 2002 HAS AN APPETITE FOR THE THINGS OF GOD.

Options are innumerable for the investment of their time, energies, and resources. But these new graduates have caught a glimpse of eternal values. They have made personal application of the words of Jesus when He said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves

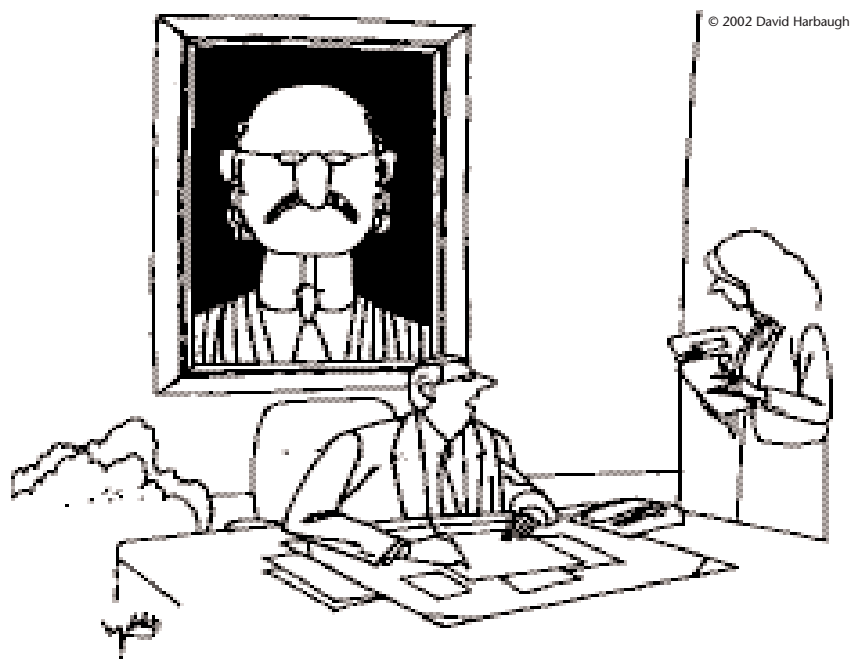
treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19–21).

Even in their youth, these new additions to our ministerial ranks have responded to Paul's admonition, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:1,2).

We open our hearts and our arms to the class of 2002. We welcome their enthusiasm and their vision. Sometimes they will ask difficult questions as they approach their tasks and the ministry in ways that differ from those of another generation. Sometimes their zeal will result in discomfort among older ministers. However, let us not forget the class of 2002 is here because we prayed for them. We asked the Lord to send forth laborers, and He has. **e**

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



"He's the first pastor of this church; council had it framed for my office. Remind me to write them a thank you note."

S E R M O N S E E D S



IN REMEMBRANCE

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

INTRODUCTION:

When a loved one passes from this life, we might cherish small items that are meaningless to most, but to us they help us recall fond memories of time spent with our loved one.

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He gave the apostles (and the Church) something by which to recall Him—memories. They mean little to those who are not members of the household of faith; but to those of us who are a part of God's family, they are greatly cherished.

Let us consider some things we remember about the Lord as we partake of Communion.

MESSAGE:

1. His Prayers.

- a. The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1–4).
- (1) "Teach us to pray"—the only thing the apostles asked Jesus to

teach them to do (verse 1).

- (2) He taught them through this model prayer.
- (3) We still need help in knowing how to pray.

b. The prayer in Gethsemane (John 17:20–24).

- (1) One of the most notable things about this prayer is that Jesus prayed for us (verse 20).
- (2) He is still praying for us (Hebrews 7:25).

2. His Power.

a. Many things demonstrated His power while He was on earth:

- (1) His walk on the water.
- (2) The multiplied meals.
- (3) His many and varied healings.

b. His power can now be demonstrated in us (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 3:20).

3. His Patience.

- a. Jesus' patience is probably shown most

clearly in His relationship with Peter, who often blundered. In spite of this, Jesus accepted him and never gave up on him.

- b. When we fail, Jesus still loves us and doesn't give up on us.

4. His Passion.

- a. Jesus endured indescribable suffering.
- b. He chose to suffer to bring us back into a right relationship with God (Isaiah 53:5,6; 1 John 4:10).

5. His Promises.

- a. I'm always with you (Matthew 28:20).
- b. I'm coming for you (John 14:1–3; 1 Corinthians 11:26).

CONCLUSION:

As we receive the emblems of the Lord's Supper, let us remember all these things (and many others) Christ has done and is doing for us.

—Martin L. Perryman, Ada, Oklahoma

FAITH, FORGIVENESS, AND FREEDOM

Matthew 6:9–15

INTRODUCTION:

Tucked into the heart of the Lord's Prayer is the greatest message of the Bible, but one of the hardest messages for many to receive. Some never accept it. It is the central word of this sermon—*forgiveness*. Let's look at it and try to learn the lesson once and for all.

MESSAGE:

1. Faith—"Our Father which art in heaven" (verse 9).

- a. What is faith?
 - (1) Hebrews 11:1—the only Bible definition.
 - (2) Realizing God.
- b. Why do we need faith? (Hebrews 11:6).

2. Forgiveness—"Forgive us our debts" (verse 12).

Forgiveness is not excusing the wrong or the wrongdoer. Forgiveness is not saying the wrong is OK.

- a. Forgiveness is transferring (committing) the case to a higher court—like filing a quit claim deed. Or, like saying, "I will no longer demand an accounting."
- (1) As long as we are unforgiving, we hold the person who hurt us responsible to us.

- (2) We demand an accounting.
- (3) We desire to get even to injure someone because of our injury.
- (4) Unforgiveness is destructive and life-threatening, not so much to the hated person as to the person who harbors the hatred. I let go of my desire to punish and cast it all on the Lord.

b. Forgiveness is letting go of our resentment.

- (1) Our word *forgive* comes from roots meaning, "To give away."
- (2) We make a conscious act to give up resentment.
- (3) We make a conscious act to stop being angry with the offender.

c. Forgiveness is becoming willing to bear the pain of another's sin against us. Jesus said, "Father forgive them." Forgiveness is a choice.

d. Forgiveness is waiting for and expecting God to work an act of release within.

- (1) Forgiveness is complete when a divine, holy release takes place within.
- (2) Unforgiveness is like a stack of overdue, unpaid bills. The longer we wait to pay them, the more penalties are added to them.

3. Freedom—"For thine is the kingdom" (verse 13).

Forgiveness transforms into freedom.

- a. When we "forgive those who trespass against us," we empty our hearts of hatred and make room for God's love, forgiveness, and freedom.
- b. When God forgives us, He offers His grace so it may bless us and flow through to bless others, too. We become channels of God's love in a world gone mad.
- c. When we forgive, we share the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and we experience personal Gethsemanes and Golgothas. But don't forget that "Sunday's coming."
- d. When we forgive, we open that festering sore of our lives to the sterilizing power of the Holy Spirit and the healing power of Christ.

CONCLUSION:

You want real freedom? It starts with faith and forgiveness—not just 1 time or 7 times, but 70 times 7. You want real freedom? Start by forgiving those who have hurt you.

—Warren McPherson, Springfield, Missouri

S E R M O N S E E D S

MAD COW DISEASE

Exodus 32:1–35, NIV

INTRODUCTION:

There is a scare, particularly overseas, concerning “mad cow disease” infecting livestock. The scientific name for mad cow disease is Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, or, BSE. According to the Institute of Food Science & Technology: “The disease-infected cattle appear nervous, lose weight, and have difficulty in walking; milk yields decline.” In the story we are about to read, the Israelites created and worshiped a calf (a baby cow). They were infected with what I call the mad cow disease.

They made the cow (verse 2), Moses got mad (verse 19), and God struck the people with disease (verse 35). Even today we get infected with the “mad cow disease.” As Christians, when infected, we become nervous, our spiritual man deteriorates, we have difficulty walking the walk, and we produce nothing.

In Exodus 32:1–35, what were the problems and the issues? By answering these questions we can determine some issues or problems we need to face in our own lives and combat this mad cow disease.

MESSAGE:

1. Sight was an issue—“the people saw” (verse 1).

- When the people could no longer see Moses, they lost their focus.
- Matthew 14: When Peter lost his focus, he started to sink.
- Hebrews 12:2: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the

throne of God.”

- Second Corinthians 4:18: “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”
 - Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”
 - Our faith cannot be based on our sight. Sight was an issue for the Israelites; is it an issue for you?
- #### 2. Time was an issue—“so long in coming” (verse 1).
- The Israelite’s timing was different from God’s timing.
 - Lazarus in John 11. Timing was an issue.
 - Psalm 27:14: “Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”
 - Psalm 37:7: “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.”
 - Psalm 37:34: “Wait for the Lord and keep his way.”
 - Time was an issue for the children of Israel; is it an issue for you?
- #### 3. Trust was an issue—“we don’t know what has happened” (verse 1).
- Their faithfulness was dependent on their human faculties and their human schedules. Their faith was in what they saw and felt.
 - Trusting God can never be determined by sight or touch. Faithfulness is a condition of the heart.
- #### 4. Leadership was an issue—“Aaron answered them” (verse 2).
- The absence of quality leadership leads to the absence of a quality corporation.
 - We must be careful to whom we look for guidance.

5. Logic was an issue: “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord” (verse 5).

- Aaron’s logic seems to be faulty.
 - The “Lord” in verse 5 is the same “Lord” used in verse 7.
 - He tagged on the name Yahweh with what he knew to be wrong.
 - Have we ever built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord”? Do we try to mix the holy with the human?
- #### 6. Foundation was an issue—“They have been quick to turn away” (verse 8).
- Parable of the Sower. Some seed fell on the path, never taking root—the birds came and ate it. Some seed fell on rocky places, never taking root—it sprang up, but withered because it had no foundation.
 - Without a foundation a house will not stand. Matthew 7 speaks of one man who built his house on the sand; it speaks of another who built his house on a rock.
 - Foundation was an issue for the Israelites; is it an issue for you?
- #### 7. Honesty was an issue—“I threw it into the fire and out came this calf” (verse 24).
- Verse 4 says, “He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool.”
 - It came down to responsibility.
 - Honesty and responsibility were issues for Aaron; are they issues in your life?

CONCLUSION:

Any of these issues are symptoms of “mad cow disease.” What symptoms do you have?
—Brad C. Frazier, North Manchester, Indiana

WHAT TIME IS IT?

Romans 13:11–14

INTRODUCTION:

Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 indicates there is “a time to every purpose under the heaven.” Tracing the use of the word *time* indicates the reality of such a statement. This raises an important question: What time is it right now on God’s great time schedule? The apostle Paul gives us three answers to this question:

MESSAGE:

1. It is time for God’s people to wake up (verse 11).

- There is too much spiritual passivity, play-acting, indifference in the church.
 - The people of God need to awaken to the fact we are in a great battle of faith, devotion, morals, and politics.
- #### 2. It is time for God’s people to dress up (verse 12).
- Negatively, we must put off the things of the old man (Galatians 5:19–21).
 - Positively, we must put on the things of the new man (Galatians 5:22,23).
- #### 3. It is time for God’s people to go up (verse 11).

- This salvation is the ultimate salvation—the rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:13–17).
- We must be ready at all times.

CONCLUSION:

We often glance at our watches subconsciously, and the time does not really register. Let this message register—it is time for God’s people to wake up, dress up, and go up.
—Jesse K. Moon, Waxahachie, Texas

S E R M O N S E E D S



MAKE UP YOUR MIND

Daniel 1:3–20

Theme: The believer must establish a nonnegotiable set of values.

INTRODUCTION:

People who say, “My mind is made up, so don’t confuse me with the facts,” are often referred to as “stubborn” or “strong-willed.” There is a time to have a nonnegotiable set of core values, establishing certain principles that are never compromised for any person nor changed by any circumstances.

The Word of God contains the standard of absolutes with which we must identify, on which we base our behavior, and for which we are willing to die.

Daniel was a young man, perhaps still in his teens, when he was brought to Babylon. From the earliest years in his Babylonian captivity, he made up his mind about certain things he would and would not do.

MESSAGE:

1. Don’t allow circumstances to dictate behavior.

- a. Daniel could have easily justified compromise. He was separated from home and family by force, living in a strange culture, and under the authority of a godless ruler.
- b. The king’s plan was to indoctrinate these young captives in the language and culture of the Chaldeans.
- c. Cultural patterns are reflected in:
 - (1) Music, literature, entertainment. (Currently, sex, violence, drugs, death, anti-god, etc.)
 - (2) Educational system. (No Bible reading, no prayer, no moral values based on Scripture.)
- d. Results of a culture that has refused to include God in its value system:
 - (1) Self-indulgent, desires immediate gratification.
 - (2) Breakdown of the home/family as the basic foundation for morality.
 - (3) Loss of civility, respect for others.
 - (4) Views scriptural principles as outmoded and those who uphold them as narrow-minded bigots.
- e. Like Daniel, you must make up your mind to:

- (1) not indulge in that which is contrary to God’s Word.
 - (2) not be pressured by peers to a sinful lifestyle for the sake of acceptance.
 - (3) believe there is one God, that His Word is true, and that obeying His commands is for our present and future benefit.
 - f. Jesus made up His mind to do the Father’s will.
 - g. Joseph refused to compromise and was thrown into prison.
 - h. Stephen refused to recant his message and was stoned.
 - i. In a godless culture, it is not easy to stand for righteousness; but we must stand firm.
- #### 2. Remain respectful toward unbelieving authorities (verses 8,9,11–13).
- a. Daniel did not create a scene. His attitude had already won him favor with his superiors.
 - b. Unpleasant, out-of-control circumstances will likely reveal who we really are on the inside.
 - c. Have your mind made up, but being obnoxious will not likely bring an affirmative response. Because you disagree on one/some areas does not mean everything else is evil/bad.
 - d. Witness for Christ is negative/positive in direct correlation with our attitude toward unbelieving authorities.
 - e. Jesus clearly said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).
 - f. Make up your mind that you will not adopt the spirit of this world, but will walk before God and man with a true spirit of humility.
- #### 3. Be confident that outcome will validate choices (verses 12–15; 19,20).
- a. Faith can be risky. It requires that we believe God is true to His Word.
 - b. Often we look for an escape hatch, in case it doesn’t work out.
 - c. Notice they asked for veggies for 10 days, and the king found their wisdom to be 10 times better than all the

- other advisors.
- d. Benefits from faith choices:
 - (1) Promotes personal fulfillment.
 - (a) The Book of Psalms begins with a promise to those who live in faith (Psalm 1:1,2,5).
 - (b) God’s ways are not arbitrary decrees, nor are they for our harm. Rather, all He has planned is for our present and future benefit.
 - (c) Personal fulfillment may be delayed. The discipline of being willing to postpone personal blessing/benefit provides a unique sense of fulfillment.
 - (2) Produces spiritual growth.
 - (a) David killed a bear and a lion, then he met Goliath.
 - (b) The need for faith implies a challenge larger than our ability to provide a solution.
 - (c) The apostle Peter expressed this truth very well (2 Peter 1:3; 5–8)
 - (3) Produces opportunities for God to manifest himself.
 - (a) Abraham chose to take Isaac to Mount Moriah as a sacrifice, but God provided a ram in the thicket.
 - (b) David chose to fight Goliath with nothing more than a sling and five stones, but God saved Israel that day.
 - (c) The three Hebrew children chose to honor no other god, but God brought them out of the fiery furnace.
- e. Be certain that our own presumption is not mistaken for faith. Pride/personal desire can lead to foolish decisions.
- f. We can be certain that God will honor the faith that has no motive other than to honor His Word and bring glory to His name.

CONCLUSION:

Have you really made up your mind? Are you willing to stand against popular opinion to serve God? Be willing to make faith choices.

—H. Maurice Lednicki, Springfield, Missouri

S E R M O N S E E D S

TIPS FOR HANDLING TURMOIL

Psalm 34:1–10

INTRODUCTION:

David was seeking refuge from Saul. David had been faithful as a servant and worker in Saul's house. Because of the anointing of the Lord on David, Saul is jealous because of the loss of God's presence in his life.

This Psalm reveals the heart of one after God's own heart. Here is one with deeply troubled circumstances, who still knew how to approach God with his need.

If we put ourselves in David's shoes, how would we respond? Note David's response:

MESSAGE:

1. Praise: "I will bless the Lord . . . let us

exalt His name" (verses 1–3).

- a. He consistently had a good attitude.
- b. He recognized God's sovereignty.
- c. He recognized his dependence on God.

2. Petition: "I sought the Lord . . . this poor man cried" (verses 4–6).

- a. He knew:
 - (1) that God is faithful.
 - (2) that God hears His own.
 - (3) what God had promised earlier—the anointing.
- b. Even though David turned to others for help, God was his only true help.
3. Patience: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in him . . . that fear him" (verses 8–10).

- a. He learned patience in the wilderness.
- b. He learned that God answers:
 - (1) according to His Word.
 - (2) according to His will.
 - (3) according to His ways.
- c. He learned that submission to God's way was the only way (Isaiah 40:31).

CONCLUSION:

We often allow circumstances to determine our response(s) in our relationship with God. David set an example of a disciplined attitude. Victory over our circumstances comes when we prioritize our relationship with God over our needs.

—Greg Persons, Steele, Missouri

GOD'S GAUGE OF GREATNESS

Mark 10:35–45

Purpose: To compare mankind's definition and qualifications for greatness with what the Bible tells us greatness really is.

INTRODUCTION:

Very few people in our world do not aspire to be great. Whether we are attempting to be great in the eyes of one person or in the eyes of the world, most of us seek position, promotion, acknowledgement, and acclaim to some degree. Our society promotes greatness.

As we study the teaching of Jesus concerning greatness in Mark 10:35–45, we will better understand how God gauges greatness in a person's life and what we must do to be considered great in God's eyes. There are three areas of importance for us to examine from Jesus' words about greatness in Mark 10.

MESSAGE:

1. The pursuit of greatness (verses 35–37).

The pursuit of greatness is the desire to be viewed as superior to others.

- a. The pursuit of greatness is nothing new (Isaiah 14:12–14).
 - (1) The pursuit of greatness began with one of God's most influential angels.
 - (2) The pursuit of greatness continued in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:6).

- b. The pursuit of greatness is now natural (Genesis 4:1–5).

- (1) Cain and Abel inherited the natural pursuit of greatness from their parents.
- (2) The natural pursuit of greatness continues to be a part of our desires today.
- c. The pursuit of greatness is never neutralized (Matthew 19:16–22).
 - (1) No matter how much we succeed, achieve, or possess, the pursuit of greatness is never satisfied.
 - (2) Our pursuit of greatness never decreases, it only increases.

2. The problems of greatness (verses 38–41).

- a. A perception problem (verse 38).
 - (1) James and John didn't understand what they were asking for.
 - (2) We don't have a proper perception when it comes to the pursuit of greatness.
- b. A preparation problem (verse 40).
 - (1) The pursuit of greatness takes proper preparation.
 - (2) Proper preparation is only possible when you have a proper perception.
- c. A personality problem (verse 41).
 - (1) The other 10 disciples became jealous of James and John's desire to be great.
 - (2) Personality problems always arise

when people compete to be great.

3. The price of greatness (verses 42–45).

- a. The price of servanthood (verse 43).
 - (1) When Jesus spoke of being a servant, He was teaching that greatness comes through putting others before yourself.
 - (2) The price of greatness is completely opposite of the world's concept of greatness.
- b. The price of slavery (verse 44).
 - (1) When Jesus spoke of being a slave, He was teaching that greatness comes through putting yourself last.
 - (2) Servanthood receives compensation. Slavery receives nothing.
- c. The price of surrender (verse 45).
 - (1) A ransom is a price paid for something you already own or a price paid for someone else.
 - (2) Paying a ransom is an act of surrender.

CONCLUSION:

God's gauge of greatness is in complete contrast to mankind's gauge. Greatness can be a good thing when we make it a "God thing" in our lives. Do you want to be great? In whose eyes—God's or man's? To be great you must serve, be a slave, and surrender. Are you willing to pay the price? Jesus did.

—Randy Cartwright, Cape Girardeau, Missouri



YOUTH COMEDY NIGHT

Purpose: To familiarize nonchurched young people with your youth group and establish a mailing list of contacts for future activities and outreaches. It can also be used as a fund-raiser.

Method

1. *Choose Your Comics.* Give nominating forms to your youth group to obtain names of people in their schools they think are funny. Contact the nominees asking if they would be willing to participate.

2. *Rules.* Print out the parameters and have each participant sign the sheet, acknowledging that he or she will abide by the rules. The participants should keep their speech and conduct morally and ethically clean. If a participant gets out of line, the host can “gong” him, making him ineligible for first prize (\$50–\$100). Also, set a time limit (5–10 minutes) for each participant. You may even want to hold auditions. We used three teens from our youth group and the youth pastor as hosts for the show.

3. *Time.* The date and time should correspond with a non-school night. Recommend that it should be late (9 p.m. to 11 p.m.).

4. *Admission.* If this is used as a fund-raiser, sell tickets for \$3 per person or two for \$5. Encourage the young people to buy for friends.

5. *Refreshments.* Refreshments can be sold to raise finances. Be sure to get plenty of help to serve.

6. *Music.* Use a live band if possible (guitarist, drummer, bass player). You could use soundtracks as a substitute. Use the music as introduction and filler between acts.

7. *Decorations.* Choose a theme from the local high schools or the community. We used “The Junkyard Comedy Club” and decorated with “found” items (junk) and car parts spray painted silver.

8. *Gifts and Prizes.* Door prizes should be given out to audience members in exchange for filling out their names and addresses on a card. Give out prizes between acts.

9. *Comedy Winners.* Audience votes by applause for the one who they think had the funniest act. Their participation gives them ownership in the event. Offer cash prizes for first and second place, and award at the end of the night.

10. *Close in Prayer.* Before releasing your audience, close in prayer. Don’t let them down. They probably anticipated some spiritual influence. You may be able to do even more. Also announce the next youth event or when youth church services are held.

—J.D. Duncan, Soldotna, Alaska

TOOLMEN—AN EXCITING MINISTRY FOR RETIRED MEN

In our church we had a ministry for retired men called Toolmen. In the church office, keep a list of small projects that need to be done—walls to paint, desks to fix, plumbing and electrical projects. Organize a day each month for the men to come and do the needed work. Some of the men may be experts in electrical, plumbing, or carpentry. Match the work to each man’s skill.

Keep track of the number of men who come each month and the number of hours they work. Multiply the number of hours the men work by \$10 to \$15 per hour. At the annual business meeting or recognition banquet, report the total savings to the church because of this ministry.

The men can work mornings and then eat lunch together before returning home. They will not only be a blessing to the church, but also to each other through the fellowship they share as dedicated Toolmen.

—Arlene Allen, Springfield, Missouri

“WHAT OUR FLAG MEANS TO YOU” SURVEY

On Saturday, September 29, 2001, with survey forms (see below) and bumper stickers of the American flag with the inscription, “God Bless America,” we led 135 people in decisions for Jesus in 3 hours in a city park. It gave us person-to-person contact to make friends, pray, invite them to our home groups, and have their names and addresses for follow-up. We had “Compliments of Heights Worship Center” and the phone number printed in small letters at the bottom of each sticker.

We scheduled a follow-up friendship dinner and gave a patriotic edition of the Bible to each person who attended.

The Survey

1. Do you agree that the American flag stands for strength in our nation? Y/N

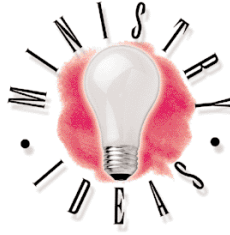
2. When you see the flag wave, does it give you a sense of unity and brotherhood? Y/N

3. Are you proud to be associated with this country that is unashamed to wave its banner? Y/N

4. Would you say this flag stands for a sense of hope that there is a better tomorrow? Y/N

5. Do you agree that the American flag—our banner—represents freedom and liberty? Y/N

6. Do you know that one of the titles of God is the “Lord is my Banner” (Exodus 17:15, NIV)? Y/N



7. As President Bush asks for God's blessing on America, would you like God's blessing on your life? Y/N

8. Did you know that anyone can receive God's blessing by accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior, and he or she will receive the gift of eternal liberty and freedom? Y/N

9. Would you accept Jesus Christ to be the banner of your life, as God's offer of eternal freedom, and the only Lord and Savior that is the hope for all? Y/N

10. Would you like to receive more information to help you grow in your freedom and liberty in Jesus Christ? Y/N

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Preferred language: _____

—N. Jaren Lapasaran, Jr., *Cross Cultural Ministries, Heights Worship Center, Hacienda Heights, California*

CREATIVE MINISTRY IDEAS THAT MAKE AN EFFECTIVE SAM

What makes senior-adult groups effective? It is the participation of the senior adults who attend. They are not coming to be entertained. Rather, seniors invest their time and talents, and create ownership in their ministry. Listed below are some ideas on how senior-adult leaders can involve members in ministry.

- **Form a key group** to assess the needs of those in the congregation. Also, assess the needs of unchurched groups for evangelism outreaches. These needs might range from a shut-in who needs food to a young, single mother who needs car repairs.

- **Women can teach the younger women** how to sew, cook, and other things such as wallpapering.

- **Men can mentor younger men** by teaching car mechanics, landscaping, or they can simply spend time together.

- **Have events centered around prayer.** This can include a prayer chain with telephone calls for urgent needs, prayer breakfasts, or prayer meetings.

- **Schedule monthly senior adult dinners with a theme.** Invite unsaved friends, neighbors, and those who need fellowship with people their own age.

- **Visit those who are sick or have missed church.** Seniors are the best ones to visit other seniors since they have

much in common.

As ministry leaders, find outlets for seniors to serve and be a blessing. You might find an untapped gift that can be used for the glory of God.

—Melinda Richardson, *Springfield, Missouri*

COLLABORATION FOR EVANGELISM

Effective kids' crusades involve more participants than the children's ministry workers, especially if the crusade is developed by the church instead of by a visiting team.

One effective event we held last summer was a Junior SURF (Students United in Righteous Fellowship)—a younger version of our church's youth ministry. This event was geared for students ages 8–12 and used the basic format of our weekly youth meetings. This Friday/Saturday night crusade involved the teens in service. This helped them learn how to minister to younger students. Kids like events they perceive as a step higher than their current age level. It was also a positive advertisement for future youth group members.

Another way to spark excitement is to use experts that tie in with the theme of your outreach. Over the years, we have invited a zookeeper to speak (he brought some animals); a gymnastic team (Joining God's Team); a coast guard seaman with rescue equipment (Jesus Saves Us); a mail carrier (Learning From Paul's Letters); a bricklayer (Firm Foundation); a chef (Follow God's Recipe); and a cartoonist (he illustrated a story as it was told). We have also used Frontier Camping Fellowship members in costume. Their equipment grabs the students' attention. If weather and property area allow, have an outdoor display of old-time tents and skills. Concluding with an outdoor service around a council fire is dramatic and memorable.

Involve others from outside of your children's ministry and see the fruitful results that collaboration brings.

—Paul Douglas, *senior Royal Ranger commander, Ocean City Worship Center, Berlin, Maryland*

SEND US YOUR IDEAS

Enrichment will pay up to \$50 for each published account of a program idea. Send your ideas, along with a detailed description, to: Ministry Ideas, *Enrichment* journal, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to: enrichmentjournal@ag.org.



SOME FATHERS DO

A soldier returning home from the Vietnam War got off the train with a limp and an arm in a sling. A small gray-haired woman ran to him, followed by a big man who kept up with her by simply walking faster. She embraced the boy and shed some tears. The father moved closer and stated, "I'm glad to see you, Son." Not much more was said until they reached home and the boy was in the kitchen with his mother.

"You know, Mom, I get a kick out of Pa," he said. "Did you notice him at the station? No dramatics. No frog in his throat like a lot of men. Of course, you understand, I know he likes me . . . I mean, he probably loves me . . . but what I mean is you'll never catch Pop losing his head. Boy, he's got ice water in his veins. What a general he would have made."

"Son," his mother said, "he loves you very much. I know."

"Sure, I know, too. Say, where is Pop?"

"He's outside. You better run in and see how we've fixed your room."

The young man left, and she went out the back door, knowing exactly where to find her husband. She looked through the crack in the garage door and saw him on his knees. The step stool was his altar.

"I want to thank You, God," the big man was saying. "I asked You, God, to give me a break and let him come out all right, though I knew then I didn't have any more right to ask than anybody else. But now he's back safe. So I want to thank You, God. I want to thank You very much. Amen." He rose slowly.

The woman returned to her kitchen. The young man came back saying, "The room looks swell. Where did Pop go?"

"He'll be right in," his mother said. "There was just something he had to do."

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him" (Psalm 103:13, NIV).

—Robert Strand, Springfield, Missouri,
adapted from *Moments for Fathers*.

HONORING THE RULES OF SPORTSMANSHIP

USA Today had the following article: "Adam Hornstine, of Howard University, writes, 'For over 10 years, I was very active in organized youth sports and, as luck would have it, I had the same coach for every sport. How frustrating it was to rarely win a game, let alone a championship. Our teams lost countless games since the coach had a rule that everyone played, regardless of skill level. The opportunity to play was more important than winning. I often had a difficult time understanding the

coach's concept of competition. Winning was never a priority. My coach stressed the fact losing is acceptable as long as you learned from the experience, performed to your best level, and strived to improve your abilities.

'By honoring the rules of sportsmanship, I am honoring my coach's legacy.

'Upon reflection, maybe I'm not as frustrated with my coach as I once thought. It took courage to preach sportsmanship when society values gold medals, trophies, and championships. Maybe I should call my coach and thank him for instilling in me important values such as respect, honesty, citizenship, and fair play. By the way, I have the privilege of calling my coach by another name: Dad.' "

God's Word instructs regarding the training of children. No one has a better opportunity to influence a child than a father. May our children be able to reflect on their lives with joy and respect us as Adam did his father.

—Tommy Winstead, Stafford, Virginia

RAISING CORN, CAIN, OR KIDS?

"Eat your cereal; it's good for you." "Mow the grass; it's good for you." Do you remember these admonitions from your mother? She placed seemingly unrelated activities into your portfolio with the phrase, "It's good for you."

Your mother was teaching you to live a disciplined life. Children must have healthy eating habits and a high regard for scholarship and work. This is why she assigned tasks that often imposed on your schedule so you would develop a well-rounded view of the demands of real life.

The story is told of a farmer who required his sons to work many hours in the cornfield. It was difficult work and quite strenuous. One day a neighbor came by and told the farmer he was working his sons too hard. He should not make them help him raise corn, but let them spend their time swimming, fishing, and playing baseball. The farmer thought for a minute, and slowly responded, "Neighbor, you're wrong. I'm not raising corn, I'm raising boys."

This is true of stewardship. Our faithfulness is required because God is not raising funds for himself. He already owns everything. God is raising us. We need to become true disciples, liberal, steadfast, and trustworthy. "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 4:1,2, NASB).

—David G. Rose, Colleyville, Texas



PAID IN FULL

Author James Herriot tells of an unforgettable wedding anniversary he and his wife celebrated early in their marriage. His boss had encouraged him to take his wife to a fancy restaurant. Herriot balked. He was a young veterinarian and couldn't really afford it. "Oh, do it!" the boss insisted. "It's a special day!" Herriot reluctantly agreed and surprised his wife with the news.

En route to the restaurant, Herriot and his wife stopped at a farm to make a call on a farmer's horse. Having finished the routine exam, he returned to his car and drove to the restaurant, unaware his checkbook had fallen in the mud. After a scrumptious meal, Herriot reached for his checkbook only to discover it was gone. Quite embarrassed, he tried to offer a way of making it up.

"Don't worry," replied the waiter, "your dinner has been taken care of." Herriot's employer had paid for the dinner in advance.

Jesus' utterance on the cross, "It is finished," is also used in the Greek as a banking term meaning "paid in full."

—Submitted by Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois.

IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM

One Sunday evening after church, 9-year-old Kelsey wanted to spend the night with her grandparents who lived in a neighboring town. It was already dark and a storm was brewing, but she and her mother set out anyway. Before they were a mile from home, Kelsey voiced her fear of the storm. Her mother tried to remain calm, even though the heavy rains impaired her vision, and the flashes of lightning were blinding. This, coupled with the thick fog, made it nearly impossible to see the road ahead. Then it began to hail.

After a brief prayer for God's protection and a call to her husband on the car phone, the mother decided to turn back and go home. Kelsey stayed on the phone with her dad. His voice calmed her fears. He wasn't able to stop the hailstorm, but he talked her through it. She knew everything would be all right.

Our Heavenly Father is able to do the very same thing. When the storms of life are raging, God can calm our fears. He may not always change the circumstances, but He can reassure us of His presence and His promise to never leave or forsake us. If you're in one of life's many hailstorms, call on Him. If the storm is obscuring your view of the road ahead, let God help you get refocused. Eventually, the storm will subside, the clouds will roll away, and the sun will shine again.

—Katy Irvan, De Queen, Arkansas

EPIGRAM ON CHARACTER

A man who lives right, and is right, has more power in his silence than another has by his words. Character is like bells that ring out sweet music and which, when touched, even accidentally, resound with sweet music.

—Phillips Brooks. Reprinted from Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations. Used with permission.

TO QUOTE—

Realize that you must lead a dying life; the more a man dies to himself, the more he begins to live unto God.

—Thomas à Kempis

Learn to say no. It will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin.

—C.H. Spurgeon

But what is freedom? Rightly understood, a universal license to do good.

—Hartley Coleridge

When we lose the right to be different, we lose the privilege to be free.

—Charles Evans Hughes

There are two freedoms: the false where a man is free to do what he likes; and the true where a man is free to do what he ought.

—Charles Kingsley

We find freedom when we find God; we lose it when we lose Him.

—Paul E. Scherer

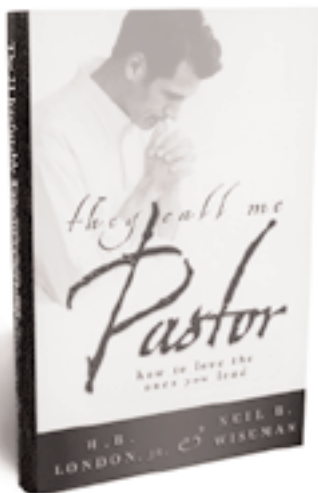
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book reviews



THEY CALL ME PASTOR

Neil B. Wiseman and H.B. London, Jr.,
(Regal, 280 pp., paperback, \$13.99)

I started reading *They Call Me Pastor* in transit to a seminar I was teaching on pastoral care. I finished the last chapter as the pilot announced the final approach. I was tempted to stay up all night and rewrite my seminar.

London and Wiseman offer an excellent work on the multifaceted office of the pastor. The authors elevate the pastorate to its rightful place. It's easy to forget that the ministry is a calling, disguised as a job. This book inspires perseverance, corrects tunnel vision, and encourages greatness. I laughed at almost forgotten mistakes. I smiled at insights into the pastor's heart. I reconsidered some basic and faulty assumptions.

They Call Me Pastor is not a dry text of pastoral theory, but a warm reminder of ministry basics. Every chapter left me with practical applications. Core issues like character, gratitude, servanthood, trust, and faithfulness are broached as if you were sharing a cup of coffee with a mentor/friend.

Six sections reveal the pastor as a shepherd, counselor, leader, minister, partner, and visionary. The authors issue

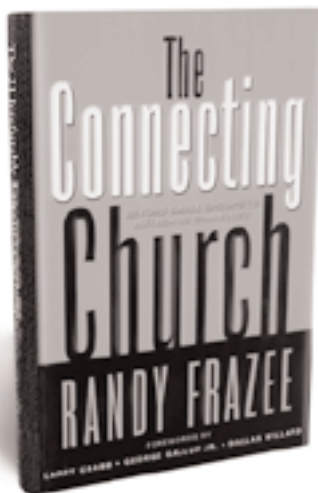
a strong challenge to take each aspect to a higher plane. *They Call Me Pastor* is a book that should find front-line placement in every pastor's library.

—Reviewed David B. Crabtree, pastor of
Calvary Church (Assemblies of God),
Greensboro, North Carolina.

THE CONNECTING CHURCH: BEYOND SMALL GROUPS TO AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

Randy Frazee, (Zondervan, 256 pp., paperback, \$16.99)

God created us for community. He implanted in our hearts a "longing for belonging." Unfortunately, trends in American society foster loneliness instead of community and leave this longing unsatisfied. These trends are even in the church. They frustrate our efforts to build authentic community through small groups and Sunday school classes.



Frazee confronts these powerful trends and offers a biblically based model for building real community in the local church.

According to Frazee, the three powerful trends that frustrate community building are individualism, isolation, and consumerism. To develop authentic

community, the local church needs to develop a common purpose (which counteracts individualism), meet at a common place (which counteracts isolation), and share common possessions (which counteracts consumerism).

Frazee is the senior pastor of Pantego Bible Church in Arlington, Texas. The model he presents is used at Pantego Bible Church. His insistence on placing small groups within walking distance of the members' homes is the book's most innovative suggestion.

The Connecting Church is clearly and simply written. It utilizes solid biblical exegesis and keen social analysis to offer practical suggestions for how the church can satisfy the God-given longing for belonging. I highly recommend this book to pastors and lay leaders who are committed to building authentic Christian community in their churches.

—Reviewed by George P. Wood, associate
pastor, SeaCoast Community Church,
Seal Beach, California.

THE DYNAMICS OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

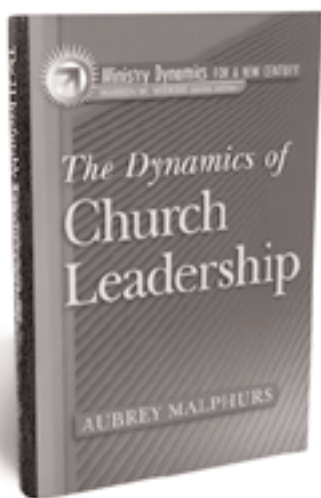
Aubrey Malphurs (Baker Books, 150 pp., paperback, \$12.99)

This book is an easy read, but do not let that fool you. This little work is jam-packed with practical ideas that can help improve the effectiveness of ministers.

Malphurs starts out by laying the basis for all ministry: character. Having laid this foundation, he shows that skill as well as character is needed in ministry, and devotes the rest of the book to developing these skills.

I found the last two chapters to be the most helpful. There, Malphurs develops a theology of change and culture. These chapters are especially significant in light of the massive changes that are occurring in the way

Americans are doing church. Malphurs identifies two key categories to assist leaders in determining what should and should not be changed in the church. He calls these function and form. His insightful examples assist leaders in thinking through how one should do



church. The last chapter concludes with a well-balanced approach of how the church should view culture. He explains that the way one views culture can greatly affect how one views change.

Aubrey Malphurs is an educator and has certainly done his homework. This book is a great choice for pastors who want to keep their churches relevant to the culture, without sacrificing the nonnegotiables of the gospel.

—Reviewed by Larry Booze, pastor,
First Assembly of God, Streator, Illinois.

HEAVEN BELOW: EARLY PENTECOSTALS AND AMERICAN CULTURE

Grant Wacker (Harvard University Press, 364 pp., hardcover, \$35)

Wacker's volume provides a fascinating profile of the characteristics, motivations, values, and activities of the American Pentecostal people in the formative years of the Pentecostal movement, 1900 to

1925. Wacker, son of an Assemblies of God minister and Harvard Ph.D., is associate professor of History of Religion in America at Duke University. Although he now stands outside the denominational boundary of Pentecostalism, Wacker has maintained a sympathetic interest in the the Pentecostal movement.

The basic thesis upon which he erects his study is that the modern American Pentecostal movement exhibits the characteristics of *primitivism* and *pragmatism*. By primitivism he means the belief that the Apostolic pattern is a norm to be sought in the present world, and pragmatism, the need to accommodate to the demands of the modern world for survival. He sees these two themes in frequent tension.

Wacker's book is based on letters, interviews, and other unpublished



materials, as well as periodicals and official documents. These resources are employed in a compelling fashion, making the author's argumentation persuasive. The writer's style makes the book eminently readable.

All will not agree with all the judgments the author makes on the various components of the Pentecostal

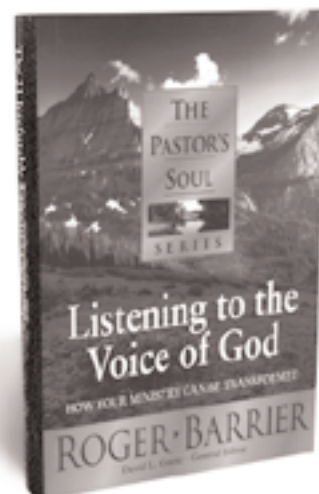
movement reviewed in the book. However, on balance, it appears he has a keen insight into the dynamics of the Movement, and has offered to Pentecostals a realistic portrayal of people and events. Pentecostals can be grateful for this impressive study undertaken by a sympathetic friend. This book will become a major resource for students of American Christianity.

—Reviewed by William W. Menzies, a
longtime educator with the Assemblies of
God and chancellor of Asia Pacific
Theological Seminary. He lives in
Springfield, Missouri.

LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF GOD: HOW YOUR MINISTRY CAN BE TRANSFORMED

Roger Barrier and David Goetz (Bethany House, 264 pp., paperback, \$14.99)

I began reading this book thinking it would be a focused, biblically reasoned treatment on the subject announced. The title piques interest immediately. What the book delivers is a series of interesting, balanced, and personal insights on a variety of topics bridging from listening to the voice of God, to spiritual warfare, suffering, grief, and doubt. The style is warm, open, easy,





book reviews

and direct. The profundity comes in the practical wisdom amply illustrated from Roger's life and his long, fruitful ministry experience.

Roger spoke to me as he addressed "overt manifestations of pride" and other "sins of the spirit" that can keep us from hearing God. His nine-point brief review of "what God's voice sounds like" was seasoned and helpful. His willingness to engage in risky obedience when God has spoken to him (like the prompt he received and followed to preach a one-sentence sermon and walk away from the pulpit) challenged me to ponder my willingness to listen and follow God's voice. At times I did self-assessment on his outline by putting check marks in the margins and noting areas for personal attention.

Here is a Baptist pastor with a proven ministry, a personal vulnerability, and valuable practical insights. This book has wisdom in its pages that God may well use to encourage you and keep your ministry on track.

—Reviewed by David W. Argue, senior pastor, Christ's Place Church, Lincoln, Nebraska.

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL: BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN ANY SIZE CHURCH

Gary McIntosh, (Fleming Revell, 174 pp., paperback, \$12.99)

This book will make you think and help you set direction for your church. Framed as a discussion between a pastor of 6 months and a veteran pastor of 29 years, this book tackles issues of church growth and how church size should determine which strategy a pastor will choose for ministry.

This helpful volume focuses on how the current size of a church will determine the pastor's role, how decisions are made, how the congregation will grow,

along with other topics.

More than an adventure in theory, this is a practical, how-to book, with charts that are both complete and helpful. Chapter 2, on how church size is the key factor in determining the orientation of a congregation, is worth the price of the book.



Another extremely helpful discussion occurs in Chapter 8 on how and when to bring about change in a church. The author's insight into five opportune times to implement change will guide the younger pastor, as well as the seasoned minister.

One word of caution: read this book in connection with a good book on preaching and another on spirituality. The other two books will bring balance to ministry.

—Reviewed by Tom Lindberg, D.Min., senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Memphis, Tennessee.

SACRED QUEST

Doug Banister, (Zondervan, 184 pp., hardcover, \$16.99)

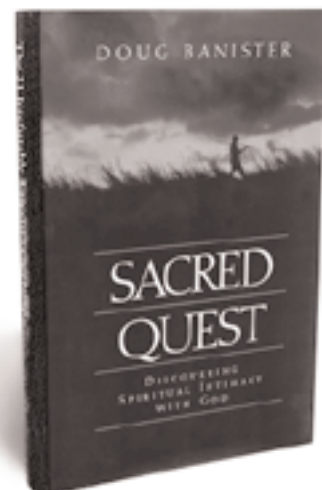
Sacred Quest is the searching for and finding intimacy with Christ and His purposes. Bonding is the way, says

Banister, whereby deep spiritual relationships are found.

By repeated use of the word and idea of intimacy to describe a Christian believer's relationship, Banister bestows a clear picture of the book's theme. He returns often to marriage and its relationship to shape the reader's awareness of other spiritual themes.

Banister uses stories to emphasize the Pentecostal/charismatic elements available for Christian living. The author is pastor of a fast-growing Evangelical Free congregation in Knoxville, Tennessee. This book indicates that his preaching, teaching, and leadership carries with it the kinds of Pentecostal gifts one might expect in an Assemblies of God church.

Since the God of Scripture is relational, our failure to bond with Him opens the door to a host of negative consequences. Low self-esteem, depression, powerless



religion, burnout, dysfunctional relationships, loss of vision—are addiction-like themes that constitute essential fallout from an unwillingness to bond with God.

In the quest for being all that God has in mind for His people, Banister carries us through the disciplines of

how to find rest and peace, knowing we are being fully formed into the image of Christ. The overall strategy of the book seems strongly focused on and for people in ministry, although encouraging to all who are deeply committed to finding intimacy in Christ.

—Reviewed by T. Ray Rachels, *Southern California District superintendent, Irving, California.*

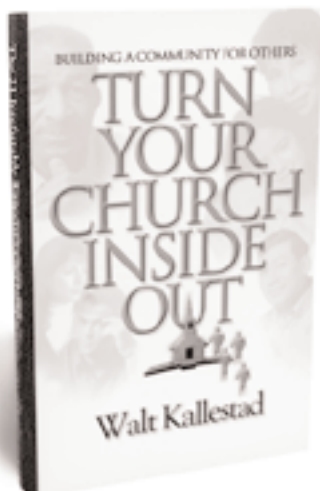
TURN YOUR CHURCH INSIDE OUT

Walt Kallestad (Augsburg Press, 192 pp., paperback, \$13)

“Too often we have circled our wagons, created little enclaves of piety and worship, built walls around our communities of faith, and invited people in, only if they were willing to become like us. We have created churches ‘for us.’ ”

Turn Your Church Inside Out addresses this issue. The author tells how the church he pastors refocused and set the goal to be a “church for others.”

Our society is self-centered, and many churches tend to be the same. Kallestad invites churches to change their way of thinking. He challenges his readers to “build a church for others,” and make reaching outsiders their goal.



The author encourages finding ways to get people to church and then allowing it to be a place where they feel loved, accepted, and a place where they want to stay and grow in Christ.

Kallestad discusses several areas of importance in reaching others: praying, worshiping, and proclaiming the gospel. He provides practical instruction for churches of all sizes. This book challenges one's thinking about the way we are conducting church.

The author follows the example of our Lord Jesus Christ—making “others” the target of His ministry. He gives the reader questions to ponder and things to do at the end of each chapter. These items cause the reader to do some serious thinking about turning one's church inside out.

—Reviewed by Mike Carl, *senior pastor, Shores Fellowship Church, Ocean Shores, Washington.*

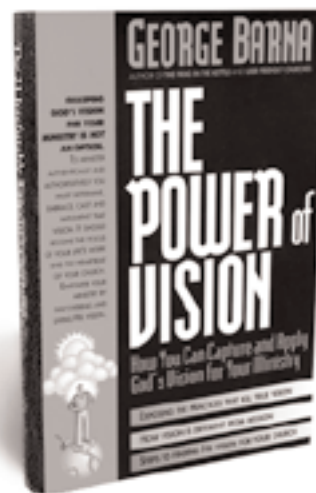
THE POWER OF VISION

George Barna (Regal, 181 pp., paperback, \$13.99)

Effective leadership depends on clear vision. This book offers a practical approach to help leaders understand what vision is and how to capture, clarify, and communicate it effectively.

Barna defines and illustrates the distinctions between mission and vision. Since most churches desire to accomplish basic objectives, their mission statements are similar. Vision is what makes each church unique and effective in its particular environment.

Vision is a precious commodity that can be imparted only by God, and it is given with the expectation that you will commit your life to fulfilling that vision. Barna leads the reader through four steps in the process of discovering vision: knowing yourself, knowing your ministry



environment, knowing God intimately, and applying objective wisdom.

Just as there are identifying characteristics and benefits of vision, there are also vision killers that must be identified and countered. The author presents leaders with tools to identify, articulate, defend, and pass vision on to others.

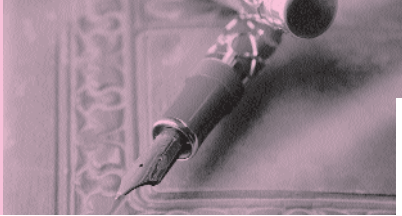
In addition to several Bible studies that begin the vision-casting process, the author has included steps to incorporate the vision in your church-marketing efforts.

The author provides practical steps and processes that appeal to the logical mind, while strumming the strings of the heart. Those who are searching for God's vision in their ministry will find this book to be helpful.

—Reviewed by Daniel L. Zitterkopf, *pastor, Bayard Assembly of God, Bayard, Nebraska.*

A SERVICE

Enrichment reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not constitute a recommendation of the books. As a service to readers the Gospel Publishing House will supply any of these books, but books cannot be returned for credit.



news & resources

PENTECOST SUNDAY SIMULCAST TRANSMISSION

On Sunday, May 19, 2002, a Pentecost Sunday service will be transmitted from James River Assembly of God, Springfield, Mo. Transmission will be on Dish Network Business TV using two satellites: EchoStar III at 61.5 degrees West, and EchoStar 1 at 148 degrees West. Those in the Eastern and Central time zones should tune to channel 9622. Those in the Mountain and Pacific time zones should tune to channel 9621. The times for this broadcast is 6:30 p.m. in all time zones.

For more information about the Dish Network, please visit the Assemblies of God Web site, www.ag.org, and click on the Pentecost Sunday logo. Specific satellite questions may be directed to Fresh Air Media: 1-530-888-7676.

FOUR NEW TOOLS FOR WOMEN

Leaders across the nation are responding enthusiastically to four new Women's Ministries tools.

Churches and individuals promptly purchased all copies of *A Leader's Guide for Successfully Ministering to Women* when it was introduced a year ago. As a second press run was launched to meet demand, the national Women's Ministries Department was already preparing three more ministry helps:

A Resource Guide for Successfully Ministering to Women is designed to complement *A Leader's Guide for Successfully Ministering to Women*. This product offers leaders a comprehensive tool kit. The *Resource Guide* provides current information on issues pertinent to leaders today, including leadership development, organizational helps, finance, publicity, and much more. In particular, this resource includes over 100 ministry ideas broken down into 15 chapters, making it easy for a group to

plan a balanced program.

Program Plans for Successful Women's Events offers concise, effective information for leaders to plan 24 different events. Twelve programs are for holiday events, and 12 provide for general events built around unique themes. Included are helps on how to promote the event, funding, altar calls, devotional outlines, and original theme clip art for each program. A CD-ROM is included, along with 48 pages of printed clip art. Art includes a full-page flyer, invitation, program, nametag, and ticket for each theme.

Leader's Touch is a bimonthly publication produced for women in leadership. This 16-page supplement to *Woman's Touch* magazine contains leadership and ministry ideas to help the local leader. The pages are designed to be removed and added to your *Resource Guide* under the appropriate tabs. The information in *Leader's Touch* makes your new *Resource Guide* a living resource, because it will always be growing.

Questions about these new items can be directed to the national Women's Ministries Department. Contact Arlene Allen, discipleship development and training coordinator, at 417-862-2781, ext. 4071, or aallen@ag.org.

Subscriptions to *Leader's Touch* and orders for materials can be requested from: gph@ag.org, or by calling 800-641-4310.

WOMEN LOVE TRANSFORMED MAGAZINE

Interest in *Woman's Touch* is soaring as churches discover the newly transformed magazine. The crisp new design unites vibrant colors and quality photography with compelling Christian journalism.

Some top women writers are sharing their wit and wisdom in *Woman's Touch*. Nancie Carmichael and Judi Braddy are joined by Sheri Rose Shepherd, Joanne

Weaver, Deborah McNaughton, and others. "The hand of God is evident in the caliber of their writing," said Darla Knoth, managing editor.

Recent issues of *Woman's Touch* have featured Sara Groves, Anne Graham Lotz, Mary Lou Retton, and Kathy Troccoli. Inspiring articles discuss the single life, marriage, life in the ministry, work, parenting, humor, finance, and more.

Woman's Touch is published six times a year by the national Women's Ministries Department. Subscriptions are \$9.95. To order, call 800-641-4310, or contact gph@ag.org. Churches are urged to inquire about bulk discounts.

BYLINE ON TRINITY BROADCASTING NETWORK

TBN announces new broadcast times for *ByLine*. Since Jan., Media Ministries has gained favor with 11 major Christian television networks and 5 local stations—a potential audience of over 96 million. The added blessing is that each network and station is offering airtime to the Assemblies of God without charge. They are doing so, in part, because of the overwhelming success of this 60-second daily commentary, hosted by Dan Betzer.

Trinity Broadcasting Network announced on Aug. 15, 2001, it has standardized its time slots for *ByLine*, so viewers will know when they can view the program. In addition to the times listed below, *ByLine* airtimes on other networks can be viewed on the new Media Ministries Web site at: www.mediaministries.ag.org. You can also listen to current broadcasts of these radio programs at any time.

TBN broadcast times for *ByLine* are as follows (Pacific time):

- Mon.—12:58.30 p.m.
- Tues.—1:28.50 p.m.
- Wed.—6:28.30 p.m.

- Thurs.—6:28.30 a.m.
- Fri.—5:58.30 p.m.

SPEED THE LIGHT DAY

National Speed the Light Day is Sunday, Oct. 20. The theme for the 2002–03 STL year is “Without Excuse.” Speed the Light Day provides an opportunity for churches to celebrate STL giving. Use this day to promote greater missions giving in the coming year. To enhance this special day, the national STL office provides theme bulletin inserts, offering envelopes, a theme video, banners, and more. Many theme items are free. To order these or any other STL resources, call 1-800-641-4310, or visit us online at: www.stl.ag.org.

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Single Adult Ministries conferences are designed to raise awareness of the need for young adult and single adult ministry on a local, regional, and national level. Our dual purpose is to train volunteer and paid leaders, as well as reach singles. Both groups will benefit from these specialized training and spiritual growth conferences:

First Assembly, Fort Wayne, Ind., Sept. 12–14, 2002

Sacramento Area, Harvest Church, Elk Grove, Calif., Sept. 19–21, 2002

First Assembly, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Oct. 24–26, 2002

Portland Christian Center, Portland, Oreg., Nov. 8–10, 2002

Bethany Church, Wyckoff, N.J., Nov. 15–17, 2002

For further information, contact the Single Adult Ministries Department, 417-862-2781, ext. 4125.

NATIONAL SINGLE ADULT TEAM

The Single Adult Ministries Department now has in place a national team, representing eight regions of the country. This team assists in developing single adult and young adult ministries through consultations, training, resources, networking, and speaking at events. Call or E-mail a representative in your area:

Northwest—Craig Gorc, 425-488-3600, craig.g@cedarpark.org

Southeast—Carolyn Heuer, 803-794-1001, cheuer6433@aol.com

Southwest—Louie Nava, 916-856-5683, louie@capchrist.org

Great Lakes—Scott Nelson, 219-482-3508, scottnelson@ilovejesus.com

Gulf Region—Mike Powers, 870-425-6204, mvpowers@centuryinter.net

South Central—Gary Pratt, 580-536-9325, firstaog@sunnet.net

Northeast—Rob Rhoden, 804-754-0712, exile@weag.org

North Central—Rick Summerhays, 319-393-6353, rlsummerhays@cedar-rapids.net

SAM MUSIC FEST/CELEBRATION

Senior Adult Ministries and the Music Department announce plans for a national SAM Music Fest/Celebration to be held at the magnificent Chateau on the Lake in Branson, Mo., Nov. 17–19, 2002. This will be the second national event planned by the SAM Department, following the successful SAM at SEA cruise to Alaska in May 2001. This event will promote fellowship and ministry among Assemblies of God senior adults.

Special guests include Doug and Laura Oldham, Sue Dodge, Bob and Jeannie Johnson, and Larry Ford, all of whom appear on the Gaither Homecomings.

Special events will include an old-fashioned hymn sing with Doug and Laura Oldham, as well as a concert by all of our guests. Other exciting activities will take place during the 3-day celebration.

For additional information regarding the SAM Music Fest/Celebration, call 1-417-862-2781, and request either Senior Adult Ministries, ext. 3311, or the Music Department, ext. 4130. You may also visit our Web sites at: www.sam.ag.org, or www.music.ag.org.

CIRCULATION OF EVANGELIO PENTECOSTAL DOUBLES

By the end of 2001, circulation for the Spanish-language *Evangelio Pentecostal* had rapidly risen beyond 17,770, a 126-percent increase since the beginning of the year.

The 560-plus churches subscribing to *Evangelio Pentecostal* represented every Spanish-language district in the United States along with most of the Fellowship's geographic districts. The publication also had subscribers in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, France, Japan, Mexico, and Spain.

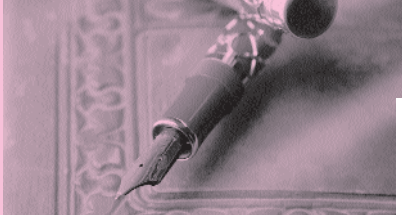
U.S.-based churches not subscribing to *Evangelio Pentecostal* can receive a trial bundle of 25 free copies by calling Pentecostal Evangel Promotions Coordinator Ron Kopczick at 417-862-2781, ext. 4107, or by E-mailing rkopczick@ag.org. The trial offer is available until July 31. Churches wishing to begin a paid subscription to *Evangelio Pentecostal* should call GPH Customer Services at 1-800-641-4310.

EVANGEL VISITORS EDITION CONSIDERED USEFUL TOOL

Based on the outstanding response following its release late last summer, the Sept. 23, 2001, *Pentecostal Evangel* Visitors Edition isn't expected to remain available much longer. Although a sizeable overprint of the publication was produced with an undated front cover, churches began ordering extra copies well before the issue came off the press.

“This Visitors Edition has received more enthusiastic response than any to date,” *Pentecostal Evangel* Managing Editor Ken Horn says. “Pastors and churches have told me they appreciate the personal, comprehensive information it contains. When this one is gone, which promises to be soon, we do not plan to reprint. We intend to produce up-to-date Visitors Editions as demand dictates.”

Churches typically use the Visitors Edition in guest packets, membership classes, and community outreaches. While supplies last, this special issue can be ordered by calling GPH Customer Services at 1-800-641-4310 and requesting item #69-7138. The Visitors Edition costs 35 cents per copy when a minimum quantity of 50 is ordered. The normal cover price is 50 cents.



news & resources

FOURTH PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL BOOKS RELEASE SLATED

A new title from *Pentecostal Evangel* Books is scheduled for release this fall. The yet-unnamed book will deal with the tough questions people are asking. This will be the fourth work published under the PE Books imprint, which has proven to be a successful 3-year co-venture between Gospel Publishing House and the *Pentecostal Evangel*.

The first PE Books release, *Strategies for Victorious Christian Living*, completely sold out and is no longer in print. *Family: How to have a healthy Christian home* and *Questions and Answers about the Holy Spirit*, the following two PE Books titles, are in their second and third printings, respectively.

Evangel Managing Editor Ken Horn explains the book line's success: "We targeted topics that we felt were practical and would interest most of our readers. Such a great wealth of writing on relevant topics exists in the annals of the *Pentecostal Evangel* that it is not surprising so many readers have been drawn to these compilations of the best of the *Evangel*. Still, the demand for additional printings has by far exceeded expectations."

For more information on any or all of the available PE Books, please call GPH Customer Services at 1-800-641-4310. The books can also be ordered from the GPH Web site: www.gospelpublishing.com.

PARACLETE AVAILABLE ON CD-ROM

All issues of the now out-of-print *Paraclete* from 1967-95 are available on CD-ROM. *Paraclete* was a journal that focused on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Paraclete CD is an excellent resource for researching Pentecostal themes and issues. Articles written by top Pentecostal scholars make *Paraclete* an indispensable source of sermon and

Bible study material.

The articles on this CD are in PDF files and require Acrobat Reader software that can be downloaded free from the Internet. One of the features of this CD is that a search for words or phrases searches all issues of *Paraclete*. This CD is both PC and Macintosh compatible.

To order the *Paraclete* CD, call 1-800-641-4310 and ask for item #751-300. The cost of this CD is \$20, postage included inside the U.S.A. Foreign orders will be charged actual postage.

FREE ONLINE A/G NEWS SERVICE

The Assemblies of God Office of Public Relations has created a free news service for anyone with E-mail access. A/G News, which covers a variety of stories that concern the Assemblies of God, is released up to three times a week on the Internet and as an E-mail mailing. To subscribe, send an E-mail to: join-ag-news@news.ag.org.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CONFERENCE, AUG. 26,27

The National Christian School Conference will be held at Cedar Park Christian School, 16300 112 Ave. NE, Bothell, WA 98011, Aug. 26, 27, 2002. Administrators, teachers, pastors, and school board members in Christian schools will find helps and new information available at this conference. Contact the Christian School Services Office at 417-862-2781, ext. 4025, to register. For more information go to: www.ag.org/acts, or send your inquiries to Christian Schools Services, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES MISSION AMERICA CONFERENCE

On Aug. 7-11, 2002, over 400 home missionaries will meet for the

Intercultural Ministries Mission America Conference (IMMAC) in Springfield, Mo. This will be a time of inspiration, instruction, and fellowship for the home missionaries with the Intercultural Ministries Department.

Speakers include:

- Clifton Taulbert, Pulitzer Prize nominee for his book, *Last Train North*;
- Jesse Miranda, of Vanguard University, and an executive presbyter; and
- George O. Wood, general secretary of the Assemblies of God.

Activities are planned for children who attend with their parents.

For more information call Intercultural Ministries at 417-862-2781, ext. 3256, or E-mail: intmin@ag.org.

KIDCARE AMERICA

KidCare America, a new initiative of Intercultural Ministries (a part of Assemblies of God Home Missions), is designed to help churches reach out to at-risk kids through afterschool mentoring programs. Michael and Nancy Ferguson, Springfield, Mo., are directors.

KidCare America provides training, curriculum, resources, and ongoing support to KidCare Centers located in local churches. Afterschool mentoring programs minister to kids during at-risk times of the day. KidCare Centers touch the whole family and function to connect children and youth to Sunday school, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, and youth ministry. For more information call the Fergusons at 417-891-9824, or E-mail: kidcareag@msn.org.

GLOBAL UNIVERSITY BA DEGREE

Global University is now offering a complete BA degree in Bible and theology through online studies. The degree programs offered through Global University are open to all who have a high school

diploma or its equivalent. Transfer credit is accepted for those with previous undergraduate training.

Also available through online study is the entire 33-course, nondegree Ministerial Studies program. More information is available online: www.globaluniversity.edu, or by phone: 1-800-443-1083.

A/G COLLEGE GUIDE SIXTH EDITION NOW AVAILABLE

The new sixth edition of the Assemblies of God College Guide, a resource highlighting the 20 endorsed Assemblies of God colleges, is available free. The Guide includes current information from each school: tuition costs, application deadlines, extra-curricular activities, an overview of the local community, job availability, and financial aid. A comprehensive listing of the degrees offered at each school is included. Handy business reply postcards can be returned directly to the schools to request additional information. You may request copies of the Guide, item #747001, from the Christian Higher Education Department at 417-862-2781, ext. 3315.

A/G COLLEGES ANNOUNCE CLASS START DATES FOR FALL 2002

American Indian College, Phoenix, Ariz.—Aug. 22 (tentative)

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.—Sept. 3

Bethany College, Scotts Valley, Calif.—Aug. 29

Black Hills Bible College—Rapid City, S.D.—Aug. 28

Caribbean Theological College, Bayamon, P.R.—Aug. 19

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.—Sept. 5

Evangel University, Springfield, Mo.—Aug. 29

Global University, Springfield, Mo.—Rolling

Latin American Bible College—California, La Puente, Calif.—Sept. 9

Latin American Bible College—Texas, San Antonio, Tex.—Aug. 28

Native American Bible College,

Shannon, N.C.—Aug. 21 (tentative)

North Central University, Minneapolis, Minn.—Aug. 26 (tentative)

Northwest College—Kirkland, Wash.—Sept. 3

Southeastern College—Lakeland, Fla.—Aug. 21

Southwestern Assemblies of God University—Waxahachie, Tex.—Aug. 21

Trinity Bible College—Ellendale, N.D.—Aug. 22

Valley Forge Christian College—Phoenixville, Pa.—Aug. 21

Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, Calif.—Aug. 28

Western Bible College—Phoenix, Ariz.—Aug. 26

Zion Bible Institute—Barrington, R.I.—Aug. 29

FALL 2001 ENROLLMENT NUMBERS FOR A/G COLLEGES

American Indian College, Phoenix, Ariz.—68

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.—415

Bethany College, Scotts Valley, Calif.—562

Black Hills Bible College, Rapid City, S.D.—100

Caribbean Theological College, Bayamon, P.R.—50

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.—854

Evangel University, Springfield, Mo.—1,570

Global University, Springfield, Mo.—3,152

Latin American Bible College—California, La Puente, Calif.—149

Latin American Bible College—Texas, San Antonio, Tex.—90

Native American Bible College, Shannon, N.C.—62

North Central University, Minneapolis, Minn.—1,870

Northwest College, Kirkland, Wash.—1,039

Southeastern College, Lakeland, Fla.—1,363

Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Waxahachie, Tex.—1,734

Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N.D.—279

Valley Forge Christian College, Phoenixville, Pa.—721

Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, Calif.—1,829

Western Bible College, Phoenix, Ariz.—53

Zion Bible Institute, Barrington, R.I.—312

BENEVOLENCES CHRISTMAS SUNDAY IS JULY 28

Christmas is the loneliest time of year for people separated from their families. Many of the boys and girls at Hillcrest Children's Home can't go home to their families at Christmas. Some don't have a functional family. The young women at Highlands Pregnancy Center are often spending their first Christmas away from home.

Many of our aged ministers will be alone this Christmas, far from family, friends, and former church members.

The Benevolences Department endeavors to bring cheer to these displaced family members at Christmas and show them they are a part of God's loving, caring family. Your church or church group can plan ways to share Christmas joy with them. Call 417-862-2781, ext. 2182, or log on to www.benevolences.ag.org for Hillcrest and Highlands Christmas needs lists.

To join the AMA Christmas Care-a-van, call 417-862-2781, ext. 2184, and you will receive the name of a retired minister on Aged Ministers Assistance to whom you can send a Christmas gift.

HILLCREST BACK-TO-SCHOOL DAY IS AUG. 11

Hillcrest Children's Home ministers to abused or neglected children who are searching for stability and self-identify in their lives. The clothes they wear and the school supplies they carry when they return to school are important to them.

Your church can send them back to school in style with your designated Hillcrest Back-to-School offering sent to the Benevolences Department, 1445 N. Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802. You can log on to www.hillcrest.ag.org to view a Back-to-School needs list, or to send your offering by credit card. Or, you can call 417-862-2781, ext. 2182, to order a needs list. **e**

With Christ

Elizabeth Beckett

Santa Rosa,
California

Lila S. Darling

Rome,
New York

Hazel Henry

Vian,
Oklahoma

Pearl E. Stephens

Commerce,
Oklahoma

Frank Carbajal

Los Banos,
California

Virla Dowdy

Walnut Creek,
California

Terrell Johnson

Sylvester,
Georgia

Violet C. Stevens

Newmarket,
New Jersey

Julious M. Chandler

Clanton,
Alabama

Ruth B. Gardiner

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Arizona

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Puerto Rico

Harry C. Stone

Bellingham,
Washington

Dionisio Cisneros

Fresno,
California

Robert G. Gouge III

Wichita,
Kansas

Raymond M. Ontiveros

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California

Alma R. Storms

Fort Mill,
South Carolina

Danny L. Corey

Brandon,
Mississippi

Mike L. Hall

Monroe,
Louisiana

James D. Pettry

Naomi,
West Virginia

Francisco Torres

Yonkers,
New York

Lloyd E. Covell

North Little Rock,
Arkansas

Walter T. Hanson

Loomis,
California

Eunice V. Sampson

Scottsdale,
Arizona

Melvin E. Welch

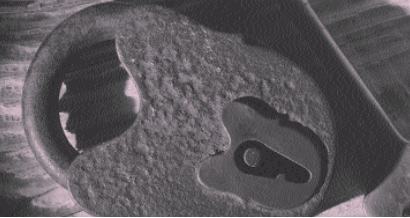
Sugarland,
Texas

Hazel A. Henning

Newberg,
Oregon

Estle A. Sanders

Hartford,
Illinois



in closing

BY RICK KNOTH



The Heart and Soul of Ministry

Little goes to the core of the human psyche more than hearing that we are terminally ill. From that moment on life shifts into neutral. The once important issues—schedules, meetings, deadlines, future plans, the long-awaited family vacation, building that dream home—are put on hold and pale in importance. Ask anyone who has heard this diagnosis, whether a victim of cancer or a near-fatal heart attack, and he will tell you about the gut-wrenching sense of helplessness and hopelessness—a loss of focus on the here and now, no range of vision for the future.

If we are to experience wholeness in our lives, ministries and churches, we must wrestle with the issues of health—spiritual, emotional, physical, and relational. No single issue should rival its importance. Query a roomful of critically ill heart patients about what they would change if they could start over, and you will hear, “I’d take better care of myself, exercise more, and practice better nutrition.”

Life can pass us by so unassumingly. If we are not careful, we will ignore the weighty, yet subtle issues, and fall prey to the urgent. Tragedy strikes. Suddenly it is too late. Then begins the agony of self-disclosure—the difficult and painful task of asking “why” and “what if . . .”

In this issue of *Enrichment*, we have focused on the minister’s personal health from six perspectives. A healthy pastor is biblically wise, consistently Christlike, physically fit, emotionally

stable, relationally sound in marriage and family, and intentionally equipping God’s people for Christ’s mission. When the pastor is healthy in these six areas, the church will be healthy and grow.

While self-sacrifice is an essential part of ministry, self-destruction is not. To disregard our health in any of these six areas is to follow a path to self-destruction and regret—the “why” and “what if . . .”

The disciplined life will ultimately breed health and success in the minister’s life. However, if we push aside our pursuit of serving God and neglect our spiritual and physical well-being in search of programs, we will lose some of God’s best for ministry. When methodology replaces biblical truth as the basis for ministry, our primary task as ministers becomes governed by discovering and developing the right program. Ultimately, we become physically weary, emotionally numb, relationally absent, spiritually dry—unhealthy.

The heart and soul of ministry is not found in a particular program or approach to ministry. It is not about style, charisma, vision, budgets, or strategic planning—though these are important and at times necessary. The heart and soul of ministry must first be about taking care of ourselves so we can proclaim the healing truth of God’s Word to others.

The Bible speaks to the issue of the healthy church. The Book of Revelation details what Jesus said to the church at Ephesus: “You have persevered and have

endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.” Healthy churches won’t forsake their first love.

To the church at Smyrna, He gave a clean bill of health. “Be faithful to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

To the church at Pergamum, the Lord said, “You remain true to my name. Nevertheless . . . You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam.” The illness of false doctrine needs to be treated.

To the Thyatirans, Jesus said, “You tolerate Jezebel. She misleads my servants into sexual immorality.” That will never be tolerated in a healthy church.

To Sardis, the Lord proclaimed, “Wake up! For you are about to die . . . Remember what you have received and heard; obey it and repent.”

And to Philadelphia, “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.”

I trust that as you have read through this *Enrichment*, God has spoken to you about your ministry’s health. Rather than traveling the easy road and later regretting it, be willing to pay the price for great leadership and commit yourself to a new and healthy way of life. **e**

Rick Knott is managing editor, Enrichment journal, Springfield, Missouri.

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