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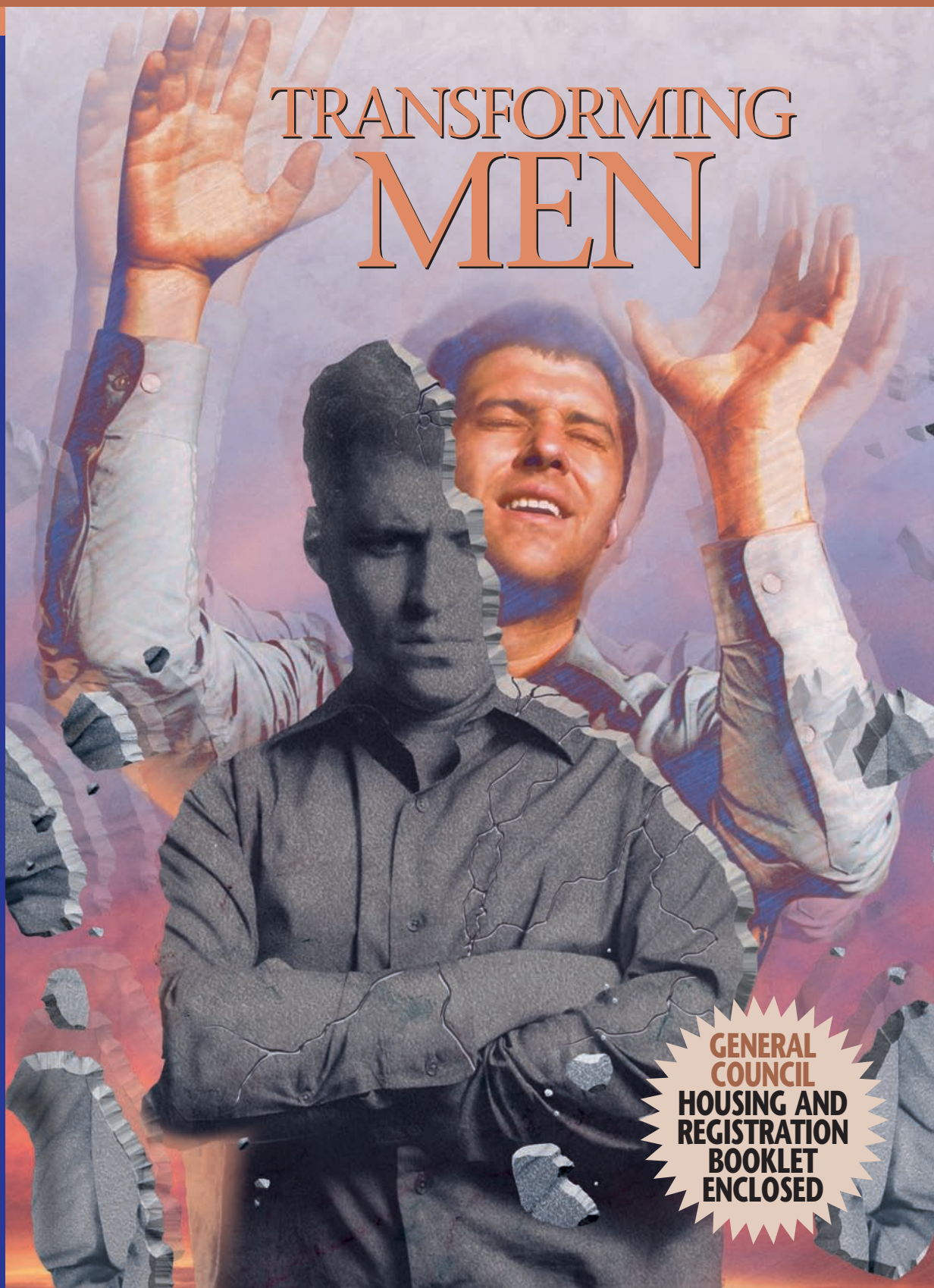
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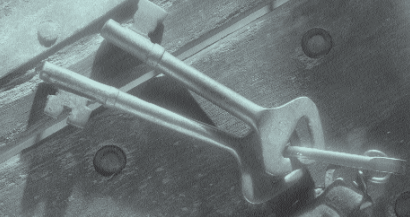


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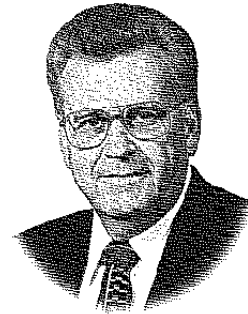






# ministry matters

BY GARY R. ALLEN



## Reaching Men

**T**he mission of the church is to reach men and women in its community. This issue of *Enrichment* is about reaching men and assimilating them into the body of Christ.

Why is reaching men important? Studies show that when a church wins 10 men to Christ through relationships and discipleship, 93 percent of these men win their entire family to Christ.

Reaching men appears to be one of the most cost-effective avenues of evangelism. A church needs to evaluate its budget and allocate adequate funds to evangelize and disciple men. And the pastor needs to be the key leader in making sure this happens. Here are some ways pastors can lead their church in effective men's ministry.

### THE PASTOR AS MODEL

Because pastors have been transformed by the power of Christ, they can lead others into a transformational experience with Jesus Christ. It is not enough to tell men what they ought to be; men need to see consistent Christian living in their leaders. If the pastor is female, she must disciple men in the church to reach and disciple other men. Following are several ways pastors can model what it means to be a godly man.

#### The pastor as a godly person

There is no substitute for personal character and integrity. It is essential that pastors be above reproach within the church and community. Often those outside the community of faith will first

see Christ in the life of a pastor.

#### The pastor as a godly spouse

Pastors must love their mate and demonstrate that love before their family, church, and community. Pastors who cannot exemplify true love and commitment to their spouse will not have the credibility to influence others.

#### The pastor as a godly parent

Pastors must love their children and demonstrate godly nurturing and loving discipline. Both the church and the community will benefit by seeing godly parenting.

### THE PASTOR AS MENTOR

Pastors need to mentor others and be a mentor of mentors—training others to mentor others.

#### The pastor as personal mentor

Pastors need to consistently have one or two people in whom they invest time, energy, and effort. This is what Jesus did with His disciples. The servant leader not only points the way but also lovingly and intentionally leads the way. If the pastor is a woman, she needs to facilitate mentor training for men through men's ministries leaders or district training personnel.

#### The pastor as mentor of mentors

Mentoring is a lifelong process that depends on continual duplication. This is an effective evangelism and discipleship model.

The motivation for such modeling and

mentoring can produce tremendous results. Men and their families are won to Christ; families are disciplined, trained, and assimilated into the church; and a seedbed is provided for leadership development.

### THE PASTOR'S MOTIVATION

The motivation for ministry to men is passionately doing the will of God.

#### The pastor's passion

The passion of every pastor must be for a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus' passion is for every man and woman in our communities to know Him.

#### The pastor's obedience

The mission of every pastor is to be obedient to the will of Christ by going into all the world with the gospel. We tend to be passionate about what we like. But all ministry does not emerge from deep, exciting passion. Sometimes we must simply be obedient to His call. We are to be passionate about the person of Jesus and obedient to His mission.

We have asked pastors and leaders who are doing men's ministries well and are reaching men to write for this issue of *Enrichment*. We hope the insight and experience contained in this issue will be a resource for your ministry to the men in your church and community. **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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**Whether singing hymns or hot new choruses, the real question remains: Is God in the house? This question and many other worship-related issues will be explored.**

Featuring perspectives by: Ralph Carmichael, Carol Cymbala, Geron Davis, Lowell Harrup, Tom McDonald, Robert Rhoden, Mark Rutland, Darlene Zschech, and others.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MARK ROSS

# e shorts

## Dollars & Sense

### TO CATCH A THIEF

If a man will rob God, then he won't think twice about robbing a church. As a ministry leader, you can help prevent theft by developing a trustworthy system for handling checks and cash.

#### Double protection.

Where possible, appoint a finance team/committee of at least two people to handle church money matters. Implement a system that includes checks and balances for, and periodic review of, all money matters—accounts receivables, accounts payables, payroll, inventory, cash accounts, etc.

**Stash cash.** Many churches ensure offerings are counted in a discreet location and only by those authorized to do so. But

similar care is often not taken with petty cash accounts. Consider implementing procedures for tracking cash that ensures a paper trail of receipts and/or authorization forms to account for all petty cash expenditures.

#### Protect accounts.

Church checkbooks and account numbers should be securely stored, with access available to select members of the finance team. Reduce potential theft by requiring at least two people to have signature authority for large purchases. Also, if you allow debit/ATM cards, ensure these are used sparingly, and keep passwords secure.

As much as possible, require that checks be written to vendors, not church members who shop for routine or special church events.

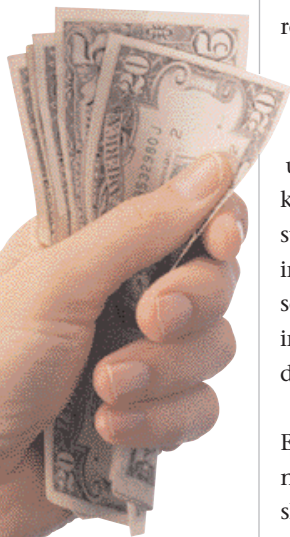
#### Know inventory.

Property theft may go undetected if you do not know what equipment and supplies are in your church's inventory. Ensure that someone regularly checks inventories and reports any discrepancies.

#### Request feedback.

Encourage members to notify you immediately should a theft occur.

—Lisa Crayton



## What in the World

### HEADLINES BELONG IN CHURCH

September 11 shook the Big Apple to the core and our whole nation quaked. That tragic Tuesday evening saw churches all across the country holding spontaneous prayer services. Calls for separation between church and state regularly voiced by civil libertarians were unheard.

The headlines of the day were not the sole domain of newspaper publishers or television journalists. They provided the people of



God with a vocabulary of prayer. It seemed entirely appropriate that we were bringing the events of the world into church with us. After all, Christians are citizens of two kingdoms.

What occurred on September 11, and in the weeks that followed, is sadly an exception instead of the norm. It is possible for people to sit through an entire worship service without hearing any reference to what in the world is going on. Even though people come to church preoccupied with news stories or concerns for national security, it is rare for worship leaders and preachers to make mention of them.

To the degree that pastors can reference the culture (including popular television programs and movies) and current events on Sunday mornings, they will remind their congregations that pastors live in the real world too. They will also be in a position to model how topics that occupy people's minds can illustrate biblical truth. (For an example of how to do this, go to [www.TeamSundays.org](http://www.TeamSundays.org) and sign up for a free weekly e-resource called "Sunday Soundbytes.")

—Greg Asimakoupoulos

## Boomers to Zoomers

### DO BOOMERS COUNT?

**W**ith all the attention paid to the shocking absence of generations X (born 1965-83) and Y (born 1984-2002) from American churches, one may wonder if baby boomers (born 1946-64) still matter. They do.

Our God is the Lord of all the generations (Psalm 33:11). When He pours out His Spirit, "your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams" (Acts 2:17). There is no generation gap in the Kingdom. Everyone counts. Consider these dimensions of the boomer generation:

#### BOOMER TIME

- There are 78 million baby boomers.
- 4 out of 10 householders are between ages 35 to 54.
- The number of householders ages 45 to 54 increased 20 percent from 1995 to 2000.
- In 1950 the median age was 30. It will be 42 in 2050.

#### BOOMER TROUBLES

- They are 500 percent more likely to experience divorce than their parents.

- Middle-aged men are twice as likely to lose their jobs in a permanent layoff as they were 13 years ago.
- The majority of boomers are unchurched.
- They are addicted, afflicted, and looking for purpose in life.

#### BOOMER ASSETS

- They own 77 percent of all financial assets in the U.S.
- They represent 66 percent of all stockholders.
- They own 80 percent of all the money in savings and loans.
- Their median income is \$47,300 annually.

This is a generation that is still largely unreached, and has massive resources of time and finances to contribute to the kingdom of God. They deserve a chance.

(Source: *Half Time*, September-October 2002, 23, 42-47, and other sources.)

**Recommended resource:** McIntosh, Gary L. 2002. *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

—Earl Creps

## A Single Word

#### CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS?

The European nations often described as the sex capitals of the world, Denmark and Holland, do not have the highest divorce rates. The United States holds that distinction.<sup>1</sup>

There are more widowed people in the U.S. than the entire populations of more than four dozen nations of the world.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. has more single adults (81 million over age 18) than any other nation in the world except for China and India.<sup>3</sup>

The number of single adults in the U.S. exceeds the total national population of all but 11 of the world's 192 nations.<sup>4</sup>

The number of single parents in the U.S. is greater than the entire population of Colorado and Tennessee combined.<sup>5</sup>

Twenty-four percent of all 25- to 44-year-olds in the U.S. have never been married.<sup>6</sup>

More than one-third of all 35- to 54-year olds have had at least one divorce and two-thirds of them remarry.<sup>7</sup>

Our nation's demographics continue to change dramatically. Ministry leaders in the local church need to understand the needs these numbers reflect to effectively minister to our changing society.

—Dennis Franck

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

1. George Barna, *Single Adults*, (Ventura, Calif: Issachar Resources, 2002), 7.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 8.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 12.
7. Ibid.

## CyberBuzz

### FINDING THE SITES THAT ARE MOST HELPFUL

[www.yil.com](http://www.yil.com)

This is a Web site for Yahoo Internet Life Magazine, a vast listing of Internet resources for travel, health, shopping, news and info, etc.

[www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)

The Alban Institute is dedicated to pursuing new knowledge in the fields of sociology, human relations, and organizational development. This includes disseminating original research through books, educational seminars, and consulting and training services. Alban Institute has some great material concerning conflict management in the local church.

[www.comresources.com](http://www.comresources.com)

This is a great church resources site. Click on "Pastoral & Preaching." Listed here are resources for funerals and weddings.

[www.globalpastorsnet.org](http://www.globalpastorsnet.org)

The Global Pastors Network is an ever-developing, ever-expanding technological presence to touch, teach, and train pastors worldwide in every major language. The goal of Global Pastors Network is to make creative, compelling, teaching content available to Christian leaders all over the world.

—Gary R. Allen

## ShelfTalk

### ESSENTIAL BOOKS FOR COUNSELING



Pastors have always been expected to provide spiritual counsel. However, inadequate training and time pressures make counseling a frustrating and unfulfilling experience for many pastors. Melody Palm, Psy.D., assistant professor of psychology and counseling at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri, recommends the following books for counseling ministry.

1. *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short Term Structured Model* by David G. Benner (Baker, 144 pp., paperback).

**Why buy?** This excellent book gives pastors an explicitly Christian model of brief, time limited, spiritually focused counseling. It addresses the context and uniqueness of pastoral counseling.

2. *Sexual Issues: Resources for Strategic Pastoral Counseling* by Harold Wahking and Gene Zimmerman (Baker, 197 pp., hardcover).

**Why buy?** *Sexual Issues* helps counselors/pastors gain enough confidence to encourage trust and openness in discussion of emotion-laden problems. The authors carefully deal with the pastor's own sexual issues and personal reactions to problems that might tend to elicit shock, embarrassment, or disgust. They include self-protective measures for remaining detached and avoiding temptation or the appearance of impropriety. The pastor is taught to quickly identify a root problem and join the counselee in partnership aimed at victory. (This book is part of a series of books titled *Strategic Pastoral Counseling Resources*.)

—Melody Palm, Psy.D.

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**"Really, Pastor Tim . . . I applaud you for heeding my advice in starting on a high-fiber diet. But please beware of extremism."**

## History at a Glance

### THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

#### 625 YEARS AGO—1378

Amid a great schism in the church with the election of two popes—Urban VI and Clement VII, John Wyclif reached a turning point in his career. After five papal bulls are issued against him, he retreated to pursue preaching and writing. Wyclif begins the monumental task of translating the entire Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English because of his conviction that the average man should be able to read the Bible in his own language. His writings on the Church and his Bible translation signaled the dawn of the Reformation. For more on John Wyclif, see the column article in this issue on page 104.



#### 100 YEARS AGO—1903

A.S. Worrell completed a translation of the New Testament with notes and instructions called the Worrell New Testament. It is noted for its careful attention to the original Greek verb tenses and for the study notes and appendices on various scriptural topics.

#### 75 YEARS AGO—1928

Miss Mary C. Rumsey opened the first Pentecostal missions to Korea and Japan. With backing from an Assemblies of God layman, she served for many years as an unofficial representative of the American Assemblies of God in Korea until war broke out during World War II, and she was forced to leave.

#### 50 YEARS AGO—1953

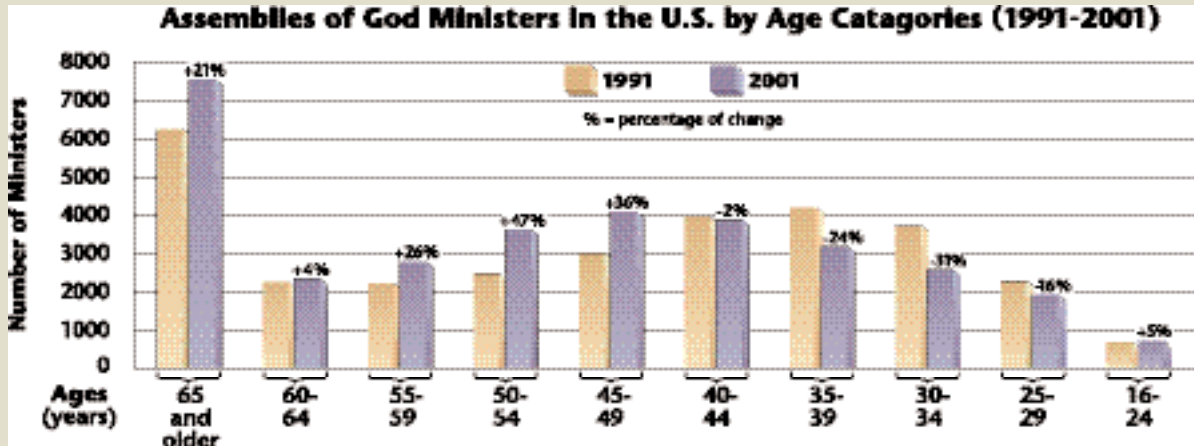
On April 8, a group of seven Korean workers who were ministering in local assemblies met with missionary evangelist Arthur B. Chesnut from the United States and organized the South Korean Assemblies of God at Seoul. Chesnut was elected their first superintendent, while Koreans were chosen as secretary-treasurer and executive presbyter. He helped to inaugurate a 2-year Bible training school, and the South Korean missions soon began to flourish.

#### 25 YEARS AGO—1978

Jesus '78 rally was held May 13 at the Meadowlands in New Jersey. Sponsored by Logos International and People of Hope, it was the largest interfaith religious rally in the United States up to that time with more than 55,000 gathered in the stadium at Rutherford, New Jersey. This spawned more than 100 similar festivals in the next few years, energizing the growth of the contemporary Christian music industry.

—Glenn Gohr

## Clergy Watch



## LeaderLife

### TRY A SERMON OF ONLY 25 MINUTES DURATION

Surveys find that most pastors consider themselves to be good or excellent communicators. But audiences don't always agree. Studies of unchurched people indicate that one of the primary reasons they do not attend worship is that they perceive (rightly or wrongly) that the sermons will be boring. Even church folk perceive preaching as much longer than the clock shows it to be. Here are 10 practical reasons to experiment with a shorter sermon: (Remember: I'm using exaggeration to provide food for thought. There is no ideal sermon length; use what fits your situation.)

1. If I'm not good, at least I can be brief. When I'm asked how long a sermon should be, I give a one-word answer: shorter.
2. Limited time puts quality ahead of quantity. Limiting myself to fewer minutes means I only have time for my best material.
3. If I can't make my point in 25 minutes, do I know what my point is? Talking until I find an anointed tangent does not serve listeners well.
4. Length is not synonymous with the anointing. The presence of the Spirit in the message is indicated by biblical integrity and fruitfulness.
5. Economy of expression is a form of servanthood. Preaching not 1 minute longer than necessary proves that I'm in the pulpit to serve, not to receive an ego infusion.
6. Short messages have the power of concentrated effort. Listeners can remember and apply one basic idea developed in depth.

7. Preaching formats are cultural, not biblical. Our taste in sermon magnitude is an issue of conscience, not a biblical absolute.

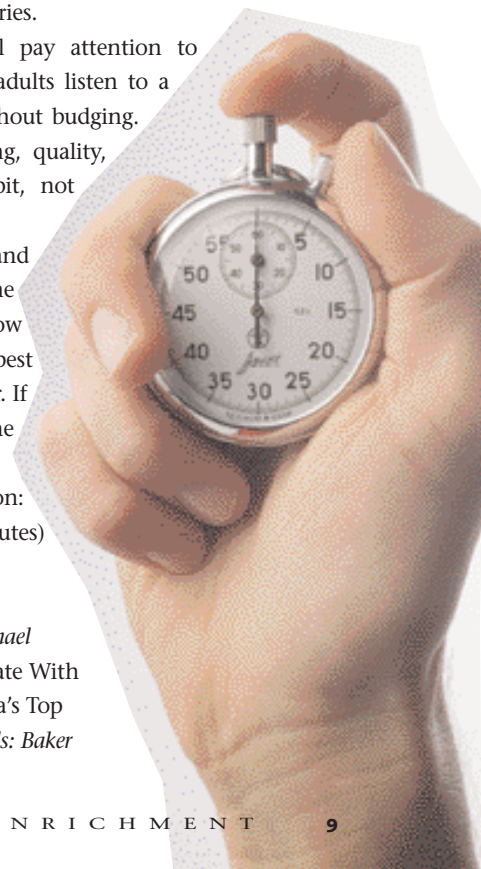
8. Shorter sermons maximize the efficiency of preparation. An hour-long message covering three points may be just an underdeveloped three-part series.

9. Every generation will pay attention to quality. I have seen young adults listen to a preacher for 90 minutes without budging. The real issues are anointing, quality, and sensitivity in the pulpit, not generations.

10. In the end, the Spirit and the text are sovereign, and the listener is served. I must allow the Spirit to lead me into the best ways to serve those who hear. If this means considering some changes, then so be it.

My major recommendation: try a shorter sermon (25 minutes) to see how it goes.

**Recommended resource:** Michael Duduit, ed. 1996. *Communicate With Power: Insights From America's Top Communicators*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.



# The Him Behind the Hymn

## HOW PAIN LED TO A PRAISE SONG

**H**ave you ever wondered how the songs we sing on Sundays came to be written? When you understand the context of the lyrics, you will probably sing them with more meaning and deeper devotion. Take the chorus, "God Will Make a Way."

Several years ago Don Moen, internationally acclaimed worship leader and composer, was jarred awake by a ringing telephone in the middle of the night.

Don's mother was on the other end of the line explaining an automobile accident involving his sister and brother-in-law and their children. One of his school-age nephews had been killed instantly. Other members of the family were hospitalized. Their physical wounds were not life threatening, but the pain of their broken hearts seemed unbearable. There seemed to be no way out of the tunnel of unspeakable grief.

As Don hung up the phone, he began to pray. He asked the Lord for a word of encouragement that he could offer his sister and her family. After waiting in the Lord's presence, Don picked up his pen and began to scratch out lyrics.

"God will make a way where there seems to be no way. He works in ways we cannot see. He will make a way for me . . ."

—Greg Asimakoupoulos



# CrossRoads

## TELL ME THE OLD OLD STORY . . . SOON

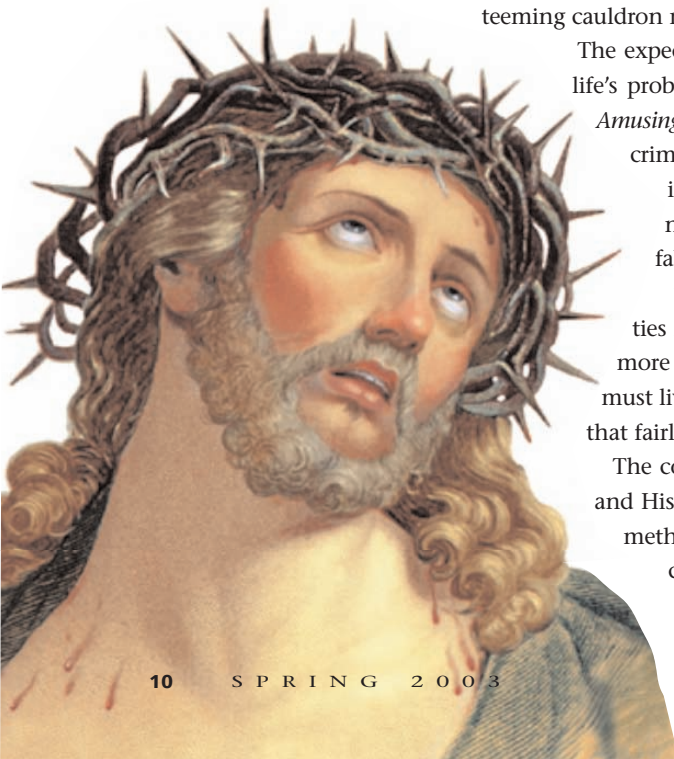
Syndicated columnist Don Feder wrote that the philosophers of the 19th century confidently announced God's demise, and the ideologies of the 20th century showed us how ghastly existence could be with such gaping holes in our souls. The 21st century is already showing us horrors that could be of apocalyptic proportions. AIDS will certainly reshape the social structure of sub-Saharan Africa. The clash of civilizations described by Samuel Huntington is becoming a teeming cauldron representing the depths of human hatred and ancient animosities.

The expectation that progress in science or greater access to information will solve life's problems is being increasingly called into question. Neil Postman, author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, wrote, "If there are children starving in Somalia, . . . if crime is rampant on our streets, . . . This has nothing to do with inadequate information." What we really need, says Postman, is a transcendent narrative to weave the unquestioned and uncombined facts of our lives into fabrics of truth.

Thoughtful Christians look at the 21st century realities and see opportunities for effective witness for Jesus Christ. However, our faith in Christ requires more than a defended ideology or an articulate philosophical system. Christians must live the story that has transformed our lives. We must do so in communities that fairly represent Jesus.

The community of the King confidently fleshes out the "old, old story of Jesus and His love" because it is more than a solution to poor information or outdated methods. We live out the old, old story because, like the apostle Paul, we are convinced we need not be ashamed of a power that rearranges the fabric of humanity (Romans 1:16).

—Byron Klaus



# Crossing Cultures

## U.S. ETHNIC POPULATION GROWING

Since 1990, the United States population has increased by 36.2 million. Seventy-five percent of this increase is ethnic minorities. One in 10 citizens is foreign born, and 1 in 7 speaks a language other than English in the home. One in 8 of our 128-million-person labor force is foreign born.

### GROWTH OF U.S. POPULATION SINCE 1990 (IN MILLIONS)

GROUP	1990	2000	GAIN
White	178.4	188.3	9.9 (9.4%)
Black	27.9	35.4	7.5 (7.8%)
Hispanic	22.3	35.3	13.0 (6.3%)
Asian	6.8	11.5	4.7 (5.9%)
Other	9.7	10.8	1.1 (8.9%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245.1</b>	<b>281.3</b>	<b>36.2 (8.7%)</b>

It is assumed that increased immigration leads to an overburdened social welfare system. The fact is, immigrants receive about \$5 billion annually in welfare benefits while earning approximately \$240 billion and paying approximately \$85 billion in taxes. Immigrants are contributing far more to our economy than they receive.

The most common place of birth for foreign-born citizens is Mexico with 4.5 million. Other nations exceeding 500,000 are the Philippines, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, and China.

According to the *Dallas Morning News*, Paterson, New Jersey, schools have had an increase in Mexican students of more than 200 percent during the past 5 years. In Portland, Oregon, the number of Mexican students has grown from 7,000 to over 50,000 in the last 20 years.

—David J. Moore

## Amu<sup>z</sup>ing Grace

### YOU KNOW IT MIGHT BE TIME TO HIRE A NEW ASSOCIATE WHEN...

1. He puts a star on his office door.
2. He quotes more Paul McCartney than the apostle Paul.
3. He names his dog after you.
4. He wears a T-shirt in the pulpit that says "I'm With Stupid."
5. He yells "Ha!" at a vital point in your sermon.
6. He joins a civic club called the Hell's Angels.
7. He keeps checking his horoscope when you plan the month's activities.
8. He keeps an autographed picture of Rev. Sun Myung Moon on his desk.
9. He uses the Shirley McClaine Reviled Substandard Version of the Bible.
10. He keeps volunteering you for the annual junior high boys overnight raft trip.

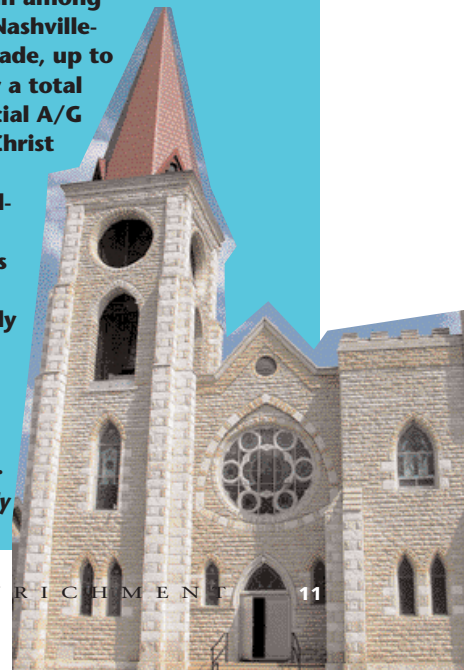
—Steve Phelps

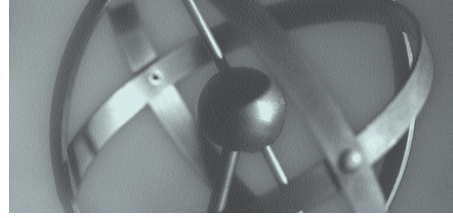
# Religion Watch

## DECENNIAL STUDY SHOWS GROWTH IN FAITH GROUPS

The Assemblies of God grew by 18.5 percent during the 1990s, the third largest gain among major faith groups in the country, according to a decennial study published by the Nashville-based Glenmary Research Center. The A/G gained 400,388 adherents during the decade, up to 2,561,998, according to the study. The Fellowship also added 731 congregations, for a total of 11,880. (These figures cover only stateside totals, and are different from the official A/G statistics that include Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.) Only the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at 19.3 percent, and the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, at 18.6 percent, grew faster during the span for faith groups exceeding 1 million adherents. For total number of congregations, the A/G trails just the Southern Baptists, United Methodists, Catholics, and Churches of Christ. The report also shows that the A/G is in the top 276 metro regions of the nation, the only group to do so besides Southern Baptists and Catholics. The A/G is the fourth most widespread body in the country, located in 83.3 percent of the nation's counties, for a presence in 2,616 counties. That is behind only United Methodists, Catholics, and Southern Baptists. Catholics are the largest U.S. religion with 62 million followers and the largest faith group in 38 states. Southern Baptists are the largest Protestant group, reporting 19.9 million adherents. They are also the most populous faith in 10 states.

—John W. Kennedy





## ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT— Winning and Transforming Men

**Churches that are alive and well  
utilize the skills of men to minister  
to the needs of people.**



*Leading men to Jesus Christ must be at the top of every church's agenda. When we reach a man for Christ and disciple him, we begin the process of transforming society.*

*Leadership, whether on the local or national level, must set the pace when it comes to reaching and training men. Nowhere is this passion for reaching men more evident than in the life of Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God.*

*This quarterly Ask the Superintendent interview will both inspire and motivate you to be about the Master's business of winning and transforming men.*

### **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REACH MEN?**

**TRASK:** Scripture indicates that a man is to be the spiritual head of his home. This is the order God has put in place. When we reach a man, we reach his home. Reaching men is effective, particularly in our society where the role of men has been diminished.

We read statistics about the many children who are being raised without a father. When there is a male role model, especially when he is a Christian, he fills

clean out his gutters.

As I was getting the ladder, the Spirit spoke to my heart and asked me to clean Steve's gutters. I don't like heights and my gutters weren't cleaned out, but I said, "Steve, I'll clean your gutters for you." When I finished, he thanked me and I put the ladder away and went into the house.

My wife, Shirley, asked, "What were you doing cleaning Steve's gutters? Ours aren't clean."

I said, "I know, but the Lord spoke to

When I went back a week later, he hugged me and said, "Thank you. Now I have my own Bible." Then he asked, "Will you go for a ride with me?" When we got back, he asked, "Reverend, how do I get born again?" I never thought Tony would ask me that, but God was working in his heart.

### **YOU ARE INTENTIONAL ABOUT INTERACTING WITH UNCHURCHED MEN.**

**TRASK:** Jesus met with publicans and

## **A Christian husband can bring harmony and success in the home, family, and in his marriage.**

the role God ordained for him. A Christian husband can bring harmony and success in the home, family, and in his marriage.

### **WHAT RESPONSIBILITY DOES THE CHURCH HAVE TO THE MEN OF ITS COMMUNITY?**

**TRASK:** Men can reach men. When I pastored, I had a program entitled "Men Investing in Men." We had a monthly dinner, and I asked the men in the church to buy a ticket for an unsaved friend. We had Christian businessmen as guest speakers. Many times a man won't come to a church service, but you can get him to come to a dinner or other activity if you bring him.

### **HOW CAN WE REACH OUR NEIGHBORS MORE EFFECTIVELY?**

**TRASK:** First, we must live out our Christianity. Then we must look for opportunities to befriend them. Steve, a medical doctor, lives across the street from us. One Saturday Steve asked to borrow my extension ladder so he could

my heart. We are trying to win him to Jesus, and here's a way to demonstrate the love of Christ."

A few months later Steve gave his heart to the Lord, and a year later his wife, Linda, got saved. My philosophy is this: if I can win them to me, then I have an open door to witness. After I've won their respect, then I can talk to them about Jesus.

Here is another example. Tony, a businessman, had been to Africa on a safari. A Christian guide there said, "Tony, when you get back, I want you to send me a box of religious books. I was a Muslim. Now I want to propagate Christianity."

This businessman said to me, "Reverend, can you get me a box of books to send this man?"

I said, "Sure I can." I gathered a box of books, including three or four Bibles. Then I went to a Christian bookstore and bought Tony a Bible and had his name imprinted on it.

I took the box to his office and he wasn't there, so I left it and the Bible.

sinner. Why did He eat with sinners? They needed Him.

There is a difference between keeping company and having an acquaintance. I would not keep company on a frequent basis with the unsaved because we don't have anything in common. Our language and lives are not the same. But we need acquaintances for the purpose of winning them to the Lord.

### **DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF BEING COMFORTABLE ENOUGH WITH YOURSELF TO WIN MEN TO YOU SO YOU CAN LEAD THEM TO CHRIST.**

**TRASK:** First, this has to come out of our relationship with Jesus. I'm not afraid to have someone look at my life because I have nothing to hide. This doesn't mean I'm perfect. No one is perfect, but we must be living right. There are men in the workplace who witness to others but don't live consistent Christian lives. When a dirty story is being told, they are part of the group that listens. The unsaved man doesn't understand this. If Christians are different,

why do they take part in something ungodly? We are salt and light by virtue of whom we are in Christ. Salt and light will accomplish the purposes for which they were created.

Second, I love people and enjoy being around them. It has never been

#### **WHAT MINISTRY ACTIVITIES CAN THE PASTOR DELEGATE TO MEN IN HIS CHURCH?**

**TRASK:** Scripture says in Ephesians 4 that God gave pastors to the church for equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. It is the pastor's responsibility

#### **WHAT ABOUT FEARS THAT AN UNSAVED MAN COULD INFLUENCE AND DISRUPT THE CHURCH?**

**TRASK:** Those cases are so rare I never worried about that. We had the unsaved outnumbered. There were times when we had several unsaved men helping

## **My philosophy is this: if I can win them to me, then I have an open door to witness.**

hard for me to make an acquaintance. That's not true for everybody, but every man in his own way can be a testimony. Some of the most powerful testimonies I know are men who say very little but live exemplary lives.

I have a responsibility before God for the spiritual well-being of unsaved men. It is easy for ministers to only fellowship with Christians. But if we do this, we lose touch with the reality that men are going into eternity without Jesus Christ. That has to move us.

#### **YOU BUILD BRIDGES WITH MEN THROUGH SHARED INTERESTS. HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE PASTORS TO BUILD BRIDGES WITH MEN IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?**

**TRASK:** If a pastor becomes a part of the community by joining the Rotary Club or some public service organization, this puts him out in the community. They know he's a pastor. When a crisis comes, they will come to him.

A while back I had replacement surgery on my knee. Sometime after my surgery my doctor's girlfriend was killed in a car accident. When I was in his office, I told him, "I've been praying for you."

He replied, "You're the first person I thought about calling when my girlfriend was killed. But I didn't think it was proper for me to call you."

I said, "I wished you had." When I said that, he fell into my arms and began to cry. When a crisis arises in a man's life, he needs a person who can help him spiritually.

to prepare men for ministry. One of the best ways for a pastor to grow a staff is to develop men within the congregation for ministry. One of the surest ways to have loyalty in a staff is to have men who have been saved under your ministry or who have come up through the church. They know your vision and goals and are committed to them.

One of the mistakes pastors make is trying to do it all. Instead, they need to train men. Another thing needed in the church is for the pastor to believe that God will call men into the ministry. God helped me in 13 years at Brightmoor Tabernacle to have 32 men go into full-time ministry. My goal was to see God call men into ministry.

#### **WHAT KIND OF MINISTRIES CAN A PASTOR USE TO ENGAGE MEN WHO ARE NOT YET FULLY COMMITTED TO CHRIST?**

**TRASK:** Churches can utilize the skills of men to minister to the needs of people. Let me give an example. Suppose a church has a ministry that paints and repairs widows' homes. If pastors can get an unsaved man involved in this outreach, this man begins to develop an interest in the church. He knows he's not saved, and you might hear some bad words when he's working with your people. That's OK. But you've exposed him to Christians in a different setting from church. You have given him an opportunity to realize he needs to be saved. Before long he'll make that commitment.

with a project. But that is healthy because it gives the men in the church opportunity to share their faith while sitting around at lunch at a work project.

#### **A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF MEN IN OUR SOCIETY, AND EVEN IN THE CHURCH, ARE WRESTLING WITH ADDICTIONS. WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?**

**TRASK:** If this is happening in the church, it's a spiritual matter. Men need to understand there is hope and deliverance through Christ, but they must want help.

Also, the church is here to bring help and hope to the community. A church can offer the community biblical solutions through its various ministries designed to help those with life-controlling addictions.

#### **WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO MINISTERS TO HELP THEM BE MORE INTENTIONAL IN REACHING THE MEN OF THEIR COMMUNITY?**

**TRASK:** Pastors must have a passion to reach lost people. This isn't something pastors necessarily learn in Bible college. And it will not happen if they sit in the office all day. Pastors need to get out and rub elbows with those who are lost.

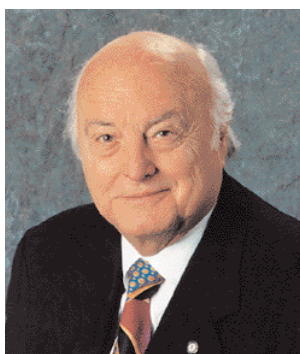
There were many times I left the pulpit at the close of an altar service and put my arm around a man who I knew was unsaved. I would ask if I could pray with him, and that's all he needed. Pastors need to seize the opportunity and then God does the work **e**



# interview

WITH EDWIN L. COLE  
AND PATRICK M. MORLEY

## Majoring in Men



EDWIN L. COLE



PATRICK M. MORLEY

**T**he church is in a life-and-death struggle for the souls of men. Of the 98 million men in America 18 years of age and older, 63 million make no profession of faith in Christ. American men are mired in the moral decay of divorce, adultery, and pornography. The national center for fathering reports that the physical absence of the father from the home is the most significant family problem facing America. More father-deprived children are in the U.S. than ever, with over 25 million children under the age of 18 growing up in a home without a dad.

Majoring in men and connecting them to Jesus Christ has never been more consequential for the church. If men are brought into a meaningful relationship with Christ and developed into fully devoted followers, they are capable of making a difference in the home, society, and the world.

This is the message the late Edwin L. Cole and Patrick M. Morley are carrying to the nations, and it is the proposition they bring to this exclusive Enrichment interview. Three months to the day of granting this interview, Edwin L. Cole went to be with the Lord. To our knowledge, this is the last interview he granted before his death on September 3, 2002.

Edwin L. Cole was the founder and president of the Christian Men's Network, a worldwide ministry that demands sexual and social responsibility from men. Patrick M. Morley is one of America's most respected authorities on the challenges and opportunities facing men. He is the founder of Man in the Mirror, a ministry devoted to helping pastors and churches create, capture, and sustain momentum in their men's ministries.

### WHY WAS THERE AN EXPLOSION OF MINISTRIES TO MEN IN THE 90S?

**MORLEY:** For the last 50 years there has been a downward slide in America in issues of morality. Men feel they are at the center of the problem, and they somehow feel they are supposed to be at the center of the solution. They want to make a contribution, but they don't know what to do. In the meantime, men are living lives broken through divorce, pornography, drugs and alcohol, and the random pursuit of blind success. Many men have gotten what

**COLE:** God only calls one man to disciple the men of the church—the pastor. One of the pastor's primary responsibilities is to disciple men. Then each man is to disciple his family.

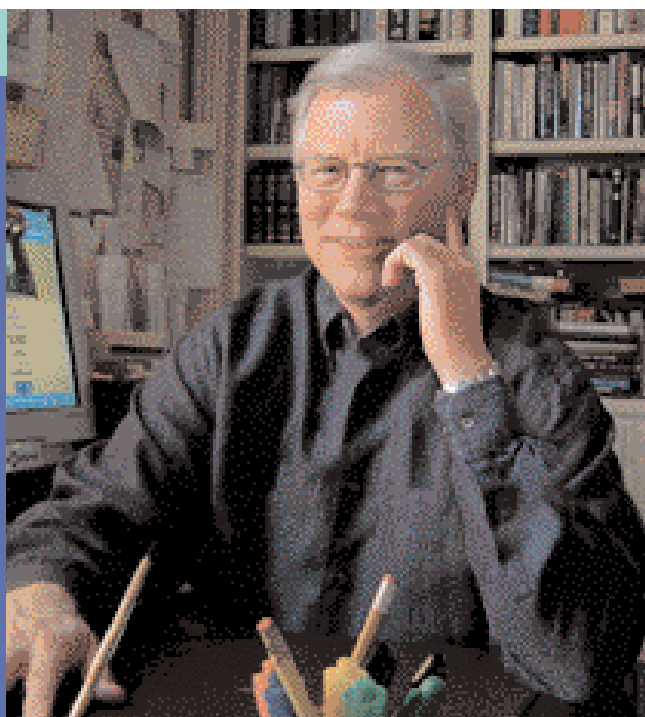
Other organizations are doing men's ministries because the pastor is not leading and men are hungry for men's ministry. So they find someplace to feed their hunger. But many pastors fail to recognize their responsibility to lead men. Until that is changed, pastors will continue to have churches where their men are not being disciplined.

enlarge the church's base by building Sunday Schools and children's ministries. Throughout that time the children and women were being reached, but for the most part the men were omitted. Then the church turned around and tried to have a men's fellowship.

I spent from 1963 to 1969 as the Northern California/Nevada men's ministries director for the Assemblies of God. I was with the A/G for 40 some years. During that time I tried to interest pastors in discipling men, only to find after

**No pastor fails on purpose. No pastor gets up in the morning and thinks, *I wonder what I can do today to make a mess out of my church.***

**—Morley**



they wanted, and they are still not happy. They are confused, disillusioned, and discouraged. They are looking for answers. I believe this is what has led to the rise of men's ministries across the nation.

God has helped us develop our ministries to help pastors build up the church. The church of Jesus Christ needs to be healed. We don't need to create a separate way for men to become evangelized and disciplined. What we need to do is build up the church.

### WHY IS THE PASTOR'S ROLE IMPORTANT TO A SUCCESSFUL MEN'S MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH?

**MORLEY:** The pastor's role is all-important. If the pastor does not have a passion for evangelizing and discipling men in his church, it will not happen. As it goes with the senior pastor, so it goes with the church.

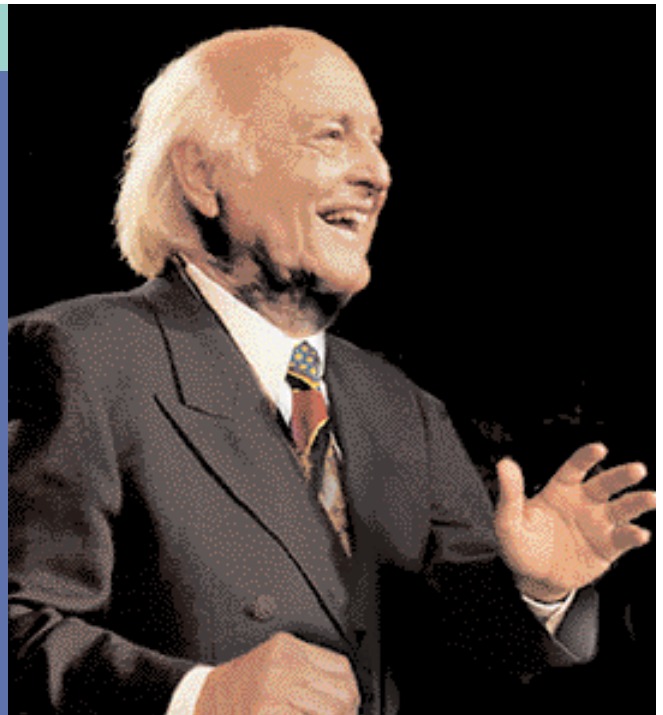
### MINISTRY TO MEN IS OFTEN AN UNDERMANAGED DEPARTMENT IN MOST CHURCHES. EXPLAIN.

**COLE:** The church went through a period where it majored in Sunday School. One popular theme the church used was "A Child Will Lead Them." The belief was that if you could reach the child, you could reach the family. So what you had was an incredible effort to

6 years, pastors still turned a deaf ear to it. Now for the last 25 years I've ministered internationally to denominations all over the world, and Promise Keepers has found the same problem—they're trying to give the ministry to pastors and pastors don't want it. So what you have is a pastoral failure to recognize their responsibility to lead men. Until that is changed, churches are going to continue to have the same problems.

**MORLEY:** No pastor fails on purpose. No pastor gets up in the morning and thinks, *I wonder what I can do today to make a mess out of my church.* No man fails on purpose. No man I've ever

**Churchianity comes from growing up in church. Christianity comes from growing up in Christ. The difference between these two can be as far apart as heaven and hell.—Cole**



known wakes up in the morning and thinks, *What can I do today to neglect my wife, irritate my children, and let my boss down?* And yet every day men do.

Men are noble. When the *Titanic* went down, it was customary for the men to say, “Women, children, and unsaved on the boats first.” Now, decades later, men provide leadership in churches and denominations as pastors and as laymen. Perhaps they think they are doing a noble thing by making sure they take care of the women and children. But the unintended consequence of this is the failure as pastors and men to make sure they take care of their own spiritual needs and discipleship.

In the United States, there are 98 million men who are 18 years of age and older. Sixty-three million of these men make no profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, 90 million out of the 98 million men—11 out of 12—are not involved in any kind of discipleship or spiritual formation. This means only 1 out of every 12 men in the U.S. is involved in discipleship. Imagine putting a football team on the field with only one man who understands the playbook. Chaos would result.

The last 50 years and current

psychological and sociological studies help explain why we have become the way we are. At the core we have a nation that is Christian in spirit and secular in practice. Only 1 in 12 men understand how to live a biblical life. Look at every problem we have in our society. At the root of that problem is a man who failed, even though, ironically, he got up that morning wanting to be successful. None of them wanted to fail. That is the challenge before us. We will not change our nation until we change our men.

**COLE:** Out of what Pat has just described has come our ministry to men. Pastors are spending their time ministering to families and are omitting ministry to men. But if they would minister to men and give men the responsibility to minister to their families, pastors wouldn’t have as many family problems in their churches.

Pastors are not called to be surrogate fathers to every family member in the church. But when pastors take care of families and the needs of the mothers and children, they become surrogate fathers. When mothers and children have a problem, they run to their pastor, not to their husbands or fathers. Pastors have created this huge issue in

the church where they provide all the answers and all the care for the families. Men are not providing ministry to their families. Then when something goes wrong within a family, the man blames the pastor. The pastor must recognize the importance of ministry to men and let the men minister to their families.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul instructed Timothy to take the things he had heard and commit them to faithful men who would teach others also. That is the Magna Carta of our ministry. If you can train a man to teach others, then you’re successful. But if you cannot teach a man to teach others, then you’re going to have a problem because he can’t teach his family.

#### **HOW, THEN, DO WE CONVINCE PASTORS THAT A PRIORITY OF THEIR MINISTRY IS REACHING AND DISCIPLING MEN?**

**MORLEY:** Whom do pastors respect? To whom will they listen? That’s the answer to your question. If the leading people in denominations—the opinion leaders—stand up on the floors of their general councils and conventions and begin to create a national dialogue about the importance of making evangelism and discipleship of our men a priority, it will begin to happen. Once

you put an idea out there, it sets forces into motion that once released can no longer be contained. Wouldn't it be interesting if out of this interview came a national dialogue with the Assemblies of God and other denominations on the importance of reaching and discipling men? Perhaps out of such a dialogue we would put into motion something that could change the spiritual direction of our nation.

**COLE:** If pastors minister to families, they get the tithe on the grocery money. If pastors minister to men, they get the tithe on the gross income. Where pastors have built their ministry majoring in men, they have had the income they need for ministry. But their success came because they majored in men.

James Meeks in Chicago has an all-male choir every Sunday morning. Single mothers see the choir filled with men. They bring their children to Sunday School where every class has a male teacher or helper. Single-parent women love that church and they flock to it.

Years ago there were church splits when some members began showing allegiance to some television ministries. As I ministered across the country, I

discovered that in every church where the pastor had a relationship with men through a men's Bible study, the church did not split. The pastor had bonded to his men and another shepherd could not lead them away. This is one reason why a pastor needs to have a relationship with his men. It cultivates bonding, allegiance, and loyalty. They won't listen to some other voice.

Jack Hayford says that if he had to give up every ministry in his church except one, he would keep the men's ministry because that is what the church is built on.

**PAT, YOU ONCE SAID, "TO HELP A MAN CHANGE THE CORE AFFECTIONS OF HIS HEART IS EASILY THE GREATEST CONTRIBUTION WE CAN MAKE TO CHRIST'S WORK." HOW DO YOU CHANGE THE CORE AFFECTIONS OF A MAN'S HEART?**

**MORLEY:** Much of the ministry to men that has and is taking place deals with helping a man change his outward life. And there is no problem with that. But we are in error when we deal with the outward and we do not deal with the inner motivational structure of the heart. The core affections of men's hearts are not focused on the person of

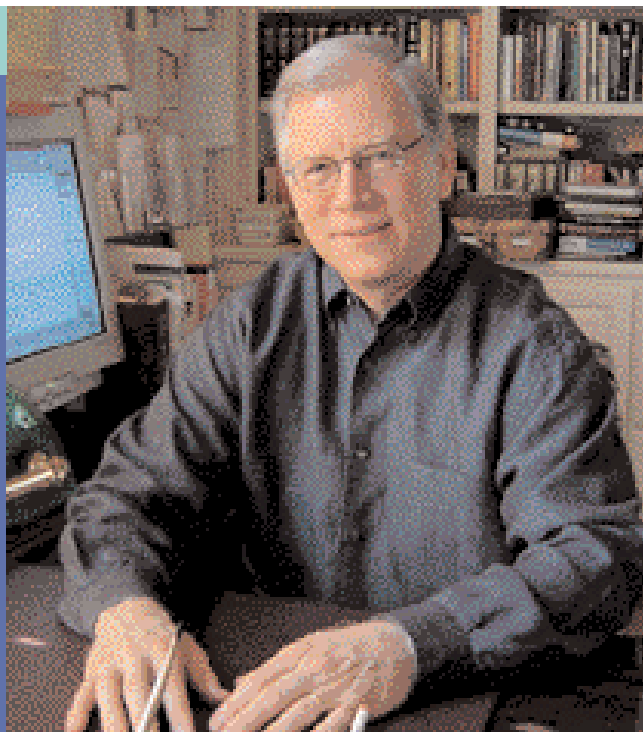
Jesus Christ. That is the challenge before us. The focal point really needs to help men change the core affections of their hearts.

A man studies his Bible, prays, pays his tithe, and serves his church. He tries to be a godly father and husband, and a good citizen. One day he looks around and realizes that life seems unfair. He's trying to be good but the wicked are prospering. He gets confused. He begins to question Scripture. He gets embittered. Little by little lukewarmness sets in and he becomes a cultural Christian. He continues in an orbit around Christ, but not at the white-hot core.

This man is with the Lord a little bit and then he's out in the world. The yeast of the culture is everywhere, so it gets in his clothes. It's like a fine dust, and some of gets in his ears, eyes, and nose. Some men even start snorting the yeast. They come to the conclusion, through unbelief, that Jesus Christ alone is not enough to make them happy. They need something else, so they make idols.

Many men are discouraged. They are often on a winning streak, but they still feel empty because they have other desires competing with a full surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

**A leader in a large denomination once told me, "Pat, our denomination is not making disciples. The reason we're not is that most of our pastors have never been disciplined."—Morley**



There are different disciplines we can teach men. But my basic philosophy is to bring men into the real presence of Jesus Christ and He will show them what they need to do.

**COLE:** Churchianity comes from growing up in church. Christianity comes from growing up in Christ. The difference between these two can be as far apart as heaven and hell. Jesus did not say you shall love God with all your soul, mind, and body. That's religious. He said love

church where the pastor relates to men and discipled them. When a pastor has trained his men and those men know what they're doing in leadership, other men are attracted. It also attracts the women. When women see men taking their rightful place of leadership in the church, they love it. Women will come where men are, but men won't necessarily go where the women are.

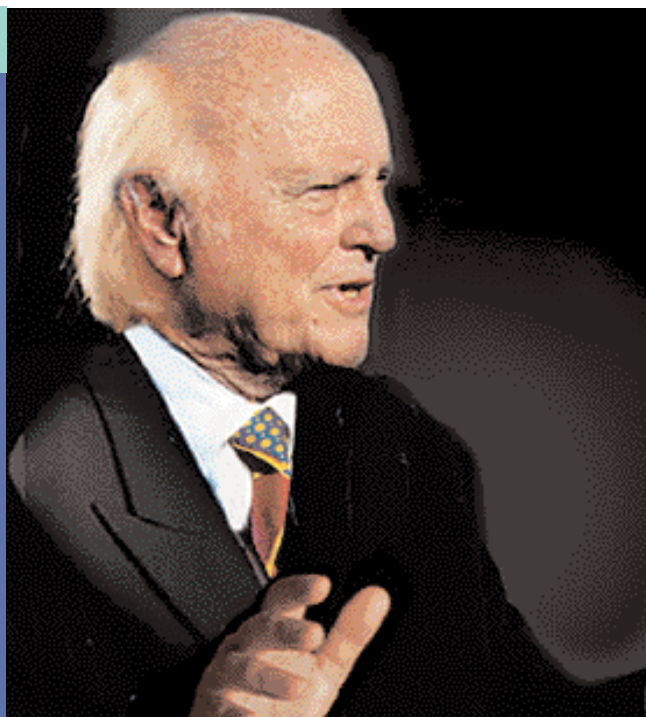
**MORLEY:** A leader in a large denomination once told me, "Pat, our denomination

150 men every Friday morning. These men want me to step on their toes, and they want me to make them laugh.

A pastor could take his men through the Bible each year. Whatever he feels God wants him to do is fine. There is no one right way, but having the pastor lead it is effective.

The dynamics in a men-only Bible study are different from a Sunday morning worship service. In a men's Bible study, the pastor can talk plainly to his men about lusting after a woman in the

**If pastors minister to families, they get the tithe on the grocery money. If pastors minister to men, they get the tithe on the gross income.—Cole**



God with all your heart, soul, mind, and body. That's Christianity. You love God with your heart. The heart comes first.

I wrote a chapter entitled "It's the Heart" for the revised edition of *Maximized Manhood*. We have a great deal of teaching that touches various aspects of a man's life but doesn't change his heart. It's the heart that has to be changed. It's the heart that has to love God. Pat talked about the fact pastors are trying to help men be good people. That's good. But until a man is changed in his heart, he still is not the man he wants to be.

#### **DESCRIBE THE KIND OF CHURCH THAT ATTRACTS MEN.**

**COLE:** A church that attracts men is a

is not making disciples. The reason we're not is that most of our pastors have never been discipled." When many pastors hear the words "make disciples," they are unclear how to do this. That's why there are ministries like Christian Men's Network, Man in the Mirror, HonorBound, and others. We need to help pastors overcome this deficiency. The pastor is sometimes in a position where it's difficult for him to admit he needs help making disciples. After all, he's the pastor. So it's almost a catch-22.

Another thing that attracts men is preaching that is challenging to a man's world in terms of his integrity and his leadership in the home and the community. I teach a men's Bible study to

office who might look like Julia Roberts. You can't talk like that in a Sunday service.

#### **NEITHER OF YOU MENTIONED A BASKETBALL LEAGUE OR A BIG SCREEN FOR MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL TO ATTRACT MEN.**

**COLE:** For years people have been trying to develop a men's fellowship and have failed because fellowship is a byproduct. When you try to get men to come for fellowship, they don't have time. That doesn't attract them because there is no purpose or destiny in it. The very name, men's fellowship, works against men coming together in the church. But when you call your men's ministry, Man in the Mirror, Men of

Integrity, or Men of Destiny, you have a name with purpose and destiny. Then there's a reason for men to come, and the byproduct of their being together is fellowship. When Pat gets together with his 150 men in the morning, they come for a purpose. The byproduct of that is fellowship with each other and they develop friendships. You must have the purpose first.

**MORLEY:** I've been working with men for 29 years. After all these years I've concluded that men basically want three things. First, they want something they can give their lives to. That's the cause or the mission. They want to make a contribution. Second, they want someone to share it with. This is the need to love and be loved. And this is not only in marriage, but also in friends and family. Third, they want a system that gives a reasonable explanation for why one and two are so difficult.

Jesus is the someone worth giving your life to. Jesus is the someone you can share your life with. And Jesus is the system that gives a reasonable explanation for why those other two are so difficult. Christianity explains why life is futile and the solution to life. I'm increasingly trying to build what I'm doing around those three wants or needs.

### HOW DOES A PASTOR AND HIS LEADERSHIP TEAM CREATE, CAPTURE, AND SUSTAIN MOMENTUM WHEN LAUNCHING A MINISTRY TO MEN?

**MORLEY:** The command to make disciples is in opposition to the principle of the Parable of the Sower. In other words, at every meeting you have seed that goes to different places. You have attrition, and so the command to make disciples is working against this. What is needed is a reciprocal process of making disciples. In other words, we need an event to create momentum. It could be having a college football player give his testimony, a seminar, or a weekend fishing trip. To get men to places where you can get to know

them and challenge them they need to be interested.

Second, you need to capture the momentum. No one cools his house down to 72 degrees on a hot summer day and then opens the windows and doors. You try to capture the energy that has been expended to cool your house. Many times, though, when we have events, we haven't thought through the follow-up process.

We have found that 6-week follow-up groups are successful. We sign up men for these groups at our events. Of the men who have been through any of our Man in the Mirror events, 66 percent of them join our 6-week follow-up groups.

Also, don't micromanage. Men are smart. They will figure it out. Say, "OK men, we're going to form in groups of six to eight and exchange names and phone numbers. Choose someone to be your discussion leader, and pick your first meeting time." Of course, you need to have some materials for them to study. HonorBound has many wonderful things men can study. Man in the Mirror has men's

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studies called *Life Plans*. They are 6-week courses. Doing this captures momentum.

The other error is trying to do too much. An overzealous approach might go like this: "Men, we've had a wonderful weekend retreat. Now we're going to have a 3-year inductive Bible study in the original Hebrew language that begins with a 40-day fast. How many would like to be a part of that?"

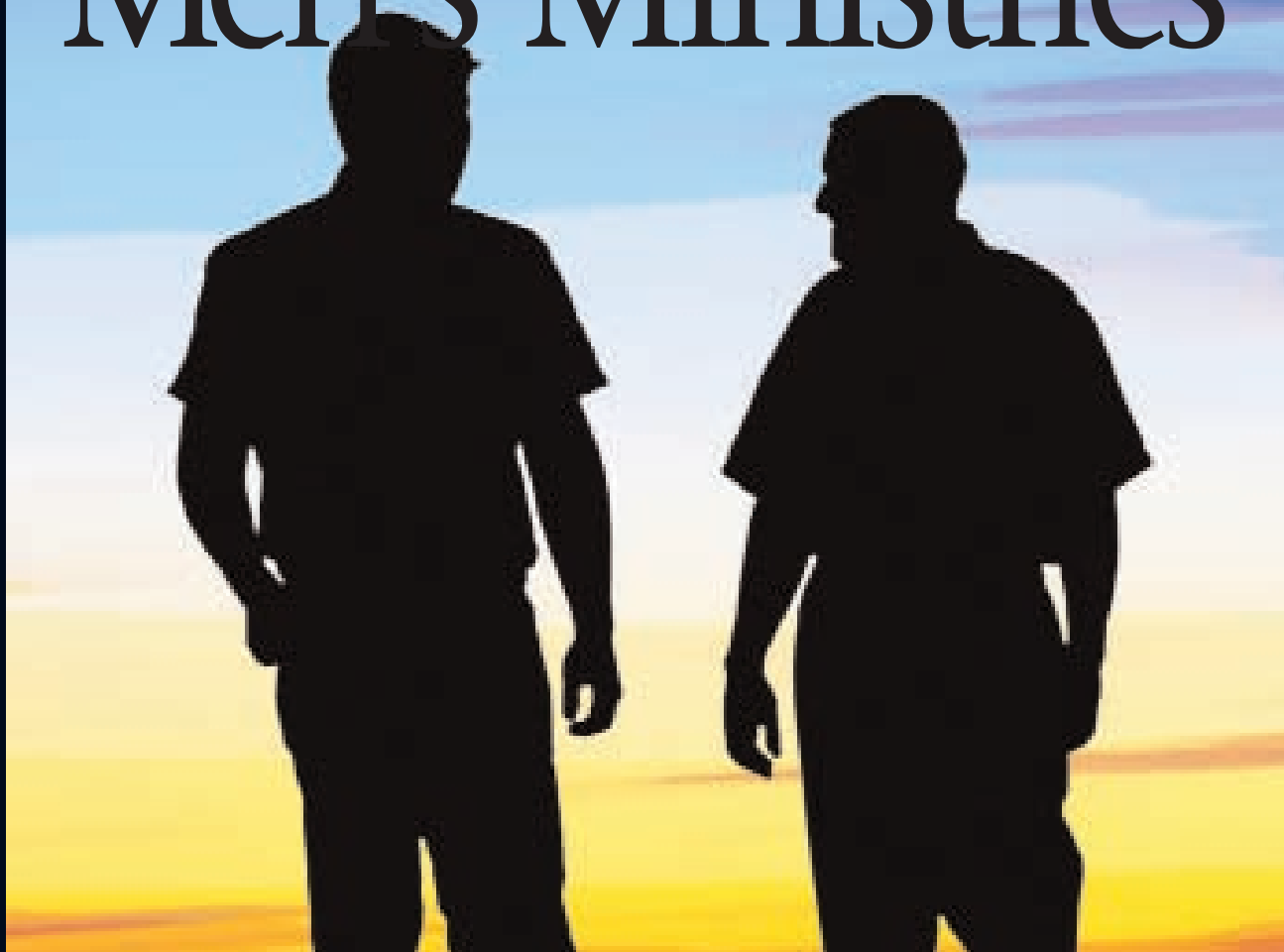
Once you get men into groups and they like it, then have an ongoing Bible study for them to sustain the momentum. Then periodically have additional events to create more momentum.

**COLE:** We do the same thing Pat does. None of us were raised up to take the place of a pastor. Everything we do is to help the pastor disciple his men and develop character in them. We are called to help the pastor because the local church is the basic ministry of Christ on the earth. Those who bypass the local church may have their own ministry, but they're not helping build the church of Jesus Christ. **e**



**"Pastor, Ken Burns of PBS is doing a documentary on the decline of the Christian Church in America. He wants your permission to use our church in the last episode."**

# THE PASTOR'S ROLE IN Men's Ministries



## A CALL FOR PASTORAL FATHERING AND MENTORING

**IN GENESIS 14**, A WAR IS RECORDED IN WHICH FIVE KINGS AND THEIR ARMIES WERE DEFEATED BY FOUR OTHER KINGS. IN THE PROCESS, ABRAM'S NEPHEW, LOT, WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE BY THE VICTORIOUS FOUR KINGS (GENESIS 14:8–12). WHEN ABRAM FOUND OUT, A MIRACLE TOOK PLACE. WITH ONLY 318 MEN, HE ATTACKED THE COMBINED ARMIES OF THE FOUR KINGS AND COMPLETELY ROUTED THEM IN A ONE-SIDED VICTORY. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? ABRAM'S SECRET WAS NOT ONLY TO BE A GODLY MAN, BUT HE ALSO "ARMED HIS THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN TRAINED SERVANTS WHO WERE BORN IN HIS OWN HOUSE, AND WENT IN PURSUIT\*" (VERSE 14). NOTE THREE THINGS ABOUT THESE MEN: THEY WERE *FATHERED* ("BORN IN HIS OWN HOUSE"); THEY WERE *FOUNDED* ("TRAINED SERVANTS"); THEY WERE *FIGHTERS* ("ARMED").

B Y D A V I D A . G A R C I A

**G**odly men are the missing link to sustained revival. Before we can have effective men's ministry, we need to have effective men. If the man is the head of the home (1 Corinthians 11:3), change the man, and you change the family. Change the family, and you change the church. Change the church, and you change the nation. Like Abram, we can raise up an army of godly men and route the enemy.

Before we implement an effective men's ministry, we need to have effective, godly men. Let's consider three critical factors.

### THE DYSFUNCTION IN MEN'S MINISTRY (FATHERLESS MEN)

American society as a whole is becoming more and more dysfunctional. The secular approach focuses on the false assumption that people are victims of society and seeks to blame most problems on other factors such as abuse, disease, environment, or lack of training. Men, however, need to take responsibility for their own actions and destiny. An effective men's ministry recognizes three things:

#### Patterns

Sixty-one percent of the households in America today are fatherless. To have a nation full of absentee fathers is damaging. Consider the following statistics\*\*:

- 63 percent of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (U.S.D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census).
- 90 percent of all homeless and run-away children are from fatherless homes (U.S.D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census).
- 85 percent of all children who exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes (Center for Disease Control).
- 80 percent of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes (*Criminal Justice and Behavior*, Vol. 14, p. 403–26, 1978).
- 71 percent of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools).
- 75 percent of all adolescent patients

in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes (Rainbows for All God's Children).

- 70 percent of all juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept. 1998).
- 85 percent of all youths in prison grew up in a fatherless home (Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations; Texas Dept. of Corrections, 1992).

An effective men's ministry must transform men from apathy to involvement. The pastor must instill the following principles into the hearts of his men.

#### Principles

1. The head or leader of the house is the man. If the head is dysfunctional, the rest of the family will be dysfunctional (1 Corinthians 11:3).
2. Manliness is Christlikeness.
3. "Being male is a matter of birth; being a man is a matter of choice" (Edwin Louis Cole).
4. "We teach what we know but we reproduce what we are" (John Maxwell).
5. You can only have godliness and revival in a church to the extent of the relationship between fathers and their children (Malachi 4:6).
6. We maximize our manhood when we imitate Christ.
7. A man must allow the Word of God to deliver his past and determine his future for him to have positive relationships.

Developing godly men should be one of the highest pastoral priorities. Yet the average man who sits in our pews week after week is plagued by problems.

#### Problems

Effective men's ministry must tackle and overcome the following snares in men's lives:

1. *Accounts*. Credit is the new slavery. More and more Christians are filing bankruptcy. Financial freedom is a top necessity.
2. *Addictions*. Pornography is the second slavery in the church. Lust has

become a stronghold in the majority of men.

3. *Authority*. Rebellion and a lawless spirit grip many men. If a man is not submissive to God, he will reap rebellion and strife in his home.

4. *Anger*. The pain of the past and unresolved conflict imprison many men.

5. *Arrogance*. Pride stops men from seeking help.

6. *Absenteeism*. Many men abdicate the leadership in the home to the wife, causing family dysfunction.

7. *Abandonment*. Many men choose to run from their responsibilities or are abandoned by their spouse.

The church must rise to meet this growing cancer. Pastors must aim to transform their men and then utilize them in ministry.

### THE DEMAND IN MEN'S MINISTRY (FATHERING MEN)

There are three key ingredients pastors need to consider to have a life-transforming men's ministry.

#### Attitude

Pastors need to look at their men as a father sees a son. "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me" (1 Corinthians 4:15,16). Even if you did not win a man to Christ, you can still adopt him as a spiritual son. If we see ourselves as leaders of men, then any transformation they receive from our ministry will trickle down to their wives and children. We must remember: it is not the pastor's job to disciple a man's children; that man is responsible (Deuteronomy 6:1–7).

Most church people look to the church to nurture, disciple, and transform their children and youth. The children's pastor and youth pastor become stepfathers while the fathers remain absent. This principle is urgent to the success of any men's ministry. Even families with no fathers can be adopted by other fathers.

## Approach

Many churches are meeting oriented; they emphasize the service as the main means of equipping and making disciples. In these services, there is little interaction, no questions, and no accountability.

As pastor, you may want to include mentorship, which is more personal, more interactive, and more conducive to making disciples.

When a pastor mentors a small group of men, he serves as a facilitator, coach,

and mentor. There is discussion and accountability. Currently I mentor 10 young, single men every Thursday morning and 20 married men every Wednesday morning. We utilize Edwin Louis Cole's *Majoring in Men*\*\*\* curriculum.

## A MENTORING COVENANT

The mentoring relationship is not a casual, but a covenant relationship between God and man. We created mentoring covenants—one for the men who are being mentored and one for the men who are mentoring others. The men who desire to be mentored at my church pledge to do the following:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to be spiritually trained and mentored by \_\_\_\_\_.

I pledge to:

1. attend two of the three weekly services, special functions and home group meetings, and participate fervently and loyally. In the event an uncontrollable circumstance occurs that hinders my participation, I will notify my mentor well in advance with the reason. This is accountability and gives honor to God.
2. complete curriculum and/or other assignments required of me by my mentor and turn them in on time.
3. receive all instruction, and even correction, without being offended. I want to grow and mature in the things of God. I believe that by submitting myself under my mentor, I will be a valuable tool in the arsenal of God at Brooksville Assembly of God.
4. discuss spiritual principles with my wife and pray with her and my children every day. I am the priest in my home, and I will exercise that authority by ministering to their needs.
5. begin recruiting other men to mentor. My ultimate goal is to fortify the home group structure, which is the heartbeat of our church.
6. refuse to murmur about anything. I desire to be a leader in this move of God because it gives significance to my life. I will only speak those things that are edifying and exhorting.
7. live with my priorities in this order:
  - (1) God and His will
  - (2) family
  - (3) job
8. I will change my thinking about my time and God's time—it is all His. When I gave God my life, my time was included in that commitment.
9. Give tithes and offerings cheerfully.

The men who mentor agree to the following:

As a mentor, I pledge to:

1. be available.
2. provide support.
3. pray for you daily.
4. give only Word-based counsel.
5. be on time to our meetings.
6. challenge you and keep you accountable to the purpose and vision of God for your life through the vehicle of Brooksville Assembly of God.
7. say the hard things when I don't want to.
8. require excellence, consistency, holiness, integrity, and godly character as fruit in your life.
9. evaluate your performance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Adapted from: *G-Men: The Final Strategy* by G.F. Watkins, pages 105–107. Used by permission.

If a man is on fire for God, he is called to ministry. Every man needs to be on fire for God and called to minister to his family and church. Even Bible schools, if we're not careful, can produce educated and trained men, but not sons.

### Accountability

People do what's inspected, not expected. We are instructed to "test all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and to "confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16). Men's ministry needs to have a system for loving, personal accountability without dictatorship or control. Healthy relationships need accountability. In a day of increasing temptations, we need to look out for one another. What are some of the key ingredients to a successful men's ministry?

### THE DYNAMICS OF MENTORING MEN (FURTHERING MEN)

Although men's ministries may vary from church to church, the following 10 areas should be a part of any dynamic men's ministry.

**1. Communication.** The vision for the church and the men's ministry originates with the pastor and is then carefully communicated to the men. The vision must include a man's relationship to God, his family, his authorities, other men in the church, and ministry. It is essential that vision and purpose be written down in simple terms. Without the pastor's leadership and direction, there can be no effective ministry.

**2. Coordination.** This is the structure and flow chart of the men's ministry.

**3. Connection.** Here is where men learn and are encouraged to relate to one another. The pastor fosters pastor-to-man relationships by personal contact. In any church, the pastor needs to develop a core group of men with whom he spends regular time. We call the men I meet with each week "G-Man groups" (godly man groups). We have homework assignments, in-depth discussion, and the forging of relationships. I serve as the facilitator and Edwin Cole's

curriculum is the instructor. Transforming the lives of men is our goal.

After 9 to 12 months, each man is encouraged to form his own small group of men he meets with once a week as well as continuing to meet with the pastor's group. In addition, each man must set aside time to meet with me two times a month where I speak into his life and discuss his goals, family, ministry, and dreams.

**4. Covenant.** Each man signs a covenant pledging to attend at least two services a week. Furthermore, he will not take offense at correction from the pastor (without dictatorship). (See sidebar, "A Mentoring Covenant" on page 24.)

**5. Cooperation.** Each man also covenants to have an attitude of servanthood and cooperation toward the pastor and the other men.

**6. Confession.** Within G-Man groups, we practice accountability between each man and his pastor and between the men themselves. We must speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), confess our faults to one another (James 5:16), and edify and not control (2 Corinthians 1:24).


**7. Confidentiality.** Every man covenants to not share what another man has revealed to anyone. Integrity is crucial and critical.

**8. Counsel.** Men are encouraged

that there is safety in a multitude of counselors (Proverbs 11:14).

**9. Compassion.** Each man is encouraged to filter his words and actions through the love of Christ. This applies to his relationship to his family, other men, and his job. He is encouraged to be involved in ministry to others and missions as part of compassion.

**10. Companionship.** Our goal is to establish godly men as the primary friendships in each man's life.

It is essential that lay leadership and men as a whole not put up social barriers. Men must be transparent with their pastor and other men. Men were created for relationships and for ministry. Let us build up one another for the glory of God. 

David A. Garcia is  
senior pastor, Brooksville  
Assembly of God,  
Brooksville, Florida.



\*Scripture references are from the New King James Version.

\*\*Information is from: [www.custodyequality.org/sys-tmpl/faqaboutus/](http://www.custodyequality.org/sys-tmpl/faqaboutus/)

\*\*\*For more information on The Majoring in Men curriculum, contact Christian Men's Network at 817-416-2898 or go online at [www.edcole.org](http://www.edcole.org).

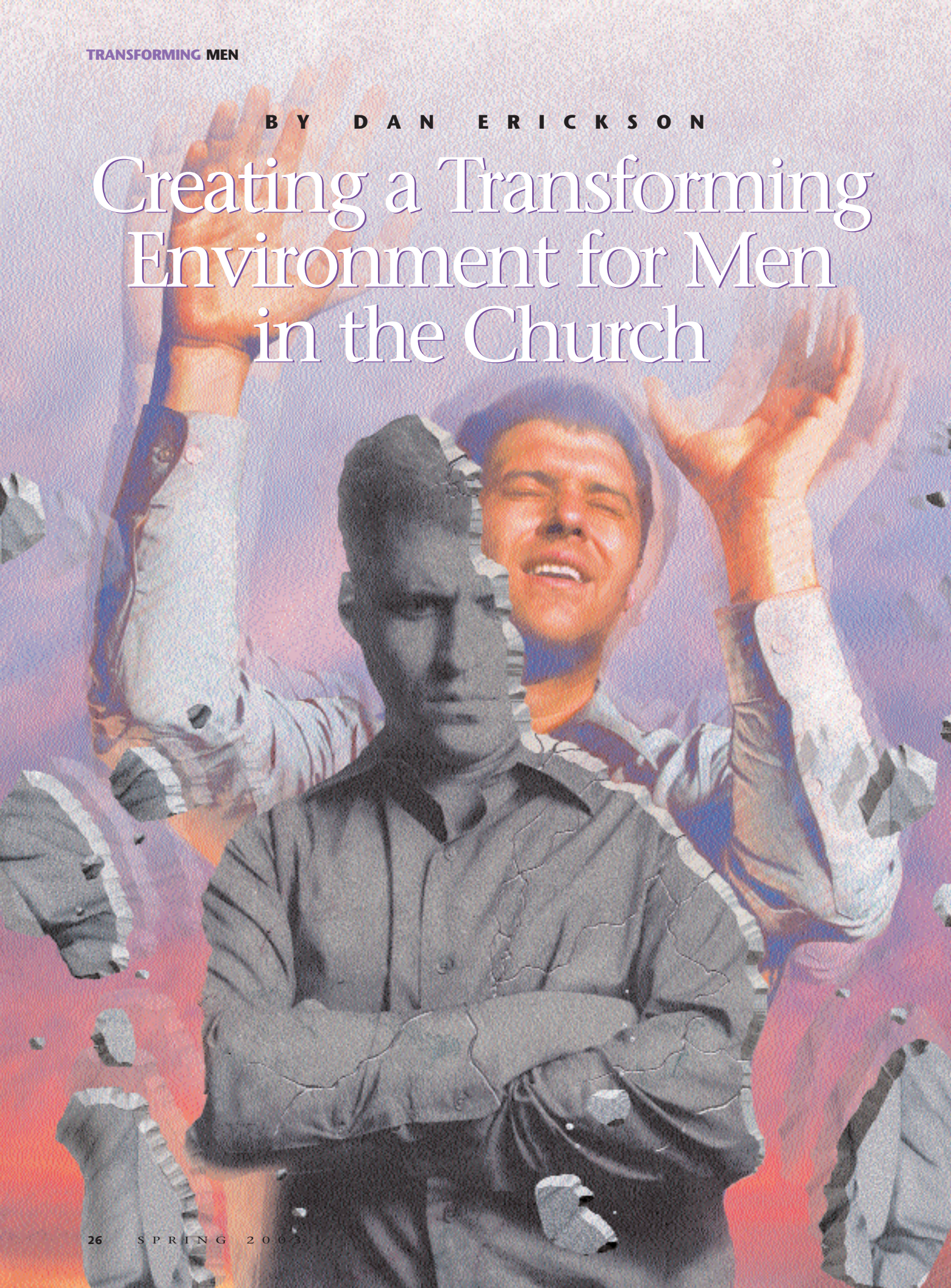


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**"So far the only thing we have in common is an aversion to singing, socializing, sharing, and studying."**

BY DAN ERICKSON

# Creating a Transforming Environment for Men in the Church



For years, men have been attending Promise Keepers events throughout North America. Hundreds of thousands of men attended the Promise Keepers sacred assembly in Washington D.C., on October 4, 1997. These events have been used by God to awaken men who were spiritually asleep.

As men awakened, they realized their spiritual lives were unhealthy and deficient. Years of church attendance (or not)—without exercising their faith—had led to spiritual atrophy. Today, men are searching for ways to get their spiritual lives in shape.

Men's events tend to be akin to making men weekend jocks. This kind of spiritual exercise—although it does create an appetite in the hearts of men for more—is short-lived. At the same time, local church ministries are struggling to provide the regimen of spiritual exercise necessary to help men get into spiritual shape. Men are discouraged with the lack of lasting change. There is too much of a gap between the catalytic events that awaken men and the local church that needs to provide the treadmill of everyday exercise. Men and leaders of men are becoming frustrated and are losing their desire soon after the stadium lights go out. (See sidebar “After the Amen” on page 28.)

### WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY

For years we witnessed a significant, life-changing movement. Some labeled it a men's movement and evaluated it from a social, political, and spiritual perspective. Others judged it as a reaction to the women's movement. But we who are committed to ministry to men believe it was something very different. Rather than a movement of men, it was a movement of God in and through the hearts of men.

Not long ago it was almost impossible to gather men for any kind of event that did not relate to sports or music. Yet their move toward large Christian events points to a deep spiritual hunger. Men are discovering a void that only Christ can fill. They want a life that really matters.

### NEED NEW SOLUTIONS

Alexander Mitslerisch wrote: “Society has torn the soul of the male, and into this tear the demons have fled—the demons of insecurity, selfishness, and despair. Consequently, men do not know who they are as men. Rather, they define themselves by what they do, who they know, or by what they own.”

It's becoming clear to men that activities, profession, hobbies, sex, addictions, and sports cannot fill this void, nor will traditional church programs. This hunger finds its ultimate fulfillment in a pure, intimate relationship with a Heavenly Father. Without this relationship, church attendance, commitments, promises, and good intentions lead to little personal satisfaction.

Whatever programs the church has used to reach lost men and to meet the needs of redeemed men are not sufficient. George Barna wrote in his article “The Battle for the Hearts of Men” in *New Man* magazine:

The explosive growth of Promise Keepers in the past several years is clear evidence of a turn in American churches: men are finding freedom and renewal in the name of Christ. But inside and outside the church, the battle for the hearts of male America is just beginning to take shape. The stage is set for a dramatic awakening of our nation's men, and yet, this potential does not guarantee that widespread revival will actually happen. (Barna 1997)

### MEN'S MINISTRY—OLD WINESKINS VS. NEW WINESKINS

As the charge has been given for men to become godly, the church has experienced little change within its structure to intentionally disciple men. To facilitate change, we must acknowledge that the typical men's ministry environment, structure, and focus (old wineskins) are unable to disciple men. Rather, we must build a disciple-making ministry for men (new wineskins) based on a developmental process to train and equip men to fulfill God's call. As men's leaders, we need to make a paradigm shift in our

thinking and see the tremendous necessity for the national men's movement to become a movement of God in the hearts of men that will build strong families through the local church.

### WHAT DO MEN WANT FROM A CHURCH?

According to George Barna, most men who are not involved in a church believe that the church does not offer any lasting value to their lives. The typical adult male in our society is more likely to spend his Sundays watching sports on TV than attending church. A majority of unchurched men believe that participating in church life cannot be justified because the return on their investment of time, attention, and energy is too slim.

George Barna identified seven key factors that unchurched men said would draw them to the church. These factors define the window of opportunity open to the church and set the parameters for effective men's ministry.<sup>1</sup>

1. Men are looking for meaning and purpose in life.
2. Men are seeking understanding of who they are and what they are thinking.
3. Men want solutions to their everyday problems and difficulties.
4. Men want to know God—who He is and what He means to them.
5. Men want effective men's ministry that touches them where they are.
6. Men want friendships that are built on trust and that will last.
7. Men want help with family issues, especially training for their children.

When ministering to men, we must focus primarily on establishing relationships, not on developing programs. A successful ministry to men will encompass the following key components:

**Identity.** God has placed into each man a longing to be significant. Countless men feel inadequate and insecure, no matter how much talent they possess. A man needs to find his identity in Christ. Every man needs a sense of purpose. Without a godly purpose, a man is left to measure his

significance by what he owns, achieves, and controls. The problem with finding his self-worth in his position, possessions, or power is that if he loses his job, house, or influence, he loses his self-respect.

**Friendship.** Most men know a lot of people by name or by acquaintance. Conversations with these individuals are light, brief, and nonthreatening. Even in the church, few men have close friends. For the most part, men are relationally bankrupt. Ask a group of men to identify their greatest needs, and most would respond with the need for close male friendships. The need for trusting relationships with other men

proves to be compelling, regardless of race or culture. Men are looking for spiritual brothers who will encourage, exhort, and love them. (See sidebar, “A Love That Passes the Love of a Woman” on page 30.)

**God’s call.** Men need to see themselves the way God sees them—full of potential and promise. When men see purpose in everything they do, they will live a purposeful life. As we minister to men, we must help them identify God’s purpose for their lives at home, work, in the church, and in the world.

**Discipline.** Most men have priorities they keep in their minds, but many

have difficulty incorporating those priorities into their daily schedule. Many say that God and family are their top two priorities. But in reality, God and family are often given less time and commitment than work and other pursuits. Consequently, many men feel guilty every time they are faced with the issue of their priorities.

**Discipleship.** Men need to know how to excel in the basics of the Christian life. The average man in church has been saved, but not disciplined. Christ saw the need to make disciples. Disciples are made, not born. A man must be taught the fundamentals of the faith to live a purposeful and

## AFTER THE AMEN . . . NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

You’ve done a great job promoting and getting your men to a major men’s event. God touched them and they started developing relationships with each other.

Now that the final amen has been said and you are headed back home, how do you capture the momentum God has built? How can you sustain it?

Following are 10 simple steps that have proven to be helpful in leveraging the event into a process to grow your men and your ministry to men.

**KEY THOUGHT:** A pastor’s direct involvement with his men and men’s ministry can be the greatest platform for change in the church.

### STEP 1: TAKE MEN’S MINISTRY UP A NOTCH.

Elevate the importance of ministry to men within you and your church. Whatever your level of ministry is now, develop a plan to take it to the next level. Ministry to men must be pastor supported and pastor supporting. The facts are indisputable—an effective ministry to men in the local church benefits the entire church and its families.

### STEP 2: ON THE FIRST SUNDAY BACK.

Recognize the men who attended the men’s event and allow them to share brief testimonies in the main service. Deliver a sermon that encourages men and their families. Have a time of prayer and consecration to the Lord. Allow them to pray with each other and for their families.

### STEP 3: PROVIDE A DAILY DEVOTIONAL FOR YOUR MEN.

Help your men establish a pattern of reading through the Bible. It is beneficial to provide a pattern for men to read through the Bible together. The *One Year Bible* is a great resource for keeping men on the same page and growing together.

### STEP 4: CAPITALIZE ON WHAT MEN NEED AND LIKE TO DO.

Brainstorm and survey men to find out their needs and interests. This will keep your attempts relevant. Find out what they like to do for fun and do those things. One church has discovered the value of road trips. The men bond and have fun. This is also a way to introduce unchurched friends to your men’s group.

### STEP 5: DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN AND AMONG MEN.

Keep in mind the “10-10-80 Principle.” Ten percent of the time men will change a major area in their life because of a sermon or lesson. Another 10 percent of men won’t change because of stubbornness. However, 80 percent will change their lives within the context of close friendships. Unfortunately, only 5 percent of men have a friend with whom they confide. With men, it’s the buddy

productive life in Christ. Each man must be given the necessary tools for Bible reading, prayer, Scripture memorization, witnessing, and mentoring others. And he must learn how to incorporate what he learns through the Word of God into his everyday life. God intends that men develop under the helpful influence of mature believers.

**Marriage and family skills.** Most men have never been taught how to be godly men, husbands, or fathers. Many boys grow up with a poor or nonexistent relationship with their fathers, resulting in deep wounds and resentment. Often these past experiences are carried over to their own families, perpetuating the cycle

of poor fathering. Many men do not feel qualified to be the spiritual leader in their home. Because of their own shortcomings, they resist the role of spiritual leader. They need to know it is OK to be real, to repent, and be humble in front of their families. Men need to know they can be models of loving fathers and husbands.

**Stewardship.** Men today need to learn how to give God the firstfruits of their lives, not only in their finances, but their time, talent, and energy. God deserves our best, but too often He gets the leftovers of our time and attention. Teaching stewardship skills will allow our men to sharpen their God-given gifts so they can be used for the Lord.

For additional information on this section, see sidebar “What Do Men Really Want?” on page 32.

## **BUILDING MEN’S MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Following are some things pastors must do:

**Have a clear vision, commitment, and mission to disciple men to spiritual maturity.** This involves men pursuing an intimate relationship with God and other men. Despite the obvious need for developing men as leaders in their homes and local churches, studies have shown that few men will change based on hearing information

system. Work to build relationships that pave the road to discipleship and lasting change.

Build personal significance within each man so he knows he is important to you. He will commit to you as much as you commit to him. Through your relationship, he will begin to realize his significance to God and that he can do great things for God. When you build relationships to men and among men, you remove barriers that prevent men from responding to God.

### **STEP 6: DEVELOP A METHOD TO TOUCH BASE WITH EVERY MAN EVERY WEEK.**

Some men need two to three personal contacts with other men as they work through issues. This helps men stay on track with their commitments. Most successful men’s ministries utilize the power of men’s small groups to accomplish the dynamics of trust and life change.

### **STEP 7: DEVELOP MEN OF PRAYER.**

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. As the leader of men, this is not done from behind a microphone; it is done by bending over an altar with men. Pastors who pray with and for their men will rapidly develop their men into a dynamic force in the Kingdom. Teach them to pray together and to pray alone. When they pray together, they will experience the dynamic of corporate prayer. When they are alone, they will begin to commune with the Lord as He deals with the secret areas of the heart.

### **STEP 8: DEVELOP A 3-YEAR PLAN FOR DISCIPLESHIP.**

It is critical to utilize discipleship materials that are specifically prepared within the male context. It is also important to offer these classes just for men. Men will respond more openly in such situations. This should not impair the other discipleship classes your church provides men and women.

Men’s discipleship classes should be offered two to three times per year at different times and in different formats, allowing men to attend when their schedule is free. The discipleship courses can be offered on a week night, Saturday morning, or Sunday morning on a weekly basis. Some churches have found a Friday through Saturday retreat advantageous for their men. HonorBound’s discipleship resources include: Preparing To Win, You’re a Soul Winner, Dad’s Coaching Clinic, and Personal Holiness in Times of Temptation.

### **STEP 9: ATTEND THE HONORBOUND BLUEPRINT SEMINAR.**

This seminar is designed to help pastors and their men’s leadership team move from an event-driven ministry to a process-driven ministry. It will help the team develop a long-range plan for effective ministry to men that impacts men and families in the church and the entire community.

### **STEP 10: MOBILIZE YOUR MEN.**

Release men to ministry. Develop goals and teams of men who minister to others and to one another. Allow men to utilize their creativity to develop the ministries of the church. If a church mobilizes its men properly, all of the ministries of the church will be blessed.

—Jeff Swaim, Springfield, Missouri

in a typical church service. The majority of men will make needed changes in their lives only after they have experienced intimate relationships with God and other Christian men.

#### **Select and equip a men's champion.**

The pastor has many responsibilities in the church. The men's ministry leader must know his pastor's heart and have a commitment to the men of the church. This champion helps provide the leadership necessary to build an effective ministry to men.

**Select, build, and equip a men's ministry leadership team.** At the heart of every effective ministry to men is a core of leaders who pray, walk with God, and are committed to make the

ministry happen. These men help develop and carry out, with the pastor, the strategies for equipping men so they become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. They must see themselves as servant leaders of men.

Commit to a prayer strategy. In our ministries, we talk a lot about prayer, but do little praying. You want your men growing in prayer personally, but you also want a concerted prayer strategy focused on praying for men and their needs. This gives you a strong base of prayer support both for individual men and for the broader men's ministry. (See sidebar "Leading Men into Vibrant Worship and Prayer" on page 35.)

**Think process, not program.** The

pastor must build a strategy in the church that disciples men. To fully develop godly men, discipleship must be a paramount conviction of church leadership. Without an intentional discipleship process, a church will never effectively grow and mobilize its men.

#### **Create a safe environment for men.**

We must create a climate that allows men to feel safe and at home in the church. As we seek to establish a male-friendly environment, to break through their isolation and reach them, we must understand six traits unique to men.

1. *Men equate personal distance with safety and security.* In general, closeness or intimacy is perceived as a threat. Men are accustomed to being guarded in

## **A LOVE THAT PASSES THE LOVE OF A WOMAN**

### ***Equipping men to cement together in God's love***

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (2 Samuel 1:26). David was distressed over the news of the deaths of Saul and his son, Jonathan, "the mighty" of Israel. In one sentence, David summed up one of the most meaningful male-to-male relationships found in the Bible. The graphic impact of the latter half of this verse hits most males between their homophobic eyes.

For hundreds of years, and especially today, many unbelievers try to stretch this verse to reflect a homosexual relationship between Jonathan and David. Unfortunately, few explore the relationship of these two men of God as outlined in Scripture.

David was lamenting the loss of a male who shared a love with him greater than that of a woman. Contrary to popular belief, most men do not entertain thoughts of homosexual behavior. Society tends to paint broad strokes with narrow numbers, trying to legitimize abhorrent behavior, deviant leanings, and abnormal circumstances.

So what is the norm for most American men? According to a compilation of sources such as the United States Census Bureau, 2001, the following can be said. The average American male . . .

- is 5'9" and 178 lbs.
- is married, 1.8 years older than his wife (female), and would marry her again.
- has not completed college.
- earns \$36,476 per year.
- would rather take a shower than a bath.
- spends 7.2 hours a week eating.
- does not know his cholesterol count, but it is 218.
- watches 26 hours and 44 minutes of TV per week.
- prefers white underwear to colored.
- cries about once per month as opposed to his female counterpart who cries four times per month.
- eats his corn on the cob in circles, not straight across.
- cannot whistle by inserting his fingers in his mouth.
- has sex 2.55 times per week.
- daydreams mostly about sex.
- will not stop to ask directions when he's in the car.

Let me add from observation that he will also not readily talk about having a meaningful relationship with other men for fear of being mislabeled. This is where the role of pastor/teacher becomes important in helping develop meaningful relationships among men in the church.

Pastor, if you have come this far in this article, then you must find out how a man like Jonathan can give love to David that was greater than that of a woman and how that love can transfer to the men under your leadership. The key to their undying love for

their relationships with other men, so they will seldom be transparent in a large church gathering. They are more likely to share openly in a small group or face-to-face encounter.

2. *Men communicate through questions.* Because men are motivated to solve problems and get to the bottom line, they communicate primarily by asking a series of questions. You can tell you have a man's interest when he starts asking questions. An effective strategy is to ask open-ended questions that cause men to think through an issue. The focus of leadership, then, should be on listening to their response.

3. *Most men are goal and challenge oriented.* The typical male views most

situations as a challenge to be met. Men enjoy meeting goals because it gives them a sense of accomplishment. The men in the church need to be challenged with clearly defined goals that are big enough to stretch their faith, but possible for them to achieve with God's help.

4. *Men tend to focus and compartmentalize.* Most men have tunnel vision. They tend to manage one thing at a time to reach their goals. When you define the goals for men, emphasize one goal at a time. Multiple points of focus can seem overwhelming.

5. *Men tend to choose rules over relationships.* To maintain logic, sequence, and order in their circumstances, men tend to emphasize rules and principles

over relationships. Although this seems to bring order, it also creates distance from other people. Because most men place a higher value on rules and principles than on relationships, ministry to men should be structured to include elements of both. Clearly define the topic, time, place, and format of your meetings. Structure creates the proper environment for men to relate to one another. To encourage meaningful relationships, create times for personal sharing, prayer for individual needs, and application of Scripture.

6. *Most men are hesitant to express emotion.* Most men do not easily express their emotions unless they feel it is safe to do so. Men hesitate to share the way they

one another can be best summed up in one word—*covenant*. "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:3).

The Hebrew word for "covenant" is *beriyth*, "the cutting of flesh or to pass between pieces of flesh." It is one of the most amazing things God has ever shown me. In a heterosexual, or even in a homosexual union, the "flesh" of two people is joined. But a covenant takes place, according to definition, when something comes between those two separate entities and joins them. This is similar to the difference between supergluing two pieces of wood side by side rather than simply placing two pieces of wood side by side.

Jonathan and David shared a powerful, spiritual male-to-male love cemented together by a bond that supersedes all bonds—the *agape* sacrificial love of God. Such love acts as spiritual cement between two parties, whether it is male-to-male, female-to-female, or male-to-female.

The proof of this bond and the way to acquire it is found in one verse of Scripture, the dynamics of which speak volumes. First Samuel 18:4 looks at what this covenant produced. "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." A modern day update of this list will equip your men to cement together in God's love.

1. A covenant of giving (robe)

Use your men's groups and their offerings to help less fortunate men in your church.

2. A covenant of provisions (garments)

Encourage men-to-men coverings—accountabilities and prayer partners for life.

3. A covenant of protection (sword)

Assign duties, special tasks, outreaches, and missions projects to men of similar talents and back them in the battle to advance the Kingdom.

4. A covenant of trust (bow)

Provide the necessary systems to launch their best weapons. Use their ministerial skills, "string their bows," and rely on them in their areas of expertise.

5. A covenant of binding oneness (girdle)

Show love, speak love, lift them up in love, and encourage them to do the same.

Can you evaluate the male relationships in your life this way? Is there anyone close to you who loves you enough to give you his robe and his garments, to lay down his sword for you (die for you), to trust you to take his bow and carry on against the enemy, and to bind himself to you?

There is someone who did that for us. His name is Jesus, and He is the cement of God between brothers. He shows us the way to real love between males.

May God continue to encourage you to split the flesh among yourselves as you love each other beyond the love of women.

—Mark E. Correll is senior pastor of Cathedral of the Cross, Birmingham, Alabama.

feel, for both internal and external reasons, including how they were raised, cultural limitations, and the masculine propensity for equating distance with safety. When men share openly, it is usually in a small group or one-to-one basis.

**Develop and maintain a focused**

**mission.** Both the church and the men's ministry reap benefits from a well-stated vision statement. A vision statement creates a mental picture, a desired ultimate objective stated in a challenging way. It should be in complete harmony with the vision of the entire church.

**Honestly assess the men and the ministry.** Assessment tells you your present location. It is about acquiring information that enables the pastor and leadership team to make good decisions. It includes asking men how they liked certain events with a carefully prepared

## WHAT DO MEN REALLY WANT?

John Gray, in his book, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, lists six needs men have: trust, acceptance, appreciation, admiration, approval, and encouragement. God offers men what they need.

### TRUST

Men want to be trusted. They gain energy as they are trusted; they lose it when they are not.

Younger men hurt when they are not trusted as capable, strong, and able. Older men want to be trusted for their competence, sensitivity, and caring.

Jesus spoke to the men around Him about trust: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much" (Luke 16:10\*). Men want to hear that.

### ACCEPTANCE

We hear a lot about what men do—engineers, accountants, attorneys. These labels give men value. But men also want to be accepted for who they are.

The apostle Paul urged, "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God" (Romans 12:1). We can show men that *being* an offering is better than *bringing* an offering. God accepts a man's offering of himself. Men can build a life on that. An accepted man is a secure man, one who can freely give himself to others.

### APPRECIATION

When men are put down by their bosses, other men, or by the women in their lives, they feel valueless. They respond in several ways. They may retreat or become aggressive.

Men crave appreciation for who they are, what they do, and what they think. A man wonders, *Does anybody like me?* As men understand who God is and what He did for them in Christ Jesus, they see how much God appreciates them.

### ADMIRATION

Admiration means, "I am somebody." Men need to know this. The macho behavior, the swearing, the attempt to outdrink other guys, and playing sports too hard for those who are aging point to insecurity and the need to be admired. Men feel they have to win admiration.

God meets men when they are admirable and when they are not. Before Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus told Peter, "When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). Men want to be empowered and admired like that.

### APPROVAL

Someone said, "Men are just little boys who got big." Little boys want the approval of their moms and dads.

God is watching us. He knows each of us by name. Men need to realize that. We can say to men, "Go ahead, look to your Father for approval." We never have to call out to God, "Look at me." We know He is looking at us. The approval that men want is there.

### ENCOURAGEMENT

We can encourage men to follow Jesus, be men of prayer, and know and obey the Word of God. A man can't be beaten into obedience; he can be encouraged to come alongside the One who wants to come alongside him.

Deep inside, men want what God offers. Men want to make a difference, to feel their lives matter. Men want to know what they can do and be in Christ.

\* Scripture passages are from the New International Version.

—Roger C. Palms, Anoka, Minnesota





survey. It can be both to evaluate and/or to take inventory.

**Organize the men's ministry.** Once a purpose is clearly defined and an assessment has been completed, the pastor and the leadership decide how they will structure the ministry to accomplish the mission.

**Establish a calendar of activities.** The calendar must serve the clear assessed needs of the men and the church. The areas that would best disciple the men of the church must drive the men's calendar. Don't have activities for activity sake; have a clear purpose for each activity.

**Get men into relationships.** Ministry happens best in the context of relationships. Programs are useful only to the extent they help build relationships. Authentic ministry happens only when

one man gets close to another and develops friendships. Encourage vital relationship through men's small groups.

**Establish a budget for men's ministry.** If ministry to men is strategic for the church, the church must establish a budget for this ministry. Churches put their time, ability, and funds toward those ministries they consider vital to the health of the church. Most churches would not argue that healthy men are vital to healthy homes; yet when they set their budget, they leave little for ministry to men.

**Have a heart and commitment to become ministers of reconciliation.** Help men see the full extent of the body of Christ and commit to break down walls that divide us culturally and denominationally.

God desires to mold leadership that

will model biblical manhood. Transformed male leadership is foundational to God's cause and is the beginning of ministry to men in the church. Leadership inevitably multiplies what is true in their own lives. Effective ministry to men in the local church starts with pastors who submit themselves to becoming Christlike. They can't take men where they have never been and have no desire to go. **e**

Dan Erickson, D.Min., is executive vice president of National Coalition of Men's Ministry, Lee's Summit, Missouri.



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1. Phil Downer, ed., *Effective Men's Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 17.

## LEADING MEN INTO VIBRANT WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Major men's events of the past decade like HonorBound, Promise Keepers, and Man in the Mirror have helped dispel the myth that men today don't really get into worship. We've all seen that men *can* be encouraged to worship and pray fervently. But as worship leaders, we need to understand the keys that unlock the intensity in men and release their passion for worship. As I have ministered to men over the past 20 years, I've discovered the following keys can help unleash the kind of vibrant worship and prayer that's necessary for 21st-century church renewal.

### ATMOSPHERE

Creating an environment of openness and freedom among men is essential for passionate expression. To feel released in worship, an atmosphere of open and honest relationship with God and each other must be fostered. Start with the greatest commandments—teaching men to love God and love people. This releases a corporate joy that is expressed through both prayer and worship.

### ACTIONS

Pastors and leaders may not realize how much they're being watched. I've observed for many years (and at over 60 Promise Keepers conferences) the same dynamic—men watch their pastor. How is *he* worshipping? Is he modeling openness and expressiveness? With few exceptions, the men are no more engaged in the worship than their pastor. He sets the tone. He gives permission. In a local church, a disengaged pastor who is looking at sermon notes or handling other business can negatively impact the congregation's encounter with God. Many worship leaders have told me of the subtle sabotage they sense when the pastor does not engage in the worship experience that is ultimately leading people toward the message . . . the message that *he's* about to preach.



### AUTHENTIC

Early on in developing the philosophy of worship at Promise Keepers, we chose passion over perfection. This meant telling some of the finest singers and instrumentalists in the nation to sing and play passionately, not perfectly. Some pastors and worship leaders use their talent and knowledge to keep themselves out front of their men. My experience is that men will engage in prayer and worship if we don't expect them to pray like seminary graduates or perform like Juilliard Ph.D.s. As a senior pastor, my heart's desire is for men to experience intimacy with God—to express through their lifestyle a love that brings glory to Him each day.

I pray these few keys will help us unlock the joy and passion for worship that lies in the hearts of our men.

—Rick Kingham is senior pastor at Overlake Christian Church in Redmond, Washington, and former vice president of Promise Keepers.





# FINDING TODAY'S Men of Issachar

B Y D A N S C H A F F E R

The tribe of Issachar described in 1 Chronicles 12:32, consisted of “men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.”\* Exploring our own times can be discouraging, unless we discover what to do.

The church is not winning the current generation of nonbelievers to the faith, nor is it keeping those who grow up in church. According to Thom Rainer in *The Bridger Generation*, if current trends continue, the church will win less than four percent of those born since 1984, and we will retain only about six percent of those young people now growing up in the church. If this trend continues, the church will have very little impact on the culture as it moves further into the new millennium.

George Barna writes, “The church is paralyzed by the absence of godly leadership.”<sup>1</sup> Leadership cannot address the challenges facing the church without a clear understanding of where the church needs to go and who can take it there.

For most churches, the issue of leadership is not seen as significant. “Only two percent of Protestant pastors name personal or lay leadership development, vision clarification and vision communication, or strategic development of ministry as top ministry priorities.”<sup>2</sup>

Effective leaders with a clear vision are key to this crisis. But where does church leadership begin? First, leadership must answer the question, “Is the building of men into godly, mature leaders foundational to the church?”

One way to evaluate the church’s position on this important question is

to examine the church budget. If only one or two percent of the church’s budget is allocated for ministry to men, then building men into mature leaders is not a priority for that church.

When Jesus set out to build His church, He regularly set aside time away from the crowds to meet with His disciples. These were significant times of teaching and learning where Jesus reproduced His heart and vision in His disciples. By following His model, we find the groundwork for producing church leaders.

## BUILDING LEADERS

### What is biblical leadership?

If building male leadership is foundational to the church, a definition of biblical leadership is in order. Biblical leadership is best described as influencing others effectively for the kingdom of God. Yet, in many churches this is not the type of leadership seen. Rather than modeling servant leadership, many churches exhibit a controlling, top-down form of leadership. The contrast of these two leadership styles is illustrated below:

POPULAR LEADERSHIP		SERVANT LEADERSHIP	
Controlling through:		Serving through:	
Position	versus	Calling	
Privilege	versus	Responsibility	
Power	versus	Influence	

**The most important leadership criterion.** In instructing His disciples, Christ gave what may be the most important characteristic of a leader: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first

must be your slave” (Matthew 20:26,27). Jesus clearly identified being a servant as the first criterion of one who leads. When I look back on my history in the church, I find few, if any, incidents where servanthood was the primary criterion used to choosing leaders. We are more inclined to choose men who have influence in the church and community, men who have money and are leading companies in the business world, rather than choose men who have distinguished themselves by serving. Servanthood is the main qualifier Christ gave for leadership. Could it be that those in church leadership need to return to Christ’s basic leadership standard to address the crisis in the church today?

### Leaders are reproduced, not produced.

In manufacturing, if you find the right process and add the right raw materials, the right product should come out. Based on this knowledge, those in leadership hope that if they share the right message in a classroom or sanctuary or use the right discipling tool, men’s lives will be changed and godly leaders will be the result. But was this Jesus’ model?

His model was one of reproduction, where He lived what He wanted to be reproduced in His disciples. In every way He became the living Word. While His disciples walked with Him over a 3-year period, His words, actions, and character were formed in them. In a very real sense, after His resurrection, the disciples became Christ to the church.

What the church needs is a change in

the way it views leadership—apart from selfish ambition or pride. Biblical leadership must be viewed through the lens of Christlike servanthood. But to do that, men must step forward with their eyes fixed on Christ and with a desire to serve others. Men must come together in relationship with one another, as Christ did with His disciples, and model what it means to pursue God and live for Him.

It has been said that we teach what we know, but we reproduce what we are. As leaders, we must be willing to allow God to reproduce His life in us so we can be used to reproduce His heart in others. Only when the Holy Spirit has reproduced a passion for God in us can we be the messengers of God's love to others.

### How does a servant leader lead?

If leaders accept the view that they must be servants with God's character and model of leadership reproduced in them, what principles should a servant leader demonstrate?

Following are seven principles Christ illustrated in Luke 10 as He released the 72 disciples to announce the Kingdom and heal the sick:

1. *Focus on those who are positioned below you.* (Honor those above you; focus on those below.)
2. *Communicate the vision.* (Help your team understand and own the vision.)
3. *Set clear parameters for them to function within.* (Help them avoid obvious

pitfalls and understand their responsibilities and authority. Responsibility is shared; authority is always given in greater measure than would be needed to accomplish the responsibility.)

4. *Release them to accomplish the mission.*

5. *Watch the process and remove any roadblocks that impede their progress.* (Don't control; allow freedom for them to grow.)

6. *Celebrate their victories.* (Don't take credit, even if it was your idea.)

7. *Help them focus on who they are, not on what they do.* (What they do is not nearly as important as who they are. What we do should flow out of who we are as children of God.)

Servant leadership, combined with the principles just described, provides the tools to create the environment necessary to move the church forward and out of its present crisis.

### What do leaders produce when they lead like Christ?

In 1 Kings 12, Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was crowned king over the nation of Israel. The result of servant leadership is revealed in the context of this story. The people came to Rehoboam and asked that the burden of domestic service and taxation Solomon had put on them be lightened. He wisely went to his father's advisors, men who had nothing to gain, and asked them what he should do. They replied that if he

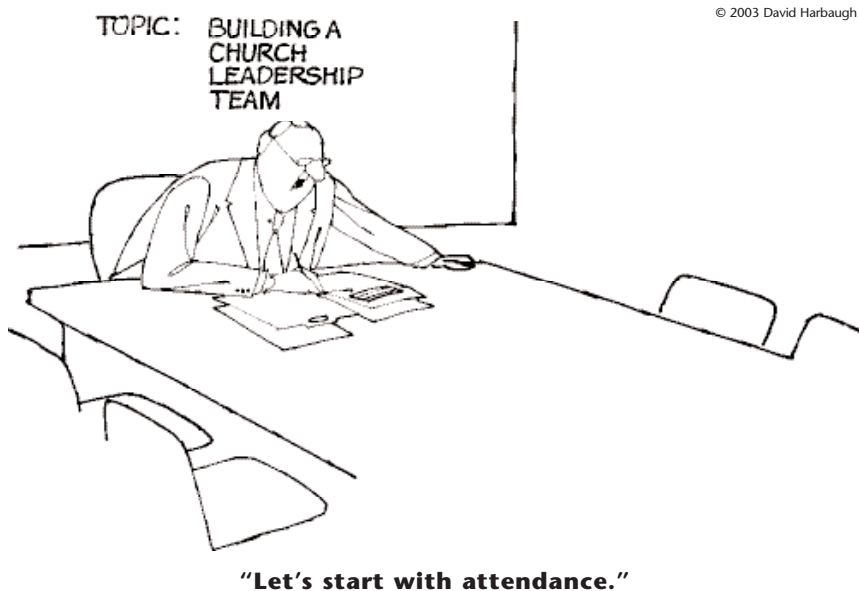
would give the people a positive answer and lighten their load, it would bring trust and unity to the nation. Rehoboam rejected their advice and went to the young men with whom he had grown up. These men had a great deal to benefit if the domestic service and taxation continued. They convinced Rehoboam to tell the people that the load he would place on them would be much heavier than that of his father. This heavy-handed, authoritarian leadership produced an immediate reaction—self-interest, division, and rebellion in the people. In many cases, the leadership model in the church produces the same results.

Christ's prayer in John 17:21 states that unity in the body of Christ enables the world to clearly see Jesus at work in us. Could it be that our leadership style is causing the very disunity that is keeping our culture from seeing Christ? No issue is more important to the church at large than building leaders who can lead us back to servant leadership and unity. The church's impact on society will be largely determined by how we address this issue.

### How do we identify and train men who can change this generation and generations to come?

Many churches lack the means to lead men from immaturity to maturity in Christ. If a man comes to your church needing to be discipled, will he be disappointed? How can we develop a pathway to spiritual maturity, and what should it look like?

See the sidebar in this article "The Church Leadership Growth Path for Men." The progressive timeline at the bottom of the diagram moves from left to right. The timeline illustrates the elements of the pathway starting with the premise that building men into godly leaders is foundational to the church. Next, there must be a core of men living out their pursuit of God who can lead others in that pursuit. Third, leaders must know the interests and needs of the men in their church. Fourth, men must be challenged to accept the call to leadership so their lives can impact other men (this is where most men's



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## CREATING AN EFFECTIVE MEN'S LEADERSHIP TEAM

*Warning: Pastors, developing a ministry for the men of your church will cause lives to be changed, marriages to be healed, leaders to be developed, and the ends of the earth to feel the repercussions.*

If you are not interested in these changes, stop reading. If you are interested in seeing these things happen in your church, read on.

Pastor, unless you support men's ministry, it will not succeed. Next to faithfully preaching the Word and casting vision, the most important thing a pastor can do is develop a ministry to the men of his church. As the men go, so goes the family. As the men go, so goes the church. This does not mean you need to run men's ministry, but you need to support it and encourage it.

I have traveled the world working with churches and denominations to develop a local church ministry to men. I have come to realize there are four principles to follow in having a good men's ministry.

### 1. CHOOSE A LEADERSHIP TEAM.

Many men's ministries fail because one man is trying to do it all. The first thing that needs to be done is develop a team of three to five men to be responsible for the ministry. These men need to take 9 to 12 months to pray, study, get to know one another, and prepare for ministering together.

### 2. DEVELOP A CLEAR PURPOSE.

Many men's ministries are nothing more than random activities with no common purpose. A ministry built on activities is constantly searching for bigger and better activities. Men's ministry built with a clear and compelling purpose will inspire men and provide direction. The ministry team needs to study the Scriptures, pray, and develop a purpose statement based on God's purposes for the world.

### 3. DEVELOP A BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY.

Ministries often become imbalanced. They are either strong in evangelism, establishing believers, equipping workers, or empowering leaders. As your leadership team develops a 5-year plan for men's ministries, have them think through how men's ministries can accomplish all four aspects. Our best example is Jesus. He had the first men's ministry. Have your leadership team study the life of Jesus, take principles from His life, and incorporate them into the way you minister to men.

### 4. BUILD FROM A SMALL, STEADY BEGINNING.

Jesus was not concerned with numbers. Why should we? If you want to build men's ministry correctly, think in terms of 5 years. Develop leaders and add one new part a year.

—Steve Sonderman, Brookfield, Wisconsin


ministries start and the point where the next generation of leaders must be identified). Fifth, men need to discover their own gifts and how to best use them in service to others. Last, leaders need to see where God is working and join Him.

Above the church pathway is the leadership loop, illustrating the cycle that must accompany the pathway. A leadership core is essential; but if leaders do not reproduce themselves in future generations of leaders, they will wear out, growth will be limited, and ministry

will suffer. It is critically important for each generation of leaders to go through the same process of growth so they share the same vision and move in the same direction the church must have leaders who understand the importance of propagating leadership.

### WILL YOU BEGIN TO IDENTIFY AND EQUIP MEN OF ISSACHAR?

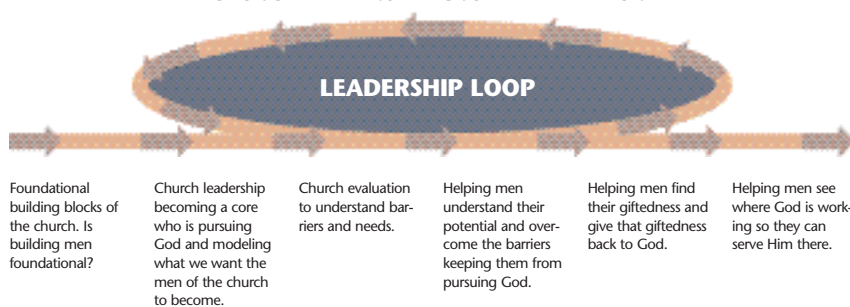
The future of the church may well depend on how effectively you identify and equip leaders in your church. Will you accept this challenge?

For more information and help on building men, visit the HonorBound Web site at [www.honorbound.ag.org/](http://www.honorbound.ag.org/) or call 417-862-2781, ext. 4170. For further information contact Building Brothers at [www.buildingbrothers.org](http://www.buildingbrothers.org), or call 303-972-2775. 

Dan Schaffer, Littleton, Colorado, is the founder of Building Brothers, an organization serving the church by helping to call and equip its men in their pursuit of God.



### THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP GROWTH PATH FOR MEN



\*Scripture references are from the New International Version.

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B Y K I R K H U N T

# TRANSFORMING YOUR CHURCH INTO A Modern-day ADULLAM

As you finish your prayer, you realize that the man weeping at the altar has come to Christ. The leather, tattoos, and body piercing no longer agree with the transformation you know has changed him. As you praise God for his salvation, you suddenly realize: *I need to help make a strong saint of this man.*

Churching, or rechurcing men, is a key task in developing a dynamic and growing body of believers. The differences in background, appearance, and even style of these new brothers can seem intimidating. However, God's power and your heart are more than equal to the task. With God you can become a modern-day captain of 400 in a 21st-century Adullam.



Will Self<sup>00</sup>

## ADULLAM ASSEMBLY

“David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father’s house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men” (1 Samuel 22:1,2).

David, hunted and hated by his father-in-law, hid in a wilderness cave. Penniless and burdened with his unjustly persecuted family, David needed help. God faithfully guided men to His loyal servant.

Deadbeats, troublemakers, and whiners arrived at Adullam. With Saul and all of Israel’s armies looking for David, only the losers arrived at his side. However the situation may have looked to David, this was God’s plan.

Whatever they were before, these men changed as they stayed with David. A ragtag group of malcontents became an elite force of warriors. Losers and castoffs were transformed into courageous champions.

The church is made up of men and their families. People progress from converts to new disciples, to growing disciples, and then disciple makers. This is the intended pattern for God’s church.

Your church or ministry can become a modern-day Adullam—a place where men can become transformed in God’s Spirit and power. All it takes is a heart for working with the men whom God calls from darkness. If this seems too much, ask for more of His grace.

Nothing can remain the same in the presence of God’s grace. Not the situation, not the men, not even the leader.

## TRANSFORMATION ASSEMBLY

Military and law enforcement leaders probably understand how Christian leaders feel. They take men who know little or nothing of war or law, then transform them. In a few weeks, they make seasoned professionals from inexperienced boys. Then they send them

into the streets and battlefields to accomplish a difficult mission against incredible opposition.

In a different sense, though, military and law enforcement leaders have no idea how Christian leaders feel. Military and law academies choose their trainees; the church accepts any who will come to the Cross. In too few weeks, or in too many years, the church makes powerful saints from lowly sinners.

Christian men, before their conversion, were often the worst offenders or the least wanted in society. The Holy Spirit transforms the hearts and natures of those men the world would throw away. Through God’s grace, we rescue “the least of these” (Matthew 25:45) and help transform them into desirable champions.

Churching the unchurched man is an extraordinary venture. Conversion, discipleship, mentoring, and mission progress through the lives of all godly men. Despite the distractions and demands of the world and church life, this process is the source of growth and strength for God’s church.

## CONVERTING MEN

“And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23). It is best to start at the beginning. Go into the highways and byways. Compel them with grace, love, and hope.

There are many unchurched men in today’s society who are in prisons, on street corners, or lurking in back rooms. Our job, as Christian leaders, is to help pull them in.

God created men to be free. They need to be led out of captivity. Their families, immediate or distant, will be released from bondage as God reclaims these men. We must go to these men, since they will not, or cannot, come to us.

Time, talent, and treasure spent on new converts are never wasted. No place where conversion takes place is too dirty or difficult for God’s grace to

appear. We can fill His house with those whom God is saving. Are you willing to be a channel for the flow of His power?

Men gathered at David’s side in spite of his situation. Men who were desperate for hope and redemption traveled into the wilderness and joined an outlaw. In a similar way, our churches and ministries can become modern-day Adullams. We can create places where men can come and be accepted as they are. Godly men can embrace rank sinners and help them kneel at the altar in repentance. Revival and restoration can become commonplace if we put our hearts and backs into reaching the lost.

## DISCIPLING MEN

With the joyous crisis of salvation and repentance complete, what happens next? The hard work of teaching, training, and tempering a new saint begins. Some mature Christian man must embrace that newborn, feed him with gospel milk, and help him progress to spiritual meat.

Here’s where the going gets tough. Teaching men takes time and talent. Otherwise intelligent and clever converts won’t immediately understand or agree with every aspect of their new lives in Christ. Someone needs to teach the fine art of godly living.

It is necessary that we teach these men to be obedient. Pleasure seekers must be transformed into modest, temperate men. Addicts must learn to reject every dependence except Jesus Christ.

Men, no matter how much they growl, respond to grace. At sometime in their lives all men need a kind, guiding hand. Newborn saints need their teachers to have respectful patience, if nothing else.

We may never know what kind of boot camp David ran for his recruits. I’m sure some lost heart when they learned what would be expected of them. Still, 400 men stayed the course and were transformed.

A new believer needs more care and teaching than he will at any other time of his Christian life. As leaders in God’s

## LAUNCHING AND REVITALIZING YOUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY TO MEN

Some churches have launched a vigorous ministry to men while others have found it hard to get their ministry off the ground. Here are some ABC's to help establish an effective men's ministry.

### ACQUIRE YOUR TEAM

The most important part of men's ministry is the leadership team. The men's ministry leadership team establishes enthusiasm and direction. Individuals on the team must believe in the need for this ministry.

**Team leader.** The pastor should select the coordinator and/or leader. Together they can select the other members.

**Team training.** The team must be trained. The HonorBound BluePrint seminar\* provides this training and helps leaders develop men's ministry suited for their church.

**Team assessment.** The team assesses the needs of the men in the church and the community through surveys, interviews, demographic studies, and brainstorming.

**Team prayer.** Without prayer, men's ministry will be another civic organization. Leaders must depend on the Holy Spirit to direct every part of this ministry.

**Team planning.** The BluePrint seminar provides worksheets to help the team address the needs they have identified. When the worksheets are followed, the team will establish a target with goals based on biblical principles.

**Team assignments.** Each member of the team will serve as a team leader in some aspect.

**Team evaluation.** Evaluate the ministry's effectiveness in reaching its goals. From time to time, adjust goals to be relevant and effective.

### BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN AND AMONG MEN

Most men change within the context of friendships. However, most Christian men don't have close friends. For effective growth and change to occur, leaders must cultivate relationships with men and among men.

**Pastor's platform.** The greatest platform for change in a community is the one-on-one encounters pastors have with their men. Men who feel significant to their pastor will feel they can do significant things for God.

**Pastor's investment.** A pastor's investment of time will pay huge dividends in the leadership core and their families.

**Pastor's leadership.** The pastor does not have to be involved in all planning, but he should be the leader. Each opportunity to speak to his men is an opportunity to lead them to excellence.

**Pastor's model.** The pastor can model relationships. His openness and transparency will be a model. Men will sense that the ministry to men is a safe place. The pastor will be able to say to his men, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

### CAPTURE AND SUSTAIN MOMENTUM

Men's ministry must be process driven rather than event driven. Here are some ways to balance events with the process of spiritual growth in your men.

**Leverage your assets.** Use major events and small events to capture the interests of men. This will help you gain momentum. Some churches have entry-point events to attract men: motorcycle clubs, fishing, hunting, golf, field trips, men's conferences, and seminars. Use their interests to reach them.

**Develop a discipleship process.** Resources are available that will help you establish a 3-year discipleship curriculum plan. Discipleship is not just a class. Everything you are doing must become discipleship. Stress relationships. The material will take root as it's caught.

**Emphasize goals.** Men are goal oriented. Stress the objectives for men to buy into the cause. When goals are established, men will rally around the team.

**Excel in basics.** Help your men establish discipline in Bible reading and prayer. If they develop disciplines in the basics, they will be better husbands and fathers.

**Find ways for men to serve.** Prepare a ministry in such a way that a man can get his arms around it and serve. He will soon take ownership and call it "my ministry." The commitment to teams can vary from a year to a few weeks to a few hours. Everyone needs to serve through the church to feel a part.

**Strive for excellence in everything you plan.** Help your team members establish goals and checklists. The variety and organization of events will maintain the men's interest.

—Jeff Swaim, Springfield, Missouri.

*\*For more information on the HonorBound BluePrint seminar, contact the HonorBound Men's Ministries office at 417-862-2781, ext.4170.*



church, it is our job to help men learn Scripture and reach maturity in Christ Jesus. By teaching and training early and well, we can help men live long and fruitful lives as Christians.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6).

Knowledge is power. A man full of Scripture and the Holy Spirit is a threat to the enemy and a champion for the Kingdom. Are the powerful emerging around you?

### MENTORING MEN

Mentoring involves an intimate teaching and leading relationship. After their initial discipleship, men still need someone to guide them into the deep waters of God. A mentor takes on that role, selflessly helping a man become what God intends for him to become.

Each man who comes to God has a unique personality and set of gifts. No matter how many times you refine copper, it will not become steel. It is a mentor's job to help this person and his God-given gifts and help him become the man God intends him to be.

"And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength" (Isaiah 49:5).

Investing in the lives of men may not have immediate return. But as Christian leaders invest in God's men, God will invest in His faithful leaders. There may be a gap between sowing and reaping. Stay the course.

God uses us to build His kingdom. Although we may not understand until later, His grace weaves exquisite patterns. God pours His glory into obedient lives. Dare to be part of His plans.

### MISSION

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19,20).

Sooner or later, a new convert becomes a mature saint. The comforts of being fed and nurtured need to give way to bringing up a new cohort of saints. At that moment, it becomes necessary to help them reach out in ministry to others.

"Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" (1 Samuel 23:2,3).

David's men knew the skill and might of the Philistines. Fighting defensive battles on home territory is one thing; attacking a superior foe on his turf is another. God's direction to David and his men was clear in its purpose, but not certain in its outcome.

The deep water of God's purpose can be scary, even for veterans. It should come as no surprise that your men might have their faith stretched in fulfilling their mission. It's important that you help them execute the Great Commission.

"Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah" (1 Samuel 23:4,5).

David's 400 men, once desperate and broken, are transformed. They fought against the hardened armies of the Philistines and were victorious. Their potential, hidden when they first arrived at Adullam, is now plainly visible to everyone.

Courageous men are usually not fearless men. Courage can be defined as "personal strength greater than personal fear." The men of your church are capable of great Kingdom work. Still, they may need a little encouragement and exhortation to get going. It may even be necessary for their captain to share his own courage and wisdom with the men.

David never hesitated to consult with God. He always called out to Jehovah-Shammah, the God who is there, when his own reserves and resources seemed too little. God's power and grace flow through willing vessels, changing everything.

### LOCAL ASSEMBLY

In the business world, an organization seeks to have 50 percent of its revenues come from young (less than 2 years old) products. The new products fuel growth in market share, customer base, and additional innovation. A leader and organization with these sorts of results are usually envied by competitors and favored by the owners and investors.

Our churches could profit from this approach. We can and should fill our pews with newly converted men. A church that grows through new converts attracts the attention of the community, expands its ability to further evangelize, and fulfills its God-given mission and commission. God and men will always favor a Christian leader who makes godly men of unbelievers.

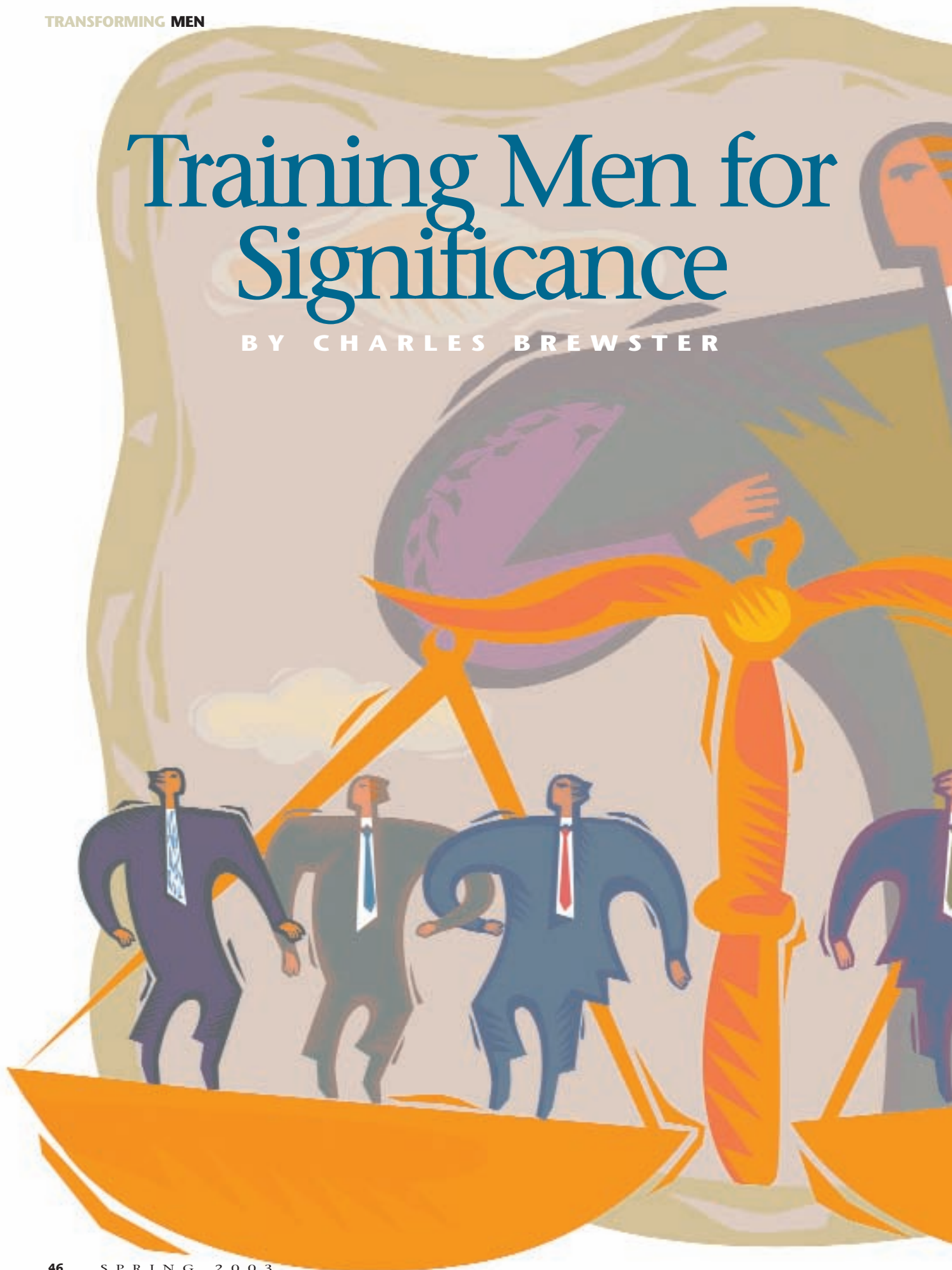
It takes effort to create a new Adullam where you are. Losers and castaways will gather at the door, seeking the salt and light of the gospel to heal their hurts. As Christian leaders, it is our mission and mandate to make saints and champions through the power of the Holy Spirit. **e**

*Kirk Hunt serves as director of men's ministries at Copper Mountain Assembly of God near Tucson, Arizona. In addition to being a contracts manager at an aerospace manufacturer, Hunt is the author of the unpublished book, Soldiers of the Kingdom.*



# Training Men for Significance

BY CHARLES BREWSTER





**D**o you have men who are standing firm in their faith and living it out in their families, your community, and your church?

The Bible says in Psalm 11:3: “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”\* This verse addresses the problem in society and the church—the wearing away of a godly foundation in society and its effect on the men in the church. The erosion of the moral foundation of America has impacted the family and consequently the church and its ministries.

The challenge pastors face today is transforming men in the face of a crumbling society where the majority of men do not believe in absolute moral truth. The only way to rebuild a moral foundation is to capture men’s hearts and lead them in a passionate pursuit of God. Rebuilding male leadership in the church takes strong and courageous men who realize who they are in Christ, and who will stand firm while reproducing themselves in other men. Traditional men’s ministry will not accomplish this goal. The answer for changing men’s ministry into a vibrant ministry is training and building relationships.

The senior pastor must be the head trainer, and he must build relationships with his men. Men who are trained and who have godly relationships with other men will reach men for Christ. But training and relationships have been difficult for men to accomplish because men’s ministry has typically been focused on what we *do* as men, not who we *are*.

The Bible tells us we are to stand firm (Ephesians 6:11,13). We are to be a living sacrifice, transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1,2), trained to win (1 Corinthians 9:24–27), and deployed in power (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8).

This means that pastors need to reproduce men who are:

1. passionate—willing to sacrifice their lives for others.
2. prepared—trained to overcome natural tendencies of the world.
3. positioned—deployed into their unique world of influence.

## DEVELOPING PASSIONATE MEN

Throughout my 23 years with the U.S. Secret Service, God gave me a unique perspective in transforming men. The Secret Service is responsible for the total security of the protectee. When danger appears, Secret Service agents cover and evacuate the person to whom they are assigned. The methodology used to accomplish this mission is gained through constant training. In Secret Service training, agents consider every possible scenario that might happen. They also conduct repetitive training until they overcome the natural human tendency of self-survival.

Cover and evacuate means exactly that—cover the protectee with their own bodies and evacuate to safety. Agents do this because they have defeated their personal selfish desires through a constant pursuit of excellence. A conditioned response goes into

action without thinking about the consequences, only the mission. That is passion.

It takes passionate men to devote all of their attention to their mission. You can be passionate about many things, but for how many of your passions will you die? Perhaps you would die for family, country, or cause, so why not die to your selfish desires and come alive with a godly purpose? Men, especially younger men, need a purpose to be passionate.

Passion is developed at all Secret Service training sessions. All Secret Service agents go through training, even supervisors. In fact, supervisors lead the sessions. They know they share common tactical goals with their trainees and need to be transparent with them to operate in unity.

Training is done as a team, so results are as a team. Discipline and training

can be boring, but often lifesaving. Routine training can develop a complacency that results in inattentive behavior, but repetitive training develops conditioning. Purpose and passion must characterize Secret Service training so agents are positioned for sacrifice.

Sitting on a pew and listening to a Sunday message is not training; it takes more than a Sunday sermon to develop a passionate man of God. As I travel and speak to pastors about the condition of men, they understand that developing passionate men starts with them. Pastors must lead their men in a closer walk with God. Passion can't be produced; it has to be reproduced. Passion is caught, not taught.

When men come alive in relationship with Jesus Christ and their pastor, they are dynamically transformed. Immediately there is a desire to see God move in ways they have only heard about, but not seen. Transformed men are no longer satisfied with just *doing* church. They want to *be* the church. They become passionate men—warriors for God. (See sidebar “How Light for the Lost Develops Men of Passion.”)

They begin to rebuild the foundations of the world by transforming men who in turn transform other men who transform families, churches, and communities.

## HOW LIGHT FOR THE LOST DEVELOPS MEN OF PASSION

Since 1953, when Sam Cochran was changed by a vision concerning the destiny of the lost, that vision has inspired Assemblies of God men to provide funds for printing evangelism literature and Bibles, now totaling more than \$8 million per year.

Here's how LFTL will transform your ministry to men:

### CONSCIOUSNESS

LFTL helps men see the bigger picture, to see the lost of this world who need the Lord.

### HEART

Men respond when they realize they can play a part in reaching the lost with the message of Jesus Christ. The vision God gave Sam Cochran has been embraced by thousands of men.

### ATTITUDE

When men are presented with the challenge, they will give themselves to reaching that goal. In the process, attitudes change as men become motivated.

### NETWORK

The network begins in the local church, inspires others, and impacts the world. Some men make faith promises for printing literature. Others become councilmen. Many do both.

### GROUP

LFTL allows men to see what can be accomplished when the group together embraces the vision.

### ETERNITY

LFTL helps men grasp the reality that only one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. Christian men want to make an eternal difference. LFTL provides that opportunity.

—Steve Brown is Northern California-Nevada District Men's Ministries director.

## DEVELOPING PREPARED MEN

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 9:25–27: “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

Slacking off is not what God is calling men to do. He is calling men to train in such a way as to win the prize. Some men feel they are trained because they attend Sunday School and are faithful to church. Sunday School is important and necessary, but developing prepared men involves much more. It involves a daily





regimen of repetitive training. When we don't submit to daily conditioning, we look like the prizefighter who is beating the air. His form and technique may look good, but it is ineffective in engaging and defeating the enemy. That is no way to finish the race.

Pastor, it takes a strong, well-trained man—a man full of the power of the Holy Spirit—to stand in the gap for his family, church, and community. Men cannot stand in the gap under their own power. If you are training men, then you must submit to rigid training as well. As you model preparation and discipline in the ministry and are passionate in your pursuit of God, the men you lead will become passionate as well.

As men partner with their pastor, they build walls of protection against the enemy through prayer and watchfulness. Men must guard against the devil's desire to thwart the process of spiritual transformation in their lives. Jesus said in Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." This kind of vigilance is exhibited in the Secret Service.

The Secret Service keeps a constant vigil around the President. Agents are

watching for the enemy and are prepared to react. The obvious enemy is easily detected and usually handled at the outer perimeters. Elite, well-trained agents, the President's inner guard, keep searching for the enemy within—an enemy who looks like everyone else but whose purpose is evil.

Secret Service agent Tim McCarthy took a bullet intended for President Ronald Reagan on March 30, 1981. Tim was working the President's detail just like any other day. It was another routine day of in-town movement with the President that can lure an agent to sleep from its boredom. But on this day, Agent McCarthy's investment in training paid off. He was in position and ready to react.

The President had just finished his speech at the Washington Hilton. The limo was waiting for the routine trip back to the White House. As Agent McCarthy preceded the President to the limo, he made sure the door was open and awaited the President of the United States. As the President exited the building and was waving to a seemingly friendly crowd, shots rang out. Hidden behind the Washington Press Corps was an assassin, John Hinckley, Jr. He had a

small handgun and began firing as soon as he saw the President. At the sound of the first shot, Agent McCarthy turned toward Hinckley and made himself a human shield to protect the President. When the enemy showed up, Agent McCarthy "got large" and stood his ground and took a bullet in the stomach thus saving the President's life.

Agent McCarthy was an ordinary man doing his job in an extraordinary way. His years of training prepared him to meet the enemy head on. His training came down to a split-second response. He didn't have time to think, to justify his position, to measure all the facts, and set a reasonable course of action. He just "got large" and became a living sacrifice for a man he didn't really know.

When pastors don't train their men to act according to the Word of God, their men's actions will resemble those of the world. Men can't be trained using worldly tools; there is no substitute for God's Word when training men to be spiritual leaders. Spiritual training develops strong male leadership by bringing men into a passionate relationship with God and a right relationship with each other. (See sidebar below "So You Want To Train Your Men.")

## SO YOU WANT TO TRAIN YOUR MEN

Before you can train men you must understand that it is going to take your time, and you must understand the five building blocks of training men.

### FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS OF HONORBOUND MEN'S MINISTRY

1. Ministry to men must be seen from a *spiritual perspective*. It must be bathed in prayer and considered as much a part of the work of the Holy Spirit as any other ministry.
2. Ministry to men must have a balanced emphasis on *being* versus *doing*. The emphasis is on what a man becomes versus what he does.
3. Ministry to men must be *gender specific*. There is a difference between ministry to men and ministry to women. Activities targeted at men must be tailored for men. Activities and ministries must be goal oriented, with a clear sense of achievement evident at their conclusion.
4. Ministry to men must have *intention*. The outcome must be decided on up front with a clear vision of the major purpose.
5. Ministry to men must have *pastoral involvement*. This building block calls for pastors to become involved with their men, supporting ministry to their men, and setting the example for their men.
  - To effectively impact your men, a pastor must have balance.
  - The training must generate a pastor-supported and pastor-supportive climate.
  - The pastor must be available.
  - The pastor must be in a small group.
  - The pastor must get close to the men.

—Charles Brewster, Springfield, Missouri. The above excerpts are from HonorBound's Blueprint training, 2nd and 3rd editions. Learn more about Blueprint and ministry to men at [www.honorbound.ag.org](http://www.honorbound.ag.org).

Jesus spent most of His ministry training His disciples to react in the proper manner. He modeled and mentored the way to live and minister. He did not produce believers; He reproduced himself. Jesus had a ministry of multiplication. He knew man's weaknesses, but gave His followers strength and a plan to overcome them. He knew the enemy would be on the prowl, so He sent the Holy Spirit to give us power to live an overcoming life.

#### **DEVELOPING POSITIONED MEN**

It is easy to talk about standing firm in the faith, but more difficult to live it. When spiritual battles begin, many flee

to safer ground. True leaders of men move forward. The pastor's position is out front leading his men.

In my days at the White House, if an agent abandoned his post near the President, it meant immediate disciplinary action. An agent's defense usually followed some line of personal reasoning. However, no amount of reasoning ever held water. The security of the person the agent had sworn to protect had been compromised to satisfy a personal need.

Leaders abandon their position when they bend the rules and justify their actions by saying they are in their best interest and therefore warranted. When

leaders do this, the enemy successfully catches them off guard and encourages them to follow their own selfish desires. A good example of this is seen in the life of King David.

In 2 Samuel 11, David abandoned his position and stayed home when it was "the time when kings go off to war." While he was away from his position he saw Bathsheba bathing. The rest of the story is a familiar tale of adultery, deceit, and murder. When he was supposed to be on a mission with his armies, he remained home with his mistress.

Instead of abandoning our post of leading men, leaders must remain steadfast with God. To do that, leaders must be

## **G-MEN: A STRATEGY TO RESTORE MEN**

It is no coincidence that spiritual leaders across America are drawing the same conclusion about the move of God today. The Spirit of God is stirring people to focus their efforts on a common purpose and passion. In a nation currently plagued by absentee fathers, the body of Christ has recognized the need to rescue men out of their spiritual slumber and restore them to right standing with God. Clearly there is a need to develop Christlike men, and multitudes of ministries have been formed around this endeavor.

As a pastor, I have seen the devastation the lack of manpower creates in the home and church. I began crying out to God for a solution, and God gave me a strategy that restores men and resurrects families. We call this the G-MEN Strategy. G-MEN stands for "godly men," and it has revolutionized the ministry at PowerHouse Christian Center.

What makes the G-MEN Strategy so effective?

#### **THE G-MEN STRATEGY CREATES FATHER/SON RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST**

In 1 Corinthians 4:15, Paul wrote, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers." Our country is steadily becoming a fatherless nation, and the result is a generation of dysfunctional children. Likewise, the church lacks the stability and accountability spiritual fathers provide. The G-MEN Strategy utilizes G-12 mentoring relationships that allow one spiritually mature generation to pour wisdom, guidance, and instruction into the next generation of believers. This strategy acts as a catalyst for discipleship and enables believers to build from what their fathers in the faith have accomplished, versus struggling through the very same obstacles.

Two years ago I started a mentoring program at PowerHouse Christian Center with 12 men. Now over 350 men are being mentored, and they all receive individual attention, prayer, and direction from their spiritual father. The 12 men I mentor find 12 other men to mentor and so on, thus duplicating the pattern indefinitely. This allows the vision God has given me to pass down through relationship to each family in the church. If Jesus' approach to ministry was to train 12 men, shouldn't we follow His example and pattern?

#### **THE G-MEN STRATEGY INSTILLS MORALITY IN MEN**

A church is not a building; the people are the church. Therefore, a church is only as strong as its members. When immorality runs rampant in a congregation, the church becomes crippled in its effort to run with vision. At PowerHouse, we utilize Edwin Louis Cole's curriculum, *Majoring In Men*, as a study guide for our mentoring program. It has truly transformed our men. However, other curricula can be supplemented into the G-MEN Strategy.

As our men read the *Majoring In Men* curriculum and study it with their wives, they are challenged to love their spouse, nurture their children, and live upright lives before the Lord. These qualities work together enabling men to focus on winning the world for righteousness. The truths in each chapter are reinforced during weekly mentoring meetings. Cole teaches men that "manhood and Christlikeness are synonymous." The G-MEN Strategy gives men an organized, consistent way to renew their minds and take on the nature and character of Christ. The curriculum also serves as a do-it-yourself marriage counseling tool. It helps couples open the doors of communication and apply biblical principles to their relationship.


men of courage, acting in faith when the enemy shows up. They overcome their fear by reacting according to their training not their intellect. (See sidebar “G-MEN: A Strategy To Restore Men.”)

Pastor, challenge your men to operate differently from the world. The men you lead must be strong when the enemy shows up, positioned with the strength and preparation to accomplish the mission. Agent McCarthy would not have accomplished his mission without preparation. At times you may feel the task of leading men is too burdensome, so you start to slack off. Resist this tendency and continue to challenge your men to fulfill God’s plan for their lives.

Many pastors I have talked with say time is the major reason they can’t do more with their men. The bottom line is men need training, and the pastor is the one who must lead the way. It is imperative that pastors find time in their schedules to disciple and train their men.

Finally, pastors should model everything in love and be passionate in their behavior. Many pastors have a passion for their work and sometimes overlook their own families. Effective modeling and mentoring take place when men see their pastor spending quality time with his family.

Pastor, God wants your best. You can

start rebuilding the crumbling foundation of our culture by investing your life in men and joining them in a passionate pursuit of God. The church of Jesus Christ needs men of significance who have a passion to serve and who are positioned to make a difference in their world. 

*Charles Brewster is director for HonorBound, the Assemblies of God men’s ministry, Springfield, Missouri.*



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

### THE G-MEN STRATEGY SPIRITUALLY EMPLOYS MEN

When a man faces unemployment, he often feels discontent, anxious, and frustrated. That’s because men have an intrinsic desire to be creative and productive. Without the means to do so, men often feel emasculated. For centuries, the church has failed to provide men with an outlet to exercise their creativity and productivity within the ministry of the local church. Consequently, men pour their time and talent into building their careers and then sit on the bench at church.

The G-MEN Strategy makes it possible for every man in the church to take an active role in the ministry through home-group (or cell-group) leadership. The man and his wife serve as undershepherds and use their ability and creativity to produce a thriving, growing home group. They become a role model of God’s order and plan for the family. Only mentored men are promoted to home-group leadership. They are charged to find 12 men to mentor and raise up to be home-group leaders. The challenge keeps men focused and motivated.

Men in my church serve in many areas of ministry. They make major commitments of time and energy and take ownership for the ministry in which they are involved. As a result of spiritually employing our men, 50 percent of the congregation is male, which is 30 percent higher than the average church in America. To have a church full of hardworking, driven men makes my job easier as a pastor. The church is able to impact the community in a major way because the men are excited about doing the work of an evangelist. The G-MEN Strategy provides clearly defined goals that fulfill a man’s need to exercise his creativity and productivity.

### THE G-MEN STRATEGY MAXIMIZES THE MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

God’s vehicle to gather the end-time harvest is the local church. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 9:37 that “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few.” The local church is the place where believers (laborers) are mobilized and organized to evangelize the world. The G-MEN Strategy restores men and raises up leaders who help retain converts in the local church. We are producing fruit that remains (John 15:16). We have a system that allows men and women to use their testimony and growth in Christ to help someone else grow in Christ. We teach people to teach people to teach people.

Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18, “Upon this rock [the revelation that Jesus is the Christ] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Any ministerial efforts within the body of Christ that do not build the local church are less than God’s best and do not adhere to His strategy.

When it comes to saving mankind, God always has a *specific* plan. He did more than merely tell Noah to build a lifesaving device. He gave him specific instructions, including precise measurements. Edwin Cole says, “Man wants victory, God gives strategy.” God gave Noah all the wisdom and information he needed to save his generation. Noah’s only job was to obey and build. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Doesn’t it make sense that He would also give us a specific plan and strategy to save our generation from the end-time judgment? God has given us all the blueprint, tools, and materials we need to rescue humanity and build the local church. All we need to do is obey and build.

—G.F. Watkins is senior pastor of PowerHouse Christian Center, Katy, Texas. If you would like to order Pastor G.F. Watkins’ book, G-MEN: The Final Strategy, or the G-MEN Strategy tape series, log on to [www.powerhousecc.com](http://www.powerhousecc.com).

# BUILDING GODLY MEN

**R**eaching men in the local church is one of the most pivotal roles pastors have. The church cannot be all that God has called it to be until men fulfill their God-given roles. The effectiveness of the church rests in getting men to move into their right place. I often say, “If I can get the men straight, it will solve 95 percent of women’s problems.”

As men walk as true men of God, the family unit will become stronger. Many of the issues facing the family and the ills of society stem from men not being what God has called them to be—God-ordained men that affirm their sons and daughters. The father helps develop and affirm masculinity in his sons. He nurtures and affirms femininity in his daughters.

Men are the foundation of humanity. This does not make men more important than women, rather this is the order God created. Because men are the bedrock or foundation of society, everything rests on them. With this understanding, if we want to get to the source of most of the world’s problems, the church must be involved in transforming men into the image of Christ.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY MAN

Without an accurate understanding of what God intends men to be, the church will not know how to go about developing them into godly individuals. A godly man is not macho, hard, tough, womanizing, or egotistical. Rather, he is a warrior, a mentor, a friend, and a priest. His goal is Christlikeness. He is a builder, nurturer, instructor, provider, and protector. He is strong yet sensitive, firm yet tender with his children. He is strong yet romantic with his wife. He is teachable and not intimidated by the gifts and strength in others—including those innate strengths of his wife. He is a

leader and also able to follow. He leads at home; yet, he may lead or follow on the job or at church. He desires God above all relationships and will not compromise or turn in the face of adversity.

The godly man’s focus remains on God. His wife can feel secure even though she may not totally understand how God might be leading him. He is following God and has his wife and family’s best interest in mind. He is both serious and fun loving. He can destroy evil and build character in others. He disciplines, protects, and loves with the same hands and heart. Confidence, not arrogance or boastfulness, are part of his makeup. His creed is integrity and his character is unshakable. His word is his bond; you can trust what he says.

Even when he makes a mistake, he repents when faced with truth. With a humble transparency and strength, he walks in a way that even his enemies respect him. He lifts up others even when he is discouraged. Those around him become stronger because of him. They can stand more steadily because he has helped them become spiritually strong. He brings order to chaos and is not given to foolishness, anger, or immaturity. He is driven and balanced—not lazy, shiftless, or impulsive.

A godly man takes responsibility for his actions, his wife, and his family. Those who don’t are relegated to live in obscurity and immaturity. A man who is unwilling to shoulder his responsibility disqualifies himself from God’s blessings.

The godly man is accountable, first to God, and then to other men and women. His accountability begins with his father and mother and then to other authority figures God brings into his life, especially accountability with his

wife. If a man will not be held accountable, he is a danger to himself and those around him. With spiritual maturity the godly man walks in the fullness of God’s Spirit and Word. He brings vision from his heart and is led by God’s Spirit. His vision is always bigger than himself and is passed on to those who come behind him.

Knowing, then, what it means to be a godly man, how can pastors develop godly character into the men sitting in their pews?

## SIX STEPS TO DEVELOPING GODLY CHARACTER

### Let men meet in male-only settings.

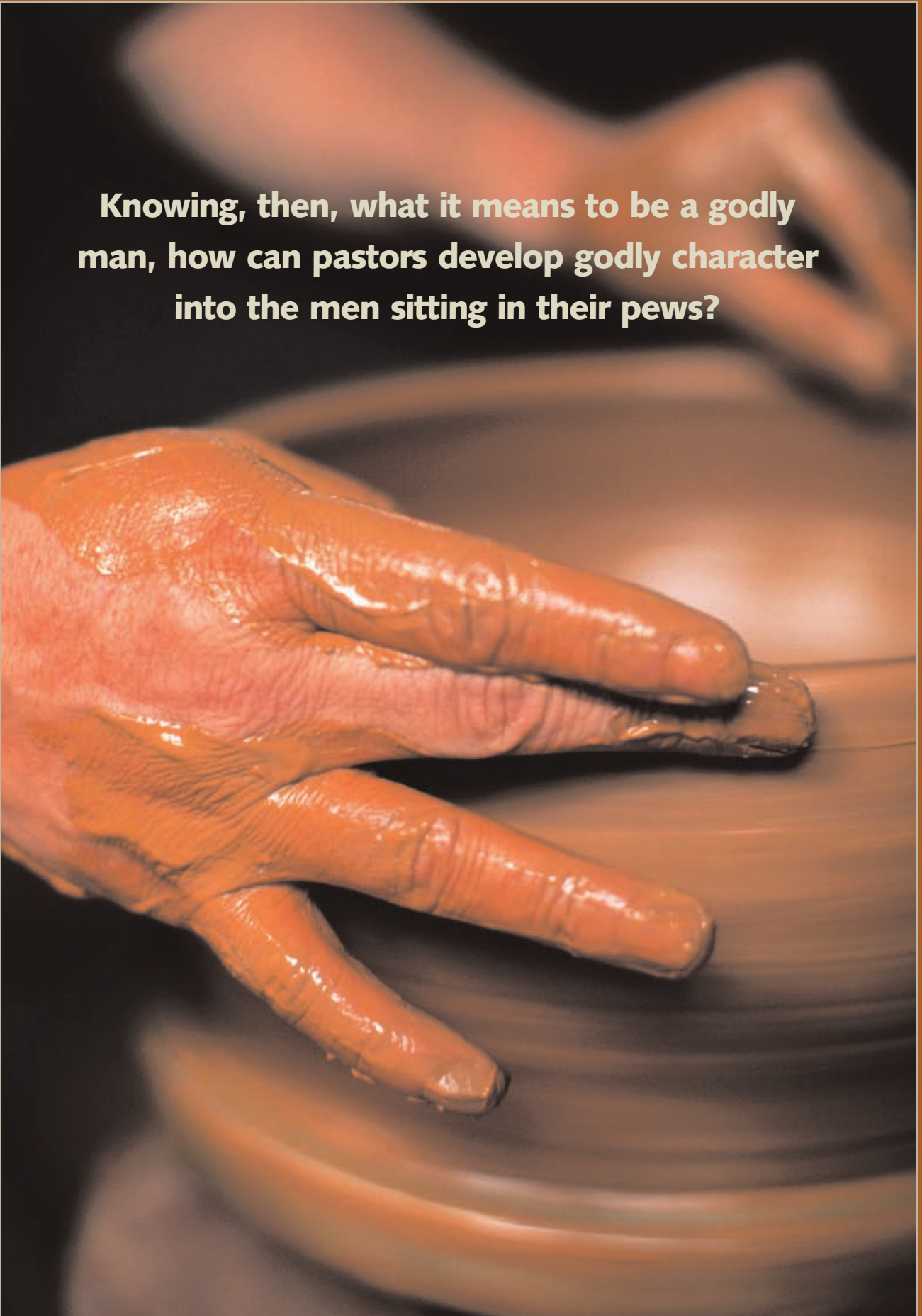
Developing strong, godly men is best accomplished in settings where men can be vulnerable without putting up their guard. Men need to be built up in settings where they are by themselves and sometimes away from familiar things. In this environment, men are less tempted to put up a facade. They can be honest, open, and transparent with themselves and with one another. (See “Conducting a Successful Men’s Retreat” sidebar.) They can laugh and cry. As a pastor, it is best to frequently meet with men in this type of setting.

### Make a man think.

Pastors must be careful in this intimate setting not to appeal primarily to men’s emotions, but to their intellect. Men are thinkers. They ponder and meditate. While women use emotions and intellect simultaneously, men tend to use only one at a time. This is God’s way of balancing the husband-wife relationship.

### Affirm men in their manhood.

Men need to be affirmed. One of the most devastating attacks on the body of Christ today is the lack of affirmation of



**Knowing, then, what it means to be a godly man, how can pastors develop godly character into the men sitting in their pews?**

## HOW TO CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL MEN'S RETREAT—10 DOS AND DON'TS

### DO:

**1. Seek approval and participation early on from your pastor and church leaders, as much as 6 to 12 months in advance or more.** Clearing your event in light of other dates on the church calendar will increase cooperation, effective promotion, and prayer support.

**2. Keep your audience in mind.** According to HonorBound's BluePrint training in conjunction with research by Promise Keepers, the "male context" is crucial. In general, guys appreciate organization, respond to clear-cut challenges, and gravitate toward identity with a group. Keeping in mind such concepts increases the likelihood your retreat hits a home run (male context).

**3. Share the load with committed brothers in the church, ideally those outside your close circle of fellowship.** Not only does involving responsible men decrease the amount of work on your shoulders, it also increases the realm of influence your retreat enjoys. Also, more guys will hear about it and a wider perspective can be gained on the needs of your church's men.

**4. Communicate with your guest ministers.** Contrary to the stereotype that some preachers or worship leaders demand the freedom to share as they feel led, many depend on and appreciate clear directives from retreat organizers. Without putting them in a confining box, take initiative to lay out your goals for the retreat, then consider any suggestions they offer.

**5. Make plans for special circumstances.** How will you reply to men who can only come 1 day for a 2-day event? Is there any financial assistance available? How young is too young for a son who wants to attend with his father? Can your schedule succeed even with inclement weather?

### DON'T:

**6. Fear a light agenda.** While no one wants a boring retreat, doses of free time are OK and often appreciated. The most personal ministry frequently takes place when men have an unplanned opportunity to share and pray with each other.

**7. Overcommit financially, especially at first.** Without a previous track record, you may think the hotel's required minimum occupancy is no problem. It may seem the speaker's fee is reasonable. All these stipulations are much easier to swallow in subsequent years if your retreat demonstrates an ability to cover costs.

**8. Beat up on the men.** For many, it was a major accomplishment to clear their family schedules to attend the retreat. How ironically sad for them to be scolded all weekend for not spending more time with their family.

**9. Forget to involve the wives.** Consider asking the women to pray for their husbands during the retreat. Send the men home with a gift for the wives or a specific goal to show their wives appreciation. Next time your church sponsors a men's event, the women may cheer the announcement more than the men.

**10. Neglect appropriate follow-up as your event closes.** If you want stronger help and participation next time, seek input through an event survey, write notes of thanks to all those who helped and ministered, and express public appreciation to pastors and church leaders for their attendance and involvement. A time of testimony by the men during the next Sunday morning service may do wonders for next year's attendance.

*—John Wootton, Columbus, Ohio, is the Ohio District Men's Ministries director*

manhood. This comes primarily from the neglect of fathers. In many cases, even if a father was present in the home, he did not affirm his children. A father affirms the masculinity in his sons and the femininity in his daughters. What is often missing in the family is to have a man look his son in the eyes and tell him, "I love you and respect you. You are a man." When that comes

from a father whom a son respects, it encourages and challenges him in ways the church cannot.

In 1998, I took the men of our church through a 6-month training. We dealt with vision, provision, relationships, sex, money, marriage, singleness, divorce, and other topics that affect men. The training culminated with a large service. I laid hands on each man

who completed the training, affirming him in his manhood. Each man received a leather jacket and certificate commemorating the event. Many of the men invited family from out of town to participate in this rite-of-passage service. Such training does not happen overnight. It comes from a trusting relationship between the pastor and the men in the church, which is then

cemented in a mutual covenant relationship with Christ.

Men have specific events in their lives that mark them. Spiritual markers, like the rite-of-passage service, need to be remembered and celebrated, especially when they relate to men becoming men. This is what happened in our church. The real importance is that it was done, not the mode in which it happened.

### Consistently challenge men.

Once men have been adequately affirmed, they must be consistently challenged. We don't want men to just sit and think about what they have learned; rather, we want to see in them a change of heart, mind, and direction. Men must be challenged to change their way of life in light of Scripture. Most men will accept the challenge to change when their lives are brought under the spotlight of Scripture. Men are by nature competitive. They are looking for the next mountain to climb and conquer. When pastors continually lay before their men the need to be godly in all manner of life, they will rise up and accept the challenge.

### Do not expect too much too soon.

Men do not come to church in a totally sanctified state. Men must be taken through the process of maturing in Christ one step at a time. Many men are coming to our services with different challenges and sins. In our misunderstanding of the sanctifying process, we sometimes want to get men saved on Sunday, called to preach on Wednesday, and preaching their first sermon the following Sunday. It does not work like that, especially for unchurched men.

We place high expectations on men—which we should—but these expectations should be achievable. If we raise the bar too high, men will become discouraged and disillusioned. If we place the bar too low, we will encourage them to live in mediocrity and beneath the standard God has set for them.


**Honestly present a strong, male image.** The challenge to church leadership is

to present themselves as strong, spiritual male images both inside and outside the church. This must begin with the pastor, deacons, and other leaders. The leaders of the church must be about the Master's business. When men see godly male leadership lived out before them day after day, it acts like a magnet. When a man sees a strong man in leadership walking in integrity, it draws him. For young men, the pastor is often their first model of a godly man. What do the men in your congregation see when they look at your life? We must be careful to present to our men an accurate image of Christ in everything we say and do.

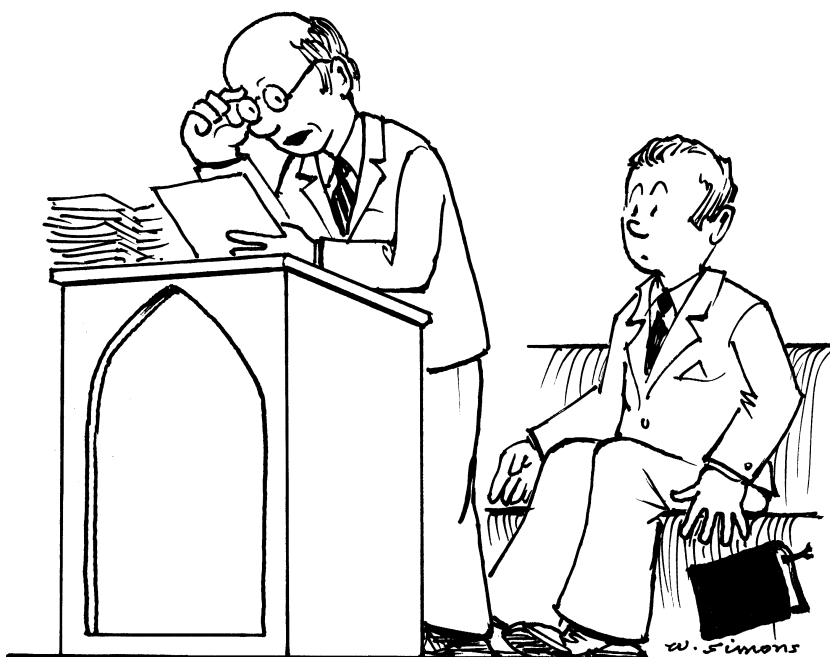
Society portrays Jesus as an emasculated, weak man who was sheepishly led to the Cross. We know differently. Jesus stood before Pilate and said, "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17,18, NKJV). Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the temple and had compassion on children and the weak. He is not a weakling. A strong masculine image of Christ draws men.

The church must consciously reach out to men. If we do not, whom will the women of God marry—immature boys? Who will raise and affirm the children—television? How will little girls expect to be treated when they grow up—like objects? Who will the boys look up to and emulate—thugs, gangsters, rappers? Who will lead this and future generations—the government?

God has already done His part by using men to establish His kingdom. If there is going to be any change through the church, it must come through strong men and women who together build families that establish societies and nations. It started with the man Adam and was corrected and fulfilled by Christ Jesus. It now rests squarely on the shoulders of the men of God to continue. Make no mistake: it's tough being a man. But somebody has to be one, and it might as well be us.

Pastor, are you teaching your men what it means to be men of God? 

*Bishop Eddie L. Long is senior pastor, New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Lithonia, Georgia. New Birth Missionary Baptist Church has grown from 300 in 1987 to 25,000 in 2002.*



**"There are 17 votes for two preaching services, 14 against, 36 undecided, and 53 for one service without preaching."**

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# Spiritual Being, Sexual Being— What We Worship Can Be Extremely Dangerous

B Y S T E V E G A L L A G H E R



In today's highly sexualized culture, it is more important than ever that pastors be equipped to help those bound by habits of sexual sin. Deeply embedded within every man's being are two intense, mutually related passions that demand fulfillment: sexuality and spirituality. God created sex to be not only a source of pleasure, but also a deeply spiritual expression of love between a man and his wife. Thus, a believer's relationship with God is often likened to the relationship between husband and wife (1 Corinthians 6:15–20).

Unfortunately, some Christian men carelessly allow their carnal desires to run wild. Rather than seeking oneness with God through worship and with their wives through sexual intimacy, they cross a line into sexual perversion. It is at this point that worship goes awry. Contrary to God's original design, their sexuality and spirituality somehow become fused into a corrupted, irresistible drive to worship at the altar of sexual idolatry.

For the men who take such a plunge, regaining the innocence they willfully relinquished is no easy matter. What are even more difficult to restore are their fractured relationships with God, their wives, and others. Nevertheless, there is a way of escape. It is vitally important that pastors help men see that restoration can only be found through deep repentance, a renewed, godly perspective on sexuality, and an understanding of true worship.

### UNDERSTANDING THE FULL SCOPE OF WORSHIP

In Hebrew and Greek, the term *worship* conveys the idea of physically prostrating oneself before another. The Greek term gives the sense of a person bowing down in utmost humility to kiss the hand of someone superior.

People are continually prostrating themselves to something or someone in their hearts. How is this? Within the soul of man is a spiritual altar, and seated on that altar is the most important object of his life. He may sing

hymns and choruses on Sunday mornings; but whether he realizes it or not, the concept of worship involves far more than merely a half hour of singing. Worship is a not just an act; it is a lifestyle in which one pays homage to the object of his desire—which may or may not be God.

Real worship is out of kilter when a person allows something other than God to take preeminence in his life. The object of adoration becomes an idol because it displaces God's rightful position in the heart. For most people, idols become those things or experiences the spirit of this world offers that cater to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and thereby dictate the course of their lives. However, a pastor must be quick to point out that the second commandment makes it clear that God will not tolerate this: "You shall not bow down to [idols] or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am

a jealous God" (Exodus 20:5\*).

Jesus said it this way: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Replacing God in one's heart with an idol is an extremely wicked thing to do because it involves the willful decision to turn away from the Lord in favor of something else. It is very dangerous to worship anyone or anything other than God because the nature of worship is terribly powerful.

Not only does idolatry seduce a person away from the Lord, but it also molds the idolater into the image of the idol (Psalm 115:8). Simply put, a person becomes like the thing he cherishes most. Rather than being "conformed to the likeness of his Son," he is being conformed "to the pattern of this world" (Romans 8:29; 12:2). The man who worships at the altar of sexual idolatry will increasingly exhibit the characteristics of the demonic idol with which he has fallen in love.

## A TESTIMONY TO THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Twenty-one years ago, I was a Los Angeles deputy sheriff working in a maximum-security jail facility. I was full of pride, anger, and sexual perversion. In short, I was extremely self-centered and had no concern about anyone but myself.

God has done a marvelous work of delivering me from sexual addiction. However, to limit His work in me to being freed of habitual sexual sin would be a terrible injustice to the mercy He has shown me. There are three areas of my life in which God has dealt with me.

First, He has repeatedly broken me of self-will. Left to myself, my selfish nature would simply find another avenue to pursue its own desires. When I first went into ministry, it manifested itself through aggressive self-ambition. It took years of closing doors, hindering my plans, and crossing my will to gain some degree of control over my life.

Second, God has been diligent to crucify the selfish flesh-nature within me that allowed sexual sin to rule my life at one time. How free would I be if I were still filled with hatred for others? How much victory could I claim if I were still utterly selfish in life? What kind of a testimony would I really have if my life still revolved around gratifying the various lusts of my flesh? Having a life of victory means more to me than simply enjoying freedom from one particular besetting sin.

Third, God continues to expose the pride that comes so naturally to me. It rears its ugly head in my life through defensiveness with detractors, the enjoyment of man's applause, and the desire to be seen in a favorable light. Sometimes I feel as though God hasn't gained any ground in this area of my life, but then I remember what I was once like.

Considering the depth of my delusion and the stubbornness of my will, it is truly amazing that the Lord has been able to accomplish anything of value within me. After all these years, my testimony is not of what I have done right, but of God's mercy to a sinner who has proven repeatedly that he has been more than willing to do wrong.

—Steve Gallagher, Dry Ridge, Kentucky

## THE LOVE OF PLEASURE

God created a world full of simple, unadulterated pleasures for His creatures to enjoy. However, untold multitudes—including many churchgoers—refuse God's original design and make pleasure the god of their life. They are known as *hedonists*. When pleasure of any sort—even sexual pleasure—becomes the focal point of one's daily existence, it not only eats away at a

"enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures" (Titus 3:3).

While these passages are each uniquely profound, Paul's prophetic words in 2 Timothy 3:4,5 are most alarming. There are those living in the last days who are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power." Undoubtedly, this Scripture refers to those who make pleasure their *raison*

thundered from pulpits has, to a large extent, been supplanted by scientific rationalizations for man's behavior. Instead of being encouraged to seek godly repentance with tears of contrition, the lust-filled, sex-crazed man is given a plethora of rationalizations. This excuses his sinful behavior, and he avoids taking proper responsibility for his actions. This silencing of the Holy Spirit's conviction is unspeakably tragic

## In today's highly sexualized culture, it is more important than ever that pastors be equipped to help those bound up in habits of sexual sin.

person's spiritual life, but it eventually contaminates everything that is wholesome.

Jesus said the love of pleasure chokes out the Word of God (Luke 8:14). James told his constituents their love for pleasure thwarted their prayers and kept them in a spirit of lust (James 4:1–3).

Moses is an example of godliness because he "chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time" (Hebrews 11:25). And the apostle Paul spoke of those who are

*d'être*—their supreme purpose in life. Although they exhibit a form of godliness, in reality, the object of their undying affections is not God, but pleasure.

### TRUE REPENTANCE: PRECURSOR TO REAL CHANGE

No minister should need to be convinced that illicit sexual behavior is sinful. However, during the past 20 to 30 years, a transformation of thought has swept the church off her feet. Under the guise of progressiveness, the Holy Spirit-inspired cry for holiness that once

because repentance is God's *only* solution to habitual sin. It's imperative that we, as ministers, fearlessly preach against sin.

The sad reality is this: most Christian men involved in habitual sexual sin have spent years riding the merry-go-round of sin and false repentance, never finding the breakthrough into freedom they seem so desperately to seek. In *At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry*, I explain it this way:

As the (sexual) addict enters the beginning stage of remorse, he will often make certain promises to God vowing never to repeat the same sin again: "Lord, I swear I won't do this ever again!" As his eyes are opened to the reality of the horrible emptiness and nature of his sin, he readily makes such a vow; for, it is at this moment that he truly sees sin for what it really is.

However, the problem with making such a resolution is that it stems from the man's own strength and determination to resist and overcome an evil. This sort of "promise-keeping" will never endure future temptations in the same area. It is for this exact reason that the sex addict has attempted countless times before to break the habit, yet to no avail.

The man desperately needs repentance. True repentance comes when a man's heart has changed its outlook on sin. A man will only quit his sinful,



**"This lesson plan is rated PG-13,  
that's Prayerful Guidance in 13 Sessions."**

## DEALING WITH SEXUAL SIN IN THE CHURCH

**Foster an atmosphere of truth and honesty.** Men who struggle must have the sense they can confess their sin without undue consequences. You may have to take a man out of a leadership position, but you should never do anything that would disrespect the man or betray his confidence.

**Renounce sin.** Sin destroys lives, corrupts churches, and weakens the body of Christ. Living and preaching holiness may offend those who wish to compromise, but it will attract those who are sincerely hungry for God.

**Educate your congregation about proper and improper sexuality.** If struggling men feel that the pastor is uncomfortable with the subject, they will never come forward for help.

**Establish and encourage men's ministry.** Men tend to isolate, and one of the greatest helps to a man overcoming secret sin is getting involved in godly fellowship with others.

**Disciple those in need.** We have learned how to build big churches, but in the process we have lost our ability to build spiritual maturity in the lives of individuals. This lack of personal attention is one of the primary reasons men do not live in more freedom.

**Offer restoration for fallen church leaders and members.** Have something in place to refer men to, such as a biblical counselor or a ministry that deals with sexual sin from a biblical perspective.\*

**Model godly character and consecration.** Your personal walk with God will determine the level of spiritual authority you have to speak into the lives of others.

—Steve Gallagher, Dry Ridge, Kentucky

*\*The Pure Life Live-in and Overcomers-At-Home programs are two options available.*

destructive behavior when he has truly repented of it in his heart.

To understand true repentance, one must comprehend the nature of sin. A person sins when he willfully acts on a fleshly impulse to do something forbidden by God. In other words, he rejects God's will in favor of his own. All who try to find freedom from habitual sin and yet remain in self-will are attempting the impossible. The act of repentance involves a confession that one's behavior is wrong, a commitment to quit that behavior, and a submission to God's will. "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret" (2 Corinthians 7:10). This occurs when the person realizes how wrong his thinking and behavior have been and agrees to change both.

### THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

As beautiful as it is to see someone truly turn from his sin, ministers fully understand that this is only half of the process of repentance. The other half is when he turns toward God and allows Him to take His rightful place on the throne of his heart. In other words, he must forfeit his worship of sex and begin to truly worship God.

For the pastor to tell the Christian sexual addict that he needs to learn how to worship God often confuses this man. After all, he has been singing worship songs in church for years. Unfortunately, in his utterly deluded condition, he fails to realize his worship has been devoid of any spiritual reality. In essence, he has been living in open defiance to the Lord. However, as he

enters the process of repentance—whereby he gets serious about giving up his besetting sin—he can now begin to worship the Lord "in spirit and truth."

This is extremely important in the war over who or what is going to occupy the throne of his heart. His flesh loves sexual sin, and there is nothing he can do to stop his flesh from loving it. But what he can do—and must do—is replace the love of sin with a consuming love for God. The answer is not simply to hate the sin, but also learning to love and fear the Lord.

This brings us back to the examination of true worship. The man who is bound up in habits of immorality has allowed sexual pleasure to reign supremely in his heart. As with all idolatry, when a person worships something other than God, self becomes huge in his heart and the Lord becomes small. By the same token, as he learns to bow before the Lord, God becomes big in his inner being, and self becomes small. *True worship only occurs when the person sees who he is in relation to God and who God is in relation to him.* A great humbling takes place that weakens the power of the flesh.

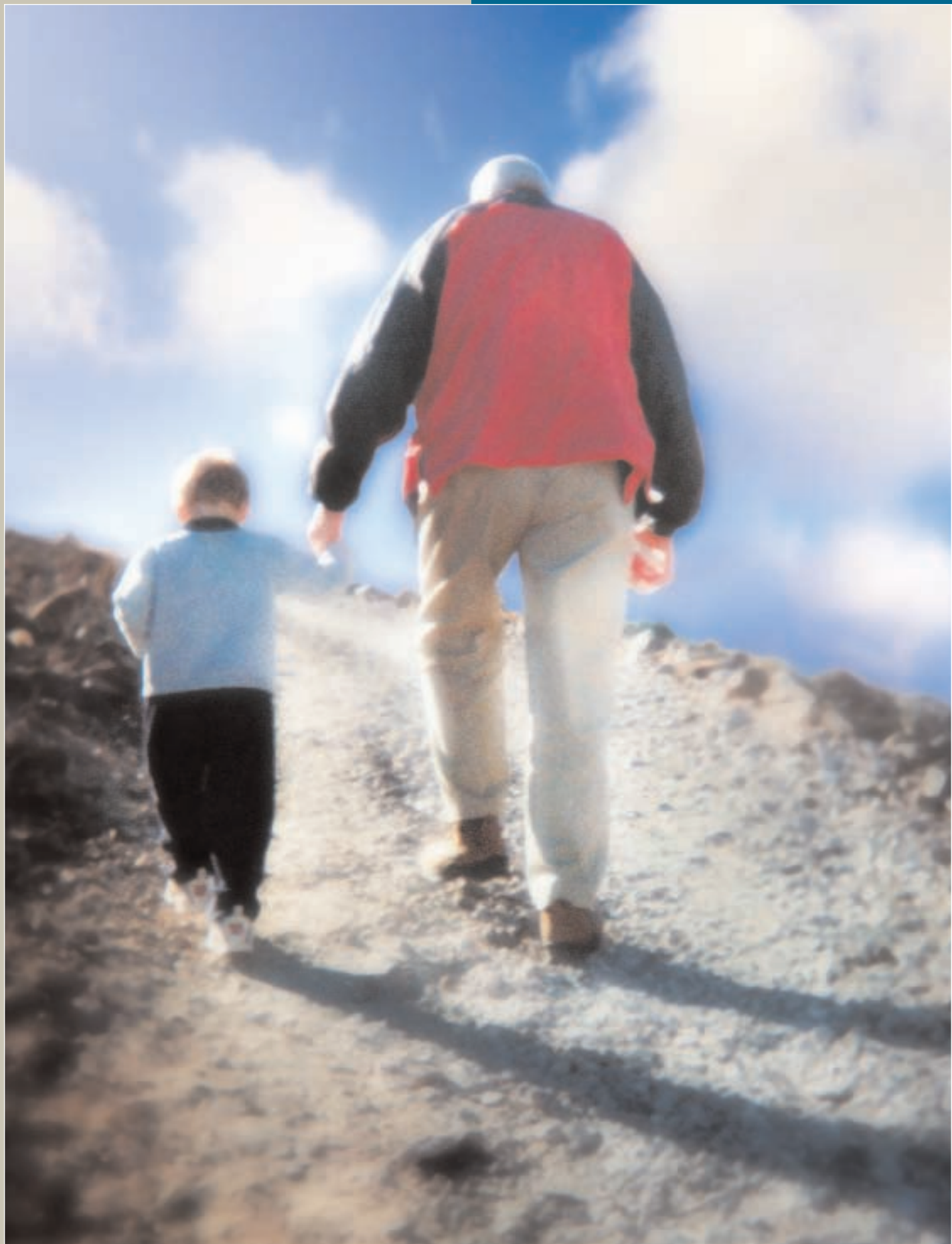
We must help a man see that true repentance occurs when he is broken over his sinful and despicable condition before a holy God and falls undone at His feet. There, at the foot of Calvary, he is freed of the hold of sin and is now in the proper position before God. He can now put years of spiritual defeat behind him and begin to put his sexuality in its proper place. Most important, he can now love God with all his heart, soul, and mind. **e**

Steve Gallagher, Dry Ridge, Kentucky, is president of Pure Life Ministries, a ministry helping those who are in habits of sexual sin.

For more information call 1-859-824-4444, or visit their Web site: [www.purlifeministries.org](http://www.purlifeministries.org).



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





B Y S T E V E F A R R A R

# Fathers and Sons

Tourists watched a demonstration by the Royal Artillery of the Queen. The six-man team worked with flawless precision. Actually, only five of them worked with precision. The sixth soldier positioned himself about 25 yards away from the cannon and stood at attention during the entire exhibition, doing nothing. After the exhibition, one of the tourists asked the staff officer to explain the duty of the man standing off to the side.

"He's number six," came the reply.

"Yes, but what does he do?"

"He stands at attention."

"Yes, I know, but why does he stand at attention?"

No one knew. The commanding officer didn't know. Even the soldier himself didn't know.

After many hours of searching through old training manuals, it became clear what number six was to do: he was to hold the horses. But the Royal Artillery hadn't used horses for nearly a century.

Why was soldier number six standing at attention? Because he was appointed to do so. Did he have any idea what his role was supposed to be? No. There are too many husbands and fathers today who are in the same situation. When it comes to their families, they're simply standing there. Motionless. Like the sixth man in the Royal Artillery, they're making about as much difference in their homes as a sprig of parsley on a plate of guacamole. The sixth man had no idea that he was supposed to be holding the horses. And too many men today have no idea that their job is to save their boys.

"If I could offer a single prescription for the survival of America, and particularly black America," writes William Raspberry, a columnist with the *Washington Post*, "it would be to restore

community of its husbands and fathers. The result is that boys learn that drugs and larceny are the fastest ways of making lots of cash. They simply don't have fathers who can teach and demonstrate the virtues of a healthy work ethic, the importance of sexual discipline and responsibility, the benefits of education, and the beauty of transcendent values." So the cycle repeats itself, generation after generation. Millions of boys don't know what it's like to have a father. That's why I believe William Raspberry was right; we must save the boys. And the local church should be helping. Men in the local church must provide a model that will equip youngsters to confidently take on the responsibilities of life and marriage. Our children are going to need godly spouses with whom they can raise the next generation for

become competent to raise their own children. In other words, children learn from their parents' example how to raise the next generation. But when the chain is broken, when a man abandons his wife and leaves his children to fend for themselves, a boy cannot learn to be a man, for there are no men to learn from.

Dave Simmons, who trains fathers through his "Dad, the Family Shepherd" seminars, has noted that God's plan for developing men is a hands-on, master-to-apprentice relationship, with Dad as the instructor. The task of the father is to equip child-raisers, who will in turn equip their own children. For literally thousands of years, this is how men have functioned. Men raised their boys, and as a result, there was stability in the family. Men didn't have identity crises; they knew who they were and what they

## **If the boys in our churches are not equipped to lead families, then the families of the next generation will not have leaders. And that will become a vicious epidemic, multiplying with each generation.**

the family. And if you asked me how to do it, my answer—no doubt oversimplified—would be: save the boys." Tragically, the black family in modern America has largely lost its boys. The enemy has effectively removed black males from their God-appointed positions of leadership and responsibility, and he has the same goal in mind for the rest of America. He may use different methods to achieve his goal, but his strategy is the same: destroy the boys by neutralizing the fathers.

Don Lewis, director of the Nehemiah Project, in testimony before the United States House of Representatives, summarized the crisis: "Through decades of social policy . . . the federal government has gutted and plundered the black

Christ. If the boys in our churches are not equipped to lead families, then the families of the next generation will not have leaders. And that will become a vicious epidemic, multiplying with each generation.

### **THE CHANGING CULTURE FOR SAVING BOYS**

From eternity, God instituted a plan for the family. It was to be followed by each generation. It has been noted by sociologists that the family is the only institution present in every tribe, village, and nation throughout history. One prominent researcher called the family "the rearing device for our species."

God's plan has always been for families to raise children, so they may

were supposed to do, because they had seen a model.

Too few men today raise their sons in this way. Satan's strategy to counteract God's plan is to lure a man away from his God-given responsibilities. And that's exactly what happened during the Industrial Revolution.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, life was built around the home. Four out of five Americans were farmers. Men worked at home, women worked at home, and so did the children. The pattern remained the same for centuries. The mother raised the children until they were somewhere between 5 and 7, then the boys worked with their fathers and the girls with their mothers. The men who weren't farmers were

silversmiths, blacksmiths, skilled craftsmen, and merchants. The same pattern applied to them; when a boy reached the age of 7, he would work with his dad and learn the trade. Most of the time, going to work meant simply going from one room to another. Fathers raised their sons, and they were together nearly every waking hour. A

child's education came primarily through the tutelage of the parents.

As the Industrial Revolution took hold, things changed. Factories popped up, and men were hired to operate machines. They exchanged work at home for work away from home—work that often required them to be away for long periods of time. Time spent away

from the home diminished the father's ability to influence the son. The formula is simple: less time = less influence.

Almost overnight, men stopped doing what they had done for thousands of years. They unknowingly brought a halt to the accumulated momentum of generations. Work now separated fathers from sons; no longer

## SIXTEEN TIPS FOR BEING A GREAT DAD

### THE COACH'S PREPARATION

Each great Hall of Fame coach went through strategic preparation as a person to be a successful coach. The same goes for a successful dad; he must go through a preparation phase to have a successful plan for raising his family.

The following 16 tips have been proven to help dads develop their families into a winning team.

#### 1. Know Who You Are

Many men struggle with who they are, their personal identity. A man could be headed for personal disaster if his self-worth and identity are built on things or status.

#### 2. Establish Priorities

A man who has inward priorities or a philosophy of life will never betray them because he values those priorities as truth.

#### 3. Live With No Regrets

A life of endless introspection and guilt is no life at all. The feelings of failure, anger, and bitterness torture such a man.

#### 4. Learn From Mistakes

Many men live in the past, carrying a load of hurt rooted in rejection, rebellion, anger, and self-pity. This heavy load affects relationships with their kids and wife.

#### 5. Love Your Wife

If you don't have a total commitment to love, honor, and cherish your wife, your kids won't either. Discord between parents will lead to insecurity in kids.

#### 6. Be Excellent

Excel in the basics—Bible study, prayer, discipleship. Give God your personal best every day.

#### 7. Build Memories That Count

We must succeed at building lasting positive memories for our kids.

#### 8. Build a Winning Attitude

A good attitude is the key ingredient for success. Most successful people have a positive attitude about life.

#### 9. Have Rules With Reason

Don't allow your rules to be dictated by neighbors or people at church. Decide what is best for you and your house. Be sure your kids know the safety reasons behind the rules.

#### 10. Live for the Finished Product

Live a life of legacy. Give your kids a heritage that is far more valuable than an inheritance.

#### 11. We Need Our Father's Relationship

Being a father is more than a position to fill or a role to play. Being a father is a relationship to live out. Is your child connected to you by more than birth?

#### 12. We Need Our Father's Love

Your children not only need the assurance of their Heavenly Father's love, but they need a constant awareness of their earthly father's love. The father sets the tone of love for the family.

#### 13. We Need Our Father's Approval

There are two opposing principles that exist concerning acceptance and approval:

*Principle 1:* In this world, you must perform to be accepted.

*Principle 2:* With God, you perform because you are accepted.

#### 14. Invest Yourself

Successful managers and effective fathers have an eye for potential. Great investors see the seed of greatness others often miss or overlook.

#### 15. Be Involved

Life coaching can't be done from a distance. It requires rolling up our sleeves and at times getting down on our knees.

#### 16. Be a Positive Influence

Influence, not force or brute strength, is at the heart of great leadership.

—Adapted from HonorBound's Dad's Coaching Clinic.

were they in a master-apprentice relationship. Men stopped raising their boys, because they weren't present to lead them. As the years have gone by, that all-important male role model has eroded even further. So it was over 200 years ago that the seeds were planted that removed men from their God-appointed role of raising boys. In our generation, those seeds are bearing fruit, and the fruit is killing us.

### THE INFLUENCE OF A FATHER

Harvard psychologist Samuel Osherson has noted that a boy learns to be a man

by watching his father. If the father is not there to provide a model, the boy is left vulnerable. We save our boys by giving them a role model to follow. When boys have a clear model, they know how to function when the time comes to assume the responsibility of marriage and parenting.

In our generation, too many boys have no idea what it means to be a man. It is a father's God-appointed task to ensure that his sons will be ready to lead their families. We must equip them to that end. Little boys are the hope of the next generation. They are the fathers of

tomorrow. They must know who they are and what they are to do. They must see role models in action inside and outside the church building. That's how they will know what it means to be a man. This puts the ball in our court. It means our men's ministries must ask: What do we need to do to train our sons to become leaders of their families? What must the church be doing to equip men to train their sons?

I have five goals for saving my own boys. It is my job as their father to model for them the importance of knowing . . .

## FIVE ROLES OF A FATHER

Pastors can help their men understand the five roles that a father must fulfill. Each role is crucial in the father-child relationship.

### PROVIDER

For many years in most cultures, the father was the sole provider. To provide a decent living—house, food, and clothes—was the primary responsibility of the father.

### PROTECTOR

If the provider provides survival, the protector provides security. Fathers give shelter from harm, outside forces, and the cruelty of this world.

### PATTERN (or example)

Children need an example to follow. They need to see how it is done. Their father's God will be their God. Their father's behavior will be their behavior. Their father's attitudes will be their attitudes.

Children are like sponges. They soak up everything they see and hear. Children are perceptive. Therefore, fathers must know the way, show the way, and go the way.

### PRIEST

The *shema* is sometimes called the Hebrew confession of faith.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deuteronomy 6:4–7, NIV).

These verses give the father the responsibility to bless his children with faith at home, on the road of life, and even at rest. Moses challenged fathers to "impress [God's instructions] on your children." Spiritually, children are like softened clay. We are to impress the Word of God on their lives. In verses 2 and 3, Moses gave the rewards of becoming the priest in our home: Our children will fear the Lord and enjoy long life. What a promise for us as we become the priest of our household.

These four roles are vital to the well-being of our families. However, unless fathers fulfill a fifth role—participant—these will have little or no long-term effect.

### PARTICIPANT

Fathers must be an essential part of their children's lives. This does not mean fathers are to become their children's peers; they are fathers. Fathers don't need to dress like their children to be liked, but fathers need to be interested in every aspect of their children's lives.

There are times when children invite parents into their worlds. Don't miss any of those chances. They are privileges they give us, and in those times we truly participate in their lives.

—Anthony Cervero, Ventura, California





- and obeying Jesus Christ.
- and displaying godly character.
- and loving my wife.
- and loving my children.
- my gifts and abilities so I can contribute to the lives of others.

A friend of mine who enjoys archery notes that error increases with distance. When he is close to the target he an excellent archer. When he moves farther away, his effectiveness drops dramatically. And what's true in archery is true in fathering: error increases with distance.

If men are going to be family leaders that God has called them to be, they must be there, on site, close to their boys, consistently. They must be there physically—an area in which we have a real disadvantage to the pre-Industrial Revolution generation. Most men get up in the morning and leave for work. Their kids get up and travel to school, and many fathers will probably not see their children until dinner. They have lost a significant amount of time with their sons because the demands of our culture have taken the time away.

To begin to turn the tide back in favor of our boys, we as Christian leaders must realize and teach the necessity of fathers being in the home. When men deduct commuting and work time from their waking hours, they may have, at best, only 2 or 3 hours a day that can be spent with their children. That time must be used wisely if they are going to influence them.

One friend of mine said he wished he could spend more time with his sons, but he was too busy working. He wanted to give them all the things he'd never had as a boy, and in doing so, he failed to spend time with them. Before he knew it, his boys were in school. He missed their games because he had business meetings. Though he wanted to have time to talk with them, most days he came home late, and his boys were already in bed. The next thing he knew, they were teenagers. He missed their first dates, their concerts, and their school assemblies. Now his boys are grown and out of the house. They have

their own interests, their own lives. The odd thing is, my friend now says he has time for his boys. Unfortunately, they don't have any time for him.

God has granted each father a limited amount of time to spend with his children. Are we transmitting this important truth to fathers in our churches?

### EMOTIONAL DISTANCE

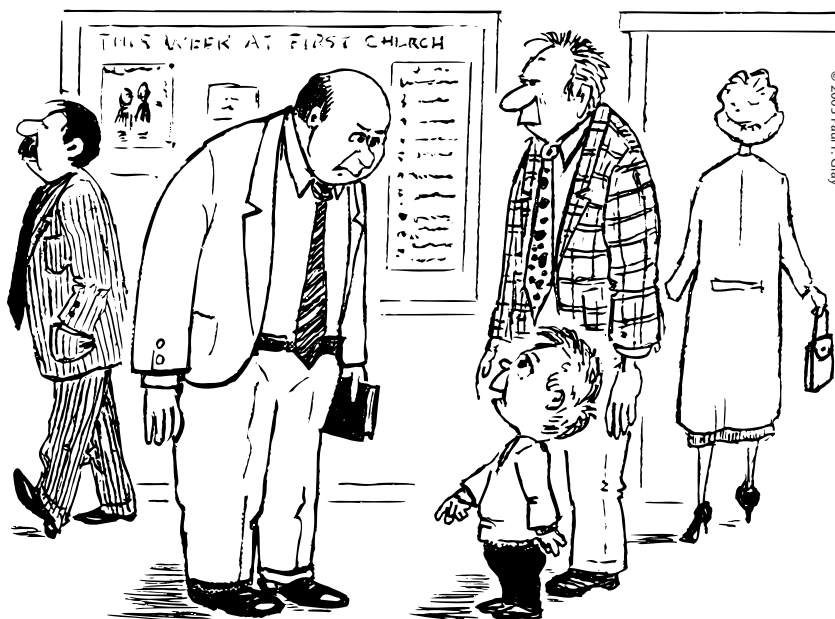
Saving boys requires more than just a father's physical presence in the home. Emotional distance is an even greater danger for boys than a father's absence from the home. I read an article that claimed "the curse of fatherhood is distance." Good fathers work to overcome that distance. They work to be with their boys emotionally and to be in tune with what is going on in their kids' lives. Unfortunately, many men in my generation had fathers who were present physically but absent emotionally. Research bears this out. Samuel Osherson, Ph.D., in his book *Finding Our Fathers*, studied 370 men who graduated from Harvard in the mid 1960s. They were the successes of society, the guys who made it. Armed with degrees, they went into their respective vocational battlefields and won big. Yet many of them had been wounded by fathers who were not there for them emotionally as they were growing up. Osherson

concluded his research by noting that the psychological absence of fathers is "one of the great underestimated tragedies of our times."

If you look around, you will see evidence of the tragedy. Your church is full of men who feel their fathers were not there for them. One study of successful businessmen, scientists, and scholars found that the vast majority believed that their fathers were either absent or a negative influence in their lives. Another study showed that 85 percent of the participants had fathers who were physically absent, emotionally absent, or abusive.

Many men have had fathers who were absent or distant, but these men dare not pass that trait on to their children. Fathers need to create new links in the chain, so their sons do not have to deal with the emotional wounds so many men carry. We must save our boys, so we can save our families.

One thing the local church can do is to help men know how to be strong, loving husbands and fathers. A church can partner experienced dads with inexperienced dads to help the younger men make wise choices about raising their children. It can create mentoring programs and offer training to new husbands so they know how to lead their homes with wisdom and loving



**"Can I play with your toes, Pastor? My dad says you have feet of clay."**



concern for their wives. As a pastor, you can encourage leaders to model both physical and emotional closeness to their families and can in this way reshape the church. In fact, if you or the leaders of the men's ministry will set the example for the other men, they will soon start to see changes in their church.

missionaries, or theological professors.

- 120 were professors at various universities.
- 110 became attorneys.
- 60 were prominent authors.
- 30 were judges.
- 14 served as presidents of universities and colleges.

children. Edwards was one of the great minds of history, yet this world-class scholar had his priorities right. He not only made sure he made it home for dinner, but he got in at least 1 hour of family time every night. It's my guess that Edwards made a difference in generation after generation because he

## If men are going to be the family leader that God has called them to be, they must be there, on site, close to their boys, consistently.

One man can make a difference. Churchill saved England. Lombardi turned the Packers from doormats into legends. Namath convinced the Jets they could win the Super Bowl. Iacocca turned Chrysler around. One man can make a difference.

### CREATING THE STRUCTURE

Jonathan Edwards was one man who made a difference. Born in 1703, he was perhaps the most brilliant intellectual America has ever produced. A pastor, writer, and later president of Princeton, he and his wife had 11 children. Of his known male descendants . . .

- more than 300 became pastors,

- 3 served in the U.S. Congress.
- 1 became the vice president of the United States.

Jonathan Edwards made a difference because he saved his boys. And his boys saved their boys. And those boys grew up to save their boys. Generation after generation, the boys were saved. He was just one man, but he positively affected hundreds and even thousands of his descendants after his death. Although Edwards was known for his daily regimen of 13 hours in the study and his busy schedule of teaching, writing, and pastoring, he made it a habit to come home and spend 1 hour each day with his

understood his God-appointed role as husband and father.

As you look toward the future, what will your church's legacy look like? Will there be a chain linking generation after generation of godly men, who in turn produce other godly men? Or will it be one generation after another of confused leadership from men who have no clear-cut role model? Pastor, the destiny of those future generations is in your hands. The choices you make with your family today will determine the quality of life in your family tree for generations to come. Likewise, the priorities you set in your men's ministry to create an instructive and supportive network for the husbands and fathers in your congregation will influence your entire community for generations. One man can make a difference, and a group of committed men working together can multiply that positive difference exponentially. And if we save our boys, it will be the greatest and most fulfilling accomplishment of our lives **e**

### A HARVEST OF FATHERS AND HUSBANDS— A PASTORAL CHALLENGE

There is no greater calling in a man's life than marriage and parenthood. As pastors, we must show our men they are called by God to fulfill these two roles. And we must teach men that they can be God's instruments of love and life through marriage and parenthood. One of the most powerful ways I can teach my men this truth is to love my wife and be the best father I can.

The role of father is being confused by today's generation. From the courthouse to the schoolhouse, the family is in a state of crisis. Only the church has the light to turn this darkness around. And only godly men, with God's power, can meet the challenge of presenting to their families and today's society what it means to be a husband and father. Today's pastors must lead the charge in this endeavor. We cannot run away from this challenge; we must lead our men to be transformed into the fathers and husbands God has called them to be.

—Anthony Cervero, Ventura, California

*Steve Farrar, Dallas, Texas, is founder and chairman of Men's Leadership Ministries.*

*This article was adapted from his book Point Man: How a Man Can Lead His Family ©1990 by Steve Farrar. Used by permission of Multnomah Publishers, Inc.*





BY MARIA KHALEEL-GILLELAND

# Preaching That Transforms: These BONES Shall Live

James Earl Matthew said, "Preaching as God intended will never lose its power nor its reason for being. Human concern will shift with every generation, but God's means of addressing human need will never change."

Pastors will never be more culturally relevant and better able to connect with people of this generation than when they stand under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the timeless truths of God's Word.

Preaching may seem unable to compete with the fast-paced multimedia culture in which we live where appetites have been whetted by special effects, action-packed movies, and video wizardry. We want to preach the gospel and see lives transformed. Yet, when we look at our congregation, we may see a man who is cheating on his wife; a businessman who has pulled a fast one on the IRS; the restless teenagers in the back pew passing notes and appearing to be completely tuned out; the church officer who is doing his best to undermine our ministry; and the man who, within the first 5 minutes of our sermon, is already fast asleep.

Pastors do not have to compete with Hollywood. They have something television, and the movies can never give: the life-transforming Word of God and the power of His Holy Spirit. Pastors bring words that are healing balm to hurts, words that quench thirsty souls, words that break bondages and set the captives free, words that affect eternity.

Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."

We use drama to bring people to encounter God. But the appointed means God has ordained to transform lives is the preaching of the gospel. It is the power of God to save.

The prophet Ezekiel lived in desperate times (Ezekiel 37:1–14). The nation of Israel had been carried into captivity to Babylon due to its own sin. Though it had been warned for years by the prophet Jeremiah and others, Israel continued to rebel. As a result, through three waves of invasions, the Babylonians destroyed the city of Jerusalem and took its inhabitants captive. While Jeremiah stayed in Jerusalem to minister to the remnant who remained, Daniel and Ezekiel were taken into exile and ministered to the exiled Jews.

Every prophet of God is given divine revelation and then entrusted with the responsibility to share that message as God directs. In Ezekiel 33, God gave Ezekiel a picture of his responsibility. The one who received a message from God was like a watchman. If the watchman failed to warn the people and they were destroyed, the watchman would be held responsible. Yet, the watchman had the power to declare the message; and, if the people listened, they would be saved.

The destiny of people is in our hands. But it is the highest and greatest privilege to be chosen to be God's messenger. Ezekiel 37 reveals that God's message preached in God's power can transform lives. It can impact nations and change the world. Spirit-anointed

preaching is God's means by which His power is unleashed in the world to do His work.

Much preaching today is academic, intellectual, and informational. It is communicated with eloquence and oratorical skill, but it is powerless to change lives. Spirit-anointed preaching is when the fire falls from heaven; when unction rises within the soul. It is where the preacher leaves off and the Holy Spirit takes over. That's when the Holy Spirit convicts, corrects, woos, delivers, heals, revives, and restores.

There is power in Spirit-unctionized preaching—power that cannot be obtained with academic degrees, hermeneutical skill, homiletical position, or exegetical study. It cannot be taught; it must be caught through prayer and waiting on the Lord.

Ezekiel 37 reveals four essentials of preaching that transforms.

#### **THE PREPARATION OF THE MESSENGER**

The messenger must be empowered by the Spirit. Ezekiel 37:1 says, "The hand of the Lord was upon me." The qualification for ministry is not our degree from the institute of higher learning. The qualification for ministry is not the credential we carry in our pocket or hang on our wall. The qualification for ministry is the hand of the Lord on our life. The hand of the Lord is God's strength; it is God's power; it is God's equipping us to do the task He has called us to do.

Ezekiel's call was not an isolated event; in fact, it began in chapter one. Ezekiel was by the river Chebar when the word of the Lord came to him and the hand of the Lord was on him.

The phrases—"the hand of the Lord was upon me" and "the word of the Lord came to me" are used repeatedly of Ezekiel. It was a lifestyle for Ezekiel to walk in the anointing of God and to be tuned to His voice. When we walk under the control of the Holy Spirit, we will hear God's voice and receive God's revelation.

#### **BE MOVED BY THE SPIRIT**

The hand of the Lord carried Ezekiel in the Spirit and set him down in a valley full of dry bones. If Ezekiel were candidating for a place of ministry, I doubt he would have chosen the valley of dry bones as his new congregation.

We need to be sure we are where the Spirit of the Lord wants us, and we are not at a church because of a cushy salary package. Then we will preach with conviction, minister with commitment, and persevere through a time of dry bones until we see God move.

Ezekiel was stationed in the middle of a huge battlefield where tens of thousands had been slain. The vultures had gathered there time and time again. The rains had washed the bones clean. The bones were white, having been bleached by the sun. There was no sign of life. Yet, this is where the Spirit placed Ezekiel to minister.

The Holy Spirit will help us see the true condition of the people we minister to and will cause our hearts to be sensitive to their needs. We will never be more seeker sensitive than when we are Spirit sensitive.

We hear about preaching to people's felt needs. But Israel in that day did not know what its true need was. The people may have felt their true need was for deliverance from Babylonian captivity. They may have thought their need was to return home to Jerusalem. But the Spirit showed Ezekiel their true condition and their need.

We can get in the mind of unchurched Harry and Mary, but the unchurched may not know their true spiritual need. We can poll our congregation to find out what the hot spiritual topics are, but the church often does not know its own spiritual need.

As Ezekiel viewed the dismal scene, two thoughts arose in his mind. First, the bones were many. The need was overwhelming. Second, the bones were very dry. The condition was intensely desperate.

Mere information could not address the need of that congregation of dry bones. Ezekiel could have told them why they needed the Spirit's life in





them. He could have given them the seven steps to spiritual life and it would not have brought life. They needed God to breathe on them.

Too much preaching is informational, not transformational. Only the Spirit of God can destroy the yoke of the enemy and transform a person.

When you first entered into ministry and began to preach, if you are like most of us, you were desperate before God. You said, "Lord, I need to hear from You. God, give me a message." Before you stood in the pulpit you cried out, "God, You must be with me. You must anoint me." But after a few years of ministry, you learned how to prepare a polished

Ezekiel prophesied to the bones, but there was still no breath in them. There was a noise, a shaking, a coming together, but still no life. There is a lot of noise in our churches—music, preaching, and multimedia. I am for these things, but they are not a substitute for the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel saw the bones come together into an organized body. In the same way, our churches run like well-oiled machinery. We have vision statements, mission statements, purpose statements. But it doesn't matter how much you dress up a corpse; it's still dead.

There was no life until Ezekiel prophesied to the wind. Then the

the message with such unction of the Holy Spirit that it comes forth with the authority of the Lord.

Remember what was said of Jesus in the Gospels. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29, KJV). Why? Because the rabbis of that day said, "Well, Rabbi Gamaliel said . . ." They simply regurgitated what Rabbi Gamaliel said. It was the word of the word of somebody who said he had heard from the Lord.

Be sure you're not just regurgitating what somebody else said. Be sure you are hearing a word from the Lord for the people to whom you minister. We

## **Pastors will never be more culturally relevant and better able to connect with people of this generation than when they stand under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the timeless truths of God's Word.**

message. You learned how to have pulpit presence. And you learned you could get in the pulpit without desperate times of prayer before God.

Listen to the question God asked His servant: "Son of man, can these bones live?" (verse 3).\*

The phrase "son of man" is a reference to Ezekiel's humanity. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for these bones to live. But Ezekiel's faith was in God when he said, "O, Sovereign Lord, you alone know" (verse 3).

The preacher stands between two worlds. The first command was to preach to the bones, and the second command was to prophesy to the wind. It takes both to see lives transformed. Prophesying to the wind is intercession and a desperate plea to God to endue the people to whom we preach with His life. There are a lot of people prophesying to the bones. But we lack a great deal of prophesying to the wind. Preaching without prayer is ineffectual.

breath came and infused life into those bones. When the Spirit blew, that congregation received life and stood to its feet as a mighty army. If it happened for Ezekiel, it can happen for our churches. Whatever condition our churches may presently be in, God wants to breathe on them and pour out His Spirit. But we must be empowered, moved, and be led and utterly dependent on the Spirit.

Preparation of the messenger comes first, then the revelation of the message. When we are spiritually prepared, we will hear from God. What the people need is not another sermon; they need to hear from God.

### **BE FAITHFUL TO DECLARE THE MESSAGE, DESPITE WHAT WE SEE BEFORE US**

Can these bones live? God's power is not limited by our circumstances. God's Word is not bound by man's indifference. God's Word is alive and powerful. We must prophesy. Prophesy means to speak forth for God. We must proclaim

need God to speak through us with a force of "thus says the Lord."

Paul did not come with excellence of speech or wisdom in declaring the testimony of God. Rather, he came in weakness, fear, and much trembling. His speech was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in power and demonstration of the Spirit.

We must be faithful to declare the message with God's heart. Ezekiel heard every little rustling and shaking because his heart was sensitive. We must be faithful to declare the message God has given us. We can't compromise the message because we are afraid of offending the family that gives the biggest tithe. We need to prophesy as the Lord commanded.

### **TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE MESSAGE OF GOD'S WORD**

**The Word of God convicts people of their condition.**

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached under the anointing of the

Holy Spirit: "You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross" (Acts 2:23). But by the end of his preaching, "they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers what shall we do?' " (2:37).

Recently two Colombians who had just arrived in the United States came to our Sunday morning service. They didn't speak English, so they heard the service through electronic translation. At the end of the service they both gave their hearts to the Lord. They came back to our 5:30 p.m. Spanish service with three friends. One of those friends gave his heart to the Lord. Then they stayed for our 6:30 p.m. service, and the other two gave their hearts to the Lord. In 1 day five

#### God's Word sanctifies.

In our church is a woman who is an altar worker and prayer ministry leader. When she first started coming to our church, you could tell she partied on Saturday night and came to Sunday morning service to fulfill a duty. But God began to transform her life on the outside and in her heart as well. She says, "When somebody first invited me here, I would go to clubs on Saturday night. Then I would just sit through the service on Sunday morning. But after a while God started dealing with me and I could no longer do the things I used to do." The preaching of God's Word sanctifies people's lives.

#### God's Word brings deliverance.

A 7-year-old girl spent the summer in

on her, her body would go into contortions. Her voice dropped to the level of a bass and she said heinous things. We prayed, and that young girl was delivered. Two weeks later we baptized eight members of her family because they saw the miracle of God in her life. The Word of God brings freedom.

#### God's Word brings healing.


Ten years ago, a woman who said she was born Catholic and would die Catholic was diagnosed with lupus. Her friends kept inviting her to church and she said, "No, I'm Catholic. I'll never go to a Protestant church." The disease became so grave she came one Sunday. The message God gave me was that the Lord still heals today. God delivered her from lupus. She got

## The Holy Spirit will help you see the true condition of the people's lives to whom you minister and will cause your heart to be sensitive to the needs of your people.

Colombians had received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior even though they didn't speak English. It was the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Haiti with her grandparents who are voodoo priests. She came back demon possessed. She came into our prayer ministry and every time we laid hands

saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit within 1 month. That woman is one of our most dedicated ministers in the church today.

Spirit-anointed preaching of the Word will produce revival. It will produce salvation. It will produce healing. It will produce deliverance. R.A. Torrey said, "Pentecostal preaching produces Pentecostal experience." The Word of God preached under the anointing of the Holy Ghost will transform lives. These bones shall live. 

Maria Kahleel-Gilleland is senior pastor of New Life Assembly of God, Pembroke Pines, Florida. The preceding was a sermon she preached during the 2002 Pentecostal Preachers Conference held in Springfield, Missouri.

\*Scripture references are from the New International Version.





**We want the theologically misinformed to leave the**

**preaching event shaking their heads in astonishment**

**and saying, "I didn't know God is like that."**

# PREACHING TO THOSE WHO GOD MISUNDERSTAND

The first-time visitor walked out of the church with an astonished look on his face. Astonishment is not common among our members, so I was curious. Before I could inquire, he said, “I didn’t know God is like that.”

As a 45-year veteran of pulpit and people, I am not usually lost for words, so my sudden taciturnity surprised me. Unable to respond declaratively, I finally asked: “God is like what?”

The forty-something man laughed lightly and moved a step toward me. He seemed vulnerable and hopeful. “Like you talked about in your sermon,” he said. “I didn’t know God is like that.”

The woman in line behind him thought the man’s time with me was up and cleared her throat to make that known. He got the message and moved on. I never saw him again, but his words wrapped themselves around my perception of homiletics.

That afternoon I went to my office to pull the morning’s sermon from the file to find out what I had said about God that startled our visitor. I had preached a simple sermon on the Prodigal Son’s father, saying that in this parable Jesus gives us His take on God.

Sitting in my office that Sunday afternoon and pondering the visitor’s astonishment, I realized it wasn’t so much what this story says about God as what it doesn’t say that impressed him. It doesn’t say the father judged the son or beat him up with guilt. No mention is

made of penalty or reparation. The story of the Prodigal’s father addresses this man’s misunderstanding of God, I concluded, fathoming now his astonishment. *My preaching this morning provided him a theological corrective, I said to myself.*

The following Thursday I was leading a class on Christian parenting and decided to test my premise. “Before next week, I want each of you to draw a picture of your childhood God and bring it with you,” I said. Facial expressions around the room demanded further explanation. I added, “Draw a picture of how you perceived God when you were a child.”

The next Thursday, 9 of the 13 class members brought pictures. Their pictorial depictions of God confirmed what I’d suspected. All were rendered negatively. One man, father of three boys, had drawn with dark crayons a picture of God in a police uniform holding a billy club. A single mom showed, with an uncomplicated black-and-white portrayal of God holding chains and looking mean and angry. One couple presented a joint effort that utilized scraps of material and glitter. It represented God holding lightning bolts and thrusting them forcibly forward. These pictures portrayed the God these people had grown up with, the God of our recent Sunday morning visitor.

God was misrepresented to many in their formative years when theology

took shape. Consequently, part of the church’s preaching task is to correct this misunderstanding of God. We want the theologically misinformed to leave the preaching event shaking their heads in astonishment and saying, “I didn’t know God is like that.”

As the misunderstanding is theologically derived, so is the corrective. The God of our misconception—who beats us up—becomes, through appropriate preaching, the God who lifts us up. Had the impatient woman behind our visitor that Sunday morning not cleared her throat, he would have told me that’s what he meant. He previously thought God attempted to devalue him, but had now heard the opposite.

In my office that afternoon, I poured over the sermon manuscript, looking for clues. What did I say that challenged this man’s concept of God? I’d already guessed the way I preached—homiletics by metaphor—made some contribution.

We preach metaphorically to teach theologically. The Greek *metapherein* indicates a transfer. Transferring Jesus’ parables to theology, we create a polemic that, by definition, introduces theological corrective. Parables, through preaching, move people from what Jesus said to who God is. God is like the Prodigal’s father, a woman hunting a misplaced coin, a shepherd beating the bushes for a stray sheep (Luke 15). No police uniform on

such a God, no lightning bolts vengefully clutched. Biblical metaphors, convincingly preached, counter theological misunderstanding.

The possibility of transference is not confined to parables. Jesus presented a holy and true God to the woman He affirmed at the well (John 4). When Jesus defended an adulterer in front of religious authorities whose theology had gone awry (John 8), He drew a corrective picture of God. Ecclesiastics thought they represented God by shunning a blind man healed by Christ. But Jesus provided alternate theology when He hung out with that man in the very temple from which he had been excommunicated (John 9). God can also be transferred, but not as readily, from both nonparabolic and nonnarrative parts of the Bible, such as Paul's speeches.

Continuing to dissect my sermon manuscript that Sunday afternoon, I knew additional reasons existed for the man's perception shift. Taking a pen, I circled everything that might have influenced him. When I finished, I detected a pattern that was doctrinal in nature. Actually, everything I said subordinated itself to doctrine. Encouraging such submission, Ian Pitt-Watson says homiletics "employs communications skills but owes obedience to biblical theology alone."<sup>1</sup>

Built foundationally under my exegesis of Jesus' parabolic take on God were the doctrinal issues of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.

## INCARNATION

"The God who came among us in Jesus Christ is the God who embraces the Prodigal upon his return," I explained in this sermon. "That's the God who comes, standing at the door," I continued. "That is why God comes in Jesus Christ—to be there when we get back from the far country. It's the Word become flesh who threw a party for that boy."

To those who misunderstand God, we preach the Incarnation as affirmation of God's faith in His creation. In Jesus, God spells himself out in the language of love. Incarnation means we

are worth coming to. We are worth God starting history over again, and turning the human situation around.

Clarence Jordan explains 2 Corinthians 5:14 this way: "God was in Christ putting His arms around the world and hugging it to himself." When we preach the Incarnation, we reconfigure the opinion many have of God. God who comes and hugs carries no lightning bolts of retribution.

## CRUCIFIXION

Not only are we worth coming to, we are worth dying for. In my sermon I said the Prodigal's father is the crucified Christ. I explained, "God who came died for us and that is who stands at the door, welcomes us home, and takes us in. Crucifixion gives God the right to love us in the midst of our prodigality."

C.S. Lewis writes, "It costs God nothing, so far as we know, to create nice things; but to convert rebellious wills cost Him crucifixion." God paid the cost gladly because of what we mean to Him. The Cross speaks of our infinite value. Christ's crucifixion is our coronation. No matter how tough things are, our best days are ahead of us because Christ died for us. Jesus told the crucified thief good news, and that's the comfort we project when preaching the Crucifixion to those who misunderstand God.

A little fellow just learning math went to church with his parents and, seeing a cross prominently displayed, exclaimed, "Look, there's God's plus sign." What we lose in Eden's garden we find on Calvary's hill. The Cross demonstrates how far God's love goes, and whom it is for.

## RESURRECTION

"Jesus deserted the tomb before they had opportunity to erect a memorial stone and went straight to the front door of the Father's house to await the Prodigals' return," I said to my congregation that morning.

David G. Buttrick, speaking of a doctrinal foundation for homiletics, says we should begin "where in fact Christology begins, with the resurrection of Jesus

Christ."<sup>2</sup> God is seen most clearly through the lens of the risen Lord. God raised Jesus Christ to function soteriologically as the Prodigal's father.

Thomas G. Long says that "when all is said and done, the Resurrection is the claim that you can never tell just where Jesus is going to show up. And that is the best news our voices are privileged to speak."<sup>3</sup>

William H. Willimon addresses the post-Resurrection presence of Jesus when he writes, "When will we become accustomed to death's defeat and the incursions of God? That the whole history of God's intrusions among us is the tale of the defeat of death's dominion? Easter is ubiquitous. When will we get it in our heads? God came back."<sup>4</sup>

Easter is ubiquitous. No context escapes Christ's presence. Not divorce, child abuse, shattered dreams, deceit, alcoholism, betrayal. We are privileged to preach the risen Christ everywhere for everybody all the time. Christ is risen to be with us, all of us.

Accepting that truth is what astonished our Sunday visitor. He heard the sound of sandaled feet and felt Jesus pull alongside him for his journey, whatever it is. He hadn't known God was like that, but now he understood. Affirming who stood at the door and who was welcomed home, he could go to the party.

Preaching does that. **e**

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# Discipline: A Father's Responsibility

BY STANLEY M. HORTON

**A**re you afraid to spank your child? Some recent court decisions might make parents think twice about spanking. Yet, as Christians, we must take the Bible as our guide.

Both the Old and New Testaments expected the father to discipline his children. "Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in" (Proverbs 3:12\*). "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?" (Hebrews 12:7).

## THE OLD TESTAMENT AND DISCIPLINE

The first meaning of discipline is not physical punishment. In Proverbs 3:12, the Hebrew *yokhiach* basically means "sets right" or "shows what is right." However, Proverbs also warns that talk may not be enough. "Folly is bound up in the heart [including the mind] of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15). "Folly" (Hebrew,

importance of the direction given.

The importance of the use of the rod is further emphasized in Proverbs 23:13,14: "Do not withhold discipline (Hebrew, *musar*) from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death."

Solomon probably had in mind how children sometimes react. My father shaved with an old-fashioned straight razor. He kept it sharp with a razor strop that hung inside the bathroom door. When my father came with the razor strop to punish me, the sight of it caused me to start screaming as if I were going to die. But I didn't die because my father tempered his use of the strop out of love. It stung, but did not do any damage.

My screams did not stop my father from punishing me. Proverbs wants us to know that letting anything keep a parent from punishing a child who needs it can be disastrous. "The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to itself

do whatever he wants and "disgraces his mother." Every child needs instruction, training, discipline.

Not every passage that deals with discipline mentions a rod. The Psalmist reminds us, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear (Hebrew, *y'r'av*, "reverence so as to obey and stay loyal to") him" (Psalm 103:13).

## THE NEW TESTAMENT AND DISCIPLINE

Paul warned, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training (Greek, *paideia*, "discipline, training, encouragement") and instruction (Greek, *nouthesia*, "counsel, warning, instruction, correction") of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). The phrase "of the Lord" is the key. The discipline and instruction come through the parents' submission to God's Word and God's authority.

In Colossians 3:21, the Bible adds, "Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." Training and instruction should end up being positive, encouraging, even joyful, making the children happy instead of bitter. There is no place here for a parent's impatience, frustration, or anger as a cause of punishment.

Hebrews 12:7, quoted earlier, is part of a passage that has Proverbs 3:11,12 in mind. Hebrews 12 applies to all of us the lessons that the heroes of faith in chapter 11 demonstrated. We are challenged to run the race of life with perseverance (Greek, *hupomone*, patient endurance that keeps confidence in God and obeys in the midst of adversity or suffering), looking away from our difficulties and fixing our gaze on Jesus, who will bring our faith to

**As we accept God's discipline in love,  
we can become better, more loving in the  
discipline of our children.**

*'iwweleth*) includes foolish actions done because the child does not know better, does not understand, or is inexperienced.

Another word for discipline (Hebrew, *musar*, derived from *yasar*, "to instruct") also indicates that direction is given that must be closely followed and the rod (Hebrew, *shevet*, "staff"—used as a sign of authority) was used to reinforce the

disgraces his mother" (Proverbs 29:15). The fact the rod of correction (Hebrew, *tokhachah*, "reproving, showing the correct way") imparts wisdom indicates further that the father warns and instructs the child. Verse 17 adds that disciplining (instructing, correcting) the child will cause him to "give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul"—in contrast to the undisciplined child who is allowed to

completion. Indeed, we are to consider His example “who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (verse 3). Keeping our eyes on Jesus, we are to: “Endure hardship as discipline (Greek, *paideian*, “training, correction”; using district words to correct in love); God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness” (12:7–10).

The Greek nouns and verbs translated “discipline” were used of training and teaching the child, using punishment when necessary, to produce correct behavior and develop character, self-control, and courage. The Mosaic Law (Hebrew,

*torah*, “instruction”) was “put in charge” (was a temporary tutor, Greek, *paidagogos*) to lead Israel through the centuries until it was time for Christ to come (Galatians 3:24). But now that we are under grace and have the Holy Spirit to lead us as we follow Christ, we still need God-given discipline. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches (Greek, *paideuosa*, “instructs, encourages, disciplines”) us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11–14).

Sometimes God allows suffering to accomplish His discipline. Peter wrote, “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you

participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed” (1 Peter 4:12,13). Like Paul we can “rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Romans 5:3–5).

As we accept God’s discipline in love, we can become better, more loving in the discipline of our children—helping them make the right choices, sometimes by the rod, sometimes by giving them difficult tasks or causing them to suffer the loss of something treasured or something that might lead them astray. **e**

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

# Finding What's Important

BY T. RAY RACHELS

**A**rkansas Methodist Bishop Richard Wilke's wonderful book, *And Are We Yet Alive?*, gives some powerful lessons on waking up to the Spirit of God and His eternal purposes before spiritual lethargy and deadness can take its killing toll on our lives.

Wilke quotes someone who once asked Robert Schuller how many ministers his church had. Schuller answered rather abruptly that the questioner had just made three mistakes. First, it isn't his church; it belongs to Christ. Second, although the Crystal Cathedral has several clergy members on staff, every member of the congregation is a minister. Everybody who joins the Crystal Cathedral is in ministry. Only a few are clergy. Third, they are not a church; they are a mission station. Every congregation should be a mission station.

Wilke also alludes to John Naisbitt's book, *Megatrends 2000*. Naisbitt comments that at one time the railroads were the most prestigious corporations

business of running railroads. Wrong! They were in the transportation business. What might have happened if they had understood they were in the transportation business? Naisbitt conjectures that the Pennsylvania Railroad

make a difference and what makes the difference in their lives. He said the answer can be summed up in one word: *vision*. "It's the difference between being in the middle of the action and watching from the sidelines. It's the difference

**Do I insist on my own work being more visible, more credited, more praised than others?**

would have been expanded to include trucking and airlines if its leaders would have seen their task as moving people and produce effectively and efficiently from one place to another.

Many people believe that our business is to run the church. That is why we are in trouble, just as the railroads are in trouble. Our job is not to run the church; our job is to present the Savior to the world. "For God did not send his

between floundering in uncertainty and moving ahead in the assurance of God's leading and purpose."

Barna defined vision as "a comprehensive sense of personal ministry. It means knowing where you are with the Lord, where your ministry is going, and how you are going to get there. Vision is the 'big picture' of the opportunities open to you, a divinely inspired insight into how you can minister effectively in your world. Vision is the key to ministry. It will unlock your potential for fruitful service."

Aubrey Malphurs writes in *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century*: "Ministry without vision is like a surgeon without a scalpel, a cowboy who has lost his horse, a carpenter who has broken his hammer. To attempt a ministry without a clear, well-articulated vision is to invite a stillbirth."

Joseph Bayly, Christian thinker and author, once talked about a visit he had made to England's Salisbury Cathedral. The cathedral's construction began in A.D. 1220 and was completed in 1265. Several generations later, workmen added a tower and spire rising 400 feet

**Do personal pronouns like "I," "me," "my" frequently fudge their way into our vision of ministry?**

in America. The Pennsylvania Railroad was chosen as the best-run corporation in the world. This is not so today. Today the railroads are in disrepair and disgrace. What happened? Naisbitt says those in charge of the railroads misunderstood the law of the situation. That law requires that we ask ourselves what business we are really in. The railroad magnates thought they were in the

Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its savior" (John 3:17, TEV).

The church needs a new vision of mission. Let us pray that our young men and women will have visions of a world transformed, that our old men and old women will dream of a church on fire.

A few years ago in *Discipleship Journal*, church-life researcher George Barna talked about Christians who



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above the roof, the highest in England.

The cathedral guide pointed out that the windows were transparent rather than stained glass, although that was not the original condition of the windows. The guide explained: "Several centuries ago a new floor was added. The floor contractor came in when the job was finished, took one look, and said, 'You can't see my new floor. There's not enough light from the windows.' So they tore out the beautiful stained glass windows and replaced them with ordinary glass, so people could admire the builder's new floor."

Bayly used this unusual detail to show the consummate pride of man, his obsession with the work of his hands, his destructive desire for praise, and in this instance, his insistence on ego satisfaction.

Could this story of the Salisbury Cathedral contractor and his floor be an eloquent and dramatic parable for people in ministry? Do personal pronouns like "I," "me," "my" frequently fudge their way into our vision of ministry?

Do I insist on my own work being more visible, more credited, more praised than others?

Could the preeminent question for people in ministry be "for whose glory does the church exist?" Or, as Bayly puts it, "Does the glory of filtered sunlight yield to visibility of the floor?"

May God help us become unselfish vision casters whose concern is not the floor, but the transcendent glory of God that shines down on our lives. **e**

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**"I vote NO on the parking lot expansion!"**

# Resolving Church Conflict

BY STEVE MARR

Tom was the pastor of counseling in a growing suburban church. Because he wanted to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals in the congregation who often came for counseling about marriage problems and other personal difficulties, he frequently scheduled appointments away from the church office. Often these appointments would stretch to several hours, during which time he was absent from the office. Unfortunately, he also struggled with his personal time management, occasionally arriving late for appointments and appearing disorganized.

Over time the administrative pastor and the church secretary, who usually had to cover for pastor, became frustrated. Although they both agreed something should be done, neither was willing to confront Tom about his absences and other practices.

or church-wide problems. And when the principal parties won't resolve the situation, the senior pastor or board has to get involved. In the end, failure to resolve conflicts affects everyone—pastors, staff, and parishioners.

Handling a situation like Tom's may never be easy. On-the-job confrontations seldom are. However, if a biblical pattern of conflict resolution had been followed, the church would not have encountered such severe difficulties, and the pastor of counseling could have remained as a productive team member.

Conflict in any organization is inevitable. Everyone has his own perspective on the events and people that make up the workplace. These different perspectives don't always mesh. The key to growth and progress—in spite of conflict—is to ensure that conflict is resolved in a positive way. The process is

times. Each time His strategy was to confront the issue immediately. He never let anything slide for the sake of keeping peace. With wisdom and enviable precision He faced each confrontation when it occurred.

Act quickly while the memory of an incident is fresh. Time has a way of rewriting facts. When we hold an offense or delay in confronting wrongdoing, our minds build on the foundation of frustration until the situation becomes distorted.

If we fail to act promptly when we have been wronged, we give our anger an opportunity to grow, thereby increasing the chances we will act inappropriately when we finally confront the issue. Most important, when we fail to act quickly, we lose the opportunity for immediate improvement in the circumstances. Had either the administrative pastor or the secretary acted quickly to resolve the conflict, the misunderstandings would likely have been alleviated and the scheduling problems would have improved measurably.

**The key to growth and progress—in spite of conflict—is to ensure that conflict is resolved in a positive way.**

Finally, after nearly a year, the senior pastor stepped in to investigate the increasing number of complaints. When Tom defended his habits as part of the job and seemed unwilling to change, the situation quickly became heated. Ultimately, the only solution was to dismiss Tom.

Too often, even within the church, unresolved conflict creates workplace tension. Issues that should be dealt with between individuals become staff-wide

just as important as the end result. Even if the ultimate solution is not pleasant, the process of resolving the conflict can be a positive experience.

Three biblical principles govern the conflict-resolution process. Implementing these principles can avoid the potentially divisive course of having the conflict spread throughout the congregation.

## DEAL WITH CONFLICT QUICKLY

The Pharisees attacked Jesus many

## DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE PERSON WHO HAS OFFENDED YOU

Jesus said, "If your brother sins, go and reprove him in private" (Matthew 18:15, NASB). Develop the biblical habit of going to the person who has wronged you. Who else can immediately change the situation?

Explain your perspective of the issue clearly and calmly. Stick to the facts and explain the consequences that have caused the problem. Recommend a solution. Stay positive by focusing the conversation on solutions and by not

attacking the person or the problem. Avoid stating how you feel and how you are personally affected, or you and your colleague could easily digress into a personal conflict.

If you are unsuccessful in dealing directly with the person, continue to follow the scriptural model and “take one or two more with you” (Matthew 18:16,

#### **DEAL WITH AN ISSUE COMPLETELY**

Don’t leave loose ends or wiggle room. Make sure each person involved understands all of the issues. Ask everyone to play back his or her understanding of the issues. When a solution is determined, ask each person to clarify his understanding. Have everyone verbalize agreement with the next steps to be

conflict be fully resolved, so be alert to the possibility of a deeper issue.

Tom’s desire to protect his counselees was admirable, but his methodology wasn’t. Setting limits early on through appropriate confrontation might have averted the year-long problem he caused. Sadly, someone like Tom can create division in the church if he is not properly confronted.

As long as imperfect people are involved, the church will never be perfect, but your efforts to resolve on-the-job conflict can make it a better place for everyone. The next time difficult issues arise, remember: deal with the issue quickly, speak only with the people directly involved, and make sure the situation is resolved completely. Then sit back and watch your church grow. **E**

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**In the end, failure to resolve conflicts affects everyone—pastors, staff, and parishioners.**

NASB). Talk to your associate pastors or staff members and request a meeting to openly discuss the issues. Remember, the only one who can effectively change the person’s behavior is the person himself. The purpose in bringing others into the discussion is to establish the facts and bring a balanced perspective, not to exert additional pressure. Do not discuss the issue with others just to let off steam. This is gossip and will only make the situation worse.

taken, then set the time frame for their responses. If future actions are to be different to avoid problems, clearly confirm the future change. Document the conversation in a memo to avoid future misunderstandings. Often a great meeting is ruined by failure to follow through.

When you are determined to deal completely with your challenge so it will not resurface, a deeper issue may emerge. Only when the real issue is addressed can

# Getting the Most Out of Your Volunteers

BY GREG ASIMAKOULOPOULOS

**W**hile making a routine flight from Portland, Maine, to Boston, Henry Dempsey heard an unusual noise near the rear of his commuter aircraft. He turned the controls over to his copilot and walked to the back of the plane. As he reached the tail section, the plane hit an air pocket and he was thrust against the rear exit door. Henry inadvertently discovered the source of the mysterious noise: the rear door had not been adequately latched. As the weight of Dempsey's body fell against the door, it flew open and the unsuspecting pilot was sucked out of the jet.

Detecting the open door on the instrument panel, the copilot radioed the nearest control tower and requested permission to land. He reported that his colleague had fallen out of the plane.

**Life becomes less stressful when you can maintain your grip of lay leadership who volunteer their time.**

Dempsey, however, had not fallen to his death. He had miraculously managed to grab hold of an outdoor ladder at the rear of the plane. He clung to it with his bare hands while the plane maintained a speed of 200 miles per hour and descended 4,000 feet.

Ten minutes later the jet landed. Dempsey's head was a mere 12 inches off the tarmac. According to the newspaper account, it took several minutes for the airport security to pry his fingers from the ladder.

For Henry Dempsey, holding on was a matter of life or death. For the small

church pastor, surviving the air pockets of stress requires knowing what to grab on to. I've discovered in my two decades of pastoral ministry that life becomes less stressful when you can maintain your grip of lay leadership who volunteer their time. Since pastors of churches whose pews are few don't have the luxury of paid associates, they need to make the most of those who donate their talents and time. Here are nine ways to encourage those who serve in the church (while keeping your peace of mind).

**1. Show appreciation.** Volunteers need recognition even more than paid staff. When we supplemented our church office with eight receptionists who each donate 4 hours once a week, we provided each with a nameplate.

When they come to work, they slide their names into the holder on the reception desk. We also make them feel important by giving them a sense of ownership in the church's mission. Public praise from the pulpit, newsletter recognition, and customized thank-you cards are a few of the ways volunteers can be compensated.

**2. Be flexible.** For years we struggled to find people who would commit to teach Sunday school 12 months straight. When we opted for a rotating schedule (each teacher gets every other month off), we had more than enough

volunteers. Our system may not resemble textbook recruitment, but it is more sensitive to the hectic lifestyles of our members.

**3. Give sufficient guidelines.** Uncertainty breeds anxiety and dissipated energy. Volunteers must be able to restate what they think you want them to do. Thoughts unattached to paper are too slippery for comfort. Job descriptions on paper aren't just for those drawing a salary. The ushers' job description is a good example. As part of the recruitment process, the ushers are given guidelines and expectations (in addition to a training session). They are assigned to a rotating monthly schedule—four Sundays on, four Sundays off. They are asked to wear a tie and suit or sport coat, and arrive 30 minutes before the service. Their duties include cheerfully distributing bulletins and assisting those who have difficulty finding a seat. Following the worship service, they tidy the sanctuary.

**4. Delegate responsibility and authority.** Contented workers are those who know a project is theirs to complete. They know the pastor will not step in and take control. When our missions conference was 4 months away, I met with the missions chairperson. After agreeing on the theme and desired outcomes of the month-long event, I felt comfortable leaving the details with Martin and his committee. Their enthusiasm and conscientiousness demonstrated in previous conferences had earned my trust. When it was all over, the committee beamed with a sense of accomplishment. Their pride was well deserved. The speakers they had chosen were top-notch. The way

they had creatively expressed the theme was remarkable. My willingness to keep hands off resulted in the committee agreeing to do it again the next year.

**5. Allow for extra time.** Time management is not just the struggle of paid professionals. Volunteers are juggling full-time jobs and family as well as ministry responsibilities. These issues occupy volunteers' minds and consume energy. That can interfere with the task you expect them to complete. Some office helpers need as much as half an hour to settle in and get their minds on the job. Some will brew coffee, make small talk, and flip through the church newsletter before they're ready to type a letter or file minutes. I not only need to be patient and flexible, I also try to be more generous with deadlines. Volunteers enjoy their work more, and more gets done in the long run.

**6. Show mutual respect.** Recently I asked the head of our volunteer receptionists for her insights on how I might better respond to a troubled church member she knows very well. Not only did she give me good advice, but she also left her work that day feeling she had contributed to the overall ministry of the church. I've found that if volunteer staff members are not included in regular pastoral staff meetings, at least they should be consulted. They need to feel their opinions and performance are respected.

**7. Allow for failure.** Our church board chairman was a military officer for more than 25 years. Steve leads a home Bible study and teaches Sunday School. In all of his commitments, he has tried a lot of novel programs. Not all of them have succeeded. Nonetheless, he has a reputation in our church for being a successful leader. He has taught me that volunteers can be motivated by wrong choices. He gives himself permission to make mistakes. He credits this core value to onetime Rear Admiral Grace Hopper of the United States Navy who claimed, "It's always easier to ask forgiveness than to ask permission."

Two of Steve's favorite sayings betray his approach to life. One he terms the eleventh commandment: "Thou shalt

not sweat the small stuff!" The other he places with the Beatitudes: "Blessed are those who have permission to change their minds."

Once Steve devised a system for assimilating new people into the life of our church. It sounded like a terrific idea. However, Steve's approach failed to weather the brainstorm. The visitors were not as willing to be assimilated as we had assumed. Rather than make a foiled idea fly, Steve quickly admitted defeat and changed to another approach. Because he was undaunted, I was too. Because he gave himself permission to fail, I've learned to do the same with others and myself. As long as you are working with people who know what success tastes like, you can give them the freedom to fall short. If you aren't sure what volunteers are capable of doing, delegate tasks you can afford for them to mess up.

**8. Provide regular time off.** Whether they're payroll- or cinnamon roll-rewarded workers, it doesn't matter. Church work is people work and people work leaves people tired. If we encourage them to take the summer off from teaching, Sunday School teachers are more inclined to return in the fall refreshed, with their emotional elastic back in shape. The same goes for volunteer custodial help, gardeners,

greeters, or worship leaders. A breather is the best investment to guarantee a high-yield return.

**9. Take time to celebrate.** At our church we look for reasons to have a party. We seize the moment to recognize accomplishments. We give framed certificates to new members. We acknowledge birthdays. It's not a novel idea; they do it in the hair salon where I get my haircut. They recognize every season of the year with contests, displays, and wall hangings. Sometimes they even wear costumes to celebrate a special day or occasion. The team of hairstylists obviously enjoys working together. Those who find reasons to blow trumpets or blow up balloons will laugh more, complain less, and trust each other to a greater degree.

Well, there you have it. Nine suggestions for reducing stress in your life by increasing your effectiveness as a manager of people. Benign neglect erodes the magnetic draw of our influence, and we risk becoming leaders in name only. As Christian management consultant Fred Smith is credited for having said, "He who thinks he is leading but has no one following is simply out for a walk." **E**

*Greg Asimakoupoulos is director of creative communications for Mainstay Ministries, Naperville, Illinois.*



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# The Spirit at the Center of the Table

B Y S T E V E P H I F E R

## PERSONAL JOURNEY TO THE TABLE

"This Do in Remembrance of Me." The words were cut deep into the wood of the table in front of the pulpit. As a child, they seemed also to be cut deep into my consciousness. As a teen, I asked my father why we didn't celebrate Communion every week the way some churches did.

"We want it to be special," Dad said. "Anything you do every week becomes ordinary, and this should never be ordinary."

Still, those words stayed with me: "This Do in Remembrance of Me."

Later as a young minister, I learned that the position of the table was significant. Generally, Assemblies of God churches have the pulpit and the Communion table centered in front of the platform, stating publicly that these things were central to our theology. But was it? "This do . . ."

In my thirties, I began a biblical study of worship, but only recently have I thought of Communion as an act of worship. Through a study of worship, I discovered that the Lord's Supper is

ordinance, something Jesus told us to do. The table at the center of the platform was not at the center of my life or my public worship.

## A JOURNEY BACK TO THE BIBLE

I went to the Scriptures to find out what the Lord's Supper was supposed to be. The things Jesus told us to do are not meaningless. He said His commands were life (John 6:63).

The Lord's Supper is referred to in the Scriptures by four terms: "breaking of bread," "the Lord's Supper," "Communion," and "Eucharist."

## Breaking of Bread (Acts 2:42,43)

Fellowship was an important part of the Early Church. In this passage, fellowship is listed separately from "breaking of bread," indicating two different meals. "Breaking of bread" is linked with prayer, making it a part of worship.

## The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20–26)

In drawing the distinction between a fellowship meal and the memorial meal

fullness of His resurrection power. When Jesus is the host, His righteousness is revealed. The bread represents His perfect life and limitless love. In the cup His atoning suffering is applied to us—by His stripes we are healed. His sustaining grace and flawless favor flow to us as we partake of His sufferings and His victories, and as we anticipate His soon return.

## Communion (1 Corinthians 10:16,17)

The Greek word "thanksgiving" (verse 16, NIV) and "blessing" (verse 16, NKJV), is *eulogia* and is defined as "fine speaking, i.e. elegance of language; commendation ("eulogy"), i.e. (reverentially) adoration; religiously, benediction; by implication, consecration; by extension benefit or largess."<sup>2</sup> Both words express the idea of blessing and thanking the Lord from our hearts.

The word "communion" (verse 16, NKJV) or "participation" (verse 16, NIV) is *koinonia* and is defined as: "partnership, i.e. (literally) participation, or (social) intercourse, or (pecuniary) benefaction: KJV—(to) communicate (-ation), communion, (contri-) distribution, fellowship."<sup>3</sup> As host of this Supper, the Lord presides over our participation, binding us to Him and to each other in an intense partnership that blesses Him and benefits us. In this two-way communion, we minister to Him with our sacrifice of thanksgiving and the Lord speaks to us by His Spirit.

## Eucharist (Mark 14:23–25)

The Greek word translated "gave thanks" is *eucharisteo*—"to be grateful, i.e. (actively) to express gratitude (toward); specially, to say grace at a meal:

**The Lord's Supper is biblically and historically considered to be the central act of Christian worship.**

biblically and historically considered to be the central act of Christian worship—the table is at the center of Christian history.

The table was centered in front of the platform in every church I had served. Yet, somehow Communion was just an

Jesus commanded, Paul indicated the prime distinctive of Communion—it is *the Lord's Supper*. The Greek words are *kuriakon deipnon*, a "meal belonging to the Lord."<sup>1</sup> Jesus himself, the host of the meal, presides over the remembrance. He is present at His table in the

KJV—(give) thank (-ful-s).<sup>4</sup> According to *Vine's*, “eu” means “well” and “charis” means “grace” or “thanksgiving.”<sup>5</sup> So, we

at the institution of the Lord’s Supper. This connection between “good thanks” at the table and “good thanks”

(*ana*, ‘up,’ or ‘again,’ and A, No. 1), is used (a) in Christ’s command in the institution of the Lord’s Supper, Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24,25, not ‘in memory of’ but in an affectionate calling of the Person himself to mind.”<sup>7</sup>

This is more than a memorial. The past is more than just remembered. Without crucifying Jesus again (the Roman Catholic view) we *participate* in symbols of the body and blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit takes grace from the Lord Jesus and makes it known to us. We give “good thanks” to God and receive “good grace” from Him (John 16:14).

#### **Covenant (Mark 14:23–25)**

Jesus described the Memorial Meal as the renewal of the New Covenant. The thanksgiving that flows from the believer and the grace that flows from God constitute the continuation of the eternal plan of God. The Lord’s Supper is

**At the beginning of the 21st century,  
will we, with our worship, regularly invite  
the Lord to dine with us?**

can call the “Eucharist” a “good thanks” or a “good grace.”

An interesting use of this verb is in a passage on the gifts of the Spirit. Paul pointed out benefits of various types of Spirit-empowered speech. He stated that he who speaks in tongues expresses thanksgiving with a high degree of excellence. “For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified” (1 Corinthians 14:17, NKJV). The word used here is the same one used by Jesus

as the Holy Spirit empowers our praise is a key to understanding the Pentecostal view of Communion.

Two other words are vital to this discussion.

#### **Remembrance (Luke 22:19)**

The Greek word for remembrance is *anamnesis* and is not easily translated into English. It is “a remembering, recollection to call me (affectionately) to remembrance”<sup>6</sup> and “ ‘a remembrance’

## **TEN WAYS TO MAKE COMMUNION MEANINGFUL**

### **USE THE BIBLICAL TERMS**

1. Emphasize the biblical phrase *breaking of bread* by teaching about the apostles’ doctrine and the Early Church. The story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus brings the revelatory nature on “seeing” the Lord.
2. Bring out the meaning of the *Lord’s Supper*. Emphasize the Lord as host of the meal, overseeing our celebration of His life, victory, and soon return.
3. Build the celebration around the term *Communion* by emphasizing our participation in the body (substance) and the blood (life) of Jesus by telling the story of the feeding of the 5,000. Believing is the work of God we do at the table as we eat and drink. Explain memorial as *anamnesis*—the bringing of a past event into our experience today.
4. Explain that *Eucharist* means “great thanksgiving.” The receiving of the elements is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord for His victory over Satan.

### **GIVE THE BIG PICTURE**

5. Celebrate the big picture. Tell the whole story of salvation: the Exodus, the entrance into the Promised Land, the coming of the Messiah, and His sinless life, atoning death, resurrection, and exaltation. By adding the big story dimensions, you can avoid the impression that a Communion service is sort of like a funeral for Jesus.

### **USE GREAT MUSIC**

6. Use the great hymns of the faith to tell the story. Communion is a wonderful chance to use the time-honored works of praise and worship: songs of the Cross, the blood of Jesus, and the Second Coming.
7. Use the wonderful new songs of the faith to bring out the devotional aspects of our relationship with Jesus: songs of love, holiness, devotion, and passion for God.
8. Use instrumental music for times of meditation or Scripture reading.

### **USE THE ARTS**

9. Great works of art can be projected as the big story is told. Banners can present truths visually. Candles and mood lighting can be used to create a worshipful attitude.
10. Drama can be used to bring life to the reading of Scripture. Also consider reading exhortations or written prayers.

—Steve Phifer, Springfield, Virginia

the Passover Meal for the New Testament.<sup>8</sup> Just as Old Testament worshipers were reminded of God's grace through their remembrance of the Exodus through a meal, New Testament worshipers participate in God's grace to them as they celebrate Communion. The word "covenant" in the Greek is *diatheke*: "properly, a disposition, i.e. (specially) a contract (especially a . . . will)."<sup>9</sup> The grace at the Lord's table is as dependable as the character of God himself, as powerful as His promises, and as far-reaching as His love. God keeps His covenant.

From the narratives of the feeding of the 5,000 and the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we learn other important details. In John 6:28,29 Jesus made it clear that the action of *believing* is what is meant by the *eating* of the spiritual food—"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (verse 29). From the story of Cleopas and his friend we see that although the Lord's presence and His words caused their hearts to catch fire, it was in the breaking of the bread that they *saw* Him (Luke 24:27–32). But, at that instant, Jesus vanished.

Biblically, then, when we receive the emblems of the Lord's life and death these things are happening:

1. We are giving thanks to Him and doing so with excellence.

2. His sustaining grace is flowing into us as we obey and honor Him.

3. We are communing with Him, participating in His life and victory, eagerly anticipating His return.

4. We are experiencing a renewal of the Lord's covenant with us. His promises are renewed and we renew our promises to Him.

5. He is revealed to us in the breaking of the bread. The Holy Spirit shows us our Lord in vivid reality.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit at the table, not the spirit of powerless ceremony or empty ritual. This is the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Paraclete, the revealer of the things of Jesus to those who believe.

## A JOURNEY TO HISTORY AND TO THE FUTURE

From church history we see that a weekly Communion quickly became the norm for the Early Church.<sup>10</sup> Centuries later the Roman view of the Lord's Supper was a triggering mechanism for the Reformation. Our 20th-century Pentecostal fathers got the doctrine right. Their doctrinal statement of the Assemblies of God is a masterpiece of succinct, well-crafted theology.<sup>11</sup> But have we shied away from Communion because of the errors of others?

In the 20th century, like the two

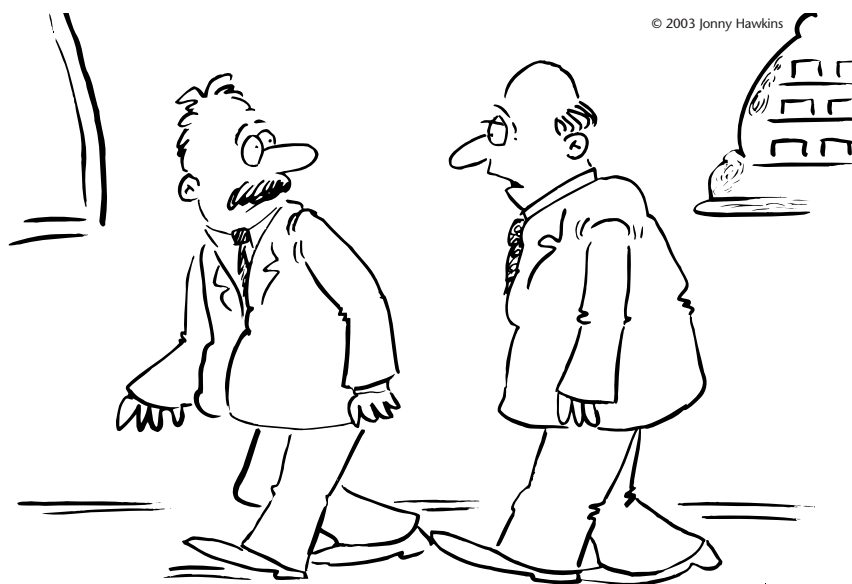
disciples on the road to Emmaus, we Pentecostals felt our hearts burn as the Holy Spirit set fire to the Word of God in us. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, will we, with our worship, regularly invite the Lord to dine with us? If we allow Him to break and bless the bread before us, will we suddenly see Him as never before? If so, this time He will not vanish from our sight. Through our participation in His life, death, and victory, He will flow through us by His Spirit to touch and heal a hurting world. **E**

Steve Phifer is worship arts pastor, Word of Life International Church, Springfield, Virginia.

\*Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references are from the New International Version.

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The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements—bread and the fruit of the vine—is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till He come!" William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton, ed., *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, Mo.: Logion Press, 1993), 110.



**"It doesn't matter that I didn't get any compliments on my sermon . . . my ego is self-inflating"**

# Crank Up the Volume

B Y C R A I G B R I A N L A R S O N

**M**y job as a preacher is to underline my hearers' Bibles for them. When God speaks in the human heart, He often whispers. Elijah learned that in the cave after the wind and earthquake.

Although God can be soft-spoken, occasionally He shouts for emphasis because people don't always listen as they should. God can boost the volume to bring people to a moment of understanding, change, and growth. When those near Jesus heard the voice of the Father from heaven, they said it sounded like thunder.

Given the decibel power at His disposal, when God wants to crank up the volume in the human heart, He often chooses a surprising means to do so—through a preacher. Not necessarily a loud preacher, just a person anointed of the Spirit, earnest about God's truth, who makes the Word and its application as clear as a desert sky.

A friend recently told me of an unforgettable experience she had while listening to Chuck Swindoll at Moody Bible Institute's Founders Week. "I

yet she would here and there bend the truth. Only when a preacher pointedly spoke those words did she fully hear what God had been saying to her for a long time.

God used a preacher to crank up the volume. Amazing. Why would He who

limitation in this age is to reach the perishing through partnership with people like you and me.

Therefore I preach with the assumption that the simplest truth in the Bible is inaudible, or invisible, to some people until I speak it in partnership with the

**God's voice thunders through human vocal cords and personality because God is determined to glorify himself by making much of humanity.**

is the Truth use preachers, who in their personal lives may themselves shade the truth—and sometimes intentionally lie—to emphasize His truth? Isn't that like a trumpet player putting a mute on his horn to play louder?

Perhaps it has something to do with the way God has chosen in this age both to hide and reveal himself. More than that, I believe God's voice thunders through human vocal cords and personality because God is determined

Holy Spirit. Until I say, "God wants you to pray and believe He will answer," some will never know the joy of answered prayer. Until I say, "God created everything that is," some will believe matter evolved from nothing. Some simply won't hear it or see it until I say it.

They need a preacher because they assume most of Scripture is irrelevant. They need a preacher because they deceive themselves. They need a preacher because they ignore what they do not understand. They need a preacher to validate what they only suspect is true.

The preacher has one of the most exalted roles imaginable: to help people take Almighty God seriously. I am certified mail for the Word of God. **e**

**Although God can be soft-spoken, occasionally He shouts for emphasis because people don't always listen as they should.**

remember exactly where I was sitting in the auditorium," she said. "I remember exactly what he said: 'God hates lying.' It had never struck me before how important it is to tell the absolute truth."

My friend is the daughter of a pastor. She grew up reading the Bible. She has known all her life that lying is wrong,

to glorify himself by making much of humanity. We are, after all, His crowning work.

He created us in His image. He died for us. He has forever united himself with human flesh in the resurrection body of Jesus. He has seated us with Christ in heavenly places. His chosen

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# The Biblical Challenge of Recovery

BY DON ALLEN, JR.

Today there are many different ideas concerning recovery from addiction. Some leading proponents of the recovery process try to convince us the disease concept is the only way of treating a recovering alcoholic or drug addict. This concept teaches that an alcoholic has an incurable disease that will progressively get worse if not treated. The only known cure for alcoholism is to no longer use alcohol or drugs, and to enter treatment for help. Others talk exclusively about the concept of sin, and the sin of drunkenness (they do not call it "alcoholism") should be renounced. One individual stated, "Lock them in a room and don't let them out till they accept Jesus as Savior and get their healing." These individuals are well-meaning and believe that we could throw all drugs and alcohol in the river, all of the social ills would be solved.

Scripture's perspective, though, shows that God has a plan of personal recovery for each individual that requires His intervention. With the

In many cases, the healing was immediate and complete. This same healing is seen today when God immediately heals a person from his or her infirmities. We sometimes try to explain why God chooses to heal some, while others are not healed. This is similar to the issues surrounding alcoholism. It may take years for someone to become an alcoholic; and, unless God heals immediately, it may take a lifetime to recover.

All healing in the Bible was not immediate, and sometimes God did not heal at all. Paul prayed three times, but God said, "My grace is sufficient" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Does Paul's lack of being healed reflect a lack of faith on his part? Paul had faith, but God had the perfect plan.

Naaman was given a part in his recovery. He was told to dip seven times in the Jordan River. I have seen men come into recovery programs who, like Naaman, thought a simple prayer would make everything better. Like Naaman, these men needed to follow the Lord's directions for recovery,

Those with carnal minds can easily relapse. Changing the mind is looking at what we believe and why we believe it, and replacing the thoughts that have not worked in the past with ideas and concepts that will work.

A friend batted left-handed because he was left-handed. No one could convince him his low batting average came from batting on the wrong side of the plate. Then someone told him to do an attitude check and listen to what other people were saying. Finally, after he changed his attitude and batted right-handed, his batting average soared. The same principle can be applied to one's change of attitude in recovery.

True, many alcoholics may have started with the sin of drinking and God will judge their sin. However, it is not my place to judge. It is my place as a minister, parent, substance-abuse counselor, and friend to help them realize that help is available.

We need to encourage addicts to do the following and seek practical help from a professional who understands addiction.

**Scripture's perspective . . . shows that God has a plan of personal recovery for each individual that requires His intervention.**

## HELP ADDICTS ADMIT THEY HAVE AN ADDICTION

Professional and Christian communities alike believe that recovery will not start until addicts admit they have a problem. Denial is not an answer to those seeking a cure. They cannot blame it on someone else. Individuals must accept the fact they have a problem and the addiction also affects their family, friends, church, and job. It takes a toll on those who care. The people who care can't admit their problems for them.

many challenges of recovery, each person dealing with addiction can find a personal, biblical solution. The idea is not to condemn the person for seeking help, but to help him find God's perfect will.

Throughout Scripture people who came to Christ for help did so in faith.

whether 6 months in a treatment facility or attending Alcoholics Anonymous. How God works in an individual's life is for God to decide.

Recovery is more than just a miracle; it is a change of lifestyle and attitude. If God heals our bodies and we don't change our minds, we remain carnal.

### SHARE WITH ADDICTS THAT CHRIST HAS THE ANSWER

Our faith in Christ does not always mean we get what we want. Paul stated in Philippians 4:19, "God shall supply all your need." A difference exists between needs and wants. I have believed God for good transportation to get around town and to take long trips. I want to drive a new Camaro, but my need is met with a 1998 Corsica.

A pastor friend said: "God will always answer prayer. Sometimes He says, 'Yes'; sometimes He says, 'No'; and sometimes He says, 'You have to be kidding.' " An alcoholic may not always be able to avoid seeing the open bottle of beer or wine on a table or the drug addict avoid the smell of marijuana or crack. Some will continue to struggle with the cravings for years after beginning recovery and asking God to heal. Does this mean they are not healed? No, it means that His grace is sufficient for them to get through the battle of life. We rejoice that the war for our heart, mind, and body is already won as we look forward to entering heaven with no more pain, sorrow, and craving.

### HELP ADDICTS SEEK THE COUNSEL OF MANY

Proverbs talks about seeking wise counsel. The recovery process for someone addicted to life-controlling substances requires him to seek a mature individual who can help him as he walks through the recovery process. Some people feel a recovering addict can only be helped by another addict. Though some issues may be best understood by someone who has been in recovery, people who have never had life-controlling addictions should not be ruled out. These individuals can care and share in ways that a person who is in recovery may not be able to. Addicts should seek out a support group like Alcoholics Anonymous and a mentor (mature Christian) to help provide strong support.

The man in Mark 2, who was sick with the palsy, needed a support group. Without the support of his four friends he would never have been lowered through the roof for his healing.

### HELP ADDICTS SET GOALS TO MAKE THE FUTURE BETTER THAN THE PAST

For some, the past looks good and the future looks bleak. Yet it is our responsibility to make the future better than the past. We can face the struggles of what is happening around us and simultaneously learn from the past.

Job never experienced a life-controlling problem, but he did lose his family, friends, health, and wealth. However, despite this, he was willing to grow out of the hardship and make the future better.

The biblical challenge of recovery is a growing process that those who have experienced addiction must learn to face. Recovering addicts need to study and find out how God can and will work in their lives. They need to accept the fact His grace is sufficient.

God has a plan to heal these people. It is our responsibility to help them find God's plan of healing. **e**

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# Is the IRS Targeting Pastors?

BY RICHARD R. HAMMAR

Is the IRS targeting pastors for audits? Is it sending pastors to jail? There are unscrupulous individuals trying to frighten pastors into thinking so. But the facts tell a much different story.

## WHAT ARE MY CHANCES OF BEING AUDITED?

There were 125 million individual income tax returns filed with the IRS in 2000. Only about 0.2% (2 out of 1,000) of these returns were audited. Stated differently, you have a 1 in 500 chance of being audited. *This is the lowest audit rate in history.* In 1980, your chances of being audited were 8 times greater than today. In 1990, they were 3 times greater.

The audit risk for pastors is no different from any other occupation. Of course, pastors can increase their audit risk slightly by reporting their income taxes as self-employed, by claiming a home office deduction, or by claiming substantial charitable contributions. But this is true of any taxpayer, regardless of occupation.

## IRS criminal investigators

How many IRS agents are devoted to criminal investigations? Not many. In 2000 there were 2,727. This represents about 10 criminal investigators per 1 million persons. And the number is shrinking. In 1995 there were 3,400.

## WHAT ARE MY CHANCES OF GOING TO JAIL?

For 1998 (the most recent year for which data is available), the IRS recommended to the Department of Justice that 3,129 individual taxpayers (out of 120 million) be prosecuted. That's about 1 out of every 38,270 taxpayers. But the Department of Justice only prosecuted

1,842 (1 out of every 65,008 taxpayers). Of this number, 1,744 were convicted (1 out of 68,661), and only 978 were sentenced to prison (1 in 122,439). This data is summarized in Table 1.

question. However, the answer must be "few, if any." Why? Because we do know, based on Justice Department data, that the bulk of these 978 taxpayers were involved in organized crime, or

**Table 1—Criminal Prosecutions and Imprisonments—1998**

DATA	NUMBER	ODDS
Individual taxpayers	120,000,000	
IRS recommends prosecution	3,129	1 in 38,270
Prosecution occurs	1,842	1 in 65,008
Convictions	1,744	1 in 68,661
Sentenced to prison	978	1 in 122,439

## Prison terms

The median prison sentence for the 978 taxpayers who were sentenced to prison in 1998 was only 5 months.

## How many ministers?

How many of the 978 taxpayers who were sent to prison in 2000 were ministers? There is no official answer to this

were high-income earners, or in some cases willfully failed to file a tax return. A few ministers may be included in that last category, but most likely these would be tax protesters who believe that paying taxes violates their religious beliefs or constitutional rights. I believe that not one minister who filed a tax return was among the 978 taxpayers

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**Table 2—Why Are Taxpayers Audited?**

REASON	% OF AUDITS
IRS formula (based on size of itemized deductions, etc.)	24
Your return is related to an audited return (spouse/partner)	19
Taxpayer requests to be audited	9
Refusal to file return	9

who were sent to prison, meaning that ministers who file a tax return and make a reasonable attempt to comply with the law have no risk of being prosecuted or being sent to jail.

### WHY ARE TAXPAYERS AUDITED?

Why does the IRS audit taxpayers? Some of the more common reasons are listed in Table 2.

### CONCLUSION

What does all this data tell us? That pastors are not being targeted by the IRS, and that it is outrageous for anyone to try and frighten pastors with the prospect of going to jail because of some innocent mistake on their tax return. Avoid those who try to tell you otherwise. They either are ignorant of the facts, or they are knowingly scaring you with false information. In either case, they are not worthy of your consideration. The information in this article is

all the evidence you need to dispel the confusion and anxiety caused by the fear mongers and to see their lamentable tactics for what they are.

One more thought. While you have no risk of being prosecuted or going to jail, this does not mean that happy days are here again and that you can start

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claiming deductions that are not allowed or failing to report income that you earned. As ministers, you should be the first to comply with the law. Doing so will avoid the interest and penalties, in addition to back taxes, that the IRS can assess if you are audited. **e**

*Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL.M., CPA serves as legal counsel to The General Council of the Assemblies of God. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he is the author of over 50 books on legal and tax issues for churches and pastors, and publishes two newsletters. This article is excerpted from an article in his Church Treasurer Alert newsletter.*



**"Well, brother, that was a close call, but it looks like our side prevailed."**



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# Pyramids, Scams & Schemes: How To Keep Your Flock From Getting Fleeced

B Y R A N D A L L K . B A R T O N

**A**s certain as there are corrections in the stock market, there is a wave of financial schemes that consistently pursue the body of Christ. While the wolf may slightly change his sheep's clothing, certain themes always emerge.

Pastors and church leaders must be alert to protect themselves, their church corporately, and individual members from these "can't miss" investment schemes.

Avoid these pitfalls that can make you easy prey to investment scams:

## **PITFALL #1: GREED**

Mark 7:20–23 says, "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' "

It is easy to skip over greed in this list of sins. Don't have a problem with greed? Greed never confronts us head-on. First, it starts as a seed of discontentedness and selfishness. Then it sprouts into covetousness. If not uprooted, it can easily grow, compromise by compromise, into the weed of greed. It grows taller and roots deeper until it chokes out everything else, taking its place on the throne of our hearts. If, in a desire for more, you buy into risky, get-rich-quick opportunities promising big payoffs, consider the seed you are allowing to germinate. We need to regularly weed the gardens of our hearts and keep our sin nature in check. What is germinating in your heart? Weed out greed to maintain

a proper focus in your investing.

## **PITFALL #2: "CAN'T MISS" INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

*Webster's* defines *knowledge* as "the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association." The verb *fool* is defined as "to meddle, tamper, or experiment especially thoughtlessly or ignorantly." A good investor will carefully screen out knowledge from rumor and act on long-term experience versus the latest idea. It is foolish to make hasty investments without verifying the facts and evaluating its soundness.

History has experienced many "can't miss" investment opportunities, with overconfident investors plunging in and buying into the hype, with unfortunate consequences. Holland tulip bulbs, commanding great prices in the 1630s, in 1637 went from being worth \$25,000 each to \$25 overnight. In the 18th century, growth experienced by privileged companies exploring the wealth of the Americas didn't last, and brought disastrous economic results for England and France. In the 1860s and 1870s, profits from the railroad boom in the United States and expansion to the West came to a complete crash by 1873. Of course, no one can forget the 1930s Great Depression ushered in when the U.S. stock market, after having experienced (through leverage) unprecedented growth, suddenly crashed in October 1929. In the 1960s, "nifty fifty" corporations dominated the stock market, with the market correction following in 1969.

"Can't miss" opportunities in oil, gas, and precious metals in the 1970s

busted by the mid-1980s. By 1989, Japan's unparalleled economic growth and unbelievable stock and real estate valuations created enormous wealth, but the crash came in 1990. The high-tech stock euphoria of the late 90s crashed by spring 2001, with the NASDAQ and many Internet stocks dropping in price like the tulip bulbs in 1637. As of mid-2002, recovery is not in sight.

How can we as investors differentiate a sound investment from a "can't miss" investment? At least three elements are usually present: (1) pride in the discovery of a new investment opportunity; (2) debt or asset valuations out of scale in relation to the underlying means of payment or producing profit; and (3) financial euphoria replacing rational market behavior, with participation by the masses so demand outstrips supply. Speculation building on itself provides its own momentum. At the end a fall always occurs—it cannot come gently or gradually. All participants prepare for sudden escape.

As you can see from history, "can't miss" opportunities are anything but a sure thing. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Don't be concerned about missing the boat. In truth, the boat is leaking—miss the boat and you won't be on board when it sinks.

## **PITFALL #3: PROMISES OF HIGH RETURNS WITHOUT RISK**

High returns always mean higher risk. Financial markets are not irrational. If you could truly receive high returns without high risk, institutional and sophisticated investors would pour so much money into the financial scheme

that it could not handle the influx of capital. Most risky investments or pyramid schemes contain some of the following components:

#### **Offshore Activity**

Offshore activities include hedge funds, money funds, products, precious metals, or precious stones that exist outside the United States. While a small amount of international stock market exposure or even emerging markets would be acceptable diversification in an investment portfolio, most pyramid schemes contain an offshore component to make it difficult or impossible to verify the facts of the activity or keep it from being scrutinized. There are legitimate reasons why U.S. businesses with overseas activity set up offshore corporations, and there are legitimate reasons why very wealthy individuals engage in offshore planning, but none is related to financial return or risk. It is always related to tax savings opportunities, asset protection, or regulatory mitigation.

#### **Insider Deals**

"Secret information," "insider deals," "getting in on the ground floor," and "no one else knows about this" are phrases that should cause you to pause. These phrases mean that the opportunity won't withstand scrutiny, it's not proven, or it has no track record of success—all of which spell high risk. Does that mean you should never invest in an initial public offering, private placement, or new venture? No. It only means that you must understand the risk and be willing to lose 100% of the money you are investing. If you can't afford to lose it all, don't invest it.

#### **Fixed Interest Rates Substantially Above Market**

Any time you are being paid fixed interest rates that are *substantially above market rates*, your investment is at risk. Why? The borrowers who ultimately must pay you the premium interest rate can't borrow at lower rates because their credit is high risk. Many church

loan funds have experienced scandal, and investors have lost all or a portion of their funds because the funds were invested in speculative real estate transactions unrelated to church lending or unsecured loans without corresponding loan loss reserves. Church loan funds are a wonderful way to build the Kingdom, but make sure that the fund you invest in is sound.

Proverbs 28:20 says, "One eager to get rich will not go unpunished." Protect your church flock by avoiding the pitfalls of greed, "can't miss" investment opportunities, and promises of high returns without risk. Instead, focus on consistency, diversification, and generosity. The latter focus will build the Kingdom, and you will always have adequate resources. **E**

*Randall K. Barton is president and CEO of the Assemblies of God Financial Services Group, Springfield, Missouri.*

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

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# The Jewish *Mikveh* Rite and Water Baptism

B Y R A Y G A N N O N

The elderly, Jewish Los Angelino glared at me with his fiery eyes. This recently past president of the local *B'nai B'rith* chapter stood trembling with rage before me as sweat beads formed on his reddened bald head and upper lip. The words flew out of his tightly coin-shaped mouth, "Look, I believe in Jesus and speak in tongues and all that stuff. But if I get baptized, I'll be a Christian."

I had just conveyed that in 2 nights we would be having a *mikveh* service at a Beverly Hills home swimming pool. Louis Brooks wasn't the first Jewish person to strongly react against the idea of water baptism, so his eruption in a North Hollywood living room Bible study that Tuesday night did not surprise me. As happy as we tried to make it, many of our new Jewish believers really struggled with water baptism.

The reasons for traditional Jewish contempt for baptism have historical foundation. Throughout the centuries there are numerous accounts concerning imposing—on pain of death—Christian baptism on religiously

communities everywhere to discourage any new Jewish faith in Jesus. Modern baptized Jews, with an obvious choice in the matter, are viewed as *meshumadim* (traitors) who have joined the anti-Semitic religious camp.

After assuring Louis Brooks that we would not impose anything on him, we sent him home with a printed teaching on the *mikveh*. It had served as a useful eye-opener to other new Jewish believers who were hesitant to be baptized. It offered a Jewish perspective on this age-old Jewish practice.

## OLD TESTAMENT USAGES OF MIKVEH

What many came to discover was that, to their surprise, water baptism was not original with the Messiah Jesus, or even John the Baptist. Immersion in water had many Hebrew Bible usages long before Jesus adapted it for God's Kingdom purposes in His Matthew 28 messianic mandate.

The temple priests were unable to engage in spiritual worship of God without first being ceremonially

ritually cleansed in water in preparation for ordination to their worship ministries (Exodus 40:12). The high priest was to wash his body in water before he was entitled to offer a sacrifice to God. The one releasing the scapegoat on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) also needed to bathe in water before being permitted reentry into the camp of God's people (Leviticus 16:23–26). One having been contaminated by touching anything unclean, such as a dead person, was forbidden to partake of holy things unless he had bathed with water (Leviticus 22:6).

In the case of the healed leper (Leviticus 14:1–9), the high priest functioned as medical examiner, but only outside the camp of God's people. After establishing that no hidden marks of leprosy remained, the high priest offered appropriate sacrifices, but still outside the camp. Only after the leper had been ritually cleansed by the blood of the sacrifice and had bathed in water was he permitted to enter the faith camp and ultimately take up his sanctified role in clean society.

**Without intelligent awareness of the exciting Hebraic perspective on biblical baptism, the Christian's baptismal experience may be seriously diminished.**

## MIKVEH IN NEW TESTAMENT JEWISH RELIGIOUS LIFE

In the rabbinical Judaism, which evolved alongside early Christianity, water baptism was utilized for the Gentile conversion process. In fact, the rabbis taught that since water immersion applied equally to both genders, it was water baptism that made one Jewish rather than circumcision itself.

There have been additional uses for water immersion in Jewish religious life through the centuries. The most common is for purification after the

oppressed Jewish masses. Martyred Jewish resisters to water baptism were made heroes of the Jewish faith while others, more prepared to save their lives by embracing Christian idolatries, were held in profound disdain as defectors. Horrific stories of forced baptisms are still perpetually rehearsed in Jewish

cleansed by washing both head and feet, symbolizing the totality of their sanctified devotion. The bronze basin was to be used for ritual purity prior to pure worship on pain of death, a fact Moses mentioned twice (Exodus 30:17–21).

The priestly sons of Aaron were to be

menstrual period and prior to resumption of normal conjugal rights. Privately sheltered community baths were built for this purpose. Many rabbis, Jewish scholars, Torah scribes, and other devout Orthodox Jews still practice the *mikveh* rite in preparation for spiritual contemplation, the holy days, or even the Sabbath. In fact, the construction of a public *mikveh* baths typically preceded the construction of a synagogue throughout the ages. As modern American Jews are experiencing an Orthodox revival, *mikvaot* (ritual baths) are being constructed in the larger American cities to serve a growing number of neoorthodox Jews.

John the Baptist's water immersion in anticipation of the kingdom of God (Matthew 3:1–8) was recognizable to first-century students of the Hebrew Bible. Yet it is probable John's baptism was also largely based on the Qumran's Essene community. While water immersion established one's clear choice to completely identify with the God of all righteousness, it also spoke to one's desire for protection against the coming cataclysm between the sons of light and the sons of darkness in the pending *eschaton*.

Jewish people of all stripes, including Sadducees, Pharisees, common Jewish people, and even Jesus, were coming to John for the *mikveh*. Jesus had no need to repent, but pursued total identification with fallen man through the standard Jewish purification ritual. This was a prelude to His ordination into the high priestly ministries of atonement maker, chief worshiper, and the leading personality for all other sanctified priests to obey and follow.

When Jesus issued the messianic mandate in Matthew 28, He commanded that every believer follow His own example of total immersion in water. Total immersion was the biblical and traditional Jewish means of the *mikveh* purification ritual as the Greek *baptidzo* signifies. The circumstantial evidence found in Acts 8:38 likewise strongly suggests New Testament

*mikvaot* (baptisms) were done by complete submersion.

The New Testament significance of water baptism includes the washing away of the impurity of sin (Acts 22:16), the believer's victory over the dominion of sin (Romans 6:1–14), total identification with the Messiah Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12,13;

comprehension of the true scriptural significance may yield successful follow-through on a lifetime of meaningful discipleship.

When Louis Brooks called me the next day, after understanding the teaching on the true biblically Jewish significance of water baptism, he forcefully asked, "Listen, am I supposed to bring a towel and a change of clothes?"

**When Jesus issued the messianic mandate in Matthew 28, He commanded that every believer follow His own example of total immersion in water.**

1 Peter 3:21,22), and the believer's public desire for complete identification with the redeemed messianic faith community (Acts 2:41).

Paul made it clear that water baptism is the functional substitute for circumcision (Colossians 2:11,12). Just as circumcision publicly registered one as a bona fide member of the covenant community, water baptism publicly marked the newborn Christian as a covenant member of the family of God. Moses forbade uncircumcised sympathizers from partaking in the Passover meal since they did not bear the mark fully identifying them with the redeemed community. Only those marked as the redeemed were to be celebrants. If water baptism is biblically likened to circumcision and the Lord's Supper to the Passover, it may raise the question of when a new believer should partake of Communion.

## CONCLUSION

It seems unfortunate that the practice of the biblical *mikveh* is often not accompanied by more than superficial knowledge. One wonders about the spiritual benefit of water baptism to one simply "getting dunked" after a trip to the altar. Without intelligent awareness of the exciting Hebraic perspective on biblical baptism, the Christian's baptismal experience may be seriously diminished. However, a new believer's

We baptized Lou, his wife Lillian, and a number of other new Jewish believers that Thursday night in Beverly Hills. Several came up speaking in tongues. One Jewess gained victory over her 52-year phobia of water after a near-drowning experience. But they and hundreds of other Jewish believers in greater Los Angeles came up out of the waters of baptism in love with Jesus, in recognition of their spiritual purification for divine worship, quickened by the Spirit of God, ordained into priestly ministry, and ready to make sacrifices for God's great glory, having left sin and its clutches far behind.

Recently I received an E-mail from a Jewish lady attending an Assemblies of God congregation in Las Vegas, Nevada. She had been a teenager in a Jewish family of five, all of whom I had baptized the same evening in that Beverly Hills swimming pool. I hadn't seen or heard from her for over a quarter century. But the knowledge Hillary and her Jewish parents and siblings received when they chose to follow Jesus in the *mikveh* has helped each of them stand tall for the Lord for three decades. In fact, she closed her E-mail with the happy news that her own two Jewish sons were now both clamoring to be baptized. **E**

Ray Gannon, Ph.D., is an Assemblies of God minister/educator.

# John Wyclif<sup>1</sup> – The Morning Star of the Reformation

BY WILLIAM P. FARLEY

**W**hen a world-renowned historian was asked to identify the most influential Christian of the 20th century, he responded: “We will need a 200-year distance before we can answer that question.” We rarely perceive the greatness of epoch makers during their lifetimes.

With this thought in mind, Barbara Tuchman wrote of John Wyclif (1330–84): “Seen through the telescope of history, he was the most significant Englishman of his time.”<sup>2</sup> Tuchman said this because of Wyclif’s immense influence over future generations, an influence that no one foresaw during his life. According to Tuchman he was the first “modern” man.

## HIS INFLUENCE

Wyclif’s power over the 14th century was that of a conscience captured by the Word of God. Unlike his peers, he denied that men must go through a priest to get to God. Instead, 150 years before the Reformation, he proclaimed the priesthood of every believer and encouraged each man to go directly to God by faith. He denied transubstantiation, the doctrine that the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ. He taught the idea, radical for his time, that the value of Communion depended on the spiritual condition of the communicant. He was the first man of his century to revive the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Each of these doctrines proceeded from his conviction that the Bible was the final authority to which men’s consciences must give an accounting.

“He declared the right of every Christian to know the Bible, and that the Bible emphasized the need of every

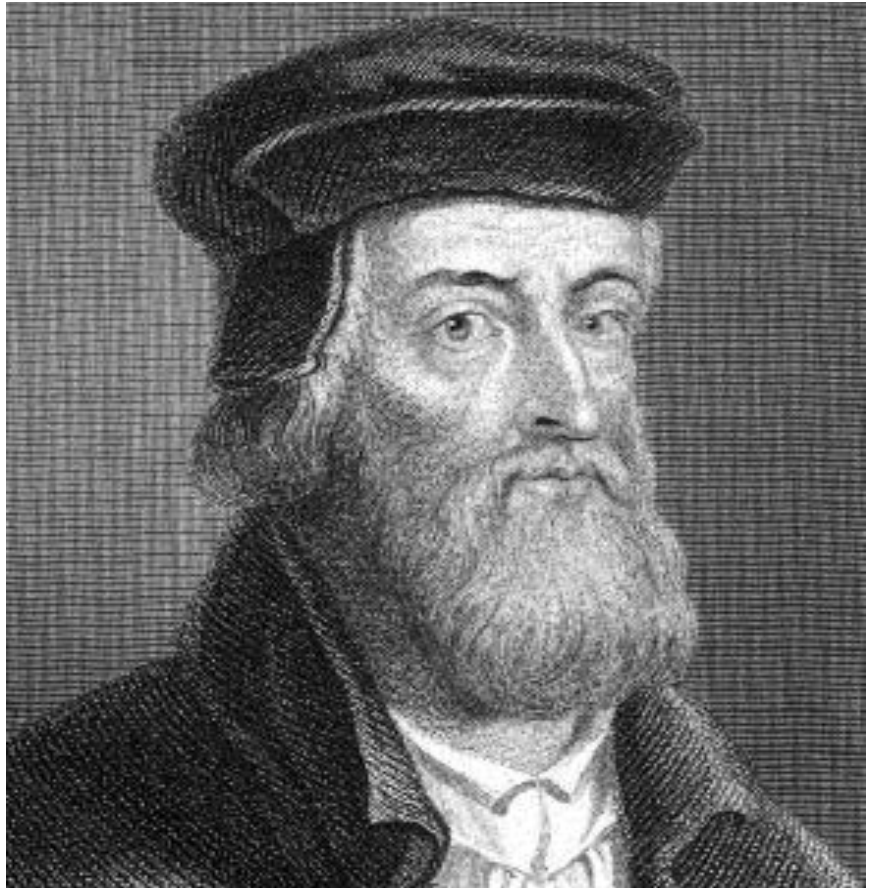


PHOTO: BILLY GRAHAM CENTER MUSEUM

Christian to see the importance of Christ alone as the sufficient way of salvation, without the aid of pilgrimages, works, and the Mass.”<sup>3</sup>

A 16th-century Bohemian Psalter pictures Wyclif’s influence on the Reformation. Wyclif is striking the spark, Jan Hus is kindling it into a coal, and Martin Luther is blowing it into a great flame.

Tuchman sums up Wyclif’s importance: “In a culminating heresy, he transferred salvation from the agency of the Church to the individual: ‘For each man that shall be damned shall be damned by his own guilt, and each man that is saved shall be saved by his own

merit.’ Unperceived, *here was the start of the modern world.*”<sup>4</sup>

To really understand the magnitude of Wyclif’s life and work, one must know the times in which our hero lived, a time very unlike our own.

## WYCLIF’S TIMES

The historian, de Sismondi, called the 14th century “a bad time for humanity.” He did not exaggerate. Most Englishmen were illiterate, and those who could read did so in Latin, the language of the intelligentsia and the church. The Bible was also in Latin. But since the printing press did not yet exist (all Bibles were hand copied), the cost made them inaccessible

to all but the wealthy. Almost no one had considered the heretical idea of an English translation. For those who did, the thought of burning at the stake quickly cooled their fervor.

Although there were some conscientious clergy in Wyclif's England, most were lazy and immoral. Drunkenness was a significant problem for many churchmen. Few could read. They learned Bible stories from their superiors, tried to memorize them, and the few that were faithful repeated them to their flocks on Sunday. The priest could even buy a license from the bishop to keep a concubine—an easy way for the prelate to make a little extra money.

Superstition ruled Wyclif's generation. Relic worship, prayer to saints, and the purchase of God's forgiveness with indulgences and pilgrimages were normative. The people believed the pope could excommunicate individuals, or even whole cities, sending them to hell without hope. Long lost, under centuries of encrusted tradition, was the crucial doctrine of justification by faith alone.

In Wyclif's later years, selfish ambition and carnality divided the Roman church. Two popes vied for supremacy. One ruled in France while another

## WYCLIF'S LIFE

Into this milieu—about 1330—Wyclif was born. We know little of his upbringing. We do know that he entered Oxford in 1346, at about age 16, to begin 12 arduous years of study toward his doctorate in theology.

He was a man of industry and academic ability, admired by friend and foe alike. In 1371, Oxford acknowledged him their leading theologian.

In 1374, the Crown awarded him the “living” of the church at Lutterworth. This meant that the tithes from this church would support him while away teaching at Oxford. The customary practice was to use part of the proceeds to hire a pastor to tend the flock in one's absence, which Wyclif probably did.

Wyclif was a godly man. The avarice and venality of the clergy provoked him. Catholic clerics, comprising only 2 percent of the population, controlled 50 percent of the national wealth. To counter clerical abuse, Wyclif taught that the state had the right and obligation to discipline the church, even confiscating its wealth if necessary. This endeared him to the head of state, John of Gaunt, who coveted the vast treasures of the national church.

state-controlled priest, would mediate Christ to the believer's conscience. Therefore, his translation threatened the glue that held medieval civilization together, the church's power to bind men's consciences. This was his great sin.

Wyclif also trained and sent out preachers, encouraging them to preach expository sermons from hand-copied Bible fragments. The people called them “poor priests.” Some were well-educated disciples of Wyclif from Oxford. Others were unlettered, but sincere men, dedicated to the dissemination of the gospel.

The humility and selflessness of these preachers were in direct contrast to the self-seeking laziness of the established clergy. The simplicity and power of their biblical message were the antithesis of the fables, superstitions, and myths taught by the parish priests. Although their enemies called them “Lollards,” meaning mumblers, God crowned their efforts with success.

About this time Wyclif lost favor with John of Gaunt. Without Gaunt's protection, he was exposed to the wrath of the established clergy. But before he could be arrested, tried, and burnt at the stake, he died of a stroke while saying Mass in 1384.<sup>5</sup>

Lollardy continued until crushed by bitter persecution from the English state-church in the 1420s, 35 years after Wyclif's death. The State hung most of the Lollard leaders or burnt them at the stake. Forced underground, the survivors continued in small groups for several generations. When the Reformation shook England in the 1530s, they emerged from hiding.

## LESSONS FROM WYCLIF

What can we learn from Wyclif and his times? First, we should be thankful that God birthed us into the 20th century

**Wyclif was the first man of his century  
to revive the doctrine of justification  
by faith alone.**

claimed supremacy from Rome. This greatly confusing the people; they didn't know which one could forgive sins or excommunicate the wicked.

Last, it was a barbarous, brutal age. The bubonic plague first scourged Europe in Wyclif's early twenties, killing two-thirds of the population in some areas. For 100 years England plundered, raped, and pillaged France, turning it into a virtual wasteland—until Joan of Arc finally rallied the French in the 1400s. Torture and brutality were widespread, and the common man had almost no political rights.

Wyclif continued to teach theology at Oxford until 1378. He was 48—by medieval standards, an old man. He retired to Lutterworth to preach and write. His last years were his most productive.

With the help of Oxford friends, Wyclif translated the Bible, all 750,000 words, from Latin into English—an immense undertaking. His revolutionary conviction that the average Englishman should be able to read the Bible in the common language threatened the power of the English state-church. It meant that the Bible, rather than the counsel of a

A sample translation of John 3:16 from Wyclif's Bible, written in the Middle English of his time.

*“Forsothe God so louede the world,  
that he gaf his oon bigetun sone, that  
ech man that bileueth in to him perische  
not, but haue euerlastynge lyf.”*

rather than the 14th. Today we enjoy religious liberty, the light of the gospel, the rule of law, mass literacy, multiple English Bibles in our homes, and modern medical care. We must ask ourselves: *Have we been good stewards of these immense privileges?*

Second, we should emulate Wyclif's courage. In an age when heretics were burnt at the stake or slowly tortured to death, he stood valiantly, and almost alone, against the monolithic medieval church. He condemned its abuses and corruptions, and denied its right to speak solely for God. He attacked the sale of indulgences, transubstantiation, Masses for the dead, and prayer to the saints. Most important, he was the first medieval man to elevate the authority of the Bible over the authority of the church. This required vast courage and conviction.

Third, we should seek, like Wyclif, to be ahead of our times. He was misunderstood by those comfortable with their times, and we will fail to recognize God's men if we also are too

comfortable with our times. Do we have Wyclif's prophetic mantle and courage? We will not be effective servants of Christ without it. His perspective was beyond his time. It was eternal, and ours must be also.

Fourth, we must never underestimate the power of the Bible to change lives and shake nations. All effective Christian leaders live and breathe the Bible. Because they feel its power, they preach it. Stories and anecdotes have their place, but they never replace clear, pungent, biblical exposition. The latter alone has the power to uproot nations and cast down strongholds.

John Wyclif understood this power, and used it courageously. In later centuries God shook the British Isles, but it all began with Wyclif and his work. He was the morning star of the Reformation. Like the heroes of old, Wyclif was a man of whom the world was not worthy (Hebrews 11:38). May we walk in his footsteps today. **e**

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

1. The spelling of his name is uncertain. It is rendered Wycliffe, Wycliff, and Wyclif. I will use the latter.
2. Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*, (New York: Knopf Publishing House, 1978), 287.
3. *Christian History Magazine*, Issue 3, 13.
4. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror*, 338-39, italics mine.
5. Since there was no other option, he was a Roman Catholic priest to the end of his life.

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# Whom Are Tomorrow's Leaders Following Today?

BY ROBERT H. SPENCE

A large billboard facing an expressway in an East Coast city arrested attention with a single, six-word question: "Whom are tomorrow's leaders following today?" Answers to that question are relevant to the ministry of Christian higher education for the Assemblies of God.

First of all, there will be leaders tomorrow. We may not always admire them or respect them. They may not compare favorably with those of a previous generation, but there will be leaders.

Some books support the idea that leaders are born with innate qualities that prepare them for their tasks, while others suggest that a leader is not dependent on inherent qualities. This need not be an either/or debate. Leaders are born *and* made. Observing preschoolers on the playground offers ample evidence that there are born leaders. Yet some of our nation's most effective leaders did not demonstrate those attributes until later in life.

Assemblies of God colleges are dedicated to the principle that leadership skills can be improved and enhanced. Only God can call to leadership, but providing the best training and education for that future leader is equally important. Whom are tomorrow's leaders following today? Biographies of effective leaders often identify someone who inspired them. Those they chose to follow exemplified distinct characteristics.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHOM TOMORROW'S LEADERS FOLLOW

Tomorrow's leaders are following someone who has the ability to recognize the times in which we are living. The Bible refers to a time in David's life when he

was in transition. Of inestimable value to him were the men of Issachar, "who understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (1 Chronicles 12:32\*). One of the attributes of leaders that tomorrow's leaders are following today is the ability to discern prevailing circumstances.

Tomorrow's leaders follow those who have the ability to communicate a sense of importance or value to the individual. Sadly, there are self-serving leaders who do not really value individuals. But they have been able to make individuals *feel* important. Tragic stories of misguided followers include testimonies of having been made to feel needed.

Tomorrow's leaders follow those who promise to change the world: "If you will follow me, we will create a new society. Come and be a part of our movement, and we will change things." Political leaders incorporate this language.

Tomorrow's leaders follow those who demand dedication and sacrifice. For the better part of the 20th century, members of the Communist party followed leaders who demanded total dedication. No sacrifice was too great. Political extremists who die to advance their cause offer themselves to the demands of leaders who call for ultimate sacrifice.

Whom are tomorrow's leaders following today? They are following someone who promises a reward. The business leader who inspires employees describes the rewards that come with success. The coach who leads his team into crucial contests expounds on the glories of victory. Aspiring officeholders assure their followers of what will be

gained through their accomplishments.

Tomorrow's leaders are following those who understand the times, who make them feel important, who promise a better world, who call for their dedication and sacrifice, and who promise a reward. Whether the leader is a musician with a new sound, a business executive with a new idea, or a religious figure looking for adherents, these distinctives will be apparent.

## JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUPREME EXAMPLE FOR LEADERS TO FOLLOW

Tomorrow's leaders are making choices today. Competing voices are being heard. However, tomorrow's leaders can fulfill divine destiny if they will follow the one Person who is the supreme and superb example of leadership—Jesus Christ.

If we want to follow a leader who understands the times, He is the one. The uncertainties of our day do not take Him by surprise. Turbulent crosscurrents of political and religious controversy swirled about Him during His 3 years of public ministry. Yet Jesus moved serenely along the path the Father chose for Him because He understood the times.

Jesus Christ is the perfect leader to follow because of His concern for the individual. Jesus described His relationship with His disciples this way:

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:14–16).

Jesus' conversations and messages to groups referred to the importance of one person. The parables that spoke of one lost coin, one lost sheep, or one lost son underscored concern and value for the individual. As He spoke of the number of hairs on a person's head being numbered or a sparrow not falling to the ground without being noted, He was conveying the importance of the individual.

And what about His promise to change the world? Jesus often spoke of changing the world—not in terms of military force or political intrigue—but by changing people. The promise of a better world touched those who assembled about Him as He taught:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away

from the one who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven' " (Matthew 5:38–45).

Jesus said that following Him would involve sacrifice and dedication. To His disciples He said:

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Matthew 16:24,25).

That is total dedication. To the one who follows Him, who desires to be an influential leader tomorrow, the word is still, "Come, follow Me, take up your cross, put your life in My hands, and find your strength in Me."

And what about the promise of a reward? Again and again Jesus spoke of future benefits. His ultimate promise was also laced with instruction:

"I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become

rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:18,21,22).

Assemblies of God colleges were established to help prepare leaders who could serve God and be instrumental in the advance of His kingdom. As we move further into the 21st century, our schools are blessed with thousands of students who are preparing to be tomorrow's leaders. Whom are they following today? Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. **e**

*Robert H. Spence is president of Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri, and the commissioner of the Assemblies of God Commission on Christian Higher Education.*

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

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# S E R M O N S E E D S



## THE MYSTERY OF THE EMPTY TOMB

Mark 16:1–8

### THEME:

The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### INTRODUCTION:

The celebration of Easter remains without rival from other religions of the world.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. The desire for an open tomb was utilitarian (verses 1–3).

- The women knew He had died (verse 1).
- The women saw where He had been buried (verse 2; Mark 15:47).
- The women were unaware of any plans by the disciples to steal the body of Jesus (verse 3).

#### 2. The discovery of the open tomb was unexpected (verses 4,5).

#### a. There was physical evidence (verse 4).

- It had been sealed (Matthew 27:66).
- It had been guarded (Matthew 27:66).

#### b. There was supernatural evidence (Mark 16:5).

#### 3. The directions from the open tomb were unconventional (verses 6–8).

- They were to bravely believe the messenger (verse 6).
- They were to blatantly examine the premises (verse 6).
- They were to boldly tell the men (verse 7).

### CONCLUSION:

We can believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ because the tomb is empty. For anyone

who is still skeptical, here is further evidence not mentioned in Mark 16:1–8:

- There was the multitude of eyewitnesses who did not expect to see Him.
- There were the transformed disciples who had been slow to believe.
- There was the inability of the Jewish leaders to refute this claim.
- There were conversions of genuine cynics like Paul, the zealous persecutor of the Early Church, and James, the earthly brother of Jesus.
- There are the testimonies of countless millions who have had experiences with the living Christ.

—Steve Eutsler  
Springfield, Missouri

## THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

Luke 24:49; Acts 2:39

### INTRODUCTION:

The Holy Spirit was poured out as a memorial of the festival of the harvest. In this dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the diffusion of power celebrates the opening day of the harvest of souls—a harvest continuing today, gaining ever more momentum as the storm clouds gather on the horizon.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. The promised outpouring was for all Jews.

- The promise was not just for the 120 who received the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room. The promise was extended to the crowd that was attracted by the noise and variety of languages spoken by the disciples and other recipients.
- The promise was not just for members of that generation, but for their children and their children's children (Psalm 103:17).
- The promise was not just for those named, but for those countless, unnamed people of future generations (Acts 2:39).

#### 2. The promise was to all races and nations.

- The promise included the hated Samaritans. Philip the evangelist brought the message of salvation to them (Acts 8:5–13).
- The promise included the Roman oppressors. Peter was sent to Cornelius' household to bring this Italian officer and his household into the fold (Acts 10). Later Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to the seat of Roman government and had converts in the palace (Philippians 4:22).
- The promise included the nations of the future. The Holy Spirit was poured out in the British Isles in the 19th century where Smith Wigglesworth received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The spiritual awakening in America at the turn of the century has continued to the present, intensifying and spreading throughout the entire world, with multitudes receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

#### 3. The promise was to all classes, societies, and ethnic groups.

- The promise included the intellectuals of Athens, where Paul preached about their unknown god. As a result, a new

church was formed (Acts 17:15–34).

- The promise also included the women of Europe. Paul and Silas preached to a women's prayer group by the river at Philippi. Lydia, a merchant, was converted and opened her house to them (Acts 16:12–15).
- Finally, the promise included the cultures and ethnic groups of the present age, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

### CONCLUSION:

- The experience of Pentecost is still the empowering, miraculous force of God, sent into the world to continue Christ's ministry through Christian converts.
- The flow of the Spirit sweeps aside cultural, racial, and ethnic prejudice, bringing God's people together in a unity that is impossible without the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- The river of God's grace overflows religious barriers, inundates denominational walls, fusing the people of God into the great Church triumphant, equipped to bring in the final harvest of the age.

—Forrest Smith

# S E R M O N S E E D S

## BELIEVERS ARE NOT ORPHANS

John 14:18

### INTRODUCTION:

After Jesus had celebrated the last Passover with His disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper, He spoke of His imminent death on the cross.

To the distraught disciples Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18). The word "comfortless" translates a Greek word meaning *orphans*.

Jesus was speaking about the coming Holy Spirit who would be a Comforter as Jesus had been.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. The promise of the Spirit.

The disciples had every reason to believe they could expect the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus explained to the disciples it was expedient for Him to go away so He might send the Comforter (John 16:7).
- Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the "promise of the Father" in Acts 1:4. (See Isaiah 44:2-5.)
- Peter indicated the promise of the Holy Spirit was not only to the immediate audience but to all afar off (Acts 2:39). This includes our generation.

#### 2. The presence of the Spirit.

The disciples had every reason to believe

the Holy Spirit would be with them always.

- The word translated "Comforter" referred to a person who was called alongside to be a counselor. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be the Comforter who would abide with believers forever (John 14:16,26). We will never be alone.
  - Paul wrote that the believer is the temple of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). The Holy Spirit is within the believer as God's glorious presence was in the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple. He is with us to encourage us in our earthly sojourn.
  - The disciples found the Holy Spirit was not only with them in the Upper Room at Pentecost, but in the difficult threatening experiences of life (Acts 4:23-31). He is with us everywhere.
- #### 3. The power of the Spirit.
- The disciples had reason to believe the Holy Spirit would provide power for holy living and effective witnessing.
- The Holy Spirit provides power for believers to live as God wants them to. Galatians 5:22,23 lists the qualities to be found in believers who allow the Spirit to control them. This

means that, like Paul and Silas, believers today can live triumphantly in difficult situations (Acts 16:25,26).

- The Holy Spirit provides power for believers to witness (Acts 1:8). He joins His witness with that of believers (John 15:26,27). As in the case of Philip, some will believe (Acts 8). As in the case of Stephen, some will not believe, but they cannot ignore the witness (Acts 7).
- The Holy Spirit provides guidance as believers seek to serve Him. Philip received guidance (Acts 8:26-29) as did Paul (Acts 16:6-11).

### CONCLUSION:

When a great rabbi died in Bible times, his students sometimes spoke of their teacher leaving them fatherless. Believers are never orphans. The Holy Spirit is with them always.

The Greek language has two words that are translated "another." In John 14:16 the word used means "another of the same kind."

Jesus assured believers they would have the abiding presence of a Comforter who would not be different from, but just like himself.

—Hardy W. Steinberg

## FABRIC OF THE FAMILY

Ephesians 5:21 through 6:4

### INTRODUCTION:

The fabric of the family is being attacked and torn by external and internal forces. God is concerned that the family grows strong. Several spiritual threads can be woven into the fabric of the family to strengthen it from evil forces.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Flexibility (Ephesians 5:21).

- Flexibility in relationships.
- Marriage is a 100 percent commitment for both partners.
- The miracle of marriage is two different people working together in Christ for common goals.
- Five golden words: "I'm sorry" and "I love you."

#### 2. Fairness (Ephesians 5:24,25).

- Husband and wife stand equal in

God's eyes, yet they have different responsibilities.

- Woman completes the duo (Genesis 2:18). Helper means "one who helps another to reach complete fulfillment."
  - Marriage is permanent. Cleave (Genesis 2:24) means "to glue, to cling."
  - Be fair with discipline in the home.
  - Rear children in the love of Jesus.
- #### 3. Firmness (Ephesians 6:1,4).
- We must remain "steadfast, unmovable" in morality (1 Corinthians 15:58).
  - We must keep away from anything that would compromise our moral stand (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
  - Children need a moral model (1 Peter 2:11,12).
  - God blesses those who stand for what's right.
- #### 4. Fun (Proverbs 17:22).

- Husband and wife need fun times alone.

- Parents and children need fun times together.
- Family fun adds a new spark of enthusiasm.

#### 5. Faith (Ephesians 6:4).

- Observe family devotions and prayer.
- Set a good example by faithfulness to church.
- If our faith is in God, we will build our family on a godly foundation.

### CONCLUSION:

The family is being attacked today. We can have a strong home that will stand against the influence of the world as we weave into its fabric the threads of flexibility, fairness, firmness, fun, and faith.

—Jerry Newswander  
Platte City, Missouri

# S E R M O N S E E D S



## RESURRECTION REALITY

*Acts 1:3; 24:36–49*

### INTRODUCTION:

When Jesus first appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, they had difficulty in accepting the corporeal reality of the Christ of God. They set it down as being something ethereal and visionary. But as Christ continued to appear and give “infallible proofs,” it became the motivating impulse of their lives.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Witnesses to Resurrection reality.

- a. Natural phenomena (Matthew 28:2).
- b. Angels (Matthew 28:2–7).
- c. People.
  - (1) Unbelievers (Matthew 28:4,11–15).
  - (2) The women (Mark 16:1–9; Luke 24:10).
  - (3) The disciples (John 21:1–4; 1 John 1:1,2; 1 Corinthians 15:4–7).

- (4) Post-Ascension appearances: Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8,9); Stephen (Acts 7:55); John (Revelation 1:10–20).
- d. The Scriptures (Luke 24:25–27; Acts 2:25–32).
- e. Actions of the risen Lord.
  - (1) Preparing food (John 21:9,13).
  - (2) Breaking bread (Luke 24:30).
  - (3) Eating (Luke 24:41–43).
  - (4) Conversing (John 21:15–23).
  - (5) Teaching (Acts 1:3).
  - (6) Commanding (Matthew 28:18–20).
  - (7) People touched Him (Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 John 1:1).
- f. The descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33; John 15:26,27).
- g. Christian experience (Colossians 3:1–4; Romans 6:4).

#### 2. Results of Resurrection reality.

- a. Awe (Matthew 28:8; Luke 24:5).
- b. Joy (Matthew 28:8).
- c. Faith (Romans 4:24–5:2; cf. Romans 10:9,10).
- d. Abounding hope (Romans 15:12,13).
- e. Assurance of life after death and the resurrection of the body (John 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:14).
- f. Boldness of testimony (Acts 1:8; 4:33).
- g. Miraculous demonstrations of power (Acts 3:15,16; Hebrews 2:3,4).

### CONCLUSION:

Some people today reject the reality of the Resurrection. But as they accept the testimony of the various witnesses and honestly, prayerfully seek to know the risen Savior, they can come to know Christ in the power of His resurrection and receive the assurance of eternal life.

—F. Helen Jarvis

## MARTHA'S HANG-UPS

*Luke 10:38–42*

### INTRODUCTION:

Martha was not a bad person. She was hospitable to Jesus (Luke 10:38), and Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (John 11:5). Martha was industrious (Luke 10:40), and that's better than being lazy (Proverbs 18:9). She had faith (John 11:21,22,27). Through faith mountains can be moved (Matthew 17:20) and people justified (Romans 3:28). However, Martha had her hang-ups.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. She was distracted with much serving (Luke 10:40).

- a. The enemy loves it when we do not

- choose the better part.
- b. She was majoring on minors. She needed her priorities realigned.
- c. Occupations, pleasures, and sin can distract people from communion with God. Some people are busy, but not with God.

#### 2. She was anxious (Luke 10:41).

- a. She was in a hand-wringing, hair-pulling mode—uptight.
- b. Some place so much importance on less important things they ready themselves for the psychiatrist's couch.
- c. Overloading can bring on a nervous collapse. In this state we are not God-conscious.

#### 3. She was critical (Luke 10:40).

- a. She thought Mary should be serving, not sitting. Why should Mary let her do this important work alone?
- b. People can become unjustly critical when they don't understand. Their eyes are on other people, not on Jesus.

### CONCLUSION:

One thing is still essential—fellowship with Jesus (Luke 10:42). Worship, prayer, and Bible reading are important to God. Mary had her priorities straight. Avoid Martha's hang-ups. Choose, as Mary, to commune with Jesus.

—Ben Richter  
Winter Haven, Florida

## GO FORWARD!

*Exodus 14:15*

### INTRODUCTION:

In no phase of life can one stand still. Either we move forward or slip back. Even under seemingly impossible circumstances, the Christian has God's command to go forward.

### MESSAGE:

#### 1. Forward from what?

- a. Egypt's (sin's) bondage.

- (1) Unavailing labor (Exodus 1:13,14; Psalm 127:1; Isaiah 55:2).
- (2) Unrelenting slavery (Exodus 5:7,8; Romans 7:15).
- b. Restricted worship (Exodus 8:28; 10:8–11,24).

#### 2. Forward through what?

- a. The enemy's pursuit may cause fear and complaints (Exodus 14:5,9–12).
- b. The obstacles will be overcome (Exodus 14:29–31).

#### 3. Forward to what?

- a. God's promises (Exodus 14:13,14).
- b. God's guidance (Exodus 14:19).
- c. God's deliverance (Exodus 14:22).
- d. God's triumph (Exodus 14:23–28).
- e. God's miracles (His provision in the wilderness: healing, water, manna).
- f. God's land (Deuteronomy 8:7–10).

—J.E. Henning  
San Bernardino, California  
Reprinted from Advance.

# S E R M O N S E E D S

## THE WAY TO LIFE

*John 14:1-6*

### INTRODUCTION:

Throughout Scripture there are hundreds of promises from God. Among these promises are those in John 14.

### MESSAGE:

1. "Let not your heart be troubled" (verse 1).
  - a. "Ye believe in God." If you have no God to believe in, you're in trouble. There must be someone bigger and greater behind all this.
  - b. "Believe also in me." Believe in the Savior that the God we believe in has

- provided for us.
- c. Believe in all the promises God has given us. He promises to save us, lead and guide us, keep us, and provide for us.
2. "In my Father's house are many mansions" (verse 2).
  - a. The word "mansions" can also be translated "dwelling places."
  - b. It is a place.
  - c. It is a prepared place.
  - d. It is a safe, secure, never-ending place.
3. "I will come again" (verse 3).
  - a. The grave was not the end for Jesus, and it is not the end for us.

- b. To "receive you unto myself."
- c. "Where I am, there ye may be also."
4. "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know" (verse 4).
  - a. He told His disciples how we would go.
  - b. He went the way of the Cross.
  - c. He arose to newness of life.
5. "How can we know the way?" (verses 5,6).
  - a. "I am the way."
  - b. "I am the truth."
  - c. "I am the life."

—Warren McPherson  
Springfield, Missouri

## WHAT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST MEANS

*Acts 17:16-34*

### INTRODUCTION:

The apostle Paul had arrived in Athens and found it totally given over to idolatry. He told those in the Areopagus about the marvels of creation, the transitoriness of life, and the uniqueness of mankind. Then he presented the claims of Jesus Christ. Their reactions and excuses are answered from God.

### MESSAGE:

1. Ignorance is no excuse, for there is a commanded repentance (verse 30).
  - a. The past actions of God.

- b. The present command of God.
2. Indifference is no excuse, for there is a coming reckoning (verse 31).
  - a. Judgment is sure (Numbers 32:23; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11,12).
  - b. Judgment is righteous (Revelation 20:13-15).
  - c. Judgment is by Jesus Christ.
3. Indecision is no excuse, for there is a capable Redeemer (verse 31).
  - a. His power is in His obedience to His Father (John 10:11,17,18).
  - b. His power is in His gospel (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4).
  - c. His power is available now because of

His unchangeableness (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 13:8).

### CONCLUSION:

If you are undecided about coming to Christ, He has answers. If you think you're not ready, He says all things are now ready. If you doubt He will accept you, He says He will (John 6:37). If you feel your burden is too great, He will give you rest (Matthew 11:28). Repent and receive this capable Redeemer for your own.

—John F. Walker

## GATHERING GOD'S GOODNESS

*Ephesians 6:5-8; 1 Kings 17:2-16*

### INTRODUCTION:

The principle found in Ephesians 6:8 is simply stated, "What you make happen for others, God will make happen for you." This principle is the key to "gathering God's goodness." Three steps are involved in gathering God's goodness that apply to the principle in Ephesians 6:8. First Kings 17:2-16 is our guide in discovering these three steps. The master key in receiving God's harvest in your life—obedience—is found in verses 5, 8-10.

### MESSAGE:

1. Realize the need (1 Kings 17:10-12).
  - a. There are two needs in the story.
    - (1) Elijah's need.
    - (2) The widow's need.
  - b. God taught Elijah the principle of Ephesians 6:8 so he could teach the

- same to the widow and she could receive a harvest. What God teaches you, you are to teach others.
- c. Realizing the need of others is the first step in receiving God's harvest for your life.
- d. How do I determine which need I must meet?
  - (1) Listen to God.
  - (2) Look at your need.
2. Release the seed (1 Kings 17:13-15).
  - a. What the widow had was not enough to be a harvest for her, so she made it a seed.
  - b. You can't harvest without planting.
  - c. You must let go before you let God.
  - d. You can't hold onto your seed and receive God's harvest.
  - e. What hinders us from releasing the seed?
    - (1) What we say.
    - (2) What we do.

- (3) What we think.
- (4) What we fear.

3. Recognize the feed/harvest (1 Kings 17:16).

- a. You must be able to recognize the harvest God is bringing into your life.
- b. The widow applied the master key: obedience.
- c. Recognition is important in two ways.
  - (1) Recognize God brought the harvest.
  - (2) Recognize the harvest God brings.
- d. Recognizing the harvest builds our faith to plant bigger seeds and receive bigger harvests.

### CONCLUSION:

What you make happen for others, God will make happen for you.

—Randy Cartwright  
Jerseyville, Illinois



### CALLING OUT CAVE DWELLERS

Men don't sit around, look intently in each other's eyes, and talk. Men enjoy being with other men when they're gathered around a project or an activity. Knowing this, we periodically plan an activity that brings men together doing something in common.

We have successfully used a Seattle Mariners baseball game as a draw for men. We kept costs low by having an outdoor barbecue on the church grounds and watching the game on TV. Men come and laugh, talk, and rib each other. Men receive encouragement from Scripture and a challenge to be spiritual warriors by praying for the pastoral staff. They are also updated on our men's small groups, men's retreat, and opportunities for service.

Men who are having a good time together create a positive atmosphere, and this is contagious in drawing other men out of their caves.

Be creative and use what appeals to your area. Any number of events or activities appeal to the men of your church. Remember, the event or activity is just a hook that draws the average guy out of his cave and into relationship with other men.

—Jon Oletzke, Stone Church, Yakima, Washington

### MEN'S BREAKFAST

We have found that by developing the spiritual and relational skills of the men of our church and community, we are able to not only improve the quality of their families, but also effectively reach their friends and business associates.

The hub event of our men's ministry is a monthly men's breakfast followed by practical teaching that is directed to men's specific needs and struggles. Subjects vary from understanding the stages of manhood to temptations men face.

The breakfast begins at 6:15 on Tuesday mornings and concludes by 7:30 so the men can get to work. Afterward, I provide the notes for my study to all the men through e-mail. Each session is also taped so men can share the message with those who cannot attend.

We encourage men to bring their friends and sons. Each month we average approximately 300 men. In addition, the men are encouraged to belong to one of our small groups that meet at local businesses, schools, and restaurants.

Once a year I have a dinner meeting with the women of the church to summarize what I have been teaching the men. This helps them feel comfortable with the material I am covering with their husbands.

Our monthly men's meetings are always a time of joyful sharing and prayer. Our counseling load has decreased significantly through these teachings and the roundtable prayer and discussions that occur after the teaching.

—Randal Ross, Naperville, Illinois

### HOW TO MAKE NEWCOMERS WELCOME

1. Make sure the first person newcomers meet is cheerful and friendly.
2. Introduce newcomers to the senior pastor.
3. Get a record of their visit (name, address, phone).
4. Do a follow-up call to the homes within the next 6 days. (Take a dozen cookies or a loaf of homemade bread.)
5. Learn something about the newcomers (occupation, number of children, names, church background, recent family crisis).
6. Direct visitors to an appropriate Sunday School class.
7. Express to newcomers your appreciation for visiting your church and invite them back. People want to know they are wanted.
8. Let visitors know they are welcome to sit during worship. Don't expect them to stand and sing for 40 minutes.
9. Preach to your audience—saint and sinner.
10. Invite those who want to accept Jesus Christ to the front. (Everyone Jesus called, He called publicly.)
11. Lead those who have responded to the salvation invitation in the sinner's prayer.
12. Give new converts material that explains what has happened to them and what discipleship steps need to be taken. Items to be covered in this material include:
  - water baptism.
  - faithful church attendance.
  - testimony of their salvation to friends, family, and fellow workers.
  - daily prayer.
  - daily Bible reading (make sure they have a Bible).
  - Holy Spirit baptism.
  - fellowship (assign someone to befriend them).
  - involvement in church life.

—Thomas E. Trask, Springfield, Missouri

### MISSIONS PRAYER BRACELETS

Our church made metal bracelets and etched on them the names of the missionaries we support. We encouraged members to select a bracelet and pray for that missionary family at least once a day. Most people prayed for their



missionaries several times a day, which was an inspiration to the missionaries.

—Ed Uhles, *Noti, Oregon*

### PRAYER FORCE

Evangel Assembly of God in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has successfully implemented Prayer Force, an integrated program that combines focused interventional prayer, community outreach, and community ministry—all in one evening.

Prayer Force meets once a week and lasts for approximately 1 hour. Participants can join prayer sorties on one of three levels. One group stays at church to pray for those going into the neighborhood and handle other prayer requests.

A second group conducts door-to-door calls in teams of two. Often husbands and wives work together and bring along their children. When they go to a home, they introduce themselves: “We attend Evangel Assembly of God and want to be servants to our community. We are here this evening to pray for any needs you might have in your life.”

This approach has been well accepted. Often the conversation leads into a soul-winning situation. People accept the offer for prayer about 80 percent of the time.

Outreach teams also offer basic servant ministries from the church to those with apparent needs. These have included mowing lawns, painting, assisting immobilized individuals, preparing meals, and assisting in other areas. This is considered the practical dimension of Prayer Force.

The third team, Prayer Force communicators, remains at church and makes phone contact with previous visitors to the church. Visitors are thanked for attending a service; and, if they are unchurched, we offer a pastoral visit. The conversation ends with a prayer for needs they may have.

Team members often intervene in the lives of those who are undergoing great difficulties. Scarcely an evening goes by without a testimony of God’s leading and timing.

Prayer Force is frontline warfare against Satan and must be conducted in connection with a strong, private devotional life and personal spiritual discipline.

Although the nomenclature of Prayer Force is somewhat militaristic, the goal is applied servanthood within the community. It offers an effectively integrated approach of outreach, prayer, and servanthood for people searching for someone who cares.

—Howard Young, *Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

### FROM SERMON TO GOSPEL TRACT

Marketing guru Joe Vitale says everybody should write a book. By doing so, you create something that will touch lives and live beyond you. For similar reasons, preacher can write a tract. They can take one of their favorite sermons, and repack-age it as a paper missionary. Here are some advantages of writing tracts.

You can reach a wider audience. One good sermon in tract form can lead thousands of people to Christ.

You can work from any location. You can have a global outreach from your home or study.

You can minister beyond the grave. History is replete with examples of sermons that have been passed on to many generations by way of tracts.

#### Tips for Designing Your Tract

1. *Pick a catchy title.* Good titles grab attention like the headlines in a newspaper.
2. *Determine a reasonable length.* A good guideline is 300 to 1,500 words.
3. *Make it reader-friendly.* Use at least 10-point type in a common font like Times Roman. Break up the text with subheads, bullets, or numbers.
4. *Include response elements.* Encourage readers to take action. Include an invitation, sample prayer, a response form (for their name and address), and contact information about you or your church.
5. *Use proofreaders.* This ensures quality and helps prevent embarrassing mistakes.
6. *Choose a standard size.* This can save money. Call a printer about preferred sizes.
7. *Use quality paper.* Let your printer or graphic artist help you.
8. *Use a striking cover design.* Find a graphic artist to help design the cover.
9. *Find the right printer.* Call several printers to compare prices and quality.

—Roscoe Barnes, *Waynesboro, Pennsylvania*

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E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to: [enrichmentjournal@ag.org](mailto:enrichmentjournal@ag.org).



### ROOTED TOGETHER

What's the largest organism in the world? How about the blue whale weighing 120 tons and over 80 feet long? Or maybe it is a giant sequoia over 300 feet high with a trunk 30 feet across? Or how about the quaking aspen? It rarely gets over 100 feet high and you'll seldom find a trunk more than a foot wide. But the aspen has a secret. The single aspen tree is not the whole story; the aspen grove is the rest of the story. The aspen's preferred method of growth is by sending new shoots off the old roots. In this way an individual plant may cover hundreds of acres, all growing from a single interconnected root system. While the individual stems rarely live over 100 years, a stand may be thousands of years old. The interconnectedness of the aspen gives life and strength. When a fire comes through the forest, though every tree may be burned down, the aspen root survives. It quickly reestablishes itself, usually taking over territory formerly inhabited by pines, maples, and oaks.

We in the church are meant to be like the mighty aspen—not like the oak fighting for survival on its own—but growing from a common root of fellowship in Christ Jesus. “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12, NIV).

—Chaplain Guy Caley, Heidelberg, Germany

### LOVE THEM INTO EFFECTIVE SERVICE

A story comes from a quiet little girl that helps me be a loving leader of people. Twelve-year-old Sally took her younger brother, who was mentally retarded, Christmas shopping. As they went into a department store, they passed a clerk who was overtired from long hours during the Christmas rush. The boy bumped a rack, knocking shoes in every direction.

The clerk grabbed the boy by the arm and demanded, “Pick them up.”

“No,” the boy screamed with defiance.

“Pick them up,” the clerk shouted.

“No,” the boy shouted back.

The big sister began picking up shoes. The boy started to help. Before long, the boy, his sister, and the overtired clerk were working together to get the shoes back in order. When they finished, the girl taught the clerk a profound lesson with these words, “Mister, you have to love my brother into doing it.”

This story provides a bigger-than-life parable for leaders in today's church.

—Author unknown

### THE DAFFODIL PRINCIPLE

A daughter called and said, “Mother, you must come see the daffodils before they are over.”

Her mother wanted to go, but it was a 2-hour drive. “I will come next Tuesday,” she promised, reluctantly.

Tuesday dawned cold and rainy. Still, she had promised, so she drove to her daughter's home. When she finally walked into her daughter's house and hugged her grandchildren, she said, “Forget the daffodils, Carolyn. The road is invisible in the clouds and fog.”

Carolyn smiled and said, “It's all right, Mother. I promise you will never forgive yourself if you miss this experience. I'll drive.”

After about 20 minutes, they turned onto a small gravel road where a hand-lettered sign read, “Daffodil Garden.” They got out of the car and each took a child's hand. She followed Carolyn down the path, turned a corner, and gasped. It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it over the mountain peak and slopes. The flowers were planted in majestic, swirling patterns—great ribbons and swaths of deep orange, white, lemon yellow, salmon pink, saffron, and butter yellow. Each different-colored variety was planted as a group, flowing like its own river with its own unique hue. There were five acres of flowers.

“Who has done this?” the mother asked.

“Just one woman,” Carolyn answered. “She lives on the property. That's her home.” Carolyn pointed to a well-kept A-frame house that looked small and modest in the midst of all that glory.

They walked up to the house. On the patio, they saw a poster: “Answers to the Questions I Know You Are Asking.” The first answer: “50,000 bulbs.” The second: “One at a time, by one woman. Two hands, two feet, and very little brain.” The third: “Began in 1958.”

There it was: The Daffodil Principle. The mother thought of this woman who more than 40 years before had begun—one bulb at a time—to bring her vision of beauty and joy to an obscure mountaintop. Still, just planting one bulb at a time, year after year, she had created something of magnificence, beauty, and inspiration.

“It makes me sad in a way,” the mother admitted to her daughter. “What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal 35 or 40 years ago and had worked away at it one bulb at a time through all those years? Just think what I might have been able to achieve.”

Her daughter summed it up in her direct way. “Start tomorrow,” she said.

—Author unknown



### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

North Carolina-based Krispy Kreme doughnuts recently extended its westward expansion to Woodridge, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago. The celebrated junk-food franchise averages 8,000 customers a day. Ironically, the new Krispy Kreme store is located adjacent to a large regional health and fitness center. Those who exit the drive-thru go past the driveway to the fitness center and a 20-foot billboard picturing a well-built man doing abdomen crunches.

That juxtaposed alignment of two establishments is a symbol of the choices we face daily as disciples. Will we be disciplined or self-indulgent?

The apostle Paul was convinced our level of self-discipline determines our fitness as faithful followers; it prevents us from a flabby witness that compromises our integrity. In 1 Corinthians 9:27 the apostle writes, "I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (NIV).

—Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois

### ADMITTING OUR VULNERABILITY

Sandra Baldwin, the first woman to be named chairman of the U.S. Olympic Committee, was also the first woman to resign. She admitted to having misrepresented herself on her résumé by claiming a Ph.D. she never completed. And she's not alone. About the same time, George O'Leary, the much-touted new football coach at Notre Dame, lost his job because of a falsified résumé.

Statistics reveal that 44 percent of all résumés contain at least one lie. According to industrial psychologist Seymour Adler (Aon Consulting in New York), people have such high expectations of themselves they are not willing to admit they have any flaws.

But admitting our vulnerability is a prerequisite for success as far as God is concerned. "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8, NIV).

—Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois

### TO BE A FRIEND . . . START WITH YOURSELF

The following was inscribed on the tomb of an Anglican bishop (A.D. 1100) among the crypts of Westminster Abbey located in London:

When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits,

I dreamed of changing the world.

As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change,

so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country.

But it, too, seemed immovable.

As I grew into my twilight years,

in one last desperate attempt,

I settled for changing only my family,

those closest to me, but alas,

they would have none of it.

And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realize:

*If I had only changed myself first,*

Then by example I would have changed my family.

From their inspiration and encouragement,

I would have been able to better my country and, who knows,

I may have even changed the world.

(Anonymous)

Here's the secret to change anything in life . . . be it life, friendships, relationships, concepts, life principles, or work. It all begins with me, myself, and I. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24, NIV).

—Robert Strand, Springfield, Missouri, 365 Moments To Cherish (Springfield, Mo.: New Leaf Press, 1997).

Used with permission.

### TO QUOTE—

"Leadership is the ability to get a person to do what you want him to do, when you want it done, in a way you want it done, because he wants to do it. You don't lead people by hitting them over the head; any fool can do that, but that is usually called assault, not leadership."

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

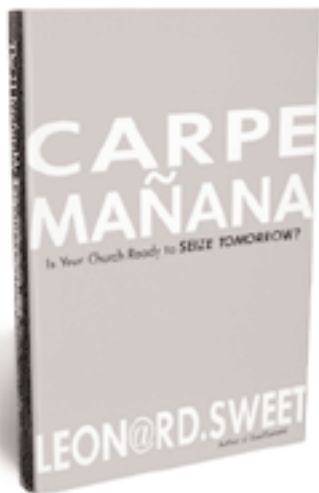
### SEND US YOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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E-mail: You may send your illustrations to: [enrichmentjournal@ag.org](mailto:enrichmentjournal@ag.org).



# book reviews



## **CARPE MAÑANA: IS YOUR CHURCH READY TO SEIZE TOMORROW?**

Leonard Sweet (Zondervan, 208 pp., hardcover)

In *Carpe Mañana*, Sweet carries a favorite theme throughout. He sees people as immigrant or native. Immigrants were born before 1962 and are modern in their outlook. Natives are younger and are postmodern. For immigrants, this book is a primer on understanding natives.

In the chapter "From Vast to Fast," the author argues that immigrants prize bigness while natives value quickness. This chapter has serious implications for the future of church growth. In the chapter "From Word to Image," Sweet maintains that immigrants want to *hear* it while natives want to *see* it. "Our minds are designed to think in pictures, not words," Sweet essentially says. "We even dream in pictures."

*Carpe Mañana* is image-rich and multitextured. Sweet doesn't want you to merely hear what he is saying; he wants you to taste, feel, see, and even smell it. Be prepared to passionately interact with his ideas—at times agreeing and at times disagreeing. And expect to be surprised by the Spirit, who has a way of showing up in the strangest places.

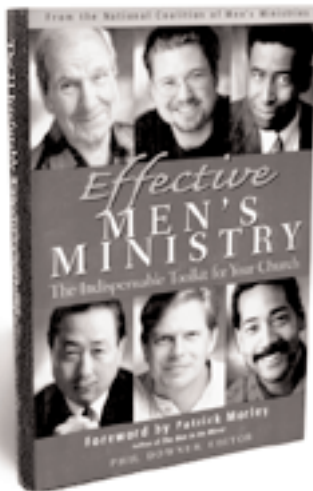
—Reviewed by Greg Wingard,  
senior pastor, Redwood Hills Church,  
Woodinville/Redmond, Washington.

## **EFFECTIVE MEN'S MINISTRY**

Phil Downer, editor (Zondervan Publishing Company, 256 pp., paperback)

For pastors and laymen who are planning to begin a men's ministry in their church, *Effective Men's Ministry* is a must read. Top leaders of men's ministry who are part of the National Coalition of Men's Ministry contributed to this book.

According to Pat Morley, "This book is about redesigning your system to produce men who love God, serve the Lord, and provide spiritual leadership to their families." To accomplish this goal, the book is divided into five parts:



Developing the Plan, Preparing the Ground, Laying the Foundation, Building the Framework, and Creating the Structure.

For the pastor who may be wondering about starting another program in his church, the contributors view men's ministry as not just another program for the church but a "transformational environment built on vital relationships, which inevitably brings positive changes within the church." Churches are in the business of changing society, and developing godly men is one avenue to accomplish this goal.

The writers also discuss the relationship between entry events for men and the need for ongoing ministry opportunities such as small groups, prayer breakfasts, and community outreaches. Each of these components adds to the success of men's ministry within the local church. The sidebars and checklists found throughout the book provide valuable direction for those planning an effective men's ministry.

—Reviewed by Richard L. Schoonover,  
associate editor, *Enrichment Journal*,  
Springfield, Missouri.

## **G-MEN: THE FINAL STRATEGY**

G.F. Watkins (Watercolor Books, 128 pp., paperback)

*G-Men: The Final Strategy* is a strategy for approaching and developing ministry to men in the local church. Built around the concepts and content of Edwin Louis Cole's *Majoring in Men* curriculum, *G-Men* provides a framework on which a pastor can develop ministry to men.

The first half of the text is devoted to a succinct history of and case for the need to personalize ministry to men. Watkins writes, "Since men are given the commandment to be the shepherd of their home and they are held



accountable to oversee and care for their wife and children, doesn't it make sense to *focus* our *efforts* on maturing and developing Christlike men?"

The second half of *G-Men* describes how Watkins has put this focus to work in his church, PowerHouse Christian Center, Katy, Texas. The G-Men strategy begins and ends with identifying and developing key men to serve as leaders, mentors, and role models for the men in the church.

Unfortunately, the text stops short of providing a working model of developing a ministry to men in the local church. To fully adopt the G-Men strategy, pastors must establish an ongoing consultant relationship with Watkins or one of his trained men.

—Reviewed by Charlie Hungerford, former managing editor, HonorBound, Springfield, Missouri.

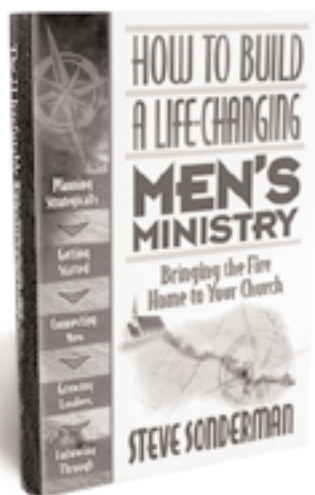
## HOW TO BUILD A LIFE-CHANGING MEN'S MINISTRY

Steve Sonderman (Bethany House, 208 pp., paperback)

Steve Sonderman makes an ambitious promise and then keeps it. Attacking his topic like a football season, the former coach promises the book "will help you build a men's ministry . . . whether you are a lone individual or part of a small group . . . whether starting from scratch or adding to what you already have."

Eleven straightforward chapters with specific tools and exercises walk the reader through steps that make growing a men's ministry achievable in any size church. Excellent for the individual interested in building godly men, the book may be even better the second or third time through with a core group or ministry leadership team.

A current message and timeless principles offset the 1990s references. "What is crucial is . . . to base your men's ministry on a clear understanding of the 'society' you work with—the men you want to reach and their roles in the world."



The section "Involving Your Pastor" gives a sensitive presentation of the pastor's perspective with wise counsel for winning confidence and realistic participation.

A primary training resource for HonorBound men's ministries in the Assemblies of God and other dynamic programs, the book provokes an "I can do this" response.

—Reviewed by Mel Surface, Christian education and men's ministries director, North Texas District of the Assemblies of God, Waxahachie, Texas.

## PREACHING WITH CONVICTION

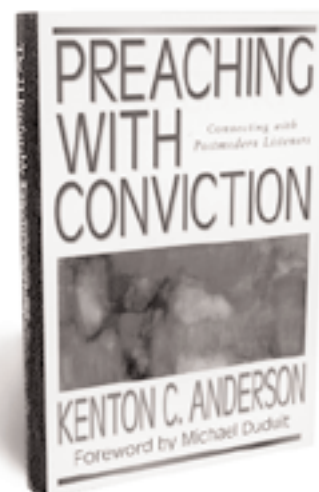
Kenton C. Anderson (Kregel Publications, 160 pp., paperback)

*Preaching With Conviction* is not your typical book on preaching. Using a compelling mystery novel format, the author walks the reader through four stages that begins with the text and ends with the delivery of the sermon. The stages of preaching that Anderson explores are the message, the sermon, the unction, and the delivery.

This book begins with the assumption that most people in America are suspicious of authority figures. Therefore, the preacher cannot assume people will hang on his every word simply because he stands behind a pulpit. Not only must the preacher declare God's Word, but he must also connect with people.

One of the author's main arguments is that too many preachers over-explain the biblical text and under-apply the heart of the sermon. Anderson explains: "Preaching does not stop with understanding ancient languages, history, culture, and customs. Unless the centuries can be bridged with contemporary relevance in the message, then the preaching experience differs little from a classroom encounter. The minister must first process the text for its original meaning and then principle the text for current application."

*Preaching With Conviction* will make every preacher think about new areas



concerning the delivery of his or her sermons. You will profit from Anderson's insights.

—Reviewed by Thomas Lindberg, D.Min., senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Memphis, Tennessee.

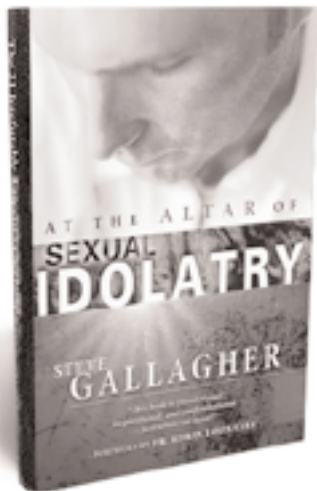
## AT THE ALTAR OF SEXUAL IDOLATRY

Steve Gallagher (Pure Life Ministries, 240 pp., paperback)

From Steve Gallagher's own personal experience and disciplined study has come an excellent resource book for people battling sexual addiction or for Christian professionals who want to understand the problem of sexual addiction from the inside out. The book is divided into four sections: The Problem, The Right Course, Influences, and The Way Out. This breakdown makes it easy



# book reviews



to find specific sections quickly when dealing with a troubled area or a particular time of temptation.

Gallagher, using his years of experience in a transparent manner, makes a convincing case for the Bible and a living relationship with Christ to be the only reliable path of freedom for sexual addicts. He talks about his own times of temptation, falling, and having to get up again. Each time God's grace has been sufficient. The biblical research cited in this book is among the most comprehensive I have seen on this subject.

Evangelical Christianity is indebted to Steve Gallagher for turning the pain of his past into a path toward purity for those in bondage to sexual idolatry.

—Reviewed by Richard D. Dobbins, Ph.D.,  
founder and chief executive officer,  
EMERGE Ministries, Inc., Akron, Ohio.

## SCHOLAR'S LIBRARY

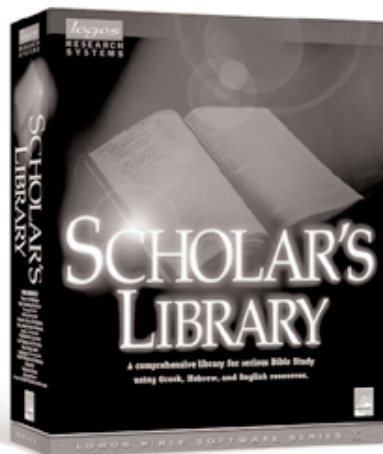
Logos Bible Software Series X (Logos Research Systems)

Logos Research Systems has provided pastors and educators one of the most powerful software tools available today. This all-new version of previous Logos software has raised computer-assisted Bible study to a new level. Several

products are in this Bible software line, two of which are beneficial to pastors.

The *Scholar's Library* is the most extensive version of Logos Bible Software Series X. It includes over \$5,000 worth of electronic books at a fraction of that cost.

Those who work with the original biblical texts will enjoy having resources such as: *Nestle Aland 27th ed.*; *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*; unabridged and abridged versions of *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*; *Louw Nida Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains*, and many other language resources.



Along with the language resources are commentaries, biblical word-study helps, Bible dictionaries, leadership resources, and many other practical resources for pastors. Hundreds of additional books can be unlocked for various fees. A full list of contents is available at: [www.logos.com/scholars](http://www.logos.com/scholars)

*The Pastor's Library*, the second product in this series, contains many of the resources found in the *Scholar's Library* but has a smaller set of original biblical language resources. The *Pastor's Library* can be upgraded to the *Scholar's Library* for an additional fee. Pastors will find invaluable tools for sermon preparation

and Bible studies such as: *Weirsbe's Expository Outlines on the Old and New Testament*; *Weirsbe's "Be" Series*; plus other sermon helps. Also included are practical resources for pastoral ministry: helps for small groups; funeral, wedding, and special events ideas; leadership material; personal and family life resources; and much more. For contents: [www.logos.com/pastors](http://www.logos.com/pastors).

The Logos software is easy to install and use. From the home page all of the resources can be searched at once either topically or by using a Scripture passage as the basis for a search. From anywhere within your search, every resource is just a mouse-click away.

This software is one of the most valuable tools a minister can have in his or her library.

—Reviewed by Richard L. Schoonover,  
associate editor, *Enrichment Journal*,  
Springfield, Missouri.

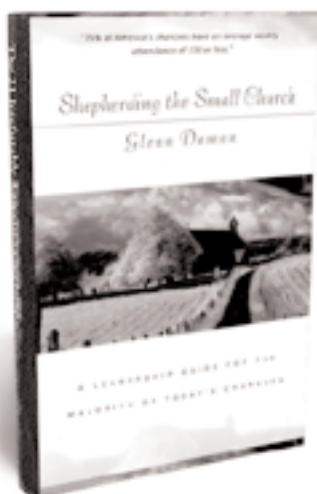
## SHEPHERDING THE SMALL CHURCH

Glenn Daman (Kregel Publications, 288 pp., paperback)

Glenn Daman has developed an excellent resource for pastors of small churches. It combines a good biblical foundation for church life with practical helps to accomplish God's will for the church. The information on developing the theology of the church is worth the price of the book.

The book has many insights on understanding the community and the church. The sections on developing the theology, character, mission, and vision are all well-written with good scriptural foundation. The appendices are practical tools to aid in making the principles a reality.

The author prepares the pastor to minister in a smaller congregation. Daman writes, "The small church



worships relationally rather than emotionally. The larger church conducts worship in the context of celebration and emotional experience. Within the small church, worship is orchestrated in terms of relationships and mutual interaction."

This book is recommended reading for all pastors of small churches and anyone who has oversight of small churches. Its principles and practical helps makes it a quality resource to pastors and other leaders.

—Reviewed by Dwight Sandoz, pastor,  
Minatare, Nebraska.

### **SHAPING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF STUDENTS: A GUIDE FOR YOUTH WORKERS, PASTORS, TEACHERS, & CAMPUS MINISTERS**

Richard R. Dunn (InterVarsity Press, 257 pp., paperback)

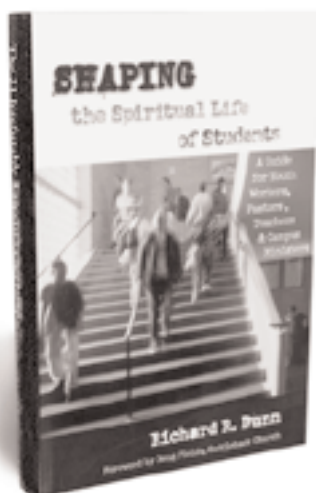
This book by Richard Dunn is a great resource for youth ministry in the 21st century. Dunn not only gives dreams of what youth ministry can be, but he spells out the nuts and bolts to get there.

The author begins with the concept of relationship ministry he calls *pacing*. He encourages leaders to get into the youth world by listening to them and loving them. Out of that relationship one can lead them, step by step, getting feedback from them on the way. Dunn then addresses specific issues of loving,

including how to resolve conflict and how to speak the truth.

The third section was especially insightful as the author walked his readers through the stages of adolescence. He gives a snapshot of the world through their eyes—early adolescence and their need to discover personal identity, middle adolescence and their need to belong, and late adolescence and their need for significance.

Dunn's book is excellent as an instruction manual or inspirational reading for youth leaders, workers, or even parents. It gives a big picture of



the ministry, then delves into the smaller pieces that make ministering to teens so fulfilling. Young people can be shaped into God's image.

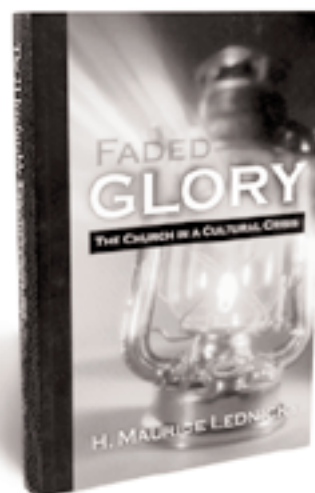
—Reviewed by Chad Nelson, AGTS student, former youth pastor, Cornerstone Assembly of God, Boynton, Pennsylvania.

### **FADED GLORY: THE CHURCH IN A CULTURAL CRISIS**

H. Maurice Lednicky (Lifestyle Ministries, 159 pp., paperback)

This practical, down-to-earth book deals with the issues confronting us in our churches and in our personal lives.

Lednicky takes the reader on a thought-provoking journey, giving opportunity for spiritual reflection and renewal. The key issue is the manner in which the church has been influenced by current cultural attitudes and



practices. The author emphatically declares that we have no right to decide for ourselves what we consider acceptable behavior. God's Word, eternal and unchanging, clearly articulates what God expects from His children.

As you read, you sense the author's genuine concern for the church. He challenges believers to the highest quality of Christian conduct and states that Christians should give testimony to a confused, self-centered world that Jesus does make a difference in our behavior.

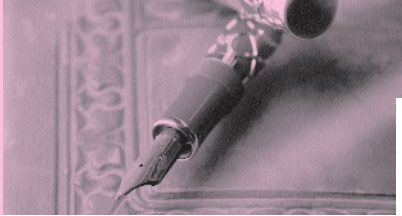
The church is urged to never downplay the urgency of being filled with the Holy Spirit, realizing the central focus of every activity in a Spirit-filled church will be to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. When this happens, evangelism and reconciliation will be at the forefront and the gifts of the Spirit will be operative.

This book is a valuable resource for ministers and laity. The timelessness of the material answers many of the perplexing issues confronting the church today.

—Reviewed by Armon Newburn,  
former Oklahoma District superintendent,  
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

### **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

## **EVANGEL PUBLISHES ANNUAL EASTER OUTREACH EDITIONS**

The annual Easter outreach editions published by *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* have been effective for sharing the gospel with unbelievers. Each year churches order thousands of extra copies of these issues.

To meet this need, *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* will once again print extra copies of the Palm Sunday (April 13) and Resurrection Day (April 20) editions. The Palm Sunday issue features the life and ministry of Jesus, while the Easter edition explores the significance of the Lord's resurrection.

Besides having an ample supply of *Evangel*s for services on April 13 and 20, many churches order additional copies to use as evangelism tools. Churches wanting extra copies of the Palm Sunday and Easter editions should place their orders early to ensure availability.

Churches requesting at least 400 additional copies of the two issues by Fri., Mar. 14, will be eligible for free customized imprinting on the back of every extra copy.

To order extra copies of the Palm Sunday (69-7315) and/or Easter (69-7316) editions, call GPH Customer Services at 1-800-641-4310. More information on the free customized imprinting is available by calling GPH.

## **KEY BEARERS 2003 GOAL: OUR 4 MILLIONTH EVANGEL**

Last May, a milestone was reached when the then-6-year-old Key Bearers ministry sponsored the 3 millionth copy of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* to the nation's incarcerated. Now the outreach has its sights on providing its 4 millionth copy of the *Evangel* before the end of 2003.

"In the beginnings of Key Bearers, we

had a vision to not only maintain what the *Evangel* had been doing, but to double it, which would mean 100,000 copies a year going into the prisons," says Light for the Lost director Benny Ferguson, who launched the Key Bearers campaign with *Evangel* Editor in Chief Hal Donaldson. The ministry was started to provide a steady supply of the magazine to correctional institutions across the United States.

For the past 3 years, donations to Key Bearers have annually sponsored nearly 600,000 copies of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* and Spanish-language *Evangelio Pentecostal Hoy* to the incarcerated in hundreds of penitentiaries and jails. Thanks to the ongoing generosity of those individuals and churches that participate in Key Bearers, the ministry has far exceeded expectations.

Earlier this year, the *Evangel* received its 10,000th salvation coupon since it began including the response forms in the magazine. About half of the coupons come from prisoners who decide to commit their lives to Jesus Christ.

The 2003 Key Bearers fund-raising campaign is scheduled to begin in March. Additional Key Bearers are needed to help reach more of the 2.2 million men and women serving time behind bars. Pastors wanting to get their churches involved in the Key Bearers ministry are encouraged to contact Light for the Lost via e-mail at [lftl@ag.org](mailto:lftl@ag.org), or by calling 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4162.

## **APRIL IS DISASTER RELIEF MONTH**

Does your church have a disaster team prepared in case disaster strikes in your area or another part of the U.S.? Many churches are realizing the need to mobilize disaster relief teams due to the

severity of recent natural disasters and possible future terrorists' attacks.

April is Disaster Relief month in our churches. It is scriptural to be prepared to help others during times of disaster. The apostle Paul admonished us: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, NIV).

During April each congregation is encouraged to receive an offering for the Benevolences Disaster Relief fund. This would also be a good time to consider starting a local disaster relief team in your church. For more information go to: [www.disasterrelief.ag.org](http://www.disasterrelief.ag.org).

## **MEMORIAL SUNDAY IS AGED MINISTERS ASSISTANCE DAY**

A recipient of Aged Ministers Assistance recently wrote: "I lost my ministry after 48 years due to ill health. One day I was sitting in my house wondering how I was going to make it. And the Lord so graciously let me know He would take over. I'm very grateful that the Lord works through AMA and the Benevolences Department and helps me make it."

Nearly \$1 million is needed each year to supplement the incomes of some 500 retired or disabled pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and spouses.

Memorial Sunday, May 25, is Aged Ministers Assistance Day. This is a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge the retired ministers in your congregation and receive an offering for Aged Ministers Assistance. Five hundred retired and disabled ministers and spouses in need are depending on AMA.

For free 2003 AMA bulletin inserts call 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2182, or e-mail: [benevolences@ag.org](mailto:benevolences@ag.org).

Send your designated AMA offering to: Benevolences Ministries, 1445 N. Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

## **AGFSG LAUNCHES PARTNERS IN CONSTRUCTION**

Assemblies of God Financial Services Group has a new consultation service to assist churches in planning, designing, constructing, and funding new or remodeled facilities. Available through A/G Loan and Capital Services, Partners in Construction provides church leaders a menu of value-added services to help reduce the financial risk inherent in construction projects.

A/G Loan and Capital Services funds over \$75 million in construction loans to A/G churches each year—almost one-third of all closed loans. While a majority of these construction loans are serviced without difficulty, a growing number of churches are unable to complete their projects on budget. "Although cost overruns are always a concern to us as a lender, we are equally concerned with the resultant financial burden to our churches," Vice President Kert Parsley explained. "We find that church leaders often require additional expertise in two critical areas—project planning and project monitoring."

For a modest fee, Partners in Construction makes available to each church an experienced construction consultant who assesses the cost of planned construction through value engineering of the component materials and processes. Once a project budget is established, the consultant provides ongoing project monitoring throughout the construction period, including oversight of fund disbursements, change orders, and lien control. Churches are also provided general consultation regarding use of materials, construction techniques, architect and builder selection, bidding procedures, and construction management options.

"Our goal is to help churches 'count the cost' as Jesus instructed in Luke 14:28," Parsley added. "Partners in Construction will enable AGFSG and our churches to effectively build God's kingdom while remaining good stewards of His financial resources."

For more information on church loans or the Partners in Construction

program, call A/G Loan and Capital Services at 1-800-449-5626.

## **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

Funding beyond tuition is necessary for a quality Christian school to become reality. Resource development is essential for operations and capital projects. MasterPlan Stewardship Services can assist you in creating an integrated system of communication and donor development to improve your funding efforts. Following are some tips from our experts.

### **Key Questions of Fund-raising**

- Why should they give?
- What causes them to give?
- Why don't more people give?

Resource development is both science and art in that you must both analytically plan for success and develop relationships. The science of development answers questions about:

- Determining the core constituency
- Defining the need
- Communicating the vision and needs
- Improving community awareness
- Clarifying the mission and vision

The art of fund-raising deals with relationship building. Evaluate your relationships in the following areas:

- Initiating connectivity with constituents
- Improving intimate knowledge of key leaders and givers
- Increasing frequency of personal contacts
- Expressing public and personal appreciation

Qualified consultants are available to assist you in planning to meet your ministry's financial need. For more information, call MasterPlan Stewardship Services at 1-800-962-7499.

## **2003 LFTL CONVENTION**

Light for the Lost is celebrating 50 years of ministry during its 50th annual convention in Corpus Christi, Tex., April 25,26, 2003. Speakers include: Chuck Freeman, Oklahoma LFTL director; and Jay Mooney, national Youth Alive

director; as well as dozens of missionaries and LFTL leaders. For more information or to register, contact LFTL at 1-800-988-0292, or check the LFTL Web site: [www.lftl.org](http://www.lftl.org). For accommodations, contact The Omni at 1-361-887-1600.

## **NEW MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES**

Light for the Lost offers two new ministry ventures that could bring evangelism literature to your area. First, LFTL has ratified the use of funds for electronic print media, such as CDs carrying written materials. This program has already been implemented using *Fire Bible* CDs in China and Chi Alpha materials on American college campuses. Not only do the CDs provide more compact storage and endless reprinting at low cost, they also draw attention in distribution. At one distribution table on campus, Chi Alpha offered both printed tracts and CD versions of the same tract. All of the CDs were distributed.

Second, LFTL is partnering with Youth Alive in the Seven Project. Churches receive World Ministries Giving credit when they purchase Youth Alive evangelism materials for their hometown high school. These campus missions packets include the *Book of Hope* for youth, *Alive in Christ* discipleship course, and *Real Hope* minimagazine. To find out more about these materials and how to receive credit, contact the national Youth Alive office.

For more information on these projects, call LFTL at 1-800-988-0292, or e-mail: [lftl@ag.org](mailto:lftl@ag.org).

## **WORLD MISSIONS CELEBRATION SCHEDULED FOR GENERAL COUNCIL**

General Council in Washington, D.C., will be the site for the World Missions celebration to be held Aug. 1, 2003. The celebration will feature inspiring updates by World Missions regional directors and missionaries. National brethren from Assemblies of God fellowships in other nations will also give firsthand reports of how God is moving in their part of the world.

A parade of missionaries in national costumes representing many of the



# news & resources

180-plus nations where the Assemblies of God has a presence will highlight the celebration. Music ministry will include an international orchestra, and the Bethesda Community Church choir from Fort Worth, Tex., will present the 2003 missions musical.

A special offering will be taken during the missions celebration to assist the Senders Fund, a fund used to help new missionaries reach their field of service sooner. In the past several years, Senders Fund has helped decrease missionary itineration time from 20 to 13 months.

The World Missions celebration was sold out at the last General Council and over \$1 million was pledged to Senders Fund. The attendance at this celebration is expected to exceed previous Councils.

## NATIONAL SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES CRUISE

Join single adults and young adults from all over the nation for a Western Caribbean cruise.

- June 30 through July 5, 2003
- Western Caribbean ports of call: Cozumel and Calica/Playa del Carmen
- Departing from Galveston, Tex.
- Prices start at approximately \$600 (based on 2 occupants per room—other prices for 1, 3, 4 per room)
- Excludes transportation to/from Houston airport or Galveston if driving
- Special group activities on board

For more information, contact national Single Adult Ministries Agency at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4125, or e-mail: [singles@ag.org](mailto:singles@ag.org).

## HERITAGE RELEASES VOLUME 4 IN REPRINT SERIES

Continued demand for the *Assemblies of God Heritage* magazine as a research tool and as inspiring reading has prompted

the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center to release the 1998–2001 issues as volume 4 in the reprint collection. This fully indexed, 16-issue volume is available from the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center (750-444) or Gospel Publishing House (75WA0444) for \$35. The entire four-volume set, which includes all issues from 1981 to 2001, is available from FPHC (750-445), or from GPH (75WA0445), for \$119.

A text-searchable CD version of *Heritage* (1981–99) can be ordered for \$20 (750-428). An order form for all digital products, including the *Pentecostal Evangel*, General Council Minutes, and oral histories is available on the FPHC Web site ([www.agheritage.org](http://www.agheritage.org)) or by mail. To learn more about *Heritage* reprints and digital products, contact the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894, or 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4400.

## CANDIDATE ORIENTATION FOR 2003

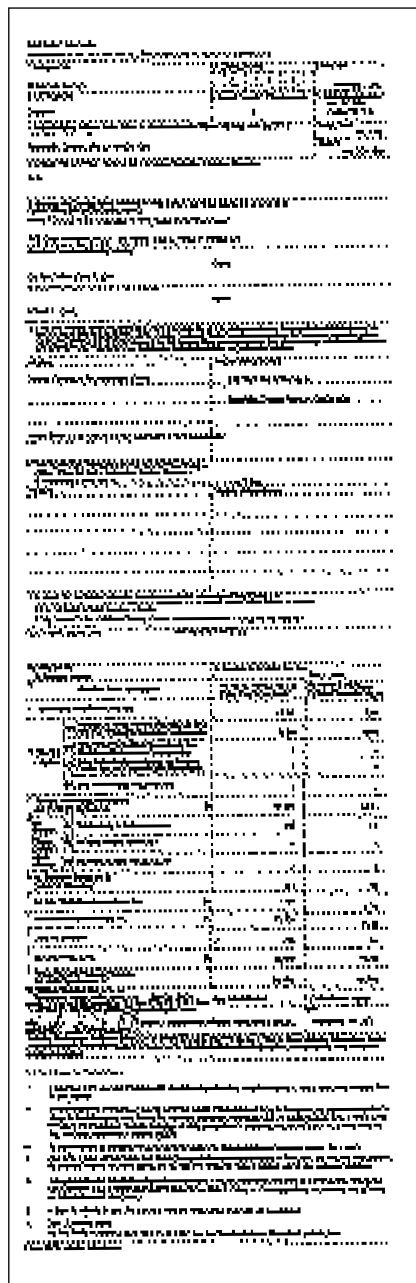
Every year Assemblies of God Home Missions endeavors to reach more people with the gospel. This requires the effort and commitment of skilled laborers for the harvest. With the help of our home missionaries, our message of *Hope for America* is reaching thousands of people throughout the U.S. The result is a renewed and vibrant passion in our churches for home missions.

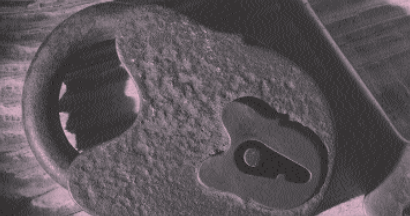
If God has placed a call to missions on your heart, home missions may be the answer. This year, Home Missions Candidate Orientation will be held Mar. 16–19 and Sept. 14–17 in Springfield, Mo.

The orientation sessions are designed to interview, train, and evaluate future home missionaries. These days of concentrated guidance help ensure that individuals are ready emotionally and

spiritually to take on the rigors of home missions work.

Men, women, or couples interested in learning more about becoming a nationally appointed home missionary should contact Assemblies of God Home Missions at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3252, or visit the Home Missions Web site: [HomeMissions.ag.org](http://HomeMissions.ag.org).





# in closing

BY RICHARD L. SCHOONOVER



## Transforming Men

This issue of *Enrichment* is designed to help you as pastor encourage and strengthen the men in your church. God has placed men under your care so they can be equipped for the ministry to which He has called them (Ephesians 4:11–16). While this task at times may seem daunting, it is doable as you allow the God who created man to guide you.

You probably have men who are committed to God, faithful in serving Him, and involved in various leadership positions in the church. No doubt you also have men who faithfully attend your church but are not involved in any active ministry role. You also have men who are on the fringe and attend church infrequently. Some of these men may also be struggling with issues that keep them from fully surrendering to God. Part of your role in men's ministry is to see that all men become committed to Christ, His kingdom, and the church.

God has given each man in your church gifts he can use to strengthen the body of Christ. As pastor, you have a responsibility to help each man discover his gifts and provide opportunity to use them to build and strengthen your church.

You can guide your men in fulfilling God's plan for their lives in many ways. Spend time with them. Have a monthly prayer breakfast with your men where you share

God's Word and impart your vision for the church. Let them get on board with you for what God wants to do in their church.

Take your men to district men's retreats, HonorBound regional conferences, and Promise Keeper events. Let them see how important building a relationship with God is to you. Use these times as a springboard to developing a discipleship program for your men. Let them learn from each other what it means to be a man who is dedicated to God.

Help your men become involved in missions projects, such as repairing and painting an elderly person's home as a community outreach. Maybe your church or district is sending a construction team overseas. Make these opportunities available to your men, and encourage them to use their God-given gifts.

HonorBound has several resources to help you minister to your men. *Preparing To Win* is an 8-week course designed to strengthen men. *You're a Soul Winner* video series will challenge and help men share the gospel with their unsaved friends. *Dad's Coaching Clinic* will inspire men to become better husbands and fathers. Take advantage of these and other resources to strengthen and challenge your men to be all they can for God.

Pastor, you are the key to a vibrant men's ministry in your church. Even

if qualified laymen provide the leadership for this ministry, it will not be effective unless you give it your full support. What an effective men's ministry will do for your church will be worth your investment.

As your men are transformed into the image of Christ, your church will benefit from their godly leadership and involvement. Their families will be strengthened. Dynamic families will attract other families to your church.

If you do not have a men's ministry in your church, start one without delay. Ask committed laymen to join you in this effort. With these men ask God how He wants you to develop ministry to men. Study and acquire the resources mentioned in this issue of *Enrichment* to help you with your planning. Develop a vision statement and ministry goals. Plan the ministry activities that best fit your church and purpose for men's ministry. Then allow the Holy Spirit to draw men from the church and community.

Men's ministry can be the most important ministry in your church. Your whole church will benefit as you develop godly husbands and fathers. Remember, Jesus set the example; He ministered to men. Follow His example and see what He will do in your church. **e**

*Richard L. Schoonover is associate editor, Enrichment journal, Springfield, Missouri.*





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