Revivalof Compassion

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MINISTRY BYGARYR.ALLEN

A REVIVAL OF COMPASSION



hen a church experiences real revival, it will act differently toward its community. Real revival will make us more compassionate toward those in need.

GOD'S COMMAND

In the Law, God described two primary elements of holiness: 1) our intimate relationship with God, "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" (Deuteronomy 6:4,5), and 2) how we are to treat one another, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:18).

There is a close connection between our response to God's holiness and how we treat others. Not only does the Old Testament provide substantial instructions as to how God's people were to interact with others within the community of faith, but also specific instructions about how to treat the alien (stranger) among them. The alien was one outside the immediate family, clan, or tribe who was not viewed as an enemy to be feared and mistrusted but one to whom hospitality was to be extended with the possibility of establishing friendship and perhaps eventual inclusion within the community of faith. This is a clear picture of holy living and the foundation for present-day "relationship evangelism."

Leviticus 19 calls God's people to

honor their parents, reverence God, keep the Sabbath, refrain from stealing, and tell the truth. But this code of holiness goes a step further. Being holy as God is holy also requires leaving grain in the fields after harvesting for the hungry to glean, treating the handicapped with mercy, acting with justice toward the poor, not favoring the rich or powerful over the weak, treating older adults with respect, and treating the alien, the immigrant, as we would treat a citizen of our country.¹

Six of the Ten Commandments tell us our obligation to one another. If we mistreat others, we desecrate God's law. Byron Klaus, president of Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, says, "Holiness is living so as to never cast a shadow on the character of Jesus Christ. It is in this we act out of obedience."²

JESUS CONFIRMS THE LAW

When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment and how one could inherit eternal life, He quoted from the previously mentioned passages in Deuteronomy and Leviticus: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27). When He was asked, "And who is my neighbor?" (verse 29), He told the story of the man who fell among thieves and was cared for by a Samaritan (verses 30–36). According to Jesus, our neighbor is anyone in need who is near us.

We do not always choose our neighbor. Usually they are placed near us by God or by circumstances. Our primary ministry is to neighbors (strangers, aliens).

The writer of Hebrews reminds us to love one another and to be hospitable to those outside the community of faith: "Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:1,2). God's presence and God's messenger may sometimes reside outside the normal boundaries of our community of faith.

Good living, kindness, and community service are never a substitute for a personal salvation experience with God through Jesus Christ. However, when we give verbal testimony to a personal, intimate relationship with God and at the same time treat others badly, we prove we are not living in His holiness.

In this issue of *Enrichment*, dedicated to compassion ministries, we address the biblical foundation for compassion ministries, look at a number of churches that have effective compassion ministries, and present some practical helps for such ministries.

GARY R. ALLEN, D.Min., is executive editor of *Enrichment* journal and national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.

ENDNOTES

^{1.} Stephen A. Rhodes, Where the Nations Meet: The Church in a Multicultural World (Downers Grove, III.: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

Byron Klaus, "Church Revitalization" (Lecture at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo., June 1999).

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unhealthy relationships, whether it is with God, or relationships within a marriage, a church, or community. Most moral and personal failures in ministry stem from a lack of genuine intimacy. Ministers who ignore their own life issues will often find these issues affecting their relationships with others. How do ministers build healthy intimacy in life and relationships? Richard Dobbins, Richard L. Dresselhaus, Joe Fuiten, Gabriele Rienas, and Gary Smalley — leaders who have developed intimate relationships with God, self, and others — share practical ways to build godly intimacy into your life and ministry.

To order extra copies for your staff/volunteers or to subscribe, call 1-800-641-4310.

A REVIVAL OF COMPASSION

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- Use of the masculine pronoun for pastor is used throughout this issue and refers to both genders.
- Unless noted, all Scriptures are from the New International Version.

CSHORTS

CLERGY WATCH HOW MUCH SHOULD WE PAY OUR PASTOR?

A recent Duke University study suggests that congregations are hindering their mission when they determine clergy salaries based on competitive, free-market approaches. Low salaries make it cumbersome for pastors to stay focused on their calling, and are responsible for prompting many talented seminary graduates to enter other professions according to the study, "How Much Should We Pay the Pastor?: A Fresh Look at Clergy Salaries in the 21st Century."

Most Protestant denominations base ministerial remuneration on market-driven factors, the report indicates. Centrally organized denominations such as Methodists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans have similar compensations because of structured pension and health care benefits packages. But congregational autonomous churches, including Baptists and Pentecostals, are much more market-driven in setting pay. The pay discrepancy is particularly noticeable in congregations of 100 or fewer attendees, where 60 percent of Protestant pastors serve. The median salary in these smaller churches, including housing, is \$36,000 for the connectional churches and \$22,300 for the congregational-type churches.

Regardless of polity, few pastors receive what most Americans would consider a livable wage, according to the study. To earn enough to pay off educational bills and to save for retirement, clergy often consider moving to larger churches. Only in churches with 350 to 1,000 members, which account for only 5 percent of Protestant churches, do median salaries rise significantly to \$66,003 for connectional churches and \$59,315 for congregational churches.

"The fact we use the free market to determine how much to pay clergy suggests that we view them as paid employees who compete for the position, and not as people called and compelled by God to spread the gospel," says Becky McMillan, coauthor of the study.

The median salary, including housing, for all full-time pastors in the study amounted to \$40,000. Only 30 percent of small congregational churches provide retirement benefits for their pastors, compared to 80 percent of small connectional churches.

JOHN W. KENNEDY, Today's Pentecostal Evangel

MINISTRY **MUSINGS** THE CHECK ARRIVED

was excited! A young man sent a check for the gas I had bought him early one morning. In all my years of ministry and helping people in need, this was the only person who had repaid me.

The check bounced! At first I was disappointed. Then I remembered that ministry is focused not on reimbursement but on ministering to those in need. I never expect to be repaid on this earth. I just hope I meet many in heaven whom I have helped and trust I had a part in their being there. Billy Fill bit towntration

12. ELER

GARY ALLEN, national coordinator, Ministerial Enrichment Office

FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY COMPASSION MINISTRIES

Assemblies of God churches are compassionate. The 2000 "Faith Communities Today" survey indicates that more than half of churches responding to this questionnaire reported compassion ministries for their members or community. This included financial assistance to families or individuals, providing services to food pantries, thrift stores, hospitals or nursing homes, and prisons or jail ministries in the previous year.*



CROSSING CULTURES

FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS ON THE RISE IN U.S.



- Foreign-born residents in the U.S. now number over 30 million, which is equal to the combined populations of Israel, El Salvador, Ireland, Angola, and Albania.
- Today, 1 in 10 U.S. residents is foreign-born. The number of foreignborn and their children is now more than 1 in 5, up from 1 in 20 in 1970.
- The largest percentage of foreign-born residents is in the 35-to-39 age group.
- Though foreign-born residents comprise 10 percent of the population, they represent a little over 12 percent of the U.S. labor force.
- Three-fourths of foreign-born residents are from Latin America and Asia. The most common birthplace of these citizens is Mexico (4.5 million). Other foreign-birth nations of over 500,000 are the Philippines, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, and China.
- Since 1980, the Asian population in the U.S. has tripled, the Hispanic population has more than doubled, and the African-American population has increased by 31 percent. These three groups make up one-fourth of the population.
- More than 80 nations were represented in the death toll when the twin towers of the World Trade Center collapsed.
- Whites comprise 72 percent of the general population but only 64 percent of the adolescent population (ages 10 to 19).
- While 71 percent of Americans own and use ATM cards, ethnic minorities use them more frequently than do whites. Hispanics use ATM cards the most — 82 percent — while only 68 percent of whites use them. The reason for this disparity is probably because ethnic minorities are more accustomed to cash transactions and use credit cards more sparingly.

DAVID MOORE, Convoy of Hope

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



1657 350 years ago

Oliver Cromwell proclaimed himself Lord Protector of England and served until his death 4 years later. His reign began after he had dissolved the Parliament a few months earlier because of their inability to make decisions. One idea from his Puritan rule was the equality of people. This was treasured by the commoners and despised by some aristocrats. It also paved the way for the religious and political liberty found in the world today. That same year he also summoned the First Protectorate parliament and enacted an ordinance for uniting England and Scotland. (See article on Cromwell on page 116.)



UTHTRAX DEFINING VIOLENCE IN A TEEN'S WORLD

Teens say feeling safe has little to do with the things that bother adults the most: violence in media, graphic video games, violent lyrics, school shootings, road rage, and increased statistics of violence in the home and at school. Rather, teens define violence by the climbing number of suicide-related deaths among their friends.

Youth suicide is becoming a major problem in the U.S.¹ The overall suicide rate has declined over the past 20 years, but the suicide rate for teens 15 to 19 years old has increased by 6 percent. For adolescents 10 to 14 years old, the



The Welsh Revival (1904–06) began with Evan Roberts as one of its first converts. In just a few months, 100,000 people were saved. Though short-lived, its impact was worldwide. This revival was a precursor of the Azusa Street Revival. suicide rate increased by more than 100 percent over the past 20 years.² Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people ages 10 to 19.

The October 2002, issue of *Newsweek* reported that 3 million adolescents were depressed, citing causes including rising divorce rates and social pressure. Chronic depression is no longer only an adult disease. Most teens described loneliness or depression as emptiness or a void in their lives. Fractured families and confusing definitions of love are two reasons youth are responsive to the gospel.

Though countering media violence and graphic video games is a worthy battle, perhaps it is time to refocus and address the real violence affecting today's youth culture.

T. SUZANNE ELLER ENDNOTES

- 1. Data provided in National Center for Health Statistics, GMWK291 Death Rates for 72 Selected Causes by 5-Year Age Groups, Race, and Sex: United States, 1979–98, p. 485. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. WISQARS (Webbased Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System).



CROSSROADS

St. Petersburg, Florida, was the recent scene of a frightening court battle. A circuit court judge had ordered an injunction on shock rock band Hell on Earth. The band wanted to have a terminally ill person commit suicide on stage while they performed in concert. St. Petersburg recently passed an ordinance making suicide for commercial or entertainment purposes illegal or to sell tickets to such events.

Hell on Earth spokesman, Bill Tourtelot, says the band will defy the ordinance, stage the event in a hidden location, and broadcast live on their Web site. This, of course, will be done for the "noble cause" of the right to die.

Human dignity and the eternal consequences of any person's death require Christians to respond clearly to the Hell on Earth proposal. The irony of a band called Hell on Earth performing a concert with ear-shattering decibels while a person commits suicide is bone chilling. The fact some people would purchase tickets for such an event speaks volumes about their adrenalin and voyeuristic addictions. To suggest this is for a noble cause is disgusting. Common sense by the city of St. Petersburg and clear action by the circuit court demonstrate that human dignity is still a public value.

This dilemma in St. Petersburg indicates the cold reality that lurks just below the warm sunlit beaches of Florida. Barbarians at the gates of common sense and human dignity must be courageously met by Christians who believe and act decisively because they affirm the Psalmist was right.

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13–16).

BYRON KLAUS, president, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

1929 75 years ago

Charles F. Parham, sometimes called the "father of the Pentecostal movement," died at age 56. He founded a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, where the Pentecostal movement began in 1901. His definition of tongues as initial evidence helped develop the theological framework for what has become the modern Pentecostal movement. The million-dollar facilities of O'Reilly General Hospital, operated by the U.S. Army during wartime, were deeded to the Assemblies of God for use as a nonprofit educational institution. This became Evangel University, in Springfield, Missouri, which specializes in Christian liberal arts training.

1954 50 years ago **1979** 25 years ago

Pope John Paul II became the first Pope to visit a Communist country when he visited his native Poland. Subsequently, he toured the U.S. with President Jimmy Carter and called for universal peace.

GLENN GOHR, assistant archivist, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

WHAT IN THE WORLD



Sunday message reminds your congrethe same world they do. When the United States went to war ence to Saddam's to point out events in the Old Testament that took place in and around Baghdad. But limited to a geography lesson. A greater treasbloodshed and ambushes that have of the ongoing spiritual battle this side of the

Calling attention to

bloodied cross and empty grave.

The aftermath of the Iraqi conflict has proved to be longer than Americans had anticipated. It has also proved to be more deadly. Ironically, more American soldiers have lost their lives after the war was declared over than during the weeks of the invasion.

In many ways, what is taking place in Iraq is still taking place in the victory Christ won on the cross when He defeated Satan. When He announced it was finished, the enemy of our souls was mortally wounded. Two thousand years later, we know our victory has been guaranteed, yet we continue to struggle with the influence of Satan. Every week we are ambushed by one who knows he has lost. Cancer, depression, addictions, divorce, child abuse, injustice, and war remind us that the aftermath of war is costly.

GREG ASIMAKOUPOULOS

BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS

Church leaders worried about the graying of their congregations are often perplexed why young adults are not responding to their efforts. One reason may be the leader's misunderstanding about how this unreached group lives and thinks. Such insight is critical to mission among them.

A 2003 study by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center is instructive. Researchers found seven factors considered to be key indicators of adulthood in American culture:

- Completing an education
- Obtaining full-time employment
- Being able to support a family financially
- Being financially independent from one's parents
- Not living with parents
- Being married
- Having a child

This survey found that the average age at which

these milestones are attained is becoming significantly later. This is evidenced by young adults waiting into their late twenties to marry.

LEADERLIFE GROWING UP AS A LEADER

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS AS A LEADER OFTEN MEANS GROWING THROUGH THREE PREDICTABLE STAGES:

STAGE 1: It's all about me. People new to leadership arts are often authoritarians. This trait usually results from the leader's pride, self-centeredness, or a remedy for his or her insecurities. Jesus described this pattern as the way the world leads (Mark 10:42). The saddest part of my leadership journey has been meeting Christians who are mired in this immature, dictatorial stage. Instead of having a 40-year career, they have a 1-year career 40 times.





Study author Tom Smith notes that, "fewer young Americans have achieved these milestones of adulthood than their parents' generation. ... They are showing less adult behavior; they are not married; they are dating; they are not raising kids; and they are out on the singles scene. It's a new kind of maturity."

Just as adolescence emerged as a life phase only a century ago, "preadulthood" (roughly from early to late twenties) is a new way to understand becoming an adult as a multistage process rather than simply turning 18. This phase

> is characterized by a maximum of freedom and

a minimum of responsibilities that are common later in life. Frank Furstenberg, professor of sociology at the University



intermediate zone, the ministry head has been exposed to leadership training literature from corporate sources. Guided by these books and seminars, the midstage leader has given up on the overt use of power over others. However, he or she is likely to see relationships as tools for accomplishing goals. Thus, while changing to casual clothing and adopting a softer demeanor toward subordinates, this person is only a more benevolent dictator who takes his or her staff to seminars. The leader then adopts relationship language (e.g., referring to every group as a "team") but in reality, his commitment exists simply because it's a more effective way to maximize his dream. This stage is sad because it is populated by sincere people who believe they are servant leaders. They are informed, but not transformed.

of Pennsylvania, contends that this gap between the teen years and the onset of adult responsibilities is a completely new life stage, representing prolonged and modified adolescence that has been appropriately termed "preadulthood."

Churches that assume younger adults are junior versions of the middle-aged will unlikely connect with them in meaningful ways. The same is true for churches that serve urban areas using rural assumptions by attempting to reach contemporary preadults with methods designed for their grandparents.

The church cannot assume its young people will marry their high school sweethearts right out of the youth group, and then attend the married couples class the Sunday after their honeymoon. The preadult population is usually not married, not as interested in classes as their parents, and not

asking the same questions we are trying to answer. Preadults must be reached on their own terms so they can be equipped to reach each other. Understanding "preadulthood" is an important part of developing missionary work in this unreached group.

MY RECOMMENDATION: Talk with preadults in your community about their lives and then dialog with your leadership to evaluate whether your ministry is operating on assumptions that are still valid.

EARL CREPS, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

SOURCE: Chicago Tribune, May 9, 2003, p. 12.



STAGE 3: It's all about us. Mature leadership is measured by one standard: Christlikeness. The essence of Jesus' ministry was His willingness to sacrifice His own life on our behalf. Christian leaders are set apart by the willingness to put their welfare on the cross for the sake of God's people and kingdom. This does not mean they are weak or visionless. Jesus was neither of these. No one is stronger and no one knows how to use strength as selflessly as Christ. Christlike leaders influence others by the fact their motivation is not self-centered or superficially relational. This form of leadership is what emerging generations of believers are desperate to find and imitate. It is Jesus' way and should be our way as well. It is the only way to turn a "them" into an "us."

MY RECOMMENDATION: When making your next leadership decision, ask yourself: Is this about me, about them, or truly about us?

EARL CREPS, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary



THE HIM BEHIND THE HYMN MAJESTY, WORSHIP HIS MAJESTY

In 1977, the British Empire was celebrating the 25th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation. Jack and Anna Hayford, vacationing in Great Britain, noticed the symbols of royalty displayed everywhere. As they drove through Scotland, Wales, and England, they felt the majestic aura of the English monarchy.

One day Jack — overwhelmed with the sense of majesty he'd been experiencing on this trip — compared the reverential grace and glory of England's royal grandeur to the kingdom of God. *Majesty, worship His majesty* came into his head. Turning to Anna he asked her to jot down these words. As Jack continued driving he began to dictate words as well as a tune.

Jack recalls, "So powerfully did Christ Jesus' royalty, dignity, and majesty fill my heart, I began to sense anew of what it meant to be His! The triumph of His cross has not only unlocked the chains of our own bondage and restored us to fellowship with the Father, but He has given us authority over sin and hell and raised us to partnership with Him in His Throne — now.

After returning to the United States, Jack continued to fine-tune the worship chorus that would resonate with Christians the world over.

"Majesty describes the kingly, lordly, gloriously regal nature of our Savior. The chorus transcends objective statements to exalt Christ in a worship which He is fully worthy of," Jack contends. "Majesty is also a statement of the fact our worship, when birthed in spirit and in truth, can align us with His throne in a way that His kingdom authority flows to us — to overflow us, free us, and channel through us."

GREG ASIMAKOUPOULOS

EMERGING REALITIES CLERGY SUPPORT FOR FAITH-BASED & COMMUNITY INITIATIVE ACT REMAINS LUKEWARM

Among Protestant clergy, the response to President Bush's Faith-Based & Community Initiatives, which allows religious organizations to use federal funds for social programs, is still lukewarm.

In a nationwide, representative study of 567 Protestant ministers conducted by Ellison Research of Phoenix, Arizona, 67 percent of the clergy support this program, 32 percent oppose it, and 1 percent are still undecided. However, just 20 percent support the initiative strongly, while 47 percent support it only somewhat.

Response to this program is particularly mixed among pastors who are registered Democrats. Among Democrats, 53 percent support the program while 47 percent oppose it. Among Republican ministers, 73 percent support the program while 26 percent oppose it and 1 percent are undecided.

Pastors' concerns about this program are not related to efficiency. Ministers' concerns are apparently more about which religious groups will be eligible for federal funds and whether religious freedom will be compromised by this use of funds. Less of a concern for most ministers was whether the plan violates the separation of church and state and whether their church would seek government funding for social programs if it were available.

Another surprising development was the fact while politically conservative ministers are the most likely to support the initiative, it was the more liberal pastors who had plans to wade in and use the funds for social programs.



Do you tend to oppose or support the Faith-Based & Community Initiatives program?

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

"Religious organizations are more efficient than government in providing social help."

type of pastor/church	agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly
All Protestant clergy	43%	45%	10%	2%
Democrats	23	53	19	5
Independents	35	50	13	2
Republicans	52	41	6	1
Political liberals	20	46	28	5
Political moderates	38	54	6	2
Political conservatives	54	39	6	1

"This plan violates the separation of church and state."

type of pastor/church	agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly
All Protestant clergy	9%	16%	35%	37%
Democrats	22	24	34	19
Independents	7	20	48	24
Republicans	5	13	34	46
Political liberals	21	25	39	15
Political moderates	14	19	38	29
Political conservatives	4	12	33	49

"Accepting government funding would compromise the spiritual mission or freedom of religious organizations."

agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly
18%	44%	27%	11%
22	39	30	9
20	46	22	11
16	45	26	12
23	36	33	8
19	43	28	10
15	46	25	13
	strongly 18% 22 20 16 23 19	strongly somewhat 18% 44% 22 39 20 46 16 45 23 36 19 43	strongly somewhat somewhat 18% 44% 27% 22 39 30 20 46 22 16 45 26 23 36 33 19 43 28

type of pastor/church	agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly
All Protestant clergy	20%	47%	23%	9%
Under age 45	18	51	22	7
Age 45-59	20	46	23	10
Age 60 or older	20	48	22	9
Northeast U.S.	20	49	21	10
Midwest U.S.	26	43	21	7
Southern U.S.	13	53	22	12
Western U.S.	19	45	26	7
Democrats	14	39	31	16
Independents	11	52	30	7
Republicans	23	50	19	7
Political liberals	11	38	33	17
Political moderates	17	51	24	8
Political conservatives	25	49	17	8

"Your church would seek government funding for social programs if it's available."

type of pastor/church	agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly
All Protestant clergy	10%	31%	31%	28%
Democrats	14	39	26	20
Independents	6	30	44	18
Republicans	8	28	31	31
Political liberals	16	38	29	17
Political moderates	10	35	32	23
Political conservatives	7	27	30	34

"Certain religious groups should not be eligible for funding through this program."

type of pastor/church	agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly
All Protestant clergy	31%	31%	25%	10%
Democrats	28	26	28	15
Independents	28	28	30	11
Republicans	32	34	23	8
Political liberals	20	23	33	22
Political moderates	29	30	31	9
Political conservatives	35	34	20	8

INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

Ask the Superintendent — A REVIVAL OF COMPASSION



uring periods of its history, the Church has been accused of straying far from the example of the Good Samaritan and offering a cheap munificence to those left by the roadside of life — the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the hurting. Guilty or not, Pentecostals and other faith groups now have an unprecedented open door of opportunity to present the transforming message of Jesus Christ to the world's most bankrupt and disadvantaged individuals. At no other time in modern history has the travail of human suffering been so great and the door to meet that need been so wide open.

How does the story of the Good Samaritan apply in today's understanding of meeting community needs? The answer to this question and many others are at the heart of this interview with Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God.

Why do ministers or churches need to care about the needy in their community?

TRASK: Caring for others is a biblical mandate. Jesus was moved with compassion when He looked on the multitude. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. Even though He was firm, you will find more examples of His compassion and His reaching out to those who were hurting. Jesus said that we are to care for the poor, hurting, needy, and disenfranchised.

Some people are victims of their own poor decisions. If we help them, won't we make them more dependent?

TRASK: That might be true in some instances, but that cannot be the reason for our lack of motivation for responding to people's needs. Jesus said if you give a cup of cold water in His name, you will not lose your reward. If we will do what we have been told to do, God will bless us. What people do with what we give them is not our responsibility.

If we minister to people and bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, then God gives them the motivation to change. Now they have the wisdom to manage their resources because they have new values and new priorities.

How does the story of the Good Samaritan apply in today's understanding of meeting community needs?

TRASK: First, we must see those who are in need, so we don't walk by them. I participated in the Convoy of Hope community outreach here in Springfield several months ago. On that cold, rainy Saturday, I was amazed at the number of people who stood in a line several blocks long waiting for food. It made me realize that here in our headquarters city there are thousands who need to be ministered to. If Christians walk by them, who is going to minister to them? That is why the Scripture says we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We need to let our light shine before men, so they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Our joy is to be examples. We are Christ's hand extended; we become His feet, His eyes, His mouthpiece. We become His ears to hear the cry of those who are hurting.

Second, our neighbors are more than those who live next door. Our neighbors are those whom God has given us the privilege of touching.

There is an element within our society that is becoming very isolationist. Is there a danger of that attitude creeping into the church and affecting our attitude toward ministry?

TRASK: That type of attitude can indeed creep into the church. That is why the church must remain spiritually sensitive and alive. We cannot be a church of the Spirit without reaping the benefits of the Spirit. The Spirit will give us a consciousness of need and how to respond to that need. A Spirit-filled church will see ways to minister to people that a nominal church might not see.

How can a church partner with community efforts to provide social services and meet needs?

TRASK: When a church partners with community agencies, it presents a good testimony. Churches need to come along-side agencies that are facilitating ministry. We need to be careful the resources that have been given to us and the resources that we give to these ministries are being used for their intended purpose.

What is the risk of the social gospel?

TRASK: Everything we do as a church, including feeding and clothing the poor, has to be with a purpose for evangelization. Otherwise we have fed and clothed people, but we have not given them the Bread of Life and we have not introduced them to Jesus who is able to change them. One of the integral parts of Convoy of Hope is an evangelism presentation. This compassion ministry will not

give people food, haircuts, or any other service until they have heard the gospel.

Jesus said except a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. He didn't say except you are fed by a church or if you become a member of a church. To not introduce people to Jesus Christ is missing His purpose for coming to earth. We must present those outside the community of faith with the claims of Christ so they might accept Him.

If we train people and motivate them for compassion ministries, won't that take away from other efforts and support in a church?

TRASK: No, it will heighten, undergird, and reinforce a person's support. If you want a job done, give it to somebody who is busy. I learned this as a pastor. If you want an outreach ministry, find people who already have a passion for God and are already busy. Compassion ministries will not distract from other ministries in people is the church. In many social agencies, a greater portion of their resources are absorbed in administration. The church operates through volunteers. This is one of the reasons the church is being asked to assist the government. It is not a matter of double taxation; it is a matter of being responsible for where God wants the church in the marketplace.

If a church receives money from the government, is there a danger that it will be controlled by the government?

TRASK: There are two concerns. First, we dare not base a ministry on government subsidy because that might be cut off, and then what happens to the ministry? If we receive government help through faith-based initiatives, we need to be careful that we don't build a ministry totally on that income. Second, we need to be careful that what we receive in the way of grants doesn't have restric-

If we minister to people and bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, then God gives them the motivation to change.

The gospel must never be compromised. We must have a g the gospel

tive strings

attached.

the church. Compassion ministries will strengthen a church, because within a local body of believers, there are those who will have a heart for outreach.

The government has programs for those in need. As Christians, we pay taxes that support these programs. Why, then, should the church become involved in compassion ministries?

TRASK: First, it is the church's responsibility, not the government's, to minister to people. Caring for the less fortunate belongs to the church. It's interesting to see that our government, under President George W. Bush — a leader who is born again — sees that the best agency to minister and care for hurting

free hand in ministering the gospel when we receive help from the government. We cannot curtail ministry as a result of too restrictive guidelines the government has established.

Do you have any concluding remarks concerning compassion ministries?

TRASK: I am thrilled when I see the church awakened to community needs outside its four walls. When you take the gospel to the marketplace, the gospel becomes effective. There is nothing that will excite the people of God more than to see people saved, brought into the family of God, and then reproduce themselves in the lives of others. This brings life and spirit into a church.

16 ENRICHMENT SPRING 2004

Compassion Rooted in the Gospel That Transforms

he reality of human tragedies now occurring cannot be avoided by refusing to acknowledge their significant impact on so much of the world. Statistics indicate that by 2005, 16 million children in Africa will have been orphaned by AIDS. Some 35,000 children die daily from preventable diseases usually related to inadequate clean water and sanitation. A massive sex industry preys on the poor of the non-Western world where parents sell children into prostitution just to be able to survive themselves. As individuals, our heart may break at the prospect of millions of people starving to death in Ethiopia in the next year, yet our corporate response as Pentecostal Christians requires more than sympathy or even empathy. The challenge of a response that is meaningful and biblically rooted requires honest and thorough awareness of our history as Pentecostals and our place in the larger framework of American Christianity.

BY BYRON D. KLAUS

OUR HISTORICAL FOCUS

From its inception, the Assemblies of God has committed itself to the "greatest evangelization the world has ever seen." We have been motivated to "work ... while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4, KJV), because we believe in the soon return of Jesus Christ. The empowerment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and a belief that Jesus' return was soon has historically motivated the Assemblies of God to mission efforts centered on planting indigenous churches.

Early Pentecostals clearly stated this focal point. In 1920, J. Roswell Flower wrote in the *Pentecostal Evangel*, "The Pentecostal commission is to witness, *witness*, WITNESS. ... It is so easy to be turned aside to do work which is very good

in itself, but which is short of the *Pentecostal standard*."

Alice Luce, an early Assemblies of God missions strategist, summarizes the Pentecostal focal point: "When we go forth to preach the full gospel, are we going to expect an experience like that of denominational missionaries or should we look for signs to follow?"¹

It is very clear that Pentecostal efforts to reach the world were focused on evangelization that plants churches in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is also understandable historically why this ministry foci was so poignant. The 19th century had been what historians called the "Christian Century." The 19th century saw the modern missions movement gain momentum and flourish. However, this great missionary effort had grown in the context of colonial empires worldwide. A central part of missionary efforts worldwide was the "civilizing" of people as part of the process of "Christianizing" people. Thus, formal structures like building schools and hospitals were part and parcel of 19th-century missionary efforts.

When Luce gave her perspective about what we should expect from the preaching of the "full gospel," she was clearly referring to the replacement of 19th-century "civilizing and structure building" strategies for a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit with signs and wonders to accomplish the task. Pentecostals affirmed a "radical strategy" for mission efforts that the Christian century had minimized. The late J. Philip Hogan stated the case for indigenous church planning: "The crucible of experience teaches these days that the final and only really successful unit of world evangelism is the church. Squarely on the shoulder of the church rests the commission and responsibility of world evangelization. Any expenditure that does not have as its final objective the building of a witnessing church cannot be God's best for this hour."²

This statement by Hogan summarizes a position formed not

only in the sovereign move of God's Spirit, but also in the larger framework of American Christianity. The late 19th century was a period of time when European religious thought penetrated the church in the United States. What has become known as the "modernist/fundamentalist" debate was waged. Core Christian beliefs like the authority of Scripture, the Virgin Birth, the deity of Christ, vicarious atonement, and the resurrection of Christ were undermined by the influence of European scholarship. As a result of this debate, lines were drawn between those Christians who wanted to focus on winning souls and those who affirmed a social gospel that valued social change and reform as the focus of Christian ministry efforts. A huge breach in American Christianity was forming

To suggest that those committed to world evangelization have been remiss in their compassion for these persons caught in the tragedies of poverty and injustice would be historically inaccurate.

> and the breaking point was personified in the Scopes Monkey Trial that took place in Tennessee in 1925. The "modernist" position is personified in the defense lawyer Clarence Darrow whose rhetoric and defense of evolution being taught in public schools was clearly presented. The "fundamentalist" position was argued by William Jennings Bryan, the Nebraska populist, whose courtroom presentation sounds much like a Billy Sunday evangelistic meeting. The nation's attention was riveted on this trial because it personified the nation's religious allegiances and highlights the evangelism versus social action/gospel bifurcation as a unique American experience. The Scopes Trial solidified the considerable opinion lines within American Christianity, and it wasn't until 1947 when Carl F.H. Henry wrote The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism that Bible-believing Christians were challenged to reconsider the broadest implications of the gospel.

AN HONEST APPRAISAL

So what does this brief history lesson mean for the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal church at large? First, we must acknowledge our mission focus was forged in the middle of a corrective that God sovereignly gives to the Church. A "radical strategy" that relies on Holy Spirit power is necessary to energize worldwide evangelization. The 20th century testifies to what historians would certainly acknowledge as the "Pentecostal Century." In 1900, only 5 percent of the world's Christians were non-Western. Today over two-thirds of the world's Christians are non-Western.³ By any calculation the Pentecostal strategy Alice Luce spoke of has been effective.

We must also acknowledge that our Pentecostal "radical strategy" was forged in the middle of a larger debate waged in American Christianity while Pentecostalism was in its earliest stages. That modernist-fundamentalist debate resulted in the split between strategies of evangelism and social action. Because our doctrinal allegiances were with orthodox Christianity it is understandable that the Assemblies of God would place its emphasis on priorities of sound doctrine and the salvation of people through Spirit-empowered evangelistic effort as a primary focus.

However, to suggest that those committed to world evangelization have been remiss in their compassion for these persons caught in the tragedies of poverty and injustice would be historically inaccurate. Following the American Civil War a huge shift from a rural to urban society began to occur. Accompanied by massive immigration from Western and Northern Europe, industrialization of the economy and massive immigration produced the grimmest of urban realities. Following the pattern of England's Salvation Army, evangelistic ministries invaded the slums of American cities and provided relief for the social tragedies that were the realities of that day. Homes to help the alcoholic, the prostitute, and those suffering from tuberculosis were built. Sunday Schools that served the needs of children where parents worked 7 days a week in factories were one of the most stabilizing factors of this era.4

One of the early influences on the Assemblies of God was A.B. Simpson and his Christian and Missionary Alliance. Simpson not only influenced Pentecostals with his message of the Four-Fold Gospel, but also served to highlight the connection between aggressive evangelism, affirmation of divine healing, and the soon return of Jesus Christ. For Simpson, these biblical foundations were necessarily connected to the care for the social needs of the masses he encountered in the large cities of eastern United States. In 1893, Simpson articulated his unique blend of evangelism and "ministries of compassion" when he said, "There is room not only for the worship of God, the teaching of sacred truth, and the evangelization of the lost, but also for every phase of practical philanthropy and usefulness. These may be, in perfect keeping with the simple ardor and dignity of the church of

CHURCH LEADS IN TACKLING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

TEMPLO CALVARIO, SANTA ANA CALIFORNIA



Perhaps no other church in southern California gives away as much food as Templo Calvario in Santa Ana, a majority Hispanic city that serves as a gateway for immigrants from Mexico and points south.

LEE DE LEON

"We are an inner-city church, very involved in working on problems like overcrowdedness and the high dropout rate," says Lee De Leon, assistant pastor. Santa Ana, he says, is the most crowded city in California and has one of the highest dropout rates in the country.

The church's flagship outreach is Obras de Amor (Works of Love), which moves tons of food and products through an interdenominational network of 50-60 churches called the Kingdom Coalition Network. Templo Calvario has a large warehouse with drive-in freezers and coolers, and 3 full-time employees and 40-50 volunteers.

"A lot of our partner churches are starting small, maybe giving out one pallet of food," says De Leon. "The point is to investigate the needs in the community. What are the struggles people face? Food may not always be the problem. Maybe lots of single moms need help baby-sitting. Maybe that's what a church decides to do."

Templo Calvario branches into key areas they think they can improve with an infusion of money, staff, and energy. They

provide a family resource center, tutoring centers in high-density apartments, and a new charter school. They are developing a community development corporation to help with housing and creating an incubator for business and job creation. Most services come free.

"This has always been part of the life of the church," says De Leon. "Lots of current members have come through the food and other ministries. It's been a doorway. We have families come who are hungry or can't keep the lights on, and that's how they find the church."

They are careful to remember that their first mission is to transform lives through the power and love of Jesus Christ.

"There's tension there," De Leon says. "You want to deliver good services and be professional in what you do, and that's wonderful, especially when you're using government money to provide those services. You have to be careful and honor that, and we do. But if you permeate it with the love of Christ, even when you're teaching mom how to take better care of her baby, she'll sense your heart, and you can always let them know that apart from the services you provide, there are Bible studies and things. Not only do you want to see your community look and feel better and safer, but people's hearts need to be impacted and touched."

Templo Calvario was a church of 100 in 1976, when Lee's brother, Daniel De Leon, took over. Today, 10,000 people come through the church every week, and 6,000 attend on Sunday.

"Our philosophy is, 'I'm blessed to bless others,' Soy bendicido, para bendecir," says Lee.

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God, the past aggressive work for the masses and the evident welcome for every class of sinful men; the ministry of healing for the sick and suffering administered in the name of Jesus, the most complete provision for charitable relief, workshops for the unemployed, homes for the orphaned, shelters for the helpless, refuges for the inebriates, the father and the helpless. And there is no work that will be more glorifying to God than a church that will embrace just such features and completeness."⁵

Early Pentecostals also exemplified the priorities of A.B. Simpson in their ministries. Many of the first Pentecostal missionaries were single women called to missions in the fervor of the Holiness movement of the late 19th century. Minnie Abrams was one such lady who served in India. Her encounter with the baptism in the Holy Spirit led her to write a pamphlet called "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire" that led to the Holy Spirit emphasis gaining root in Chile. Until her death, Abrams' work combined ministry to widows and orphans with evangelizing unreached groups.

Lillian Trasher served her entire adult life in Egypt among the widows and orphans of that land. In her nearly 50 years of ministry at the Assiout Orphanage, she was committed to winning the lost and ministering compassionately to thousands. Florence Steidel cared for the lepers in Liberia. Combining evangelism, compassion, and economic empowerment ministries Steidel established one of the most effective ministries of compassion in the history of the Assemblies of God. The ministry of George and Carrie Judd Montgomery combined healing ministries with evangelism and service to orphans and a rescue home for girls.⁶ The more recent examples of this blending of soul and the body are exemplified in the efforts in Calcutta by Mark and Huldah Buntain and the considerable impact of Latin America ChildCare founded by John and Lois Bueno.



However, questions still remain about where the emphasis of the Assemblies of God should be placed. Our historical commitment to world evangelism has been clearly at the center of our mission and ministry efforts globally. Yet, there are obvious examples of Pentecostals who choose not to get caught in the historic American bifurcation between evangelism and social concern. Such an honest acknowledgment must take into account the huge global challenges that are facing us in just the next decade.

The sovereign Lord of the harvest shaped a powerful corrective to the 19th-century missionary movement by igniting a Pentecostal revival that yielded the growth of Christianity in the 20th century that was unprecedented. In the face of famine, the AIDS epidemic, economic methods, war, and violence what might the Lord of the harvest have to say to a Pentecostal church to continue ministry in greater effectiveness?

The empowerment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is truly the sole source of hope and the possibility of meaningful life to so many in the non-Western world. We should listen carefully to Pentecostal brothers and sisters whose understanding of the empowerment present in the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been refined in the middle of tragedy, poverty, injustice, and life at the margins. An Assemblies of God scholar from Puerto Rico, Eldin Villafañe, speaks succinctly: "The baptism in the Spirit is rightfully seen as empowerment for service impacting the believer deeply by giving him/her a tremendous boldness, a heightened sense of personal holiness, and a new sense of self worth and personal power. The Pentecostal church has the spiritual resources to face spiritual power encounters of our soul struggles. If the object of the baptism in the Spirit is the ongoing mission of the Messiah, then the challenge which remains for Pentecostals is to catch the broader prophetic and vocational role of the baptism in the Holy Spirit." Simply put, Villafañe is affirming that the baptism in the Holy Spirit can be relied on for empowerment in the most trying of circumstances. Regardless of the level of need or obstacle to hope we can rely on the power of the Spirit to be present in sufficient measure as to demonstrate the dramatic reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords over all challenges.

A Pentecostal from India speaks from his context where the empowerment of the Holy Spirit must be adequate for that context where huge social problems are the reality of the day. He says, "In the power of the Holy Ghost man becomes confident of building for himself a just society, that is humane, peaceful and righteous. If we want to win India for Christ, we have to girdle ourselves and get ready for the struggle. Let us fight for the marginalized, the ostracized, the untouchable, the prostitute and her customer, the child whose childhood has been robbed. The need of the day is socially active Christians who will accept the challenge of the gauntlet thrown upon us by the forces of the world."^s We can see that Pentecostals carry varying perspectives on the social dimensions of ministry. Could it be that the insights of these brothers and sisters might be a prophetic voice to we Americans?

FOUNDATIONS FOR NAVIGATING 21ST-CENTURY CHALLENGES

Pentecostals have always looked to the Bible for clear understanding of their spiritual experience and authoritative foundation for ministry efforts. The gospel is eminently personal, because each person must have an encounter with God and choose to accept or reject Him. But when the gospel transforms an individual there are implications that are social. Every human being is part of a social situation, and the Bible makes clear that it is impossible to love God while hating those close by (1 John 4:20,21). A personal transformation due to the gospel has social results because God's saving grace is extended to humanity in a social situation, not apart from it. To recognize this connectedness within the gospel is not a "social gospel." It is the power of Jesus Christ to abundantly pardon and save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25).

There are also some areas where we must be careful to understand more fully our affirmation about the relationship between the biblical theme of the kingdom of God and our

Every human being is part of a social situation, and the Bible makes clear that it is impossible to love God while hating those close by.

understanding of endtime (eschatology). Croatian Pentecostal Peter Kuzmic provides insight into these thematic tensions. Kuzmic notes that evangelicals (including Pentecostals) have an inherent tendency to oversimplify complex issues, including teachings of Jesus on the kingdom of God. Kuzmic cautions us not to allow the present and the future to get separated. While we live between the "already fulfilled" and the "not yet completed," the first coming of Jesus is the decisive event of the gospel's teaching. In Jesus Christ, the future has begun and the end is not in doubt. With the establishment of the Church as the place where the Spirit dwells, the victory of Christ has established the visible picture of what it means to be redeemed and live as redeemed people in an unredeemed world (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). Kuzmic cautions us that postponing the significance of the Sermon on the Mount and other segments of the New Testament implications for moral living exerts a cleavage between the fullest power of the gospel and its present usefulness. Quoting Argentine evangelical scholar René Padilla, Kuzmic argues "in the light of the biblical teaching there is no place for our 'other worldliness' that does not result in the Christian's commitment to his neighbor, rooted in the gospel. There is no place for statistics on how many souls die without Christ every minute, if they do not take into account how many of those who die, die victims of hunger. There is no place for evangelism that, as it goes by the man who was assaulted by thieves on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, sees in him only a soul that must be saved and ignores the man."⁹

Our view of the future impacts the way we live in the present. Christ's kingdom severely critiques our present state of affairs in the world and calls a redeemed people to give a visible glimpse to what the future may look like. Rather than look at the issue of compassion and the gospel with fear that our historical evangelistic commitment may be neutralized, I would look at this discussion with anticipation that our effectiveness to minister the gospel could be enhanced. Pressing global needs and obvious breakdown in our own society calls us to humbly come before our Lord with a desire to sharpen our efforts. Critical questions form on the horizon. Will attention to social concerns dampen our evangelism? Can evangelism be continually effective without attention to present social dilemmas people are facing? The question of antiquity voiced by Cain is

> still poignant: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). Does Christian prosperity call us to greater Christian responsibility for our fellow human beings worldwide? Should/can faithbased organizations stay true to their ministry calling and the guidelines of the government organizations from which they receive funding? Just as our Pentecostal pioneers faced critical

questions 100 years ago as to how the Pentecostal dynamic of Spirit baptism, ministry in the power of the Spirit, and the urgency of the hour impacted world evangelization, so we must humbly and critically address our current context with serious theological reflection.

We enter the necessary reevaluation with a notable advantage. The significant growth of the Assemblies of God worldwide has seen a large portion of that increase take place among the most destitute and vulnerable of the two-thirds world. We have truly been a church of the poor, among the poor, and our local churches worldwide have been a massive network of grassroots efforts caring for the needs of people in their local contexts. The Assemblies of God has not shunned responsibility to the poor. The late J. Philip Hogan succinctly stated our position: "We (have) invested millions of dollars and devoted countless lives to feed starving people, clothe poor people, shelter homeless people, educate children, train disadvantaged adults, and provide medical care for the physically ill of all ages. We have always generously responded to the pleas of foreign nations after natural disasters hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. As the director of this Fellowship's overseas efforts, I want the world to know that the reason we do these things is because Jesus Christ did them. The reason we love people is because Jesus Christ loved them. We have no other motive than that. Our relief efforts are inseparable from our gospel witness."¹⁰

As we participate in this time of refinement the sage wisdom of the venerable Melvin Hodges is worth our consideration. Arguably the most celebrated missiologist in Assemblies of God history, he is usually associated with the planting and development of indigenous churches. However, Hodges, who lived and worked in the middle of poverty and peasant revolts in Central America, reflected deeply upon social concerns when he said, "Christians by their very nature love righteousness and hate iniquity. They will therefore, be championing every just cause and endeavoring to show good will to all men." Hodges was fond of saying, "People are not souls with ears."

In *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission*, Hodges lays out his guideline rules for social concern. A synopsis of those guidelines would include the following:

- 1. We must manifest the love of God and help, as we are able, those around us. God expects us to give productive manifestations of the love of God.
- 2. The local church is the center of all ministry to social concern.
- 3. Any program of social concern must point people to the central message of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ.
- 4. Our ministry to social needs should never arouse unacceptable or legalistic expectations in the people being served.
- 5. We should be sure our ministry is reaching real needs. We should not enter into wasteful competition with secular agencies.
- 6. We should minister so as to help people help themselves.
- 7. We should remember only those things done for the redemption of humanity will stand for eternity.

A succinct declaration by Hodges on social concern was, "It

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- Daniel Evearitt, Body and Soul: Evangelism and the Social Concern of A.B. Simpson (Camp Hill, Penn.: Christian Publications, 1994), 5.
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is evident that evangelicals do have concern for the whole man. Nevertheless, the spiritual need of men is given primary importance as this opens the way to all else. Evangelicals consider their task to be communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ both by proclamation and by deed, thus letting their 'light so shine' that men see their good works and be drawn to Christ (Matthew 5:16)."¹¹

Assemblies of God missiologist Doug Petersen has used his work among the poor in Latin America to write a seminal volume entitled Not By Might Nor By Power. He suggests that any person who participates in ministry of compassion must have a relationship with Jesus Christ, which is a radically transforming encounter that brings a person under the singleminded focus of God's rule. This radical spiritual overthrow that takes place thrusts a person into the world empowered by the Holy Spirit to take responsible participation on behalf of the poor through a local community of believers. The baptism in the Holy Spirit provides an act of God's grace where a person is equipped to evangelize and introduce righteousness as a consequence of an encounter with God. The social context Pentecostal believers find themselves in does not define the needs to be addressed; it is rather a point of insertion where the transforming power of the gospel is given visibility by a Pentecostal community, by Spirit-empowered witness, and Spirit-empowered action that testifies to the eternal, lifechanging gospel of our risen Lord. The heartache of suffering people cannot be avoided. But could it be that we are facing an open door of opportunity to present to those left by the roadside of life the wonderful transforming message of Jesus Christ? If we will live out the fullest implications of the Kingdom under whose reign we live — in Word, deed, and sign — we could continue to see the greatest evangelization this world has ever seen.¹²



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- 10. Division of Foreign Missions Annual Report, 1986.
- Melvin Hodges, A Theology of the Church and Its Mission (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 103–105.
- See Douglas Petersen, Not By Might Nor By Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1996).



A Pentecostal Perspective from Luke/Acts

verett and Esther Cook were retired Pentecostal church planters from the western United States. I met them when they were running Springfield (Missouri) Victory Mission, using Brother Cook's retirement

income. They mentored some Central Bible College students, including me. I assisted at the mission, putting into practice what I was learning from my Bible and from works like Ron Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*.

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BY CRAIG S. KEENER

Ministry to the poor has always been an important Pentecostal emphasis — starting from the Day of Pentecost. After the first outpouring of God's Spirit and Peter's Pentecostal preaching, the Christians began to live in a Spiritempowered way (Acts 2:41–47). This included not only signs and wonders, corporate prayer, and devotion to the apostles' teaching, but a radically new lifestyle of serving and sharing. Because these Christians loved their fellow Christians more than they loved their possessions, they were willing to part with their possessions to meet others' needs (Acts 2:44). Whenever someone was in need, those who had more than what they needed to live on sold what was beyond their own needs to meet the needs of others (2:45). When we read about *koinonia* ("fellowship") in Acts 2:42, we sometimes think only the Kingdom. The most prominent aspect of His fruit in our lives is love (Galatians 5:22). But Jesus' teaching and example showed them how love should be concretely expressed, and the Gospel of Luke presents this teaching in great detail. Because Luke wrote his Gospel and the Book of Acts to be read together, we can best understand the first Pentecostal church's radical lifestyle of service by examining the Gospel's teaching which led up to it.

JESUS' MISSION FOR THE POOR

Ancient writers, like modern ones, often stated their central thesis and summarized their main points early in their work. Most scholars regard Luke 4:18–27 as the programmatic sermon of the Gospel of Luke, the way Acts 1:8 and 2:17–21 lay

Earlier years at the mission in Springfield, Missouri, and more recent years of ministry living in impoverished and often drug-infested housing projects, confronted me with faces that I could not ignore as easily as I can hide from statistics.

of chatting after a church service (pleasant as that is), but the earliest Christians' "fellowship" went beyond mere chatting to getting involved deeply in each others' lives and needs. The Greek term *koinonia* appears in ancient business documents for economic partnerships or sharing, and sometimes carries this meaning in the New Testament as well (2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13). Paul usually used the related verb with this meaning (Romans 12:13; 15:27; Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:15).

After the Church, facing persecution, prayed for God to grant boldness by giving them signs and wonders, God poured out His Spirit afresh. One of the results of this outpouring was again Christians caring for the needy among them (4:31-37). This pattern of caring for the poor continued in the Book of Acts (e.g., 9:36,39), eventually crossing cultural boundaries to serve other groups of needy Christians in the same city (6:1-6) and geographic boundaries to serve needy churches in other locations (11:29,30; 24:17). Such ministry continued beyond the conclusion of the Book of Acts and continued beyond concern only for fellow Christians (e.g., James 5:4,5; cf. Amos 2:1), though it necessarily had to begin there. By the second century, wealthy pagans began to mock Christians for caring not only for their own poor, but that of the pagan world as well. While the rich pagans complained, the church was converting the impoverished majority of their empire out from under them.

Where did the earliest Christians learn to serve one another in this way? The Spirit gave them the power to sacrifice for out the themes to be treated in the Book of Acts. The themes of this passage (such as Jesus being anointed by the Spirit, Acts 4:27; 10:38) recur later in Luke-Acts. Jesus' mention of earlier prophets' ministry to a foreign widow and leper prefigure not only His own ministry to widows and lepers in the Gospel (e.g., Luke 5:12,13; 7:12), but also the church's ministry to Gentiles in the Book of Acts. Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's promise that He will preach good news to the poor (Luke 6:20–25) and later told John that the signs of the Kingdom include the poor hearing the good news (Luke 7:22).

How does Jesus' mission in the Gospel of Luke affect us? Because Jesus' baptism in the Spirit and mission in Luke's Gospel prefigure the experience and ministry of the church in Acts, His model and mission remain valid for His followers. Although the focus in Luke's second volume is especially Spirit-empowered cross-cultural evangelism (missions; Acts 1:8), the ministry to the poor that followed outpourings of the Spirit demonstrates that this emphasis in the Gospel remains valid for today's church as well (Acts 2:44,45; 4:32,34). We are called first and foremost to evangelize the world; but we are also called to care about the world we are evangelizing.

Jesus announced His mission based on a Scripture text from Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1,2 in Luke 4:18,19). His hearers would know the Book of Isaiah well, hence they would be familiar with Isaiah's emphasis on caring for the poor and establishing justice in society. If Israel neglected these concerns, its religious rituals would not impress God at all, and He would not heed their prayers (Isaiah 1:11-17; 58:5-7). Isaiah denounced those who were oppressing the poor (e.g., Isaiah 10:2), concerned only with accumulating more for themselves (Isaiah 5:8); he held society's leaders, who should have established justice, most responsible (Isaiah 3:14,15). Other prophets also demanded justice, including one of Isaiah's contemporaries, Amos (e.g., Amos 2:6,7). Like Isaiah, Amos claimed that sacrifices and outward religion were pointless unless we work to transform society morally, establishing justice for those who are being mistreated (Amos 5:21-24). Like Jesus' first audience, we are familiar with other relevant passages in the prophets; for example, standing for the rights of the needy is intrinsic to our relationship with God (Jeremiah 22:16); among Sodom's sins was ignoring the poor (Ezekiel 16:49); and even a pagan kingdom could extend its longevity by showing mercy toward the needy (Daniel 4:27).

Jesus' audience in the synagogue was also familiar with an

NEW SPARK PROMPTS CHURCH TO EXPAND COMPASSION MINISTRIES

MY FRIEND'S HOUSE, WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA



A crisis of purpose led My Friend's House (Assemblies of God) in Whittier, California, to become community-minded, providing houses for the poor, tutoring children after school, and reaching out to gangs.

JIM ORTIZ Jim Ortiz and his wife founded the church 32 years ago as street evangelists during the Jesus Movement. They first met in basements and homes, and soon formed a church with a facility and programs. But in the 1980s, Ortiz says they became an institutionalized church and "lost the initial spark and passion and vision for the community."

After taking a sabbatical in the early 1990s, Ortiz came back determined to turn his self-focused church into a communitychanging dynamo. My Friend's House is now fully engaged in solving community problems through Metro Impact, Inc., its community development corporation. The church developed food ministries, opened a computer-learning center with a grant from the Presbyterian Church USA, and opened a childcare center using money from L.A. County. They started an after-school center with Coke and popcorn, foosball, and Ping-Pong to serve hundreds of latchkey kids from nearby public schools.

And they started buying foreclosed HUD homes, rehabilitating them, and selling them to low-income families, giving the families entrée into the housing market, and providing income for the church's other outreach programs. The effect on the church and the community has been remarkable.

"Once you get a reputation for community involvement, businesspeople, civic leaders, and people not related to the church come out of the woodwork," says Ortiz. "When they earlier passage in the Law to which Isaiah himself may have been alluding. Isaiah's "liberty for captives" and "year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:1,2) might echo biblical teaching about the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25). Because ancient Israel's economy was a farm economy based on land ownership, only those with land could hope to make a living for themselves. When some people in the ancient world proved unable to support themselves, they were sold as slaves to cover their debts, or the land on which they depended was sold. While Israel had much the same system, God had a special plan of justice for them: Once in every generation all debts were released. What this meant was that every generation could start anew and everyone would begin with the same basis for earning a living. Poverty did not become an intergenerational cycle that kept an entire class of people locked into a permanent underclass. We do not live in an agrarian society; for many people today education, computer literacy, and other resources are often more relevant

see a congregation mobilizing to help meet needs, feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, reaching kids in the 'hood, they come to you."

Ortiz sees it all as a gospel mandate. "Salvation means experiencing your full potential in Christ: physical health, education, becoming more effective businesspeople, employees, and students, and getting prepared for heaven, too," he says. "For example, a lot of people in my community don't read and write. I believe I should help facilitate their learning. We teach people to use computers so they're more employable. That to me is part of the role of the church as well as preaching and teaching the gospel."

HUD involvement has given My Friend's House and Metro Impact credibility with other federal programs and granting agencies as well. They are hosting 20 AmeriCorps members for 3 years. And they're partnering with the University of California to develop programs to attract minority students to universities.

"In most Latino communities like ours, it's a foreign language to excel in academics," says Ortiz. "Their only aspiration is to get a job."

The church is also an agency for court-mandated community service workers. Every week, 4 to 12 people, including minors, report for duty at the church. Ortiz says this is an evangelism boon for the church.

The church even invites gang graffiti artists to paint wall murals at the back of the property, as long as they use a scriptural theme. As a result, the graffiti in the neighborhood has decreased and gangs don't tag the church.

"Churches have to understand that Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4 is our mission statement, too: Help the lame to walk, set the captives free, bring relief to the oppressed, sight to the blind, and preach the good news of redemption to the poor," says Ortiz.

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for earning a living than land is. But the basic principles of seeking justice for our neighbor remain the same.

Jesus quoted this text because it accurately described His mission. Isaiah spoke of one anointed by the Spirit for His mission, and Jesus had just experienced this anointing. The Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism (Luke 3:21,22) and then led Him into (4:1) and out of (4:14) the wilderness, where He was tested. Jesus also would minister to the sample groups Isaiah listed: the poor, captives (Luke 13:15,16), the blind (7:21,22; 18:35–43), and the downtrodden (including other marginalized groups). Of these groups, the Gospel of Luke focuses especially on the poor. Jesus' emphasis on caring for the needy in His example and teaching explains why the first Christians after Pentecost knew how to carry out their mission.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SHARING RESOURCES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, preached repentance as the way to prepare for the coming Kingdom (Luke 3:3,8), just as Peter would preach on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). What did this repentance involve, in practical terms? When the crowds asked John this very question, he answered that the person with two cloaks must give one to the person who lacked any (Luke 3:10,11). Some peasants who listened to John may have had only one cloak, but many would have had two. We can imagine them feeling uncomfortable with this demand for sacrifice.

Jesus' warnings about caring for the poor do not imply that we are justified by works; the Bible is clear that we are justified by faith alone.

Modern readers often interpret the passage as hyperbole (i.e., rhetorical overstatement to reinforce a point). It is in fact possible to read this passage as hyperbole, but only if we also keep in mind that hyperbole's purpose is to communicate graphically a basic point, not to let us simply dismiss the point by claiming, "That passage is just hyperbole!" The point of John's preaching is that we need to care for other people more than we care about what we own; and, if we have more than what we need, we must be ready to share it with those who have less than what they need.

In a culture where people advanced by inviting peers or other honorable people to banquets, Jesus emphasized inviting the poor and disabled who could not repay their hosts (Luke 14:13,21). Like resources shared with the needy that laid up treasure in heaven (12:33,34), such dinner invitations looked to a higher reward than available on this earth. Invite those who cannot repay you, Jesus said, and God will repay you at the judgment (14:14). When Jesus sent His followers on their first evangelistic mission, He instructed them to heal the sick and also to travel simply, living as simply as the poor among whom they would be ministering (Luke 9:3; 10:4). (Between 70 and 90 percent of Galileans were impoverished peasants. Fishermen were not technically rich, but they were much better off than most other Galileans.) They were to focus on their service, not on their status or remuneration.

Although Jesus showed great compassion for the needy and welcomed self-confessed sinners, He was much harder on people who were self-satisfied religiously or socially. When I am most satisfied, I am often most complacent and need the firmest words to seize my attention. I suspect that most other people, then as well as today,

As useful as statistics are, God's Word and our engagement with genuine human need will move us more than any amount of statistics can, because God has placed His love in our hearts.

are similarly endangered when life becomes comfortable. Happily, Jesus did not spare the sort of words that would shake hearers free from complacency. He told of a rich fool who hoarded goods instead of caring for others' needs; instead of laying up treasure for himself in heaven, he left behind his wealth when he went to hell (Luke 12:16–21). Jesus does not tell us exactly why another rich man went to hell (Luke 16:23), but if He offers any clue it is that the man let Lazarus starve to death at his doorstep (verse 25). Jesus addressed the parable to some unsaved religious people who "loved money" (16:14). That no one so poor starves at our doorstep does not necessarily let us off the hook. Our society is too sophisticated to let the mortally poor near our doorsteps; but, if we know of such needs, we remain responsible.

Jesus' warnings about caring for the poor do not imply that we are justified by works; the Bible is clear that we are justified by faith alone. But we know many nominal Christians, people who call themselves Christians yet never demonstrate it by how they live. For all the New Testament writers, genuine saving faith, like genuine Christian compassion, must be expressed in concrete ways. James warns that faith that is not accompanied by concrete action is not genuine saving faith (James 2:14). He then illustrates this truth by asking, "If a brother or sister lacks clothes to wear or food to eat, and one of you says, 'May it go well with you, may you be warmed with clothes and satisfied with food,' but provides no practical assistance, what concrete help have you given? Just so, faith without works to demonstrate it is lifeless" (James 2:15–17, *my paraphrase*).

Nor does Jesus' preaching mean that He was against the rich. The issue was not how much money one had, but what one did with what one had. Jesus spent considerable time ministering to tax gatherers. While tax gatherers were socially and morally marginalized, they were not usually economically marginalized. They often took a cut off the top of what Rome or Herod Antipas demanded from the poor, and they were sometimes brutal in collecting funds. Sometimes they were known to beat old ladies to discover where their sons, who were behind on paying taxes, had fled. Their reputation grew so bad that some villages in Egypt, defaulting on their taxes, fled their homes and started new villages somewhere else when they heard that tax collectors were coming. Tax gatherers were among the rich people who oppressed the Galilean peasants to whom Jesus also ministered, but Jesus reached out to the tax collectors, too.

Jesus said that getting a rich person into the Kingdom was like getting a camel through the eye of a needle. (Despite the best efforts of some modern writers to get around it, a needle's eye meant the same thing back then that it means today; the proposed "needle's eye" gate in Jerusalem was not built until the Middle Ages.) Jesus probably was speaking hyperbole, however, because some rich people did follow Him. Zaccheus, a rich tax gatherer, gave half his goods to the poor and offered to repay fourfold anyone he wronged (which probably diminished a sizeable proportion of the other half; Luke 19:8). Wealthy Joseph of Arimathea went beyond the commitment of Jesus' more immediate disciples by directly asking Pilate for Jesus' body. To publicly identify with someone crucified on the charge of treason (claiming to be "King of the Jews") was to risk one's life, even if one belonged to the aristocracy.

JESUS' DEMANDS FOR ALL DISCIPLES

Nor should we suppose that Jesus makes demands only of the wealthy. Often we have our ways of reading right past Jesus' demands without thinking they have anything to say to us. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer pointed out, when Jesus commanded a rich ruler to give all his goods to the poor (Luke 18:22), we often spend more time explaining that Jesus was addressing only that ruler than asking what implications the verse might have for us. Bonhoeffer was a German theologian who died for



his stand against Hitler. He read the Bible as courageously as he lived, complaining that too often theologians help us get around Jesus' teachings rather than helping us to obey them.

Contrary to what we often assume, Jesus told not only the rich ruler, but all His disciples, to sell their goods and lay up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:33). Jesus did not think, as some have claimed, that money was evil; rather, it simply had no value compared with the eternal investments we could make with it in other people's lives (Luke 16:9–13). He promised that God will supply our needs if we seek His kingdom (12:22–32) and invited us to prepare for the Kingdom partly by investing our resources in what matters (12:33–40).

Charles Finney, a 19-century evangelist who led perhaps half a million people to Christ, preached on Luke 14:33 at a wealthy church in Boston. In this passage Jesus, explaining

The point of John's preaching is that we need to care for other people more than we care about what We own.

the cost of the Kingdom, warned that no one can be His disciple who does not surrender all possessions (14:33). The pastor, Lyman Beecher, closed Finney's sermon by assuring his congregation that God would never ask them to give up their possessions; they simply needed to be "willing" to do so. Finney countered that God can demand of us what He wishes; we do not lose all our possessions at the moment of our conversion, but we do lose our *ownership* of them. Finney understood that if Christ is truly Lord of our life, He is also Lord of everything we have.

Many of us in ministry have, like Jesus' first fishermen disciples (Luke 5:10,11), left behind potentially lucrative alternative careers to follow God's call; we have shown that we value the Kingdom above earthly treasure. Still, it is often more comfortable even for us to look the other way rather than painfully confront suffering beyond our immediate spheres of ministry.

According to some statistics, 35,000 children die every day from malnutrition and preventable diseases, but such figures are too numbing and too abstract for us to grapple with emotionally. To put matters in somewhat more graphic perspective, we were rightly enraged at the murder of some 3,000 human beings in New York City's Twin Towers. But 35,000 is more than ten times that number of children, dying every day. Distance should not diminish compassion; Paul urged the church in one part of the world to care for the church in other parts of the world (Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:13,14). The statistics are not as dire in our own country, but for hundreds of thousands of homeless people, including teenage runaways often forced into prostitution, the implications here are no less staggering. As useful as statistics are, God's Word and our engagement with genuine human need will move us more than any amount of statistics can, because God has placed His love in our hearts. Scripture reminds us that Christ laid down His life for us and asks how we can refuse to care for our needy brothers and sisters in Christ (1 John 3:16,17). Earlier years at the mission in Springfield, Missouri, and more recent years of ministry living in impoverished and often drug-infested housing projects, confronted me with faces that I could not ignore as easily as I can hide from statistics.

Jesus calls us to sacrifice our lives for His kingdom; part of what it means to serve His kingdom is to meet human need, because people are what will last forever, whether they are people who are already our brothers and sisters or people that God wants to be (i.e., everyone else; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). From ministries like Teen Challenge to Calcutta's Mission of Mercy, our works of compassion also reveal Christ in ways that invite the world's attention to our Master. May the Spirit empower us today, as on the first Pentecost, to reveal His heart to the world.



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Pentecostals as a CHURCH CONNUNITY INACIVIL CONNUNITY

ILLUSTRATION BY RICK WHIPPLE

ur ecclesiology influences our individual and collective outlook in regard to living in this world. How do we see ourselves as a church community? Are we interested in the church as a salvation emergency room for sick and dying people? Are we interested in the church as a country club for the elect? There are many ways our discussion could go. However, let me direct this article to our church and its role toward the civil community and its social structures.

BY GREG MUNDIS



"A fundamental thesis in our discussion is that not only are the individual members of society fallen and in need of reform, but that this is true as well of the structures of society."¹ The author, Nicholas Wolterstorff, also says, "In response to this we are not to avert ourselves from our social condition, seeking closer union with God by means of undisturbed contemplation, for God himself is disturbed by our human condition; rather, we are to struggle to alter those structures and the dynamics behind them, so that the alienation is diminished and the realization is advanced."²

JESUS AND THE CIVIL COMMUNITY

It is not necessarily true that Pentecostals are ascetic in their thinking and history, but it is true that Pentecostal practice has not been perceived as proactive in its relationship to secular civil society since the 20th-century outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In a way, we have coexisted. Some Pentecostals have been, in a sense, so other worldly that they have, to a great degree, forgotten that they are "not of the world" but they have been "sent into the world" (John 17:14–18). Could we agree that there was a lack of intentional Pentecostal societal engagement through most of the 20th century?

Pentecostals who proclaim that they are reestablishing first-century Christianity in modern times have failed, to a certain degree, to understand this aspect of the societal intervention of Jesus in history. His intervention is not only into people's individual lives, but He also intentionally intervened into the civil community and its social structures. Two examples will demonstrate this. First, He addresses Herod as a wicked and manipulative king when He said, "Go tell that fox" (Luke 13:32). On the other hand, He showed His respect for Roman law when He said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21). This intentional intervention of Jesus continued after His resurrection through His establishment of the Church. "The forming of the Church (a gathering whose Greek name, ekklesia, meant 'called out') was implicit in His decision to 'call' twelve disciples. The realism of Jesus' proclamation included its power to create its own sociological base; without this He would have been 'no threat' to the religious and political establishment. Loose as it was, his organization frightened religious and secular politicians alike."³ "In the church, the society of Jesus could, without plotting to overthrow the state, refuse to take its primary guidance for human behavior from the state. In this sense, it was indeed an alternative society, an alternative sphere for working out relations of leadership, power, and human connection, modeled not on Roman culture but on Hebrew culture reaffirmed and augmented by Jesus himself."4

RECONCILING THEOLOGY WITH RESPONSIBILITY

The self-awareness of the Early Church being an alternative society in the first century must also become a vitalized element in the self-awareness of the Assemblies of God in the 21st century. This practical intentional theology of the Early Church was based on their understanding of the symbiotic relationship between word and deed.

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the Assemblies of God accelerated its participation in projects designed to help the poor, speak to relevant and moral issues, and address problems of society in a proactive manner. We have a growing sense that this needs to be done. Is this sense enough? Does it need to turn into an intentional practical theology?

The Calvinists have theological perspective of "a world-formative Christianity and strive for a 'pattern which is both biblically faithful and relevant to our modern world.' "⁵ We, as the Assemblies of God as a relatively young fellowship, are coming
to a better understanding of our role in society. The challenge is finding the balance between biblical faithfulness and cultural relevancy.

When we look at striking a balance, Convoy of Hope is certainly a bright spot on the domestic side, and the practical touching ministry of Assemblies of God World Missions and our sister church around the world continues to demonstrate this on the international side. The overwhelming response of our U.S. churches to hurting people because of natural disasters and war substantiates searching for the balance. We could say it is reconciling our theology with our responsibility in this world. It is interesting that non-Western Pentecostal churches have not felt the tension in their theological balance between word and deed that we Western Christians seem to struggle with. This could be because most of the Pentecostal church membership in the world is in countries that do not enjoy the prosperity that Western Christians enjoy. They more easily and readily relate to the need of a meal, bed, warm clothes, and medical help. Could it be that finding the balance of ministry to the community and its social structures in non-Western theology and Western missiology is still developed at street level?

HEARTLAND OUTREACH TOUCHES THE WORLD FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD CANEY, KANSAS



When Michael and Virginia Morris came to First Assembly of God in Caney, Kansas, 22 years ago, they found a small congregation doing the best they could to get by in a small and struggling community. Caney is in decline, with a population that has shrunk from 2,500 to about 1,800 people in the intervening years. First

MICHAEL MORRIS

Assembly's attendance still hovers around 60. But this is a church that is truly touching the world.

"When I first arrived, I looked at the bulletin board," Morris says. "There were pictures of the few foreign missionaries we were supporting with modest pledges of just a few dollars each month."

God began to deal with Morris about shifting First Assembly's ministry away from the small offerings they were able to send overseas and toward what they could do locally with tangible assets. He began to share with First Assembly's families his burden to develop a hands-on ministry. Simultaneously, Virginia Morris felt led to reach out to needy homes in the community.

What has resulted is a year-round schedule of outreach that touches Caney, reaches across the United States and — with God-directed growth — has again been applied to meet needs overseas. Virginia and women in the church volunteer as staff at First Assembly's thrift store. Donated clothing and household items can be had at tremendous discounts, and all proceeds are reinvested in the ministry. A food collection schedule typically results in 20-40 tons of food items being distributed to families each year. This includes 40 large boxes of food taken to elderly couples across the area each month. First Assembly teams have gone on short-term missions trips into the Appalachians, onto Indian reservations, and into the inner city.

"When we show up at a missions site, we're usually caravanning," Morris says. "Our old pickups pull about 10 trailers of goods and ministry supplies to wherever we're headed. We'll help a church with a building project or with painting or whatever while we conduct a carnival and crusade for local children."

Where First Assembly had at first suspended their overseas cash pledges, they discovered a practical way to minister that greatly multiplied their original support. Through Larry Smith, a missionary to Bangladesh, they learned that their ability to collect household items could be of enormous assistance to orphanages and other benevolence ministries in Southern Asia.

"We hand out shopping lists to our families and when they're at Wal-Mart they pick up items to go into our shipping containers," Morris says. "We recently filled two full-size metal shipping containers for Larry. He estimated that we had donated \$175,000 in goods. We're working on the next two containers right now."

Every age level is involved. One gentleman in the church who has been recovering from a stroke has faithfully helped load the containers. The process is exacting, requiring careful inventory of all items and repackaging of purchased goods to make sure every contribution ships safely.

"His doctors have said this ministry is the best kind of physical therapy he could have," Morris says.

When word came that laundry detergent was needed for the Asian outreaches, First Assembly set up 55-gallon barrels in their children's church. Children give offerings and encourage their parents to buy extra laundry detergent, then bring it to church to pour into the barrels.

Prayer is the key to success in each part of this outreach, Morris emphasizes. He says he encourages families to pray specifically over every item they buy for a collection. As a result, he says, miracles naturally follow.

"From the beginning," Morris says, "our ministry theme has been, 'Anything God gets into our hands, we will get someplace it can be used.' "

Caney's population may continue to shrink. The families at First Assembly may continue to count every penny in their budgets. But Morris continues to see God's faithfulness at work.

"Nobody here is wealthy," he says. "This is all about daily faithfulness. I deal with it every day, and I still have a hard time believing what God has done."

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Martin Kahler wrote at the beginning of the 20th century (around the time of the Pentecostal outpouring), "mission is the mother of theology." There is no doubt that a dynamic theology needs serious scholarship, but there is also no doubt it needs to be in touch with the needs of people.

"The distinction between Christians and other men is neither in country nor language nor customs. For they do not dwell in cities in some of place of their own, nor do they use any strange variety of dialect, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life. ... Yet, while living in Greek and barbarian cities, according as each obtained his lot, and following the local customs, both in clothing and food and in the rest of life, they show forth the wonderful and confessedly strange character of the constitution of their own citizenship."⁶ How should this "constitution" of the church community be modeled in the Western and secular civil community with its social structures in the United States?

A PENTECOSTAL MODEL

FIRST, I suggest we need to repent of attitudes of ignoring, or of complacence to and coexisting with, the secular world. We dare not be so "heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good." We need to be so heavenly minded that we are of tremendous earthly good.

KALEIDOSCOPE OF NEED RESURRECTION CENTER DALLAS, TEXAS



Tony Fundaro enjoyed the dual blessing of having godly parents and being taken regularly to church. But he fell off the deep end of life as a teen. Fundaro became an addict at 14; throughout high school his days were a blur of getting high and finding the money for his next drug

purchase. He left home, lived on the streets, and

TONY FUNDARO

couch-hopped from one friend's house to another. At 18, his life was transformed when he accepted Christ and spent a year being discipled through Teen Challenge.

While attending Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Texas, Fundaro discovered a passion for ministry. By his senior year he had married, and he and his wife, Hanah, began to build the foundation of what has become Resurrection Center. Located in Deep Ellum, a culturally complex community in the heart of Dallas, Resurrection Center reaches people who are from every stratum of society and who struggle with every imaginable sin.

"This morning, I looked out my office window at two homeless crack addicts," Fundaro says. "Then I looked down the street to the \$600,000 homes a block away."

Deep Ellum draws a cross section of people to its bars, clubs, and tattoo parlors. On weekends the masses arrive with one goal in mind: forget about life's problems and party until dawn. No single approach to ministry is going to reach this crowd.

"I've attended church planting seminars," Fundaro says. "The importance of focus groups is always emphasized. A focus group wouldn't work in Deep Ellum. We would end up with 100 different groups and need 100 churches to touch 25 city blocks."

Resurrection Center got its start through the help of Trinity Church of the Assemblies of God in nearby Cedar Hill. Before the church was officially off the ground, Fundaro and about a dozen volunteers spent more than a year passing out 15,000 copies of the *Book of Hope* and following up with some 10,000 personal visits. "Not one person stayed in our church from that outreach," he says. "There was no lasting fruit." Street evangelism every Friday as well as biweekly all-night prayer meetings didn't do much better.

From that foundation, however, inroads were being established. The church first met in a bar owned by a Muslim, then moved to its current home in a warehouse in January 2001. A dedication service on April 27, 2003 has created momentum, and today about 100 people meet for the Sunday morning service that serves as the centerpiece for the church's week of ministry.

"These are people who are completely out of touch with the church world," Fundaro says. "They don't know church is only supposed to last 1 hour and 15 minutes. So our worship celebration goes for two and one-half hours and plugs in singing and preaching and a baptismal service if we need to."

Cell groups meet during the week, and the church operates Insomnia, a coffee shop located three blocks from the sanctuary. At Insomnia, espressos and lattes serve as 21st-century versions of the loaves and fishes. People enjoy their coffee while church-organized entertainment presents the gospel in a nonconfrontational manner. Painters, poets, musicians, live art the shop offers it all during different days of the month. The themes are all Christian, but the presentation is always subtle.

While many inner-city church plants develop ministries that give people the opportunity to leave the community, Resurrection Center is striving to create a spectrum of outreaches that will transform Deep Ellum and make people want to stay.

Life Communities, an interdenominational ministry the Fundaros have just started, is aimed at that goal. Working with board members from several denominations, they plan to draw churches together in the area and establish a series of ministries that will impact people's lives where they are.

"We have plans for a homeless shelter as well as an afterschool program that will eventually become a Christian school, along with a lot of other possibilities," Fundaro says. "Whether people are rich or poor, we want to touch them where they're at. We're totally dedicated to relational evangelism."

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SECOND, we need to find our place in society by maintaining our biblical faithfulness while advocating our cultural relevance. Our presence as a body of believers in the civil community is vital for the moral, ethical, and social life of the community and its social structures. After all, Jesus has called us to be the salt and light of society.

THIRD, our church needs to develop in its self-awareness to better model to the civil community the constitution of the Kingdom. We must be a part of the public life of the community and not allow ourselves to be relegated to the private individual sphere by our secular society. The constitution of the church is made up of the Beatitudes, the commands of Jesus, and the principles of Scripture that are timeless. We have a biblical message for this pluralistic, multicultural, secular society. It is the same good news that Jesus, the apostles, the Early Church fathers, the reformers, and our predecessors preached. Jesus saves. Jesus heals. Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit. Jesus is coming again. However, this biblical message must find ways and language of expressing itself to this generation. For example, we mentioned Convoy of Hope citywide crusades and Pentecostal involvement in every aspect of community life; i.e. politics, community service, ministry to the down and out, etc. We need to maintain our biblical Pentecostal faithfulness and be culturally relevant.

FOURTH, we need to be a proactive proponent of shalom and forgiveness. We are called to be "ambassadors of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). This means we take a part in reconciling lost men to God. It also means we take part in being agents of reconciliation to the broken civil systems and societal institutions that need to be fixed. Community life and social structures need a moral compass; they need a true north. Our Pentecostal churches have members equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit to influence these civil institutions for good. We need to encourage our people's

involvement so as to model the constitution of the Kingdom.

FIFTH, we need to take on the mantel of the first-century church in its radical approach to society. This radical approach could be categorized as "turning the world upside down" (Acts 16:19). As Pentecostals, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we need to be more than "forming agents" in society. As Pentecostals, we should be agents of transformation. After all, if the individual can be transformed by the power of God into a new creation, why should not social institutions in the civil community, made up of people, also be transformed?

SIXTH, this suggested posture we are describing needs to take place within the framework of our biblical eschatology. We have a blessed hope. Each of us has a longing for the return of our Savior and the implementation of His rule on earth. We know through biblical study and teaching that the world will not keep on getting better until the end comes. We know from Scripture that ultimately only Christ's reign will solve all the problems that the civil community faces. There is a bright future when Jesus returns. However, and until then, let's occupy this world, as Jesus instructed and modeled, by being biblically faithful and culturally relevant.



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ENDNOTES

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- 3. Donald W. Shriver, An Ethic for Enemies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 37.
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WIDESPREAD POVERTY in the Richest Nation in Human History



yet we have a higher poverty level than any other industrialized nation.

In 2001 (the latest official statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau), 32.9 million Americans (11.7 percent of all Americans) fell below the official poverty level. That was 1.3 million more poor people than in 2000. And things have gotten worse since 2001.

BY RONALD J. SIDER

The official poverty level is \$18,104 for a family of four (40.8 percent — 13.4 million people live at half or less of the poverty level).

What would it be like to live in the United States on \$18,104 a year? Try to imagine what your family, or the family of four you know best, would need to give up to exist on \$18,104 a year. (See Table 1.)

Begin by selling your house and moving to a modest two-bedroom apartment (\$711 a month, including heat). No more study, rec room, bedroom for each child, second bathroom, backyard, or porch. If you are willing to live in a lower-income, multiracial neighborhood, you might be able to buy a small house.

Next, sell all your cars. You don't have a garage anyway. You can get around on public transportation, or perhaps you can afford an old car — only \$49 a week for transportation.

Forget about being in fashion. New clothes each season are unthinkable. If you visit the local thrift store for most things, you can probably get by on \$410 per person per year.

You will no longer be able to afford to eat at restaurants. You will have to figure out how to avoid hunger and stay healthy on just a little more than \$1 per meal for each person.

No more regular telephone calls to Grandma, other relatives, or friends in other cities. Your telephone budget is just \$30 a month. And be sure to turn off the lights when you leave a room because you have only \$41 a month for all utilities not included in your rent.

Let's look at the totals.

table 1 LIVING AT THE POVERTY LEVEL (FAMILY OF FOUR)					
Utilities	852				
Food	5,280				
Transportation	2,570				
Clothing	1,640				
Social Security taxes	788				
(for a full-time worker earning minimum wage)					
	\$18,102				

The 2001 poverty level was \$18,104, so you have \$2 for a call to Grandma once a year on her birthday.

Notice what this budget does *not* include. No household appliances, no vacations, no toiletries, no birthday or Christmas gifts, no recreation, no visits to the dentist, no private health insurance, no donations for church, no child care, no movies, no travel outside the city, no private music lessons, no sports equipment for the children. Poor people, of course, do have some of these things. However unthinkable from a middle-class

perspective, somehow they manage to spend less on some of the other items or receive help from family, friends, or church.

Any volunteers? No, I don't mean for 3 years of graduate school while you prepare for a secure middle-class livelihood. I mean year after year with little hope for improvement. That's what millions of our neighbors struggle with in our affluent nation.

Life at the poverty level is tough. In addition to scraping by

We are the richest nation in human history, yet we have a higher poverty level than any other industrialized nation.

financially, poor people feel excluded from the community. Many poor people face terrible schools, widespread crime, and a lack of quality health care. More than 43 million persons in the United States do not even have health insurance.

That's the bad news. The good news is that for the first time in decades, the larger institutions of society are astonishingly ready to welcome the contribution of religion to solving our most desperate social problems. Christians and other people of faith have a historic opportunity that has not existed for decades.

To seize this opportunity, we need a comprehensive, holistic vision of how to overcome the complex problems of intolerable poverty in our country today. We must combine a biblical framework of values with careful social analysis to create a holistic vision and an effective, comprehensive agenda that combines evangelism and spiritual transformation of individuals with the right public policies by government, business, and the media. Of equal if not more importance, we must motivate the millions of Christians sitting in our pews — and other people of faith as well — to care as much about the poor as Jesus did.

WHO ARE THE POOR?

Mention poverty and many people in the United States instantly think of a single, African-American mom living in an urban ghetto with a bunch of little kids. Wrong.

Only 12 percent of the poor live in urban ghettos; only about 27 percent are African-American. About 35 percent of the poor live in families headed by a married couple. Twenty percent of poor families have an adult working full-time yearround and still live in poverty; 37.2 percent of all poor children in the United States live in a family in which at least one parent is working full-time.

The elderly used to suffer the highest poverty rates. Now it is our children. In 1960, one-third of the elderly were poor. Now — thanks to Social Security and SSI — only about 9 percent are poor. But over 16 percent of all our children live in poverty. Thirty years ago, half of the poor lived in rural areas. Today, only 25 percent do. Poverty is growing fairly rapidly in the suburbs (especially the inner suburbs) where 33 percent of the poor now live. The largest group live in our cities (43 percent), mostly in mixed-income neighborhoods. Only 12 percent of the poor live in urban ghettos — defined as an area in which at least 40 percent of all the residents are poor.

Although less than half of the poor are African-American and Latino, poverty rates for minorities are more than double those for whites.

The largest single bloc of poor people (43 percent) live in single-parent families with children. Twenty-two percent of the poor are single adults not living with children. But that still leaves one-third (35 percent) of all the poor living in married-couple families.

A close connection exists between single parenthood and poverty. In 1996, only 8.7 percent of all married-couple families were poor, but 44.3 percent of all female-headed households with children were in poverty.

WHAT CAUSES POVERTY?

In the last few decades, political liberals and conservatives have fought harsh ideological battles over the causes of poverty. Liberals traditionally argued that structural changes and systematic injustice caused most poverty. They explained how globalization, technological change, and the shift from a manufacturing to a service and information economy reduced the demand for low-skill, well-paying jobs. Robots and machines replaced many factory workers. When possible, companies moved labor-intensive operations to developing countries where wages were dramatically lower. In addition, many jobs moved from central cities to the suburbs. Suburban industrial parks replaced crowded factories in decaying urban neighborhoods. Retail jobs moved to new suburban malls, and new suburban office complexes emerged closer to suburbanites' homes. Since public transportation to suburban locations was inadequate and the urban poor often lacked cars, there were simply not enough good jobs available to the urban poor. Woven through everything else was continuing racism.

Conservatives disagreed. Poverty has resulted from wrong moral choices exacerbated by bad government policy. They loved to point out that only a very small percentage of those who finished high school and avoided having children out of wedlock were poor. Soaring illegitimate births, divorce rates, and singleparent families — along with bad choices about drugs, alcohol, work, and sex — were the primary causes of poverty. And generous government welfare programs that allowed the state to replace fathers as the breadwinners simply made things worse.

Who is right? Both are partly right. I have lived and worshiped with the poor far too long to side either with the liberal who quickly dismisses the way personal choices

HOW TO CARE FOR THE POOR AS MUCH AS GOD DOES

- **1.** Pray each day that the Holy Spirit will lead you to a needy person.
- **2.** Read some of the hundreds of biblical texts on the poor and ask: *Is there as much emphasis on the poor in my ministry as there is in the Bible?* Then ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to do about it.
- **3.** Invite persons in your congregation who would like to explore a new ministry of evangelism and social action with poor persons to join you for an exploratory discussion.
- **4.** Read one book on poverty in America.
- Contact Evangelicals for Social Action for their materials helping local congregations combine evangelism and social ministry (1-800-650-6600; www.esa-online.org; www.network935.org).
- **6.** Get the most recent census data for your community (your local librarian can help you) and see how many people in your county live below the poverty level.
- 7. Preach 3-5 sermons on: "What Does the Bible Tell Us About the Poor?" (See Sider, Ron. *For They Shall Be Fed.* Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 1997.)
- **8.** Encourage your congregation to give at least one-tenth of its budget to help to reduce poverty here and abroad. (The National Association of Evangelicals World Relief can help [tziemer@wr.org].)
- **9.** Pray that God will lead you and your congregation into caring as much about the poor as the Bible says God does.

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contribute to poverty or with the conservative who ignores the way complicated structural barriers make it difficult for many hardworking people to escape poverty. If your factory closes because global economic forces prompted management to move production to Mexico and you can only find a much-lower-paying job, the problem is not lack of personal responsibility. On the other hand, if you lose your job because of poor work habits, drugs, or alcohol, personal choices are more clearly central to the problem.

I argue that there are four broad causes of poverty: structural causes; personal decisions and misguided behavioral patterns; sudden catastrophes; and permanent disabilities.

Structural causes

Decreasing number of low-skill, well-paying jobs. Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson is surely correct in seeing the loss of low-skill, decent-paying jobs as one major cause of poverty. Many formerly well-paying, low-skill, blue-collar jobs have moved to Mexico or China, and new service sector jobs often do not pay enough to support a family. Many employers have moved to the suburbs, but the public transportation system was not designed to enable inner-city residents to travel easily to such locations. The lack of jobs that pay a family wage, Wilson rightly argues, helps create absent fathers, increasing violence, and general social decay.

Falling wages. Changes in the global economy and technological changes that caused people to be replaced with machines have also produced falling wages for low-skilled persons. Wages for men without a college degree have fallen dramatically in the last 20 years even when such men work full-time all year.

Minimum wage. The falling real value of the minimum wage is another structural cause of poverty. When the minimum wage remains the same while inflation reduces each dollar's purchasing power, the real value of the minimum wage falls lower and lower. In 1975, a full-time, year-round worker paid at the minimum wage earned a salary at least equal to the poverty level for a family of three. In 1997, that same full-time worker's wages were just 84 percent of the poverty level.

Unions. Unions, which historically have been successful at raising wages, have lost members and power in the last few decades. In 1953, 26.9 percent of the U.S. labor force belonged to a union; by 1998, only about one-half that many (13.9 percent) were unionized.

Racism. The lingering effects of our racist past and racial prejudice in the present play a role in the poverty of minorities. A racist history means that African-Americans inherit less wealth. Ongoing discrimination in housing, education, employment, and law enforcement limits their opportunities and lowers their earnings. One study suggested that if we recession of 1974 to 1975 halted economic growth. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan cut taxes, as well as social programs for the poor. The effective federal income tax rate for the poorest 20 percent increased from 8.1 percent to 10.4 percent from 1980 to 1985, and it dropped from 29.7 percent to 24.4 percent for the richest 5 percent. Reagan also restricted welfare benefits. What happened? From 1979 to 1983, the child poverty rate climbed from 16.4 percent to 22.3 percent. Structural factors obviously play a large role in the existence and perpetuation of poverty.

Personal decisions and misguided behavioral patterns

While the structural causes of poverty are many and varied, they alone do not explain all poverty. In fact, structural causes are often intertwined with personal decisions and misguided behavioral patterns. A young unmarried teenager who is sexually active, gets pregnant, and then drops out of school is certainly making personal choices that will very likely condemn her to extended poverty. But how much was her action shaped by the fact her father had left her mother when he lost his job because the factory he worked in moved to Mexico, by the fact subtle racism helped create an inferior high school, and by the fact the best-paying job available to her boyfriend was selling drugs? Keep in mind this interconnectedness as we examine some of the personal decisions and behaviors that lead to poverty.

An increase in the number of single-parent families. Skyrocketing single parenthood is one of the major causes of growing poverty in the United States. Single-mom families are the poorest people in our nation. Children who grow up in

In the last few years, many leaders in government, the media, our top universities, and public policy think tanks have begun to discover the powerful way that religious organizations help overcome social problems.

simply reduced discrimination in the sale and rental of housing by 13 percent, we would narrow the gap between African-Americans and whites in earnings and education by 33 percent.

A quick review of the years from the mid-1960s to mid-1980s shows how broad structural factors reduce or increase poverty. After President Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty in 1964, several important programs quickly followed: Food Stamp Act (1964), Economic Opportunity Act (1964), Medicare and Medicaid (1965). The economy was also booming. The result? The poverty rate fell from 19 percent (1964) to 11 percent (1973).

Then the huge jump in oil prices in 1973 and the severe

single-parent families are 11 times more likely to experience persistent poverty than children who grow up in two-parent families.

Out-of-wedlock births are the most important contributing factor to the growth of single-parent families. In 1960, 85 percent of all teenagers who bore children were married; by 1995, only 25 percent were.

Why this escalation in out-of-wedlock births? Society's abandonment of historic Judeo-Christian sexual moral standards — thanks in part to TV, popular music, and the movies — is one reason. Decreasing job opportunities and lower wages for low-skilled men — especially inner-city minorities — is another.

Other behavioral patterns. The decisions and behaviors that lead to single parenthood are not the only ones that contribute to the existence of poverty. Drug use and sexual abuse are also important factors. A small but significant number of families are poor because one or both parents use illegal drugs or abuse alcohol. There is also a high correlation between sexual abuse and teen pregnancy. One study found that 61 percent of all teenagers who were pregnant or parenting had suffered sexual abuse earlier in life. Abuse creates low selfesteem, which fosters excessive craving for male affection. Poverty also increases the likelihood of sexual abuse. Femaleheaded households are more likely to have transient boyfriends who in turn often feel powerless and hopeless and sometimes compensate by asserting power over girls in the family. Tragically, that abuse increases teen pregnancy, which increases the chances of poverty.

Wrong choices, not merely unjust structures, cause poverty.

Sudden catastrophes

Sometimes disaster strikes fast. Every day accidents on the road or at work kill or disable the principal breadwinner in solid lower-middle-class families. Every day long-term illness hits a person who, along with tens of millions of other people in the United States, lacks health insurance. Too often, the result is poverty. In these and similar cases, the cause is neither broader structural change nor misguided personal choices. But the result can be devastating poverty.

Permanent disabilities

Finally, some people are poor simply because (often through no fault of their own) they have a condition that prevents them from working. This is true of the mentally and physically disabled. It is also true of the elderly who can no longer work but were not able to save enough money for retirement.

DISTRIBUTIONS OF INCOME AND WEALTH

Not only are 33 million people in the United States poor in the midst of enormous wealth, *they are becoming poorer while the rich grow richer*.

Growing inequality

Table 2 shows that in 1974, the bottom 20 percent of the population received only 5.7 percent of the total national income, while the top 20 percent enjoyed 40.6 percent. In the next 20plus years, the inequality became worse. The bottom share dropped to 4.2 percent, while the top share expanded to 46.8 percent. In 1974, the richest fifth enjoyed seven times as much income as the poorest fifth. Twenty-two years later, the rich had 11 times as much.

What about the distribution of wealth? In 1997, the top 20

INCOME OF FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES PERCENT OF TOTAL INCOME MEAN INCOME (1996 DOLLARS)							
	1974	1996	1974	1996	CHANGE		
Lowest fifth	5.7%	4.2%	\$12,697	\$11,388	-10%		
Second fifth	12.0%	10.0%	26,803	26,847	0%		
Third fifth	17.6%	15.8%	39,191	42,467	+8%		
Fourth fifth	24.1%	23.1%	53,612	62,052	+16%		
Top fifth	40.6%	46.8%	90,337	125,627	+39%		
Top 5 percent	14.8%	20.3%	131,766	217,355	+65%		

table 2

Distribution in the United States," in *Toward a Just and Caring Society: Christian Responses to Poverty in America*, ed. David P. Gushee (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), chap. 6.

percent owned over 84 percent of all wealth. In fact, the top 1 percent had more wealth than all people in the bottom 90 percent. In 1965, CEOs made approximately 44 times the salary of the average factory worker. Today it is 500 times. If factory workers had received pay raises comparable to those of their CEOs between 1980 and 1995, they would have earned \$90,000 a year by 1995, and the minimum-wage worker would have earned \$39,000 a year. The United States has the greatest income inequality of all developed nations. What can be done?

For decades, liberals blamed poverty on unfair structures and proposed expanded government social programs. Conservatives blamed poverty on bad personal choices and wanted to cut government programs. And both tended to ignore the role of civil society, especially religious organizations.

Fortunately, much is changing. In the last few years, many leaders in government, the media, our top universities, and public policy think tanks have begun to discover the powerful way that religious organizations help overcome social problems.

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Studies show that church attendees are about twice (64 percent) as likely to volunteer time (and volunteer twice as much) as those who do not attend church. Recent studies by social scientists underline the positive social impact of religious faith. Harvard economist Richard B. Freeman discovered that the best predictor of whether young black inner-city males would escape the syndrome of drugs, crime, and prison was church attendance. Some preliminary data suggests that, sometimes at least, faith-based providers of social services are far more successful than secular programs. Teen Challenge's Christ-centered drug rehabilitation program has an 86 percent success rate in graduates who entered the program because of drug and alcohol use — a rate that is far better than secular programs.

We need extensive, sophisticated evaluations of a wide variety of secular and religious social service programs to evaluate these claims. But if careful studies by social scientists confirm that faith-based programs are more successful, it will not surprise Christians. Christians know that persons are not just complex socioeconomic machines. They are also spiritual beings whose free decisions contribute to social problems. Therefore, dealing with whole persons rather than just the physical side of persons ought to produce better results. Especially in the case of persons caught in a destructive environment that makes misguided decisions about drugs, sex, school, and single parenthood extremely easy, coming to personal faith in Christ is important. Conversion and the work of the Holy Spirit produce a radical transformation of outward behavior. While secular agencies and government programs cannot bring about such transformation, evidence clearly indicates that Christ-centered programs — especially those with a substantial religious content in their activities — can and do.

That is why President Bush's Faith-Based Initiative is so important. President Bush rightly says that there is a poverty of the wallet and a poverty of the soul. Government can do something about the first, but cannot touch the second. But Christian social programs like Teen Challenge correct the poverty of the soul.

The central importance of the President's Faith-Based Initiative is that it (like the Charitable Choice legislation that then-Senator John Ashcroft inserted in the 1996 welfare legislation) seeks to demand a level playing field so religious social service programs are not discriminated against when they apply for government funds. The new proposals in the Faith-Based Initiative insist that government dare not discriminate against explicitly religious agencies. Such agencies may keep their religious symbols and hire staff that share their faith. No government funds dare be used for "sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytization," but the faith-based

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN ACTION CEDAR PARK ASSEMBLY OF GOD BOTHELL, WASHINGTON



It was an unlikely place for a salvation decision the waiting area at a mechanic's shop. But that was where a young woman in Bothell, Washington, recently committed her life to Christ. This was no ordinary mechanic's shop, however. The woman made her decision when another

waiting customer shared the gospel during the

FUITEN

monthly free day offered by Cedar Park Assembly of God at its own fully equipped garage.

"There are a lot of single moms and others in need who can't afford a mechanic," says Pastor Joe Fuiten. "And if you don't have a car, you don't have a job."

Cedar Park also accepts donated cars, which it refurbishes and sells interest free to people needing inexpensive transportation.

Few people probably connect a grease pit with the gospel, but auto repair is one of many practical avenues Fuiten and his staff have created to minister to hurting lives.

"When I was just discovering God's call to ministry on my life," Fuiten says, "I began to study what righteousness really is. Righteousness is more than praising God. It's a godly attitude and godly action toward the poor. In working out that call of God in my life, I've tried to create ministries that care for those in need."

Some of the avenues of assistance are more traditional. Cedar Park has a food bank, a clothing bank, and a furniture bank, and distributes needed items to a steady stream of individuals and families. A thrift store will open soon. But there is also a funeral home and cemetery, with reasonable rates to help bereaved families and free interment for babies. A counseling center with nine professional counselors on staff sees a growing clientele.

"We have a sliding scale," Fuiten says. "Our full rate is \$120 per hour, but a family without insurance may pay as little as \$5 an hour. In all of our ministries, we look for ways for people to participate in their own help."

Funding for benevolent ministry is a significant percentage of Cedar Park's budget. Cash outlays to those in need totaled more than \$100,000 in 2002 outside the cost of running these programs. Virtually all of the money comes through church contributions. No federal funds have been utilized. The only government assistance to date has been a county health department contribution to establish a Web site and literature to help people battle addictions.

Cedar Park is also active in other community outreaches, including Love Inc., an interdenominational effort to help homeless people get back on their feet. An alms box is positioned in the church foyer for free-will offerings. Proceeds are collected weekly and donated to a range of service providers in the city.

Fuiten is no stranger to poverty. He assisted missionaries Mark and Huldah Buntain in establishing Mission of Mercy in Calcutta, India. While the poverty level in Bothell is not as severe as in Southern Asia, the principle of living out the gospel through helping those in need is unchanging and Fuiten has applied it consistently since coming to Cedar Park in 1981.

"The righteous life is expressed by caring for the poor," he says, "and if you don't, you're not righteous no matter how loudly you say amen in church."

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agency may raise private funds for such activities and include explicitly religious activities in their overall program.

EXPANDED FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS ARE NOT ENOUGH

A greatly increased emphasis on the crucial role of faith-based programs must be at the heart of any successful program to combat poverty. It would, however, be utterly wrong to suppose that religious groups by themselves can conquer poverty. If religious congregations were to replace the federal government's spending on just the four most basic programs for the poor, every one of the approximately 325,000 Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations in America would have to raise another \$289,000 per year to assist the needy. And if these congregations also took over the federal government's share of Medicaid, the figure would be \$612,000 per congregation each year. That would be rather difficult since 50 percent of all U.S. congregations have less than 100 regular participants and their total median annual budget is a mere \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Without Social Security from the federal government, almost one out of two elderly Americans in 1997 would have lived in poverty. Thanks to Social Security, only about one in 10 elderly Americans was poor. Without government benefits, more than one-fifth of all Americans (21.6 percent) would have been poor in 1996. Government programs reduced the poverty level by almost 50 percent to 11.5 percent. Unless jobs paying a family wage are available for everyone willing to work, poverty will prevail no matter how much individuals are spiritually renewed.

We dare not allow politicians to use expanding faith-based programs to legitimize governmental abandonment of the poor. Furthermore, let no one suppose that if civil society and government get it right, then large private institutions like the media and business have no responsibilities. Civil society, business, the media, and government all have crucial roles to play if America is to dramatically reduce the scandal of widespread poverty in this land of abundance. We need a multisector strategy in which each group does what it does best.

Business

Unacceptable levels of injustice and agony, however, are a part of the way today's market economy works in America. It is simply wrong that some people work full-time and still cannot escape poverty. It is immoral that over 43 million people lack health insurance. It is unacceptable that corporations treat labor as merely an economic input, undermine family life, and use advertising techniques that subtly, powerfully promote the lies that human fulfillment comes by means of more gadgets and joy comes through illicit sex. Business leaders can and must contribute to empowering the poor and renewing society. Profits are essential, but elevating the maximization of profits above a concern for workers, the common good, and the environment is idolatry. Businesses have a moral responsibility to adopt policies that help make jobs available to everyone (especially the poor) and strengthen rather than undermine family life.

Businesses have numerous opportunities to empower the poorer segments of society. Programs for profit sharing and employee ownership, generous on-the-job training for lowskill workers, and corporate giving focused on the poor would all help. It would also help for corporate leadership to urge the federal government to abolish most of the \$125 billion in corporate welfare that private business now receives and spend those savings on effective programs to empower the poor.

Unions

Strong unions also play an essential role in the fight against poverty. Biblical faith teaches what Lord Acton aptly summarized: In a fallen world, power tends to corrupt and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely.

Large corporations wield enormous power. By comparison, individual employees are mere ants. Top business executives are no less — or more — sinful than the rest of us, but their enormous power offers vast opportunity to use it for selfish advantage unless other power counterbalances corporate power. Strong, honest, democratic unions can do that. Unions have often been effective tools, helping the poor to demand a living wage and minorities to find a place in economic life.

Media

TV, movies, and the Internet are often the primary moral teachers for our children, and, tragically, what they teach concerning consumerism, sex, and violence is abominable. What we need is clear: less sex and violence, and more positive stories about wholesome family life and successful social ministries that empower the poor.

Government

I have argued that everyone would benefit if *non*governmental institutions, especially faith-based organizations, played a substantially larger role in combating poverty. When a social problem emerges, the first question should *not* be, What can government do? The first question should be, What institutions in society have primary responsibility for and are best able to correct this problem? Many times there will be overlapping responsibilities. In those cases, it is crucial that the several institutions support each other's respective roles. Frequently, nongovernmental institutions will be more effective at less cost. We must reject liberals' automatic preference for government solutions.

Libertarianism ("the less government, the better"), however,

is not the answer. Biblical principles, church history, and realistic contemporary analysis, however, all lead us to reject libertarian approaches.

In the Old Testament God commanded kings to do justice and righteousness. The Hebrew words include economic justice. Kings were to have a special concern to care for the poor and needy and restore productive assets to the impoverished. To be sure, the first responsibility lay not with the king but with the family. But there is not a shred of biblical support for those Christians who argue that individual believers and churches, but not government, should assist the poor. In fact, church history demonstrates that Christians over the centuries have supported the role of government in alleviating poverty.

There are some things that only the government can do. Society needs marriage laws that apply to everyone. Even though the primary responsibility for renewing marriage and the family rests with churches and synagogues, governments should rewrite divorce laws to make them more family friendly. Government should act as a last resort when other institutions do not or cannot care for the poor.

It is both morally right and in each person's long-term selfinterest for the government to tax us all so it can provide funding for effective programs that empower and care for the needy. In the biblical perspective, poverty is a family affair. Therefore, using tax dollars to care for our needy brothers and sisters and restore them to dignity and community is right. It is also wise. None of us knows when drastic, permanent illness may swoop down on us, wiping out our savings and exhausting private insurance policies. When government serves as the insurer of last resort, the risk for catastrophic events is shared by all citizens. Furthermore, effectively empowering the poor so they can become productive citizens (paying taxes instead of requiring public assistance or even police and prison) benefits everyone in society. Appropriately, therefore, everyone also contributes to make this happen. Dramatic reduction of poverty in America demands a crucial role for government.

What we need is a new holistic vision. If we are to dramatically reduce poverty in the richest nation in history, every institution in society must do what it does best. The churches must greatly expand their holistic social programs that combine evangelism and social change, thereby offering both spiritual and social transformation. At the same time, the media, business, unions, and government must all do their part. People need Jesus *and* a job.



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12 PRINCIPLES FOR A JUST SOCIETY

- **1.** Made in the image of God, every person enjoys an inalienable dignity and worth that society must respect.
- **2.** Persons are not just complex socioeconomic, materialistic machines; they are also spiritual beings enjoying God-given rights and responsibilities. Each person is a body-soul unity made for relationship with God, neighbor, and earth.
- **3.** Because the Trinitarian God created persons for mutual interdependence in community, society must be organized in ways that nurture the common good. Since persons reach their potential only in a multilayered community of diverse institutions (family, church, school, media, business, government), society must promote policies (consistent with religious freedom for all) that strengthen all institutions to play their full proper role.
- **4.** Every policy, both public and private, must be measured by its impact on the poor and marginalized because biblical faith teaches that one of the central criterion by which God judges societies is how they treat the least advantaged.
- **5.** Both because God wants all persons to be dignified participants in their communities and because centralized power is always dangerous, we must strengthen the economic and political power of the poor.
- **6.** Renewing wholesome, two-parent families must be a central goal for both government and civil society.
- **7.** Every person and family should have the opportunity to acquire and use (without discrimination based on religion, race, or gender) the productive resources that, if used responsibly, will enable that person or family to earn a decent living and be a dignified participating member of the community.
- **8.** Everyone able to work has an obligation to do so, and society, where possible, has the responsibility to make work opportunities available to all. Everyone who works responsibly should receive a living income.
- **9.** Society should care in a generous, compassionate way that strengthens dignity and respect for those who cannot care for themselves.
- **10.** Quality education must be available to all, regardless of family income.
- **11.**Quality health care consistent with society's present knowledge and resources must be available to all, regardless of family income.
- **12.** Every community must enjoy public safety. Communities should be places where people feel physically secure, violence is rare, and the police and courts function without bias for or against anyone.

RONALD J. SIDER, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania



Loving Our Neighbor's Welfare

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID BATES

od is passionate for the poor and vulnerable. And He is passionate that His church imitate that passion. More than 400 Scripture verses make this plain. Jeremiah 22:16 says

BY AMY L. SHERMAN



that defending the cause of the poor is what it means to know God. James 1:27 shows that "pure religion" involves visiting widows and orphans in their distress. First John 3:17 says, "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" Proverbs 14:31 teaches, "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." And Matthew 25:44–46 warns that if we fail to care for the least of God's children, if we neglect the naked and poor and hungry, we will be guilty of neglecting Christ himself.

We need no further motivation. But what is wonderful about Christianity is that God does give us an additional motivation: When we in love pursue our neighbors' welfare, we are ourselves enriched. God promises incredible blessings and rewards for our obedience.

Six gifts can be noted,

but these blessings come to us only

through an entanglement of

our lives with the lives of people in need.

through an entanglement of our lives with the lives of people in need. They do not typically accrue if our contact with the poor is cold, distant, and sterile. These enrichments are gained through a relational, holistic mercy ministry.

THE GIFT OF AGITATION

As John Piper observed, the New Testament is clear that the appropriate posture of the Church is the posture of the longing Bride, waiting at the altar for the appearing of the Bridegroom. The Bride is filled with a holy discontent over the absence of her Bridegroom. The Bride is keenly aware of — and acutely impatient with — the "not-yet-ness" of the kingdom of God. The Bride, the Church, is supposed to be crying, "Maranatha! Marantha! Come Lord Jesus!" That's what the firstcentury church did. Why do we not long more for Christ's return?

Is it because we are happy the way things are? Abundance and

affluence anesthetize us. It is easy to grow comfortable with this world this world that we are supposed to see as a place of pilgrimage and not as our true home.

But when we allow ourselves to be touched with the brokenness and pain of our needy neighbors,

Often the church has been guilty of a cheap benevolence that wants only to help the poor, but isn't willing to know them. At times we have strayed far from the example of the Good Samaritan, who did not toss canned goods and a tract at the wounded traveler along the Jericho road. He dirtied his hands as he bandaged the man's wounds. True mercy is, as church father Gregory of Nyssa taught many centuries ago, "a voluntary sorrow that joins itself to the suffering of another."

Six gifts can be noted, but these blessings come to us only

then an oh-so-needed holy discontent will begin to grow within us. As we entangle our lives with those who suffer, we begin to become agitated with the ways things are. There's not supposed to be discrimination. There's not supposed to be destitution. There's not supposed to be child abuse. There's not supposed to be hunger and privation. We are spiritually impoverished by this absence of agitation. We need the holy discontent we can gain by participating in the sufferings of our neighbors.

THE GIFT OF GROWTH IN HUMILITY AND DEPENDENCE ON GOD

When we are engaged in face-to-face friendships with poor, hurting, struggling people, we become aware of their overwhelming needs. We recognize we cannot personally meet all these needs, and so we sense our desperate need for God to intervene. The reality of inadequacy is a great gift for all who are proud and self-reliant. God has told us that it is when we are weak Christ's strength is perfected in us.

The feeling of being overwhelmed produces true humility. We begin to think first of our need for Jesus, rather than being overly confident and focused on what we have to offer to the hurting. The four friends of the paralytic in Mark 2 did not look at their friend and think, We can fix him. We've got a lot of resources to offer. No. They felt overwhelmed, and the only thing they could think to do was to carry their friend to Jesus. It is always good to be reminded of our limits so we cast ourselves upon God because of His limitlessness.

THE GIFT OF LEARNING ABOUT THE NATURE OF TRUE FAITH

We who have support networks, IRAs, savings accounts, and educational degrees have safety nets. In many ways we can depend on ourselves. When those in more marginalized positions pray, "God, give me my daily bread," there is an authenticity about their dependence. There is a sense, "If God doesn't come through, I'm sunk." This dependency of the believing poor on God is good for us to witness and to learn from. "Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith?" (James 2:5). Some Christians who are economically poor have a great gift of faith. Their relationship with God is marked by an immediacy and an urgency from which we can learn much.

THE GIFT OF AROMA

The mercy ministry of the church is different from that offered by the government or by secular nonprofit

FROM RIOTS TO RECONCILIATION FIRST CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY OF GOD **CINCINNATI, OHIO**



In a city scarred by recent race riots, First Christian Assembly, a 95-year-old church in the heart of Cincinnati, embarked on an ambitious racial diversification plan.

CHRIS BEARD

"The city saw us as a leading church, but the neighborhood around us didn't know us at all," says Pastor Chris Beard. "We were a commuter church that was 99 percent white."

Then God spoke to Beard's heart about forging relationships with African-American pastors and churches. He and the church planned joint picnics and prayer events, spoke about reconciliation from the pulpit, hired African-American staff members, and launched a class called Cultural Perspectives to help whites and blacks understand each other's cultures.

The result has changed the church and contributed to a larger transformation in the city, where churches are crossing racial lines to sponsor a summit on racism, forging friendships, and joining together for major citywide prayer meetings.

But the first change for Beard came in his own heart, as he felt God instructing him to learn from pastors of other races.

"I had a lot of growing to do in understanding ministry as demonstration, not just declaration," says Beard. "[The African-American pastors in the city] had a greater concern for the whole life of an individual: employment, health of home life, what's happening with people's kids in school. Those weren't things we thought about before. We thought if you believed in Jesus and came to church, that was good. Discipleship took on

three dimensions for me. We embraced the idea that the whole church is responsible for the whole city with the whole gospel."

Beard depoliticized the language and tone of what was spoken from the pulpit, eliminating talk of taking back American culture.

"Bleeding the politics out of the pulpit was very big in making our church safe for all people," he says. "We stopped using white/right-wing political jargon and kept it on Kingdom things. When we talk about politics, it's from a justice angle, not a 'save traditional America' angle. Christians were never asked to save the culture, but to present the good news that Jesus Christ transforms lives. When we make it about the defending the culture, this makes enemies out of lost people. I believe the Lord is speaking to the church in America and saying to be a First Peter Church, to be the body of Christ in the context of your nation, to harvest and thrive, not take it over."

As a result, Beard says, the church's message is inclusive of all political views, and people's energy goes into Kingdom things: evangelism, missions, compassion ministries. They feel more at peace with unbelievers and see their personal witness grow because "they don't feel the need to correct people on their politics," he says.

Today, FCA is 15 percent people of color. African-American pastors are often guests in the pulpit, "and not just in February (Black History Month)," says Beard. The pain and sense of disparity between urban and suburban communities that boiled up in the 2001 riots is slowly healing.

"God is pouring a vision into the churches in Cincinnati to become more racially complete," says Beard. "It's gotten our attention. We're all laying down our agendas to seek the face of God."

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organizations. The church's benevolence should be marked by what Beverly Carradine, a preacher from the 1800s, defined as the kindness of God. There is a great difference between the kindness God expects of us and the kindness the world offers, which is really mere politeness.

A truly powerful kindness comes from heaven. Christians must display merciful servanthood that is quickly recognized as being something that is not indigenous to the human heart but implanted by the Holy Spirit. Our compassionate ministries become a visible witness to the reality of God and His love when those ministries have the look, feel, and smell of God about them. This happens when we minister as Jesus, the Bread of Life, ministered — to the whole person. A cheap and easy benevolence that lacks the aroma of the Bread of Life will not often get noticed by unbelievers. Our compassionate ministries must be of such a nature that, when the world looks at them, they are intrigued and even noticed. We demonstrate the presence of God

RENOVATING LIVES FAITH ASSEMBLY OF GOD PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



SMITH

As he studied architectural drawing in college, Richard Smith grappled with the call of God on his life. Raised in the Church of God in Christ, he had started preaching at 15 and pastored his first church at 19. But corporate dreams called for a season. When he made the decision to transfer to Valley Forge Christian College and

pursue the ministry wholeheartedly, he never could have guessed how God would use his secular training.

Richard and Rosilyn Smith have planted and nurtured Faith Assembly of God in Philadelphia for 21 years. They first met with a few members in a community center, then moved in with nearby Calvary Chapel Assembly of God. In 1983 the church was in a storefront building. Five years later, they were back at Calvary Chapel, this time as sole occupants.

Along the way, Richard's skills have been a blessing. The congregation had to put running water, heat, and electricity into the storefront sanctuary. When they assumed ownership of Calvary Chapel major repairs were needed as well. Faith Assembly's new facility into which they plan to move this summer is a warehouse they have completely restructured to meet their needs. It will seat 400 and includes a gymnasium/multipurpose building.

But buildings are only shells, even if they are customized for outreach. The Smiths' hearts are with the needy families in their Philadelphia community. They have opened the doors of Faith Assembly to the homeless. As a result, their congregation has steadily grown.

"When we moved into Calvary Chapel," Smith says, "we had maybe 15 people and only took up two pews."

Within a couple of years, the 125-seat sanctuary was filled to capacity. The reason: Faith Assembly became a 24/7 church.

"We would have food distribution for the homeless," Smith says, "but then they didn't have anywhere to go for the night. So we turned some Sunday School rooms into bedrooms and began letting some men take shelter there."

Deeper needs, such as addiction, called for another level of

ministry. Smith was referring dozens of people each year to local centers until he was told they were at capacity. So Faith Assembly started its own. The Smiths bought a home for the church to use as a residential facility.

"Once we had taken care of the men," Smith says, "I'd have women approaching me and saying that the church needed to think about their needs too."

The city of Philadelphia gave Faith Assembly an abandoned crack house for \$1. The residents from the men's home renovated it, and it became a women's facility and then a home for needy families.

The original feeding ministry has continued to grow. Faith Assembly feeds 300-400 families every month.

"These are hard-working families that find themselves with little or no money left in the budget for groceries after they've paid their rent, utilities, and other basic bills," Smith says. "We give them enough groceries to last 3-5 days, as well as essential household supplies."

There are also regular meals offered at the church, as well as special outreaches during the year including a turkey distribution at Thanksgiving and a gift drive for kids at Christmas. For the past 12 years, Faith Assembly has created a community summer highlight by holding a tent crusade for 8 nights. Besides the spiritual food delivered from the pulpit each evening, 300-400 meals fill hungry stomachs.

With the warehouse renovation nearing completion, Smith envisions several additional ministries. He particularly wants to see the church's outreach to local youth expand through use of the gymnasium. Corporate and government donations of computers are allowing Faith Assembly to set up a career-training program.

While the government allocation does come with some rules, they are not prohibitive. "We're still welcome to share our faith as long as it's not coercive," Smith says. "Most of the people who come to our church for the food or other assistance ask for prayer anyway."

The warehouse's 400-seat sanctuary may take awhile to fill. But with Faith Assembly's focus on multiplication through discipleship, it appears to be only a matter of time before Smith will be looking for that next property in need of a facelift.

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through a relational, holistic ministry that transforms people's lives. And that witness goes out before a watching — and sniffing — world and attracts and draws unbelievers.

THE GIFT THAT MIGHT BE CALLED "THE GIFT OF THE GARDEN"

We are promised the gift of the garden by God himself in Isaiah 58:10,11: "If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sunscorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

The word translated "spend" (verse 10) connotes the idea of issuing forth or pouring out. The King James Version speaks of "drawing out" your soul to bestow a mercy upon the recipient. These are terms used when talking about water. We speak of pouring out water or drawing water from a well. We are being asked to spend ourselves, our very souls. We possess this "water" — our time, our heart, our soul — we are to pour it out, to issue it forth to water others. When we pour ourselves out, we do not become empty; God pours himself and His provision in.

Are we fearful that by pouring ourselves out we will become empty and dry? It is the same fear that the widow of Zarephath must have had in 1 Kings 17. The land was plagued by famine and drought. God told Elijah to go to a place called Zarephath where he would encounter a poor widow. He was to ask her for something to eat and drink. Elijah met her at the town gate and asked for water and bread. The widow replied that she only had a tiny bit of oil and a handful of flour. She told Elijah she was gathering firewood to make a final meal for herself and her son before they died. Incredibly, Elijah still asked her to feed him first. He promised her that if she poured out all that she had, God would be faithful and provide for her and her son. By faith, she gave the hungry prophet of God her last morsel of food. The result? Verse 15 says, "And there was food every day for Elijah and the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah."

That is the promise of Isaiah 58:11. When we take our water and pour it out in sun-scorched places among those who are thirsty, we will not run dry. God pours himself and His provision into us so that we become like a well-watered garden.

THE GIFT OF INVIGORATED WORSHIP

Our vision of God enlarges as we begin to witness Him acting in other people's lives in ways that may be unfamiliar to us. We see new facets of who God is as we witness different deeds He accomplishes that we may have otherwise missed. For invigorated worship, we need to mingle with people whose prayer requests are different from our own; for example, the circumstance of being persecuted or discriminated against or the circumstance of being healed from crack addiction or the circumstance of obtaining a job after 16 years on welfare. When we are in relationships with people who are praying for God's deliverance and provision in ways that we have never prayed before and then we see God answer those prayers, we see more clearly the multifaceted grace and provision of our Heavenly Father, and our adoration of Him is deepened.

CONCLUSION: THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING

This way of approaching service has the additional benefit of helping us to pursue a kind of service that offers supplicants the chance to become contributors rather than mere receivers. If we truly love our neighbor's welfare, we will not stop at merely meeting his needs. We will seek to exhort and encourage him to be a giver to others, because of the joy there is in giving. As Christians, the gospel we proclaim not only saves people from negative things; it saves them for positive things.



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Community Ministry: A Curriculum for Congregations (Hudson Institute, 2002).



"After 20 years in the ministry, I don't know if my sermons are any better, but my resignation letter is without equal."

THEMEINTERVIEW

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE D. MCKINNEY, JESSE MIRANDA, JR., & GEORGE W. WESTLAKE, JR.

HOLISTIC MINISTRY — BRINGING THE WHOLE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE PERSON



GEORGE D. MCKINNEY

The church must improve in its desire and efforts to show the compassion of Christ by ministering to people's needs - spiritual, physical, emotional, financial, and social. In this interview, Rick Knoth, managing editor of Enrichment journal, spoke with Bishop George D. McKinney, Dr. Jesse Miranda, Jr., and Pastor George W. Westlake, Jr. about holistic ministry and how they are bringing the transforming, compassionate love of Christ to their churches, communities, and individual ministries. McKinney is senior pastor of St. Stephens Church of God in Christ in San Diego, California, a position he has held for 41 years. He has been recognized and honored by the San Diego City Council for his many years of work and service in the inner city. For 18 years he has served as bishop of the Second Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Southern California in the Church of God in Christ. Miranda is codirector of the Hispanic Churches in American Public Life research



JESSE MIRANDA, JR.



GEORGE W. WESTLAKE, JR.

project and founding and current president of the Alianza de Ministerios Evangelicos Nacionales on holistic ministry. He is also an executive presbyter for The General Council of the Assemblies of God and currently serves as distinguished professor and director of the Center for Urban Studies and Ethnic Leadership at Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California. Westlake is pastor of Sheffield Family Life Center (Assemblies of God) in Kansas City, Missouri, a 4,000-plus-member multicultural, multiracial metropolitan church in the inner city.

Define holistic ministry.

MCKINNEY: Holistic ministry is an attempt to follow the example of Jesus who modeled holistic ministry by addressing the human situation in its totality. His message of good news was for people in any circumstance and under any condition. He delivered those who were demon possessed. He brought health and wholeness to the mentally ill by the power of His Word. He provided bread for the hungry. He was concerned about defenseless widows and children. He was concerned for the poor but also had compassion for the rich. As followers of Christ, we are under His direction to bring the whole gospel to the whole man throughout the whole world.

MIRANDA: Holistic ministry addresses the whole person and works toward a total change in the person's life. This means not only reaching spiritual needs, but also physical, social, economic, and political needs. A person's greatest need is often the deepest within him. Ministering to this need takes time and spiritual discernment to confirm it and then encourage that person.

WESTLAKE: People live in a real world, and Jesus died for the whole person — body, soul, spirit. You can't have the compassion of Jesus Christ and not try to meet people's

needs. Jesus met people where they were, not where they ought to be. We must minister to these needs too. Jesus reached the apostles when they were fishing. He met the tax collector where he was. If we are not going to meet people where they are and be concerned about them, how can we say we are fulfilling what Jesus has asked us to do?

If loving the whole person the way Jesus did is holistic ministry, describe the characteristics of a holistic congregation.

MCKINNEY: By God's grace, for the past 41 years, we have been laboring in inner-city San Diego. Early on, we believed the church must be an island of hope in a sea of despair. We also believed the holistic approach required that we look at certain realities that exist here — social, economic, criminal, and environmental. As the Holy Spirit led us, we began to

respond to those needs.

Forty years ago we recognized that minority teens who had gotten into difficulty with the law were being released from juvenile hall or being placed in a flop-



In our situation, we simply responded to the needs of the people in our community. All of these activities are a part of our strategy to lift up the name of Jesus, for man's basic need is to know Him.

WESTLAKE: Our congregation is rather unique for this part of the country. When I came to Kansas City 30 years ago, we had an all-white congregation of 200 in the middle of the city. I asked God to give us a church that represented the Kingdom. We do not have one predominant race in our church; we are multiracial and multicultural. We have professional people and we have people from the ghetto. Our mission statement is to reach as many people in as many ways as possible. We have 60 outreach ministries, each uniquely organized around a particular need in the community.

A well-known church-growth expert told me our church

In the past there has been a rebellion in the Pentecostal church against a social gospel that ignored the gospel truth that you must be born again. —Westlake

house downtown and told to behave. We responded by opening a halfway house.

We surveyed and found out that in an area of nearly 100,000 people, there was only one childcare center that had a license for 10 kids. We organized a licensed childcare center that became a part of our strategy to reach the community with the message of Jesus Christ. It has been a very effective tool in reaching the lost — when we take good care of the children of those who are lost.

We discovered there was a need for housing. So we became involved in establishing affordable housing and built a 47-unit facility. We later built a 60-unit senior housing project.

In a meeting with the superintendent of schools and the board of education 35 years ago, we discovered they didn't want to waste their best teachers on the kids here. So we established St. Stephens Christian School and recruited teachers from Harvard, Yale, Stanford, San Diego State, and other schools who were interested in working in an urban-school setting where there was emphasis on reading, writing, arithmetic, and a relationship with God. The school has been operating since 1978.

A holistic church will have an atmosphere where people from any ethnic group are welcomed. If there is a predominate ethnic group, it must welcome others from other ethnic backgrounds. The church will also welcome the homeless, those with AIDS. couldn't keep growing (at that time we were running about 1,500) because we didn't have a homogeneous principle. I said we do have a homogeneous principle: We are all children of God. Now we have about 4,500 or 4,600 on Sunday mornings. We have Ph.D.s sitting next to people with no formal education. To me that's what a holistic congregation ought to look like.

MIRANDA: I am not a pastor, so I'll respond from the point of view of a layperson. A church needs to reflect its own historical and social situation. A holistic church will look like the people in the city or neighborhood of the church. A church also needs to grow in its sensitivity to the opportunities that God is bringing to it. And the gifts of the Spirit that bring a transformation to people's lives should be in operation in a congregation that is holistic.

Most churches are predominately Anglo, Hispanic, or African American. How do you bring people to accept multiracialism in the church?

WESTLAKE: You need to preach on racism. I inherited an allwhite church 30 years ago, and several years passed before we were able to get a black family in the church. We had some Hispanic families. We had children, but we weren't reaching adults. As soon as an African-American man met the requirements of our constitution, I asked him to serve on the board. It's important to put people of various races and various economic levels in key positions in the church. You must have multicultural leadership if you are going to have a truly multicultural church. I say racism is not tolerated.

We conducted an unsigned survey in our church. We asked people what they thought about the church and why they attended. One overwhelming response was the way everyone is treated equally.

We minister to people with HIV. We have a ministry to homosexuals and lesbians. We have a nursing home ministry too. We have Tabitha House, a rehabilitation home for women on alcohol and drugs. We don't care about lifestyles. We don't care where people come from. We are more concerned where they are going. not have the social gospel debate. When people ask why the Hispanic church is growing so fast, this is what I tell them: "We are reaching out to the social concern of our people."

WESTLAKE: In the past there was a rebellion in the Pentecostal church against a social gospel that ignored the gospel truth that you must be born again. Rather than seek the middle ground that the Bible teaches, Pentecostals have had a tendency to go the other extreme and say we don't want anything to do with the social gospel because of what's been done with it in the past.

Regardless of the past, we need to read and reread the Book



We have Ph.D.s sitting next to people with no formal education. To me that's what a holistic congregation ought to look like. —Westlake

You need to be intentional to have a multiracial church. Our staff is multiracial. Every committee is multiracial. You won't see white people sitting here and African-American people sitting there.

MCKINNEY: Leadership must have a proper understanding of the meaning of the gospel and the compassion and love of God. If the leader does not have that understanding, it will be difficult for his congregation to grasp that concept. For example, at our church there has been more than one instance where Caucasians have joined, and someone reported to me that some members want to keep the church all black. When this comes to my attention, I deal with it from the pulpit in the light of the teachings of Jesus. We promote an understanding that racism and prejudice are not accepted in this congregation.

A large number of Pentecostal churches regard social concern as a distraction from their spiritual mission. Is this a valid concern?

MIRANDA: First, I think we need to look at our Pentecostal heritage. The Assemblies of God began not only with unity among the races, but we also had social concern. Look at Azusa Street. It was later that we began to think that social action would draw us away from the priority of winning people to Jesus. We did not want to be like the denominations from which many of our early leaders came.

Second, this problem is unique to the United States. The fastest-growing segment of the church in most if not every denomination is the Hispanics. When I talk to Hispanics, they do of Acts where ministry to widows was important. Paul said that he who does not provide for his family is worse than an infidel and has denied the faith. The context is in taking care of widowed mothers. The Book of Acts clearly shows that these things are the responsibility of the church.

A balance between word and deed is evident in our services in that we

emphasize the need to know Jesus Christ. We give an altar call at every service. We follow up on every convert and even our homeless. We feed the homeless and share the gospel with them on the street. If we can get them to come to church, we bring them and try to help them, but the main thing is we point them to Jesus Christ. If people get saved at our altars but don't want to attend our church, we try to get them into another Bible-believing church. You need to remember that each person has an eternal soul. We use good deeds to reach people with the gospel.

MCKINNEY: We need to keep in mind the emphasis Jesus made regarding the whole person. It is interesting that in the story Jesus gives us in Matthew 25 people are rejected on the basis of whether or not they visited the sick, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, or visited those in prison. This is a clear statement about the social implications of the gospel. Those invited into God's eternal rest are those who were compassionate to the poor, fed the hungry, and visited the widows. To somehow miss this teaching must be a trick of the enemy. The business of the Kingdom involves social, economic, and spiritual concerns.

How can churches in rual America become more involved in compassion ministries?

WESTLAKE: My second church had 13 people. I pastored churches of 50 and 60 and 70 in rural communities. You need to see the needs in your community and try to meet them. The people in your community need to know that you care about



We need to look at our Pentecostal heritage. The Assemblies of God began not only with unity among the races, but we also had social concern. —Miranda

their financial and physical needs. What happens in urban America also happens in rural America. See how you can minister Jesus Christ to people, reaching them with the gospel and at the same time meeting their other needs.

MCKINNEY: Those who serve in small communities and churches need to be encouraged that the Lord is expecting all of us, whether we serve 5 or 5,000, to be faithful. And when we are faithful we are successful. If we are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and quick to obey Him, then we are successful. I encourage those in rural America to be faithful to the assignment God has given them.

If the church is the primary force uniting, transforming, and reconciling communities, how can the Pentecostal church do a better job of connecting the church to the community?

MCKINNEY: One of the things that has been a blessing to us is that we have been unashamed of our Pentecostal heritage and our emphasis on the Pentecostal heritage of holiness and faithfulness to the Word of God and the emphasis on prayer. We have also been advocates for justice. That kind of voice not only speaks to social issues but also models the life of the church through the many outreach programs that we have. This labor has come to the attention of those who are in authority. Mayors, governors, presidents, etc., have visited us. We have attempted to lift up the name of Jesus and be consistent in our focus on the family and righteousness and holiness by focusing on these things and teaching consistently.

We attempt to show a better way of life. The Pentecostal church has a wonderful heritage that the world is hungry for. People need to know that marriage can still be a beautiful monogamous relationship between one man and one woman. of injustice. When there is consistent advocating and sacrificing in the spirit of love and an attempt to practice what is preached, these pastors connect with those who want to see the community as a place that is inviting and healthy and wholesome.

WESTLAKE: We do some things to invite the community, like block parties, just for a good time together. We have reached people by being involved in community activities in the neighborhood.

Is the younger generation more community minded? MIRANDA: One of the problems in today's culture is individualism. But I think the younger generation is more aware of community. The church is by definition a community. In the Book of Revelation the apostle John saw people of every tribe and nation around the throne of God. I think our younger generation is willing to promote that kind of community in our churches today.

WESTLAKE: About 75 percent of our congregation is under 45, so we have a lot of younger people involved in ministry. I also agree with Jesse Miranda. The younger generation is more community minded.

Today there is considerable controversy surrounding government funding for faith-based organizations. What has been your experience with charitable choice and the faith-based initiative?

WESTLAKE: We have received some government funding with no strings attached for going into the schools with motivational speakers. We then announce that these speakers are going to be at our church that night where they will be preaching the gospel.

We are also in the process of looking for several million



As followers of Christ, we are under His direction to bring the whole gospel to the whole man throughout the whole world. —McKinney

They need to know that children can be taught to live pure lives.

People want to see an example of real compassion in the courtroom by pastors who advocate for those who are defenseless and are sometimes the victims dollars from the government. We have a building we are going to turn into a medical clinic, a place for people to live and get vocational training, and for those with HIV and drug addictions. We are looking to the government for this funding, but we are being cautious about what strings are attached to the grant.

I have a few concerns about the faith-based initiatives, simply because it's an executive order. If Congress jumps on it,

Here are some interesting findings. First, politicians believe one way and citizens another. In churches we found pastors believing one way and the laypeople believing differently. Second, laity desires more knowledge and involvement in social and political areas and economic areas as well. They see pastors and leadership a little more cautious in those areas. Third, Hispanics focus on social and economic needs more



When people ask why the Hispanic church is growing so fast, this is what I tell them: "We are reaching out to the social concern of our people." —Miranda

they could do all kinds of things with it, so we are being cautious. However, we are not cautious about taking grants, but we are cautious about this new faith-based thing.

MIRANDA: Generally what I see as the mood from our leadership across the country is cautious optimism and fear. Many wonder if the government is trying to cleanse its hands of its responsibilities and passing it on to the church, rather than an honest attempt to assist the needy in our country and seeing the church as a good partner. We know the government has cut programs and funding considerably from what they were in the beginning. We do have an affiliate through which all our government and federal programs are received for housing and colleges and things of that nature, so that is the way we've been able to handle that.

MCKINNEY: We have received government funds for food programs, for day care, and our K-12 program, and we have not had any problems. We also received a \$3.5 million grant that the church and the city — the church invested a half million, the city a half million, and federal government \$3.5 million — used to build a 60-unit retirement center. We are breaking ground now for an additional \$6 million facility. We have not had any complications or problems with government funds to underwrite social programs.

Dr. Miranda, what were the key findings of your 3year study on Latino participation in public life? How might our readers benefit from these findings?

MIRANDA: This study is entitled "The Hispanic Church in the Public Life of America." This particular program and research is historic in a sense that it is the first national Hispanic study of evangelical and mainline churches. It also was done jointly with the Catholic community. It was not based on doctrine, but on issues that have to do with the public. We joined efforts to get a profile of the Hispanic spirituality and also the social and political implications. than political or educational, so there is a different agenda among most of the evangelical churches concerning what they see as the need of community. These would not line up with the religious right in relation to some of the agenda or some of the issues that they deal with.

An interesting finding is that Protestantism is growing considerably with Hispanics. Twenty years ago approximately 4 or 5 percent of Hispanics were Protestant. Today approximately 33 to 35 percent are Protestant, with the majority being Pentecostal or charismatic Catholics. We also found that every generation of Hispanics is becoming more and more Protestant. The first generation is about 15 to 16 percent Protestant, the second generation about 20 to 25 percent Protestant, but the third generation is 33 to 35 percent Protestant.

How can our institutions for higher learning better prepare students to serve the community through the local church?

WESTLAKE: We need to constantly emphasize the human need and let the students know that it is a part of ministry. We could possibly have them intern in churches that have holistic ministry, so students can see what is going on and how human needs are met where the gospel is being preached and people are being saved, set free, and delivered. This is like the left hand and right hand working together. Students need to see holistic ministry in action. It is one thing to sit in a Bible college or seminary and learn about holistic ministry, but it is something else to experience it firsthand. I would at least have students visit for a few days a church that is involved in holistic ministry and see what goes on in churches that are ministering in their communities and see how effective they are in reaching people for the kingdom of God.

MCKINNEY: What a joy it has been to have Bethel Seminary, which has its campus here in San Diego, and Westminster, a Presbyterian seminary in Escondido. These schools have their

students spend time here at St. Stephens. It has blessed our congregation, and I hope it has been a blessing to the students who have come. Student internships in inner-city churches should he required of all students.



To somehow miss this teaching must be a trick of the enemy. The business of the Kingdom involves social, economic, and spiritual concerns. —McKinney

As a seminary student,

I did not have the privilege of spending an internship or a practicum in a local church and I felt short-changed because of that. But most seminaries now provide that opportunity. I want to encourage seminary leaders to continue to provide those opportunities because it is vital that students get exposure to what really goes on.

MIRANDA: Two things are important in this area. One is a curriculum that brings balance between the academic and the practical aspects of theology. This is more than just content; it includes the total culture of the institution. There should be internships and hands-on experience, not just cognitive, academic. This is the purpose of our center — Urban Studies at

they are in ministry or out in the community, they will have already had a cross-cultural experience. We also need to prepare indigenous leadership for ethnic communities so we do not need to rely on cross-cultural ministry, but having trained people that represent the community in which they are ministering.

Anything else?

WESTLAKE: God is bringing the world to urban America. Here in the middle of America at a local middle school we have 32 language groups. Our purpose is to reach people in as many ways as possible and it takes meeting people's needs. Primarily, of course, seeing their hearts and lives changed by the power of

Students need to see holistic ministry in action. It is one thing to sit in a Bible college or seminary and learn about holistic ministry, but it is something else to experience it firsthand. -Westlake Jesus Christ. We agree with the apostle Paul that we need to become all things to all men, to reach them in any way we possibly can because the

Vanguard University - to involve students already in ministries with the poor and the needy in the community, and not just weekend mission trips. These mission trips impact students and some of them remember it for life. But imagine if this would be a more systematic, comprehensive type of ministry that students would do in their communities. It would not just be something for them to remember, but would form their philosophy of ministry in the future, be they laity and professional workers or ministers preaching behind a pulpit.

Second, there needs to be an aggressive act on the part of seminaries and other church institutions to bring in ethnic minorities so their school would mirror the ethnic makeup of the city in which the school is located. This is important. At present, only 3 or 4 percent of seminary students are minorities. Students need to sit alongside an ethnic person and become friends with someone of another ethnic background. Then when

Bible says Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost, and He's passed that on to us. That's our commission. The bottom line for the church is still go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. If that means paying the rent or fixing a car to reach that person, we will do whatever we can to preach the good news of Jesus Christ.

MCKINNEY: Our challenge today is to continue to have a high view of Scripture and to proclaim the gospel so its transforming power will be realized in our turbulent and uncertain times.

MIRANDA: We must continue in our Pentecostal heritage as it relates to our relationship and responsibility to the social community. When the church builds the community from the inside out, it brings a spiritual transformation that results in social transformation.





starting compassion ministry in your congegation

ou believe God desires to restore broken lives and rebuild troubled neighborhoods through outreaches that blend evangelism and relief services. You desire your church to become a vessel for the healing, transforming presence of Christ in your community. But, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the needs and discouraged by the obstacles to mobilizing the church for ministry. Questions arise: What kind of ministry

should we do? Will the congregation support it? Where can we get funding and staff? How do we get started? What steps will take us to the next level?

Effective outreach takes vision, purpose, and planning. *Vision* is the conviction that God is calling the church in a particular direction. *Purpose* unifies the congregation around the goals of the Kingdom. *Planning* lays out the steps to fulfill the vision.

BY HEIDI ROLLAND UNRUH AND PHILIP N. OLSON How does a church pursue these essential ingredients? No church will travel the same path to effective local outreach. Each congregation starts in a different place, has a unique makeup and character, and ministers to a particular community context. While there are no simple 1-2-3 steps to compassion ministry, there are three stages that most churches experience along the way and each stage includes five action points. Some points under each phase may follow in sequence; others may develop simultaneously.

As you read the following, ask yourself: Where is my church in this process? Where do our strengths and weaknesses lie? This will point to what your next steps should be.

STAGE 1: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Think of your church as a garden (see 1 Corinthians 3). You must carefully prepare the soil for the seeds. In the same way, ministries of mercy will only spring up if the church is prepared. Faced with a compelling need, the first impulse of many churches is to launch a program. But programs, if disconnected from the church's larger purpose, can lose their spiritual center and drift toward secularization.

Compassion ministries that are not grounded in a supportive, healthy congregation are less likely to be effective and self-sustaining. So the first critical stage is to take a step backward from the *task* of developing social ministries to focus on the church's *identity* as a body of believers called to follow Christ's example of service and to share God's love with the world. A church's ministry should flow from the center of its faith. Strengthen your church's commitment to outreach by building ministry on the foundation of mature leadership, lovloving church relationships, spiritual vitality, and familiarity with the community's needs and assets.

Prepare the leadership team.

The most fertile seedbed for ministry is a team of clergy and lay leaders who share spiritual passion, a common commitment to and theological framework for local mission, and positive working relationships. C. Gene Wilkes writes in *Jesus on*

SELF-STUDY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After gathering information on your congregation, use the following questions to guide your reflection as part of the vision discernment process:

- 1. HOW READY IS YOUR CHURCH FOR LOCAL MISSION?
 - Identify the areas where growth is most needed, including: • *theology* for mission
 - *spiritual passion* animating mission
 - commitment to mission
 - *amount* of outreach mission
 - \bullet type of outreach
 - integration of spiritual and social ministry within outreach
 - balance of outreach with internal congregational nurture
 - willingness to embrace a major *challenge*
- 2. HOW CAN YOUR OUTREACH MISSION BUILD ON YOUR CHURCH'S IDENTITY AND HISTORY? How does your answer to the question, "Who are we?" help you answer the question, "What kind of ministry should we do?" Reflect on your church's unique attributes and history. What aspects of your identity may provide the foundation for a new ministry direction? What ministry doors have opened and closed; what problems related to ministry have you encountered in the past; where have you experienced success?
- 3. WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES FOR COMPASSION MINISTRY? Most church characteristics can be either an asset and/or an obstacle. For example, a large building opens up space for ministry programs, but building

maintenance can siphon off funds and energy. What forms of ministry might capitalize on the ministry strengths of your congregation? What steps might be needed to strengthen critical areas of weakness?

- 4. ARE THERE AREAS OF CONFLICT OR CONFUSION RELATED TO MINISTRY? Sometimes church leaders have one set of beliefs and priorities, while the congregation is on another track. Sometimes different groups within the church pull in different directions. Church members may have only a vague sense of what the church's mission is and why they should support it. This may call for further teaching and training, or for a ministry demonstration project to unite the church body.
- 5. WHAT MIGHT HOLD BACK THE CHURCH'S GROWTH IN LOCAL MISSION? Anticipate barriers to change within the congregation. (See sidebar "Obstacles to Ministry Development," page 73.) What individuals or groups in the congregation will be most affected by a new ministry direction? Whose support is critical for change to take root?
- 6. WHAT STEPS CAN THE CHURCH TAKE TO HELP IT MOVE FORWARD IN MISSION? Consider what your church could do to strengthen its foundations for vibrant, sustainable ministry. Look particularly at the church's leadership, organization, discipleship, and internal caring. List specific steps that the church might take in each area to prepare the congregation for mission.

Adapted from **RONALD J. SIDER, PHILIP N. OLSON, AND HEIDI ROLLAND UNRUH**, Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community With Good News and Good Works (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 255–257. *Leadership*: "Leadership begins when a God-revealed mission captures a person." Help church leaders become "captured" through teaching, mentoring, role modeling, and exposure to other model ministries. Work through any conflicts among the leadership team related to mission. Prayerfully recruit and nurture people who can lead new efforts.

Know your congregation.

What your church *does* in ministry should grow out of who you *are*, taking into account your unique identity, history, and leanings. A congregational self-study can assess current programs and explore your church's strengths and weaknesses for a new venture. A study also takes the pulse of your church's spiritual maturity, commitment to outreach, and openness to change, which can help pinpoint training needs. Organize a task group to

A major hurdle to overcome in many churches is the dominant understanding that the church exists to serve the needs of its membership.

gather information about the congregation in areas pertaining to identity, history, membership, theology, programming, leadership, organization, resources, spiritual life, relationships, and partnerships. Study methods include interviews, focus group discussions, and/or a survey. (A sample survey is posted in the downloadable tools section of www.network935.org. Also, see sidebar "Self-Study Reflection Questions.")

Prepare the congregation.

Not everyone in the congregation may be ready to embrace the vision for outreach. Lay the groundwork with training that explains the theological basis for evangelism and social compassion. This can include sermons, Sunday School classes, training, and field trips that expose members to exciting opportunities. Build the congregation's spiritual vitality and relational health.

Assess the community context.

Effective ministry depends on accurate information about the context for ministry. A community assessment brings into focus the problem areas that need to be transformed, as well as the ways God is already at work in the community. The first step is to define your community — whether a specific neighborhood, an ethnic group, or a special-needs population. Become familiar with its demographics, culture, systems, assets, and needs. Employ walking and driving tours, census

TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY STUDY

Methods you can use to get to know your community in preparation for ministry:

CENSUS DATA and other published reports: The census (available on the Internet, http://www.census.gov) provides a wealth of demographic information and tracks changing trends. Other kinds of studies of your community may also be available from a local university, school board, chamber of commerce, or another church.

MAPS: Get or make a detailed map of your community. Fill in symbols for the key components of community life: owner-occupied, rental, and abandoned buildings, businesses, schools, non-profit institutions, government agencies (post office, police station, welfare office), youth-oriented places and hang-out spots, churches, etc. Color-code the symbols to indicate which represent key assets, needs, and potential partners.

SURVEYS: Use written or oral questionnaires and ask residents to identify local needs, issues, and assets. Surveys are best conducted door-to-door by church members. If church members are not from the community, try to pair each member on the survey team with a local resident who knows the people in the neighborhood.

INTERVIEWS: Interview leaders and insiders in the community (elected officials, business leaders, other pastors, longtime residents). Ask about their experiences and perceptions of the community, as well as their perceptions of your church. Ask how churches could contribute to the community's well-being.

COMMUNITY INFORMANT PANEL: Invite a selection of experts on the community — school principal, city council representative, police officer, business leader, and neighborhood association representative — to meet at the church. Have each person give a brief presentation on the community and answer questions. Include church members who live or work in the community, particularly in service positions such as health-care providers or teachers.

FOCUS GROUPS: Gather a group of community residents to share their insights. Groups can either reflect the diversity of the community or share a common key characteristic (such as seniors, or parents of teenagers). Start by asking broad questions about people's opinions and observations of community life. As your ministry vision narrows, focus groups can also target specific questions (such as what kinds of ministries for seniors are needed, or why residents think so many local teens are becoming pregnant).

OBSERVATION: Conduct visual surveys by foot and by car ("windshield surveys"). Shop, eat, and take public transportation in the community; visit public spaces like parks, libraries, and welfare offices; attend public events such as a Little League game or a town meeting; volunteer for local nonprofits.

Adapted from **RONALD J. SIDER, PHILIP N. OLSON, AND HEIDI ROLLAND UNRUH**, Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community With Good News and Good Works (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 263.



WHAT CAN YOUR CHURCH DO?

HERE ARE SEVERAL IDEAS YOUR CHURCH COULD USE TO REACH YOUR COMMUNITY:

- job training
- baby-sitting service for single parents
- friendship evangelism in a public housing development
- refugee resettlement assistance
- adopting a public school with tutoring and after-school care
- Saturday kids clubs
- community organizing to address neighborhood issues
- mentoring children of prisoners
- small business incubator
- housing rehab with Habitat for Humanity
- door-to-door evangelism and home Bible studies
- divorce recovery services
- parish social worker or nurse sponsored by a church coalition
- soup kitchen or food pantry
- financial counseling
- sharing the gospel through the arts
- home services for persons with disabilities
- mentoring and advocacy for women on welfare
- kindness evangelism
- family counseling and parenting seminars
- conflict resolution training and mediation
- car repair service for low-income families
- support groups for addictions or abuse
- summer revival services
- educating and lobbying about environmental issues
- GED, ESL, or literacy tutoring
- shelter or transitional housing for homeless persons
- youth sports league
- fitness and nutrition program

The possibilities are endless.

—Adapted from Connect the Dots Workbook: Assess Your Church and Community Context To Develop a Plan for Holistic Ministry, by Heidi Unruh with Ronald J. Sider and Philip N. Olson (2002). data, door-to-door surveys, interviews, and focus groups. (See sidebar "Tools for Community Study," page 67.) By networking with other community agencies and leaders, you prevent redundancy of services, build bridges of understanding and respect, and plant the seeds for partnerships.

Nurture a commitment to outreach.

A major hurdle to overcome in many churches is the dominant understanding that the church exists to serve the needs of its membership. Leaders must guide the transformation toward becoming a mission-oriented church. This means cultivating a commitment to reaching out beyond the walls of the church as a central expression of the congregation's faith and worship. Provide training and activities to help overcome barriers of race, class, and ability that may separate your congregation from the community.

STAGE 2: UNLEASHING THE VISION

A vision is a portrait of the future that your church is called to help bring about through the power of the Spirit. In this stage the church discerns a specific vision for compassion ministry and organizes to achieve it. This vision builds on your congregational identity to respond to the needs and opportunities in your community context, out of a desire to share the love of God in word and deed. Once your church has a Spirit-anointed focus of ministry, you can then form a strategic plan to take action.

Seek God's vision for ministry.

Generate a list of ideas for potential ministries. (See sidebar, "What Can Your Church Do?") Is there a particular area your church feels drawn to address — inadequate housing, at-risk youth, families on welfare, or immigrants? Where are the gaps? What doors seem open at this time? Narrow your focus to one or two areas. Develop a vision statement that identifies specific goals for ministries the church will develop over the next few years. (See sidebar "Tips for Developing a Vision Statement.") Decide whether this vision calls for starting a new program, revising an existing church program, or partnering with the program of another church or agency.

Share the vision with the congregation.

Once a direction has been discerned, help the congregation foster ownership of the vision. Communicate the vision consistently, clearly, and creatively. Ways of doing this include: a *mission statement* which encapsulates the vision; a *logo* that captures the essence of your mission; *special events* such as a worship celebration, missions conference, retreat, or concert focused on outreach; *educational programs* such as a Sunday School series on issues your church plans to address; and *special guests* from the community or from other ministry models who can share their story. For example, if your church feels led to address housing needs, plan a Habitat for Humanity work weekend or a tour of homeless shelters.

Organize for ministry.

Develop a detailed plan (services or activities the ministry will entail, resources and partners it will require, how it will be organized and led) and the steps needed to make it happen (who will follow through on the proposal, when it should start, how other church staff or systems will be affected). Decide whether it will be administered directly by the church or a separate incorporated nonprofit. Learn from best practices to guide your planning and avoid reinventing the wheel. In addition, assess whether current church structures help or hinder the ministry plan.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement identifies specific goals for ministries the church will develop over the next few years. Factors to consider in the process of vision discernment include:

THE CHURCH'S MISSION GOALS. The mission statement clarifies the church's core purposes. Which ministries will help the church fulfill these goals?

THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, as shown in the community assessment. Which concerns are the most pressing or the most neglected? Which present openings for building relationships and faith-sharing? Where can your church have the most strategic impact?

THE SKILLS, INTERESTS, RESOURCES, AND EXPERI-ENCES OF THE CONGREGATION FOR MINISTRY, as revealed by the congregational self-study. What possibilities spark the most excitement in members of the team and the congregation?

EXISTING CHURCH OUTREACH MINISTRIES. Are these programs holistic — do they address both social and spiritual needs? Are they consistent with the mission statement and evolving ministry vision? Do they appear to be a wise investment of resources? Are people motivated to continue their involvement? Discern whether your vision is best expressed by planting new ministries or revising and expanding existing programs.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES, including potential partners (such as nonprofits or other churches). Are there ministries already in the community that you could come alongside? Could they serve as your ministry mentors?

RISKS AND REWARDS OF MINISTRY OPTIONS. New ventures should stretch the congregation's faith, without pushing the church beyond what it is ready to handle.

THE CONGREGATION'S OWN NEEDS. Consider areas where the needs of the church and the community overlap, e.g. family counseling or day care.

THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Allow God to guide you through times of corporate and individual prayer and devotions. What seems so impossible that it just might be a God-thing?

The vision discernment team may start with either the "who" or the "what" of ministry. You may begin with a desire to serve seniors, for example, and then explore what programs would best meet their needs. Or the team may be drawn to a certain kind of ministry, such as mentoring, and then look for ways to connect this service with those who need it most. In examining how to meet a need, consider various angles of engagement: relief, community development, and advocacy.

The process of discernment culminates in the writing of a *vision statement*. The vision statement indicates the main focus of outreach (i.e. serving single moms or improving education), and points to specific ministries the church can do to address this area of concern in a holistic way. The vision statement describes in broad strokes:

- Who does the church want to reach?
- What will the ministry/ministries to serve them look like?
- *How* will the ministry vision integrate evangelism and social compassion?
- *Why* is this ministry vision important to the congregation's mission at this time?
- *How* does this vision for outreach intersect with other areas of church life? (For example, a program that serves youth may attract new participants to the youth group.)

After the vision discernment team drafts the vision statement, it can be presented to the governing body of the church or to the whole congregation for further feedback, refinement, and confirmation.

—Adapted from *The Holistic Ministry Vision Project User's Guide*, by Heidi Unruh with Ronald J. Sider and Philip N. Olson (2002).
Gather resources and partners.

Your self-study should identify the resources the church has to offer to a program — funds, spaces, personnel (staff and volunteers), and any special equipment you might need; also what can be used from outside sources. Hiring the services of a professional grant writer and fund-raiser may be a good investment. Consider possibilities such as internships or shared staff. Create systems for recruiting and supervising volunteers. Develop relationships with other groups who share common goals, as identified by the community assessment. Who is already doing good work in the community, and how might you collaborate?

Rally the congregation.

Recruit and equip church members to connect to the outreach plan in practical ways. Emphasize that each member is called and gifted for ministry. Blend statistics, stories, Scriptures, principles, and appeals that capture members' hearts and move them to action. A spiritual gifts inventory is an essential tool in awakening the ministry potential of your congregation. Personally invite members to participate in ways appropriate to their gifts, interests, and ministry and life experiences. Offer clear volunteer job descriptions. Training can help volunteers overcome hurdles of inertia, inexperience, and insecurity. Provide evangelism training that prepares volunteers to share their faith with confidence.

STAGE 3: SUSTAINING THE VISION

Even after a ministry program is under way, the task of mission is not complete. A ministry vision requires effort to be sustained, lest it become a passing fad in the life of the church. God's mission always beckons a church, in the words of Aslan in the last book of C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, to advance "further up and further in." Just as our individual calling to be

OBSTACLES TO MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

Reflect on what holds your church back from deepening its commitment to compassion ministry. Which of the following sound familiar? Don't dwell on these obstacles, but use the knowledge to strategize how to prepare your congregation for ministry.

- **OVERCOMMITMENT:** "Everyone's already too busy. There's no way we could do more."
- LEADERSHIP: "It's not a high priority on our pastor's to-do list."
- **CONFLICTS:** "Every time someone brings up community outreach, it stirs up trouble in the congregation. We just can't agree on what to do or how to do it."
- □ INTERNAL NEEDS: "We've got lots of problems in our congregation that need attention before we can reach others."
- EXTERNAL RESISTANCE: "People in our church's neighborhood will object if we use the building for service ministry."
- **FAMILY TIES:** "We can't seem to make new people really feel at home in our church."
- **TIMIDITY:** "Most people in our church don't feel comfortable sharing their faith."
- **THEOLOGY:** "We don't believe it's the church's job to do social work."
- □ **IMMATURITY:** "Our people aren't ready to do ministry they're still learning the spiritual basics."
- □ **FINANCES:** "Within two years we will have paid off our debts on our new facility. Then we're going to get serious about outreach ministry."
- **GIVING:** "We already commit X percent of our church budget to missions. How can we expect our congregation to give any more to support new programs?"
- **WORSHIP:** "There's nothing about our services that would attract and keep unchurched people."
- **DOUBT:** "Our congregation is so small, our budget so limited. How could we do anything that would make a difference?"

- **FAMILIARITY:** "We don't really want the church to change. We like everything cozy and comfortable."
- □ SECURITY: "Too risky! What if people damage our property, disrupt services, take advantage of us?"
- □ **FAR-SIGHTEDNESS:** "We're great at supporting missions overseas, but we ignore our own backyard."
- □ ILL-EQUIPPED: "Our members aren't educated about social concerns or trained to share the gospel."
- □ **ISOLATION:** "Our congregation is so different from the people in the community. We don't know how to build bridges from our church to the neighborhood."
- □ **VISION:** "We don't have a sense that God is leading us to do anything specific. We just respond to crises or opportunities as they come up."
- **DYSFUNCTION:** "We do have a missions committee, but it's not very active right now."
- **EXPECTATIONS:** "We have an annual food drive, and we invite our unsaved friends and family to church. Isn't that enough?"
- **FEAR:** "Most of us feel anxious about getting involved. We'd rather let a few gifted people do ministry for the rest of us."
- **BUREAUCRACY:** "We had a ministry plan in the works but it was never approved by church council."
- **PREJUDICE:** "Why should we put ourselves out for those people? They'll probably never change and besides, they'll never join our church."
- **DISCOURAGEMENT:** "We've already tried and failed. Nothing seems to work for us."

Adapted from Connect the Dots Workbook: Assess Your Church and Community Context To Develop a Plan for Holistic Ministry, by Heidi Unruh with Ronald J. Sider and Philip N. Olson (2002), and from James Krabill, Does Your Church 'Smell' Like Mission? (Elkhart: Mennonite Board of Missions, 2001), 4,5.



REACHING THE UNWANTED

RESCUE ATLANTA CHURCH ATLANTA, GEORGIA



The names of many inner-city communities contain a certain irony. For example, Summerhill in Atlanta, Georgia, is no exception. If the conjured image is a grassy knoll bathed in sunshine, the stark rows of apartments quickly explode that myth. Summerhill has the second-highest level of crime of any housing project in Atlanta, and lies in Zone 3, the worst

MEL ROLLS

ing project in Atlanta, and lies in Zone 3, the wors zone in the police department's districting plan.

Yet at Summerhill's perimeter, Rescue Atlanta Church stands as a spiritual beacon. Pastor Mel Rolls and his wife, Teresa, have spent 14 years building relational bridges with people whom society has written off — not just struggling families from Summerhill's crowded housing, but many who call the area's alleys and sidewalks home.

"We're reaching the people no one else wants," Rolls says. "Ninety-five percent of our congregation are homeless."

Rolls served on church staffs in the late 70s and through the 80s while he pursued inner-city outreach. He soon discovered that traditional churches were not prepared to disciple the people he was salvaging off the streets. Recognizing the need for a church designed to meet this need, Rolls realized God was leading him to establish such a congregation.

Rescue Atlanta Church was born.

Ministry at Rescue Atlanta starts early every Sunday. Rolls is there at 5 a.m. Volunteers from four other churches are there by 6 a.m. For an hour and a half, they labor over preparations for a steaming breakfast. By 8 a.m., the people who have lined up to be served are filing in to take a seat. Some 800-900 meals later, with a solid presentation of the gospel thrown in, Sunday morning service is over and clean-up crews are in full swing. There is no evening service.

"Some people ask us why we don't have a Sunday night service," Rolls says. "The Sunday morning outreach from start to finish takes 9 hours. There's really no way to do that twice. Second, it just makes sense in this neighborhood not to have people out at night."

Even the daytime is not immune to risk.

"We had a tent outreach going on for the neighborhood

kids once," Rolls says. "A gunfight started nearby. Helicopters were circling overhead. The kids were outside trying to see what was going on, and I had to round them up and remind them this wasn't television."

The unexpected is always expected here. Besides the occasional interruption of neighborhood gunshots, there is no telling when a disturbed person might try to disrupt a service or a drug addict might have a seizure and require a call to the EMTs. But Rolls and his staff — people largely from the ranks of the homeless and addicted who have been saved at Rescue Atlanta — keep plugging into Summerhill's needs with the power of the gospel. Besides the feeding outreach, the church offers clean showers, personal counseling, and a referral service to halfway houses.

"We also have ministry teams come in from churches across the country," Rolls says. "Our goal is simply to connect them with the people in need in this community and get them started. We put together the skeleton of an outreach and let them put the meat on it. Young people come and serve here and get firsthand exposure to needs they've never encountered before."

After 14 years, Rescue Atlanta has grown to about 400 in attendance. But Rolls points out that it is a cyclical congregation. People come and go all the time. He doesn't mind.

"I was visiting a hospital just recently," he says. "A man came up to me. 'Pastor Mel,' he said, 'I'm so sorry I haven't been to church lately.' He'd gotten his life together, moved out to another part of the city, and found a full-time job and another church. He just wanted to thank me."

For Rolls, the continuing ministry of Rescue Atlanta is a continuing exercise of faith. Working marathon hours every week, he is unable to travel to raise funds. His staff is largely comprised of volunteers from the surrounding communities. Burnout has been a challenge as some staff members have married and started families and decided that small children and the inner city are not a good combination. But the church moves ahead one day at a time.

This coming Sunday it will still be dark when Rolls unlocks the doors. Sunlight will just begin to bounce between apartment windows as spiritually and physically hungry people line up for breakfast. Another day will dawn over a community fraught with every societal ill imaginable. And, under the Holy Spirit's anointing, more souls in Atlanta will be rescued.

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holy leads us into a lifelong journey of sanctification, the church's call to mission is a transformational process as God matures, refines, and prunes His people for His purposes.

Address fears and conflicts.

Visionary leaders will encounter resistance to change. Trying something new will generate anxiety and dissent. Help the church assess the costs and benefits. Working to maintain a

Compassion ministries that are not grounded in a supportive, healthy congregation are concerning immigration policy. Also continue to less likely to be effective and self-sustaining.

healthy balance between outreach and worship, discipleship, and fellowship can reduce strife. Respond to conflicts and concerns in constructive ways, using the tensions to help the church reassess priorities and paradigms. We recommend the book by Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey, which outlines in more detail the process of reorienting a congregation toward mission. (See sidebar "Obstacles to Ministry Development," page 71.)

Build ongoing accountability.

Develop criteria for assessing efforts. Is the ministry effective in achieving goals? Are resources being used efficiently? Are relationships being cultivated between volunteers and those receiving services? Are people coming to new or renewed faith? With feedback from the congregation, the community, and the mentors, evaluate whether ministries are holistic, effective, and faithful to your calling. Recognize the good work done in Jesus' name by your congregation (2 Corinthians 9:12). Plan an annual worship service that glorifies God for the fruit of your church's compassion ministry.

Develop new leaders.

Avoid burnout by identifying and training new leaders. Invest in the next generation by working with youth to instill a mission-focused mindset. Cultivate relationships with current and potential board members.

Maintain a fresh vision.

Continually adapt priorities and projects in light of the changing congregational and community context, while affirming your core mission. Help those involved connect their service with their faith by providing opportunities for spiritual reflection

and retreat. Continue to submerge ministries in prayer and seek the ongoing anointing of the Holy Spirit. Prevent an erosion of vision by building in requirements that board members and key staff embrace your church's mission.

Keep growing.

Look for ways to take your ministry to the next level. If your church sponsors a soup kitchen, perhaps this can evolve into

> a cooking school that prepares people for culinary jobs. A tutoring program may lead to a partnership with the local public school. Ministry to immigrants may spark a letter-writing campaign grow in your relational and spiritual depth. Expand opportunities for those served to encounter God's love; for example, Bible studies, prayer circles, and friendship evangelism.

Connect with other churches or parachurch agencies with a compatible vision that can provide your church with counsel, expertise, and encouragement.

CONCLUSION

Start small, if need be, but get started. Don't put ministry on hold until the congregation fully embraces the vision. If you want to light a fire in the congregation, "Action is oxygen," advises one pastor. Get prayed up and then get going. In the process your congregation might just bring a life-giving word or touch to someone who needs to experience the mercy of God. In Christ, every church is ordained to "bear fruit ... that will last" (John 15:16). Let this promise sustain your congregation in its steps on the journey to compassion ministry.



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LET MY DASTORS Building and Equipping Churches for Compassion Ministries

pastor friend had just finished a huge, multiyear building campaign that had been the goal line of his long term in one church. He was older, wiser, and well respected.

Several of us asked, "Now that the building is completed, are you really enjoying your church?"

BY BRAD SMITH

He responded, "Nope. It seems the bigger we get, the better our programs become, the less I enjoy it. Sometimes I wonder what type of monster I've created. People come into the building on Sunday morning always wanting a better show: 'Make me laugh'; 'Make me cry'; 'Give me a nugget of biblical teaching to make me feel like I'm growing.' I used to have a congregation. Now I have consumers — and they want to consume only the best religious goods and services. My staff fights for airtime to announce their programs. I feel like they wind me up

After I have studied hundreds of effective equipping churches, three principles emerged in every one that was equipping and deploying people well into compassion-type ministries.

compassion ministries can be their secret weapon to take the discipleship war into the 24/7 lives of the people in the church and battle *outside of church*, the consumeristic attitudes people are bringing *into the church* and their approach to compassion ministries is suddenly different. Before, it was an add-on program. Now, it fuels a churchwide transition to an equipping culture and equipping systems. These equipping systems are not used just to close the back door of new visitors coming and going; not just to fill up children's classes with teachers; but

to make disciples.

A full-scale war on consumerism through compassion ministries must involve more than sermons on spiritual gifts and ministry fairs. Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of

and send me out with advertisements. We have the equivalent of a small army in small groups, but they are hanging around in huddles and never dispersing. We gave them some full-color, 13-week small-group curriculum on how to serve in the community. They enjoyed it so much they couldn't wait to stay in their group and start the next study. We hire staff to equip people to do more of the ministry and it only increases their expectation that the staff will do it for them."

He continued, "I've got books on the purpose-driven church, the small-group church, 10 keys to a healthy church, and the five building blocks to the evangelistic church. What I need is the antidote to the consumer church. We have lost the soul of what makes a great church."

This pastor's church had vision and leadership, but a hidden pollution was destroying its health. He preached on service, sacrifice, and surrender every Sunday, sometimes in tears. But his 1-hour-a-week influence in the service wasn't enough to turn the tide of the other 167 hours in which his people were bombarded with consumeristic messages in the culture. In truth, any church that is built around a geographically and time-centered ministry focused on Sunday morning activities in the church building faces the same overwhelming odds.

Many people look at compassion ministries as an important *option* their church can use to become better known in their city; to obey Christ's commands to feed the poor, clothe the naked, and visit the imprisoned; and to see significant transformation in the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of people's lives in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Yet, for most churches, as long as compassion ministries are seen as benefiting those out there, it will always be the place where those few wide-eyed people in the church find happiness, but something from which the church can always disconnect.

Yet, when the senior pastor and church leaders realize that

sermons on the topic of discovering spiritual gifts and using them to serve. Yet, most churches find that at best only about 10 percent of those hearing the sermon actually applied it by getting more involved in volunteer service.

The first reaction was for pastors to blame themselves. Somehow the sermon was not good enough to stir the other 90 percent to action. More sermons were added from Ephesians 4, Romans 12, or 1 Corinthians 12. Recently, churches have used elaborate ministry fairs to respond to a pulpit invitation to serve. These fairs often have a 50 percent sign-up rate the day of the sermon, but the results over the long term show only 10 percent sustained any difference in their lifestyle. Sunday morning events cannot be the sole driver to create a seven-day-a-week, out-in-the-community church.

The movement of churches toward a greater emphasis on equipping and compassion ministries has sometimes been called lay empowerment — releasing laypeople from feeling inadequate and unprepared. In reality, it may be as much about clergy empowerment — releasing clergy from their own unrealistic expectations and the impossible expectations their church has for them.

After I have studied hundreds of effective equipping churches, three principles emerged in every one that was equipping and deploying people well into compassion-type ministries.

VISIBLE SUPPORT OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SERVE

The sermon reminds people that maturity does not happen without works of service. These include sermon series on calling, gifts, and service. It becomes obvious to anyone attending sermons even sporadically that spiritual maturity and effective discipleship require not just attending on Sunday, but also doing works of service throughout the week.

There is also an intentional effort to build an internal culture where the normal expectation of church members is service. Church leaders assess what they are doing that might send a mixed message allowing apathy; then, they live out by personal example what service in the community looks like. They point out people who are serving as models of what a mature Christian looks like through sermon illustrations, stories in church newsletters, and examples in the new members classes.

A church in Little Rock sent out a Christmas card that had the church staff wearing sports fan clothing waving banners with the caption, "We are cheering as you do the work of the ministry." A church in Los Angeles has commissioning services not just for world missionaries, but also for teachers, policemen, farmers, and homemakers as they lay symbolic instruments of their work at the front of the church and are sent out as missionaries in their workplaces. Other churches make sure that any new members are greeted, visited, and oriented not by the pastor, but by nonordained leaders. When these greeters for new members are loyal to the pastor and articulate the vision and mission of the church, they send a loud, clear signal to incoming members that this is a church where the pastor delegates and does not control authority.

A SEAMLESS SYSTEM THAT MOVES PEOPLE INTO SERVICE

Many occupations are better trained in systems than pastors. Farmers understand the key to a successful crop is not just planting or harvesting, but it involves a full system of soil preparation, seed selection, pest management, environmental control, and after-harvest distribution contracts that make up a full system called farming. Farmers understand that it is better to do a C job on all the parts rather than an A-plus job on some and skip others. It is the seamless system that creates success, not stellar performance on a few of the parts.

The same is true for the equipping church. The system has some standard parts, none of which can be skipped. Rick Warren has used a baseball diamond in his book *The Purpose*

WHERE IS COMPASSION ALREADY PRESENT IN YOUR CHURCH?

Many people who are currently involved in compassion ministries as individuals or families don't always see it as part of their church. Simply surveying the congregation to learn where they are already serving apart from formal church programs often provides the answer for where the church should focus its next church-sponsored compassion ministry.

An assessment of what is already happening in your church can be organized to discern God's preceding patterns by using the following chart:

WHO ARE OUR PEOPLE SERVING?

poor; immigrants/refugees; handicapped; prisoners; elderly; young; other_____

WHAT AND HOW ARE WE SERVING?

SUBJECT/SCOPE	RELIEF (give a man a fish)	TRAINING (teach a man how to fish)	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (help them build a fishing enterprise)	SOCIAL JUSTICE (change the ownership and zoning of the lake)
HOUSING				
FEEDING				
EDUCATION				
HEALTH				
ECONOMIC				
CRIME/PRISON				
TRANSPORTATION				
FAMILY				
RECONCILIATION				
ENVIRONMENT/BEAUTY				
SPIRITUAL/EMOTIONAL				

Driven Church to illustrate the concept of an equipping system with connected base paths and milestones at each base. Underneath that simple communication framework are the components that make it work:

Assimilation. This process helps visitors learn about the church and decide to join. This can be as simple as an effort to recognize and greet new faces — all the way to Web-based target marketing, special parking places, Sunday morning

receptions, visitation teams, introductory videos, and assigned assimilators.

Biblical foundations. New members are taught concepts of gifts, calling, and service. Early on people began to realize that the concept of volunteer — "I can choose to serve" — is a foreign concept to Scripture. We are made to serve. Other foundational concepts from Romans **Matching and placement.** This process connects between the individual gifts and calling and the place where they are exploring the possibility to serve. This is the hardest part of the system to build. In smaller churches, the handoff between the person guiding the gift discovery and the leader of the ministry they have selected is a quick phone call or handshake in the parking lot. In larger churches, the name and choice go into a database. Each ministry area has a

For most churches, as long as compassion ministries are seen as benefiting those out there, it will always be the place where those few wide-eyed people in the church find happiness, but something from which the church can always disconnect.

12:3–8; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Corinth-ians 12; James 1:22–27 are taught along with the doctrines of discipleship and growth and the core principles and programs of the church.

Discovery. People learn about their spiritual gifts and calling. Since this may be repeated at different levels over the years, this initial class on gifts may focus mostly on areas of passion in service. The key is not which assessment tool is used, but the small group or relational context in which discovery takes place. Gifts are taught not from an "It is all about my fulfillment and I don't do windows" mindset; but from an "It is about God's church and how God has given me abilities that were designed to serve others."



designated person called a ministry connector (rarely the director of that ministry) responsible to call any new people who have expressed interest in their ministry. The ministry connector is also responsible for ongoing training and followup of people in that area of ministry and often has quarterly meetings with the rest of the connectors.

Coaching and recognition. People are discipled best as they serve, not as they sit in a classroom. Yet, time must be made for training and for reflection. Also, God has built a need for appreciation in people. And it works wonders to have regular ways for leaders to express it.

Churches that are organized around small groups have found this step as a key antidote to the inward and personal needs focus that often destroys the health of small groups. When reflection on and preparation for compassion ministry becomes a central purpose of the small group, it becomes a powerful ongoing discipleship center that propels Bible study and fellowship into sacrificial, life-changing service. Yet, small groups don't often look beyond their own needs without the intentional leadership training and accountability that an equipping system provides.

Deployment and transformation. Since many people seem to want to be matched and placed the first time inside the church, there needs to be an intentional part of the process to connect them to opportunities outside the church. This involves a team constantly building relationships with agencies in the community and creating places for people to serve in the community and workplace.

This sixth step is the hinge that keeps the equipping system from becoming yet another way for a church to provide more religious goods and services to religious consumers. Four to five



years after building a churchwide equipping system, there are often multiple connection points between the church and the community. As each new and existing member is interviewed regularly, the church will find many are being called to compassion ministries outside the church. If the equipping system is working well, at the end of the interview the member is not given a phone number and an address, but the name of a church member who is already serving in a compassion ministry who will call him and drive with him to the first meeting. When they arrive they will find a compassion ministry that is user friendly for volunteers who walk in already knowing their gifts and calling. Training and placement are intentional. Discipleship reflection is the norm. Expectations and roles are clear.

However, if that scenario is 4 to 5 years into the process, how do you start the deployment process, especially if you are a smaller church? If you have 15 people serving in 15 different compassion ministries, you will lose much of the discipleship opportunities for them to reflect on their service together, and the impact of their work is so dispersed that it will do little to stir others in the congregation to follow. The best way to start is often to choose a church-sponsored target ministry — recognizing that you are asking many people to sacrifice their individual gifts and calling for a season to support the church's focused calling on a limited number of compassion ministries.

Choosing a focused target ministry in the early stages of a church's involvement in compassion ministry is often best done by a task force that looks for eight issues:

(1) Is this something that beginners in compassion ministry can pick up quickly? Tutoring young children is an easy-entry ministry. Job training for adults inside a maximum security prison is not.

(2) Is this something that can involve large numbers of people without specialized skills? A used furniture warehouse needs many diverse and general gifts. A medical clinic needs fewer, highly specialized gifts.

(3) Does the location make sense for our church? In

many cities, economically depressed areas have large, aging apartment complexes. In the early stages, a closer location for targeted compassion ministry will often mean greater participation by members of your church.

(4) Is this someplace where God has already raised up leaders in our church with cross-cultural passion, relationships, and experience? The trust-building phase of

will call him and drive with him to the first meeting. When they arrive they will find a compassion ministry that is user friendly for volunteers who walk in already knowing their gifts and calling. Training and placement are intentional. Discipleship reflection is the norm. Expectations and roles are clear. However, if that scenario is 4 to 5 years into the process, how do you start the deployment process, especially if you are a smaller church? If you have 15 people serving in 15 different compassion ministries, you will lose much of the discipleship

working cross culturally often takes a minimum of 5 years to get to the point that joint projects can be conceived. Many recipients of compassion ministry have already seen a parade of well-meaning people who offer assistance without recognizing the worth, gifts, and potential of the receiver. Trust is built when people don't just add resources, but also help people use the gifts, vision, and resources they already possess. Look for where God has preceded you with cross-cultural trust relationships involving people in your church of whom you may not be aware. Spend time learning the lessons of both compassion and empowerment ministry from their example. Don't underestimate the direction God provides through one or two passionate and faithful individuals to whom God has given a clear mantle for compassion ministry.

(5) Is the need we are addressing something where we can make a discernable difference? Tackling the crime statistics of the whole city is too broad even for a large church. Targeting the reading levels of third graders in one elementary school district has easily measurable results.

(6) Is the need we are addressing a critical, and perhaps previously unaddressed need in our community? Research unmet needs and efforts already under way that you might join.

(7) Can we tell the stories of this compassion ministry in ways that will continue to impact the internal culture of our church? In the early stages of compassion ministry for a church, it is important the whole church identify easily with the needs and the people being served. Ministry to addicts or to people in the sex industries needs to be out of the spotlight

TOP 10 OBJECTIONS TO SERVING:

- **10.** I don't have time (which usually means they have one of the objections below that remains unanswered).
- **9.** I am serving in other places in the community (actually a great reason and a great opportunity to connect more people to that service opportunity).
- 8. I didn't know I was supposed to.
- **7.** There is no room for me. The committees around here have been filled with the same people for years.
- **6.** I feel called to serve in the marketplace and community, but the only connections this church promotes are inside the church.
- 5. The volunteer positions around here seem like "Hotel California" — once I sign up I can never leave. I want to know that there is a system that is preparing my replacement.
- There are really no challenging jobs here. It seems as if volunteers are merely here to do the grunt work of the staff.
- **3.** Service seems like a nice option, but not essential for my growth. It seems as if this church is saying that attending the Sunday morning worship and getting more Bible teaching in Sunday School, midweek classes, or small groups is the most important aspect of my spiritual growth. I don't have time for nice options.
- **2.** I don't feel adequately prepared. I don't know my gifts and calling, and I'm not sure that whatever job I am assigned to do is one that I could do well.
- **1.** I haven't been asked. I don't have an understandable next step to take.

The equipping system described in this article creates specific solutions for each of these 10 objections to service. More information, training, and resources about equipping systems are available in the books *The Equipping Church, The Equipping Church Guidebook*, and at: www.connextion.org. — Brad Smith, Dallas, Texas to be effective. Ministry to children or the aged is often easier for people to emotionally identify with.

(8) Is the compassion ministry we are choosing to focus on something that will be conducive to partnerships with other churches? Compassion ministry is an excellent, nonthreatening place to act out being the whole church, with the whole gospel, for the whole city. Partnerships with similar churches save time and resources. Partnerships with churches in economically depressed neighborhoods must be set up where they provide something that is absolutely essential for the ministry to work.

These six parts of the equipping church system (assimilation, foundations, discovery, placement, coaching, and deployment) are supported by administrative and leadership development teams. In large churches, there may be a team for each part coordinated by an overall core equipping team. In small churches it may be one nonpaid person who is always thinking about the system and creating intentional conversations to move people into the next step of their growth.

A POINT PERSON WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING THE SYSTEM AND CHAMPIONING THE VALUES OF EQUIPPING

The best point person for an equipping system has facilitative leadership gifts. When there is a job to do, his first instinct is not to do it, but to recruit a team with the right gift mix and clear roles and goals. That person is constantly building teams and releasing them with clear expectations and the necessary support for them to succeed. Even in a church of 50, just having one person who has the clear authority, responsibility, and gifts to ask people about their gifts, calling, and intended place to serve will create a momentum of involvement. They become a ministry matchmaker marrying people's gifts to service needs and connecting sermon words to sermon lifestyles.

When these three common equipping principles are in place, the work of compassion ministries becomes front and center not just in pulpit communication, but also in the lifestyles of the people. Compassion ministries is where the church makes a difference in the community and in the lives of the congregation as they are placed outside of their comfort zones. Yet, while this starts and is supported by Sunday morning events, these alone cannot sustain them. It takes an equipping mindset, system, and leaders to fuel the training and deployment of disciples that make a difference inside and outside of the church walls.



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Faith-Based Initiative: *Alive and Thriving*

f you believe the media, you are sure that President George W. Bush's initiative to expand federal support for faith-based and community programs that serve their neighbors is all but dead and buried. After all, Congress hasn't adopted any faith-based bills yet, and the one bill still in play — the CARE Act, now waiting a House vote — only passed the Senate after faith-friendly language was first stripped out. So, no big new law giving money to churches and thus no faith-based initiative. That's the story. But it's wrong.

BY STANLEY CARLSON-THIES

The truth is that the federal government, and many state and local governments, have had a change of heart over the past few years and are actively redesigning their programs and rules to become hospitable to faith-based organizations and to grassroots groups. These governments weren't always hostile in the past; often they've worked with organizations like Lutheran Services of America, Jewish Federations, the Salvation Army, and Catholic Charities. Yet there's been doubt about whether these relationships are legitimate and often put pressure on the groups to downplay their faith. What is new is greater respect for the faith of faith-based programs, clearer standards so religious groups don't have to hide their commitments, and an active effort to recruit previously neglected groups.

REMOVING THE OBSTACLES

All this is part of the President's campaign to rally the armies of compassion. As he often emphasizes, government services have their place, and private groups like the Salvation Army and the Red Cross provide indispensable help. Yet much of the assistance that families and communities in distress count on is given by neighborhood healers — small programs, often faith-based. The faith-based initiative works to include such neglected groups in local assistance networks and to expand support for them.

Much of that expanded support should come from the private sector, not government. That's why the President strongly backs the CARE Act, which would allow federal taxpayers who don't itemize to take a tax deduction for their contributions to charities, and which includes tax changes to stimulate greater giving by businesses.

And some of the new support could come from government



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. WHY SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT GIVE MONEY TO FAITH-BASED GROUPS WHEN IT IS THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY, NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S, TO HELP THE NEEDY?

A. Many churches and parachurch ministries assist needy families. One goal of the faith-based initiative is to promote greater giving to compassionate ministries. Government assists the needy by funding private groups. Views differ on what government's role should be. The faith-based initiative insists that, when the government does fund private service programs, it must not discriminate against faith groups. Faith-based ministries, if they believe funding will enhance rather than harm their programs, should have equal opportunity for funding.

Q. SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT CUT TAXES SO PEOPLE CAN CONTRIBUTE MORE MONEY TO FAITH-BASED GROUPS INSTEAD OF PROVIDING GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO THOSE GROUPS?

A. A key strategy of leaders who favor a greater role for faithbased services is to change tax policy to encourage greater private giving. Government social programs ensure people with needs will receive help and continue to receive help even if private giving falters. Since government provides social help by funding private service groups, it shouldn't discriminate against faith-based groups that provide effective assistance.

Q. SHOULD PEOPLE DEPEND ON FAITH-BASED ORGANI-ZATIONS INSTEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLY SOCIAL SERVICES?

A. Private service groups, including churches and parachurch ministries, have always been a major part of the American social safety net for the needy. Faith-based programs have a unique power to transform lives, leading to permanent changes. As a result, politicians, scholars, and policy analysts are considering ways to increase the role of faith-based services. Public opinion and policy makers are also acknowledging the important and positive role faith plays in the lives of individuals, communities, and social services. The faith-based initiative enlarges the importance of faith-based services without collapsing the government's role of overseeing and coordinating society's response to need.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS RELIGIOUS GROUPS, WON'T FEDERAL MONEY GO TO OBJECTIONABLE RELIGIONS?

A. Many Christians believe it is wrong for federal money to support secular programs that contend religion is irrelevant. The government needs to focus on programs that work with equal treatment of different philosophies and faiths. The President can't be our chief theologian. Also, Americans have very diverse views. The government will always be funding groups that some Americans object to. Officials can refuse to fund organizations that violate American standards and treat clients with disrespect. Christians concerned that bad programs will receive funding need to work harder so officials have better programs from which to choose. If excellent Christian ministries refuse to partner with the government, officials will have no choice but to fund programs reflecting other faiths or those that are ineffective and even harmful.

Q. DOES THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE OF SEPARA-TION OF CHURCH AND STATE FORBID THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM SETTING UP PROGRAMS TO FUND CHURCHES?

A. The U. S. Constitution doesn't use the phrase "separation of church and state." It simply forbids government from establishing religion, but the Constitution does require government to protect religious liberty. It would be incorrect for the government to financially support churches, synagogues, and mosques. It is equally wrong for the government to support only secular programs when good faith-based programs exist. Officials need to choose the best programs to receive government support. They owe it to taxpayers and the needy to have a bias for effectiveness. The real question is, can officials give government grants to the most effective social-services programs, whether religious or secular? There is no faith-based money set aside for churches or Christian ministries. If officials fund an effective church-related social program, they are using tax money wisely, not turning the church into a government-supported institution.

Q. IS IT WISE FOR FAITH-BASED GROUPS TO DEPEND ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING?

A. Faith-based groups should never base their financial strategy on receiving government money. They need diversified funding to preserve their independence. Government has addressed social problems for decades by funding private social-service programs. In the past, courts asserted that government could not aid religion. But they now regard equal treatment of all groups, religious or secular, as a constitutional requirement. Efforts to expand those partnerships didn't begin nor will they end with the present administration.

Government officials, academics, and policy analysts who are concerned about effective social services regard policy changes that invite faith groups into partnership one way to improve services for the needy. The faith-based initiative is goodgovernment reform, not the special interest of religious people.

Q. HOW CAN THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE ADVOCATE FUNDING SERVICES OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS WHEN THERE'S NO PROOF THESE GROUPS PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES?

A. The government has no plan to stop funding secular providers and fund religious providers because one is secular and one is religious. The plan is to remove restrictions in the laws that keep officials from choosing effective service providers based on religion. More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of both faith-based and secular service providers. Some faith-based groups may rank at the top and others may not.

Q. SHOULD FAITH-BASED GROUPS RECEIVING GOVERN-MENT MONEY BE ALLOWED TO HIRE WHOMEVER THEY WISH, OR IS THAT GOVERNMENT-FUNDED JOB DISCRIMINATION?

A. When a faith-based group that is permitted by law to hire only believers is selected for a government grant, the government isn't funding job discrimination. It is ensuring that taxpayer money goes to the most effective service organizations. Faith-based organizations, not the government, select employees on the basis of their faith commitment. Federal civil rights law and the laws of most states and local governments protect the right to select employees on a faith basis when government funding is not an issue. Requirements for government funding may stipulate that grantees not use religion as employment criterion. That condition is not universal, nor should it be. Faith-based groups consider faith when hiring and firing to ensure their staff will be compatible with their character and mission. Discrimination, however, is not permitted when selecting employees for reasons such as a person's color, race, national origin, sex, or disability.

Q. WILL FAITH-BASED GROUPS THAT RECEIVE GOVERN-MENT FUNDING ALSO BE SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENTAL INTERFERENCE WITH THEIR BELIEFS AND OPERATIONS?

A. Faith-based groups need to be alert about accepting excessively restrictive government rules. They also should not become so dependent on government money that they can't walk away from government funding that is accompanied by excessive restrictions. Rather, faith-based groups should cultivate dependence on their true supporters — the folks in the pew and the neighborhood who will pray for them, volunteer their time and expertise, and donate finances. Churches can establish a separate nonprofit organization to accept government funding and administer services to protect the independence of its congregation. Informal and innovative groups may decide the government's rules are too limiting. For other faith groups, an important part of the faith-based initiative is the strong effort to reduce excessive regulations and restrictions on religion. No one wants churches and parachurch ministries to be subject to improper restrictions. The rules for government funding have to be accommodating for faith-based groups to feel welcome.

DAVE DONALDSON AND STANLEY CARLSON-THIES

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agencies. These agencies almost never deliver services like welfare-to-work training, drug treatment programs, after-school tutoring, and housing rehabilitation themselves. Instead, they pay private organizations to help their neighbors and neighborhoods. The question is which kinds of groups are permitted to get government funds to support their good works, and what kinds of strings are attached to the money. The faithbased initiative is removing the obstacles that have made it hard or sometimes impossible for groups with a strong religious character to win government funds to provide social services.

As you can imagine, many antireligious organizations have been up in arms about such changes. They claim the administration is bulldozing the wall of separation between church and state. Some Christian leaders have been worried, too, fearing that Christian ministries will become dependent on the government's shekels and be unable to escape the government's shackles.

As Jim Towey, director of the White House Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives, points out, the President isn't attacking the Constitution at all. He's only knocking down the wall that separates the poor from effective programs. The faith-based initiative simply tells government officials to make

Agencies now get graded on whether they are eliminating obstacles to faith and community groups, and not just on how well they use computers or how efficiently they purchase supplies.

sure they give grants and contracts to the best programs, whether faith-based or secular. They have to stop discriminating against effective groups that name God in their mission statement or that offer voluntary prayer or Bible studies along with job training or budget help.

And, while Christian leaders must always be vigilant, Towey notes that the President has never suggested that ministries ought to grab federal dollars. Whether or not to seek government support is a decision for each ministry to make. What's wrong, and unconstitutional, is for government officials unilaterally to exclude faith-based programs as being "too religious" to do any earthly good. These days, in thinking about the possibility of government support, Christian leaders should note that officials aren't just putting out a welcome mat but are actually getting rid of rules and regulations that were biased against faith.

Capitol Hill has been tied in knots about the faith-based initiative. Opponents have spouted outlandish charges along

with some legitimate concerns. Many supporters have been stalwart, but some haven't been so well prepared to defend a policy of fair treatment for all. It's as if, in order to keep religious groups we don't like from gaining support, we'd rather have the federal government spend all of its money on services that are secular and even antireligious. Shouldn't we instead redouble our efforts to develop programs that do so much good that they will win the competition for funds? And shouldn't we thank God each time some group, whatever their mistaken beliefs, actually serves their neighbors in a genuinely helpful way?

Despite the logjam in Congress, the faith-based initiative has been making important progress. For one thing, Congress during the Clinton years adopted the faith-friendly language called Charitable Choice four separate times. When state and local officials spend federal funds to buy welfare services, drug treatment help, and some other services, they are supposed to be using new, faith-friendly rules. Slowly they have been changing their practices. According to research by Amy Sherman, in a sample of seven states spread across the nation, just between the years 2000 and 2002, the number of government contracts with faith-based social services jumped from 54 to 485, and the value of the contracts grew from \$7.5 million to more than \$88 million.

Since his inauguration, President Bush has been pressing federal officials to change their own overly restrictive ways. That is why he created Centers for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives in seven major federal agencies, giving faith groups and small community programs an advocate right inside the federal bureaucracies. These Centers and the White House faith-based office have held information and training conferences around the country, drawing as many as 1,500 community and faith leaders at a time.

And because it is the President's responsibility to use the taxpayers' money wisely and to make sure federal programs are as effective as they can be, he has directed the heads of federal agencies to take a close look at whether they wrongly exclude faith-based and community groups. Agencies now get graded on whether they are eliminating obstacles to faith and community groups, and not just on how well they use computers or how efficiently they purchase supplies. In December 2002, in an executive order, the President told federal officials (and state and local officials who use federal funds) that they must follow new rules that honor the religious character of faithbased groups and the religious liberty of people who seek help.

The President recently took another courageous step, issuing a clear statement defending the freedom of religious groups to take faith into account when they hire and fire employees (the White House Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives, "Protecting the Civil Rights and Religious Liberty of Faith-Based Organizations"). The loudest and most effective criticism of the faith-based initiative has been the bogus charge

that it amounts to nothing more than government-funded job discrimination, overturning precious civil rights gains. But as the new statement points out, the basic federal civil rights law itself authorizes religious groups to consider the faith of prospective employees (discrimination on the grounds of race or national origin and the like is forbidden). The problem is that some federal programs have required religious groups to forfeit this freedom in return for government money. The President is determined to protect and extend the precious and essential religious staffing freedom. It's the critics who want to upend civil rights law, making it always illegal for faith-based groups to maintain their employment standards if they accept federal support for their good works.

THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE AND YOU

Is the faith-based initiative a good idea, or is the government tempting ministries into a bad deal by making it easier for them to compete for grants? Here's a matter for fervent prayer, careful planning, and learning from experienced groups. Unwary organizations can get into trouble. But prepared ministries usually find the structure and discipline required to be an effective competitor for government money — and the money itself to be welcome supports for their outreach to hurting families.

When Amy Sherman and a colleague recently asked nearly 400 leaders of faith-based service groups what their experience of government funding was, the results might surprise you. Many of these groups were very new to government money; some of them were churches; many of them operated small programs. Yet, 89 percent said that taking the government dollars did not threaten the faith basis of their organization; more than two-thirds said the required paperwork wasn't much of a burden; 90 percent didn't anticipate any drop in private donations due to receiving government money. And a full 92 percent of these faith leaders had such a positive experience that they expected to apply for more government money in the future.

Of course, ministry leaders must be vigilant, but not timid. When government officials change overly restrictive policies and ask faith-based organizations to become partners in fighting social ills, shouldn't we thank God that a new door to expanded service has opened? And if, after prayerful and careful consideration, a church or a ministry decides not to walk through that door, shouldn't we at least regard it as a reminder from God to examine ourselves to see if we really are loving our neighbors as ourselves, as Jesus commanded (Mark 12:28-34)?



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GRANT Development

The Role and Process

J rant writing generally approaches a specific type of resource — *public funding*. For the purpose of this article, public funding refers to any type of funding resource that contemplates its purpose as a *public or community benefit*. Most ministries are connected to traditional sources of religious funding with a primary purpose of religious benefit like worship or evangelism. Ministry that includes compassionate care,

health services, support for families, afterschool programming, or some other form of compassionate service is often eligible for a variety of public funds that come from government, private foundations, and corporations. From a general perspective, churches should pursue public funding for activities that serve individuals both within and beyond their congregations and are usually based in a relational evangelism setting.

BY DAVID W. MILLS

Grant development plays a central role in supporting broader community service efforts. Beyond its obvious purpose of securing resource, the grant development process often becomes a primary catalyst for organizing and planning effective service. Grant writing embodies the process, preparation, and philosophy of Christian service as it is communicated in the world of public service. For senior leaders,

The character of a ministry, which is demonstrated over time and through the development of a history of service, is one of the most important things that grant development can communicate about a ministry.

ministry administrators, and compassionate ministry personnel, understanding the role and process of grant development can help illuminate many of the essential elements of effective compassionate ministry.

EFFECTIVE GRANT DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWS THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

Grant writing should be viewed as ministry when it is offered as service to Christ and in the spirit of Christ. The individuals who participate in grant writing need to be effective communicators of the value of the church to the secular world and participants in ministry leadership. The truth is, the best grant writers for faith-based purposes are individuals who have led and operated effective ministry — they understand the heart of ministry and are committed to its mission. And while it may surprise us, effective grant writing actually follows the principles for all effective ministry.

Built on and fostering relationships

Just like all ministry, building relationship is the key. The first law of grant writing is "know your funder," and it is equally true that our funder must know us. People are most likely to support and invest in those with whom they are familiar. The place to start with all funding efforts is locally — and building effective relationships is the most important factor in working with city, county, and state government, and local foundations. This extends to the federal level, where agency staff report that "people who have no contact with program staff at the agency rarely get funded."

Start small — be faithful

I remember clearly the days when I had to remind myself not to "despise the day of small beginnings" and meditate on Luke 19:11–27 and its example of faithfulness — even with little. There is an illusion among some who are currently seeking funds that they ought to start big and seek large amounts. This is both unrealistic and unwise. Most funders will compare the amount you have requested with the amount you have managed before. Since you may be operating your compassionate ministry under a new 501c3, with limited budget history, a pru-

dent funder will preclude large grant awards until a larger budget history is achieved. No funder wants to overwhelm a nonprofit with a project (or funds) that is too large, and will probably not consider applications that are as large or larger than your previous

year of operation. The best approach is an incremental journey into the land of nonprofit finance, beginning with donors, small grants, or subcontracts. Your faithful fulfillment of your obligations will go a long way to ensure long-term access to funding and a high level of credibility in the social service community. You would be surprised how small the funding community really is and how often they discuss those who do not complete projects. Some ministries have skipped these initial smaller steps and have secured large amounts of funding right from the beginning. Some of them survive the birth and growth pains that follow a first large grant, but many have marred their future prospects by failing to fulfill the service or accounting requirements. The first grant will always be accompanied by growth and challenge — it needs to be based on a manageable scale. One of the best ways to start is with smaller grants (\$5,000 to \$100,000), individual donors, and subcontracts tied to existing nonprofits. A district collaborative 501c3 can also help with this process by coalescing the capacity of more than one ministry.

Gift based realized through diligence

Just like the rest of ministry, a portion of our success is based on our gifting, but the real fruit comes only with hard work and consistent effort. Grant writing should involve people who have both gifting and passion for their work, but it will also require developing skills through experience and long-term effort. In the nonprofit world, more than one grant is planned to fund each activity. A minimum is at least four high-quality grants to secure funding, and sometimes as many as 10.

Clear goals and purpose

Clear goals and purpose are just as important in funding social service as they are in ministry. In compassionate ministry that is funded with public resources, you can never afford to simply respond to circumstances or the availability of funds. The focus must be on service that flows out of a clearly defined mission and strategic goals. We can ill afford "mission creep," when our influence impacts the eternal destiny of needy families. By matching potential funding against our mission and strategic goals we ensure that our priorities remain resolute.

Strength in community

Strength in community is one of the divine "design elements" in the body of Christ. We are connected by design and must understand that teams have more longevity, maturity, and productivity than isolated ministries. Grant writing is most often successful in a team where individuals with different gift areas (business and budgets, writing, research, service delivery) can collaborate to develop and review proposals.

Character matters

Character matters in grant development just like it does in ministry. The character of a ministry, which is demonstrated over time and through the development of a history of service, is one of the most important things that grant development can communicate about a ministry. The grant team can only communicate about a history that a ministry has developed and documented.

Another element of quality is found in the type of programs and methods of service that are employed. When a ministry engages in publicly fundable service, it must be willing to review its program and look for ways to match its approach to programs of demonstrated effectiveness. We should seek to include academically verified "best practices" in our programming.

Use the right wineskin

Ministry is most effective when its support structure fits its function. As we move into compassionate ministry we need the right type of structure: one that is flexible but uniquely designed for charitable service. A separate 501c3 insulates the church from liability, allows for greater funding access, and creates a publicly "fundable" institution. At a grant-writing seminar provided for grassroots faith-based organizations, one rural pastor wanted to debate the requirement for a separate 501c3. After pointing out the benefits, we concluded that he could legally submit grants without a separate corporation — that was his right. I felt that it was important for him to know that this choice would probably cost him about 80 percent of his success in actually securing grants.

Welcome accountability

Great scrutiny is being applied to everything that is occurring in the Faith Based Initiative. Its basic premise is that whoever can provide the most efficient and effective services should be the

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recipient of public funds. This assumes our ability to provide solid measurement and evaluation data about what we do. It may feel foreign to some, but we understand the importance of accountability in ministry. In the service world, our self-initiated measurement and cooperation with outside evaluation is the evidence that we should be included in the sphere of public funding.

Fund diversification

Just like it is unhealthy for a small group of givers to support an entire congregation, it is important for social service efforts to seek diversified funding. The incessant changes in government at all levels and variations in the private foundation and public giving climate make it critical that we seek a diversified approach. We also need to maintain religious funding in our programs to secure our freedom to minister. Effective grant development will view the pursuit of various funds as components of an overall fiscal development plan that emphasizes diversification.

UNDERSTAND THE TRENDS IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

Two social service trends are important for Christians desiring to enter community and compassionate service endeavors.

First, we must understand that the real situation in government-funded social service is "too few resources for too many problems." Our nation is moving steadily away from big government as a delivery system for social benefits. Contractors and nonprofits already deliver a large percentage of the social



services in our nation — this trend will continue. The organizations that can deliver the most effective services with the least expense will become the most valuable in this system.

A related social service trend is the movement toward outcome measurement. Because of the trend toward outsourcing social services and continuing pressure on resources, there is an increasing emphasis on credible measurement of services. We too must be willing to "judge ourselves" — that is, undertake consistent and thorough evaluation of our outcomes and need for improvement, lest we "be judged" and found mediocre. Our evaluation and outcome measurement should be part of a regular cycle of review and improvement because our services should be the best.

These two trends have an enormous impact on effective grant writing. Almost *all* funders are looking for proposals that indicate a commitment to evaluation and that bring greater value than what we would expect from a hireling.

Here are some tangible ways to address these trends in your service:

Evaluation

- Begin using customer satisfaction surveys for services.
- Attend training and use a logic model for all your efforts; training is offered in many locations and universities and is often called "outcome-based evaluation."
- Build relationships with local academics; ask for their help in building methods to evaluate your services.
- Keep track of demographics for people you serve (age, origin, educational level, number of children, etc.).

Leverage

- Track all donations that are used for services. Volunteer hours should be on time cards and booked into your accounting. Donated goods and services should be accounted for just like they are cash.
- Track the use of facilities and book their market value as in-kind donations toward the service.
- Develop a consistent policy for counting food stuffs, clothes, etc., so their wholesale value is reflected in accounting.
- Have your accountant allocate any staff time that is devoted to community service and have this booked into your compassion account.
- Develop lists of qualified constituents who can provide donated services — counselors, teachers, medical professionals — and collect resumes.
- Demonstrate your ability to leverage resources by participating in community volunteer mobilization or community events.

Potency of the church

As you enter the arena of public funding, it is crucial to

communicate the assets that your church brings to the social service system. Even though you may use external 501(c)(3)s to account for your efforts, everyone understands that your service/ministry is really an extension of the local church. Within the Christian community we value most that which has greatest eternal outcome — lives that intersect eternity through the power of the Cross. However, when we describe ourselves in traditional ministry terms, we often guarantee that our proposals are disqualified. Instead, we have to highlight the unique assets that the Christian community brings to compassionate service.

Churches have unique social assets that make a strong case for their inclusion in funding.

- *Neighborhood locations and facilities.* Our ability to hold events, facilitate training and education, store and organize donated goods, support sports, and provide a large venue that is well-known and furnished.
- A healthy network of community members. Each church is made up of a community of individuals who are for the most part functional and self-sufficient — a cross section of many social sectors including small business, large employers, educators, tradesmen, neighbors, entrepreneurs, and retirees. This network is the social connection needed by individuals and families who are struggling with life-controlling issues and poverty.
- Capacity for restorative relationships. Churches serve people from a variety of backgrounds of brokenness single parents, parolees, and recovering addicts and have a redemptive way of working with broken people.
- *Rapport and "constituency of trust" in the community.* Our history in the community, longevity, and the large number of constituents that surround the active members of our church make us an important institution.
- *Internal systems of values.* Churches support the values of responsibility, respect for authority, work, sobriety, and faithfulness. These are the pro-social values that result in a functional society. Our presence supports the ideals of the "reformed" welfare system, the long-term interests of individuals in recovery, and the aspirations of single parents for their children.
- Volunteerism potential. While we may have some anxiety about getting enough volunteers to man our current programming, volunteerism is a significant asset. Currently, religious volunteers make up a large portion of all volunteers and are among Americans most likely to be active in a social service setting. We already mobilize lots of volunteers around major events — holidays, sports, and other focused efforts. We have individuals in our church who would begin to volunteer if there was a charitable outlet outside the church — we should not be afraid to talk about this as one of the capacities of the church.

• Holistic approach to service that addresses the whole family and whole person. The social service world consistently strives for the "one stop," the "comprehensive and integrated," the "wrap-around" service model. It is well understood in social service that we must care for the whole family and the whole person in order to bring about long-term change. For most Christians, this ideal of holistic ministry is a clear outcome of our understanding of the New Testament and the ministry of Jesus - and we already do this in most of our efforts. During midweek we provide multiple programming opportunities where hurting adults can bring their children for special care while they attend a meeting that meets their own needs. In compassionate service we model a holistic model as we provide not only food and clothes, but life skills, mentoring, grief and addiction recovery, and a host of other comprehensive services.

These general assets provide a framework for expressing the value that the church brings to the social service system, but our value does not stop with general assets. Each congregation consists of a unique set of individuals who each have a

special gift package. By understanding the congregational "gift package" consisting of the people who are attached to your congregation, you can more fully understand the "gift" that your church is to the community. A stack of resumes from professional educators and social workers who will volunteer to support a service program is extremely valuable.

The gift package in your church will make room for itself in the local community — for grant development it helps to make a list and collect resumes.

FINDING HELP

Once we have identified and established our passion for service, the unique set of gifts that God has placed in our congregation, suitable structure, and a philosophy of ministry that supports compassionate ministry, we can begin developing a grant team. The components of your team should include the following (See figure 1):

figure 1						
GRANT TEAM						
PROGRAM	RESEARCH BEST PRACTICE & FUNDING	EVALUATION	BUSINESS	WRITING		

Whether you field this team from within your congregation, a mixture of your constituents and some paid staff, or you seek help from one of the teams fielded by Assemblies of God Charities, it is important to make sure that you include all the key players. You can access help locally in universities, among Christians who work in local social service, local schools, as well as with graduate students. You may discover that congregation members have some of the skills and are delighted to discover a new outlet for ministry. If we are to sustain this type of effort, we must also advocate that professional training for this effort should not only be provided at secular universities, but must also find its way into our ministry preparation institutions.

It may seem obvious to consider that grants involve language — and writers are needed. One of the primary challenges for ministry-oriented writers is to write in the language of social service. Beyond the standard acronyms like "request for proposal" (RFP) and "notice of funding availability" (NOFA) that typify *grant speak*, there is a more subtle art of translation from the customary words of ministry to language that describes social service as it is used in the professional field. Like a journey to China, we find not just one dialect, but a hundred dialects used for the specific service arena that is being addressed. And like our visit to a foreign country, there

The best grant writers for faith-based purposes are individuals who have led and operated effective ministry.

are forms of expression that will communicate the exact opposite of our intention. In a ministry setting we rest in sources of authority that do not communicate authority in a grant. Some Christian writers seem to use their grant writing as an opportunity to evangelize or preach; and, while this may benefit the reviewers, it does not result in funded grants (except of course with a limited number of Christ-centered foundations). Grants are reviewed by individuals who work in the field of service that the grant will fund. Just like any other trade or profession, inclusion is signaled by the introduction into the grant vocabulary of "terms of art." When we write about the homeless we might discuss "co-occurring disorders" (mental health *and* substance-abuse problems), but when we write about welfare services we use the term "dual diagnosis" for the exact same condition.

There is other research that must be accomplished for effective grant development as well — funding research. From the tens of thousands of federal and state grants to more than 60,000 public foundations, along with corporations, cities, and other government agencies, there are a lot of places to look for funding. A good portion of the work is simply identifying and understanding the funding target. This research is usually ongoing and, when well organized, should result in an annual grant calendar for the organization. This approach will allow pre-development of grants and program language. Especially with government funding, waiting for the public announcements of grants is usually too late to start. A quality training program can help to identify search and planning tools for this process.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT WHEN YOU BEGIN SEEKING PUBLIC FUNDING:

Continued investment

Initiating and sustaining publicly funded compassionate ministry will require investment. The first area of investment will be regular compassionate service donated by your congregation or ministry to the community. This track record of service will help establish you as a community organization and more important secure a heart of service in the congregation and staff. The second area of investment is the cost of grant writing. You should never plan to pay a grant writer out of grant proceeds. Consider it an up-front investment until the operation begins to build overhead funds resulting from multiple grants.

If you choose to hire staff to complete these tasks, several guidelines will be helpful. A grant writer's resume is a list of

Grant writing should involve people who have both gifting and passion for their work, but it will also require developing skills through experience and long-term effort.

funded grants and references — you should call them and see how they worked out. The best referrals for grant writers come from funders. Grant-writing consultants should never ask you for a percentage of the grant; this is unethical and sometimes a violation of the funding regulations. If claims sound too good to be true, they probably are — there is no shortage of people trying to take advantage of ministries. Encourage grant writers that you use and appreciate to sign up with Assemblies of God Charities for training and as a point of reference for others.

If you are going to raise leaders from within your circle of ministry or perhaps cooperate at a district or sectional level, then training will be an important investment. Several trainings should be provided for everyone involved: a) basic proposal writing course from a local university or community provider, b) an outcome-based evaluation course and c) an in-depth faith-based funding course (recommend Assemblies of God Charities sponsored training), not just a 1-day overview, plus visits to other successful providers and attendance at program-focused training such as the after-school training provided by KidCare America.

The grant team's role

The grant team will act as a catalyst to continually push the organization toward necessary levels of planning, management, evaluation, and accountability. The day will come when pastoral leaders ask why the grant team continues to demand strategic plans, budgets, letters of support, memorandums of understanding (a brief contract used in social service between organizational partners), job descriptions, ad infinitum. The team will be asking for these documents as they respond to funding requests that require these and many other items. They will invariably be the ones who have to prod our organization to complete the kind of organizational documents that we should already be using.

Locating a grant team at the district level can be effective in building funding. This grant team can connect to the national grant teams at Assemblies of God Charities. Collaborative efforts often have much greater opportunity for success, require a lower level of initial investment, and can help build momentum in both the local church and entire region. The cost of training can be shared and a centralized auxiliary 501c3 can be developed for regional use.

The purpose of grant development

It is important to remember that the purpose behind grant development is not only to secure resources, but also to allow your organization to be considered one of the important players whose service and opinions matter. The grant thrusts your organization's influence into the circle of providers, and since funding is competitive you need to plan on "a number of times at bat" before you get a hit. This repetitive submission helps your organization to be recognized. High-quality organizations and consistent well-developed grants will produce significant results over time. Successful grants build a cumulative impact on the way your organization is perceived — success breeds more success.

Ultimately, we must serve because God calls us to touch the world around us, to bind up the brokenhearted, to set free the oppressed, and to visit orphans and widows (see James 1:27; Luke 4:18). While funding can support this effort, it can never replace the mandate so clearly provided in Scripture and the example of Christ.



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A/G CHARITIES: Where Compassion and Ministry meet

he number of people living on the streets of our nation's capital surprises me. Congressional men and women whose decisions and power shape our nation and impact our world seem powerless to change the lives of needy people. I asked one of our staffers, "Why are more people living on the streets of D.C. than in New York City or L.A.?"

BY JOHN BONGIORNO



The government can provide needy Americans with some help but it cannot provide them hope. The reason? Hope without faith is nothing. Faith is the very substance of hope, and it is the essence of the message of the church.

The message of hope for the helpless and hurting is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Our Creator came to heal and help broken people. All the money in the world will never bring deliverance to someone addicted to drugs and alcohol. Our message is: through Jesus there is hope and deliverance. In the last decade, the question has been asked, "What would

The government can provide needy Americans with some help but it cannot provide them hope.

Jesus do?" His Word provides the answer. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me. ... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me" (Matthew 25:35,36,40).

The church is to provide for the poor, the disenfranchised, and the overlooked in America. Serving the poor was a priority of our Lord. In the Bible, over 400 Scriptures address God's concern for the needy. His priority must become our mandate.

President George W. Bush has challenged the faith community to partner with government and help the poor. The Assemblies of God and A/G Financial Services Group have determined that directing God-given resources to God-given goals includes assisting compassion ministries affiliated with the Assemblies of God in receiving government funding. The General Council has

established A/G Charities in Washington, D.C, as a resource center and intermediary for faith-based initiatives with the federal government. By using the collective influence of its churches and ministries, A/G

Charities represents the Assemblies of God as one voice on critical issues and helps A/G churches apply for public funds. A/G Charities, through guidance and resources, is equipping compassion ministries to achieve results.

Through a strategic partnership with the National Grant Center, A/G Charities provides faith-based ministries opportunity to join a valuable network for grant writers. Training seminars in cities around the U.S teach groups how to navigate through the government's financial bureaucracy and find resources consistent with their mission and objectives. The National Grant Center also helps facilitate grants to ministries and is a resource for potential providers.

REMOVING THE BARRIERS

The time to gather an army of compassion is now. More and more, the federal government no longer sees itself as the direct provider of social services. In fact, less than 4 percent of federal domestic spending on social programs is administered by federal employees. The balance of resources is disbursed to a vast network of private and public agencies that perform the services, or re-grant funds to private groups. These programs that help the poor are either faith-based or secular.

Non-Christian organizations are the primary recipients of government funds. The Programs Office at the Department of Justice projected that in fiscal year 2001, only 0.3 percent of

> the funds it distributed to state and local government would be given to faith-based providers. The Department of Education calculated in fiscal year 2000, faith-based organizations received

25 of 1,091 grants it awarded; 2 percent of available grants. When government funds social services from secular institutions, the less fortunate go to these agencies for help.

When President Bush signed the executive order on January 29, 2001, for establishing the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, he stated, "The paramount goal is compassionate results. Private and charitable groups, including religious ones, should have the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete on a level playing field, so long as they achieve valid public purposes. ... The delivery of social services must be results-oriented and should value the bedrock principles of pluralism, nondiscrimination, evenhandedness, and neutrality."

The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is working together with the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Labor, Justice, Agriculture, and the

The church is to provide for the poor, the disenfranchised, and the overlooked in America.

U.S. Agency for International Development to remove barriers so faith-based groups can receive more federal funding. The FBCI is working to change regulations that discourage faithbased organizations from working with the federal government to serve those in need. The playing field has been leveled so churches can now lead publicly sponsored programs to provide childcare, foster care, drug rehabilitation, and job readiness. The FBCI urges Congress to enact legislation that will provide new incentives for charitable giving. The FBCI also partners with groups like A/G Charities to acquaint them with the federal government and its programs.

Jim Towey, director of the White House Office of

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, stated, "The Faith-Based Initiative President Bush launched is an effort to mobilize armies of compassion, like A/G Charities, to step forward and touch these wounds of society." A/G Charities is working with many compassion ministries to alleviate hunger, provide shelter and provisions for the homeless, work with prisoners and their families, provide solutions for youth-at-risk, and work with substance abusers in leading them toward recovery.

WHICH MINISTRIES SHOULD CONSIDER PUBLIC FUNDING?

The door for faith-based organizations to receive public funding is open. However, with this opportunity comes limitations and rules. The government has not received funding specifically for faith-based groups. Government will not allocate funds for religious services for direct proselytizing, but there are billions of dollars available for groups providing sound social services. The key to receiving funding is results. The government will provide organizations with proven programs the funding to further develop their programs.

The following guidelines by the National Grant Center help determine if a compassion ministry is ready to pursue public funding:

- **1.** Ministries must be currently providing a holistic compassionate service and be committed to it long-term.
- **2.** Ministries must document a track record of compassionate service through accurate records and solid relationships with other community organizations.
- **3.** Ministries must be committed to relational evangelism in which compassionate service is viewed as a demonstration of Christ's love and redemption without requiring recipients to participate in religious activities or church membership.
- **4.** Ministries must have access to a separate legal structure that can support nonsectarian public benefit activities: specifically access to a separate 501(c)3 and high-quality nonprofit accounting system.
- **5.** Ministries must partner with social service or nonprofit professionals to support the compassionate service efforts.
- **6.** Ministries must first commit their resources and volunteers to compassionate efforts so their reputation is greater than their requests for public resources.

Ministries must internally cooperate with other community organizations and Christian ministries to develop complementary and mutually supportive opportunities.

THE CHURCH AND STRATEGY

A/G Charities has connected faith-based groups like Teen Challenge and KidCare America (an after-school program based in churches) with funds to help them accomplish their mission. A/G Charities must compete with the best secular programs for funding. To do so, A/G Charities has developed





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a careful strategy that enables ministries to maintain integrity in mission and benefit from leveraging their resources with public funds. The strategy centers on five Rs:

Relationships. A/G Charities cultivates meaningful relationships with government officials at all levels. Our offices have become a place of refuge and prayer for many of our nation's decisionmakers. A/G Charities is also an intermediary between the government and faith-based organizations, bringing together officials and leaders to seek understanding and results.

Representation. In Washington, D.C., numbers count. The depth and width of one's network translates into the depth and width of one's influence. A/G Charities uses the collective influence of its vast number of churches and ministries to unite the Christian community's voice on critical issues and compete for public funds.

Results. Mel Martinez, secretary of Housing and Urban Development, says, "We are not looking for compassion intentions, but for compassion results." A/G Charities assists Christian ministries by establishing program objectives and meeting them. The National Resource Center and Grant Writing Department sends these results to government agencies in the form of proposals to garner funds for worthy programs and projects.

Resources. A/G Charities is a resource center for faith-based organizations needing direction. The recipe for receiving public and private funding is one-third writing a good grant proposal (See the article by David W. Mills, "Grant Development - The Role and Process" on page 90.) and two-thirds research. The National Resource Center teaches groups how to navigate through government financial bureaucracy and find resources consistent with their mission and objectives.

Replication. Wade Horn, director of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families says "Why should we pay \$30 million for social services when we can invest \$30 million and receive \$300 million in social services in return?" Investment in groups that can replicate programs and leverage resources is the answer. The government wants the best return possible. A/G Charities helps groups present programs the government funders find attractive.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

A/G Charities is working on the national level to help faith-based groups receive the necessary funding to compassionately reach out to others. But over 80 percent of federal resources are channeled to the states through block grants. Great potential exists in accessing resources at the state, county, and city level. A/G Charities five Rs strategy can also be used at the grassroots level. Cultivate relationships in your community with those in need and learn to reach out to them. Build relationships with decisionmakers in your area and partner with them to channel resources to the hurting. Volunteer in a compassion ministry in your local church or community. Represent your community on boards and committees. Seize opportunities to influence through involvement. Share the results of your work with

The Department of Education calculated in fiscal year 2000, faith-based organizations received 25 of 1,091 grants it awarded.

others as the Holy Spirit empowers you. Develop and leverage resources for Christian ministries to replicate effective programs designed to help people find Jesus and employment. Pray that these initiatives will continue be an effective force in our nation's capital.

This is the moment for the local church to take its rightful and responsible place as the caregivers, mentors, and agents of hope. It is time to stop and help those that need help most. It is time for the church to begin moving as an army of compassion.



JOHN BONGIORNO is executive vice president, A/G Charities, Springfield, Missouri. If you would like more information on A/G Charities, call 1-202-667-2347 or e-mail: info@agcharities.org. You can also find us at www.agcharities.org.

ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG SCHUTT

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LED BY OMPASSION Ministries That Are Making a Difference

hree years before the formation of the Assemblies of God, Lillian Trasher was compelled by the Holy Spirit to care for an orphaned, sick child. This act of compassion was the first of thousands of children that would be ministered to physically and spiritually at the Lillian Trasher Orphanage in Assiout, Egypt.

Caring for the physical needs of the lost has accompanied ministry to spiritual needs throughout the Assemblies of God's nine decades of missionary endeavors. Florence Steidel built New Hope Town in Liberia to care for lepers. Mark Buntain directed the construction of a school and hospital to help the poor and suffering in Calcutta, India. Morris Williams pulled the decaying teeth of Africans. Arthur and Juanita Chesnut distributed food and supplies to Cambodian refugees, and Ernie Jones spearheaded relief efforts to the fleeing Rwandans.

BY MIRIAM TESTASECCA

Thousands of Assemblies of God missionaries have fed the hungry, assisted the sick, clothed the naked, dug wells for the thirsty, and taught millions of people to read and write. Richard Nicholson, Latin America/Caribbean regional director, says, "We don't have a program of social concern; as a Fellowship, we are a program of social concern. We don't have a relief ministry; as a Fellowship, we are a relief ministry." Compassion ministries are also based on the principles of indigeneity. For instance, HealthCare Ministries is training nationals worldwide to minister to AIDS victims within their own countries. Convoy of Hope could not conduct a successful outreach without the full cooperation of national believers. The missionaries' goal is to partner with and strengthen the hands of people in local congregations as they reach out in

Caring for the physical needs of the lost has accompanied ministry to spiritual needs throughout the Assemblies of God's nine decades of missionary endeavors.

Since, however, a person can be well-fed and educated but still be lost in eternity, the goal of Assemblies of God compassion ministries is not simply to eliminate the suffering of the underprivileged or teach the illiterate. Giving medicine, food and necessities, or providing education must always be accompanied by a clear explanation of the gospel. Jesus said, "If anyone gives even a cup of cold water ... he will certainly not lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). But He also said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

Jesus' earthly ministry touched the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of men and women. So we, as a Fellowship, are endeavoring to integrate ministry to the whole person as we establish the church of Jesus Christ. Our mission statement, summarized by four pillars — reaching, planting, training, and touching — addresses a ministry of wholeness. Each pillar speaks to a phase of compassion ministries.

Early Assemblies of God missionaries such as Melvin Hodges believed that establishing an indigenous church — one that is self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing — is the most effective way to build a strong body of believers. compassion to their neighbors. John Bueno, AGWM executive director, says, "The most effective distribution center for ministering to human need is through the more than 236,000 local Assemblies of God churches worldwide."

CHILD-CARE MINISTRIES

Assemblies of God World Missions does not have a centralized child-care agency, but each designated region has developed a ministry specifically designed to meet the distinctive cultural needs within that area. The compassion of Christ is demonstrated through feeding stations, orphanages, medical clinics, drug rehabilitation centers, relief efforts, Christian camps, and educational opportunities. With each compassion outreach, children are given the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Africa's Children, launched in 1989, is committed to meeting the desperate needs of as many of the 3.6 million African children as possible who are suffering the ravages of war, disease, and poverty.

Asia's Little Ones is ministering to children throughout the Pacific Rim where nearly 50 percent are under the age of 15.

CONTACT INFORMATION

AFRICA'S CHILDREN (417) 863-6502 ASIA'S LITTLE ONES

(417) 862-6155

EURASIA'S FUTURE (417) 863-6502

SAVE EUROPE'S CHILDREN (417) 862-2732

LATIN AMERICA CHILDCARE 1-800-289-7071

TO PARTICIPATE IN TEAM MINISTRIES, CONTACT:

AFRICA TABERNACLE EVANGELISM (417) 863-6502

AIM (417) 862-2781, ext. 4039 BUILDERS INTERNATIONAL (417) 582-0509

FRONTLINE MINISTRIES (417) 882-0708

HEALTHCARE MINISTRIES (417) 866-6311

LIGHT FOR THE LOST (417) 862-2781, ext. 4162

MAPS BUILDERS (417) 862-2781, ext. 2082 WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

(417) 862-2781, ext. 4060

Through Eurasia's Future, children throughout Southern Asia, the CIS, the Central Asian Republics, and the Middle East and North Africa are hearing the gospel, being fed physically, and receiving medical and educational assistance.

Save Europe's Children assists in a variety of projects for children and seeks to raise awareness of the spiritual and physical needs of boys and girls across Europe while helping missionaries acquire the tools they need for effective children's ministry.

Latin America has two child-care agencies — Latin America ChildCare and Children of Brazil Outreach. Since 1963 LACC has been giving needy children


health care and a daily nutritious meal along with a chance for an education through a child-sponsorship program. Through COBO, Christian teachers minister in Brazil's public school system, and Christian schools and day-care centers have been established throughout the country.

RELIEF EFFORTS

When disaster strikes, short-term assistance is needed immediately. Through national churches in more than 190 countries, the Assemblies of God is able to help those in need.

HEALTHCARE MINISTRIES – MINISTRY TO THE PHYSICALLY SICK AND SPIRITUALLY LOST

Two weeks prior to HealthCare Ministries' medical and evangelism outreach, missionaries Richard and Jennifer De Martino and Assemblies of God believers from Family Worship Center in Puebla, Mexico, fasted and prayed. Their petitions accompanied those of the 16-member evangelism team and believers of Bethlehem Assembly of God in Valley Stream, N.Y., and a 20-member medical team of health-care professionals from throughout the United States.

During the 5-day outreach, the health-care team provided medical, dental, and eye care for 1,200 patients while the group from Bethlehem Assembly ministered through drama, music, and personal evangelism. Jennifer De Martino says, "We saw an openness to the gospel as never before and more than 500 people prayed the sinner's prayer. The outreach made a great impact on our community and helped us to build relationships. The people knew that we cared."

Pastor Steve Milazzo, a member of the evangelism team and pastor of Bethlehem Assembly, says, "The combination of evangelism and HealthCare Ministries was powerful because it brings together compassion for the spiritually lost and the physically sick. This is what Jesus did. Our people were excited as they saw a door of ministry opened through health care and watched the gospel bring life transformation." The World Assemblies of God Relief Agency, the humanitarian outreach of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, was officially launched at the 1994 World Assemblies of God conference in Seoul, South Korea. WAGRA seeks to provide essential food, medicine, and shelter to victims of natural and political disasters. C.W. Van Dolsen, assistant to WAGRA's international chairman, says, "Meeting physical needs of hurting people has given missionaries and national believers the opportunity to share God's love and the plan of salvation. Many have accepted Christ as their personal Savior and new churches have been planted near distribution areas."

Nearly \$2 million has been given through WAGRA to minister to those devastated by earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, drought, and war in almost 60 nations. Assemblies of God fellowships throughout the world pledge annually and send funds to WAGRA. As projects are approved, funds are disbursed to the national church that organizes and oversees relief efforts.

With evangelism as its focus, the international division of Convoy of Hope responds to natural and political disasters by providing food, necessities, shelter equipment, and even sewing machines. When water filtration is needed, COH workers demonstrate the equipment and use the opportunity to illustrate how Christ can forgive sin, change lives, and bring spiritual cleansing. A pastor from the mountains of Honduras testified that his church grew from 40 to 300 after COH provided food for people in his village.

HealthCare Ministries and MAPS Builders representatives assess disaster damage, and their teams are often the first respondents to minister to those in crisis.

TEAM AND SHORT-TERM MINISTRIES

Every year more than a thousand construction and evangelism teams of Assemblies of God men, women, and youth from the United States travel throughout the world to present the gospel and build, repair, equip, or enhance churches, Bible schools, orphanages, and Teen Challenge centers. During these 1- to 2-week trips, U.S. believers partner with believers from the national church to minister. Each team member provides his travel and living expenses and the sending church supplies the building and evangelism materials. Ministries that offer opportunities for both construction and evangelism include: Africa Tabernacle Evangelism, Builders International, FrontLine Ministries, MAPS Builders, Women's Ministries, and Men's Ministries. Gerald Jackson, AGWM foreign field construction representative, says, "Bricks, mortar, hammers, and nails can never bring revival by themselves. But when they are used by people eager to contribute firsthand to reaching the world for Christ, they become missions tools to help win the lost."

Volunteer short-term medical evangelism teams are providing eye exams, dental care, diagnosing illnesses, and administering medications while sharing the love of Christ.

The women listen to a Christian therapist discuss post-traumatic stress and believers who have overcome violent and traumatic experiences through Christ.

HEALTH CARE

Since 1984 HealthCare Ministries teams of doctors, nurses, and other health-care professionals have responded to health crises and disasters around the world and ministered to the poor and suffering in regions where medical assistance

> is virtually nonexistent. Volunteer short-term medical evangelism teams are providing eye exams, dental care, diagnosing illnesses, and administering medications while sharing the love of Christ. Nearly 70,000 people have

Overseas ministry for youth has expanded in recent years through the Assemblies of God AIM program. Youth perform manual labor, distribute literature, and minister through children's programs, mime, puppets, and music.

Compassion ministries reach beyond building construction and improvement projects. Short-term missionaries are addressing long-term needs as they apply agricultural, educational, business, and life skills in depressed areas throughout the world. In Serbia, Assemblies of God missionaries Grady and Janet Smalling have started a ministry to people victimized by war. Refugee women are invited to a formal tea setting and seated with women from U.S. Women's Ministries groups.



accepted Christ as their Savior through the one-on-one ministry of health volunteers.

With the death toll from AIDS and other epidemics rising, missionaries and national churches have asked HCM to provide training to assist them in addressing the needs of those dying, as well as the needs of the families and caregivers. Health education has become a vital ministry tool in today's world.

Dr. JoAnn Butrin, director of HealthCare Ministries, says, "I've been working in compassion ministries for many years but have never gotten used to seeing the pain and suffering. Long ago I realized I could not solve these problems, but many of us working together do make a difference. I will forever work to lessen suffering and extend a healing touch, but I will always couple that with the offering of the good news and hope in Jesus Christ."

Global Teen Challenge is sharing the hope of the gospel and freedom from addictions and life-controlling problems through 243 residential rehabilitation centers and 131 evangelism outreach points in 77 nations. GTC is reaching into dope dens, gang turfs, red-light districts, and prisons and ministering on the streets to rescue the lost and troubled youth.

The Holy Spirit continues to open a multitude of doors to the gospel and provide believers with avenues of service through compassion ministries. As Christians endeavor to mirror the ministry of Christ, they will be "moved with compassion" (Matthew 9:36) for both those dying without Christ and those who need physical and emotional care. ■



MIRIAM TESTASECCA is editorial coordinator, Assemblies of God World Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

COMPASSION MINISTRY RESOURCES

WEBSITES

www.agcharities.org A resource center for faith-based ministries of the Assemblies of God.

www.ccda.org The Christian Community Development Association is the premier organization of church-related, community-serving programs.

www.cpjustice.org The Center for Public Justice is an excellent source of information on charitable choice and for insight on the faith-based initiative.

www.fbci.gov

The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives provides information on how the federal government is changing to become faith-friendly. Its website provides links to the sites of the Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in major federal social program-funding departments.

www.guidestar.org

GuideŠtar provides a current database of 850,000 nonprofit organizations that includes information regarding their operations and finances

www.hudsonfaithincommunities.org

The Faith in Communities Initiative of The Hudson Institute, headed by Amy L. Sherman, provides a wealth of information about how faith-based groups are ministering to their communities.

www.nationalservice.org

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the federal government's agency for mobilizing volunteers for social service.

www.performance-results.net

Performance Results, Inc., assists nonprofit groups with developing a plan of action to measure the results of programs and services through outcome-based evaluation.

www.religionandsocialpolicy.org

The Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy is an excellent source of news about faith-based issues and publishes guides to research and policy questions.

www.wecareamerica.org

We Care America is a good resource for guidance when involving your church in social ministry, ministry models, and government funding.

www.welfareinfo.org

The Welfare Information Network is an excellent source of news about all aspects of welfare reform.

NONPROFIT FUNDING WEBSITES

Information on funding and grant writing for nonprofit organizations:

www.fdncenter.org The Foundation Center

www.generousgiving.org Generous Giving, Inc.

www.grantsmart.org GrantSmart

CONNECTING FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS WITH CORPORATE AMERICA

Organizations that build collaborations between faith-based leaders and business professionals:

www.christianity.com/cma Christian Management Association

www.fcci.org Fellowship of Christian Companies International

www.halftime.org Halftime, Inc.

www.stewardship.org Christian Stewardship Association

LEGAL HELP

The Christian Legal Society and its Center for Law and Religious Freedom can be contacted at (www.clsnet.org), 703-642-1070, extension 3550. Explain your question or problem clearly and briefly and you'll get a call back from a religious liberties lawyer or a referral to a local Christian attorney.

Gammon and Grange (www.gandglaw.com), 703-761-5000, deals with nonprofit law and with religious liberties issues. This resource publishes guidance on issues that confront religious and nonprofit organizations.

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PREACHING THAT CONNECTS BY CRAIG BRIAN LARSON

THE PREACHER'S DELIGHTFUL INHERITANCE

am concerned my heavenly reward for preaching may be small. Great would be my reward, I'm sure, if I preached with painful reluctance, but one reason I preach is I simply love the ministry of the Word. At no time am I more selfindulgent than when I sit down to study and later to stand to preach God's Word. Not that I follow my own agenda, but God's agenda is such exquisite pleasure.

In *National Geographic*, T.H. Watkins writes about the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. It has classic desert beauty: graceful sand dunes, buttes that glow orange in the morning light, rugged canyons, sandstone wedges jutting into the blue sky.

Watkins writes that the area is "endlessly various and fascinating in its forms. Much of this I have come to think of as my own country. ... I have spent several years exploring this western landscape, driving its roads, flying over it, hiking into its canyons, camping along its rivers ... sometimes writing about it, most of the time just thinking about its warps and tangles of rock and sky."

My feelings are the same for the endless grandeur of Scripture. To study and preach the Word is to explore limitless terrain. Someone has said when you thank God for something, you enjoy it twice; similarly, when we preach the fruits of our

SCRIPTURE ISN'T JUST BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE; LIKE MOUNT SINAI IT IS SACRED GROUND.

study, our pleasure in God's truth multiplies. The more I do so, the farther the horizon stretches, the more colorful are its truths, the more striking is its righteousness.

But Scripture isn't just beautiful landscape; like Mount Sinai it is sacred ground. My sandals come off at the thought that I handle the words of God himself.

A sermon series can become a monument in my life. In my first pastorate, with three preaching services per week, I soon began preaching through books of the Bible on Wednesday nights. I discovered those sermon series became not just segments in my preaching calendar but markers in my personal history. I remember the year I preached Romans. Whatever else happened that year, life was significant because I had climbed, mapped out, and mined one mountain in Scripture and shared its precious metals with my people. Feelings are fickle, of course, and at times I don't relish the thought of sermon study. I chafe at sermon work primarily when I let my schedule fill with other things or when I have not prayed enough about the message to come. I chafe when I run out of time to prepare or don't know what to preach. If I am running out of time, then I'm sweating, not giving thanks.

But that's the exception.

More often I feel like an overwhelmed King David. After he had settled into his palace of cedar, David's heart ached at the thought that he had better accommodations than the ark of the Lord. He spoke to Nathan the prophet, and that night the Lord told Nathan he looked with such favor on David that the Lord intended to defeat all David's enemies, make his name great, and build a house from David's line that would endure for eternity.

When David heard the prophecy, he was stunned. He went into the temple and sat abashed before the Lord. "Who am I, O Sovereign Lord," he said, "and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? ... Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign Lord? What more can David say to you?"

How is it that God calls me to be His messenger? As I consider this honor, my throat tightens. I thank God again and again. My chest heaves with emotion. Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?



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editor of Christianity Today International's preaching resources — PreachingToday.com and Preaching Today audio as well as pastor of Lake Shore

Church (Assemblies of God) in Chicago. He is coauthor of *Preaching That Connects* (Zondervan, 1994).

THE CHURCH & THE CHOSEN PEOPLE BY RAY GANNON

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS PRAY TOGETHER AT THE DISMANTLED "WALL"

S pending a season of prayer at the Wailing Wall at Jerusalem's Temple Mount a few years ago, I witnessed the arrival of an enthusiastic group of Koreans for prayer. Focusing on one of their party, they laid hands on him and prayed with old-fashioned Pentecostal exuberance for him to become Spirit-filled. I watched curiously as several rabbis and security guards came around the now sole Korean still ecstatically speaking in tongues with his face against the Wall, as tears of joy and shouting tongues poured forth. The rabbis studied him closely from all angles with looks of complete bewilderment. Finally some turned to me and asked, "Is he Jewish?"

Paul referenced in Ephesians 2, a second "wall" that had once carefully demarcated between Jews and Gentiles but had now been entirely dismantled by our Peacemaker as He "broke down the barrier of the dividing wall." The old wall of partition was fully destroyed by Christ 20 centuries ago and cannot make a comeback today or ever; that wall has no potential for resurrection.

GOD HAS CHOSEN THE JEW

Recently I listened to an intense college panel discussion centering on the proper biblical relationship between Jews and Gentiles and their respective privileges and obligations. Reflected in the trialogue were the standard double-minded dispensationalist teachings suggesting, on the one hand, that the "Church and the Chosen People" represent two entirely different programs in God's economy and have very distinct eschatological destinies; but, on the other hand, that Jews and Gentiles are expected to be deliberately uniform in their cultural faith expression so as to not raise a wall of hostility or distinction between the two people groups.

To secure a proper focus on the unique function Paul's "all Israel" is to play in God's economy, it is important to remember the following maxim: "God chose the Jews because He loved the Gentiles."

Rather than God's chosen people, Israel, being elected for lofty status in God's kingdom or handpicked extraordinary privilege, was chosen before Isaac had been conceived to execute a distinct assignment, to perform a particular mission task. God chose to create the Jewish people that He might have a full nation of ambassadors ready to communicate the responsibility of all nations to serve the God of Israel. "All Israel" was and remains God's prime choice among mission agencies to carry the good news of salvation in Jesus to all peoples.

Paul recognized his personal Jewish responsibility to carry the gospel to Gentiles. But he never lost sight of "all Israel's" corporate calling to perform the same apostolic ministry. He was but one Jew among the multiplied millions who were under divine obligation to carry the gospel, certainly to Israel, but equally to all nations. This is why Paul mandated preaching the gospel "to the Jew first" and the other 12 apostles primarily labored among "the circumcision." Because without God's chief mission agency — Israel, embracing Jesus — God's Jewish ambassadors would fail to discharge their divine assignment leaving the world in perpetuated darkness even should two full millennia transpire.

In the interim, those Gentiles coming to faith in Christ would need to successfully execute their own mission to Israel, e.g., provoke Israel to spiritual jealousy with the result of the salvation of "all Israel" (Romans 11:25,26).

THERE ARE NO SURROGATES FOR ISRAEL

Paul recognized Gentile believers to be no substitute for Israel on either the short-term or long-term basis. Paul would wholeheartedly reject any handy fabrication of a Gentile church replacing Israel in God's program either permanently or even for a 2,000-year dispensationalist hiatus. Any notion of God's replacement of the patriarchal progeny of Israel with some alternative group is entirely foreign to Scripture, Old and New Testaments, and only finds its origin in late second-century anti-Jewish theological polemics and the perpetuation of related theological errors.

Rather than replace Israel even temporarily, the Spirit of God inspired Paul to write that the middle wall of hostility between Jews and Gentile believers had been entirely dismantled by the Cross. All believers, regardless of their ethnicity or cultural styles, are part of the one people of God. The God of all unity enjoys human variety and wants it all to be fully employed for His glory. Human distinctives between Jews and believing Gentiles do not override their spiritual unity in the Lord.

GENTILES HAVE JOINED THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

For this reason, Paul can celebrate the reality that Gentile believers have now been made part of the "commonwealth of Israel." Jews and other believers together formulate the one people of God. Gentiles are not grafted onto a specially prepared Gentile tree; they are grafted onto Israel's olive tree. Ethnic groups do not form a new orchard of trees, one for every people group. No, there is only one tree, Israel's patriarchal-rooted olive tree. To Paul, Gentile believers derive their new faith identity by their spiritual identification with Israel as they have joined God's one people.

The God who loves variety does not prefer one humanly fabricated culture over another. All cultures are flawed house of Israel with the Gentiles believers having the distinctly mandated duty to successfully provoke Israel to spiritual jealousy. According to Paul, when such spiritual fullness of the Gentiles becomes sufficiently actualized, "All Israel will be saved."

There is no place for national, ethnic, or cultural pride, or one-upsmanship of any variety in the kingdom of God. We are all equally saved. We are all one in Jesus. We are each and every one jointly mandated to proclaim the gospel to all men everywhere. We are commonly responsible to culturally relate to the people within our respective groups so as to effectively give all God's loved ones the gospel in the language they can hear and in a framework they can understand.

RENEWED EXPRESSIONS OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN CHRISTENDOM

In our day the latent anti-Semitism of the 1930s and 1940s has resurfaced with profound fury. Hostilities to "all Israel" abound around the world and are making strong inroads into American society as well. The massive Jewish embrace of Christ in the early Pentecostal decades of the 20th century was immediately followed by the harshest expressions of anti-Semitic attitudes in Europe in particular. The Holocaust came on the heels of one of the greatest Jewish-Christian revivals in European history. There is dreadful present correspondence between the tremendous Pentecostal move of God among Jewish people that we are experiencing the world over, with tens of thousands of Jews coming to faith during the past three

HOSTILITIES TO "ALL ISRAEL" ABOUND AROUND THE WORLD AND ARE MAKING STRONG INROADS INTO AMERICAN SOCIETY AS WELL.

and subject to Holy Spirit scrutiny, including Jewish culture. But with God, cultural choice is never the issue. All ethnics can practice whatever culture they prefer as long as the Holy Spirit has been given opportunity to properly address those cultural aspects of offense to God. But with all their matchlessness and idiosyncrasies, all ethnics are to employ their sanctified cultural expressions for the glory of God.

THE ENTIRE COMMON-WEALTH IS UNITED IN MISSION

Being fully joined to the one people of God, Gentile believers are partnered in the Jewish mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to all men everywhere. Until the day that "all Israel" embraces Christ, Israel remains the backslidden people of God. Messianic Jews and Gentile believers are equally responsible to proclaim the gospel to the whole western anti-Semites during the years of Nazi terrorism as documented in Mitch Glaser's 1998 Ph.D. dissertation completed at the Fuller School of World Mission. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, Western civilization is again experiencing a dangerously steep rise in demonically inspired anti-Semitism at this very season when Jews, throughout the United States and the entire Jewish world, are showing wonderfully improved readiness to hear and positively respond to the gospel.

While the "wall of partition" is gone forever, erring saints can rebuild the walls of narrow-mindedness, pride, and prejudice. When the General Council of the Assemblies of God in its 1945 session passed its resolution condemning all forms of anti-Semitism, it was not just in response to World War II and the Holocaust. General Superintendent E.S. Williams expressed his shock that even Pentecostal pulpits had been used to incite anti-Semitism. In fact, the baseless *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forgery suggesting Jews were conspiring to take effective control of the world, found repeated support in the *Pentecostal Evangel* in the 1920s. Editor Stanley Frodsham only officially repudiated support for the *Protocols* in the 1930s. Happily, he later became an outspoken enthusiast for Israel's destiny in God and Assemblies of God Jewish evangelism.

Pentecostals need to keep in mind and celebrate our spiritual union with "all Israel" as we have been joined to the "commonwealth of Israel." Our corporate efforts to bring the Pentecostal gospel to the Jewish world can result in the salvation of the entire Jewish people, those still called to proclaim Christ to all nations.



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decades in many nations including the

United States, Israel, Russia, Argentina,

and South Africa, and this current rise

Some 250,000 Jewish Christians were

among the 6 million Jews destroyed by

in anti-Semitism.

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

BY TOM MCDONALD

SYMPTOMS OF A WORSHIP WAR

was surveying pastors about worship in the church. One person I talked to was a young pastor who had been elected to an historic congregation in a large city. He had been youth pastor a decade earlier and had returned to the church as senior pastor. What he inherited was messy.

The former pastor had placated the generations and split the congregation into traditional and contemporary services because of his fatigue due to the congregation's smoldering intolerance for each other's musical preferences.

The new, youthful pastor began his tenure at this well-known church by singing hymns at 8 and dancing at 10:45. This dichotomy lasted 18 months. One morning in prayer he felt checked by the Holy Spirit. The pastor immediately gathered the leadership from the early service and said, "I have been stirred by the Holy Spirit and sense we need to blend our congregation back into one integrated body. By worshiping in different styles, we are fostering separate and unequal opportunities for the presence of God to operate among us. Consequently, we are not unified in heart or purpose. What do you think?"

Instantaneously they declared, "Pastor, you're right. We miss worshiping with our families. We miss their enthusiasm and the privilege to carry their burdens to the Lord. We gladly embrace your vision for a blended service. All we request is an occasional hymn and the option to sit when the worship exceeds our strength to stand."

The pastor, feeling emboldened, gathered the leadership of the contemporary service for a similar vision cast. The result shocked him. After he had carefully described his pastoral concerns, the group retorted, "No way! If you insist we include the older people and sing their songs, we'll leave."

The pastor dropped his voice and offered this seminal observation: "Tom, the youth in my congregation loved the music of their day more than Jesus himself."

That sentence reverberated loudly in my spirit. I hung up the telephone — stunned. How could one demographic in a congregation be so overtly selfish with another?

This conversation made me realize that it is not always the older generation who is inflexible. Arrogance relative to accepting musical diversity is not necessarily age related; it is attitudinal. There are four symptoms that, if left unchecked by church leadership, can easily spark into a brushfire of worship war hostility.

GENERATIONAL CONFLICT OVER REPERTOIRE

We all have musical likes and dislikes. Music has universal appeal but localized appreciation. M. Wayne Benson, president of Central Bible College, explained "Most people like the music that was sung when they were saved." A congregation under 10 years old will probably have congruity in worship music. Most people saved there gladly accept the repertoire of the church.

However, the church that is 20 to 100 years old may have great differences in

musical taste. Persons saved around World War II may have a need to memorialize their historic roots in Pentecost. Their children and grandchildren may or may not share that musical need. Persons currently being saved may need to learn to appreciate the hymns of faith. Historic churches have many perspectives about hymn singing.

Learning a hymn's veracity can be productive. Young believers need to learn that hymns substantiate doctrine and mature congregants need to be reminded of these great truths. This is effective church education in the 21st century.

It is also biblical to entreat mature believers to validate new compositions. The Bible states 273 times, "Let us sing a new song to the Lord." New songs strengthen our praise vocabulary, fortify our faith, and show us another facet of the Lord's grace that is manifest during storms of life.

This symptom of a worship war can be disarmed. The second symptom emerges from a church musician's lethargy.

FAULTY DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Delivering a contemporary worship chorus in incorrect time may frustrate the youth in your congregation. Similarly, presenting a hymn without the proper instrumental setting or without proper enunciation is equally distressing to older people. Both seasoned worship leaders and neophytes can suffer from the same sword — presenting songs they do not relate to in an adequate manner.

The answer to faulty delivery systems is advance preparation. Study the musical details of each song and listen to the composer's rendering if possible. Read the story of the hymn's origin. Use authentic instrumentation. Plan the worship far enough in advance to incorporate the best musicians your church can muster; an organist for the special hymn, or an acoustic guitarist for the latest Matt Redman tune.

Success requires analyzing the use of specific instruments for

presentation. If you are going to sing a song, present it right.

Before bringing a medley of worship to the congregation, church musicians need to hear from the Lord privately. One of the most significant skills for a worship leader to master in today's church environment is the ability to plan the Sunday repertoire like a pastor prepares a sermon. Planning the worship involves hearing from God before doing for God. Planning is a spiritual, not just a musical, exercise.

If the church musician's plan is balanced spiritually and musically, there will be congruence between congregational appetite and prophetic thrust.

The third symptom affects growing churches in a unique way.

THE WORSHIP TEAM LIMITATION

Worship teams are helpful in small settings. As a church grows its leadership must consider the fact 10 percent of any congregation has the gift of music. A church over 300 without a choir leaves musical congregants disenfranchised. Over time worship teams can become elitist.

Beyond leadership responsibility is an evangelism issue for a music ministry. If your church does not have a choir, who will minister the gospel in your community at Christmas or Easter? A choir can function as a worship team, but a worship team cannot function as a choir. A choir has much more versatility and historic identity. People will attend a choral event in a church — especially at holiday seasons. It seems peculiar to drop a choral program in an effort to attract a new constituency while alienating another.

The Pentecostal church needs to lead the way chorally by programming cantatas and musicals. This is not a season to cut corners but to expand our music departments with an intentional choral emphasis. Every city needs a Spirit-filled choir. A choir can become a mighty tool of evangelism and countermand the darkness that threatens to steal our children. Finally, we face a challenge regarding interaction as colleagues.

PASTORAL STAFF CLASHES

If the pastor and worship leader have unforgiveness or have let bitterness spawn in their souls, how can they flow in the Spirit on the church platform? There is no other relationship on the pastoral staff as potentially stormy as the one between the administrative and artistic leaders.

While worship has the capacity to usher us into the presence of the Lord, the adversary knows that if he can keep persons jealous, angry, or irritated with each other, public worship will suffer.

Pastoral staffs must guard against secret sin. It is inappropriate for leadership to harbor anger or gossip. Conflict on the staff must be arbitrated in light of Scripture.

The worship wars in the Pentecostal church are winnable. Generational sensitivity is one way to bridge this conflict. We must understand that wherever there is a worship war there is a lack of love. Leading a congregation without love into spiritual formation — where love is valued and internalized — presupposes teaching and modeling a biblical way of interacting as a local church family. Modeling a spirit of love can start with the worship leader. A worship leader who serves all the musical tastes of a diverse, multigenerational congregation is offering "cold water" in the Lord's name. Balance is key.

Christian songwriter Paul Baloche said it well: "A steady diet of doctrinal hymns is like too much filet mignon. But living on repetitive four-line choruses is like making a meal of potato chips. Ideal is a mix."

How can it be wrong to bless a young person with a hymn in worship or an older person with something new?





HISTORY IS HIS STORY BY WILLIAM P. FARLEY



OLD IRONSIDES: OLIVER CROMWELL AND THE PURITAN REVOLUTION

n a cold January day in 1649, King Charles I stepped before a hushed crowd of Londoners. He ascended the scaffold, wished his executioner well, and knelt, thrusting his head forward onto the dry chopping block. The ax fell, severing his head from his neck. Then the executioner lifted the king's head and cried, "Behold the head of a traitor."¹

The unthinkable had happened. A "Christian" nation had put its king to death. Spontaneously, an audible groan pulsed through the anxious throng, "a groan, said an eyewitness, 'as I never heard before and desire I may never hear again"² — one that represented the sentiment of many Englishmen and most contemporary Europeans.

Few recognize history's great turning points when they occur. The execution of Charles I was no exception. The ideals of the Reformation had reached full expression, affecting even the sphere of politics, and the Puritans were the vehicle in which these ideals had traveled. They terminated in Charles' execution.

And, no one was more single mindedly devoted to the Bible, and the political implications of its truths than the Puritan, Oliver Cromwell (1599–1659), the man primarily responsible for the king's beheading. He was England's greatest 17th-century statesman and a military genius who, although lacking formal military training, was never defeated in battle. To his dismay, he eventually replaced the king, ruling England as Lord Protector. He was offered crown and monarchy but refused it.

To the ideas planted by Cromwell and his Puritan peers, we owe most of our religious and political liberty, the inception of capitalism, the birth of the scientific revolution, and the advent of denominationalism. Cromwell represented the Puritan ideals well.

PURITAN CARICATURES

Who were the Puritans? They were not a denomination but a spiritual movement of reform scattered throughout England's churches. During the 1560s the Reformation failed to adequately purify the Church of England. Many clamored to go all the way with the Bible. They were derogatorily labeled "Puritans."

"Throughout western culture the image aroused by the word *Puritan* is killjoy," notes Jacques Barzun. "In the United States he is the thin-lipped New Englander who passed 'blue laws' against all innocent pleasures, his only pastime being to hang witches."³

The facts quickly disprove this caricature, promoted by popular literature such as *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*. In fact, the Puritans wore bright clothes, danced, were excellent businessmen, ardently promoted higher education, were the first to allow multiple religious denominations in one country, and knew how to enjoy life. When the good ship *Arabella* sailed for New England in the 1630s with a cargo

bound for the New England Puritans, she carried 10,000 gallons of wine (50,000 fifths), and 42 tons of beer, but only 14 tons of fresh water.⁴ When the Indian, Squanto, walked into the hut of the first Pilgrim⁵ settlers at Plymouth Colony they immediately did what all good Puritans do — offered rum and ale.

The spiritual tide that began with the Reformation in 1517 hit its high-water mark with the Puritan movement. The "Puritans shine before us as a kind of beacon light," notes J.I. Packer, "over-topping the stature of the majority of Christians in most eras."⁶

Now that we know something of the Puritans, let's further examine the life and times of Oliver Cromwell, one of the great Puritan leaders. The epochal conflict into which he was born does much to explain his life.

THE GREAT CONFLICT

James I (1566-1625) and his son, Charles I, assumed the Divine Right of Kings. This was the doctrine that the king should be head of the National Church, ruling that church through bishops subordinate to his power. Both James and Charles I believed the King spoke for God and that the King's word was to be mediated through the bishops of the State church. In other words, since the King spoke for God, James and Charles both believed that their subjects' consciences should be bound by the King's command.

However, the Reformation, which began to influence England just before James' birth, taught the "the priesthood of all believers." This was the idea that every man can, and should, bypass the king and his bishops, hearing from God directly through Scripture. Therefore, they believed it was paramount that the State give men liberty of conscience. Second, the Bible taught equality of all men, that all men are equal before the judgment seat of Christ, and that all, king and commoner, were equally subject to the law of God. These were radical ideas in the 17th century.

BIOGRAPHY

When Oliver was born, in 1599, the Divine Right of Kings had been accepted political theory for hundreds of years. The official State religion was Anglicanism, and no other denominations were allowed. Churches that "separated" or "dissented" were brutally persecuted. Many were hung or tortured for worshiping outside of the Anglican church.

Oliver was born into a middle-class family near Huntingdon, in the vicinity of Cambridge. Little is known of his youth. He studied law at Cambridge, but dropped out before completion.

During Cromwell's youth, the power of Puritan preaching radically transformed England. These preachers were uniquely gifted and empowered by God. After preaching for 2 hours, Laurence Chaderton tried to quit: "My God sir, don't stop. Go on! Go on!" urged his congregation — such was the common hunger for God's Word.⁷ In fact, the impact of Puritan preaching on England during Cromwell's youth is one of the phenomenons of Church history.

We know little of Cromwell's conversion except that sometime in his late twenties he became a victim of this powerful Puritan preaching. From that day forward, his life revolved around the crown rights of King Jesus.

In 1625, James I died, and his son, Charles I, ascended the throne. Three years later the village of Huntingdon elected Oliver to represent them in Parliament. At this time most members of Parliament were middle-class Puritans soaked in the biblical presuppositions mentioned above. The King's Divine Rights and the Puritan Priesthood of All Believers were coming into increasing conflict. Charles asked Parliament and the nation to submit to his governance. Parliament asked Charles, like all men, to submit to the law of God and the law of the land. Although Charles was an honorable man, capitulation to this request was unconscionable.

By 1642 their differences had became irreconcilable. Parliament and the King raised armies and the first English Civil War began. The war was over assumptions. Should biblical or traditional presuppositions about men's consciences and the role of civil government prevail?

GENERAL CROMWELL

Although Cromwell's background was that of a humble farmer and village lawyer, he possessed a gift for military leadership that neither he nor his friends foresaw. In 1642, knowing nothing about the military, he returned home to raise a troop of cavalry. His martial abilities appeared early, giving him a decisive role in the Parliamentary victories of Marston Moor (1644), (where he was nicknamed "Old Ironsides"), and later Naseby (1645).

As his successes mounted, Parliament increased his responsibilities until he soon commanded armies. He recruited young men with deep piety and vibrant faith. Ignoring established custom, he promoted officers on the basis of ability not social class. His troops marched into battle singing Psalms. His army set aside days for repentance and fasting, and devoted themselves to the preaching of their Puritan chaplains. And, everywhere Oliver went, victory followed.

In 1646, Parliament defeated the King's armies, and the first Civil War ended. King Charles agreed to share power with Parliament, allowing some liberty of conscience, and replacing bishops with a Presbyterian government. However, behind the scenes he deceitfully outmaneuvered Parliament, enlisting the aid of Scotland and Ireland to start a second civil war.

CHARLES' EXECUTION

A second Civil War began. It cost thousands of lives and much suffering. While Cromwell's army quickly defeated the Irish and Scotch, Parliament, controlled by the Puritans, felt bound to apply justice without favoritism, even to the King. Charles had broken the law. He had committed treason. Like all men, he must be judged impartially. The King was not above, but under the same law of God as his citizens.

In January 1649 Parliament tried Charles I for treason, found him guilty, and executed him in the fashion of men. Without Cromwell's leadership and commitment to biblical justice it would not have happened. This event was the genesis of modern liberty, and it arose from the compost of the biblical presuppositions preached by the English Puritans.

THE PROTECTORATE

Cromwell and his men replaced the King with Parliament, hoping that godly members of Parliament would cease the reigns of power and initiate a period of peace and justice. But Parliament fell into such bickering and infighting that it proved ineffective and could not rule.

To prevent chaos, Cromwell temporarily ceased the levers of power. Parliament offered him the crown in 1657, but he refused. Reluctantly, he ruled as Lord Protector until his death in 1658. It was a time of great economic prosperity and peace for England.

After Cromwell's death, England looked back over two civil wars and yearned for peace and stability. Parliament called Charles' son to return from his exile on the continent and assume the crown his father had lost. Embittered by his father's death, Charles II persecuted the Puritans and tried to reinstate much of what his father had lost.

In 1688, after the death of Charles II and his son, Parliament passed a group of laws known as the "Glorious Revolution." They institutionalized the principles for which Oliver and the Puritans fought the civil wars.

CROMWELL'S CHARACTER[®]

Despite opinions to the contrary, Cromwell was a man of sincerity, tolerance, and godliness. For example, during the first Civil War Parliament raised his pay to 1,600 pounds, an immense sum of money in those days, but Oliver offered to return 1,000 pounds per year to the war effort.⁹ After he became Lord Protector, he extended religious toleration to Baptists, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists — unheard of leniency in his day. In fact, he was the first modern head of state to allow different denominations to freely operate in the same country.

His letters reveal a man of deep piety, sound biblical learning, and unshakable faith. For example, to his daughter-in-law he wrote, "I desire you both to make it above all things your business to seek the Lord: to be frequently calling upon Him, that He would manifest himself to you in His Son."¹⁰ This Christ-centered attitude animates his correspondence to family, friends, and statesmen.

SUMMARY

God raised up the Puritans and Oliver Cromwell to "Pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 1:10, NRSV). "Never again," notes Samuel Rawson Gardiner, did there appear in England a persecuting Church supporting itself on royal absolutism; a monarchy resting its claims solely on divine right; a Parliament defying the constituencies by which it had been elected as well as the Government by which it had been summoned."¹¹ For all this we owe a debt to Cromwell and the Puritans for whom he spoke.

Benjamin Hart contends that America owes its political and religious freedoms, not primarily to the Romans and Greeks, but to Cromwell and the Puritans whom our founding fathers fervently admired.¹² If this is true, America owes a great debt to brave Oliver and the Puritan saints.



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Mercy, Baker. You can contact him at 509-448-3979.

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FINANCIAL

BY RANDALL K. BARTON

THE GIFT OF GIVING IN YOUR CHURCH

he seven motivational gifts in Romans 12 serve distinct purposes in the body of Christ:

- Prophecy serves the church by declaring the truth regarding ministry and motives, guiding the church in a new direction, or putting it back on the right track.
- Service provides for the practical, everyday needs of a church.
- Teaching shares God's Word systematically so it comes alive to the hearers.
- Encouraging (exhorting) helps others mature in their faith and reach their spiritual potential through transparent relationships.
- Leadership (organization) designs organizational structures that enable the body of Christ to collectively produce far greater results than believers could ever accomplish individually.
- Mercy acts as the glue that holds the church together through love, sensitivity, gentleness, kindness, and empathy.
- Giving contributes with extraordinary generosity to meet the needs of the body of Christ.

Unfortunately, the church has far too often focused on developing a few of the motivational gifts and ignored the others. A healthy church will have all seven gifts in operation all of the time.

One of the motivational gifts listed in Romans 12 is giving. This refers to those in the body of Christ who have been given a special spiritual empowerment to contribute to meet the needs of others.

This special gift is not about tithing — that is for every believer. Rather, it is a deep understanding of the law of sowing and reaping that motivates someone to share his or her available resources above and beyond what would be considered the norm.

Consider these characteristics of this gift:

- It is given from the Lord.
- It is not dependent on an amount of resources but the extreme generosity with which they are shared.
- It is always joyful.
- It is often anonymous.
- It is never reluctant.
- It is dispensed to meet the needs of the body of Christ.
- It becomes a specific answer to someone's specific prayer.
- The gift in operation in the church challenges others in their spiritual walk.
- The gift in operation allows people to testify to what God has done.

Consider how the gift and grace of giving can be encouraged and nurtured in the church today.

MODEL COMPASSION GIVING

For many in the church, a tremendous opportunity to develop this gift is through compassion ministry. How many remember their first experience of helping someone in need and how sharing of their abundance compared to their lack created a lasting realization that giving was a motivational gift God had given them?

Unfortunately, too often the opportunity to exercise this latent motivational gift is not systematically developed in the church, nor are frequent opportunities provided within the body of Christ.

In fact, because of an unbiblical fear that compassionate outreach translates into a social gospel, the church too often has left secular society to fill the void of compassion ministries. This has not only resulted in compassion without a moral compass in America, but it has also resulted in our exporting that idea around the world.

The God of the Bible is a model of compassion. The Gospels have many instances of how Jesus was moved with compassion and then acted on it in a variety of ways — teaching, healing, prayer, or feeding the people. In Mark 6:30–44, Jesus fed the 5,000 physically as well as spiritually. Compassion giving opens doors for the gospel.

Compassion giving ministers to the Lord and honors God. Matthew 25:37 says, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?" In verse 40, the Lord answered, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these ... you did for me." Proverbs 14:31 says, "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God."

Churches need to model compassion to their congregation through a variety of activities. Here are some practical ways that a church can model compassion giving:

• Provide regular designated giving opportunities for a particular compassion need, a project around the church, youth camp scholarships, gifts for refugees overseas, Convoy of Hope, Christmas gifts for underprivileged children, etc. (Plan the appeal in advance and adequately communicate the need. It is usually more effective if taken as a separate offering.)

- Connect the giving opportunity to the people being helped. While many will respond to an emotional appeal, people often don't give because of a lack of connectedness to a ministry or cause. People give primarily to help *people*, not organizations. Show a video, distribute literature, or have a guest speaker or missionary.
- Demonstrate compassion giving in action, such as giving away a car to a single mom in a Sunday service.
- Send contributions *and* volunteers to a local ministry or compassion organization, such as a soup kitchen, prison ministry, or teen pregnancy home.

The goal isn't to have the compassion ministry end at the church but to serve as a catalyst for congregants to show compassion outside the doors of the church.

CHALLENGE GENEROSITY

Another way to nurture the gift of giving is through the process of challenging others to give. First Timothy 6:17,18 says, "Instruct those who are rich ... to be generous and ready to share" (NASB).

At first it may be awkward, but to "provoke" one another to good works (Hebrews 10:24, KJV) could help others experience the thrill of generous giving for the first time and realize that they have the gift of giving. This creates a wonderful opportunity to multiply this gift in the body of Christ.

A church can challenge its congregants to generous giving through:

- children giving to Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade.
- youth ministries through Speed the Light.

- women's ministries through the Touch the World Fund.
- men through Light for the Lost.
- capital campaigns for the building fund or expansion.
- youth setting goals for giving.
- pastoral leadership sharing personal examples of how they have been challenged in giving generously, as King David did in 1 Chronicles 29:1–14.

If you struggle with challenge giving in your congregation, remember that it is a *privilege* for a giver to give and sow into good soil with spiritual growth and eternal results (Matthew 6:19,20). Generous giving also provides an opportunity for a generous blessing (2 Corinthians 9:6).

CREATE DISCIPLINED GIVING

Disciplined giving refers to those who have exercised their gift by setting personal giving goals and celebrating when these goals are met. The disciplined giver sets everhigher goals, often as a percentage of income or even assets. Those who exercise their spiritual gift of giving through discipline will model attributes of strict budgeting, debt elimination, and a pattern of savings in conjunction with Kingdom generosity.

When people discover financial freedom through financial discipline, they also often discover they have the gift of giving. Following are some practical ideas for creating disciplined giving in your church:

- Host financial freedom Sunday School classes or seminars on budgeting and personal finance.
- Have people testify what God has done in their finances as they have learned to honor God with their giving. Don't pick the wealthiest congregant; do like Jesus and honor the widow who gave her mites. Some churches video a series of 30-second testimonies to provide quality and time control.
- Precede the offering by a short Scripture on stewardship. When you consider there are 2,350 references related to money and stewardship in the Bible, you will never run out of relevant Scriptures.
- Consider a bulletin insert with a stewardship challenge. The goal is to elevate the offering to a spiritual moment while providing diverse ways to challenge people to give.
- Take advantage of technology and make giving via electronic transfer available.
- Giving appeals by mail gives congregants an opportunity to develop discipline in giving and the church opportunities to raise funds for special projects away from the pulpit. Always include a return envelope and thank them for their faithfulness.
- Send quarterly giving reports as a record of how congregants are doing. Some churches provide monthly giving statements, including return envelopes.

CONCLUSION

The gift of giving should be in operation in one form or another in your church every week. This does not refer to passing the offering plate to collect tithes. Rather, the gift of giving is expressed in the lives of those who have been given that gift and demonstrate that gift in your congregation.

Pastor, ask yourself: *How often is the gift of giving allowed expression in my church to lift up the body of Christ?* While you are at it, check the other six motivational gifts. When all seven are in operation, your church will be effective, vibrant, and balanced.



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A VIEW FROM THE PEW

VOLUNTEERISM

Here are some suggestions to encourage volunteerism among those who attend your services.

G reeters, teachers, musicians, visitation teams, altar workers, custodians, ushers, fellowship coordinators. Every church needs them, but not every church has an easy time recruiting or retaining them. What can you do to encourage volunteerism among those who attend your services? Let me make a few suggestions based on observations and first-hand experience.

ESTABLISH PURPOSE

Each church should determine the purpose of its volunteer opportunities. In Acts 6, the apostles appointed seven men to take care of the business of the Christian community — waiting on tables and taking care of the widows — so the apostles could give themselves to "prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (verses 3,4, KJV). Volunteers can relieve the pastor of the logistics of running church programs, so he or she can focus on pastoral care.

In a 1991 article in *The Door*, Eugene Peterson, long-time pastor and Christian writer, suggests a model that supports this proposition. He says, "The laity should be committed to doing the real ministry of the church and the pastor should be

WOW! IF HE CAN COMMEND THAT PERFORMANCE, JUST THINK HOW MUCH HE'D APPRECIATE WHAT I CAN DO!

committed to the spiritual direction of the laity."¹ This model may require some structural overhaul or new ways of thinking. The empowering of laity to run church programs to release pastors for pastoral care enlivens those workers beyond keeping programs going for their own sake.

Another purpose of volunteering is how the work matures individual believers. Ephesians 4:11–15 implies that the diversity of gifts is for "perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body ... that we henceforth be no more children ... but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (KJV). Although we generally read this passage as describing the effect of preaching on others, it could also be read as the results of the work of the ministry on the ministers themselves. Paul says "until we all," even we who are "speaking the truth in love," grow up or mature. Everyone knows that the quickest way to learn anything is to teach it to someone else.

A friend told me that he had been going to church for years, listening to sermons

and church school lessons, absorbing and absorbing, using church to let others put back what the week had taken out. One day, he realized he should stop taking and start giving. It was time for him, at his level of absorption, to pour himself out for others. Since his vocation was teaching, the obvious place for him to start was the classrooms of the church.

A third purpose of volunteers is the fostering of community among members of the church. Ephesians 4:16 says that when the individual members of the body of Christ minister together (the "unity of faith," verse 13), the "whole body" will be "joined together" by what "every joint supplies," which will "increase" the community through the edifying work of love.

In one church we attended while I was pregnant, I was asked to lead a discussion group for a 10-week, adult Bible study. The course ended three weeks before the baby arrived. Because we were using a set curriculum with simultaneous discussion groups, the church offered training to group facilitators. Through those training sessions I met other women leading other groups. These women gave us a baby shower just before our daughter was born. One woman put our name on the list to receive a baby blanket from another group of church women. Through them I met other women active in volunteering in the church. One simple response to a call for involvement and I was plugged in to the network of the church.

EXHIBIT TRUST

If the purpose of lay workers in a church is clear, then the next best thing the clergy can do to foster volunteerism is to show they trust the workers to do what they are asked. In another article, Peterson relates a story about how his church adapted to his desire to leave off micromanagement and focus on pastoral care. Two weeks after he gave control of church affairs to the deacons, his stewardship committee met. He says, "I walked into the meeting uninvited. The chairman of the group looked at me and asked, 'What's the matter? Don't you trust us?' I admitted, 'I guess I don't, but I'll try.' I turned around, walked out, and haven't been back since."² Although he says he hasn't always agreed with the deacons' choices, he has found the freedom to focus on pastoral ministry more than made up for the difference.

I witnessed another example of extraordinary pastoral trust while visiting a church in another city. Instead of simply listing requests before prayer, the pastor mentioned each need by name. He then looked out over the congregation and asked, "Who will check on Mary this week?" "Who is willing to take a meal to George and Ann?" In each case, a member of the congregation raised a hand in response, taking on the visitation responsibility for the week. What amazing trust that pastor had, to rely on his people to meet needs. And what incredible community that practice must have fostered among those people!

PROVIDE DIRECTION

If turning over the inner workings of a church to laity is a scary thought, it needn't be. A pastor can establish commonsense guidelines to encourage volunteers to stay committed at many levels.

First, ask lay leadership to establish a system for announcing needs, contacting workers, and training them. In the case of the church that recruited me to facilitate a Bible study, a woman who knew my name and my face — more important, whose name and face I knew — called me and asked if I would be willing to participate. The church provided ample training, materials, and support. I never once felt I had been handed a group and told to "go for it."

At a different church, however, after a few months of attending, I talked once or twice to the Christian education director about teaching a class of adults if needed. He often cited a pressing need for adult classes, but never specified what the system for setting one up might be. I felt he expected me to come up with the topic, set the dates, and make the announcements to a congregation I barely knew. Even my generally gregarious nature shrank from so much responsibility before a body to which I did not yet feel connected. I suppose if I had plunged in, some community ties might have been forged, but I was not willing to take that risk without more direction from leadership. And if I wasn't willing, it's no wonder hardly anyone else came forward to teach.

Second, be sure that the church isn't sending mixed signals about certain classes of volunteers. I have heard of more than one situation in which a church or parachurch organization used (or hired) women with children to work full- or part-time

IF TURNING OVER THE INNER WORKINGS OF A CHURCH TO LAITY IS A SCARY THOUGHT, IT NEEDN'T BE.

(we know that there's no such thing as "part-time" church work, even if it's called that). Those same churches or organizations then allowed pastors or guest speakers to preach negatively about working mothers, effectively alienating the very people who were accomplishing much of the work.

Finally, find public ways to encourage, praise, or otherwise reward those who carry the burden of church leadership voluntarily. You might be surprised at the side benefits of appreciation. Once when I was visiting a struggling new church I became the unwitting recipient of praise that produced a surprising result.

I am nowhere near the kind of musician most pastors would want for their worship team. But this new little work was desperate, and the usual pianist unreliable. I wasn't even a regular member but was driving a long distance every weekend that summer to attend services and encourage the pastors who were family friends. I offered to play the piano, if needed.

One Sunday morning I had a cold — stuffed ears and nose — and little energy. The pastor had no pianist. So I played: badly, falteringly, embarrassingly. After the last song I wanted to disappear downstairs to lead children's church which consisted of the pastor's three children. On my way out the door, I vaguely heard the pastor praise my playing, thanking me in glowing terms for my willingness to serve.

The next Sunday, a woman from the tiny congregation who had faithfully attended since the church opened came forward. She revealed that she had been a regular pianist at her former church, a large congregation in another state, for 11 years. She had been reluctant to get involved as yet.

The pastor's words of appreciation for what was clearly an inadequate performance, but which had come solely from a desire to encourage the new work, spurred another person into realizing that her talents were sorely needed. I can just hear her thoughts, *Wow! If he can commend that performance, just think how much he'd appreciate what I can do!* A volunteer's faithfulness, even outside her comfort zone, led to the growth of other volunteers in the fledgling community.



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ENDNOTES

1. "Subversive Spirituality." *The Door*, November/December 1991 as quoted in Eugene Peterson. *Subversive Spirituality*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

2. "Haphazardly Intent: An Approach to Pastoring" *Leadership*, Winter 1981 as quoted in Peterson, Eugene. *Subversive Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

COLLEGE BY ROBERT H. SPENCE

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

housands of students on Assemblies of God college and university campuses this spring are preparing for service to the Lord, the church, and the world. Many of these students are in their final semester and are looking forward to commencement and assuming vocational responsibilities. Some of these graduates already know where they will be going while others are still praying for divine direction.

Receiving a degree is seen by some as the concluding and crowning event of a long and arduous educational journey. For others, the academic ceremony will simply be an acknowledgement of one's achievement along the path of lifelong learning.

A concluding semester can be a time to review the list of courses taken over the past 4 years to make sure all graduation requirements have been satisfied. This final

PEOPLE WHO ARE AFRAID FIND IT DIFFICULT TO EXERCISE FAITH.

semester can also be a time for asking: *What has the Lord been teaching me through my educational experiences?* and *What are the provisions He has made for me up to this point?* With gratitude for past blessings, members of the Class of 2004 as well as graduates of past years, need to ask, Where do I go from here?

Job applicants are often asked, "Where do you see yourself in 5 years, 10 years, or longer?" For those involved in the work of the Lord, we might ask ourselves, *Where do I expect to be at a future point?* The question is not referring to geographical location or a ministerial responsibility, but where will we be spiritually? What difference will we be making in our world?

In the days before His crucifixion, Jesus intensified His teaching on the Kingdom. His disciples expected an earthly, political domain and had difficulty understanding that His kingdom was not of this world. Utilizing parables, Jesus continually illustrated the precepts of a new order. Repeatedly He said, "The Kingdom of heaven is like..." and then expanded their horizons by sharing profound truth.

One of the most familiar passages in which Jesus describes the Kingdom is the

Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30). Innumerable sermons have been preached about God's giving gifts or talents to every servant according to his or her ability and the accountability He requires. From this parable we understand that reward will be based on what we do with what we have. Everyone will answer for his or her potential and performance.

This parable also provides meaningful guidance in responding to opportunity. We sense excitement and joy as servants are commended, "Well done good and faithful servant." We feel sadness when one is told to surrender what he has and give it to someone else because he did not do what his master has asked him to do. The principles found in this teaching speak to the question: Where do we go from here?

Assemblies of God college faculty and staff are dedicated to helping gifted 21st-century followers of Jesus hear words of commendation rather than words of rebuke. Spirit-filled and Spiritdirected faculty use Scriptures such as Jesus' parables to identify profiles of ministry that result in eternal reward. They also point out possible ways the embarrassed and humiliated servant could have changed to make it possible for him to have received the same rewards his fellow workers received.

It is not only the student or graduating senior who has opportunity to ask, *Where will I be spiritually in the future that I may receive the Master's commendation?* Every one of us can be challenged by that question. We can ask the Holy Spirit to apply the truths Jesus shared with His disciples as He told the story of a servant who could have heard, "Well done, good and faithful servant," but did not.

First, we need to be honest with ourselves about our gifts. One of the servants in the parable was given one talent. He would gain nothing by pretending he had five or wishing he had two. Likewise, we must be honest with ourselves. The Lord has positioned us in a place of ministry with opportunities to serve. Fantasizing about different giftings or resenting those with different opportunities leads to disappointment.

Second, we need a right attitude toward those with whom we work. The servant's attitude toward his master is questionable. The servant entrusted with one talent, when asked to account for his stewardship, made accusatory remarks about the expectations of his master. The other servants do not speak of the master as being a "hard" man with unreasonable expectations. Our attitudes become lenses through which we see people and circumstances. A change in attitude has a remarkable way of changing the interpretation we give to other people and their actions.

Third, we should deal with our fears. Jesus allowed His disciples a glimpse of the effect fear had in the unfaithful servant's actions. The servant said, "I was afraid." We are not given details, background, or other events that shaped this servant's life. However, people who are afraid find it difficult to exercise faith. We must overcome fear to be where the Lord wants us at a future time. Jesus often charged His disciples: "Fear not."

Fourth, we must give attention to character. The servant with one talent accused his master of being unreasonable and described his own fearfulness. The master replied by identifying areas of this servant's life that needed changed. The servant had control to change these flaws. The master described him as "wicked" and "lazy." One word describes those qualities: *character*.

Education at an Assemblies of God college is not intended to only transfer facts from an instructor to a student. Covering material or memorizing vast amounts of knowledge cannot take priority over developing a heart and nature that know the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we need to accept help that is available. The humiliated servant who lost what had been entrusted to him could have had a totally different conclusion had he accepted the help that was available to him. The master even questioned why he did not allow others to assist him. If we are going to be where God wants us to be at a point in the future, we must accept help from those the Lord places in our lives to accomplish the vision and burden He placed within our heart. Then we will be where God desires us to be now and in the future.



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LET'S TALKABOUT ISLAM

ISLAM — A BRIEF HISTORY

WHO WAS MUHAMMAD?

In A.D. 570, a boy was born to a widow in the city of Mecca, in what is now Saudi Arabia. He was named Muhammad. At 40, Muhammad was alone in a cave. He went into a trance and heard something like jingling bells in his ears and a voice telling him to recite.

When Muhammad consulted with others about what that might be, he was told that God, the creator of heaven and earth, had chosen him to be a prophet to the Arabs. In those days, Arabs worshiped many gods, the chief of whom was Allah, that is, "the God."

Meccans felt threatened. Their religion went back many generations and now Muhammad was telling them to worship only God and discard all other gods. They reacted with hostility toward him and his claims. "Dreamer," said some of them. "Disillusioned," said others. Still others believed he was demon-possessed.

Over a period of 12 years only 75 people — mostly his slaves, friends, and family members — accepted Muhammad's claims and converted to Islam. In A.D. 622, he and his followers escaped for their lives from Mecca and settled in Medina. Immediately after that, it looked like nothing could stand in their way. Muhammad's followers gained converts through intrigue and threats, temptations, wars, gifts, and bloodshed.

Muhammad's trances continued and along with them came more "recitations." Several years after Muhammad's death, these recitations were collected together to form the *Qur'an*, the holy book of Islam. In addition, stories about what Muhammad said and did were collected to be a guide of behavior for his followers. These collections are called "*The Hadith*." Muslims go to the *Qur'an* to find out what God says to them and to the *Hadith* to find out how to follow Muhammad's example in life's various situations and experiences.

ISLAMIC EXPANSION

At the beginning, Islam claimed to be a religious and social reformation for pagan Arabs. But as tribes, villages, townships, countries, and almost whole continents fell into the hands of Muslims, it became clear that Islam had a goal that extended far beyond Arab reformation. Within two decades and with lightning speed, Arabs conquered the five most important cities in Eastern Christendom: Damascus, Antioch, Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Alexandria. Within 100 years of Muhammad's escape from Mecca, Islamic troops had conquered the areas known today as Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, northern Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Iran, Mesopotamia, parts of India, Spain, and Armenia. Later, the Mediterranean Sea was almost like a lake inside Islamic territory, "Allah-u Akbar," the Muslim call to prayer, was heard right at the gates of the Vatican, and the Catholic Pope paid religious taxes to Muslims for 2 years.

Today Islam claims a hold on more than 1 billion people. This means that about one person out of every five is Muslim. Islam claims adherents in almost all countries of the world.

Even in the West, Islam is spreading very fast. Islam is the second largest religion in the United Kingdom and in France. According to some claims, there are 7-9 million Muslims in the United States.

ISLAMIC INFLUENCE

In addition to its numerical power, Islam has vast strategic strength because huge areas in Asia, Africa, and Europe are considered Muslim lands.

IS ISLAM REALLY A RELIGION OF PEACE?

Since September 11, 2001, how often have you read or heard that Islam is a religion of peace? It isn't. Islam is a system based on the use of physical power to reach one's goals. Both the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* encourage Muslims to use the sword ... to do battle ... to shed blood. Most Muslims are peace-loving people, but Islam is not a religion of peace.

How can we explain this apparent contradiction? In Mecca, Muhammad was weak and oppressed. When he and his followers moved to Medina, he became strong. There is a vast difference between the tone and attitude of the revelations that came to Muhammad in Mecca and those that came in Medina. Both sets of revelations are included as parts of the *Qur'an*. Consider this:

- In Mecca he is ordered to be patient with those who oppose him (*Qur'an* 73:10). In Medina he is ordered to kill them (*Qur'an* 2:191).
- In Mecca he is ordered to be kind to Christians and Jews (*Qur'an* 29:46). In Medina he is ordered to kill them if they do not convert to Islam (*Qur'an* 9:29).

When Muslims quote qur'anic verses that talk about peace, they are using the older teachings that, though still in the *Qur'an*, were canceled by the newer ones. Muslims control all the southern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, all of the Red Sea, more than half of the Black Sea, and more than two-thirds of the Caspian Sea. Muslims also control the most important water passages in the world; the only exception is the Panama Canal. They control the Suez Canal, the Straits of Gibraltar, the Dardanelles, the Bosporus, the Straits of Hormuz, and the Straits of Bab El Mandab. Three of the world's five greatest rivers are in Muslim lands — the Nile (most of it), the Euphrates, and the Tigris.

The Muslim world produces more than one-fourth of the world's consumption of oil, and it owns more than 60 percent of the world's known reserves of oil.

Islam is characterized by solid religious unity in spite of its many sects and myriads of subsects. Staunch enemies may still remember that as Muslims they are brothers in the faith. Muslims respond readily to agitation often without considering reasons or goals. They need only to be told that the issue is a religious one and that their community is in danger to move en masse, demonstrating and shouting that Allah is great.



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"I would fix it, but it's been handy in illustrating to the people how close the lightning struck to the back pew." © 2004 Jonny Hawkins

FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY BY GAIL D. JOHNSEN

THREE SACRIFICES A PASTOR'S WIFE SHOULD NEVER MAKE

he role of a pastor's wife is a privilege, and yet attached to it are ambiguous expectations, a degree of loneliness, and sacrifices — some of which she should never make.

IDENTITY

In a survey by *Just Between Us* (a magazine for pastors' wives) the No. 2 need of pastors' wives was finding a sense of self-worth. The third most expressed need was for clear and healthy expectations. Both these needs center around one's identity.

FOR ALL THE EMOTIONAL WEARINESS AND THE SPIRITUAL BATTLES, REMIND YOURSELF OF THE PRIVILEGE OF PARTICIPATING IN SACRED MOMENTS OF A SOUL RESPONDING TO GOD.

If the pastor's wife's identity is that of second best ("Oh, your husband isn't home? Well, I guess you could pray with me.") or her value comes from her association with him, her self-worth is affected. But to be a pastor's wife does not mean giving up your identity.

Soon after my husband and I graduated from Bible college, we became youth pastors. I had little ministry experience and was painfully aware that I did not fit the mold of the perfect pastor's wife, but I determined to be part of the team. I filled in wherever my husband needed me. His success, I decided, was our success. Soon I was able to say no to areas which did not fit and yes to areas in which God had gifted me. I not only found fulfillment in walking in God's purposes, but also had something to say.

Knowing your calling and gifting helps you remain true to yourself and faithful to the Lord's call on your life.

FAMILY

Ministry can overshadow all aspects of our daily lives; and, if not managed, is a prescription for resentment and a recipe for disaster. Usually the first thing relegated to the back burner is family. Sacrificing time and energy with none left over for family can contribute to alienation that may lead to rebellious children or even divorce.

Diligently guard time with your family. Schedule a regular date night/day with your spouse (and keep it) or a weekly family night. Over the years, our family night has evolved into playing games around a table. It usually includes popcorn or nachos. Develop rituals such as morning coffee together with your spouse or Saturday breakfast at McDonalds with your kids. Rituals will change as your family grows.

My teenage son has the habit of coming into our bedroom at night, after he arrives home. We wait for him. He sits on our bed and hangs out. We laugh. We tease. We talk. Sometimes it's nothing more than discussing his algebra test the next day or as heavy as how his friends impact his life.

When our four children leave home, I want them to recognize what a

THREE SACRIFICES YOU SHOULD MAKE

1. Guilt. Whether it's from outside or self-imposed, there's a lot of guilt associated with being a pastor's wife. "Oh, you work outside the home?" "Why weren't you at the baby shower for Susie?" "There's no one else to teach the Rainbows." "Honey, can we have the board over for a BBQ this Friday?" There is a tendency to feel if you don't do it, it won't get done. Give yourself permission not to do it all. Say no, when needed. Remind your husband your first priority is your family.

2. Bitterness. Some have said that ministry would be wonderful if it weren't for people. People will let you down; they will disappoint you, even deliberately hurt you. Hurtful words, false accusations, violated trust ... all have the potential to simmer in your soul and poison it. Choose to love. Choose to forgive (Ephesians 4:31).

3. Comparison. Comparing your church, ministry, family, husband, and finances to anything/anyone else will eat at you from the inside out. From this self-inflicted disease a critical spirit will grow and infect your soul. Don't let it. Take your thoughts captive. Develop a grateful heart. Find out what it means to discover God's presence, power, and purposes in the place to which He has called you.

wonderful privilege ministry is, but it was never more important than them. I want them to know they were valued and deeply loved. When they are gone, I look forward to shared (quiet) moments, not with a stranger, but with my lover, my confidant, and my best friend.

JOY

The financial burden can be overwhelming. People's demands on your time can be crippling. Constant juggling between family and ministry can leave you exhausted. Whatever your situation, don't lose your perspective (Habakkuk 3:17,18). Determine to focus on the joys: the young father who was saved on Sunday ... the adult women who was delivered from drugs ... the marriage that was reconciled.

Rejoice in God's faithfulness. Don't let the whiners derail you. For all the emotional weariness and the spiritual battles, remind yourself of the privilege of participating in sacred moments of a soul responding to God. The hard points and the sacred moments, in tandem, are the brick and mortar of Kingdom building. Most of all, keep your eyes on Jesus.



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THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST MARK 11:27-33

INTRODUCTION:

According to a Colorado Institute of Technology study, four different elements can comprise authority: 1) the authority of competence, 2) the authority of position, 3) the authority of personality, and 4) the authority of character.

MESSAGE:

- 1. Those who question Christ's authority are usually convinced of their sophistication (verses 27,28).
 - a. They want to know if Christ's authority is built-in (verse 28).
 - b. They want to know if Jesus' authority is borrowed (verse 28).

- 2. Those who question Christ's authority are usually confronted with these selections (verses 29,30).
 - a. They are given the option to believe in the supernatural (verse 30).
 - b. They are given the option to believe in the natural (verse 30).
- 3. Those who question Christ's authority are usually concerned about their situation (verses 31,32).
 - a. This can be caused by unbelief (verse 31).
 - b. This can be caused by fear (verse 32).

- 4. Those who question Christ's authority are usually confounded by His silence (verse 33).
 - a. None are so blind as those who will not see (verse 33).
 - b. God does not answer those who will not hear (verse 33).
 - c. God does not explain to those who will not believe (verse 33).

CONCLUSION:

Will we acknowledge the authority of Christ?

—Steve Eutsler Springfield, Missouri

SPEAK UP! EPHESIANS 6:19,20

INTRODUCTION:

Paul asked for prayer that he might speak boldly of the mystery of the gospel.

In Acts, there are several references to Paul speaking boldly: Acts 9:27 (Damascus); Acts 9:29 (Jerusalem); Acts 14:3 (Iconium); Acts 19:8 (Ephesus).

The word "boldly" means: to be confident and assured in spirit and demeanor, outspoken, frankness.

MESSAGE:

- 1. Paul knew his relationship: "I am an ambassador in bonds" (verse 20).
 - a. Damascus road experience (Acts 9:1–20).
 - b. Primary focus of Paul's life (Philippians 3:7–14).
 - c. Paul identified himself as an apostle—one sent forth. (See the opening salutation: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus.)
 - d. Human energy and enthusiasm

are inadequate for long-term ministry. Christ's love constrains us (2 Corinthians 5:14).

- No difficulty can sever the relationship with Christ (Romans 8:35–39).
- 2. Paul knew his message: "make known the mystery of the gospel" (verse 19).
 - a. Paul, a Jewish scholar, referred repeatedly to the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 3:3,5).
 - b. Mystery (scriptural) that which is outside the range of natural comprehension/understanding. Only received by divine revelation.
 - c. Most difficult barrier is often intellect (reason vs. faith).
 - d. As an apostle (ambassador), Paul was speaking the message of the One he represented.
 (1) Knew His heart — relationship.
 (2) Knew His will — Word.
 - (3) Knew His ways life experience.
 - e. Message must be clear to hearer from convinced messenger.
- 3. Paul knew his mandate: "may

speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (verse 20).

- a. Declaring the message is a very special privilege, but it is also an equally awesome responsibility.
- b. Paul felt the weight of this divine commission (1 Corinthians 9:16,17).
- c. This mandate does not depend on:(1) personal preference.
 - (2) human ability/personality.
 - (3) financial resource.
 - (4) organizational structure.
 - (5) geographical location.
 - (6) audience size.
 - (7) degree of sacrifice
 - (2 Corinthians 11:23–28).
- d. The urgency of eternity is before us. Can we do less than give our total energies to our Lord and Master?

CONCLUSION:

Believe that God will give you a clear voice in a world of uncertainty and relative truth.

> —H. Maurice Lednicky Springfield, Missouri

HOW TO BE SPIRITUAL 1 CORINTHIANS 13

INTRODUCTION:

We may point to our use of spiritual gifts, our righteous actions, and our spiritual experiences as proof of our rightness and spirituality. However, these experiences and actions mean nothing to God unless we are displaying Christian character. If we are not being transformed from a self-centered way of life to a life of love, then we are not focusing on what is important to God.

The Corinthian church was pointing to spiritual gifts as proof of its super spirituality, but many of its members' actions were as self-centered, unloving, and ungodly as the secular culture around them.

It is good to pray in the Spirit, but it is even more important to walk in the Spirit.

As Christians, we must make love our goal in everything we do because ...

MESSAGE:

- 1. Love is essential (verses 1--3).
 - a. Without love we produce nothing. (1) We want our lives to count for
 - something. However, it is possible to do work for God and miss the point entirely. What we do, if done for the wrong reasons, will produce little or nothing of value.
 - (2) God has given us spiritual gifts to bless the church, not to promote ourselves. Love dictates that what we do in the service must be focused on meeting the needs of the whole group.
 - b. Without love we are nothing.(1) These strong words are intend
 - ed to get the attention of the proud individual who is focused on using the gifts to be

SEEING JESUS JOHN 20:1-8

INTRODUCTION:

Various people went to the empty tomb on Easter morning. What did they see? How did they see?

MESSAGE:

1. Mark saw only with the eye. The Greek word used is *blepō*, a "somebody" in the assembly. (2) Even the most impressive dis-

- play of miraculous gifts does not make a person a "somebody" in God's sight. God wants to see love inside.
- (3) We can try to impress others, but it is more important to gain God's favor.
- c. Without love we gain nothing.(1) Without love, we gain nothing
 - from doing sacrificial acts of righteousness.
 - (2) God looks at the condition of our hearts and sees beyond our surface activities. He wants to see love working inside, showing itself on the outside.
- d. Love is essential to the Christian life. We need to discover what a loving lifestyle looks like. What is it about love that makes it so important? How do I have love? When we see what God's love is like, we will want to make love our goal in everything we do because ...

2. Love is excellent (verses 4–7).

- a. Love is excellent because of ...(1) What love is (verses 4,7).
 - (a) Patience.
 - (b) Kindness.
 - (c) Persistent.
 - (d) The best choice.
 - (2) What love is not (verses 4-6).
 - (a) Envious.
 - (b) Boastful.
 - (c) Rude.
 - (d) Self-seeking.
 - (e) Easily angered.
 - (f) Delighted by evil.
- b. Love is God's essential requirement for our lives. And we also know about the excellence of

love and what kind of person God is creating us to become. Paul sealed his argument with one more point. We should make love our goal in everything we do because ...

- 3. Love is eternal (verses 8–13).
 - a. Paul placed the gifts the Corinthians prized against the eternal goal — love.
 - b. Paul is not putting down spiritual gifts. Rather, he is putting them into perspective.
 - c. The gifts are a part of what God uses to get us to the goal, but they themselves are not the goal. Love is the goal.
 - d. Gifts are temporary in nature and love is permanent in nature.
 - e. Until we reach perfection in heaven, we need God's grace and spiritual gifts to strengthen us in our weakness and help us along the way.
 - f. Once we have reached the point of completion and perfection in heaven, spiritual gifts will be unnecessary.
 - g. Even faith and hope are only temporary. They are not the goal, but a means to get to the goal of Christlikeness.
 - h. Love is the goal.

CONCLUSION:

Let us be zealous for spiritual gifts. Pray for them. Practice them. Let us go after love and make it our aim in everything we do. May God's love instinctively flow from our lives in every attitude, motive, and action. May we make love our goal in everything we do. It really is the more excellent way.

-Greg Allison, Beech Grove, Indiana

which means "to see or look at."

- 2. Peter saw with the mind. The word used is the *theoreo* basis for the English word theory. In the Greek it means to "check something out or investigate."
- **3.** John saw with the heart. The word used is *eidon*, which

means "to see with the heart and believe.

CONCLUSION:

How do you see Jesus?

—Terry L. Terrell Burlington, Iowa

LIFE IS GOOD IN GOD'S KINGDOM PSALM 29, NIV

INTRODUCTION:

If you have ever met someone of great importance, the experience is unforgettable. You appreciate that you are face-to-face with an important person.

In Psalm 29, King David invites us to pay tribute to the Lord God Almighty. Our Lord reigns in power and glory. When we appreciate this fact, it will provoke two key responses from us.

First, recognizing God's power and glory will cause us to ...

MESSAGE:

1. Approach Him with reverence (Psalm 29:1,2).

How does one enter the presence of royalty? In England, perhaps you would enter a luxurious hall and approach the throne with a bow or curtsy. What would you do or say in the Queen's presence? With gentleness and respect, you would honor her high position by addressing her as "Your Majesty, the Queen."

In the same way, when we approach God in prayer or in worship, we acknowledge that He is our glorious King.

- a. "Ascribe" is linked to bringing a gift to the King as we enter His presence.
 - Our gift is our praise. We proclaim God's awesome power and majesty.
 - (2) We ascribe to the Lord glory (verse 1).
- b. Glory in the Old Testament conveys the idea of heaviness, honor, or reverence. Just as we might say something is a "heavy subject" or a "weighty matter," God's presence is "heavy" or "weighty."
 - As we approach God, we do so in a manner that recognizes His glory.
 - (2) In our increasingly casual culture, it is becoming more common for Christians to treat God in a flippant or light way.
 - (3) Is God's presence near you a

weighty thing? Do you honor Him with your heart, your lips, and your actions?

- **Appl:** Praise is rightfully His by virtue of His position. We are to "ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name" (verse 2).
- Recognizing that God is among us, we should feel compelled to ascribe glory to the Lord.
- (2) It is His right and our duty to respond to Him with reverence.
- d. We should worship the Lord "in the splendor of his holiness" (verse 2).
 - This gives us the mental picture of someone bowing in the presence of a great king.
 - (2) Our physical posture can be an important aid in our worship.

Appl: What is your posture in worship? Do you slouch, or behave in a way that shows inattention or boredom? Let us snap to attention, for our great King has privileged us with an invitation into His throne room.

Second, recognizing God's power and glory will cause us to ...

2. Look to Him with confidence (Psalm 29:3–11).

The magnitude of an earthquake's or tornadoes' power is awesome, but it is also untamed and destructive. Not so with God's power. God uses His awesome power in a controlled way to save and care for His people. God uses His limitless resources to bring strength and peace to those who serve Him.

- a. The same strength that snapped the cedars of Lebanon is available to strengthen God's people (verse 11).
 - The cedars of Lebanon are massive. They can reach a height of 85 feet and their circumference can measure as much as 40 feet.
 - (2) God breaks the cedars of Lebanon simply with His

voice. How much more, then, will the power of God be displayed in His caring for His people?

- b. Throughout the Bible and in life, we see God's power at work.
 - God brought the Children of Israel into the Promised Land.
 - (2) God sent His Son to die in our place and exercised His power by raising Christ from the dead.
 - (3) God's power is expressed each time someone is born again.
 - (4) God's power is demonstrated in our everyday lives. His grace and power are greater than our needs.
- c. God gives His people peace (verse 11).
 - There is a great sense of well-being, wholeness, and security that comes from serving the Lord.
 - (2) He makes our lives complete.
 - (3) We have absolute confidence that our eternal King will never be dethroned.
- d. Life is good in God's kingdom a life of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. No one else comes close to bringing us the kind of peace and sense of wholeness that Christ brings.

CONCLUSION:

What shall we do in response to this? 1. We need to come before Him with reverence, awe, and a posture of worship.

2. We need to worship the Lord, and ascribe to Him glory and strength, worshiping Him in the beauty of His holiness.

3. We need to look to Him with absolute confidence ... our God is King and Lord of all.

4. We need to also expect God to work in our lives and bring peace and wholeness.

—Greg Allison Beech Grove, Indiana

SHED BLOOD — THE SOLUTION TO MAN'S GREATEST NEED HEBREWS 9:22

INTRODUCTION:

There are over 450 references to shed blood in the Old Testament (not including references to sacrifices and offerings) and a multitude of references to the shed blood of Jesus (who fulfilled the Old Testament types) in the New Testament. Therefore, it is important for us to pay attention to statements about shed blood in the Bible.

MESSAGE:

1. What is man's greatest need?

- a. Some would say, "More money" (for better houses, cars, vacations). "For what is a man profited ..." (Matthew 16:26).
- b. Others would say, "Better health." But all eventually die (Hebrews 9:27).

- c. Others might say, "Improved government." There will be no perfect government until Jesus reigns.
- d. Man's greatest need is a right relationship with God (Luke 16:19–26).
- 2. What are some of man's solutions to his greatest need?
 - a. Doing good works. But Scripture states, "not of works" (Ephesians 2:8,9).
 - b. Be religious. The Pharisees were religious but lost (Matthew 5:20).
- 3. What is God's solution to man's greatest need? It is shed blood.
 - a. Blood sacrifice as an atonement offering (Leviticus 1:1–5).
 - b. Blood sacrifice as a peace offering (Leviticus 3:6–8).
 - c. Christ's shed blood as a ransom

for many (Matthew 20:28).

- d. Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away sins (John 1:29).
- e. Christ is Redeemer through His blood (Colossians 1:14; Revelation 5:9).
- 4. What does man do with God's solution to man's greatest need?
 - a. Some ignore or neglect it (Hebrews 2:3).
 - b. Some accept it.

CONCLUSION:

God's solution to man's greatest need can become effective for us as we turn from sin to God in faith (Acts 20:21).

—Ben Richter Winter Haven, Florida

GOING HOME JUSTIFIED LUKE 18:9-14

INTRODUCTION:

Many people wish they could walk through the door of their house with a clean slate, free from guilt and sin. That can happen. A man did many years ago.

MESSAGE:

1. Two (different) men (Luke 18:10).

- a. The Pharisee a religious man. The Pharisees paid tithes, practiced forms of prayer, knew Old Testament Scripture, and professed to be righteous. They did not consider themselves sinners. Many church members and good citizens today do not consider themselves sinners.
- b. The publican a tax collector for Rome. Publicans overcharged people by padding the cost of collection (Luke 3:12,13). They

were considered sinners by fellow Jews, like thieves and murderers are by us (Matthew 9:10–13; 18:17; 21:31,32).

2. Two (different) conditions in prayer.

- a. The Pharisee was proud and self-righteous; he felt he was in need of nothing.
- b. The proud may be judgmental, unteachable, etc. (Proverbs 16:18; James 4:6).
- c. The publican was humble like the repentant Prodigal Son (Luke 15:21).
- **Appl:** Pride can keep people out of heaven.
- 3. Two (different) confessions.
 - a. The Pharisee said he was not an extortioner, unjust, or an adulterer but that he fasted and paid tithes (Luke 18:11,12).
 - b. The publican said, "God be

merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). See Romans 3:27,28. Don't take the good works approach (Romans 4:5).

- 4. Two (very different) results. a. The Pharisee went home still in
- his sins (Luke 18:14). Appl: Sin brings death (Romans 6:23).
 - b. The publican went home justified (Luke 18:14). He was clear before God's law and with heaven in his future.

CONCLUSION:

We can go home justified because Jesus paid the penalty for us (Galatians 3:13). Confess your need and believe in Jesus today (Acts 20:21).

—Ben Richter Winter Haven, Florida

MINISTRY IDEAS

VIDEO TO EMPOWER

In Ezekiel, God used clay tablets and hair to teach His people. Today we can use video as a teaching tool.

Teaching and application of the Word. I videoed the donut-making process at a donut shop to illustrate how a rising donut parallels Christian growth, how hot grease correlates testing times, etc. At the end of this 3-minute presentation, this message flashes: "After watching this video, do you want a donut? After seeing you, do others want Jesus?" Donut shops are now reminders of deeper truths.

Here are a few ways video can empower a response in your church:

Testimonies. How is God moving in your congregation? Videotaped testimonies allow better control of testimony length. Filming may help the one speaking feel more comfortable than in a live service. Filming allows freedom to add photos and other material, and the testimony can be used repeatedly.

Promotions and special events. How can people come to an event unless they have heard about it or seen it advertised? If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a crackling bonfire with rousing music and cowpokes laughing while steaks sizzle will pique interest for a men's bonfire more than a written or spoken announcement. Men will ask, "Where do I sign up?"

Missionary visits. Keep the reason for giving alive. Periodically highlight various missionaries by creating a short video that shows them and their ministry. These videos can also be shown in children's church or Sunday School classes.

Fund-raisers. Nothing beats showing a humorous adaptation of what could happen in a parking lot in disrepair (via youth helpers and ingenuity), if an ambulance had to respond because of so many accidents. People will readily give money for sections of new asphalt. Humor energizes more than pleading.

Leadership training. Do you have procedures for deactivating your new alarm system and several people need refresher training? Do you have a soundboard in the sanctuary that has only half the needed trained volunteers? Video the alarm/sound expert demonstrating the correct procedures. Make copies of the video so leaders can review procedures on their own.

Small-church challenges. So you can't get 30 women in a tight kitchen for a food demonstration on Ladies Night Out? Video a home-kitchen cooking demonstration. Then show the video on Ladies Night Out. Enjoy already-prepared food samples.

Consider your challenges. Then try a video solution. You will notice an empowering response.

—Don Sultz, Aurora, Illinois

SINGLE-PARENT MINISTRY

A friend who was recently divorced said to me, crying, "I don't know

how to do the many things Tom did for me. Who can teach me?"

I wondered, How would I manage as a single parent?

I talked with several church leaders, and we brainstormed about how to minister to single parents.

First, we prayed for them and about how our church could help.

Second, we surveyed the needs of single parents in our church and to our surprise found we had many single parents. Some were inactive members and were excited about having a single-parent ministry.

Third, we provide a free supper for single parents where in a relaxed atmosphere they can present their needs. We offer free childcare to single parents. We ask church members to go to single-parent homes and help with projects, such as cleaning out a garage or gutter. Both men and women are involved in this event held twice a year. A prior sign-up is required with a specific job request to post.

On Mother's Day or Father's Day, one parent offers to take his/her child shopping for the other parent. In the case of a single parent, who will help shop for special occasions? My friend was elated when I took her daughter out to buy her mom a gift. She gave her daughter some money to buy the gift, and I made a small contribution too.

The church has special speakers who offer free seminars on financial planning, tax forms, and home repair. Childcare is provided.

Special times are scheduled for single parents to pray together. We also match newly divorced or widowed singles with older same-gender persons who can offer advice.

Single parents have many needs. Be open to how your church can minister to this group.

-Malinda Fillingim, Rome, Georgia

HONORING VETERANS

Our church honored the veterans of World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and Persian Gulf War on Memorial Day Sunday.

Veterans marched into the sanctuary to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers" and stood across the front. After prayer we recited the pledges to the American and Christian flags.

Each veteran was given a boutonniere of a white carnation, red ferns, and small blue flowers. A table was set up in the foyer for pictures, medals, and other memorabilia veterans wanted to display.

We sang patriotic hymns. Names of deceased veterans whose widows attended our church were read and their pictures displayed in the foyer.

As a WWII veteran, I spoke on "Three Lessons Learned in the Military: Change, Obedience, and Hardiness." The service concluded by playing the recording of Daniel Rodrigues, the singing cop of 9/11, singing "God Bless America."

-Donald Matthews, Conneaut, Ohio

ILLUSTRATE IT

WE ALL HAVE POTENTIAL FOR GREATNESS

Israel Isadore Baline was born to Jewish parents on May 11, 1888, in Temun, Siberia, Russia. His family immigrated to the United States in hopes of a better life, but Izzy grew up in poverty in New York City's lower Eastside. After his father died, Izzy went to work full-time. When he failed to earn as much as his brothers and sisters, he left home at the age of 13 because he didn't want to be a burden to his family. Now homeless, Izzy slept in stairwells and on park benches. He tried odd jobs — selling newspapers, working the docks — but just couldn't make anything work.

Finally Izzy got a job as a singing waiter and dreamed of making a career in music, especially as a songwriter. But there were a few problems. First, Izzy had only reached the third grade. Second, although Izzy taught himself to play the piano, he could only play it in one key — F sharp. Third, Izzy couldn't read music. Throughout his life he would have to rely on a musical secretary to compose music as he thought out the melody in his head.

While serving in the Army during the First World War, Izzy composed a patriotic song and sang it for his musical secretary, Harry Ruby. Ruby listened to the song, frowned, and said, "Not another patriotic song." A discouraged Izzy, now called Irving, threw the song into his trunk of rejects.

There the rejected song stayed for 20 years until on the eve of the Second World War he gave it to singer Kate Smith. The song became so popular most Americans wanted to make it the national anthem. The rejected song was "God Bless America." The songwriter was Irving Berlin.

Despite his limitations in music, education, and opportunities, he wrote more than 1,500 songs and published nearly 1,000. One half of these became hits, 100 went to the top 10, and 35 reached number 1 in the nation.

Hits like "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Blue Skies," and "White Christmas" made Irving Berlin — the poor Russian-Jewish immigrant with little education and no music training — widely recognized as one of America's greatest songwriters.

What limitations do you think you have? What excuses are you making for not succeeding, for not trying? God is your Creator. He is able to take the raw material of your life and fashion you into something great. The Scripture says, "O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand" (Isaiah 64:8, NIV).

—David C. Causey, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

WHO WANTS TO BE A DISCIPLE?

The biggest fear of most basic trainees is that an injury will force them to restart training.

After a worship service a soldier on crutches came forward to speak to the chaplain. The chaplain's 3-year-old daughter listened to the conversation. Later that day the 3-year-old related the story to her grandmother. "Daddy talked to the soldier girl and she was crying."

"Why was she crying, Honey?" Grandma asked.

"She doesn't want to be a disciple," the girl replied.

When Grandma shared this account with her son, he was momentarily puzzled. As he replayed the conversation in his mind, however, it dawned on her, "She doesn't want to be recycled."

Unfortunately, for many of us, what the daughter said is truer than we would like to admit. Being a disciple seems to imply a level of difficulty that is above and beyond the call of duty. Like the soldier on crutches, we expect a certain level of discomfort in life; but when it comes to facing genuine hardship, we feel like the one in charge is asking a little too much.

> —Chaplain Guy Caley, Heidelberg, Germany. Adapted from At Ease.

TREASURES IN HEAVEN

In spring 2003, the United States and its coalition allies successfully liberated Iraq from the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein. In the days following the dictator's demise, the streets of Baghdad were filled with spontaneous celebrations. The crowds waving palm fronds was not unlike the Gospel accounts of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In the days that followed, however, the crowds proved to be as capricious as in Jesus' day.

Protests against the American liberators gave way to lootings and crime. In the midst of the unrest, the Iraqi National Museum was ransacked of priceless antiquities predating the days of the biblical patriarchs. Artifacts documenting the development of mankind were stolen.

On the day after the unthinkable break-in, Moayad Damerji, professor of archeology at Baghdad University and former director general of the Iraqi Department of Antiquities, stood among the broken shards of glass and grieved the loss of his people's identity.

"The Iraqi National Museum is the only museum in the world which shows all the steps in the history of mankind," Damerji said. "These witnesses to our own development have gone, they are gone."

Although the loss of relics and antiquities is a tragedy, the sacking of the Iraqi museum proves a sobering point. If our identity is linked to what can be looted, we are in trouble. Jesus warned against storing up treasures on earth as a way of defining our identity or documenting our worth. He said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19–21, NIV).

-Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois

BOOKREVIEWS

A REVOLUTION OF COMPASSION

Dave Donaldson, Stanley Carlson-Thies (Baker Book House, 201 pp., paperback)

Revolution of Compassion is the first comprehensive work describing the history, intension, and progress of the faith-based and community initiative introduced by President George W. Bush in February, 2001. Dave Donaldson and

Stanley Carlson-Thies give the perfect blend of perspective and expertise on what some call the most controversial issue of American politics today. Donaldson has personal experience with government and faith/church sponsored welfare programs due to the early death of his pastor father. Carlson-Thies provides 25 years of philosophical and political science theory, as well as practical experience in the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives as a Bush appointee. Both men filter their analysis and attitudes through their personal evangelical worldview.

A Revolution of Compassion is a thorough, easy to read story of the process the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. It traces the history of social services and rationale behind the 1996 Welfare Reform Act. The book teaches what is acceptable procedure for a faith-based or community organization that wishes to apply for government grants. The book contains examples of what has worked well for some churches, and what others should avoid.



Donaldson and Carlson-Thies infuse Scripture throughout the book to remind us of the true reason for our service: to follow the Lord's example and "feed His sheep." A Revolution of Compassion is a must read for any church staff, board, or lay ministry that is considering part-

nerships with government, business, or other community organizations. It answers most of the big questions all in one volume.

Reviewed by Joe Fuiten, pastor, Cedar Park Assembly of God, Bothell, Washington.

MINISTRIES OF MERCY: The Call of the Jericho Road

Timothy J. Keller (P & R Publishing, 236 pp., paperback)



In the second edition of *Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road,* Timothy J. Keller offers a wealth of practical information to assist mercyminded churches

in coming to grips with the task of ministering to the needy. The book is divided into two parts: "Principles" and "Practice." "Principles" includes theological exposition of pertinent passages, based on Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). Included with the theological discussion are references to social and psychological studies.

"Practice" provides direction for taking a church from a state of minimal action to becoming fully involved in meeting needs.

This volume wrestles with the hard problems, like helping those who show little inclination to change, when to quit giving, and the difficulty (and necessity) of focusing on both word and deed.

Individuals are urged to have and model a servant heart. Congregations are presented with the need to be proactive in planning, rather than reacting to need. Instructions are included to lead churches through the stages of preparing, mobilizing, and managing ministries of mercy. Numerous church case studies caution readers against pitfalls and recommend winning strategies.

This book is an excellent resource for any individual or church serious about showing Christ's love to the needy by meeting their needs effectively. *Reviewed by Ken Horn, managing editor, Today's Pentecostal Evangel, Springfield, Missouri.Bothell, Washington.*

RESTORERS OF HOPE:

Reaching the Poor in Your Community With Church-Based Ministries That Work *Amy L. Sherman*

(Crossway Books, 256 pp., paperback)

Much that is written about poverty can be depressing. Wearisome debates between left and right, manipulative pieces designed to evoke guilt, rants about welfare reform, endless theorizing, and — perhaps most wearisome of all authors who assert or imply that anyone who disagrees with them lacks true compassion.

BOOKREVIEWS



Amy L.Sherman

proper scriptural context and helps readers understand how a ministry of mercy is foundational to Christian faithfulness. Practical because it explains how God's people can make a difference, providing concrete ideas and clear guidance for establishing ministries that bring good news to those caught in poverty. And encouraging because she profiles several church-based ministries that shine like beacons of hope in this sad world.

Restorers of

Hope, though, is

soundly biblical,

and supremely

encouraging.

Biblical in that

Sherman sets the

entire issue in its

intensely practical,

Any church that imagines it can safely ignore mercy ministry needs to take another look — at both the gospel and society. Those who are discouraged over the apparent lack of impact of Christians in modern society should read *Restorers of Hope* for the evidences of grace Sherman relates.

Restorers of Hope convicted me, encouraged me to greater faithfulness, and demonstrated what thinking Christianly looks like. Reviewed by Denis Haack, founder and director of Ransom Fellowship (www.ransomfellowship.org),

Rochester, Minnesota.

COMMUNITY OF KINDNESS

Steve Sjogren & Rob Lewin (Regal Books, 190 pp., paperback)

Imagine, you are a soldier fresh out of boot camp and on your way to battle. In the mess hall you sit by a veteran who has just returned from the frontlines. "What do I need to know about the conflict?" you ask. What follows is a series of insights and observations about being a soldier based on the veteran's experience. For the church planter, *Community* of *Kindness* is a lunchroom discussion with two respected veteran church planters. Sjogren and Lewin have great insight for church planters and church revitalizers. Their insight isn't the result of careful field research, staunch statistical analysis, or elaborate international surveys. It comes out of the trenches of church planting.

Community of Kindness is a collection of 106 short anecdotal paragraphs discussing various topics like dealing with anger and hiring staff. In five sections the authors share their thoughts on mission, personnel, atmosphere, job descriptions, and resignations.



Community of Kindness is a must read for pastors who want to build churches that impact their communities. The underlying premise of *Community of Kindness* is: The church that meets

the practical needs of its community earns the right to speak to its spiritual needs.

This book is quick and easy to read and will challenge church leaders to think about things that matter in ministry.

Reviewed by Jeff McElhattan, church-planting projects coordinator, Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS OF SEXUAL SIN: The Story of My Life and

Ministry Steve Gallagher

(Pure Life Ministries, 240 pp., paperback)

A life of drugs, promiscuity, and crime promised to take Steve Gallagher to hell. *Out of the Depths of Sexual Sin* recounts his dramatic story. At age 12, Steve responded to an altar call at the church his mother made him attend. "Unfortunately," he writes, "nothing seemed to change in my life afterwards." By ninth grade, he was immersed in the drug culture.

After being sentenced to a juvenile work project for cultivation of marijuana,



Steve went to a revival and gave his heart to Christ.

Immediately, he began witnessing to old friends, but after several months, his faith faltered. He

reverted to his old ways, then returned to the Lord — a pattern that continued for years.

As he entered his twenties his interest in drugs subsided, but another vice gained momentum in his life: pornography and illicit sex. By the time he joined the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department he was a full-blown sex addict. A wonderful return to Christ set him on the path to victory.

Today, Steve and his wife, Kathy, direct Pure Life Ministries, a live-in facility for recovering sex addicts. *Out* of the Depths details the thrilling account of how God's mercy has preserved Steve's life, restored his marriage, and empowered his ministry.

Steve says he can bring another only as far as he himself has come. "If I had a superficial walk with the Lord, that was all I could hope to give others," he writes. "I owe it to these men to grow spiritually so I might better help them."

Steve's story illustrates how God can use a man's worst experiences for His glory — when the man is fully yielded to God. His transparency and humility make *Out of the Depths of Sexual Sin* a powerful book.

Reviewed by Randal Murphree, editor, AFA Journal, American Family Association, Tupelo, Mississippi.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD U.S. MISSIONS SPRING CANDIDATE ORIENTATION

Every year, Assemblies of God U.S. Missions equips dedicated men and women to plant churches, evangelize university campuses, minister on military bases and in occupational settings, and reach diverse cultures and people with life-controlling problems.

The 2004 U.S. Missions Candidate Orientation will be held March 14–17 in Springfield, Mo. Orientation sessions consist of interviews and training and evaluation. Spring orientation helps ensure that candidates are emotionally and spiritually ready for the rigors of missions.

Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a nationally appointed home missionary should contact Assemblies of God U.S. Missions at 417-862-2781, ext. 3252, or visit www.HomeMissions.ag.org.

BENEVOLENCES/DISASTER RELIEF INTERACTIVE CD AVAILABLE

Benevolences Disaster Relief was started in 1965 to help churches affected by natural disasters. Hundreds of churches have received millions of dollars in assistance through this program.

Recently, Disaster Relief increased its focus to include other disaster victims. Financial aid was sent to the 9/11 victims, their families, and the churches and agencies helping in the recovery efforts.

Benevolences Disaster Relief partners with other Assemblies of God and secular disaster relief agencies to give aid in Jesus' name to victims.

April is Disaster Relief month in Assemblies of God churches. Please send your designated Disaster Relief offering to the national Benevolences Department, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

A free interactive Benevolences/Disaster Relief CD is available. The CD contains a video clip about Disaster Relief and other information on Benevolences ministries.

To order this free Benevolences/Disaster Relief Interactive CD go to www.benevolences.ag.org, or order by phone at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2182.

AGED MINISTERS ASSISTANCE DAY

"Out of sight, out of mind," is an expression that often applies to our aged ministers. When ministers are preaching and teaching in our churches, we love and support them. But when age or infirmity removes them from the pulpit, it's easy to forget them.

Aged Ministers Assistance Day, observed Memorial Sunday, May 30, is an opportunity for churches to remember the many pioneer preachers who gave sacrificially during their decades of ministry. Let them know you still care. Approximately \$1 million is needed each year to meet the basic needs of the nearly 500 aged ministers and their spouses receiving assistance from AMA.

AMA Day bulletin inserts are available on the Web at www.benevolences.ag.org, or by calling 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2182.

Send your designated offering to Aged Ministers Assistance, 1445 N. Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

EVANGEL PREPARES ANNUAL EASTER OUTREACH EDITION

For several years *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* has published outreach editions for both Palm and Easter Sundays. The Palm Sunday issue typically features the life and ministry of Jesus, while the Easter edition focuses on Christ's death and resurrection. Churches regularly use the two annual issues for outreach ministry.

Since Palm Sunday falls on April 4 this year, when the *Evangel* distributes its monthly World Missions Edition, the April 11 Easter Sunday edition will present the person of Jesus while demonstrating His purpose as mankind's Redeemer. Thus themes from both special issues will be combined.

Churches will want extra copies of the Easter Outreach Edition for those attending Passion Week services. The issue can be an excellent evangelistic and invitational tool. Churches can use the April 11 *Evangel* prior to Resurrection Day by:

- Distributing it door-to-door in their neighborhoods and communities
- Sponsoring it as a supplement in local newspapers
- Placing it in literature racks at area businesses

To assist churches using the Easter edition for outreach purposes, free customized imprinting will be available on all bulk orders (400 or more copies) placed by Monday, March 15. The imprinting will appear on the back cover of every bulk copy ordered.

Churches are encouraged to order extra copies early to ensure their needs are met. Bulk orders for the *Evangel*'s April 11 edition can be made by calling GPH Customer Service at 1-800-641-4310 and asking for product #69-7415.

SURVEY INCREASES DEMAND FOR EVANGELIO PENTECOSTAL HOY

A 2003 survey of prison chaplains receiving *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* via the Key Bearers program indicated a greater need of the publication for the incarcerated, as well as a severe shortage in the number of the quarterly Spanish *Evangelio Pentecostal Hoy* provided to correctional institutions.

NEWS & RESOURCE

The survey, conducted by the Chaplaincy Department, Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, showed the needed number of Key Bearers-sponsored Spanish *Evangels* jumped last fall from 2,151 to 9,727 copies. The astounding 352 percent increase demonstrates the vital importance of the Key Bearers ministry to incarcerated men and women.

This demand for more *Evangels* comes from the several hundred institutions currently involved in the Key Bearers program. Thousands of other correctional facilities would welcome the publication if it were available to them. The potential outreach of Key Bearers is unlimited.

More supporters of Key Bearers are desperately needed to help meet the current demand and provide the foundation for growth of the ministry. Every dollar donated to Key Bearers sponsors at least four copies of the *Evangel*.

Approximately 1,300 donors currently provide more than 600,000 *Evangels* annually to the incarcerated. Nearly 750,000 copies are needed this year. To help support this need, churches are asked to consider giving just \$1 per week to the Key Bearers program.

If every church in the Fellowship were able to participate, annual support for Key Bearers would increase more than 400 percent. To get your church involved, please call Light for the Lost at 1-800-988-0292 or visit the *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* secured Web site: www.pe.ag.org. More information on Key Bearers can be obtained by sending an e-mail to: lftl@ag.org.

NEW RELEASE BY GPH — PEOPLE OF THE SPIRIT



Preachers, missionaries, and teachers, many without ministry experience, were the raw iron of the Pentecostal movement. The Holy Spirit shaped them to be His instruments of revival. Challenged by skeptics, a lack of resources, and their own human nature, these men and women drew together as a unified fellowship, now known as the Assemblies of God.

For the first time you will hear the collected stories of littleknown men and women and their fellowship. Their commitment to the "new work" of the Lord began the spiritual renewal that continues to spread across the world today. Join respected historian Gary McGee as he relates the triumphant journey of these compelling and astonishing "people of the Spirit."

To order a copy of *People of the Spirit*, call 1-800-641-4310, and ask for item 02PY0457. The cost is \$39.95.

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES — UNLIMITED



Women's Ministries leaders report a positive response to "Women's Ministries — Unlimited." Intent upon changing outdated stereotypes associated with Women's Ministries, national leaders sought input from key district leaders and a professional marketing team. The result is "Women's Ministries — Unlimited," a multifaceted image campaign that portrays the contemporary face of Women's Ministries.

" 'Women's Ministries — Unlimited' emphasizes the unlimited opportunities open to every woman for ministry in the local church and community," says Arlene Allen, national Women's Ministries director.

The campaign theme is also this year's Women's Ministries theme, and was emphasized in National Women's Ministries Day packets mailed to churches.

Eleanor Grossglass, New York District Women's Ministries director, notes, "We needed this campaign to catch the attention of women in their 20s and 30s."

Karen Yancey, Kansas District Women's Ministries director, served as advisor during formation of the campaign and believes it "draws attention and fresh focus to the original guiding purpose of Women's Ministries while bravely launching the department into a new era of relevance."

Many Women's Ministries groups already offer ministry to abuse victims, missions projects, finance seminars, homeschool support groups, weight-loss groups, and mothers groups. Leaders say Bible studies, prayer groups, quilting and crafts events, and other traditional Women's Ministries functions continue to flourish.

"Our churches need to understand that Women's Ministries is not a small group of ladies coming together for a monthly meeting void of purpose," says Allen. "It is ministry to women and ministry by women. It's about every woman finding her gifts, then using them to touch others for the glory of God."

Kay Gross, Ohio District Women's Ministries director, says the campaign is necessary because "Our women are looking to have their needs met. If we are not prepared to reach out to women in relevant ways, they'll go somewhere else, that may not be biblically grounded."

Allen says, "I can see that in two to three years, our Assemblies of God churches will have added many new and unique ministries to women." She adds, "Strong Women's Ministries is a great way to grow churches."

EXPLOITING THE POOR: A WARNING TO MINISTERS

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Some years ago I met a minister who was launching a series of programs to help poor families in his community. As I toured his facility, I kept waiting for him to express his love for the disadvantaged. I expected to hear emotion in his voice or see him get misty-eyed on behalf of the hurting. Instead, all he talked about was the money he'd have at his disposal from government and corporate grants.

I didn't sense a genuine burden for the poor. Yes, he wanted to see them come to Christ, but his subtly disparaging comments revealed that he also disrespected them. I wondered if he would have chosen a different line of ministry if it weren't for the promise of grant money and accolades from the community.

By the time I hopped in my car to leave I was grieved. "Lord," I prayed, "here's a man who's helping the poor as Your Word commands, but I don't believe You'll bless him because it appears that he's exploiting their suffering for personal gain and glory."

During the next few years, this man's ministry continued to flourish. He amassed the money and influence he sought. He heard the praises of his fellow ministers and saw his name in print. But ultimately, his ministry collapsed because it was built on the wrong foundation: greed rather than compassion.

At a time when the promise of funding for compassion ministries has never been greater, it is essential that ministers examine their motivation for wanting to launch a compassion work. If ministers believe God has spoken to their hearts to start a compassion outreach, they should be willing to launch and maintain that ministry with or without the promise of funding. God is our funding Source — meeting needs through offerings, grants, and means not anticipated. He provides for His work long after a particular funding source may have dried up. Unfortunately, many compassion ministries disappear when the grants disappear, leaving a bitter taste in communities that have grown accustomed to unfulfilled promises and unmet expectations.

Generally, ministers who shed tears on their pillow because of the misery lurking in their community will have more effectiveness and longevity than the persons motivated by money and power. Persons called to compassion ministry have access to God's resources, while others are forced to rely on human assets and salesmanship.

Ministers should explore every legal source for funding — including government and corporate grants — as long as they don't compromise their mission to share the gospel. The more important issue centers on our motivation: Why are we active in compassion ministry?

Pity? No. Many have pity for the poor yet do nothing to help them. Christ's compassion requires action. Psalm 82:3,4 states, "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Praise? No. All praise and glory is directed to God. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). He further taught us, "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men" (Matthew 6:2).

Profit? No. We give to the poor expecting nothing in return. "When you give a banquet, invite the poor ... and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:13). Proverbs 22:16 tells us, "He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth [shall] come to poverty."

People? Yes. As Jesus commanded, we demonstrate concern for the physical and spiritual wholeness of men, women, and children. Matthew 25:40 states, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Proverbs 14:31 reminds us, "Whoever is kind to the needy honors God."

In the years ahead the greatest challenge facing compassion ministries is not funding — for God will support His work. The greater concern relates to the motives of our hearts: Will we enjoy God's blessing because we are Spirit-led and peoplefocused or, like the above mentioned minister, will we forfeit His favor because we've become money-driven?

HAL DONALDSON is editor-in-chief, *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* and president of Convoy of Hope, Springfield, Missouri.

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