



Is it time for a sabbatical? 42

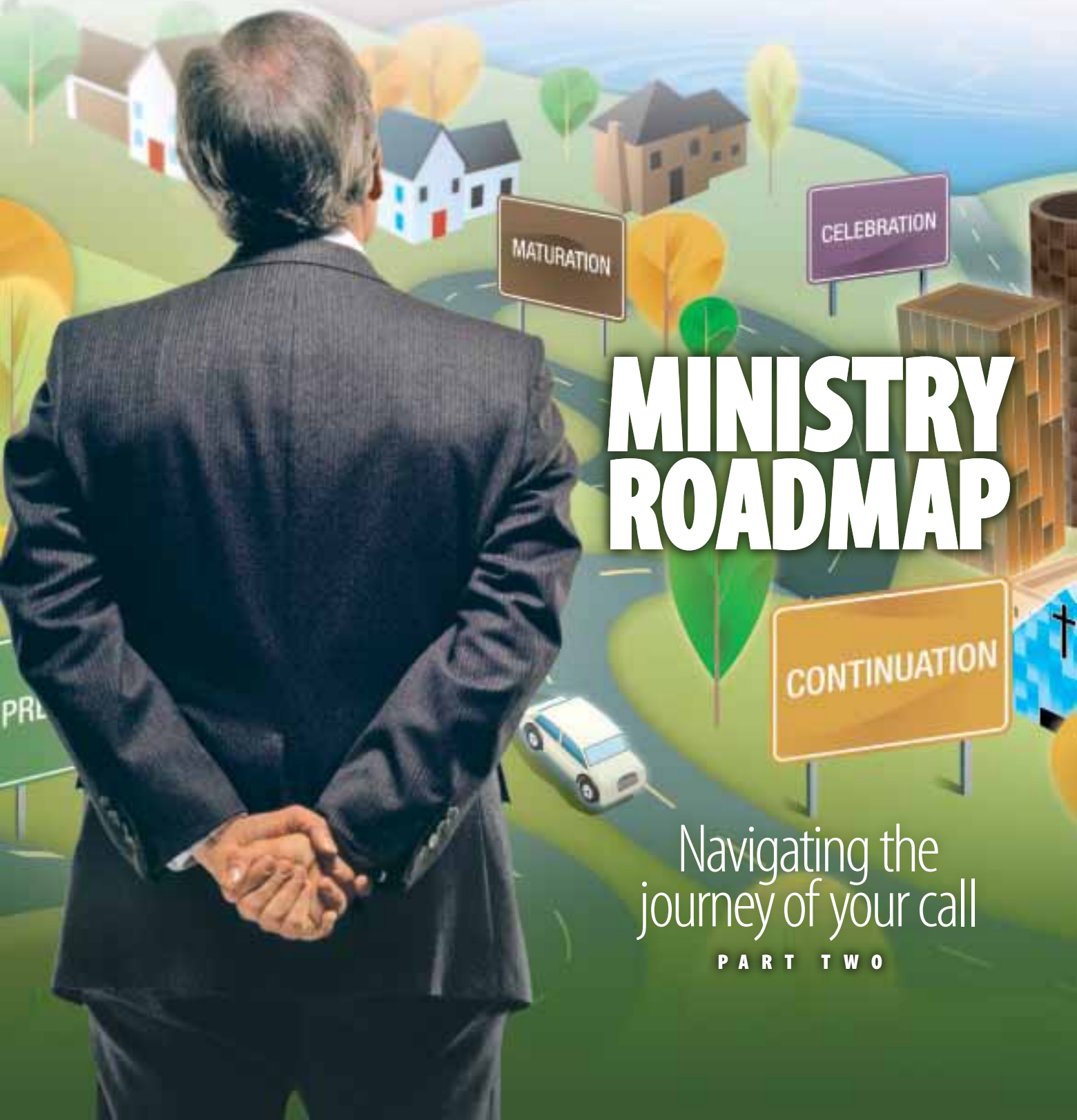


Finishing strong 66

# enrichment

Enriching and equipping Spirit-filled ministers

Spring 2007



## MINISTRY ROADMAP

Navigating the  
journey of your call

PART TWO



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Spring 2007 / Volume 12 / Number 2

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### EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Kingdom Ministry  
in a Multiethnic World

What can we do to truly celebrate unity in diversity? What can we do to foster the unity depicted in Jesus' prayer in John 17? Christ intended for His kingdom to encompass people from every nation, tongue, and tribe. The establishment of multiracial and multiethnic churches represents the New Testament model of inclusion as found in the Book of Acts.

In a society that is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, churches can reflect the passion of Christ for all people by embracing unity in the midst of diversity. This issue of *Enrichment* provides insight, wisdom, tools, and guidance to assist pastors and churches in becoming more intentionally inclusive. Read compelling essays by Craig S. Keener, Jesse Miranda, Jr., Pablo Polischuk, Sam Rodriguez, Isaac Canales, Miroslav Volf, and others.

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• Use of the masculine pronoun for pastor is used throughout this issue and refers to both genders.

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## ON THE EDGE

# STRESSED WAY OUT — WHY?

- **People sleep 2 ½ fewer hours** each night than people did 100 years ago. You are sleeping less than your grandparents did.
- **The average workweek is longer now** than it was in the 1960s.
- **The average office worker has 36 hours of work** piled up on his desk, and it takes 3 hours a week to just sort through it and find out what to do.
- **We spend 8 months of our lives opening junk mail.**
- **We spend 2 years of our lives waiting** — playing phone tag with people who are too busy or not answering their phones, and killing time while people who are trying to do too much are running late for meetings.

Dr. Richard A. Swenson in his book, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*, claims: "The conditions of modern day living devour margin. If you're homeless we direct you to a shelter. If you're penniless we offer you food stamps. If you're breathless we connect you to oxygen. But if you're marginless we get one more thing to do. Marginless is not having time to finish the book you are reading on stress. Margin is having the time to read it twice."

Marginless is part of our culture. Margin is counter-culture, having some space in your life. Marginless is the disease of our decade and margin is the cure."

## The Immediate Benefits

Swenson shows that rest, margin, and balance bring:

- **Peace of mind.**
- **Better health.**
- **Stronger relationships.**
- **Usefulness in our goals, work, ministry.** ☺

**WAYDE I. GOODALL, D. MIN**, president of Mission of Mercy and executive director of Benevolence, Bethesda Ministries, Colorado Springs, Colorado

## WHAT IN THE WORLD

# A Companion in the Contest

Every September in Holland, Michigan, students at Hope College participate in the annual frosh-soph tug-of-war. It is a century-old tradition where the freshmen challenge the sophomores to a rope pull across the murky Black River that flows through this quaint little West Michigan town. The contest is aptly called *The Pull*. Participants in this 3-hour ordeal rigorously train for 4 weeks before the event.

On each side of the river is a team of 18 men. These brawny collegians are not standing when they pull on the 3-inch diameter rope. Instead, they lay in trenches to maximize their leverage.

Curiously, each puller has a personal cheerleader. These coeds are called *moralers*. They refresh the participants with bottles of water, but mostly by giving words of encouragement. They relay signals from the caller who is perched on a high pedestal dictating when to pull the rope in unison and when to simply hold on for dear life. These 18 female moralers are the key

to the pullers' success. Their words help the athletes maintain their focus and perseverance.

If we are honest, we will confess that the pull of life's demands sometimes makes us feel like participants in a tug-of-war. At times we



Greg Asimakopoulos

strain with all we have to just hold on and keep our wits. Fortunately, the risen Christ draws near to us to refresh and encourage us during the challenge. Aware of our struggle, He fortifies our willpower by promising never to leave us. He is the ultimate Moraler.

Is it any wonder Jesus told Mary in Luke 10 that being near Him was the best choice she could have made? In light of endless demands and distractions that characterize our lives, there is one who sticks closer than a brother. Jesus knows what cues to give us in the contest that will last our entire adult lives, not just 3 hours. ☺

**GREG ASIMAKOPOULOS**, Mercer Island, Washington

## UTHTRAX

# SUBCULTURES in Youth Culture

We often talk about youth culture, but how realistic is it to lump every teen into one homogeneous group? Look around. The teens sitting in your youth service are diverse in their fashion, music, and attitudes. One way to effectively reach teens is to explore the subcultures in youth culture.



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**What is a subculture?** It is a small group that has splintered from a larger group and is comprised of people who have a common language and worldview. Members function socially by uniting together.

One current subculture consists of people who call themselves *Emo*. Trying to pin down a solid definition is difficult. If you plug the word *Emo* into Google, you will uncover a multitude of sites with as many definitions.

So let's begin by defining what *Emo* is not. Those who call themselves *Emo* do not want to be confused with Goth, but would rather be labeled artistic or sensitive. Although 20 years ago *Emo* was a type of punk music, that is not totally true today. These teens are not limited to one kind of music. They might wear small T-shirts, horn-rimmed glasses, and high-top Converse tennis shoes; or, dress with a more artistic flair wearing black hair, straight bangs, tight hoodies, and vintage clothing (think creative thrift shop finds), with black eyeliner or red eyeshadow.

**At the core, *Emo* is all about being upfront with your emotions.** Even marketing experts have tuned in to the *Emo* trend. One national chain of fashion stores issued a patch that read, "cheer up, *Emo* kid!"

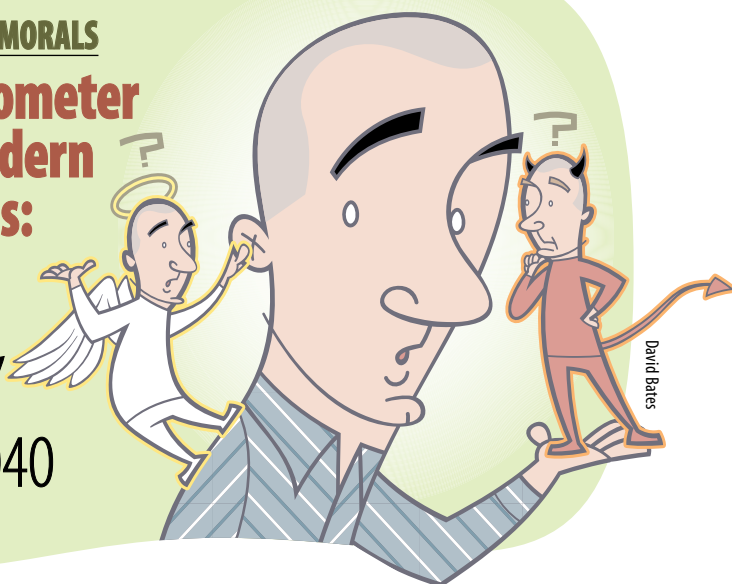
Since trends come and go, I will not give you the entire scoop on *Emo*. Understanding current subcultural trends, however, helps adult leaders and youth pastors connect with more than one type of teenager. When you understand the foundation of a subculture, you can push past the stereotypes and share the gospel in a way that connects with their core needs. 🌟

**T. SUZANNE ELLER**, Muskogee, Oklahoma

## MODERN MORALS

# A Barometer of Modern Morals:

# Sex, Drugs, and the 1040



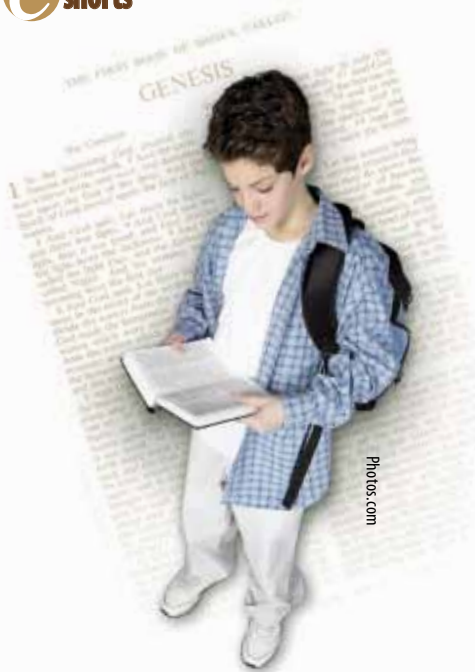
David Bates

- Cheating on your taxes is almost as bad as cheating on your spouse.
- Drinking excessively is worse than smoking marijuana.
- Engaging in homosexual behavior and having an abortion are equally fraught.
- Telling a lie to spare someone's feelings is worse than gambling.
- Sex between unmarried adults is more objectionable than overeating (but not by much).

These edicts are not drawn from some new millennium users' guide to morality. Rather, they represent the collective judgment of the American public when asked in a Pew Research Center survey to assess the moral dimensions of different kinds of behaviors. 🌟

PERCENT WHO BELIEVE THIS BEHAVIOR IS...	Morally wrong	Morally acceptable	Not a moral issue	Depends	Don't know
Married people having an affair	88%	3	7	1	1
Not reporting all income on taxes	79	5	14	1	1
Drinking alcohol excessively	61	5	31	2	1
Having an abortion	52	12	23	11	2
Smoking marijuana	50	10	35	4	1
Homosexual behavior	50	12	33	1	4
Telling a lie to spare someone's feelings	43	23	26	6	2
Sex between unmarried adults	35	22	37	2	4
Gambling	35	17	42	3	3
Overeating	32	6	58	3	1

**SOURCE:** The *Pew Social Trends Report* explores the behaviors and attitudes of Americans in key realms of their lives — family, community, health, finance, work and leisure. To download the complete report go to <http://pewresearch.org/social/pack.php?PackID=7>



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## CURRENTS

### Bible Literacy a Must

A survey of English professors at 34 top U.S. colleges and universities including Yale, Harvard, Stanford, and Princeton — yielded a surprising result. Almost everyone said young people needed to know more about the Bible to adequately understand both the classics of Western literature and contemporary work.

Dr. Marie Wachlin, who did the research on behalf of the Bible Literacy Project, was surprised with how much agreement there was among the 39 English professors surveyed. One anonymous professor noted that the Bible is arguably the most influential text in all of Western culture.

The report suggested that high schools make courses available to students that would promote Bible literacy. 🌐

Taken from *The Pastor's Weekly Briefing*, Volume 14, Number 32, August 11, 2006. Copyright © 2006, Focus on the Family. Used with permission.

## LEADERLIFE

### Your Leadership Wake

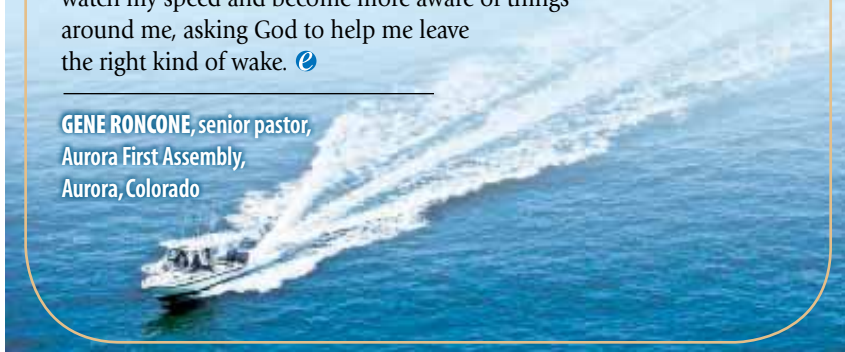
**Searching the Internet is like going to the Dollar Store.** There are many things to choose from but little you might want, use, or need. However, I recently had an online search excursion with a surprising ending. While doing some research I accidentally found the state of Oregon's nautical laws outlined in a boaters' guide. A highlighted sentence caught my eye before I could click to the next page. It read: "Remember, you are legally responsible for your wake and the damage or personal injury it may cause."

Curiosity over my newfound responsibility got the best of me. I learned that a wake is the path of moving waves a boat leaves behind it when in motion. Even if a boat is obeying the laws of speed, the operator is responsible for any damage or personal injury the wake may cause. Without ever touching someone else's boat or dock, a boater is responsible for the ramifications of his wake. Without ever being involved in a collision, he can cause personal injury and be responsible for medical bills, repairs, or insurance premiums.

I am not a boater, but the idea got me thinking about my leadership. My actions are leaving a wake of impact, and I am responsible for the ramifications. It is sobering to think that as I progress through life my movement takes on a life and energy of its own. My wake is affecting things behind my field of vision and outside the path of forward progress. The reality that my leadership wake can endanger those who are inexperienced has awakened me to a new sense of responsibility. The recognition that my wake can rock, swamp, or capsize other lives has me checking my speed and looking around. The fact my wake can cause erosion that muddies up the clear waters of life and creates uninvited danger has me realizing that I need God even more.

Furthermore, I discovered that a 10-inch wake is five times more destructive than a 5-inch wake. The power of 5 extra inches makes a difference. So, when it comes to leadership, I am trying to watch my speed and become more aware of things around me, asking God to help me leave the right kind of wake. 🌐

**GENE RONCONE**, senior pastor,  
Aurora First Assembly,  
Aurora, Colorado



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## TVS OUTNUMBER PEOPLE

**It's official: For the first time, most American homes now house more television sets than people.** According to the latest research from Nielsen Media Research, the U.S. household averages stand at 2.73 TVs and 2.55 people. 🌐

**GARY R. ALLEN, D.Min.**, director, Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri





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## BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS

# TALKING TO EACH OTHER OR ABOUT EACH OTHER

**During a church service in Europe I had the experience of trying to understand a foreign language** by way of an English translation delivered through an infrared-powered headset. This plan seemed fine except that the devices were unreliable, meaning that I picked up about one word in three.

I wonder if this experience is something like what members of different generations feel like when talking with each other. Everyone scrambles to make sense of the fragments that are getting through, but real communication is still a long way off.

Perhaps this frustratingly intermittent communication is why we talk *about* each other so much more than we talk *to* each other. Here are just a few examples of the kinds of things said in my hearing by one generation about another:

**"Builders** (b. 1945 and before) think of dialogue as repeating their opinion — only louder."


**"Boomers** (b. 1946 – 1964) only care about being in control"

**"Busters** (b. 1965 – 1983) aren't willing to work hard"

**"Millennials** (b. since 1984) are spoiled; they want to be in charge on the first day without earning it."

Ironically, there might be elements of truth in each statement, depending on *who* you have in mind. But adding absolute words like *only* and *always* turns a tendency into a stereotype that destroys fellowship across generational lines. For example, were we to make statements like this about ethnic groups, we could be accused rightly of racism.

### My major recommendations:

1. **Find a friendly representative of a generation you struggle to understand** and ask the person to help you interpret that attitudes and behaviors of their group. You will be surprised by how willing others are to act as your guide if approached in humility.
2. **Stop talking about older or younger people** and start talking to them.
3. **Once a connection is established, "be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry"** (James 1:19). Eventually, members of other generations will begin coming to you for the same sort of guidance you sought out initially. Sow and reap. 

**EARL CREPS**, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

## FAMILY LIFE

# Families Drawn Together By Communication Revolution

**T**oday is nothing special — just a typical day. So, will you be getting in touch with mom or dad?

For a growing number of adult Americans, the answer is yes. More than four in 10 (42 percent) either see or talk to a parent (usually, it's mom) every day,


according to a Pew Research Center survey that looks at the nature of family ties and the frequency of family contact. In 1989, a Gallup survey found that just 32 percent of adults maintained such daily communication with a parent.

This increase in regular daily contact is one of many findings in the Pew survey that highlight the strength and resilience of family bonds in the face of sweeping changes over the past several decades in family structures and living arrangements.

The Pew survey finds that in an era of declining cost and growing ease of phone communication:

- **Family members are staying in ever more frequent touch.** Some 73 percent

report that on an average day they speak with a family member who does not live in their house.

- **Family remains the greatest source of satisfaction in people's lives.** Fully 72 percent say they are "very satisfied" with their family life, compared with 32 percent who say they are "very satisfied" with their household income, 42 percent with their standard of living, and 63 percent with their housing situation.
- **Most parents and adult children live within an hour's drive of one another.** Sixty-five percent of respondents in the Pew survey who have a living parent say they live within an hour's drive of that parent.
- **When people have personal problems, family is the first place they turn for advice.** Asked whom they turn to (other than a spouse) when they have a serious personal problem, 45 percent of respondents named a family member. Some 22 percent named a friend, neighbor, or coworker. 

**SOURCE:** The *Pew Social Trends Report* conducted by the Pew Research Center. To download the complete report go to <http://pewresearch.org/social/pack.php?PackID=5>



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## LEADERLIFE Sacred



**Leaders emphasize the importance of being intentional.** But many great accomplishments, however, have been made in which accident played at least as big a role as design. Examples include Velcro, X-rays, the microchip, and even Popsicles.

The person who happens to be there when the right accident happens becomes the *inventor*. In 1928, Alexander Fleming was doing research on influenza. One of his laboratory samples became contaminated and the result was the accidental discovery of Penicillin.

Jesus compared the Kingdom to a farmer who scattered seed that grows, "though he does not know how" (Mark 4:26–29). Christian leaders must be intentional but not at the expense of failing to recognize who owns the work itself.

A primary issue for Christian leaders, then,

may be how to put themselves in a position to experience *sacred accidents*. How many ministries have opportunities for success, but the opportunities look too much like failure or appear in a way leaders did not plan; and are, therefore, being ignored or even destroyed?

Sacred accidents may be the best and most satisfying part of being a Christian leader. These *accidents* happen when we create opportunity for the Holy Spirit to move in our organizations.

As with accidental innovation in science, sacred accidents do not happen just because we want them to. We need to work hard and plan wisely. The Spirit must operate in our organizations with the same power in which we believe He operates in our worship services. We have faith for the latter, why not for the former?

### **My major recommendation:**

Ask the Lord to give you the kind of discernment that will put you in the room when the next *sacred accident* happens and the eyes to see it for what it is. 🌀

**EARL CREPS**, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

## THE HIM BEHIND THE HYMN

### High Flight

**When John W. Peterson was an Air Force pilot during World War II, he was known as "Deacon."**

This unusual nickname for a pilot was based on Peterson's determination as a young man in his 20s to read his New Testament every morning no matter who was looking.

"Deacon" Peterson's duty during the war was to fly the China Hump. On one

of those long, lonely flights, he had opportunity for meditation and prayer. Seeing evidence of God's power and handiwork in the Himalayan Mountains below, John felt the presence of the Lord. As he observed the rugged terrain below and the glories of the heavens above, he was overwhelmed by the power of his Creator and the glory of what He had created.

While meditating on the view from his cockpit, John pondered a truth he could not dismiss. The same God who created the cosmos was the God who loved him and sent His only begotten Son to take his place on the cross.

John Peterson said: "I was quite overwhelmed as I began to think of these two aspects of God's power and love; and suddenly, the words of a new song began to form in my heart. In a short time, I was sketching the words and melody of a new song."

Although John W. Peterson is credited with writing more than 1,000 gospel songs, the song that resulted from that routine

flight over the China Hump was one of the first he ever wrote. *It Took a Miracle* is also one of his most famous.

**My Father is omnipotent  
And that you can't deny;  
A God of might and miracles;  
'Tis written in the sky.**

### CHORUS

**It took a miracle to put the  
stars in place;  
It took a miracle to hang the  
world in space.  
But when He saved my soul,  
Cleansed and made me whole,  
It took a miracle of love  
and grace!** 🌀

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**GREG ASIMAKOPOULOS**, Mercer Island, Washington



## MANAGING YOUR MINISTRY

# PASTORAL USE OF E-MAIL, INSTANT MESSAGES, AND TEXT MESSAGES



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**A** pastor's time is one of his most valuable resources. Because it is finite (even pastors only get 24 hours in their day), it is important to choose a communication strategy that helps balance the demands of e-mail, instant messages, and text messages with the demands of personal time with God, family, staff, and message preparation.

### E-mail

E-mail has flattened organizational communication. Providing easy access to anyone in the organization, it often means those in leadership receive e-mails that would be more appropriately sent to other team members, requiring redirection of those e-mails; and, that redirecting process takes time. Left uncontrolled, a pastor can easily lose his days to this and other digital communication processes.

Most pastors today have at least one e-mail account. Many manage the redirection of e-mails by having two e-mail addresses: one for the public, and one for staff and those with whom he works closely. A secretary or administrative assistant usually screens the public address and does the redirecting — including redirecting some e-mails to the

pastor's hidden address.

This makes the pastor appropriately available to those on his team while also being appropriately available to the congregation and community. And it allows the pastor to focus on what needs his attention.

### Instant Messages

Instant message access can be disruptive. Yet, the pastor wants some people to have instant access. Team members who report directly to the pastor and some close relationships in church leadership are good candidates for this higher level of access. These trusted individuals understand the demands of the pastor's time.

One innovative pastor uses IM to begin his day in a virtual pastoral staff meeting. By agreeing to be available for a brief time every day, his staff have opportunity to ask quick questions they need answered or to set up meetings with him they need to have. It efficiently increases everyone's productivity.

### Text Messages

Text messages can be received almost

anywhere, making them a disruption factor that is much higher than e-mail or IM. It is unlikely that a pastor would be at a daughter's soccer game with a notebook computer connected to the Internet and communicating via e-mail or IM. But text messages, delivered by cell phones, can interrupt any setting.

Because anyone who knows the pastor's cell phone number can send him a text message, it is important to protect those numbers. A pastor should consider:

**1. Turning on the feature that shields his cell phone number** from those he calls. This setting can usually be overridden by preceding a dialed number with “\*82.” (For those I call often, I add this prefix to their entry in my address book.)

**2. Only share cell phone numbers with family, close friends, and key members of staff and church leadership** who will guard the pastor's time and not abuse this higher level of availability.

By strategizing their digital communication options, pastors can be appropriately available to family, key staff, and key church leaders while also protecting their time. ☺

NICK B. NICHOLAOU, president, Ministry Business Services, Inc. Reprinted from the *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology*. Used by permission.



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## CROSSROADS

# The Way It Used To Be Will Never Be Again

**The US is the most culturally diverse nation in the world** with 500 distinct groups, 600 different languages, and more than 36 million foreign-

born people. In Minneapolis, Minnesota, you will likely hear Amharic spoken because of the large Ethiopian population. Arabic is spoken more than English in some areas of Detroit, Michigan. In the Los Angeles, California, Unified School District, 145 languages are spoken as first languages. Chicago, Illinois, is the second largest Polish city in the world, and most signs are

in Vietnamese in the Southern California city of Westminster.

This new reality is not just an urban phenomenon. Some rural-area radio stations now play country music in Spanish because the people who work in the local livestock packing industry speak Spanish. Unusual vegetables and products often show up in our grocery stores, and salsa has replaced ketchup as our favorite condiment. The world is coming to America, as has always been the case throughout our history, and the tensions are numerous.

Will the church move beyond the obvious tensions and challenges and communicate Jesus to new immigrants? This opportunity is usually gone within a decade because these immigrants usually become swallowed up into being *American* where pop culture and consumer marketing have been the most effective programs of *evangelism*. ☺

BYRON D. KLAUS, D.Min., president, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

## PROFILES

TAYLOR ASSEMBLY OF GOD,  
TAYLOR, NEBRASKA:

# "You've got to go find them"

BY SCOTT HARRUP / Photos by Adele Poe

If Mike and Ruth Sullivan were ministering in Los Angeles County, California, they would have somewhere near 1 million children in their Royal Rangers and Missionettes groups. At least, that is how the math works out when one compares the number of children they are reaching in Loup County, Nebraska.

The Sullivans pastor Taylor Assembly of God. Taylor, a community of about 200, is the lone town in Loup County. The county population, after reaching a high of 2,188 in 1910 has steadily declined. The 2000 census noted 712 people, and cited Loup as one of the poorest counties per capita in the nation.

Some might find such numbers discouraging. Not the Sullivans. They came to Taylor Assembly in 2000 and have led their congregation in reaching out to young people across the county, primarily through Royal Rangers and Missionettes.

While pastoring in Rapid City, Michigan, in the 1990s, Mike met Frank Chilson, known as "Poppa Bear" to the boys in the church's Royal Rangers program.

"Frank got me into Rangers," Mike says. "Our oldest son was only 10 when he got involved. Then my second son joined. We've been involved ever since."

With their third son about to graduate high school, the Sullivans are close to becoming empty nesters. But their focus on children in their community has granted them almost foster-parent status in many families.

Taylor AG already had Royal Rangers and



Missionettes when the Sullivans arrived. The traditional Wednesday night meeting time was Mike's first target for change.

"We found what works best here is right after school on Wednesday," Mike says.

Children enjoy the afternoon programs, and then families are invited to remain for Wednesday night services for adults and youth. Taylor AG began the program by busing students to the church from school, a journey of about a mile and involving several vans. Christ Place AG in Lincoln heard about the Taylor church's need and donated their 80-passenger bus in 2002.

"The bus has been great," Mike says. "We can get all the kids to the church in one trip, and we can also take them to camps and other activities."

Of 186 school-age children in Loup County, between 60 and 70 are regulars at Royal Rangers and Missionettes, and another dozen attend services for older youth. All together, nearly half the children and youth in the county receive some kind of ministry from the church.

Every year Taylor AG uses the school gymnasium for a pinewood derby rally. Mike built a six-lane track and began inviting children to make their own cars as part of the Rangers outreach. Soon other families took an interest.

The open competition now attracts 300 to 400 people. "I also teach hunter safety, CPR, and first aid in the community; and, one of the men in our church is a

4-H club gun safety instructor," Mike says. "So people know us well."


That kind of familiarity builds trust. When families have a prayer need, Mike says, Taylor AG is often the first place they call to be put on the church's prayer chain.

"We believe all of this is because of the youth program," he says.

Reaching such a high percentage of area youth requires a significant percentage of Taylor AG's annual income and volunteer power. Mike estimates at least a quarter of the church's funds are dedicated to the ministry, with 10 of the church's 25 to 30 adults providing leadership for four groups of Royal Rangers and six Missionettes groups. The church pays for curriculum needed for the programs, equipment for the many activities, and scholarships that help children attend area camps.

"Besides our leaders," Mike says, "we have several other adults who agree to pray for one of our groups at least an hour a day, especially on Wednesday, for these kids to come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior."

When a children's evangelist held meetings at Taylor AG in 2003, more than 90 children attended the revival.

"Pastors visited and couldn't believe there were that many kids available in this area," Mike remembers. "We've got them. They just need a reason to be here. They're spread all over. You've got to go find them. You've got to get out there and look for them." 

SCOTT HARRUP, senior associate editor, *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*







## Growing Strong and Finishing Well



“  
*If a pastor can  
stay fresh in  
vision, spirit, and  
in the Word,  
he is less likely  
to hit the wall.*  
”

**M**inistry over the long haul can become demanding. Some pastors drop out because of the stress of ministry. Others continue in ministry but have lost their enthusiasm. They simply go through the motions. In his quarterly interview, General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask provides practical pastoral advice for growing strong and finishing well.

**Seeing that 50 percent of ministers drop out of ministry during the first 5 years, what must they do to stay fresh and increase their longevity?**

**TRASK:** A pastor needs to understand that ministry is spiritual. He must derive his strength, freshness, and passion from outside of himself. Staying fresh in the ministry can only be accomplished through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

A pastor must have a disciplined devotional life apart from sermon preparation. Out of his personal relationship with God his spirit will be renewed. Does this mean he will not get tired or he will not be challenged? No. But the Lord will renew his strength. That is absolutely essential and critical for the ministry.

A minister needs to have time off so he can step back and evaluate his ministry. He needs to avail himself of ministry materials and helps and take advantage of opportunities to learn from others. God inspires people by different methods. That does not mean we copy, but we can learn from other ministers and adapt what we learn.

One of the worst enemies of the ministry is the status quo. A minister must guard against becoming comfortable with where he is, what he is doing, and with his standard of living. A minister is charged with the responsibility of the spiritual well-being of men and women. This focus must stay fresh in his heart, along with a passion and love for people.

**How important are personal relationships with ministry colleagues and those in the pew and how much should a pastor depend on these?**

**TRASK:** It is important to develop relationships in the ministry. At times, a pastor needs to bare his heart. He cannot confide in laypeople. If he does, he diminishes his value. Whether right or wrong, they put him on a pedestal — not because of who he is, but because of the office he holds.

This respect for his office is appropriate. For a pastor to successfully lead people, they need to respect and honor his office as pastor.

I made it a practice to never become buddy-buddy with people in the congregation. I felt I had to maintain respect for the office so I could minister to them. When a pastor becomes too familiar with congregants, he might compromise himself. If he needs to discipline someone, he cannot discipline appropriately because he has become too friendly. Congregants will expect him to go easy on them. The pastor becomes guilty of showing partiality. This does not mean that you cannot socialize with members of the congregation, but keep it mostly on a professional level.

A pastor needs to develop relationships with other ministers so he can be strengthened as he and his fellow ministers pray with and care for one another. Fellow ministers can become true friends around whom they can share personal needs.

**What can pastors do to relax and take time off from the ministry?**

**TRASK:** In the early days of this Movement, the philosophy of ministry was all work and no play; and, there was no play. The other side of this issue is the need for balance. A pastor needs time for recreation which could include one or more hobbies — like coin collecting, genealogy, fishing, golfing, or hunting — as long as they do not become the dominant force in his life. The ministry must remain heart and center. But pastors need a diversion.

When I came to Springfield, Missouri, J. Philip Hogan, executive director of World Missions, said to me, “Brother Trask, you need to have something beyond your work. I have had a cabin to relax at over the years. General Superintendent G. Raymond Carlson has horses.”

I said, “Brother Hogan, my hobby is horses, but they are underneath the hood of a car.”

Having pastored around the automobile industry for 20 years, I developed a love for cars. Detailing a car is a pleasant diversion for me. But no matter what you do, moderation is the key in these matters. Nevertheless, pastors need to enjoy some kind of hobby or recreational outlet.

**Many ministers hit the wall after 15 to 20 years in ministry. They get blindsided by stress and disillusionment. How can pastors deal with these issues?**

**TRASK:** If a pastor can stay fresh in vision, spirit, and in the Word, he is less likely to hit the wall.

After 15 years, a pastor may feel he has exhausted all that he knows to do and has tried every avenue of ministry. At this stage, two things need to happen. First, the pastor needs to step back, and ask, *Is the vision and passion for ministry still fresh in my heart? If not, why?* Second, after introspection, the pastor needs to ask the Lord if He is endeavoring to bring a change in his ministry. Maybe the Lord is trying to get his attention.

One ministry challenge is what I call *comfortableness*. The pastor becomes comfortable with the congregation; they become comfortable with him. They love the pastor; he loves them. God is blessing. People are being saved, healed, delivered, and baptized in the Spirit. Nevertheless, a pastor must be careful not to become too comfortable in any ministry situation.

A final idea about becoming more effective is to consider enlarging the staff. When a church reaches a plateau, the pastor may need to add more staff and spread responsibilities so he can do the work of ministry more effectively. Additional staff releases the senior pastor from some responsibilities, helps re-energize him, and gives him opportunity to narrow his focus on what is most important at that moment in the life of the church.

**In the closing years of ministry some pastors realize they have not accomplished what they hoped they would. How can pastors finish well and strong?**

**TRASK:** It is God's plan for all pastors to finish well. Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7,8, KJV). The Lord is vitally concerned about pastors. How we approach the finish line is critically important.

My father and mother pastored for 50 years. I remember when Dad retired and hit the wall. Dad was always positive and optimistic. I had never known him to be bitter or unappreciative. But after he retired he suddenly

was different. I flew to Minneapolis to see him. I asked, "What is the problem, Dad?"

He said, "Nobody loves me. Nobody cares for me anymore. I have given my life for the ministry and the Assemblies of God."

I said, "Dad, nothing is further from the truth. You are loved in this district. Here is what you are going to discover: you can have all the ministry you want, but without the burden of administration."

After he moved through that short period of adjustment, he found he had all the ministry and preaching he wanted.

Retirement is a period of adjustment. I am coming to grips with the reality of it myself. I do not plan to retire. Let me add that I do not plan to remain general superintendent forever. I will serve until the Lord, the Fellowship, and I am comfortable that it is time for a change. When I look toward the retirement years, however, I find I am not interested in retirement. I want to have ministry after my responsibility as general superintendent.

How a person approaches retirement is important. Yes, there will be less call and less demand for one's ministry. But one's effectiveness is determined by one's attitude, and by how he is viewed by those who need his ministry.

**Do you have any concluding thoughts on growing strong and finishing well?**

**TRASK:** The beautiful part of the ministry is that God has chosen us. We did not choose the ministry; He chose us. Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16, KJV).

If our first priority is to serve the Lord, please Him, live to fulfill His will, and carry out His design, these ministry stages in life will be just as fulfilling as the earlier stages. These years will be different, but the fulfillment, the joy, and the value will continue. If a person has decided to do his own thing and has focused on his own interests and priorities, he could be disappointed as he moves through the six stages. God moves us through a progression in life that brings joy and fulfillment as we serve Him and are obedient in carrying out His will. I have watched men and women who have served God and finished well. Finishing well is God's plan and purpose for those in ministry. 🌀



“  
*One of the  
worst enemies  
of the ministry  
is the status quo.*  
”



## Defining Truths of the Assemblies of God: Salvation



"Salvation" by Ron DiCianni

*We must  
give people  
opportunity  
to publicly  
confess  
Jesus Christ  
as Lord  
and Savior.*

**S**alvation is the foundation stone for who we are. God has called us, as a Fellowship, to be in the redemption business. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).<sup>1</sup> It is through God's plan of salvation that people come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

People need to understand they are sinners. Some churches today are uncomfortable with saying to the unsaved, "You are a sinner." But Scripture says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). People cannot know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior until they first realize they are sinners and that their sin separates them from God. Pastors do unsaved people a disservice when they allow them to become comfortable in church, continue to live in their sin, and never confront them with the claims of Jesus Christ. Jesus' death at Calvary purchased our salvation and atoned for everyone's sin.

There is a proper way to share with people their need for salvation. Jesus was confrontational in dealing with the unsaved. If Christians know that on Sunday morning, Sunday night, or Wednesday night their pastor will give opportunity for people to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then they can feel comfortable in inviting the unsaved to come.

It is also essential for pastors to emphasize that the purpose for the local church as the body of Christ is for people to come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. If the church does not fulfill its purpose, all we have done is window dress the sinner. Scripture teaches that their blood will be on our hands. We must tell people they need to know Christ. They need to experience salvation so their names can be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

When people are saved, they become a new creation in Christ Jesus. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Salvation is a life transforming experience. The things we once loved, we now hate; and, the things we once hated, we now love. Every person must have the life transforming experience called salvation.

Salvation is not found in church membership; it is found in a relationship. Scripture says "all we like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6).

Pastors must give people opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. Pastors cannot assume people in their churches are saved. Pastors often look at their congregations and say, "Everybody here is saved." We do not know that. We are only looking at the veneer. We do not know their hearts. Only Christ knows their hearts. The Holy Spirit brings people to realize they need Jesus.

Those in leadership must give people opportunity to publicly confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Everyone that Jesus called, He called publicly. He said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33).

As a pastor, I never closed a service without giving people opportunity to accept Christ. Even now, when I travel, I want to be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is doing. Pastors deal with the eternality of people's souls. If a person goes into eternity without knowing Jesus Christ, he is lost forever. We may not be able to fully comprehend this, but that is the reality.

**P**astor, ask God to give you a burden for the lost. Open the altars of your church. Give an invitation. You ask, "Brother Trask, what if nobody comes?"

Do not worry about that. A pastor's responsibility is to invite people to come. If they come, pray with them, introduce them to Christ, and pray the sinner's prayer with them. Keep a record of their decision. Follow up with them, baptize them in water, and disciple them.

Discipleship is important because they have just begun a new journey, and they are new babes in Christ. If you give people opportunity to accept Christ, I promise you, you will please the heart of God, and people will come know to Jesus Christ. There is no greater thrill in the ministry than to introduce people to Jesus Christ.

I will pray and believe with you that the Lord will give you the unsaved for your labors. May God richly bless you. ☺

### NOTE

1. Scriptures are KJV.





## MINISTRY ROADMAP: NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY OF YOUR CALL

**In the winter 2007 issue of *Enrichment*, "Ministry Roadmap: Navigating the Journey of Your Call (Part 1)," we described the first three of six ministry phases: Formation, Preparation, and Implementation.**

In this second volume, we describe phases four, five, and six: Maturation, Continuation, and Celebration. Remember, we intentionally did not include time elements, age, or exact length of each phase because each pastor/minister passes through these phases at different stages in his or her life. The boundaries between the phases are often difficult to identify because of personal issues, life experience, and ministry context. Yet, there is a general direction and flow in all of our journeys.

Also, we have not provided a roadmap with every detail for everyone's journey. What we have provided, though, is a working road-map for you to process and chart your own ministry travel.

Each of these six phases forms a segment of ministry. We hope this ministry roadmap will help you identify where you are, what you should be experiencing, and help you anticipate and plan for the future. Our goal is to provide you with resources within each phase for further reading, research, and development.

Two elements are on a continuum that cut across all six phases of ministry:

### **LIFELONG LEARNING**

Lifelong learning begins with personal and spiritual formation and should be an intentional element of your ministry through each phase. Lifelong learning can be either formal or informal, and this process improves

your personal development and ministry skills to make you more effective in ministry. It is especially important to maintain lifelong learning in phases four and five and not rely on past accomplishments. Even in the years of phase six continuing to learn keeps you fresh and connected with your environment.

### **LIFE CRISES**

This roadmap also has a Life Crises element. The hurts and tragedies of life usually intrude and interrupt when we least expect them. These events shock and traumatize us, often immobilizing us for a time. But even in and through these times God is present and enables us to fulfill His call on our lives.

### **ACTION STEP**

Included in this issue is a foldout ministry roadmap with the six phases. This worksheet has space for you to pencil in your journey. We have also placed a Word and PDF file of this worksheet on the *Enrichment* journal Web site at <http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org>. Click on current issue and look on the table of contents for this file. We have provided this file so you can build and expand your own roadmap. You may wish to do a periodic review of your ministry roadmap to align and adjust your course.

We hope these ministry roadmap issues of *Enrichment* journal (winter 2007 and spring 2007) will serve as practical aids for helping you map your life and ministry. 🌱



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









# MINISTRY ROADMAP:

# NAVIGATING THE

Phase I Formation	Phase II Preparation	Phase III Implementation Years 1 - 5
<b>Components/Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Discipleship</li> <li>•Understanding one's call</li> <li>•Beginning one's lifelong personal and spiritual formation with a Pentecostal distinctive</li> </ul> <b>My Components/Issues:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Education</li> <li>•Internship</li> <li>•Evaluation and self-assessment</li> <li>•Credentialing (Many coming from distance learning)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•50 percent of those who drop out of ministry do so within the first 5 years.</li> <li>•Networking and support systems are essential.</li> <li>•Establishing worth and value</li> </ul>
<b>Role:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Disciple</li> </ul> <b>My Role:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Staff, Solo, or Senior pastor</li> <li>•Mentoree</li> </ul>
<b>Vulnerabilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Discouragement</li> </ul> <b>My Vulnerabilities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Distraction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Disillusionment</li> <li>•Financial stress</li> <li>•Isolation/boredom</li> </ul>
<b>Needs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Encouragement</li> <li>•Modeling</li> <li>•Character development</li> </ul> <b>My Needs:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Counseling</li> <li>•Advice</li> <li>•Mentoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mentoring</li> <li>•Support system</li> <li>•Proactive training</li> <li>•Relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Family</li> <li>•Local church</li> </ul> <b>My Resources:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•College/seminary</li> <li>•Distance learning</li> <li>•District training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Peers</li> <li>•Section</li> <li>•District</li> </ul>
<b>Lifelong Essential Elements:</b> <b>My Lifelong Plan:</b>	Personal development, family/marriage development, spiritual development	
<b>Finances:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Establishing financial values</li> </ul> <b>My Finances:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Financing education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Learning to budget on a limited salary</li> </ul>
<b>Family Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Parent/Child relations</li> </ul> <b>My Family Issues:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Developing personal identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Marriage/children</li> </ul>
<b>Life Crises:</b> <b>My Unscheduled Crises:</b>	Illness, death, divorce, moving, occupational changes, discipline problems	

# JOURNEY OF YOUR CALL

Phase IV <i>Maturation</i> Years 6 - 14	Phase V <i>Continuation</i> Years 15 - Retirement	Phase VI <i>Celebration</i> Retirement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•George Barna says most effective years of ministry in one location occur during this phase.</li> <li>•The average Assemblies of God pastor stays 8.1 years. (Staff pastor much less)</li> <li>•Many pastors leave a church before their most effective ministry begins.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Many “hit the wall” during this phase.</li> <li>•May feel stuck</li> <li>•Have not obtained goals</li> <li>•Challenge is in remaining fresh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Uncertainty</li> <li>•Questioning personal worth and value</li> <li>•Mixture of fulfillment and frustration</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Staff, Solo, or Senior pastor</li> <li>•Mentoree, Mentor/Coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Staff, Solo, or Senior pastor</li> <li>•Mentor/Coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Retired/semi-retired</li> <li>•Mentor/Coach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stress/burnout</li> <li>•Transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stress/burnout</li> <li>•Transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Isolation</li> <li>•Health issues</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Coaching</li> <li>•Relationships</li> <li>•Lifelong learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Being a Mentor/Coach</li> <li>•Lifelong learning</li> <li>•Sabbatical</li> <li>•Update tools/skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Utilization</li> <li>•Role identity</li> <li>•Finishing strong</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Peers</li> <li>•Section</li> <li>•District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Peers</li> <li>•Section</li> <li>•District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Peers</li> <li>•Section</li> <li>•District</li> </ul>
<p>ment, education, and skills training</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Consistent financial planning</li> <li>•Saving for children’s education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Evaluate net worth</li> <li>•Evaluate savings/retirement funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Living on retirement savings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adolescent issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children returning home</li> <li>•Caring for aging parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Aloneness</li> <li>•Health issues</li> <li>•Death of spouse</li> </ul>
<p>of child, substance abuse in family, premarital sex by child, premarital pregnancy of child, etc.</p>		





# PHASE FOUR: MATURATION

**George Barna says that the most successful years of ministry in one location are the 5th through the 14th years.** After having progressed through the first 5 years of implementation and adjustment, a sense of personal accomplishment and fulfillment may become more apparent. Many personal, family, and ministry goals are being met and effective ministry is being realized.

Scripture says not to “become weary in doing good,” (Galatians 6:9). Often the grind of routine events and activities becomes monotonous, allowing

fatigue and lethargy to rob us of creativity and excitement. It is important to be intentional in creativity and planning. Remaining fresh and relevant in our context is essential to effective ministry in one place for a significant period of time.

Our freshness comes first from supernatural strength imparted from God’s Word and a regular, focused prayer life. Then we can look to personal development and skills training to take us to the next level in life and ministry. 🙏

## YOU ARE HERE





ILLUSTRATION: JAMES PALMER

# **MAINTAINING YOUR MARRIAGE FOR LIFELONG MINISTRY**

[ BY WAYDE I. GOODALL ]

**A**s I watched the candidates for licensing and ordination that evening, I could not help but notice their eyes bright, full of anticipation. Some cried, some laughed; all were sincere. Through intuition, I interpreted what they were dreaming and sensed their boldness. They were full of hope and faith about their futures.

Several candidates were middle aged and were entering ministry as their second (or third) career. The younger couples and single people were likely receiving credentials because they were involved in ministry or just finishing their education. My mind rushed through a series of questions:

*In 10 years, how will they feel?*

Church conflict has a damaging effect on a minister's marriage. Like anyone else, pastors carry their stress home and the pressure of conflict affects their marriage and family. Conflict also significantly challenges a ministry couple's ability to manage stress and their careers. Recent studies by Pulpit and Pew show that a minister's worst battle in the ministry will be conflict in the church. Many pastors quit the ministry because it is so intense and/or so unending.<sup>1</sup>

To withstand church conflict, ministry couples need to continually work on communication and on seeing ministry as a team effort. Men and women naturally have different styles of coping when faced with problems. Men tend to withdraw while ladies

express their concerns verbally. The enemy endeavors to keep ministry couples from talking through their concerns, from praying together, and from brainstorming for wise solutions to issues they face.

*Will their marriages grow or will their priorities get complicated and the joy of being a couple fade?*

## **To withstand church conflict, ministry couples need to continually work on communication and on seeing ministry as a team effort.**

H.B. London, of Focus on the Family, writes in his book, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, that:

- 25 percent of pastors' wives see their husband's work schedule as a source of conflict.<sup>2</sup>
- 13 percent of pastors have been divorced.<sup>3</sup>
- A study of 4,400 clergy from 10 Protestant denominations found: "Those in ministry are equally likely to have their marriage end in divorce as general church members."<sup>4</sup>

*Will they live a holy life and keep their focus on Jesus?*

In an interview with H.B. London for *Viewpoint*, the radio arm of Save America, host Chuck Crismier cited some statistics that startled many:

- 20 percent of pastors say they view pornography at least once a month,
- 33 percent of pastors confess to inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in the church, and
- 20 percent of pastors admit having had an affair in the ministry.<sup>5</sup>



My wife and I believe we are called to serve *together* and that we are accountable to *each other*. This is important. She understands me and instinctively knows when things might be getting to me. She knows when

I am tired from just pushing through issue after issue, project after project.

Years ago, I learned to listen to her. I want to know how she feels about my schedule and my work, and I inform her when I am battling with

something. My ministry involves much travel. I am careful, however, to build boundaries around my life as a protection against temptation. Our mutual accountability and trust is a constant safeguard and helps protect me.

*Will any of them go through a severe temptation where the enemy will persuade them to fail? If they fail, will they get back up? Will people allow them to get back up?*

I also saw in some eyes, especially in the men, a determination that says, *I'm going to do this no matter what; my wife will just have to get it.*

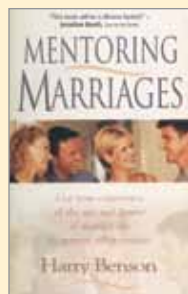
When watching many couples in the room who were down the road in ministry, I saw wives who had gradually realized they had lost their husbands to the ministry. Each of these wives needed to find ways to help her husband understand what a great asset she could be in what God was calling both of them to do. Some of the ladies would succeed at that and some would not. Perhaps their marriage would eventually become an agreement, "Let's just find a way to get along."

With the information we have today from H.B. London, George Barna, and others, we know it is easy for ministry couples to drift apart. Ministry is hard work and can easily get complicated. Working with people who are in numerous stages of growth can be exhausting. Carnality is an issue that is more difficult in some churches than in others; but, when pastors need to deal with an extremely carnal segment of the church, it will take both the husband and his wife to intercede, to think, and to seek assistance as they deal with it.

The call to pastor, or to serve as a missionary or evangelist, is a heavenly calling that must be

## MENTORING MARRIAGES

Harry Benson (Kregel, 256 pp., paperback)



*Mentoring Marriages* presents a biblical concept of the church's responsible approach to the problem of divorce. Benson clearly explains how experienced couples can become powerful resources in building strong, healthy marriages. His claim is "anybody with a bit of experience and a bit of training can be a mentor." Benson's concept of "attitude," as a primary focus for success in marriage, appears to reflect how Scripture teaches believers should respond to one another. He proclaims an accurate view of what marriage covenant is and offers salient information from current research to emphasize its importance in establishing and maintaining healthy relationships. Benson contributes eye-opening perspectives regarding relational "bad habits" and "good habits" and gives mentors practical tools for identifying "stop signs," assisting couples in becoming aware of bad habits, and for promoting good communication.

Although Benson does not necessarily always quote Scripture, he promotes biblical principles and truths throughout. His final chapter reveals the scriptural basis for his concepts and perspectives. *Mentoring Marriages* is a fresh new look at an age-old godly expectation for the body of Christ. Benson reveals that healthy relationships are established and built up as couples participate in a mentoring process. Every pastor should read this book and establish mentors who help restore and build healthy marriages. *Mentoring Marriages* promotes a vital restoration concept toward the preservation of God's most sacred sanction — marriage.

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Reviewed by David L. Culbert; MA, LPC, CSAC, Christian Counseling Services, Springfield, Missouri.



supplied with heavenly strength. Some (including board members) may look at it as just a job when it is much more than that. When a pastor looks at ministry as a career he must succeed in, his career becomes his primary focus. This attitude is pervasive among those in full-time ministry. There is no question that any career can injure a marriage if the career becomes more important than the marriage. This is especially true for those in full-time ministry.

## PASTORAL MINISTRY IS COMPLICATED AND CAN COMPETE WITH THE FAMILY

Thirty-two percent of pastors say that the first things they put on their schedules each week are appointments. Nearly 28 percent said meetings; only 13 percent said the first things they schedule are family time.<sup>6</sup>

### How pastors divide their time on the job

- 14 hours planning and attending meetings and services.
- 13 hours teaching, preaching, studying, and preparing.
- 9 hours pastoral care, counseling, and conflict mediation.
- 6 hours doing miscellaneous tasks.
- 4 hours doing long-range planning, developing leaders, and evangelizing.<sup>7</sup>
- Pastors typically start their workdays at 8 a.m. and end them at 6:30 p.m., 6 days a week.<sup>8</sup>
- 40 percent of pastors say they work more hours each week than they did 5 years ago.<sup>9</sup>
- 15 to 25 percent left their pastorate voluntarily, 30 to 40

percent were forced out, and the remaining cases were the result of a combination of motivations.

- Preference for specialized ministry and frustration from dealing with conflict were the most common reasons for leaving parish ministry.
- Institutional and interpersonal problems were more significant factors than loss of faith, health problems, or financial difficulties.<sup>10</sup>

When there is major conflict in one's work/ministry, there is no question that this pressure can cause significant tension in one's marriage. Ministers are not insulated from feelings of inadequacy and fear, or from experiencing conflict in their work.

### How do pastors find balance?

To grow, pastors need to know the hindrances of growth and learn to keep focused on their goals. Marriage is a living organism — emotionally and mentally — and

(concerning their marriages). He said, "Ministry should not be the No. 1 priority in your life."

I asked him to explain.

He said, "Ministry to your family should be the No. 1 priority in your life. Minister to your wife (or husband) and your children, and do not let the work take you from this God-given commitment."

I agree.

God understands the challenges of our day, and He can show pastors creative ways to meet those challenges while still allowing their marriage to grow. Some key factors for marital and family health are:

*Live within your budget*

We may wonder, *Will we be able to take care of our family's personal needs, meet the church's dress code, pay medical bills and insurance, and buy a home?*

Financial pressure is the No. 1 issue that causes marital problems. If pastors do not live within a budget or have an agreed-on way to save, spend, or take care of upcoming emergency needs, they can add undue pressure to their marriage.

## Marriage is a living organism — emotionally and mentally — and can become stronger through pain, trials, and pressure, or it can become weaker.

can become stronger through pain and trials, or it can become weaker.

Pastors can become afraid, concerned about conflict, and/or overwhelmed with their work. They might compare themselves to others they perceive as successful. This constant bombardment of pressure affects their marriage.

My wife and I were recently with Josh McDowell. He was talking about ministers who have subtly let their priorities get out of order

Ministers worry about how to pay their bills, if they will survive the challenges of their church, or if they will they lose their jobs. In our research with Pulpit and Pew, we discovered that 30 to 40 percent of pastors who are no longer in ministry were forced out.<sup>11</sup> They had lost their job. Often, in ministry, there is considerable concern about what other kind of occupation pastors would be suited for.

These are legitimate financial

## If pastors do not live within a budget and trust in the Lord to supply their needs, finances can become a major issue in injuring their marriages.

concerns that go through many ministers' minds and can take the joy out of ministry — and marriage. What can pastors do?

*Establish a financial plan and set ground rules about discretionary spending.*

It is okay to spend if there are agreed-on priorities. Over the years, I have noticed Christmas presents, clothing, food, and mending in the trunk of our car — things I knew were not for our family. I discovered that Rosalyn frequently purchased things that poor (sometimes destitute) people in the church needed. Not expensive things, but necessities. She has never gone outside of our budget. When I find out who the items are for and what they are going through, I am embarrassed about my criticism: *I could have bought a new shirt for what*

*you spent on that!*

We have agreed on how much we can spend on discretionary items, have goals for saving, and, even though we hate the thought, have found a way to put a little money aside for retirement.

Couples need to communicate when there is an upcoming financial need (concern about braces for one of the children or if something needs to be repaired at the house). When needs become priority in a given month, discretionary spending is put on hold for awhile.

Many ministers are car poor or house poor. Many churches are building poor. Let me explain. The pastor may feel he needs the newest luxury car or a beautiful home. The church might have built a fantastic facility, but now has little else. Because of that car, house, or

building, taking care of the basics becomes difficult or impossible.

Harris Interactive™, a market research firm, found that nearly one in every three Americans in a committed relationship is guilty of infidelity — not the kind that occurs under the sheets, but in shopping carts.

Stealth spending is

becoming so common it is almost a given. A pattern of secret spending can damage long-term planning, as well as lead to credit problems, and can eventually hurt the bond of trust and the overall relationship.<sup>12</sup>

If pastors do not live within a budget and trust in the Lord to supply their needs, finances can become a major issue in injuring their marriages.

### AS A COUPLE, UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF CONFLICT AND HOW TO LEAD THROUGH IT

Since we know that conflict is a major concern of ministers and missionaries, we must remember the verse, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). The fear of man, however, is a common fear for those who serve in the ministry. The “fear of man will prove to be a snare” (Proverbs 29:25).

Many ministers are afraid and insecure. *Will the board like what I do? Will they give me a raise? How can I confront a particular person who is a friend of one of the deacons? If I preach this message from the Word, am I likely to offend a particular group who has influence, or who gives a considerable amount to the church?*

Pastors need to be diplomatic, tactful, and sensitive to the feelings of others, but they cannot be controlled by the fear of man. If pastors are, why have they chosen ministry for an occupation?

A pastor's work is to help sinners find Christ, teach about discipleship





(which involves discipline), and, in a Christlike spirit, confront those who are wrong. Pastors are sometimes called to face the Jezebel spirit and the Goliaths in their congregations.

If pastors are paralyzed by a fear of people and what they might do, they will not walk by faith and may miss opportunities to bring the cleansing power of Christ to their congregations.

Most pastors enter the ministry because they receive a call from God. God picks people and selects them for pastoral ministry. Therefore, He is our Source, not man. When the board or pastor thinks that the church is the source of the pastor's income, they have gotten their theology out of order. While pastors are grateful for their income and benefits, they need to be mindful that without the blessing of God, they have nothing.

Avoiding conflict can be injurious to one's ministry and can cause undue tension in one's marriage. Handling conflict in the right way, such as talking with one's spouse

while addressing the conflict, and praying together for wisdom, timing, and favor, will help pastors manage challenges with a lesser degree of anxiety.

## A pastor and his wife must learn to resolve their interpersonal conflict in nonthreatening ways.

Richard L. Dresselhaus suggests several steps to follow for successful resolution of church conflicts:

### **Describe the predicament.**

What is the story that has been pieced together about the conflict? What are the strands and patterns of events that have converged to create the crisis?

**Define the plight.** Who are the persons in conflict? That is, whose self-esteem has been significantly threatened to move him from stress to distress?

**Identify the coulds.** What are the *could haves* and the *if maybes* that may have prevented the escalation of events to the point of conflict?

### **List the cans.**

What needs to be done to move those in conflict to a point of resolution? Make an exhaustive list of the options.

**Evaluate the shoulds.** What are the pros and cons of each option? What is the anticipated conclusion of each option?<sup>13</sup>

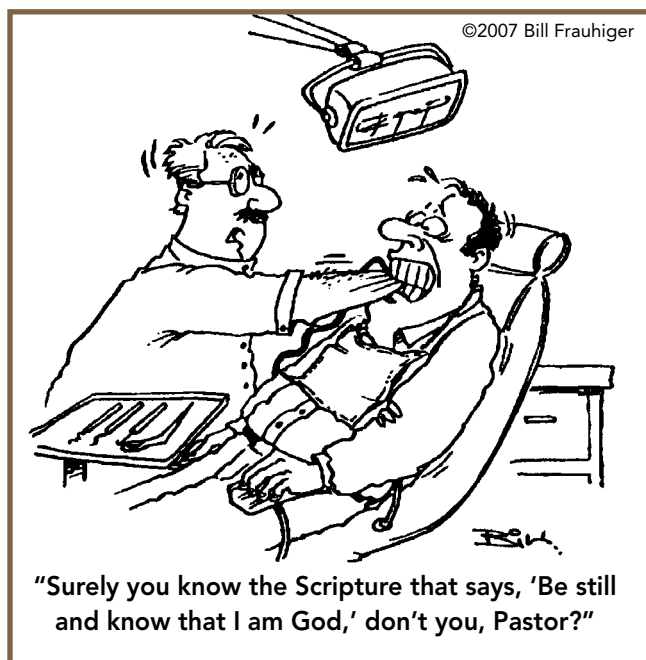
Ministry couples can determine *together* a way to manage

conflict in the ministry. A pastor and his wife are a team. There is spiritual power when they agree on a scriptural strategy and support one another in prayer.

Sometimes, the conflict couples face is with each other. A pastor and his wife must learn to resolve their interpersonal conflict in nonthreatening ways. Following are some rules that may help:

**Determine the best time.** It is important to know each other well enough to understand the best time to talk about an issue. Whether the topic is the discipline of children, financial concerns, or an issue in the church, timing is important. It is not good to talk about a difficult issue before bed, after just getting home from a tiring day, or when feeling overwhelmed because of work, life, or even a flat tire. Being sensitive to each other and knowing when to discuss an unpleasant issue is important.

**Determine the best temperament.** Knowing one another's moods is something couples learn over time. Couples need to be observant of certain times of the month, certain days in the week, and times when we do not understand why our spouse is feeling discouraged, agitated, overworked, or even depressed. For example, Saturday night is not a good time for me to discuss something that is upsetting or could be a topic on which we might disagree. My mind is on Sunday. Rosalyn and I, however, do need to find an appropriate time to



discuss important subjects.

## **Determine the best topic.**

There will always be issues, subjects, and opinions on which couples do not agree. Every married couple has topics that need to be handled with tolerance and compromise. Someone said: “Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken.” I sometimes say to myself: *This isn’t a big enough hill on which to die.*

The bottom line for marriage is commitment. Within that commitment are numerous issues that we choose to understand are the opinions of our spouse, or perhaps issues that they may need to work on for years because of their history. When a pastor needs to discuss topics that are difficult for his spouse to talk objectively about, he prays for her, and finds ways to love her through it.

## **Determine the best transition.**

It is important to know when to transition from discussing to ending the discussion. Ministry couples can exhaust the subject and not come to a conclusion. This is when they need to choose to agree that at this time they do not completely agree, and, for the time being, they will lay the issue aside. Most conflicts or

through an especially difficult time in ministry, my wife has commented, “If we need to compromise what God and Scripture are telling us to do to keep peace, I would rather leave.”

I know that my wife is wise and spiritual, that she prays for me, that she is committed to our unified call, and will support me — even when that involves difficult decisions. I listen to my wife. She has talked to me when she senses that I might be wrong or when the timing for a decision might be off. Listening to her has saved me from many potential problems. We are committed to each other and to doing the will of God together.

Relationship expert, Scott Stanley, says commitment is two-fold:

*Commitment involves constraints.*

Constraints are those forces that keep a couple together: children, in-laws, money, friends, value systems, faith, even the threat of divorce. The constraint aspect of commitment, however, is not strong enough to keep couples together and happily married forever.

*Commitment involves dedication.*

Couples with dedication not only

lifelong commitment. He suggests:

1. Plan several activities and dreams to do together over the next 20 years.
2. Write out an agreement on what you plan to do for the next 20 years to keep your love alive.
3. Express your lifetime commitment in words. Gary Smalley says, “Print it on a plaque, say it with gifts, just plain say it. I will be with you forever and keep loving you until death do us part. Write a poem and print it for the whole family to see.”<sup>14</sup>
4. Become a student of your mate.
5. When conflict arises, employ the three skills (living within a budget, dealing with work-related conflict together, and being committed to each other for life) that can take you to the deepest level of intimacy.
6. Another type of commitment that couples need from one another is a willingness to keep searching for solutions to problems between them.

## **YOUR MARITAL HEALTH — YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH**

“A 51-year-old male with symptoms of depression, who has high blood pressure and is overweight, presents a heightened risk of heart disease and other illnesses. He works 60 to 70 hours a week in a sedentary job, does not currently engage in any physical exercise, and reports considerable work-related stress. Patient is married, with three children, one of whom expresses interest in following patient’s career path. Patient expresses little enthusiasm for encouraging child to do so.

“While the case history may sound routine, Dr. Halaas and her patient

## **The purpose of discussing a conflicting issue is determining the truth, not winning an argument.**

discussions can have an agreeable ending. Knowing when couples reach that point and *then* deciding to conclude is part of dealing with conflict in marriage. Remember that the purpose of discussing a conflicting issue is *determining the truth*, not winning an argument.

**Agree to be a committed team.** Occasionally, when going

plan to stay together, but they also have a constantly evolving plan on how to do so. They rededicate themselves to each other regularly through planning events and talking about the future.

In his book, *The Heart of Commitment*, Stanley gives guidelines for couples who want to encourage their spouse’s need and desire for a



are, in fact, remarkable — perhaps even historic. That is because the patient is not a specific individual, but a statistically based overview of a typical ... pastor.”<sup>15</sup>

The stress, conflict, long hours, and other issues common with the ministry can affect the physical and emotional side of us. Although data is limited, research indicates that some of the most critical issues facing clergy appear to be weight, mental health, heart disease, and stress.

- A national survey of more than 2,500 religious leaders by Pulpit and Pew found that 76 percent of clergy were either overweight or obese, compared to 61 percent of the general population.
- The same study found that 10 percent of those surveyed reported being depressed — about the same as the general population — while 40 percent said they were depressed at times, or worn out “some or most of the time.”<sup>16</sup>

Many clergy health problems may be rooted in the nature of ministry today — what Stephanie Paulsell, a visiting lecturer on ministry at Harvard Divinity School and author of *Honoring the Body*, calls *the overwhelmingness of ministry*.<sup>17</sup>

“It’s a job that is conducive to eating on the run, not taking time to exercise, and not getting enough sleep.” Forced by overwhelming need and filled with a genuine desire to help, many pastors, consciously or not, set themselves up for problems, thanks in part to a misguided notion of ministry.<sup>18</sup>

“There is a false notion that effective ministry is about the imitation of Christ,” says Pamela Cranston, chair of the Clergy Wellness Commission of the

## Too many ministers (and spouses) are in bad physical health.

Episcopal Diocese of California.

“There is the idea that ministry is about living a life dying to the self and living to other people, and that to be a true minister you have to kill yourself, to give your entire life for others. The theological problem around that is that Jesus already did it and we don’t have to.”<sup>19</sup>

My wife and I have discovered that we must guard our health by disciplining our lives. Too many ministers (and spouses) are in bad physical health. The Mayo Clinic has determined that the health of ministers is as bad as, or worse than, the general population in the United States. The stress, conflict, and other issues pastors deal with can affect their bodies. By disciplining themselves to be careful with their diets, to get enough consistent exercise, and to make sure they take vacations and days off, pastors can be healthier and happier in all that they do. Discipline is involved in a variety of areas, such as choosing to live within a budget, handling conflict in a healthy way, working as a committed team with one’s spouse in the calling as ministers, and leading a healthy and balanced life.

Ministry couples face many issues in church ministry, missions work, and other types of full-time ministry. Admittedly, younger couples may read this and think that they would not want to be a full-time pastor. However, understanding some of the hazards and issues that will possibly be part of their future is important. Someone said: “I don’t mind going to war ... I just want to know who my enemy is.”

It is important to consider our calling as an opportunity to grow together and be extremely fulfilled in what we do. There is nothing like understanding that ministry is “God’s work and God’s call on our lives.” When couples discover that, and can find ways to communicate, live balanced lives, and determine to be a team in this wonderful work of the ministry, they will find deep contentment in their lives together. ☺



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### NOTES

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# THE HIDE OF A RHINOCEROS: MAKING THE CASE FOR THE LONG-TERM PASTORATE

[ BY RICHARD L. DRESSELHAUS ]

**I**t was devastating.

A malcontent in the congregation had conducted an 18-month anonymous letter-writing campaign critical of church leadership, and I was at the eye of the vindictive assault.

Then one day a bulging manila envelope arrived from Tim LaHaye, a fellow pastor in San Diego at the time, containing the cumulative work of the anonymous letter-writer. My heart sank as I realized how widely the toxic material had been circulated.

But the cover letter caught my eye, and finally my heart. After explaining that he was returning these “in-house” materials unread, he made this poignant comment: “An old minister once told me that if you are going to make it in the ministry, you need to have the hide of a rhinoceros.” And then this cryptic and unforgettable tag line: “God bless you, Dick, as you grow yours.”

How does a pastor stay in one place for decades? There are countless ways, approaches, and techniques, many of which are helpful and

good, but it boils down to this: grow a thick skin.

Pastoral ministry is not for cowards. It takes fortitude, determination, and nerves of steel. Ease and comfort are not the companions of the shepherd of the flock of God. Anonymous letter-writing campaigns and such will be encountered along the path of ministry. How a pastor fares during these times will set the parameters for pastoral tenure.

I wish I had a dollar for every time I have been asked: “Dick, how did you last for so many years as the pastor of San Diego First Assembly of God?” The meditative moments I have spent pondering this question have birthed the principles outlined in this article.

Or, put differently, here are some principles that will facilitate the growth of that most important “hide of a rhinoceros.” In the process, the case will be made, hopefully, for the long-term pastorate.

But wait. Maybe there is no need for such deliberation. Perhaps long-term pastorates are the norm and this subject is irrelevant.

Brace yourself. Nothing could be further



ILLUSTRATION: JAMES PALMER

**An old minister once told me that if you are going to make it in the ministry, you need to have the hide of a rhinoceros.**

from the truth. Go to the Barna Group Web site (Pastor's Profile), and see for yourself.<sup>1</sup> The median number of years pastors have served in their present assignment is four. Other stats suggest maximum effectiveness does not occur until around the seventh year. The point is irresistibly clear: Most pastors leave before they achieve their maximum impact in ministry.

Most will agree that the subject is crying for attention and is replete with a sense of urgency.

Six points of argument make the case for the long-term pastorate:

### **LONG-TERM PASTORATES DIMINISH THE IMPACT OF PERSONAL DISAPPOINTMENT**

It is virtually impossible for me to recall a time in 45 years of pastoral ministry when I was not battling disappointment, a sense of falling short, of letting people down, of failing to reach goals or achieve objectives.

When pastors stop the clock at any of these moments, the disappointment seems crippling. But when pastors focus instead on months, years, and decades, the hurts of the moments are swept away by the passing of time.



Let me personalize it a bit. Repeatedly I have reviewed the stats for a given Sunday and felt the cause was hopeless; but, when I saw that single Sunday against the backdrop of decades of ministry, the picture began to change.

When evaluating goal achievement at the end of the year, it is tempting to ignore the progress of the decade and focus only on the shortcomings of a given year. The long pull matters. It is winning the war that eclipses the isolated battles that may be lost or won along the way.

One benefit of hindsight is that the valleys are lifted and crooked places are made straight. The criteria used for measuring ministerial effectiveness become increasingly more accurate and reliable. The perplexities of a given moment are diminished and minimized by the trustworthy verdict of passing time.

I spoke earlier of an 18-month period when I felt devastated by a small group of critics. Admittedly, and to my embarrassment,

I experienced despair during those trying times.

That was 25 years ago. Now the whole event has a different flavor. Twenty-five years have filtered fact from feeling, emotion from reality.

What if I had called it quits 25 years ago? What if I had allowed the pain of the moment to obstruct my long-range perspective? What if I had decided that my energies and patience were spent? I would have allowed a moment to rob me of the gift that decades have brought.

I argue for the long-term

pastorate. I grieve when I see the premature resignation of a gifted minister. I

want to shout: "Hold on. Hang in there. What is a day or two, a month or two, or even a year or two in light of a 40- to 50-year lifetime call to ministry?"

I also am a realist. Sometimes the Lord's assignment is short.

Sometimes a pastor has no control over things that happen. There is a right time to conclude an assignment. (See *"When It's Time To Leave,"* page 78.) Leaving can be as much a step of obedience as staying.

The fact remains, many pastors leave their assignment prematurely and by doing so

miss the incredible opportunities longevity can bring.

## LONG-TERM PASTORATES FACILITATE THE ATTAINMENT OF LONG-RANGE GOALS

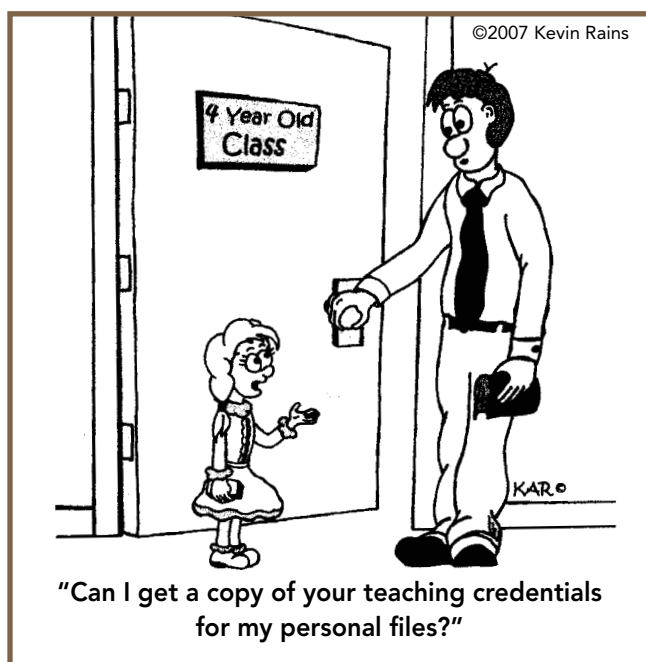
In the early 80s, my wife Elnora and I decided to plan the rest of our lives (tentatively and generally). We established goals relative to retirement resources, education, travel, and other significant life priorities. At that moment, I realized how important it was to

**I firmly believe continuing education is imperative if a pastor is to be effective in a long-term pastorate.**

immediately begin working on a doctorate. The bracketed time for our projections (1980–2000) was limited. If I wanted some years for application, I needed to get started quickly. The work at Fuller Seminary helped revitalize my vision and prepare me for the later years of pastoral ministry. I firmly believe continuing education is imperative if a pastor is to be effective in a long-term pastorate.

Carefully and prayerfully established goals are like magnets. They pull pastors along day by day toward the achievement of life's objectives. It might be said that goals are birthed and then nurtured, and that takes time. Carefully defined goals and applied effort equal success. While true in life's experiences, it is especially applicable in fulfilling God's call in ministry.

I have the privilege of friendship with the pastor of a large church in our city. This church began 5 years



ago and is now attracting 7,000 worshipers per weekend. He shared with me his plan for the future. He is believing for 30,000 worshipers per weekend in the near future. That God-given goal is pulling him forward in his day-by-day ministry.

## Some pastors have short-changed their vision by their impatience. They have tried to turn an infant into an adult by wishful and unrealistic ambition.

Most pastors do not think of goals in those dimensions. For example, I grew up in an Assemblies of God church that attracted 30 to 50 worshipers per week. It was a great church, and goal setting in that context also yields a fruitful harvest.

The point is clear. It takes time for a vision to reach fruition and maturity. Our infant granddaughter cannot be rushed in her growth. Growth requires time. The work God has called pastors to do also requires time.

Some pastors have short-changed their vision by their impatience. They have tried to turn an infant into an adult by wishful and unrealistic ambition. Goal achievement requires time, and a long-term pastorate alone provides that opportunity.

### LONG-TERM PASTORATES UTILIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

Several years ago Billy Graham led a crusade in our city. I was asked to offer the closing prayer. Why? Largely because I had pastored for many years in San Diego. When the community was debating the domestic partner question, I was asked by the *San Diego Union and Tribune* to make a public and

published statement on the matter. Why? Because I had pastored many years in San Diego. When a leading pastor in our city was looking for someone to serve as a mentor, he gave me a call. Why? Because I have pastored in this city for many years.

John Maxwell has helped pastors understand that authentic leadership is expressed in influence. There is no shortcut. It takes time — lots of it.

Influence requires more than longevity. Integrity, character, a cooperative spirit, hospitality, friendliness, and selflessness are also essential. But these attendant attributes need time. Influence is fickle. It can easily be diminished and discarded. Only time solidifies and establishes influence.

An associate pastor often concluded his presentation to new members with this story: “I have asked people outside the church if they have met Pastor Dresselhaus.

“They often replied: ‘No, but we have met some of his people.’ ”

The message is clear. A pastor’s influence is measured by its observable impact on the people in the congregation, and this process requires time.

Though not original with me, I have long been a spokesperson for a dynamic principle in pastoral work: *Ministry flows out of relationship*. Nothing could be more true. This principle is demonstrated in the life and ministry of Jesus, the corroborative nature of apostolic ministry, and the persistent lessons of church history. Ministry with

influence is pegged to strong and meaningful relationships, and this takes time.

A long-term pastorate provides the occasion and opportunity for godly influence both in the church and in the community. It is sad to see capable and dedicated pastors terminate their assignments prematurely and miss golden opportunities to exert a transforming influence on people.

Some pastors masterfully make it to the 10-yard line, then give up and never carry the ball into the end zone. The work of pastoral ministry is sabotaged by lack of perseverance.

Remember, influence takes time, and only the long-term pastorate can maximize that opportunity.

### LONG-TERM PASTORATES ENABLE THE BUILDING OF A STRONG PULPIT

I think I can count on one hand the times I repeated a message over 33 years. (You are way ahead of me if you said: “Probably they were not worth repeating.”) The reason is based on my personal commitment to expository preaching. The well never runs dry when pastors let Scripture speak in content, tone, delivery, application, and invitation.

Preparing an expository message is like walking through a riverbed looking for gems. Some gems lie in plain sight. Others are exposed only with careful and persistent effort. In a carefully selected text, some of the most profound truths are just below the surface and require careful search, but the results are well worth the effort.

Haddon Robinson in *Biblical Preaching* includes this insightful verse:

“I had six faithful friends,  
They taught me all I knew,

## PHASE FOUR

Their names are How and What and Why,

When and Where and Who.”<sup>2</sup>

Good advice. Ponder. Question. Imagine. Conjecture. Speculate. Track down the flow of thought. Squeeze hard. Unpack. Only then will it be advisable to draw on the thoughts of others. Do not let the ideas of others obstruct the fruit uncovered through exploring of the text.

The point is it takes time to develop a solid, effective preaching ministry in a church.

Here are two closely related questions: Is it possible to build a great church without a strong pulpit? Second, is it possible to build a strong pulpit without the benefit of time? While there may be exceptions, the weight of evidence falls on the side of a time-nurtured pulpit. Strong pulpits build strong churches, and strong pulpits require time.

What is better than a long-range

preaching program that wrestles with the great themes of God’s Word, that regards the parts of Scripture as equally important, and that creates a spirit of expectancy in the hearts of worshipers?

Wonderfully, in the process, the preacher is also nurtured, built up, and made ready for the next privileged opportunity in the pulpit.

Pastors must let the passion to preach put stretch to their pastoral time line. Passion is birthed and maintained by a serious handling of Scripture.

### LONG-TERM PASTORATES ENERGIZE THE COMMITMENT OF LAY LEADERSHIP

Imagine the letdown lay leaders feel with the premature resignation of their pastor. Conversely, imagine the energy created by a pastor’s commitment to stay

regardless of the obstacles.

It is true: Everything rises or falls on leadership. Argue as one might, it is incontestably true. Put a strong and effective pastor in a church, and growth and progress become inevitable. Choose a weak and ineffective pastor, and lack of growth and progress will become inevitable. In any case, tenure will be the constant with dynamic leaders who build strong churches.

How can lay leaders be motivated to make long-term commitments when pastoral leadership is interrupted for selfish and carnal reasons? How can pastors call lay leaders to a level of commitment that they themselves are unprepared to give? How can lay leaders buy into long-range and ambitious plans for the church if their pastor is unwilling to make the same commitment?

How many times have I heard: “He got us deep in debt and then

## IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL: BUILDING EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM PASTORATES

Glenn E. Ludwig (Alban Institute, 130 pp., paperback)

When pastors and congregations come together in ministry, they generally do so with the hope that the relationship will be long-lasting and dynamic. The reality, however, is that long-term pastorates are an increasingly rare phenomenon in congregations. While there are many reasons that most pastors can only sustain their ministries in a church for a relatively limited number of years, Glenn E. Ludwig argues that this does not have to be the case if both the pastor and congregation take deliberate steps toward an enduring relationship.

A 17-year veteran in his current call, Reverend Ludwig draws both on his own experience and the research and observations of those who have studied successful long-term pastorates to create an essential guide for sustaining

mutual ministry. With an engaging and forthright style, he considers the advantages and disadvantages of long-term pastorates and outlines the key elements that promote them, including:

- ☐ Starting off strong
- ☐ Building trust
- ☐ Establishing firm foundations
- ☐ Developing support systems
- ☐ Nurturing staff and lay ministry
- ☐ Creating a favorable environment

All who are seeking the joy and depth that long-term pastorates can bring to both pastors and congregations will value the time-tested wisdom of *In It for the Long Haul*. To read chapter one, go to <http://www.alban.org/bookdetails.asp?ID=1697>.



left. Now we are struck with a huge mortgage, a declining membership, and a cash flow shortfall." It is not fair. Lay leadership should never be sold a plan and then be left to pick up the shattered pieces of an aborted vision.

## A LONG-TERM PASTORATE PROVIDES THE BENEFIT OF CONTINUITY

What could be better than to marry a godly couple, dedicate their children to the Lord, watch those children grow and mature, marry those children, and then dedicate their children to the Lord?

Only long-term pastorates afford a pastor this unparalleled privilege. It has been my pleasure to participate in this joyful demonstration of continuity many times.

I have listened carefully to the young people who grew up in our church and then left to pursue educational and vocational objectives. On returning for a visit, they would often comment that it was reassuring to come back to their home church and find clear evidence of continuity.

In a culture where radical change is the norm, it is essential that people find stability and predictability in their church. A consistent pastoral presence is an important part of that equation. A long-term pastor becomes a pillar of consistency in a society of inconsistency and instability. To see that the shepherd is still at the gate is incredibly reassuring and encouraging. Pastor, people are grateful you are still there week after week, year after year, and decade after decade. It builds a sense of continuity and stability into their lives. They say, "Thanks."

Here is a testimony to the unique privilege that awaits a faithful pastor:

"To receive the confidence of people; to know the secrets they have told to no other living soul; to blush with them over their sins and exult with them when the sin is flung under the table; to know their private affairs and to be the sharer of their highest ideals, is to have a joy of which not one of us is really worthy."<sup>3</sup>

This blessed opportunity is open to pastors who build trust in their people, and that takes time.

I will never forget this particular moment in our ministry. The church had gifted my wife and me with a 25th wedding anniversary trip to Hawaii. But just before leaving, an inquiry came as to my interest in pursuing the possibility of a pastoral change. The church making the inquiry was large, prestigious, and well known for providing generously for their pastor.

Between walks on the beach, visiting the rain forests, and enjoying delicious meals together, we prayerfully considered how to respond to this most gracious invitation. During those days, I came to this conclusion: There is no church big enough or salary large enough to take me away from my present assignment. In other words, I would not leave for any other reason than an unshakable conviction that the Lord was calling us to change our place of ministry.

It may seem trite and elementary, but that commitment made it easy to decline other opportunities that came along. Put differently, a pastor should never entertain the possibility of a change in ministry location without an authentic and well-validated word from the Lord. Too many pulpits are vacated for insufficient cause or

excuses of convenience. The grass may be greener on the other side of the fence, but that is a wholly insufficient reason to make a change.

## CONCLUSION

I do not know if the arguments have been convincingly made or the line of reason set forth with clarity, but a sincere attempt has been made to show that a long-term pastorate becomes an opportunity for a most fruitful, influential, and satisfying life of ministry.

However, if pastors are still unconvinced, take a mental journey across America and visit the largest and most influential churches in the land. What is the one common denominator? What is the one factor that invariably is found? Those churches are led by pastors who have made long-term commitments.

What does it take to make it over the long pull? What does it take to dodge the bullets, navigate the troubled waters, and avoid the minefields that dog the landscape of pastoral work?

Tim LaHaye's old minister friend still has the answer: "If you are going to make it in the ministry, you need to have the hide of a rhinoceros."

God bless you as you grow yours. 🙏



**RICHARD L. DRESSELHAUS, D.MIN.,** is an executive presbyter and former senior pastor, First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.

## NOTES

1. <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=30>
2. Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 67.
3. W.E. Sangster quoted in Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Creative Preaching: Finding the Words* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 58.



# TAKING A BREAK INSTEAD OF **BREAKING UP** — THE ENERGIZING BREAK FOR A LIFETIME OF MINISTRY

[ BY KEVIN MILCAREK ]

## REST, REFLECTION, RESTORATION

Throughout Scripture there are references to the importance of rest. After completing creation, God himself rested (Genesis 2:2,3). Not only did God rest, He also made the day holy *because* He rested. So, it is also important for man, made in God's image, to observe regular periods of rest, reflection, and restoration.

In Mark 6:31, Jesus recognized His disciples' exhaustion. His solution: "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'" Jesus recognized the importance of rest — a time away from the busyness of life and ministry.

Pastors can more effectively minister to others when they rest and rejuvenate their weary minds, bodies, and souls. They do not realize how depleted they are until they are given opportunity to rest.

In Leviticus 25:1–5, God told Moses to instruct the Israelites to let their fields lay fallow every seventh year. During this year of rest and renewal, the Israelites were to neither plant nor harvest. Even today, farmers recognize the value of allowing a field to rest. After a period of rest, fields are revitalized and regenerated, and bear more abundant fruit.

As I look back over my years of ministry, I can see periods when I needed rest. There were times when I received the rest I needed and my ministry was better for it. Unfortunately, there have also been times when I did not get the needed time away, and even ministry, which I love, became a grind.

## MINISTRY AT BACK BAY

In June 1995, my family and I arrived in Virginia Beach, Virginia, to serve at Back Bay Christian Assembly of God, in the rural southern portion of a rapidly growing resort city. When we arrived, the 8-year-old congregation of 25 believers was meeting in a small house that had been converted into a church. In 1996, the church began a building program and held its first service in its new sanctuary on Easter Sunday 1997. In 2000, the church added a 2,500-square-foot fellowship hall and classroom space. In September 2005, work was completed on a 10,000-square-foot building that houses Back Bay Christian Academy. Our average attendance has grown to more than 150, and our church family includes more than 200. We also have more than 60 children enrolled in our school and preschool programs.

In spring 2005, Potomac District

Superintendent H. Robert Rhoden nominated me for a sabbatical. He had pioneered an innovative sabbatical program over 10 years ago. (See *EJ Online* at <http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org> for a summary of the Potomac District Sabbatical Guidelines.) I spoke with the church board, and they were unanimous in their approval. Following this meeting, Superintendent Rhoden met with the board and then later addressed the congregation. Clear boundaries were set regarding my contact with the congregation and the circumstances under which they could contact me.

Because this was a district-sponsored sabbatical, we received traveling expenses that gave us

**For some ministers, serious reflection on the meaning of their life and ministry will make the difference between a fruitful future and a burned-out, stagnating decline into frustration.**

opportunity to visit other churches. In addition, the congregation continued to pay my salary during my 4-week absence. The church board also encouraged us to utilize the additional vacation time I had accrued. Church members took care of our home and pets during this time. The entire church family was supportive, and they encouraged us to enjoy this time of spiritual and physical renewal. During my 5-week absence, my assistant pastor, Don Piper, handled both the pastoral and preaching duties of the church. We met several times prior to my departure to ensure a smooth transition.

## BENEFITS OF SABBATICALS

The benefits from the sabbatical for my life and ministry and for the congregation were many. First, our church family realized during our absence the enormous load my wife and I had been carrying. Not only were we involved in many of the church's ministries, but I also served as the general contractor on each building project.

During my absence, the assistant pastor called a special church meeting, and many members volunteered to play a greater role in the ministries of the church.

Second, the experience strengthened the church because members developed strategies and skills for

## **Pastors can easily lose their ministry focus if they are not careful. A sabbatical allowed me to renew my spirit on a daily basis.**

functioning that did not require my wife's or my involvement. The congregation is now stronger and more dependent on individual members to fill needs in the church and community. The sharing of ministry responsibility is now more balanced between the pastor and the congregation, each working to serve and minister to each other. The lessons learned during my sabbatical will serve to foster healthy growth, not only in the congregation but also in individual members as they continue to seek new avenues of service.

Third, I enjoyed spending time with my family, unencumbered by the demands of ministry. I was also able to reflect on my calling and recapture my vision for the congregation I served. By distancing myself emotionally, physically, and spiritually, I was able to see the ministries of the church with fresh eyes and a renewed appreciation.

Perhaps the most important benefit of my sabbatical was my willingness to delegate more ministry responsibility to the laity. I realize I cannot be involved in every ministry of the church, nor should I try. Delegating allows others greater

opportunity for ministry and service.

During our sabbatical my wife, Cheryl, observed how completely and inextricably our lives are intertwined with the church.

Pastoring is a 24-hour-a-day commitment for the minister and his family. Meals are put on hold

when a grieving family needs comfort. A child's birthday party is rescheduled to accommodate a wedding. Sermon preparation gives

way to counseling people in a troubled marriage. Seldom is there any down time. Cell phones, e-mail, and other advances in technology makes the pastor more accessible to the congregation than ever before. However, having a gifted assistant pastor who was willing to take on the day-to-day demands of the ministry ensured our time away was restful and uninterrupted.

Part of the learning experience of the sabbatical came as I visited other churches. Experiencing varied worship styles and different ministry methods broadened my vision. In one church we attended, I learned some innovative ideas for making visitors feel welcome. In another church I was inspired by a visually illustrated sermon. Since then I have preached several visually illustrated sermons that have been well received by the congregation. Another church's outreach program motivated me to start a new program on Wednesday nights. The evening begins with a fellowship meal, followed by classes for different ages and interests. Since the inception of this program, our Wednesday

night attendance has quadrupled.

Pastors can easily lose their ministry focus if they are not careful. A sabbatical allowed me to renew my spirit on a daily basis. It was good to spend time with the Lord without an agenda and to have times of fellowship where I allowed myself to hear God clearly. I reflected on His wonderful grace and love. I enjoyed uninterrupted prayer time and time in the Word with the sole intent of growing closer to the Lord. Refocusing on the most important things in my life — my calling and my relationship with the Lord — reminded me that without the Lord the ministry is a burden too heavy for me to carry.

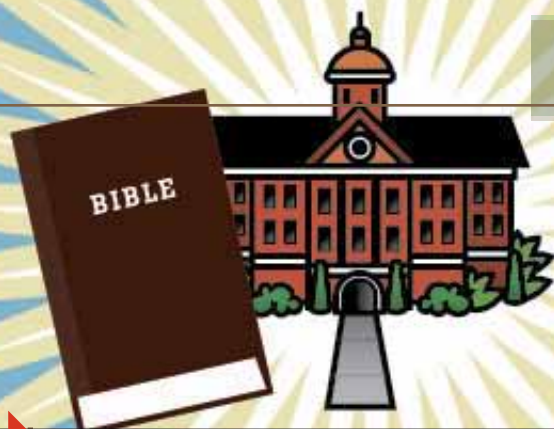
## **THE RETURN TO BACK BAY**

It was easy for my family to integrate back into fellowship with our church family because we have a strong, unified body of believers at Back Bay Christian Assembly. When we returned, we were surprised to learn that the congregation had worked diligently to complete several painting and decorating projects in preparation for our homecoming. Since then, the church has been proactive in constantly challenging us to allow them to help in the ministries of the church. They made it easy for us to return by reminding us that we are respected, appreciated, and loved. Not only was the sabbatical something my family desperately needed, but it was also an immense blessing to the congregation. ☺



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# SEMINARY —

Enhancing the Minister's Professional Skills  
[ BY JOSEPH L. CASTLEBERRY ]

**As an institution of teachers that exists solely for the church, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary takes Ephesians 4:12 seriously, seeking “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”** To fulfill this biblical role, AGTS provides

professional training for those in church ministry, as well as for Christians in every walk of life who reach out to a lost and hurting world. The seminary’s mission reflects this calling, enjoining its faculty to “shape servant leaders with knowledge, skill, and passion to revitalize the church and evangelize the world in the power of the Spirit.”

## WHAT IS A MINISTRY PROFESSIONAL?

The word *professional*, when applied to ministry, may be a stumbling block for some Pentecostals, but it is important to consider what it means to be a ministerial professional. When I was growing up, the only way I ever heard the word *professional* used was in reference to athletes. I thought professionals were people who made large sums of money for doing their jobs. In the churches I attended, becoming a professional minister was seen as bad. People thought a professional minister was a hireling, doing the job strictly for money.

Many Pentecostals still believe ministers should not be considered professionals, but ministers closely fit the definition of *professional*. Across the spectrum, from business to health care to education to ministry, the standard definition of a *professional* is one who engages in intellectual and creative work, rather than routine, manual, mechanical, or physical labor. Rather than being guided by rules or bosses, professionals perform their work by exercising *professional judgment* based on a code of ethics, a body of research-derived theory, and lessons learned by applying theory to real-life situations in practice. Professionals are expected to be engaged in continuing education, constantly renewing their knowledge of emerging research, theory, and best practices in their field. They are also burdened by the responsibility to preserve the trust that the public has afforded their guild.

Pentecostals have traditionally argued that the Spirit-filled minister relies on something better than

professional training to make judgments — the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, dependence on the Holy Spirit must continue to be the guiding principle of Pentecostal ministerial practice. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit usually works with pastors’ talents, knowledge, and skills, not to mention their personal character and sense of ethics. While the Holy Spirit is capable of giving pastors miraculous words of knowledge or wisdom, most ministerial practice requires some degree of ordinary knowledge, and no minister can be expected to presume on miraculous giftings for every action. Pastors might like to pretend that simply being Pentecostal is enough to ensure a high level of ministerial effectiveness, but experience has not shown that pretension to be justified. Professionality under the Spirit’s control is an appropriate — and humble — ambition for Pentecostal ministers.

## SEMINARY EDUCATION AND THE CYCLE OF MINISTRY

A seminary offers degree programs that can play a crucial role in enhancing the professional skills of ministers throughout the life-cycle of ministry. A seminary offers thorough training in the biblical and social research skills essential for a truly professional practice of ministry. A seminary education introduces pastors to the enormous body of theological and professional literature that exists for ministers, providing a rich resource for their practice. Students are exposed to the current best practices of ministry, providing successful models with which students can creatively engage. A seminary introduces students to the ethical dimensions of ministerial practice — an element that if ignored, can yield disastrous consequences. Perhaps most important, a seminary education nurtures students’ curiosity and learning skills creating lifelong learners. Because professional ministers are lifelong learners, it is not surprising that they often return to seminary at important junctures in their ministerial life seeking further knowledge, skills, and direction. By forming ministry professionals, AGTS seeks to enhance the trust that the public places in Assemblies of God ministers.

Studies of adult education show that adults relate academic learning to their life experience. Because



# PHASE FOUR

## SEMINARY CONTINUED

individual learners at seminary are often experiencing different developmental stages of adult life, they engage their studies differently, providing themselves opportunities to reinterpret and rearrange their past experiences. Formal learning experiences give pastors new tools, theories, and skills they apply readily to navigating the cycles of ministerial life.

For those in the *formation* and *preparation* phases of ministry whose calling may or may not have fully defined itself yet, seminary is an ideal place for building a network of lifelong relationships among like-minded people who have responded to God's call to ministry. Academic preparation establishes an intellectual foundation for ministerial practice that the Holy Spirit can use for the minister's lifetime. Individual degree programs provide specialized training for different callings.

The Master of Arts in Theological Studies at AGTS is a 2-year degree providing education in Bible, theology, and church history. The M.A.T.S. program provides a strong theological foundation for Christian professionals in secular fields of work or serves as an intermediate degree for those preparing for careers as theologians or Bible scholars.

The 3-year Master of Divinity offers well-rounded training in Bible, theology, and practical theology for those planning to devote their lives to church ministry, missions, chaplaincies, and other areas of full-time professional ministry or Christian scholarship.

The Master of Arts in Christian Ministry is a shorter program that focuses on practical theology and the development of ministerial competencies.

The Master of Arts in Counseling provides training in psychology in a Christian context and worldview for students who want to become licensed professional counselors.

The Master of Arts in Intercultural Ministry offers crucial intercultural communications training and a strong theological foundation for those called to missionary service or other ministries in multicultural or intercultural environments.

The *implementation* and *maturation* stages of ministry call for the enhancement of practical skills at a time of life that usually does not permit students to study in residence. To facilitate the development of theologically reflective practice for these ministers, AGTS has established extension sites across the country that offer the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree. Independent study and Internet-based courses also make possible an in-service Master of Divinity program. These programs allow people to continue their present ministries while advancing in their understanding of theoretical perspectives on ministry. During the

maturation stage, some ministers interrupt their careers and upgrade their knowledge and vision for ministry.

The *maturation* and *continuation* phases present an ideal time for ministers to enroll in the Doctor of Ministry program — an in-service program that is presented in 10, 5-day modules on the AGTS campus. The doctor of ministry program focuses on developing leaders' personal lives and public ministries by providing a unique opportunity for sharpening life goals and professional objectives.

Psychologist Eric Ericsson has theorized that midlife is characterized by a struggle that leads to either generativity or stagnation. For some ministers, serious reflection on the meaning of their lives and ministries will make the difference between a fruitful future and a burned-out, stagnating decline into frustration. Participants in the Doctor of Ministry program routinely comment that their studies have re-energized their lives and radically changed their way of looking at ministry. They also report marked increases in ministerial success and satisfaction.

Most people do not associate the *celebration* phase with higher education. Still, the trend in recent years shows older people returning to college and seminary in huge numbers. For some, retirement offers the freedom of schedule that allows them to dedicate themselves to areas of learning and creativity long left unattended, often to their great frustration. Some have unfinished business in terms of their life's accomplishments that only an advanced degree will complete. Others desire to achieve the academic qualifications that will formally certify their significant experience and aid them in investing in younger people through teaching. Every year, AGTS welcomes retired people who enter seminary with enthusiasm and excitement about the learning that awaits them.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SEMINARY EDUCATION

No matter what age or phase of ministry a particular student may be in, seminary can play a crucial role in providing them with tools that will take them to a new level of professionalism in ministry. Just as important, seminary study occurs in the context of deep commitment to the presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus desires to pour out on the young and the old, on men and women, and on people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and walks of life. ②



**JOSEPH L. CASTLEBERRY, ED.D.,** is academic dean at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

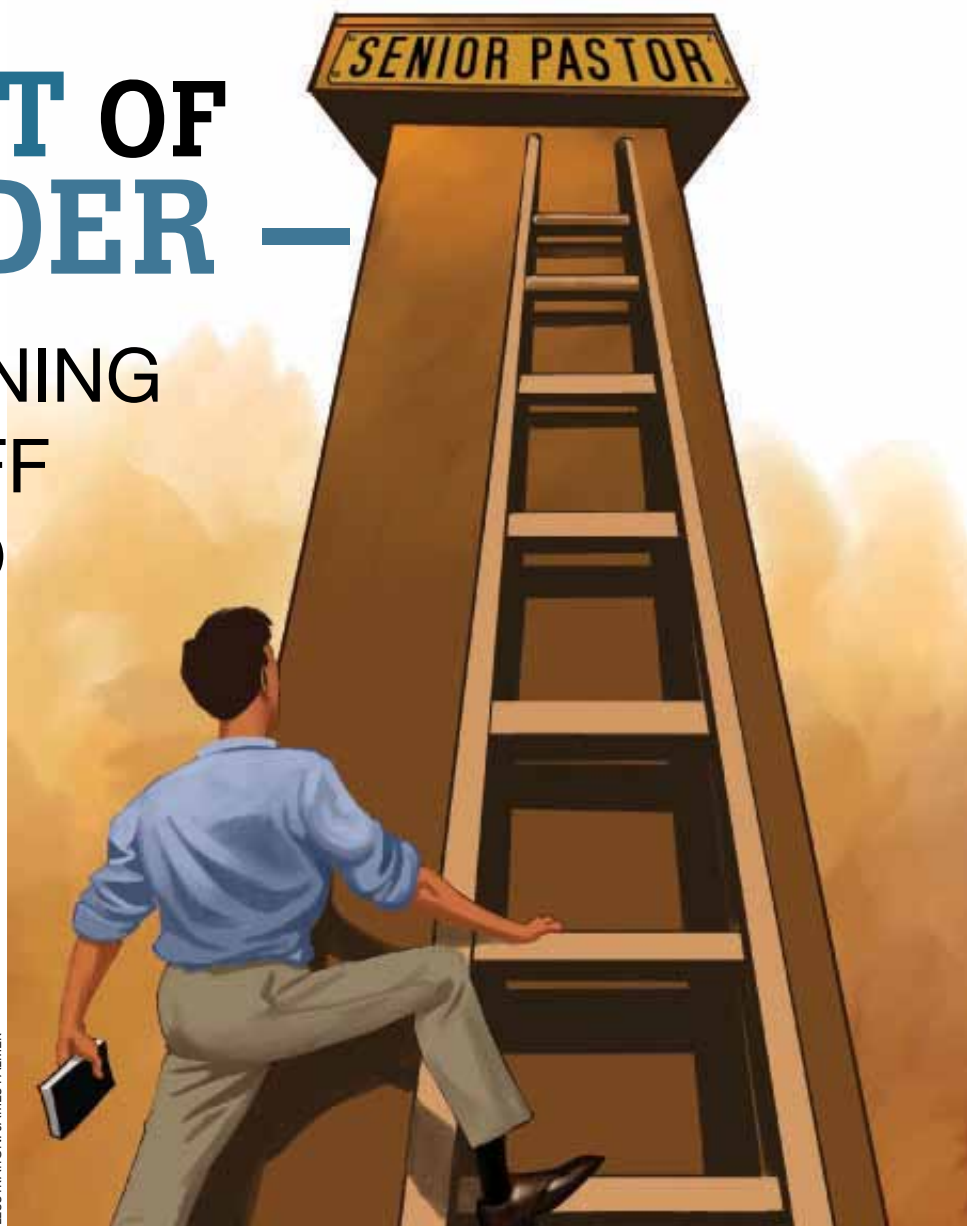


# THE ASCENT OF A LEADER —

## TRANSITIONING FROM STAFF PASTOR TO SENIOR PASTOR

[BY ROD LOY]

ILLUSTRATION: JAMES PALMER



**I**n 1987, my senior year in Bible college, I listed my goals for the next 15 years of my life and ministry. In a time of prayer and reflection, I wrote 10 goals. In 2001, 14 years later, I was on track. I had achieved the first nine goals, and only had one remaining. The final goal on my list was to be a senior pastor by age 35. But I sensed the need to adjust my goals. It was not time to make that transition.

I enjoyed my executive pastor role at First Assembly of God in North Little Rock, Arkansas, serving my senior pastor, Alton Garrison. I felt I was making a difference for the Kingdom, regardless of my position or title. So, in January 2001, I met with Pastor Garrison to share my thoughts. I still remember my words: “I want to submit my goals and dreams to your goals and dreams. I look forward to serving you

as long as you feel I am adding value to your ministry and the ministry of First Assembly.” It was a heartfelt pledge, one I took seriously. I would continue serving my leader and leave the future to God. I did not write a new set of goals. I believed I was right where God wanted me, in the center of His plan for my life.

Four months later at the Arkansas District Council, my pastor was elected superintendent. I sat in the business session with a knot in my stomach as the vote changed not only his life, but also mine. Whether I liked it or not, my ministry was about to be in transition. A week later, I was presented to the congregation of First Assembly as the candidate for senior pastor.

## When entering a new role, one needs to start over.

### This does not seem fair, but that does not matter.

I had never been voted on and was not looking forward to it. My future, my family, and my ministry seemed to hinge on this one moment. I know God directs events, but when you are the one being voted on this is easy to forget. So many times, voting brings out the worst in a church.

I decided to take a vote in my own family to see how I would do. I wanted to get a win under my belt. The first vote was a tie — two for, and two against. My sons, Parker and Tyler, both voted against their own dad. I called for another ballot. Tyler changed his vote, but Parker stood firm. I finally asked, “Parker, why would you not want me to be pastor?”

His response: “Dad, you know I love you, and I love Pastor Garrison, too. But if I must have one of you as my pastor, I would rather have him.”

I explained to him, “Son, that is not an option. Pastor has already accepted another job.”

I never did win the vote of my younger son, Parker.

I must admit I was not filled with confidence. An entire congregation was to vote on me, and I could not even win a vote in my own family. I was glad Parker was not old enough to vote in the church election. The next few weeks were tense.

I will never forget that Sunday morning, sitting with my family in the media room, watching the monitors as the congregation voted on me. My boys did not seem to sense the gravity of the moment, but enjoyed chocolate chip cookies and a Coke® as we watched the meeting. That morning, I knew one way or another my life was changing. I would either be moving or assuming a new role. When the vote was announced, I had been elected senior pastor. My emotions were mixed between excitement, relief, and fear.

Now, 5 years later, I realize I should have been both more excited and more afraid. Many times Pastor Garrison had told me, “It is a lot more than 20 steps from your desk to mine.” He was

right. My 15 years as a staff member did not prepare me for the different world of the senior pastorate. The

transition was challenging and exhausting.

I have learned some valuable lessons about the transition from staff member to senior pastor. I was working at the same church with the same people, but the challenges were entirely new. Over the last 5 years, through much trial and error, I have discovered the response to each challenge.

## CHALLENGE: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY GROWTH?

As a staff member, the senior pastor challenged me to grow and improve. My weaknesses were addressed and my strengths were developed. At times it hurt, but I learned to appreciate the built-in accountability.

When I became senior pastor, I discovered how valuable accountability was. Now, no one challenged or confronted me. No one ensured I was growing. I was on my own. I was surprised how much I missed this aspect of my relationship with my senior pastor.

## RESPONSE: LEAD YOURSELF

As pastor, I learned I must initiate moments of accountability. I must call a friend or mentor and confess to weakness, struggles, or a bad attitude. Self-leadership has become much more important to me. I am responsible for my growth.



## PHASE FOUR

### CHALLENGE: WHERE ARE MY FRIENDS?

As a staff member, the other staff members were my closest friends. We faced the same frustrations and fears. As senior pastor, the same staff members are still my closest friends. However, we no longer face the same frustrations and fears. The challenges of the senior pastorate are different. I was surrounded by people, but struggling with loneliness.

### RESPONSE: BUILD NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEADERS

As a pastor, I find relationships with other pastors and leaders have become more important to me. As a staff member, I did not understand the importance of attending district or sectional events. Now, I value opportunities to connect with other leaders who understand my hurts, fears, and frustrations. No one can understand the pain of someone leaving your church like another pastor who has been there. I need

other leaders who are at the same point of the journey to encourage, challenge, and warn me.

### CHALLENGE: WHAT WILL I SAY?

As a staff member, I thought Sundays were important. As senior pastor, I think Sundays are everything. One of my mentors reminds me often, "You are only as good as your next sermon." I have discovered a unique challenge: There is a Sunday every week. The 6 days between Sundays seem to fly by. I think every senior pastor can identify with this desperate feeling: "What will I say next Sunday morning?" The pressure of preparation and communication is enormous. As a staff member, there were times I would wing it in my area. As pastor, I believe the risk and the responsibility are too great to wing it.

### RESPONSE: WORK AHEAD

I quickly learned the only way to survive as a senior pastor is to work ahead. If I save Sunday's sermon preparation for Saturday, I am taking an enormous risk. Emergencies arise, schedules fill, and the phone rings. I discipline myself to always be 3 or 4 weeks ahead in my preparation. Preparing ahead allows me to respond to crisis without feeling the pressure of Sunday. In addition, several times each year,

I take a mini-sabbatical and spend 3 straight days in study, solely for sermon preparation.

### CHALLENGE: WHY DO I NEED TO START OVER?

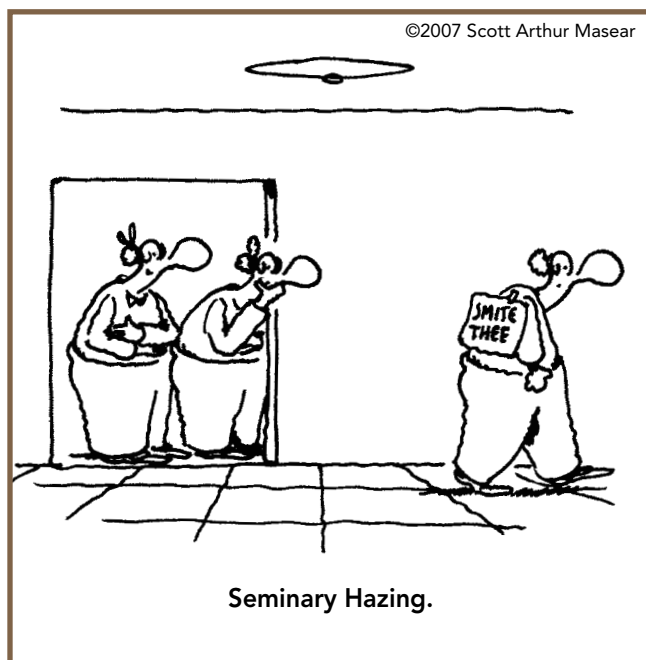
I served 9 years at First Assembly before assuming the senior pastorate. I mistakenly assumed the congregation would give me credit for those 9 years. I thought I would assume my new role and continue moving forward. I had a rude awakening. Although I had 9-year relationships, I had to start at the bottom rung of the leadership ladder. I had to prove myself in the new role, one person at a time.

### RESPONSE: START OVER

For the first year I attended every event. If there was a party, activity, or departmental event, I was there. Many times, I would attend two or three activities in one evening. I paid the relationship price. It was like starting at a new church. When entering a new role, one needs to start over. This does not seem fair, but that does not matter. A new pastor starts over and earns his influence again. I no longer attend every function at First Assembly. But, I understand that in times of church transition, I will need to pay that price again.

### CHALLENGE: WHY DOES EVERYONE NOT AGREE WITH ME?

I assumed when I became senior pastor that everyone would be willing to follow my every directive and plan. After all, I agreed with my leader. Would everyone not do the same for me? As a staff member, if someone did not like me, it was not a big deal. They could like another staff member. They could attend First Assembly



even if they did not like me. I was not required to like everyone. It was easy to avoid the people with whom I did not get along.

## RESPONSE: LOVE EVERYONE

As senior pastor, I must pastor everyone, including the people I do not like. I even have the privilege of pastoring the people who voted against me. After 9 years at First Assembly, I received 85 percent of the vote. Fifteen percent of the crowd voted against me, even after knowing me for 9 years. I understand that some people voted against the process, and some people do not like change. This did not matter to me. I had taught their children, counseled with them, attended funerals, and performed wedding ceremonies.

## My job as senior pastor is to release others into ministry and facilitate their success.

How dare they vote against me? I knew who had voted against me. I knew who had called their friends. Now, I was their pastor.

A senior pastor's job is to love everyone. I choose to love the difficult people, the negative people, even the people who voted against me. Why? Loving the people is my assignment from God. My job is to love God and love people.

## CHALLENGE: WHERE ARE THE EASY WINS?

I had always planned to follow a pastor who had struggled, one whom everyone was secretly glad he had left. Instead, I followed a heroic leader who had led the church to previously unheard of heights. I had been part of the church. I had helped design ministries, recruit staff, and cast vision.

Now as pastor, easy wins were few and far between. There were no glaring areas of weakness and lack. I could not attack the weaknesses of former leadership because I was part of the former leadership. I struggled to find places to build my influence and leadership.

## RESPONSE: RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO COMPETE

Most people want to compete and prove they are better than the last guy. Many leaders are tempted to boost themselves by highlighting the weaknesses of the former pastor. Pastors need to remind themselves that they are not competing against the last pastor; they are on the same team. Satan is the enemy, not the former pastor. Pastors need to decide early on to never speak negatively of the former

pastor. When church people

make comparisons, I always use it as an opportunity to praise the leadership of the former pastor.

I resist the temptation to compete. First Assembly is not my church. First Assembly is God's church. He has allowed me to serve as steward for this period of time. Any success belongs to God.

## CHALLENGE: HOW CAN I DO EVERYTHING?

As a staff member, my job was task intensive. I drew floor plans for our new buildings. I oversaw the construction of those facilities. I designed programs, fixed problems, and implemented my pastor's plans. I started each day with a list of specific, measurable tasks. I did not spend much time thinking about tomorrow. I did not pray for vision. This was not

my job. My job was to accomplish the task today. I received great fulfillment from finishing the job.

When I became senior pastor, I mistakenly thought I could still do everything. My satisfaction and fulfillment had come from doing. Now, instead of doing, I needed to be thinking, praying, and planning — things I formerly did not consider work. Trying to be involved in every detail while, at the same time, finding God's vision was overwhelming. It seemed there were not enough hours in the day.

## RESPONSE: RELEASE THE MINISTRY

My job as senior pastor is to release others into ministry and facilitate their success. If I am doing the task myself, I am most likely off track. I have learned a team best accomplishes ministry. Every team has a coach. I have now become the coach. I need to give up doing everything.

How do I fill my time? Thinking, praying, dreaming, studying, casting vision, problem solving, and networking with key leaders. Before, doing those things seemed like an easy cushy job. Now, I understand how much hard work is involved. My focus has shifted. Instead of being task oriented, I must remain vision oriented.

As I near the 5-year mark of my journey, I thank God for godly mentors and a wonderfully patient congregation. I would like to think if I called for a vote in my family, even Parker would vote for me now 🙏



**ROD LOY** is senior pastor, First Assembly of God, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

# SUPPORT TEAM OR SECOND FIDDLE?— A STAFF PASTOR FOR LIFE?

[BY RON MARKESE]

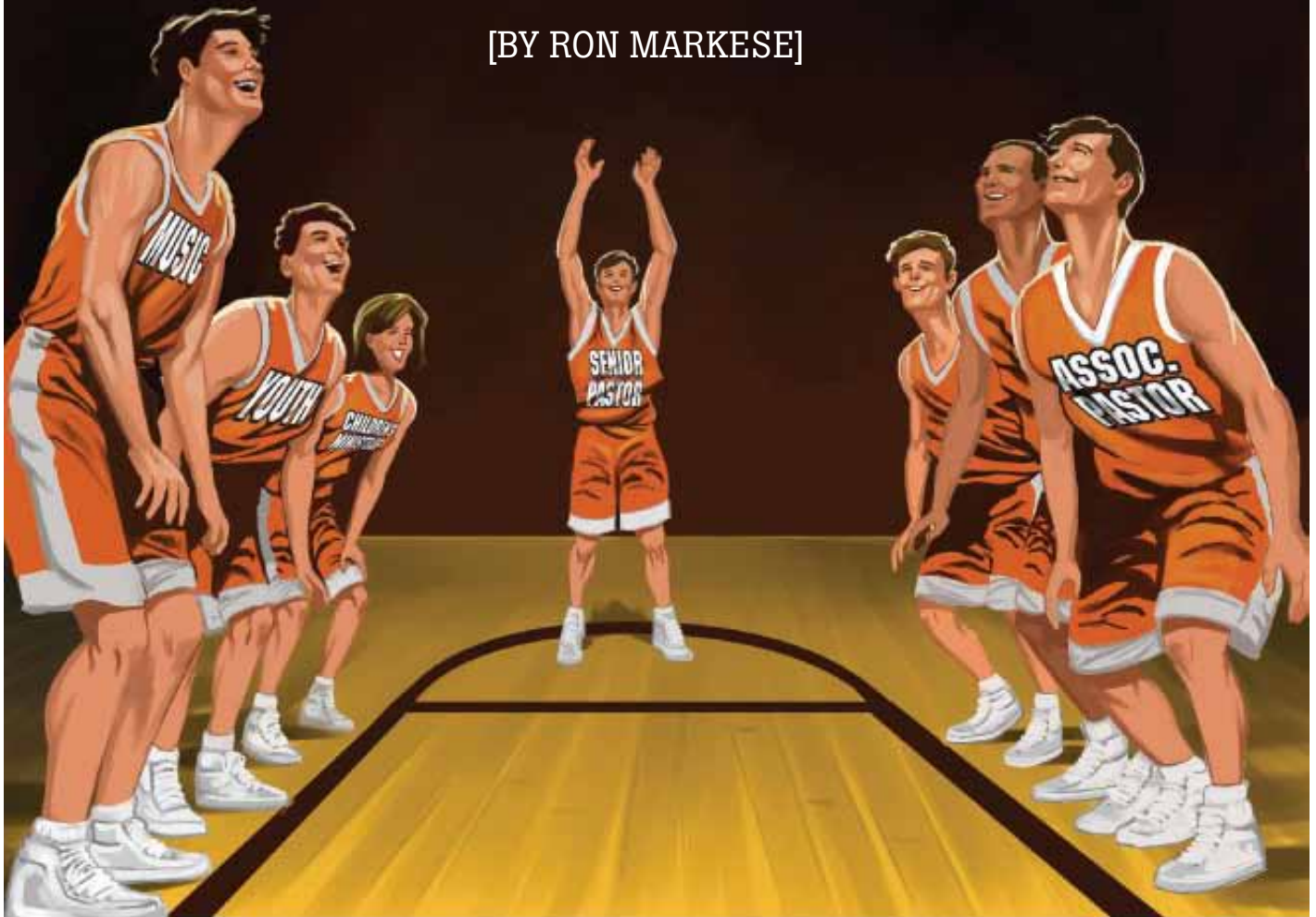


ILLUSTRATION: JAMES PALMER



**I** have been in ministry 26 years and have served as a staff pastor for 23 1/2 of those years. After being a senior pastor for 2 1/2 years, I learned that my personality and gifts seem better suited to the role of staff pastor. I feel more joy and fulfillment in ministry when serving as a staff pastor. So, even though I cannot say I have felt a specific call to be a staff pastor, in a sense God has called me to be a staff pastor.

## STAFF PASTOR CHARACTERISTICS

A staff pastor must possess certain skills and personality traits. Loyalty to the senior pastor is probably the most important. Every pastor I have worked for has told me how important loyalty was to him. Along with loyalty is respect.

### The staff pastor's relationship with the senior pastor and other staff pastors is a vital part of the team spirit.

The senior pastor needs to know that his staff loves, respects, and supports him.

A staff pastor also needs to be flexible. Every pastor has his own way of doing things. A staff pastor may not always agree with his senior pastor's philosophy of ministry or how he goes about ministry; but, since he works for the senior pastor, he needs to comply. At times, this means a staff pastor must humble himself and do what the senior pastor asks of him because he is the senior pastor.

The ability to love people and minister to them is a necessary trait for staff pastors. The staff pastor will probably minister to people on a one-on-one basis in ways that the senior pastor might never minister to aside from his sermons.

When a staff pastor has a high regard for the church and the senior pastor, he wants to make

the ministries of the church and the senior pastor successful. He wants to make his pastor look as good as possible.

## MINISTRY RELATIONSHIPS With the senior pastor

Some people think a staff pastor is second fiddle rather than a support person. But the key to how people view the staff pastor comes from the senior pastor's attitude toward his staff. Some senior pastors make staff pastors feel like second fiddles, but the senior pastor has a responsibility to make his staff feel they are important.

A senior pastor who is a team player and believes he and his staff are serving the Lord and the church together will make sure staff pastors

feel they are a part of the team and ministry. As the senior pastor helps his staff feel like a

team, every person feels important. Also, when the senior pastor views each staff person as part of a team, egos are kept in check.

The staff pastor's relationship with the senior pastor and other staff pastors is a vital part of the team spirit. I served with one senior pastor; and, even though I was his associate, I felt he was my friend. In larger churches, though, where there are multiple pastors, a staff pastor will probably not be the pastor's best friend. If a staff pastor has this idea, he is mistaken. It is too hard for the senior pastor to have this type of relationship with each staff pastor when he has multiple staff. Most senior pastors will try to build relationships with their staff through various times of fellowship — eating out together, or gathering in a staff's home. This type of interaction between senior pastor and staff is necessary in building a team mentality.



# PHASE FOUR

## With other staff

Staff pastors need to set aside their egos because — depending on their personality, ego, or pride — their relationship with other staff can easily become a competition to get more exposure in ministry at the church, or get closer to the senior pastor. To be a team player, a staff pastor

needs a humble spirit. This is especially

true when a pastor has been on staff a long time. He may believe he deserves preferential treatment. But he needs to realize every person on the team is equally important.

A staff pastor might have more people under his ministry than another staff pastor, but he cannot allow himself to develop an adverse or competitive spirit. All staff serves for the same reason — all have been called, all have a job to do, and all are important in the Kingdom.

A team-building senior pastor empowers his staff. He wants his staff

to do what is right and be successful as team players. A staff pastor might silo his ministry because he feels he needs to protect it. He wants to make sure his ministry succeeds so the senior pastor is happy with him. It is easy for a staff pastor to build a silo and not care about the ministry of others because some senior

## The ability to love people and minister to them is a necessary trait for staff pastors.

pastors allow these silos. But with this attitude, a staff pastor may not want to help other staff members succeed in their ministries.

Staff pastors must also support the other staff. Suppose a couple wants a staff pastor to perform their marriage ceremony, but the other staff pastors believe this couple should not get married for various reasons. If the staff pastor told this couple that he wanted to marry them but the other staff would not allow it, problems would arise. The staff pastor should tell the couple

that the staff as a whole concluded that they should not get married. The staff pastor might disagree with the decision, but he should still show that he is part of the pastoral team.

## With the congregation

Staff pastors also need to develop and monitor relationships with the congregation. This is especially

true when someone criticizes the senior pastor. Anytime anyone criticizes the senior pastor, his staff needs to defend him. A staff pastor may agree with the criticism, but he cannot express his agreement. He also needs to stop the criticism as soon as possible. A staff pastor can offer to pray with people about their situation. He can pray that the person will have a right attitude, and that they will be loving and kind to the pastor. He can also suggest that the person talk with the pastor about their issue.

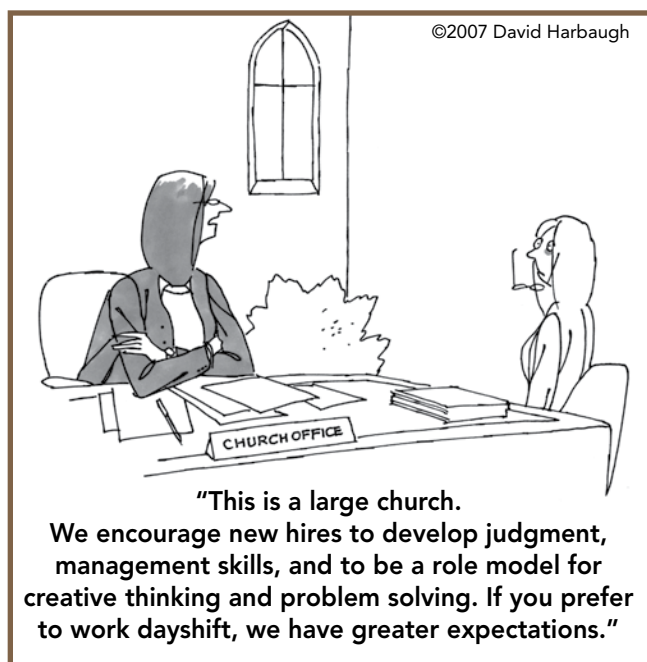
When the staff functions as a team, it helps the church deal with criticism. When the staff publicly compliments the pastor, people learn that there is no need to complain to a staff pastor because he will stand up for the senior pastor. When people see the staff getting along, loving each other, and functioning as a team, they also know the staff will defend and support each other.

## SURVIVING SENIOR PASTOR TRANSITIONS

Staff pastors need to show wisdom during a transition between senior pastors. The congregation needs to see staff pastors working as a team, loving and supporting each other during this time.

The priority of staff is to see the church move forward. During a transition, the pastoral staff needs to explain to the congregation that God has a wonderful future planned for the church in whomever He brings as pastor. The staff needs to lead the congregation in praying and believing that God will bring the right man.

The 2 1/2 years after Pastor Robert Schmidgall died was an interesting time. During that time,

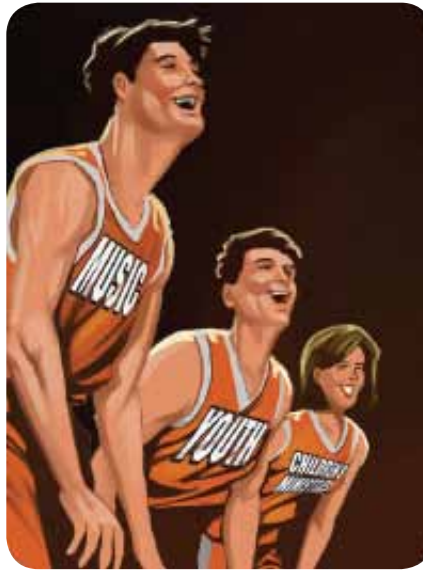


the staff pastors became a close team. No one allowed his ego to get in the way. One Sunday all nine staff pastors joined to sing “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” This showed the congregation that all staff members were united and believed God was their help and strength. The congregation commented on how wonderful it was to see the pastors united. That made an impact on the body of Christ.

Staff pastors need to be careful during a pastoral transition. People told me they hoped the board would choose me as senior pastor. I am sure other staff members had the same thing happen to them. A staff pastor needs to accept these comments as a compliment, but say, “I appreciate the fact you think I would be a good senior pastor, but we need to seek God and know God’s will. I want God’s will to be done, and God to bring the right man.”

None of the staff thought he should be senior pastor or tried to get into a position so the board would ask him to be the pastor. The staff worked together as a team and was concerned for the church, not their own self-interests. No one tried to get ahead of the other or get more exposure than the other. This was a wonderful experience. It was important that the church saw the staff function as a team and love and support each other. A staff pastor’s goal is to serve the Lord and the body of Christ.

During a transition, staff pastors can feel insecure because they do not know if they will remain on staff when the new senior pastor arrives. Church boards can help with this transition. Our board told Pastor Ross they wanted the staff to stay for at least 2 years after



## Staff pastors must also support the other staff.

he came. Even though we knew this, each staff pastor submitted his resignation when Pastor Ross came because we felt it was the ethical thing to do. We felt if Pastor Ross wanted to bring in his own staff, that was his privilege. But Pastor Ross agreed with the board and even suggested the staff stay on for 3 years. But he did ask each staff member to give him at least 2 years. After 2 years, staff members could decide whether they wanted to stay and he could make an informed decision on whether he wanted them to stay.

That kind of attitude brings continuity. If a new senior pastor replaces all the staff, there is no continuity in ministry. Too many changes are being made that will affect laypeople and leaders as well.

## CONCLUSION

Paul wrote that every person has a gift (Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:7–11; Ephesians 4:7–16). God has given staff pastors gifts and

abilities, and a role in the body of Christ. The staff pastor needs to believe the Lord has called him to his position.

With God’s help, a staff pastor can fulfill what God has called him to do. A staff pastor may not preach every Sunday or may not have the same responsibilities as the senior pastor, but God has given the staff pastor an important ministry in the Body.

First Corinthians 12:14–31 says that every part of the Body is important. All cannot be the head; all cannot be an eye or ear, but we all have a part. For the Body to function, each member needs to do what God has called him to do. When God places a person in a staff position, he has an important part in the ministry of the Kingdom. If God has called a person to be a staff pastor, then he should serve with joy and give 100 percent of his effort. He needs to be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led, and do his ministry as to the Lord.

In the story of the talents, God gave one person five, another person two, and the third person one (Matthew 25:14–30). All three of these men were important. What staff pastors do with the talents and gifts God gives them is important. God wants staff pastors to use the gifts He has given them. A staff pastor can feel just as fulfilled as a senior pastor if he is doing what God has called him to do, and he is doing it as to the Lord. God will someday say, “Well done thou good and faithful servant.” ☺



**RON MARKESE** is senior adult ministries pastor at Calvary Church, Naperville, Illinois.

## IT'S TIME TO LET GO OF ALOOFNESS

[ BY PAUL WALTERMAN ]

*“They agreed they were in this for good, completely together in prayer, the women included” (Acts 1:14, The Message).<sup>1</sup>*

**D**arrel had known that ministry would be hard. He had discerned as much while still a boy watching his father minister. His father told him more than once, “It’s tough, boy. You carry a lot, and you carry it alone. It’s a solitary calling, and you need to buck up and keep going.” Fortunately, that was not Darrel’s official call to full-time service in the local church, but he did hear God’s voice asking him to pursue ministry.

Now in his 17th year, Darrel felt relatively content with what he had done for God’s kingdom. Ministry had taken its toll, however. For some time he had felt the pain of loneliness about which his father had spoken. He had shared his feelings with his wife, and she had helped him as much as she could. Yet, there was more he desperately wanted to share. He was tired, lonely, tempted, discouraged, and battling the onset of a mid-life event (hopefully not a crisis). He struggled with these issues daily. If only he could share his frustrations, fears, and even the outlandish hopes he harbored for his church’s future. But with whom? Who could identify with a man of the cloth?

### COMMUNITY

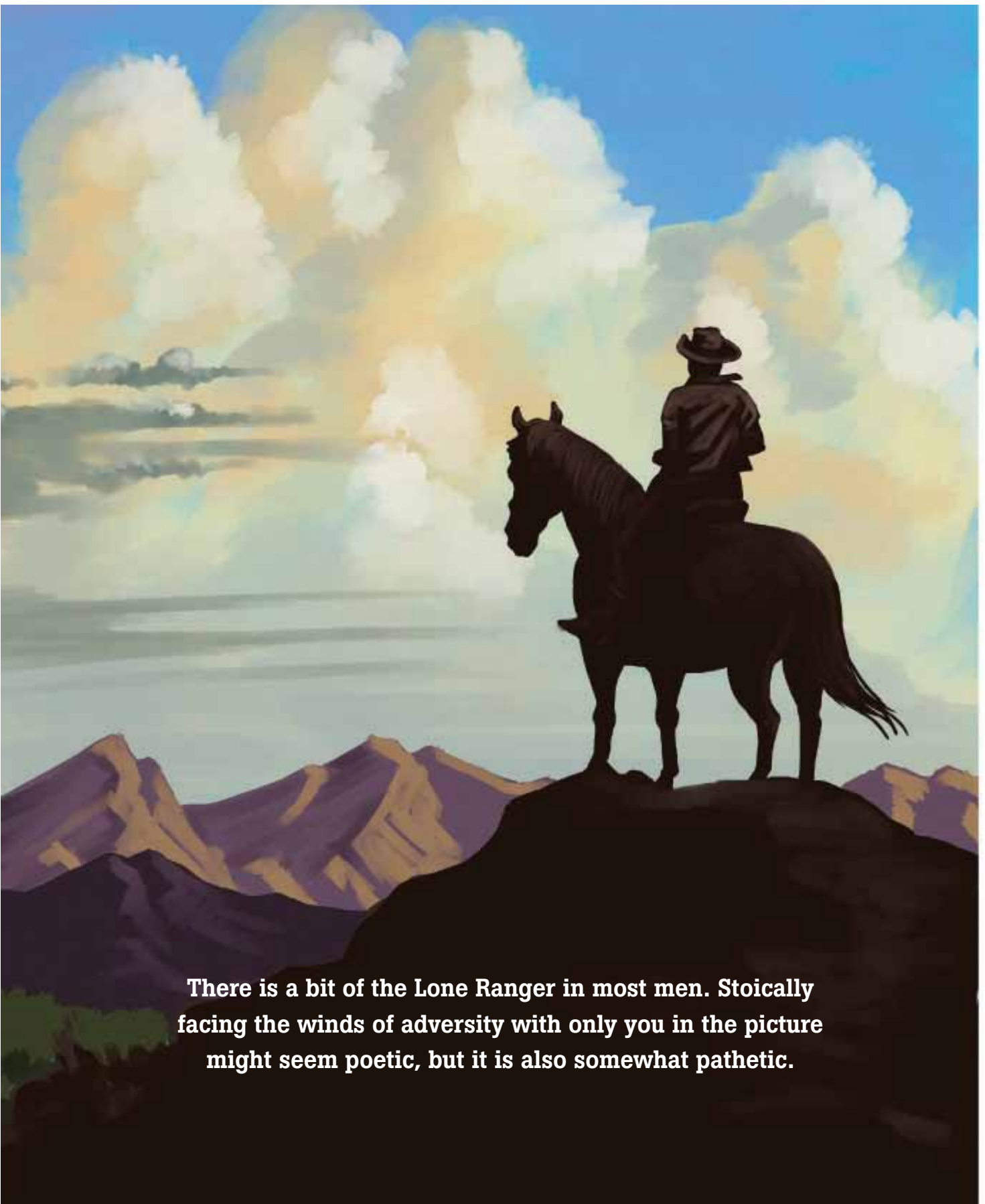
If you intend to be a *finisher* in the Kingdom, you must commit to community. Leaders who desire

to survive place a premium on their relationships with other ministers. It must be that way. When God took on the most challenging job in history, He did it in a thoroughly personal way. To reconcile lost humanity to himself, God met face-to-face with humanity through His Son, Jesus.

When the Father came looking for us, He did not select a committee to carry out this endeavor, send spam e-mail to our computers, set up a conference call, or search for consecutive numbers on Social Security cards. Instead, God called us by name. Eugene Peterson phrases Paul’s quotation from Isaiah this way: “If each grain of sand on the seashore were numbered and the sum labeled ‘chosen of God,’ They’d be numbers still, not names; salvation comes by personal selection. God doesn’t count us; he calls us by name. Arithmetic is not his focus” (Romans 9:27,28, *The Message*).

A godly leader is *with* people, not just *around* people. Those who are more introverted may need more alone time to recharge life’s batteries, but community is not simply something a leader oversees, but something in which he must be involved. He must be committed to let people into his life.

The Early Church was a community of believers. Even before the Day of Pentecost Jesus’ followers had made a decision: They were in the church for good and were in it *together*.



**There is a bit of the Lone Ranger in most men. Stoically facing the winds of adversity with only you in the picture might seem poetic, but it is also somewhat pathetic.**



# PHASE FOUR

The first converts had “all things in common,” and “gladness and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:44,46, NKJV).<sup>2</sup> We say, “This was a miracle.” And it was. But the miracle did not start in Acts 2 with baby Christians exhibiting these traits, but in Acts 1 when these Christians and their leaders agreed to stay together.

Getting into relationships and staying in relationships are often difficult things for pastors, especially men. There is a bit of the Lone Ranger in most men. Stoically facing the winds of adversity with only you in the picture might seem poetic, but it is also somewhat pathetic. Scripture makes it clear that loneliness is not next to godliness.

After calling His creation “good,” God looked at man, sensed the dynamics of his isolation, and declared, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18, KJV).

Moses struggled with the seclusion of his position as leader with its overwhelming responsibilities as he confided with God: “I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me” (Numbers 11:14).

The psalmist David gave us God’s intention in Psalm 68:6: “God sets the lonely in families.” Working alone, living alone, and worshipping alone are not norms from God’s

perspective, and His perspective is the only one in which we should be interested.

How can we argue with the logic of Solomon: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return on their work: If one falls

better: “If one falls down, his friend can help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:10).

Everyone falls down occasionally. It may be an emotional tumble, a moral indiscretion, or a financial or health-related fall, but we all fall down. It is part of being human.

## The wise leader understands the potential for getting more done when working through relationships.

down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12).

When we come alongside someone else, we do not simply double their potential, we exponentially multiply it. In Deuteronomy, we read that one man can put a thousand to flight and two can put ten thousand on the run (32:30). God’s mathematics gets incredibly exciting when we partner with someone else in the work of the Kingdom.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Not only can we work better in relationship, we can also recover

When I attended Bible college in the early 1960s, students were told to keep aloof and separate from members of their congregations. Students followed this advice, kept to themselves, and did not develop close friendships. They purposefully kept away from developing any relationships that might hold them accountable. After all, they were leaders and were not supposed to need accountability relationships. (At least they would not admit a need for such relationships.) Like Humpty Dumpty, many fell off the wall. But unlike Humpty, many did not have the king’s horses or men to put them together again.

With no one to be accountable to, these leaders fell — and fell hard. At best, the buddy system could have kept them on their feet. At worst, it could have helped them recover quicker and find their ministry position again. “But pity the man

who falls and has no one to help him up.”

A close friend from seminary days, at the height of his ministerial success, was fighting for his life with sexual temptation. Where were those who



should have been asking the hard questions and standing alongside him during the toughest times of battle? Most likely they were never called on to serve as friend, mentor, and accountability partner. The reason? It is a sign of spiritual weakness to admit the battle is going poorly in your life. The antidote: Gulp hard and swallow pride. Look for trusted companions who understand the battle and have won a few victories in the arena. Invite them into your life with vulnerability and acceptance, and most likely with a great deal of apprehension. There is no other way.

## RELATIONSHIPS

The wise leader understands the potential for getting more done when working through relationships. He grasps the significance of having close friends and family that will ask him the hard questions and refuse to let him slide by with behavior below Christian norms. He also understands that life is much more fun when you have someone to share it with. Ecclesiastes 4:11 mentions keeping warm, but I am going to take that idea further than just sharing sleeping quarters with someone.

During years of traveling in ministry, I took pictures of places and sights that I wanted to share with my wife. Either I was an extremely poor photographer or I had a substandard camera because it seemed the pictures rarely conveyed what I had felt at the moment I snapped the picture.

On the other hand, when Joanie traveled with me to these places, the joy of sharing the moment was real and satisfying. Life is meant to be shared, not only the falling down times but also the times of great joy and exuberance.

## COMMITTING TO COMMUNITY

How does a pastor become committed to community if he has been a one-man show throughout his life? Consider the following steps:

1. Ask God to put a spirit of participation and cooperation in your heart. Ask Jesus to give you His heart when He said, "I am not alone, for my Father is with me" (John 16:32).
2. Seek the input of a relational person to help you. In the beginning, you may fail to see opportunities for community because you are blind to the ways you have always conducted your ministry. You need the help of someone who wears relationship-colored glasses. If you are married, the help you need may be as close as your spouse. I used to consider it nagging when my wife asked me if I had sent a thank you card to someone for a recent act of kindness. Now I see her as an ally with powerful gifts and sensitivities whom God has given me to help me be more relational.
3. Look at your ministry team. If you pastor a church alone, look at other pastors in your area. If you pastor a team, begin to look at them differently. Do not think of yourself only as the boss but also as a brother. Learn to recognize and respond to the gifts in their lives that will help you and your church grow. Unless you chose people without concern for how they would blend or for God's approval, your staff has been assembled on purpose and with a purpose. If you do not know your staff as brothers and sisters, with an awareness of their gifts,

struggles, and ministry potential, stop business as usual and spend quality time together until you become a spiritually cohesive team that knows how to work, play, and fight spiritually together.

4. Another relationship with great potential is the relationship between you and your church board. Too many times the pastor and board are either mildly antagonistic or apathetic toward each other. They often do not know each other well and work toward conflicting or competing goals. Ask God to build unity between you and your board. It will strengthen God's work in your church.
5. During your reflective time at the end of the day, honestly evaluate if you could have acted in a more relational way. Did you do something alone that you could have done with an associate? Did you make a decision on your own that may have been better balanced if you had sought the advice of one or two others? Ask God to help you improve in these areas tomorrow.

When it comes to being aloof, pastor, let it go.

"Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble" (Proverbs 17:17, *The Message*). 🔄



**PAUL WALTERMAN**,  
president, Fresh Heart  
Ministries, Apple Valley,  
California

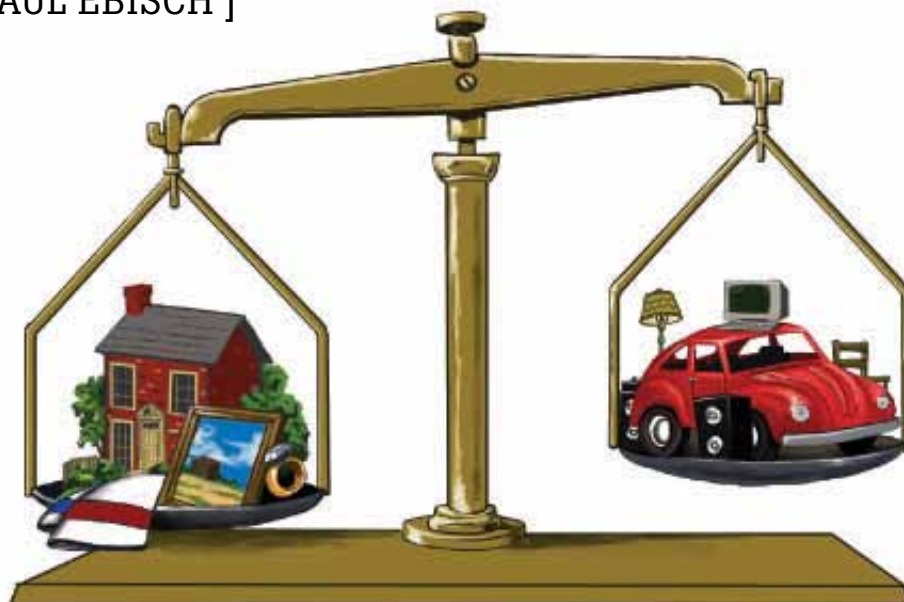
## NOTES

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# NET WORTH PRINCIPLE:

## BUILDING WEALTH WITHOUT BUDGETING

[ BY PAUL EBISCH ]



Once you have been pastoring 5 or more years, many of the early adjustments to ministry have occurred. This is the time to change your focus from surviving financially to building a financial infrastructure for the future. During this period in your life and ministry, you will make many decisions that will influence your financial future. The choices you make will either put you in bondage or free you to do whatever God calls you to do.

Along with budgeting or investing, there are other ways to flourish financially. Most people can reach their financial goals by focusing on their net worth. You need to realize that a battle is taking place for your net worth. Be on guard to protect and grow it.

Getting ahead and increasing financially

eludes even the best. Many successful and sophisticated people miss the mark when it comes to accumulating wealth. But instead of focusing on accumulating wealth, the main factor you need to focus on is your net worth. No other factor is affected by every financial choice you make as is your net worth.

The key is not the amount of your net worth. The key is that you focus on your net worth when making financial choices. Your net worth can serve as a means to bring balance to your living and keep you from making costly mistakes.

Net worth does not bring personal value. That is why some are afraid to look at it. A small net worth does not mean you are worth less than another person, nor does a large net worth denote greater personal significance.

Many people try to appear successful, but their bottom line does not match up. Many times people who have a large net worth do not appear wealthy. They are confident and comfortable with whom they are because their significance is not tied to what they own.

Every financial guru has some recipe for achieving wealth or becoming a good steward. In my opinion, many of their formulas do not seem to connect with most people. Most of these recipes are built on the premise of budgeting and/or investing your way to financial success. While budgeting is important, Americans in general seem to dislike budgeting. They are also afraid to make choices when investing.

## UNDERSTANDING AND CALCULATING NET WORTH

Simply put, your net worth is the difference between your assets and liabilities. Assets are the things you own that have worth. Their value is determined by what someone else would pay for them. Liabilities are the amounts you owe to someone else. (See *Sample Net Worth Chart*. For an electronic version, go to <http://www.networthprinciple.com/resources.php>.)

Assets need to be viewed in two different categories. They either appreciate (increase in value over time) or depreciate (lose value). (See *Appreciating/Depreciating Chart*.)

Sample Net Worth Chart			
House	\$150,00	Mortgages	\$120,000
Automobiles	\$10,000	Auto Loans	\$12,000
Savings (Bank accounts and CD's)	\$3,000	Credit Card Balances	\$8,000
Investments (Mutual Funds, Stocks, Bonds)	\$0	Student Loans	\$15,000
Retirement Accounts	\$5,000	Home Equity Loans	\$10,000
Real Estate	\$0	Alimony	\$0
Art	\$0		
Jewelry (100 - 300 percent over retail price)	\$0		
Stuff (everything else)	\$0		
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$168,000</b>	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$165,000</b>

This is a sample chart of a typical person who appears to have nice possessions, but does not have much net worth.

Appreciating/Depreciating Chart	
Appreciating	Depreciating
Home	Automobiles
Savings	Electronics
Investments (hopefully)	Clothes
Retirement Accounts	Furniture (in general)
Real Estate	Food
Art	Almost everything else
Collectibles	
Jewelry	

**Only incur debt if you have done your homework and determined that it will enable you to gain an asset that will increase in value.**



Calculating your net worth is not difficult. Credit unions and banks ask you to complete this information when you apply for a loan. A close estimate of your net worth can be accomplished in a matter of minutes. Many people, however, have no idea what their net worth is or even if it is a positive one or not.

## INCREASING YOUR NET WORTH

### 1. Calculate your present net worth.

Using the example above, list all your assets and liabilities on a sheet of paper. This new worldview will start you on a good course. Plus, eventually, your banker will ask for it.

### 2. Set goals for how much you want to increase your net worth each year, and every 5 years.

Without goals you will never arrive at where you want to go. Goals are the difference between increasing your net worth or not. Your goal in life is not to accumulate wealth but to increase your net worth.

Balance your net worth with your charitable giving by setting goals for each. Set goals for you to have a certain net worth and/or amount of charitable giving by certain points in your life. This way you can measure your progress and more freely obey when God asks you to give.

### 3. Focus your income toward net-worth building by regularly adding to accounts or assets that appreciate in value.

The best way to accomplish this is to budget. Focusing on your net worth may inspire you to develop a budget and succeed at following it. Learn to save automatically off the top of your income and not spend more than you make each month.

Do not use credit cards unless you can pay them off at the end of each month.

One way to accumulate net worth is to regularly add to retirement accounts that are diversified. The MBA 403b account at AG Financial is one of the best ways for AG ministers to save for retirement. Their Frank

## TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS

1. Act your own wage.
2. Pay attention to your net worth.
3. Develop a comfort level of minimal or no debt.
4. Develop a comfort level of savings.
5. Spend less than you make for a long time.
6. Get rich slowly.
7. Resist fear and greed.
8. Actively pursue financial freedom.
9. Be patient.
10. Accept the fact God's provision may never be more than it currently is.

PAUL EBISCH, Springfield, Missouri

Russell Funds provide many levels of diversification.

### 4. Evaluate every major purchase with how it will affect your net worth.

Common mistakes to avoid:

*Moving too often.* Most people incur a real-estate sales commission (usually 6 percent) every time they sell a home. The closing costs each time you finance add up even though they may be rolled into the loan. This will immediately decrease your net worth each time you move. Moving also incurs additional costs that may prevent you from saving for a period of time afterward. But when you do sell, making sure you buy right and sell right will increase your bottom line over time.

*Buying vehicles.* Vehicles are probably more detrimental to your net worth than any other item you regularly buy. First, they are expensive, causing you to take out a loan on a depreciating asset, which conflicts with step 5. Second, they depreciate in value and sometimes quickly. Third, many people do not drive their cars long enough.

Consider buying a used vehicle



over a new one. Do research before buying to determine if you are getting a good deal. Drive new or slightly used vehicles for 10 years instead of 5 or less.

*Do not buy electronics with debt.*

Whenever you buy electronics, such as televisions and computers, they are simply a large expense unless you are generating income from them. Be aware that you take a direct hit to your net worth when you buy these items. Watching your net worth fall may give you the will power to say no to some tempting items.

**5. Avoid or minimize debt that does not have corresponding assets that appreciate in value.**

There is *bad* debt, and there is *good* debt. Only incur debt if you have done your homework and determined that it will enable you to gain an asset that will increase in value quicker than the corresponding debt and increase your net worth. Many millionaires have used good debt, but they hate the other kind.

**6. Assess investments prudently and critically to avoid major losses.**

There are few free lunches in this world. Do not expect to invest your way to financial success. This rarely happens. What the market gives it often takes away. Be wise, and make investment decisions with thought and research. Otherwise, diversify well and seek to achieve a nice average rate of return. It is amazing how haphazardly people put large amounts of their net worth into investments without understanding the risks. Take risks, but do not jeopardize the bulk of your net worth while doing it.

## CONCLUSION

You can get ahead and make good choices by keeping your net worth

## COMING TO GRIPS WITH HOW YOU WILL ASSIST WITH YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Decide how much money you want to spend on your children's educational needs. You may be unable to pay 100 percent of the tuition for the degree program on which your child embarks. For many, a goal might be to provide one-third to one-half of the costs. Financial aid from various sources may meet the rest of the need. Taking responsibility for a portion of the cost may keep you from the total paralysis of trying to figure out how to provide it all.

Decide how much assistance you will provide for each child long before your first child enters college. This will allow you to contribute the same amount for each child without jeopardizing your own financial plans for the future.

### GET CREATIVE

Find ways to set aside money for education. Here are some suggestions:

- Open an account when your child is born and inform family and friends of this account while the gifts are pouring in. (Many family members will contribute to an educational fund if they know an account is already set up.)
- Save an amount equal to each birthday and Christmas gift you give your children.
- Find odd jobs or other ways to make extra money for your child's education.
- Put aside bonuses instead of buying something you want but do not need.
- Take advantage of tax-free savings accounts such as IRAs, 529 College Savings Plans, and savings bonds.
- Match whatever your child saves to encourage involvement.
- Take out a 15-year mortgage instead of a 30-year mortgage so you can make payments toward education once your house is paid off.

PAUL EBISCH, Springfield, Missouri

in focus during these crucial years of your life and ministry. Between the fifth and fifteenth year you will most likely make most of life's major financial choices at least once. Use these simple steps to ensure they will be wise decisions versus choices that haunt you for years to come. Remember, each phase of life builds on the previous. Until you get a grip on the steps mentioned earlier you will have a

hard time moving on to any other financial phase. 🔄



**PAUL EBISCH** is chief financial officer of Assemblies of God Credit Union and founder of Blairol Capital Management, LLC. For more on this subject read Ebisch's book *Net Worth Principle: Build Wealth Without Budgeting*. It can be ordered at <http://www.networthprinciple.com>.



# PHASE FIVE: CONTINUATION

➔ **Somewhere within this phase of 14-plus years, effective ministry seems to diminish (real and/or perceived) and many ministers hit the wall.** They often feel as if they have exhausted their abilities, skills, and resources and lose much of their vision and motivation. Also, many physical, mental, and emotional aspects of aging become reality, often leading to new stresses, burnout, and disillusionment.

This is a time for spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical renewal that may come through personal revival/renewal, new mental challenges, and lifestyle changes. Ministers must continually be searching for invigorating relationships with

peers and mentors and looking for resources that keep them challenged and inspired.

This may also be a good time to honestly assess your life and ministry. It may be helpful to use some reliable tools to re-evaluate your personality type, leadership and management styles, and conflict-management skills. This may facilitate a midcourse adjustment in your journey resulting in more effective ministry with a greater sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. 🔄

## YOU ARE HERE

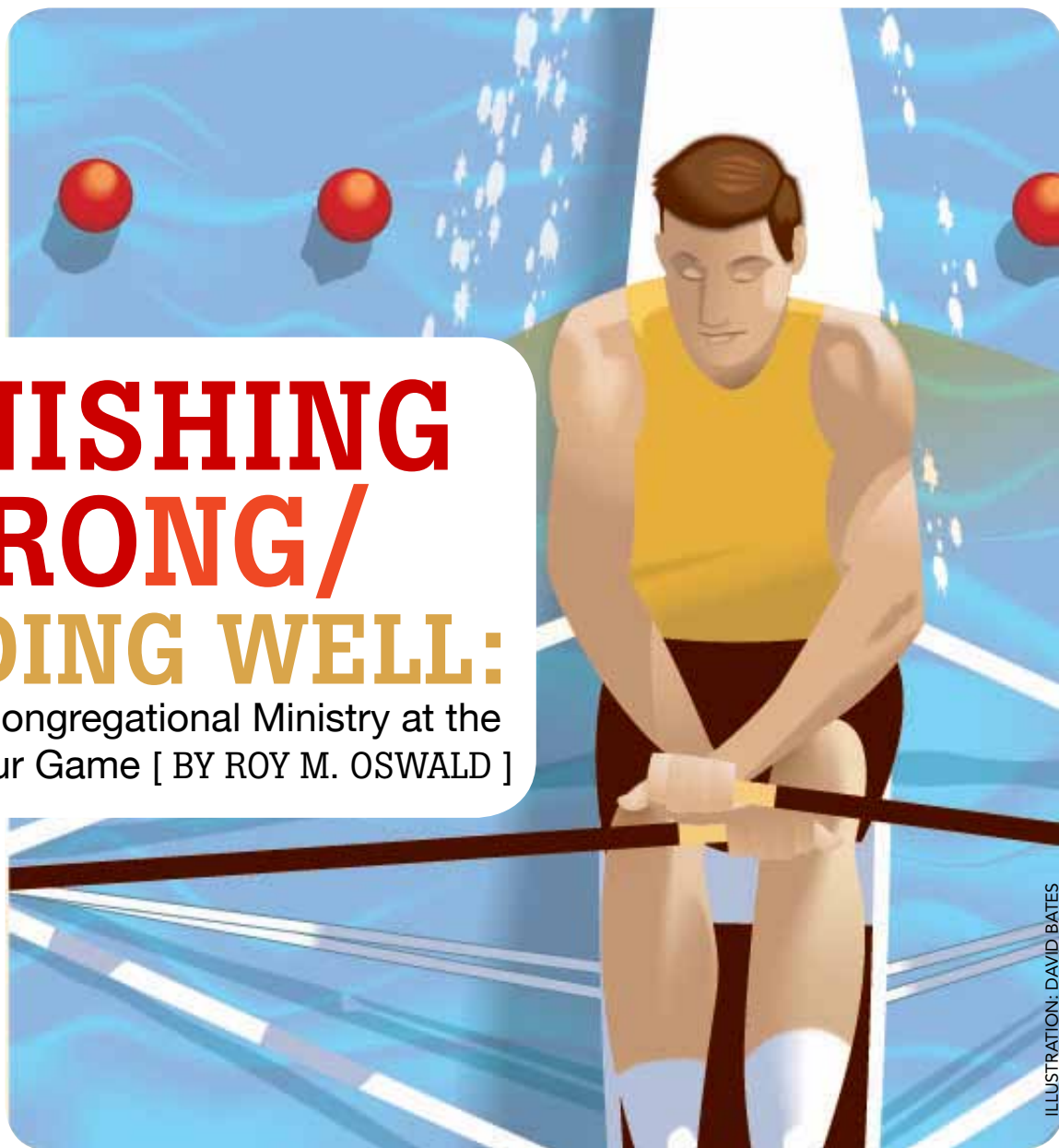


ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES



## FINISHING STRONG/ ENDING WELL:

Leaving Congregational Ministry at the Top of Your Game [ BY ROY M. OSWALD ]



**P**astors nearing retirement often find themselves living the paradox of possessing a rich reservoir of accumulated wisdom and yet feeling constrained by a depleted spirit. But the 5 to 7 years prior to retirement should be a pastor's most productive and creative years of ministry. He has increased knowledge and experience, which makes him more effective in ministry. He knows how to work smarter, not harder. Many pastors might be asking themselves *How can I remain vital in the years leading up to retirement?* While there are various personal and ministry issues that must be addressed, there are ways to finish strong and leave a lasting legacy.

Most pastors are motivated to finish strong because they want to move into retirement feeling good about their ministry. The worst thing a pastor can do during his last 5 years of ministry is coast into retirement. The congregation may love him and therefore not fire him because of the great things he has done in the past, but they will wring their hands while they wait for him to retire. In a situation like this, most pastors probably sense they are letting their people down. People know their pastor is not offering his best, so they are being patient with him until he retires.

I have discovered through conducting Finishing Strong/Ending Well workshops there is no such thing

as a *lame duck* in ministry. This corporate and political term does not apply to congregational life. In fact, as a pastor's tenure in ministry increases, a congregation wants more, not less, from him.

To prevent a pastor from coasting in the last years of his ministry, I recommend that the congregation and pastor enter into a contract. A pastor needs to announce his resignation 5 years in advance and then enter into a planning process with the board and congregation. He needs to tell his board, "Five years from now I will retire. I want to focus on the things I do best. Let's take 6 months and develop a strategic vision for where we want the church to go in the next 5 years. I want to leave the church in the best shape possible."

In *Discerning Your Congregation's Future*, (Alban Institute, 1996), I explain how to arrive at specific, measurable, and attainable goals that have a broad base of support in the whole congregation. When key leaders are involved in selecting goals, they are more likely to support them.

The congregation also needs to be involved in this planning process. When the congregation is involved, their ownership of the vision is

of their transition is over. Any goals the pastor was not able to complete provide a clear idea of what the church needs the interim pastor to do.

I recommend that the church utilize an interim pastor, especially if the retiring pastor has had a long-term pastorate. (See the sidebar, "Transitioning Out of Retirement To Help Transitioning Churches" on page 93.) One weakness with interim pastors, though, is most do not have a contract with the congregation. Often, the congregation has not thought through the tough issues that need to happen in the interim period. When these issues are thought through, and the interim pastor has taken care of them, the new pastor can spend the first 9 months being a lover and historian. He can get to know and empower people, build a base of support, and find out the crucial changes that need to take place.

This process of planning for retirement with an interim pastor works best in a long-term pastorate. Church-growth statistics show that in growing churches the pastor has been there an average of 12 years. High clergy turnover diminishes momentum. It takes 5 to 7 years to get to know people, build trust, and get the building blocks in place so

you must learn how to rejuvenate your spirit early in your ministry.

Most congregants have no idea how demanding ministry is and how demanding some congregants can be. When younger pastors are just

**To finish strong, you must learn how to rejuvenate your spirit early in your ministry.**

starting out in ministry, they think: *This feels good. These people need me; they value me.* But over time, always being on call can wear you down. A crisis is always just one phone call away. Younger clergy feed on that; older clergy do not.

If your congregation knows you are vacationing 50 or 100 miles away, they may not hesitate to call you back to conduct a funeral. This is a sticky wicket. You may be accused of not caring when you say, "No, I'm sorry. I'm on vacation. I've made arrangements for another minister to take care of funerals and hospital visitation in my absence. Please call him."

Some pastors are reluctant to refuse to come back from vacation for church business for fear if word gets out that they did not come back to conduct a funeral, the people will be disgruntled. When a pastor has been in the ministry for 30 years and has had to be strong for other people in their times of weakness, the wear and tear becomes too much. He never can get out from under this demand.

Congregations expect pastors to have the finest programs and to preach brilliant sermons. When one Sunday's sermons are over,

**Pastors nearing retirement often find themselves living the paradox of possessing a rich reservoir of accumulated wisdom and yet feeling constrained by a depleted spirit.**

much higher. As soon as the vision and strategic plans are in place, the pastor takes a 3-month sabbatical to gear up for this last thrust of energy.

Not only does this planning process cover the last 5 years of the retiring pastor's ministry, it also informs the congregation about what they need the interim pastor to do before that phase

significant growth can take place. These important things cannot take place in a short-term ministry.

### **PASTORAL SELF-CARE — A LIFELONG COMMITMENT**

Your spirit can become depleted as you reach the 5-to-7 year period prior to retirement. To finish strong,

## PHASE FIVE

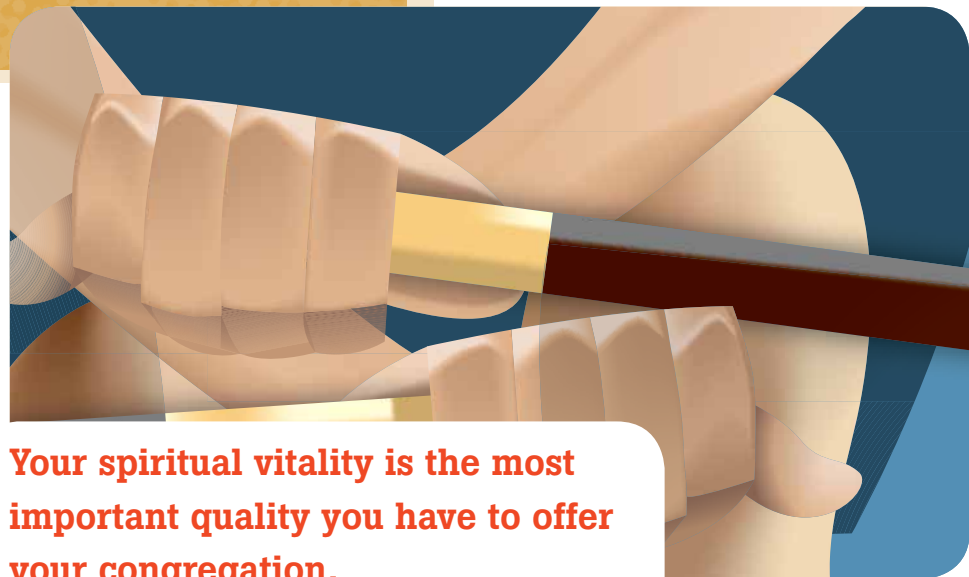
pastors must start thinking about next Sunday's messages. After 30 years of consistently feeling the pressure to preach inspirational sermons, pastors become worn down, particularly if they have not had time to replenish their own spirit. They are driving on empty. This is when sermons or certain themes begin to be repeated.

A congregation that does not give its pastor significant chunks of time away to rejuvenate his spirit is hurting his long-term effectiveness. A pastor cannot develop spiritual depth by putting in 60 hours a week fixing everybody's problems without replenishing himself.

### The role of the sabbatical in lifelong self-care

As a pastor, you need to engage in self-care that leaves you fit for the long haul. This is where the sabbatical becomes important. The sabbatical is central to your long-term effectiveness.

In reality, the planning process that I suggest prior to retirement needs to happen every 4 years. After 4



**Your spiritual vitality is the most important quality you have to offer your congregation.**

years, the church needs to evaluate how well they achieved their previous goals and then develop a new set of goals for the next 4 years. Then the pastor immediately takes another sabbatical.

#### *Time for learning*

The formula that includes a sabbatical every 4 years will challenge a congregation to set goals and close the gap that develops between pastors and congregations in a long-term pastorate. A sabbatical every 4 years will revitalize your ministry and give you opportunity

to do things you might not do otherwise, such as visiting other congregations.

A sabbatical plan needs to include opportunities for learning. Your congregation and church leaders should understand that you learn from other churches as well as from other educational opportunities that can be beneficial

to the church upon your return. The concept of allowing you to visit other churches, attend seminars, conferences, or a seminary class often escapes church boards and the laity in general. Congregational and societal life is changing rapidly, and the educational opportunities a sabbatical provides will ensure that you are not left behind.

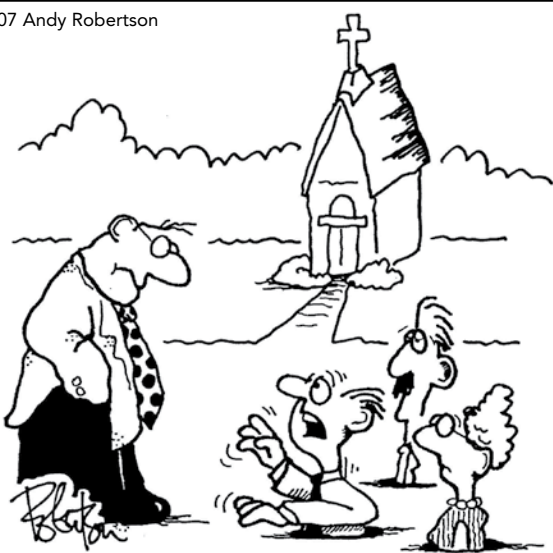
The educational component should only be one-third of the sabbatical. Two-thirds of the sabbatical should be set aside for a real sabbath's rest — where your vitality is restored from plenty of R&R as well as doing the things you enjoy.

#### *Time for maintaining spiritual vitality*

Your spiritual vitality is the most important quality you have to offer your congregation. Your life becomes a walking symbol of the messages you preach Sunday after Sunday. You exemplify what you preach. When you speak, people listen; they see the joy and peace you have and sense that you have something they do not have.

It is hard for a pastor to preach a message of peace, love, and joy when he is burned out. Being in front of people out of duty is the last thing a burned-out pastor

©2007 Andy Robertson



**"Pastor, what do you mean our church is not growing because we are set in our ways?"**

wants to do, especially when he is exhausted, cynical, disillusioned, and self-deprecating. When a pastor is burned out, he can quickly become a symbol of a different message. Soon congregants will begin to sense that the content of his sermons is not consistent with the life he lives. Consequently, they may wonder if his

ministry is of any value to them.

The desert fathers went to the desert because the simplicity of life there did not distract them. In the desert they returned to their prayer life and were reconnected with God. After they were refreshed, they came back to the congregation to teach, preach, and provide pastoral care.

Then they returned to the desert for another period of refreshing. This oscillation between desert and ministry time needs to happen for today's busy pastor.

Some believe that when a pastor comes to a church he should wait about 8 years before he takes a sabbatical. I can see the wisdom of

## FINISHING WELL: FROM MICROSCOPIC TO MACROSCOPIC

**I have a new appreciation for the fact life is a marathon, not a 100-yard dash.** If you asked me what is the most influential teaching I have heard in the last 10 years, I would reply, "The concept of finishing well."

One thousand leaders are mentioned by name in the Bible. One hundred are discussed in some detail, either from the beginning, middle, or end of their lives. Fifty of those are portrayed in more detail; but, of those 50, only 1 in 3 finished well. The statistics are daunting; but, if 1 in 3 were able to finish well, then it is possible, and I need to strive to do the same. What does it mean to finish well? Simply stated, it is serving Jesus, influencing people for the Kingdom, and experiencing a vibrant personal relationship with God at the end of your life. It is an accumulated sense of accomplished destiny.

Deuteronomy 17:14–20 records Moses retelling God's promise that in the future (500 years), the Israelites would be in the Promised Land. Once there, they would become jealous of other nations; and, in an attempt to be like them, they would ask for a king. Though those through whom this prophetic insight would be fulfilled were yet to be born, this message foretold the lives of kings Saul, David, and Solomon. While these names are renowned throughout Scripture, all who know the details of their lives are aware of their shortcomings. Whether it was the abuse of power, sexuality, plateauing leadership, family, money, or pride, none of them finished well.

Today, investigators report that there is a significant dropout rate after the first 5 years in full-time ministry. I read that there are 19,000 Protestant pastors in Australia, and another 19,000 who were once church leaders but are no longer in active service. Though there may be legitimate reasons for their inactivity, many of them may no longer be in ministry because one of the temptations listed in Deuteronomy 17 has snared them.

What does a pastor need to do to finish well in his service to King Jesus? In my experience I have found it is important to honestly evaluate my strengths and weaknesses. We need God's grace and mercy to pick us up when we fall short, but there are also ways we can focus our lives on God and our work for His kingdom. By practicing the spiritual disciplines of solitude, silence, study, fasting, prayer, and meditation, we give room for God to deposit His strength into our lives. Practicing these disciplines requires personal accountability. It is wise to be mentored by others. By having 10 to 15 people who can speak honestly to us, the community of believers can join us in our quest to finish well.

Since the early days of my Christian faith, a paradigm shift has occurred in my ministerial perspective. My thinking has been transformed from a microscopic to a macroscopic view of life. I wish I had developed this view 30 years ago. A doing-to-being shift in how I approach ministry has allowed me to experience ministry that comes out of my relationship with Jesus. Changing from an immediate view of life to living life in perspective has meant that my walk with God is motivated by the desire to finish well.

It is difficult to quantify how successful each life is. Only by discovering what God wants each of us to do with our life will we find true success. Unlike my early years of ministry, I hope young pastors can learn from others' mistakes, and that their personal worth does not come from their productivity but from who they are in Jesus and what He has done for them.



**ROBERT L. GALLAGHER, PH.D.**, assistant professor of Intercultural Studies, Wheaton College Graduate School, Wheaton, Illinois



waiting until the seventh or eighth year, but my bias is that sabbaticals should start after the first 4 years. From then on, sabbaticals are every

## Most pastors are motivated to finish strong because they want to move into retirement feeling good about their ministry.

4 years. A congregation that does not offer a sabbatical to its pastor will eventually be the loser in the end.

The best time to negotiate a sabbatical is before you officially begin your ministry in a new congregation. Establish the terms up front. Explain to the board, “This has been my policy, and I know the church will get the best out of me if every 4 years I have a 3-month sabbatical.” If this policy is not negotiated up front, later, when you ask the board for a sabbatical, you appear to be begging.

If a church wants to retain quality pastoral staff, this sabbatical policy needs to apply to staff

pastors as well. A church needs to be known as a Sabbath-keeping congregation, and a sabbatical is part of the sabbath rest. There is a commandment to rest. “Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work” (Exodus 23:12).

Some people in the church might say, “I do not understand why the pastor gets a sabbatical. I don’t get one.” But clergy rarely get a Sabbath Day when you consider most of them put in a 10-hour day on Sunday. In the secular workplace, most employees get a 2-day weekend. Unfortunately, many of these same people believe pastors are supposed to survive on just 1 day off. If pastors do on their day off what most people do on Saturday — shop, yard work, house repairs, cook, and laundry — then pastors aren’t really getting a day off after all. This is where we can learn from our Jewish friends. To have a real Sabbath, a person needs a day

to prepare. By Friday night at sundown Jewish people have all their work done. The house has been cleaned. The food is prepared. The lawn is mowed.

Clergy also need 2 days off a week and to keep their workweek under 50 hours. That is still 5, 10-hour days — 10 hours more a week than the typical person works. How would 2 days off a week affect clergy vitality? I get a chuckle when I ask pastors, “When’s the last time you had a long weekend?” In the ministry, there is no such thing as a long weekend. Pastors work hard all day Sunday, and on Saturday they prepare for Sunday. They may relax a little on Monday or whichever day of the week they choose to take off.

Most laypeople get about 11 long weekends a year. This means they are off work from late Friday afternoon until Tuesday morning. If we multiply these 3 days by 11 weekends and then multiply that number by 4 years, we have the equivalent of a 3-month sabbatical. In this sense, pastors are not getting any more time off than the average layperson when they take a sabbatical every 4 years.

Sabbaticals need to be talked about with some clarity brought to the issue of rest so you can stay healthy and be enthusiastic about your ministry. This way when you arrive at your last 5 years of ministry, you are not totally burned out.

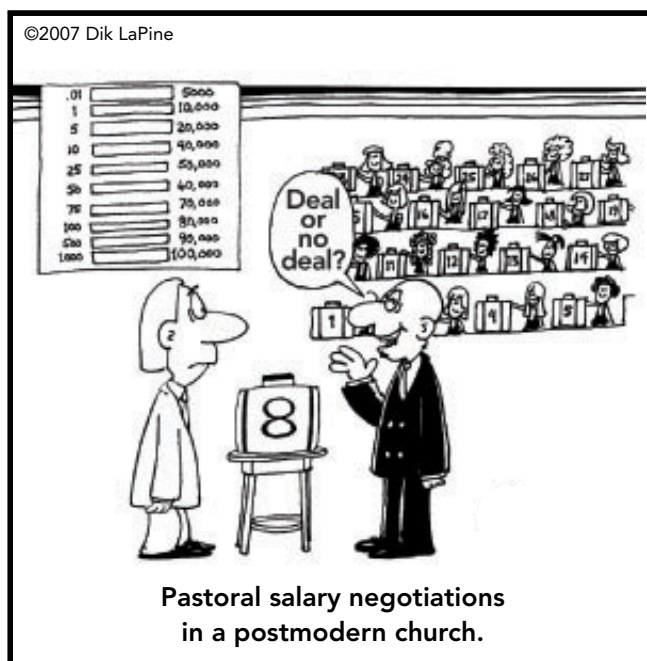
## MAKING MID-COURSE ADJUSTMENTS

When you are more than half way through your ministry, you may become dissatisfied with the

## As a pastor, you must continually figure out how to keep yourself spiritually fit.

Nothing needs to be done during the 24-hour Sabbath Day.

foundation upon which your ministry has been built. This can lead to feelings of guilt and depression. Here are some things to consider in



## PASTORAL RESOURCES

***Ending Well, Starting Strong:  
Your Personal Pastorate Start-Up Workshop.  
A Complete Self-study in Six Audiocassettes and Guide***  
**By Roy M. Oswald**

**ISBN 1-56699-143-9; 6 cassettes, 60 min. each**

Alban research shows that the first 12 months in a new pastorate determine the course of one's entire ministry in that congregation. This 2-day workshop in audiocassette format prepares you to face the issues and develop your strategies for leaving one pastorate and going to another. You will: reflect on how you left earlier pastorates, closure style, termination stress, and emotions (yours and the congregation's); explore appropriate management styles for various church sizes, reflect on your management and leadership styles; discover the key tasks of the first 9 to 12 months that are critical to a successful beginning; and learn how to develop a ministry plan for the first year of a new pastorate.

The accompanying study guide provides self-scoring assessment instruments and supplemental material. This is a must for all clergy contemplating or in the midst of changing pastorates. Six audiocassettes, 60 minutes each.

***New Beginnings: The Pastorate Start-Up Workbook***  
**By Roy M. Oswald**  
**ISBN 1-56699-032-7**

Getting off to a good start in your new pastorate is crucial. This book draws on years of field experience, research, and time-tested methods that will help you to: understand your entry style, respect and understand your new congregation's history and system, assess your leadership style, know when to make changes, create support systems, get through first "pinches," take care of yourself in stress, get along with those you don't like, and celebrate with the search committee.

Includes stress and strain inventories you can self-administer and score on the spot.

***Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning***  
**By A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff**  
**ISBN 1-56699-223-0**

Planned time away from the parish for study, rest, and spiritual renewal can be beneficial — and often necessary — for any pastor, as well as for the congregation. In this thoroughly revised and expanded edition of Alban's popular Sabbatical Planning for Clergy and Congregations, Bullock and Bruesehoff provide the definitive guide to putting together refreshing pastoral sabbaticals that can help keep ministry vital and growing for the long term.

**SOURCE:** Alban Institute, [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)

the event you need to make a mid-course correction.

Some people go into the ministry and later realize they do not belong there. They do not have the gifts and graces required to be an effective pastor. These individuals need to revisit their call and ask themselves, *Is this what I'm supposed to be doing with the rest of my life? Am I equipped to be the kind of servant of the Lord that I need to be, or does something else seem to call me?*

I have seen pastors resign their churches after evaluating their call because they were burned to a crisp. This may not be the best time to evaluate the legitimacy of your call.

***A sabbatical plan needs to include opportunities for learning.***

Ministry evaluation involves spiritual discernment. If you sense you have not given full time and energy to the ministry, you may need to ask yourself: *Why am I not motivated; why am I not more effective?* Spiritual discernment comes when you spend time praying and fasting to get a clear sense of God's direction for your life.

I met a minister who said, "I was not effective or focused on what my role was. I am now in my 50s, and I realize I have either wasted time or spent too much time on the wrong things." He changed by learning what is essential to being a transformational pastor in the business of converting non-Christians into Christians. He learned how to implement that philosophy in the congregation so new people felt welcome. A pastor who needs to make this mid-course adjustment may also need a mentor or support group to help him

discover and change his misdirected priorities.

A pastor also needs to be very clear on what is the essential nature of his call and how he is to fulfill that call. The congregation may want its pastor on a leash to do what they want, but the pastor needs to sense whether God wants him to work in a different way. The pastor's work is to transform lives. If the pastor and the church are not concerned about transforming lives, then the church is only a social club. If the pastor can come to an understanding of what is essential, he will shift his priorities and start going about his ministry in a different way.

## KEEPING YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY FIT

One of the paradoxes of ministry is when pastors were laypeople they fed themselves spiritually with Scripture, prayer, and worship. But when these become the tools of the pastor's everyday trade, he can become too familiar with them, and they stop feeding him.

There is almost no accountability for you to take care of your spiritual life. Your congregation does not say, "Pastor, we are so excited that you spent the morning in prayer." The only thing that motivates your spirituality is your own hunger for more intimacy with God.

As a pastor, you must continually figure out how to keep yourself spiritually fit. This is the key to a long-term pastorate. Your spiritual life needs to be taken very seriously. Self-care is important. Self-care is the first thing that goes when you start putting in 50 to 60 hours per week. Evaluate your workload, and then make the necessary adjustments to sustain yourself spiritually.

Every pastor needs a spiritual

director who prays for him and who meets with him regularly to discuss his spiritual life. Your spiritual life is different from those in your congregation. A trained spiritual director knows how to tailor the spiritual advice he gives you because he knows your personality and temperament. Don't discount the value in having someone else monitor your spiritual journey. When you take time to meet with

a spiritual director, his investment in you is to keep you spiritually alive and fit for the rest of your ministry journey. 🙏

## CLERGY SELF-CARE: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry

Roy M. Oswald (The Alban Institute, 136 pp., paperback)



Clergy are rated among the worst professions in the area of health. Stress, pressure, financial needs, and lower medical insurance coverage all contribute to this alarming statistic. Clergy generally pay more attention to the health of others than to their own well-being.

Oswald covers material in the "wounded healer" portion that every ministry family will relate to. Continually helping people is tough business, and some people hurt because they have been hurt. Clergy learn over time to develop a tougher skin while keeping a tender heart. The author addresses these issues and provides warnings.

The level of stress with which he lives affects a minister's health. The chapter "Finding Out Where Your Edge Is: Stress Assessment Tools" contains much helpful information for pastors.

Oswald's three chapters on burnout will help pastors develop boundaries and balance in their lives. He gives practical advice regarding "how much is too much?" He also covers topics from what clergy eat to what eats at them, a pastor's lack of exercise, and how ministers can find happiness in what they do. Clergy wives need to be aware of this information so they can help their husbands.

The author knows how clergy live and understands the unique pressures associated with what they do. I recommend every pastor, missionary, and seminary student read this book.

*Reviewed by Wayde I. Goodall, D.Min, president, Mission of Mercy, and executive director of Benevolence, Bethesda Ministries, Colorado Springs, Colorado.*



**ROY M. OSWALD, M.DIV.,** is a senior consultant and seminar leader with the Alban Institute. He is author of eight books including *Clergy Self-Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry*.





# WHEN GOD FORGETS:

The Good News, The Bad News

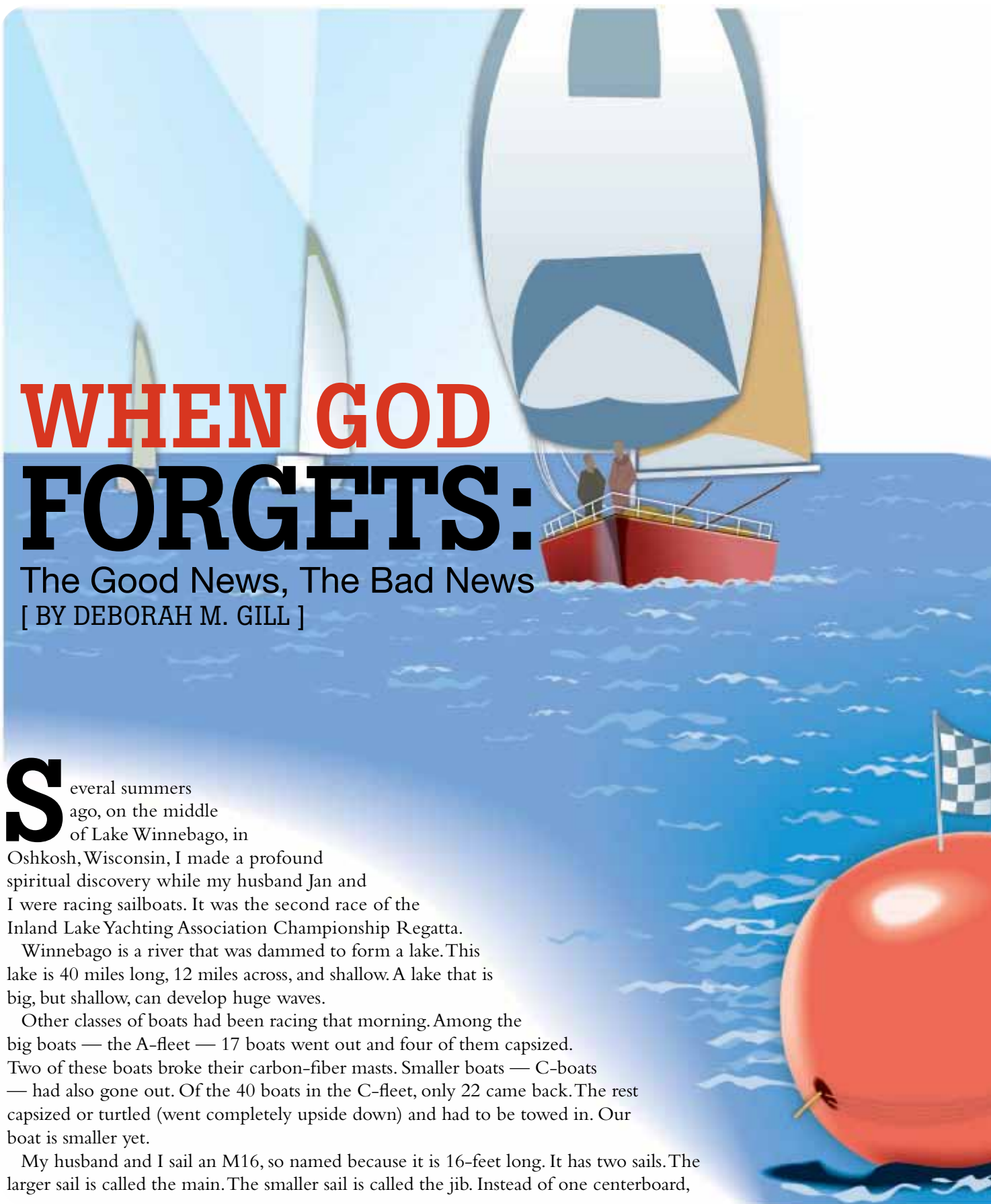
[ BY DEBORAH M. GILL ]

**S**everal summers ago, on the middle of Lake Winnebago, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, I made a profound spiritual discovery while my husband Jan and I were racing sailboats. It was the second race of the Inland Lake Yachting Association Championship Regatta.

Winnebago is a river that was dammed to form a lake. This lake is 40 miles long, 12 miles across, and shallow. A lake that is big, but shallow, can develop huge waves.

Other classes of boats had been racing that morning. Among the big boats — the A-fleet — 17 boats went out and four of them capsized. Two of these boats broke their carbon-fiber masts. Smaller boats — C-boats — had also gone out. Of the 40 boats in the C-fleet, only 22 came back. The rest capsized or turtled (went completely upside down) and had to be towed in. Our boat is smaller yet.

My husband and I sail an M16, so named because it is 16-feet long. It has two sails. The larger sail is called the main. The smaller sail is called the jib. Instead of one centerboard,



we have two bilge boards (one on each side) that keep our boat from slipping. I run the boards along with the jib.

The wind had been so strong that morning the ILYA committee had canceled the first M16 race. But

windward; then boaters run *with* the wind — leeward; and continue that course two and one-half times (sailing five half-laps), ending *into* the wind.

Unfortunately, when the gun went off at the starting line we were not in

— one half-lap ahead — that the rest of the boats were going the opposite direction from ours; they were heading windward while we were heading leeward.

As our boat approached the others, the sailors called out, “Good racing, Jan, good racing.”

At the fourth mark — with only one mark left — Jan cautioned me, “It’s not over, yet.”

When we rounded the fourth mark, the wind changed, and something went terribly wrong. We started that last half-lap way ahead. I thought we had stayed ahead of the fleet. But it is hard to be sure. In a long racecourse it is hard to see the mark because it is 1.4 miles away. Though it is a big, bright orange buoy, boaters need to strain to spot it on the horizon. Because it is impossible to sail directly into the wind, sailboats must tack — zigzagging this way, then that way — with each skipper choosing the angles he thinks will be best. A boater cannot be *sure* he is ahead of the others until he gets close to the mark.

When all the boats started tacking toward the final mark, Jan retorted, “We’ll be lucky to come in fifth.”

“What do you mean?” I asked. “We’ve been ahead *all four laps*.”

He pointed with his nose, “Look at those boats over there. They’ve got good air.”

Incredulously, I questioned, “Are you sure they are ahead of us?”

He said, “Yes, they are ahead of us.”

Do you know what? The skipper was right. As the boats converged on the final mark at the finish line, they beat us. Even though we had been leading the race four out of five marks, we finished in fifth place.

Jan and I still remember the first four marks of that race. But no one else in the ILYA cares about those first four marks. What was written in the

## **It is great to get a good start. It is important to do well in the middle. But nothing is as important as how you finish.**

when it was time for the second race, we went out. There were 20 boats in our fleet.

The racecourse for an M16 regatta is 7 miles. The course set that day was a windward-leeward 2 1/2.

Boaters start by heading *into* the wind —

a great position. The start is *important* in sailboat racing. Whoever gets out front first gets the best air and has the best chance of winning the race. Though we did not get a good start, by careful, strategic sailing — and a little bit of luck — by the time we made it to the first mark our boat was in first place. When we rounded the second mark, we were No. 1.

When we rounded the third mark, we were still No. 1.

In fact, by this time we were so far ahead

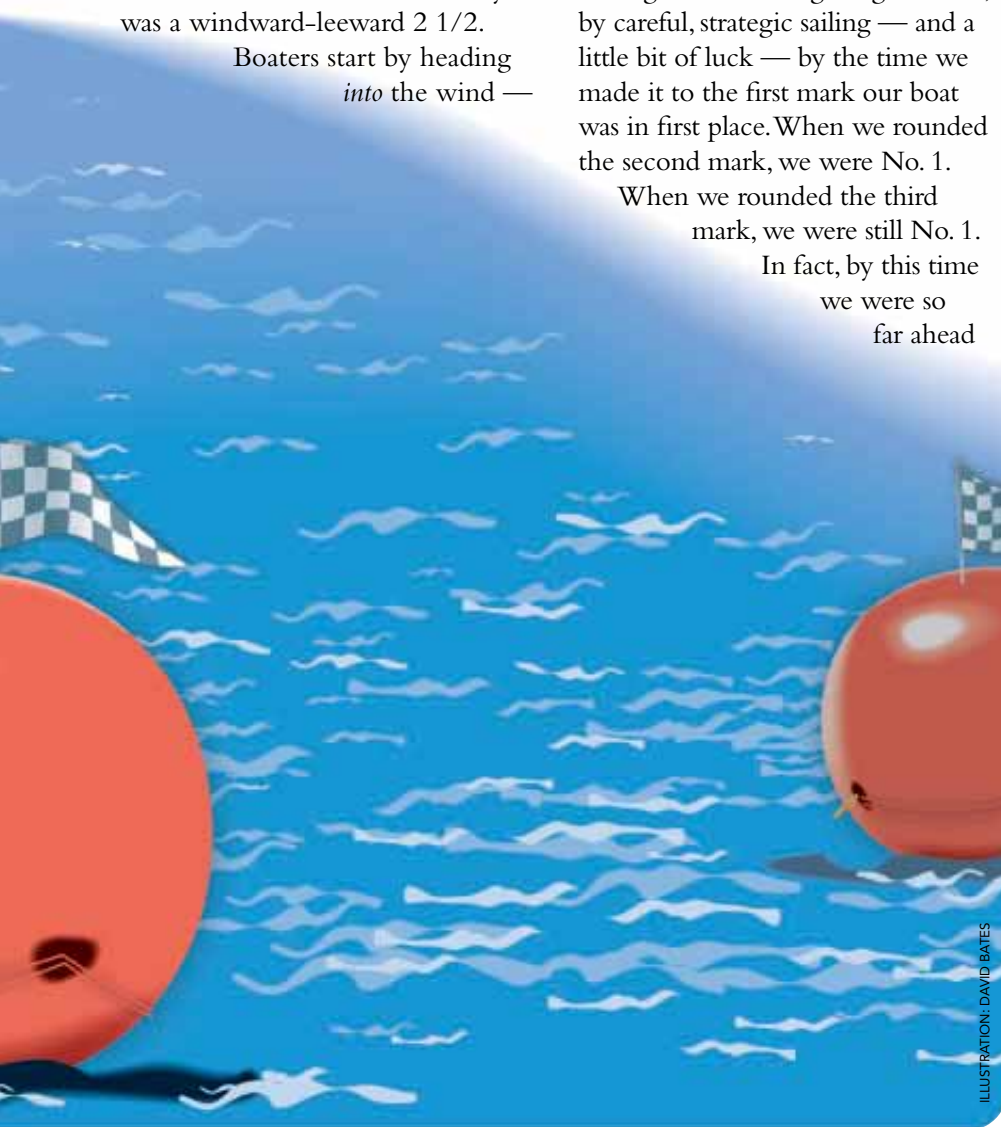


ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES

## PHASE FIVE

archives for Jan and me? “Fifth Place.” That is all that counts in the end.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN SAILBOAT RACING — AND IN LIFE — IS HOW YOU FINISH

It is great to get a good start. It is important to do well in the middle. But nothing is as important as how you finish. Many are the marks we round throughout our laps in life. What is the first mark, second mark, or third in a pastor's life? Maybe it was his first decade in ministry, or the second decade; the first community he lived in, or maybe the second; the first church he served, or possibly the third. Maybe he did well progressing through these marks. But in the end, when the record is written, none of that matters as much as how he finished the race.

Sailing competitors forget many good things after a race is over. The Bible says that God does, as well. He forgets the many laps in life, and focuses on how we finish. In Ezekiel 33:1–20, Ezekiel shares the sobering truth about when God forgets — the good news and the bad news.

We are all familiar with God's grace to forgive those who repent. God

not only forgives, but also forgets sin. That is the good news. Verses 14–16 emphasize this point. “And if I say to the wicked man, ‘You will surely die,’ but he then turns away from his sin and does what is just and right — if he gives back what he took in pledge for a loan, returns what he has stolen, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die. *None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him.* He has done what is just and right; he will surely live” (emphasis added).

It is hard to believe verses 12 and 13 are in the Book. “Therefore, son of man, say to your countrymen, ‘The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys. ... The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness.’ If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, *none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered*; he will die for the evil he has done” (emphasis added).

Ezekiel's audience could not believe this aspect of God's forgetfulness — the bad news. The people rebutted in verse 17: “The way of the Lord is not just.”

Can you hear them? “That's not fair, God. You've got to remember all our years of fastidious faithfulness. We've put in our time; we've paid our dues. Shouldn't our impeccable past permit a little coasting and compromise in the present? What about the first, second, third, and fourth laps? Shouldn't they count for something? Add it all up, God — our righteous record should tip the scales for eternity.

### A righteous past has no value unless you keep on keeping on in righteousness.

You can't just forget all that, God — it's not fair.”

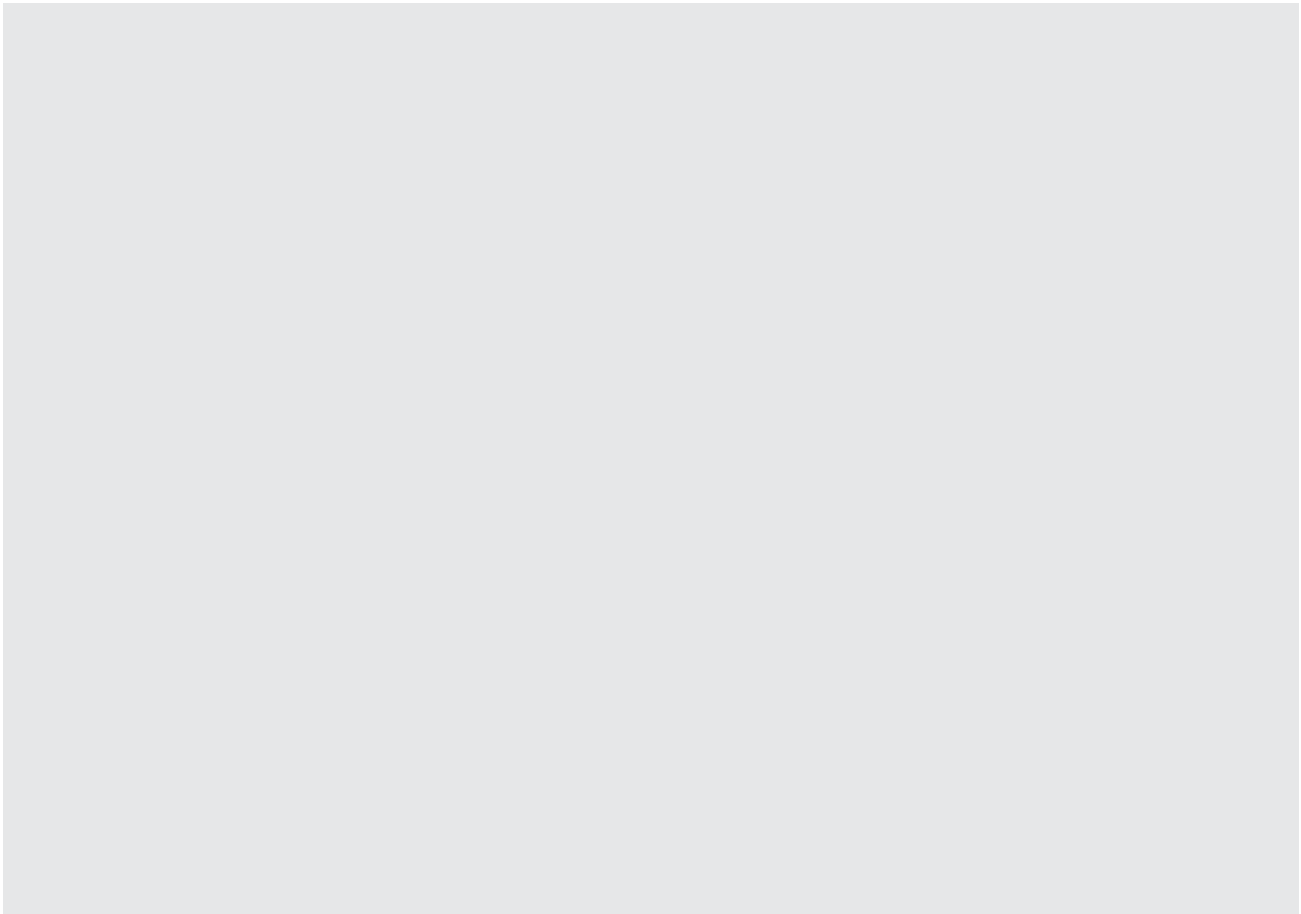
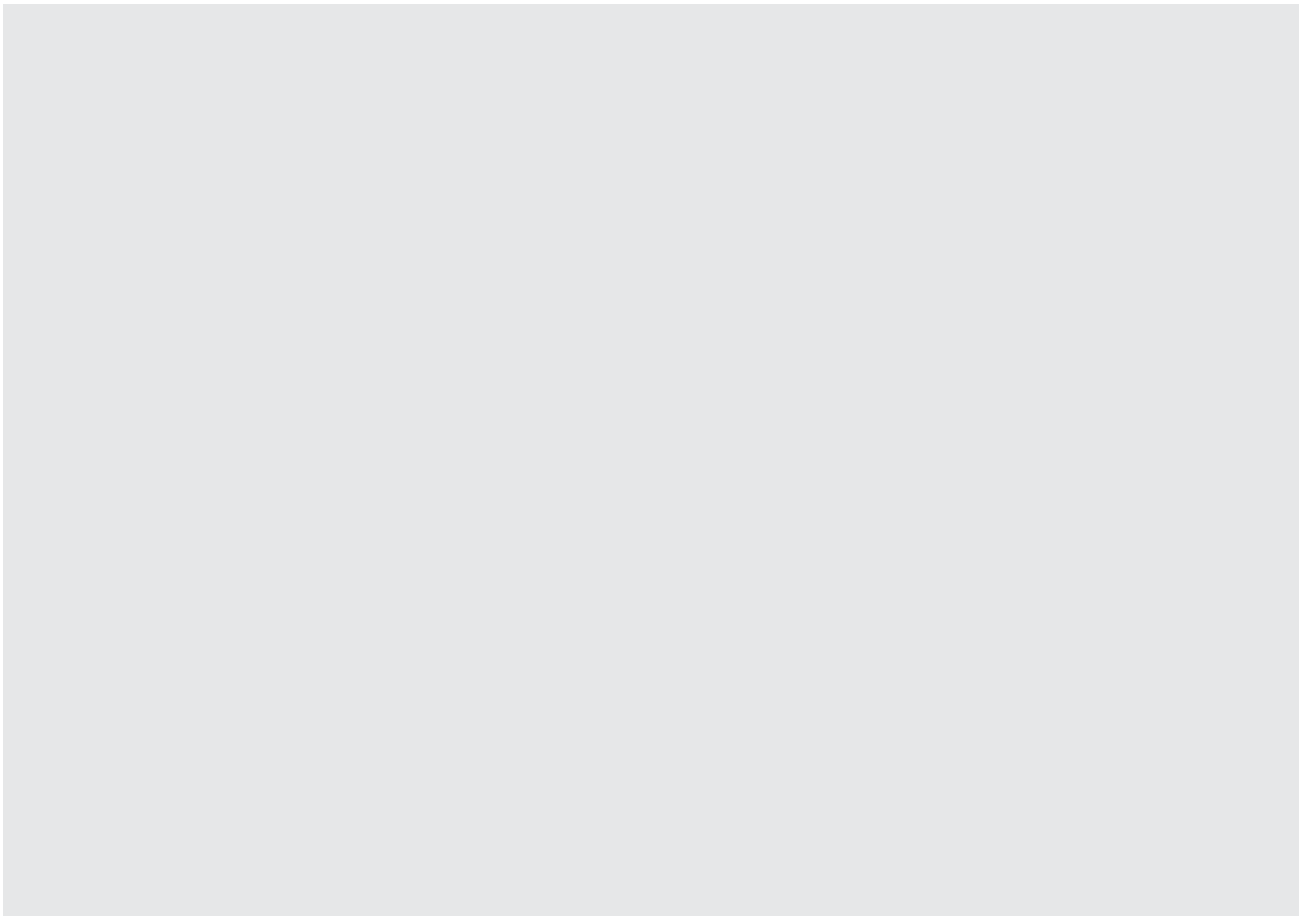
But God overrules their objection in verses 18, 19. As Almighty Judge, God has decreed that if the wicked turn from their wickedness — they will live. If the righteous turn from their righteousness, they will die.

Sin cannot condemn you if you reject it. Righteousness will not help you if you relax it. A righteous past has no value unless you keep on keeping on in righteousness.

Life has seasons and ministry has stages. But nothing matters more than how we finish. Just like sailors in a regatta, God forgets all the good that we have done unless we *persist* in doing good until we cross the finish line. 🏁

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# WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE:

A Strategy for Experiencing a Healthy and Positive Departure [ BY RICHARD L. DRESSELHAUS ]



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES

**I** was shocked by my own rudeness. The preacher and I both made a mad dash to the door — he to greet his parishioners and I to preserve my anonymity.

But this was not just any Sunday morning. Elnora and I had left town to find a church where we could safely endure the morning. This morning my successor was candidating to fill the pulpit I had occupied for 33 years. My emotions were doing cartwheels.

First Assembly in San Diego was filled with worshipers eager to meet the board-selected nominee. Today held the climaxing moment of 7 months of diligent prayer and resume analysis. The ultimate choice would soon be made. Emotions were high. People were excited. But none of it included us.

It mattered little that I had initiated the process, was confident in God's will for both the church and us, and knew we were about to conclude an unbelievably smooth and positive transition. Hearts can break even though minds understand. So it was with us.

For 33 years I had known the moment would come. Nothing is forever but forever itself. There is a time to come and a time to go. Good leadership plans for both.

My prayer for years had been: "Lord, when it is time for me to leave, let it be in joy and victory." God had answered my prayer. Elnora and I could not have believed for anything more wonderful. The final service. The farewell. The expressions of appreciation. We were grateful beyond words.

**My prayer for years had been:  
"Lord, when it is time for me to  
leave, let it be in joy and victory."**

But none of this could hide the great sense of loss that gripped

our hearts as we walked through this time of transition. There is no virtue in denial. Emotions hurt, too. How can a pastor invest 33 years of his life in a church and walk away as if nothing has happened? How can a pastor dedicate children, marry those same children, and then

dedicate their children without depositing a piece of his heart? How can a pastor witness sinners coming to Christ, growing in grace, and then launching out into God's work without laying down a large part of

## **I wish every pastor who leaves an assignment of ministry could experience the satisfaction and joy of a healthy and positive departure.**

his life as well? A pastor cannot; and we had not tried.

I wish every pastor who leaves an assignment of ministry could experience the satisfaction and joy of a healthy and positive departure. Perhaps the thoughts expressed here might in some way help pastors prepare well for the inevitable: leaving.

### **GOAL-SETTING AND TRANSITION**

In the early 1980s, Elnora and I decided to plan the rest of our ministry lives (obviously subject to intervention). It was a simple process, but it carried great dividends.

At the top of the long side of an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper, we wrote the years from 1980 to 2000 (coincidentally, the final date marked my 65th birthday). On the side we listed goals: retirement, travel, education, and housing. Incidentally, this was when I decided to begin work on a doctorate at Fuller Theological Seminary. The close proximity of the year 2000 obliterated every excuse. It also helps explain why our retirement funds in MBA have some degree of respectability.

For many years I anticipated that my leaving San Diego First Assembly would coincide with the final year of the planning sheet. By God's grace and people's favor, we chose to extend the date by 3 years. But the preparations

had been set in place years before.

Pastors are God's servants. He is the Master Tender of the vineyard. He shuffles servants at His choosing. Yet, it is appropriate for workers to be good stewards, which includes

goal-setting and wise planning. God can alter plans, but I doubt He looks with favor on a lack of planning.

Good leadership must not only know when it is time to come, but it must also recognize when it is time to leave. A positive transition, however, requires a good plan. No pastor should be shocked by the thought of departure. Departure should be viewed as a significant part of God's total plan for that assignment. Coming is to be joyful and victorious. Leaving should be the same. Sadly, such is not always true. Reason? Sometimes because coming and going are not viewed as two sides of the same coin.

After I announced to the board that Elnora and I would be leaving, one of the board members said: "Pastor, my wife just said that you have never preached so good."

I thanked him for the compliment and then added the question: "Should I wait until I'm not preaching so good?"

The point is clear. Transitions are never *if*, only *when*. That is why wise pastors work it into their long-range goals and plans.

### **STRATEGY AND TRANSITION**

But how? That is the question. For me, it was prayerful and intentional. Since leaving was in my long-range goals, it was logical to develop a strategy by which the transition might occur.

Transitions involve an incredible number of considerations. When should a pastor inform the board of his intentions? When should the staff be informed? When does the full membership deserve to know? How much time should the transition take? What is a pastor's part in the process? Who should lead the search for a new pastor? How should the search be conducted?

Let me share our story. Here is the time line for the transition we just concluded:

1. In May, I informed the board of our intention to leave (if you are married, this must be a joint decision). Elnora and I had for many months anticipated being out of the country for 2 weeks just at this time. The board agreed to hold this information until our return. (*See the Web sidebar "Transition Letter for Board Members" along with the online version of this article at: <http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org>. Click on current issue.*)

2. In early June, I read a letter of resignation to the entire congregation. (*See the Web sidebar "Transition Letter for Membership" along with the online version of this article at: <http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org>. Click on current issue.*) A 7-month period of transition provided everyone opportunity to accept the inevitability of this change and adjust to it in positive ways. Prior to informing the congregation, I privately spoke with each member of the pastoral staff.

3. I shared with the board several guidelines I felt would assist them in the selection process. (*See the Web sidebar "Memo to the Vice-chairman of the Church Board" along with the online version of this article at: <http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org>. Click on current issue.*) Perhaps the best suggestion I offered the board was to invite our district superintendent,

Ray Rachels, to partner with them in the process. This they wisely did.

4. For the following 6 months, Elnora and I continued to pastor as we had for 33 years. We maintained the same degree of passion, burden, and energy in ministry. It was a positive, productive, and happy 6 months. I pastored while the board conducted a search for my successor. They were free to do their work, and I was free to do mine.

5. Elnora and I had our final Sunday at San Diego First Assembly the early part of November. The following Sunday, my successor had his first Sunday as the new pastor. The church was not without a pastor for a single Sunday.

## TRANSITION AND BEYOND

While writing this, I am looking across a valley in the Austrian Alps. Elnora and I are enjoying a trip abroad as part of our transitional plan. The snow is falling. The trees are white. A little Austrian village is scattered across the valley. We are looking ahead to the good things God has for us in the future.

Life comes in seasons. God has ordained that each season be equal in its challenge, opportunity, and joy. When Jesus declared from the cross “It is finished,” He had reference to His part, not ours.

Our part in the work of the Kingdom is never finished. It is always coming. It is dynamic, not static. Emerging. In process. And you and I are a wonderful part of the program. Like links in a chain, we have our place. One begins. Another finishes. One initiates. Another consummates. One plants. Another waters. But God gives the increase.

This is why I am excited about the future. Retirement? No. New opportunities? Yes. That is exactly

## TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PASTORS LEAVING A CONGREGATION

Lawrence W. Farris (Eerdmans,  
96 pp., paperback)



At some point in the pastoral journey, pastors will say goodbye to a congregation. Whether that goodbye is prompted by retirement, a call to serve a new congregation, or circumstances dictating a leadership change, *Ten Commandments for Pastors Leaving a Congregation* offers practical wisdom for the leaving process.

The author points the leaving pastor to several important principles that will assist in making the transition a healthy experience for the pastor, the pastor’s family, and the congregation. Communication with God, oneself, spouse, family, parishioners, colleagues, and denominational representatives is one of the key principles Farris emphasizes.

Commandment 10 is absolutely vital: “Thou Shalt Grieve.” Many pastors are not comfortable with the grieving process because it takes work and extracts some emotional energy. But when done properly and in a timely manner, the benefits pastors and their families gain will make for a healthy transition.

*Ten Commandments for Pastors Leaving a Congregation* is a must read for every pastor.

*Reviewed by Robert L. Nazarenus, former Nebraska district superintendent, Grand Island, Nebraska.*

how we are viewing the future.

In my final Sunday sermon I spoke on transition using the story of Elijah and Elisha. I noted from that story: (1) The inevitability of change; (2) The possibilities of change; and (3) The consequences of change.

As part of the final point, I mentioned that Elijah had a way of continuing to show up. Remember the transfiguration story? How about the two witnesses in the Apocalypse? Hopefully pastors will agree that Elijah had a way of

continuing to show up.

My parting words were these: “Count on it. Elnora and I will keep showing up — hopefully in your prayers, in your love, and in productive ways of ministry and service.”

By God’s grace it will be so. 🙏



**RICHARD L. DRESSELHAUS, D.MIN.,** is an executive presbyter and former senior pastor, First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.







ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES

## WATCHING OUT FOR THE CURVE BALLS

[BY AG FINANCIAL]

**A**fter you have been in ministry for several years, you still need to manage stress and avoid burnout. But this is also an important time to continue working your financial plan. By now, life may be serving you a series of curve balls. The good news is that you have probably gained perspective and the skills to deal with these difficulties in life. Just like a major-league baseball player, you will need to *take* some curve balls. Others you will swing at and miss. The great news is that with God's help you can hit some, too. Once in awhile some will even go out of the park.

Here is a partial list of questions you may already be asking yourself:

- *Will I be able to continue to work until I am ready to retire?*
- *Will my spouse and I be able to live independently or will we need to live in an assisted living facility?*
- *Will our projected retirement savings last us the rest of our lives?*
- *What events, such as death, poor health, disability, and job change or relocations, could reshape our future?*
- *Will we be able to keep up with rising medical expenses?*
- *How will we be able to send our children to college while also caring for our aging parents?*

You still need a series of goals to guide you during these last few years of ministry. No matter how great your plans are or how financially secure you become, they are not substitutes for an even stronger dependence on God. So, what should good stewards be doing in their 40s, 50s, and early 60s? The following five important areas can make critical differences in the later years of life and ministry.

### LIFE INSURANCE

Insurance providers tell people they need about seven times their annual income in life insurance. If you have a larger family, you may need more. But as your children mature and leave home, and as you build up other assets, your life insurance needs should diminish to nearly zero. Whole Life and Universal Life (policies that build up cash value) are more permanent policies, and are also much more expensive. I recommend the more affordable term-life insurance policies. Around age 50, this coverage usually becomes expensive. By the time you turn 65, continuing this coverage may not even make sense. If you convert to a permanent policy later in life, however, you will get skinned. Think of term life as protection for that period when you need it most. (For more information, visit <http://www.stewardchurchinsurance.com>.)

## ASSET ACCUMULATION

In America, we are encouraged to own a home and invest in stocks and mutual funds. These are assets. We are also encouraged to buy automobiles, clothes, and vacations. These items rarely appreciate. In the continuation phase, you need to be accumulating appreciable assets. Later in life you may need to sell these assets, so liquidity is important. If you retire at your full retirement age as defined by Social Security, you will need a net worth of about seven times your final salary to live at a comparable lifestyle.

Ministers who live in church-owned parsonages need to set aside money in addition to retirement and emergency savings for the down payment on a home. Ministers in this situation often deplete their retirement funds and or savings to purchase a home later in life. They are then unable to supplement their monthly Social Security income from these funds or have enough money to meet unexpected medical costs.

## RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Many so-called financial experts are unduly focused on rates of return for your investments. Whether you earn 8 percent a year or 10 percent a year is important. But when I see some of these same experts advising people not to invest in 401Ks, 403(b)s, or IRAs, I think they must be trying to sell their books or something other than good financial planning. The government's tax incentives for these qualified retirement plans are hard to beat and, by comparison, dwarf the actual returns on the investments. I like to think of these retirement funds as subsidies; because, if you do not take advantage of them, you will pay the

same amount to the government in income taxes.

In 2006, the maximum retirement contribution you can make from your salary is the lesser of \$15,000 or 100 percent of your includable income. If you are age 50 or older, that amount can be increased by \$5,000. For ministers, includable compensation is reduced by their housing allowance. Ministers might want to consider reducing their housing allowance to make a larger contribution to retirement. A minister's housing allowance deducted from employment is subject to SECA tax while retirement contributions are not. If you are in the 25 percent federal tax bracket, your subsidy for a pretax contribution to your retirement plan could be in excess of 45 percent (when you figure your state income tax and SECA contributions). *(For more information, visit <http://www.agfinancial.org/retirement>. To calculate your retirement investments, go to <http://ei.russelllink.com/PlanningCentral/southset.htm>.)*

## DIVERSIFICATION OF INVESTMENTS

Everyone needs to have diversified investments and own some mutual funds (equities). In the past, stocks have outperformed every other asset class of investment. Adding this to your portfolio may provide you with the 20 to 30 percent improvement in rate of return you will need to fund 25 or more years of retirement.

When people talk about risk, they should be talking about volatility. Though daily prices can occasionally rise or fall by 7 percent, they generally fluctuate less than plus or minus 2 percent. Remember, you make money in stocks by buying low and selling high. The buying and selling transactions determine


your actual returns. Paper gains and losses are far less important. If you have 20 years until retirement, the market has time to rebound. Fixed-rate or fixed-amount payroll deductions mean that if the mutual fund's price goes down, more units are purchased at the lower price.

Older people should be less aggressive in equities. Why? If past performance is any indication, the market will experience downturns in the future. These are usually short-lived. The good news is that in modern times the market has never been down for 4 or more consecutive years.

## DEBT REDUCTION

Do not carry debt into your retirement years. In the preparation and implementation phases you may have had a great deal of unavoidable debt, but the older you get the more you need to get out of debt. The Rule of 72 indicates that an unpaid balance on a credit card with an 18 percent interest rate will double every 4 years. Think of it this way: if items purchased wear out, such as shoes, or go out of style, such as clothes, you will still be paying on items you are not using. *(For more information, visit <http://www.faithandfinances.org>.)*

## CONCLUSION

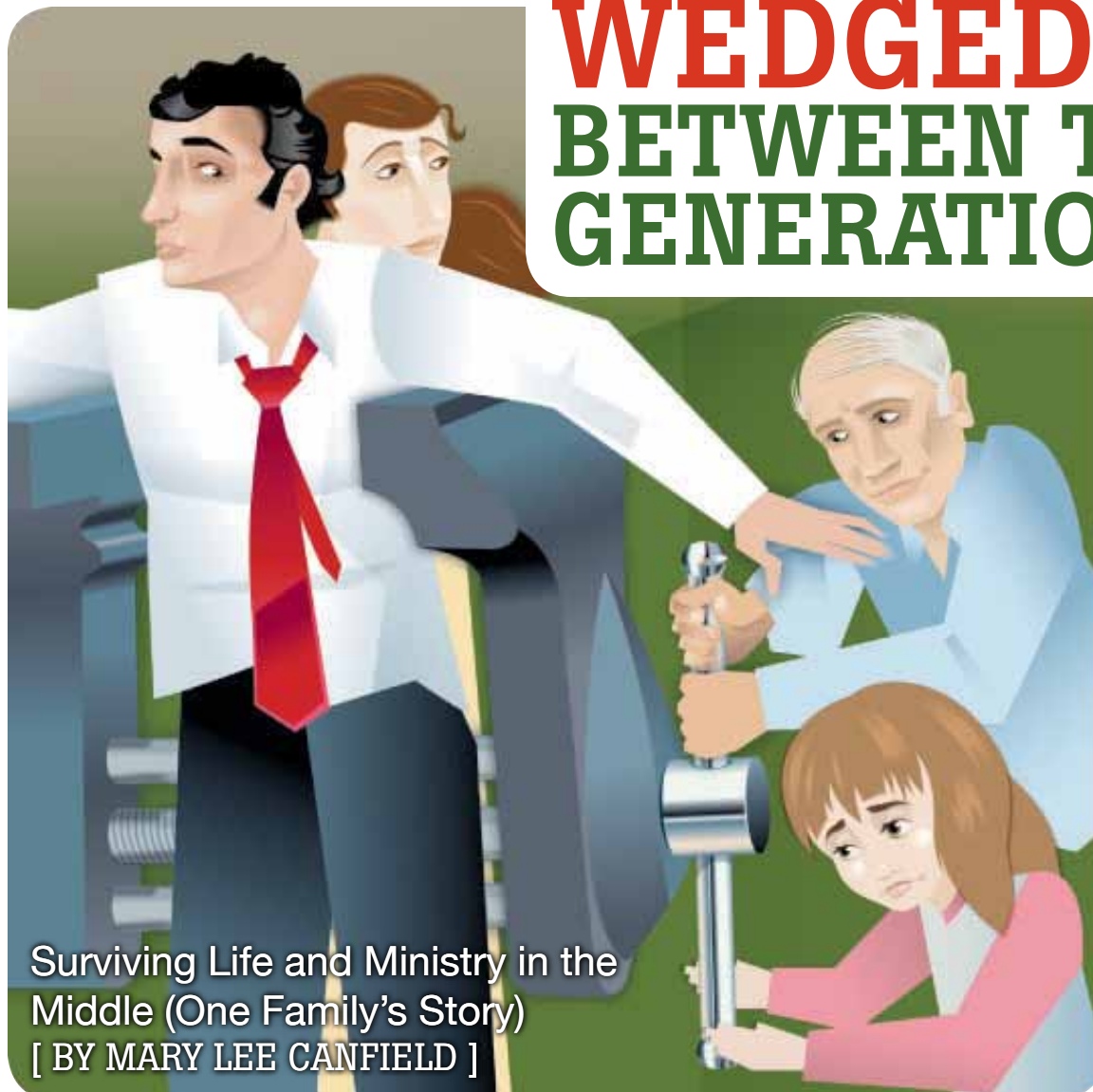
As you enter the continuation phase, set goals with your spouse. Monitor your progress annually and be flexible to prepare for any unexpected events. These five areas should get you ready for life's curve balls. Remember, AG Financial Services is here to serve you. 

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AG Financial Services.

For more information log on to <http://www.agfinancial.org>, or call toll free 1-866-621-1787.

## WEDGED BETWEEN TWO GENERATIONS:



Surviving Life and Ministry in the Middle (One Family's Story)  
[ BY MARY LEE CANFIELD ]

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES

**P**astoral ministry is enjoyable. Fifty years ago my husband and I made a decision to enter the ministry. We have never regretted our decision even though ministry can be stressful. There are always challenges along the way. One of these challenges is being a member of the sandwich generation®. We were sandwiched between raising our own children, caring for our aging parents, and being in ministry. What do you do when you are caught in the middle and are being pulled on all sides? How do you deal with the guilt and stress associated with being in this station of life? Perhaps what we experienced can help you cope with your squeeze.

In 1964, Kenneth and I started the church in North Olmsted, Ohio. On Sundays, we had church in the Masonic Temple, but Wednesday night services were

held in our home. Our daughter Pamela was 6 and our daughter Cynthia was 7 years old at the time. When we had church services on Wednesday, our daughters had to go to their upstairs bedrooms early. It was stressful for them, and it was stressful for us. However, we did survive.

To support our family outside of ministry, Kenneth and I worked 40-hour jobs. The girls would get up early, fix their lunches, and get ready for school. I worked close to home, so during lunch I came home and prepared the evening meal. On Wednesdays, I would also straighten up the house for the church service.

As with most small pastorates, people stopped by quite often and many times unannounced. This added to an already hectic schedule. Our daughters learned early how to help with meals and keep the house clean. Even though



it was hard at times, we worked as a family to get everything done.

## THE PRESSURE BEGINS

When our daughters turned 7 and 8 years old, my parents started living with us between ministry opportunities. My parents were evangelists and did not have much money. When they did not have meetings, they would often come without calling ahead. At times, they would stay for several weeks or months.

There were times they were mistreated during their evangelistic work. I experienced a lot of guilt while they were staying with us because I felt I had to be especially gracious to them. I was forced into the role of being a mother to my parents on many occasions. I had a wonderful husband who went along with this living arrangement without complaining.

Having my parents live with us was difficult. Not only did I have to work, take care of my family, do household chores, and take care

## Working out a schedule defines priorities and becomes the basis by which we helped meet everyone's needs and deal with the demands of children and parents.

of the church, but I also had to do things for my parents. My mother would help when she could, but everything still fell on my husband and me. I tried not to burden him because he was preaching and doing ministry work. I was taking care of my family while trying to make my

parents, my children, my husband, and the church happy. And that was no easy task. The challenges at times seemed overwhelming.

## PARENTING ISSUES

When parents live in the same house with you, there are a number of adjustments and issues that need to be addressed. One issue in particular concerned how we were raising our

## I was taking care of my family while trying to make my parents, my children, my husband, and the church happy. And that was no easy task.

daughters. Sometimes my parents wanted to take over and tell my girls what to do and what not to do. I quickly stepped in to correct this situation. This was especially true when our daughters became teenagers and we decided to let them wear pierced earrings.

I was raised in the hellfire and brimstone era where everything was wrong. If I put nail polish on my fingers and went to bed, I would wake up in the middle of the night worried I might go to hell if Jesus came. This is what my parents believed and how I was raised.

My mother became especially vocal against letting our daughters have their ears pierced. I told my mother, "Mother, times are different now, and you cannot dictate how we are to raise our daughters. I'm going to let the girls have their ears pierced, and I'm going to let them wear a little makeup." As she continued to protest, I finally had to say, "Now, Mother, please let me take care of my daughters." It was not always easy, and she did get irritated with me, but we were able to work through it. When my parents finally moved into their own house, this took some pressure off their parenting issues.

It is important to establish boundaries when it comes to parenting issues. Not only does this help reduce conflict, it also prevents children from playing their parents against their grandparents.

In spite of these types of conflicts, our children are well adjusted. They knew my husband and I loved them, and they knew that providing a place for my parents to live was something

we needed to do because they had no one else to help them. Even though my daughters were young, they understood. There were times when they rebelled and did not like my having to give my parents so much time, especially when it meant I could not do things with them. They would sometimes say, "Oh, I suppose you're gonna do *that* with *them*." But with love and patience we survived this time in our lives.

## JUGGLING THE SCHEDULE

Juggling a hectic schedule is never easy, especially when you are sandwiched between two generations along with ministry responsibilities. But working out a schedule defines priorities and becomes the basis by which we helped meet everyone's needs and deal with the demands of children and parents.

We needed to schedule our own family time, time for the church, and time for my parents. We set priorities and followed through with what we had scheduled. Doing what we said we would do was very important. If there was an emergency, such as a death in the church, then everyone understood that we had to adjust our schedules accordingly. To keep

(continued on page 87)



## STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

**E**ntering the Stuck in the Middle Generation can be one of life's most stressful, most difficult, and challenging seasons of life. Our churches are filled with people experiencing this season, having aging parents needing care and providing care for their own children.

A *Los Angeles Times* article, "Stuck in the Middle," heralded the fact many baby boomers are doing double duty as caretakers for children and parents. The author writes, "Guilt and stress are the hallmarks of life as a member of this generation."

Today's adult children often find themselves wedged between the responsibilities of raising their own children and helping ailing parents, often while working full time. This balancing act is extraordinarily difficult.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

**1. Take care of yourself.** Isn't that selfish? If you do not take care of yourself, you have nothing to offer others older or younger than yourself.

**2. Set aside time for spiritual reflection and renewal.** Jesus said to His disciples, "Come ... apart ... and rest a while" (Mark 6:31, KJV). He invited them because He knew if they did not come apart and rest they would come apart in other ways.

Cultivate your own relationship with the Lord. That sounds basic. But we can get caught in the middle, and get so busy we become a "Martha." We become so busy we forget to worship. Jesus rebuked her and said, "only one thing is necessary" (Luke 10:42, NASB).<sup>1</sup>

**3. Take time for your own marriage.** I do not believe it is God's will to sacrifice our relationship with our spouse for anyone else in this world. Ephesians 5:22-33 shows the tremendous importance the Lord places on marriage. Do not neglect your own family to take care of your parent(s). Aren't they my family? Yes, but taking care of husband or wife and children is your first responsibility.

**4. Keep the lines of communication open.** Talk about it. How many times in counseling does the wife say, "Talk to me?"

The husband replies, "I don't want to talk about it. I'm thinking."

Little by little, if you ask the right questions, communication begins. Where there is communication, there is healing. Ministry takes place. Keep family and

friends informed about what is going on. Do not take anything for granted.

**5. Be informed about resources, ministries, or agencies that are available in your community, such as Meals on Wheels or adult care centers.** I visited an adult care center just a few weeks ago, and it was tremendous. Aging parents, senior adults, cared for during the day and returning home in the evening, were a part of this environment. Many people do not know these resources may be available in their community.

**6. Establish a support system.** Realize that you are not Wonder Woman or Superman. You cannot do it alone. There are those around you who can help. How many times have you said to someone, "If I can do anything, let me know?"

The night my Mom died, I heard a knock on the door. I opened the door, and it was one of my son's high school buddies. He came by to give my son a hug and a card. I do not know how much you understand male versus female, or Mars versus Venus, but guys do not show that kind of support often enough. My son opened the card and found a handwritten note. When I read it, I wept. His buddy said, "A few years ago I lost my grandfather. I loved my grandfather like you loved your grandmother. I hurt so badly, and nobody was there for me. I determined then that when I had a friend lose a grandparent, I was going to be there for them. Anything I can do, if you need to go to a movie, go for a ride, or just sit and talk, will you call me?" I think we can learn something here about support.

**7. Remember, this is a difficult time for your parent(s) as well.** Sometimes we forget that we are not the only part of the equation. This is a difficult time for Mom and Dad, too.

**8. Allow yourself time to accept or even mourn the changing relationship between you and your parents.** No one is ever fully prepared for what is ahead.

**9. Plan ahead.** As much as possible, think things through before they happen. My Mom was with us at Thanksgiving. Her health wasn't 100 percent so I said, "Mom, when you go home, I want you and David (my older brother) to talk about things just in case the Lord decides to take you home sooner than you are planning on."

They went home and talked. How much easier it was for my brother when Mom died because he was able to

say, “This is what Mom wanted.” Knowing your parents goals and values, their dreams and desires, is vital to successfully traversing the final steps of life’s journey.

**10. Enlist your workplace.** Many employers have programs available to assist you in caring for your parents. Check to see if your work schedule can be adjusted to accommodate responsibilities with your children or parents. Open communication with your supervisor will increase the likelihood that your employer will provide opportunities that help meet your needs. Many people (22 million) are involved in some form of caregiving.

**11. Accept the fact you will have good days and bad days.** Those around you will love you and understand if you include them in the process. Consider your parents’ feelings and desires. They are part of this as well. Think about your parents’ independence and dignity. You will be helping them make some of the most difficult decisions they have ever faced. Allow them to do whatever they can for themselves for as long as they are able.

**12. Take one day at a time.**

God has not promised skies always blue,  
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives thro’;  
God has not promised sun without rain,  
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God has promised strength for the day,  
Rest for the laborer, light for the way,  
Grace for the trials, help from above,  
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.”<sup>2</sup>  
That’s what God has promised.

**13. Give back to your parents now.** There was a day when all they did was give to you. It is the cycle of life. To everything there is a season. Give back to your parents and take care of your children.

I tease my son who wants to become a pediatric surgeon. I tell him, “Go for it. When you become a pediatric surgeon, Dad is going to retire and come live with you.” While I am kidding, that may one day be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Take good care of your parents, of yourself, and of your children. Someday you may need to call 1-800-Help-Kids, and they will be there for you.

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**STEVE SPARKS**, former national director, Senior Adult Ministries, Springfield, Missouri. From Assemblies of God Senior Adult Ministries *Prime on Line* <http://sam.ag.org/practivealliving/sandwichgen.cfm>. Copyright ©2006 The General Council of the Assemblies of God 1445 North Boonville Avenue, Springfield, MO 65802-1894

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**NOTES**

1. Scripture quotations marked NASB taken from the New American Standard Bible. Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995; Audio Recording Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, (P) 1989 by The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, Calif. All rights reserved. Used by permission ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)).
2. *What God Has Promised* by Annie Johnson Flint

(continued from page 85)

my schedule it was necessary to set priorities. My husband and I and our daughters sat down and worked together to set our priorities.

I had to make sure God was always No. 1. If you don’t put God first, you will not have the strength to deal with the issues that come from being caught in the middle. It is often easy to confuse putting God first with church work. But being busy for the Lord is not the same as spending time in His presence and gaining the strength you need to face the challenges of each day.

My husband and children came next. When we set our priorities, if I said I was going to do something, I did it. It is important not to disappoint your children. If you disappoint them, they might resent you and not trust your word. My husband and I regularly set aside a day for a date. Most of the time the girls came with us. When a pastor and his wife serve a church and give all of their time to it and none to their family, they have nothing if they have not built a relationship with their children.

I then sat down with my mother and dad and planned our schedule. I told them that I could do certain things for them on certain days. I had to explain to them that I had church obligations every day; I had to work every day; and I needed to spend time with my husband and daughters every day. It is important to not let your parents make you feel guilty for not making caring for them your priority. Setting your spiritual and family priorities prior to setting aside time for your parents helps you be firm when they pressure you for more time.

## HEALTH ISSUES

My husband was first diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when Pamela

was 6 weeks old and Cynthia was 12 months old. Kenneth was blind, paralyzed, and his lungs were paralyzed. The doctors sent him home to die, but God

## Setting your spiritual and family priorities prior to setting aside time for your parents helps you be firm when they pressure you for more time.

miraculously touched him, and he was healed. Several years later he started to get MS on the other side of his body. It was a type of slow-moving MS.

The stress caused by this disease meant that I must think about what my husband's needs were. Since he is the lead in this ministry, I needed to be there to help support him both physically and spiritually.

The periodic problems with Kenneth's MS caused added stress during the times my parents were living with us. Kenneth is normally kind and gentle. Sometimes his medication made him nervous. The added stress of dealing with my parents increased his nervousness. At times I would need to tell my parents, especially my mother, to curb certain behaviors that brought out more stress in Kenneth. My husband's health was a priority. I could not allow my parents to jeopardize his health any further.

### DEALING WITH PARENTAL DEMANDS

When my parents' health began to fail, it was difficult to deal with their demands along with everything else that was going on in our lives. By that time, the church had grown and some people from the church would pitch in and help. But my parents were still my responsibility.

One of the biggest issues in dealing with aging parents is feeling guilty

that you are not doing enough to help them. The guilt I felt during this time was overwhelming and my parents often took advantage of this. Sometimes I felt I was a terrible

daughter. My mother would often reminded me of this. My dad would call and say, "Your mother is upset. You need to come over to our house and help her."

I would answer, "Dad, I can't come right now."

He would reply, "Well, you know you need to be here."

At times, I would get a little smart with him; I didn't mean to. I would then say, "Daddy, I'm sorry that I said that, but you need to understand from where I'm coming."

To gain balance in my perspective and get relief from the pressure and guilt, I spent time talking to the Lord. A pastor's wife needs to get away from everyone for a short time every once and awhile. Many times I would go for a walk and reflect on Scripture and pray. You cannot neglect your devotional life during this time. If you do not pray and read the Word, you will have a difficult time making it.

It is important that the husband and wife support each other during the stress of taking care of parents and children. I had an understanding husband to whom I could talk. He was such a support during this time. I also had a friend outside the church in whom I could confide. She helped me understand the events in my life.

Every pastor's wife needs a friend outside the church on whom she can depend. I encourage every

pastor's wife to find someone, even if it is a pastor's wife in another city. Call her and talk. She understands the ministry, and she can listen, counsel, and pray with you.

Many times a pastor's wife will keep her thoughts and feelings bottled up and not reach out to others. She often feels that she has failed. Early in our ministry we were taught not to talk to people about our problems but to keep our problems to ourselves. It was family business and no one else's. This kind of thinking will keep you from baring your heart and receiving the help you need.

When choosing someone to confide in, make sure you choose someone who is mature and will keep your confidence. You need someone you can trust.

### LOOKING BACK

We can look back on our lives and see what we could have done different, better, or with more thought. But we often act to meet the need of the moment. We cannot put our family and ministry lives on hold for our parents.

Through our experience I learned not to feel sorry for myself and spend so much time in the guilt of *what if*. If you do, it will debilitate you. Instead, spend your time reflecting in the realm of *why not* and *I can*. Rely on God's strength to help you stay strong. 🙏

*For a list of resources on dealing with aging parents, go to: <http://sam.ag.org/practicalliving/whenMomandDad.cfm>.*



#### MARY LEE CANFIELD

is an Assemblies of God minister who ministers with her husband at North Olmsted Assembly of God, North Olmsted, Ohio.

# PHASE SIX: CELEBRATION

**Everyone wants to finish well and finish strong. This is the time in your life when you expect to savor the joy and fulfillment of ministry.**

Joy and fulfillment are more likely to happen when you have been focused and intentional in the previous five phases. This does not mean you are perfect, have never made mistakes, or taken wrong turns in your journey; but you should enter phase six expecting celebration, having done your best.

The risks in this phase include the fear and insecurity of not having done as well as you expected to, anxiety of remaining effective in

retirement or semiretirement, and concern over not having adequate financial resources with which to retire. Often the anticipation of part-time ministry or being a resource and encouragement to other pastors does not develop. Quickly the feeling of underutilization and despair can set in.

It is not too late to refocus your vision, hone your skills, access the needs around you, and begin a fresh and fulfilling journey in this phase. 🌀

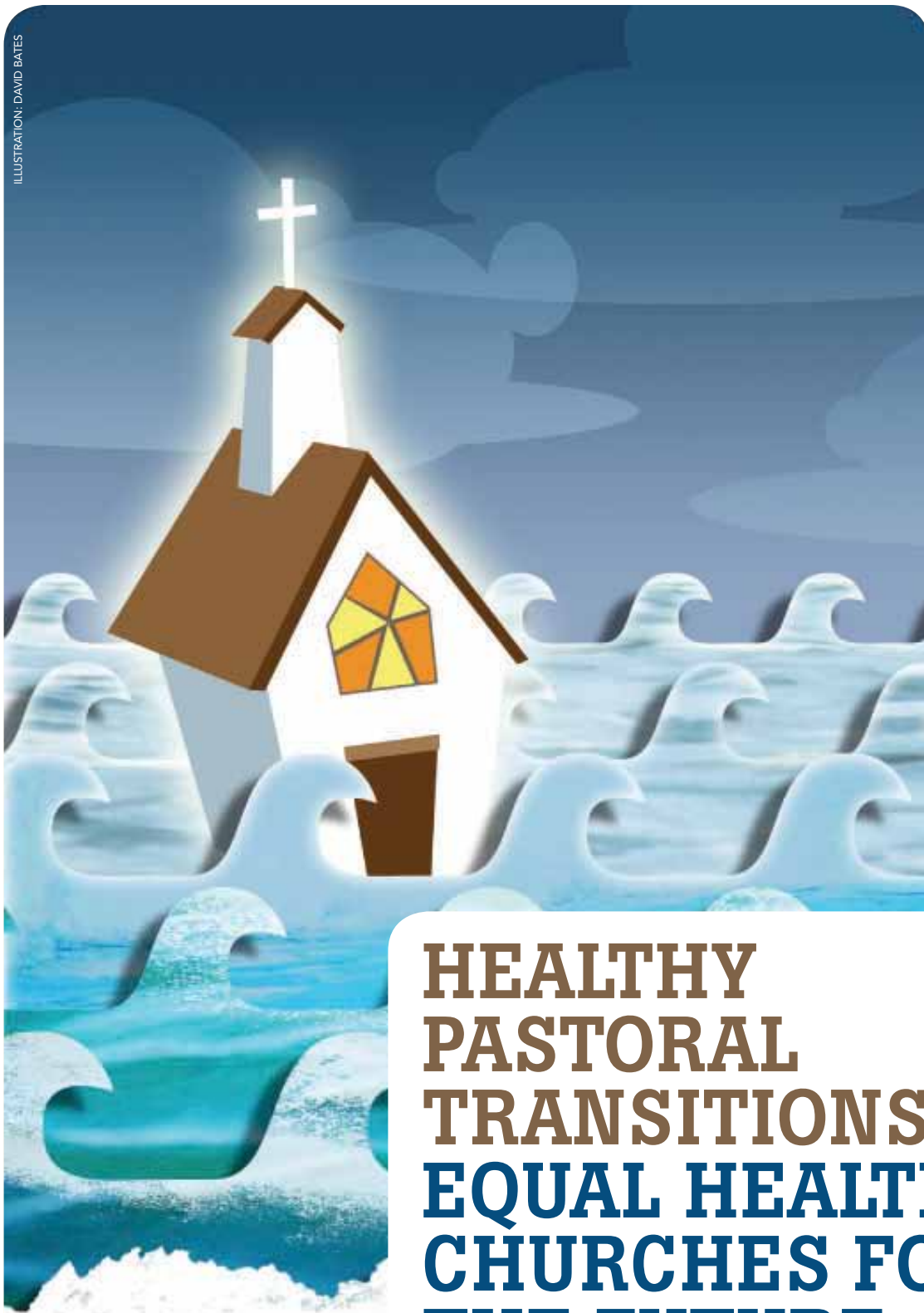
## YOU ARE HERE



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES



# HEALTHY PASTORAL TRANSITIONS EQUAL HEALTHY CHURCHES FOR THE FUTURE

[ BY DAVID L. BITTINGER ]

**B**ecause a pastor loves his family, he prepares a will, a living will, and a durable power of attorney to make things easier for them should he be first to be with the Lord. A pastor also owes it to his church to design a plan that will ease its transition to a new pastor whether he is suddenly called home or God calls him to minister in another part of His kingdom.

After a pastor leaves, parishioners need opportunities to celebrate the good things from their former pastor's time with them and to

much-needed ministry venue: the trained interim pastoral coach.

### THE HARBOR PILOT IS STANDING BY

One Assemblies of God minister described the role of an interim pastor in the transition process as being similar to that of a harbor pilot. According to David L. Fink, the harbor pilot temporarily stands in the place of a ship's captain as the vessel enters and exits the unfamiliar waters of a harbor. This person is "trained to pilot ships [congregations] that are

interim pastor or the transitional congregation for their unique roles and responsibilities during the interim period.<sup>2</sup> The potential for development and success of such a unique ministry resides in the vast experience pool of our retired ministers. We need to harness and direct retired ministers to help bring unity and direction to transitional churches.

Nearly half of the Assemblies of God districts across the United States indicated in a recent survey that although they have developed excellent resources to guide congregations through the pastoral search process, they have no defined systematic training model for interim pastors.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, a significant number of congregations appear to be struggling with unhealthy transitional issues when their new pastor arrives.

Nearly half of the Assemblies of God district officers who responded to this survey believe the primary role of an interim pastor should be twofold: (1) surface and resolve congregational issues, and (2) prepare the congregation for the new pastor.<sup>4</sup>

With a growing awareness of the need for interim pastoral ministry, the Ohio District has begun to seek out retired pastors to serve as spiritual harbor pilots in the temporary capacity of interim pastor to fulfill this twofold role.

While these early years of the 21st century present an increasing number of churches in pastoral transition, they also offer a means to healthier and more positive outcomes if we take advantage of the growing number of retired ministers willing to serve as interim pastoral coaches. They are a valuable source of wisdom and maturity, capable of facilitating

## **A pastor also owes it to his church to design a plan that will ease its transition to a new pastor whether he is suddenly called home or God calls him to minister in another part of His kingdom.**

process any pain and sorrow related to his departure. To be healthy, parishioners must also make an orderly transition to a future that will be different from their past, but holds the promise of God's best for them with their next pastor. To accomplish this, parishioners need a visible, comforting presence from someone who will provide spiritual and emotional support following their pastor's departure — no matter what precipitated his departure.

Jesus provided an example of this presence in His promise to send a Comforter to help His disciples in His absence. He also spoke with them about what they were to do in His kingdom on earth after He ascended to the right hand of the Father.

Districts and churches can accomplish Jesus' example in times of pastoral transition in a church's life cycle. These are the prospective goals of a specialized and

passing through the treacherous, narrow water of the harbor [an interim period], then hand the ship [congregation] to the captain [the new pastor] and ... go back to help another."<sup>1</sup> Fink's analogy clearly portrays the valuable role of trained interim pastoral coaches in helping congregations in transition make healthy preparations for a new pastor.

Expanding on this comparison, the official board and other lay leaders of a congregation can be compared to a tugboat working at the harbor pilot's direction to apply gentle pressure against the side of a ship — helping steer it to a safe depth and away from underwater obstacles in the harbor. Trusted lay leaders of the congregation, working together with an interim pastoral coach, can help shape (or reshape) attitudes and goals during times of transition.

At present, no training program exists to prepare either the

## We owe our parishioners and the future of our Movement our best effort to create a spiritual “Mission: Possible” team of compassionate, skilled, and experienced interim pastoral coaches.

church health during the critical time of pastoral transition.

### THE BUCK STARTS HERE

The challenge for districts is to develop a more thorough approach for congregations in transition than just providing pulpit-supply preachers and materials to guide congregational

leaders in the pastoral search process. The health of individual congregations and, by extension, the health of sections and districts, can be improved by developing a well-defined formal training model for interim pastoral coaches. A program based on careful training of retired Assemblies of God ministers to

guide congregations in transition will result in a healthier, more positive experience for both congregations and the new pastor.

The Ohio District Presbytery and executive officers have favorably received this concept. Superintendent Doug Clay subsequently:

- created the district director of church development position, with a portfolio including the administration of the Ohio interim pastors program.
- recruited a team of retired Ohio Assemblies of God ministers who have a proven record of mature pastoral

## A PRESCRIPTION FOR PASTORAL CARE IN TRANSITIONING CHURCHES

**Retired Assemblies of God ministers represent an untapped reservoir of skills for unique and vital congregational ministry as interim pastoral coaches.** Their wisdom and years of experience make them invaluable in guiding believers through one of the most difficult times in any congregation’s lifespan: a change in pastoral leadership. Although this article focuses on the Ohio District Council, the need for this kind of ministry exists throughout the Assemblies of God.

During a recent 3-year period, 75 churches in the Ohio District (27 percent) experienced pastoral transition.<sup>1</sup> These transitions were made in the same way they had always been made: without the guidance of a trained interim coach. This frequently led to significant congregational dysfunction during the transition as it had in years gone by.

One of the primary reasons for a difficult transition following a long-term pastor may well be the current prescription for pastoral care during such a time — provision for pulpit supply, with the primary focus being the pastoral search process. This process is well developed and usually successful in securing a new pastor. However, it is not nearly as successful in terms of retaining a new pastor.

While pulpit supply and the search for a new pastor are obviously critical, they are not parishioners’ only needs. Each congregation has unique and varied

characteristics that affect its level of health and readiness for growth under a new pastor. These issues remain largely unaddressed during pastoral transition. Thus, a new pastor is often blindsided by these issues and must expend great time and energy addressing residual problems. This contributes to a serious and ongoing problem in some congregations — a destructive cycle of frequent pastoral turnover that perpetuates unhealthy, struggling churches.<sup>2</sup> It is the kind of problem that a trained interim pastoral coach can help uncover and resolve before the new pastor’s arrival.

When problem areas are not addressed during the pastoral transition, a new pastor may feel compelled to prematurely leave the church — suffering personal burnout from dealing with unresolved congregational issues, such as grieving the loss of the former pastor, perpetuations of unproductive ministries, conflict in the congregation, loss of financial income, drop in attendance, and diminishing pastoral care.<sup>3</sup>

DAVID L. BITTINGER, Kent, Ohio

### NOTES

1. John Wootton, executive secretary, Ohio District Council, interview by author, 6 December 2005, Columbus, Ohio, e-mail.
2. “A Questionnaire for Assemblies of God Congregational Leaders in Churches That Have Gone Through Pastoral Transition,” survey by author, December 2004 to May 2005, mail and e-mail.
3. Ibid.

experience and are committed to the vision of interim pastoral coaching as a new strategy for churches in pastoral transition; and

- adopted the Church Benefits presentation, which shows lay leaders in transitional congregations, both the short- and long-term benefits of God-directed interim pastoral coach ministry.

### LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

During the 6 to 12 months spent with an interim pastoral coach, the transitional congregation has opportunity to grow and develop into a healthy, vibrant body of believers. This helps everyone's re-entry into a pastoral relationship — the congregation as well as the new pastor. The skill set of a trained

interim pastoral coach includes:

- years of pastoral experience and a mature approach to pastoral care in times of congregational crisis;
- training to address the unique challenges of restorative pastoral care as the congregation works through grief, loss, and the fear of change;
- willingness to provide goal-directed ministry as a buffer between

## TRANSITIONING OUT OF RETIREMENT TO HELP TRANSITIONING CHURCHES

**Some pastoral transitions are sudden, traumatic, and hurtful because of a pastor's moral or ethical failure.** Other transitions can be painful, even in good situations, because the pastor is moving to another church. Either way, when a pastor leaves, there are felt needs in that congregation. It is better to deal with these needs before a new pastor comes in.

In Ohio, we have several retired pastors who have energy, mobility, and spiritual stamina. The Ohio District is using these retired ministers as interim pastors when churches are in transition.

Retired pastors serving as interim pastors fill the pulpit on Sundays. Some serve the church 1 or 2 days a week to provide shepherding and pastoral responsibilities. They provide great leadership. It is a win-win situation for the church, the retired pastor, and the district.

The church benefits from the capable leadership retired pastors can provide without being concerned that the interim pastor will candidate for the position. The retired pastor wins because he has opportunity to contribute to expanding the Kingdom. The district wins because there is less pressure to fill the pastoral vacancy. Having an interim pastor gives the district time to deal with issues. This also gives the district time to learn what the church needs, what type of pastor the church is looking for, and also gives the board time to evaluate who they believe God is calling to lead them. Sometimes churches are too quick to elect a pastor and may overreact based on their previous pastor.

The Ohio District has about half a dozen ministers who have been effectively engaged in interim pastorate work. This program has been so successful, that in any

transition — a healthy church where the pastor leaves, or in a traumatic transition — my first recommendation is for the church to consider an interim pastor.

The Ohio District considers three criteria when choosing interim pastors. First, what is the DNA of the church and will one of our retired ministers feel comfortable going into that setting? Second, what are the circumstances surrounding the pastoral vacancy? Some of our interim pastors have a nurturing, shepherding heart. If the vacancy was created because of moral failure or the transition has been negative, their presence brings healing. Some of our retired pastors are strong administrators. If, in the interim, the church's administration effectiveness needs to step up, I send one of them. Third is geographic location. We try to keep an interim pastor relatively close to where he lives, which allows him more freedom in choosing office and visitation hours.

Before assigning an interim pastor I meet with him and discuss some ground rules. The district is also developing material called "Transition in a Box." This material outlines specifics concerning what the Ohio District wants to see accomplished in the interim pastorate program.

When we first started this program, churches were not sure about having an interim pastor. But 100 percent of them have said, "We were uncertain about having an interim pastor on the front end, but thank you. We see the value of having someone walk with us."

Our churches often feel pressured to find someone to assume the pastorate. Without fail, boards say, "Thank you for helping us take our time in this process."

**DOUG CLAY**, superintendent, Ohio District, New Albany, Ohio



## PHASE SIX

differing styles of pastoral leadership;

- ability to resolve congregational conflict before the new pastor arrives;

- openness toward intentional, anointed preaching and teaching relative to a transitional congregation's needs;

- proven ability to work with and advise lay leadership during the transition period and pastoral search process;

- experience in managing church administrative and financial matters during the transition period; and

- the ability to function as a liaison between district leadership and the

transitional congregation.

In addition to these many opportunities, the interim pastoral coach must also be aware of clearly defined boundaries for interim ministry:

- Long-term program responsibilities do not belong to the interim pastoral coach;

- He should not project long-term goals or ministry opportunities;

- It is inappropriate for an interim pastor to become a candidate for the pastorate of the church; and

- The interim pastoral coach must remain impartial in the process of selecting a new pastor. No attempt

should be made to persuade church leadership in any way regarding any pastoral candidate.

In recent years, several retired Assemblies of God ministers in the Greater Akron section have served as interim pastors for churches with serious congregational issues. These ministers have piloted troubled congregations through difficult waters in preparation for their new pastor.

During 7 years as sectional presbyter overseeing Assemblies of God churches in the Greater Akron section, I have witnessed the distinct, positive differences these

## WHAT IS YOUR LIFE EXPECTANCY?

**"There is only one thing that age can give you, and that is wisdom," claims S.I. Hayakawa.**

"Age does not depend upon years," insists Tyron Edwards. "It seems some men are born old, and some never grow so."

Perhaps pastors need to surrender some of their stereotyped ideas about aging and being active. It may, in fact, be time to admit that some pastors are as good or better at 60 than they were at 40.

Howard McClusky, a nationally known gerontologist, supports this idea. This University of Michigan aging expert suggests, "We're capable of much more than we think." In 1776 only 1 in 50 Americans was 65 years of age. In 1900 life expectancy reached 47; today it is pushing past 76.

Anyone who reached 65 in 1984 had an average life expectancy of 16.5 more years. Within 35 years, at least 1 in 5 Americans will be 65.

Senility and living in the past are no longer considered a necessary part of life when people pass 60, insists McClusky. To accent this truth, he points to the wealth controlled by older people, the number of older students in college, and the widespread increase of *gray power*.

Although all of us have been aging since the day we were born, most can upgrade their life expectancy. There are those whose spirit and influence we would do well to keep among us as long as we can.

I began to consider this as I approached my 65th

birthday. About that time, I read the story of an older minister whose achievements after age 65 greatly challenged me.

After turning 65, he led a dying inner-city church into a highly visible period of spiritual vitality and congregational growth. He accepted retirement at 70 only because it was mandatory in his denomination.

I thought, *If he can do that, so can I.*

Because I was in good health and wished to continue, I readjusted my focus and opted for 70 as my retirement goal. On reaching the 65-mile marker, I simply stayed on the freeway.

With the approval from a loving congregation, I continued in my role as senior pastor of a small church. I also worked with a heightened awareness and appreciation for the privilege of remaining active.

This did not stop my being confronted with that oft-repeated question from friends, "When are you going to retire?" Thus, I also became acutely aware of those who opted out.

I later learned that the United Methodist Church had allowed a friend, whom I will call John, to continue in ministry past age 65. They still mandated retirement at 70, but allowed him to change congregations and remain a full-time pastor.

As mile marker 70 came into closer view, my wife and I realized it would be better for our congregation and for us to terminate our 17-year pastorate. Now I am

interim pastoral coaches have made in transitional congregations:

- serving as a healing agent of congregational pain when the previous pastor left due to a moral failure;
- providing budgetary wisdom for a transition church in financial trouble;
- serving as a mediator in congregational conflict;
- serving as a buffer between a long-term, founding pastor and a new pastor;
- providing administrative guidance to a church board through the pastoral search process and even

praying over the new pastor;

- providing leadership and direction for a church staff during the transition period; and
- pastoral ministry and care during the transition, such as hospital visitation, Communion, water baptisms, baby dedications, and funeral services.<sup>5</sup>

These interim pastors have been God-given agents of restoration and growth.

## A BETTER MOUSETRAP

The primary goal of the Ohio District, relative to the interim pastoral coach program, is to

develop a training program to empower retired Ohio Assemblies of God ministers who feel called to minister in pastoral transition churches as agents of congregational health, preparing each church for a new long-term pastor.

The training of these interim pastors during a 2-day seminar will focus on five topics:

- the characteristics of an interim pastoral coach according to Gene Wood in *Leading Turnaround Churches*;<sup>6</sup>
- an understanding of coaching churches in pastoral transition;

looking for the best way to move on.

It is not yet time to exit the freeway, but when that time comes, I want to have the same spirit as Washington Gladden. After retiring from his Columbus, Ohio, church, he became pastor emeritus. He continued attending regularly, but only preached on occasion.

In January 1918, a visitor learned Gladden would fill the pulpit on a certain Sunday. World War I had not yet ended. Many people hated each other and many ministers, with fire in their voices, were denouncing America's enemy. The public was not hearing much about God's love and forgiveness. But in his sermon Gladden proclaimed the wrongness of fiery hate and the froth of malice.

Following worship that morning this visitor overheard two elderly ladies confiding in each other: "We did a wise thing when we kept Gladden as pastor emeritus. If he did nothing other than live his life among us where we could catch his spirit, his influence alone would make it worthwhile."

Gladden became ill later that same Sunday and died in July. His January sermon was his valedictory message to that congregation and to the world.

As I approach my eighth decade of life, I see numerous possibilities for driving on. There are green lights in every direction, but I have a genuine fear of not having the good judgment to know when to step aside for younger leadership.

I pray that I may continually upgrade my life expectancy not only in the number of years but also in the quality of life I live and the service I give.

A fellow pastor retired from his 7,000-member African-American Baptist church at the age of 80. That formerly unthought-of prospect now looks like a possibility.

Norman Vincent Peale was still writing books when he died at age 93. Robert Schuler has retooled and revisioned for his eighth decade. My Baptist friend, Del, continues serving as an interim pastor as he reaches his eighth decade.

Whether I can continue *doing* that long does not matter nearly as much as what I am *being* during the remaining time God gives me. After 45 years of feeling guilty if I did not spend every waking moment achieving certain goals and creating church growth, I have better expectations for myself.

I no longer have, if I ever did, the sheer physical drive to maintain the pace many congregations want. I believe I have the wisdom and, hopefully, the patience and stamina to focus on what should always be our first priority: not so much *doing* but a great deal more *being* for Jesus' sake.



**WAYNE M. WARNER**, Battle Creek, Michigan  
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## PHASE SIX

**A program based on careful training of retired Assemblies of God ministers to guide congregations in transition will result in a healthier, more positive experience for both congregations and the new pastor.**

- congregational characteristics during the interim period;
- the tasks of a congregation during the interim period according to Carolyn Weese and J. Russell Crabtree in *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Transitions*;<sup>7</sup>
- How to plan for each interim pastoral ministry assignment: the strategy of pastoral care.

The interim ministry period in Assemblies of God churches presents an unprecedented opportunity to experience a time of healing, growth, and preparation for the new pastor under the skilled leadership of an interim pastoral coach.

### THE END OF THE BEGINNING

When addressing whether World War II had turned a corner and

was nearing its end, Sir Winston Churchill told guests at the 1942 London Lord Mayor's Day luncheon: "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end.

But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." Likewise, we are not yet at "the end" regarding how best to minister to transitional congregations. However, when we identify the need and determine to address it constructively, we are at "the end of the beginning."

As Assemblies of God districts across America recognize the benefit of providing trained interim pastoral coaches for congregations in transition, churches will be healthier, more vibrant, and experience less frequent stress-induced changes in leadership. We owe our parishioners and the future of our Movement our best effort to create a spiritual "Mission:



Possible" team of compassionate, skilled, and experienced interim pastoral coaches. To do less is to shortchange everyone's future. 🌐



**DAVID L. BITTINGER**, senior pastor, Christian Life Center Assembly of God, Kent, Ohio, and presbyter of the Greater Akron section of the Ohio District Council of the Assemblies of God.

### NOTES

1. David L. Fink, "A Questionnaire for Assemblies of God Pastors Who Have Served as Interims in Pastoral Transition Congregations," survey by author, Lewisville, Texas, 5 September 2005, e-mail.
2. "A Questionnaire for Assemblies of God Pastors Who Have Served as Interims in Pastoral Transition Churches," survey by author, December 2004 to May 2005, mail and e-mail.
3. "A Questionnaire for Assemblies of God District Officials and Presbyters Who Have Directed Churches in Pastoral Transition," survey by author, December 2004 to May 2005, mail and e-mail.
4. Ibid.
5. "A Questionnaire for Assemblies of God Pastors Who Have Served as Interims in Pastoral Transition Churches," survey by author, December 2004 to May 2005, mail and e-mail.
6. Gene Wood, *Leading Turnaround Churches* (St. Charles, Ill.: Church Smart Resources, 2001), 87–127.
7. Carolyn Weese and J. Russell Crabtree, *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Transitions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004).







ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES

# SURVIVING THE LOSS OF A SPOUSE

[ BY RICHARD D. DOBBINS ]



I remember the evening clearly. It was after 5 p.m. I was leaning against the breakfast bar. My wife and youngest daughter were in the family room with me. We were waiting for the results from several days of diagnostic tests my wife had undergone to determine the cause of her intense and highly mobile back pain.

Then, it came ... the sudden ring of the telephone. Even though we were expecting it, the ring startled us. The voice on the other end was that of our family doctor. "I'm afraid I don't have good news for you," he said grimly. "Your wife's back pain is coming from tumors that appear to be a form of lymphoma. We'll have to take further tests to determine the kind of lymphoma we are dealing with. I suppose the only good news is that these kinds of cancers can respond very well to chemotherapy." He prayed for us and hung up. I was left with the responsibility of telling my wife and family. We were in shock.

The initial shock that accompanies heartbreaking news is a merciful anesthetic to those who must face tragic moments. For several hours, what was happening to us seemed like a nightmare from which we would awaken.

Being a minister and mental health professional I had been through similar moments with many people. Even so, my past experiences could not make me, my wife, and my family immune from what other couples and families face when they experience similar circumstances.

At the time, little did we know that we were beginning a 3-year battle that would end with Dolores' death in the summer of 1992. So, we did what other families in our church had done in similar times of crisis. We notified our pastor and friends in the ministry and asked them to pray for us. Initially, we received daily phone calls from people wanting to know about Dolores' condition.

Congregations across the country prayed for Dolores' healing. Our family found great hope and comfort in

this. However, as the weeks and months passed and the disease refused to loose its deadly grip on her body, we had to face the possibility that we might lose her. We could no longer deny it.

## SURRENDERING YOUR SPOUSE TO GOD CAN BE DIFFICULT

As a man, and particularly as a pastor, I thought I should have been able to protect my wife from this threat to her life. After all, didn't we believe in healing?

## The initial shock that accompanies heartbreaking news is a merciful anesthetic to those who must face tragic moments.

Hadn't people around the world prayed for her healing? I do not know how many people called to give us a *word from the Lord* that this sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God.

Going home from the office one evening I found myself in an intense struggle with these contradictions. In the middle of my pain, the Lord reminded me of Abraham and Isaac going up Mount Moriah and challenged me to put Dolores in His hands. "After all," He seemed to say, "if I want Dolores there with you, cancer will never kill her. And, if I want her here with Me, all the prayers on earth will never heal her." Although, this did not alter the intensity of my prayers for her healing, it did help me to surrender her to God. This is one of the most difficult spiritual challenges you face when dealing with the possible loss of a loved one.

There was no doubt Dolores was more aware of what was happening

to her than I or the children, since the disease was in her body and she had to deal daily with the pain and the medical procedures required to battle it. She had her last chemotherapy treatment just before Christmas in 1991. Because the outcome was not good our oncologist delayed relaying the news to us until after the holidays.

We knew we served a God of miracles, and we never doubted His ability to heal. After Christmas, however, it became obvious that short of a miracle we had only a

few weeks or, at the most, a few months together. So we talked.

She shared with me her anxieties about death and hopes of heaven.

When you go through the valley of death with a spouse, you are confronted with your own mortality. The illusion that death happens to others, but not to you, dissolves.

## WHEN POSSIBLE ... TALKING IS IMPORTANT

When your spouse is snatched from you suddenly, death deprives you of the opportunity to say the loving and intimate things to each other that tend to ease your parting. Inevitably this aggravates the grieving process and often gives rise to regrets.

However, when your spouse's death occurs gradually over a period of weeks or months, you have opportunity to prepare for final separation. So, we had time to do things that were important to us.

I did not want her to feel alone, so I insisted that we talk about what was happening to her. She needed to express what she was experiencing, and I needed to let her teach me

what it was like to experience death. So, we talked ... long and often.

As a family, we decided to keep Dolores at home when the medical community could do no more for her. As long as she could and wanted to, she did the familiar things around the house that she had done through the years. So, until 2 weeks before she died, she fixed sandwiches and soup for us at night ... and insisted on doing the dishes.

Then as death drew nearer, hospice nurses were with us around the clock. The team we had was wonderful. Several times during the final days the children and I stood around her bedside and sang her favorite hymns and choruses. We played taped passages of her favorite Scriptures.

Since we were up with her most of her last night, a little before 8 a.m. the hospice nurse thought we had time to slip downstairs for a cup of coffee and breakfast. We had just seated ourselves at the table, however, when the nurse came down and softly said, "I am sorry to tell you that Dolores just slipped into the presence of the Lord." It was almost as if she had waited until we were out of the room so she could spare us seeing her draw her last breath.

## PLANNING AHEAD HELPS ... WHEN YOU CAN

We all rushed up to the bedroom to view Dolores and comfort each other. After the children went downstairs, I stayed behind and waited for the mortician to come. This was among the things I had determined to do ahead of time. I had also determined not to kiss her body after she departed. After all, you kiss a person ... not a body.

I decided I would stay with her body as long as she was in our home

## PHASE SIX

and accompany her body to the hearse. Watching the hearse pull out of the driveway carrying the body of your spouse is an unforgettable moment in the grieving process.

Out of my respect for her as my wife, I wore my wedding ring until her burial. However, to keep me from denying the pain of her loss, I decided I would take my wedding ring off at the gravesite and give it to our son as a memorial of our love for him and each other.

I also decided to take the diamonds from my wife's engagement and wedding ring

some sense of control over a set of circumstances that had rendered me powerless.

Generally, I do not think it is emotionally healthy to continue wearing your wedding ring after the funeral of your spouse. This can easily become a way of denying your loss. After all, according to the Scripture when your spouse dies, your marriage ends (Romans 7:2,3).

Some women may want to wear their wedding ring during their grieving process because they do not want to attract the attention of other men. When a woman

The period of your grief will vary according to the nature of your relationship with your spouse and how suddenly or prolonged the death of your spouse happened to be. Usually, the more sudden your loss, the longer your grief since you had no time to prepare for it. If your spouse dies suddenly from natural causes, it may take 2 years to recover. However, if you lost your spouse to war, accidental death, murder, or suicide your grief may extend to 3 or more years. This is called *aggravated grief*. Most people need the help of a competent pastor or Christian mental health professional to deal with the spiritual and emotional issues provoked by these special kinds of losses.

When your spouse faces a prolonged death, much of your grief work is done before her death. This is known as *anticipatory grief*.

I was grateful for the time Dolores and I had to prepare for our inevitable separation. Even though marriage vows remind couples that death will inevitably part them, most couples seem to forget that once they are married. Couples live as though they will always have each other. The first big adjustment you make to your spouse's death is getting used to the fact she is gone, and you are alone.

### VISITING THE CEMETERY CAN HELP YOU GRIEVE

The cemetery where Dolores is buried is just a few minutes from our home. Her grave is right next to a road in the cemetery. I visited her grave every day for the first 6 months after her death. If it was raining, I would just sit in the car and reflect on the 47 years we had together. When the weather would permit, I stood in front of her grave and meditated for a

### As a man, and particularly as a pastor, I thought I should have been able to protect my wife from this threat to her life.

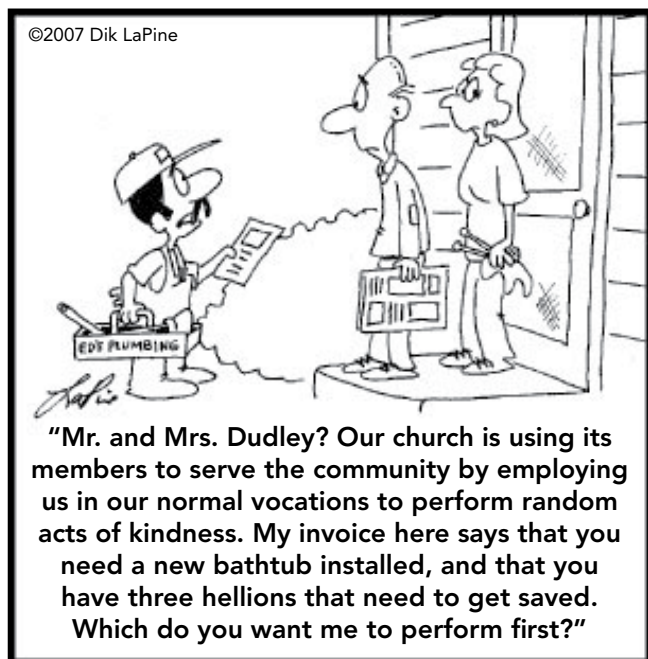
and have a set of earrings made for our youngest daughter and a diamond necklace for our oldest daughter. These gestures provided our children with lasting mementos of their mother; helped me begin to put some closure on this tragedy in my own life; and restored to me

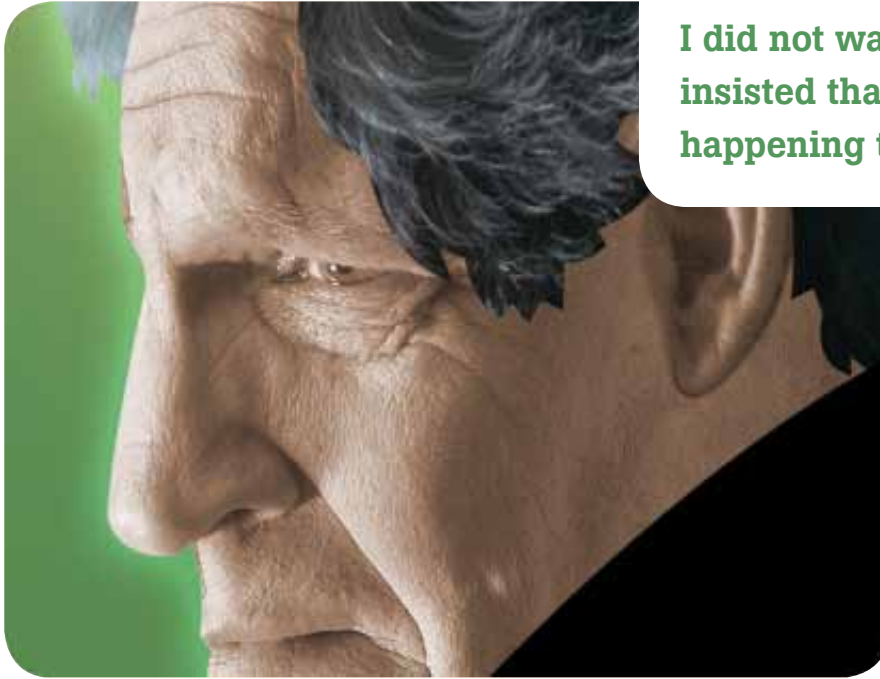
chooses to do this, however, she needs to understand the risk she is running of denying her loss and extending her period of grief. Taking off your wedding ring confronts you with the fact you are no longer married. The sooner this occurs after the funeral the

healthier it will be for you, but be patient with yourself.

### GRIEF HEALS FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Do not deny your grief ... and do not be embarrassed by it. Losing a spouse strikes pain to the deepest part of your spirit. Deep emotional anguish is a normal part of this tragic life experience.





**I did not want her to feel alone, so I insisted that we talk about what was happening to her.**

while on special moments from our marriage. Often I would spend time in prayer, opening my spirit for God to touch my grief with His comforting hand. These trips were a real help to me in getting through my grieving process.

## **CRY WHENEVER AND WHEREVER YOU FEEL LIKE IT**

Do not be too embarrassed to cry *whenever* you feel like it. At times, I would be seated in a restaurant with friends when my grief suddenly overwhelmed me. Right there in public I began to sob. Remember, the wounds of grief are healed from the inside out.

Trying to be *strong* only traps you longer in your pain. As time passes your bouts with grief will become less intense and occur less frequently. That is how you know you are healing.

## **LEARNING TO BE SINGLE**

After your spouse is gone, it will take you several months to learn how to be single again. I found this

to be a difficult challenge. In fact, for the first 6 months I struggled in a kind of social no man's land. I was single, but I still felt married. The journey from being married back to single life is a strange one.

When the funeral is over, family and friends go back to their own lives and you are left in the same house without your spouse. This is when you discover that your spouse's spirit occupied part of the space in that house. So, for the first few weeks you feel the emptiness in the house left by death's removal of your spouse's spirit. Over time, you will discover that your spirit will expand to fill this emptiness. But until then, the loneliness is very tangible, especially when you face the empty half of your bed every night.

Even though you may give your spouse's personal belongings to family members or charitable organizations, there will be many things to remind you of his or her presence. For several days the lingering fragrance of perfumes and colognes will be in the house,

and you will discover evidences of places she had visited and what she had done. Getting beyond these discoveries is part of learning to be single again.

## **YOUR SOCIAL LIFE CHANGES**

The fact you are no longer included in social events for married couples begins to bring this reality home to you. In most cases, failure to include you in the group is not intentional. For example, after my wife's death I continued to go to the church we had founded and pastored for 26 years. Yet, I was never asked to join couples for Sunday dinner or after-church snacks at restaurants.

These social changes may be more awkward for men than women. Women tend to be more socially skilled than men. They are more likely to exercise the initiative to get together with other single or widowed women for enjoyable times, such as lunch or shopping. Because men are less likely to initiate fellowship they can suffer more than women from loneliness.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why some men rush into relationships with women so soon after their spouse has died. This is seldom healthy. Often, it results in disastrous, premature marriages. Men would be wiser if they mixed socially with other guys for several months after the loss of a spouse.

## **YOUR SEXUAL FEELINGS CONTINUE TO LIVE**

Not long after your spouse dies, you discover that your sexual feelings



## PHASE SIX

did not die with them ... they are still alive. This makes you aware of another void in your life caused by the passing of your spouse. This subject is so personal and sensitive. I have not found any articles that offer any practical advice for managing this part of your life.

So, let me suggest that the loving memories from your years of marriage serve as a source of comfort and relief to you as long as you remain single. Do not allow unreleased sexual passions to drive you into another relationship. Learn to be comfortable and happy as a single person before you even begin to think about bringing someone else into your life.

### LEARNING TO LIVE AGAIN

Do not feel guilty when you discover you like the freedom of being single. It does feel good to come and go as you please without having to worry about how another person will respond to your actions. There is relief in discovering that one person can live for less than two. Also, not having to get a second opinion about what to buy and how much to pay for it feels liberating. These feelings are normal ... and healthy. Enjoying your single life will provide you with a cautious wisdom against surrendering it to someone who does not deserve you. 🍷



**RICHARD D. DOBBINS,** Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and founder and clinical director of EMERGE Ministries, Akron, Ohio. His book, *Invisible*

*Imprint: What Others Feel When in Your Presence*, published by VMI Publishers, Sister Oregon, 2001, can be purchased through Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri (1-800-641-4310).

### **LIFE AFTER DEATH:** *Rediscovering Life After the Loss of a Loved One*

Tony Cooke (Faith Library Publications, 246 pp., paperback)



Dealing with death effectively is crucial in pastoral ministry and even in our own lives. *Life After Death* is refreshing, stimulating, and a practical guide for clergy and laypeople.

Grief recovery is a difficult process for many, and they need skillful and compassionate help to walk them through this process. Cooke tackles the tough questions, misconceptions, and key emotions experienced by those who are bereaved.

Pastors often serve as frontline caregivers during bereavement. Cook offers pertinent Scripture passages that provide insight for children, youth, and adults that will help them work through their guilt and anger and bring about forgiveness and peace in their lives.

Each person is unique and adjusts differently to the loss of a loved one. Cooke deals briefly with dependency, identity, and companionship issues in adjusting to one's new reality. In chapter seven he says, "We must always consider the feelings of those we are attempting to help, making sure that everything we do and say is indeed helping and not adding hurt upon hurt." He shares insights on how to give, and also how to help people receive comfort that will help and not hurt.

Cooke says, "Death's challenge and influence are felt physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, socially, relationally, and financially. Indeed, they affect every realm of our being." Drawing from the Scriptures and quotations of exemplary Christians through the centuries, the author proclaims freedom from the fear of death, heaven as the believer's hope, and death as a translation (not a termination).

Cooke describes his own experience in coming to receive God's gift of eternal life. He articulates how one can respond to the gospel, be saved, take specific steps to follow Christ, and serve Him. One step is the additional experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit (as described in the Book of Acts).

The book concludes with five appendixes on topics such as "Dealing with Suicide" and "Scriptures of Comfort and Strength."

Utilizing *Life After Death* in pastoral ministry will greatly bless and help people who have lost a loved one.

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*Reviewed by John C. Katter, D. Min., recently retired from pastoral ministry, and former professor of practical theology and counseling, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.*



# CELEBRATION (THE REST OF YOUR LIFE)

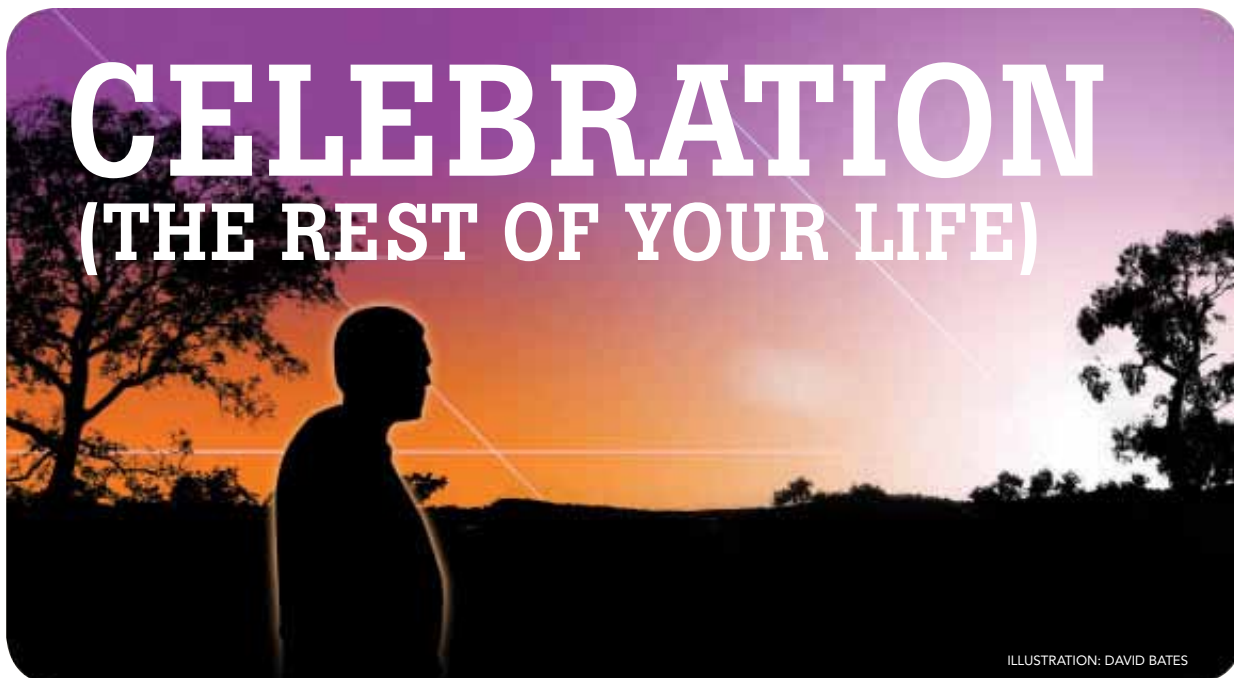


ILLUSTRATION: DAVID BATES

**D**uring the last few years of your ministry, you probably reflected quite often on what retirement would be like. Commercials for secular retirement plans show people in their 50s sailing, golfing, and enjoying their grandchildren. You may have some of these plans and more for your retirement. But as good as these are, Christians are also called to godly ministry and service.

I offer this alternative model of a good steward retiring well:

- *Adequacy*: Having enough liquid assets to comfortably meet your financial needs for the rest of your life.
- *Legacy*: Leaving an inheritance for your children and grandchildren.
- *Ministry*: Blessing Christian ministries with your time, talents, and treasure to further the Great Commission, even after your death.

In retirement, your ministry does not necessarily need to end. You have a great deal to offer. Consider taking mission trips, helping college students, supporting missionaries, and encouraging pastors. (See “*Healthy Pastoral Transitions Equal Healthy Churches for the Future*,” page 90.) These are a little harder to portray in a marketing ad than a sailboat scene but are much more rewarding in God’s economy.

Life will not get any easier, and slow knuckle balls may seem to have more zip on them than ever before. Your health and finances will be key factors as to how well you can live. So, what are the things you need to be careful about?

## CREATING YOUR RETIREMENT INCOME PLAN

As you are entering retirement, you need to develop a plan for the assets you have accumulated. You need to develop your plan, determine how much money you will need to withdraw to supplement any Social Security, pension, or working income you may be receiving. You do not want to outlive your assets. The graph on the next page provides a simple way to determine how long your money will last based on what percentage you withdraw. For example, if you are earning 6 percent on your retirement and are withdrawing 7 percent per year, your funds would last approximately 33 years.

## LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

Many ministers desire to provide financially for children and grandchildren as well as bless various ministries. Planned giving makes this possible. Several options are available that provide income for your spouse and children while leaving gifts to ministries of your choice. Be sure you have your financial house in order. (For more information, visit <http://www.agfoundation.com>.)

## DRAWING YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS BEFORE YOUR FULL RETIREMENT AGE

The only time I recommend drawing retirement benefits early is if someone is in poor health and will be earning less than \$12,480 per year. If you begin drawing Social Security benefits at age 62, your long-term

benefits will be reduced by 20 to 25 percent. If you work, your benefits will begin to be forfeited at the rate of 50 cents on every earned dollar. (If you are eligible to draw \$1,000 per month in Social Security, an income of \$36,480, would reduce your benefits to zero.) If you wait until your full retirement age, you will not have the reduction for early benefits, and the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000 completely eliminates the earnings test. (For more information, visit <http://www.ssa.gov>.)

## DROPPING YOUR MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS

Some ministers who are retiring think they should let their credentials lapse. God called you, and this decision is one that you should feel equally led by God to make. The Assemblies of God bylaws identify three classes of senior ministers (age 65 or older): senior active (3/4 time), senior semi-retired (1/2 time), and senior retired. Remember, when

you maintain your credentials, you can declare a housing allowance with MBA and reduce the tax on your retirement distributions.

## LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE

By the time you retire you have probably considered the possibility of assisted living. Perhaps one of your parents or even a spouse has declined to this point of poor health. Not only is this coverage expensive but it may also be unavailable to you if your health or family history appears less than desirable to the insurance company. It is also possible that you will never use this coverage. Most plans are written with a cost of living adjustment (COLA) that can raise the monthly premium by nearly 50 percent. While these plans offer generous-sounding lifetime maximums, keep in mind that you are far more likely to retire than to end up in a nursing home. Most people would be much better off investing the same amount as those premiums

in their retirement plan instead.

Another long-term care insurance policy you may wish to consider is a supplemental plan. These policies pay a daily amount directly to you for a period of time and COLA upgrades affect benefit levels every couple of years. This asset-protection approach means premiums are much less. Be careful to understand what is covered or is not covered by these policies. (For more information, visit <http://www.stewardchurchinsurance.com>.)

## CONCLUSION

This information should better equip you to anticipate life's curve balls and fulfill God's calling on your life. AG Financial is here to serve you. The focus of our ministry is to assist ministers in building a secure financial future and in enhancing their ministry. ☺

For more information, visit <http://www.agfinancial.org>, or call toll free 1-866-621-1787.

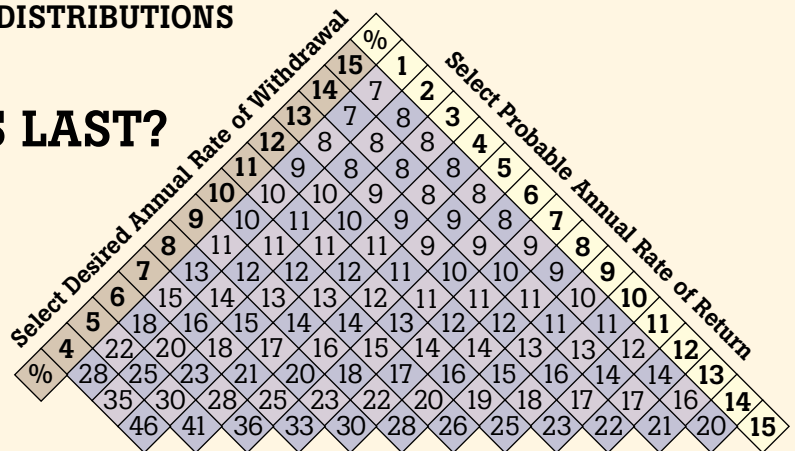
## PAYOUT GUIDELINE FOR PLANNING DISTRIBUTIONS

### HOW LONG WILL YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS LAST?

Please note the required minimum distributions (RMDs) mandated by the U.S. Government will cause these approximate percentages to be withdrawn from year end balances.

Age 70½	=	3.65%
Age 75	=	4.37%
Age 80	=	5.35%
Age 85	=	6.75%
Age 90	=	8.77%
Age 95	=	11.63%
Age 100	=	15.87%

You can take more, but not less than these percentages.



Approximate Number of Years Your Retirement Savings Will Last

## REMAINING YEARS / LIFE EXPECTANCY

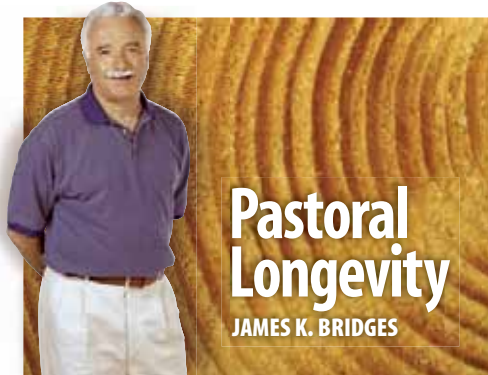
AGE	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
YOUR LIFE	25.2	21.0	17.0	13.4	10.2	7.6	5.5	4.1	2.9
UNIFORM JOINT LIFE*	30.9	26.2	27.4	22.9	18.7	14.8	11.4	8.6	6.3

\* For joint life expectancies above age 70, we have used the same table as the Federal government for determining RMDs. For those below age 70, we have the beneficiary to be the same age.





Check out  
*Enrichment* journal's  
Web site for these  
and other great  
ministry resources.



**George Barna states: "The average tenure of a pastor in Protestant churches has declined to just 4 years — even though studies consistently show that pastors experience their most productive and influential ministry in years 5 through 14 of their pastorate." Tremendous opportunity and ministry blessing await those who strive for the long-term pastorate. Read what this long-time Pentecostal leader says is necessary to establishing a long-term pastorate.**

### **Pastoral Transitions (When Asked To Leave)**

**JERRY NEWSWANDER**



**Making a change in pastoral ministry is challenging** for any pastor and his family, even when they have chosen to make that transition.

However, for the pastor who is released from his present ministry and must transition to a new place of ministry, the journey can be difficult. For the ministry family in transition this article offers helpful insights that can ease the pain of change.

### **Sabbatical Considerations for Pastors and District Leaders**

**H. ROBERT RHODEN**

**Sabbaticals provide an extended period of spiritual rest, study, and renewal** for ministers who give so much of themselves week in and week out, year after year. But how does a pastor or district develop an effective model for sabbaticals? Consider this time-tested model for ministry restoration and renewal.

### **The Classroom of Ministry Transition**

**LES WELK**

**Every year thousands of ministers come face-to-face with a ministry transition.** Properly facing and dealing with a transition can spell the difference between future success or failure. Reflect on these solid principles that will help you navigate through a pastoral transition.

### **Veering Off Course**

**RON IWASKO**

**Being a few degrees off at the start of a journey** doesn't seem like a huge problem. But the further we go into the journey, the greater the magnitude of our error. How is it, then, that churches, committed Christians, and hard-working dedicated church leaders veer off course? This essay discusses the subtle changes that can bring disaster to one's life and ministry and how to get one's life and ministry back on course.



### **How To Minister Effectively in Family, Pastoral, Program, and Corporate-Sized Churches**

**ROY M. OSWALD**

**Pastors may be set up for failure** when they move from effective ministry

in one size congregation and begin a new pastorate in a different-sized congregation. Research has discovered that churches that are growing or downsizing hold on to deeply engrained assumptions about what constitutes a dynamic church and what effective clergy do. The inflexibility of these expectations is an important cause of clergy malfunctioning. In this article, the author walks pastors through the steps needed to survive in a growing or a declining church.



## Looking Forward To Paying Off That Home Mortgage Early? Not So Fast!

RANDALL K. BARTON

**Many well-meaning financial planning experts counsel ministers**

to take extra cash flow each month and budget to make extra mortgage payments. While these planning concepts seem to make common sense (who wouldn't want to pay off their mortgage early?), when examined in comparison to increasing retirement contributions, this apparent good stewardship strategy may be an illusion for ministers that could erode future retirement benefits. Read this insightful article and learn how to make wise financial decisions concerning retirement.

## Importance of the First Senior Pastor

BEN F. KAUFMANN

**When a number of Christian leaders were asked to name the most significant event or person that shaped their ministry, many stated that the most significant person was the first senior pastor under whom they had worked as an associate pastor.**

Relationships, not events and resources, dominated the top three influences on those leaders. Here are important steps to learn how to be a relational leader.



## Be a Barnabas, Pursue a Paul, Train a Timothy

PAUL R. MARTIN

**"If every minister would seek to be a Barnabas, pursue a Paul, and train a Timothy, many ministers**

on the sidelines or in the grandstands could be active in ministry assignments," states author Paul Martin. "When younger ministers are mentored, they will be more effective in the work of the ministry. And those offering themselves in training will be further encouraged and safeguarded along the way."



## Prodigal in the Parsonage

JUDI BRADDY

**"Is there anything more devastating for a minister** who is setting out to win the world than to find that he is losing his own children?" asks Judi Braddy, author and minister's wife. "As ministers and the parents of an adult prodigal son, we understand firsthand the dilemma a pastor faces when he is caught between the church and his family, and the issues that must be resolved if he is to balance both without losing either."

Learn how to survive the emotional roller coaster ride that comes when your children turn away from the faith.

## Following The Long-Term Pastor/Youth Pastor

BY DON NORDIN

**Three factors determine the effectiveness of a minister who follows the long-term pastor:**

attitude of the successor, attitude of the predecessor, and attitude of the church. Learning to navigate through the minefields of these attitudes will determine the success of the minister who follows a long-term pastor.

## Widowed Too Young

BY RICHARD D. DOBBINS

**No matter how many years a person has been married,** when a beloved spouse dies, the first reaction is most likely to be, "Not now; not yet. There are so many things we still planned to do together."



The younger one is and the more suddenly this happens, the more difficult it is to get through the death

of a mate. This is especially true in a ministry couple. Here are some practical guidelines for working through the grieving process. ☺

Photos.com

## A Pastoral Counseling Approach for Those With Chronic Illness and Pain



*Chronic pain adds to the torment experienced by those with chronic illness.*

**O**f the countless needs brought to a pastor few are as complex and difficult to address as those of chronic illness and pain. Chronic illness and pain (CI/CP) have a tremendous impact on the quality of an individual's life. Just knowing the likelihood that they will live their entire lives (except for a healing miracle) having to cope with the ravages of disease or pain is an enormous burden to carry. Thus, the worldview of those with CI/CP, even the Spirit-filled believer, is vastly different from that of a *healthy* person. Those with CI/CP belong to a unique population that sets them apart from most other people.

The twin scourges of CI/CP exist in epidemic proportions in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and

Health Promotion, the number of individuals suffering from chronic illness ranges between 54 million (1 in 5 Americans) to 90 million (1 in 3 Americans). Chronic illness is defined as any physical, psychiatric, or cognitive disability that significantly interferes with daily living. Therefore, chronic illness includes: heart disease, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's disease, blindness, traumatic brain injury, birth defects, and a large number of mental illnesses.

According to the American Chronic Pain Association, an estimated 50 million Americans live with chronic pain. Chronic pain is defined as ongoing physical discomfort that is severe enough to significantly interfere with the normal activities of life. Chronic pain can include: back injury, rheumatoid arthritis, neuropathy, cancer, gastro-intestinal disorders, and migraine headaches. Two thirds of the 50 million Americans living with chronic pain have done so for more than 5 years. Since our perception of time is relative, imagine how long 5 years of constant pain must seem.

Many who suffer from CI/CP shy away from discussing their problems with anyone. Fear of not being understood, embarrassment, and feelings of failure are the most common reasons for not seeking help. However, a compassionate pastor who is willing to address the overwhelming problems faced by someone suffering from CI/CP, has a unique opportunity to minister hope to the hopeless.

Chronic pain adds to the torment experienced by those with chronic illness. Whether it is moderate or agonizing, ongoing pain can wear down the most faithful Christian. The following quote from one of my clients demonstrates the enormous toll taken by his chronic neuropathy. "Some days I don't think I can stand it anymore. Day after day the pain just wears me out. It's always there. It tears at me. Some days it's worse than others, but it's always there. At times, the pain is a dull throb like a toothache. I say to myself, *This isn't too bad. You*



**DOUG WIEGAND, Ph.D.**, is a licensed professional counselor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



can handle it. But at any moment, that dull ache can flare up without warning and a stab of pain, like a razor sharp knife, cuts through me. I try not to cry out, but sometimes I gasp in surprise and grab for my leg. Worse than the pain is seeing the look of sadness in my wife's face."<sup>1</sup>

Based on the statistics quoted above, the chances are good that you will be called on to care for an individual who suffers from CI/CP. This person's chronic illness may have severely limited his mobility. Perhaps chronic pain has taken away his ability to work. As you face the thorny problems of helping a church member with CI/CP, you will certainly need Holy Spirit wisdom and insight to be effective.

It is difficult for those in relatively good health to understand the unique life experiences of those with CI/CP. But there is a pattern of common attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors present in the chronically ill or pain-filled person. By understanding the common themes, the pastoral counselor will be better prepared to assist those with CI/CP.

The anguish of trying to endure unrelenting pain is damaging to a human being. I have divided the human personality into three fundamental dimensions that are negatively impacted by CI/CP.

### The Spiritual Dimension

The spiritual dimension contains the supernatural strivings and yearnings of the human soul. Those with CI/CP often have serious doubts about the nature or even the reality of God. It is vital, therefore, that early in the counseling process the pastor respectfully opens the door to discuss the counselee's spiritual beliefs and his relationship with Jesus. As counseling progresses, the pastor will have set the stage to minister salvation or to bolster the faith of a believer. Only by allowing Jesus to be our burden bearer can anyone find the strength to endure unending pain or suffering.

### Why?

A pastoral counselor will likely be asked to address the *why* questions. Specifically, "Why must I suffer this pain and illness?" There are many other *why* questions that are often asked: "Why am I not healed?" "Why does a

loving God allow pain and suffering?" These questions are among the most significant in all of Christianity. I cover these questions in detail in my book, *Struck Down But Not Destroyed!: A Christian Response to Chronic Illness and Pain*.

The following are three scriptural explanations for why CI/CP is present in the world:

First, we live in a world tainted by sin. The perfect, earthly paradise God created (the Garden of Eden) was lost. Paul explained that "sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men" (Romans 5:12). All people in the world, to one extent or another, face illness, pain, aging, and death because of Adam and Eve's original sin.

Second, having CI/CP is not an indication of God's punishment of individual sin. As stated in Paul's letter to the church in Rome, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). If CI/CP were punishment for individual sin, then every person would have equal opportunity to be struck down.

The Bible does describe circumstances in which a person's sin has brought about his illness. It is essential, however, that this possibility be considered only after much prayer and Holy Spirit confirmation. *Job comforters* can do great harm to the already alienated individual with CI/CP.

Third, God may allow us to experience suffering for our spiritual growth. According to the Psalmist, "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees" (Psalm 119:71). It is often only when we are struggling with a burden and have nowhere else to turn that we seek God in sincerity and faith.

When counseling those with CI/CP, it is important to emphasize the fact Jesus understands their pain and sympathizes with their suffering. He knew all manner of physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. The prophet Isaiah described Jesus as "a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering" (Isaiah 53:3). In spite of the feelings of alienation and loneliness the person with CI/CP experiences, there is comfort in the knowledge that Jesus "took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). Jesus is with the victim of CI/CP throughout his journey to ease his sorrows.



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*Many who suffer from CI/CP shy away from discussing their problems with anyone.*





## Pastoral **Dos and Don'ts** When Counseling People With Chronic Illness and Pain



### **Do:**

1. **Establish** a caring relationship.
2. **Listen.** Listen. Listen.
3. **Ask** questions about their pain and illness.
4. **Learn** about their illness.
5. **Urge** them to counsel with you or someone else.
6. **Trust** the Holy Spirit to guide you.
7. **Be alert** for any signs of depression or suicide.
8. **Pray** with them often.
9. **Be flexible** and patient with them.
10. **Be aware** of the needs of their spouse and children.



### **Don't:**

1. **Be afraid** of them.
2. **Offer** platitudes.
3. **Talk down** to them.
4. **Withdraw** out of frustration.
5. **Lose** your sense of humor.
6. **Assume** you know God's plan for their future.
7. **Pray** just for healing, but pray for strength to endure.
8. **Forget** that you can consult with other professionals.
9. **Forget** the isolation of those with CI/CP.
10. **Forget** that God is with you as you minister.

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*A pastoral counselor will likely be asked to address the why questions.*

### **Feelings of inadequacy/lowered self-esteem**

As a person with CI/CP tries to adjust to a life with tremendous limitations, it is typical that his self-esteem should suffer. We live in a society that prizes success and accomplishment. Our sense of value is often tied to our job or possessions. People who are confined to a wheelchair or use a guide dog no longer possess the same ability to perform or compete with the *healthy* person. Therefore, they are no longer part of the *group*.

It is essential that a pastoral counselor remind a person with CI/CP of the false value system that exists in the world. People need to be encouraged that their worth to God is unconditional and not performance based. Christians need to be empowered with the knowledge that our innate value is based on two facts. First, "God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). Second, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16). Each Christian is an essential and unique part of the body of Christ, regardless of his limitations. Illness or pain does not diminish the importance of the role we play in God's plan.

## **The Relational Dimension**

### **Withdrawal**

There is a strong tendency for those with CI/CP to withdraw from friends, neighbors, coworkers, church members, and family. They also withdraw from activities in which they were regularly involved, including church. Pastors need to be careful not to be offended or over-react to their absences. Although they isolate themselves as protection, this only worsens their feelings of alienation and loneliness.

A person's withdrawal often severely damages his relationships with his spouse. According to a recent National Health Interview Survey, the divorce rate for marriages with one partner who has CI/CP is more than 75 percent. Thus, the spouse is also a victim of CI/CP. Pastors counseling a married person with CI/CP need to strongly consider marriage *and* family counseling (depending on the age of children) in addition to individual sessions.

### **Hypersensitivity**

A person with CI/CP is hypersensitive to the slightest hint of disapproval or condescension. For example, few words will turn him away as quickly as when someone says, "I know exactly what you're going through." Even spoken by the most loving pastor, this statement cuts like a knife to the one with CI/CP. What is meant to be a word of comfort and empathy comes across as a glib remark. To the overly sensitive person struggling with CI/CP, it serves only to further alienate him from *normal* people. A spiritually mature pastoral counselor, however, can move in the compassion of Jesus. He can bridge the gap created by a thin-skinned individual. The pastor can demonstrate God's love and acceptance. The Psalmist David rejoiced in God's everlasting love for His children in these words: "For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies" (Psalm 57:10).

## **The Emotional Dimension**

### **Depression and anxiety**

In almost all cases of CI/CP, the sufferer's emotional life is negatively affected. As time passes, he is less able to handle stress. An estimated 25 percent of those with CI/CP meet the clinical criteria for chronic depression (dysthymia). Most people with clinical depression also suffer from some form of anxiety disorder. Together, they rob the person with CI/CP of the spiritual resources, emotional energy, and intellectual focus needed to combat their pain and illness.

People with chronic depression (dysthymia) go through life in slow motion. Their emotional reactions are blunted and a dark cloud of pessimism floats over their heads. Even the most basic activity seems beyond their ability to perform. Nothing brings them joy. They feel hopeless.

Now add anxiety symptoms to dysthymia. Anxiety causes people to feel nervous and ill at ease. They worry about everything. Their minds race from one negative thought to another. They might even experience an acute anxiety attack causing their heart rate to soar and their hands to tremble as adrenaline courses through their veins.

To combat depression and anxiety, a pastor must help those with CI/CP to realize that depression and anxiety are common reactions to their health crisis. The pastor must remind counselees that God is their ever-present strength and hope in times of discouragement. The Psalmist wrote, "Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens" (Psalm 68:19).

### Adjustment disorder

This category of symptoms refers to the confusion and inactivity that floods over those suffering with CI/CP. Feeling overwhelmed and uncertain

how to proceed, they freeze and do nothing. Sufferers become passive and unable to assist in their own recovery.

Typically, adjustment disorder hits during the initial occurrence of their disease or injury. This is when people must first face the limitations and changes with which they must live. It is important for a pastor to contact congregation members as soon as he learns of their debilitating disease or accident. At this stage, groundwork can be laid that will help speed the process of adjustment to their condition. When the adjustment disorder becomes a long-term lifestyle, it is harder to minister to them.

### Conclusion

It is clear that the problems surrounding CI/CP are many and complex. In spite of the difficulties, if the Holy Spirit has gifted you with the ability and compassion to counsel, I urge you to reach out to the suffering and often isolated person with CI/CP. 🌀

#### NOTE

1. Doug Wiegand, *Struck Down But Not Destroyed!: A Christian Response to Chronic Illness and Pain* (Rainbow's End Publishing, 1996).

*When counseling those with CI/CP, it is important to emphasize the fact Jesus understands their pain and sympathizes with their suffering.*



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*I cannot explain  
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## Wake Me Up for the Miracles

*"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels" (Proverbs 1:5, KJV).*

A minister and his wife came to National Institute of Marriage in Branson, Missouri, to attend one of our couples counseling intensives. As they sat on opposite ends of the couch, their body language spoke volumes. They appeared to be emotionally disconnected and in desperate need of a marriage miracle.

Neither of them had engaged in adultery or any other immoral behavior, but the relational distance between them was immense. The other therapist and I began to ask them questions. As they shared their story, I felt an enormous amount of compassion.

We worked with this couple during 4 days of intensive therapy. We were able to uncover what was driving their fears and behavior, and what hindered their being able to experience an intimate relationship again. Once we talked through the obstacles, they began to gain insight into their own heart as well as into each other's heart. It was amazing to see the transformation that took place over this 4-day period. Before they left they told us they felt like they were on their honeymoon. They could not wait to return home and bless their

children and congregation with their newly embraced love and commitment.

On the way home that night tears streamed down my cheeks as I praised the Lord. I had a profound sense that the enemy had been working overtime to knock this couple out of the race. But once again, God was victorious. I had witnessed God come through in a supernatural way.

I cannot explain how or when it will happen, but in almost every intensive we witness heart transformations that seem miraculous.

### Restoring Marriages Through God's Intervention

As an intensive therapist at NIM, I work with many couples each month. These couples come from across the country and from all walks of life, but they have several things in common. They are usually Christian couples who feel stuck, exhausted, and disappointed in their marriage. They often sign up for an intensive as a last-ditch effort before signing divorce papers. I have heard some couples on the first day of their intensive state that their divorce papers are at home, waiting to be signed if this intensive does not work.

Each week therapists at NIM witness seemingly hopeless marriages revive and become



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infused with hope for a far better future. It is common to walk away from the intensives in awe of what God has done.

The therapists at NIM are highly trained, but regardless of their experience and skill, each of us relies completely on God's intervention. We are keenly aware that all the training in the world will not provide miracles. But we are thankful to serve a God whose presence and power provides hope and healing for those who ask for it.

A few months ago during an intensive I watched a man's heart change. For years his heart had been hardened toward his wife, and he looked angry and hateful. There was a specific moment, however, when something that was said hit him, and his countenance changed. His face softened, and tears began to flow. He turned toward his wife and said, "I get it. I get it. Oh, I'm so sorry. Honey, I'm so sorry. I get it." She, too, began to cry, and they lovingly embraced and wept together.

The transformation was miraculous, and my heart felt full of wonder and amazement at what I had just witnessed. Suddenly, a thought came to me. This feeling I was experiencing was familiar — not just from previous intensives, but from my childhood.

My parents are Assemblies of God regional directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. When I was young, they were missionaries to Argentina. My dad planted many churches while we were there. Typically, he began the church plants with tent crusades. I remember going to the nightly services as a child; and, when I became tired, I would put my head on my mom's lap during the sermon and say, "Mom, make sure you wake me up for the miracles." After prayer for healing, people lined up along the platform to give testimonies about the miracles they had just experienced. I did not want to miss hearing the testimonies about the miracles that God had performed that night.

Witnessing God's supernatural ways was a common occurrence in my childhood, but it never became old or boring. Even now as an adult in the United States, though the setting is far different, the same God shows up in the counseling room to transform hearts and marriages. When God moves, I sometimes get a glimpse of what

it must have been like to watch the parting of the Red Sea. It is always inspiring, always amazing, and always a God thing.

I have a special place in my heart for ministers and their wives not only because my husband is an Assemblies of God minister, but also because I believe the enemy's attack against them is frequent and often underestimated. The enemy works overtime to steal, kill, and destroy their lives and effectiveness in ministry. One target area seems to be their marriage.

The two professions we see most in our intensives are doctors and pastors. People in these professions give much of themselves to a worthy cause. They work long hours. Their work is understandable and important, but it often takes a toll on their marriages.

Some pastors and their spouses who attend intensives have experienced infidelity in their marriages. Others have not, but are unhappy and emotionally disconnected. Some feel hopeless that anything could change; but often, if they are willing and available, their marriage does change.

Investing time, energy, and finances into your marriage is well worth it. There are many great books on marriage as well as many great counselors. Whether you feel your marriage is in a state of disrepair or simply in need of enrichment, investing in your marriage will benefit far more than just the two of you.

One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is a great marriage. A church that has a pastor with a healthy marriage is blessed because his relationship will speak louder than many of his sermons.

### Principles for Improving Marriages

Hope is available for every struggling marriage. Implementing some principles and techniques will often be enough to dramatically improve the quality of the marriage relationship. Below are five key elements that are taught at NIM, and are expounded on in the book, *The DNA of Relationships*, by NIM copresident Robert Paul and founder Gary Smalley. (See a review of *The DNA of Relationships for Couples* on page 148.)

#### Safety

If you or your spouse does not feel emotionally safe in your relationship, experiencing intimacy



*Investing time, energy, and finances into your marriage is well worth it.*





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*Do not wait  
for your spouse  
to change  
for you  
to be happy.*

will be virtually impossible. Trying to create intimacy when people do not feel safe is similar to trying to pry open a manhole cover while standing on it. When people feel safe, they naturally open up, and from that posture intimacy has a chance of developing. If your spouse calls you controlling or says she does not feel safe with you, put your energy into being kind, loving, compassionate, slow to anger, and interested in what your spouse is saying. Convey empathy and care on a regular basis, and your spouse may begin to open toward you sooner than you might think.

### **Personal responsibility**

When a couple is dissatisfied in their marriage relationship, they often try to change their spouse. Nothing could be more disempowering. Share with your spouse what you are feeling, but own everything you can. Whatever you do, do not wait for your spouse to change for you to be happy. Start changing the things you can change within you. Even if you are only 10 percent of the problem, you have control over that 10 percent. Often, if one person will change within the system, the system will change.

### **Self-care**

If you are starting to feel empty or needy, you are probably not taking adequate care of yourself mentally, emotionally, spiritually, or physically (or a combination of the above). You cannot expect to have an endless reservoir to give from if you are not taking care of yourself. You must focus on caring for yourself so you have something to give. Remember, the greatest command is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor *as yourself*. Self-care is different from selfishness. Selfishness only benefits you; self-care benefits everyone involved in your life. The purpose of self-care is to get filled up so you have something to give.

Self-care might mean taking your allotted days off, as well as vacation days. Mark time on your calendar for just you, whether it is to go to the health club, to have coffee with a friend you enjoy being with, or just to pray.

Also, learn to delegate responsibilities. Good managers know the importance of delegating. If you feel you are the only one who can do everything well, eventually you will suffer.

### **Care for your mate**

Get a Ph.D. in your spouse. Learn her love language and do the things you believe will be meaningful to her. Whether it is weekly date nights or weekend getaways, make every effort to have fun together. Pray together daily. George Barna's research shows that the divorce rate in the church is as high, if not higher, than the divorce rate outside the church. But National Association of Marriage Enrichment polled couples that daily prayed together and learned their divorce rate was less than 1 percent.

### **Become a team**

You and your spouse are on the same team. On any sports team it is impossible to have an outcome where one person on the team wins and the other loses. You either both win, or you both lose. If you frequently look for ways to win arguments with your spouse, most likely she will walk away feeling like she lost. The fact is you both lost. The goal is for a win/win in every interaction. Listen to one another with open hearts during times of disagreement. Agree to talk through disagreements until you find a solution that feels great to both of you.

There is little in life that will give you opportunities for personal growth like marriage. Within marriage you will experience sorrow and joy, agonizing turmoil and profound peace, feelings of defeat and feelings of triumph, overwhelming fear and overwhelming love. This endless list of experiences and emotions gives us opportunities to look inside our hearts and explore the wonder of our human existence. We choose how we will respond to every experience, and it is in this series of choices we discover ourselves in light of our Lord.

### **Conclusion**

If you have a great marriage, embrace it and continue to cherish the gift you have. If you are struggling in your marriage, there is hope for you. Read books on marriage and implement changes immediately. Find a couple that is willing to mentor you and your spouse. Meet with them for accountability and support. Seek good, reputable, Christian counseling and commit to the process. Rely on the Lord for insight, wisdom, and understanding as you continue the journey of marriage. I pray you will embrace the adventure. 🌿



*Businesses take extreme and expensive measures to ensure they continue operating in the event of a disaster.*



### Averting an IT Disaster

**In light of recent events, many stories and articles are circulating** about the need for disaster preparedness. Many of us are in areas prone to at least one form of natural disaster. What are the facts? How do we prepare?

Possibly the hardest question to answer — what will it cost?

Church computer systems have become essential tools. The first time a church's system is down will drive home the point. But what would happen in the event of a disaster? Businesses take extreme and expensive measures to ensure they continue operating in the event of a disaster — even to the extent of renting or building duplicate data centers in different parts of the country. While this is not practical for churches, you can take some best-practice measures.

#### Identifying Causes

In August 2001, the Federal Emergency Management Agency gathered experts to identify and discuss the greatest disaster threats to our nation. The top three were:

1. A terrorist attack in New York City.
2. A category 5 hurricane hitting on or about the New Orleans area.
3. A 7.0 or stronger earthquake on the San Andreas Fault in California.

Sadly, two of these three have occurred and, according to the experts, it is only a matter of time for the third.

While you may not be in one of those areas, consider your geographic location and the most

likely disasters that could occur. For example, the West Coast may face earthquakes, the East and Gulf Coasts are threatened with hurricanes, and some are in a flood plain. (FEMA has a database of potential natural disasters with an interactive map at <http://www.hazardmaps.gov/atlas.php>. Remember that, statistically, fires cause most disasters. So, do not overlook that cause.)

#### Making a Plan

Once you have identified your potential disasters, create a written plan. It should include:

- **A contact list** identifying multiple ways of reaching key people such as managers, employees, and vendors;
- **Detailed descriptions**, including location of IT equipment; and
- **A list of all current software** and its purpose.

Those on the contact list should be involved in preparedness planning because everyone who would play a role when disaster strikes will have valuable input. Cross training in the event one person is not available will provide better flexibility and help ensure the success of your plan.

#### Set Priorities

A sensible practice is to prioritize each operational and ministry area, setting its true requirements. This will answer the question, "How fast does it need to recover, and how much are we willing to spend to make that happen?" Consider assigning different values, or levels:



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- **Level 1** for highest priority — those systems that must be restored as fast as possible (or that we would never want to be unavailable),
- **Level 2** might be those systems that must be restored within 1 to 2 days, and
- **Level 3** might be those systems that can take a week or longer.

Many ministries can survive for a few days without computers, so restoring IT services may not be a Level 1 priority for everyone. Bringing back your essential services first will help restore a sense of normalcy. To do that, you will need plans with priorities.

## Safeguard Your Data

Full system backups with a copy kept offsite is smart planning. Data backups are essential to recover from any disaster. Computer hardware can be replaced, but data is irreplaceable. A backup is only as good as the data that can be restored from it, so make certain it is working as needed *before* it is needed by doing monthly testing.

Consider keeping a copy of your data in another part of the country. Geographical separation can make a big difference. If the ministry and the offsite backups are just a few miles apart, it may not be enough to survive a calamity. A smarter solution is to have copies of your most important data in an entirely different part of the country. Contact your IT vendor to see if it provides offsite backup services.

## Review Your Insurance

Assuming everything is covered no matter what may occur can leave you stranded without the funds necessary to replace damaged equipment. Contact your insurance carrier and thoroughly review what *is not* covered. It is too late to change the policy once a disaster occurs. Areas that are prone to flooding or earthquakes sometime require additional policies or riders. A part of the planning process is to assess the likelihood of risk, bear that part which is affordable, and insure the balance.

## Test Your Plan

Test your disaster survival plan at least annually. Each time you test it, throw in a different

wrinkle. For example, what if cell phones were out? Each time you test your plan, amend it with up-to-date lists and whatever you learned.

## Quick Tips From the Experts

1. **Your most important IT equipment should be on dedicated grounded electrical circuits.** Never let a server, for example, share an electrical circuit with air conditioners, refrigerators, photocopiers, and other high power machines.
2. **Use a good Uninterruptible Power Supply to keep critical IT equipment running** for short periods and allow for graceful shutdowns once their batteries are depleted. UPSs are also valuable under normal circumstances to provide clean, level electrical power. If your ministry has greater needs, a standby generator may be required.
3. **Maintain a current inventory of your computer and networking equipment** and the software titles. If it is all destroyed you will need to know what to replace.
4. **Make sure you have a reliable data backup.** Hardware can be replaced but your data is invaluable. Use industry standard devices and software. If you need to restore after a disaster, standard hardware and software are easier to find and acquire.
5. **Do a “test” restore to guarantee your backup reliability.** Remember to change what data your test restores each month.
6. Backups are great, but if they get destroyed in the same disaster, they are worthless. **Take at least one copy — better yet, an entire week of backups — home.** Rotate these so your offsite copies stay current.
7. Take your disaster survival plan to the next level and **store critical data in a remote location** — preferably a different geographical region of the country. Storing data in a completely different geographic region can make all the difference in surviving a disaster. Check with your IT vendor to see if it provides this service.

Possibly the most important factor that will see you through a disaster is not how well prepared you are — it is how well you react. Trust in God. Do not panic. Implement the plans you have made and, to the best of your ability, go about your business. ☺



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*Once you have identified your potential disasters, create a written plan.*



## Conventional, Complementary, and Alternative Approaches to Healing



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*Conventional medicine tends to focus more on curing diseases and less on maintaining health.*

**G**ood health is a precious gift from God. When disease or injury threatens our health, we quickly seek to have our health restored. In the world of medicine, there are several different approaches to healing: conventional medicine, complementary medicine, and alternative medicine. Pastors can benefit from a survey of the various approaches to healing and their potential spiritual implications as they seek to maintain their own health while they tend to the needs of members in their churches who need healing.

### Conventional Medicine: Strengths and Weaknesses

The dominant form of medicine practiced in the United States and other Western nations is called *conventional medicine*. Those who are licensed to practice conventional medicine are medical doctors (M.D. degrees), registered nurses, and other allied health professionals, such as physical therapists, dietitians, and

psychologists. Another name for conventional medicine is *allopathic medicine*, coined by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann in the late 18th century. The term *allopathy* is derived from the Greek *allo* meaning “other” and is based on the theory that symptoms should be treated by substances that suppress symptoms. Hahnemann then founded *homeopathy*, an alternative medicine system of therapy based on the theory that *like cures like*.

The focus on treating symptoms and accurately diagnosing their cause is one of conventional medicine’s greatest strengths. Diagnostic tests used in conventional medicine — X-rays, CT scans, EEGs, EKGs, and various blood tests — can reveal the presence of a disease before the patient experiences symptoms. These diagnostics tests can be lifesaving. Conventional medicine has also developed powerful weapons against infectious diseases, such as antibiotics and vaccines. Excellent tools for helping an accident victim recover also abound in conventional medicine — techniques for setting bones, preventing hemorrhages, and restoring a person’s physical appearance through plastic surgery.

Yet, the very reductionist, disease-oriented approach that makes conventional medicine so successful in treating pathogen-based illnesses, biochemical imbalances, and acute injuries can be a weakness in treating many chronic conditions such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, and Alzheimer’s disease. In general, conventional medicine focuses more on curing diseases and less on maintaining health.

The main tools of conventional medicine are drugs, surgery, and radiation. Conventional medicine tends to look at the individual part that is not functioning instead of the whole person. In contrast, alternative medicine focuses more on preventing diseases and maintaining health through lifestyle changes, such as diet, exercise, and the use of nutritional supplements.



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## Alternative Medicine: Capabilities and Cautions

Alternative medicine is an approach to healing used in place of conventional medicine. Complementary medicine, on the other hand, is used together with conventional medicine. For example, if a special diet is used to treat cancer in place of surgery recommended by a conventional doctor, the diet would serve as an alternative therapy. However, if a special diet were used to combat high cholesterol levels in a patient with heart disease, in addition to coronary artery bypass surgery, the diet would serve as a complementary therapy. Since the same therapy can serve as either complementary or alternative, the various therapies outside the domain of conventional medicine are often grouped together under the term CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) therapies.

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine of the National Institutes of Health classifies CAM therapies into five categories: alternative medical systems, mind-body interventions, biologically based therapies, manipulative and body-based methods, and energy therapies.

Alternative medical systems are complete systems of theory and practice that have developed apart from conventional medicine. *Homeopathic* medicine and *naturopathic* medicine are two such medical systems that have developed in Western cultures, while traditional Chinese medicine and *Ayurveda* are examples of medical systems developed in non-Western cultures. Both of these systems are based on Eastern religious beliefs.

The theory behind Chinese medicine is based on Taoist philosophy and yin-yang dualism. Yin represents the cold, slow, or passive principle, while yang represents the hot, excited, or active principle. Health results when the body has the forces of yin and yang in balance. Disease is due to an internal imbalance of yin and yang that leads to a blockage in the flow of vital energy (*qi* or *chi*) along pathways in the body known as *meridians*. Through the use of acupuncture,

herbal preparations, and massage, a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine attempts to restore the balance between yin and yang.

*Ayurveda* means “knowledge of life” in Sanskrit. Ayurvedic principles are meant to enable a person to take charge of his own life and healing. The theory behind *Ayurveda* is based on the *Vedas*, or Hindu scriptures. Like traditional Chinese medicine, *Ayurveda* recognizes basic energies. In the ayurvedic approach to healing, there are three basic energies that must be in balance: *Vata* (wind), *Pitta* (fire), and *Kapha* (clay or earth). Through the use of herbs, nutrition, cleansing, acupressure massage, and yoga, the practitioner of ayurvedic medicine attempts to restore the balance between the three energies in a person.

The strengths of these alternative medical systems is the integration of mind, body, and spirit that is often lacking in conventional medicine.

For the Christian, however, the link between these approaches to medicine and ancient Eastern religions is cause for caution. The theories of life energy behind these systems have no known scientific or biblical basis. Some medical doctors who reject the Taoist theories of acupuncture have developed physiological theories that may justify the limited use of acupuncture as a painkiller. In such cases, cause for spiritual concern is minimized.

The second category of CAM therapies is mind-body interventions, where a variety of techniques is used to enhance the mind’s capacity to affect the body. Some techniques in this category are now considered a part of conventional therapy, such as patient support groups. Other techniques are still considered alternative, including meditation, prayer, biofeedback, and therapies based on art, music, and dance. Research findings related to mind-body interactions include studies that show the importance of social interactions, healthy relationships, and church attendance in maintaining both mental and physical health. Such findings make excellent material for sermon illustrations. On the other hand,



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*Alternative medical systems are complete systems of theory and practice that have developed apart from conventional medicine.*

other therapies in this category derive from New Age religious thought, and caution must be observed.

The third category of CAM therapies is biologically based therapies. These therapies use substances found in nature, such as herbal products, vitamin and mineral supplements, and antioxidants derived from fruits and vegetables. Herbs are the oldest form of health care and are the basis of many drugs commonly used in conventional medicine.



*Good scientific research is key to discerning the difference between effective treatments and useless and potentially dangerous ones.*

In fact, about 25 percent of prescription drugs dispensed in the United States contain at least one active ingredient derived from plant material synthesized to mimic a natural plant compound. Thus, herbal medicine can be effective in treating various conditions. In addition, some herbs, just like the drugs used in conventional medicine, may cause side effects and toxicity in high doses.

Purity and dosage are important issues related to herbal medicine. Herbs can contain a complex mixture of active ingredients. Drugs derived from herbs are pure preparations of the main active component of a given herb. Thus, it is easier to establish the correct (both safe and effective) dose of a purified component from the herb than the correct dose of the herb. In addition, some components of an herb may be toxic. Purification allows the medicinal component to be purified away from any toxic components. On the other hand, the effectiveness of some herbs may be from a number of constituents, making the unpurified herb more effective than one or two components purified from the herb.

A number of cautions are to be observed for biologically based therapies. First, natural does not necessarily mean nontoxic. Some plant components, such as pyrrolizidine alkaloids, are carcinogenic. For example, the herb comfrey, whose leaves and underground parts are considered to be wound-healers by modern herbalists, derives this ability from

its content of allantoin, a compound that promotes cell proliferation. However, since comfrey also contains carcinogenic pyrrolizidine alkaloids, purified allantoin would be a safer choice than the herb itself.

A second caution is that herbs and supplements can interact with common drugs to cause serious side effects. For example, leafy green vegetables and broccoli, high in vitamin K, should not be consumed in large quantities while taking Coumadin, an anticoagulant (blood thinner). These vegetables could render the drug ineffective, resulting in blood clotting. For this reason, it is important to fully inform your doctor of any herbs or supplements that you are taking or any dietary changes you have made.

The fourth category of CAM therapies includes manipulative and body-based methods, such as chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation, and massage. These methods focus on maintaining and restoring health through aligning the body's musculoskeletal structure to improve the body's functions. Emphasis is placed on health rather than disease and on restoring the body's natural ability to heal itself. Problems can arise when body-based methods are used in an attempt to treat conditions beyond their proven capabilities. While chiropractic care can be helpful for musculoskeletal problems, be cautious about claims that spinal adjustments can treat diseased organs and heal infections. Furthermore, manipulation of the cervical spine (neck) in rare occasions can cause a stroke by tearing the arterial walls. For this reason, neck manipulation should not be done in elderly patients.

A spiritual concern regarding chiropractic therapies is the concept of *innate intelligence* espoused by chiropractic's founder, David Daniel Palmer (1845–1913). He described an *innate intelligence* within our bodies that was connected to the *universal intelligence* through our nervous system. These spiritual concepts are compatible with a pantheistic worldview rather than biblical truth. However, there are many Christian chiropractors practicing today who have removed themselves from the spiritual concepts of Palmer and think of the *innate intelligence* simply as bioelectrical energy flowing from the brain to the rest of the body through the nervous system.

The final category of CAM therapies is energy therapies, which involve the use of energy fields. They are of two types: biofield therapies and bioelectromagnetic-based therapies. While



the existence of biofields — energy fields surrounding and penetrating the human body — has not been scientifically proven, therapies such as *qi gong*, *Reiki*, and therapeutic touch purport to manipulate these fields to restore and maintain health.

*Qi gong* is based on the concept of vital energy from Chinese medicine and Taoist philosophy. *Reiki* was developed by Japanese Tendai Buddhist Mikao Usui who claimed that he gained knowledge of this therapy through a mystical revelation. The *ki* in *Reiki* is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word *qi*, the Taoist life force. A nurse and professor of nursing at New York University, Dolores Krieger, Ph.D., R.N., who is a theosophist, created therapeutic touch in the early 1970s. Christians would do well to avoid therapies with no foundation in either biblical or scientific truth.

Bioelectromagnetic-based therapies involve the unconventional use of electromagnetic fields to treat a range of musculoskeletal disorders. Included in this category are the shoe inserts, knee wraps, and other bandages meant to relieve soreness in joints and muscles from sports injuries. Two possible explanations for the effectiveness of magnetic therapy exist. The first theory postulates that the magnets stimulate nerve endings in the skin surface releasing the body's natural pain-relieving chemicals called *endorphins*. The second theory maintains that magnets promote healing by increasing blood flow through the attraction of ions (electrically charged molecules) present in the blood.

### **Complementary Medicine: The Best of Both Worlds?**

Perhaps an approach to healing that makes use of the strengths of both conventional medicine and alternative medicine would enable a person to experience the best of both medical worlds. The forms of alternative medicine with scientific backing could be used to maintain health and increase physical fitness, while conventional medicine could be used to accurately diagnose and eradicate disease. Certain cautions, however, should be observed.

First, an unconventional route to healing is not necessarily the more biblical or spiritual route. Good scientific research is key to discerning the difference between effective treatments and useless and potentially dangerous ones. Practitioners who assume an adversarial relationship with the medical establishment are often trying to avoid the accountability of subjecting their cures to sound

scientific and medical review. Unfortunately, some Christians who have a negative view of science as the domain of atheists can fall prey to approaches to healing that use spiritual language. However, we must be careful to discern biblical approaches to healing from other spiritual concepts.

Second, be wary of claims that appear too good to be true because such claims probably are not true. Miracle cures do not exist apart from genuine biblical miracles. Be suspicious if one product or approach is being touted as the treatment for a variety of diseases.

Finally, a system that explains bodily processes using theories outside the medical understanding of anatomy and physiology should be suspect. As Christians, we believe that truth is established through God's revealed Word and through careful observation of God's creation. Mystical theories that cannot be validated through research should not be trusted.

### **Implications for Pastoral Care**

The increasing interest in alternative medicine, which attempts to treat a patient's body, mind, and spirit, can be viewed as a measure of the spiritual hunger in our high-tech society. The desire within the medical community to integrate treatments for a patient's spiritual needs as well as physical needs is validating the importance of pastoral care in the hospital setting. These trends can be viewed as doors of opportunity for ministers of the gospel. The increased use of alternative therapies based on New Age philosophies and ancient religions means ministers must be prepared to educate their flocks on the spiritual implications of such belief systems in the same way ministers would provide teachings on the danger of cults. For example, the biblical model for healing outlined in James 5:14,15 must not be confused with the laying on of hands to balance vital energy.

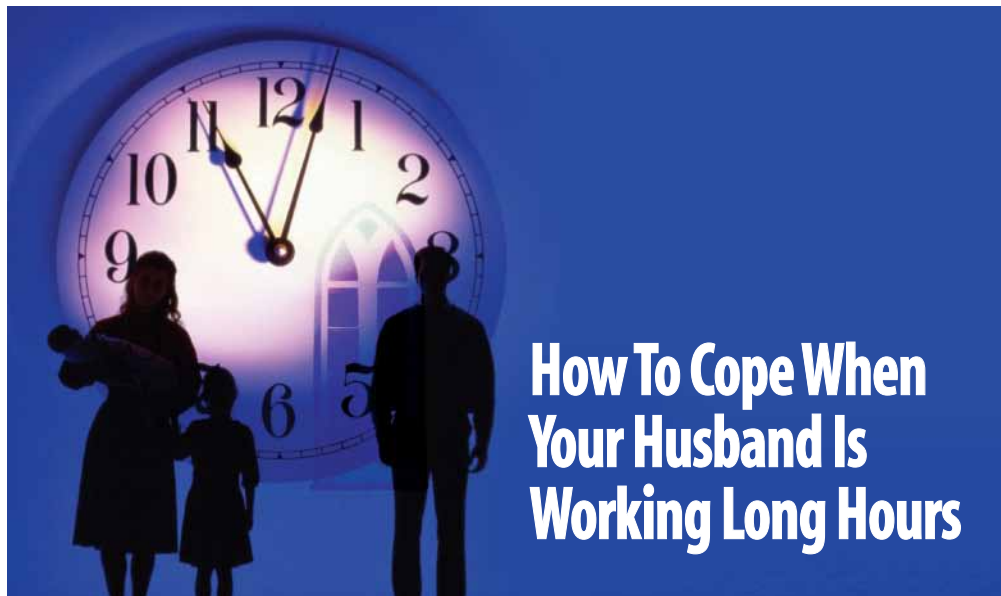
While a pastor is not in a position to pass scientific judgment on the effectiveness of a given alternative therapy, he is in a position to provide insight on the importance of using discernment when seeking medical care. In addition, a pastor is uniquely qualified to address the underlying spiritual needs of a parishioner who may be seeking spiritual answers and emotional comfort from questionable sources. My prayer for each pastor is that he would be effective in turning hearts to the Great Physician and protecting the flock from spiritual harm disguised as health care. 🌀

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**Q** Our church is going through a stressful time and my husband is working long hours. He has not been home for dinner in several months. I am taking care of things at home, but I miss him. How do I get him to see that I need more of his time and attention?

**A** This is a common dilemma for ministry wives, especially those with young children. The longing in your voice betrays the quiet desperation of a mom who feels lonely, disconnected from her husband, and perhaps a bit resentful of the ministry.

Many pastor's wives in your position either conceal a quiet frustration, or attempt to approach the subject with their husbands finding that it leads to conflict and more distress.

The first order of business is to try to talk about it. Talking about a tense subject is always preferable to avoiding it. The rules for good marital communication apply here as in any other conflict. If you have tried to talk about this with your husband, only to encounter anger and defensiveness, examine your approach. Defensiveness usually arises when a person feels attacked. Could your husband feel criticized or discounted? If you express your concerns in the form of criticism, you are more likely to get a negative response.

Communicating thoughts like, *You do not care about me* or *You are making wrong decisions about how you spend your time*, will usually lead to protests and self-protection. Instead, communicate respect, positive regard, and understanding as you express what you need: "I know you are under pressure right now, but I am missing you."

Make specific, concrete requests for time together: "Can we take a drive together this weekend?" Sometimes a wife has trouble asking for specific things. Believing her husband should *want* to spend time with her, she waits for the day when he will initiate togetherness. The rationale is: *He should miss me when we are apart and desire to spend more time with me. Since he does not express a desire to do so, he probably does not care anymore. Why should I initiate something if he does not want to spend time together?*

This thinking is discouraging and sad, and the reasoning is flawed. The conclusion is, *My husband does not want to spend time with me*. This assumption is most likely incorrect. Pastors are overwhelmed with the many responsibilities and needs represented in a congregation and have a sincere desire to serve people. Your husband may need to be reminded of his responsibility to his family. If he responds positively to your concrete suggestions for time

*Believing her husband should want to spend time with her, the wife waits for the day when he will initiate togetherness.*



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together, it is a compelling sign that he does want to spend time with you.

If you have felt disregarded, discuss with him ways that you could feel more important in his life. For example, ask him to call you during the day or to stop by for a few minutes between appointments. Bring a picnic lunch to the office or ride along with him on an errand or visitation. Volunteer in an area of ministry that places you at the church in closer proximity to him or drop by the office for a quick visit.

Another key to survival is expanding your interests when your husband is busy. If you find yourself in a position where your husband's homecoming is the only relief you have from the stress and routine of your life, then you will be frustrated by his absence. Consider pursuing your talents, interests, or even friendships. Perhaps there is an area of ministry to which you are called. Develop a passion in your life. Use creativity in dealing with financial and parenting concerns. Become less dependent

on his presence to make you happy.

In reality, your husband is not the only one in the ministry. This is a calling that affects all the areas of your life together. Approach the challenges of time and priorities as a team. Work together to solve difficulties that arise, rather than as two people competing against one another.

In my own life, as long as I believed my husband preferred to spend his time at the office more than with me, I saw the ministry as competition. When I realized this was not the case, and that my husband looked forward to coming home to me after a long, hard day, I was much less inclined to complain. The difference was that I began to see his heart; he wanted to be with me. I was the icing on his cake, and it made all the difference to me. 

If you have questions you would like Gabriele to answer, e-mail them to: [enrichmentjournal@ag.org](mailto:enrichmentjournal@ag.org). You can also mail your questions to: Q&A For Pastors' Wives, *Enrichment* journal, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

*Approach the challenges of time and priorities as a team rather than as two people competing against one another.*

## Sound Advice: Is Your Worship Too Loud?



*Avoiding liability is just one reason to address excessive noise. Another reason is the ethical responsibility to protect members of the congregation from potentially damaging levels of noise during worship services.*

**T**he music performed in some churches during worship services and special events can become loud and intense. When electric guitars and drums are involved, the noise can become deafening.

Consider a few examples:

- A church uses a small band consisting of electric guitars, drums, and five singers during worship services. Some church members complain that the music is too loud.
- A church conducts youth services one night each week. These services include a prolonged period of singing led by a worship band using electric guitars and drums. The noise is so loud that some of the youth experience ringing in their ears for hours after each service.
- A church uses a small band during worship services. One of the band members is the church's music minister. After being in the band for 4 years, the music minister begins to notice a permanent hearing loss. She wonders if this is a possible workers compensation claim.

Is it possible for musicians and church members to suffer permanent hearing loss during worship services in which loud music is performed? If so, at what level of intensity does permanent damage occur, and what steps can a church take to limit or eliminate the damage? Do churches face potential legal liability for failing to address this issue? These questions are all addressed in this article.

### Sacred Music

The Bible contains many references to music, and several of these refer to loud music.

Consider two examples.

- "And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away" (Ezra 3:11-13).
- "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn — shout for joy before the Lord, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity" (Psalm 98:4-9).

These and many other verses demonstrate that sacred music is an integral and energetic part of religious worship. But two problems arise when music is too loud: (1) The music may cause



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permanent hearing loss in members of the congregation; and (2) the church may be exposed to liability.

## Hearing Loss

Can music performed during worship services cause permanent hearing loss? The answer is yes. The question is what level of intensity, and duration, is required for hearing loss to occur. Fortunately, much research has been devoted to hearing loss, and much is known about the level and duration of noise that is associated with permanent hearing loss. To illustrate, the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders of the National Institutes of Health and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have done extensive research into occupational noise and have provided the following information:

- Hearing is a series of events in which the ear converts sound waves into electrical signals that are sent to the brain and interpreted as sound. The ear has three main parts: the outer, middle, and inner ear. Sound waves enter through the outer ear and reach the middle ear where they cause the eardrum to vibrate. The vibrations are transmitted through three tiny bones in the middle ear, called the ossicles. These three bones are named the malleus, incus, and stapes (also known as the hammer, anvil, and stirrup). The eardrum and ossicles amplify the vibrations and carry them to the inner ear. The stirrup transmits the amplified vibrations through the oval window and into the fluid that fills the inner ear. The vibrations move through fluid in the snail-shaped hearing part of the inner ear (cochlea) that contains the hair cells. The fluid in the cochlea moves the top portion of the hair cells, called the hair bundle, which initiates the changes that lead to the production of nerve impulses. These nerve impulses are carried to the brain, where they are interpreted as sound. Different sounds move the hair bundles in different ways, thus allowing the brain to distinguish one sound from another, such as vowels from consonants.
- Every day people experience sound in their

environment, but when an individual is exposed to harmful sounds (sounds that are too loud or loud sounds over a long time) sensitive structures of the inner ear can be damaged, causing noise-induced hearing loss.

- Sound radiates into space uniformly in all directions from its source. The sound pressure produced by the source is the same in every direction at equal distances from the point source. The sound pressure level decreases 6 dB (decibels) for each time the distance from the point source is doubled. This is a common way of expressing the “inverse-square law” in acoustics. This reduction in the intensity of sound over distance is called *sound attenuation*.

*Example.* If a source produces a sound pressure level of 90 dB at a distance of 1 meter, the sound pressure level at 2 meters is 84 dB, at 4 meters is 78 dB, and so forth.

*Example.* An unshielded drum set used by a church’s worship team emits 120 dB at its source. At 2 meters, the decibel level drops to 114. At 4 meters it drops to 108. The front row of the church is 4 meters away, so persons sitting in this row would experience a decibel level of 108 dB. At 8 meters the noise level of the drums drops to 102 dB. At 16 meters it drops to 96 dB. The last row of the church is 16 meters from the drums, and so persons sitting in this row experience a noise level of 96 decibels from the drum set alone, not including amplified voices or guitars.

- Of the 28 million Americans who have some degree of hearing loss, about one-third can attribute their hearing loss, at least in part, to noise. Nearly 80 percent of those affected have irreversible and permanent hearing damage. In addition, some 6 million people also suffer from tinnitus (ringing in the ears) to the extent of requiring medical attention.
- 15 of every 1,000 persons under age 18 have some type of hearing impairment.

## Key Point

When noise is too loud, or music is played too loudly, it begins to kill the nerve endings in



*The music performed in some churches during worship services and special events can become loud and intense.*





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*Church leaders should recognize that excessive noise might expose a church to potential liability.*

the inner ear. This can cause permanent and irreversible damage to our hearing (one in 10 Americans has a hearing loss that affects his ability to understand normal speech). As the exposure time to loud noise or music increases, more and more nerve endings are destroyed. As the number of nerve endings decreases, so does a person's hearing. To quantify this, continued exposure to noise above 85 decibels [dB] (about the level of city traffic), over time, will cause damage to hearing. Personal stereos with headphones have been measured up to 112 dB, with rock concerts between 110 and 120 dB. Music levels of certain orchestral instruments can reach in excess of 126 dB. Some car stereos can blast at levels above 140 dB. Studies show that 37 percent of rock musicians and 52 percent of classical musicians have a measurable hearing loss. There is no way to restore life to dead nerve endings, so the damage is permanent.

### How Loud is Too Loud?

Permanent hearing loss is a function of both loudness and duration. Louder noises affect hearing over shorter periods of time. The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists makes the following recommendations for how long a worker can be exposed to a given level of noise without hearing protection. The following noise levels are given in decibels and multiplied by the "A weighting" scale used by the American National Standards Institute to determine the time of unprotected ear exposure before hearing is affected:

American National Standards Institute	
<b>NOISE STANDARDS</b>	85 dB(A) ... 8 hours
	88 dB(A) ... 4 hours
	91 dB(A) ... 2 hours
	94 dB(A) ... 1 hour
	97 dB(A) ... 30 minutes
	100 dB(A) ... 15 minutes
	103 dB(A) ... 7.5 minutes
	106 dB(A) ... 3.75 minutes

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has developed similar standards.

### Legal Liability: Court Cases

A few courts have addressed the question of liability for hearing impairment suffered by persons who are exposed to loud music. In most cases, the victim's lawsuit is dismissed on the ground that he *assumed the risk* by voluntarily remaining in the presence of loud noise. But a few courts have suggested that

liability may arise if music is so loud that it causes permanent hearing loss. Also, note that minors are a special case. Some courts have ruled that the assumption of risk defense is narrower when applied to minors. And, recent surveys reveal that most adolescents do not see loud music as a problem.

### Workers Compensation

All states have enacted workers compensation laws to provide benefits to employees who are injured or become ill in the course of their employment. Benefits generally are financed through insurance premiums paid by employers. Churches are subject to workers compensation laws in most states. Some courts have addressed the issue of an employee's eligibility for workers compensation benefits based on hearing loss caused by excessive noise at work.

### Reducing the Harmful Effects of Excessive Noise

Many churches continue to expose members and employees to excessive noise that exceeds permissible decibel levels. Church leaders should recognize that excessive noise might expose a church to potential liability. But avoiding liability is just one reason to address excessive noise. Another reason is the ethical responsibility to protect members of the congregation from potentially damaging levels of noise during worship services. This is especially true of children and adolescents who are more susceptible to hearing loss than adults. Once church leaders understand that the noise level in worship services may be causing permanent hearing loss, many will want to do something about it apart from any consideration of legal liability.

Simple and effective ways are available for churches to address the problem of excessive noise during worship services. Here are some of them, adapted from recommendations from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and OSHA:

### Noise Measurement

Obtain an audiometer and measure noise levels during worship services at various places in the sanctuary. This can be done during rehearsals, services, or musical performances. Audiometers will demonstrate if noise levels are excessive. Monitoring sound levels with an audiometer should be continuous. Audiometers are inexpensive. Accurate models are available from electronics stores or on the Internet for less than \$50.

### Engineering and administrative controls

OSHA regulations specify several engineering and administrative controls that can effectively manage the risk of loud noise. These include minimizing the sources of noise; preventing the propagation, amplification, and reverberation of noise; protecting persons from excessive noise; acoustical enclosures; component replacement; and exposure limitation.

### Personal protective equipment

If administrative or engineering controls do not lower noise exposure to acceptable levels, or until such time as they are implemented, hearing protection devices are the only way to prevent hazardous levels of noise from damaging the ear. Hearing protectors should reduce noise exposure to within the acceptable limits. Manufacturers of hearing protection devices must display the device's noise reduction rating (NRR) on the product packaging. Common forms of hearing protection include single-use earplugs made of foam or rubber, molded earplugs, and earmuffs. Earplugs can be purchased in bulk at nominal cost from many vendors. Check the Internet for several options. It is important to understand that

the effectiveness of hearing protection devices will depend on proper use. Earplugs may fall well below their NRR rating if improperly inserted.

Churches that cannot reduce sound levels to noninjurious levels should consider the following actions. First, periodically inform the congregation in the weekly bulletin or newsletter that sound levels may reach injurious levels during worship services that could cause permanent hearing loss. Second, periodically inform members (and musicians) that earplugs will be available at specified distribution points, such as an information booth, usher station, or from any usher. These procedures not only will inform and protect members and musicians against permanent hearing loss, but they also will reduce the church's potential liability for cases of hearing loss caused by excessive noise levels during worship services.

### Hearing Tests

Consider offering annual hearing tests to musicians, employees, and others who may be exposed to excessive noise during church services or other functions. 🎧

*There are simple and effective ways for churches to address the problem of excessive noise during worship services.*

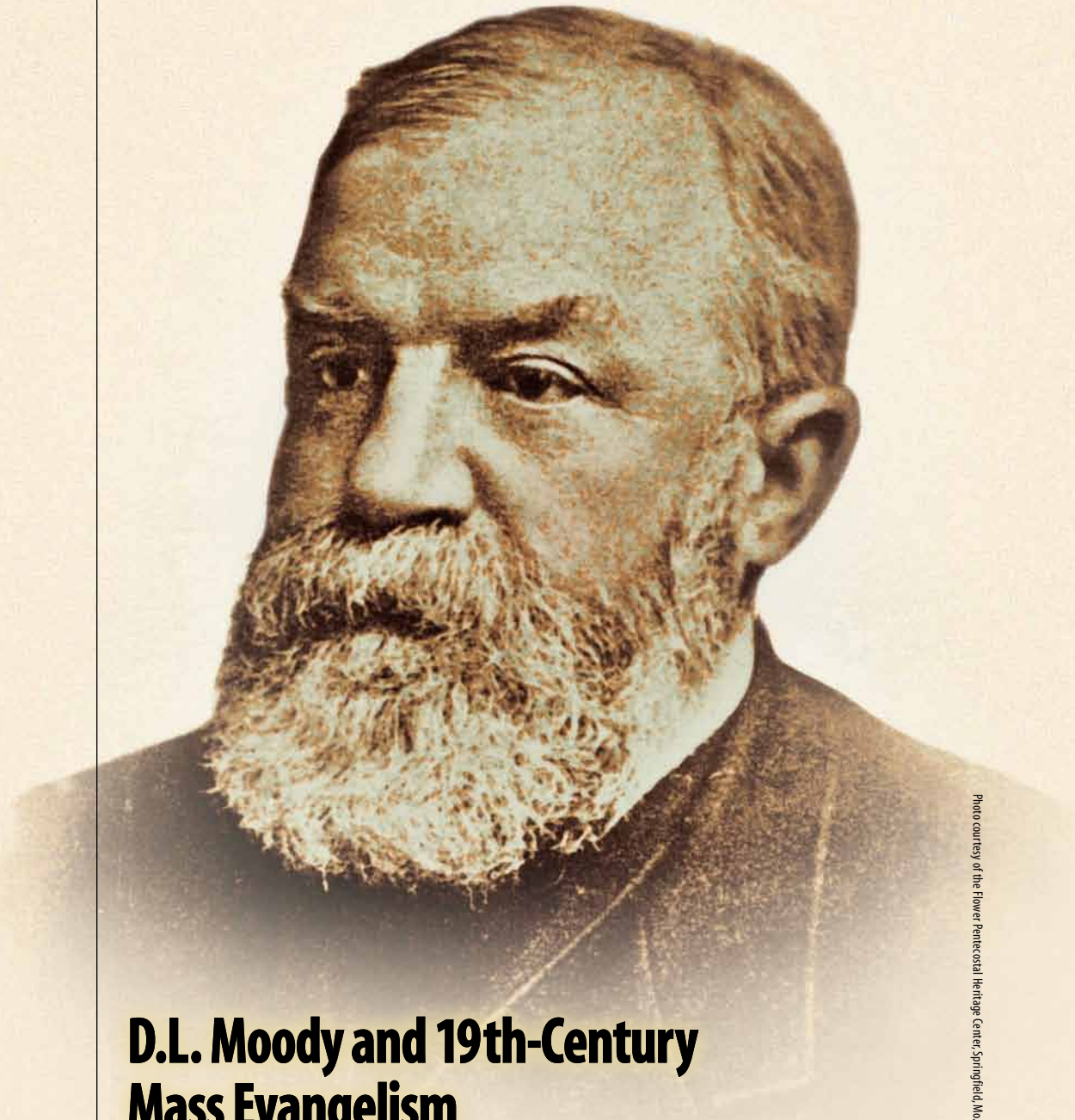


Photo courtesy of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

## D.L. Moody and 19th-Century Mass Evangelism

*So great was the power that attended his work that some called it a “third Great Awakening.”*

**I**n 1871, Sarah Cooke and Mrs. Hawxhurst attended the church where 34-year-old D.L. Moody was pastor. Despite his earnestness and sincerity, these women were convinced that he lacked something important — spiritual power. So, they sat in the front row and prayed.

They shared their convictions with Moody and began praying with him for spiritual power. Moody’s longing for God’s power grew. One

day he “rolled on the floor in the midst of many tears and groans and cried to God to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire.”<sup>1</sup>

While Moody was in New York on business, the Holy Spirit’s power fell. Here is how Moody described it. “One day, in the city of New York — oh, what a day! — I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of



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which he never spoke for 14 years. I can only say that God revealed himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand."<sup>2</sup> Moody was sure that if God did not lift His hand, he would die.

A few months later, in 1873, he planned a preaching trip to the British Isles. With him came his newfound friend and song leader, Ira Sankey. Moody began to preach; and something had changed. "The sermons were not different," he noted. "I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience [New York] if you should give me all the world — it would be as the small dust of the balance."

Thus began D.L. Moody's Spirit-empowered stage of ministry. Before his trip to England, he was little known. From England, news rapidly spread of the supernatural power that attended his ministry. When he returned to America, he was an international celebrity.

So great was the power that attended his work that some called it a "third Great Awakening." For the next quarter century he traversed the English-speaking world. He preached to an estimated 100 million people, established colleges and schools, and left his imprint on 19th-century Evangelicalism. His was a remarkable life. "Without higher education, he founded three schools. Without theological training, he reshaped Victorian Christianity. Without radio or television, he reached 100 million people."<sup>3</sup>

## The Times

"The history of the world," wrote Thomas Carlyle, "is but the biography of great men."<sup>4</sup> In this sense, 19th-century Christian history cannot be understood without a close look at D.L. Moody; and, we cannot appreciate Moody without an understanding of the times in which he lived.

Moody was born into an agricultural world that had changed little for 1,000 years. By contrast, he lived during a period of turbulent change. Cities swelled as the numbers engaged in agriculture rapidly declined. By his death

in 1899, the United States had become an industrialized nation. His generation witnessed the inception of the telegraph, the railroad, the use of steam-powered ocean-going vessels, and the discovery of germs and bacteria.

It was also a time of epochal theological change. Methodist Arminianism conquered the Calvinist "orthodoxy" of America's New England fathers. The later decades of Moody's life saw the rise of pre-Millennialism, the increasing popularity of Keswick higher-life theories of sanctification, renewed interest in the Holy Spirit, and the beginning of the Holiness Movement.


Moody's personality fit into this world of turbulent change. In some ways, he was a poster boy for 19th-century freewheeling capitalist America. Successful in business, "Moody was a Horatio Alger figure," notes George Marsden. "The boy born in modest circumstances, who through initiative and imagination, rose to fame and success. In this sense, he was a man of his era."<sup>5</sup>

## Biography

Moody was born in 1837 in Northfield, Massachusetts. At age 4, his father died. His poverty-stricken mother raised him and seven siblings with the necessary moral timbre for God's later call on his life. Growing up in a sleepy Massachusetts village, he obtained little more than a grade school education. His mother baptized him into the Unitarian church.

In 1854, at age 17, Moody left home for Boston, where he took a job as a shoe salesman. He was outgoing, confident, hard working, and optimistic. Through the influence of a Sunday School teacher from a Boston Congregational Church he placed his faith in Christ. Ironically, when he applied for church membership, the elders turned him down. His Unitarian background had not equipped him with adequate biblical knowledge. A year later the elders accepted his membership.

Chicago was a bustling city of 80,000 on the Western frontier — a dynamic center of business opportunity. In 1856, Moody moved there to pursue his fame and fortune. He was 19. Determined to become wealthy, he became



*Moody was born into a world that was rapidly becoming urbanized.*





Photo courtesy of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, Mo.

*Moody approached his rallies with the efficient organizational skills of the businessman he was.*

an instant success. By age 23 he had amassed \$8,000 (\$800,000 in today's currency).<sup>6</sup> He was earning the equivalent of \$500,000 per year. While in Chicago, he involved himself in Sunday School work and joined the local YMCA — an organization that had influenced him in Boston.

In 1860, Moody gave up his business ambitions and became a full-time children's evangelist for the YMCA. Although he was extremely energetic, Moody's ministerial skills needed work. In his early years "he was anything but a fluent speaker," notes D.O. Fuller. "After a midweek service at which he had tried to say a few words, someone advised him that he would serve God most effectively by keeping still."<sup>7</sup>

Moody started a Sunday School to reach poor children from the slums of North Chicago. His biographer notes that he "pursued this assignment with a zeal and determination which was almost frightening in its single-mindedness."<sup>8</sup> His work quickly grew to 800 weekly attendees. As the teens grew into adults, Moody formed a church to meet their spiritual needs and the needs of their parents. This was his principal ministry during the 1860s.

In 1862, Moody married 19-year-old Emma Revell. He was rough, without formal education, and lacking social graces. Emma, however, was cultured and refined. Under her influence he quickly acquired the social graces that would be so important in his later ministry. In addition, she handled all of his correspondence, the family finances, and raised their three children. She was "the backbone of Moody's success."<sup>9</sup>

After his 1873 "baptism in the Holy Spirit," for that is what he always called it, his ministry took a dramatic turn. When the power first appeared, Moody was bewildered. He had never experienced it, and did not know what to do. Here is an eyewitness account: "A large chapel was filled to hear Moody; a deep impression was made. I have just come from the evening service, where every aisle and standing place, the vestries and lobbies, even the pulpit stairs, were crowded nearly half an hour before the evening service commenced. The Holy Spirit worked mightily, sinners in all positions in life sought the Lord earnestly, and Christian brothers and sisters of the Church of England, Friends, and of every denomination, were constrained without invitation to speak and pray with them."<sup>10</sup> The British tour ended with 4 months in London. Some have estimated that he spoke

to 2 1/2 million people while there.

"When Moody and Sankey returned home after this tour, which had lasted from 1873 to 1875, they were virtually national heroes," notes George Marsden.<sup>11</sup> Invitations to hold crusades came from Brooklyn, Philadelphia, New York, and other main North American population centers. For the remainder of his life, he traveled extensively, (some estimate one million miles), and preached revival sermons to overflow crowds.

Careful preparation, the cooperation of local churches, and effective, advance publicity characterized Moody's ministry. In this respect, he forged the template that would later be used by 20th-century mass evangelists such as Billy Graham and others.

But Moody did more than preach. In the late 1870s, his evangelistic powers began to subside. Seeking to prepare full-time evangelists and lay workers, he turned to Christian education. In 1879, he founded a school for girls in Northfield, Massachusetts. A school for boys, Mount Hermon, followed in 1881. In 1886, he began a Chicago Bible school to train lay ministers. After his death, it was renamed The Moody Bible Institute.

He also entered the publishing business. In the 1880s, he hired his brother-in-law, Fleming Revell, to publish some of his books. The success of Moody's writings made his brother-in-law's publishing business a success. Revell Publishing became a model for later Christian publishing enterprises.

In late 1899, while campaigning in Kansas City, Moody became ill. He died of heart disease in December, a few weeks before the turn of the century. Throughout the country, the church mourned his passing.

### **Uniqueness of Moody**

Compared with other evangelists, Moody was unique. With the equivalent of a grade school education, he preached to millions. His lack of education, however, hindered him. Most of his life he struggled to spell properly, use correct punctuation, and speak with proper grammar.

An old saying goes: "There are no great men who are not great readers." Moody might have been an exception. Action, not reading theology or spending time in contemplation, was the hallmark of his life. At age 62, a few weeks before his death, he was still preaching up to six times a day. Although he read the Bible diligently, he read little theology or

church history other than the writings of his friend, C.H. Spurgeon. Pragmatism, not the life of the mind, engaged his interest.

Second, he was never ordained. He was the consummate businessman-evangelist. All of his great evangelist predecessors — Whitefield, Edwards, and Finney — were ordained ministers, but Moody broke the mold. Technically, he was a lay preacher, and he insisted that people call him, “Mr. Moody.”

Third, he was the first mass evangelist. Prior to George Whitefield in the 18th century, local pastors evangelized their congregations. Itinerant evangelists were unknown. The ministries of Asahel Nettleton (1783–1844) and Charles Finney (1792–1875) followed in Whitefield’s steps, but neither conducted mass rallies like Moody.

Moody approached his rallies with the efficient organizational skills of the businessman he was. When invited to a city, he required unity among Protestant leaders, prearranged financial backing, door-to-door canvassing of the city, and sometimes required the erection of suitable buildings before he would agree to come. His team organized everything in advance. Nothing was left to chance. In his later years, the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit had all but departed.

Fourth, whereas most 19th-century evangelists belonged to a denomination, Moody never joined one. He was not against them. Instead, he used his neutral status to build bridges between himself and disparate Christian organizations. His ministry promoted ecumenism among those he served.

## His Legacy

As with many great men, Moody has affected the church profoundly.

First, his life changed the public perception of an evangelist. His example encouraged the separation of theology and evangelism in the public mind. He said “while what one believes is important, in whom one believes is of ultimate importance.”<sup>12</sup> Such statements leave the impression that theology and experiencing Christ can be separated or are different subjects. His life and ministry promoted the idea that critical thinking is not important to the work of evangelism.

Like many men, Moody did have a theology, but he kept it simple. He summarized it using the three Rs: Ruined by sin, Redeemed by the blood, and Regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Moody also popularized Bible schools. In

contrast to seminaries, Bible schools de-emphasize church history, the formal study of theology, and the study of the original languages. The result is an emphasis on “me and my Bible.”

Moody’s ministry also introduced a new sentimentality into Christian work. He often preached for an emotional response. His message was simple, sincere, and straightforward. Down-home, simple exhortation, littered with personal anecdotes characterized his preaching. This style was in direct contrast to the older evangelism that appealed to human reason. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit converted thousands through his ministry.

Moody’s ministry made lasting contributions to the church and society. He encouraged and motivated lay involvement in evangelism, church unity, and interdenominational ministry.

Moody was an average speaker who got above average results because God’s power accompanied him. The result was many people trusted in Christ, not D.L. Moody. His ministry constantly reminded men of their need for the Holy Spirit’s power.

Like most Christian workers, Moody’s ministry impacted the church in many unseen ways. Moody deeply influenced F.B. Meyer. Meyer, with his new evangelistic fervor, influenced J. Wilbur Chapman. Chapman helped the ministry of Billy Sunday, who had a profound impact on Mordakai Ham. Ham, holding a revival in North Carolina, led Billy Graham to Christ. God moves in mysterious ways, and the ministry of D.L. Moody constantly keeps this truth before us.

Truly, history is His story. 🌀

## NOTES

1. Vinita Hampton and C.J. Wheeler, “The Gallery,” *Christian History Magazine* 9, no. 25, (1990):13.
2. William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, (Albany, Ore.: Book for the Ages, Ages Software, 1997), 127.
3. See front cover, *Christian History Magazine* 9, no. 25.
4. J.D. Douglas, P.W. Comfort, D. Mitchell, *Who’s Who in Christian History*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1997; republished in a digital format by Libronix Digital Library System).
5. Ibid.
6. James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837–99*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 61, 88. A workingman’s annual wage in 1860 was \$350. Moody had accumulated \$7,000 or 20 years’ wages. Today’s annual wage is about \$40,000. Twenty times this figure is \$800,000.
7. David Otis Fuller, *Valiant for the Truth*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 413.
8. Findlay, 77.
9. Hampton and Wheeler, “The Gallery,” 12.
10. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 138.
11. Douglas, Comfort, Mitchell, *Who’s Who in Christian History*.
12. Stanley Grundy, “The Three R’s of Moody’s Theology,” *Christian History Magazine* 9, no. 25, (1990):19



*Moody was an average speaker who got above average results because God's power accompanied him.*

*Many students and professors have never heard a reasonable explanation for faith's foundation or its application to life, current events, or history.*



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## Christ in the Classroom

**H**ave you ever heard a biblical perspective in a secular university class? Do any of your students' professors discuss biblical truth in positive ways or invite guest speakers whose presentations might?

Such discussions, though rare, are not without precedent. Unfortunately, some professors can be sharply critical of Christian faith. I remember several classmates whose skepticism found its birth and/or nourishment in academia. Perhaps you have friends, family members, or disciples whose faith has faltered during student years.

An inquisitive mind can be healthy. Believers

have nothing to fear from the truth. But many students and professors have never heard a reasonable explanation for faith's foundation or its application to life, current events, or history. They may not know that believing in Jesus means not shelving one's brains but rather opening one's eyes to reality. Trapped in professional pursuits, pride, pain, or worse, they have never encountered a knowledgeable Christian who treats them with respect and civility.

I once heard radio commentator Paul Harvey quote a United States congressperson, who noted,



**RUSTY WRIGHT** is an award-winning author, syndicated columnist, and university lecturer with Probe.org. He has spoken to secular audiences on six continents.



"If we educate without religion, we graduate clever devils." The following story might encourage you to help bring biblical perspectives into the education of the students you try to reach.

## A Speaker Team

During campus ministry in Atlanta, friends and I developed a speaker team to present credible lectures as invited guests in secular university classrooms. Speakers included several pastors, a real estate agent, a dentist, a university professor, an engineer, an airline pilot, and a professional writer. We trained them in the subtleties of presenting biblical perspectives in secular classrooms.

Our topic list included more than 60 lectures for various disciplines. Speakers could address "Atheism: A Realistic Option?" or "A Biblical View of Human Nature" in a philosophy class. "A Christian Perspective on Racism" or "A Biblical Therapy for Anxiety" might do well in a psychology or sociology course. "Was Jesus God?" could fit in either religion or history classes. "Miracles and Science" and "Prophecy and Archaeology" were available for those studying science and mathematics. "Business and Ethics" and "Personal Management and Leadership" were designed for business students.

One presenter had a unique qualification: He had spent 14 years in state and federal penitentiaries for bank robbery. Although I would have loved hearing him lecture on "A Christian View of Finance," his topic was "A Biblical View of Criminal Rehabilitation."

During one year, the team spoke to 3,000 students in 150 classes on six campuses. Various campus ministries contacted interested students afterward to answer questions, seek to lead students to Christ, and encourage discipleship.

Morris Brown College, an historically African-American institution, saw a memorable outreach. The campus chaplain made our lecture series part of their annual Religious Emphasis Week. We spoke in 85 classes over 3 days, needing extra speakers and combined classes to meet the demand.

I will always remember Dr. Bird (not his real name), chair of a social science department, as a

warm, kindly gentleman. At our first encounter he politely suggested I return in a few weeks and he would have some classes lined up.

When I returned, he looked uncomfortable. "Oh, Mr. Wright," he said, "I don't want to lie to you. I haven't contacted any of our professors about the lecture series. How's it been going in the other departments?"

"Well," I replied, "today is the first day I've been signing up specific classes. I've talked with professors in three other departments and no one has turned me down."

"My goodness," exclaimed Dr. Bird, "we've got to do something in this department. Follow me."

He led me down a corridor of offices, introducing me to faculty and encouraging them to discuss the program with me. These professors seemed open to scheduling lectures their department head recommended.

## A Professor's Affirmation

Dr. Bird agreed to combine his own class with another class I would be addressing during the lecture series. At the appointed day and hour, Dr. Bird forgot. I hoped the other professor might remind Dr. Bird and his students, but he seemed reluctant, so I did the honors.

"Excuse me, Dr. Bird," I ventured politely when I found him addressing his class. "Today is the day you were going to bring your students to hear me speak."

"Oh, that's right, Mr. Wright. So sorry. We'll be right up."

He marched them up the stairs, then sat in the back and dozed as I spoke.

Dr. Bird awoke during a discussion about good works and earning eternal life. I tried to clarify grace and God's free gift by explaining that works were intended to be a result of faith, not a precursor to it. One young woman insisted that works were a prerequisite for eternal life. Dr. Bird looked at her, then at me, then back at her and the class. Finally he raised his hand. "Mr. Wright, may I have a brief word?" he asked. "I don't want to steal your thunder, but I want to make one thing perfectly clear. No amount of works will save a person. A person is



*Classroom outreach may seem daunting, but God can open doors and hearts.*





*You can perform a valuable service to your university by presenting reasonable, credible positions listeners might not otherwise have considered.*

saved by grace, through faith, not works, lest any man should boast." During his short speech, his students clearly heard his Christian beliefs and their ramifications.

Morris Brown had 1,500 students. The audience attending the lecture series totaled 1,400. Some heard lectures in several classes. Jesus became an issue on campus that week. Exciting avenues into academia had opened across Atlanta. Some professors enjoyed our speakers so much that on their own initiative they scheduled them for future classes. The Holy Spirit helped the gospel to spread.

### Lessons for Secular University Outreach

What lessons or applications might this story hold for your secular campus ministry? Consider a few.

#### Trust God to Open Doors

"The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Proverbs 21:1, NASB).<sup>1</sup> Classroom outreach may seem daunting, but God can open doors and hearts. On one Alabama campus, a professor advised us somewhat sarcastically to talk to one of his colleagues about our lecture series because "He eats Christians for lunch." The colleague, when approached, received us warmly and scheduled a speaker. You never know how God will work.

#### Seek to minister to the total university

Most students spend significant time in the classroom. Many commuter students arrive in the parking lot at 7:45 a.m., jog to their first class, attend several classes, and then leave for work. Meet these students in the parking lot, jog with them to their morning class, and present Christ as you go. Or share Christ with them *in* their class.

#### Pray

Expect spiritual battles in classroom outreach. Many professors are open to a Christian classroom lecture series. On some campuses, 50 percent of faculty we approached expressed their willingness to schedule a Christian speaker if the time and topic were right. Others, however, were not as open. Occasionally, deans and administrators have closed down a lecture series. Meet every situation with faith and prayer.

#### Present Christianity's credibility

The faith you hold has mountains of supporting

evidence and positive, practical ramifications in academia and life, but not everyone realizes this. You can perform a valuable service to your university by presenting reasonable, credible positions listeners might not otherwise have considered.

#### Use local talent

Capable, local volunteer presenters can touch many lives at low cost. Community leaders often relate well to students, especially students who aspire to succeed in the lecturer's field. Such leaders can help you cultivate relationships with nonbelieving professors and open doors for repeat bookings.

A speaker team with a large topic list is more likely to be scheduled because they can give professors more choices than one or two speakers could offer. As speakers experience hands-on ministry, their vision, enthusiasm, and dedication for your campus work can intensify.

#### Training is key

Classroom speaking is different from church speaking or even addressing other secular campus groups. Time limits, academic relevance, professor expectations, and the *captive audience* factor, necessitate careful approaches. *Christianese*, preaching, and public prayer will close classroom doors in a hurry. Training materials exist to help you and your volunteers learn to communicate effectively. If I had our Atlanta classroom outreach to do over again, I would devote more time to training speakers

#### Partner with other ministries

I was responsible for scheduling the Atlanta meetings, and I had no staff to follow up interested students. Other campus ministries, however, were eager to receive classroom comment cards and follow up students who requested more information. Different evangelical groups have their own distinctives, but chances are you agree on many essentials, especially the need to reach lost students. Often you can accomplish more together than separately.

#### Trust God for big things

Could God be leading you to help penetrate academia with His truth? Do some giants in your life and/or ministry need slaying? Could He use you and your colleagues to help impact an entire university? Classroom outreach might be a means to such ends for you. ☪



## Expositional & Team Preaching

### Interview with John Lindell and Chris Lewis: Part Two

In this second of two installments, Senior Pastor John Lindell and former Senior Associate Pastor Chris Lewis of James River Assembly in Ozark, Missouri, pick up where they left off by turning our attention toward expositional and team preaching. Chris is now the senior pastor of Foothill Christian Center, Glendora, California, as of December 2006.

#### What is the value of an expositional series for the preacher and for the church?

**LINDELL:** For the preacher, the value of an expositional series is in spending your week studying instead of deciding what you will preach. As a result, you have a message on Sunday that you have given a great deal of thought to, not only in the time you have spent studying the biblical passage, but also in the thought you have given the passage as you drive down the road, lie down at night, and get up in the morning. The passage simmers in your heart.

Expositional series preaching also frees you of the burden to be creative. I am not as creative as either Scotty or Chris. So, for me, it has been helpful not to have to worry about things such as creativity and to be able to give myself to the presentation of the text.

For the church, the value is in learning how to study the Word of God. When I preach expositionally week after week, my people learn what to look for as they study the Bible. They learn to study a book of the Bible, its flow of thought, and they extrapolate principles that God has given us so we can walk in victory. The preacher is living out Bible studies for the congregation. In terms of the church, it builds a depth in people that I do not think can be built any other way.

**LEWIS:** In expositional preaching, the Word of God changes people. If all we did was preach topically, sermon preparation would be much more difficult. When preaching topical sermons, the preacher must choose a topic and

then find Scriptures that genuinely support it. In an expositional sermon, people clearly hear the Word of God. God's Word is powerful. It will transform lives. Expositional preaching is just feeding God's Word to them week after week. People derive maturity from that.

#### You have adopted a preaching team concept at James River. Why did you decide to go to a team approach?

**LINDELL:** A team approach is biblical. Acts 13 tells us that the church at Antioch — possibly the greatest church of the first century — was where people were first called Christians. From this church, the Word of God was taken to the Gentiles and to the Gentile world. The church had five teachers; among them were Paul and Barnabas. When Paul and Barnabas left the church to go on their missionary tours, there were still three capable teachers left to teach the Word of God.

Many churches only hear one voice. When a church hears one voice, it is limited to what it can receive. Churches have a tendency in this situation to build on the preacher's personality. One of my desires has been to see James River expand beyond my own preaching personality. When my time of ministry ends at James River, the church will be equipped to move forward because it has not bought into the cult of personality. Team preaching is healthier for the church.

From a practical standpoint, team preaching has freed me up to do leadership and minister personally with people. If I were preaching several times a week, I would not have time to participate in these other ministries. Team preaching means people are getting a fresh speaker at each service. I do not think enough can be said about having a fresh speaker. If a pastor preaches three services on Sunday, by the end of the day, he is toast. When a preacher does that over a series of weeks, it can take him 2 or 3 days after Sunday before he fully feels like he is at the top of his game. Team preaching allows me to start the week fresher. Rather than getting a preacher who has already preached twice on Sunday morning and who may be fatigued on Sunday night, the



Lindell



Lewis

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*When my time of ministry ends at James River, the church will be equipped to move forward because it has not bought into the cult of personality.*

—LINDELL

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church gets a preacher who has a fresh voice and a fresh word. I think that has elevated the spiritual temperature of the church.

### **How would you advise a church that desires to start a preaching team?**

**LINDELL:** First, a pastor needs to firmly know philosophically what he believes concerning the Word of God and what he expects to happen in the pulpit. A senior pastor does not want a preaching team where two people are going in different directions. This can create confusion.

If a church is interested in starting a preaching team, there must be unity of philosophy. Unity of philosophy starts with the senior pastor determining in his heart what God wants for him and for his ministry, and then knowing how that will play out in the church.

Second, team preaching requires having someone who is capable to preach expositionally. Some people can only exposit one or two sermons a year before reaching their limit. Others might have a higher preaching capacity and can contribute more frequently. Look at a person's ability. A senior pastor cannot arbitrarily split the services if the person he is delegating to preach the other half does not have the capability to preach.

Third, the quality of preaching must be maintained to have a successful preaching-team ministry. Preaching qualities vary with each preacher. In each setting, the senior pastor will need to determine the quality of what is preached. If the quality of the preaching is substantially less, people will not come. When they do come, they will not be open to the preaching ministry of someone whose sermons are substandard in content or delivery.

### **How do you plan a series with a preaching team?**

**LEWIS:** During our monthly planning meeting, we look at what is ahead. Right now we are preaching through Luke. Luke is a narrative. We will look at each narrative episode and where the logical breaking points are. Luke should be split up differently than the literature of Paul or the general epistles. So establishing proper breaking points depends on what kind of biblical literature you are working in.

Depending on how your preaching team works, and who will be the primary voice to the congregation, you determine assignments. The person who is the primary voice will continue in that role. You then fill in openings with other preaching-team members.

In our situation, we do series preaching. For example, let's say we have finished Luke 8 and are headed into Luke 9. We break up the passage and make assignments that will take us into the next several weeks. We schedule who will be preaching on each Sunday morning. We



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*When preaching topical sermons, the preacher must choose a topic and then find Scriptures that genuinely support it.*

—LEWIS

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also have a Sunday evening series we are going through, and we follow the same procedure for Sunday evenings. Sunday evenings are a little different because John and I rotate services; he does one, I do the next week. But on Sunday mornings when the crowd is larger, that is a primary leadership time for the congregation, and we want to touch the most people. John will preach most of these sermons, and Scotty and I will preach every 5 to 6 weeks.

Planning team preaching is not rocket science. It is meeting on a regular basis, forecasting where we are going, and walking through the passage. I do not think we have ever been rigid in our planning. At times, we realize in our sermon preparation that we could have broken up a passage in a better place. During our meeting, as we come closer to the time of preaching, we decide a couple of verses may fit better in another person's sermon. So, adjustments can be made while the series progresses. By keeping in contact with the



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*From a practical standpoint, team preaching  
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—LINDELL

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preaching team, sitting together with our Bibles open, and going through the passage, we get the series planned out.

Our planning also allows us to look at difficult passages, helps us to mine our way through them, and figure out what the passage is about. One advantage to having a preaching team is that team members are not alone in their studies. Each person spends much time in study, but has other people he can partner with and draw on.

**What would you say to the pastor who believes team preaching will dilute his leadership influence in the church?**

**LINDELL:** A minister's influence may be diluted, depending on how he leads. The pulpit is the most powerful place in the church in terms

of engaging people publicly. Any time you turn the pulpit over to someone else, you automatically empower that person to function in the church at a greater level. So, it is true that team preaching could dilute one's leadership.

Leaders must be secure in their leadership position, and they need to be willing to watch someone else succeed and celebrate that. If a pastor cannot do that, then the team-preaching ministry could really drain on him.

When the pastor has another preacher in the pulpit, especially if he does it with some regularity, some people will naturally gravitate toward that person's ministry. They may be attracted to his ministry because of the way they are wired, the relationships they have with that person, or the way that person processes or illustrates his sermon material. Some people will have a greater appreciation for one team preacher over another. The senior pastor has to accept this, and at the same time realize this is part of why he entered a team-preaching ministry. In our setting, it means we can attract more people. When you offer diversity, it is attractive to people.

I would also say this: Your leadership is not something that should be crammed down the throats of the people you are leading. Enter into team preaching gradually over time. Cautiously allow people opportunity to get used to what is happening.

If you are going to start a preaching team, you need to think long term and this requires a commitment from the people. You cannot turn a pulpit over to a person for a couple of years. This could be potentially as destabilizing for a church as a short-term pastor.

**What do you wish you knew about preaching earlier in your ministries?**

**LINDELL:** One, the joy and advantage of expository preaching. Two, that no sermon is as bad as you think it was.

**LEWIS:** Or as good as you think it was.

**LINDELL:** Three, that over time sermon preparation will always demand work, but it will not always be as emotionally exhausting.

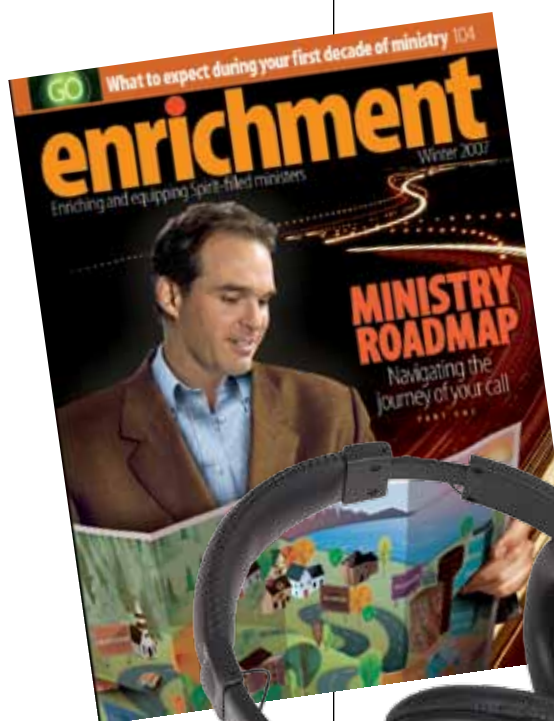
**LEWIS:** John gave me this good advice: When you preach a good sermon, go out and have a cup of coffee and a piece of pie. When you preach a bad sermon, go out and have a cup of coffee and a piece of pie. ☕🥧

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**"Anyone can deliver a well-written sermon. But to get up completely unprepared and try to pass off something like this takes the courage of a true preacher."**





### Audio Enrichment

**A**re you one of the many Assemblies of God ministers who eagerly opens *Enrichment* journal the moment it arrives? Many ministers look forward to the arrival of *Enrichment*, but are unable to read it.

One in 10 people lose 90 percent or more of their vision after age 65, and Americans are losing their vision at younger ages at an alarming rate. Others are born blind or with impaired vision.

Assemblies of God ministers are part of these statistics. Some have never had good vision or have lost a major portion of their vision with age. Until recently these ministers have been unable to enjoy *Enrichment*. But that has changed.

An audio version of *Enrichment* is now available to ministers who are blind, vision impaired, or have other disabilities that prevent them from reading.

The Center for the Blind is an Assemblies of God U.S. Missions ministry and has many resources for those who have impaired vision. The Center is able to offer these services at no cost because of gifts from individuals and churches.

For more information, contact: Paul Weingartner at 1-417-831-1964; e-mail: [Blind@ag.org](mailto:Blind@ag.org); or visit: <http://www.blind.ag.org>.



### Fourth AG Faculty Seminar

**Approximately 170 educators from endorsed Assemblies of God colleges and universities attended the fourth Assemblies of God Faculty Seminar** in Springfield, Mo., July 19–21, 2006.

"This was a seminar of excellence," said Anthony Garcia of Latin American Bible Institute — Texas in San Antonio. "I enjoyed every session as each one brought inspiration and encouragement. It was a wonderful opportunity for all educators."

The 3-day seminar, held at Evangel University, brought key leaders from Bible/theology, practical ministries, and missions for a dynamic time of interaction.

Peter Kuzmic, missionary from Croatia, was guest speaker at one of the plenary sessions. Other guest speakers included Commissioner for Christian Higher Education Robert Spence, and Rick Johnson, director of Assemblies of God World Missions Personnel/Family Life. General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask and General Secretary George O. Wood addressed those attending the seminar at banquets on Wednesday and Friday respectively.

For many professors the seminar provided opportunity to meet or renew professional acquaintances and for iron to sharpen iron as they networked together.

"This has been a fabulous opportunity to meet peer professors," said Mike Thompson, who teaches Christian education and youth at Northwest University in Kirkland, Wash. "As a result, we've enriched each others classes for the fall and have also networked with the national Youth Department to create and share resources across the nation."

April Westbrook, a biblical studies professor at Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, Calif., not only enjoyed the fellowship of other educators but also the encouragement she received from other believers in her profession.

"We were encouraged and strengthened by the body of Christ as we shared ideas, common challenges, and the same commitment to Christian higher education," said Westbrook.

The seminar was sponsored by the Assemblies of God Board of Administration and hosted by The Commission on Christian Higher Education.



## Global University Names New President

Effective Sept. 30, 2006, Dr. Ron Iwasko resigned as president of Global University after serving more than 7 years.

In 1999, Iwasko assumed leadership over Berean University in Springfield, Mo., and ICI University in Irving, Tex. Replacing Zenas Bicket and George M. Flattery, this move was made to smooth the uniting of these two schools to form Global University. On June 12, 2000, faculty and staff occupied space in the new Global University campus in Springfield.

Bringing the two schools together was a massive undertaking, and the years following have required skilled leadership to fully integrate the U.S. operations of Berean with the missions work of ICI. The result is now a seamless curriculum offering evangelism and discipleship courses, vocational ministry training, and advanced degrees in Bible and theology.

When asked what he views as Global University's most outstanding accomplishments, Iwasko reflects on the varied aspects of the mission of the school. "Seeing some 550,000 people from across the world declare in writing their commitment to Christ through our programs has to rank at the top.

"On the academic side, I am deeply grateful to the Global University team for the high quality of our academic programs and related courses. The new Berean series is outstanding, and the new developments at the undergraduate and graduate levels have raised the level wonderfully."

On leaving, Iwasko, an appointed world missionary, will travel extensively to train ministers around the world in such countries as Brazil, Ethiopia, Romania, Kenya, and Vietnam.

Global University's board of directors meet in October and named Dr. George M. Flattery, Assemblies of God world missionary, as Iwasko's successor.

Flattery served as chancellor of Global University for nearly 7 years. Before that, he was president of ICI University, the World Missions organization he founded in 1967 to train ministers all over the world and reach the lost for the kingdom of God.

For more information about Global University, visit <http://www.discovergu.com>.



Dr. George M. Flattery

## It's E-LIFE time!

**E-LIFE Kids is a new, challenging ministry opportunity for children** that teaches them to evangelize and mentor other children in their schools and communities.

E-LIFE Kids is not a program; it's a lifestyle you can instill in every child in your church, particularly upper-elementary students. E-LIFE, developed by the national Children's Ministries Agency and cutting-edge children's pastors across the nation, is free when you visit <http://www.4kids.ag.org>. The front-page E-LIFE banner will link you to the new E-LIFE Web page.

E-LIFE Kids demonstrate the five commitments of an E-LIFE Kid: **Seek, Show, Share, Invite, and Invest**. The goal of an E-LIFE Kid is to share the E-LIFE Plan (plan of salvation) with other children and to disciple them in their spiritual walk with Jesus. It all begins by building relationships, being kind to others, helping others, and investing their lives in their schoolmates.

The E-LIFE Web page offers 5-minute theme activities that can be used to teach children about the five commitments of an E-LIFE Kid. Hundreds of theme activities will be offered in the coming months. Download these activities to encourage every student to become an E-LIFE Kid and live out the five commitments.

The 5-minute theme activities can be conducted throughout the year in any children's ministries setting — children's church, Sunday School, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, or any gathering with children. Theme activities enable children's leaders to coach children how to witness and build relationships with others in their schools.

The key is to challenge children to realize they can become missionaries to their schools. Not every child in school will have opportunity to go to church, but every child can learn about Jesus through an E-LIFE Kid.

Find out more about E-LIFE by visiting the national Children's Ministries Agency Web site at <http://www.4kids.ag.org>.







## HighPoint Has Arrived

**HighPoint is a new large-group, small-group, anytime children's ministry program.** Since you know the children in your church better than anyone else, *HighPoint* is designed to let you choose when to use it — midweek, children's church, Sunday morning, or for neighborhood outreach. The 5-session kit can be presented in any order you wish. Each kit addresses a character trait that parents want their children to learn — respect, anger, overcoming disappointment, love, and worship.

*HighPoint* provides:

- Small-group relationships that help kids learn practical ways to become the person God created them to be.
- Large-group times with high-energy fun and heart-centered worship.
- Creative, discovery-based learning that makes *HighPoint* fun.

Plus, small groups ensure visitors will have a leader welcome them, learn their names, and invite them back.

Visit <http://www.gph.org/highpoint> for introductory prices on the newest kits and a free sample lesson.



## 2006 National Youth Scholarship Program Winners Announced

**The Assemblies of God national Youth Ministries Department and Christian Higher Education Department have selected the recipients for the 2006 J. Robert Ashcroft National Youth Scholarship Program.**

Applicants were judged in academics, extra-curricular involvement, Christian service, Christian life, financial need, essay, and references.

First place and a \$5,000 scholarship was awarded to Rachel Carney, daughter of Loren and Carol Carney, of Corvallis, Mont. Rachel is attending Trinity Bible College in Ellendale, N.D.

Second place and a \$3,000 scholarship went to Stephanie Flatau, daughter of Steven and Janice Flatau, Havre, Mont. Stephanie is attending Northwest University in Kirkland, Wash.

Third place and a \$1,000 scholarship was awarded to Christopher Haggard, son of Kemuel and Susan Haggard, Wrangell, Alaska. Christopher is attending Northwest University in Kirkland, Wash.

The Christian Higher Education Department and national Youth Ministries Department annually sponsor the J. Robert Ashcroft National Youth Scholarship Program. Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors who attend Assemblies of God churches (or are dependents of Assemblies of God missionaries) and who plan to attend an Assemblies of God endorsed college after graduation. Applications can be obtained from district youth directors after November and can be submitted from January 1 to March 31 to district youth directors.



## National JBQ Festival

**First Assembly of God in Kenosha, Wis., will host the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Junior**

**Bible Quiz National Festival, June 7–9, 2007.**

This festival brings together the top Junior Bible Quiz teams in the country. To qualify for the festival, a team must win its district JBQ championship or be one of the top five at its regional meet.

In this year's festival 75 to 80 teams are expected to compete for the national championship title. Each team will quiz 24 rounds in 2 days to determine the winner.

Junior Bible Quiz is a discipleship ministry for elementary children — first through sixth grades — giving children a fun and exciting way to learn the Word of God. For more information on Junior Bible Quiz and the National JBQ Festival visit <http://www.nationaljbq.org>.





## New Mega Sports Camp Theme

**MEGA Sports Camp is an intentionally evangelistic outreach** that uses sports to attract elementary age children. Since the program is sports based, it is easy for children to invite their friends or for churches to invite the whole neighborhood. Churches using MSC have reported a 50 percent increase in visitors. MSC makes turning visitors into regulars easy because MSC builds in natural opportunities to connect with children and their families.

These evangelistic features led *Outreach* magazine to award MEGA Sports Camp with its 2005 Award for Best Outreach Resource for Children's Outreach. Panelist Ivy Beckwith remarks, "The entire program is geared toward evangelistic outreach." Beckwith adds that the kit materials are thorough and offer flexibility for churches and camps of all sizes.

Beyond the Gold, the new theme, is based on 1 Corinthians 9:24,25 and teaches children how athletic disciplines can make a difference in their physical and spiritual lives. The new theme uses the same high-quality, do-it-yourself format to teach children basketball, soccer, or cheerleading skills. MSC also incorporates upbeat music, interactive Bible stories, and attention-grabbing object lessons to teach Jesus' great love in simple terms.



Suzanne Cole, a children's ministry director in Louisiana, reports, "MEGA Sports Camp was our most successful outreach ever. We had 40 percent more children, and nearly 30 of them accepted Christ. And, for the first time, men volunteered to help. We are definitely doing MSC again."

MEGA Sports Camp's schedule is flexible. By using five, 3-hour sessions or 10, 1 1/2-hour sessions, MSC can be used as a VBS alternative, spring break outreach, after-school program, midweek program, weekend sports clinic, or back-to-school kick-off. Youth pastors and teens have also successfully adapted it for overseas missions trips.

Discover how easy it is to introduce children to Christ through sports by visiting <http://www.MEGAsportscamp.com> or calling 1-800-641-4310 for a free information packet.



*Outreach* magazine awarded MEGA Sports Camp its 2005 Award for Best Outreach Resource for Children's Outreach.

## U.S. Missions Missionary Candidate Orientation


March 17-23, 2007, U.S. Missions will host candidate orientation for new missionary candidates. Spring Candidate Orientation consists of interviewing, training, evaluating, and preparing candidates for the emotionally and spiritually trying aspects of missions work. The week will end with a commissioning service on Friday, March 23. For more information, contact Mary Hartley at 417-862-2781, ext. 3274.



## U.S. Missions Luncheon at General Council

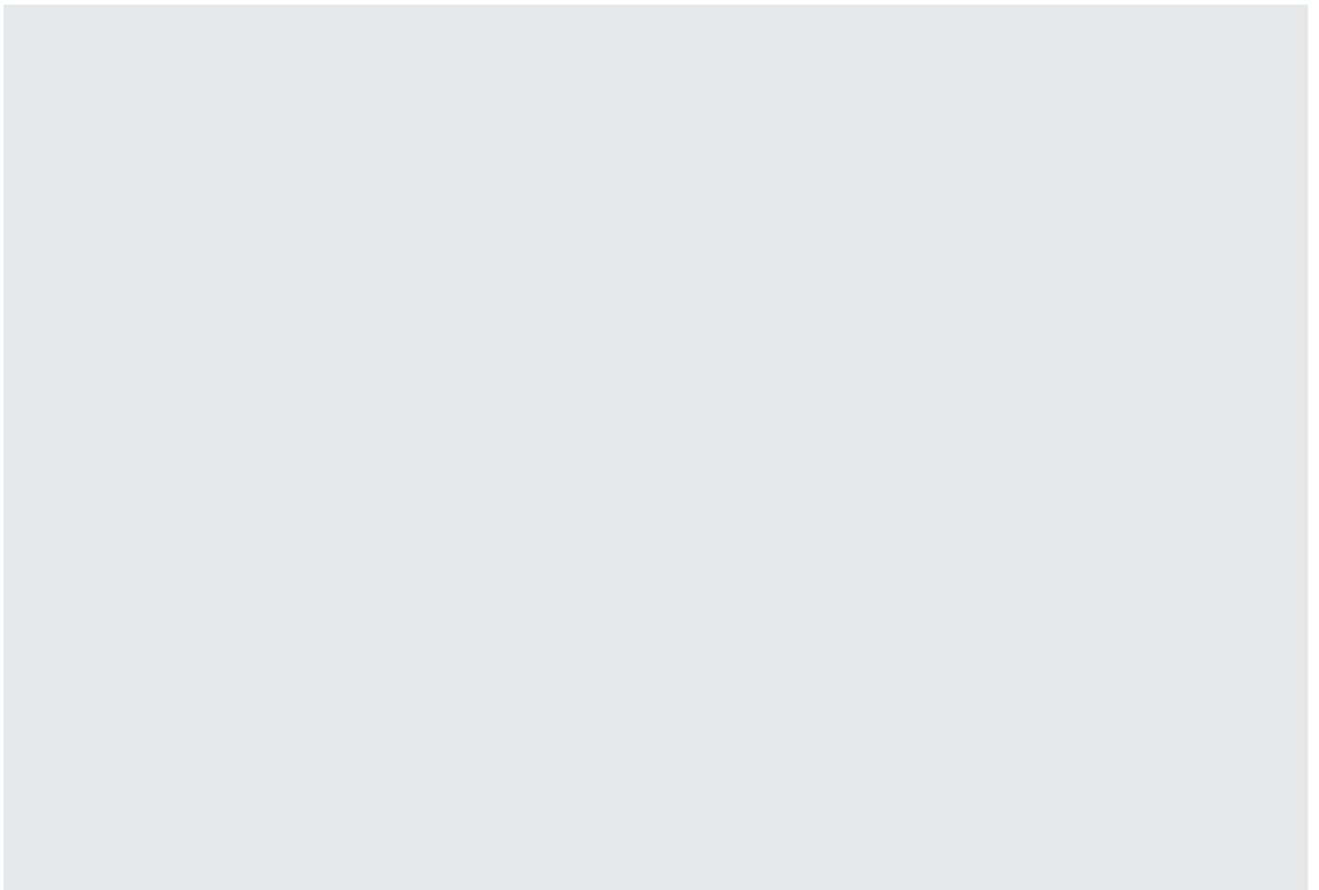
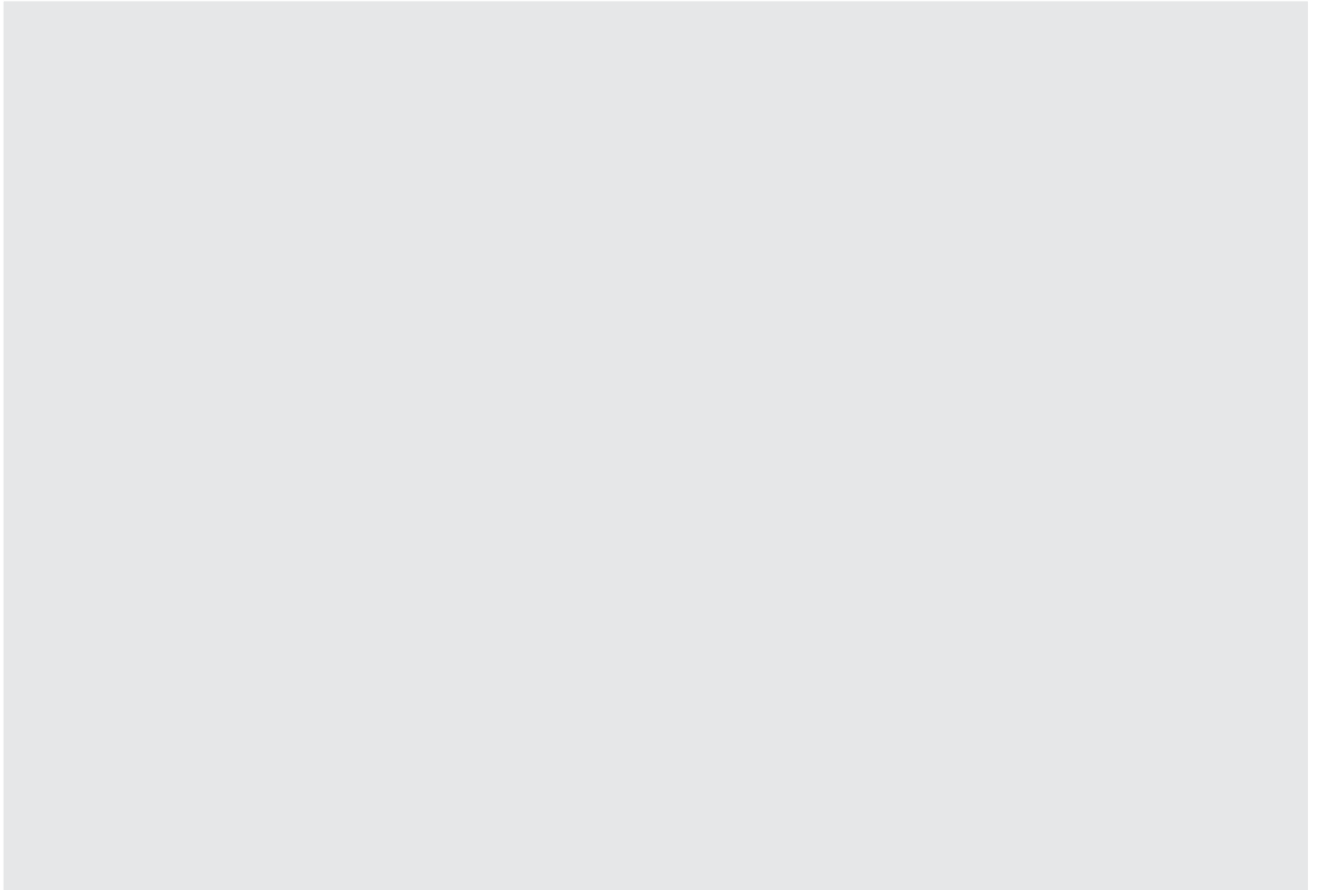
Join U.S. Missions for the ReachAmerica Celebration at its Friday luncheon on Aug. 10, 2007.

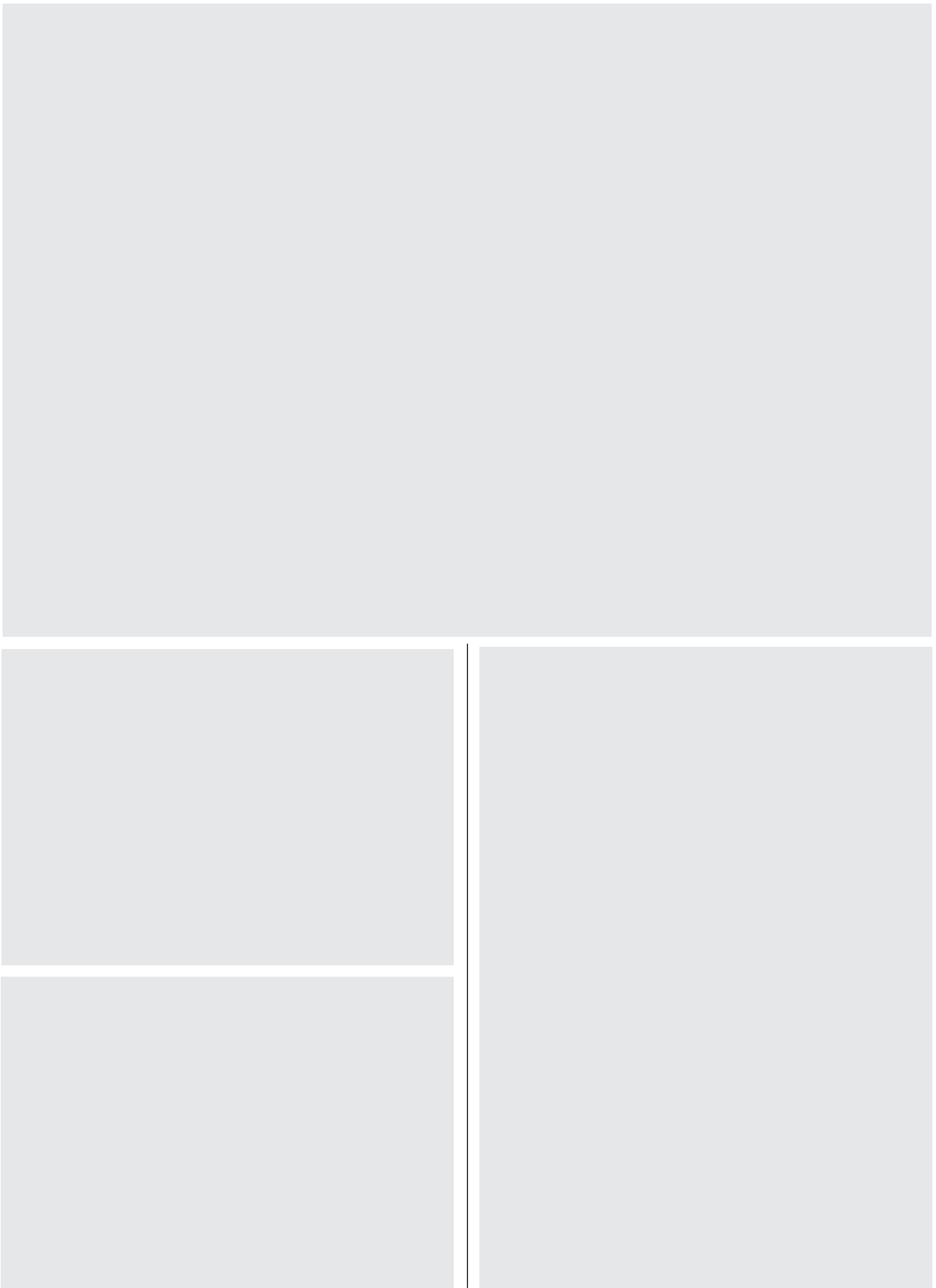
Sponsored by the ReachAmerica Coalition, this luncheon will highlight the efforts of U.S. Missions missionaries in reaching our great nation. Tickets are \$30 per person and may be ordered on your General Council registration form. Districts, pastors, or members of the ReachAmerica Coalition

wishing to sponsor a table and invite guests may reserve tables by marking "U.S. Missions Luncheon Table Sponsor" on their registration forms. 



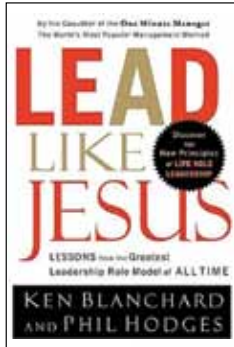
## Marketplace





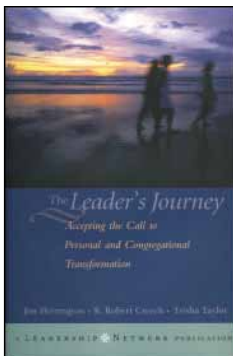


## Book Reviews



*Lead Like Jesus*

*The dominant theme that threads Lead Like Jesus together is servant leadership.*



*The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*



*The Competent Pastor: Skills and Self-Knowledge from Serving Well*

### Lead Like Jesus: Lessons From the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time

KEN BLANCHARD AND PHIL HODGES (W Publishing Group, 240 pp., hardcover)

After co-authoring the highly successful *One Minute Manager*, Ken Blanchard embarked on a spiritual journey that ultimately led him to Christ. In his introduction to *Lead Like Jesus*, Blanchard recounts, "When I turned my life over to the Lord in the late 1980s, I began to read the Bible. ... I soon became aware that everything I had ever taught or written about effective leadership during the past 35 years, Jesus did to perfection, beyond my ability to portray or describe."



Blanchard

Along with fellow believer and corporate manager Phil Hodges, Blanchard sets out in *Lead Like Jesus* to explore the implications of Jesus' leadership style for the corporate business leader. The book is filled with Scripture, practical guidelines, assessment tools, and prayer guides. It is an excellent resource for laypersons seeking to integrate their spirituality with their effectiveness in the marketplace by developing Christ-centered "best practices" in business leadership.

The heart of the book builds on the four domains of leadership: heart (motivation), head (point of view), hands (behavior) and habits (spiritual renewal activities). The dominant theme that threads the book together is servant leadership. Blanchard and Hodges explore how the two primary enemies of servant leadership — pride and fear — affect both leadership style and relational interactions. The outcome is a compelling look at life leadership as opposed to organizational leadership — leadership that is Christlike and highly influential.

—Reviewed by James Bradford, Ph.D., senior pastor, Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

### The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation

JIM HERRINGTON, R. ROBERT CREECH, TRISHA TAYLOR  
(Jossey-Bass, 192 pp., hardcover)

As a pastor, have you ever felt like "a stray dog at a whistlers' convention"? Have you ever observed that church dysfunction and family dysfunction look terribly similar? Well, you aren't the only one.

In a thoughtful work, Jim Herrington, R. Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor (Southern Baptists with pastoral or counseling ministries in Houston, Texas) have teamed up to bring insight to the family system we call *church*.

Possibly the most insightful part of the book is the extended discussion of "chronically anxious systems" with the need for "calm leadership." Pastors need inner transformation to not be caught up in the vortex of a chronically anxious system.

This book addresses the need for pastors to look hard at their own family of origin as well as to practice the spiritual disciplines they preach, else they soon will suffer from "soul neglect," an unfortunate way of life for many in the ministry.

Though *The Leader's Journey* does not offer a one-stop, quick-fix solution to dysfunctional congregational life, it is an important contribution for pastors seeking godly wisdom in pastoring anxious and troubled congregations by addressing their own inner needs.

—Reviewed by Paul E. Grabill, senior pastor, State College Assembly of God, State College, Pennsylvania.

### The Competent Pastor: Skills and Self-Knowledge from Serving Well

RONALD D. SISK (The Alban Institute, 200 pp., paperback)

As a skilled photographer carefully adjusts the lens, so Ronald D. Sisk provides the practical mechanism by which a pastor can find clarity of focus that will assure ministerial effectiveness.

The landscape under review includes family origin, self-motivation, communication skills, time management, interpersonal skills, leadership styles, and spiritual disciplines. These requirements become the prism by which

ministerial competence is appropriately viewed and measured.

If you are looking for fundamental measuring tools by which to make a personal assessment of ministerial competence or if you are seeking for resources — both print and electronic — that will move you toward greater effectiveness, you will find *The Competent Pastor* most useful. The author has a rich background both as a pastor and academician. You will appreciate the good balance between the two.

You may find a special intrigue with the section that deals with “family of origin.” This discussion will help identify and describe those attitudes and responses that were put in place early in life and now have direct bearing on the pastor’s approach to ministry.

Every pastor is well advised to conduct an inventory of ministerial effectiveness. Sisk provides the information and strategies by which that evaluation might be accomplished.

The work of ministry is far too important for any pastor to settle for less than the highest level of competency. Here is an instrument of measurement and evaluation that will yield a verdict on your ministerial competence.

—Reviewed by Richard L. Dresselhaus, D.Min.,  
executive presbyter and former senior pastor,  
First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.

## How To Lead & Still Have a Life The 8 Principles of Less Is More Leadership

H. DALE BURKE (*Harvest House, 239 pp., paperback*)

Burke had the daunting task of replacing Charles Swindoll at First Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, California. But under his leadership, the church has grown to the point that a third Sunday morning service has been added and is full.

Along the way, Burke developed a leadership seminar that he calls “Less Is More.” He targets both religious and business leaders in his seminar. This book appears to be the printed version of his seminar.

Burke’s teaching is built around eight biblical principles or disciplines for leaders. They are: spirituality, humility, imagination (the power of vision), mobilization, specialization (operating according to one’s giftedness), innovation (being creative), concentration (the power of focus), and determination (the power of hope). He bases these principles on the life of Jesus, the lessons Jesus taught, and

the leadership He exhibited. Burke’s book is thoroughly scriptural and Christ-centered.

The key thought in this book is that today’s pastor must simplify and focus his life so he can lead more and manage less. I approached the book with the question: Will it play in Peoria? Do the principles of the book apply to the majority of our churches that do not average more than 100 in attendance? Could a pastor with no paid staff implement the principles of the book and make a difference in his congregation? After studying the book, I found the principles are biblical and applicable to a pastor of any size church. The book would make a good addition to any pastor’s leadership library.

—Reviewed by Gary A. Denbow, D.Min., president,  
Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri.

## Leading the Small Church

GLENN C. DAMAN (*Kregel Academic and Professional, 240 pp., paperback*)

Any minister who desires a transformational ministry needs this book.

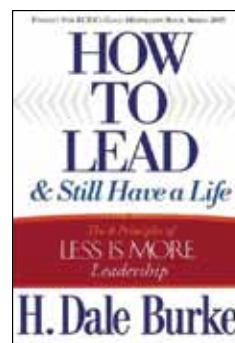
“Ministry is really simple; it’s a matter of preaching the Word, loving the people, and living our lives as examples for others to follow,” says Daman.

I have read other small-church ministry books, but Daman has written a thought-provoking masterpiece. The book is based on the notion that large churches developed in the last couple of decades have put additional pressures on the small church.

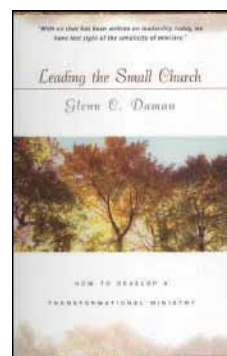
The secular methods of growing a church have overridden the biblical methods of shepherding a church. “What the church needs today is more shepherds, not more visionaries. We need more churches in vital relationship with Jesus Christ, not bigger churches with bigger problems (or smaller churches with smaller problems).” Daman says “we must return to the ancient, biblical paradigm, the one in which pastors are spiritual caretakers of God’s people, and are more concerned about the spiritual health of the congregation than about agendas, programs, and status.”

I recommend this book for anyone ministering in a small church. I also recommend that every pastor read this work as it will challenge you to re-examine the task to which you are called and to reassess how we all measure success in ministry.

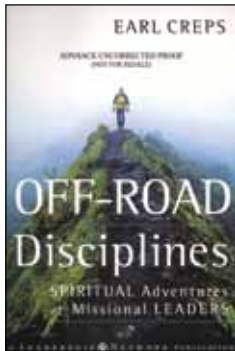
—Reviewed by Michael Hilger, senior pastor,  
River of Life Worship Center, Stewartville, Minnesota.



*How To Lead & Still Have a Life:  
The 8 Principles of  
Less Is More Leadership*



*Leading the Small Church*



*Off-Road Disciplines:  
Spiritual Adventures of  
Missional Leaders*

**Off-Road Disciplines**  
*will discomfit  
the comfortable  
and give guidance  
to the hungry.*

## Off-Road Disciplines: Spiritual Adventures of Missional Leaders

EARL CREPS (*Jossey-Bass, 186 pp., paperback*)

**I**f your devotional life seems disconnected from your work-a-day life, or if you feel you have “an 8-track ministry in an iPod world,” or if you feel quite satisfied with your spiritual accomplishments, *Off-Road Disciplines* is definitely for you.

The goal of Earl Creps’ book is the ongoing spiritual transformation of missional leaders. A major premise of the book is that transformational moments do not happen only in the prayer closet, but they may also occur at the store, in the car, on the phone, or while e-communicating. Creps believes that reflective practitioners will catch Christ at work in culture, learn from it, and be formed by it.

Creps identifies 12 transformational opportunities in *Off-Road Disciplines*. He divides them evenly in two categories labeled personal and organizational. The personal disciplines are: “personal transformation, sacred realism, point of view, reverse mentoring, spiritual friendship, and decreasing.” The organizational disciplines that impact the interior life of ministries are: “missional efficiency, blending differences, discernment, making room, surrendering preferences, and passing the baton.”

*Off-Road Disciplines* will discomfit the comfortable and give guidance to the hungry. It is a notable addition to Leadership Network’s titles.

—Reviewed by Mark Wootton, D.Min., church ministries divisional chair, Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri.



Creps

## The DNA of Relationships for Couples

GREG SMALLEY AND ROBERT S. PAUL  
(*Tyndale, 378 pp., paperback*)

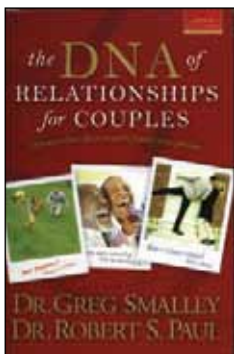
**Current statistics show traditional marriages are failing at an alarming rate.** Hundreds of books attempt to address the many causes for failing marriages and many propose miraculous cures. *The DNA of Relationships for Couples*, written by Dr. Robert Paul and Dr. Greg Smalley, provides more than “a cause of” and a recommended “cure all” for marriages in crisis. Written like a novel, the book brings readers face-to-face with the true stories of four couples who are either inquiring about the 4-day intensive or are on their way to attend one. These couples learn concepts, are given tools to better their relationships, and are shown how to put everything learned into practice.

*The DNA of Relationships for Couples* walks the reader through the equivalent of a 4-day intensive. Therapists Smalley and Paul direct

the four couples through an amazing process of hope and transformation, and their relational breakthroughs are miraculous. Each couple is faced with unique challenges: enormous disappointments and unfulfilled expectations, the disastrous effects of infidelity, and emotional distance because of unresolved conflict and family tragedy. A pastor and his wife come to the intensive hoping to fix the other person, only to find joy and freedom in discovering the true reason for their failed marriage. The therapists’ goal is to see marriages in a state of crisis profoundly changed to healthy marriages couples are thrilled with.

Throughout the story, key concepts, principles, and strategies are introduced. The reader will better understand the concepts and principles presented by a periodical pause in the story to “talk with the doctors.” Smalley and Paul give a brief explanation of each concept and the marital system model is introduced.

Readers will feel the couples’ emotional highs and lows as well as their spiritual breakthroughs. The book is an eyewitness account



*The DNA of Relationships  
for Couples*



of true-to-life couple intensives. It is a deeply challenging, enjoyable book to read.

—Reviewed by Gary Bruegman, director of Denominational Relations and an intensive therapist, National Institute of Marriage, Branson, Missouri. For more information on National Institute of Marriage, or marriage intensives, contact National Institute of Marriage, 417-335-5882, or visit their Web site: [www.nationalmarriage.com](http://www.nationalmarriage.com).

## A Change of Pastors ... and How It Affects Change in the Congregation

LOREN B. MEAD (*The Alban Institute, 112 pp., paperback*)

*A Change of Pastors* addresses one of the most critical times in a congregation's journey — the transition time between pastors. Mead shares insights from his years of study and observation of congregations in pastoral transition. He discovered that the interim period provided exceptional opportunity for congregational change and growth if the church is under the leadership of an intentional interim pastor. This book is a good information source for church leaders who are trying to do more than just find people to fill the pulpit during the interim period.

Mead offers a systematic approach to the pastoral change process that begins with the departure of the present pastor and clarifies the impact change brings to the congregation as it prepares for a new pastor. His illustrations of churches in transition enable clergy and church members to identify with these challenges. The author provides practical steps for congregational leadership, as well as "Five Developmental Tasks" for the congregation to address during the interim period. Mead's closing chapter outlines the roles of bishop (or district official), interim pastor, board member, and search committee as all provide active leadership in a congregation in pastoral transition.

This book has value as an introduction to the concepts of pastoral transition. However, one must read it with an awareness of the author's denominational biases.

—Reviewed by David L. Bittinger, senior pastor, Christian Life Center Assembly of God, Kent, Ohio, and presbyter of the Greater Akron Section of the Ohio District Council of the Assemblies of God.

## The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church, and the World

MARVA J. DAWN (*Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 315 pp., paperback*)

This book is a must read for anyone who has ever wrestled with his or her call to ministry because of the rigors of the work or asked the question, Why is ministry so hard? Dawn offers some suggestions for finding the spiritual wholeness we need to fulfill our calling. "In a nutshell,



the sense of our call is that God's kingdom reclaims us, revitalizes us, and renews us; and thus reigns through us, before others, on behalf of others, sometimes in spite of others,

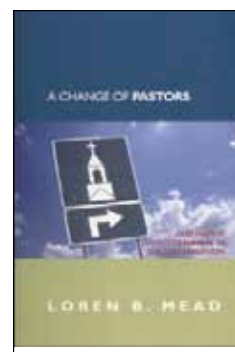
and always with others." That summary emphasizes the seven key points that undergird the book.

The sabbath way of life she espouses is a profound resting in Kingdom's grace instead of a perpetual struggle to "do our work." Her exegesis of Acts 6:1–6; 2 Timothy 4:1–5; and 1 Peter 4:10,11 is worth the price of the book.

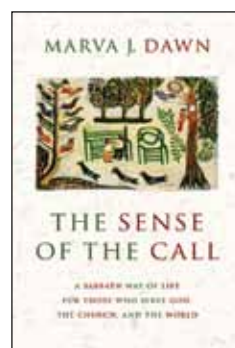
Dawn frames the book around Resting, Ceasing, Feasting, and Embracing as ways to incarnate the gift of sabbath. Taking 295 pages to make the point seems to overwork the reader with more detail than necessary. Dawn is a gifted theologian and writer who challenges us to walk in the "Joy" of our calling. (She always capitalizes joy and explains why in the book.) In the words of Phillips Brooks, we will "keep history open" to see how those who serve God, the church, and the world embrace the book.

I recommend it especially for those who are taking or thinking of taking a sabbatical. Although this book is not about extended sabbaticals, it might provide a jump-start for people considering one.

—Reviewed by H. Robert Rhoden, former superintendent of the Potomac District Council of the Assemblies of God, Glen Allen, Virginia.



*A Change of Pastors ... and How It Affects Change in the Congregation*



*The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church, and the World*



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Springfield, Missouri

**Julia Barrios**  
Tulare, California

**Murray Birmingham**  
Kalama, Washington

**Walter E. Bostick**  
Sacramento, California

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**Floyd Smith**  
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**Jeffrey H. Smith**  
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**Jimmy A. Smith**  
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**W.G. Staples**  
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**Troy P. Starr**  
Lockhart, Texas

**Royce E. Stephenson**  
Franklin, North Carolina

**Richard C. Stevens**  
Vero Beach, Florida

**William H. Tabb**  
Bloomington, Illinois

**James L. Tarver**  
Newberry, South Carolina

**Nicholas J. Tavani**  
Altadena, California

**Faye Tidwell**  
Springfield, Missouri

**Esmeralda D. Torres**  
Hercules, California

**Olen Troutman**  
Baytown, Texas

**Kenneth L. Turner**  
Fort Smith, Arkansas

**Angela Valdez**  
San Antonio, Texas

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**R. Tyler Whitlock**  
Buckeye, Arizona

**Opal F. Williams**  
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**J.D. Winscott**  
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## Finishing Strong

*When you  
love people,  
they will  
return your love  
and support  
your vision.*



**I began pastoring when I was 29 years old.** In the first 2 years, I learned a great deal that was not covered in my college or seminary curriculum. I do not fault my education for this; there are some things we cannot and do not learn until we engage in life experience. Here are some principles I discovered early on. Following these principles will help you have effective ministry now and will also help you finish strong.

**The call will hold you through tough times.**

I could not have survived the first 2 years of ministry (or the rest) without an inner sense that I was in the center of God's will. Make sure you are where you are because the Lord wants you there, not because it is a great opportunity or the compensation package is appealing.

**Build on your own strengths.** It is natural for a young minister to feel insecure. His insecurity can lead to his attempting to imitate an older, successful minister or some other person's way of doing things. Take stock of what you are good at and what your gifts are. Focus on your strengths and then get other people to do what you are not that good at.

**Lay foundations strong enough to bear the weight God will later place on you.** Tall buildings require deep foundations. Take time in the early years of your ministry to develop thorough ministerial preparation and discipline. Many ministers experience burnout in midlife because they never developed exegetical and hermeneutical skills, a personal prayer life, or habits of study. This shallowness leads to their own spiritual starvation and that of their congregation. Discipline yourself to study 15 to 20 hours a week.

**Your strengths are not enough.** There is a limit to what your education, training, and gifting can accomplish. The work you are in is not yours; it is God's. As multitalented as the apostle Paul was, he understood that the gospel comes "not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). A church or ministry will not grow unless you rely on God's power.

**Take care of things.** In my first year of pastoring, I felt the Lord speak to me about the unsightly

lot next to the church: *If you cannot take care of the lawn, how can you take care of people?* I scheduled a workday and we planted new grass. Within 6 months the church tripled from 100 to 300. Was it the lawn? I think it was the principle. Take care of things. Keep facilities well maintained. Have office hours. Return phone calls. Answer the mail. Do everything with excellence.

**Love people more than your vision.** In my first year of pastoring, I almost made the fatal mistake of elevating my vision for the church to such heights that I was willing to run over people to make it happen. I was ready to divide the board and the congregation to force my vision. Fortunately, the Spirit whispered four words into my heart, *George, fast your tongue.* The Lord helped me become a uniter rather than a divider. When you love people, they will return your love and support your vision.

**If leadership is not united, the people will be divided.** In my pastoral years, there was only one time when I went ahead with a major decision that did not have the unanimous support of church leadership. The nature of the issue required that I choose truth over unity. If you try to move ahead on major decisions without unity in the leadership, there will be disunity in the congregation. It is better to take time for prayer and fasting than to charge full speed ahead.

**Put the King and the Kingdom first.** In my first 6 months as pastor, church membership declined from 73 to 49. After a severe time, the Spirit spoke this word into my heart: *George, I am not interested in building this church on your personality. It must be built on Mine. Put Me and My kingdom first, and I will take care of the rest.* From that moment on, I tried consciously to never attach the personal pronoun *my* to the church or to any staff member or employee. It was not my church — it was His. We also learned that giving to advance the Great Commission throughout the world had to be a top priority. The Lord will bless a missionary-minded pastor and church.

*Enrichment* journal has provided this second part of the ministry roadmap to help you navigate the journey of your call. I trust you will use these articles to help you have effective ministry now so you can finish strong. ☺

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