

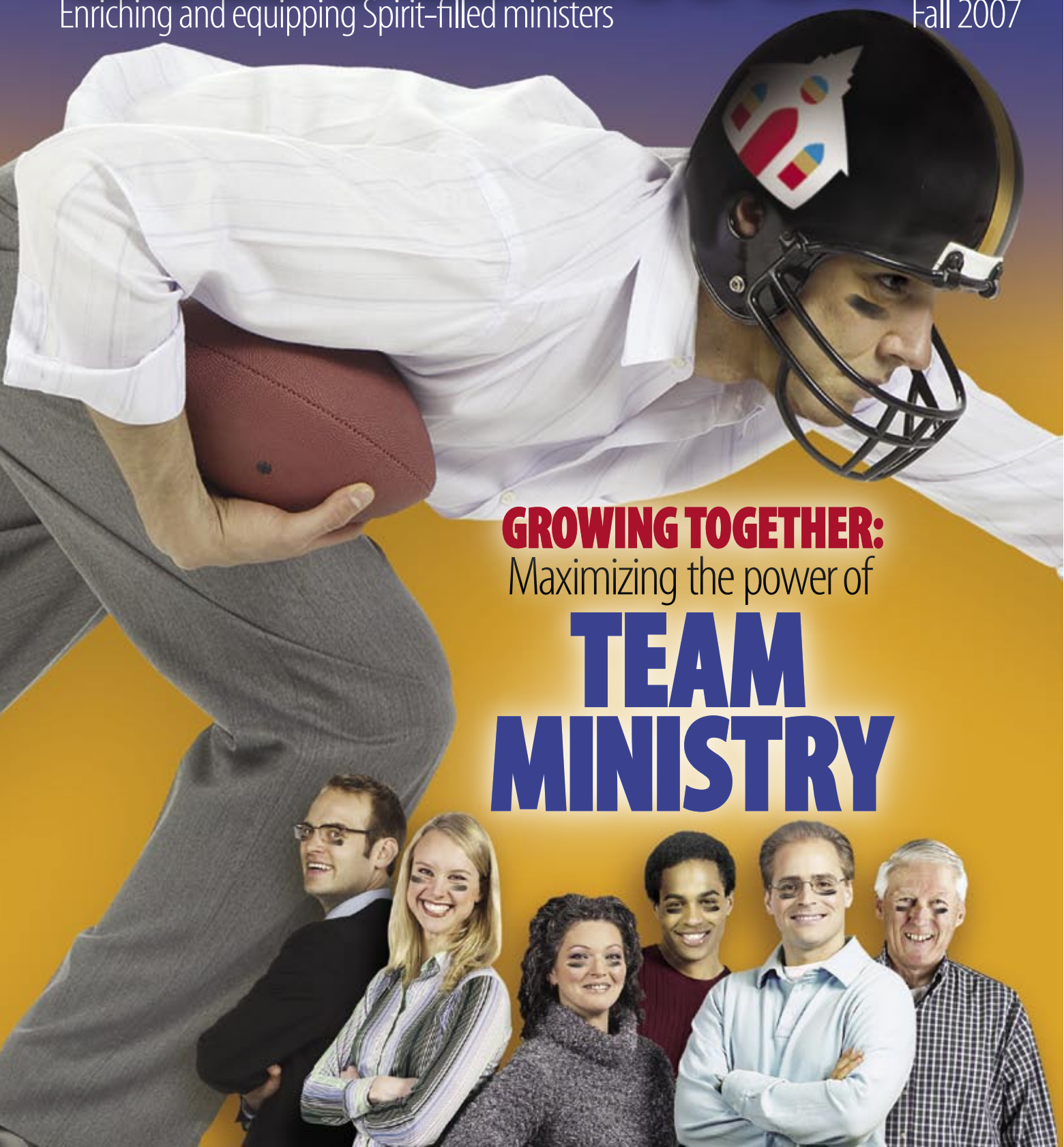


How to help your staff perform better, relate better 54

# enrichment

Enriching and equipping Spirit-filled ministers

Fall 2007



**GROWING TOGETHER:**  
Maximizing the power of

## TEAM MINISTRY

## It Takes a Team

*A great staff is built by mutually supportive people who minister for the good of the community of faith.*



**A** staff pastor is invaluable. It is difficult to measure the scope of influence and attach a true value to an effective staff member. Staff pastors expand the effectiveness of the senior pastor as well as establish their own invaluable ministry in the church. Together they build a ministry team.

### The Joys of Staff

I was a staff pastor for 5 years and a senior pastor for 20 years. My staff experience was rewarding because I had great senior pastor/mentors. As a senior pastor, I had some of the best staff pastors. I received personal fulfillment in watching them grow and develop in character and ministry skills. Investing in them and their families was easy because loving pastors had invested in my wife and me during the early years of our ministry.

### Be Willing To Sacrifice

I never hired a staff member when the church could afford it. It was always a step of faith for the church, the staff member, and me. But God always provided.

Pastor, be willing to sacrifice your own financial increase for more staff if needed. Additional staff can grow the church to the benefit of everyone. Be certain the staff benefits economically as church finances increase.

As a staff member, be willing to sacrifice to come alongside of an effective senior pastor who needs you and is willing to increase your remuneration as the church grows. A staff pastor who finds a great senior pastor is as valuable as a senior pastor who finds a great staff member.

### There Is Neither Male or Female

Pastor, consider the best person for the ministry position. We are blessed to have wonderful men and women graduating from

our Bible colleges, universities, seminary, and nontraditional schools. Never overlook or hire any staff member on the basis of gender only. That is discrimination. In the workplace that is illegal.

Look around your congregation. Are there men and women called into ministry who you could mentor and place in appropriate leadership positions before they leave for Bible college or seminary? Nurture them and help them get a great start even in a volunteer staff role. Provide them with a positive, rewarding ministry experience.

### Lifetime Staff or Leadership Progression


Many successful staff ministers have spent their entire ministry as a staff pastor. That is great, but it may not be the ideal role for every staff pastor. Many senior pastors are more effective because of the excellent mentoring/coaching they received as a staff pastor. The church is the best environment for effective ministry mentoring and coaching.

### Aspire To Be a Senior Pastor

It is admirable to aspire to be a senior pastor, but it is wrong to conspire to take your senior pastor's job. Usually, when transitioning from a staff pastor to a senior pastor, it is better to begin fresh in a different environment and establish your own senior pastor identity.

### Paul and Timothy Needed Each Other

Effective senior pastors need loyal, effective staff members; and, staff members need loyal, supportive senior pastors. A great staff is built by mutually supportive people who minister for the good of the community of faith. The lives of Paul and Timothy are worth studying as a biblical model of ministry teaming and partnership.

The *Enrichment* staff hopes this issue will help and encourage both senior and staff pastors. We have always tried to include materials for staff members in *Enrichment*, but this is the first time we have made staff ministry the emphasis. Let us know if we have been effective by e-mailing us at [enrichmentjournal@ag.org](mailto:enrichmentjournal@ag.org). 



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



## **GROWING TOGETHER:** Maximizing the power of **TEAM MINISTRY**

14 **ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT**  
**The Role and Care of Church Staff**  
INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK  
Consider these common-sense reflections on pastor-staff dynamics.

20 **Synergy: The Multiplying Impact of Ministry Teams**  
J. DAVID ARNETT  
To be truly effective, ministry teams must possess the unity, mutuality, and interconnectedness of a well-functioning body.

26 **Becoming the Kind of Leader Others Want To Follow**  
BRUCE MCNICHOL  
While many pastors work hard to develop performance-based skills, relatively few are intentional about developing character. In fact, many simply do not know how.

34 **Mentoring That Produces Great Spiritual Leaders**  
J. DON GEORGE  
The model mentor of the universe is Jesus. We would do well to consider His principles of mentoring.

44 **The Insecure Pastor**  
SAMUEL RIMA, SR.  
What can a pastor do to defeat the destructive dynamics of personal insecurity? Consider these steps to overcoming this dark side of leadership.

54 **Taking Staff to Higher Levels of Performance & Relationship**  
TIM HAGER  
Pastors and staff can climb to higher levels of relationship and performance by practicing these basic team-building principles.

62 **Turning Future Stars Into Real Treasures: A Strategy for Building High-Performance Team Members**  
MARK RUTLAND  
Seeing ministry players mature into a finely tuned team that makes great plays and wins the big games is rewarding.

70 **Can't We All Just Get Along?**  
GARY L. MCINTOSH  
Numerous problems may be encountered in team ministry. Consider these suggestions for minimizing conflict and helping pastors and their staff get along.

78 **Building an Effective Ministry Team in the Smaller Church**  
GLENN DAMAN  
How can the smaller church effectively staff its ministry and develop effective teams when it relies on volunteers?

84 **The JENGA Staffing Principle**  
DAN REILAND  
Consider these principles to understanding the nature of staff changes and how to optimize even the difficult ones.

92 **In Search of Timothy: Traits of Great Supportive Ministers**  
TONY COOKE  
What are the characteristics of a profitable assistant? Here are 10 essential traits to look for when hiring supportive staff.

98 **Can You Lead From the Second Chair?**  
MIKE BONEM and ROGER PATTERSON  
How understanding the paradoxes of second-chair leadership will help you thrive in your supportive ministry role.



84



98



**ENRICHMENT** (ISSN 1082-1791) is published quarterly (January, April, July, October), ©2007 by The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65802. Assemblies of God ministers may reproduce nonbyline material from *Enrichment* in church publications, giving credit to the journal. Except for brief quotations, signed articles may not be reprinted without permission of the authors. Subscription rates: USA - 1 year \$24; 2 years \$42. Outside USA add \$18 per year. Subscriptions: All subscription correspondence, including change of address, should be sent to *Enrichment*, Customer Services, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802, phone 1-800-641-4310. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, Missouri, and at additional mailing offices. Printed in the USA. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Enrichment, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802.**

### **GROWING TOGETHER:** Maximizing the power of **TEAM MINISTRY**

6  shorts

18 ej News & Trends

112 ej Online

## EDITORIALS

2 **Ministry Matters**  
GARY R. ALLEN

160 **In Closing**  
RICK KNOTH

## COLUMNS

114 *THEOLOGICAL ENRICHMENT*  
**The Sins of Generational Curse**  
W.E. NUNNALLY

122 *THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF PASTORAL CARE*  
**What Pastors Can Do To Help Victims of Domestic Violence in the Church**  
GRANT L. MARTIN

126 *HISTORY IS HIS STORY*  
**The Great Pelagian Controversy**  
WILLIAM P. FARLEY

130 *MINISTRY & MEDICAL ETHICS*  
**Healthy Habits for Sustaining Effective Ministry**  
CHRISTINA M.H. POWELL

134 *Q&A FOR PASTORS' WIVES*  
**Adjusting to a Change in Ministry**  
GABRIELE RIENAS

136 *REACHING SECULAR UNIVERSITIES*  
**University of Central Arkansas: Praying Up a Storm**  
RUSTY WRIGHT

138 *REAL LIFE PREACHING*  
**Carpe Digital: Taking Your Preaching Off-Road Via Godcasting**  
MARK BATTERSON

140 *CLERGY, CHURCH & LAW*  
**How Pension Reform Legislation Affects Your Church: The 10 Most Important Changes for Churches and Staff**  
RICHARD R. HAMMAR

## DEPARTMENTS

- 12 **Church Profile**
- 16 **A Chat With Pastors**
- 146 **Sermon Seeds**
- 150 **Book Reviews**
- 154 **News and Resources**
- 157 **Marketplace**
- 158 **With Christ**
- 159 **Advertising Index**



Next time in **enrichment**

### **DISCIPLESHIP:** The Neglected Mandate

Why are Christians not more like Christ? This is the crisis at the heart of the church today. The dismal state of discipleship in the church begs us to readdress this issue again. While most churches have programs for this purpose, most pastors fail to see the need for biblical discipleship that transforms the heart and turns ordinary Christians into extraordinary followers of Christ. In this issue you will read compelling essays by Earl Creps, Brett Eastman, Stephen Lim, Greg Ogden, Shane Warren, Michael J. Wilkins, and others.

#### EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Gary R. Allen

#### MANAGING EDITOR

Rick Knoth

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Richard Schoonover

#### ASSISTANT EDITOR

Kevin Wilson

#### ADVERTISING/PROMOTIONS COORDINATOR

Steve Lopez

#### OFFICE COORDINATOR

Connie Cross

#### GRAPHICS/DESIGN

Design Services



#### PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERY

Thomas E. Trask (general superintendent), C. Dan Betzer, James K. Bridges, L. John Bueno, Warren D. Bullock, Charles T. Crabtree, Charles E. Crank, Richard L. Dresselhaus, Douglas E. Fulenwider, L. Alton Garrison, J. Don George, Nam Soo Kim, Jesse Miranda, Jr., John M. Palmer, H. Robert Rhoden, Zollie L. Smith, Jr., George O. Wood

#### ADVERTISING

For information on print or online advertising, call Steve Lopez at 417-862-2781, ext. 4097; go to [enrichmentjournal.ag.org](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org) (click on Advertise); or E-mail [slopez@ag.org](mailto:slopez@ag.org).

#### ADVERTISING POLICY

*Enrichment* does not endorse any advertiser or product. Claims made in an advertisement are the sole responsibility of the advertiser. *Enrichment* reserves the right to reject any advertisement that is inconsistent with the journal's objectives, editorial convictions, and Assemblies of God doctrine.

#### E-MAIL:

[enrichmentjournal@ag.org](mailto:enrichmentjournal@ag.org)

#### WEB SITE:

[www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org](http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org)



Member of  
Evangelical  
Press Association



Member of  
International  
Pentecostal  
Press Association

- Use of the masculine pronoun for pastor is used throughout this issue and refers to both genders.
- All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.
- Cover photographs: Photos.com.



**BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS**

**MEET  
GENERATION  
NEXT**

**A** new generation has come of age, shaped by an unprecedented revolution in technology and dramatic events both at

home and abroad. They are *Generation Next*, the cohort of young adults who have grown up with personal computers, cell phones and the Internet and are now taking their place in a world where the only constant is rapid change. *Generation Next* includes Americans 18 to 25 years old.

- **They use technology and the Internet** to connect with people in new and distinctive ways. Text messaging, instant messaging, and e-mail keep them in constant contact with friends.
- **They are the look-at-me generation.** More than 4 in 10 have created personal profiles on a social networking site such as Facebook, MySpace, and MyYearbook.
- **They are more likely than older adults to say cyber tools make it easier for them to make new friends** and help them to stay close to old friends and family.
- **About half of Gen Nexters say the growing number of immigrants to the United States strengthens the country** — more than any generation. They also lead the way in their support for gay marriage and acceptance of interracial dating.
- **They maintain close contact** with parents and family.
- **About half of Gen Nexters say they have either gotten a tattoo**, dyed their hair an untraditional color, or had body piercing in a place other than their ear lobe.
- **One-in-five Gen Nexters say they have no religious affiliation**, or are atheist or agnostic.
- Four percent of Gen Nexters say **people in their generation view becoming more spiritual as their most important goal in life.**
- **They are somewhat more interested in keeping up with politics and national affairs** than were young people a generation ago.
- **More Gen Nexters identify with the Democratic Party**, making *Generation Next* the least Republican generation.
- **They are significantly less cynical about government** and political leaders than are other Americans or the previous generation of young people.
- **Their heroes are close and familiar.** When asked to name someone they admire, they are twice as likely as older Americans to name a family member, teacher, or mentor.
- **They are more comfortable with globalization** and new ways of doing work.
- Most Gen Nexters say **their generation's top goals are fortune and fame.** ☺

**SOURCE:** Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, January 9, 2007. To read the full report, visit <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=300>



**CROSSROADS**

**In the CROSSHAIRS**

**Shrill voices are rising** from the publishing houses, movies studios, and network offices of the cultural elites in North America and Western Europe. Book publishers are turning out best sellers like Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* that suggests all religion is socially dangerous and calls for removal of respect for anything so destructive to the world. Sam Harris' recent *Letter to a Christian Nation* calls religion a travesty of good ethical behavior and champions what he calls a conversational intolerance for all things religious.



Richard Wear/DesignFics

Media offers a growing diet of movie blockbusters such as *The DaVinci Code*. New discoveries fill documentaries with faith-threatening offerings such as the *Gospel of Judas* and James Cameron's discovery of the real tomb of Jesus' earthly family. Rosie O'Donnell offers her view that radical Christianity is just as threatening as radical Islam, and Bill Maher suggests Christians are "just demagogues, con men, and scolds."

When descriptors of people of faith (particularly evangelical Christians) include "murderously intolerant," "yearning for apocalyptic violence" and "fevered by religious radicalism," it is easy to become defensive and circle the wagons. These current circumstances call for reasoned responses that engage this secularist agenda with substantive rhetoric.

We also need to compare our experiences with those of other Christians around the world. Aggressive action against Christianity is global. John's Gospel offers the continuing reality that darkness does not comprehend light and even has an aversion to the light Jesus came to offer (1:5). The sobering fact is, where Christianity is the most vital, opposition to followers of Jesus is the most aggressive. ☺

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



Photos.com

**GET THE POINT**

# 10 Easy Ways To Know You Are **Not** a Leader

**watch people a great deal** — some in person, some on television. I look for signs of leadership. Great leaders surround me. Because of that, I know what great leadership looks like. I fall in the group that believes God gifts some to be leaders. This means some have gifts that do not include leadership, and that is a good thing. We need a great mix of gifts to have an impact

in ministry. It would not be good if we only had leaders.

As I've watched for leaders to emerge these last several weeks, I've noticed that people have different personality types. Some are genuine leaders. Some are in leadership positions, but they are not really leaders. Some are not in a leadership position but think they should be. All of this has made me think about leadership and signs that indicate when someone is not a leader. Feel free to add and subtract from this list. Here are 10 easy ways to know you are not a leader:

1. You are waiting on a bigger staff and more money to accomplish your vision.
2. You think you need to be in charge to have influence.
3. You are content.
4. You foster division instead of generating helpful dialogue.
5. You think you need to say something to be heard.
6. You find it easier to blame others for your circumstances than to take responsibility for solutions.
7. It has been some time since you last said, "I messed up."
8. The task drives you instead of relationships and the vision.
9. Your dreams are so small that people think they can be achieved.
10. No one is following you. 🔄

**SOURCE:** Tony Morgan, <http://www.tonymorganlive.com>

**WORSHIP TRENDS**

## Karaoke Church?

**On April 4, 2007, The Intelligence Group, a market research and trend consulting firm** specializing in the consumer behavior of 8- to 39-year-olds, posted a blurb on its trendcentral® International Trend Update e-letter. It explained the alternative services some Catholic churches in Barcelona, Spain, are offering to get more (younger) bodies in the pews, including karaoke-style worship. Curious about what karaoke worship might be, I read further. Apparently, it means placing a big screen next to the pulpit so when people sing, they can follow along in a karaoke-style way.

Reading the full blurb on Catholic karaoke church, gave me two thoughts: (1) *Whew. That's a relief. I can't imagine a priest rendering a Sinatra-like I Did It My Way between the entrance song and the offertory,* and (2) *What's so novel about this? We've been projecting words on a big screen or a blank wall since the early 1970s.*

This novel approach by some Catholic churches in Spain makes sense, but what about us? Just because we have been doing big-screen worship for years does not mean that we get it. Changing fonts or backgrounds on every stanza of a worship song will not guarantee more participation, particularly from younger members of our churches.

While they may desire a participatory worship style, our younger members are not content to be consumer participants of preproduced worship experiences. What they want is creative participation in designing their worship experiences. Lest we fear this only means loud rock music and dimly lit rooms, their eclectic tastes respectively leave room for more traditional forms of worship, both music and otherwise.

Practical tip: Add a young person's perspective into the mix of your worship planning, including your sermons. And sometimes Do It Their Way (karaoke pun intended). 🔄

**RANDY C. WALLS**, director of Continuing Education, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

**GET THE POINT**

# 10 Easy Ways To Make Your Church Services More Boring

One of the most frequent reasons people cite for not attending church is that the services are boring. The only place there should be boring churches is in Boring, Oregon, where I have identified, with the help of Google, that there are actually 25 Boring churches.

If I were intentionally setting out to create another boring church, here are 10 easy ways that could be used to make church services more boring:

1. **Do not worry about when you finish.** No one has plans after the service.
2. **Use Scriptures only and no stories.** Jesus did not teach that way, but you are a better communicator than Jesus, right?
3. **Television and movies are just a phase.** People do not need visual stimulation; they prefer talking heads.
4. **Use the same service order** every week with no exceptions whatsoever.
5. **Make more announcements.**
6. **Encourage elementary school children to sit through your services.** They love lively 45-minute sermons. It is good for them. It builds character.
7. **Talk more about the past and less about the future.**
8. **Play the same Chris Tomlin song every week,** and sing the chorus one more time.
9. **Use many big words that no one uses** in normal, everyday life.
10. **Forget relevant topics and life application.** People are only interested in hearing what you think, not why it matters to them.

Okay, you probably get the point. The question is: What are you doing to make your services memorable and impacting?



Or, do you believe unchurched people — people who are not in a relationship with Jesus — should just be expected to show up and put up with something they perceive as boring?

**SOURCE:** Tony Morgan, <http://www.tonymorganlive.com>

**WHAT IN THE WORLD**

## The Self-sacrifice of a Loving Father

**Following a family celebration on Thanksgiving Day 2006,** James Kim, his wife, and two young daughters (4 years old, and 7 months old) drove toward the Oregon Coast. No one expected the tragic outcome that would result.

On November 25, after stopping for a meal at a Denny's restaurant in Roseburg, Oregon, the 35-year-old San Francisco Internet journalist proceeded with his family in their 2005 Saab station wagon. The weather worsened as the Kim family headed west toward Gold Beach, where they had reservations for the night. Missing a turn, the Kim family became stranded on a snowy mountain road. With no cell phone reception and limited gas, the family waited for help.

While James' wife Katie fed their two daughters breast milk, James burned one of the car's tires to generate heat. After a week of waiting, James decided to go for help. He never returned.

Two days later, search helicopters found Katie and her two girls. Critics then began to second-guess the father: "If only he had stayed put, the entire family would have been rescued." But their criticism was premature.

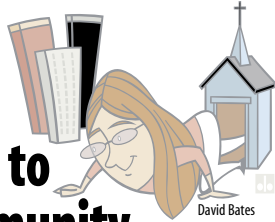
Because Kim had struck out on his own, rescuers in a search helicopter found his footprints in the snow. Search and rescue teams were then alerted to the fact Kim's wife and daughters were in the vicinity. Kim was a Christlike figure. His selfless efforts were the means by which his family was saved. Kim sacrificed his life so his family would survive.

Jesus words ring true, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

**GREG ASIMAKOPOULOS,** Mercer Island, Washington



# Taking It to the Community



David Bates

**How do you describe youth ministry?** Is it 100 teens you disciple each week? That is awesome, but imagine what might happen if our definition of youth ministry reached beyond the church and into the community? Ginger Sinsabaugh McDonald, author of *Help! I'm an Urban Youth Worker*, says it is important to continually introduce teens to reality role models. She offers suggestions such as introducing a graphic designer to your group's tag artist. Great idea. But let's reverse that. What about youth pastors serving as role models to teens who might never come to church?

Several months ago I realized that my world had become confined to believers only. I wrote and spoke to Christian teens and adults, and even my friends and family are believers. I decided to search for opportunities to serve outside the faith community. I discovered a mentoring program designed for freshmen girls called the 2010 Challenge. As part of the program, I speak in different high schools in my city, and am one of several women who connect with girls who might need direction or a listening ear.

The commitment level has worked well with my full-time ministry schedule, and the few hours I have invested in my community have reaped many benefits. I have made several new friends outside the faith community and connected with 475 freshmen girls in my city. The teens and adults know that I write about faith. Even though I do not speak about faith in the school system, students are free to ask questions on their own time; and, many have, which allows me to listen, and to share my faith openly. But even more, I have opportunity to live out my beliefs as I serve.

What about your community? Are there opportunities that might fit your skills and passion? According to Josh McDowell, 56 percent of teens attend church. Perhaps expanding your youth ministry by serving within the community might impact the remaining 44 percent. ☺

**T. SUZANNE ELLER** is an author and youth sponsor. She can be reached at [tseller@daretobelieve.org](mailto:tseller@daretobelieve.org). See real teens sharing real life stories at <http://www.daretobelieve.org>

**NOTES**

1. Quote: "Logos in the Hood," by Ginger Sinsabaugh McDonald, <http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/media/logos.php>
2. Statistic: Over half of teens (56 percent) attend church on a given Sunday. Teen Statistics, compiled by Josh McDowell. <http://www.josh.org/notes/file/Internet16-TeenStatistics.pdf>.

**THE HIM BEHIND THE HYMN**

# Thirsting for God in a Desert Place



Photos.com

**T**hirty years ago, Marty Nystrom graduated from Oral Roberts University with a degree in Music Education. His heart's desire, however, was to serve the Lord in a music ministry. His years at ORU, including a stint with the World Action Singers, had whetted his appetite to lead others in praise.

After graduation, Nystrom entered a spiritual wasteland — a dry, barren season. "It was a time when I could not honestly say that I sought Jesus Christ," Nystrom recalls. "Instead of seeking the Source of my thirst, I sought the approval of people and position in ministry."

Then in the summer of 1981, Nystrom was invited by a former ORU classmate to attend summer school at Christ for the Nations. This would be a place to acknowledge his spiritual thirst and seek the Lord.

"At summer school I felt led to fast," Nystrom admits. "And in laying myself before the Lord, He showed me that my primary calling was not for position in ministry, but to be a worshiper of God."

During that time at Christ for the Nations, Nystrom sat at a piano, opened his Bible, and sang out his praise to the Lord. The words of Psalm 42 seemed relevant to where he was in his life.

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1,2).

Nystrom began to play a haunting melody that supported the plaintive words of the Psalmist. In a short time he had written his first praise chorus. A quarter of a century later, Nystrom's autobiographical expression of praise continues to be sung by congregations around the globe. By his own admission, it is the testimony of all who genuinely seek Jesus Christ, wanting more of Him.

You alone are my strength, my shield;  
To you alone may my spirit yield.  
You alone are my heart's desire,  
And I long to worship you. ☺

**GREG ASIMAKOPOULOS**, Mercer Island, Washington



**MEMBERSHIP & GROWTH TRENDS**

# Assemblies of God Fastest Growing Faith

**The Assemblies of God, the Mormon Church, and the Roman Catholic Church were the fastest growing major denominations** in the United States last year, according to the just-released 2006 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches.

The Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal church, grew 1.81 percent to just under 2.8 million members. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints increased 1.74 percent to nearly 6 million people. The Catholic Church, by far the largest denomination in the United States, grew .83 percent to 67.8 million.

Only three mainline Protestant churches remain among the 10 largest U.S. denominations. The United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., stayed in the top 10 despite declines in membership last year.

The Methodists ranked third, with about 8.2 million members. The Evangelical Lutherans ranked seventh, with nearly 4.9 million people. Presbyterians ranked ninth with just under 3.2 million congregants. ☺

**SOURCE:** The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, <http://pewforum.org/news/display.php?NewsID=10315>

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

**Where Were You on Sunday?**

**Why do Americans attend church?**

Those who do not attend base their decision on a variety of reasons. A recent Gallup Panel survey asked Americans about their usual church-attending behavior, and followed up with an open-ended question asking them to explain their attendance or lack thereof in their own words.

When asked **how often they attended church or synagogue**, people responded:

**ATTENDANCE**

Once a week . . . . .	35 percent
Almost every week . . . . .	10 percent
About once a month . . . . .	10 percent
Seldom . . . . .	28 percent
Never . . . . .	16 percent
No opinion. . . . .	Less than 0.5 percent

When asked **the most important reason why they attended church or synagogue**, people who attend church services at least monthly responded:

**REASON**

For spiritual growth and guidance	23 percent
Keeps me grounded/inspired . . .	20 percent
It is my faith . . . . .	15 percent
To worship God . . . . .	15 percent
The fellowship of other members/the community . . . . .	13 percent
Believe in God/believe in religion	12 percent
Brought up that way/a family value or tradition . . . . .	12 percent
Other . . . . .	4 percent
No reason in particular . . . . .	1 percent
No opinion . . . . .	Less than 0.5 percent

**Reasons for Not Attending Church**

There are two groups of reasons why Americans seldom or never attend church. The first is what can be called rational reasons, or reasons based on more



explicit decisions or patterns of belief.

The second set of reasons are practical, and do not by themselves signify any specific opposition to attending church, but rather an acknowledgment that respondents' life situations

get in the way of their attending religious services.

When asked what is **the most important reason why you do not attend church or synagogue**, people who seldom or never attended church responded:

**RATIONAL REASONS**

Don't agree with organized religion/what they preach . . . . .	24 percent
Don't believe in going to church	16 percent
Atheist/Don't believe in God . . .	10 percent
Church wants/asks for too much money . . . . .	3 percent

**PRACTICAL REASONS**

Don't have time/Don't get around to it . . . . .	21%
Don't have a church I connect with . . . . .	9%
I'm lazy . . . . .	6%
Poor health/Disabled . . . . .	2%
Family members are different religions . . .	1%
Other . . . . .	5%
No reason in particular . . . . .	6%
No opinion . . . . .	3%

**Bottom Line**

Those who study religious behavior often focus on more underlying reasons for church attendance, such as habit, socialization, need for community, business, development, and validation of one's status and standing in the community. These reasons are infrequently given by church attendees themselves, suggesting that the explanations attendees give are more accurate, more easily at hand cognitively, or more normatively acceptable. ☺

**SOURCE:** The Gallup Organization, Princeton, New Jersey. Copyright © 2007. All rights reserved.



Photos.com

**LEADERLIFE**

**Got Discontinuity?**

**We live in an era much like that of Luther and Gutenberg.** The invention of the printing press offered an information highway that moved Western society toward the individualized world we have grown up with. Luther's German translation of the Bible and translations in other languages were broadly distributed, and the Western world transitioned into a new era. We live in a similar time. Changes are occurring that will forever transform our culture. This discontinuous change is typified by working harder with one's skills and systems, yet not addressing the challenges faced; realizing that new unpredictable environments mean new skills are needed; and concluding that there is no going back to normal.<sup>1</sup>

Experiencing this era of discontinuous change leaves most church leaders feeling as though they are trained to play baseball and now everyone is playing basketball — the game and rules have changed. Many church leaders feel unprepared to meet the challenge. The response of many pastoral teams is to seek successful models of church effectiveness and transplant these models in their local context with the assumption that if it works in their church, it will work in our church.

Repackaging old paradigms will not work, and asking the question *How?* without the accompanying questions *Why?* is counterproductive. Leadership teams for the 21st century need to help their congregations understand the extent to which many current models of church effectiveness are, in reality, misdirecting the church from faithful witness in our world. Leaders must create an environment where God's people can discern new forms of ministry life and witness, and anticipate and thrive in the midst of ambiguity and discontinuity. ☺

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

**NOTE**

1. See Alan Roxburgh, Fred Romanuk and Eddie Gibbs, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church To Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

## SPIRITUAL LIFE

# Small Groups

The following statistics and analysis come from a national survey conducted by Barna Research. In Barna Research Group studies, small groups are defined as groups that meet during the week for the purpose of prayer, Bible study, or spiritual fellowship, excluding Sunday School or other church classes.

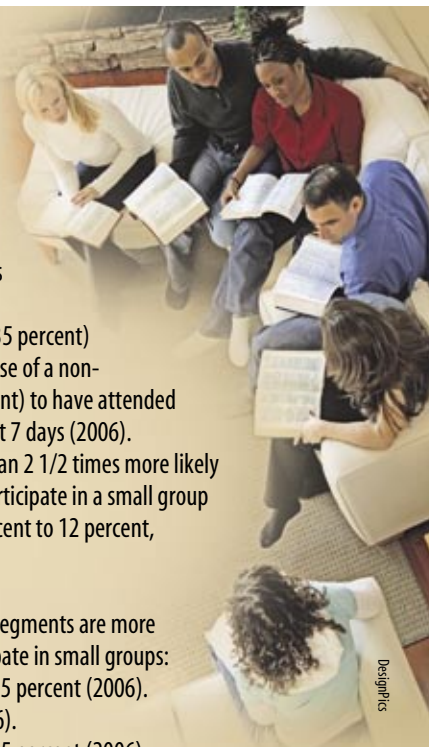
### Participation

- Participation in a small group in a typical week:  
1994: **12%**      2000: **17%**      2004: **20%**  
1996: **17%**      2001: **16%**      2005: **23%**  
1997: **18%**      2002: **18%**      2006: **23%**
- Twenty percent of men participated in a small group that met during the week for the purpose of prayer, Bible study, or spiritual fellowship (excluding Sunday School or other church classes) compared to 9 percent in 1994 (2006).
- Women's participation in small groups has risen to 26 percent in 2006, compared to 19 percent in 1996.
- Participation in small groups in the West has doubled from 11 percent in 1994 to 22 percent in 2006.

- Black adults are more likely (43 percent) to attend groups during the week as are Hispanics (20 percent), whites (20 percent), and Asians (21 percent, 2006).
- Born-again Christians (35 percent) are more likely than those of a non-Christian faith (20 percent) to have attended a small group in the past 7 days (2006).
- Protestants are more than 2 1/2 times more likely than are Catholics to participate in a small group in a given week (32 percent to 12 percent, respectively, 2006).

The following population segments are more likely than average to participate in small groups:

- Evangelical Christians, 55 percent (2006).
- Blacks, 43 percent (2006).
- Born-again Christians, 35 percent (2006).
- Nonmainline attendees, 37 percent (2006).
- Residents of the South, 28 percent (2006).
- Females, 26 percent (2006).



Designpics

SOURCE: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=45>

## FIELD TRIP

# CREATING A LEARNING COMMUNITY

**"Learning is not compulsory ... neither is survival."**

The sage words of business expert W. Edwards Deming echo the exhortations of Proverbs, clearly communicat-

ing the value and necessity of constant learning. For the church, whose mission could not be farther from the low standard of mere survival, learning that envisions a future and maps the course must take priority.

Missionary Chip Block, pastor of International Christian Center in Nairobi, Kenya, understands the importance of coaching pastors to embrace the principles of a learning organization.

Not content with numeric growth (which he describes as "tremendous" in the last few years), Block observed a disconnect between the church's vision and its strategy and set out to remedy the problem.

Thorough research of relevant literature and assessment of both the church culture and its staff led to efforts to raise the level of learning for the pastors as individuals and as a team and the church collectively. Critical to the learning process was a willingness to confront harsh realities, including the fact much of their growth may be attributed to transfers and not conversion. Block taught a two-day pastors' coaching clinic focused on

understanding culture, shaping culture according to values, and adopting a team-style leadership model.

Participating pastors enthusiastically interacted with the material. "Indicative of their learning stance was a commonly expressed desire to continue to ask questions. One interesting outcome in the pre- and posttest results showed a decrease in feeling equipped to lead a learning organization. Far from negative, the finding demonstrates a key learning for any community — the ability to humbly acknowledge the need to grow.

The applications of Block's research extend beyond the mission field to any church or organization seeking success in its mission. To learn more about his research or coaching clinic, please contact Chip Block through Assemblies of God World Missions.

**LORI O'DEA**, teaching and small groups pastor, The Oaks Fellowship, Red Oak, Texas



Photos.com

CHURCH PROFILE

# Hope

Amid the RUINS



Destroyed by a tornado, the church in Greensburg, Kansas, ministers to the hurting and plans to rebuild.

BY ARLICE DAVENPORT



Pastor Christa Zapfe leafs through a *Book of Hope* outside the ruins of the church.



Sanctuary exterior before the tornado.

Jeremy Gundling



Sanctuary exterior after the tornado.

**No pulpits, no pews, no altars remain in the small Kansas town of Greensburg** — only debris and heartache, and a will to persevere.

On the night of May 4, 2007, a massive, EF5 tornado swept across the southwestern Plains, killing 12 people and devastating 95 percent of Greensburg.

Businesses, homes, and monuments lay flattened or heaped in rubble.

All the town's churches were destroyed, including Lighthouse Worship Center Assembly of God, a 73-year-old congregation of about 30 members.

And though no physical signs of the church stand to call the faithful, Pastor Christa Zapfe sees signs of hope and healing amid the ruins — signs that signal her church's rebirth in the months and years ahead.

"While none of the bricks, metal, and wood are lying in the same place," she said, "the people of Greensburg have never been so strong and so open to the love of the Lord.

"Men, women, and children who once turned away from the very mention of God are now allowing us to pray with them.

"Men, women and children who once allowed sports, work, and recreation to rule their schedules are now calling for worship services to resume.

"Men, women and children who once believed that they were okay, now openly speak of their need for Jesus Christ."

Meeting those spiritual needs can be a challenge when all your church members have lost their homes, and church facilities no longer exist.

But with the assistance of the Kansas District Council, other Assemblies of God churches across the country, and an army of local volunteers, Greensburg's scattered congregation is ministering to the hurting and planning to rebuild.

"By the help of the Spirit and work of God's people, we will have a strong voice and meaningful presence in that town and county," said Terry Yancey, superintendent of the Kansas District.

He added that Zapfe and her congregation "are poised to be the spiritual architects of the new Greensburg and oversee the spiritual reclamation" of the town.

Zapfe is also working with local officials and government agencies to arrange the physical reclamation of her church.

Until then, members meet on Wednesday nights in the home of a family in Haviland, a town 15 miles east of Greensburg. On Sundays, the congregation gathers to worship under a large tent on church property.

"We will continue to meet under our tent and enjoy the open air until the Lord allows us to rebuild," Zapfe said.

Presbyter Dwight Dozier, coordinator of AG disaster relief efforts in Greensburg, is committed to the rebuilding process, which he says will present ministry opportunities for months to come.

"We must be in this for the long haul," he said.

"Financial contributions and offers to help rebuild the church and parsonage continue to pour in. Response from the national fellowship has been impressive," Yancey said.

Teams from Texas, Mississippi, Washington, and Florida have expressed an interest in helping.

Closer to home, Missionary Associates Don and LaVada Wood, construction coordinators for the Kansas District, have relocated to the Greensburg area to work with Dozier to oversee the rebuilding.

They, too, are committed to the long haul. "Does the Kansas Assemblies of God have staying power in dealing with a crisis?" Dozier asked.

"Yes, I believe we do."

He and Zapfe and others in the Kansas District are showing how the spirit of the Plains and the spirit of Pentecost can work together to rebuild a town and church — body and soul. ☺

## CORRECTION

The fifth paragraph in the church profile article on page 105 in the summer 2007 *Enrichment* journal contained an error. The original wording indicated that Carlos Paniagua was senior pastor. It should have read:

He was part of a team that planted Christ Tabernacle in New York City under the direction of Jim Cymbala and Brooklyn Tabernacle. Four years later he became associate pastor and in the following 14 years saw the church grow to a congregation of 2,000.

We apologize for this error.



**ARLICE DAVENPORT** edits the "Faith & Values" section for *The Wichita Eagle* in Wichita, Kansas. His wife, Laura, is publications coordinator for the Kansas District Council of the Assemblies of God.

## The Role and Care of Church Staff

**G**eneral Superintendent Thomas E. Trask understands the role of the senior pastor when it comes to working with and enriching pastoral staff. Throughout his years of pastoring he mentored many pastoral staff members and helped them excel in ministry. In his quarterly interview with *Enrichment*, Trask shares from his rich experience as senior pastor on how to effectively work with and mentor pastoral staff.

### **When a church considers hiring its first staff member, what position should the church fill?**

**TRASK:** Churches have different needs. When a church is ready to hire its first staff member, it must ask: What is our vision and need? Once this question is answered, the church can decide what position to fill. For some it will be a youth pastor; for others, a children's pastor or Christian education director. Some churches might need to combine ministry positions until the church grows to the point where they can hire additional staff.

### **What are the dynamics of having women on staff?**

**TRASK:** Women staff members are valuable, especially as a congregation grows. The diversity of the congregation almost demands that there be diversity in the staff. Whether it is ethnic or gender diversity, a diverse staff sends a tremendous message to the body of Christ. Having women on staff is healthy for the body of Christ and healthy for these women as they utilize their ministry gifts.

The Assemblies of God embraces women in the ministry. Recently, I was in two churches where the senior associate is a woman. It is encouraging to women who feel God's call to vocational ministry to see other women ministering in the church.

### **How can the senior pastor teach the congregation about its responsibility to support staff?**

**TRASK:** Several areas of importance need addressed regarding congregational responsibility to staff. First, the congregation has a fiscal responsibility to care for staff. The church must make ample provision for financial compensation so staff members can take care of their families and met their responsibilities and needs.

Second, church members need to understand

they cannot pit staff members against the senior pastor. When the senior pastor's leadership is being challenged, church members cannot expect a staff pastor to support their opposition concerning the senior pastor.

A staff pastor must support the senior pastor. If a staff member cannot to this, he or she has a responsibility to resign. It is unfair — even when the staff pastor has support in the congregation — for that staff member to stay and undermine the leadership of the senior pastor.

Third, the congregation needs to understand that only the senior pastor has the right to select staff members. Neither the board nor the congregation selects staff members. The senior pastor may ask for the advice and support of the board or even the congregation before he makes his decision. Staff members work for the senior pastor to serve the congregation.

### **What advice would you give a staff member who is working for a difficult pastor?**

**TRASK:** A staff member who is working for a difficult pastor must have a great deal of patience. The first question I would ask is: Are you in the will of God? It is as important for a staff member to know he or she is in God's will as it is for the senior pastor to know he is in God's will.

Open communication is essential. If communication is lacking between the staff member and the senior pastor, tension will continue to build. The situation might come to a point where a change must be made simply because the chemistry is not there.

It is important to understand that one person's problem may not be another person's problem. If there is a lack of chemistry between a staff member and a senior pastor, it may appear to others that the senior pastor is unfit to lead. When in reality, the problem is not his inability to lead staff, but rather a lack of chemistry between the two personalities. When the next staff member comes in, he may not have the same experience with the senior pastor.

It is true, however, that some senior pastors are difficult to work for. Some consider a staff member to be a hireling instead of a team



“  
My goal was  
to see my  
staff succeed.  
I never viewed  
a successful  
staff member as  
competition.”

member. This is unfortunate and unfair to the staff member.

### How does a senior pastor deal with a difficult staff member?

**TRASK:** First, it is important that the senior pastor do thorough referral research to know the person coming on staff is a match for the position, for the church, and for the senior pastor. This helps remove the possibility of obtaining a difficult staff member. Ask: *What is the track record of the staff member? Did he have problems at another church?* If so, it is likely he will bring those problems with him. This is not always the case, but there is a high probability this may happen. If the senior pastor does thorough research and does an in depth interview, his problems with this staff member can be minimized.

If problems do arise with the staff pastor, the first thing the senior pastor must do is discuss the situation with the staff member. The longer the senior pastor lets the situation continue, the more difficult it will be to manage.

Deal with the issue. Be forthright. Hold the staff member accountable. If the staff member is not willing to be accountable or willing to make the necessary changes, then he will need to resign. In this case, the senior pastor must give ample time for that change to take place. He must give fair compensation and be as fair as possible in all other matters related to the staff transition.

### What about those who believe they are called to be staff members for life?

**TRASK:** I had such a staff member. He had served my predecessor for 25 years, and he stayed on with me for another 11 years, until his retirement. He said, "Brother Trask, God has never called me to be a senior pastor. I don't want your job." He was fulfilled because he knew his calling.

Some people are called to be staff members. They can fulfill their calling and role with superiority. They can be a blessing both to the church, the kingdom of God, and the senior pastor, and never chafe under their role.

### Explain why being a staff member is good experience for becoming a senior pastor.

**TRASK:** When I was a senior pastor, other churches would often try to hire my staff to be their senior pastor. This was a compliment to the church and to me. The reason people were on my staff was because they were good at what they did.

Serving as a staff pastor provides wonderful training and practical ministry experience, especially for the staff member who feels called

to become a senior pastor. If a person can learn from someone else's mistakes, he does not need to take that class himself.

### Discuss your most rewarding experiences involving staff.

**TRASK:** My goal was to see my staff succeed. I never viewed a successful staff member as competition. Unfortunately, some pastors are insecure. When they see a staff member succeed, they want to make a change because they cannot share success. That is unfortunate. My joy was in seeing my staff members fulfilled.

In selecting staff, I tried to find people who would complement my ministry. Most of us cannot be successful in every aspect of ministry. Some excel in preaching, some in teaching, and some in prayer and other auxiliary ministries. When you see people succeed and then go on to be used of God in ministry, it is a great reward.

When I accepted the senior pastorate of a church, one of my goals was to reproduce myself. When I left the pastorate to come to Springfield, 32 people from my congregation had gone into full-time ministry. Many of those individuals are pastoring great churches today. To me, there is no greater reward than seeing them be used of God, and to see how they have grown and matured. There were times when I wanted to fire some of them, but God would not let me. I am sure other pastors have had that experience. But now when I see how they have blossomed and are used of the Lord, it is such a reward and such a joy.

### Any concluding thoughts on church staff?

**TRASK:** To senior pastors I would say be patient and caring. You never know what a staff member might become. He might be the next Billy Graham; she might be another Lillian Trasher.

We have a great opportunity to powerfully impact the kingdom of God by hiring staff members who have potential to be used of God. Our Fellowship has many young people who are committed, dedicated, passionate, talented, and excellent. They are also technology savvy. It is a great day and opportunity for the church and for a senior pastor.

It is also a great day for staff members. In the past many AG churches could not afford staff members. Today, many young people coming out of our Bible colleges and universities are able to find staff positions in churches that can take care of them financially. To staff members I would say be diligent, committed, and loyal. God has a great future for you. 🌱



*We have a great opportunity to powerfully impact the kingdom of God by hiring staff members who have potential to be used of God.*





## Defining Truths of the Assemblies of God: Divine Healing

**In this series on the four cardinal doctrines of the Assemblies of God, I turn our attention to the subject of divine healing.**

In Mark 2, Jesus healed a man who was lowered through the roof. Jesus said to the man: "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (verse 5).<sup>1</sup> The scribes and Pharisees murmured in their hearts. Jesus exposed their faultfinding: "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" (verse 9). There are not two kinds of faith; there is one faith. The faith a person needs to be saved is the same faith a person needs to be healed.

In the Book of James, James wrote, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray" (5:13). We can pray when we are afflicted. But then James continued, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (verses 14, 15). We are instructed to lay hands on the sick, anoint them with oil, and pray the prayer of faith. I do not heal; you do not heal.

The sovereignty of God is difficult to understand. Why does He heal some and not heal others? I do not know. But this is not for me to figure out or question. My responsibility is to do what I have been instructed to do as a minister of the gospel: pray for the sick, anoint them with oil, and leave the results in the hands of the Lord.

Years ago I was studying divine healing. At that time, evangelists were telling people they were healed, but those who were supposedly healed later died. The Lord showed me something that was liberating: No Scripture instructs a minister to tell people they are healed. I only need to pray the prayer of faith. There are times when God gives the pastor a word of knowledge. Then he can proclaim with confidence that a person has been healed. But to tell everyone you pray for they are healed is a mistake because of God's sovereignty.

Someone might say, "When God doesn't heal, it shakes my faith." On the contrary, it should ground us in our trust in Him. Scripture says: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

Suppose I said to the infinite God, "God, You've got to do it my way."

God might reply, "No, I know what's best, and I will do what is best in this situation."

The power of prayer is marvelous. As a pastor I regularly had prayer for the sick. At times, people who did not even belong to our church came for prayer. Give people opportunity to be prayed for. Pray the prayer of faith and the Lord will raise them up. That is His responsibility.

Divine healing was provided for in the Atonement. When Jesus died on Calvary, the provision for healing was made. Scripture says, "With his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Our responsibility is to come in faith and pray, believing that the Lord will perform the miraculous. As a result, He gets the glory.

Years ago when my father was a board member at the Assembly of God in Brainerd, Minnesota, a man named Wally Johnstone had a hideous cancer on his lip. The cancer had been removed but had grown back. The doctors told Wally that the cancer would progress and he would die.

Johnstone, a new Christian, was reading James 5:14. He called the pastor and said, "Pastor, get the deacons over here and pray for me."

The pastor called my father and said, "Waldo, have the deacon board meet me at Johnstone's house."

When they arrived Wally said, "I was reading in James that if anyone is sick he needs to call for the elders of the church who are to anoint him with oil and pray the prayer of faith. I've done what the Lord told me to do. Now, anoint me with oil, lay hands on me, pray the prayer of faith, and the Lord is going to heal me."

So they anointed him with oil, and began to pray. While they were praying, the cancer fell off Johnstone's lip. He lived to be 92 years old.

Johnstone acted on the Word, and the Lord confirmed His Word. God expects us to obey His Word. Pastors, pray the prayer of faith, give opportunity for people to be prayed for, and the Lord will heal.

May the Lord richly bless you. 🙏

### NOTE

1. Scripture passages are KJV.



"Divine Healing"  
by Ron DiCianni

*The faith  
a person needs  
to be saved  
is the same faith  
a person needs  
to be healed.*





## Discipleship Ministry Improves Retention Rate

How one congregation keeps new converts coming back week after week

**A**s part of an evangelistic Fellowship, many Assemblies of God pastors have found success in asking non-Christians to raise their hands for salvation at Sunday morning services. But along with most evangelical church bodies, AG congregations have had a difficult time keeping those people coming back week after week.

Ismael "Pancho" Flores, outreach and follow-up pastor at Oak Park Christian Center in Pleasant Hill, California, is driven to change that. As founder of New Believer Concepts, Flores stresses two key elements:

laity rather than clergy doing the follow-up, plus the discipleship occurring one-on-one rather than in a teacher-classroom setting.

Since implementing the method Flores designed in 2001, Oak Park Christian Center has a new Christian retention rate topping 50 percent. In contrast, the Assemblies of God's Northern California-Nevada District had 268,000 converts from 1995 to 2005, but only 8,040 became part of church bodies, a retention rate of just 3 percent.

"When someone comes looking for a church, the church may have wonderful things to offer, but a lot

EXIT



"The church may have wonderful things to offer, but a lot of times these new people don't stay long enough to find out."

— Ismael "Pancho" Flores

of times these new people don't stay long enough to find out," Flores says. The New Believers Concepts follow-up begins the day

after the salvation commitment and involves teaching seven private weekly lessons and an additional seven calls by appointment during the first 7 weeks.

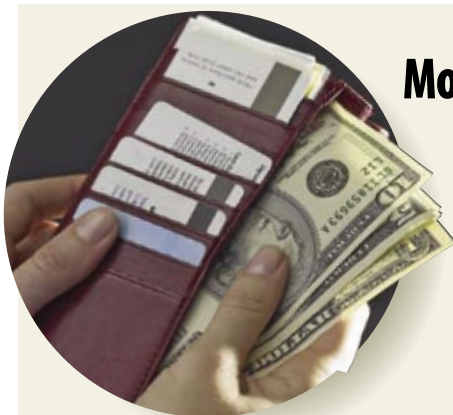
Matching common characteristics is a key to success, Flores says. For instance, a single mother who loves God and is a faithful church attendee is uniquely qualified to minister to a new convert in similar circumstances.

At the end of the 7 weeks, the new believer is ready to be integrated into the congregation, Flores says.

"For this to work, the church must provide a nurturing climate in terms of unity, love, and good teaching,"

Flores told *Enrichment*.

For more information on the ministry, see <http://www.newbelieverconcepts.com>



## More Proof Needed for Itemized Cash Donations

**A new law that took effect earlier this year** means that churchgoers no longer may deduct cash donations to their congregations without producing a bank statement or receipt from the church.

"The law was enacted for one reason: to

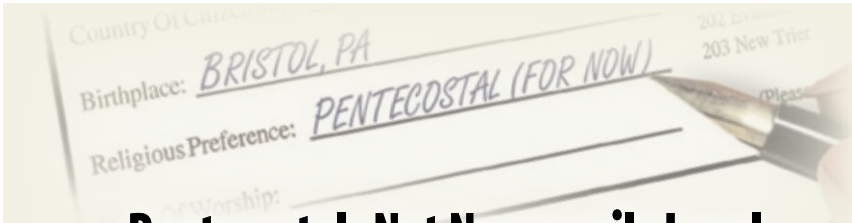
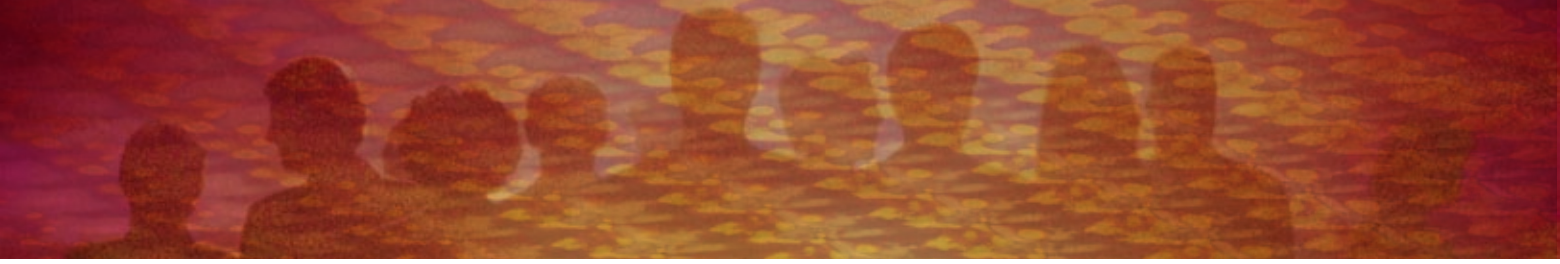
eliminate the revenue loss associated with unsubstantiated contributions," says Assemblies of God Attorney Richard Hammar, author of the bimonthly newsletter Church Law & Tax Report.

Hammar explains that in the past donors could substantiate cash gifts under \$250 with a canceled check, statement from the church, or "other reliable written records." But as part of changes resulting from enactment of the Pension Protection Act, donors no longer can rely on diaries, notes to themselves, or personal bank registers to document cash contributions to charities as an authenticated record.

"The new law bars donors from using other reliable records to substantiate cash contributions of any amount," Hammar told *Enrichment*. "This means that only canceled checks or donee statements will suffice."

Hammar says that while givers still may use church envelopes to make cash contributions, there must be a written receipt from the church to qualify as a tax-deductible contribution.

However, many people putting greenbacks in the collection plate are not itemizing charitable deductions. The standard deduction for married couples filing jointly was \$10,300 for 2006 returns.



## Pentecostals Not Necessarily Loyal

**Pentecostals are the most likely Protestant group to say denominational allegiance does not matter,** according to a recent survey by Ellison Research. Although 62 percent of Pentecostals say they definitely plan to continue attending the church where they currently worship, 3 out of 10 say it will not matter whether they look for another Pentecostal church if they decide to change congregations. For all faith groups the average is about half that, 16 percent.

Four out of every 10 persons in a Pentecostal church has been attending 2 years or less. Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians all had comparable figures under 30 percent. Conversely, only a dozen members of the typical Pentecostal congregation have attended for 20 years or more, compared to 26 percent for the other groups. Pentecostals also had the lowest average years at the same church (8.1 versus 13.7 overall) and shortest median years at the same church (5 versus 6.6

for every denomination measured).

Ron Sellers, president of the Phoenix-based research company, says the statistics show that pastors need to have a strategic plan for incorporating newcomers into congregational life. He warns ministers and denominational officials not to take for granted that laypeople will faithfully stick around as many did in previous generations.

"In a typical Protestant congregation, one-third of the people in the pews are not definite in their plans to continue attending that church," Sellers says. "It's important that pastors or denominational leaders don't automatically assume the people in the pews are 'our people' because the data suggest a significant minority don't hold a level of loyalty."

## Organization Seeking Christian Books

**A**fter reading the results of a Christian Booksellers Association study that the average believer in the United States owns nine Bibles, Christian Resources International Executive Director Fred Palmerston began a campaign to get some of those Scriptures into the hands of those new to the faith in the developing world.

CRI receives more than 250 letters a month from pastors and Christian

workers in Africa, Asia, and South America who have no Bibles — or Christian books of any kind.

"In our country the church isn't growing so much, but the pile on every Christian's book-shelf sure is," says Palmerston, who is retired and offering his services full time to CRI.

Palmerston launched Operation Bare Your Bookshelf (<http://www.bareyourbookshelf.com>) to help get the resources of well-stocked Americans into the hands of those lacking literature elsewhere.

Although the organization is nondenominational, CRI matches requests of Pentecostal believers looking for Pentecostal materials.

"If we get a request from a Pentecostal in Nigeria, we try to meet their needs by lining up with their belief system,"

Palmerston told *Enrichment*.

And the ministry is looking for a spectrum of books besides Scripture.

"We accept used Sunday School materials, theological books, and anything with good moral content," Palmerston says. "We need the books from the seminary days of pastors who are thinking of retiring, books they will never read again but that would be a great blessing to people who have a couple of theological books at the most."

Visitors to the CRI Web site enter their name, address, and denomination and then will receive free mailing materials (with CRI return address labels) needed to send Christian books to a specific pastor or Christian worker overseas. The ministry also will send the request letter so the donor can get to know and pray for the recipient by name. CRI passes along thank you letters generated by the packages sent by book contributors.

---

**Operation Bare Your Bookshelf helps bring the resources of well-stocked Americans to those lacking literature elsewhere.**





Synergistic support teams are vital to the proper functioning of the church.

# Synergy:

## The Multiplying Impact of Ministry Teams

By J. David Arnett

I hate to rake leaves. When unseasonably warm weather came to Missouri, I decided to use my riding mower to mulch the piles of crimson and golden leaves that cluttered my yard. The plan worked well until I began mowing the slope near the driveway. The mower lost traction on the wet leaves, slid sideways, and wedged itself into the neighbor's fence.

I tried to go forward, reverse, faster, and slower. I got off to push, pull, and kick the mower. Each attempt to free the metal beast made the situation worse. Humbly, I went into the house to ask my son for help. With the addition of his muscles, we quickly pushed the mower through the mounds of maple tree debris.

My problem was too difficult for one person. However, when a support person joined me, we accomplished the task with ease.

Team members working together to produce an effect greater than the sum of their individual

efforts is *synergism*. Long ago, the writer of Ecclesiastes wrote about synergy, "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

The multiplying impact of synergy is a lesson the contemporary church must learn. Synergistic support teams are vital to the proper functioning of the church. The task of evangelizing the world and building effective churches is too complex for one person — no matter how visionary, gifted, and experienced a leader he may be.

### Great Leaders Are Humble Enough To Accept Support

Moses was a great leader. He demonstrated special traits and skills by leading 603,550 men plus their families out of Egyptian slavery (Numbers 1:46). Unfortunately, when studying Moses' leadership traits, many scholars overlook the fact Moses had a significant support team and was humble enough to accept their advice and help: "Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3).

### Be humble enough to recruit team members with different proficiencies

According to Jewish tradition, when Moses was a small child, he picked up a glowing coal. He quickly dropped it. When he put his fingers into his mouth to soothe them, a few glowing

---

embers clung to his hand. These cinders burned his lips and tongue. Moses struggled with a slight lisp the rest of his life.<sup>1</sup>

When God called him to liberate the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, Moses felt inadequate and insecure. He described himself as “slow of speech and tongue” (Exodus 4:10). Although angered by Moses’ obvious lack of faith, God responded to Moses’ apprehension by offering Aaron (Moses’ older brother) as a spokesperson. Aaron was proficient

the Israelites at Rephidim, Moses recognized his need for a support team. He delegated leadership of the combat troops to Joshua. He then assumed the posture of an intercessor. Moses stood on top of a hill with his hands raised. In one hand he held the staff he had used to display the miraculous power and provision of God.

Moses realized that while Joshua battled bravely in the valley below, the outcome was determined at a spiritual level above: “As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were

sermon. This one-man show was far from the biblical pattern for a church service. Paul wrote, “When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church” (1 Corinthians 14:26). Churches will be much stronger if pastors will be humble enough to permit broad-based participation.

### **Be humble enough to delegate responsibilities to others**

When some people hear the phrase *advice from the in-laws*, they recoil with defensiveness. Moses was not one of these people. He was humble enough to accept advice from his father-in-law, Jethro.

After watching Moses put in a hard day of work as the sole arbiter for the people of Israel, Jethro offered some sound advice: “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people — men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain — and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they

---

## Contemporary church leaders need to learn from Moses and recruit team members who are proficient in areas where the leader is limited.

---

where Moses was limited. Aaron could provide encouragement and emotional support to his brother as Moses faced numerous leadership challenges.

Contemporary church leaders need to learn from Moses and recruit team members who are proficient in areas where the leader is limited. If a leader is strong as a preacher or teacher but weak in business administration, he needs to add team members who are capable in administration. If a pastor is introverted and task-oriented, he needs to recruit team members who are gregarious and people-focused. If all team members have the same personalities, gifts, and skills, some team members are probably not needed.

### **Be humble enough to accept support from the team**

When the Amalekites attacked

winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning” (Exodus 17:11).

Although he was a great leader and intercessor, Moses was human. He grew tired; he had difficulty holding up his hands. Moses needed help. His brother Aaron and his brother-in-law Hur came to his aid.<sup>2</sup> These two men formed a synergistic support team. They took a stone, put it under Moses, and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur kept Moses’ hands steady until Joshua vanquished the enemy. We can only imagine the tragedy if Moses had not had supportive prayer partners or he had tried to battle by himself.

Some years ago I visited a church where the pastoral team sat on the front pew while the senior pastor did everything in the worship service — welcome, leading worship, prayer, announcements, offering, and

---

## The contribution of an assistant pastor is not less important than that of the senior pastor. It is just different.

---

can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied" (Exodus 18:17–23).

How many pastors and church leaders burn out because they cannot admit their inability to handle the work alone? How many church members go home dissatisfied because a harried, strained pastor has not learned to delegate decision-making and ministry responsibilities to others?

### Be humble enough to respect the anointing resting on other team members

Moses' frustrations with the whining and complaining of the people he was leading spilled out in a grievance session with God. His words were full of anger and depression as he complained to God, "I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now" (Number 11:14,15). God's remedy for the maudlin Moses was to form a team of 70 elders to help carry the burden of leadership (verse 16). God anointed these elders with the same Holy Spirit who was resting on Moses.

Two of the elders — Eldad and Medad — did not follow God's instructions to gather at the Tent of Meeting. God anointed them anyway and they prophesied among

the people. Moses' assistant Joshua objected. They were prophesying in a location not endorsed by Moses and they should be stopped. Moses displayed humility again by setting aside jealousy and recognizing that the anointing rested on these men. He replied to Joshua, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them" (Numbers 11:29, see verses 24–29).

Modern church leaders need to learn to appreciate and respect the anointing of God that is resting on other team members — including those described by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson as second-chair leaders. (See their article "Can You Lead From the Second Chair?" on page 98.) These authors define a second-chair leader as "a person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization."<sup>3</sup> Second-chair leaders are not understudies waiting for their opportunity to come on stage as the star; their ministries are already significant in their own right. The contribution

of an assistant pastor is not less important than that of the senior pastor. It is just different.

Some years ago, a young father said to me, "Pastor, the reason my family and I attend this church is because of the children's pastor." I was not offended or jealous. Instead, I felt good — much like a parent who hears a tribute paid to his child. I agreed that the ministry of the children's pastor was vital to this couple and their precious children. I honored the pastor's anointing and skill in ministry to young families. I was also relieved he was part of our ministry team. I appreciated the synergy he brought to the diversified ministry team.

### Diversified Ministry Teams Are Vital for Healthy Churches

In the Old Testament, the patriarchs (Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) provided multifaceted ministry and leadership. They did everything. As they attempted to follow God's

©2007 Dik LaPine



**"I've discovered ministry to be nothing but a vicious cycle: a church calls you, you evangelize converts, you plug them into areas of ministry, you raise them up to positions of leadership, they then ask you to leave, another church calls you."**

---

leadership and serve their extended families, these men filled the roles of priest, prophet, judge, general, teacher, and preacher as various needs arose. As the people of God grew into a complex nation, however, God formalized the ministry and leadership functions into offices held by different individuals.

While under the theocracy, God called some to serve as prophets, others to act as priests and, periodically, some to lead as judges. The priests “cared for the temple worship, provided for the sacrifices, forgave sins, announced pardon, [and] comforted the people.”<sup>4</sup> Prophets thundered forth the messages of God and called people to repentance and to a demonstration of their faith. Periodically, God used judges to accomplish a specific task — usually to lead a temporary militia of liberation. Later, when the people of Israel requested an earthly potentate, God called and anointed a king to permanently fulfill the role of the judges. The kings managed the material affairs, settled disputes, and provided for the common defense.

According to Norman Shawchuck, “All three ministries were going on in the congregation at the same time, being carried out by different persons.”<sup>5</sup> To function properly as a society, the nation needed a balanced ministry team that included a prophet, a priest, and a potentate. Things worked well when each office holder faithfully fulfilled his distinctive role and respected the function of the others.

### **Ministering as servants in the body of Christ**

The New Testament clearly presents

the need for diversified and synergistic support teams. To be truly effective, however, ministry teams must possess the unity, mutuality, and interconnectedness of a well-functioning body — the body of Christ. According to Millard Erickson, the use of the body metaphor “emphasizes that the church is the locus of Christ’s activity now,

---

## **The New Testament clearly presents the need for diversified and synergistic support teams.**

---

just as was His physical body during His earthly ministry.”<sup>6</sup> As Christ’s hands and voice in the contemporary world, the church must behave and minister as Christ would. Christ, therefore, becomes the ultimate model for ministry.

One of Jesus’ most obvious leadership styles was servant-leadership. He said of himself, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). He taught this precept to His disciples — “the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves” (Luke 22:26).

According to Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, to be a true servant-leader the “desire to serve others must be stronger than the desire to lead — so leadership becomes a means of serving.”<sup>7</sup> Servant-leaders find joy in encouraging others. They do not demand credit for their ideas. They base their authority on character, not on the office they hold.

Servant-leaders avoid what Hans Finzel calls the “number one leadership sin.”<sup>8</sup> They stay away from “top-down autocratic arrogance.”<sup>9</sup> Greg Ogden observes that servant-leaders “shun the trappings of authority and status. Realizing that all are equals before Christ, they avoid titles that support hierarchical pecking orders and opt instead for functional

language that describes what a person does.”<sup>10</sup> While not writing from a strict theological perspective, Robert K. Greenleaf has defined servant-leadership by describing the process of becoming a servant-leader and then explaining how to evaluate one’s effectiveness. “The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”<sup>11</sup>

### **Out of the one Spirit comes many ministries**

Loving, Christlike body ministry fills a prominent role in Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church — a church plagued by divisions that revolved around preferred personalities and the exercise of spiritual gifts in general and likely the abuse of the gift of tongues in particular.<sup>12</sup> Paul reminded the divided church that it



---

is not strong human personalities but the Holy Spirit who builds the Body through “different kinds of gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:4). While varied, these graciously bestowed gifts find their unifying source in the Holy Spirit. Out of the one Spirit come many gifts, many kinds of service, and different workings (12:5,6). The Holy Spirit bestows the various gifts, services, and ministries for building up, strengthening, benefiting, and profiting the corporate body of Christ (12:7). Since the Holy Spirit decides which person ministers in what gift, no one should despise another person’s ministry.

### Many ministries contribute to a unified and healthy church

For the divided Corinthian church, Paul illustrated how there can be unity despite the diversity of spiritual gifts. Reversing his earlier emphasis that out of the one Spirit comes many ministries, Paul stressed that from many team members come one healthy church. To drive home his point, Paul used

perform its own function and not seek to function in a role for which God did not create it. Likewise, the members of the church with their various functions need each other (12:21). The members should have mutual respect and concern for each other and even for those who minister in the inconspicuous places (12:22,26). Each Christian has an important ministry as a part of that Body (12:27).

Paul concluded his treatment on spiritual gifts by asking a series of rhetorical questions, “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” (12:29,30). The implied answer to these questions is no. Since the Holy Spirit does not use anyone in all the gifts (even first-chair leaders), diversity is vital to a well-functioning church.

### It Is Time for a God-Thing

Commenting on the state of many contemporary churches, Reggie

will come when the contemporary church begins to take seriously the leadership role of the Holy Spirit in energizing and superintending the activities of the church. Leaders will stop relying on natural abilities and showmanship. Broad-based participation and synergistic ministry teams will emerge naturally. The Holy Spirit will diversify ministries and bring the miracle of mutual respect and loving unity to the churches. 🌀



**J. DAVID ARNETT, D.MIN.**, is associate professor of church ministries and Bible and theology, Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri.

### NOTES

1. Jonathan Hirsch, *Moses: A Life* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1998), 64.
2. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 3, chapter 2, paragraph 4.
3. Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading From the Second Chair: Serving Your Church Fulfilling Your Role and Realizing Your Dreams* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 2.
4. Norman Shawchuck, *What It Means To Be a Church Leader: A Biblical Point of View* (Indianapolis: Spiritual Growth Resources, 1984), 20.
5. Ibid.
6. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 1036.
7. Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving Others* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 35.
8. Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: ChariotVictor Publishing, 1994), 22.
9. Ibid.
10. Greg Ogden, “Servant Leadership” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 151.
11. Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Power of Servant Leadership* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1998), 1.
12. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 570,571.
13. Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

---

## Since the Holy Spirit decides which person ministers in what gift, no one should despise another person’s ministry.

---

the example of the human body. Just as a body with many parts is one body, the church is united in the Holy Spirit, even though it is comprised of persons from diverse backgrounds (12:12,13,20). In fact, diversity is necessary for a body to operate properly (12:14–19). Each part of the body must be willing to

McNeal wrote, “The truth is, many churches are more secular than the culture. Everything that transpires in them can be explained away in terms of human talent and ingenuity. Only when something goes on in church that can be explained as a God-thing will a spiritually fascinated culture pause to take notice.”<sup>13</sup> This God-thing

# Becoming the Kind of Leader

# Others Want To Follow

By Bruce McNichol

“Why is George Barna upset?”  
My friend’s question should not  
have stunned me, but it did.  
“Why should George Barna be  
upset that the Christian culture  
statistically mirrors the pagan  
culture? Christians have always  
reflected their culture.”

This businessman — as an astute observer — continued, “When I trek through Africa, the African-Christians carry the same colonial-bonded worldview and money issues as their non-Christian counterparts. When I journey to Russia, Christians have about the same rate of depression and corruption as Russian unbelievers. A century ago the marriages of North American Christians lasted longer, just as *all* marriages were enjoying longevity. So, why should it surprise us that North American data demonstrates that Christians divorce at the same rate as non-Christians; or,

that at conventions youth leaders view adult films in their hotel rooms with the same regularity as their non-Christian counterparts? No one glows in the dark.”

Are you the kind of leader those on your staff want to follow? Being successful in ministry is a driving passion for all of us. But too often during our ascent, we compromise our character to reach a performance goal, forgetting that lasting, positive influence depends on the kind of person we become, not simply on the titles, power, or wealth we’ve achieved. While many pastors work hard to develop performance-based skills, relatively few are intentional about developing character. In fact, many simply do not know how.

### What Would You Say to My Friend?

Nothing is so powerful as the *right* answer to my friend’s question. Churches have invested billions in trying to influence North American culture. In fact, they continue to do so. News flash: It isn’t working.

What is going on? Our responses to this troubling issue of why Christians tend to live like those who do not know Jesus will determine much about our Kingdom endeavors in the marketplace and in the



Grace is a relational life process that gives Christians and spiritual leaders, like yourself, a way out of hiding and pretending and a way into the people they dreamed they might one day become.

church — whether we are healthy, growing, maturing, reaching, and leading the culture — or sadly only reflecting it. Our answer to this culture question will also tell a great deal about how pastors develop staff and lead congregations.

### No One Glows in the Dark

As with Barna, we need to be distressed concerning the statistics listed above. But my friend's last statement is the real news bulletin: *No one glows in the dark.*

The church's standard of godliness coerces people to hide their behaviors. When people are driven into hiding, they stop glowing. They stop experiencing the power of God's light, grace, and truth. They become a self-referencing, closed system. Gradually darkness takes over. They no longer fellowship in the light. They begin to think differently. Their shame motivates a disastrous progression of behaviors.

The church is forcing its own to behave like those with no light,

except it is far worse. Christians are compelling each other to pretend they are living up to the standard. This process of appearing pious has turned believers into poorly behaving liars. As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and a new heart of Christ; but striving to be godly while hiding produces Christians who behave much like those who do not know Jesus.

Why? Because God has so designed the relational essence of Christianity that when a person chooses not to live in the light of community he will gradually lose his spiritual health. It does not matter who he is — how educated, how wealthy, how committed, how honored or decorated, or how many years he has been a Christian — he will not glow in the dark. Barna, Gallup, and other pollsters support this reality.

### Preaching Another Gospel

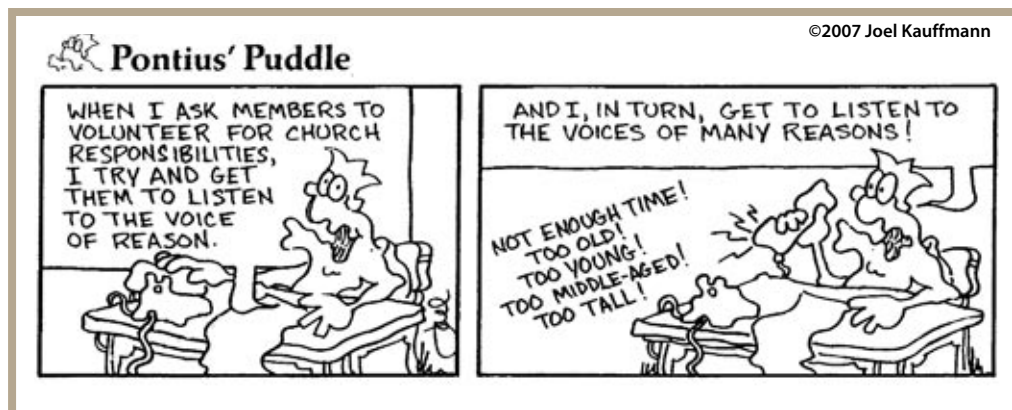
Have you noticed that the tragic cultural data always involves *relationships*? This is all the more

heartbreaking because Christianity is a faith that is based on relationships. Christianity is rooted in the relationship of the Trinity who lives, loves, and leads in a realm of grace.

The truths of grace ground the core relational reality of God's universe. Missing this relational reality produces a fatal flaw in one's Christianity — a virus that corrupts one's worldview. This crisis derails the core of our Christian experience. On a large scale, this defect negates the Christian community's impact on culture.

There is a way of living a Christian life that many believers have apparently missed; a basic grasp of the gospel has escaped their notice. When something this foundational concerning our faith goes awry, it requires sweeping change — a conversion in how we understand the Christian life, a revolution of grace. Grace revises the way we see our world. Revolution means rotation, upheaval, turn, conversion. Grace propels believers onto a different orbit and into a new world.

Join me on a tour into this new world of grace. Grace is a relational life process that gives Christians and spiritual leaders, like yourself, a way *out* of hiding and pretending and a way *into* the people they dreamed they might one day become. We will make five stops on this tour.



### Stage 1: Awakening to Pain

Sooner or later a person awakens to the pain of not being able to control his life the way he thought he could or the way he used to. The truth is people have never been in control of their lives. People wake up to this pain because they experience a crisis, pressure,

failure, or trigger point. If you have ever bumped a bruise you did not realize you had, you know what it is like to awaken late to an existing problem.

When people become aware of their pain they often try to solve the symptoms without help from others. In their isolation they make assumptions about themselves — who they are, how they are doing, how they are affecting others. But without grace and personal truth, what a person thinks is right is often distorted.

### Standard procedure: awaken to pain, put on mask

Over time, most people notice that their struggle with painful sin issues is not going away. But as Christians, they believe it is important that others think they are succeeding, managing, and enjoying victory. Thus, believers hide behind a mask. To maintain appearances, believers paste more and more layers on the mask just to hold it together. Their real thoughts, emotions, and behaviors — that are threatening and inappropriate — scare them. They make statements they do not believe and pretend to like things they dislike. Some Christians have become human time bombs — resentful, guarded, and ready to blow. They need a great deal of downtime to be alone and free from the pressure of pretending.

Family and friends know something is wrong in these believers' lives, but they have stopped trying to work through the problems or concerns they have with these believers. They have learned not to bring up issues that push their hot buttons.

"Don't try to talk to him about. ... " "Don't ever bring up. ... " They tiptoe around these believers. "He's too thorny, too erratic." "She's too defensive, too unpredictable."

Many Christians admit to wearing masks but they have no idea how to

take them off. They are clueless about how they became like this. They blame their actions on circumstances or the pressure they are under.

How a Christian handles awakening to pain determines whether he tries to glow in the dark or in the light. Foolishly handling one's unresolved life issues is the root of the acute culture deficit in the church. Believers need an *encounter*. Since encounter is the least understood stage, I will invest the most space discussing it.

### Stage 2: Encountering a Protector

When a Christian is in pain or stuck in his life issues, he needs an encounter with a protector, not a controller. Many leaders attempt to control

## When a Christian is in pain or stuck in his life issues, he needs an encounter with a protector, not a controller.

emerging leaders so they do not make mistakes that will tarnish or embarrass the leader.

Controllers try to fix people. This is why people often try to solve their own problems. People do not need the aggravation of a fixer in their lives. Have you noticed that when people try to fix others, they do not stay fixed?

This encounter marker is anchored in the Old Testament truth of God's jealous love. God said to Israel, "If you will trust Me, I will protect you from various kinds of evil to which you are susceptible. If you do not trust Me, I cannot protect you. You will fall into various kinds of evil." Many times Israel proved God right in both instances. Notice, even God did not control; He offered protection.

What does a protector understand that a controller does not? Study this two-line diagram.

## Working on My Sin Issues

### Trusting Who God Says I Am

Those who have trusted Christ will continue to have sin issues, and they will continue to have the identity God gave them. These are constants, unchanging realities.

It is important to ask ourselves: *Which of these two constants defines my life? Which offers me the hope of experiencing the other?*

A person who opts for the top line will never experience the bottom line. A protector, however, understands that if a person focuses on the bottom

line he will experience unparalleled transformation regarding his sin issues in the top line.

### Counterintuitive living

In the 1980s, popular pictures were created that, at first glance, appeared to be nothing more than colorful patterns. Yet, if you relaxed your eyes and looked deeply into the pattern, you eventually saw a beautiful three-dimensional picture.

The first time you were able to see the hidden images was a remarkable moment. This is similar to our seeing all the way through the patterns of our sin and into the beautiful and astounding reality of who God says we are. Suddenly life is in three dimensions — alive, rich, and full of hope.

When a person is in pain he needs a friend who knows which direction

## Many leaders attempt to control emerging leaders so they do not make mistakes that will tarnish or embarrass the leader.

is up; a leader who will take him from the bottom line to the top line. Few Christian leaders understand this truth; because, like many biblical truths, it is counterintuitive. It appears that if a Christian were really serious about his sin issues he would start at the top and work downward with all the commitment possible so he would become godly. The opposite is true. Starting with the top line and working down is taking sin lightly. Starting on the bottom line by trusting who God says you are is the only way to take sin seriously.

Working from the top line becomes a law-driven effort, while launching from the bottom line is a grace-driven experience. The top line depends on one's power, which is futile; the bottom line depends on God's power. The difference between the two is self-effort versus God's effort.

Working from the top line, a person becomes his own savior; moving from the bottom line, he invites Jesus to be his Savior. (Remember, one becomes a Christian when he finally admits he can do nothing concerning his own sin.) If one starts with the top line, he becomes hopelessly tangled in trying to sin less — sin management. Welcome to failure. This is like someone rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic* so he can get a better view as the ship goes down. One who launches from trusting who God says He is replaces sin management with atonement. He will love more and sin less. Working on top-line sin issues first leads to hiddenness. Trusting who God says you are produces authenticity.

### How a protector handles sin

Imagine that a person is struggling with an overwhelming sin and he meets a controller instead of a protector. Picture this person struggling to forgive someone who has severely wronged him. The controller will ask him to work on his behavior. Controllers focus on symptoms, but these are not the real issue. A controller will ask him to reassess his commitment to Christ, because, "If you were really sold out to Christ, you would forgive the person who wronged you."

How has this approach been working? Not well. This person's commitment is not the problem. If it were, he would have forgiven the other person long ago.

A person hides his sin from a controller because leaders who start from the top line see others through this formula: More right behavior + Less wrong behavior = Godliness. This theology has two significant problems: First, it sets up people to fail and to live in hiddenness. Second, it disregards the godliness — the righteousness — that God has already placed in believers at infinite cost. The controller's formula will sabotage one's spiritual journey.

A protector, conversely, sees a person's unforgiveness and gives him space to discuss the pain and wounding he experienced. Remember, this person has just had an awakening to pain — the pain of not being able to control his life issues.

A protector will then take this person to the bottom line and remind him that even on his worst day he is a saint

who may still sin. The protector will ask him to consider who he would like to trust for his satisfaction and fulfillment in life — God or himself.

The protector does not focus on a person's behavior as much as on his relationships with others because the protector wants access to his heart. His focus is on relationships, not behavior. The protector knows that working on a person's sin first will never lead him to godliness; it will keep him trapped in his shame. The protector may not have the answers to this person's problems. The protector is not his counselor, but a friend who loves him.

The church is good at evangelistic love — proclaiming and sharing the gospel. The church does well at serving love — caring for people when they get into crisis or trauma. The church is growing rapidly in social-justice love — caring for the poor or those caught in cycles of injustice. But the church knows little about the protective love of this second stage — encounter.

The encounter leaves a person with a critical life choice we call *exchange*. If one misses the exchange, he has wasted the encounter.

### Stage 3: Exchange

Some believe Jesus said: "They will know you are my disciples by your *strategic plans*" (my rendering). Others thought He said "worship programs," "evangelistic endeavors," or "building projects." You fill in the blank. Whatever our compulsions, we have undervalued the highest value of Jesus: love.

Some believers do not cherish love because they have never learned the power of *receiving love* into their own lives. Leaders are big on giving love. Leaders are focused on giving out, not taking in. Leaders find fulfillment in seeing others benefit from using their gifts.

In fact, most leaders, after reading Jesus' command in John 13:34 to "love one another as I have loved you," think it is a command to *give* love. They have never considered that if this command is to be fulfilled, there must be *love-ees* to go with the *love-ers*.

Protective love assumes there is a love-ee in the relationship and that an exchange will take place. Someone

trusts another person to the point of giving him permission or access to his life — the handshake — the exchange. People cannot become healthy or mature in isolation. People can only glow in the light. Receiving love does that for them.

The catch is that receiving love requires trust. The two are inseparable. Remember this statement: The degree to which I trust you is the degree to

which I can receive your love, no matter how much love you have for me.

While leaders expect others to trust them, they do not relish trusting others with themselves. The hardest thing I have done is learning to consistently trust others with me. I am self-sufficient by temperament, training, and track record. This style worked for me in the past, but going it

## "You Can't Handle the Truth!"

Colonel Nathan Jessep (Jack Nicholson) hurled that zinger at young attorney Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee (Tom Cruise) in *A Few Good Men*. Minutes later his words boomeranged back into his veneered life with this harsh lesson: **Light brings truth out of hiding — either because we voluntarily disclose it or because we get caught. Jessep had traded off his integrity years earlier; the courtroom merely brought it to light.**

Aren't you glad we handle the truth differently than Jessep? *What a jerk*, you might think. *Glad I'm not like that*. But we have all played loose with the truth to keep things we valued — our reputation, career, income, agenda, or relationships — when we thought we could get away with it. When left to ourselves, we consistently prove that no one glows in the dark.

That's the snag we hit when we try to become leaders of integrity on our own. Left to ourselves we cannot handle the truth. As with Jessep, we lean toward manipulating reality if it means we can elude embarrassment, avoid bad grades, or sidestep rejection. How do people glow? How do you help a young leader develop integrity?

### You May Be Surprised How Integrity Is Formed

Most suggestions on how to develop integrity remind me of 2 Timothy 3:5, "having a form of godliness but denying its power." Try harder, buck up, commit. These suggestions sound right, even godly, but they do not work. They do not develop integrity. The true path to developing integrity is a road less traveled. The real answer, like most Kingdom truth, runs counter to what one might expect.

### Leader Development Insight

Integrity is formed when I am free to declare who I am and who I am not; and what I can do, and what I cannot do.

Do not be deceived. We cannot develop integrity on our own. We need a safe place where we can be who we are. In the absence of such an environment of grace we will hide the truth about ourselves to reach our goals.

We were not designed to develop character in isolation. Character words are relationship words. Character is formed in relationships, but tested in isolation.

That is why an atmosphere of grace is the perfect seedbed for developing integrity in a child, a teen, or an adult. Far from hiding or cheapening truth, grace allows truth to flow most freely. Grace is a safe place, not a soft place.

### Insight for Growing in Integrity

To get started in integrity one must take a step of vulnerability. Do not wait until you can muster up enough trust — just act. Give someone access to yourself. Trust someone with the truth of who you are. The alternative is to live with unresolved life issues and duplicity.



BRUCE MCNICHOL, Phoenix Arizona

## Protective love will determine the authenticity of your key relationships — marriage, family, staff, congregations, community, and beyond.

alone did nothing to heal my wounds, to mature me spiritually, or to form me emotionally. I was a great deal of work for others. (Some would say I can still be a great deal of work.)

We are often aware of the love others have for us. They want to guide us out of our tunnels, protect us from self-destructive actions, use their strengths to protect our weaknesses, tell us ways that would help us grow, and comfort us. We are aware of their love, but we have yet to experience it. Perfect love will never cast out your fears unless you trust it.

A lack of trust keeps people in isolation even when others surround them. Refusing to trust others with yourself will leave you with unresolved life issues. If you do not have exchange, you will not have breakthrough.

### Stage 4: Breakthrough

Shame drove me to various damaging actions until I became a Christian in seventh grade. Then I had victory over shame. But if you believe I never exhibit ungodly behavior, I have some ocean-front property in Phoenix, Arizona, to show you.

Thousands of Christians want to believe they will never have behavior issues after coming to Christ. They want the Christian life to work that way. They want to be *fixed*.

When I became a Christian my shame-driven dysfunctional behaviors did not cease. At salvation, I received a new heart, but I still had shame-driven self-stories to confront. Through

multiple encounters and exchanges, I have learned through the decades to trust who God says I am.

The church today often fails to realize that apart from physiological issues, a person's repetitive sinning is driven by shame. Shame began in the Garden with Adam and Eve and continues to this day. Jesus did not only die to save people from their sins; He died to give them a new identity, to replace the old shame-story with a saint-story, so they could begin to enjoy shame-free behavior. When they live out of a righteous new heart, the power of shame is broken.

Exchanging my trust when I encounter your protection brings hope to obtaining freedom from shame and a resolving of my life issues — issues that used to overwhelm me, no longer do. This is called breakthrough — a primary reason for authentic Christian community.

Having a breakthrough does not mean a person lives in sustained victory. This was my delusion during my early 20s. I thought I could reach *Christian nirvana*. A resolved sin — a breakthrough — is not a fixed sin, never to occur again, but an issue that has moved into the light. One could say, breakthrough represents victory *from* sin, not victory *over* sin.

Do you see why Jesus placed love at the top of the commands and as the top criteria for the watching world to assess Christianity? It is powerful. It brings people into the light. Jesus did not say, "They will know you are Christians if you sin less." He said,

"All men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

### Stage 5: Legacy

Breakthrough naturally leads to an entirely different level of legacy than we would otherwise experience in our relationships — whether it is our personal legacy or the church's legacy in the culture.

Millions of people are longing for authenticity and love. You and those you influence were meant to carry the answer to these very longings. As you think of the people you lead, those on your staff, remember, you do not create a culture through strategic planning. Over time the culture becomes who *you are*. The culture is merely the shadow cast by the leader.

Understanding these five relational markers of God's grace will change you. Protective love will determine the authenticity of your key relationships — marriage, family, staff, congregations, community, and beyond. In a cultural sea awash in darkness, your island of light will glow. You will leave a profound legacy. 🌟



**BRUCE MCNICHOL**, president, Leadership Catalyst, Phoenix, Arizona, addresses audiences around the world on leadership development, character

formation, and building high-trust organizations. Bruce coauthored *The Ascent of a Leader, Beyond Your Best, Behind the Mask, and TrueFaced*.

For more information on this five-stage journey, see *TrueFaced Experience* book and guide, designed for leaders and small groups. Also, visit our Web site: <http://www.truefaced.com>.

### NOTE

1. Some of the biblical references used for this article are: Genesis 3; Exodus 34:1–28; Hosea 11:1–4; Matthew 5:16f; John 3:13–17, 19; Romans 5–8; 2 Corinthians 2:5–7; Galatians 3:5; Hebrews 4:14–16; 1 Peter 5:5, 6; 1 John 1:5–11; 4:18–20.









# Mentoring

## That Produces Great Spiritual Leaders

By J. Don George

It is important for those who want to be effective spiritual leaders to understand the difference between mentoring and coaching.

A mentor shares what he personally knows — what he has learned. A coach assists by helping people discover answers and solutions to questions and problematic situations.

When I embarked on this odyssey of preaching and pastoring, I soon recognized my need for mentoring. I clearly understood that to achieve maximum effectiveness in ministry I would need assistance from others with greater wisdom and maturity.

Both my father, Roy F. George, a pioneer church planter in the Assemblies of God, and my brother, R. Kenneth George, current superintendent for the New Mexico

District of the AG, served as my mentors. I will forever be grateful for the manner in which these men shaped me and prepared my life for effective ministry.

### Mentoring — Who Needs It?

While it could be argued that a mentoring relationship is not absolutely essential to success in ministry, any minister with the responsibility of people engineering will profit greatly from developing a mentoring relationship with his staff. *People engineering* can be defined as the art of recruiting, training, and motivating people. Motivators and manipulators have one significant common characteristic: both influence people.

The purpose for which motivators and manipulators influence people differs greatly. A motivator influences people for their benefit, or for a cause mutually agreed on. A manipulator, though, influences people for his benefit. The differing motives of motivators and the manipulators set them apart. Pastors and church leaders

are to be motivators rather than manipulators.

The effective church leader of the 21st century can be greatly assisted by competent mentoring. The people engineers in today's churches include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Senior pastors with multiple staff.
- Executive or senior associate pastors who have direct oversight of multiple staff.
- Solo pastors who have no paid staff, but who are responsible for recruiting, training, and motivating volunteer lay leaders/ministry partners.

The lack of adequate people skills has been the downfall of many church leaders. Chris Turner listed the top 5 reasons for more than 1,300 dismissals from Baptist church staffs in 2005.<sup>1</sup> Failures in the area of people engineering topped the list for the 10th consecutive year. Clearly, when church leaders improve their people skills, the number of staff member dismissals will decline. Church leadership will benefit by improving their mentoring strategies and techniques.

### The Model Mentor

When Jesus began establishing His kingdom on earth, He chose men from diverse walks of life to be the foundation stones for His church. His choices included highly skilled men from the professional world (a tax collector) as well as men of common labor (fishermen).

Jesus knew these men would need to be trained and equipped for the assignment at hand. Thus, He chose men who were willing to be mentored. As a result, the disciples were prepared for their ministry assignments through the mentoring process of Jesus.

Where could one find a more able

## Church leadership will benefit by improving their mentoring strategies and techniques.

mentor than Jesus? He had learned from His Heavenly Father, and He used earthly experiences to prepare men for their supreme spiritual responsibility. The model mentor of the universe is Jesus. We would do well to consider His principles of mentoring.

### The Principle of Association

Jesus selected 12 men with whom to be closely associated: "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they *should be with him*, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:13,14, italics added).<sup>2</sup>

The Twelve were selected and set apart for a divine purpose. They were primarily called to "be with him" (verse 14). Jesus desired to establish close, quality relationships with the Twelve.

Jesus used this close association to teach His disciples how they should live. They learned how to deal with the most difficult people and situations by observing Jesus' lifestyle. He invited His disciples to observe every aspect of His daily life as He reproduced himself in these 12 men.

The Master saw potential in His disciples. He saw them, not as they were, but as they could be through proper mentoring.

Jesus developed His disciples' potential by mentoring them daily in a variety of ways. Peter was brash, impulsive, and impetuous. Through mentoring, however, Peter

became a leader of the Early Church in Jerusalem.

Church leaders today would do well to adopt the mentoring style of Jesus. Followers need opportunity to associate with their leaders. It has often been said that life-changing principles and insight for effective living are more often caught than taught. The principle of association will produce positive results in the lives of our staff and volunteers.

As a young pastor at Calvary Church in Irving, Texas, I quickly recognized the powerful potential of mentoring. Although the church was small in the beginning, I realized that if the church were to experience healthy growth, I must duplicate myself in the lives of trustworthy men. I began to search for men who would walk by my side, learn from my example, and share the responsibilities of ministry.

I met with a small group of men for breakfast every Saturday for 18 months. This initial group of 30 became a committed team of 10 during that defining year and a half. I did not miss a single meeting, and encouraged those early followers to make a serious commitment to Christian discipleship.

Each Saturday we fellowshiped during breakfast; afterward I taught principles of discipleship. It was exciting to observe the spiritual growth and development in these men who were truly committed to the purpose of God. From that humble beginning came the first group of lay leaders for our fledgling church. The core of that small group that came together 35

years ago is still active as lay leaders in our church today.

More than three decades have passed since the birth of that first men's discipleship group, and I am still committed to the process of mentoring. Each week I meet with two small groups of men as I continue to mentor for ministry.

### The Principle of Assignment

Jesus gave specific assignments to His disciples: "He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might *send them forth* to

## The principle of association will produce positive results in the lives of our staff and volunteers.

preach" (Mark 3:14, italics added). "And he ... began to *send them forth* by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits" (Mark 6:7, italics added). "And they *went out*, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark 6:12,13, italics added).

Jesus understood the need for plurality of spiritual leadership. He also recognized that He needed to give the Twelve a detailed description of their responsibilities (Mark 6:8-11). Jesus told them precisely what He expected of them. The disciples understood and accepted the responsibility of ministry that Jesus gave them.

Some of Jesus' disciples may have felt incompetent to fulfill the task they were assigned. But by providing good instruction and loving encouragement that would counteract their feelings of insecurity and incompetence, Jesus gave His disciples the best

opportunity for success.

Today's wise church leader will apply this principle of mentoring in the local church. Mentoring pastors and lay leaders may at times feel insecure or inadequate when faced with a daunting responsibility. In most cases, a definitive job description will allay negative feelings.

It is also important that the person being mentored be made aware that he has the complete support, encouragement, and covering of his mentor. Church staff members

and lay leaders need to know that their senior pastor believes in them. Their insecurities will be alleviated through positive input from their mentor.

An effective mentoring pastor will focus on strengthening the confidence of his staff and volunteers. Those being mentored need to hear their mentor say early and often, "I believe in you, and will do everything in my power to help you succeed. Never fear failure. Always expect God to give you sufficient strength for the size of every task. You and God are a winning combination." (See the sidebar

"The Freedom To Fail" by Dennis Franck on page 38.)

### The Principle of Review

Following a period of ministry, Jesus called His disciples together and asked them for a report of their ministry activities: "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and *told him all things*, both what *they had done*, and what *they had taught*. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6:30,31, italics added).

The review process is an essential ingredient in the growth process for those being mentored. I often tell my staff that a leader should never *expect* what he does not *inspect*. All ministry should be inspected and approved by spiritual leadership. The servant who serves well will desire to give a report and have his service reviewed by the leadership to whom he is accountable.

Those being mentored will become weary with going the extra mile



and striving for excellence when their mentor demonstrates a lack of interest and an attitude of unconcern by failing to review and evaluate the

effectiveness of their ministry. Mentors must review the ministry of those who serve under their oversight. Disappointment, disillusionment,

and disinterest result when mentors fail to demonstrate interest in the manner in which ministry assignments are completed.

## ▶ THE FREEDOM TO FAIL

**I remember the day well. I was in my first church staff position as a youth and music pastor at First Assembly in Huron, South Dakota. My senior pastor asked me to come to his office and talk with him. Being new to the ministry and eager to please, I welcomed the opportunity to chat. We discussed how things were going for me in my ministry. He asked questions, and I gave him answers that reflected my excitement.**

I am not sure whether he thought I did not understand the need to take risks, or I did not understand his leadership style, but I will never forget what he told me and how I felt as a result. My pastor looked at me with an intense, firm, yet compassionate gaze, and said, "Dennis, I want you to make three big mistakes every month you are here."

At first I thought I had misunderstood him, and asked, "What did you say?"

He repeated his words again, this time with a smile. "I want you to make three mistakes every month."

I could not believe it. "You want me to make three mistakes every month?" I asked. "I thought you brought me here to be successful, to be effective in reaching youth, and to help them grow in their relationship with the Lord and with each other."

"I did," he replied. "I do want you to be effective in your ministry."

"Then why do you want me to make mistakes?" I asked.

I will never forget his answer because it has helped me through 31 years of ministry.

"I want you to be successful in ministry," he said. "To do that you will need to stretch yourself, dream new dreams, think new ideas, and try new things. Some of your new dreams and ideas will work; some will not. I want you to have the freedom to fail."

"You mean it's okay to fail at some things?" I asked.

"Yes," he confidently answered. "I have, and you will too."

I cannot describe the feeling of relief that came over me. I could fail and my pastor would not be upset with me. From that day, until years later when God moved me to another ministry location, I not only felt his support for me and my ministry, but I also felt I had a pastor who understood my desire to succeed and my fear of failure. He gave me permission to fail so I could learn to succeed.

I began to realize that failure does not mean I am a failure. I began to understand that effectiveness in ministry does not mean everything I do will be successful. Failure sometimes shows that an idea, plan, or way of doing ministry is not always the best way, and inspires people to find more effective methods.

I do not know any pastor who wants to fail in the ministry God has given him. No one desires to be known as a failure. Pastors desire to be successful in fulfilling their ministry pursuits. What I did not know, until my pastor helped me understand, was that pastors need the freedom to fail to learn to be successful in what God has called them to be and do.

As a leader, ask yourself:

- *Do I give my staff the freedom to fail?*
- *How do I react when someone under me fails?*
- *Do they have permission from me to make mistakes without experiencing my wrath or extreme disappointment?*
- *Do I realize that if I do not give them permission to fail, their mistakes may cause them to distance themselves from me, or even limit their desire to try again?*

Failure is not something we want, but something we need the freedom to experience.



**DENNIS FRANCK**, national director, Assemblies of God Single Adult/Young Adult Ministries, Springfield, Missouri



## Jesus used the time of review as an opportunity for teaching and imparting a higher principle to His disciples.

Mentors must become involved in the lives of those being mentored. The attitude that says *just do your own thing and do not bother me with questions or details* is detrimental to spiritual growth and emotional health. Mentors must demonstrate that they care and that they desire to be involved in the process.

Jesus used the time of review as an opportunity for teaching and imparting a higher principle to His disciples. On one occasion Jesus sent forth 70 disciples to preach the gospel "into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1). When the 70 returned from their mission, Jesus asked them for a report.

The disciples rejoiced and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17).

Then Jesus taught them that it is

*better* to rejoice "because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

When the Good Samaritan took the wounded man to the inn and arranged for his care, the Samaritan made an interesting promise to the innkeeper. He said, "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10:35). In making that promise, the Samaritan was holding the innkeeper accountable for the care of the wounded man. The Samaritan was also demonstrating a high level of concern for the wounded man by promising to pay for the full cost of his care.

Jesus, the disciples' Mentor, also observed that they were in need of rest and renewal. He recognized the pressures of ministry and the many demands made on them by

the multitudes. Knowing that the disciples had labored for a long period without time for leisure, Jesus informed them that it was time to rest.

An effective mentor will also create a culture of care for those whom he mentors. He will demonstrate love and concern for their physical and emotional well-being. Church

staffs and volunteers serve with greater enjoyment and productivity when they serve within an atmosphere of peace, respect, and appreciation. It is the mentor's responsibility to foster a culture of relaxed effectiveness.

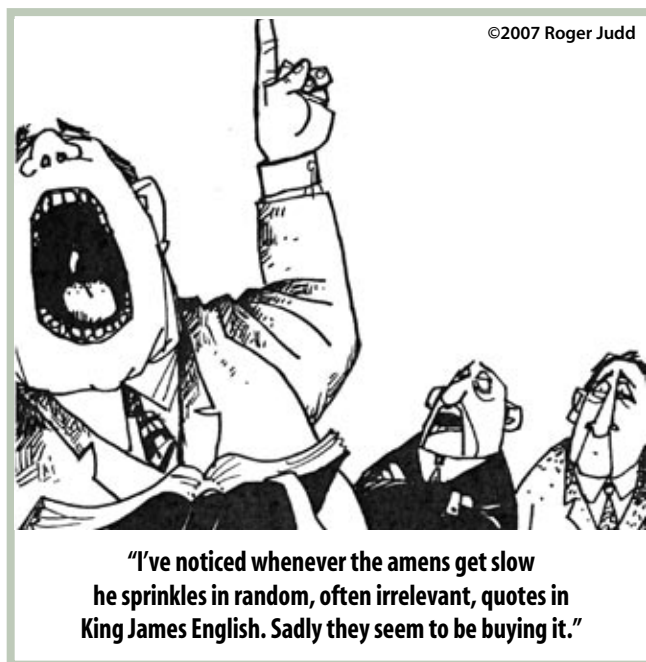
### The Principle of Reassignment

It was Jesus' practice to give new assignments to His disciples after He completed their review. Prior to His ascension, Jesus assigned a far greater responsibility to His disciples than He had previously given: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:15-18).

Considering the magnitude of the Master's new assignment to His disciples, one can conclude that His mentoring strategy had been effective. Jesus assigned the disciples the remarkable challenge of world evangelism.

The disciples had experienced spiritual and emotional growth while being mentored by Jesus. Though previously filled with timidity and fear, the disciples launched a Holy Spirit-empowered ministry that would eventually touch the world with the message of the Cross.

After giving His disciples their new assignment Jesus "was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19). Even though Jesus was gone from this earth, the disciples continued in ministry just as they had done while Jesus was physically





with them: “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20).

The principle of reassignment is one of the most important phases of mentoring for ministry. The reward for effectiveness in ministry is reassignment to areas of greater

responsibility. Jesus said, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10).

This truth demonstrates the need for faithfulness and for tenacity of faith

## Refreshing Others: Staff Sabbaticals

Staff pastors understand that their senior pastor has more responsibility, earns more money, and often has some benefits not offered to staff pastors. There is an emerging benefit for senior pastors, however, that can be shared with staff pastors and will add value and refresh their ministry. I am referring to the sabbatical program offered in some districts. This program provides opportunity for senior pastors to lead the way by allowing staff pastors to take sabbaticals.

In 1 Corinthians 16:17, Paul — with appreciation and affection — mentions Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. We know little, if anything, about Fortunatus and Achaicus. They may have brought Paul the Corinthians’ letter to which 1 Corinthians is in part a reply. The household of Stephanas was among the first converts in Achaia and prominent on Paul’s radar. These three visited Paul and refreshed him (verse 18). The verb Paul used that is translated “refreshed” is also used in Matthew 11:28 where Jesus said, “I will give you *rest*” (italics added). Evidently these three men not only knew how to refresh someone, but they also practiced it.

Senior pastors need to consider how they might refresh their staff. The following observations are intended to be prompters. They may even create discussion for a pastoral staff meeting or a meeting with the official board. Perhaps both.

### Sabbaticals for Staff Pastors Help Promote Longevity

At West End Assembly of God in Richmond, Virginia, any staff pastor can earn 2 weeks of sabbatical leave for every 5 years of service — in addition to regular vacation. It is not surprising that most of the pastoral staff have been on the team 5 years or more. Three of the pastors (including the senior pastor) have more than 70 years of combined service. While the sabbatical program at West End is not the singular cause of longevity, it is an important ingredient.

### Adding Value to Others Helps Develop a Culture of Generosity

We reap what we sow is one of the laws of Scripture. A culture of generosity begins with the senior pastor. If culture is what people do without being told, then the senior pastor must constantly model what he wants others to do. The greatest human power a leader has is modeling. Interestingly, Paul said the three men who refreshed him deserved recognition (1 Corinthians 16:18). They did not ask for or expect recognition. Paul was simply putting the law of sowing and reaping into action.

### Start Somewhere and Make Plans for Further Development

One may not be convinced of the full benefits of a sabbatical or may not feel church leadership is ready to take this step. The senior pastor can prime the pump by providing a weekend away for a staff pastor, and then measure the results. Give it a chance. If you want to make a statement, provide extra cash for your team member. Perhaps his short time away will lead to a more formal sabbatical program.

### Sabbaticals Help Pastors Finish Strong

The coach of any athletic team knows what it takes to win. The term *fresh legs* is used in basketball. Certain players are given bench rest so they can make a strong finish and help the team win. The coach knows his players and game plan well enough to rest players at the right time. We can learn from this sports analogy.

If you are still asking, *Why?* I want to respond with, *Why not?* Refresh others on your pastoral staff with a sabbatical. I am a strong promoter of this truth because I believe it is biblical.



**H. ROBERT RHODEN, D.Min.**, Glen Allen, Virginia, is an executive presbyter and former Potomac District superintendent.

## My steadfast prayer and fervent desire is that I will be able to mentor at least 10 people whose ministries will surpass mine in every way.

during the early stages of ministry when neither the task nor the location of the assignment gives cause for celebration. Zechariah wrote, "For who hath despised the *day of small things?* for they shall rejoice" (Zechariah 4:10, italics added). We need to remind ourselves that every large ministry was once a small ministry; every great ministry had a humble beginning.

Today I am grateful for the mentoring I received from my father and brother. Apart from these impartations of grace into my life and ministry, I would be woefully unprepared and unqualified to fulfill my present ministry responsibilities. Mentoring made it happen.

Although I preach to thousands of people each week in the worship services of Calvary Church, I vividly remember the small congregation at my first pastorate in a small Texas town. Even though my pastoral ministry began in relative obscurity in a remote region of the country, God ultimately permitted me to transition into a large metropolitan area with unlimited potential for Kingdom growth. I believe that my present role in Christian service is the result of faithfully following the mentoring principles invested in my life by others.

Inasmuch as the disciples were reassigned to a broader area of responsibility, the Master may also desire to reassign today's servants to new fields of ministry that possess greater opportunities for growth and development. The late foreign

missionary, Charles Greenaway, told me: "Always be flexible in your ministry. God may order you to do a 90-degree turn at any time during the journey."

Jesus, the personnel director of the Church, possesses the authority to place His servants in positions of service where their ministry skills will be most fruitful. We never know when our day of reassignment will come. Jesus knows. He will promote His servants when He is ready, and when they are prepared to be promoted.

It is good to remind ourselves that we *grow* into positions of leadership and responsibility. Years ago, while touring a beautiful new church facility, a young minister in the group said, "I'd sure love to *fall* into a pastorate like this some day."

A more seasoned and wiser minister in the group replied, "Young man, you don't *fall* into a ministry like this; you grow into it."

Spiritual maturity and spiritual growth do not occur by accident. Spiritual growth is intentional. The one who achieves in Christian ministry is one who, while recognizing his destiny, is willing to go through the process of discipleship through mentoring.

Mentoring enables each minister to excel to his greatest potential. Mentoring is mandatory for those who are determined to serve our Master with excellence.

Several young staff members who have been mentored at Calvary Church have gone from here into various

fields of service and have excelled. My steadfast prayer and fervent desire is that I will be able to mentor at least 10 people whose ministries will surpass mine in every way.

I believe God will answer my prayer. In fact, several young ministers are now nearing or have already reached that level of ministry achievement.

### I Watched Them Tearing a Building Down

I watched them tearing a building down,  
A gang of men in a busy town.  
With a ho, heave, ho and a lusty yell,  
They swung a beam and a side wall fell.

I asked the foreman, "Are these men as skilled,  
As the men you'd use if you had to build?"  
He gave out a laugh, and said, "No indeed!

Just common labor is all I need  
I can easily wreck in a day or two  
What builders have taken years to do."

So, I thought to myself as I went my way,  
*Which of these roles have I tried to play?*  
*Am I a builder, who works with care,*  
*Measuring life by rule and square?*  
*Or am I a wrecker who just walks the town,*  
*Content with the labor of tearing down?*  
—Unknown

Mentoring will produce great leaders who will effectively build and fulfill their destiny in the Master's service. 🌱



**J. DON GEORGE, D.D.**, is senior pastor of Calvary Church, Irving, Texas, and an executive presbyter with the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

#### NOTES

1. <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=24102>
2. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.



# The Insecure Pastor

By Samuel D. Rima, Sr.

---

**A**fter serving as senior pastor for 10 years in a medium-sized urban church on the East Coast, Tim was eager to entertain the advances of a committee from a larger church in the Midwest.

Tim had been recommended to the chairman of the committee by one of his seminary classmates who thought he knew Tim relatively well. As Tim and the committee successfully navigated the usual rituals of a pastoral search process, Tim began to feel a vague sense of uneasiness. Even though he had been waiting for this kind of opportunity since leaving seminary, he worried about whether he was capable of leading a larger, multiple-staff church. Rather than acknowledge his concerns and share them with his wife, Judy, or the chair of the committee, Tim convinced himself that his uneasiness was unfounded and decided to project an air of absolute confidence in his ability to provide leadership for this new church more than triple the size of the previous congregation he had served.

During the final stages of the search process, Tim gave

detailed answers to questions concerning how he would manage the 15-member staff with the assurance that he and the staff would work together like a well-oiled machine. He handled congregational inquiries concerning how he would oversee the \$3.5 million budget and increasingly problematic space problems with creativity and aplomb.

Despite his nagging doubts and concerns, even Tim was beginning to believe this new leadership challenge would be a piece of cake. After all, half the battle, he had convinced himself, was making others believe he knew how to lead at this advanced level, even though he was riddled with self-doubt and feelings of personal insecurity.

Tim believed that expressing his concerns and being transparent about his feelings of insecurity would only foster a lack of confidence in his leadership. So, rather than approach the new position with healthy humility and communicate that he was willing to learn from the more experienced staff members and truly work as a team in this new leadership venture, Tim settled on the *never-let-them-see-you-sweat* approach.

Tim was called to the church with a strong congregational vote and immediately set out to make his mark. Three years into his new ministry, Tim found himself in an extremely challenging position as senior



pastor. Based on the leadership books he had been reading, Tim decided to hire an executive pastor to run the church and be the primary interface with, and supervisor of all the staff. This allowed Tim to insulate himself from hands-on management of his staff. He would devote himself to preaching and writing, and delegate congregational care matters to the pastor of congregational care. To address the space challenges the church faced, Tim launched a compelling effort to convince the leadership and congregation that the church needed a new sanctuary, family life center, and office/classroom complex. Not only would this massive building project meet their current facility needs, it would also serve to attract new members to the church who would then be able to help pay for the \$12 million project.

Even though there had been significant pockets of congregational resistance to the building plans and the ensuing capital campaign, Tim would not allow anything to defeat his dream of building an

even larger facility that would allow him to become pastor of the state's only megachurch. Many of those uncomfortable with the plans believed that the current membership would not be able to service the \$5 million debt the church would need to take on to build the new facility.

Among the resisters was a popular staff member who had been on staff for 10 years. As pastor of student ministries, Doug had a significant following comprised of parents and grandparents of the many students he had helped during the previous decade. Even though Doug was willing to move ahead with the church, he made it known that he was not in favor of the building project. He believed the debt would cripple the church's ministry as they pinched every penny to service the debt. Even though Doug had committed not to share his views publicly or to undermine the project, Tim believed Doug's failure to fully support the project was a direct repudiation of his vision and leadership as senior pastor.

Doug's refusal to embrace the building program reinforced Tim's secret feelings of insecurity as well as his personal doubts about exercising leadership in a significantly larger church. Moreover, Tim interpreted Doug's lack of support for the building program as a lack of personal support for him as both a person and a leader. Thus, Tim could not allow

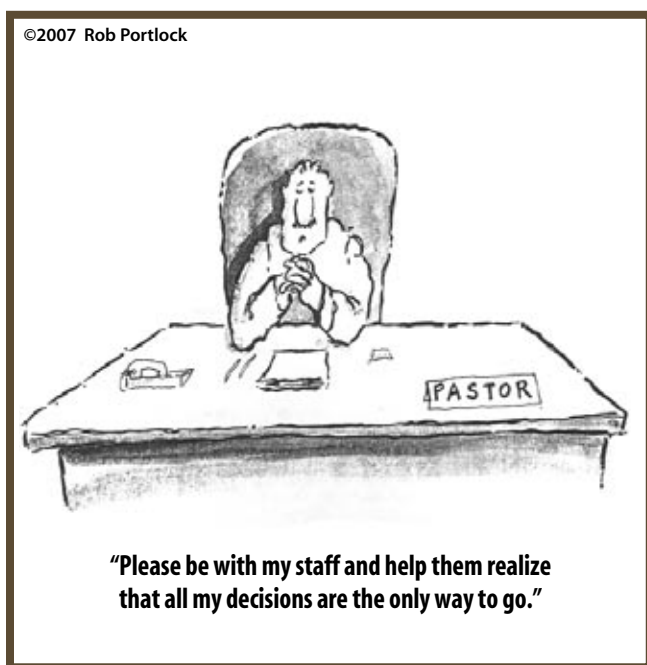
himself to live with Doug's position. He required total, enthusiastic support from every staff person — anything less was seen as a challenge to him personally.

Tim felt that Doug needed to either fully embrace the program, and his leadership, or resign. Tim justified that to allow him to remain on staff was a threat to the staff team. Rather than personally deal with Doug regarding the issue and negotiate an appropriate solution to the situation, Tim met with his inner circle — the executive pastor and the senior associate pastor — to form a strategy to remove Doug from his position. During the following year, as the building program was in progress, Tim and his inner circle began to look for any signs of insubordination or poor performance they could use to legitimize their removal of Doug.

After nearly a year of trying to build a case against Doug, Tim believed the time had arrived to force Doug from his position at the church. Tim decided that the best way to handle Doug's removal would be through the executive pastor, Andrew Long, Doug's direct supervisor.

The disciplinary document that Tim and Andrew drafted, and that Andrew presented, came as a complete shock to Doug. His last two performance reviews, performed by Andrew, had been exemplary. The list of petty complaints that comprised the discipline document left Doug confused and angry. He was told that failure to sign the document, acknowledging the legitimacy of the charges, would be grounds for immediate dismissal.

As word of the effort to remove Doug was leaked to the congregation (not by Doug), many people began to express their own anger and pent-up frustration with the direction in which



the church had been moving since Tim had become senior pastor. Because Doug refused to sign the discipline document, the board sent a letter to the congregation informing them of a meeting at which Doug's removal for insubordination would be voted on, just one month before the grand opening of the new facility.

The congregational letter resulted in a massive backlash. The congregation began to focus attention on Tim's leadership style that many believed to be dictatorial, rigid, and highly impersonal. Rather than supporting Doug's removal, people wondered how Doug's situation could have become so bad without their having been informed earlier. The meeting that had been called to discuss and vote on Doug's removal turned into a referendum on Tim's leadership.

The congregation's response to the situation was an even greater threat to Tim's feelings of insecurity and lack of confidence. With the new buildings scheduled to open within 2 weeks, Tim found himself struggling with severe depression, contemplating resignation from the church, and wondering whether he was even fit for pastoral ministry.

### When Personal Insecurity Becomes a Public Problem

Tim is not the only leader who has experienced the pain that can result when a personal dysfunction, such as acute insecurity, is ignored and instead covered over with the mask of confidence and self-assuredness. In fact, leaders we perceive to be exceptionally confident and in command are more often than not compensating for a deeply rooted sense of inferiority and insecurity. We often see this same dynamic operational in the lives of comedians, actors, and models. Some of the most

beautiful models, when interviewed, express feelings of insecurity regarding their appearance. Some of the funniest comedians admit that their larger-than-life public persona is an attempt to compensate for deeply rooted feelings of inferiority and a way to deal with their pain from childhood teasing and trauma. The same can be true for those who aspire to positions of leadership, whether in political, business, or religious realms.

Not only can personal insecurities lead to attempts to compensate by projecting the image of a confident, in-control public leader, but they can also become so consuming that people become driven in their efforts to prove to themselves that they are okay and worthy of the love and esteem

## Some pastors tuck away the parts of their personalities that pain them and cause them shame.

of others. These efforts often lead to illicit, secret relationships. Through physical or emotional acts of intimacy, people hope to prove to themselves that they are attractive, intelligent, desirable, or loveable — contrary to their own personal feelings and self-talk. Unfortunately, such attempts never fully assuage their feelings, leading to additional and often increasingly risky behaviors.

Such was the case with Jim Bakker, founder and leader of PTL ministries. From outward appearances, he seemed to be a highly confident, charismatic, and competent leader. Unknown to most people, Bakker's grand leadership projects and charismatic public persona were being driven by an acute sense of personal insecurity rooted in his childhood and adolescent years. Despite the apparent success of his ministry, none of his achievements

were enough to silence the inner voices that continually reinforced his low self-regard and deeply rooted sense of insecurity. Eventually, his reckless search for affirmation led to a public failure and media frenzy that still influence the way the public views Christian leaders.

A more recent episode of public leadership failure involved Ted Haggard, pastor of a megachurch in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and president of the National Association of Evangelicals. In a statement he released in the immediate aftermath of the debacle, he wrote: "The public person I was wasn't a lie; it was just incomplete. When I stopped communicating about my problems, the darkness increased and finally dominated me. As a result,

I did things that were contrary to everything I believe."

Similarly, when pastors attempt to mask their personal dysfunctions and present their congregations, or the public, with a manufactured image, they are presenting an incomplete picture of themselves. Some pastors tuck away the parts of their personalities that pain them and cause them shame. The longer these personality flaws remain in the shadows of their lives, the more the darkness grows and begins to dominate their lives because more and more psychic energy is required to keep these issues from being publicly known.

In addition, as in Haggard's case, more and more energy is focused on these risky behaviors that is hoped will satisfy and alleviate the unmet needs that dominate one's life. But all too often, one's failure to deal



openly and honestly with his feelings of insecurity or other personal dysfunctions often ends in personal and/or corporate catastrophe.

### Signs That Signal Insecurity

How do we know if we, or someone whom we know, might be struggling with hidden insecurity? Individuals who struggle with personal insecurity are, at some level of their consciousness, aware of their problem. But because they often have spent so much energy masking their true feelings and compensating for their problem, rather than constructively confronting it, they may have lost the ability to objectively identify the problem any longer. In fact, they may have convinced themselves at some superficial level that they feel okay about their lives, but that is rarely the case. One traumatic event that threatens them at some level will cause the repressed feelings to surface again. What are the different manifestations of personal insecurity? What are some of the signs that a problem needs to be addressed?

### Paranoia

Pastors who struggle with deep feelings of personal insecurity are often concerned that people in their churches might silently doubt their leadership ability. They then become paranoid that people are conspiring behind the scenes to undermine their leadership or certain projects they are promoting. As a result, as with the case of Tim, these pastors have a difficult time allowing staff members or even parishioners to maintain a vital role because paranoid pastors are fearful that someone might lead a leadership coup. Thus, perceived dissenters must be removed, and often such removals are orchestrated through clandestine and hurtful means.

### Jealousy

Another indicator that a pastor is struggling with insecurity is his jealous reactions toward other staff members. One pastor of a large church refused to allow any staff member to preach in his absence. Instead, he insisted that his Sunday sermon be videotaped and shown to the congregation on Sunday morning. This jealous reaction stemmed from a previous occasion when a staff member had preached in his absence and had received rave reviews for his sermon. Jealousy can also be related to a pastor's paranoia that people might like another staff member better than they like the pastor.

### Compulsivity

A pastor who is struggling with feelings of insecurity may also exhibit compulsive behaviors, such as giving special attention to his personal appearance and dress. To mask feelings of insecurity, the pastor may give an inordinate amount of attention to his outward appearance. Having immaculately pressed suits and well-cut hair that always seems to be perfectly in place can be an obsessive concern for the leader struggling with feelings of insecurity. By compulsively focusing on his appearance he is attempting to control the external aspects of his life to compensate for his inability to control the internal aspects. As a result, these leaders often spend excessive amounts of money and time in pursuing the clothes and grooming habits necessary to maintain an immaculate appearance.

In addition, compulsive leaders frequently are perfectionists and extremely demanding of others. This is because they perceive everything in the organization to be a reflection of them personally. Thus, everything must be done to perfection. How

long must a person work to ensure that everything is done to perfection? Forever. Absolute perfection is not attainable. But this is the reason many compulsives are also workaholics who demand the same of others.

### Narcissism

Although narcissism is most commonly manifested in a person's excessive self-admiration, self-centeredness, an overestimation of his own appearance — as well as a need for the expressed affirmation of others — these manifestations are, paradoxically, rooted in feelings of self-loathing, insecurity, inferiority, and vulnerability. For a narcissist, everything in life and ministry revolves around him — he needs to always be at the center of attention. The narcissist does not like to share attention or admiration with anyone. He will strive to keep other staff members out of public view so there are fewer opportunities for them to be noticed or appreciated. The narcissistic pastor is only too willing to accept praise for the work of other staff members who rightly deserve the praise because, after all, he is the senior pastor who made it all possible.

Although these are not the only possible signs of a potential problem, they are among the most prominent and potentially destructive. A pastor must proactively and purposefully deal with the root problem of his personal insecurity to prevent his actions from escalating out of control and creating a public failure that could jeopardize his ministry and a congregation.

### When Insecurity Leads to Instability and Chaos

When a leader's attempts to cover up and compensate for his personal insecurity are not dealt with directly





and decisively, it almost always leads to sickness and instability within the church or organization.

It is virtually impossible for a leader suffering from paranoia to develop deep, intimate personal relationships within the staff or congregation. His fear is that information exchanged

during the relationship, should it go sour, could be used against him to undermine his leadership or bring him down. Thus, it is better to remain aloof and superficial and avoid developing interpersonal relationships. This fear frequently leads a senior pastor to isolate

himself from others and to work within a cocoon of tight secrecy with one or two trusted associates. This leaves other staff members feeling devalued and out of touch with their leader, which can lead to a plethora of other staff related problems.

When a pastor struggles with

## Narcissistic Spiritual Leaders

**So how do narcissistic leaders show up in the church and Christian organizations? Christian leaders often use those they lead to enhance their own image and improve the way they feel about themselves. Far too many sermons are preached in an effort to gain the approval and admiration of followers, with little or no concern for God's approval. The pastor or speaker who steps down from the platform and is immediately obsessed with whether his sermon was good is dealing with a prime symptom of narcissism.**

Jim Bakker seems to have been a classic victim of narcissistic personality disorder. His visions of grandeur were born out of deep feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. He was driven to achieve in an effort to prove to himself and others that he was worthy and approved. So deeply rooted was his psychological need to achieve greatness that he would stop at virtually nothing in an effort to gain the approval and recognition he craved.

Numerous churches have been destroyed by leaders who led the church into projects too energetic and costly for the congregation because the leader needed to feel good about himself. How easy it is for Christian leaders to use their organizations as nothing more than platforms from which they launch themselves on their chosen career path with little or no regard for the long-term health of the organization they were entrusted to lead.

When a pastor or Christian executive says to himself, *This church (or organization) would suffer if I ever left*, it is a sign of narcissism. When the leader is constantly beginning new ministries, even when existing, essential ministries are not adequately staffed or effective, it is a sign of narcissism. Rather than ensuring that existing

ministries are efficiently functioning, the narcissistic leader needs the kudos that come from new and unique ministries. However, once the high of a new ministry launch is gone, the narcissistic leader provides little long-term oversight or maintenance.

Because ministry provides the ready justification that grandiose visions and risky ventures are necessary to accomplish God's kingdom work, the church and Christian organizations provide fertile soil for a budding narcissist. Tragically, because many followers of the narcissistic leader think all this activity is being done for God, they feel uncomfortable challenging their leader.

### TARGETING INSIGHTS

One manifestation of the dark side is the development of the narcissistic leader. Solomon is one example found in the Bible.

Some signs of a narcissistic leader include the following. Narcissistic leaders are driven to succeed by a need for admiration and acclaim. They may have an over-inflated sense of importance as well as great ambitions and grandiose fantasies.

At the heart of narcissistic leaders are self-absorption and uncertainty due to deep feelings of inferiority. In addition, they may not enjoy their success and may be dissatisfied with their lives.

### APPLYING INSIGHTS

So how do you know if you are narcissistic when it comes to the exercise of leadership? One of the traits of narcissistic leaders is that they live in a state of constant denial and self-justification. Therefore, the following inventory may be helpful.

jealousy rooted in deep personal insecurity, his staff will feel stifled and unable to exercise the full spectrum of their spiritual gifts and strengths. Insecure pastors rarely engage in mentoring others or training staff for new responsibilities for fear that staff members might become more gifted

and competent than they are. This can easily result in an ethos of stagnation and frustration among the staff and leaders.

A senior pastor's compulsivity can result in personal burnout as well as rapid staff turnover. When the senior pastor requires staff to

work unreasonable hours in the impossible pursuit of perfection, many staff members find it unbearable and resign. In these settings, it is common for the staff to experience consistently low morale as well. Rapid staff turnover, low morale, and a senior pastor who

- 5 = strongly agree**
- 4 = agree**
- 3 = uncertain**
- 2 = disagree**
- 1 = strongly disagree**

1. Fellow leaders in my church or organization frequently question whether my proposed goals and projects are feasible and realistic. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I am obsessed with knowing how others feel about my sermons, lessons, and performance. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I find it difficult to receive criticism of any kind, reacting with anger, anxiety, or even depression when it does come. 1 2 3 4 5
4. At times I find myself thinking, *I'll show them; they could never make it without me*, when I experience conflict situations or opposition to my proposed plans. 1 2 3 4 5
5. In spite of achieving what others would consider significant success, I still find myself dissatisfied and driven to achieve greater things in an effort to feel good about myself. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I am willing to bend rules and press the envelope of acceptable behavior to accomplish my goals. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I find myself feeling jealous of the success and achievements of associates, other churches, or organizations in my area. 1 2 3 4 5

8. I am often unaware of or unconcerned about the financial pressures my goals and projects place on those I lead or the church or organization I serve. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Success or failure in a project has a direct bearing on my self-image and sense of worth. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I am highly conscious of how colleagues and those to whom I am accountable regard my accomplishments. 1 2 3 4 5
11. I need to be recognized or on top when meeting with a group of fellow pastors, denominational officials, or associates. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I see myself as a nationally known figure at some time in the future or I have plans to attain such a position. 1 2 3 4 5

Add up the circled numbers and place the total here: \_\_\_\_\_

If your total comes to less than 20, you probably are not narcissistic. If your total is between 21 and 40, there is likelihood that you have some narcissistic tendencies. If your total is 41 or more, you probably are a narcissistic leader.

Do you see traits of a narcissistic leader in yourself? In what ways does this type of leader mirror your dark side?

Excerpted from the book, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, by Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, Sr. (pp. 99–103). Used with Samuel Rima's permission. (Copyright owned by McIntosh and Rima.)

(See "The Saul Syndrome: Its Symptoms, Causes, and Remedies, Including Options for Potential Codependents" in *EJ online* at: <http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org>.)

is continually pushing himself to the ragged edge of his energy and emotional reserves is a recipe for organizational ineffectiveness, if not disaster.

Finally, living and leading with a narcissist is incredibly difficult because everyone is expected to cater to him and meet his needs before doing anything else. Narcissists use people. The narcissistic leader sees his staff as the means to accomplish his personal vision and goals. People are a resource to be used to accomplish his plans, which are usually designed to elevate and enhance his image and reputation.

The symptoms and behaviors that swirl around the insecure pastor have the potential to create not only instability within the church, but also extreme chaos if the problem is not dealt with decisively.

### Taking Steps Out of the Darkness and Into the Light

What can a pastor do if he begins to sense that some of these symptoms might be descriptive of his life or leadership? How might lay leaders in a church approach a pastor who seems unaware of the destructive dynamics of his personal insecurity? Let me suggest a few basic steps one might take to deal with this dark side of leadership.

The first step out of the darkness is recognizing the problem and owning it. As long as everyone allows the insecure pastor to live in denial, nothing will ever change — except for the worse. The insecure pastor must be willing to identify the problem, recognize the behaviors in which he has engaged in an effort to compensate for his feelings of insecurity, and then own the problem. This is the primary prerequisite for bringing about change.

In the second step, the insecure

pastor must discover and explore the roots of his feelings of insecurity. He must take time to explore and examine the past. This can be an emotionally painful process, which is why leaders avoid it and engage in compensating behaviors. Because this process can be complex and painful, I recommend engaging the services of a spiritual director, counselor, Christian psychologist, or therapist.

## The third step out of the darkness is recognizing that the power of Christ can be perfected in a person's personal weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It is vital that the pastor take this step and pursue it until he has attained the necessary learning, understanding, and personal growth needed to lead him out of the darkness of denial and self-deception and into the light of God's grace.

The third step out of the darkness is recognizing that the power of Christ can be perfected in a person's personal weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). When we recognize our weaknesses, embrace them as a part of wholeness, and bring them out of the shadows of our lives so God can redeem them, we eliminate their controlling effects in our lives.

The fourth step is finding our true identity in Christ. The previous three steps will be difficult if not impossible to take if a pastor does not understand his true identity in Christ. He must understand that God loves him completely as he is — even with his dysfunctions — and that God has allowed these to exist in his life so He can facilitate spiritual growth toward wholeness. In Christ, believers are holy and blameless.

This is our spiritual position. But believers do not always live out the wholeness Christ made possible because of dysfunctions that result from sin. However, when people fully embrace who they are in Christ, they are provided with the confidence to process their dysfunction(s) in emotional safety. They can then integrate their dysfunctions into their lives, rather than continue to hide

them in the shadow side of their personality because of their shame.

For the insecure pastor who has learned to mask or hide his insecurities and compensate for them in unhealthy ways, there is hope and the real possibility of becoming whole in Christ and allowing his dysfunctions to become the rich spiritual soil from which his most effective ministry might come. May God help pastors to live and lead from places of wholeness and freedom, rather than guilt and shame. 🌱



**SAMUEL D. RIMA, SR., D.Min.**, is director of the doctor of ministry program at Bethel Seminary, where he also serves as director of leadership enrichment

and teaches in the Center for Transformational Leadership. Rima has written three books: *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction* (Baker, 1998); *Leading From the Inside Out: The Art of Self-leadership* (Baker, 2000); *Rethinking the Successful Church: Finding Serenity in God's Sovereignty* (Baker, 2002). Rima also conducts national workshops and seminars on leadership and spiritual formation, and organizational effectiveness.






# TAKING STAFF

TO HIGHER LEVELS OF

PERFORMANCE & RELATIONSHIP

By Tim Hager



As a pastor, one of my top energizers is to leave the church knowing that a multifaceted event was well executed.

This feeling is not only about the fact the mechanics went well, but also about the energy created among staff — when everyone is having a great time doing something bigger than themselves, and doing it with excellence.

Any leader who has been in a key pastoral role long enough has probably experienced the frustration that comes when key tasks are not getting done at a critical moment. *Where are the greeters on this opening night of the summer concert series? Why have the ushers vacated their posts partway through the service? Ten people are at the altars to accept Christ and not a prayer partner or pastoral staff member is in sight.* The cry may not be audible, but more likely a voice is bellowing inside: *Where is my team?* We leave the church and wish the day would start over.

Another top energizer for me is when staff members get along well. A pastor can become emotionally drained when his staff does not work well together and does not seem to care about each other. When apathy dominates relationships, the ugly twins — disappointment and concern — hop on my shoulder and hitchhike home with me. It is a blessing when those involved in ministry love what they are doing, love whom they are serving with, and are succeeding at what they do.

Pastors and staff want to be a part of a team of caring and competent individuals who work well together, achieve Kingdom goals together, and celebrate hard-earned ministry successes together. *Together* has a nice ring to it. It resonates well with those who know what it feels like to really work as a team, and yet be more than a team

— real partners in the ministry. This is achievable. Pastors and staff can climb to higher levels of relationship and performance by practicing basic team-building principles.

### What Is a Team-Based Church?

The apostle Paul understood the benefits of individuals coming together in small groups to do ministry. His teaching on spiritual gifts highlights how a believer's individual graces work within and in concert with other believers. Furthermore, Paul described the church as functioning like a physical body — individual parts working in cooperation with other parts. A thumb, for example, is limited on its own. But when it is strategically attached to a palm in play with four fingers, the thumb becomes part of a productive unit — the hand.

In a team-based church, we are smarter than any one of us individually; together we are able to do more ministry than any of us by ourselves. In fact, a ministry group working together will outperform an individual working alone, especially when ministry requires multiple skills, decisions, and experiences. Teams in the church are a power catalyst for ministry.

### Disciplines of a Team-Building Pastor

The axiom, *As the leader goes so goes the organization*, drives home the point that whoever is in charge sets the agenda for everyone else. The senior leader is the thermostat that either warms or cools team dynamics. The senior pastor is the rudder that directs the ship either toward or away from the goal of rich team dynamics. A senior pastor must sanction and support a team culture if he wants his staff to be more than task-driven robots.



One senior pastor was shocked to learn that changing the term *staff* to *team* did not enhance camaraderie. It never occurred to him that his behavior must reinforce the trust and solidarity he had talked about. Another pastor was disappointed to discover that hiring an executive associate with team-building skills, and then giving raises to the entire pastoral staff, failed

to the Kingdom. Here are some principles pastors can use to help raise staff members to higher relationships and performance.

### Provide autonomy within boundaries

Consider Jesus' pattern of delegation and empowerment in Luke 9 and 10. The disciples' assignment was made clear: preach and cast out demons (Luke 9:1,2). Jesus gave them a pattern to follow when He sent them out two-by-two (Luke 10:1). Jesus knew it would take greater clout and addi-

have the quality people you do."

This pastor misidentified the catalyst for better teamwork. Knowing the envied pastor, I can say it was not only quality individuals but also his applying basic principles of empowerment that made the difference. This pastor understood that until senior church leadership is free to share information, authority, and resources, the church will never see high-performing ministry teams. Competent staff members who are capable of overseeing extraordinary programs need information, authority, and resources. Controlling pastors do not empower people; they corral them by withholding the resources that are necessary for them to function effectively.

Leaders can be reluctant to allow other people opportunity to take significant ministry responsibility or even experience real success. Often the underlying cause of this reluctance is fear: fear of others knowing more, doing more, achieving more, having more, or being applauded more. Strong ministry teams require autonomy, resources, and boundaries to excel.

**The axiom, *As the leader goes so goes the organization*, drives home the point that whoever is in charge sets the agenda for everyone else.**

to boost productivity and creativity. Why? The pastor consistently gave conflicting communication about what success looked like and promoted unhealthy interstaff competition. These habits undermined team-building efforts. The senior pastor, however, can guide the team to develop strong rewarding ties that will be productive

tional tools to accomplish what they were assigned to do, so He gave them power and authority (Luke 9:1).

Accountability is the expectation that what we are expected to do will be inspected. The disciples returned and reported to Jesus. Jesus briefed the team, celebrated success, and coached them on attitudes (Luke 10:17,20).

Jesus gave His staff room to work on their own, resources for their tasks, and provided them with parameters. This created a powerful environment for ministry expansion as well as personal growth.

One pastor was bitterly envious of a colleague's staff: "Your people really know how to make things happen. I don't

### Create real partnerships

From the disciples' perspective, Jesus was going places. Some of them must have had some concern about being left out or not measuring up because two of them discussed what it would take to hold the top positions in the new order (Matthew 20:20-28). Jesus confronted their thinking on this point when He explained that leaders are servants, not ladder climbers. *Okay, You are creating a flat organization without right- and left-hand perks. It is disappointing, but the adventure may be enough. We will still be Your servants as we fulfill Your vision. Good enough? Not quite.*

©2007 David W. Harbaugh





I have been challenged by the care that Jesus, as Team Leader, took to personalize His relationship with His disciples. In John 15:15, the Visionary Leader said, "I no longer call you servants ... but I have called you friends." This is a profound declaration of relationship in the

leader-team context.

Jesus viewed His closest disciples as trusted associates who were accomplishing the mission God had given them. Their relationship was not just about serving Jesus. Their mission was closely connected to the reason why Jesus was there. But our Lord

made it clear to those in His inner circle that their relationship was a real partnership.

Some pastors catch the subtlety of Jesus' approach, and they communicate: "You are not my servant; you are my friend. You do not work for me; we work together.

## ► Qualities of a Productive and Close Staff

### Positive Atmosphere

Staff can quickly sense a relaxed, comfortable, informal atmosphere where they can engage in activity that holds their attention and interest and is energy producing.

**My Staff:** When we meet, are we comfortable and relaxed? What suggestions do they have for improving the mood?

### Clear Purpose

Take time to clarify and come to agreement on group objectives. Personal contributions are clearly understood in light of the group's goal. Commitment to the group's purpose is each individual's motivation.

**My Staff:** Do we have a clear understanding about what we are trying to accomplish? How might the group become more aware of how each individual's contribution is necessary for success?

### Constructive Communication

Every staff member contributes to the discussion. While there is a great deal of dialogue, it is focused on the work at hand. There is freedom to share ideas, even crazy ones, without fear of being shunned or ridiculed. Thoughts and observations build

on one another. Criticism is never personal but helpful and frank, always being directed toward the obstacles that keep the group from achieving its goals.

**My staff:** Do we listen to each other? Are we affirming? Do we stay focused? How might I gain feedback from the group on the quality of our communication?

### Helpful Conflict

Conflict is viewed as a genuine difference of opinion and is openly discussed, carefully evaluated, and resolved by the group. There is no attempt to neutralize conflict by ignoring it, minimizing it, or ganging up on the dissenter to force agreement. When disagreements persist, the group moves forward with accomplishing its purpose and goals and returns to address the matter another time.

**My staff:** How effective are we at resolving conflicts within our staff? Do we have an atmosphere that allows for open, frank discussion? Where does the staff feel they need training?

### Participatory Decision Making

Take time to identify and examine all the issues with your team. Members

openly share their support or concerns. Since most decisions are reached by consensus, the staff is in agreement and willing to support efforts to make its decisions effective. Decisions arrived at by the group are owned by all members of the group.

**My staff:** Do all staff members participate in decision making? Do I allow enough time for identifying and carefully weighing issues before decisions are made?

### Monitor Team Dynamics

Staff members are aware of how well they work together. They understand what their goals are and how they will accomplish them. Members will take time to evaluate relationships and determine if strategies and methods used by the group are progressing toward goal completion. If a hindrance is encountered, the team has an open discussion that leads to a solution.

**My staff:** When was the last time we discussed how well we work together? What adjustments were made?



**TIM HAGER**, Bristow, Virginia



We work *with* each other; I with you and you with me." The behavior of a genuine partnership pastor reinforces the staff's confidence that they are trusted to do bona fide ministry and are trustees of the vision along with the senior pastor.

Real partnership means the game

First Church seized an opportunity to minister to an unreached segment of its community by adding a third weekend service held on Saturday evenings.

Months later, the senior pastor led the staff in exploring the possibility of adding additional small-group Bible studies for children, students, and

effectively overcame obstacles by collaborating at a high level between departments. The fruit of their effort was measurable and impressive. The pastor helped the staff find renewed purpose when everyone could have passively settled into a new-service success.

## The senior pastor is the rudder that directs the ship either toward or away from the goal of rich team dynamics.

is not just about the quarterback. Skilled individuals bring their particular abilities to the huddle. All take responsibility to fulfill their roles while coordinating with others to get the ball across the goal line. Pastors who believe a well-done effort by each staff member means the entire staff scores for the Kingdom are leaders with a different attitude.

### Help staff keep focused on the main objective

Staff members in large churches were asked: "What is the most helpful team-building contribution from a senior pastor?" A top pick was *bringing clarity*. This answer should not be surprising. In the fog of a ministry battle, staff needs their senior pastor to speak authoritatively and clarify the vision.

When priorities become blurry, we value the person who can remind us of important objectives. Nothing cools team commitment and momentum quicker than unclear performance goals and a fuzzy purpose. Daily pastoral demands can chip away at focused work efforts. One superintendent said, "The leader's job is to define reality." Pointing out opportunities and redirecting staff toward a rallying point are essential in a busy church.

adults. Based on the church's vision, mission statement, and the opportunity arising from the growing service, the pastor asked the staff to work together on a plan to make additional programming a reality. In 9 months, a comprehensive small-group Bible study plan was rolled out that followed these services. Nearly half of the service attendees became participants.

Here the pastor provided the leadership that many staff members desire: keeping an eye on the bigger trends and opportunities in the church. When there was a ministry possibility to explore, the pastor called the staff together for feedback and reflection. Soon a central purpose for the staff was defined and objectives were given. The staff became committed to the task and motivated to plan well. They

### Coach staff on how to work together

Poll most staffs and the results will reflect that they want to be successful and see their collective efforts bear fruit for the Kingdom. Many reasons beyond our control impact team effectiveness. However, the pastor that will lovingly coach his staff in areas where they can make changes will likely be well received.

Senior pastors provide an invaluable service to their teams when they assist them in understanding situations that influence the team's ability to meet its goals. Generally, obstacles fall into two categories — *internal* and *external*. Internal situations include relationship roadblocks or the way staff members

## Characteristics

### Pours Into Others

A team-building pastor sees the potential in others and makes developing others a priority. The time he spends in training and coaching individuals is regular and consistent. Helping key staff and volunteers grow in their effectiveness in managing, recruiting, inspiring, discipling, and leading their groups is viewed as an essential task.

### Views Self As Part of the Whole

The team-building pastor communicates and relates outward to all departments and staff rather than isolating himself from others. The function of senior pastor is recognized as only one of many other valuable roles in the church. Genuine consideration is shown for all staff and their contributions to the church. Relationships go deeper

are approaching their work together. External factors — a resistant cell in the church, slow progress among other departments, or a shift in demographics within the congregation — may be blindsiding the group. By equipping the staff to respond appropriately to internal and external situations, the pastor will help the team work together.

### Model the art of listening and dialoguing

While providing team-development training with a staff in a sizable church, I was pleased to see that much of the material was energizing the staff; they were excited and quickly jumped into the exercises. But when the topic of interpersonal relationships was introduced, a deafening quiet came over the group. No one moved. They all stared at me and did not flinch. The topic was listening, really listening to each other.

The problem, I discovered later, was one monopolizing talker. When he

was present, the whole conversation became a monologue. When he was absent the staff engaged in free discussion, employing healthy team dynamics. This situation was unfortunate, but not uncommon.

The capable staff and anointed pastor possessed the potential to attain a higher level of relationship and team function. Overcoming this obstacle to their communication would have blessed the church and helped the staff become even more effective as a group. In contrast, another staff experienced remarkable tenure and sustained ministry excellence because they practiced the disciplines of listening and talking through issues together.

### Believe fun is a healthy commodity

“We thought those guys from First Church were nuts. But, frankly, we were a little envious at how much they seemed to enjoy being together.”

Fun is an important ingredient in healthy staff relationships. Many

hard-working staffs have a high work ethic and task-focused activity, but not much heart.

One pastor asked me how to defuse some of the intensity and stress his staff and employees were feeling over a particularly long season of new program start-ups. We looked at several options. Later he catered a picnic for the 30-some employees, provided sand volleyball and other games, and took the lead in getting everyone involved, and then sent everyone home early with pay. I applauded his courage. The pastor said the laughter, fun, and unexpected time off re-energized the staff. This event took some creativity and initiative, but the relational payoff was almost priceless from a team standpoint. Higher-level relationships and productivity happen when those we work hard with are those we have fun with.

### Conclusion

Can a staff grow together? Can senior pastor and staff experience a higher

## of a Team-building Pastor

than just doing business; the pastor displays an informal, personal interest in the well-being of others.

### Encourages Risk Taking

The team-building pastor expects creative thinking and serious reflection from his staff. The pastor invites and welcomes staff ideas and comments, thus nurturing a climate for creativity and improvement. Unsuccessful programs become opportunities for the team to better understand their ministry environment and work methods. Then they can create better approaches that avoid unintended hazards and obstacles.

### Models Openness and Transparency

The team-building pastor evidences the fruit of the Spirit in relating to the team (patience, kindness, gentleness). He

occasionally shares personal feelings, concerns, and opinions. He forges casual, close relationships with his staff. He encourages openness. The pastor is aware of his personal impact with the team. Feedback is directly sought and accepted from the team.

### Delegation and Decision Making

The team-building pastor manages, guides, and coaches the staff as a cohesive unit. He encourages and cultivates teamwork. The pastor shows high levels of trust and confidence in the staff's abilities by giving them significant latitude for decision making and execution of plans. The pastor provides coaching as needed in the areas of encouragement, work discipline, and decision-making processes.



TIM HAGER, Bristow, Virginia



# Keys for the Solo Pastor

## Building Effective Volunteer Teams

**S**olo pastors have a tremendous team-building opportunity. The reality of church and staff size is this: bigger is not necessarily better. Numbers compound and complicate ministry. The principles that guide team building are foundational to all churches. The work of discernment is in how these principles are applied in each congregation. As a solo pastor, know that teams can thrive in your church. You can bias your potential for success if you will practice the following principles:

### Faithfully Apply Empowerment Principles

Jesus ministered to crowds, but spent additional time with a smaller group of disciples delegating, equipping, and briefing them concerning ministry. In every church, there are people who have potential to do substantive ministry. Recruit them to work along side you in praying for people, visiting the sick, or managing an event. Train them yourself or ask a competent colleague to assist. Assign volunteers responsibility and authority. Set up an accountability loop by establishing regular times when you and the volunteer meet to discuss what he has experienced, what is working well, where he needs assistance, and how well his work is accomplishing the goals of the church. Pastors can create an inspiring climate of ministry in their churches by wisely empowering others to do ministry.

### Be Ruthlessly Disciplined About Focus

Focus has power. Light focused into a beam becomes a laser and can cut through steel. Disseminated light has no power. Church programs are similar to light. When programs are focused toward vision and purpose, they will have power.

Mobilize teams around a clear vision, purpose, and objective. Avoid weakening your volunteers' efforts by scheduling too many programs. Quality teams need time to prepare and work together; give them that time. Avoid the tendency to take on too many programs in your church. Stay focused. Do a few things well. Nurture team relationships and evaluate team performance.

### Anchor Your Self-Worth in Christ's Cross

Unrealistic, self-imposed expectations about ministry success can wreak havoc on a pastor's attitude and affect his ability to develop ministry teams. Even though Ephesians 4:11–13 encourages pastors to equip God's people, an insecure pastor will lead from a position of fear (*Read "The Insecure Pastor" by Sam Rima on page 44*). Often this fear causes the pastor to withhold information, resources, opportunities, and authority that are essential for a team's success. Solo pastors who build effective ministry teams must be confident in their identity in Christ and their calling. Confidence becomes a catalyst for releasing ministry, coaching volunteers toward greater fruitfulness, and celebrating successes with others.

As a solo pastor, building ministry teams has many rewards. To experience these rewards apply team-building principles with your church in mind. When teams develop and have success, both you and the people will rejoice. Few things energize a congregation more than effectively working together and seeing the Kingdom advanced.

---

**TIM HAGER**, Bristow, Virginia

level of fruitfulness and fulfillment working together? The answer is yes. This requires individual and group discipline. Knowing the characteristics of a team-based church is a start. Understanding how pastors and staff can build

synergy between each other is also important.

Is taking your staff to higher levels of performance and relationship worth the effort? Experience the fruit. Then, when you pull off the church property, you will be energized and

filled with anticipation for the next ministry opportunity. 🌟



---

**TIM HAGER, D.MIN.**, senior associate pastor, Manassas Assembly of God, Bristow, Virginia



# Turning Future Stars Into Real Treasures

A Strategy for Building High-Performance Team Members

By Mark Rutland

**If** you see a turtle on a fence post," Sen. Zell Miller (Georgia) once said, "you can bet one thing for sure; he did not get there by himself."

Every leader worth his salt carries in his mental wallet a photo of himself as a turtle on a fence post. The team with which he surrounds himself has probably contributed more to his success than his own giftedness. That humbling reality brings gratitude to a leader's heart and helps him determine to find, hire, assemble, motivate, and keep the best team he can.

Baseball managers often tell the old joke, "I am only two players away from

having a team that can win the World Series. Unfortunately, the two players are Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig." In other words, the real secret to being a world-class leader is building a world-class team.

There are leadership giants who seem to be able to win with whatever hand they are dealt. Someone asked O.A. "Bum" Phillips, the colorful country boy who once coached the Houston Oilers, how good a coach Don Shula — Baltimore Colts (1963–69) and the Miami Dolphins (1970–95) — really was. Phillips responded, "I'll tell you how good he is. Shula can take his'n and beat your'n; then he can take your'n and beat his'n."

There are coaches who are geniuses; but, for most pastors, the key to great success in leadership is assembling the right team.

## The Right Players

One recipe used by many in putting together a winning team is called *the three Cs*. It is a useful way to think about the team-building process.

## Character

This is the most difficult of the three to discern; yet, in the long run, the most important. Proven track records that reveal relational issues as well as performance matters are telling and must not be ignored. Override your leader's intuition or the warnings of others with regard to character and the consequences can be serious.

## Competence

There are high-character, true Israelites in whom there is no guile, yet they are not competent at the level you need, and may be incapable of getting



there. When possible, hire a Lou Gehrig. Sometimes, however, you find a diamond in the rough — someone who is not *there*, but shows clear promise. If there are enough seasoned veterans on the team for balance, these future stars can be true treasures.

### Chemistry

The tension between Shaq and Kobe was front-page news, but it was hardly new. The more high-performance players there are on a team, the more leadership can become bogged down in ego management. Coaching a team that has a Kobe and a Shaq can be a real challenge, but a team with high-performance players can also win championships.

Tension is a part of life and leadership; it cannot be avoided. Its most destructive results can, however, be minimized by

building a team whose gifts fit. In other words, some top-quality performers may have team chemistry that will never work. In the hiring process, smart leaders will do all they can to discern how prospects will work with other team members. Some personalities, none of which are bad, will never work together on the same team.

Part of the leader's responsibility is to lubricate the egos and personalities on his team with balance, humor, and equitable decisions — as free as possible from favoritism. An even more important responsibility is the ounce of prevention that is only possible in the selection process.

As replacements become necessary, newcomers must quickly attain a high level on the competence scale. Developing team chemistry will happen, but first the replacements

must prove they can work on a team of high performers. They must be given opportunity to prove themselves, and must be shown grace and patience; but, the better the team, the faster replacements must get up to speed.

### The Missing Ingredient

The three Cs have been widely taught and employed by many leaders. I have, however, added a fourth ingredient that I have been using for the last few years in the team-building process, especially in hiring replacements. This ingredient is what I call *moment*.

I may interview a talented and gifted person who has the ability to play at the level of my team and show the character we value; yet, the timing may be off, leading me to conclude that bringing him in now

would be a serious mistake. Is the question: Is the person capable enough to replace the last man in that office? No. The right question is: Who do we need now? or, Do we need anyone in that place now? Every transition is an opportunity to reshape the whole team. At Southeastern University, we had five vice presidents in 1999. By 2005, there were six. Today, we have four.

Creative restructuring is part of making flexible responses to changing landscapes. Whether you realize it or not, you are not leading the same organization you were 10 or even 5 years ago. Your leaders have changed; the organization has changed; your goals have changed; your vision has grown; your skills have matured; and the world around you is different. You may need different team members, not just better ones.

### Broaden the Concept of Team

John P. Kotter said that one of the major causes of stall out in leading any organization through dynamic change is a “failure to assemble a sufficiently

powerful guiding coalition.”<sup>1</sup>

A guiding coalition means much more than just staff. A pastor surrounded by weak leaders who lack influence is in trouble. Every position of influence that is closest to the pastor — board members, committee chairs, ministry volunteers, and advisory councils — needs to be filled with strong leaders.

Each member of the executive administrative team at Southeastern University is a professional. They are clear on our vision, and committed to it. In addition, the Board of Regents, especially its chairman and officers, are enthusiastic about our long-term comprehensive master plan. The alumni president, the chairman of the leadership roundtable, as well as leading pastors and business people who provide both local and national representation are part of a coalition of vision — the kind that is critical to successfully leading change in any organization.

The pastor who wants to instill enduring change into his church culture must — beginning at the top and broadening his definition of team — build a coalition of loyal, capable, influential visionaries. The more profound the needed change, the more powerful that coalition must be.

### Talk, Talk, Talk

In team building, it is impossible to overcommunicate. It is possible to communicate poorly, to communicate too late, and to

communicate too little, but it is not possible to communicate too much. The essence of team building is communication. The mission, vision, goals, and plans for accomplishing them are fuel for leadership. Team building takes time — time spent communicating.

A pastor must communicate with those whom he leads — especially, but not exclusively — with those closest to him. Staff meetings are wasted if they become swamped with low-level tactical responses to crises. The effective transformational pastor frequently rehearses the vision and plans with every leadership level of his church. The church’s values, any changes in direction, altered expectations, and challenges ahead must be patiently, clearly, and frequently explained. The team must have confidence in its leader, and loyalty must be built through relationships. Leadership is another word for communication. The myth of the strong, silent type is exactly that — a myth — and a destructive one at that. Teams do not thrive under withdrawn, uncommunicative men of mystery.

### Hire My Staff

Another university president once asked me how his school could experience the great growth and success we have had at Southeastern. I told him the secret: Hire my staff.

I am not the greatest or the smartest president in the world, and certainly not the best educated. I do, however, have the greatest staff. If this is true, and it is, they deserve to be blessed.

I believe in blessing the team. Great leaders share the glory, the limelight, and the rewards. As great teams develop and mature, team members need to feel appreciated. Sometimes showing appreciation is nothing more than giving praise. A

©2007 Dik LaPine



“Mark, I can’t marry you and Lori.  
After all, you’re my singles pastor.”



river of encouraging notes, e-mails, and phone calls needs to flow from the pastor's office. Occasional gifts and bonuses, and regular raises, also express appreciation.

A friend pastors a large church near Southeastern. Every year he takes his entire pastoral staff to an elegant department store and buys each of them a new outfit. When a youth pastor at another church heard this, he began wrangling for a job there. When people learn that a pastor appreciates his staff, high-performance players will desire to be on his team. This is not all about receiving a new suit or a raise; it is about being appreciated.

Steal my staff if you can. But it's going to cost you.

### From the Top Down

Some pastors who are trying to lead change and growth either start at the wrong place or get stranded at the beginning. The right place to start is at the top.

It is impossible to massage deep-tissue cultural change into any organization from the bottom up. Key positions of leadership — those closest to the pastor and those with the greatest influence and responsibility — must be filled first, and filled with top performers. It is absurd to think that any profound shift in the leadership culture of a complex church can be effectuated by replacing the assistant-associate-deputy, junior high youth pastor. Change starts in the most senior positions.

Change, without intentional downward pressure, can get stalled at the top. Each leader must grasp the vision and the culture of the church. He must also understand that it is his responsibility to lead change in his own division.

The senior pastor's philosophies of leadership, relationship, and

management must reach the extremities of paid and volunteer staff. This will not happen unless the senior staff shares the pastor's vision with their hearts and heads. It will not happen unless the church administrator understands that his job is not only to keep the books and pay the bills, but also to ensure his secretary answers the phone in a way that reflects the pastor's leadership.

Until the janitor knows what the pastor expects — how to speak to a visitor, how to strive for excellence — someone between the janitor and the pastor has dammed up the flow. If the volunteer nursery worker is out of sync, then the nursery coordinator has not fully grasped her job. This means the director of children's ministry is failing in part of her job, and the director of Christian education is not performing an important part of his job. It is crucial that the culture at the heart of the ministry is put into action at its extremities.

### Strategy and Attitude

President George W. Bush made it clear in his own inimitable way that in leadership there is no substitute for "stratergy." How true. High-performance teams thrive at higher altitudes of strategic focus. The leader who allows high-octane talent to be wasted on low-level problem solving and crisis management will frustrate his team. Assembling a high-performance team is one thing; staying out in front of it is another.

Team members need to know that you are thinking ahead, planning and envisioning a future they have not yet seen, and anticipating challenges they are not yet aware of. Waste as little of their time as possible in the tactical *now* and

press them toward high-altitude, strategic thinking.

Take, for example, the budget process. Strive to get the team past turf warfare and into the ionosphere of strategic thinking. This is a challenge for any team. Reimagining the budget process is essential to getting past the

**There is plenty of self-interest in any team for the leader to deal with without encouraging it.**

divisions and parochialism that haunt many teams. Communicate, teach, and preach — whatever it takes, as long as it takes — that budgeting is not divvying up the pie but moving as a team toward a common goal.

### Steal the Bacon

When I was a boy we played a game called *steal the bacon*. We would stand in a circle. The *bacon*, usually a stick or a rag, was put in the middle of the circle. Each child was given a number known only to himself. The leader would call out two, three, or four numbers at a time. Those whose numbers were called would dive for the *bacon* and strive to carry it back to his place on the perimeter of the circle. This game is a perfect picture of a common approach to team leadership that has often proven destructive.

Adversarial advocacy — a leadership philosophy preferred by some who want high-performance teams — can turn your staff dynamics into a highly destructive game of steal the bacon. There is plenty of self-interest in any team for the leader to deal with without encouraging it. Create a zero-based-sum mentality and allow your team to fight for the bacon, and you

may turn your *team* into disconnected, discordant *adversaries* who are duking it out for whatever advantage they can get to make their area of ministry successful.

Some claim adversarial advocacy runs off weaklings who are unable to keep up with the top performers. This may be true; but, the big boys you create may never be loyal to you, will almost never coalesce into a unified force, and will probably learn to operate using covert manipulation and deceit. This anything-to-get-the-bacon attitude may create high-powered staff members who are hardly more than high-powered enemies. They will be constantly advocating for their own, incapable of pulling together, and ultimately will pull apart.

### Building Consensus

Another management philosophy is called *conciliatory consensus building*. Instead of a fragile consortium of sworn enemies — each after a bigger share of the budget — consensus building molds a staff of complementary gifts into a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The goal of the adversary leadership model is to weed out weaklings and build tough staff members who can stand the heat. The goal of consensus building is to create a team capable of strategic thought, creative negotiation, and unified problem solving. This model tends to make stronger teams, not angry, isolated individualists who are in competition with each other.

Effective consensus building has a cost: Time. A budgetary dogfight is quickly and viciously settled. But statesmanship, leadership, and communication skills are necessary to forge a team that can move past self-interest and strategize together for a greater good. The fabric of mutual trust is not woven in a day, especially

using the threads of high-performance hard chargers who are success oriented. Team members must learn to trust their leader, trust each other's competence, and trust each other's motives and intentions.

### Leasing for Power

Perhaps the most common inhibiting factor in a high-performance team's development is the pastor's fears. Pastors who are easily threatened may fear their staff member's accomplishments and giftedness. A fearful pastor may subconsciously engineer his brightest star for occasional failure. He believes this keeps him humble, less likely to lust for his job, and more desperate and grateful to keep his own.

The pastor with this philosophy is wrong. The more he shares the spotlight, the more he publicly praises each staff member's successes and covers their setbacks with grace, the stronger his staff becomes. A leader's praise strengthens his staff's loyalty. His confidence in them increases their confidence in themselves and in each other. His willingness to turn their failures into teaching opportunities instead of despotic tirades increases their sense of balance and enjoyment, both of which make them stronger.

## The wise pastor empowers his team by continually leasing them more territory.

The wise pastor empowers his team by continually leasing them more territory. When they feel empowered to make more decisions, two important things happen. First, the staff pastor becomes a stakeholder with a true sense of ownership when he feels the liberty to make decisions. Second, fewer crises hit the leader's desk because they

are met and resolved at lower levels. I tell the vice presidents at Southeastern University, "Bring me solutions. The problems I can find for myself."

Empowered teams must know when and where it is appropriate to act and when they should defer to the pastor. Erring on the side of granting greater release and authority may cause an occasional train wreck; but, taken as a whole, it generates an atmosphere of trust and builds stronger, more confident team members. Pastors who clutch at every task and insist on controlling all outcomes and decisions demonstrate fear, not faith. Leasing out authority allows the team to move faster, make better decisions at lower levels, and avoid executive bottlenecks.

### Hold Tightly With Open Hands

Finding good team members and blending them so their gifts and personalities complement each other is no easy task. Managing complicated egos and seeing players mature into a finely tuned team that makes great plays and wins the big games is rewarding. As gratifying as that is, transitions can also be frustrating. Assembling an infield that effortlessly turns double plays is a coach's dream, but watching it fall prey to free agency is no fun.

Some pastors react to staff transitions with angry protectionism that usually succeeds only in offending the departing staff member and ruining their relationship. No one likes losing a star from the team, but learning to let him go gracefully plants him as a friend wherever he lands. (Someday you may need a friend in that exact spot.) It also demonstrates to those who remain on staff that they are not inmates but trusted and valued colleagues whose personal destinies are not in bondage to their leader's dreams.

## ▶ **Accountability: Say It Forward**

**Suppose that late at night — without telling my wife, Johanna, where I am going — I walk into the garage, open the garage door, and start my car. Frustrated at my failure to communicate my intentions, she asks, “Where are you going?” in a voice that is absent of tenderness.**

I do not appreciate the fact she is questioning my intentions, so I respond angrily, “I don’t need to report to you.” At that moment our relationship becomes tense, and anger is likely to escalate.

I have just failed Accountability 101.

Should Johanna be told where I am going? Absolutely. She has a right to know why I am leaving home late at night. However, if she demands that I tell her, it is no longer accountability, but an investigation.

If I walk through the house and say, “Honey, I am going to the store. I will be back in 20 minutes,” she will never look up. Why? I have offered information about my intentions, and she is satisfied. There is no tension, and the relationship is not damaged.

Accountability is offering necessary information before it is required. Accountability is not only effective at home it is also essential in creating an efficient team atmosphere among church staff members. Practicing accountability increases staff harmony, allows synergy to develop, and prevents unnecessary conflict and resolution process that drains staff energy.

Here are some ways accountability can function in the church.

- A staff member informs the pastor that she will be late because her baby has been sick and she has

been up most of the night.

- A board member notifies the pastor that an out-of-town trip will prevent him from attending the all-church prayer meeting.
- A teacher informs the discipleship director that she will be unable to begin her class on time for the next 3 weeks because of a work situation.
- A staff member discloses to the pastor that his spouse will not be in Sunday service.
- A member of the care team tells a hospital patient that he is representing the pastoral team and wants to minister to her needs.

In each of these scenarios, providing the necessary information creates open communication and establishes positive feelings among staff members. Each situation could have resulted in tension, but having the initiative to offer an explanation means everyone works together for the common good. This is accountability. Here are some positive results of accountability:

- Rather than investigating why the staff member did not honor the office hours policy, the pastor is informed of the sick child, understands the situation, and responds in mercy. The pastor prays for the sick child, and the young couple appreciates a caring pastor.
- Because the board member explained his pending absence in advance, the pastor does not speculate about the reason the board member is not present.
- Instead of fretting over the tardiness of the teacher, the discipleship director prepares in

advance to avoid an interruption in the class.

- Instead of being disappointed that the pastor did not come personally, the patient is assured that the hospital care team member is representing the pastor and the church.

Accountability needs to be offered on a consistent basis. It ensures continual personal growth and creates an atmosphere of trust and teamwork.

I have served with many great team members. Because they understood the value of accountability, they would frequently ask me if there was any thing I had observed in their ministry or personal behavior that needed to be changed. That gave me permission to mentor without sounding critical.

The associate pastor needs to offer accountability. In return, the senior pastor must be willing to confront the associate when correction is needed. This ensures minor issues never become major problems.

When an associate gives a pastor permission to speak into his life, a teaching moment occurs instead of a tense correction. In an atmosphere of mutual agreement, the pastor can give words of encouragement along with advice. This fosters a trusting relationship that frees the leader to empower the associate by giving him responsibility, unleashing him with authority, and affirming him — while monitoring the process through accountability.



**ALTON GARRISON**, executive director, Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, Springfield, Missouri

A veteran Australian leader gave me wise parenting advice. He said, "Hold on to your children tightly with open hands." That is also good leadership in team building.

In building a high-performance team, there is no substitute for hiring wisely and well. Never expect a plow horse to win the Kentucky Derby. If you want to hire thoroughbreds, settle for nothing less. Find them, reward them, praise them, and take good care of them. Once you hire them, let them run.

Racehorses rebel when petty jockeys, fearful of losing control, constantly jerk back on the reins. Let your team

## Pastors must make careful decisions when hiring staff members because the choices they make cannot easily be changed.

go for it. Teach team members to trust you and each other by creating an atmosphere of trust and modeling it. Then, when transitions come — and they will — go through them with good will and faith, not panic and anger.

Send departing staff away full, then try to hire up if possible. If you are replacing a star, it may not be easy to hire up. In fact, it may create some hard work in transition. Transitions are a fact of life, and a healthy team led by a healthy leader can often take advantage of them to become better. Assemble a great team, and then hold them tightly with open hands. *(For more on staff transitions, see Dan Reiland's article "The JENGA Staffing Principle" on page 84.)*

### Right Church, Wrong Pew

Team builders strive to get the right people on board. It is hardly possible to overestimate how important it is to hire

the right person; yet, a complementing truth is often forgotten: Those right people must be in the right places.

Sometimes capable and anointed staff members are inadvertently engineered for failure because they are placed in the wrong job. A sign, "Beware of the Peter Principle," should be on every leader's desk. The greatest youth pastor in the world may be a disaster as an associate pastor.

Pastors must make careful decisions when hiring staff members because the choices they make cannot easily be changed. It is distressing to move a great youth pastor to associate pastor,

hire a new youth pastor to replace him, and watch the now associate pastor implode before your eyes. Despite all the regret and second-guessing, it is too late to change the situation. The pastor often ends up with a less capable youth pastor, no

associate, and a hurt and disillusioned ex-staff member.

A failing staff member may also be successful in a different role. At Southeastern University I was ready to ease a less-than-effective employee out the door when one of the vice presidents interceded. He saw gifts in this person that I could not see and appealed my decision. Against my judgment we moved this staff member to a detail-oriented, administrative job where he blossomed — proving once again my lack of discernment. This person has proven himself to be of invaluable assistance through Southeastern's incredible growth surge these last few years. He was an intelligent and capable employee who was in the right church, but seated in the wrong pew.

### Success and Toxicity

Much has been written on team building and much is yet to be added.

One important and relevant perspective that probably is often ignored is that no pastor interested in a growth-oriented, influential ministry wants lethargic or lazy people on his staff. On the other hand, leadership is not supposed to kill us, and the goal of ministry is not to make our staff members miserable.

I want a high-performance team. I have one, and I am thankful for each player at each position. But a cautionary warning needs to be made regarding the phrase high performance. We can lose ourselves and our souls in our striving for success. High-performance men can become driven and empty while trying to fill their inner emptiness with accomplishments and applause. A high-performance life that is fulfilling includes adequate rest, values true love, and remembers what is really important. Toxic success, as one writer calls it, is not high performance; it is just the fast lane to unhappiness, marital stress, and ministerial burnout.

Anointed pastors who are leading high-performance teams need to pace themselves, develop healthy inner lives, and cultivate contented spirits before it is too late. Relationships — spouse, God, family — must not be neglected in their search for success.

One of the risks of being on a high-powered team is adopting the self-deception that success is enough. Nothing could be further from the truth. Doing the work of God without God is toxic. Those called to God's work have the greatest needs, and nothing can fill those needs but God himself. 🙏



**MARK RUTLAND, PH.D.**, is president, Southeastern University, Lakeland, Florida.

#### NOTE

1. John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).





# Can't We All Just Get Along?

By Gary L. McIntosh

**In** the ministry world of the 21st century, some think team-based leadership is a miracle cure for what ails churches. Unfortunately, what at first seems to be a simple paradigm to implement may become another problem-filled approach to ministry. Most teams function well for a few months, but then experience predictable staff issues that threaten to pull the team apart.

Underlying all problems in team ministry is human nature. Team members are human beings with all the attendant characteristics. Senior pastors often talk about shared leadership, but revert to claiming the sandbox as their own by overcontrolling decision-making. Associate pastors talk about equality of input but refuse to share information with other staff members. Team members talk about the good of the team but end up arguing over who gets the credit for what the team produces.

While numerous problems may be encountered in team ministry, most fall into one of four major categories: motivational, communicational, organizational, and relational.

## **Motivational**

According to studies conducted among teams in various settings, the following are the *big three* motivational problems for teams.

### **Free riding**

Free riding takes place when team members are not carrying their share of the ministry workload. Team members may share in the glory of being on the team and in the team's accomplishments, but they drop the ball in their own area of ministry. Other team members may notice the failure of their teammate to accomplish his task but do not want to tattle on him. As a result, they harbor ill feelings toward the poorly performing member.

There are two ways to approach free riding. First, the team leader must assist team members in setting specific goals and then hold each team member accountable for accomplishing them. Second, team members must hold each other accountable for contributing to the team. Team members must have the courage to confront each other in the total team environment and not let any team member get away with free riding.



Illustration: David Bates



## Groupthink

Groupthink occurs when everyone on the team appears to think alike; no one raises objections or concerns about anything. Groupthink occurs when the group is homogeneous and everyone does think alike; team members are close friends, and no one wants to challenge his friends; or members are afraid and do not want to rock the boat.

If groupthink is a problem within a team, use one of the following two approaches. First, appoint a *devil's advocate* every time the team meets. The devil's advocate is to raise and investigate potential pitfalls in the team's thinking. This role should be rotated so no one person is always the bad guy. Second, the senior pastor needs to share his opinions last — after everyone else has had opportunity to comment on an issue. In groupthink situations, team members will pick up on what the senior pastor wants and echo those sentiments in their own comments. When a team leader withholds comment early on, he encourages freer thinking by all team members.

## Social loafing

Social loafing occurs when everyone knows about a problem, but no one wants to be the first to mention it. Each team member feels someone else will voice the problem before the group. Social loafing may result in a problem never being noted or perhaps being mentioned too late to be addressed. To encourage responsibility, a senior pastor must communicate that all team members are to be honest and forthcoming; and, when someone does mention a difficult issue, not to shoot the messenger.

## Communicational

Harold J. Westing, author and consultant on multiple-staff ministry, reports that a lack of communication and misunderstood communication rank first and second as causes of dissatisfaction between team members.<sup>1</sup> Two key communicational problems are commonplace among teams.

### Team members communicate little with each other

People who work together are not always personal friends. In fact, some individuals find they can minister with other staff members competently without socializing with them away from work. The way staff members feel about each other may not be a matter of great concern, unless it gets out of hand. What is out of hand? Staff

relationships are out of hand if:

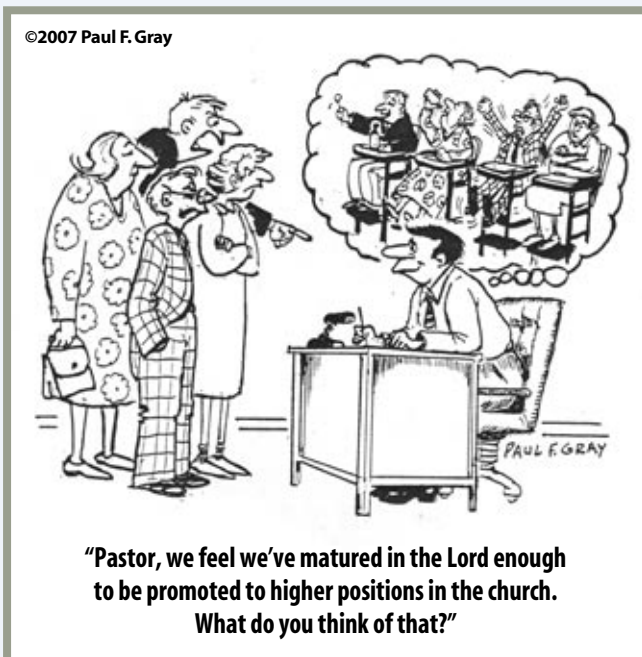
- Key staffers are not speaking to each other.
- Hostile camps exist.
- Who does what becomes a matter of who is friendly with whom.
- Staff members resist assignments outside their normal roles.
- Key information is held by a small subgroup and not shared with others outside the group.

There are situations where nothing the senior pastor can do will help. In these situations, it is best to let feuding staff members work it out themselves, provided the ministry is getting done and their difficulties are not counterproductive to the team. However, when counterproductive situations exist in a staff team, it is time to intervene. Here are a few suggestions to help pastors get started:

- Make the message clear that you want team members to cooperate.
- Give attention equally to all involved so those who are feuding will not feel you are on one side or the other.
- Tell staff directly what you want.
- Manage difficult team members as a team rather than alone.
- Identify a common cause or purpose for everyone to work on together.
- Realign the roles of staff members so individuals must cooperate to accomplish their objectives.

### Team members communicate in harmful ways

Harmful communication may become a silent epidemic as team members regularly spread malicious rumors, become involved in backstabbing, or give each other the silent treatment. This rude behavior goes by various names: workplace incivility, psychological aggression, hostile work environment, or workplace bullying.





A formal study on team problems in secular workplaces sheds light on the issues. Joel J. Neuman, director of the Center for Applied Management, lists the top 10 acts of workplace bullying as:

- Talking about someone behind his back.
- Interrupting others when they are speaking or working.
- Flaunting status or authority, or acting in a condescending manner.
- Belittling someone's opinion to others.
- Failing to return phone calls or respond to memos.
- Giving others the silent treatment.
- Insults, yelling, and shouting.
- Verbal forms of sexual harassment.
- Staring, dirty looks, or other negative eye contact.
- Intentionally damning with faint praise.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, those who have served on a multiple-staff team can identify with at least 8 of the 10 items listed above. To protect the team from negative forms of communication, preventative and proactive measures must be used. First, the team leader needs to take the lead in establishing a gracious and loving atmosphere. How the team leader, or senior pastor, treats others sets the tone for the entire team. Second, the team as a whole must establish acceptable guidelines for personal communication. A good way is to have team members establish a covenant under which they all agree to work. Third, the team must commit to confront those who violate the covenant.

### Organizational

Some team conflicts are attributable to organizational or management issues. Three of the most common are the presence of an overcontrolling senior pastor, misunderstanding team roles, and inequity in salary.

### The team leader does not delegate

Giving a staff member responsibility and letting him do the job is something senior pastors or team leaders seem to have trouble doing. For one reason or another, they take on all the big ministry projects themselves. When they do hand off goals and assignments to a staff member, they hover over the staff member constantly checking and rechecking his progress, giving directions, making changes, and generally running the show. While the task may get done, neither the senior pastor nor the associate gains much.

Not letting go is a tendency of senior pastors who do not understand how crucial it is to their own growth to have a staff team that is capable of doing a larger job. If there have been times when you have added an important project to your own busy schedule instead of letting a qualified associate do it alone, ask yourself:

*What am I afraid of?* Leaders often have what they believe are logical explanations of why they keep control.

## In the ministry world of the 21st century, some think team-based leadership is a miracle cure for what ails churches.

Some say, "He won't get it done on time"; or "She will make a mistake"; or "I can do it faster." Explanations of this kind are based on the fear of letting go and losing control. Determine to ask yourself what you are afraid of and then ask:

*What have I got to lose?* At times, you may have a great deal to lose. At other times, you may have little to lose depending on the nature of the assignment. In cases where you have much to lose, you can still delegate the task to an associate if you clearly communicate what needs to be done,

build in deadlines, and make yourself available to provide assistance if necessary. Then, ask yourself:

*What have I got to gain?* In most situations there is much to gain. You lift a burden from your shoulders, help develop an associate staff member's skills and confidence, and pave the way for great success in the future.

### Team members do not understand their roles

Role and title misunderstandings are common among members of multiple staffs. For example, is there a difference between a *minister of music*, a *director of music*, or a *worship leader*? If so, what are the differences, and what does this mean to the team? What do the terms *associate*, *assistant*, and *director* indicate? How do such terms impact authority, responsibility, and accountability? Misunderstanding also surfaces regarding roles. For example, a question may arise concerning who oversees the ushers and greeters who serve at Sunday morning worship? Do these servants report to the worship

pastor or the assimilation pastor? These and other misunderstandings are commonly at the root of staff difficulties.

The best way to overcome misunderstandings in roles and titles is to develop written ministry descriptions for each ministry position. Ministry descriptions guard team members from diversified role expectations in the congregation; clarify relationships between ministry jobs; help avoid overlaps and gaps between positions; provide a foundation for job appraisal; spell out duties, responsibilities, and

limits of authority; provide the basis for team evaluation; and build status, respect, and motivation for each team member.

### **Major differences in salary packages, benefits, or perks**

One of the most difficult aspects of team ministry is the financial inequity between staff members. Some churches do an excellent job of keeping salaries and benefits on an equitable footing, but other churches allow for huge differences that may lead to ill feelings and poor cooperation between team

members. find it difficult to talk to church leaders about personal money issues. Experience, however, has shown that the initiative for providing sound financial information most often begins with the staff member.

### **Relational**

Joining a staff team is similar to marrying into a family. We do not choose to marry someone based on her family but, once we marry, our relationship to our spouse's larger family is important. In the same way, once you join the pastoral staff of a

church, all the relationships connected to the staff team become important ingredients to one's ministry.

church, common occurrence, and members may feel that they are walking on eggshells never knowing when they will make a comment that will set another staff member off. Church consultant William Easum suggests five ways to encourage trust among teams. First, encourage staff members to be passionate about the vision and direction of the church. Second, assist team members to understand their roles. Third, challenge team members to embrace change in their roles. Fourth, build in systems for communication, such as Web pages, retreats, weekly Bible studies, and team-building events. Fifth, meet weekly in a small-group setting for sharing and prayer. Sixth, recruit team members who have some basic affinity with each other.<sup>3</sup>

## **The team leader must assist team members in setting specific goals and then hold each team member accountable for accomplishing them.**

members. Financial rewards among staff members do not always reflect hours or energy spent. Assistant staff members may put in many more hours than senior staff members who receive a healthier salary. Society teaches us that value is measured by income, and even the Bible tells us that a laborer is worthy of his hire. Inequities are a root of many staff problems and need to be addressed.

Inequities in salary can be addressed in several ways. First, each staff member needs to rest in the understanding that his ultimate value comes from the Creator and not from his pay package. Second, those responsible for determining staff pay packages must commit themselves to establishing equitable pay for all staff members. As a general rule, the pay scales for a given staff position should be within 15 percent to 20 percent of the position directly above. Third, staff members must take responsibility as stewards to inform church leadership of their financial situations. Most pastors

church, all the relationships connected to the staff team become important ingredients to one's ministry.

Church staffs are also similar to families in that certain personalities sometimes do not click. At times it is difficult to get along with or even love members of the family. Habits, lifestyle decisions, or beliefs may create conflict. Here are a few of the key relational problems staffs often encounter.

### **Team members do not trust each other**

Trust levels between staff members are significant because even though team members plan together, they work separately. If pastoral staff members do not trust other members to carry their ministry loads, to complete their roles in the grand scheme of things, or to support each other, the team can fail to function. When staff meetings become times for chronic complaining, it is a sign of trouble. Complaints may be simple, such as the office is too cold or too hot, or members feel they have too much work to do. Moodiness also is a

### **Territorial attitudes are present**

Territorial issues are present when a staff member sees equipment, facilities, or personnel as belonging only to himself. Another common territorial attitude is seen when a staff member believes a certain room in the church is his private classroom.

Team leaders must communicate on a regular basis that the ministry is the Lord's and does not belong to any one individual — including the senior pastor. Therefore, it is expected that each team member will graciously work with all aspects of the ministry in a mutual manner, recognizing that as the church grows, multiple use of facilities is a necessity.

### **Spouses or families are not happy**

It is difficult for a staff member to function successfully when his spouse or family members are unhappy. One pastor's wife puts the potential impact this way: "A divided staff can muzzle a church's vitality. A wife's

# Staff Communication

In the February 14 issue of *Alban Weekly*, senior pastors were asked to answer a survey identifying the one thing they feel their staff does well and the one thing they would change about their staff team. It is probably no surprise that communication was a top response in each category.

## According to this survey, senior pastors would like to change the following in regard to their staff's communication.

- To have more honest communication about what is really going on.
- To develop a climate where staff members can give each other helpful feedback on their work instead of just hoping or wondering if others approve it.
- To be able to speak honestly to one another in the spirit of encouragement, wanting each to have fruitful ministry within and beyond the congregation.
- To continue to look for ways to improve communication throughout the entire staff.
- To meet together on a regular basis, which is difficult because other staff members work part time.

## The senior pastors who indicated that their staff communicates well offered these descriptions:

- We communicate with each other on an as-needed basis. Whenever I am in the office, I am available to the staff. This augments meetings and brings up topics that do not find their way into staff meetings.
- We have established good lines of communication. We can express frustration in relatively productive ways and seek solutions that work for the entire staff.
- An atmosphere of trust enables open communication. Trust was established by all staff pursuing a theological education, though not in a seminary setting.

- We have open, regular, and usually informal communications so there are no surprises and each member has a sense of what the others are about.
- The staff is learning how to ask one another for suggestions and help before the last minute.
- We state what we need without apology.
- We maintain open communication via notes, e-mail, telephone, and personal contact.
- We listen well to one another.

## Regardless of the category in which you would place your congregation, here are a few ideas for developing or maintaining good communication within a staff:

- Meet as a team on a regular basis. The regularity with which you meet will vary according to staff size and availability. If your team includes part-time and volunteer members, you may need to meet at nontraditional times, such as evenings or on Saturdays. Design your meetings in such a way to elicit participation from everyone and to honor each person's input.
- Maximize opportunities for communication outside of meetings. Informal conversations often result in deepening levels of communication. When used appropriately, the telephone, e-mails, and notes can keep staff members informed in helpful ways.
- Directly ask team members for feedback and take the risk of offering constructive feedback to others. Team members need to exchange feedback in ways that build trust and enhance cooperation among team members.

"Staff Communication" is reprinted from *Alban Weekly* (No. 39, April 18, 2005), with permission from the Alban Institute. Copyright © 2007 by The Alban Institute, Inc., Herndon, Virginia. All rights reserved.

attitude about other staff members has potential to wreck or to promote healthy, harmonious workings among a group of people committed to a common cause."<sup>4</sup>

Managing unhappy families of staff members is extremely difficult. In some cases it may be wise to stay out of the situation and allow the staff member to handle the problem.

However, if the unhappiness begins to creep into staff relationships and destroys harmony and the team's ability to minister effectively, something must be done. The best approach is to seek a win/win between the church and the team member's family by collaborating to discover the mitigating concerns and searching for a workable solution.

## Prepare for team conflict

One of the most frustrating, exasperating, and demanding aspects of leadership is resolving team conflict. Whenever individuals serve together on a staff team, there is sure to be conflict in at least one of the four areas previously noted. Thus, a wise team leader prepares for conflict. Here are some steps to consider.

First, allow for healthy conflict. It is a mistake to create an atmosphere where conflict is not allowed. When unresolved conflict is buried inside a staff member's storehouse of feelings, it will later explode in an unexpected moment. It is far better to allow conflict to be expressed and resolved a little at a time as it takes place.

Joseph Umidi, professor of ministry at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, believes healthy conflict interactions are encouraged as leaders allow for three Ps: *permission*, *protection*, and *potency*. *Permission* is given for healthy conflict to take place in the normal process of ministry. *Protection* is given to each team member by establishing boundaries so conflict is managed with respect, appropriate language, and integrity. *Potency* is empowering all staff members to potently express their point of view.<sup>5</sup>

Second, deal with conflict as early as possible. Norman Shawchuck suggests that conflict moves through five stages:

1. *Tension Awareness*: Team members begin to sense the breakdown of relationships.
2. *Role Confusion*: Team members begin to place blame on others.
3. *Injustice Collecting*: Team members begin compiling evidence to justify their position.
4. *Attack Stage*: Team members begin to openly express hostility toward other team members.
5. *Adjustment Stage*: Team members begin to leave for other ministries or church splits occur.<sup>6</sup>

The key to managing conflict is to deal with it as early as possible in these five stages. Recognize that the longer one waits, the more difficult it will be to come to any form of resolution.

Third, practice healthy communication. Conflicts normally create an atmosphere where it is difficult to communicate. However, by following

several guidelines, healthy communication is possible. To communicate in a healthy manner one must focus on the issue or act rather than the person, avoid generalities and exaggerations, spell out specific remedies, choose the right time to talk, and follow up to keep communication open.

Fourth, select the proper approach. One of the biggest mistakes in managing conflict takes place when the leader of the team thinks he must resolve all issues between staff members. It is natural for staff members to view the senior pastor or team leader as the Big Daddy who can take care of all their problems. If the leader is a benign I'll-take-care-of-your-problem parent figure, however, he may be harming the team rather than helping it. While this is one approach to managing conflict, at least five other approaches to managing conflict need to be considered.

*The Win/Win Option.* All parties collaborate to arrive at a meaningful resolution. Key question: How can we work together? This approach to managing conflict is sometimes called collaboration. It is the healthiest approach and should be used in as many situations as possible.

*The Win/Lose Option.* One party seeks to win the conflict at all costs. Key question: Is it worth the cost? This approach — sometimes called competition — is best used when core moral, ethical, or biblical values are at stake.

*The Lose/Yield Option.* One party yields to the other after realizing the issue is not worth the trouble. Key question: Is it really that important? This approach — sometimes called accommodation — is best used when the conflict focuses on surface or cosmetic issues.

*The Lose/Lose Option.* The issue

is dropped because it will hurt the church to pursue it to resolution. Key question: Will it hurt the church body? This approach — sometimes called abandonment — is best used when core values are not at stake and the issue can be tabled until a later time.

*The Compromise Option.* The conflict is ignored, allowing the various parties to work out the issues on their own. Key question: Is it worth getting involved? This approach — sometimes called avoidance — is best used when it is wisest not to get involved with problems that are beyond your influence.

Those ministering on a multiple staff face unique challenges and struggles — one of which is facing conflict. On the whole, conflict is to be avoided. But conflict is an aspect of human nature that is sure to come out in any team situation. Conflictive situations are opportunities for growth and development. The key is for staff members to accept their roles and to develop a realistic and positive attitude about the circumstances in which they serve, while always recognizing that Christ builds His church, not us. 🙏



**GARY L. MCINTOSH, D.MIN., PH.D.,** is professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. This

article is adapted from his book *Staff Your Church for Growth* (Baker Books, 2000), and used with permission of the author.

#### NOTES

1. Harold J. Westing (Pastor's Symposium seminar at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California, 12,13 October 1987).
2. Quoted by Jessica Guynn in "Bullies in the Workplace," *The San Diego Union Tribune*, 28 December 1998, sec. C, p.1.
3. William Easum, "Teams," at <http://www.easum.com>, accessed September 1998.
4. Marilyn Hansen, "When Your Husband Is Part of a Staff," *Partnership*, March–April 1985, 49.
5. Joseph Umidi, "How To Resolve Conflict Among Your Church Staff," *Ministries Today*, January-February 1998, 36.
6. Umidi.





Illustration: Nip Rogers

# Building an Effective Ministry Team in the Smaller Church

By Glenn Daman

---

Pastor John sat at his desk frustrated and discouraged. In the past several months he had been working with the board and the Christian education committee to form a new after-school program for children as a community outreach. When he first mentioned this idea, it was met with enthusiasm and approval. Even though the church was small, it had always had a strong children's ministry. People recognized that the church's future depended on its ability to attract families with children; and, if the church were to do that, it needed a vibrant children's ministry.

After the initial discussions, however, it seemed that Pastor John hit a brick wall. While people were supportive of his idea he could not find anyone to lead the program. He also encountered difficulty in finding volunteers to run the program. The ones who did get involved could not agree on the structure and curriculum.

While Pastor John had heard about the challenges of staffing and team development in the larger church, he had always thought these issues were irrelevant to the smaller church. But as he sat at his desk he suddenly realized that this was the problem he faced. The difference was that in the larger church the staff developed and ran programs; but, in the smaller church, it required untrained volunteers to develop and run its programs. John was perplexed. How can the smaller church effectively staff its ministry and develop effective teams when it relies on volunteers who might resign at the slightest whim?

The problems confronting Pastor John are not unique. The smaller church often does not have enough people to fill the basic staffing needs that keep the church functioning. Furthermore, especially in rural areas, people in the smaller church are fiercely independent and prefer to work alone rather than in teams. Yet much of church

ministry requires people to work together to accomplish common (and biblical) goals and objectives. The challenge for leadership is to develop an effective strategy to fill the staffing needs of the church and equip people to work together to accomplish the will of God.

## Staffing the Ministry

When we think of staffing we often think of hired staff. In the smaller church, however, the staff is volunteers who give their time and energy to the work of the ministry. While they may not receive a salary, they are just as critical and valuable as any paid employee. The smaller church cannot function effectively without the volunteer's vital contribution.

The challenge pastors in the smaller church face is recruiting and equipping volunteers for ministry. To effectively staff church ministries pastors need to use the right methodology in recruiting people. Pastors in smaller churches often approach staffing with the *arm-twisting approach*. As needs become more critical, pastors increase the pressure on people to become involved. Consequently, people are motivated to sign up out of guilt and duty rather than a passion and desire to serve. The result: People half-heartedly approach their ministry. What the smaller church needs are people who are passionate about

---

ministry and understand its importance. Pastors, therefore, need a recruiting strategy that excites people for ministry.

### **Recruit to a purpose, not a position**

Before pastors ask people to serve in the church, pastors need to clearly answer this question: "Why is this ministry important?" One of the reasons people are reluctant to become involved is the perception that the church is only doing what has traditionally been done. Because the smaller church places a high value on tradition, it can cause people to lose sight of the fact the goal of ministry is spiritual transformation (Colossians 1:28,29). People do not volunteer to build an organization

## **As pastors seek to recruit people, they need to clearly communicate why the ministry is important, and how it will affect others.**

or program (even a church's). They become involved because they desire to influence, change, and help their friends, family, and neighbors. As pastors seek to recruit people, they need to clearly communicate why the ministry is important, and how it will affect others.

### **Provide adequate training**

People can easily become intimidated in ministry. In the smaller church pastors rely on laity to develop and lead programs. Pastors do not have the luxury of having Bible college- or seminary-trained individuals to develop and oversee ministries. For example, the only training the Christian education director might have received came through teaching a Sunday School class. Even then, his experience may be limited. In the large church people are trained before they are given a ministry, especially if it involves leadership. In the smaller church pastors must often train people *after* they are placed in

ministry. As a result, pastors must develop strategies that provide on-the-job training. Then, when a pastor recruits people for a ministry, he can clearly communicate to them how he will equip them for ministry.

### **Value both the generalist and the specialist**

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul gives an analogy: The church functions as a body. Each part — no matter how small — is equally valuable to the health of the whole body. Paul affirms that each part performs different duties in relationship to its contribution to the body. God has equipped each individual differently, with different

spiritual gifts, backgrounds, talents, personalities, and abilities.

Some within the church are *generalists*. These individuals are able and willing to perform multiple responsibilities or are gifted in a few areas but are able to exercise their gifts in a variety of ministries. For example, a person may have the gift of mercy. As she teaches the primary class she uses her gift in the classroom to minister to the needs of the children. Others in the church are specialists. They are gifted in a specific area and are comfortable focusing on only one responsibility.

Because the smaller church largely depends on generalists, pastors can easily overlook the specialist, or worse, consider him unspiritual because he is not willing to perform more than one responsibility. On the other hand, pastors can become critical of the generalist because, while he does a number of different tasks, he does not

excel in any specific one. The generalist does an adequate job in his ministry, but he never becomes a star. The result is that pastors criticize generalists for being mediocre. Yet both have an important role to play.

### **Avoid overworking volunteers**

When pastors are staffing the church, it is easy to focus on needs rather than on the amount of work people are already doing. In many smaller churches people are heavily involved in ministry. They have a sense of ownership of their ministry and are often performing several tasks within the church. If pastors are not careful, they can manipulate people into becoming so involved that they burn out.

Not only is it the pastor's responsibility to involve people in ministry, it is also his responsibility to protect people from becoming overcommitted to the point where they neglect their families and other responsibilities. When pastors overwork people, they can burn them out; and, they quit all activities, leaving the church in an even worse position.

### **Have clear job descriptions**

When pastors recruit people to a ministry in the church, it is important to communicate the responsibilities and requirements of the job. By clearly describing what the ministry will involve, pastors aid both the church and the volunteer because they can match volunteers with ministries they are equipped by God to perform. In the smaller church, however, communicating responsibilities is often not done through a formal job description but through informal communication. Nevertheless, pastors need to develop a clear job description even when they plan to communicate it informally.



### Developing a Team Within the Ministry

The challenge confronting the smaller church is not only in recruiting people to serve, but also in developing a sense of teamwork within the different ministries. While people in smaller churches — especially rural areas — are strongly relational, they also are independent and self-sufficient. They tend to be more inflexible in their ideas; and, as a result, when they work with others, they can easily become frustrated when their ideas are not

## Job Descriptions

A job description answers the following questions:

1. What is the church asking the person to do?
2. What is the purpose of the ministry?
3. How much time will be required both in preparation and performance of the ministry?
4. How long will the person be asked to serve?
5. What are the responsibilities and requirements of the position?
6. Who is the person accountable to?
7. What training will be provided and in what areas will the person experience personal growth?

**GLENN DAMAN**, Dallas, Oregon

adopted. Yet, God has designed the church to be the ultimate expression of teamwork. Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 12 that Christians in the body of Christ are to function interdependently rather than be independent of one another. The fact God has established a plurality of leadership within the church implies that the church is to function as a team (see Ephesians 4:11–13). While

a pastor cannot force people to work well with others, he can provide an environment that fosters teamwork.

### Develop the right foundation

Building an environment for effective teams begins with those in leadership. The pastor sets the example. When a church fails to work together, it is possible that the pastor has also failed to work well with others.

A mistrust may exist between pastor and board. Pastors can destroy team development in their church by having an adversarial attitude. The danger of ministerial training is that pastors may develop a sense of superiority. They may begin to equate training and biblical knowledge with spirituality. They view board members as untrained and uneducated in spiritual leadership. Instead of trusting and valuing the board's input, counsel, and decisions, the pastor begins to question them. When the board rejects the pastor's ideas, he quickly labels them as rigid, old fashioned, and unspiritual. As a result, the pastor-board relationship begins to disintegrate. Instead of working as a team with the board, the pastor develops an adversarial relationship.

This adversarial relationship can be further exasperated if the board views the pastor as an outsider. Because of a high pastoral turnover and because of the cultural differences that exist when a pastor comes from a different cultural setting, the board does not fully accept the pastor's leadership. Moving beyond these obstacles and learning to work together for the common good of the church is critical for developing teamwork in the church. If pastors cannot work with the board as a team, they can never expect volunteers in the church to work as a team. The result is a dysfunctional church.

### Develop a trusting environment

A church that works together must be built on trust. First, the church must learn to trust God. Effective ministry requires faith. It is easy for the smaller church to become reluctant to take risks because people fear a new ministry might put the church at financial risk. As a result, they focus on maintaining existing programs rather than on developing new ideas. The church, however, needs to recognize that God is responsible for providing it with the resources needed to accomplish His will. The focus of the team should never be, "How can we maintain the program?" The focus should be, "What does God want us to accomplish?"

Second, church members need to learn to trust others. Trust is also critical for pastors. Sometimes it is difficult for pastors to trust people with the ministry of the church. It is difficult to trust their ideas and their methods of doing things. Pastors struggle to allow them the freedom to plan and perform the ministry in the way they think best. Pastors must realize that God entrusts ministry to the whole congregation. In Ephesians 4:11–13, God gives the work of ministry to the congregation. So must pastors. A pastor's responsibility is not to dictate to his people what they are to do, but to equip them to do the work.

### Develop an empowering environment

Along with trust is the importance of empowering people for ministry. Empowering people means giving them the authority to accomplish the task. When Christ sent out His disciples, He not only gave them the responsibility to preach the gospel, but He also gave them authority to fulfill the task (Matthew 10:1–16). It is easy to give people responsibilities but difficult to give them authority — the freedom to set the goals and

strategies for their ministry. While pastors provide counsel and direction when needed, especially when the individual is new to a ministry, pastors must also allow them freedom to make decisions. Only when pastors empower people will they develop into effective leaders.

### Develop an encouraging environment

In the smaller church discouragement also plagues people's involvement. When people do not see extraordinary results for their efforts, they begin to wonder if the ministry is worth their efforts. This is especially true when they have attempted to implement new ideas but failed to see positive results.

When a group works together to implement new ministries, especially those designed for outreach, they often develop a defeatist mindset. Consequently, pastors need a positive-based evaluation strategy where they focus on spiritual outcomes rather than on goals and objectives alone. A positive-based evaluation strategy is one where pastors recognize that if God desires to sovereignly accomplish His purposes through them, they can expect God to work unexpectedly. People might consider a ministry effort to be a failure, but God may use it to accomplish His purpose. When people work together to serve God, He will accomplish His will through them, even though they may achieve far different results from those they expected. Consequently, pastors need to reward people for their faithfulness rather than just their achievements (Matthew 25:14–30), for in their faithfulness God achieves His purpose.

### Develop a supportive environment

To have effective teams a pastor needs to offer support in three areas. First, he needs to provide adequate resources for ministry. A team will

only be as effective as the resources provided. Asking people to develop a youth program without providing financial resources will not only frustrate the team, but will also ensure its failure. Second, pastors need to provide guidance. While pastors should never dictate what needs to be done, they should periodically meet with the team to discuss how the youth ministry is going, what goals they desire to accomplish, and how they will reach them. Third, pastors need to provide spiritual support through prayer and encouragement, ministering to team member's spiritual and emotional needs as well.

### Develop accountability

One of the most difficult aspects of working with volunteers in the smaller church is accountability. Volunteers are less likely to handle criticism, even when it is constructive. Furthermore, in the smaller church, if a person becomes hurt or upset, it reverberates throughout the congregation.

Accountability, however, is not the pastor holding a club over the team like a taskmaster, demanding that it do exactly as he says and making sure it achieves the results he desires. Instead, accountability involves loving, supportive oversight that allows the pastor to provide assistance when problems arise.

When Christ sent out His disciples, He reminded them that they were accountable to God for how well they performed their ministry (Matthew 10:28–33). They were accountable not in the area of results, but in their faithfulness to be obedient to God and to be good stewards of what He had given them (see Matthew 25:14–30).

Pastors are to hold volunteers accountable in three main areas. First, volunteers are accountable for walking in biblical obedience. As ministry

leaders they are to exemplify Christ in their lives. Second, volunteers are to be faithful to the assigned task. If they are failing to fulfill their responsibilities, the pastor needs to come alongside them and address the issues in their lives that are hindering their ministry. Rather than fire them, help them develop the skills necessary to accomplish the task. Third, volunteers are accountable to uphold the values, beliefs, and vision of the church. While each ministry will have its own vision and goals, these should never conflict with the vision of the church. While volunteers are given freedom in the curriculum, it should never conflict with the theology and values of the church. When it does, the person needs to be reminded of his agreement to teach what is in agreement with the church. If he refuses, then he must be removed. Otherwise, his teaching will bring division and error into the whole congregation.

### Conclusion

As Pastor John thought about the new children's ministry, he realized that the program was struggling because he had failed to properly recruit people to the ministry. When people did volunteer, they were given positions but were not placed on a team.

He still believes the ministry is critical for the future of the church, but it will require more preparation and effort on his part to share with people the passion and importance of the ministry. He then needs to work with the volunteers to develop a team so they can work together with a shared vision to accomplish the ministry. 🌀



**GLENN DAMAN, D.Min.**, is director of the Village Missions Center for Leadership Development, Dallas, Oregon. He is author of *Shepherding the Small Church*.





By Dan Reiland

# The **JENGA**<sup>®</sup> Staffing Principle

**I like to play JENGA.** This nerve-racking game requires concentration and a steady hand. The object is to remove one of the 54 wooden blocks from the lower portion of a tower and then add it to the top of the tower as each player tries to build an increasingly higher tower of blocks without it falling.

The box says: "Balance the wooden blocks. Stack up the stories. Don't let the tower fall."

The detailed instructions on the box are:

1. "Carefully remove one block from any level. Use a steady hand to stack it on top.
2. "Continue to remove and stack blocks to build the tower taller and taller ... and shakier.
3. "How tall is too tall? You'll find out when the tower falls."

It struck me that playing JENGA is like building a staff; however, there are more instructions on the JENGA box than I received in seminary. First, a disclaimer: This illustration has its limitations because staff members are not like wooden blocks.

If you lead a staff, you are required to balance the blocks, adding more as your church grows, and pray the whole thing does not come crashing down.

For example, every time a staff member leaves, a *block* is extracted from your tower. Note that step 1 in the directions says *carefully*. Then, using a *steady* hand, stack it on top — move it somewhere else. Most often this means the staff member is added to another pastor's JENGA stack in his church. In JENGA, with each move you make, more beads of sweat collect on your forehead because the tower is taller; you have more invested; and, if it falls, it is a mess.

Step 2 is *continue*. The process never ends. Even if your last move resulted in a close call or the tower is becoming extremely shaky, you continue to make changes until you either quit the game or the tower comes crashing down.

Finally, step 3 asks: "How tall is too tall?" Hasbro does not answer this question. No strategy plans are given on the box, and there is no 800 number to call for help. Players must keep playing. If the tower falls, you did something wrong.

In making staff transitions, the pastor is moving the blocks. If he wonders if he is taking a risk, he is. Every time a pastor removes or adds a block, the tower is not just one block different; it becomes an entirely different organization of blocks and must be treated accordingly.

For example, removing a block that is part of the

foundation — one that has been there since the beginning — will have greater impact than if a recently added block is moved. I have often looked at my staff configuration and wondered if the next move I make will cause a crash or build a tower people admire.

If you want to get the emotion and intensity of this idea, play JENGA and think about a complicated staff transition.

### Five Kinds of Transitions

Staff transitions shake things up. Sometimes there's only a little shakin' going on, but it is felt somewhere. The issue is whether the shaking is done in a positive and healthy way. Remember, if you make a change and no one cares, you made a change that did not matter. The key is to understand the nature of staff change and how to optimize even difficult changes.

There are dozens of reasons and hundreds of scenarios but probably only five major categories behind staff transitions:

#### Directed dismissal

The pastor decides to let a staff member go, and it is clearly not the staff member's idea or desire. This is the most difficult kind of transition. This decision can be made for many reasons from incompetence to character. Once you have made your decision and cleared it with the appropriate people, move quickly. Delay almost always hurts the process. If your reasoning is good, your conviction

**If you lead a staff, you are required to balance the blocks, adding more as your church grows, and pray the whole thing does not come crashing down.**

is strong, and your key leaders back you, then act. Do not wait, and do not let the person remain on staff more than 2 weeks. A shorter time frame is even better. If you want to give a severance package, do so, but do not allow the staff member to remain long after the decision is made.

In deciding what to communicate and how to communicate information about a staff member's dismissal, give details only to the key leadership of the church. Do not make public statements unless you are in

## If you expect the church to make progress, your staff cannot remain the same.

a small-church culture that demands more information. Even then, it is wise to speak as positively as possible and leave out unnecessary details.

### Open opportunity

This kind of staff transition is perhaps the easiest, even though it may not always feel like it. It is hard to see a good staff member go; but, the fact is they do. Many pastors have had great staff members walk into their offices and say: "Can I talk with you?" It is easy to read their faces and tone of voice every time: *God is stirring; it's time to go.*

Another pastor might have called and recruited the staff member away from you. Do not get upset about that. If the other church has a bigger vision or appeals to your staff person and he is willing to leave, be willing to let him go. Encourage your staff member to exit well. Feel free to make requests and give direction on what leaving well looks like.

### Chemistry change

This kind of staff transition is my least favorite because it is the most subjective. This person is often doing a good job (task wise) and demonstrates no apparent character breakdown. The problem is that his attitude and/or relational connection to the team have changed. A breakdown of some kind has caused his perspective to sour and this often results in his need to leave the team.

Take every opportunity and make every effort to repair the relational breakdown. There is a good possibility that the problem can be corrected. If the leadership's efforts to correct the problem are executed well, but a change still needs to be made, the transition will go much smoother. Be honest about the behavior that bothers you. If you are not addressing a minor personality quirk, but an issue that matters, be direct in your communication. If you do not clearly communicate concerning the

problem, the staff member will not be successful in making the needed changes.

### Resource reasons

An unfortunate situation arises when a church can no longer afford a staff position. This is difficult because the church has not completely run out of money, but financial decisions must be made. The difficult decision

to eliminate a staff position is usually due to a money shortfall. Even though it seems impersonal to choose to pay the mortgage and light bills over keeping a staff member who is loved and respected, the assumption is that *creative cuts* have already been made, including minor pay cuts, so people can keep their jobs. The bottom line is that a tough transition will take place.

It is a legitimate option to tell the person you will hire him back as soon as you can, but that rarely works out. This can create a situation where the person accepts a job he does not want, but remains there in hopes of coming back on staff. When you cannot or do not rehire him, the relationship is greatly damaged. It is better to give a severance package (if possible), celebrate his contribution, and grieve the loss. In this scenario, try to use your contacts and people resources to help the person find another job.

### Surprise syndrome

This kind of staff transition is the least common, but can be the most shocking because it is unexpected. Everything seems fine, and then a staff member quits — without notice. He is simply done. Any of the above categories may be in play, but because no one saw it coming there is the additional element of it being out-of-the-blue. My best advice is that nothing is out-of-the-blue. This means you missed some cues.

This situation will be a learning experience for you. Invite the staff member to share with you the process involved in his decision to leave. Give him permission to be honest.

In comparison, the open opportunity category seems similar. But as the leader, you were aware of a possible change because you had good, open conversations with all staff members.

©2007 Glenn Meyer



"I've finally gotten a staff for my church."

Pastors can reduce the *surprise syndrome* from occurring by creating opportunities for frequent open and honest communication. This is best accomplished through nonthreatening and nondefensive conversation.

### Great Transitions Require Courage

JENGA requires courage. When you play JENGA, you will come to a point when you do not want to pull one more block from the tower. You want to pass, but you cannot. To pass is to not play the game by the rules. You are only pretending to play if you pass.

Church leaders pass when they stop making moves and pretend they are still in the game. If you expect the church to make progress, your staff

cannot remain the same. This does not always mean that someone on staff is leaving. A lateral move may be needed or perhaps the church hires an additional staff member, but the principle is absolute.

The following provides insight into the kinds of courage a pastor and his team need to make the best staff transitions.

### Courage to make the change

A pastor must be willing to make needed changes. I consulted with a pastor in Dallas, Texas, several years ago. It was clear to his wife, the church board, and to me that he

needed a new minister of music. He refused. He said that if keeping the

**The better your leadership is on an ongoing basis, the better transitions will go.**

current person would stop church growth, he would deal with it. While I was amazed by his loyalty, I was also confounded by his lack of courage in leadership.

The minister of music was a good man and would have thrived in a smaller church where his skills were a match. But the pastor vowed he would never reward the music minister's years of faithful service when the church

## Senior Pastor Succession

Every church will eventually experience a change in senior pastor. The larger the church, and the longer the former pastor's tenure, the more significant is the transition. For example, the transition from a large-church pastor who was the founding pastor, or one who was the second of only two pastors, is critical. Such a pastor may have led the church for 20 or more years. He is greatly loved and respected. Making a change without careful planning and attention to the important issues can hurt the church.

Every church is different, but the following will help churches make successful transitions.

1. Make the transition for the right reasons. Follow God's voice more than politics and personality battles.
2. Do not be pressured to hurry. Take time. If the current senior pastor must leave — for health or other stressful reasons — it is often wise to enlist an interim pastor. Do not allow the interim pastor to become the new pastor. Remember the reasons why he is interim in the first place.
3. Develop a search team of mature leaders who have no agendas. Do not use the church board. They will have biases that disqualify them for the search team. Choose two or three board members and add the

right people who are skilled for the task, and who have the time to do it.

4. Have open and honest conversations about how much influence the current senior pastor will have in the selection of a new pastor. This is highly subjective. There is no one right answer, but unity with the answer is important.
5. Look for the pastor whose personality fits your church's needs and future direction. The search team should prayerfully discern the church's current needs and the direction the church needs to pursue. Look for a leader whose heart is aligned with these goals. It is also important to allow the new leader freedom to implement his expression of that vision.
6. Do not announce an heir apparent too soon. If you are considering a leader from within, do not announce this person as a possibility. If you are not ready to declare a candidate with confidence, wait.
7. Celebrate the past, but give the new pastor permission to make changes.



DAN REILAND, Lawrenceville, Georgia

was small and struggling by letting him go when the church outgrew his skill set. The truth is that God has another place where the minister of music would be happier and more productive.

The entire staff needs to know that the pastor has the courage to make necessary changes. Whether the change is moving a staff member to a different position, or removing him

### Courage to fight for culture

About 6 years ago I joined the staff of Crossroads Community Church to serve as executive pastor. Crossroads is a great church located just north of Atlanta, Georgia. The founding pastor, Kevin Myers, is the senior pastor. God has blessed us with a great partnership. Of the many things Myers has said that have impacted our partnership, one of the most powerful was: "I'm

## Becoming distracted from the church's mission happens too often in the church.

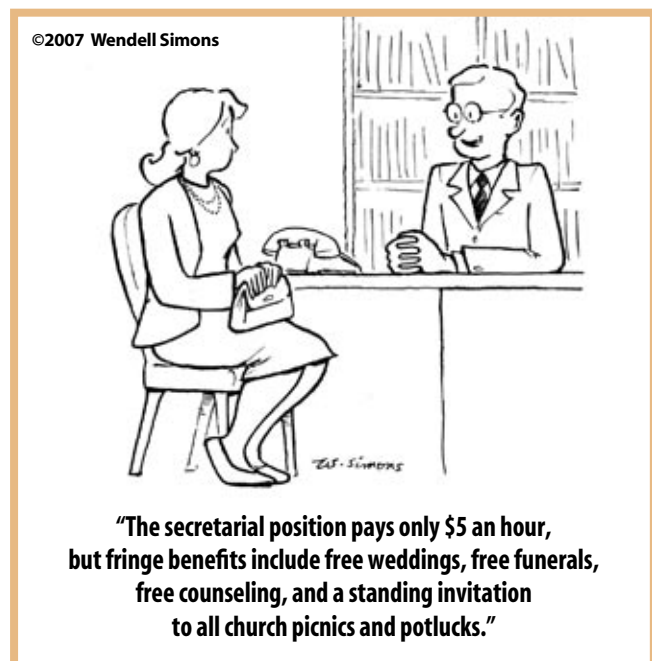
from the staff altogether, transitions must take place.

Your leadership prior to a transition is important. The better your leadership is on an ongoing basis, the better transitions will go. This is the secret to successful staff transitions. Strong and consistent leadership provides the kind of environment that withstands even the toughest transitions. This is similar to how a strong, healthy family endures a crisis or hardship. The stronger the family, the better they handle what life brings their way.

giving you the keys to the church, but don't mess with the culture."

I knew exactly what he was saying: *I have invested my life's energy in developing the church and staff culture. It is important; it matters to me; it is critical. Do not change it.*

Myers is a smart leader, and he knows that some nuances of culture change. One example is the growing size of a church. But in this instance, he was referring to core essentials — authenticity, no pretense, and a light-heartedness personally while taking God seriously.



area. The congregation is freed up and fired up. The staff is passionate and on purpose.

When I consider a transition on our team, I know it will shake things up a little. But does it cause a problem? No. Problems are prevented because of the strength of the culture.

### Courage to maintain integrity under pressure

Maintaining integrity is easy when no pressure is attached to the issue. I am never tempted to give in to staff under normal circumstances. It is when the heat is on, passion is up, and opinions are strong, that I might be tempted to lower my level of responsibility.

For example, suppose I have several complex church-wide issues that involve large amounts of money and people want answers yesterday. Meanwhile a staff member wants permission to start a project that I do not think is a good idea. In the moment, it is easier to say yes rather than fight another battle that I do not have time for. But the right thing to do is to approach the issue with a full heart and mind.

If I approve wrong projects enough times, the staff member may slowly veer off track, and I have inadvertently let it happen. Then when I turn down the next project, the staff member wonders why. This process, if unattended, can lead to difficult staff transitions.

Another challenge to team integrity is when a staff leader, under pressure from multiple other demands, lowers performance standards. This is easy to do. While it may feel like the path of least resistance in the moment and easily fixed later, it is not. Never put off a performance issue; deal with it immediately. If you lower performance standards with one staff member, the rest of the staff will notice, stability





## Disloyalty or True Loyalty

**Y**ou are disloyal. Clean out your desk and files and be gone by the end of the day." These harsh words shocked the student ministries pastor. The associate thought he was being loyal to the lead pastor when he informed him about the surprise inquiry he received from another pastor about a position on his staff. Another pastor shared this philosophy with his staff: "The moment you entertain another position you are being disloyal and you are released."

Loyalty and transparency are qualities most pastors seek in their staff, but loyalty and transparency must be a two-way street. Loyalty is a warm blanket that encourages transparency. However, loyalty and transparency must trickle down from the lead pastor to his staff.

"God's will for my associates is also God's will for our church," stated one pastor. "If it is God's will for them to be somewhere else, they will only sense complete fulfillment there, and they may be an impediment to us. If it is God's will for them to stay here, we will be delighted and thankful, and we will see growth in them and in their ministry assignments."

The secure pastor realizes, even outside of the considerations of God's will, that when his staff sees the opportunities and provisions afforded at his church and under his leadership they understand "how good they have it here." That pastor does not fear any comparison.

Revolving door associates and frequently changing staffs do not help church growth. Someone in one church said "an optimist is an associate who unpacks his bags." Associates in large churches learn how the lead pastor will treat them as they watch the experience of their coworkers. If other associates are treated with patience, kindness, and gentleness as they seek God's unfolding will, all staff members will be much more transparent. If departing associates are treated with unkindness and in anger, that lead pastor can expect more surprise departures.

Every lead pastor wants the Galatians 5 fruit of love, joy, peace, and faithfulness demonstrated by his staff. As the head of the staff, the pastor needs to employ patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control to fertilize the soil — even during transition.

Loyalty to the cause and call of Christ should be our greatest consideration. When it is time to move on, the staff pastor wants the Lord to reveal that fact to him first. He then hopes and prays that all concerned will feel a confirmation in their spirit regarding that stirring. Then he trusts that all, including the lead pastor, will join him in prayerfully finding God's direction.



**DAVE MATHENY**, Auburn, Washington

begins to erode, and their confidence in your leadership begins to diminish. Team spirit is weakened, and transitions become problematic.

### **Courage to remain on mission**

This subtle temptation reminds me of the frog in a kettle. If you drop a frog into boiling water, it will immediately jump out. If you put the frog in water that is at room temperature and slowly heat the water, the frog will cook to death.

Becoming distracted from the church's mission happens all too

often in the church. No one person or group makes an overt move away from the core mission of evangelism and discipleship; but after a number of years, little by little, the church adopts many busy, energy-sapping programs that have little to do with the mission of the church — The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20). Many of these programs, classes, and events are strongly defended. Even if we give these activities the benefit of the doubt, no church can successfully do them all. At some point the energy required by these programs will

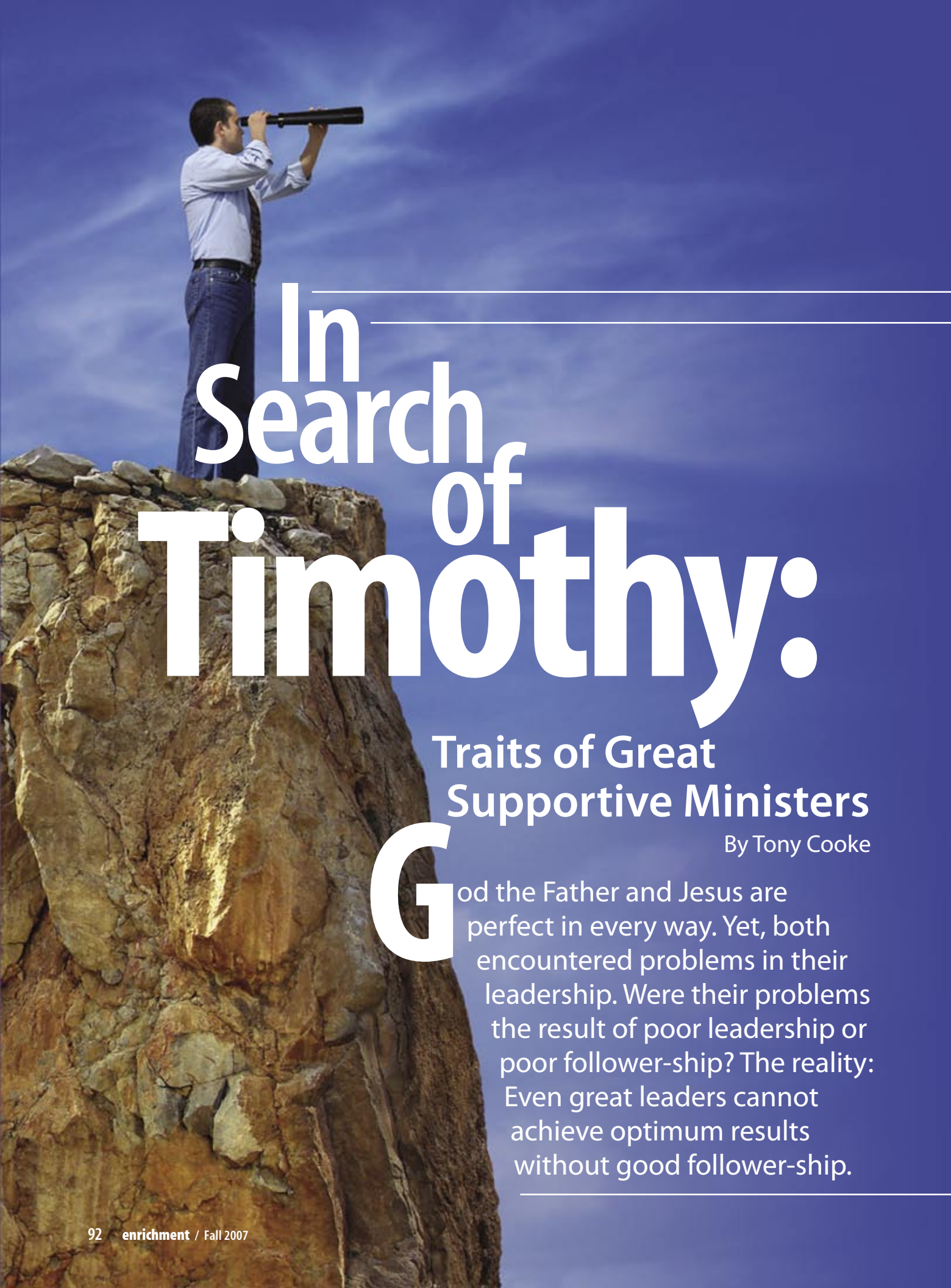
distract and derail the church from doing what matters.

Few things in the local church bring more strength, courage, and stability than fighting for mission. When a church is boldly on mission, staff members are more likely to stay; and when changes take place, the church is strong enough to weather the transition. 🌀



**DAN REILAND, D.Min.**, is executive pastor, Crossroads Community Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia.





---

# In Search of Timothy:

## Traits of Great Supportive Ministers

By Tony Cooke

**G**od the Father and Jesus are perfect in every way. Yet, both encountered problems in their leadership. Were their problems the result of poor leadership or poor follower-ship? The reality: Even great leaders cannot achieve optimum results without good follower-ship.

---

### When Leaders Lack Support

Pastors often feel pressure because they do not have enough help. This problem is not new. Moses complained to the Lord: "I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me" (Numbers 11:14).<sup>1</sup>

Paul was a great leader, but he did not always have the help he needed. Writing to Timothy, he said, "For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:20,21).

Even great leaders cannot produce great followers without cooperation. Had it been solely up to Paul, he would have generated dozens of Timothys. Many leaders have compelling assignments from God, but they struggle because potential helpers are consumed with seeking their own and will not help carry the leader's vision.

### No One Else Like Timothy

Paul needed a representative — someone to reflect his heart. A hireling would not meet the need. This person must genuinely care for and serve the best interests of others. Paul had only one person available and capable of doing this — Timothy.

Paul described Timothy as "like-minded," a word meaning *equal soul*. Timothy knew and shared Paul's heart, values, priorities, purpose, convictions, and attitudes. Timothy was not self-promoting or self-willed. He had no personal agenda; this is what made him so valuable to the apostle Paul. He wanted to serve God by helping Paul. How tragic that Timothy's attitude was an exception when it should have been the norm.

God is raising up a great company of Timothys today to surround and help senior pastors in Kingdom work. We all recognize that God calls some people to supportive roles just as He calls others to top-level leadership roles.

### Learning To Be Like Timothy

When I was in Bible school, I had certain aspirations concerning how God would use me in future ministry. Instead of placing me in a high-visibility position, such as pulpit ministry, the Lord wisely placed me where I could grow in character and learn the significance of serving. Working as a janitor in a church helped me identify several issues: I had immaturities and pride that needed to be dealt with; and, I needed to cultivate a servant's heart.

There were times when my attitude was wrong, and three times the Lord graciously spoke vital words of correction to me. Those words helped me form core values and shaped my view of supportive ministry.

The first time the Lord corrected me, He said, *I want you to treat this job as though it were your ultimate calling and as though it were the most important thing you could ever do for Me.*

Another time the Lord challenged me, saying, *If you were the pastor, what kind of janitor would you want working for you?* It was easy to make a mental list: As a senior pastor I would have high expectations of those working for me. Then I sensed the Spirit say, *You be that janitor.*



## Great Examples in Supportive Ministry

The Bible records the characteristics of many godly people whose examples can be emulated by today's pastors. Paul said, "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you" (Philippians 3:17). In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul also said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." Below are some examples to emulate:

- Attention to details (Joseph).
- Courageous assistant (Joshua).
- Supporting the leader (Aaron and Hur).
- Respectful (David).
- A covenant man (Jonathan).
- Devoted (Amasai).
- Determined follower (Elisha).
- Willing to decrease so another may increase (John the Baptist).
- Encouragement (Barnabas).
- A partner and fellow worker (Titus).
- Like-minded (Timothy).
- Profitable (Mark).
- Faithful (Luke).
- Showing initiative and refreshing others (Onesiphorus).
- Committed (Priscilla and Aquila).



**TONY COOKE**, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

Another time when I let my attitude slip, I was doing my job externally, but I was grumbling internally. I remember standing in one of the restrooms cleaning the mirror when the Holy Spirit spoke to me, *Clean this restroom as though Jesus himself were the next person coming in here.* Suddenly, I realized I had not been doing my work as unto the Lord.

### The Traits of Great Supportive Ministers

Later, when I became an assistant pastor, I repeatedly read Paul's letters to Timothy. I noticed that Paul told Timothy to bring Mark with him, because Mark would be profitable to him for the ministry (2 Timothy 4:11). That struck a chord with me, and became the basis for a prayer I often prayed: "Lord, make me profitable — beneficial and useful — to the man of God for whom I work." This should be the heart's desire of every staff member and volunteer in every church.

What are the characteristics of a profitable assistant? While godly character, competence, intelligence, longevity, and many other qualities are important, 10 essential traits are found in long-term supportive ministers who thrive and are effective in their work.

### Great supportive ministers are loyal

An elderly lady I was visiting at the hospital said, "Brother Cooke, I want to thank you for coming to see me. The senior pastor hasn't been by to see me." A critical and cutting tone of voice revealed her offense toward the senior pastor.

I could have exploited that situation to promote myself. I could have said, "Well, I'm here because I have such a love for the people." But it is never right for a staff member to make himself look good at his pastor's expense.

One of your jobs in supportive ministry is to represent your pastor

in a favorable light, especially when others make unfair criticisms. I said: "I am glad to be here, but I came because the senior pastor asked me to visit you. God has given our pastor the wisdom to know he cannot be everywhere at once, and that is why he selected people like me to be part of his staff. He asked me to stop by and check on you because he wants to know how you are doing. I am here on his behalf, as an extension of him, because he cares about you."

Your job as a staff member is not to promote your own popularity, to build your own following within the church, or to make yourself look good by making someone else look bad. As you carry out your assignment, be sure to promote the pastor and encourage people to follow his leadership. Connect people to the pastor and the church, not merely to yourself.

### Great supportive ministers have excellent attitudes

The importance of one's attitude cannot be overestimated; this major factor determines the quality of a supportive minister's contribution to the church. As an assistant, I observed that the senior pastor had to continually deal with many responsibilities and problems. I chose not to add to his list of problems. I endeavored to lift him up, not drag him down. I wanted to make his job easier, not harder. Every supportive minister should endeavor to be a low-maintenance, high-output team member.

Having the right attitude not only makes a supportive minister a blessing to the senior pastor, but it also helps motivate the rest of the team. Good attitudes are contagious; they inspire and encourage others. Bad attitudes are also transmittable; they can create a negative and hostile work environment in which others feel they must walk on eggshells all the time.

You choose what you focus on. Every organization has flaws and imperfections. If you choose to dwell on these negative things you will remain agitated and frustrated. Instead, concentrate on the good things that take place.

You may have great talent, but if you do not have a great attitude, your ultimate contribution will be greatly diminished. Attitude is a choice — a choice to be positive, encouraging, pleasant, cooperative, and supportive.

### **Great supportive ministers are faithful**

Some ministers fail the faithfulness test because they do not value what they believe are small tasks. They think, *When God gives me an important assignment, then I'll be diligent and faithful.* Jesus,

## **When good follower-ship partners with good leadership, it pleases God, maximizes our corporate potential, and raises us to higher levels.**

however, made it clear that being faithful in small things is essential (Luke 16:10–12). A faithful person:

- is careful to fulfill a promise. He is reliable; you can believe him.
- is dedicated in carrying out his duties and responsibilities.
- is diligent in his work.
- is dependable in completing his assignments. You can count on his work being done.
- is thorough. He is not just a good starter, but also a good finisher. He does not drop the ball halfway through the project.
- pays attention to details. He does not let things fall through the cracks.
- is punctual. He shows up on time and meets deadlines.
- is consistent and constant. He is not up one day and down the next.

- does not just look good on the surface, but is solid through and through.
- is honest and trustworthy. He is not underhanded or sneaky.
- meets and exceeds expectations. He does not do just enough to get by; he is willing to go the extra mile.

### **Great supportive ministers play well with others**

In the first few grades of elementary school our report cards had a category: Plays well with others. As a supportive minister, this skill is particularly vital to maintaining healthy working relationships with three main people or groups of people.

First, a supportive minister must get along and work well with the pastor

(or his supervisor). In addition to having a submissive and cooperative attitude, supportive ministers need to know the pastor. Those who assist him need to know his values, vision, and style, and they need to work in conjunction with — not against — the pastor's philosophy of ministry.

Second, a supportive minister must relate well to his coworkers. This involves teamwork. A good team player gets along well with the rest of the team, not just with the coach. Teammates need to operate under the philosophy that we is more important than me.

Third, a supportive minister must have a good relationship with church members. As he supervises others, he must use diplomacy. Occasionally, a person allows a position or title to go to his head.

Ministry then becomes a power trip, and he becomes bossy, domineering, and offensive. A supportive minister will cease to be an asset when he continually creates collateral damage among the people and makes messes the pastor must clean up.

### **Great supportive ministers have a servant's heart**

Ministry is not about titles, positions, recognition, and prestige. It is about serving others with the love of God. The highest commendation Paul gave Timothy may have been when he wrote, "You know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel" (Philippians 2:22).

Occasionally, people in ministry lose their eagerness to serve and become particular about what kind of work they are willing to do. They develop the attitude that they are too good to do certain tasks. At times, people may have the privilege to specialize by serving in a particular area, but they must be willing to serve wherever they are needed to get the overall job of ministry done.

Experienced pastors have learned to be leery of people who seek authority, power, and control. Pastors know that those who are the greatest asset to the church are those who seek to serve; they are not jockeying for a position or pursuing prestige.

### **Great supportive ministers are energetic and enthusiastic**

No leader likes to pull dead weight. Pastors want supportive ministers who exhibit passion, zeal, eagerness, and enthusiasm in their work. They want people who are industrious and bring energy to their work. Pastors desire workers who have fire in their belly. Such workers are self-starters and hard workers. They take initiative without trying to take over.



### Great supportive ministers are flexible and growth oriented

Great staff members maintain flexibility and pliability in their lives; they do not get stagnant and stuck in a rut. The words of a dying church (also the words of a supportive minister who is becoming outdated) are, "We've never done it that way before."

What are the traits of growth-oriented, flexible people? They:

- are lifelong learners.
- are willing to address and overcome weaknesses in their lives.
- are open to new ideas and new ways of doing things.
- adjust graciously to unexpected developments.
- adapt to other people.
- are willing to embrace new assignments or relinquish old roles for the good of the church.
- continually seek improvement.

### Great supportive ministers exercise wisdom in their pulpit ministry

Not all supportive ministers will have opportunity for public speaking. If preaching is part of your job description, here are some important guidelines.

- *Avoid giving direction or correction.* As a general rule, direction and correction for the church body need to come from the senior pastor, not from someone in a supportive role. The task of a supportive minister in the pulpit is to communicate basic truths of Scripture and to provide instruction that is edifying.
- *Avoid controversial subjects.* The pastor does not need to be clearing up confusion created by other speakers. If you are uncertain about a particular topic, ask the pastor before you speak.
- *Do not be flashy.* Supportive ministers should not try to outdo the pastor or dazzle the

congregation with their preaching skills. Avoid flamboyance. A supportive minister's goal is not to garner popularity or create a following for himself — he is to supplement the ministry that is taking place. Use any pulpit opportunities to bless, not to impress.

- *Do not rearrange the furniture.* You would not go into someone's home and rearrange their furniture. Treat the church with the same respect. What you teach should be consistent with the beliefs, doctrines, and vision of the church and pastor.

### Great supportive ministers demonstrate discretion

Discretion is having a keen sense of the right things to say and do. A discreet person avoids saying the wrong things at the wrong time to the wrong people. He also avoids taking inappropriate action. A discreet person uses good judgment — sensitivity to what is fitting and appropriate — and behaves accordingly. Discretion is also the ability to maintain confidentiality and responsibly handle sensitive information.

### Great supportive ministers avoid staff infection

Whether it is the betrayal of Judas, the dishonesty of Gehazi, or the rebellion of Absalom, Scripture is filled with stories of people who missed God's will for their lives. Not every case of *staff infection* is this dramatic. Some infections are less serious, such as the disciples bickering among themselves.

What are the traits of supportive ministers who have developed a strong spiritual immune system? They:

- avoid having unrealistic expectations.
- guard their joy in serving.
- have learned to deal with frustrations and disagreements in

mature and constructive ways.

- know they can disagree without being disagreeable.
- keep a good attitude and give their best effort even when something is done different from the way they would have done it.
- do not wear their feelings on their sleeve and refuse to get offended.
- have determined to avoid attitude problems, strife, and any undermining behavior.
- realize that Satan's greatest weapon is to get supportive ministers into a spirit of criticism and faultfinding, and they resist those temptations.
- choose to focus on the positive, and keep moving forward for the good of the team.

### Becoming God's Dream Team

If you are a supportive minister, I trust you are striving to be profitable to your pastor. Work to develop the traits described above. As these virtues are established in your life, they will make you a healthy, effective, and valuable member of God's dream team. When good follower-ship partners with good leadership, it pleases God, maximizes our corporate potential, and raises us to higher levels. 🌀

(For more traits of supportive ministers read "How To Be Heard" in ej online at <http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org>.)



**TONY COOKE** is founder of Tony Cooke Ministries, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Tony Cooke Ministries focuses on strengthening churches and leaders

across the country and around the world. The ministry is committed to helping pastors, staffs, and congregations achieve new levels of excellence, effectiveness, and productivity for the kingdom of God.

#### NOTE

1. Scripture passages are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





# Can You Lead From the Second Chair?<sup>1</sup>



By Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson

# If

you have the gift of leadership, then lead diligently” (Romans 12:8, paraphrased). But is this verse only for *first-chair* leaders — the senior pastor? The scriptural exhortation to lead is not limited to one person in a church. In fact, if the senior pastor is the only person exercising the gift of leadership, a congregation is not reaching its greatest Kingdom potential.

So, what does it look like for those who are in second-chair roles to lead? In our book, *Leading From the Second Chair*, we define a second-chair leader as “a person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization.” If you are a second-chair leader, how can you use your gifts to lead diligently? And if you are the senior pastor, how do you take full advantage of the leaders who serve alongside you?

Leadership in the second chair is fundamentally different from first-chair leadership. Scripture has much to teach on this subject. What is the best way to convey the importance, challenges, and potential impact of this role? We understand the unique nature of second-chair leadership through a framework of three apparent paradoxes: subordinate-leader, deep-wide, and contentment-dreaming.

The *subordinate-leader* paradox recognizes that those in the second chair are called to lead, but they also answer to a supervisor. They learn to lead without being at the top of the organizational pyramid because their authority and effectiveness are dependent on their relationship with their senior pastor.

The *deep-wide* paradox acknowledges that second chairs have specific roles that are narrower and deeper in scope than those of the first chair, and yet they need to have a broad, organization-wide perspective. They need to be strategic thinkers; and, at the same time, manage a variety of ministry areas with excellence.

The *contentment-dreaming* paradox calls for second chairs

to take a long-term view. They can have dreams even though they are not in the top position; but, they also need to discover contentment as God shapes their lives and guides their paths in the present.

### **Subordination: Challenging, But Biblical**

Many second-chair leaders struggle in the tension of the *subordinate-leader paradox*. They know they have the gift of leadership but feel unable to exercise it. This struggle often plays out in one of two ways. Because they feel hampered, some slip into a submissive and passive posture. They follow the orders of their first chair with little enthusiasm and a growing frustration. Others experience constant friction with their senior pastor. They repeatedly take initiative, even when this is clearly beyond their authority. The former may eventually leave for greener pastures once the stress becomes unbearable. The latter may leave for any pasture when they are asked (or told) to exit.

At its root, the subordinate-leader paradox deals with issues of relational and spiritual vitality. It is relational because effective second-chair leadership is only possible in a healthy, trust-based relationship between first- and second-chair leaders.

The analogy of a marriage is often used to describe this partnership. An enduring, successful marriage is only possible when trust is established and maintained. The issue is also spiritual because a clear understanding of Scripture and awareness that God is at work in both lives

can completely reorient a second chair's perspective.

The Bible contains many examples of vibrant relationships between first- and second-chair leaders: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and Paul and Timothy. Have you ever thought of God the Father and Jesus the Son as the original illustration of this subordinate-leader paradox?

Consider Jesus' words in John 5:19: "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father

doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." This statement about the eternal work of God expresses the subordinate-leader paradox better than we possibly could. A second-chair leader is aware that he can only do his ministry because of the authority and permission the first-chair extends to him. Without this, a second-chair leader will accomplish little of lasting value in his current place of service.

Jesus demonstrated a willingness and desire to only do His Father's

work. We have proclaimed through the ages that the Son is subordinate to the Father. Our creeds and confessions speak of this, yet we have neither stopped to consider how this played out in Jesus' ministry, nor have we realized that this is an example of how second chairs should relate to their senior pastors as they serve together.

Let us clarify what we are and are not saying. As our orthodoxy has expressed for centuries, the members of the Trinity

## First Chairs Take Note

Last year, at a seminar in Springfield, Missouri, one second-chair leader, age 40, thanked us for finally validating his ministry. He said, "For the last 5 years I have been struggling in my spirit with my role as a second-chair leader. The second-chair conference helped me come to terms with my calling, its unique function in the Body, and how I am in the center of God's will for this season of my life."

Our experience is that this leader's struggles are widely shared among his peers. While we are thankful to have a ministry of encouragement, we realize we are not the ideal source of affirmation for second-chair leaders.

Senior pastors need to take note of this hunger and need for validation in the lives of their second chairs. The marriage analogy we use to describe the relationship between first and second chairs has important implications for the senior pastor. Just as a marriage cannot thrive unless both spouses reach out to each other in love, the partnership between leaders requires intentionality on both sides. Ideally, the senior pastor should draw near to his subordinate; and, at a minimum, he should be receptive when the other takes the initiative.

First chairs, we hope you will look for opportunities to build the relationship and encourage your second chairs. But you also need to go beyond the warm and fuzzy affirmation stage. You need to acknowledge the unique gifts your second chairs bring to your congregation and release them to make a meaningful contribution. One of the most important roles for any first chair is to transfer authority to second chairs.

John 5:19 offers an important word for second chairs: Work within the boundaries established by your superiors. The passage, however, goes on to paint a picture of authority being given away: "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me" (John 5:26,27,36).

As senior pastor, do you give your second chairs the opportunity to finish the job? to serve in their roles with authority? If not, what keeps you from doing so? Make the investment to help your second chairs grow as leaders. Show that you care for them and believe in them by coaching them, sending them to training events, and giving them opportunity to succeed (or occasionally fail).

Senior pastors, if your ministry is to thrive, you need capable and passionate second chairs to serve alongside you. We encourage you to reflect on the gifts and abilities of your subordinates; but, more than that, reflect on the ways you can change the organizational culture to enable second chairs to flourish. Find them, uplift them, and release them to lead to their fullest potential. As you do, God will bless you and them.



**MIKE BONEM** and **ROGER PATTERSON**,  
Houston, Texas

are coequal and coeternal. This is critical in understanding this discussion about Jesus being subordinate to the Father, lest we fall into heresy by advocating the doctrine of subordinationism — the teaching that the Son and Spirit are later creations of God the Father. The distinction that theologians make is that the Son and the Spirit are subordinate to the Father in their administrative function.<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem terms this “economic subordinationism,” in which the Son and Spirit are “equal in being but subordinate in role.”<sup>3</sup>

Scripture teaches that God the Father had a redemptive plan that was to be accomplished through God the Son and God the Spirit. In the relationships within the Trinity, we see this picture of the Father, the source of ultimate authority, granting all authority to the Son (Matthew 28:18) to accomplish the redemptive mission that God the Father authored.

Look at these words from Jesus about His relationship to the Father: “For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him” (John 5:20–23).

Jesus depicts a love relationship in which the Father shares His plan with the Son. Furthermore, the Father fully empowers and trusts the Son with judgment that will honor the Father. Out of this love, Jesus reflects a spirit of submission.

Others noticed Jesus’ constant expression of subordination during

His earthly ministry. The Roman centurion, who understood the vesting of authority, asked Jesus to exercise the authority granted to Him by God to heal his servant (Matthew 8:5–13). We might paraphrase the centurion’s request: “Jesus, I too, just like You, have authority because it has been granted to me by another. Please exercise the authority granted to You to heal my servant.”

Second-chair leaders often long to be granted authority without first making sure they are being subordinate to the authority figure that has been placed over them. We recognize that this analogy breaks down at many points because second-chair leaders are not Jesus, and the first-chair leader is not the Father. But when second-chair leaders are submissive and subordinate to the authority that God has placed in their lives, they look like Jesus. Second-chair leaders must realize that the only thing they can control in their interactions with their first chair is their portion of the relationship.

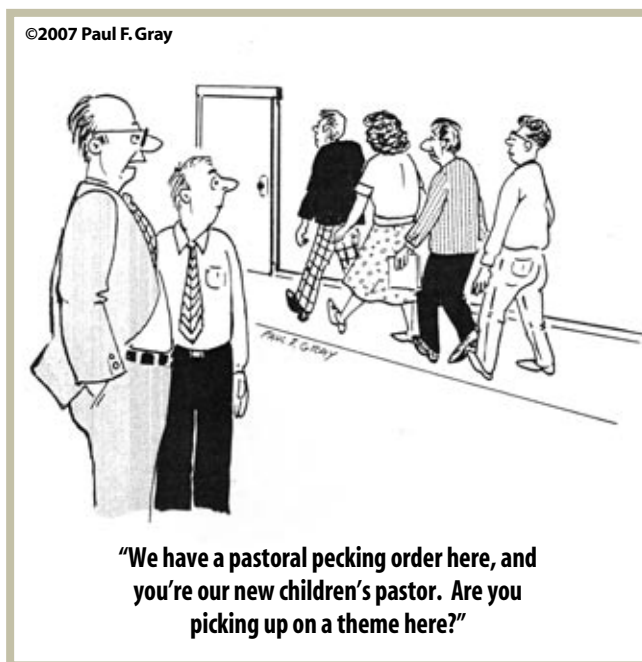
What is the most frequent advice we offer to second-chair leaders? Draw near to the first chair. Work diligently and intentionally to establish a strong relationship with the first-chair leader. Look for ways to build trust and demonstrate loyalty. Recognize what frustrates him so you can avoid missteps. Be a student of his personality and preferences so you can learn how to

communicate in ways that are clearly understood.

This sounds like hard work, and it is, but the fruit in your life and your ministry will far outweigh the cost. Your leadership in the second chair requires that authority be granted to you, and this will only happen in a healthy relationship with your first chair. As your senior pastor’s confidence and trust in you grow, your freedom to lead and ability to make a difference will increase exponentially. So, if you want to lead, use your gifts to their full potential, and to thrive in this paradox, practice subordination and draw near to the first chair.

### Beyond Subordination — The Deep-Wide Paradox

Having a great relationship with the first chair is essential for those who seek to lead from the second chair, but it is not enough. The *deep-wide paradox* calls for second-chair leaders to see the big picture, identify their church’s greatest opportunities or most pressing problems, and then take initiative in these areas. But if only one



---

person does the initiating, the certain result is a burned-out, unsuccessful second-chair leader. Effective second-chair leaders work well with others by calling out people with different gifts to build a team. They know that the journey of ministry is more exciting and that the results are multiplied when the Body functions in this way.

How do you view those who serve alongside you? When was the last time you recognized your dependence on

do (Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:1–31; Ephesians 4:11–13). When the second chair fails to use these gifts, it is not only a lost opportunity, but it is also poor stewardship.

Another glimpse of the relationships expressed in the Trinity can revolutionize the way we relate to those with whom we serve. Let's ponder how the relationship between the Son and Spirit shows us a mutual dependence from which we can learn.

## The Bible contains many examples of vibrant relationships between first- and second-chair leaders: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and Paul and Timothy.

the rest of your team? Joe Namath was asked whether he could be a Hall of Fame quarterback in this modern era of football. Namath's response: "It depends on the horses in front of me. It is a team game and no one player can win without the rest of the team."<sup>4</sup>

Are you willing to play a team game? Ministry in the 21st century is a team game. The sooner all players are willing to do their parts to fulfill God's vision, the sooner eternal victories will be wrought in and through the local church.

A second-chair leader needs to take the first step to create this collaborative environment. A simple admission that he needs help will open the door to expand his ministry. It will push him to reach out to others and to include them in the process of developing solutions for his most important needs. It will bring to light things he would have never considered. And it will give others in the church a greater sense of permission and freedom to contribute. God has assembled the body of Christ with the necessary gifts to do the work He has called the Church to

William Evans states, "How dependent Jesus Christ was, in His state of humiliation, on the Holy Spirit!" The Scripture portrays this dependence as Jesus was led into the desert (Matthew 4:1), anointed for service (Acts 10:38), crucified in the power of the Spirit (Hebrews 9:14), and raised by the power of the Spirit (Romans 1:4, 8:11).<sup>5</sup> Clearly, Scripture shows that Jesus' accomplishments were made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was dependent on the Spirit, but He was also in authority over the Spirit.

The doctrine of double procession teaches that the Father and the Son have the authority to send the Spirit. Jesus was dependent on the Spirit, but He also was the One who gave the Spirit to His disciples. In John 15:26, Christ said, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me." And in John 16:7, He stated, "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will

not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." Beyond being sent, the Spirit is directed by the Father and the Son: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you" (John 16:13–15).

If the Son and Spirit are dependent on one another to accomplish the redemptive mission of God, why do pastors think they can go it alone? Why are first-chair leaders slow to recognize that a significant way God meets their needs is through their staff? First-chair leaders need to see their staff as God's provision. If not, how will these leaders begin to change the way they view their staff? (See sidebar "First Chairs Take Note" on page 100.)

What about you, second-chair leaders? Do you respect and encourage your collaborators, even when you become impatient with their inadequacies? On your church staff, do you bear with and forgive one another as Colossians 3:13 describes?

## What is the most frequent advice we offer to second-chair leaders? Draw near to the first chair.

If this spirit of humility and teamwork does not characterize our lives and our churches, we will not accomplish anything substantial for the kingdom of God. If God the Son is dependent on the Spirit, and the Spirit is dependent on the Son, how

can second-chair leaders choose not to honor and be dependent on those whom God has put around them to fulfill His redemptive mission? Second-chair leadership requires that

point back to God as the Source of their dream and their Sustainer in the midst of daily struggles. Why should the picture be any different for those in a second-chair role? The words of

## If the Son and Spirit are dependent on one another to accomplish the redemptive mission of God, why do pastors think they can go it alone?

people see God's broader plan and know that joining Him in His mission is not meant to be a solo journey.

### Finding Contentment

The final paradox, *contentment-dreaming*, also has a clear spiritual and scriptural foundation. While the subordinate-leader paradox focuses on the relationship between first and second chairs, contentment-dreaming is rooted in the vibrancy of the second chair's relationship with God. Unfortunately, many second-chair leaders relegate God to the backseat when they are dealing with seasons of discontent or dreaming about their future. How do we know? Because we hear them talking about their frustrations in their current role, but not about what God is teaching them in their current circumstances. Or we hear them planning their next career move, and it sounds as if they have orchestrated a man-made timetable.

Contentment is never possible unless we are following God. Dreaming is never fulfilling unless the Lord inspires it. Think of the captivating stories you have heard of people ministering in the most difficult circumstances. What enabled them to continue day after day? What was their source of joy and strength when the fruit of their efforts seemed meager? These testimonies always

the Psalmist aid our understanding in this matter.

Psalm 37 teaches that those who wait on the Lord will inherit the land (verses 9,11,22,34). The verse that most people know and love is Psalm 37:4: "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." Simply put, (and taken out of context) if we delight in God, we will get what we want. What we want is the next move, the bigger church, and the anointing and opportunity to speak before our peers at annual denominational meetings. We have big dreams, and we want them fulfilled now.

At times we claim these promises and then walk away disappointed because they have not come to fruition. That is, they have not come to fruition in the way and time that we wanted. We need to understand the context and meaning of this verse, realizing that God longs to do much as we wait on Him. Psalm 37:4 does not stand alone. It is surrounded by instructions to Israel about their responsibilities while they wait on the Lord. They are told to cultivate faithfulness, dwell in the land, trust in the Lord, do good, and commit their way to the Lord. He then promises to do what only He can do: "make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun" (verse 6).

Most people can testify to the struggle of waiting for the desire of their hearts to bear fruit. If second-chair leaders will be responsible to dwell, trust, commit, and cultivate faithfulness, they can be encouraged that God will use this season of waiting to prepare them to inherit the land He has for them. God will use this season of uncertainty or turmoil to prepare them for the dream that He has put in their hearts. As you claim the promise of Psalm 37:4, embrace verse 7 as well: "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him."

Your leadership gift is a precious treasure from God. He wants you to develop your gift to its fullest potential and use it for His glory. The church needs you to thrive in your second-chair role, whether it is for a brief season or the rest of your ministry. We hope you will become increasingly more effective as you understand the paradoxes of second-chair leadership. 🌀



**MIKE BONEM** and **ROGER PATTERSON** are coauthors of *Leading From the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams*. Both serve in second-chair roles at West University Baptist Church in Houston, Texas; Roger as associate pastor and Mike as minister of discipleship. For more information visit:

<http://www.SecondChairLeaders.com>.

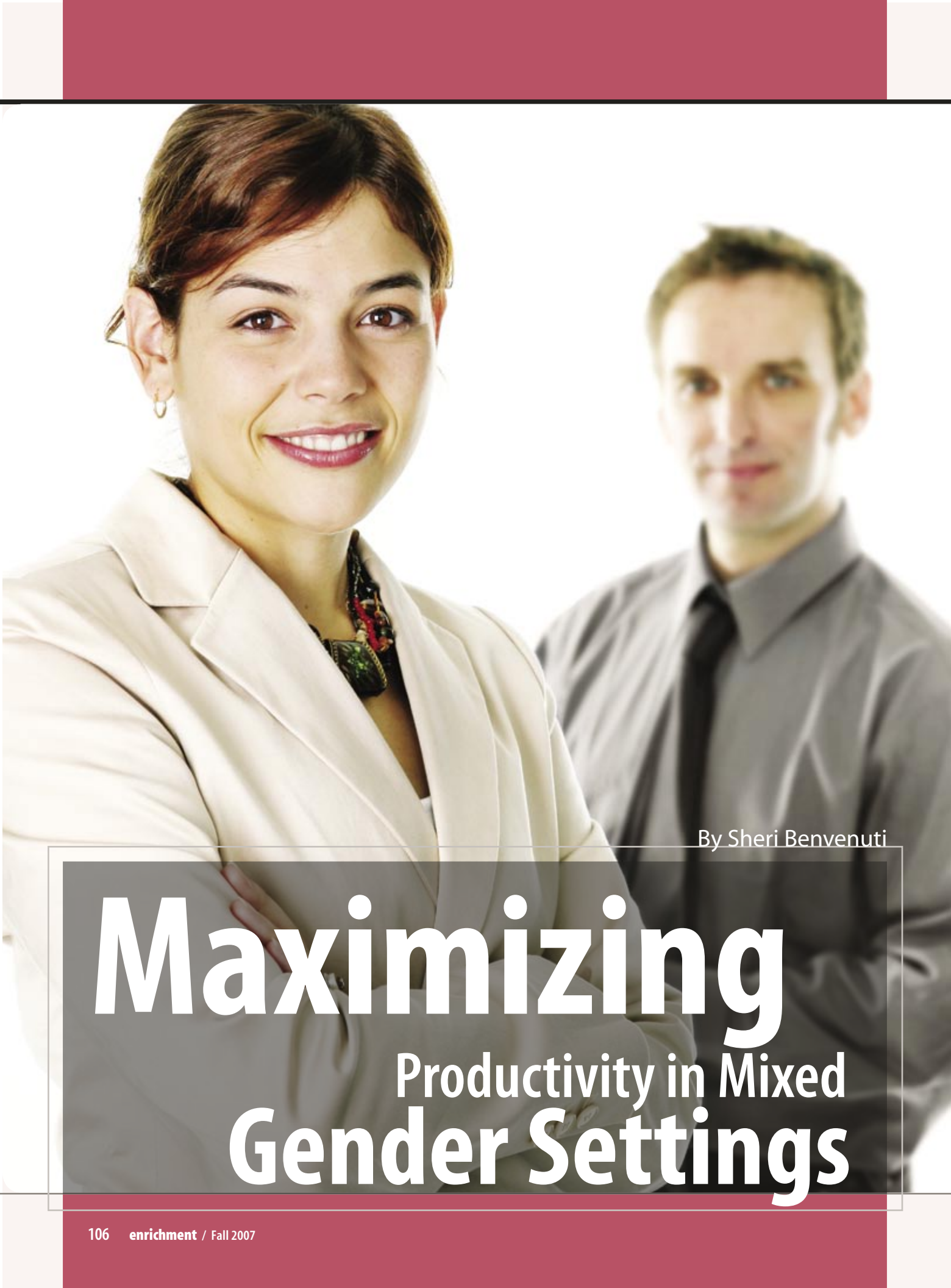
### NOTES

1. Portions of this article are drawn from Roger Patterson's doctoral thesis, "A Theological Foundation and Workshop for Subordinate Leaders in the Local Church" (D.Min. Thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006).
2. Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005).
3. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).
4. *Fox News Channel's* Hannity and Colmes (November 29, 2006).
5. William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980).









By Sheri Benvenuti

# Maximizing

Productivity in Mixed

# Gender Settings

**M**y pastor had invited the church staff to his house for a time of fellowship when he turned to me and said, "I don't know what to do with you."

At first I thought my job as preaching associate pastor was in jeopardy, so I gulped and asked, "What do you mean?"

"You're not one of the guys," he said, "and I just don't know how to relate to you."

Twenty years later, while many more women are being called to ministry and given positions of authority in the church, I have discovered that this kind of difficulty among dual-gendered church staffs remains at the top of the list. Male and female leaders still do not know how best to work with each other. All is not lost, however. We have an opportunity, a window of time, to accomplish the work of the Kingdom as God has planned — men and women working together by utilizing the special gifts God has given each one — to provide a holistic ministry to a lost world.

This effort is not without its challenges. Men and women need to understand each other better, make compromises in leadership styles, and learn what it means to serve one another. Daunting as this sounds, especially in light of our post-Christian milieu, the necessity of doing ministry this way may well determine the future success of our Fellowship.

In this endeavor, two broad areas of interest rise to the forefront: the way in which men and women utilize authority in leadership, and the way in which men and women experience community relationship.

### **The Necessity for Shared Power**

The major question among evangelicals concerning women in ministry revolves around the concept of authority. Can women have authority in the church? I want to answer this question by saying, "I thought ministry was about servanthood." As true as this statement is, God gives leaders spiritual authority in the church whether they are male or female. So, to address the potential of dual-gender ministry in church life, one must first consider the underlying issue of power within that context.

Not surprisingly, the issue of power arises early in Scripture. Both male and female, created in God's image, are given authority over all of the earth — including the animal life ("the fish of the sea and the birds of the air," Genesis 1:28). In Genesis 2, the man and woman are together in everything; so much so the writer digresses in the narrative to state overtly that the closest of human relationships can be defined by the concept of "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This idea is underscored by the man's joyful exclamation as he awakes from his deep sleep, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' " (*Ishah*, the feminine form of *Ish*, which means *male*). The message is that male and female are distinct, but made of the same *stuff*.

In light of these factors, it is not by accident that Satan was in the guise of a serpent during the temptation. Nor is it unusual for the man and woman to be together standing before the serpent. Both had been given authority to rule over the animal kingdom, including snakes.

When confronted with the serpent's temptation to "be like God" (Genesis 3:5), the man and woman did not act in their authority by reminding the serpent that they were already enjoying their reality as God's image (Genesis 1:26,27). Instead, they allowed the serpent to take authority over them by believing the enemy's lie: "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5).

It isn't until after Adam and Eve ate of the tree that this "one flesh" relationship was broken. They made coverings for themselves and then hid from God. In the midst of this alienation, one of the most horrible ramifications of their sin is found in the words spoken of the woman's future reality, "and he [the man] will rule over you" (Genesis 3:16).

To emphasize the seriousness of their fallen condition, the writer related that Adam named his wife in a manner that separated them. He took the name Adam — the name of humanity — for himself alone, while labeling his wife Eve — identifying her with her childbearing function alone. This was a huge shift in power, for in the Edenic world, those made in the image of God were never meant to rule over each other. Only in human fallenness is power over one another utilized to bring a false sense of order to the world.

In Christ, however, there is a shift back toward the Edenic ideal: The one who would be the greatest must become the least among us

(Matthew 23:11); the meek inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5); the ceremonially unclean are touched by the Rabbi, Jesus (Matthew 8:2,3); prostitutes are

where everyone is equal, and when it comes to solving problems and mapping out the next play, flatness implies collaboration and equality."<sup>1</sup>

## The major question among evangelicals concerning women in ministry revolves around the concept of authority.

forgiven (Matthew 21:31,32); all are welcomed at the banquet table (Luke 14:16–24).

Christ's work of redemption through the cross signals a reversal in the order of life. The apostle Paul described this reality: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, italics added). In this way, the "one-flesh" principle found in Eden before the Fall is once again a possibility in Christ. How, though, can this biblical truth be worked out in the life of a church staff?

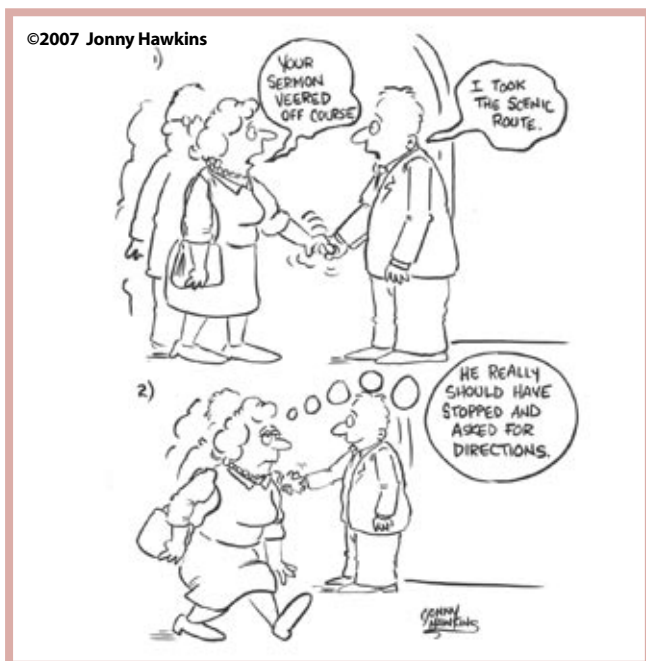
The first task is to understand the difference in how men and women handle authority. According to Pat Heim, "Men and women have

The practical aspect of Heim's observation is especially noted in the decision-making process. For example, it is not unusual for men to gather in the hallway and make a decision about the issue at hand before the meeting even takes place. Men then enter the meeting with their ducks in a row and their support network in place — the decision having been made before the issue even reaches the table. Women, on the other hand, usually enter the meeting room with choices A, B, and C in mind, expecting an open and honest discussion that will lead to a consensual decision.

In both cases, a decision will eventually be reached. If the male method is used in a dual-gender group, the women will leave the meeting room feeling as if the men have ganged up on them. Conversely, if only the female method is used the men will be wondering why their authority was questioned. As a result, a simple meeting can shatter the whole concept of two-as-one leadership, wreak havoc on the unity of the church staff, and create hard feelings that may cause long-term ramifications for relationships among the members.

The meeting room can become a place where a church staff can experience unity while allowing each leadership style to flourish. Men cannot and should not cease to have their hallway conversations; this is how most men are wired. Nevertheless, there needs to be an

learned different guidelines about authority. ... From childhood on, most men become accustomed to living their lives in ... hierarchical organizations. ... The leader expects that when he gives an order it will be followed. Without this chain of command, he believes all will be chaos. ... [Women perceive organizations] as a flat playing field



understanding that no final decisions can or should be made in the hallway. An openness for dialogue must be expressed in the meeting, and a desire for consensus must be the motivation for the discussion. If men walk in with a let-the-little-woman-have-her-say attitude, trust me, a woman can sense it, and irreparable damage will be done to relationships.

Women, on the other hand, must not lose their desire for a flat playing field. However, women must enter the meeting room with the understanding that they will need to have a set of reasons for their decisions and communicate those reasons in a logical manner.

In this scenario, a shift in power has occurred. The male sacrifices dominance

to give equal place to the female staff member. This shift is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of true spirituality. Interestingly, Kenneth Wuest defines the idea of *humility* in the New Testament as *power under control*.<sup>2</sup> In the church staff, the male member chooses humility by opening himself to other ideas, and the female member chooses humility by entrusting her spiritual thoughts and dreams about ministry to her male counterparts.

This kind of interaction between church leaders sets the stage for the church to become what life looks like where Christ reigns — the community of God. But it must be understood that there can be no true community life without shared power.

### The Necessity for Community

In 1990, Deborah Tannen did a study on the speech of 2-to-5 year olds. She observed that girls often made collaborative proposals by beginning their sentences with let's, as in, "Let's play house." It was also noted that girls jointly participated in decision making, with minimal stress, conflict, or displays of status. They often expressed agreement with another's suggestions. When they had ideas of their own, they usually put these in the form of a question, such as, "I'll be the mommy, okay?" Tannen's study shows that social connection is at the core of a woman's being. Hence, women leaders create community by mentoring and being mentored. In fact, a female leader experiences great ego satisfaction in taking the success of the one mentored as her own.

On the other hand, while boys in this study knew how to employ this kind of collaborative speech, they seldom used it. They generally used language to command others, get things done, brag, threaten, ignore another's suggestion, and override

## The Joy of Doing Ministry Together

Men and women working together in ministry can provide congregations with a clearer understanding of what godly leadership looks like, while these men and women experience a greater quality of ministry in their own lives in the process.

Helena Cornelius suggests that when men and women both contribute general characteristics of their leadership style to the workplace, the combination gives greater quality to leadership itself.<sup>1</sup> That is, we are better together than we are by ourselves. Cornelius' assertion works like this:

CONTRIBUTION FROM TRADITIONALLY MASCULINE PERSPECTIVES		CONTRIBUTION FROM TRADITIONALLY FEMININE PERSPECTIVES		BALANCED LEADERSHIP QUALITY
Dominance	+	Consultation	=	Real Authority
Courage	+	Ethic of Care	=	Right Action
Confidence	+	Communication & Conflict Resolution Expertise	=	Enabled & Empowered Teams
Tactical Analysis	+	Whole System Awareness	=	Strategic Thinking

This kind of leadership is the outcome of hard work and mutual appreciation. It may require a shift in theological understanding, letting go of certain gender stereotypes, a great deal of listening, and even more prayer. The effort is worthwhile because when we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, the potential outcome is a rare witness to His redemptive work within broken humanity — a successful dual-gender leadership team functioning in right relationship with one another.



**SHERI BENVENUTI**, Costa Mesa, California

#### NOTE

1. Helena Cornelius, *The Gentle Revolution: Men and Women at Work — What Goes Wrong and How To Fix It* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

each other's attempt to speak. The boys were not afraid to risk conflict. Tannen's observations indicated that competition is part of a boy's makeup. Hence, a male leader will often find ego satisfaction in the number of his followers rather than in the depth of intimacy of a few relationships.<sup>3</sup>

Allow me to pause a moment and declare that God has wondrously fashioned humanity. While male and female leaders tend to lead differently, discipleship, relationship, and community still occur in the Kingdom.

## While male and female leaders tend to lead differently, discipleship, relationship, and community still occur in the Kingdom.

There are some things we need to learn from each other, however, that will allow more effective ministry to occur more often.

Women must learn from their male counterparts to refuse to involve themselves in mentoring relationships that suck the spiritual life out of them. The female ego can easily be tied into the desire to be needed — to save the day. Women are good at many things, but women can never take the place of the Holy Spirit in another person's life. Women need to learn to set boundaries in relationships that restrict the emotional and spiritual investment they make in another person's life. In addition, women need to broaden their mentoring relationships. That is, these relationships should signal *inclusivity*, not *exclusivity*.

Men also need to reset boundaries in relationships; the demarcation line, however, needs to be defined in a different way. Male leaders must

learn to experience ego satisfaction not from the number of followers they can count (making Jesus a failure by this criteria), but from the act of giving their selves away to others. Spiritually mature male leaders do not compete with their counterparts, but celebrate God's work in other people's lives, even if it is a woman who is the visible leader associated with what God does.

### Conclusion

When many people quote the submission passage in Ephesians 5, verse 21 is often left out. It is grammatically vital that it be included in the passage because in the original Greek text there is no verb in verse 22. Without verse 21, verse 22 would read: "Wives, to your own husbands as to the Lord."

When verse 21 is added, we see the full import of what Paul is attempting to say about human relationship: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives to your husbands as to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for her. This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:21,22,25,32).

The obvious message is one of mutual submission; however, I think Paul is delving a bit deeper.

In his work on the Trinity, Jürgen Moltmann suggests that the Godhead enjoys a relationship of interdependence within itself. Each member of the Trinity — the Father, Son, and Spirit — maintain their own roles, but the mind and will of the Godhead is so interconnected as to be interdependent. With the advent of the Church, however, Moltmann asserts that the members of the Trinity

take a step back from one another and "unclasp hands," inviting individual members of the church to step into the opening and clasp hands with the Godhead. In doing so, each believer becomes part of an interdependent relationship with the Triune God that results in an interdependent relationship with one another. Hence, Paul can declare that "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16), and that we "are complete in Him" (Colossians 2:10, NKJV),<sup>4</sup> both results of what Moltmann calls our "interpenetration" into relationship with God and one another.<sup>5</sup>

With this understanding of the believer's relationship with God in mind, the idea of mutual submission, or better, interdependence, presses itself into the fabric of our lives because it is the Godhead's way of conducting relationships. I suspect that the enemy fights relationships between men and women so fiercely because if we ever began to function in this manner — submitting one to the other and becoming one according to our created and redeemed purpose — the world itself would be forced to admit that the kingdom of God has come. ☪



### SHERI BENVENUTI, PhD.,

is vice president for student affairs, codirector of the Center for Women's Studies, associate professor of social ethics, Vanguard University of Southern California, Costa Mesa, California.

### NOTES

1. Pat Heim, *Hardball for Women: Winning in the Game of Business* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992).
2. Kenneth Wuest, *Word Pictures in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).
3. Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1990).
4. Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
5. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1993).





Check out *Enrichment* journal's Web site for these and other great ministry resources.



## Ethics at the Core of Ministry

BY JOSEPH J. SAGGIO

The apostle Paul never used the word **ethics** in his pastoral epistles to Timothy and Titus, but he called those early leaders to live up to the highest standards of ministry. Joseph Saggio observes a decline in ministers' commitment to ethical service to their churches and communities and calls for a return to above-reproach behavior in three areas — finances, pulpit ministry, and relationships. Only through consistent integrity, Saggio maintains, can ministers hope to impact the world positively.



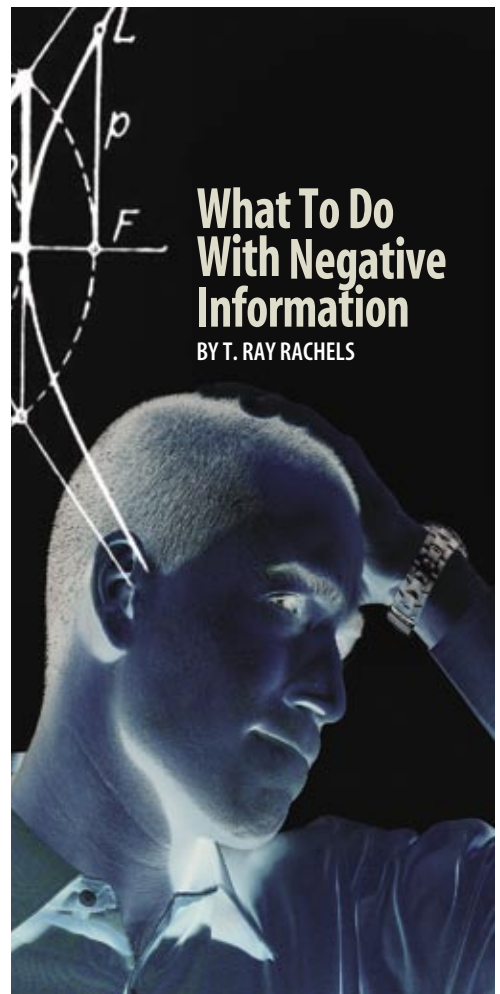
### Masks in the Ministry

BY SANDE PEDERSON LANGAGER

**Langager offers two compelling reasons ministers hide difficult personal circumstances**

— the need to preserve a public image, and the need to bolster public perception of God's sufficiency in the minister's

life. But, Langager insists, only truth can maintain a vibrant ministry. Does this mean there can be no privacy for the minister? No. Langager outlines a three-step approach to living honestly by facing yourself, facing God, and facing a trusted friend.



## What To Do With Negative Information

BY T. RAY RACHELS

**T. Ray Rachels, now a district superintendent, looks back on his pastoral ministry** and the criticisms he endured. The minister who takes to heart the inevitable occasional negative comment from a parishioner can be emotionally derailed. Rachels advises three responses to criticism — ignore discouraging words when they are groundless, filter criticism through a sense of God's love and purpose, and exercise faith in God's ability to bring good out of any situation.





### **The Saul Syndrome: Its Symptoms, Causes, and Remedies, Including Options for Potential Codependents**

BY ED VAINIO

**Ed Vainio tackles the subject of the narcissistic pastor** using a detailed analysis of King Saul, a man whose spiritual and psychological disorders are evident in Scripture. The author outlines eight parallels between Saul's self-serving personality and that of a pastor who becomes the center

of his own universe. The article encourages personal recovery through renewed accountability, and gives helpful advice to members of a church staff dealing with a senior pastor's toxic behavior. (Also see "The Insecure Pastor" by Samuel Rima, Sr., on page 44 of this issue.)



### **When Others Disappoint You**

BY DON STEIGER

**One of the most painful experiences in Don Steiger's pastoral life** illustrates the debilitating effect of criticism and the lack of support from a congregation. Steiger parallels the experience of a beleaguered minister with the personal observations Paul the apostle made of people in his life. The human relationships examined include adversarial, broken, reconciled, and faithful examples. All must be dealt with through the strength gained in the faithful divine relationship God grants His servants.



### **How To Be Heard**

BY DON NORDIN

**We live in a generation that is enamored with having their voices heard** and their ideas taken seriously.

But every generation has felt the frustration of feeling that the leaders of the previous generation turned a deaf ear to their ideas and treated them as if their ideas were premature or completely illegitimate. The dilemma that leaders and followers face is simply that leaders feel threatened and followers feel ignored. What does it take to be heard? The answers contained in this article might surprise you.



## The Sins of Generational Curse

*Those who teach generational curse believe people acquire not only their ancestors' sin nature, but their accumulated guilt as well.*

### Introduction

**I**n recent years the generational curse teaching has become quite popular in Pentecostal and charismatic circles, and is promoted by some of the most visible leaders in these movements. The nature of absolute truth and proper interpretation of Scripture, however, cannot be determined by the number of people who embrace a teaching or by the popularity of those who promote it. Matters of faith (what we believe) and practice (how we live out our lives as Christians) can

only be determined by a correct understanding of Scripture.

### The Basis for Generational Curse Teaching

Most teachers of generational curse base their teaching on some combination of Exodus 20:5,6; 34:6,7; Numbers 14:18; and Deuteronomy 5:9,10. Each of these texts contain the words, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children ... to the third and the fourth generations" (KJV).



W.E. NUNNALLY, Ph.D., professor of Early Judaism and Christian Origins, Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri

Those who teach generational curse interpret these verses to mean that a person's guilt is genetically passed down to all his descendants. People not only inherit their ancestors' sin nature (the tendency all have to rebel against God), but they also acquire the accumulated guilt of their ancestors. As a result, God sees them as guilty, not only for their own sins, but also for their ancestors' sins as well. Furthermore, Satan has the right to continue to hold legal claim against Christians who have not effectively dealt with their generational curses, resulting in failure, violence, impotence, profanity, obesity, poverty, shame, sickness, grief, fear, and even physical death.

Generational curse proponents then take their teaching to its next logical step. They conclude that Jesus' blood was shed for the sins of the individual, but an additional step must be taken to remove the guilt a person inherited from his ancestors. This additional step is required for a person to be set free from the bondage that holds him captive to the sins of his forefathers. This procedure involves an elaborate ceremony that consists of listing the sins of one's ancestors up to four generations, confessing their sins for them, reciting the recommended prayers and declarations, and personally breaking these supposed curses.

### **In Their Own Words**

One Web site devoted to generational curse states, "The kingdom of God and darkness operate totally on 'legal rights.' Jesus came to confirm the Old Testament, not to erase God's laws. ... The whole family pays for the sins that their forefathers committed.

"Satan comes before the throne and shows legal rights to attack your body or finances. It is decided on if the claims are valid ... if he is allowed to do as petitioned against you/ your family.

"Generational curse: I have seen many who were not healed from these diseases even after tons of prayer ... though they do have faith! Pastors don't understand the reason and blame it on the sick person's 'lack of faith.' ... After learning about breaking the generational curses ... I have seen most of those people healed totally. NEVER to return!!!! Teaching on this takes 2 weeks to deliver to a church and lead them through the prayers.

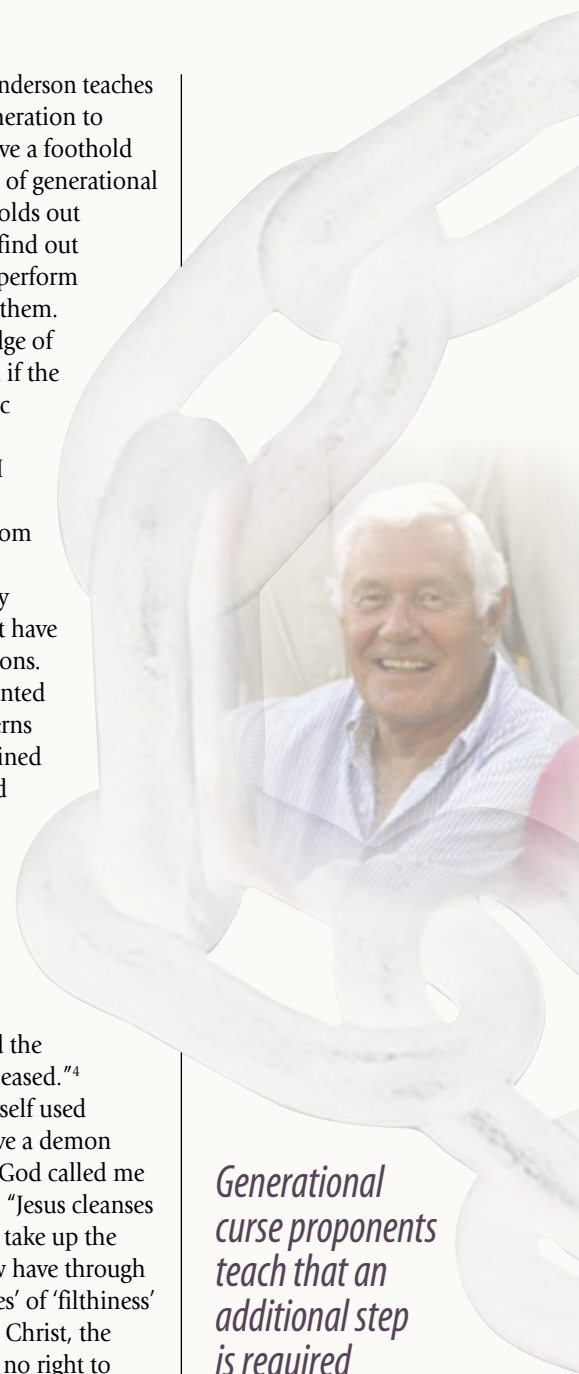
"God is raising up an army today to bring forth a powerful anointing to set the church free ... but it must have the knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

Based on Exodus 20:4,5, Neil Anderson teaches that demons are passed from generation to generation and these demons have a foothold in the lives of Christians because of generational sins. To get the demonic strongholds out of their lives, Christians need to find out what these strongholds are, and perform deliverance ceremonies to break them. Counselors with special knowledge of demonic strongholds are needed if the case is severe. A special diagnostic test is given and the words to be repeated are provided, such as, "I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors."<sup>2</sup>

Derek Prince states, "There may be forces at work in our lives that have their origins in previous generations. Consequently, we may be confronted with recurrent situations or patterns of behavior that cannot be explained solely in terms of what happened in our lifetimes or personal experiences. The root cause may go back a long way in time, even thousands of years."<sup>3</sup> He continues, "Most Christians who should be enjoying blessings are actually enduring curses ... they do not understand the basis upon which they can be released."<sup>4</sup>

Rebecca Brown explains, "I myself used to think Christians could not have a demon indwelling them. That was until God called me to this ministry."<sup>5</sup> She continues, "Jesus cleanses us from our sins. ... But *we* must take up the power and authority that we now have through Jesus Christ and 'cleanse ourselves' of 'filthiness' or demons. As soon as we accept Christ, the demons are trespassers and have no right to remain in us *unless* we give them legal ground to do so through sin and/or ignorance."<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere she describes children who "had inherited demons through the parents," noting that she counseled them to "ask the Lord to break the line of inheritance and seal their children from that source of demons."<sup>7</sup>

Teresa Castleman also provides detailed instructions for casting demons out of Christians: "Call forth those curses that have been allowed through the generations by way of a *Familiar Spirit* — we break the hold and command in the Name of Jesus that it flee. We command that it go to dry places and tell the curse it not [*sic*]



*Generational curse proponents teach that an additional step is required for a believer to be set free from the bondage that holds him captive to the sins of his forefathers.*

*Scripture reveals we are neither responsible for our forefathers' sins nor are we doomed to repeat them.*

be allowed to go into any future generations. Its power and hold is broken forever.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Promoters of Generational Curse Provide a Step-by-Step Procedure for Deliverance**

Promoters of this teaching usually provide their readers with elaborate diagnostic tests and checklists, and even the exact words to utter during the deliverance ceremony. One Web site suggests: “Make a detailed list of all the sins your family members have made as far as four generations back. If family members continue to sin in the present, their sins should be confessed each day. ... It is important to be repentant on behalf of your family. After you have confessed all sins on each list, renounce any claims of Satan upon your life in the name of Jesus Christ. ... Then spend a time of worship and praise to the Lord. ... The Lord will unfold to you new freedoms in the days that follow.”<sup>9</sup>

A representative example of the wording of such prayers can be found on the same Web site: “Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I come before You and humble myself to confess the sin of \_\_\_\_\_. I ask forgiveness of this sin for myself, and any family members on both sides of my bloodline going back 4 generations. I loose the precious blood of Jesus on this sin and it will be washed from me. Please forgive me Father so I may be loosed from the bondages of Satan that have been placed upon me from this sin. I ask this in the name of Jesus.”<sup>10</sup>

Another prayer recommended for Christians to recite reads: “Jesus, I ask You first to forgive me for my sins and cleanse me from any area where I have allowed Satan and evil spirits into my life. ... I now cancel every curse and demons that have been assigned to destroy me. ... I cancel every evil that was spoken against me.”<sup>11</sup>

### **What Should Be Our Response?**

#### **Examine the biblical texts on which this teaching is based**

First, we need to consider the Ancient Near Eastern context of the biblical texts used to teach generational curses. In Exodus 20 and 34, Moses was addressing the children of God who were surrounded by paganism. Pagans believed that those who committed cultic infractions, forgot their god's birthday, offered the wrong sacrifice, or paid allegiance to another god who offered assistance in some special area (rain, fertility, or war), would die. (Notice that in paganism, the issue is never doctrine or morality.) The main god a person worshipped would issue a death warrant against the offender and against his entire family until they were completely wiped out.

Like much of the Pentateuch, Moses is writing correctively. He is declaring to the superstitious Israelites that their God is different. He is interested in obedience from the heart, not merely one's touching the correct cultic bases. Those whose lives are a constant offense to Him will be judged accordingly. Furthermore, if they persist in rebellion against God and His Word, they risk negatively affecting their immediate descendents — not by any perceived collective, biologically transferred guilt, but by their poor role modeling (see next point).

Second, we need to consider Moses' point of reference. The children who were being judged were exhibiting learned behavior, not inherited guilt and the curses that come with it.

The results/effects of sin are not handed down to descendents genetically or legally. The negative effects of sin are handed down as learned behavior. The phrase “to the fourth generation” refers back to the great-grandfather and indicates that the influence a man has on his son, grandson, and great-grandson only extends as long as he is living. His ability to transmit his ungodly ways to his descendents ceases when he dies. During his life, however, his descendents can choose whether they follow in his wicked ways or turn to the Lord.



Therefore, we are neither responsible for our forefathers' sins nor are we doomed to repeat them. Also, we do not have the legal guilt or the genetic tendency that proponents of generational curse teach.

Third, we need to read the texts used to support generational curse in their entirety. Numerous Bible-believing Old Testament scholars have noted that the judgment of God falls only on members of the second, third, and fourth generations "who hate me" (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9; compare also Deuteronomy 7:10; 32:41).<sup>12</sup> These specialists note that these words (which appear at the end of the passages cited by proponents of generational curse) further identify those on whom the judgment falls — people who have willingly followed their older, rebellious role models. These words of Scripture explain that God's judgment is reserved for individuals who persist in rebellion against God by choosing to perpetuate the sins of their ancestors.

### Point out the lack of biblical evidence for generational curse

*The phrase generational curse never appears in Scripture.* The phrase *generational curse* or any other such phrase cannot be found in either Testament. This in itself is not sufficient to dismiss the teaching as unbiblical. The word *Trinity* does not appear in Scripture, but accurately reflects the teaching of the Bible. The fact the phrase *generational curse* is not found in Scripture, however, should alert discerning Christians that care needs to be exercised in this area. Conclusive proof should be forthcoming when the full counsel of God is surveyed.

*The concept of generational curse is foreign to Scripture.* When Exodus 20:5 and 34:6,7, etc., are read in their Ancient Near Eastern context and properly interpreted, the possibility that these texts support the teaching of generational curse is completely removed.

*The diagnostic tests, rituals, and prayers recommended by those who teach generational curse cannot be found in Scripture.* No such steps exist in the Bible, which is our *only* rule for matters of faith and practice. If generational curses were a reality, God would have given appropriate instructions in Scripture regarding how to deal with this problem.

### Consider what the rest of Scripture says

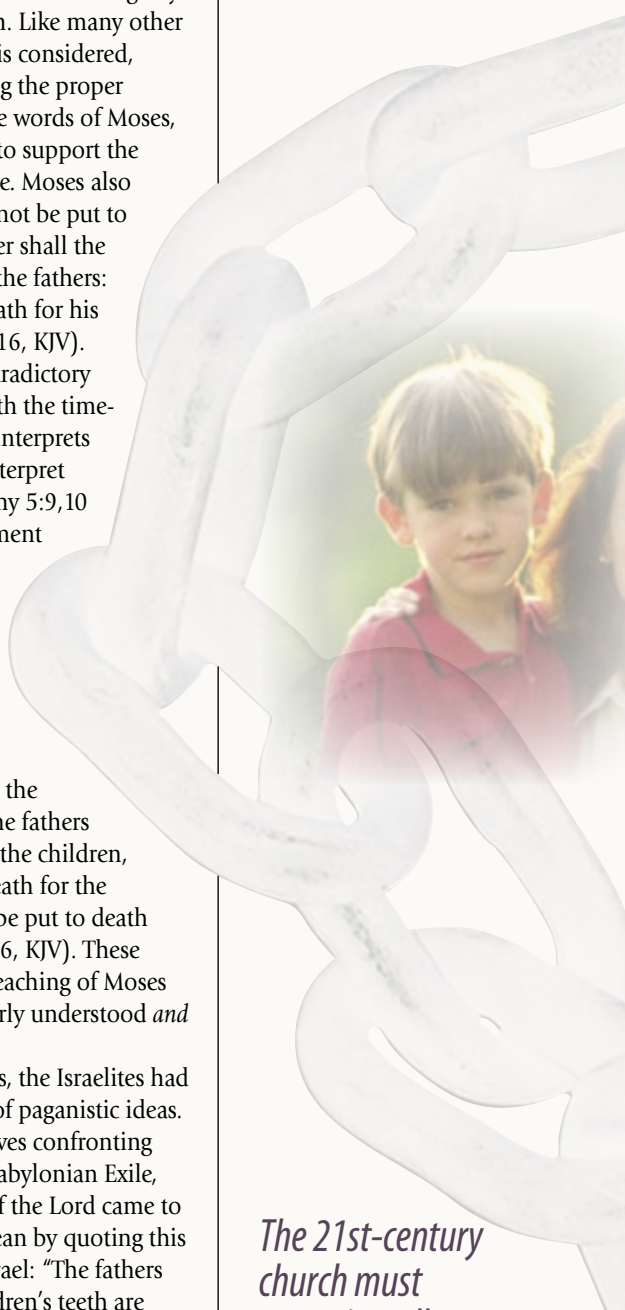
Considering all biblical evidence is always an

appropriate step to take before concluding any matter of Bible interpretation. Like many other issues, when all of Scripture is considered, little doubt remains regarding the proper conclusion. Look again at the words of Moses, whose words are often used to support the doctrine of generational curse. Moses also wrote that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deuteronomy 24:16, KJV). The inspiration and noncontradictory nature of Scripture, along with the time-tested principle of Scripture interprets Scripture, requires that we interpret Moses' words in Deuteronomy 5:9,10 in light of Moses' clear statement in chapter 24.

Second Kings 14:6 and 2 Chronicles 25:4 are parallel passages: "But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (2 Kings 14:6, KJV). These Scriptures indicate that the teaching of Moses in Deuteronomy 24 was clearly understood *and practiced* in ancient Israel.

By the time of the prophets, the Israelites had forgotten Moses' correction of paganistic ideas. The prophets found themselves confronting the same issue. During the Babylonian Exile, Ezekiel records, "The word of the Lord came to me: 'What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: "The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son — both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die' " (Ezekiel 18:1-4).

Ezekiel continues, "But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things: He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. ... He does not oppress anyone. ... He does not



*The 21st-century church must unequivocally assert the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice.*

commit robbery, but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked. ...

He will not die for his father's sin; he will surely live. But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what was wrong among his people. Yet you ask, 'Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?' Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. The soul who sins is the one who will die [playing off Deuteronomy 24]. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son.

The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him" (Ezekiel 18:14-20).

Jeremiah, a contemporary of Ezekiel, spoke to the Jews in Jerusalem: "In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes — his own teeth will be set on

edge" (Jeremiah 31:29,30). These passages are clear. In fact, this is the Scripture-interprets-Scripture principle: Difficult passages *should* be interpreted in light of clearer passages, such as these from Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

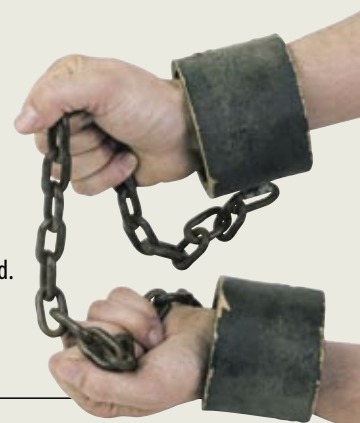
It is instructive to note that not all Jews at this time were attempting to pass the buck. Though faced with the same trials of the Babylonian captivity, the prophet Daniel exhibited the opposite attitude of his contemporaries in Judah and Babylon. Instead of blaming his fate on his ancestors, as did the audiences of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he accepted his own personal responsibility and that of his contemporaries for the judgment that had befallen them. He wrote: "And I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, 'Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances. ... Righteousness belongs to Thee, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day — to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which Thou hast driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have

*Google the phrase generational curse. You will find this teaching is even more popular with the psychic network and occult crowd than it is in Christianity.*

## The Sins of Generational Curse Teaching

What is the harm in playing a little fast and loose with Scripture and saying a few extra prayers? Here is an incomplete list of the detrimental effects of generational curse. It:

- 1 denies the sufficiency of Scripture and requires that human-generated tests, rites, and formulas be added to the Word of God (compare 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3-8).
- 2 denies the completed work of Christ on the cross.
- 3 creates a Jesus-plus gospel (see Galatians 1:6-9).
- 4 denies the biblical teaching of personal responsibility.
- 5 moves us a step closer to the paganism out of which we were called.
- 6 puts undue emphasis on the works of men, thus flirting again with a works-based relationship with God.



**W.E. NUNNALLY**, Springfield, Missouri

committed against Thee. Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him' " (Daniel 9:4,5,7-9, NASB).<sup>13</sup>

In Daniel's prayer, there is no mention of the reason for the exile being the sins of the fathers. This is even more amazing when we remember that Daniel was aware that for generations God had sent prophets to warn Israel of such a judgment if they did not repent.

By the time of Jesus, the Jews had *again* forgotten the corrections of paganism expressed by Moses and the prophets. Jesus confronted the same issues. In John 9:1-3 we read, "And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was neither that this man sinned nor his parents; but ... that the works of God might be displayed in him' " (NASB). While the disciples were fixated on the old paganistic worldview that sin-guilt could be inherited, Jesus was intent on emphasizing the glory and grace of God.

Jesus also stated, "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11). Jesus' words suggest that the forgiveness of God is sufficient to accomplish a degree of spiritual transformation sufficient to produce a changed life. Jesus believed that the woman He had just forgiven was free to choose whether she would remain in sin or depart from it. No reference is made to an additional prayer, ceremony, or formulaic renunciation needed to supplement God's gracious offer of forgiveness.

Paul's words, "God will render to *every man* according to *his deeds*" (Romans 2:5,6, KJV) and "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God ... and *every one* of us shall give an account of *himself* to God" (Romans 14:10-12, KJV, emphasis added) clearly assert the New Testament's priority on individual responsibility. These passages should be seen as reflecting the unified teaching of Scripture beginning with Moses (Deuteronomy 24:16), continuing in the prophets (Jeremiah 31:29,30; Ezekiel 18:1-4,14-16, 18-20; Daniel 9:4,5,7-9), and culminating in the teachings of Jesus (John 8:11; 9:1-3).

Moses had tried to correct the paganism of his day, but by the time of the prophets, the people had lapsed back into their pagan ways. The prophets tried to correct the paganism of their day, but by the time of Jesus, the people had lapsed backed into paganistic thinking.

Today's church has the witness of Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles, along with the New Testament, the fullness of the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit — including the gift of discernment — and yet a percentage of the Pentecostal/charismatic church has lapsed into paganism.

Because we have not listened to Jesus nor consulted all of Scripture, we are again afflicted with a magical view of God's world. In this world God's ultimate sacrifice has limited power and effects, and must be supplemented by our own exorcistic formulas and human efforts. In fact, if you Google the phrase *generational curse*, you will find that this teaching is even more popular with the psychic network and occult crowd than it is in Christianity. Strange bedfellows, to say the least. This almost begs the question: Who is following whom?

#### **Affirm the sufficiency of the Cross**

The 21st-century church must assert the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice as unequivocally as did the Early Church. Paul declared without fear of contradiction: "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display [the reference is to the Roman spectacle where conquering emperors and generals would parade the spoils of war and vanquished prisoners through the streets of Rome to demonstrate to citizen and enemy alike the power of the empire] of them, having triumphed over them through Him" (Colossians 2:13-15, NASB).

Paul's words clearly show that whatever sin-debt we had accrued was effectively canceled as a result of Jesus' substitutionary death. Further, Paul asserts that the powers and principalities that held us in bondage to sin were not only defeated and disarmed, they were also totally humiliated in the process. The death of Jesus accomplished both forgiveness of sin *and* deliverance from demonic oppression and possession for those who appropriate that sacrifice to themselves.

Hymnist Horatio Spafford experienced this personally, and in his hymn, "It Is Well With My Soul," even glossed the metaphor



*The death of Jesus accomplished both forgiveness of sin and deliverance from demonic oppression and possession.*

Paul used when writing to the Colossians.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

Similarly, Charles Wesley expressed in "O For a Thousand Tongues To Sing" the same message communicated by the apostle two millennia ago:

Jesus! The name that charms our fears,  
That bids our sorrows cease;  
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'Tis life, and health, and peace.  
  
He breaks the power of  
canceled sin,  
He sets the prisoner free;  
His blood can make the  
foulest clean,  
His blood availed for me.

### Conclusion

So what is the end of the matter? When Jesus said, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free *indeed*," (John 8:36, italics added), He meant it. 🌟

### NOTES

1. <http://hometown.aol.com/godswaitn/genealogy/index.htm>.
2. C. Peter Wagner and Douglas Pennoyer, *Wrestling With Dark Angels: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the Supernatural Forces in Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura Calif.: Regal Books, 1990), 125–159, especially 158, 159.
3. Derek Prince, *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 32, 33; also see 17–20 where the wording and examples given make it clear that the author is referring to Christians.
4. *Ibid.*, 38.
5. Rebecca Brown, *Prepare for War* (Chino, Calif.: Chick Publications, 1987), 106.
6. *Ibid.*, 109.
7. *Ibid.*, 294, 295.
8. Teresa Castleman in *Brownsville Assembly of God Deliverance Manual* (Pensacola: Brownsville Assembly of God, 1996–97) 25.
9. <http://www.yourgoingtohell.com/curse.html>.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Examples of readily accessible information are: Walter Kaiser and others, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 178; Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Press, 1992), 285, 286; and Gleason L. Archer, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 152, 153).
13. Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)).

*"If the Son  
sets you free,  
you will be  
free indeed"  
(John 8:36).*

## What Can We Learn From This Brush With Heresy?

- 1 The Scriptures are the only trustworthy lamp to our feet and light to our path.
- 2 The words of man can only bring us back into bondage: for example, fear. We must follow the full counsel of God in Scripture rather than the latest theological fad.
- 3 Fallen man is always looking for a quick fix. Most problems addressed by the ceremonies of generational curse cannot be cast out or bound. Behavioral problems need to be addressed in our discipleship walk. We need to daily take up our cross, reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, bring our bodies under subjection, take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and renew our minds by the word of God. A drive-by exorcism of our character flaws will leave us sorely disappointed when we awake the next day to find our flaws still with us. Jesus did not call us to a short-cut version of Christianity. He called us to discipleship — daily following the Master, submitting to His lordship, learning from Him, and becoming more like Him.
- 4 It serves to remind us of the power and sufficiency of Jesus' blood.
- 5 Because generational curse has caused us to return to the Bible to re-evaluate its message, we are again reminded that our actions do have consequences, and our lives do have a powerful impact on our children, either for good or evil. By the way some believers live, they are indeed "sowing the wind and will indeed reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7). Many people in our churches are in need of true biblical repentance, transformation, and empowerment so we can live the exemplary lives God calls us to live.

W.E. NUNNALLY, Springfield, Missouri





## What Pastors Can Do To Help Victims of Domestic Violence in the Church

*Typical clergy see almost 14 people each year whose problems involve family violence.*

**It was 10 p.m. Kirstin, overwhelmed with pain and fear, was sitting at the kitchen table.**

Every bone in her body ached. Her arms were bruised, and one eye was almost swollen shut. Her husband, Tim, had just stormed off in their only car after another one of their "family squabbles," as he called them.

Feeling hopeless and trapped, with no idea of what to do, Kirstin reached to pick up the phone to call the pastor of the church she sometimes attended.

Imagine that you are Kirstin's pastor. What would you do? The probability is good that domestic violence is shattering lives in one or more families in your church. Domestic violence is one of the secret tragedies occurring within the church.

Consider the following facts: Persons killing their spouses account for 15 to 20 percent of all murders committed in the United States. The FBI estimates that in this country a wife is beaten every 15 to 30 seconds. Two to four million women are abused each year, and 4,000 of them are killed.

Domestic violence is an epidemic problem. Nearly one-third of American women have reported that their husbands or boyfriends have abused them. In 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice found that more than half a million American women were victims of nonfatal domestic violence. Each year, as many as 324,000 women experience domestic violence during their pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, domestic violence or spousal abuse appears to take an equally damaging toll within the church community. A national survey completed several years ago by the Seattle Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence found that typical clergy see almost 14 people each year whose problems involve family violence.

One national denomination polled a sample of its membership and found that 68 percent of those questioned had personally experienced some type of family violence, including spousal abuse.



**GRANT L. MARTIN, Ph.D.**, is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Edmonds, Washington. His books on domestic violence include *Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse* (Word, 1987), and *Please Don't Hurt Me* (Victor Books, 1987). His other books include *Help! For Teachers: Strategies for Reaching All Students* (Purposeful Design, 2004), and *The Attention Deficit Child* (Victor, 1998). Martin can be reached by e-mail at [drgrantmartin@drgrantmartin.com](mailto:drgrantmartin@drgrantmartin.com), or through his Web site at <http://www.drgrantmartin.com>.



The anguish of thousands of desperate people can be described by the words of David: "My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me" (Psalm 55:4,5).

While the vast majority of victims are women, there is some evidence that men are also abused. One study estimated that 3.5 million women and 250,000 men are battered by their spouses or intimate partners. However, because of the preponderance of abused women, this article will be limited to a discussion of women victims.

### What Is Domestic Violence?

*Domestic violence* refers to actual or threatened harm. *Physical violence* includes any act or behavior that inflicts bodily harm or is intended to inflict physical harm, such as kicking, hitting, shoving, choking, throwing objects, or the use of a weapon.

*Emotional abuse* may include ridiculing or demeaning statements, withholding affection or privileges, and blaming the spouse for family or interpersonal problems.

*Threatened violence* is a type of emotional abuse. It can include verbal threats to harm, the wielding of weapons, threatening gestures, injury or killing of family pets, destruction of property, or any other intimidating verbal or nonverbal behavior.

### Phases of Violence

A predictable progression of events seems to continually repeat itself in an abusive relationship. The first phase is a time of *tension building*. Irritations over things such as discipline and finances may lead to a feeling of walking on eggshells. Regardless of the wife's efforts to avoid confrontations, the crisis phase is inevitable.

The second phase starts when *acute violence* begins. This is when the batterer unleashes his aggressive behavior on his wife. The abuse can be verbal or physical, but there is always a victim, and there is always pain.

After the explosive release of violence, a period of relative calm follows. This is the *remorse phase*. Like a penitent alcoholic, the abusive husband may express guilt, show kindness and remorse, and shower his partner with gifts and promises that the violence will never happen again. This behavior often comes from a genuine sense of guilt over the harm he inflicted, as well as the fear of losing his spouse. The husband or boyfriend may really believe he will never allow himself to be violent again. The wife wants to believe her husband, and for a time may renew her hope in his ability to change. The problem is that the cycle will repeat itself unless outside intervention takes place.

### How the Pastor Can Help

As a pastor, you may often be in the forefront of identifying a domestic violence episode and in helping a family in severe need of support and intervention. Important goals for pastoral involvement need to include: safety for the woman and children in the family; accountability and treatment for the abuser; and restoration of both the victim and abuser, and hopefully reconciliation of the relationship.

Often, your first contact may be with the wife who is being abused. If you observe the woman wearing long sleeves in the summer, sunglasses indoors, withdrawal from social situations, unexplained injuries, signs of stress, and alcohol or drug use, these may be signs of abuse. Chronic low self-esteem, a need to rescue or cover the mistakes of her husband, social isolation, and emotional and economic dependency are often seen in women who are battered.

To assist in taking inventory of a situation, you could have the wife respond to the following questions about her husband's behavior.

- **Does he continually monitor your time and make you account for every minute** (when you run errands, visit friends, and commute to work)?

*A predictable progression of events seems to continually repeat itself in an abusive relationship.*





*The pastor may be in the forefront of identifying a domestic violence episode and in helping a family in severe need of support and intervention.*

- **Do you ever feel isolated and alone**, as if there were no one with whom you could confide?
  - **Is he overly critical of daily things**, such as your cooking, clothes, or appearance?
  - **Do his moods change radically** from calm to angry, or vice versa?
  - **Does he ever strike you** with his hands or feet (slap, punch, or kick), or with an object?
  - **Has he ever threatened you** with an object or weapon?
  - **Does he ever give you visible injuries**, such as welts, bruises, cuts, or lumps on head?
  - **Have you ever had to seek professional aid for any injury** at a medical clinic, doctor's office, or hospital emergency room?
  - **Does he ever hurt you sexually** or make you have intercourse against your will?
  - **Does he become abusive with his language**, call you names, convey insults, or make threats?
- If the wife answers yes to two or more of these questions, she may be living in an abusive situation. The violence will not go away by itself, even if she and her husband claim to be Christians. Talk to the wife about taking action for her own safety and perhaps the welfare of her children. After the safety procedures are implemented, more consideration can be given to restoration. Following are some suggestions for pastors as they begin the process of understanding, guiding, and helping protect a potential victim.

### What To Do for a Suspected Victim of Domestic Violence?

Most victims of spousal abuse feel totally helpless and have no idea where to begin. The following approach is suggested:

- **Listen to the victim, stand with her, and believe what she is reporting.**
- **Reassure her that the abuse is not her fault.** She is not to blame. What the abuser has done is wrong, even illegal. Assure her of God's love and that God does not want her to remain in a situation where her life and the lives of her children are in danger.
- **Be trustworthy and calm.** The victim needs reassurance, support, and hope, but do not pressure her to talk about the abuse.
- **Let her know it is likely that, in spite of his promises, the violence will continue** and probably escalate.
- **Make sure she knows she is not alone** — millions of American women from every ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic group suffer from abuse, and many women find it difficult to leave.
- **Also explain that domestic violence is a crime** — as much of a crime as robbery or rape, and she can seek protection from the justice system.
- **Be concerned about her injuries.** Does she need or has she gotten medical attention?
- **Be patient in listening** and allowing the victim the time to process her story.
- **Respect her need for confidentiality.** Do not put her name on a prayer list, or give information to elders or other church leaders.
- **Help the victim take inventory of her situation.** Assess the level of harm and danger to herself and the children.
- **Give her time.** She needs to make her own decisions. If she is not ready to make major changes in her life, do not take away your support.
- **Become educated about local resources**, magistrate numbers, support groups, counseling, shelter programs, and legal advocacy services. (The National Domestic Violence Hotline is 800-799-7233.)
- **Make safety a priority.** Help her develop a safety plan with her welfare in mind.
- **Help the victim decide when and how to implement the plan.** If she is planning to leave, remind her to take important papers with her, such as birth certificates, passports, and health insurance documents.
- **Suggest that her husband needs treatment.** He needs to take responsibility for, and change his behavior.
- **Pressing charges may be appropriate.** Domestic violence is a crime. A record may be helpful

### Pastoral Responses to the Abuser

- **Be clear that the violent behavior is unacceptable.**
- **Work with him on his spiritual understanding and personal growth**, and make it clear that nothing in Scripture justifies abusive behavior.
- In dealing with him, be careful to **protect the safety of the victim.**
- **Do not accept his rationalizations** or his blaming of the victim.
- **Offer him hope that he can change.** Tell him about group treatment or other counseling options in your community.
- **Hold him accountable.** To change he must take responsibility for his actions. If he is serious about changing, he will seek out the help he needs. Pastoral counseling does not substitute for a formal treatment program.
- **Do not take his word that the violence has stopped.** Check with his abused partner without him being present.
- **Do not encourage marital counseling** until it is clear that the violence has stopped.
- **Avoid premature forgiveness** and blind hope that everything will get better.
- **Collaborate with community agencies and law enforcement to hold him accountable.**

GRANT L. MARTIN, Edmonds, Washington.

## RESOURCE LIST

The following books are recommended for pastors who wish to learn more about domestic violence.

- Kroeger, Catherine, and Nancy Nason-Clark. 2001. *No Place for Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence*. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press.
- Miles, Al. 2000. *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs To Know*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress Publications.
- Murphy, Nancy. 2003. *God's Reconciling Love: A Pastor's Handbook on Domestic Violence*. Seattle, Wash.: FaithTrust Institute.

GRANT L. MARTIN, Edmonds, Washington.

in the future to hold him accountable for his behavior. Some research has shown that being arrested can have beneficial long-term effects. Men who have been arrested are less likely to beat their wives again. Help the victim realize that once she makes the call, she should be prepared to follow through on signing a warrant or whatever else may be required. Calling the police may not be a long-term solution unless it leads to the batterer getting help. If there is a high likelihood of danger, the police should definitely be called.

- **Continue in prayer.** Prayer is a high priority regardless of what else you do. Ask God for direction in what type of intervention to pursue. God admonishes us to pray (Matthew 21:22).
- **Once she is safe, help her begin thinking about long-term alternatives.**

Following is a short list of things a pastor should not do while working with a victim of domestic violence.

### Do not:

- **tell her what to do, when to leave, or not to leave.**
- **tell her to go back and try a little harder**, to be more submissive, or to give her husband what he wants.
- **tell her she should stay because of the children.**
- **blame her in any way for the violence.** Emphasize that the abuser is totally responsible for his anger and acting out regardless of the frustrations he has faced.
- **rescue her by trying to make decisions for her.**
- **offer to try to talk to her husband or boyfriend** to straighten things out.
- **tell her she is wrong for wanting to stay** with her husband.
- **recommend marriage counseling or any marriage-enrichment seminars** until, or unless, the husband has completed his own treatment.

Remember, no one deserves to be beaten or threatened. There is no excuse for abusive behavior, and it is not part of any suffering for Christ. Violence at home will not just go away, but if you help the victim take action and reach out for help, it can be stopped.

A comprehensive perspective for ministry to those experiencing domestic violence would be to: (1) Make clear pronouncements from the pulpit about the evil and harmful consequences of

violence in the home. (2) Establish policy and procedures to protect victims and to minister to their practical needs, as well as to offer healing for their emotional and spiritual needs. (3) Take clear steps to ensure the abuser is held accountable for his actions, often in cooperation with the legal system, in the process of restoring the person and assisting him in developing new patterns of behavior.

As a pastor, you can be a significant instrument of God to bring accountability and grace into a traumatized family. You can affirm to the victim and to the abuser that God can heal the brokenhearted. This includes the entire family — the victim who struggles with hopelessness, the perpetrator who carries insecurity and shame, the children who are preoccupied with fear and apprehension, and the church family who has experienced shock and disbelief. God, through Jesus Christ, can bring reconciling love, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and justice to all those concerned. 🌊

*If you help the victim take action and reach out for help, violence at home can be stopped.*



### NOTE

1. "Domestic Violence is a Serious, Widespread Social Problem in America: The Facts," Family Violence Prevention Fund [Internet]; available from <http://www.endabuse.org/resources/facts>; accessed 16 April 2005.



Augustine (354–430)

*Augustine's experience of the power of grace to shatter sin's chains affected him the rest of his life.*

## The Great Pelagian Controversy

**Life in fourth-century Rome was difficult at best.**

Rodney Stark notes: "Roman cities were small, extremely crowded, filthy beyond imagining, disorderly, filled with strangers, and afflicted with frequent catastrophes — fires, plagues, conquests, and earthquakes. ... Dread of fire was an obsession among rich and poor alike. ... Sewers were ditches running down the middle of each narrow street — ditches into which everything was dumped including chamber pots at night."<sup>1</sup> Life expectancy was short, probably about 30 years.

On August 26, A.D. 410, Alaric and his army of Goths broke through Rome's vast walls plundering and raping at will. One of the conquests the Romans perpetually feared had finally occurred.

Many refugees fled from Rome to North Africa, the breadbasket of the Roman populace. A secular monk named Pelagius (c. 354–420), with his disciple, Caelestius, was among those fleeing. Although their ultimate destination was Jerusalem, they stopped at Hippo where Augustine (354–430) was bishop. Pelagius wanted to meet the famous teacher, but the bishop was out of town. Pelagius left him a courteous note, which Augustine later answered with similar courtesy.

Continuing on to Jerusalem, Pelagius stopped at Carthage, the capital of North Africa, where he left Caelestius. As Pelagius' mouthpiece, Caelestius began to teach his master's doctrinal system. When Caelestius' teaching reached Augustine, a doctrinal controversy began. These shock waves have reverberated down through the centuries. This controversy was central to the Reformation 1,100 years later, and continues to be a debate every generation of Christians must fight anew.

To understand the controversy we need to acquaint ourselves with both Pelagius and Augustine. They had much in common. Both were born in 354. They were in their mid-fifties when their debate began. Pelagius came from the British Isles, while Augustine came from

North Africa. Both first visited Rome in their early 30s. Pelagius took up the ascetic life of a monk, ministering to poor dockworkers and laborers. He lived in Rome for many years until its sacking by the Goths made him a refugee. Both men were well educated. Both were convinced their positions were scriptural. Both were lovers of peace; neither enjoyed conflict. However, Augustine and Pelagius also differed at critical and crucial junctures.

### Augustine

Unlike Pelagius, Augustine came to Rome in his youth, but soon moved to Milan where he was influenced by the preaching of the great Bishop Ambrose (A.D. 340–397). Slowly and increasingly Augustine felt great conviction, but for him Christianity seemed impossible. How could he be baptized? Since his youth sexual lust had dominated him. A life of chastity and sexual purity seemed utterly unrealistic. He felt hopeless about conversion.

At a low point he heard a voice on the other side of the garden wall singing, "Pick up and read. Pick up and read." Paul's letter to the Romans was nearby. When he opened the book his eyes fell on Romans 13:13,14: "Not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality. ... But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (ESV).<sup>2</sup> Instantly, faith in God's power surged into his fallen heart. He knew God would give him power to change.

From that moment he was a convert by the grace of God. His experience of the grip of indwelling sin and the power of grace to shatter its chains affected him the rest of his life.

After his baptism he returned to Africa, determined to live a quiet life of celibate scholarship. But God had other plans. The seaport town of Hippo soon made him their bishop, where he served until his death 40 years later.

Before he died Augustine left the church a legacy of 5 million words written with quill on parchment. "Augustine shaped the history



WILLIAM P. FARLEY is pastor of Grace Christian Fellowship in Spokane, Washington. He is the author of *For His Glory*, Pinnacle Press, and *Outrageous Mercy*, Baker. You can contact him at 509-448-3979.

of the Christian church," notes John Piper. "His influence in the Western world is simply staggering."<sup>3</sup>

## Pelagius

Paul warned the Corinthian believers that Satan sometimes comes as an angel of light. Such was the case with Pelagius. People liked him. He "was a man of clear intellect, mild disposition, learned culture, and spotless character. Even Augustine, with all his abhorrence of [Pelagius'] doctrines, repeatedly speaks respectfully of the man."<sup>4</sup>

Pelagius had one great liability; he did not experience Augustine's struggle with personal sin, which would prove decisive.

During his many years in Rome, Pelagius attracted disciples and even became popular with some in the Roman upper class — including Caelestius, a lawyer from a wealthy family — who became Pelagius' most important disciple. Pelagius' ascetic lifestyle and moral purity drew Caelestius to him. Pelagius disliked controversy, but Caelestius was of a different temperament. "Pelagius was the moral author," but "Caelestius the intellectual author of the system represented by them."<sup>5</sup>

Dependence on grace was not the backbone of Pelagius' Christianity. Instead, his Christianity depended on an external legalism. It was a pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps spirituality. He was the spiritual John Wayne of the fifth century. He believed that God expects perfection, but believed that every human had the ability to perform it. He reasoned that God gives all men power to obey what He commands. If not, God would be unjust. Pelagius' "message was simple and terrifying," notes Augustine's biographer, "since perfection is possible for man, it is obligatory."<sup>6</sup>

He believed that any man could be perfect who wanted to be, and that many Old Testament saints were. Perfection could be attained with human will and determination. His favorite text was "This is the love of God, that we keep his commands" (1 John 5:3, ESV). "For the Pelagians, man had no excuse for his sins, nor for the evil that was around him."<sup>7</sup>

In short, Pelagius completely rejected the doctrine of original sin, the Pauline idea that all men inherit Adam's sin and guilt at conception. This sin cripples the will, desires, emotions, and intellect. Therefore, men can never satisfy God's righteous requirements by human effort.

Pelagius' assumptions turned him to asceticism. He gave his life to fasting, self-denial, and

outward morality. He thought every Christian should do likewise because only an ascetic lifestyle could guarantee one's salvation.

In short, Pelagius' concern was ethics, not doctrine. Here was his Achilles heel. He wanted a moral reformation of the Roman Church, and he was convinced that a misunderstanding of grace was the problem. *Why would someone, saved by grace alone, change and become more Christlike?* he wondered. In the Roman Church he saw moral laxity and even indifference. He believed Paul's overemphasis on grace was the culprit.

In about A.D. 405, Pelagius heard someone read the famous prayer from Augustine's *Confessions*, "Command what you will: Give what you command." Pelagius was horrified. If man must rely on God's grace to obey His commands, then man has no moral responsibility. Christians can blame their sins on God's unwillingness to give grace. He was convinced that Augustine thought man was a robot, completely determined by God, and lacking any substantial incentive for moral reformation.

## The Issue

Before Augustine's engagement with Pelagius "the anthropology of the church was exceedingly crude and indefinite."<sup>8</sup> Although most Christians believed that men were sinners, the nature of sin and how it affects us had not been thoroughly defined.

David stated the question clearly in Psalm 8. "What is man that you are mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4, ESV). "What is man?" That was the question. Does Adam's sin and guilt corrupt him from conception, or is he inherently good, in complete possession of his moral faculties, and able to save himself through self-effort?

If Adam's fall affected us, how far and to what extent did it affect us? Does it cause spiritual death, rendering us unable to respond to God, or does it merely cripple us, leaving our capacities and desires to turn to God intact?

Did Jesus die to help us help ourselves? Or, did He die because men were utterly bound by sin, unable to help themselves, and in desperate need of a divinely wrought salvation?

Behind these questions lurked the idea of grace. What does grace accomplish? How much grace do men need? How dependent is man on the grace of God? Does God give grace to make men holy, or does man's holiness qualify him to receive divine grace?

The answers to these and other questions are important. They affect our understanding of



*Dependence on external legalism, not grace, was the backbone of Pelagius' Christianity.*



*Augustine taught that God saves without violating man's moral responsibility to seek and obey Him.*

man's freedom, of Adam's condition before the Fall, how Adam's fall affects us, how God's grace works, the nature of regeneration, the doctrines of predestination and election, whether man's will is free or bound, the judgments of God, and most important, the nature and degree of man's dependence on God.

### Augustine's Victory

The debate accelerated after Caelestius preached his ideas in Carthage. Between A.D. 410 and A.D. 416 Augustine answered Caelestius with a series of letters and dissertations proving from Scripture the reality and nature of original sin.

From Paul's letters Augustine refuted Pelagius. Adam's sin was no private affair. He represented all men. When Adam fell, all fell. We are born debilitated with Adam's sin. (To Augustine its fundamental nature was pride.) We also enter the world guilty with Adam's guilt. In theological language, Augustine taught that both Adam's sin and guilt are imputed to us. Therefore, we are born dead in sin, unable to believe or respond to God. Augustine believed this is why God must choose and

elect those who will be saved. To the elect God gives the gift of faith. He justifies them and empowers them to grow in holiness. Eventually God glorifies them. This is how Bruce Shelley sums up Augustine's anthropology: "In Augustine's view, Adam's sin had enormous consequences. His power to do right was gone. In a word, he died, spiritually — and soon, physically. But he was not alone in his ruin. Augustine taught that the whole human race was 'in Adam' and shared his fall. Mankind became a 'mass of corruption,' incapable of any good [saving] act. Every individual, from earliest infancy to old age, deserves nothing but damnation."<sup>9</sup>

Most important, Augustine taught that God saves without violating man's moral responsibility to seek and obey God. Augustine embraced the mystery that God is sovereign and man is responsible. When I was a new Christian, I asked a student of Augustine how the great man was able to reconcile God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

"He never tried to reconcile close friends," my friend wisely answered.

Augustine's theology also generated a profound dependence on God and His glorious grace. His personal experience of indwelling sin convinced him that he was utterly dependent on God. His prayer, "Command what you will: Give what you command" — so detested by Pelagius — expressed the heart of his piety. He knew his dependence on God for salvation, sanctification, and every other good thing.

He also believed that his theological system was the solution to moral laxity. It was only when the church taught Original Sin, humanity's helplessness, and God's free grace that the moral transformation that Pelagius so earnestly sought would occur. Why? Because he believed his doctrine of grace went deep, touching the human heart, transforming it by grace, evoking a life surrendered to God in joyful gratitude. He believed that this inward revolution alone would produce the heart virtue that Christ so earnestly seeks.

### Aftermath

Pelagius moved to Palestine. There he encountered the great scholar Jerome (c. 347–420) who also opposed Pelagius' ideas.

In the meantime, the conflict between Augustine and Pelagius accelerated. Some Christians sided with Pelagius; others with





Augustine. In the last decades of Augustine's life, however, the church increasingly sided with Augustine and Jerome. In A.D. 431, the ecumenical Council of Ephesus, meeting a year after Augustine's death, denounced Pelagianism and endorsed Augustine's theology of human nature. A century later, the Council of Orange (A.D. 529) reaffirmed this decision. Since the sixth century, almost universally, Pelagianism has been considered a heresy and Augustine's doctrine of grace orthodox.

Before he died, however, Augustine's teaching was resisted by an unexpected source — the ascetic communities that had flourished in the Egyptian desert. Having built their lives around fasting, rigorous self-denials, and self-renunciation, these Christians found the freedom of grace oppressive but Pelagius' doctrines sweet. The conflict between those that delight to work and those who delight to submit to God's grace was not new, and it has permeated the following centuries.

Although Augustine's theology was orthodoxy, where theology affects daily life, people were often practical Pelagians. That is, Pelagianism was the default view of the common man. From A.D. 500 to 1500 the church moved ever closer to Pelagianism. Men increasingly worked to gain God's acceptance. The seven sacraments, attendance at mass, and obedience to the Pope became crucial precedents to salvation.

Much of this culminated in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, a renewal of the conflict between Augustine and Pelagius. Martin Luther (1483–1546) was an Augustinian monk. His reading of Paul's epistles, fortified by Augustine's comments, converted him to Paul's doctrine of grace. In fact, from Augustine both Luther and Calvin appealed to the Catholic authorities for acceptance of justification by faith alone.

## Lessons

What can today's pastor learn from the conflict between Pelagius and Augustine?

**First, the cure for the lukewarmness that Pelagius so greatly feared is not more discipline.** Instead, it is the repeated and clear proclamation of humanity's sin, our unworthiness of God's favor, and the magnificent grace of God that saves us. Only as we see our bankruptcy, our need of grace, and our dependence on God, do we lavishly give ourselves to Christ and His kingdom.

**Second, the history of the Pelagian conflict reminds us that doctrine matters.** Churches rise

and fall on their doctrinal clarity concerning basic issues. Clarity on the depth, power, and debility of human sin makes churches humble, needy, and fruitful. Failure in this doctrine renders them lukewarm. The more we understand and abhor sin, the less it will control us.

The opposite is also true. Failure to emphasize the doctrine of sin usually amplifies evil. The better we feel about ourselves the worse we usually become. In the 20th century, Pelagian ideals have unleashed untold horrors. All the utopian movements of the last 100 years — Communism, Fascism, and Nazism — started and built on Pelagian assumptions about man.

**Third, every generation must refight Augustine's battle.** The conflict did not end in the fifth century. Pelagianism proliferates in the contemporary church. In a recent survey, 77 percent of professing evangelicals said that they believe human beings are basically good, and 84 percent believe that in salvation "God helps those who help themselves."<sup>10</sup> It would be a mistake to assume that this is not the case in our churches.

**Last, the history of Pelagianism teaches us that unless we aggressively and regularly teach our congregations about sin and its manifold effects, Pelagianism will proliferate.** Why? Because men are by nature proud, and pride leads men to the feet of Pelagius. That is why we say that Pelagianism is the default religion of humanity. Convinced of its power, wise pastors resist it persistently and intentionally.

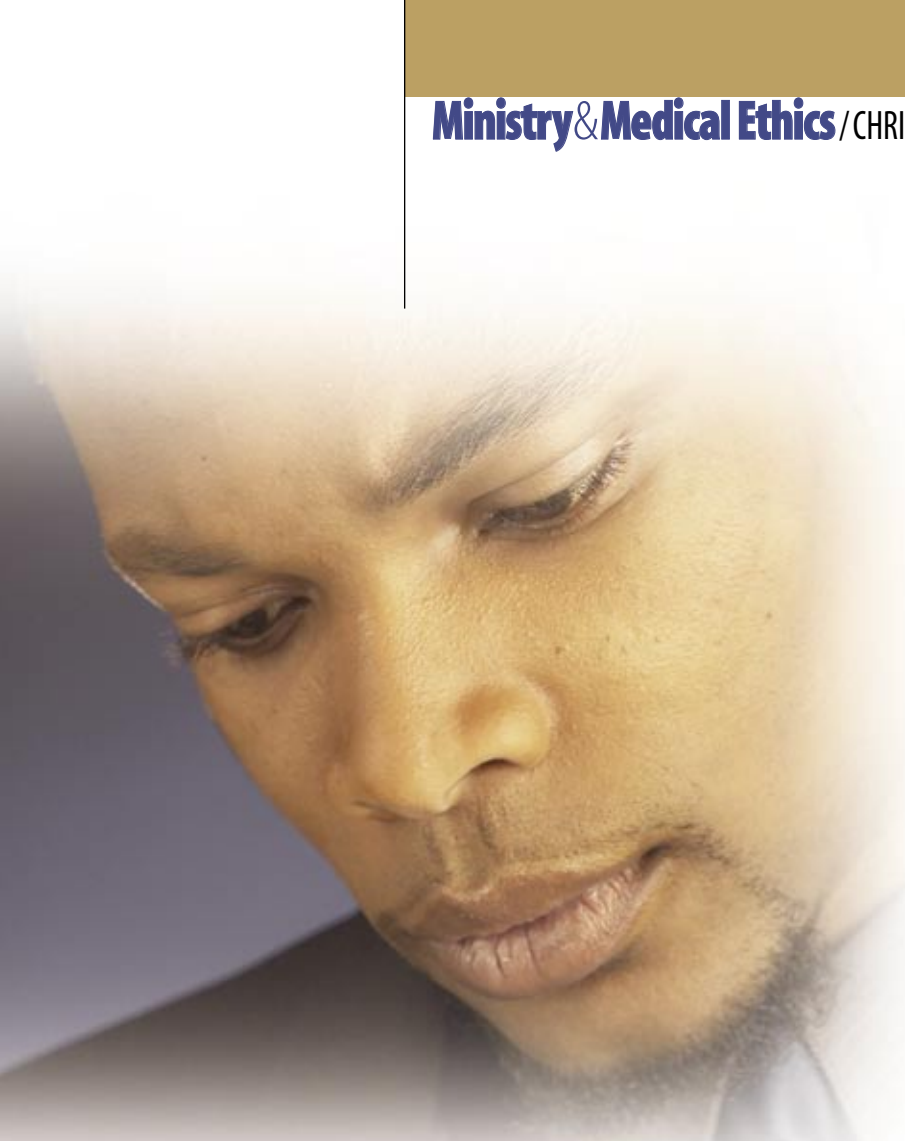
History is His story. 🌀

## NOTES

1. Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (San Francisco: Harper-Collins/San Francisco, 2006), 26–28.
2. Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version, copyright © 2001, Wheaton: Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
3. John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin* (The Swans Are Not Silent) (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2006), 43.
4. Philip Schaff, *The History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006), 790.
5. *Ibid.*, 792.
6. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), 342.
7. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 350.
8. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, 785.
9. Bruce Shelly, *Church History in Plain Language* (Dallas, Texas: Word, 1995), 129.
10. Michael Horton, "Pelagianism," *Modern Reformation*, January/February 1994, 31,32.



*Clarity on the depth, power, and debility of human sin makes churches humble, needy, and fruitful. Failure in this doctrine renders them lukewarm.*



*Part of your responsibility as a minister is to maintain your ability to respond to the needs of your congregation through appropriate self-care.*

## Healthy Habits for Sustaining Effective Ministry

**In my ministry and medical ethics column, I often address issues concerning ethical choices** we make as a society. In this article, I discuss ethical issues on a personal level — the ethics of self-care in ministry.

I occasionally speak to Bible college students. During talks with students I often hear a future pastor express his passion to *burn out for Jesus*. While I am thrilled at the commitment to ministry that such words convey, talk of *burning out* reminds me of unfortunate situations I have witnessed while ministering in places

other than college campuses.

In this article I address keeping a wholehearted commitment to ministry while *avoiding* burnout. The principles and practices I highlight can help ministers of all ages form the healthy habits necessary for sustaining effective ministry years beyond those energetic college days.

### Self-Care Need Not Be Self-Centered

Our society seems to be focused on self: self-help, self-fulfillment, and self-improvement. Ministers often preach against selfishness and self-centeredness. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34). The apostle Paul reminded us, "Love is not self-seeking" (1 Corinthians 13:5). From this perspective, any talk — even the topic of self-care — can seem unspiritual. Yet ministers have an ethical duty to practice effective self-care.

Self-care need not be self-centered. Respect for one's call to serve God and His people can and should be the basis for self-care in ministry. A pastor does not think twice about taking proper care of a car given to him as a tool to aid his ministry. As the most important physical tool he has for accomplishing God's work, his body deserves at least the same good care.

If a pastor wants to keep his car effective for the ministry, he will regularly change the oil, check the air in the tires, and perform the necessary maintenance according to the manufacturer's schedule. If he wants to keep his physical body effective for ministry, he will get at least 7 hours of sleep on most nights; eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in his diet; and exercise consistently. Similarly, he will work to protect his spiritual and emotional health by setting aside time to nurture his relationship with God and his family.

Pastors can serve others best when they are healthy and whole on several levels (spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical). Part of



**CHRISTINA M.H. POWELL, PH.D.**, an ordained minister and medical research scientist, preaches in churches and conferences nationwide. She is a research fellow at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital as well as the founder of Life Impact Ministries.

your responsibility as a minister is to maintain your ability to respond to the needs of your congregation through appropriate self-care.

An unhealthy minister lacks effectiveness as a role model for the people he leads. Yet the demands of ministry often can result in pastors neglecting their own needs in the process of caring for the needs of others.

### **Let Your Purpose Define Your Limits**

Taking proper care of oneself and one's family requires time. Thus, adequate self-care is a product of successful time management.

Ministry will always provide more opportunities for service than time to complete them. Pastors are often reluctant to face their limits because they often believe limitations are connected to weakness. Instead, they need to look at limits as defining their focus instead of measuring their inadequacy.

Your purpose in ministry needs to define the limits of your activities. Overbooking your schedule prevents you from giving your best to your main purpose. Once you prayerfully determine the focus of your ministry, you will know what activities need to be limited. For example, a senior pastor who is responsible for delivering the Word of God to his congregation each week will need to make prayer, study, and sermon preparation a high priority in his schedule. As a result, time for counseling may need to be limited to one day a week. Other staff members may also need to help with the counseling load. Similarly, a pastor's schedule may allow for only a few outside speaking engagements. A pastor who deeply understands his call and passion will know which of the many worthy opportunities he should choose. Other opportunities to speak outside the church should be graciously declined.

To give his best on Sunday, a pastor needs to be attentive to how he structures his activities on Saturday. If possible, adequate sleep on Saturday night means he will be fresh and energetic the next day. Scheduling sermon preparation earlier in the week and protecting those times from unnecessary interruptions best accomplish a restful Saturday night free of last-minute sermon preparation. Similarly, Saturday

afternoon activities should be kept simple to minimize the opportunity for disrupting a calm Saturday evening.

Many ministers rise early in the morning to pray. This is an excellent practice for spiritual self-care as well as empowerment for ministry. Preparation for early morning prayer needs to start the night before. To awake rested in the early morning, the minister must retire to bed early.



Pastors often feel they are giving the best to their ministry by engaging in many activities for long hours. After evening services, evening classes, or evening committee meetings, it can be difficult to turn in for an early bedtime without first unwinding at home for a while. Yet, for the sake of longevity in the ministry, pastors must recognize their need to give God their best through quality of work done as well as quantity of activities. For example, a sermon prepared in haste and delivered on little sleep can be anointed and bless the hearers because God's grace makes up for our human weakness in those times. Your best preparation for pulpit ministry, however, is a well-prepared sermon you have had time not only to write in full but also to edit for clarity and length, and then deliver it well-rested with a clear mind and energized body.

### **Take the Long View of Life**

Understanding your purpose also requires perceiving the changing needs of various seasons

*Simply knowing that a season of replenishment is coming can relieve stress for both the minister and his family.*



*Strategies for self-care must be tailored to the unique stresses of each ministry situation.*

of life and ministry. Balance between ministry and personal and family needs is not always achieved on a daily basis. Crises in the lives of congregation members and periods of rapid church growth or conflict may result in a period of intense focus on ministry. These times need to be relatively short-term, sustained by sufficient self-care, and then followed by a season of replenishment. Simply knowing that a season of replenishment is coming can relieve stress for both the minister and his family. At other times, especially during important family transitions — such as the birth of a baby or selection of a college for a high school junior — the minister needs to make a special effort to log more hours at home and fewer at work. By allowing ministry and family balance to ebb and flow with the seasons of life, the minister can maintain productivity in his work and nurture relationships at home over the long haul.

Ministry also has its seasons. A pastor starting a new church plant will have a different blend of responsibilities than a senior pastor of a large established church. An associate pastor who does not preach regularly, yet teaches numerous classes during the week and also has a full schedule of hospital visitation, has yet another blend of ministry challenges. Missionaries and evangelists have special concerns related to frequent travel. Strategies for self-care must be tailored to the unique stresses of each ministry

situation. A senior pastor needs to model appropriate self-care for junior staff and assist them in developing realistic ministry schedules, routines, and work/life boundaries.

### **Form Healthy *Little* Habits**

When you take the long view of life, you will notice not only the pattern of life's seasons, but also the effect of small changes over time. Little habits have big consequences. We need to keep ever vigilant for "the little foxes that ruin the vineyards" (Song of Solomon 2:15). For example, a cheeseburger at the end of a long day of ministry is a small treat, a seemingly harmless indulgence after a stressful or exhausting day. One extra cheeseburger a week over a year equals a gain of between 8 and 9 pounds a year. After 5 years of ministry, such a habit could make you 45 pounds overweight and at a higher risk of a variety of diseases, especially cardiovascular disease and diabetes. On the brighter side, go for a brisk 30-minute walk four times a week and you will offset your cheeseburger calories.

The best way to improve your diet or exercise habits is through small, incremental steps. Using this approach, changes can be gradually integrated into your life in a relatively easy manner. Once one change becomes a part of your routine, add another improvement. Since the changes occur a little at a time, the change is not overwhelming, making it less likely that you will give up and abandon making any changes at all. For example, healthy steps could include adding fresh fruit to breakfast, reducing portion size, or storing healthy snacks such as walnuts and almonds in your desk drawer.

Sometimes an approach that provides tangible evidence of the new change can make the difference when you are trying to learn a new healthy habit. One approach might be to put money in a jar every time you drink a glass of water instead of a soda, or pack a healthy sandwich instead of stopping for fast food. Gaining the support of your family and friends also can help you follow through on the changes you intend to make. Share your goals for adopting a healthier lifestyle with those who will offer you positive support. During those times when you are tempted to abandon your new healthy ways, you need encouragement to continue with your plan, not judgment for missing your goals. An ideal situation is to form an accountability partnership

with another minister who is also attempting to improve areas of self-care.

### **Protect Your Values From Erosion**

Accountability partnerships not only can help you make needed changes but also can assist you in protecting your values from erosion. Understanding your values is as crucial in matters of health as it is in life and ministry.

As a first step, prayerfully determine your values regarding care of your spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical self. Make sure these values align with biblical principles. Write down these values followed by practical ways to protect them from the erosion of a hectic ministry lifestyle.

In nature, erosion wears away solid rocks over time. In ministry, exhaustion from many responsibilities and activities can cause you to compromise your values. When we are tired, we are more likely to make poor decisions. For example, a tired minister is more likely to become irritated at parishioners, escalating conflict in relationships. This conflict leads to greater stress in the ministry and more work for the pastor, spiraling into a situation that drains joy from his life. In more serious cases, exhaustion can lead to a carelessness from which moral failure is born.

Your congregation needs you to remain strong. When you set the boundaries needed to protect your values from erosion, you are putting in place safeguards against future ministry ineffectiveness. Warning signs that your values may be in danger of erosion from ministry stress include the loss of joy in your call, increased forgetfulness, enhanced anxiety, loss of objectivity, and depression.

Part of protecting your values from erosion is learning to be consistent. Consistency is key for health and success. Our bodies thrive on predictable schedules and routines. We have internal biological clocks that regulate periods of sleep and wakefulness, body temperature, and hormone levels. Going to bed and waking up at approximately the same time each day, exercising nearly every day, and eating nutritious meals at regularly scheduled times keep our bodies functioning at their best. Of course, there are times and circumstances that call for exceptions to life patterns and disruption of

the normal routine. We need to be on guard, however, when we find we are having so many exceptions to the rules that we are in reality allowing good habits to erode and giving a foothold to bad habits that may be challenging to change once established.

### **Conclusion**

Far from being self-centered, self-care in the ministry is an expression of humility, underscoring your need for reliance on God. You have been fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). When you take proper care of your body, you are expressing gratitude to the One who has created you by respecting the way He made your body to function best. You are choosing to serve Him diligently by laboring wisely in His harvest fields. You are demonstrating good stewardship to a world out of balance and given to excess. You are setting aside time to take care of your body, soul, and spirit to prepare yourself for greater and longer service to God and His people. May God guide you in the proper steps as you consider the ethics of self-care in your ministry. 🌱



*When you set boundaries to protect your values, you are putting in place safeguards against future ministry ineffectiveness.*

*An end means loss, and loss — big or small — always induces some degree of grief.*

## Adjusting to a Change in Ministry

**Q** We recently moved to a new church and I am struggling with the change. I was content at our previous place of ministry. I miss my friends and my former ministry. I do not know anyone other than my immediate family, and my new ministry area is well-organized and does not seem to need any help. I am lonely and cannot seem to get excited about being here.

**A** Being married to a pastor carries the implication that change and relocation will most likely be a part of our lives.

Sometimes change is welcomed, but at times change can be difficult.

You are in the process of transitioning to a new chapter of your life. A transition is both an end and a beginning. An end means loss, and loss — big or small — always induces some degree of grief. Any relocation brings unfamiliarity, discomfort, and disorientation. You have lost proximity of friendships and the fulfillment you felt in your former area of ministry. Grief is normal and should be expressed. Know that grief is a temporary state and will fade as your new surroundings take on a new reality for you.

Remember that new chapters also bring new beginnings. This means new opportunities, personal growth, and ways to expand your potential.



See your sadness as a temporary transition period as you become aware of the possibilities.

Building new relationships will help you feel at home. Do not be afraid to form relationships with women in your church. Be aware that there are certain limitations because of your role, but this should not deter you from reaching out and forming warm bonds with the women God places in your life for such a purpose.

It is important for a pastor's wife to have at least one or two relationships outside the



**GABRIELE RIENAS** has been a pastor's wife for 25 years and is currently at Life Church in Aloha, Oregon. She is a professional counselor with Christian Counseling Center of Oregon and is available to speak at women's events, conferences, and seminars. She can be reached at 503-649-4444.



*If you believe God is directing the course of your life, it must be true that He planned for you to be where you are at this time in your life.*

ministry. Explore the options for interaction with other women in your community. Is there a community Bible study, a moms' prayer group, or a pastors' wives group? These are great places to start, and they provide opportunities to meet women who have similar values.

Challenge your unrealistic thoughts about your new location. In distress, it is easy to exaggerate difficulties. Challenge blanket generalizations, such as thinking: *I cannot relate to anyone; they do not need my help; this community is unfriendly; there are no resources or opportunities here.* Ask God and your husband to help you see a more realistic picture.

Next, identify things about this new chapter that appeal to you. Is your location close to nature? Is it in a metropolitan area with many fun things to do? Is it within driving distance of your extended family? Does the church have great programs for your children? You may want to list the positives to help you recognize them. Begin to focus on the good things and expand the list as you become more familiar and aware.

Above all, remember that God is intimately aware of your situation. If you believe He is directing the course of your life, it must be true

that He planned for you to be where you are at this time in your life. He has nothing but good intentions for you. Ask God to help you see exactly where you should be directing your attention and efforts during this time. Should you jump into ministry? Should you take some time to regroup and rest? Should you concentrate on your family? Should you focus on building relationships?

Several years ago my husband and I tried out at a church. I was adamantly against this transition, and I had good reasons to feel the way I did. Not only did I set my heart against it, but I also let my opinion be known to my husband in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. As it began to dawn on me that the transition was going to take place, I became more adamant and stubborn. Finally, I whined and complained and stated my case before the Lord. Rather than sensing His reproof and disapproval for my unyielding behavior, I was instead showered with His love and compassion, His reassurance and presence. I finally yielded, overwhelmed by His love and care for me. It turned out to be an awesome season in our lives as a ministry couple, as a young family, and as a married couple. Did I experience the pain of transition? Were some of my concerns realized? Were there some losses? Yes. But the bigger picture held opportunities and experiences I failed to appreciate from my limited perspective at the beginning of the process. Thank God that He challenged my heart in His loving way. I almost missed a great opportunity. 🌱

©2007 Andy Robertson



## University of Central Arkansas: Praying Up a Storm



Matt Anderson



*Much of what has happened on campus through Chi Alpha appears to be a response to prayer.*



**Chi Alpha at the University of Central Arkansas has garnered significant media coverage in Assemblies of God circles, and justifiably so.** You have read about this ministry in *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* or seen video from U.S. Missions.

Chi Alpha campus pastor Matt Carpenter and his wife, Kiki, serve in Conway, home of the UCA Bears. They have seen God changing lives and enlarging the borders of their campus ministry. Much of what has happened appears to be a response to prayer.

Matt explains, "God placed it on my heart to set aside a room in our offices and corporately seek after God 24 hours a day for a week. I presented this to the leaders." He had 25 or 30 student leaders then, so corporate 24/7 prayer would require daily shifts of about 2 hours per student. Surprisingly, by the end of the week, students did not seem worn out or feel overcommitted. "They couldn't wait to pray more," Matt recalls. One week became 2, 3, 4, and eventually 5 weeks during the remainder of that semester.

"We saw God do more in that 5 weeks than in the previous 2 1/2 years on campus," Matt remembers. He says people became filled with the Holy Spirit and delivered from lifelong strongholds. Meeting attendance climbed from 125 to as high as 450. Students began to initiate their own ministries. Lives were changed.

*Today's Pentecostal Evangel* tells of Cale Mills who, though outwardly successful, struggled with guilt over a dark secret. Cale had been addicted to Internet pornography since adolescence and contemplated suicide. "By the world's standards, I looked like someone who had a great life," he told *TPE*. "But I hadn't yet had a personal encounter with the Spirit of God."

As Mills struggled with depression, he had an experience with the Lord that helped turn his life around. He explains, "In that moment I felt such love that I knew He had been there all along. ... I was also aware of my sin, and I just kept telling God, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry.'"

Mills found freedom from his porn addiction, became a ministry student leader, and produced promotional Chi Alpha videos.

Jody McCall, a UCA student, had struggled with depression since she was in the fifth grade. She asked the women in her prayer group to pray that the demonic presence would go away. The women laid hands on her and prayed. Jodi says that not long after, "I felt this presence just leave me." She returned to her apartment and says the gloomy presence was gone.

Matt encouraged students to minister in their own circles of influence. Ian Goodman, former UCA soccer captain, began a Bible study with non-Christian soccer players. At least four indicated decisions for Christ.

### Polar Bear Baptisms

Enthusiasm for Christ grew so much that Matt even baptized people in a lake during mid-winter so new believers would not have to wait for warmer days. It seems these UCA Bears are polar bears.

The fatherhood of God has been an important focus at UCA, and for compelling personal reasons. Many students today come from broken homes — or homes with emotionally detached fathers — and lack the stability and security that comes from knowing their fathers love them. As a result, it can be psychologically difficult for these students to connect with God as a loving Father.

Matt's father was an alcoholic who at times was violent toward Matt's mother. His parents separated when he was 11. As Matt's world fell apart, he cried out to God. "That's the day Jesus became real to me," he exclaims. Eventually



**RUSTY WRIGHT** is an award-winning author, syndicated columnist, and university lecturer with Probe.org. He has spoken to secular audiences on six continents.



both parents trusted Christ as Savior, his dad's alcoholism came under control, and his parents reconciled.

Matt made paper, pens, and paint available so students could write on the walls of the Chi Alpha office prayer room what God was showing them. Matt added a reference from Ezekiel 37, in which God breathed life into dry bones and made them into an army: "A lot of people look at the university campus and they think, *That's just a valley of dry bones. Nothing good can come out of it.*" Matt believed God would raise an army at UCA. "God's doing it," he observes. "He's raising up an army on this campus. I've only seen these things in my spirit's eye. I'm starting to see them with my own eyes now."

### Lessons for Reaching Secular Universities

What lessons might God have for campus ministers from this account of His work at UCA? Consider several.

#### Pray. Then pray some more

Things took off when UCA believers focused on prayer. One is reminded of the early believers who were "continually" devoted to prayer: "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles" (Acts 2:42,43, NASB).

You have probably seen God's response to your prayers. But, how much prayer is enough? Should you implement UCA's 24/7 corporate prayer strategy? What if you lack sufficient people to fill the slots? Mary, Jesus' mother, offered counsel. It is from a different context, but the advice applies: "Whatever He (Jesus) says to you, do it" (John 2:5, NASB).

#### Rejoice over changed lives

Even though Matt has seen a significant increase in ministry numbers, he is more concerned about changed lives. Measuring results is important. The Bible includes numbers (3,000 new believers in Acts 2:41; 5,000 fed in John 6:1-14; etc.) that bring glory to God. But sometimes an over-emphasis on numbers can distort what ministry is all about — touching people for the Lord Jesus. Also, response numbers and audience sizes can reflect many factors, including campus spiritual soil, geography, and academic climate. Do not become discouraged if your ministry numbers are not as high as those you read about.

Your responsibility is to be faithful. "It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 4:2, NASB).

#### Bloom where you are planted

Matt encourages Chi Alpha students to minister in their affinity groups: clubs and athletic teams. God has given your students natural connections with nonbelievers through their daily activities and associations. Often these nonbelievers trust your Christian students because they know them and feel comfortable around them. One friend described the church as "God's Trojan Horse" infiltrating society. These connections can spread the gospel.

#### Get priorities straight

Matt commented that "God is raising up students that are saying, 'I'm not here for an education. I'm not here for athletics. I'm not here to join a club on campus. I'm here to serve God and to see His glory displayed in my life.'" In other words, their purpose is not their education or campus activities but is serving God. While such a perspective may trouble parents who are paying steep university bills or who have other long-term aspirations for their children, the perspective is proper. After all, shouldn't we all — regardless of our occupation — be concerned about God's will?

I vividly recall, as a student attending a Bible study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the speaker issued this challenge: "Are you a student who happens to be a Christian? Or are you a Christian who happens to be a student?" That concept resonated deep within my spirit. I did not want to neglect my studies; I wanted to do a responsible job academically. But most of all, I wanted to serve God and glorify Him.

The questions have broader relevance. Are you a businessperson, nurse, salesperson, construction worker, parent, journalist, or campus minister who happens to be a Christian? Or are you a Christian who happens to do whatever it is you do?

#### Connect with personal pain

Matt's painful youth — his father's alcoholism, his parents' strife — deeply affected him. God's love became his anchor. As he indicates, many students today face similar struggles. Being honest about our own pain and meeting students with Christ's compassion and love can help open wounded hearts and turn lost students into godly disciples. ☺

*"God is raising up students that are saying, 'I'm not here for an education. I'm not here for athletics . . . I'm here to serve God and to see His glory displayed in my life.'"*





## Carpe Digital: Taking Your Preaching Off-Road Via Godcasting

Will the Church watch others redeem this medium to spread their message — or lead the way?

*With a modest investment in hardware and software, anyone can podcast.*

**W**ho said preachers must preach from behind a pulpit and parishioners need to listen while seated on wooden pews?

In 1728, John Wesley was ordained into the Anglican priesthood. During his time most people assumed that preaching was to take place behind a pulpit inside the church. The hierarchy within the Church of England considered preaching outdoors a violation of canon law. But John Wesley broke the law and the mold.

Wesley was not trying to be different for difference sake. His unorthodox methodology of *field preaching* and *circuit riding* led to his disenfranchisement and death threats. Wesley even admitted in 1772: "To this day, field preaching is a cross to me." So why did Wesley take his preaching off-road? Because he did not believe the gospel should be quarantined to a church building. In his own words: "I look upon the world as my parish."

Wesley preached his first off-road sermon on April 2, 1739. His last outdoor sermon was delivered under an ash tree in the churchyard of Rye in Kent, England, on October 7, 1790. During that 50-year stretch, Wesley preached more than 40,000 sermons; traveled 250,000 miles on horseback; and saw 150,000 people convert to Christ.

What does that have to do with podcasting?

Podcasting is field preaching. It is circuit riding at the speed of light. Without having to saddle up, digital technology enables any preacher to travel 250,000 miles and preach 40,000 sermons with the click of a mouse.

Giddy-up.

### Walkaway Content

So, what is a podcast? Think of it as free radio. Think of it as an audio blog. Think of it as a sermon traveling faster than the speed of sound to anyone, anytime, anywhere around the globe.

Podcasting is the democratization of broadcasting. With a modest investment in hardware and software, anyone can podcast. All you need is a microphone, a sound-recording program, and a free tutorial (<http://www.apple.com/podcasting>). Most churches are already equipped to podcast. All they need is a tech-savvy teenager who likes to plug-and-play.

Here is how it works. A sermon is recorded and converted to MP3 format. It is uploaded to a Web site or podcast directory like iTunes. Anyone with a computer or MP3 player can subscribe to a podcast. It is easy to find, subscribe, and transfer podcasts to your iPod using iTunes 4.9 (<http://www.Apple.com>). And it is free.

As of this writing, there are approximately 7,000 podcasts to choose from. For a directory of Godcasts, visit <http://www.godipod.com>. Or if you want to take a test drive, visit



**MARK BATTERSON** is senior pastor at National Community Church in Washington, D.C.

<http://www.theaterchurch.com> to subscribe to the Theaterchurch podcast.

When you subscribe to a podcast, great content is automatically delivered and downloaded onto your computer or MP3 player. No fuss. It is called walkaway content. You control what you listen to, when you listen to it, and where you listen to it.

You can download your favorite preacher and take his messages with you wherever you go. In fact, with a 60-gigabyte iPod, you can put 1,000 preachers in your back pocket. You can even throw in all of your favorite music. That is how I got bit by the podcasting bug. I got tired of being a captive audience to whatever radio station my gym decided to tune in to. I had dozens of sermon CDs, and *The Message* that I listened to while I worked out. I now subscribe to several Godcasts, and they have become a regular staple in my spiritual diet.

Podcasting is spiritual multitasking. It is feeding your spirit while you are commuting, relaxing, or working out. You can redeem the time and *have church* in the car, at the beach, or on the treadmill. Instead of mindlessly listening to talk radio or pop music, Godcasting facilitates digital or downloadable discipleship.

## Download

The August 29, 2005, edition of the *New York Times* ran an article on preaching and podcasting: "Missed Church? No Worries. Download it to your iPod."

Kyle Lewis, 25, missed going to church one Sunday last month. But he did not miss the sermon. Lewis, who regularly attends services at National Community Church (<http://www.theaterchurch.com>) in Washington, D.C., downloaded the sermon to his iPod and listened to it while he was at the gym. Instead of listening to the rock music his gym usually plays, he heard his pastor's voice.

"Having an iPod is a guaranteed way to get the sermon if you're going to be out of town," Lewis said. Lewis also listens to the pastor's podcast at least once more during the week, usually while driving to work, even during weeks he makes it to services.

Here is a sobering fact for anyone who is part of the preaching clan: 95 percent of what we say is forgotten within 3 days. But retention rates more than double if we hear or read something twice. That is why I e-mail a written version of my weekend messages. That weekly evotional™ (<http://www.evotional.com>) gives NCCers a

double dose of every message. Podcasting has the same effect. It is a spiritual supplement.

## The iPod Generation

MP3 players may be a novelty right now, but so was e-mail a decade ago. Less than 1 percent of Americans owned an MP3 player 1 year ago, but Apple sold 6.2 million iPods last quarter alone. Even my 9-year-old is asking for one.

My generation is the Internet generation. One week before I was born, October 29, 1969, the first e-mail message was sent on the precursor to the Internet, the ARPANET. A UCLA student named Charley Kline typed the word *Login* and my generation never logged off.

The next generation is the iPod generation. MP3 players will do to CD players what DVD players are doing to VHS players. I can hardly find a VHS copy of a movie at my Blockbuster® anymore. In the next decade, CDs will phase out, and MP3s will phase in.

A few years ago, our resource ministry stopped duplicating cassettes because cassette players were becoming obsolete. We shifted to a CD format for all messages. Podcasting is the next shift. We convert all of our messages to MP3 format and deposit them onto our Web site for easy downloading. Podcasting is the logical next step for any church that wants its message to be heard beyond its four walls.

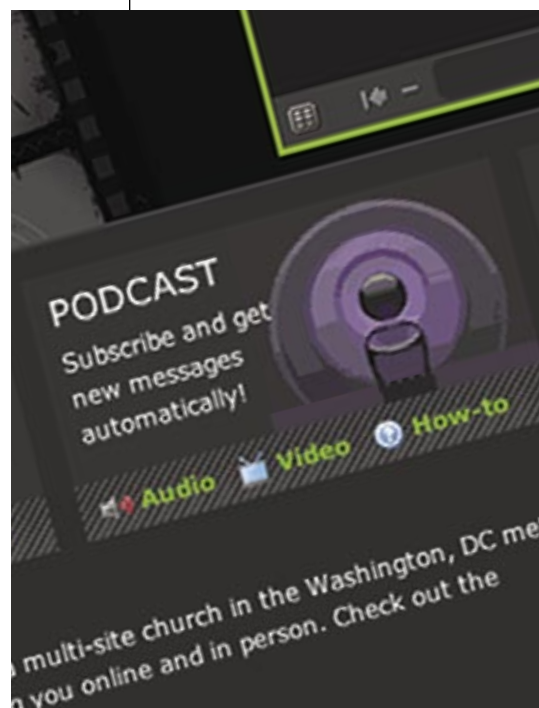
## The Podcasting Revolution

The podcasting revolution has begun. The question is: Will the church idly sit by and watch others redeem this medium to spread their message, or will the church lead the way?

Five hundred years ago, a new technology changed the course of history. Johann Gutenberg put scribes out of business. His printing press fueled the Protestant Reformation by aiding and abetting a German monk, Martin Luther, to spread his God ideas farther, faster, and cheaper.

Digital technology presents to the 21st-century church the same opportunity that Gutenberg's printing press presented to the 15th-century church. The church is in the redemption business. That includes technology. We are called to redeem technology to foster spirituality.

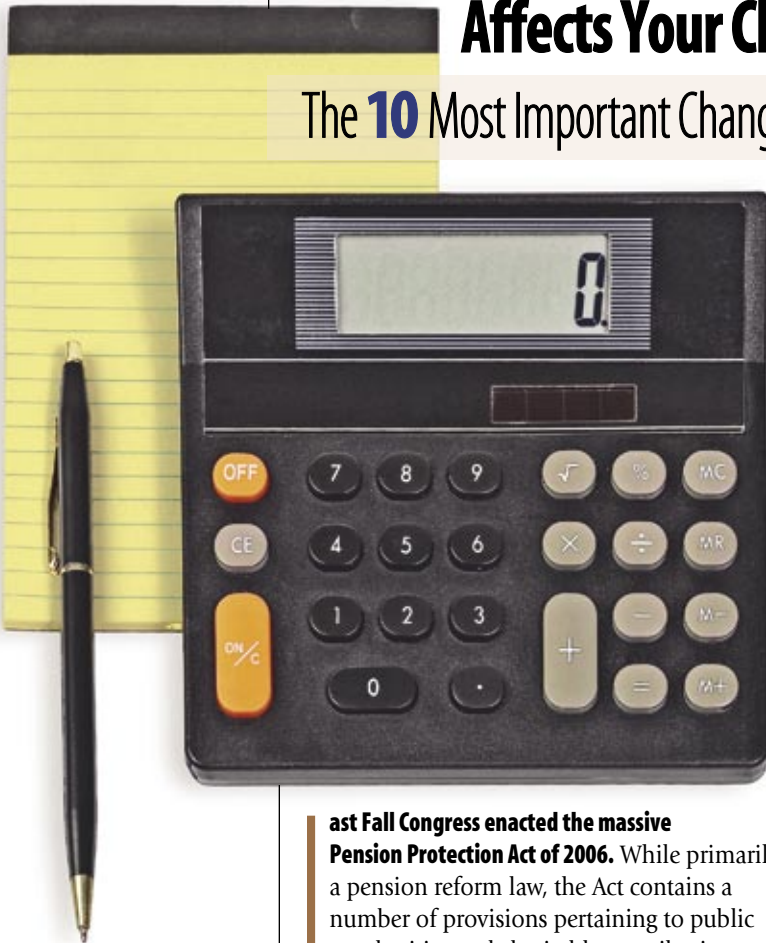
Carpe Digital. 🌀



*Podcasting is the logical next step for any church that wants its message to be heard beyond its four walls.*

# How Pension Reform Legislation Affects Your Church

## The 10 Most Important Changes for Churches and Church Staff



*Key provisions in the new law have special relevance to church leaders.*

**ast Fall Congress enacted the massive Pension Protection Act of 2006.** While primarily a pension reform law, the Act contains a number of provisions pertaining to public charities and charitable contributions.

Most notably, the Act imposes new requirements on the substantiation of charitable contributions. These requirements take effect immediately and must be understood by church leaders to ensure that donors will be able to deduct their cash contributions.

This article will address 10 provisions in the new law of special relevance to church leaders.

### 1. Tax-free distributions from IRAs for charitable purposes

IRA owners who are least 70 1/2 years of age can make tax-free distributions of up to \$100,000 from a traditional IRA or a Roth IRA to a tax-exempt church or charity. This provision is effective through 2007.

### 2. Charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory

Any taxpayer engaged in a trade or business is eligible to claim an enhanced deduction for donations of food inventory. The total deduction for donations of food inventory in a given year generally may not exceed 10 percent of the taxpayer's net income for the year from all business entities from which contributions of "apparently wholesome food" are made. This provision is effective for contributions made in 2006 and 2007.

### 3. Modification of recordkeeping requirements for cash contributions

**Caution:** The Pension Protection Act of 2006 changes the way donors substantiate cash contributions to a church or charity. Church leaders must be familiar with these new rules to ensure that members will be able to deduct their cash contributions. The new rules take effect in 2007.

The Act made an important change in the way contributions of cash are substantiated. It amended the tax code to require all cash contributions, regardless of amount, to be substantiated by either a bank record (such as a canceled check) or a written communication from the donee charity showing the name of the charity, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution.

Maintaining other written records may not satisfy the recordkeeping requirements. In the past, donors could substantiate cash contributions of less than \$250 with "other reliable written records showing the name of the donee, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution" if no canceled check or receipt was available. This is no longer allowed. This change is effective for 2007 and future years.



**RICHARD R. HAMMAR, LL.M., CPA**, serves as legal counsel to the Assemblies of God, and is editor of the *Church Law and Tax Report* newsletter. He has written over 50 books on church legal and tax issues, including the third edition of *Pastor, Church and Law*.

**Example:** A church member makes cash contributions to his church of between \$20 and \$50 each week. He uses offering envelopes provided by the church, but the church provides no other receipt or statement substantiating the contributions. The member will not be able to claim a charitable contribution deduction for any of these payments (made after 2006). The Pension Protection Act of 2006 amended the tax code to require all cash contributions, regardless of amount, to be substantiated by either a bank record (such as a canceled check) or a written communication from the donee showing the name of the donee organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution. Maintaining other written records may not satisfy the recordkeeping requirements.

**Example:** A member makes a contribution (by check) of \$1,000 to her church's building fund in December of 2006. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 amended the tax code to require all cash contributions, regardless of amount, to be substantiated by either a bank record (such as a canceled check) or a written communication from the donee showing the name of the donee organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution. Maintaining other written records may not satisfy the recordkeeping requirements.

For many years the tax code also has disallowed a charitable contribution deduction for any contribution of \$250 or more unless the taxpayer substantiates the contribution by a contemporaneous written acknowledgement of the contribution from the donee charity. The acknowledgement must include the amount of cash, whether the donee provided any goods or services in consideration for the contribution, and a good faith estimate of the value of any such goods or services. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 did not affect this requirement. Instead, it is in addition to the new rules.

#### **4. Reduction in charitable contribution deduction for appreciated tangible personal property not used for charitable purposes**

Tangible personal property is any property other than land or buildings that can be seen or touched. It includes items such as furniture, antiques, books, jewelry, stamp or coin collections, equipment, computers, vehicles, clothing, and works of art. In most cases such property declines in value over time, meaning that its market value is less than what the owner paid for it (the property's cost basis). Donors who contribute

such property to a church or charity generally may claim a charitable contribution deduction in the amount of the property's cost basis.

But some tangible personal property *increases* in value over time. Generally, the amount of a charitable contribution deduction in such a case is the donated property's *fair market value* at the time of the contribution, and not the cost basis. In other words, the donor gets to deduct not just the cost basis of the donated property, but also the amount the property has increased in value. There is an important exception to this rule: The amount of a charitable contribution deduction for a donation of appreciated tangible personal property that is not used by the church or charity for its tax-exempt purposes must be reduced from market value to cost basis. This means the donor is not able to deduct the gain or appreciation in the donated property.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 amends the tax code to reduce a donor's contribution deduction for a donation of appreciated tangible personal property to the property's cost basis if the charity does not use the property for exempt purposes for a minimum of 3 years. This rule only applies to donated property that is identified by the charity (for example on Form 8283) as having a use related to the charity's tax-exempt purposes, and for which a deduction of more than \$5,000 is claimed.

If a charity disposes of the property in the tax year the contribution is made, the donor's deduction generally is his cost basis rather than the donated property's fair market value. If the disposition occurs in a subsequent year (but during the 3-year period following the contribution) the donor must include as ordinary income for the taxable year in which the disposition occurs an amount equal to the excess (if any) of (1) the amount of the deduction previously claimed by the donor as a charitable contribution with respect to the property, over (2) the donor's cost basis in the property at the time of the contribution.

**Key point:** There is no reduction in the charitable contribution deduction if the charity makes a certification to the IRS by written statement signed under penalties of perjury by an officer of the charity. The statement must either (1) certify that the use of the property by the charity was related to the purpose or function constituting the basis for its exemption, and describe how the property was used, and how such use furthered such purpose or function;



*Does a Hawaiian vacation — a gift from your church — qualify as a nontaxable fringe benefit?*

*A member's charitable contribution deduction may be affected by how the church uses the donor's gift.*



or (2) state the intended use of the property by the charity at the time of the contribution and certify that such use became impossible or infeasible to implement. The charity must furnish a copy of the certification to the donor (for example, as an attachment to Form 8282, a copy of which is supplied to the donor).

**Key point:** A penalty of \$10,000 applies to a person who identifies property as having a use related to a purpose or function constituting the basis for the charity's tax exemption knowing it is not intended for such a use.

### 5. Form 8282 reporting requirement

Generally, donors must obtain a qualified appraisal for a donation of property (other than money or certain publicly traded securities) for which a charitable contribution deduction in excess of \$5,000 is claimed. The donor must also complete a summary of the qualified appraisal (on Form 8283, Section B), and attach it to the income tax return on which the contribution deduction is claimed. This summary must be signed by the donee charity. In the past, if the charity disposed of donated property for which it signed a qualified appraisal summary, and the disposal (by sale or otherwise) occurred within 2 years of the date of the contribution,

it was required to file a donee information return (Form 8282) with the IRS.

The Act modifies the Form 8282 reporting requirement in the following three ways:

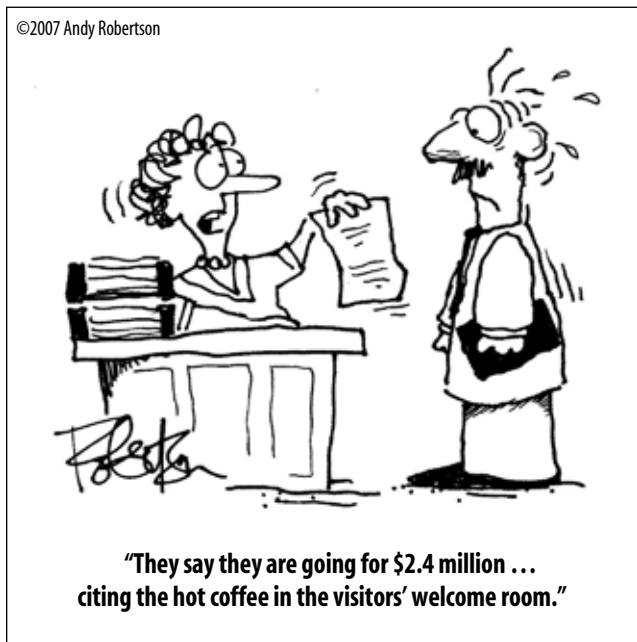
- The Form 8282 reporting requirement is extended to dispositions of donated property within 3 years after the date of the contribution (up from 2 years under prior law).

- Form 8282 must include, in addition to the information already required on the return, a description of the donee charity's use of the property, a statement of whether use of the property was related to the purpose or function constituting the basis for the donee's exemption, and, if applicable, a certification of any such use.

- The charitable contribution deduction available to donors who contribute appreciated tangible personal property to a charity is not reduced (from market value to cost basis), if the donee charity makes a certification to the IRS by written statement signed under penalties of perjury by an officer of the charity that either (1) certifies that the use of the property by the charity was related to the purpose or function constituting the basis for its exemption, and describe how the property was used and how such use furthered such purpose or function; or (2) states the intended use of the property by the charity at the time of the contribution and certifies that such use became impossible or infeasible to implement. The charity must furnish a copy of the certification to the donor (for example, as an attachment to Form 8282, a copy of which is supplied to the donor).

This provision is effective for contributions made and returns filed after September 1, 2006, and with respect to the penalty, for identifications made after the date of enactment.

**Example:** A church member purchased a coin collection in 1990 for \$3,000 and that coin collection is worth \$10,000 today. He donates the collection to his church in December 2006. The church sells the collection shortly after the contribution, and never used it for a "related purpose." Since the church did not use the donated property in furtherance of its exempt purposes, the member's charitable contribution deduction is limited to the property's cost basis (\$3,000) rather than its market value (\$10,000). Since the contribution deduction does not exceed \$5,000, the donor is not required to obtain a qualified appraisal or complete a qualified appraisal summary (Form 8283, Section B), and the church is not



required to file Form 8282 with the IRS upon its sale of the collection.

## 6. Fines and penalties applicable to charitable organizations

Under prior law, the IRS could assess a penalty against “managers” of a church or other charity who approved an “excess benefit transaction” unless a manager could demonstrate that his approval was “not willful and due to reasonable cause.” This penalty was in the form of an excise tax of up to 10 percent of the amount of the excess benefit, with a maximum of \$10,000 per manager (but the total tax on all directors could not exceed \$10,000).

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 increases the 10 percent amount to 20 percent. It also doubles the dollar limitation on managers for participation in excess benefit transactions from \$10,000 per transaction to \$20,000 per transaction.

**Example:** In 2007, a church sent its pastor and his wife on an all-expenses-paid trip to Hawaii in honor of their 25th wedding anniversary. The total cost of the trip was \$8,000. The church treasurer assumes that this amount is a nontaxable fringe benefit, and so she does not report any of the \$8,000 on the pastor’s W-2. The pastor likewise assumes that the cost of the trip is a nontaxable benefit. The church’s payment of these travel expenses constitutes an automatic excess benefit resulting in intermediate sanctions since it was not reported as taxable income by either the church or pastor in the year the benefit was provided. This is so even though the amount of the benefit by itself, or when added to the pastor’s other church compensation, is reasonable in amount. This may result in (1) the assessment of penalties against the pastor, and (2) an excise tax of up to 20 percent of the amount of the excess benefit against each member of the church board who approved the transaction, up to a maximum of \$20,000. While each board member is individually liable for the full 20 percent penalty, the IRS can only collect the penalty once. This means that if the IRS collects the penalty (\$1,600) against one director, it cannot assess additional penalties against any other director.

## 7. Clothing and household items

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 amends the tax code to deny a charitable contribution deduction for a contribution of clothing or household items unless the clothing or household items are in “good used condition or

better.” The Treasury Department is authorized to deny (by regulation) a deduction for any contribution of clothing or a household item that has minimal monetary value, such as used socks and used undergarments.

Under the new provision, a deduction may be allowed for a charitable contribution of an item of clothing or a household item *not* in good used condition or better only if the amount claimed for the item is more than \$500 and the taxpayer includes with his tax return a qualified appraisal with respect to the property. Household items include furniture, furnishings, electronics, appliances, linens, and other similar items. Food, paintings, antiques, and other objects of art, jewelry and gems, and collections are excluded from this provision.

## 8. Appraisal reform

Taxpayers are required to obtain a qualified appraisal for donated property with a value of more than \$5,000, and to attach an appraisal summary to their tax return (Form 8283, Part B). The Pension Protection Act of 2006 makes the following changes in the qualified appraisal requirement:

- **Qualified appraiser.** It amends the tax code to define a qualified appraiser as an individual who (1) has earned an appraisal designation from a recognized professional appraiser organization or has otherwise met minimum education and experience requirements to be determined by the IRS in regulations; (2) regularly performs appraisals for which he receives compensation; (3) can demonstrate verifiable education and experience in valuing the type of property for which the appraisal is being performed; (4) has not been prohibited from practicing before the IRS by the secretary at any time during the 3 years preceding the conduct of the appraisal; and (5) is not excluded from being a qualified appraiser under applicable Treasury regulations.

- **Qualified appraisal.** It amends the tax code to define a qualified appraisal as an appraisal of property prepared by a qualified appraiser (as defined by the provision) in accordance with generally accepted appraisal standards and any regulations or other guidance prescribed by the IRS.

- **Civil penalty.** It amends the tax code to create a civil penalty that the IRS can assess against any person who prepares an appraisal that is to be used to support a tax position if the appraisal results in a substantial or gross



*Donated clothing or household items must be “in good used condition or better.”*



*The annual unrelated business income tax return should be made available for public inspection.*

valuation misstatement. The penalty is equal to the greater of \$1,000 or 10 percent of the understatement of tax resulting from a substantial or gross valuation misstatement, up to a maximum of 125 percent of the gross income derived from the appraisal. The penalty does not apply if the appraiser establishes that it was “more likely than not” that the appraisal was correct.

### **9. Public disclosure of information relating to unrelated business income tax returns**

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 amends the tax code to make the annual unrelated business income tax return (Form 990-T) subject to public inspection. The new law specifies that certain information may be withheld by the organization from public disclosure and inspection if public availability would “adversely affect” the organization.

**Example:** A church operates a bookstore on its premises that is open to the general public. Net earnings from the bookstore are \$15,000 in 2007. The church pays the unrelated business

income tax on this income, using Form 990-T. This form is now subject to public inspection. This means that the church must make the form available for inspection during regular business hours to any person who asks to see it, without charge other than a reasonable fee for any reproduction or mailing costs. The request to inspect may be made in person or in writing. If made in person, the copy must be provided immediately and, if made in writing, it must be provided within 30 days.

### **10. Elimination of “sunset” retirement provisions**

The Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 made a number of changes to the tax code pertaining to pension plans and IRAs. However, EGTRRA included a “sunset” provision under which all of these provisions expired at the end of 2010. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 makes these provisions permanent. These include increased IRA contribution and 403(b) contribution limits (including catch-up limits for persons who are at least 50 years of age). ☺





# Sermon Seeds



## Behold, I Show You a Mystery

WARREN McPHERSON, Springfield, Missouri

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

### INTRODUCTION

1. The villain was not the butler. The scene of the crime was not the parlor. The murder weapon was not a gun, or even a candlestick.
2. The guilty party was the religious leaders and the spiritually blind. The scene was Golgotha. The crime was committed with a whip, crown of thorns, nails, a wooden cross, and a spear. The victim suffered great shame.
3. No mystery is as great as the mystery of God's Word.

### MESSAGE

1. "Listen, I tell you a mystery" (verse 51).
  - a. Planned from eternity past (1 Corinthians 2:6-8).
  - b. Hidden in God and from man (Ephesians 3:8-10; Colossians 1:25-27).
  - c. Revealed a clue at a time as needed.
    - (1) "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14).
    - (2) "The mystery made known to me by revelation . . . which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 3:1-5).
  - d. Revealed in ordinary realities.
    - (1) Marriage — a mystery (Ephesians 5:31,32).
    - (2) Divine wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6-16).
  - e. The mystery of His will (Ephesians 1:7-9).
  - f. Faith and godliness (1 Timothy 3:9,16).
  - g. Stewards of the mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:1,2).
  - h. Love is our motivation (1 Corinthians 13:1,2).
2. "We will not all sleep" (verse 51).
  - a. The mystery of death.
  - b. The mystery of change.
  - c. The mystery of the Rapture.
3. "Thanks be to God" (verse 57).

### CONCLUSION

The Broadway play *Sleuth* is about a man who plots a crime and intends to frame another man. The play contains many twists and turns.

But even a well-written Broadway production cannot compare to the greatest suspense thriller of all time — the mystery of God's only begotten Son.

## For the Sake of That Name

HOWARD CUMMINGS, Aurora, Colorado

TEXT: 3 John 7

### INTRODUCTION

In his third letter, John referred to his companions in the gospel who were taking the message of the Cross to unreached people in pagan

cultures. Such men risked their lives "for his name's sake." John explained their motivation — passion — and commended fellow believers for offering hospitality to such men and complimented them for their generosity to God's servants.

Most commentaries refer to these traveling ministers as "itinerant evangelists." In our culture they are better defined as missionaries: "traveling teachers and missionaries who are passing through" (verse 5, TLB).

John wrote that "we ought therefore to show hospitality to such men" and "you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God" (verses 8,6).

Every age of Christendom has had its trailblazers — those who have gone out "for the sake of the name."

What is the biblical motivation in the ministry of missionary pioneers? Search your heart to learn your own motivation and commitment to the Great Commission.

Julius Caesar said, "I came, I saw, I conquered." It could be said of missionary heroes of every age that "they went, they preached, they conquered."

### MESSAGE

1. They went out "for his name's sake."
  - a. They went in obedience to the Lord's command and call.
    - (1) It was enough for them that Jesus told them to go.
    - (2) Many times a missionary's situation has been similar to that of Abraham: "He went out not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). Although a missionary may have felt a strong directive toward a particular country or people, travel plans could change abruptly en route. William Carey wanted to go to Burma, but ended up in India. Adoniram Judson headed to India and spent a lifetime in Burma.
    - (3) Early pioneers had an element of trust in their lives.
    - (4) They listened to the Holy Spirit and submitted to church elders.
  - b. They went at great risk and with total abandonment to God's will.
    - (1) Irrespective of personal hazard.
    - (2) Motivated by the Spirit of a lowly Galilean "for his name's sake."
    - (3) Many early pioneers shipped goods to the field in their own coffins, never expecting to return.
  - c. Early missionaries experienced much "for his name's sake."
    - (1) Forgiveness "for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12).
    - (2) Called and empowered in His name.
    - (3) Went out with His name, not theirs, as their mantle.
2. They preached the gospel "for his name's sake."
  - a. Jesus had told His disciples how much the preaching of the gospel would relate to His name.
    - (1) They would be "hated of all men for my name's sake" (Matthew 10:22).
    - (2) They were to gather "in my name" (Matthew 18:20).
    - (3) They would perform miracles and cast out devils "in my name" (Mark 16:17).
    - (4) When they prayed, they were to ask "in my name" (John 14:13).
    - (5) The Early Church preached boldly in His name and declared there was salvation in no other (Acts 4:12).
    - (6) Angry magistrates ordered them to cease and desist

preaching “in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:17,18).  
(7) “Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” was how they were described (Acts 15:26).

- b. Trailblazers in every age have proclaimed Jesus’ name to the heathen. His name is more than sufficient.
- 2. They conquered “for his name’s sake.”**  
Even if it seems at times that the message has failed, many times victory is only delayed.

#### CONCLUSION

Mauritius, where Adoniram Judson’s traveling companion buried his young wife, now has 60,000 baptized members.

They went, they preached, they conquered for the sake of His name. That is purpose.

## ■ How God Sometimes Answers Prayer

JOHN F. WALKER

TEXT: Mark 5:21-43<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

We live in a day of skepticism regarding answered prayer. Do we believe God will answer our prayers, or do we even pray at all? Let’s see how God answered this question.

#### MESSAGE

- 1. The individuality of his prayer** (Mark 5:22,23).
  - a. “There cometh one” (verse 22).
  - b. God wants us to come individually.
  - c. There was worship in his prayer.
    - (1) “He fell at His feet” (verse 22).
    - (2) See John 4:24.
  - d. There was a burden in his prayer.
    - (1) He “besought Him greatly.”
    - (2) He felt his need and had concern.
- 2. The interruption to his prayer** (Mark 5:24–34).
  - a. Delays to our prayers being answered may come, but God allows them.
  - b. God allowed this delay so Jairus’ faith might be tried and to show him that God’s way is always best. Isn’t raising a person from the dead a far greater miracle than healing a sick person?
  - c. Our part is to believe; His part is to answer.
- 3. Intervention for his prayer** (Mark 5:35–43).
  - a. Jesus intervenes.
    - (1) With encouragement: “Be not afraid” (verse 36; see 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 55:22).
    - (2) With assurance: “Only believe” (verse 36; see Isaiah 41:10; Hebrews 13:5).
    - (3) With exclusions: Only parents and three disciples were allowed in the room.
    - (4) With a touch (Mark 5:41).
    - (5) With His Word: “And He . . . said.”
    - (6) In an amazing way (Mark 5:42).

- b. Jesus brings about changes (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- c. Jesus gave some added responsibilities (Mark 5:43).

#### CONCLUSION

Individuality in prayer is a delight to the Lord. Interruptions or dilemmas may come, but we should not give up. The Lord will intervene in His own way and time. God has no problems, only plans.

#### NOTE

1. Scripture quotations are KJV.

## ■ The Keeping Power of God

STEVE D. EUTSLER, Springfield, Missouri

TEXT: John 17:6-19

#### INTRODUCTION

1. God will always keep us. The Greek word for keep (tarew) means to:
  - a. reserve.
  - b. preserve.
  - c. observe.
2. This prayer is the longest recorded of Jesus’ prayers. This prayer:
  - a. should be called the Lord’s Prayer. The prayer often called by that name is the disciples’ prayer (Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4).
  - b. was offered after the Last Supper.
  - c. was offered before the Lord crossed the Kidron Valley.
  - d. focuses on three different groups. Jesus prays for himself (17:1–5), for His immediate disciples (17:6–19), and for His future believers (17:20–26).

#### MESSAGE

- 1. Jesus prayed for the persons who are believers** (17:6-8).
  - a. He prayed for those who are servants of God: “those whom you gave me” (17:6). Believers are God’s gift to His Son.
  - b. He prayed for those who are seekers after God: “they know” (17:7). Believers have a deep conviction that Jesus is the Son of God.
  - c. Jesus prayed for those who are students of God: “I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them” (17:8). Jesus places a high premium on the authority of Scripture.
- 2. Jesus prayed for the protection of believers** (17:9–12).
  - a. His prayer has a limitation: “I am not praying for the world” (17:9, compare 17:20,21,23). Jesus loves all people, but His special concern here is believers.
  - b. His prayer has a motivation: “glory has come to me through them” (17:10). Jesus expects to continue receiving glory through our lives.
  - c. His prayer has an inspiration: “protect them by the power of your name . . . so that they may be one as we are one” (17:11,12).
    - (1) The Father’s name refers to His nature, personality, and character. Judas did not take advantage of this power.
    - (2) Jesus’ goal for believers is unity. Anyone who disturbs that peace goes counter to Jesus’ design.
- 3. Jesus prayed for the purification of believers** (17:13–19).



- a. This prayer is necessary because of the ascension of Christ: “I am coming to you [the Father] now” (17:13). Jesus is not physically with us individually, so He sends the Holy Spirit (14:16–18; 15:26).
- b. This prayer is necessary because of the antagonism of the world: “the world has hated them” (17:14). The world hates Christians enough without us being hypocrites.
- c. This prayer is necessary because of the anticipation of escapism: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one” (17:15). Jesus does not want us to hide until His return. He wants us to evangelize without compromise.
- d. This prayer is necessary because of the admonition for believers: “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (17:18). Our job is to spread the gospel while time remains for repentance, and we are to lay down our lives for others in the process.

**CONCLUSION**

As a result of this prayer by our Lord, there is no reason why every Christian should not appropriate the keeping power of God.

- 1. Does Jesus pray for you? Are you a believer in God?
- 2. Do you do anything that requires protection? Are you a risk-taker for God?
- 3. Do you live a pure life? Are you an example for God?

**The Ministry of Jesus**

JERRY ROBERTS, Phoenix, Arizona

TEXT: MATTHEW 11:1-19

**INTRODUCTION**

The ministry model we observe in the life of Jesus provides insight and direction for mission/ministry today.

**MESSAGE**

- 1. **The Word of God revealed in the message of Jesus.**
  - a. The Word was revealed as Jesus finished instructing His disciples (verse 1).
  - b. The Word was revealed as He set out to teach and preach in Galilee (verse 1).
  - c. The Word was revealed in the dialogue with John’s disciples (verses 2–4).
  - d. The Word of God is revealed today by those who teach/preach the Word of God.
- 2. **The works of God represented in the miracles of Jesus.**
  - a. John sent His disciples to ask “are you the one who was to come?” (verse 3).
  - b. Jesus answered, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see” (verse 4).
  - c. The blind, lame, those with leprosy, and the deaf were healed. The dead are raised (verse 5).
  - d. The miracles of Jesus served as credentials verifying that He was the Christ.

**3. The will of God reflected in the mission of Jesus.**

- a. The miracles of this mission were noted in the catalog of miracles (verse 5).1
- b. It is still a miracle when “the good news is preached to the poor” (verse 5; Luke 4:14; Isaiah 61:1).
- c. This mission came about in the “fullness of time” (Galatians 4:4, KJV).
- d. “The prophets and the law” foresaw John’s role in announcing this mission (verse 13).
- e. The mission of Jesus and God’s will for contemporary faith communities.
- f. What “Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1) defines our mission today.
- g. The Acts 1:8 commission to witness.

**CONCLUSION**

By considering these principles we can better understand our responsibility regarding the Great Commission and how to implement God’s plan of evangelism to reach a lost world.

**NOTE**

1. Regarding this mission see: John 1:1–4,29; 3:1–6,16; 4:13; 5:24; 6:32–40; 7:37,38; 9:35–39; 10:1–10.

**Thankful Always**

JOHN F. WALKER

**INTRODUCTION**

In 2 Timothy 3:1–5, note the word *unthankful* (KJV). We must be living in the last days because of the unthankfulness in so many places. Daniel was continually filled with gratitude (Daniel 6:10). Let’s look at four passages that can cause us to be in a constant state of thankfulness.

**MESSAGE**

- 1. **Thankful in everything because it is the will of God** (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
  - a. Nothing comes into your life but what God allows.
  - b. So in everything give thanks.
- 2. **Thankful in every prayer because prayer brings the peace of God** (Philippians 4:6,7).
  - a. A thankful attitude brings rest to your heart and puts your mind at ease — beyond your understanding.
  - b. So pray with thanksgiving.
- 3. **Thankful for every believer because he honors the Word of God** (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
  - a. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
  - b. Faith grows in heeding the Word of God (Psalm 119:9,11).
  - c. God’s Word is effective in each believer.
- 4. **Thankful that believers are in the security of God** (Philippians 1:3–6).
  - a. A believer is not secure because he is faithful, but because God is faithful.
  - b. We can trust God to work in our lives until Jesus returns.

## CONCLUSION

These Scriptures teach us that we can be in a constant state of thankfulness and have an attitude of gratefulness to the Lord in every situation.

## ■ Three Things Every Leader Should Know

STEVE D. EUTSLER, Springfield, Missouri

TEXT: 2 SAMUEL 5:1–25

## INTRODUCTION

Many people do not realize they are leaders, but they are leaders nevertheless.

1. Do you have people who work for you?
2. Do you serve on boards?
3. Do you have children?
4. Do you have someone depending on you?  
Then you are a leader.

## MESSAGE

1. **The development of leadership skills necessitates practical experience** (2 Samuel 5:1–5).
  - a. “In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns” (verse 2).
  - b. Peers recognize the value of practical experience (5:1,2). “We are your own flesh and blood” (verse 1). Faithfulness in smaller matters prepares people for faithfulness in larger matters.
  - c. Even providence recognizes the value of practical experience (5:2–5). “And the Lord said to you, “You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler” (verse 2). Prior to this, David had been a shepherd of sheep.
2. **The accompaniment of Almighty God ensures spiritual empowerment** (2 Samuel 5:6–16).
  - a. “And he became more and more powerful, because the Lord God Almighty was with him” (verse 10). The Hebrew word, *gadol*, means to “grow up, become great . . . twist a cord, make firm, strong.”
  - b. Early victories in a leader’s tenure establish credibility (5:1–10). “Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion” (verse 7). “David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David” (verse 9). David succeeded at securing a new capital that was politically neutral. Jerusalem had been under Jebusite control (Joshua 15:63). This way David brought the entire nation together. Plus, Jerusalem was defensively well situated.
  - c. Frequent victories in a leader’s tenure establish harmony (5:11–16). “And David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel” (verse 12). Some things that happen in the lives of leaders may be more for the benefit of others than for themselves.

- (1) The recognition of other leaders also serves to confirm callings (5:11,12). “Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a place for David” (verse 11). Real leaders recognize each other.
  - (2) The traditions of one’s culture serve to confirm callings (5:13–16). “After he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him” (verse 13). Some of these marriages were no doubt politically arranged. Harems were considered signs of prestige in the ancient Near East. Immorality, however, eventually became David’s downfall.
3. **The management of responsible positions creates mortal enemies** (5:17–25).
    - a. “When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him” (verse 17; compare Ephesians 6:12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood”; and Luke 6:26, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets”).
    - b. Sincere prayer overcomes stiff opposition (5:17–21).
      - (1) “So David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I go and attack the Philistines?’” (verse 19). David wanted to know God’s will.
      - (2) “Will you hand them over to me?” (verse 19). David wanted to know God’s intention.
      - (3) This attack was the first Philistine invasion. (Compare Matthew 5:44,45, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.”)
    - c. Swift obedience overpowers sizable opposition (5:22–25). “As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will mean the Lord has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army” (verse 24). He who hesitates is lost. This attack was the second Philistine invasion.
      - (1) The enemies of the Lord can sense God’s hand upon someone (5:22–24). “Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim” (verse 22).
      - (2) But the enablement of the Lord does not do away with human responsibility (5:25). “So David did as the Lord commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer” (verse 25).

## CONCLUSION

By way of application, practice these basic principles of leadership. If you:

1. desire to become a leader, get some practical experience.
2. face a tough assignment, humble yourself and draw closer to God.
3. come up against serious opposition, pray for guidance and be quick to obey. 🙏

## Book Reviews

### Leading From the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams

MIKE BONEM and ROGER PATTERSON (*Jossey-Bass, 208 pp., hardcover*)

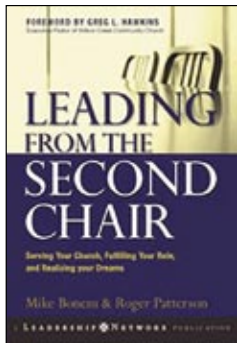
There are numerous leadership books for senior pastors, but there are few books specifically designed for church leaders who serve in subordinate or supporting roles. Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson have provided such a resource.

Bonem and Patterson explore the unique and vital role of second-chair leaders in the church. They define a second-chair leader “as a person in a subordinate role whose influence adds value throughout the organization.”

The book reveals the paradoxes of second-chair leadership. Second-chair leaders are subordinate to the senior pastor but are leaders as well. They need to be deep in their area of expertise but have a wide overall perspective of the organization. Second-chair leaders need to be content in their ministry position yet remain enthusiastic about their dreams. Drawing from biblical examples, interviews with second-chair leaders, and some personal, practical advice, the authors challenge the second-chair leader to examine his role and serve with passion.

Whether you are a senior pastor, full-time staff member, or volunteer, this book is a must read. It includes valuable insight for both first- and second-chair leaders who want to improve their church organizations, serve with passion, and grow in their ministries. *Leading From the Second Chair* is an eye-opening book that inspires, challenges, stretches, pushes, answers questions, and helps you serve your pastor, church, and other staff members more effectively. Second-chair leaders can make a great impact on their church and community.

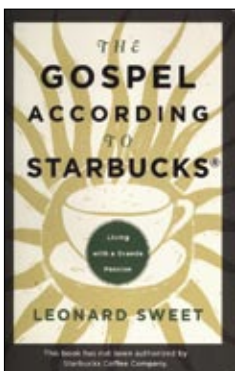
— Reviewed by John Jay Wilson, director of Connections, North Point Church, Springfield, Missouri.



*Leading From the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams*



*This role challenges your ego, buffers your speech, and keeps you anchored in your calling.*



*The Gospel According to Starbucks®: Living With a Grande Passion*

### The Gospel According to Starbucks®: Living With a Grande Passion

LEONARD SWEET (*Waterbrook Press, 210 pp., paperback*)

What makes people stand in line and pay a premium for a cup of Starbucks coffee? What does Starbucks know that the church doesn't?

Sweet is a self-proclaimed Starbucks junkie who sees beyond the \$4 price tag on a cup of java to a cultural phenomenon that helps explain the postmodern shift in today's culture. He uses Starbucks as a springboard to explaining a concept he has famously coined as EPIC — experiential, participatory, image-rich, and connective. Sweet explains how Starbucks uses the EPIC principle in one chapter, then expands on how the church could use this principle in the next chapter. What emerges is Sweet stuff, if I might say so.

The basic premise is that the church can minister in the world we have, or it can minister in the world we wish we had (or the one we remember having years ago). People today are not longing for intellectual arguments or top-down declarations; they want connective (relational) engagement in a meaningful experience. Sweet illustrates the way Starbucks has captured this desire and built an empire on it, then uses that analogy to illuminate the path to effective ministry in today's world.

This fun and handsome paperback gives a crash course in postmodern, EPIC ministry for today's world.

— Reviewed by Mike McCrary, young adults pastor, Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

## Leadership Above the Line

SARAH SUMNER (Tyndale House, 208 pp., hardcover)

Sarah Sumner provides a unique volume for the reader because she walks a fine line between two schools of leadership theory. The first school is the Behavior phase of leadership studies (which emphasizes a comparison in a leader's person and task orientation). The second is the Contingency phase that suggests that a leader's behavior needs to take into consideration both the maturity of his followers and the context in which the leader is working.

Sumner's contribution is the *People Model*, which she says will increase self-awareness, make sense of confusing situations, motivate people, instigate changes, and establish strong teams to imagine new solutions and approach hard decision conversations more effectively.

Sumner's contribution to leadership studies is her understanding that leader situations are contingent: Multiple layers of people, structures, history, and motivations permeate all leadership situations. She develops three discreet kinds of leader decision-making power: *explanatory power* to interpret organizational behavior, *motivational power* to muster up people's willingness to forfeit stubborn habits that have weakened their effectiveness in the past, and *creative power* to imagine wise solutions for the future.

Sumner provides self-diagnostic tests that offer readers an analysis of the kind of decision-making power they tend to use and the implications of each position. Such self-analysis and the suggested applications make this volume useful for pastoral teams to work through together on their way to understanding their own organizational dynamics and hopefully finding greater effectiveness.

— Reviewed by Byron D. Klaus, D.Min.,  
president, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary,  
Springfield, Missouri.

## In Search of Timothy: Discovering and Developing Greatness in Church Staff and Volunteers

TONY COOKE (Faith Library Publications, 256 pp., paperback)

I remember thinking, *This is too simple*, as I began perusing *In Search of Timothy*. After 18 years of vocational ministry — most of which was spent as an associate in medium- and large-sized

congregations — I found the principles listed to be almost pedantic, until I introduced this book at the weekly staff meeting at the church where I serve as lead pastor. The discussions prompted by the solid content and thorough discussion questions have been thought-provoking and profitable. Cooke has a unique way of posing the kinds of questions each person should be asking, such as, "It seems that loyalty is not as high a value in people's lives today as it used to be. Why do you think that is?"

*In Search of Timothy* takes a comprehensive approach to the challenges *supportive ministers* (a term Cooke broadly applies to associate pastors and volunteers alike) face. This book treats the area of *support* first as a biblical principle shared from a variety of scriptural examples: Paul and Timothy, David and Jonathan, Elijah and Elisha, and Jesus and the disciples. After laying this groundwork, Cooke articulates key traits successful supportive ministers must embody. He concludes by treating staff infection — a malady that can attack a church staff like a harmful virus.

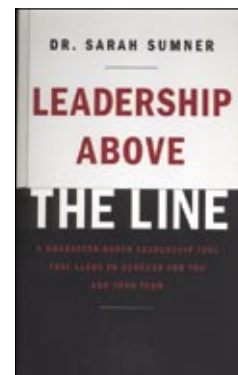
Cooke, an associate pastor to Kenneth Hagin for many years, expertly handles the delicate issue of the armor-bearer. It can feel self-serving to teach on submitting to authority when you are the pastor who directly benefits, but Cooke teaches that the entire body of Christ benefits when every member knows his God-ordained role. Pick up this helpful resource for your weekly team meetings; support those who serve in support roles.

— Reviewed by Clint Bryan, pastor,  
First Assembly of God, Lyndhurst, Ohio.

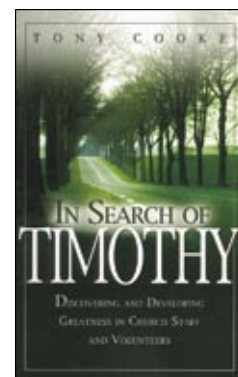
## The Spirit-Led Leader: Nine Leadership Practices and Soul Principles

TIMOTHY C. GEOFFRION (The Alban Institute, 230 pp., paperback)

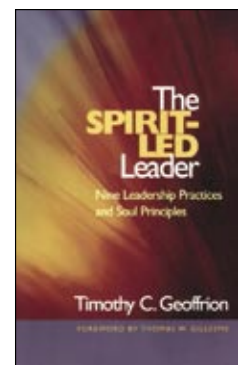
*The Spirit-Led Leader* is a unique combination of practical approaches and spiritual principles that are underpinnings for effective leadership. Geoffrion offers practical guidelines that promote positive and lasting change in leadership behaviors. At the same time, his emphasis on the leader's deepening spirituality gives this work a quality that earns it a place on the contemporary leader's bookshelf.



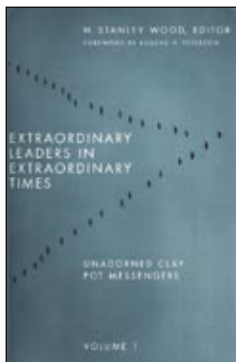
Leadership Above the Line



In Search of Timothy:  
Discovering and Developing  
Greatness in Church Staff  
and Volunteers



The Spirit-Led Leader:  
Nine Leadership Practices  
and Soul Principles



*Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times: Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers*

*Darrell Guder calls the contemporary church back to her Spirit-empowered roots.*

The openness and honesty of the book immediately connect with the reader. Geoffrion's opening quip, "Leadership was much harder than I imagined and less satisfying than I hoped," sets the mood of the book. The author's candid view of a leader's humanity and, consequently, the need for a vital spirituality to lift leaders beyond themselves is the heartbeat of this helpful work.

This book palpitates with sound spiritual principles that can be applied in any leadership role, secular or sacred. The commitment to see things change, recognizing God's prerogative to initiate processes for a richer spiritual life, and the leader's responsibility to connect with God in increasingly meaningful ways are among the book's several essential issues.

A major point in the book is that a leader's relationship with God informs and empowers the mission and task of the contemporary leader. Refreshingly, Geoffrion consistently leads the reader to recognize that God is not waiting with folded arms for us to initiate contact with Him. He gives the reader hopeful steerage when he indicates: "God has already initiated communication with us and is simply waiting for our reply."

The book's vivid spiritual nature does not overshadow the author's balanced approach to other leadership matters. In fact, Geoffrion's integration of the spiritual, practical, emotional, relational, and psychological issues of leadership make *The Spirit-Led Leader* a mainstay for both emerging and veteran leaders.

— Reviewed by Howard Young, D.Min., senior pastor, Woodland Worship Center of the Assemblies of God, Oneida, Wisconsin.

**Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times: Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers**

H. STANLEY WOOD, ed. (*Eerdmans, 188 pp., paperback*)

*Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times* is an excellent and informative book with a misleading title. My expectation was a compilation of great thoughts on leadership by various authors. Instead, it contains the results and analysis of a research project involving 704 church planters who started churches in the 1980s and 1990s. Despite what first appears to be a narrow scope, the book does have several worthwhile gems that are applicable to every 21st-century leadership context.

Darrell Guder provides the first gem with a powerful evaluation of church history in which he demonstrates how the church has been crippled by its historic partnership with the state (dating from the Edict of Constantine); and, in the spirit of his book *Missional Church*, calls the contemporary church back to her Spirit-empowered roots.

Another gem is the research itself. The results strongly support the principles on which the Assemblies of God Church Planter Assessment System is founded. Although the language is different, the behavior qualities identified by the study are virtually the same as the Church Planter Profile currently used by many Assemblies of God districts. This is good because while the book identifies the characteristics of effective church starters, it does not offer a tool with which to verify the presence of those characteristics in a potential church starter.

A final gem is the discussion of church size and health augmented by research-based ideas on why healthy churches come in all sizes.

If you prefer books that lean more toward inspiration than information, *Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times* is not for you. But if you are interested in expanding your understanding of essential leadership qualities of catalytic leaders, you will find the book to be an informative read.

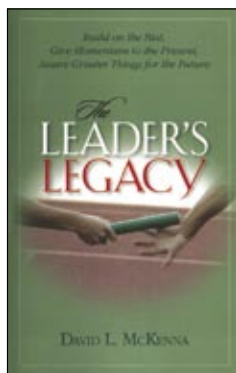
— Reviewed by Steven M. Pike, director, Church Planting Department, U.S. Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

**The Leader's Legacy**

DAVID L. MCKENNA (*Barclay Press, 172 pp., paperback*)

Effective leaders are links in a chain "who build upon the past, give momentum to the present, and assure greater things for the future." This is the proposition developed by McKenna in *The Leader's Legacy*.

Using the example of John the Baptist, forerunner of Jesus Christ, McKenna identifies, develops, illustrates, and applies what he refers to as *The Successor's Cycle*. The steps in the cycle lead the reader through the various stages that mark the journey of the leader: Reading the organizational culture of the past, understanding personal life cycles, accepting specific leadership roles, timing the exit, completing the leadership task, announcing the decision to leave, celebrating the



*The Leader's Legacy*



successor, making the exit, managing emotions, letting history be the judge, and, finally, celebrating the legacy.

This is a must read for every leader. Each leadership assignment is terminal. Leaving is as important as coming. Finishing is as critical as beginning. How the leader navigates the full journey will measure the content and quality of the legacy he leaves.

Especially helpful is the author's transparency in speaking of the emotions, attitudes, tensions, and struggles that comprised his personal experience as a president of two universities and a seminary. Writing from retirement, McKenna is able to reflect over his journey with a candor and forthrightness that are most helpful and insightful.

Many leaders do not finish well because they find it difficult to cultivate an environment in which positive succession is achieved. This book will find a place of ready reference for leaders who have a passion to finish the journey with joyful satisfaction.

— Reviewed by Richard L. Dresselhaus, executive presbyter and former senior pastor, First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.

### **Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt To Reconcile These Concepts**

YOUNGMO CHO (*Paternoster*, 227 pp., paperback)

This important book was penned by a Korean Assemblies of God minister who studied at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary prior to his doctoral studies at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. In this revised version of his Ph.D. thesis, Cho argues that Paul refers to the work of the Spirit to communicate the significance of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God to his largely Gentile and Hellenistic audience. This book is significant for several reasons.

First, the book offers an important glimpse into the nature of the relationship between the teaching of Jesus and the proclamation of Paul, an issue that New Testament scholars have wrestled with for years. In so doing, Cho highlights a significant thread of continuity that binds together the message of the New Testament.

Second, Pentecostals will resonate with the fresh insights into the Early Church's understanding of

the work of the Spirit. Cho's thesis challenges non-Pentecostal readings of the New Testament that tend to force Luke into a rigid Pauline mold. The author calls us to recognize the true diversity and power of the biblical witness regarding the Spirit's work.

Finally, Cho represents a growing and significant group of emerging Asian biblical scholars. In view of trends in this region, it is no surprise that a significant number of these scholars are Pentecostal in their theology and praxis. I am convinced that the next decade will witness a burst of creative theological contributions from this region. These contributions will serve to strengthen the church around the world.

— Reviewed by Robert P. Menzies, Springfield, Missouri.

### **Thriving Churches in the Twenty-first Century**

GARY L. MCINTOSH and R. DANIEL REEVES (*Kregel Academic & Professional*, 224 pp., paperback)

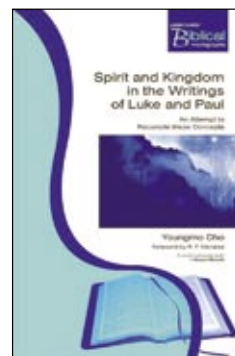
*Thriving Churches in the Twenty-first Century* makes the reader think and evaluate where he is going.

Like the scriptural "men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (1 Chronicles 12:32), the authors of this intriguing book possess unusual insight on what the church needs to do to effectively minister in our changing world.

Gary L. McIntosh and R. Daniel Reeves have combined their skills to create this manual on developing life-giving systems for building a thriving church in today's changing society. Readers will find the authors' insights on motivating and empowering the church to be practical and applicable. They not only point out what changes need to take place within the church to effectively communicate truth in our technology-driven society, but they also put proper focus on the spiritual health of its leadership. Their emphasis on prayer — training and developing intercessors, prayer warriors, and prayer teams — is refreshing and invaluable.

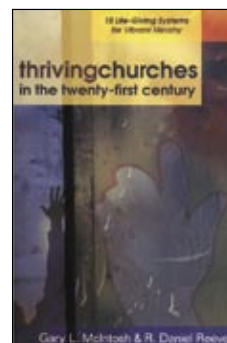
This book is an excellent resource for any pastor who is interested in building a thriving church in the 21st century.

— Reviewed by Clarence St. John, superintendent, Minnesota District, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



*Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt To Reconcile These Concepts*

*Like the scriptural men of Issachar, the authors of Thriving Churches possess unusual insight on what the church needs to do to effectively minister in our changing world.*



*Thriving Churches in the Twenty-first Century*



**Enrichment journal articles are now available online in Croatian, French, German, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Ukranian in addition to English.**

## www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org — New Look, New Features

**Looking for ministry resources?** The *Enrichment* journal Web site has several resources you need for effective ministry.

**www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org** also has a new look. Not only is this new design attractive, it also makes navigation of the site much easier for users. Several new features have also been added:

- **eonline** contains articles of interest on various ministry-related subjects.
- **international editions** of *Enrichment* journal. In addition to the Spanish *Enrichment* Web site that has been offered for several years, the journal has added PDF files of *Enrichment* in Croatian, French, German, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, and Ukranian.

- **three new e-newsletters: Pentecostal Preaching, Tools of the Trade, and Pastor's Survival Guide.** These newsletters offering relevant and practical helps for the busy pastor. To subscribe, visit **www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org** and click on the e-newsletter subscribe link. The first newsletter will launch August 2007.

- **links to other ministry resources:**

**Georgeowood.com**, a resource of sermon and teaching material by General Secretary George O. Wood; **Women in Ministry** Web site, a site specifically designed for credentialed women; and **Encounter: a Journal for Pentecostal Ministry** from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary are some of the ministry links found on *Enrichment's* Web site.

- **relevant topics: articles, video clips, and other resources** on various topics of interest facing the church.

- **PDF download of the current issue of *Enrichment*** is now available for purchase.

These items are in addition to the ministry resources that have been a part of **www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org** for years: sermons (updated weekly), ministry ideas, leadership tips, illustrations, humor, and articles on the Holy Spirit (all updated monthly).

Become one of the more than 11,000 visitors who come to **www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org** every month to find ministry resources.



**Churches can send their communities this dynamic message through a variety of methods, including postcards, door hangers, signs, and radio and television spots.**

Each ad directs viewers to **http://www.nothingstoohardforGod.org** — a powerful ministry Web site at the hub of the media plan.

At this site, the unchurched will find eight videos containing stories about people who faced difficult situations and found that nothing's too hard for God. They will hear testimonies of deliverance

## Ministry Web Site at the Heart of New AG Media Plan

**M**any Assemblies of God churches have expressed interest in a **media campaign** that offers new material every quarter.

The *Nothing's Too Hard for God* media plan meets this need. Churches can release a new set of postcards, TV spots, radio spots, and print ads (created by a professional production team) every quarter for 2 years.

from fear, addictions, and financial struggles along with healings in broken relationships, hearts, bodies, and lives. In addition, individuals will see a powerful video invitation to accept Christ and find resources to begin their walk with God. A link is also provided to help them find a local AG church.

A single church can make a dynamic impact by launching the campaign on its own; or, a group of churches in a rural or metropolitan area can unite to witness to their community.

This fully equipped media plan can be customized to fit your church budget and your community needs.

**For more information, visit <http://www.nothingstoohardforGodcampaign.ag.org>.**

## Church Planting BootCamps

Assemblies of God Church Planting is committed to the multiplication of God's kingdom through church planting and revitalization of existing churches. While some existing churches have plateaued or declined, their leadership desires to restore or renew the church's vision, strategy, and passion.

In 1999, the national Church Planting Department established BootCamp. BootCamp is an intense 4-day strategic planning event that prepares individuals to plant new churches or improve the health of existing churches. The goal is to produce strong, healthy, multiplying churches. During BootCamp participants will receive practical skills training under the guidance of a team of facilitators and coaches.

To attend a BootCamp, or to invite the national church planting team to your district, visit <http://churchplanting.ag.org>, or call 417-862-2781, ext. 3252.

## Xmultiplicity

### 5th Annual National Church Planting Leadership Summit

**Multiplicity will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, Nov. 29,30.** The summit's guests are Ed Stetzer (author of *Church Planting Movements*) and Steve Johnson (president, Vision USA).

Hosted at Radiant Church, *Multiplicity* is more than a conference — it is a time of connecting, resourcing, and challenging church leaders. Church planters, parent church pastors, and anyone interested in multiplying God's church are invited to attend.

Through fast-paced general sessions and high-impact affinity groups, participants will be challenged to define their potential role in the future of the church in America. During this 2-day event, many diverse approaches to church planting will be presented, providing a daring environment for developing each participant's worldview.

To register or for more information, visit <http://churchplanting.ag.org>, or call 417-862-2781, ext. 3252.

## 2007 Nationwide Mpat Girls Clubs Sleepover/Coins for Kids Project

The annual Nationwide Mpat Girls Clubs Sleepover is September 28,29. This year's theme is *Child of the King*. This theme is based on 1 John 3:2 where John stresses to the Early Church that they

are God's children. In a world where many children are not treated as special, this theme communicates that each person can choose to be a part of the kingdom of God. The Nationwide Sleepover is a great way to start your new Girls Club's year and introduce visitors to Jesus. Invite girls to become children of the King.

The annual Coins for Kids offering is also received during this event. All funds collected this year go to the Touched Romania project for the abandoned babies ministry and the Hagar Home Maternal Center. The Home provides basic needs, counseling, life-skills education, and an environment filled with the love of Jesus. All Coins for Kids funds sent to the national Missionettes Ministries office will be included in your church's total BGMC giving.

Every church reporting a Girls Clubs ministry on the Annual Church Ministries Report will receive a combination annual Theme/Sleepover packet. If you have not received your packet, contact the national Girls Ministries Department, or visit <http://ngm.ag.org> for a downloadable version.

## 2007 National Girls Ministries Week, Sept. 9–15



"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs" (Matthew 5:3, NLT).<sup>1</sup> The 2007 National Girls Ministries annual theme is *The King's Palace*. The emphasis for those who realize their need for Christ is their promised eternal destination — the Father's house — and the significance this gives to their lives.

If your church has not received the annual Theme/Sleepover packet, contact the national Girls Ministries Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4074, or e-mail [ngm@ag.org](mailto:ngm@ag.org) for your free materials. The Theme/Sleepover packet can also be downloaded at <http://www.ngm.ag.org>. The packet contains promotional plans and resources for National Girls Ministries Week, a Sleepover planning guide, and a new catalog.

The National Girls Ministries Week offering, received by the local church during National Girls Ministries Week services, helps the national office cover administration costs and provide resources to more than 200,000 girls and leaders involved in the Assemblies of God Girls Ministries programs.

1. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.



Nationwide Mpat Girls Clubs Sleepover  
September 28,29, 2007





**Campusmissionary digisource V.3 includes materials that teach and train campus missionaries and help raise up qualified coaches.**

## Campusmissionary digisource V.3

**C**ampus missionaries are the backbone of Youth Alive. To support and equip student missionaries with the ideas and materials needed to effectively reach their campuses, Youth Alive has developed the campusmissionary\_digisource V.3. This new product has more than 50 resources.

By including materials that teach and train campus missionaries and help raise up qualified coaches, Youth Alive is creating a strong network of support for campus missionaries.

As a CD with widespread computer compatibility, the campusmissionary\_digisource V 3.0 has an interactive menu and is easy to use. To order this product, visit <http://www.yausa.com> and click on store, then Youth Alive Web Store, or call GPH at 1-800-641-4310. Order item number 73TW1949.

## G5\_Digisource Leaders Edition V.2

**The G5\_Digisource Leaders Edition V.2 is the new member of the digisource family** developed by

national Youth Ministries. It combines the ease and structure of the campusmissionary\_digisource V.3 with the convenience and formatting of a digital download.

Everything your youth leaders need is included: 15 weeks of sermons, small group materials, and Sunday School lessons. To sign up for G5\_Digisource Leaders Edition V.2, visit <http://www.digisource.yausa.com>.



The G5\_Digisource Leaders Edition V.2 is a key tool to help youth leaders and students commit to pray, live, tell, serve, and give. This resource contains:

- G5: *Growing in the Five Commitments of a Campus Missionary* (book).
- G5 Youth Service Guide.
- 15 fully animated PowerPoints for the G5 Youth Service Guide.
- G5 Book — Leaders Edition.
- G5 Daily Devotions.
- G5 Small-Group Discussion Guide.
- Youth Alive Strategy video.
- User's Guide.



**Women In Ministry e-newsletters are for those involved or interested in pastoral and missions work.**

## Women In Ministry Web Site Now Offering E-Newsletters

**The Women in Ministry Web site exists to connect, encourage, empower, and equip women** who are called by God to ministry. The Women in Ministry Web site (<http://www.womeninministry.ag.org>) is one of the ways in which these goals are being accomplished.

The site features articles, interviews, and book reviews written by women in ministry for women in ministry. In addition, the site now offers two biweekly WIM e-newsletters, one sent each week to subscribers. The WIM e-newsletters are for those involved or interested in pastoral and missions work.

To subscribe to WIM e-newsletters and to receive notice each time the site is updated, go to the top of the home page and follow the instructions.



**Delores L. Adams**  
Sartell, Minnesota

**Lee Archer**  
Corpus Christi, Texas

**Floyd A. Bailey**  
Coquille, Oregon

**Ernest C. Bell**  
Germantown, Tennessee

**Rodger D. Berkey**  
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

**Genevieve G. Berthume**  
Durand, Michigan

**B.P. Birkeland**  
Mercer Island, Washington

**June R. Booth**  
Trenton, Missouri

**Melvin M. Brewer, Jr.**  
Sammamish, Washington

**Homer Brooks**  
Palatka, Florida

**Marion R. Brumfield**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**James P. Bryant**  
Nixa, Missouri

**Robert A. Burke**  
Mustang, Oklahoma

**Henry C. Calhoun III**  
Coffeyville, Kansas

**Marvin L. Callahan**  
Cuba, Missouri

**Esteban Camarillo**  
San Bruno, California

**Mack A. Cantwell**  
Point, Texas

**Jimmie D. Capehart**  
Corsicana, Texas

**Walter A. Clark**  
Greenville, South Carolina

**Jose Collazo**  
Bayamon, Puerto Rico

**Mable C. Collins**  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**Arline L. Crompton**  
Bradenton, Florida

**Luis Cruz**  
Hacienda Heights, California

**Paul D. Curtis**  
Stone Mountain, Georgia

**Helen S. Dunbar**  
Canyonville, Oregon

**Katherine C. Duncan**  
Kenner, Louisiana

**Ernest Espinoza**  
Lake Elsinore, California

**Beatrice J. Florence**  
Fort Worth, Texas

**Teodolo M. Garcia**  
Andrews, Texas

**L. Gene Geesey**  
Chandler, Arizona

**Hubert C. Greer**  
Plainfield, Indiana

**Dennis G. Hale**  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

**Ernest E. Henley**  
Olathe, Kansas

**John W. Hocker, Jr.**  
Burkburnett, Texas

**Millard H. Holmes, Sr.**  
Cullman, Alabama

**James R. Holtzclaw**  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**W. Earl Hubbard**  
Oakley, California

**Ervin M. Hukill**  
Mineral Wells, West Virginia

**Arlene M. Hunter**  
Spokane, Washington

**James E. Hyllberg**  
Kenosha, Wisconsin

**Gene Jackson**  
Hendersonville, Tennessee

**H. Fulton Jones**  
Sarepta, Louisiana

**Tae Hi Kang**  
Marietta, Georgia

**Clarence E. Kent**  
Remington, Indiana

**Carl B. Lambert, Jr.**  
Krum, Texas

**Albert J. Lewis, Jr.**  
Tyler, Texas

**George E. Mandel**  
Carlinville, Illinois

**Avis F. Martin**  
Lee's Summit, Missouri

**James O. Martin**  
New Blaine, Arkansas

**Elbert J. Mason**  
Irontdale, Missouri

**Ruth Mayfield**  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

**Marvin McElhannon**  
Okmulgee, Oklahoma

**Jack L. McIntosh**  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**Chesley B. McKenzie**  
Humboldt, Tennessee

**Warren G. McKenzie**  
Oviedo, Florida

**Alejo L. Mercedes**  
Trenton, New Jersey

**Philip J. Moore**  
Dade City, Florida

**Ray F.G. Myers**  
Russells Point, Ohio

**Curtis E. Palmer**  
Gerrardstown, West Virginia

**Josie J. Pannell**  
Canton, Oklahoma

**Mattie E. Patillo**  
Fitzgerald, Georgia

**Freddie A. Perkins**  
Wheatland, Missouri

**Marion A. Peschke**  
Alvin, Texas

**Albert A. Ragsdale**  
Memphis, Tennessee

**Alton L. Richardson**  
Springfield, Missouri

**Agnes W. Roberson**  
Honolulu, Hawaii

**Alta J. Rogers**  
Bixby, Oklahoma

**Haskell H. Rogers**  
Bixby, Oklahoma

**Donald W. Rudolph**  
Sparks, Nevada

**Elisa T. Sanchez**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Arlie D. Schenbeck**  
Scottsbluff, Nebraska

**Aniano R. Seda**  
Levittown, Puerto Rico

**Pedro Serrano**  
Waterbury, Connecticut

**Russell Skipper**  
Tallahassee, Florida

**Mary E. Slocum**  
Stanfield, Arizona

**Edwin C. Smith**  
Chickamauga, Oklahoma

**Mrs. W.L. (Stella) Smith**  
Russellville, Arkansas

**John W. Sowell**  
Seminole, Alabama

**Clarence R. Spurlock**  
ChIPLEY, Florida

**Howard E. Strong**  
Beech Grove, Indiana

**Opal T. Strong**  
Dona Ana, New Mexico

**Danewood E. Stroud**  
Many, Louisiana

**Mary E. Tanner**  
Moreno Valley, California

**William P. Taylor**  
Weott, California

**Leslie Tomlin**  
Lewisburg, Tennessee

**Robert L. Tribble**  
Locust Grove, Georgia

**Thomas N. Tye**  
Albany, Georgia

**Victor C. Walker**  
Jones, Oklahoma

**Lester L. Warren**  
Twin Falls, Idaho

**(Mrs. Jack R.) Margaret Watts**  
Silsbee, Texas

**Hubert M. Wilder**  
Jacksonville, Florida

**Charles E. Wilson**  
Springfield, Missouri

**Erston R. Young**  
Cedar Bluff, Virginia

**Lester C. Young**  
Keizer, Oregon

Accelerated Christian Education .....	inside front cover	National Church & Clergy Tax & Accounting Services .....	159
AG Bible Alliance .....	2	Nothing's Too Hard for God Media Campaign .....	39, 154
AG Financial Solutions .....	5, inside back cover	Revista de enriquecimiento .....	157
AG Perspectives Series.....	49	Office of Public Relations .....	39, 49, 154
AG U.S. Missions .....	43	<i>Side by Side</i> .....	145
Assemblies of God Credit Union.....	outside back cover	6Years2MDiv.com .....	53
Asia Pacific Media Ministries .....	77	Southeastern University.....	69
Carpenter Bus Sales .....	144	Stevens Worldwide Van Lines.....	157
Christian Higher Education .....	97	Steward Church Insurance.....	inside back cover
Counseling Referral Service .....	157	We Believe! .....	17
<i>Enrichment</i> journal:		Women in Ministry .....	111, 145, 156, 157
Back Issues .....	121		
E-Newsletters .....	69		
Web Site.....	89, 97, 154		
<i>Enrichment: The First Decade</i> 3 CD Set.....	104		
GeorgeOWood.com .....	121		
Global University.....	83		
Gospel Publishing House .....	33, 91		
HelpLine .....	111		
HighPoint Curriculum .....	33		
Judson Press .....	125, 133		
Leading to Change 2007 Ministers Conference .....	77		
Life Publishers .....	61		
MEGA Sports Camp .....	91		
Ministerial Enrichment Office .....	111, 157		

## The Power of Team Ministry

In an age when major corporations find it increasingly difficult to remain viable and maintain their corporate edge, businesses are realigning and forming strategic partnerships at a rate previously unknown. Strategic alliances are now the mainstay and means of survival for many top-notch companies.

Due to the explosive changes in global economics and geopolitical concerns, executives are cautiously steering their companies down paths of organizational transformation in hopes of a brighter future. A seismic shift from traditional, top-down corporate practices, to a structure that embraces fresh ideas, adopts new core values, and fosters an environment of teamwork and relationship is turning committee-based, status-quo organizations into highly competitive business enterprises.

The cultural and moral issues confronting today's church leaders are no less compelling and require a similar response. Society's constant change is fast and furious, putting pressure on both pastor and staff to reevaluate how they do ministry. Facing these day-to-day challenges can overwhelm a pastor's inner drive, attack his initiative, and challenge his faith. An urgent need exists for today's church leaders to understand the "times" and respond, or see their ministries face a certain, slow, agonizing death.

To champion ministry transformation, pastors must be willing to deviate from the practices of the past and embrace contemporary ministry paradigms. Gone are the days of traditional ministry methods where leadership focused less on relationship and more on task, policy, and program. Yesterday's programs and leadership methodologies must yield to a new vision where staff are empowered, openness is encouraged, and teamwork is cultivated.

*Growing Together: Maximizing the Power of Team Ministry* is a fitting title for this issue. This theme embodies the idea that a unified, empowered ministry team is far more effective than ministry in the hands of a few externally driven leaders who may not understand the virtues of a ministry environment where each staff member fully participates and is valued. Regardless of church size, or whether staff is paid or volunteer, an empowered team approach to ministry is possible and desirable.

A major component to team ministry is creating an empowering environment where

team members are understood, valued, and given freedom to fully participate. Gretchen Spreitzer, professor of Management and Organizations at the University of Michigan and coauthor of *A Company of Leaders: Five Disciplines for Unleashing the Power in Your Workforce* (Jossey-Bass, 2001), did an extensive study on empowerment in the workplace by analyzing responses from 400 Fortune 500 company managers. Spreitzer's analysis identifies four dimensions that define empowerment and four organizational conditions that lead to an empowering environment:<sup>1</sup>

### Dimensions That Define Empowerment


- 1. A sense of meaning.** Team members' work is important to them; they care about what they are doing.
- 2. A sense of competence.** They feel confident about their ability to do the work; they know they can perform.
- 3. A sense of self-determination.** They feel free to choose how to do the work; they are not micromanaged.
- 4. A sense of impact.** They feel they have influence; people listen to their ideas.

### Conditions That Lead to an Empowering Environment

- 1. Clear vision and challenge.** Empowered members feel they know where the organization is going and have access to strategic information.
- 2. Openness and teamwork.** Empowered members work together to solve problems.
- 3. Discipline and control.** Goals, lines of authority, and task responsibilities are clearly defined.
- 4. Support and a sense of security.** Empowered members have a sense of secure and predictable relationships.

Pastor, if you want more creative, effective, and influential staff members, then take the steps necessary to create an empowering ministry environment. Your church, ministry, and staff will be on the cutting-edge of ministry transformation.

If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to read the theme articles in this issue. Senior pastors will benefit from some articles, staff pastors will benefit from others, and everyone will benefit from those remaining. The content is relevant and compelling; the authors are experienced and time-tested practitioners.

The *Enrichment* staff trusts this issue is a blessing to your life and ministry. 



*If you want more creative, effective, and influential staff members, take the steps necessary to create an empowering ministry environment.*



**RICK KNOTH** is managing editor of *Enrichment* journal.