



Churches and Missionaries: A Marriage Made in Heaven 34

# enrichment

Enriching and equipping Spirit-filled ministers

Summer 2008



Expanding the Mission:  
**REACHING  
OUR WORLD**

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Summer 2008/Volume 13/ Number 3

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Next time in **enrichment**  
**Proclaiming Truth**  
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In our post-Christian society — or as some have called it, an anti-Christian society — people are asking "Is there such a thing as truth?" Relativism has taken such a hold on our society that many people believe there is no such thing as absolute truth. As a pastor, how do you respond to the attacks and beliefs that are so prevalent in today's society? How do you prepare your people to answer today's skeptics? There are relevant, intellectual, and practical ways to address today's issues concerning truth. To help you proclaim truth in this anti-Christian age, the next issue of *Enrichment* will provide apologetic articles from Mike Beals, Paul Copan, Richard L. Dresselhaus, Graham Johnston, David Kinnaman, James Emery White, and Ravi Zacharias.

## enrichment

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## Reaching Our World

### First Things First or a Priority

There is a difference between what we might do first and something that is a priority. We must do some things in sequence. For example, when you drive your car you insert the key into the ignition, turn the key to start the engine, put the car in gear, and press the accelerator. We must do first things first.

Other things in life are priorities but may not have a sequence. In fact, we may need to do them simultaneously. This includes reaching our community and reaching our world. We cannot place one before the other. They are both priorities and we must do both at the same time with equal intentionality.

### Missions Giving Is Like Tithing

A church's missions giving is similar to personal tithing. Missions giving is a principle as much as it is a plan. The church that places a high priority on missions will usually meet its budget. A church that delays its missions program until it has met its own financial needs is like a person who says he will tithe when he can afford it. We obey God *before* we can afford it.

During one of our building programs a banker told me that if the church would put 3 years of its missions money toward the mortgage the bank would fund our project. I told him that he did not understand the principle of missions giving. If we used missions money for the mortgage we would not have God's blessing. We would be in a worse financial position.

### Money, Money, Money

True, missions is more than money. Not everyone in the church can go to the mission field, but everyone can give. So the emphasis is on money, and we need never apologize for that. Teach people to tithe and give generously and they will prove God's promises.

### Pray, Pray, Pray

Just as everyone can give, everyone can pray. Kingdom ministry — especially missions — is fueled by prayer. If your people pray about reaching the world, they will more readily respond to the needs of missions and missionaries. If you only preach *community*, they will only see their community. If you preach on reaching the world, they will want to reach the world.

### A Priority of the Pastor

Missions must be a priority of the pastor before it will be a priority of the church. A pastor must share his passion to reach the entire world from the pulpit. He must preach it, and give as he wants his people to give. If the pastor is sacrificial in his giving, the people will follow his example.

### Be Intentional

Moving a priority into action requires intentionality. We need to make missions a priority and then focus on doing the right things. Observe the needs.

### Be Methodical

Find methods that work in other churches and adapt them to your own situation. If your methods have lost their effectiveness, look for alternatives, but do not change something that is working for the sake of change. If we interrupt peoples' giving patterns, it is often difficult to regain momentum.

### Be Consistent

Methods anchored in sound principles and work need to be maintained. If they are working, do not change them. Many things in life change to keep people excited. Do not change proven methods as long as they are working.

### Find a Missions Mentor

Find a church similar to yours that has a good missions ministry and ask if the pastor will mentor you.

- Attend his missions convention or service.
- Observe how he receives offerings and/or missions commitments.
- Is there an on-going missions emphasis or reminders?
- Observe how he treats missionaries.
- Ask if he has sermons on missions he would share.
- Invite him to speak at your missions emphasis.

We hope this issue of *Enrichment* will help you in your missions efforts. We have engaged AGWM in securing experienced missionaries and pastors to write for this issue. We want to convey the urgency of reaching our world and provide practical helps for improving your missions ministry. 🌍



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

# ASSEMBLIES of GOD WORLD MISSIONS TIMELINE

**1910s**



► **1914**

■ **APRIL** — Assemblies of God forms in Hot Springs, Ark.

■ **NOVEMBER** — The second General Council at Stone Church in Chicago declares, "We commit ourselves and the Movement to Him for the greatest evangelism the world has ever seen."

► **1917**

**First Foreign Missions Committee meets**

Included are Susan C. Easton, William W. Simpson, J.W. Welch, E.N. Bell, George N. Eldridge, and Stanley H. Frodsham

► **1918**

■ **Christian Schoonmaker**

elected as the first chairman of the newly organized Assemblies of God of India.

**1920s**

► **1920**

■ **J. Roswell Flower**  
Director of World Missions 1919-1923

When early missionaries inquired whether they should take the required medicine to enter the Belgian Congo (the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Flower said, "Trust in God, praying with all your might, and go ahead and take the quinine."

■ **Ivan & Katherine Voronaeff**

establish the Pentecostal church in Russia.

► **1921**

■ **Alice Luce**

Early advocate of indigenous church principles

"When we go forth to preach the Full Gospel, are we going to expect an experience like that of the denominational missionaries, or shall we look for the signs to follow?" — Alice Luce

► **1922**

■ **James & Esther Harvey**

establish work at Nawabganj, North India. James dies in 1922, but Esther continues the work until 1961.

"Could we preach the love of Christ to these and turn them away naked and hungry to die along the roadside? We could not." — Esther Harvey



► **1925**

■ **Etta Calhoun**

organizes a group of women in Houston, Texas, to intercede for missionaries. First Women's Missionary Council is formed.

► **1927**

■ **Noel Perkin**

serves as executive director 1927-1959.

"May the realization of a world lying in the hands of the wicked one urge us on to do our utmost to support those who are entering the strongholds of darkness to bring deliverance to the captives. No gift is too small or too large to make use of in this great cause." — Noel Perkin



**1930s**

► **1931**

■ **First missions manual**

published under Noel Perkin's leadership.



"The winning of souls to Christ

and establishing of assemblies in all places where converts are won should be regarded as the primary objective of all missions. All other branches of ministry should be subordinate to this."

— Assemblies of God Missions Manual

**e shorts**

## A World of CHANGE

Twelve significant changes concerning the way AGWM, in partnership with AG churches, is fulfilling the Great Commission

**Assemblies of God World Missions has:**

1. **Opened 89 countries** since 1990.  
Twenty countries have opened in this decade.
2. **Partnered with laypeople**, using their specific skills to strategically work in creative-access countries.
3. **Lifted age restrictions** for candidates.
4. **Removed restrictions on the number of children** new missionaries may have.
5. **Created two new regions** to focus on new countries from the former Soviet Union and Northern Asia.
6. **Prioritized reaching people in Islamic countries.**  
Twelve percent of our missionaries are ministering in Muslim contexts.
7. **Increased exposure to compassion and relief efforts.**
8. **Focused on evangelism and discipleship of children.**
9. **Become increasingly involved in media, medical, and Internet ministries**, in addition to evangelism, church planting, and pastoral training.
10. **Sent more women, singles, and people with physical challenges** to help answer God's call in times of great need.
11. **Sent 13,000 AG people, young and old, on short-term ministry trips** (2 weeks to 2 months) in 2007.
12. **Partnered with more than 5,400 AG missionaries to 168 countries.** As indigenous national churches mature, AGWM is increasingly reaching all nations from all nations.

— AGWM administration, Springfield, Missouri  
<http://www.worldmissions.ag.org>



## Unreached Peoples Facts

- Of 235 total countries, 169 (72 percent) are Christian-majority countries. The total population for these countries is 2.32 billion.
- Of the 16,256 total groups, 6,877 are least-reached, totaling 2,717,115,000 people. Of these 6,877 groups, 5,313 are in 10/40 Window countries. That means 77 percent of the unreached/least-reached people groups are in the 10/40 Window.
- The largest least-reached group is the Japanese, with more than 120 million people.
- 3,284 groups are primarily Muslim, totaling nearly



Tokyo, Japan.  
The largest least-reached group is the Japanese.

- 1.3 billion people.
- 2,652 groups are primarily Hindu, totaling about 900 million people.
- 570 groups are primarily Buddhist, totaling nearly 375 million people.
- 6,361 groups are primarily Christian, totaling more

than 2 billion people. Christian is defined here as Christian adherents, not restricted to Evangelicals.

— Joshua Project,  
Colorado Springs, Colo.  
[www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)  
Sources available on request:  
[info@joshuaproject.net](mailto:info@joshuaproject.net)

## Global Mission Trends

An average of 160,000 a day hear the message of redemption in Christ for the first time. Every hour, 3,000 more people decide to follow Jesus Christ.

In 1800, those who had never heard the gospel were almost 75% of the globe's population. Today the percentage of those who have not heard is 28%, which is a major move forward. However, that means about 1.5 billion people have not heard the gospel even one time.

Fifteen years ago there were about 100 prayer networks around the world. Today there are 4,000 networks involving an estimated 25,000,000 intercessors.

### Internet Trends

**More than one billion people are now on the Internet.**

Almost one million new people get connected every day. Remarkably, the second most popular search topic on the Internet is "spiritual and religious" related information.

### Negative Trends

**In 2006, \$24 billion was embezzled** by church staff and treasurers worldwide. This is \$2 billion more than the \$22 billion world's annual giving to missions. Eliminating this fraudulent activity within the Church could add billions of dollars to global missions.

The American career missionary work force is rapidly shrinking. In 1986, there were 69,000 career American missionaries. In 2006, that was down to 35,000 — almost a 50 percent reduction in the last 20 years.

— Joshua Project  
[www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)

1930s continued

▶ 1932

■ W.E. Simpson

was killed by bandits on China/Tibet border June 25, 1932, at age 31.

"His was the rare quality of making himself one with the lowest Tibetan that he might win him to Christ. He ate his food and wore his clothing. . . . It was thus he won the love and hearts of those so steeped in superstition and degradation."

— *The Latter Rain Evangel*, June 1932



▶ 1933

■ Louise Jeter (Walker)

arrives in Peru at age 19. She would author *The Great Questions of Life*.

"Louise Jeter Walker may be the most prolific missionary writer in the Assemblies of God."

— *Pentecostal Evangel*, June 23, 1995

■ Gustav Bergstrom arrives in Brazil where he planted churches in more than 250 cities through personal evangelism and literature distribution.



▶ 1936

■ Anna Tomaseck

opens orphanage on the Nepal/India border.

"Her compassion for suffering and abandoned children became an outreach that resulted in the planting of the church in Nepal."

— *AG Heritage*, Spring 2001

■ Ralph Williams & Melvin Hodges assist nationals in establishing the

Assemblies of God in Nicaragua. Later this fellowship is the first overseas Council governed by nationals.

▶ 1937

■ Melvin & Lois Hodges

establish Matagalpa Bible School, Nicaragua's first Assemblies of God Bible training center.



MISSIONS  
FACT



Of the world's 16,256 ethnic people groups by country, 6,361 (39 percent) are primarily Christian, totaling more than 2 billion, or nearly one-third the world's population.



**1940s**



► **1940**

■ **Everett & Dorothy Phillips**

arrive as the first appointed Assemblies of God missionaries to Nigeria.

► **1944**

■ **The World Challenge**

Published as the Fellowship's first major missions magazine.



► **1945**

■ **Oren Munger,**

a gifted pianist and song writer, dies of typhoid after only 2 years in Nicaragua. His passion for pastors to

receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit sparks the beginnings of revival.

"It is not in the great numbers of missionaries that the evangelism of the world lies, but in the intense glow with which the fire brands burn." — Oren Munger

► **1947**

■ **Florence Steidel**

erects first buildings in New Hope Town, a leprosarium in Liberia.

The town eventually includes more than 100 buildings, including a church, schools, clinic, and homes.

"Why let the word *impossible* disturb me, when by His help, I can." — Florence Steidel



► **1948**

■ **J. Philip Hogan**

& **Garland Benintendi**

establish the Assemblies of God in Taipei.



■ **Anna Ziese**

remains in Talyuan, China, when other missionaries leave.



■ **Ambassador**



AGWM buys an army surplus C-46 airplane to transport missionaries.

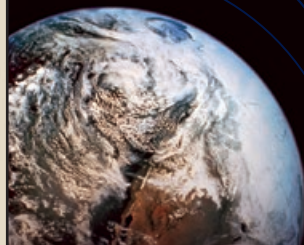
► **1949**

■ **Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade**

forms as a joint venture of AGWM and the national Sunday School Department.

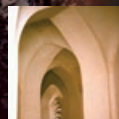


"Before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne" (Revelation 7:9).



### Global

- Every day another 74,000 people across the globe come to faith in Christ.
- An average of 3,500 new churches open every week around the world.
- From 1990–2000 the number of born-again believers in the world doubled.



### Afghanistan

Until recently, becoming a Christian was close to a death sentence.

Now missionaries in Kabul report unprecedented openness and many new believers in the last 2 years.



### Brazil

From 1992 to 2002 the evangelical population of Brazil doubled.

Goals have been set for 250,000 congregations by 2010. Over 100 mission agencies have emerged, sending more than 2,000 Brazilian missionaries to 85 countries.



### China

In 1950, when China closed to missionaries, there were about 1 million Chinese believers. Today

there are an estimated 80 million believers and 28,000 new Christians in China every day. There are as many followers of Christ in China as in North America.



### India

In east India 95 percent of Nagaland's 3 million people confess Jesus as Lord. The Nagaland

church recently vowed to send out 10,000 new missionaries to India and beyond. Those once unreached are now becoming senders.



### Iran

More Iranians came to Christ between 1980 and 2005 than the previous 1,000 years combined.



### Israel / Jews

More Jews have embraced Jesus / Yeshua as Messiah since 1967 when the Jews took control of Jerusalem

than in all the years between A.D. 100 and 1967. Check out Luke 21:24.



### Korea

Once deemed "impossible to penetrate" by missionaries, Korea has experienced dramatic church

growth in the last century. Today Korea is 30 percent Christian with more than 3,000 churches in Seoul alone. Several of these churches have more than 1 million members each.



### Nepal

In the early 1980s there were only 75 known Nepali believers.

Today there are an estimated 500,000 believers. From almost no churches 20 years ago there are more than 6,000 churches and house fellowships today.



### Southern Africa

20,000 new African believers every day. Three percent Christian in 1900, today Africa is more than 50 percent

Christian in some countries. The church in Africa is growing 4 times faster than the general population. Sub-Saharan Africa is becoming a sending base for missionaries to Islamic North Africa.



### Southern Sudan

In 1960 only about 5 percent of southern Sudan was Christian.

Today, after decades of terrible warfare and persecution, the figure is close to 70 percent Christian.



### Turkey

One-third of the converts to Christianity in Turkey say they came to Christ because He appeared to

them in a dream. God is at work even where there are no missionaries.

— Compiled by Joshua Project

Sources: 2020 Vision — Stearns ISBN: 076420016X  
Operation World — Johnstone ISBN: 1850783578

If the world were a village of 100 people ...



... its religious composition would consist of:

- 10 Buddhist
- 34 Christians (including Catholic)
- 8 Ethnic religions
- 14 Hindu
- 22 Islam
- 11 Nonreligious/Atheist
- 1 Other/Small

— Joshua Project; Gordon Conwell's Center for the Study of Global Christianity

NOTE: AG makes up about 2 percent of total world population and 10 percent of all Pentecostals.

## Gains in Adherents and Churches Overseas and U.S. Combined for 2006–2007

On average, around the world we are adding:

- 1 person every 10 seconds.
- 1 church every 32 minutes.

— AGWM administration



If the world AG Fellowship were a village of 100 believers ...



... its ethnic composition would consist of:

- 6 North Americans (including Canada)
- 27 Africans
- 9 Pacific/Northern Asians
- 4 Eurasians
- 4 Europeans
- 50 Latin Americans



... its church composition would consist of:

- 2 from the unreached/least-reached people group
- 12 from a formative church
- 26 from an emerging church
- 60 from a growing church

— AGWM administration

NOTE: Ninety-five percent of AG adherents live outside the U.S.

## MISSIONS FACT

The world AG Fellowship comprises 212 countries and territories. Of these, 46 are *restricted access* or *sensitive* countries and territories. Since 1997, 33 countries have opened; 16 of these are restricted access.

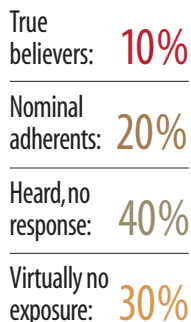
World AG Fellowship Data	2007* Totals	2006 Totals	United States Totals**
Constituents	60,020,329	57,023,562	2,836,174
Churches	311,997	295,724	12,362
Ministers	319,937	303,926	33,871

\* includes 2006 U.S. data

\*\* U.S. constituents are 2006 numbers. U.S. churches and ministers are for 2007.

The figures above include the 200 countries and territories AGWM works in, as well as the United States and other countries with Assemblies of God constituencies not considered mission fields.

## The Gospel to the Ends of the Earth



— Joshua Project

## WORLD MISSIONS TIMELINE

1950s

► 1951

■ Alfred & Elizabeth Cawston

establish Southern Asia Bible College in Bangalore, India



► 1953

■ Melvin Hodges

writes *The Indigenous Church*, a standard text on missions used throughout the evangelical world. It articulates the Assemblies of God missiology of establishing self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating churches.

"We are following New Testament principles as exemplified by the great Early Church missionary, the apostle Paul. We follow these principles not because they are indigenous, but because they are biblical." — Melvin Hodges



■ Wesley & June Hurst

arrive in Tanzania where they are instrumental in the formation of the Assemblies of God. Wesley serves as the first superintendent.

► 1954

■ Mark & Huldah Buntain

begin evangelism ministry in Calcutta that grows to include a large church, 70 other assemblies, a hospital with a school of nursing, elementary schools, a vocational school, a teacher training college, and a Teen Challenge ministry.

"Tomorrow will be too late! This is the hour when we must put the precious Word of God into the hands of these eternity-bound multitudes." — Mark Buntain

► 1958

■ Dr. David Yonggi Cho

plants church in Seoul, South Korea, that will influence the nation through its more than 800,000 members,

hundreds of daughter churches, a university, Bible schools, outreach ministries, and church planting efforts throughout the world.



1950s continued

► 1959

■ J. Philip Hogan

elected executive director of World Missions.



1960s

► 1961

■ John & Lois Bueno

arrive in San Salvador, El Salvador, to pastor Templo Cristiano. The church eventually grows from 100 to 22,000 people and plants more than 120 other churches. In 1963, the Buenos establish an elementary school that grows into Liceo Cristiano, a school system with 38 campuses, a 900-member faculty and staff, and a university to train teachers.



► 1964

■ J.W. Tucker

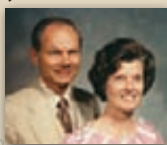


is brutally beaten November 24, 1964, and his body thrown into the crocodile-infested Bomokande River of the Congo.

► 1965

■ Mark & Gladys Bliss

direct the first Bible school in Iran. In 1969, they were injured in a car accident in Iran that claimed the lives of their three children.



"I have planted three seeds that I expect to grow into a church." — Mark Bliss

► 1966

■ AIM — short-term missions for youth is launched.

■ George & Esther Flattery

launch International Correspondence Institute.

"Because of our limited knowledge, changing times and varying situations, we must remain pliable in strategy. We can be confident that the Spirit will guide us." — George Flattery



## 10/40 Window

Less than 2 percent of all missions giving is directed toward the 10/40 Window. Yet "dollar for dollar and hour for hour, the harvest coming from the 10/40 Window nations outstrips that from the rest of the world 100 to 1."

The top 10 countries with the largest unevangelized population are located in the 10/40 Window. Eighty-five percent of the world's poorest of the poor live in the 10/40 Window. Forty-three of the top 50 countries that persecute Christians are in the 10/40 Window.

**Developing World Missions Initiatives:** Estimated missionaries sent by various countries to the 10/40 Window over the next 15–20 years:

Latin Americans	10,000 missionaries
Nigerians	15,000 missionaries
Koreans	30,000 missionaries
Chinese	100,000 missionaries
Filipinos	200,000 contract labor tentmakers

— Joshua Project

## Interesting Language Facts



adequate Scriptures. There are about 2,500 languages needing Bible translation work to begin.

- Indonesia has the most people groups (575) whose primary language does not have Bible portions, totaling 28,961,000 people.
- Many (1,709) people groups in the 10/40 Window have neither Scripture portions or gospel radio available in their primary language, comprising 340 million people.
- Many (9,430) people groups have the New Testament available in their primary language, totaling 5,699,118,000 people.
- The largest group without even Scripture portions in their primary language is the Jin Chinese of China, population 58 million.
- China has the largest number of people whose primary language

does not have Bible portions (196,639,000 people).

- There are 992 languages with the *Jesus* film available, 324 with gospel radio available, and 4,037 with gospel recordings available (plus approximately 2,000 language recordings that have not had *Ethnologue*s assigned yet). Many (2,216) languages have none of these resources available, with about 195 million speakers.
- 90 percent of the world's people, if they have an Internet cafe and the funds, can hear the gospel in a language they understand.
- 97 percent of the world's people are members of language groups who have had at least one person presented with the plan of salvation.

— Joshua Project

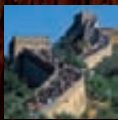


"All nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord, they will bring glory to your name" (Psalm 86:9).



#### Afghanistan

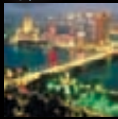
There were only 17 known Muslim background followers of Christ before 9/11/01. Today there are more than 10,000.



#### China

The Communist government has printed 50 million Bibles over the past 20 years at its official Amity Press. The Bibles and NTs are distributed at 55,000 distribution points throughout the country. But still many in rural areas have no Bible or share handwritten portions among many believers.

#### Egypt

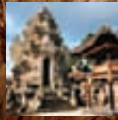


During the 1990s, the Egyptian Bible Society used to sell about 3,000 copies of the *Jesu* film each year. Last year they sold 600,000 copies, plus 750,000 copies of the Bible on tape in Arabic and about a half-million copies of the Arabic NT. A huge cave on the outskirts of Cairo accommodates the largest church in the Middle East — 10,000 meet weekly for worship, and a prayer conference there in 2005 hosted 20,000 believers.

#### Ghana



This West African country is where you will hear mostly Muslim names, such as Mohammed, Fatuma, or Achmed in church. The desperate need of churches is training and literature as Muslims come to faith in Christ at such a pace that in the entire country the percentage of Muslims has dropped by 25 percent in the past 10 years.



#### Indonesia

More than 60,000 house churches have sprung up in recent years. The last religious census in the country was taken in 1979, when it was determined that 20 percent of the population were followers of Christ. The statistic so concerned government leaders in this populous Muslim country that there has not been another religious survey since.



#### Iran

At the time of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, there were possibly only 500 Shiite background followers of Christ. Today, many Iranian pastors suggest there may be as many as one million.



#### Iraq

More than 5,000 Muslims have come to faith in Christ over the past 4 years during the Iraqi conflict. There are 14 new churches in Baghdad and dozens more in Kurdistan, some with up to 800 members.



#### Uganda

One church in Kampala seats 10,500 and is filled to capacity for four services every Sunday. The church has planted more than 1,000 daughter churches across Uganda and has sent missionaries to South America, Japan, and the United States. Twenty-five years ago, Uganda's population was 22 percent Muslim. Today it is around 6 percent.

— Joshua Project

#### Percentage of First-term Missionaries Who Left AGWM Before the End of Their First Term

Period	Percentage	Number of Missionaries
1986-1990	17	99
1991-1995	10	50
1996-2000	6	25
2001-2007	2	11

#### REASONS FOR THIS DOWNWARD TREND INCLUDE:

- More focus on selection and training (1990).
- Missionary associates program.
- More focus on field training.
- More focus on helping candidates raise budgets (1996).
- First full-time itineration manager (1996).
- Three-year first terms begin (1996–97).
- Districts begin Fast Track and Jump Start programs for candidates (1997–98).
- Senders Fund established to expedite candidates' departure to the field.

— AGWM administration

#### 1970s



#### 1973

##### ■ Bernhard Johnson

"The Billy Graham of Brazil"

holds crusade in Pôrto Alegre with 50,000 people attending the first night. Ten invalids are healed, and 200 people testify to seeing the resurrected Christ walking above the crowd in the direction of the sick. During Johnson's 32 years of evangelistic crusades, 1.8 million people accept Christ as Savior.

#### 1974



##### ■ New Life Assembly of God

planted in Madras, India. Pastored by David Mohan, the church now has at least 35,000 people.

#### 1979

##### ■ Mountain Movers

printed as official voice of AGWM.



#### 1980s

#### 1981

##### ■ David & Jimmie Ruth Lee



appointed as founding directors of International Media Ministries.

##### ■ Center for

##### Ministry to Muslims

formed with David Irwin as director.



#### 1983

##### ■ HealthCare Ministries

formed with Dr. Paul Williams as director.



1980s continued

DECADE OF HARVEST

► 1988

■ **Decade of Harvest declaration** signed by delegates from 40 nations. The conference results in the formation of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship with J. Philip Hogan serving as the first chairman.

**GROWTH IN THE  
DECADE OF HARVEST OVERSEAS**

■ **MINISTERS**

1989: 111,074

1999: 199,217

Increase: 79.4%

■ **CHURCHES**

1989: 117,115

1999: 200,467

Increase: 71.2%

■ **MEMBERS  
AND ADHERENTS**

1989: 16,414,392

1999: 32,002,437

Increase: 95.0%

■ **STUDENTS**

1989: 39,108

1999: 86,332

Increase: 120.8%

■ **MISSIONARIES**

(from USA)

1989: 1,588

1999: 1,814

Increase: 14.2%

■ **DONATIONS**

(from USA)

1989: \$86,686,018

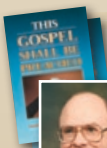
1999: \$145,623,945

Increase: 68.0%



► 1989

■ **Gary McGee** completes *This Gospel Shall Be Preached*, a two-volume history of AG missions.



1990s

► 1990

■ **Loren Triplett** becomes executive director of Assemblies of God World Missions.



**The Gospel for Every Person:  
What Is the Status?**

- **Bible translation:** More than 82 percent of the world's population has adequate Scriptures in their language. However, to complete the remaining 18 percent may require as many as 2,500 new translation efforts.
- **Jesus film:** There have been approximately 6.225 billion viewings of the *Jesus* film. It is available in languages spoken by more than 90 percent of the world's population.
- **Status of the gospel for every person:** Approximately 70 percent (4.3 billion) of the world's population has heard the gospel in some form. Thirty percent (2 billion) have had virtually no exposure to the gospel.

— Joshua Project



**Unreached/  
Least-reached  
People Groups**

There are 6,877 unreached/least-reached ethnic people groups out of 16,256 total groups in the world. (*Unreached/Least-reached* is defined as less than 2 percent evangelicals and less than 5 percent Christian adherents in the people group.) Many (3,647) of these unreached/least-reached groups are small — less than 10,000 in population, so the task is not as large as it first appears.

— Joshua Project

*Challenges* of the Unfinished Task

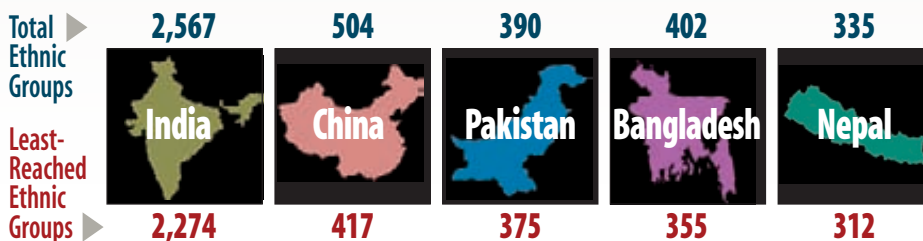
- **Spiritual challenge:** More Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in the previous 19 centuries combined.
- **People challenge:** The remaining people and people groups tend to be in remote locations, have great language and cultural barriers, practice religious fundamentalism, and are the most resistant to the gospel.
- **Political/National challenge:** The countries with the most least-reached tend to be closed to Christianity.
- **Church challenge:** More than 85 percent of all cross-cultural missionaries labor among nominal

Christians. Out of every \$1 (one U.S. dollar) of Christian giving to all causes only half a penny goes toward pioneer church planting among least-reached people groups.

— Joshua Project



**Countries With the Most Least-reached People Groups**

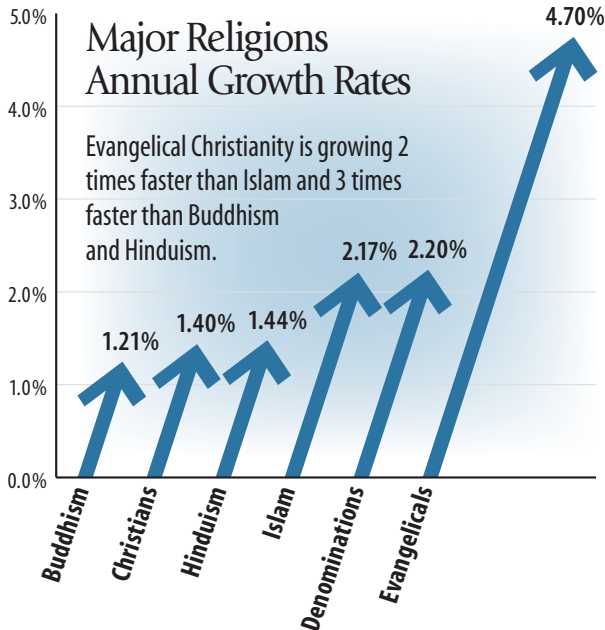


**Explosion** of the non-western Church

- True Christianity has grown by more than 300 million believers in the past 10 years.
- About 10 million of these new Christians are from North America and Europe.
- The rest — 290 million — are from developing countries such as Nigeria, Brazil, India, and China.

— Joshua Project





### Cost of Itineration

■ Average cost per unit (itineration): **\$25,731.71**

■ Average itineration expense per unit: **7 percent of the total funds raised**

— AGWM administration

### MISSIONS FACT

Northeast Asia has the highest number of people practicing Animism (65 million), followed by East and Southern Africa (44 million).

## The Assemblies of God: Growth in Members and Adherents

Year	Region	Percentage
<b>Afric A</b>		
2000	8,594,297	
2007	14,644,111	70.3%
<b>AsiA Pacific</b>		
2000	2,633,572	
2007	4,755,835	80.5%
<b>EUr Asi A</b>		
2000	1,217,028	
2007	1,998,064	64.1%
<b>EUr o PE</b>		
2000	1,710,494	
2007	2,576,085	50.6%
<b>Latin Am Eric A/cA ribb EAn</b>		
2000	21,488,804	
2007	27,278,890	26.9%
<b>north Ern Asi A</b>		
2000	7,511	
2007	22,365	197.7%
<b>combin Ed to tAL</b>		
2000	35,651,706	
2007	51,275,350	43.8%

Note: Does not include the U.S. or countries not considered mission fields.

— AGWM administration

1990s continued

■ **Robert Mackish**  
First resident AG missionary to Russia.

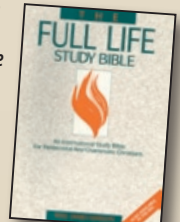


■ **Don & Deborah Tucker**  
establish Africa's Children and later publish *Edward the Elephant*, a children's evangelism and AIDS prevention booklet that has been distributed in 13 languages to nearly 16 million children and youth.



► 1991

■ **Donald Stamps**  
completes study notes for the *Full Life Study Bible* (Fire Bible) 6 weeks before his death. The Bible is printed in English and Portuguese in 1992.



► 1993

■ **Jim & Dorothy Bryant**  
First resident missionaries to the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union.

► 1994

■ **Mehdi Dibaj & Haik Hovsepian Mehr**  
Iranian national AG leaders martyred for their faith.



► 1995

■ **Dick & Jennifer Brogden**  
First AG missionaries to Sudan





1990s continued



► 1997

**L. John Bueno**  
elected executive director of Assemblies of God World Missions.



■ **Michael Chowning**  
First AG missionary to the Tuva region of Russia.



► 1998

■ **Mountain Movers** merges with *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* to form the monthly *Missions World Evangel*.

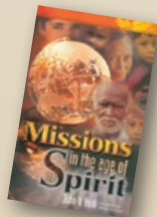
► 2000

■ **John York**

publishes *Missions in the Age of the Spirit*. "The Church will transform the world to the degree that its people practice radical discipleship.



To be world-changers, believers must first know they have passed from death to life. Then they must be dissatisfied enough with a given state of affairs to bring about change." — John York



■ **Jim & Maralyn Mathias**



First AG missionaries to Finland

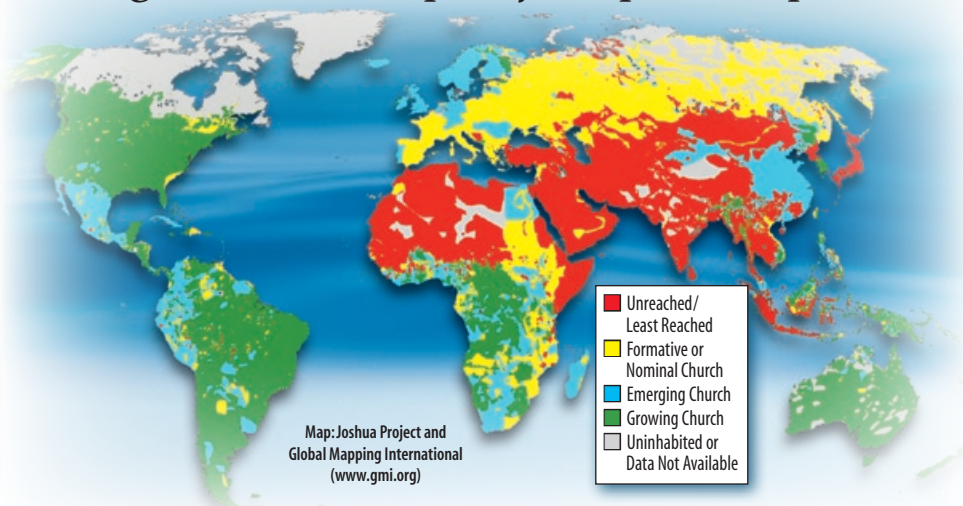
► 2001

■ **Ken & Jeanie Morris**

First AG missionaries to Scotland



## Progress of the Gospel by People Group



### Overseas Efforts of Other U.S. Evangelical Churches

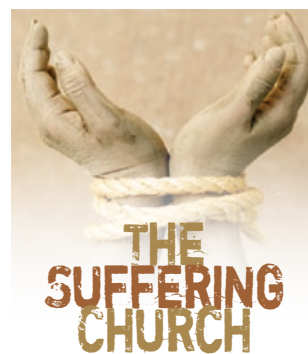
	CHURCHES	MEMBERS
Church of God	33,633	8,150,000
Nazarene	29,265	969,269
Southern Baptist	135,252	8,800,000

	MISSIONARIES	ASSOCIATES
Church of God	135	310
Nazarene	363	0
Southern Baptist	4,147	1,156
Wycliffe	3,496	0
New Tribes	1,402	62

— Source: Web sites and correspondence



The United States, China, Nigeria, and Brazil have the greatest number of evangelicals, according to Operation World. Uganda has the highest percentage of evangelicals at 46 percent.



- 14,717 ministers
- 17,954 churches and preaching points
- 1,843,612 members and adherents
- 392,312 filled with the Spirit
- 144 Bible schools and extension classes
- 11,890 Bible school and extension students

## AGWM Countries Unreached/Least Reached

AGWM ministry where born-again believers represent 2 percent or less of the population.

### AGWM Countries/Personnel

	AGWM 2007	In Least Reached Area	Percentage
Countries/Territories	200	98	49%
Missionaries	2061	680	33%
Associates	644	206	32%
Combined	2,705	886	33%

### AGWM National Church

	AGWM 2007	In Least Reached Area	Percentage
Ministers	286,315	42,947	15%
Churches	299,686	38,959	13%
Constituents	51,275,350	7,178,549	14%
Bible Schools/Ext. Schools	2,133	384	18%
Bible School / Ext. Students	99,037	20,798	21%

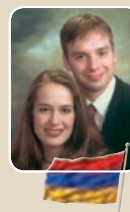
NOTE: AGWM figures include only the 200 countries and territories where AGWM has missionaries or ministry.

## Glossary: Talking Points



AGWM Terms	Least Reached / Evangelical Terms
The lost, those who have not heard	Unreached, least reached
Restricted access countries, creative access countries	Closed countries
Those with least access	Those who have least exposure and least Christian presence
360 Missions	1040 Window
No adequate witness	No near neighbor witness
Focus on reaching in	Focus on reaching people groups
Suffering Church	Persecuted Church
Born-again believers	Evangelicals
Spirit-Led Missions	Prioritizing the Great Commission

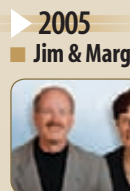
2000s continued



► **2003**  
■ **Nick & Olivia Puccini**  
First Assemblies of God missionaries to Armenia



► **2004**  
■ **Bill & Connie McDonald**  
Unión Television, Cuenca, Ecuador, begins broadcasting via satellite, making it possible for the ministry to reach 500 million people throughout Latin America.



► **2005**  
■ **Jim & Margaret Thacker**  
First Assemblies of God missionaries to Burundi



■ **Jeff & Liz Hartensveld**  
coordinate compassion relief in Indonesia following the December 26, 2004, tsunami that killed more than 200,000 people.



■ **Jason & Tracy Parnell**  
First missionaries to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Thousands of Assemblies of God missionaries have faithfully served the Lord of the Harvest throughout these past 94 years. Only a small portion of them were included in this pictorial timeline. May it help us recount our rich Pentecostal heritage, compel us to trust Him as others have in the past, and enable us to continue to see lost generations won to Christ.

L. John Bueno  
AGWM Executive Director



## Giving

### Total Giving to AGWM

	IN MILLIONS
Giving to Missionary Accounts	\$185,243,451
Income from Support Ministries (LFTL, STL, BGMC, WM, General Legacies)	13,238,961
Promotional and Financial Income	5,755,245
Adjustments to End of Year Total	3,790,109
<b>TOTAL GIVING TO WORLD MISSIONS (adjusted)</b>	<b>\$208,027,766</b>

**Donor Sources** — Offerings to Candidates  
• From Churches **75%** • From Individuals **25%**

### Giving to Missionary Accounts per Region (Does not include auxiliary ministries or end-of-year adjustments)

REGION	2007	PERCENTAGE
Africa	\$ 23,155,431.38	12.5%
Asia Pac	18,524,345.10	10.0%
Eurasia	24,266,892.08	13.1%
Europe	21,117,753.41	11.4%
Lat/Am	37,233,933.65	20.1%
No. Asia	6,298,277.33	3.4%
IM/Gen	51,868,166.28	28.0%
Wycliffe	370,486.90	0.2%
Retired – Assignment	1,481,947.61	0.8%
Short-term	926,217.26	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$185,243,451</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Chocolate Cake and Faith Promises: A Recipe for Restoration



*Faith is like  
a muscle.  
If you do not  
exercise it,  
it will never grow.*

**I**n 1971, I became pastor at Glad Tidings Assembly of God in Newport Beach, California. The church had just gone through a split. Our small A-frame sanctuary held about 200 people. On a good Sunday, attendance was 65 to 75 adults.

I was 29 with an earned doctorate. My father was a missionary, an evangelist, and a pastor. I was convinced I had the qualifications to turn that church around. But in the first 6 months of my pastorate we lost one-third of the people. It was not a pretty picture.

We needed \$400 a week to break even; we were getting about \$250 a week. I remember several times going to the electric company with a check the day they were going to shut off the power.

The church also had founded a preschool before I came. The ostensible reason was to provide income. Unfortunately, the church was sinking \$1,000 a month into keeping the preschool afloat. It was just a mess.

When I describe these challenges to young pastors today, I can anticipate their idea of a solution — radical budget trimming, perhaps a financial overhaul with an understanding bank. It almost invariably comes as a surprise when I describe the solution we discovered — targeted

increased financial outlay. And the object lesson that best illustrates that solution is equally surprising — chocolate cake.

More on the cake later.

### Sunday Miracle

Six months into our crisis I asked the deacons to begin meeting with me at a restaurant on Saturday mornings at 6. We would eat breakfast, pray, and then decide which bills to pay. This went on 4 weeks until the third Saturday in August of 1971.

Most pastors know that August is one of the down months in a church's finances. Tithes go on vacation with the people. We were hitting bottom. As we were discussing which bills to pay, one of the deacons made an observation: "You know, Pastor, since you've been here we've not paid a single missionary commitment."

At that time the church had \$257 a month in missionary commitments to a group of missionaries at \$5 to \$10 a month. I was from a missionary family, but I had decided that our church needed the money more than these missionaries. At times, the offering was barely enough to cover my paycheck. My wife and I were selling some of our furniture to supplement our income.



"I think we should take Sunday's offering and pay at least 2 months' missionary commitments," the deacon said.

That was \$514. It would take several weeks' offerings to cover that. Nevertheless, we all agreed and prayed the Lord would supply. After the prayer, the deacon who made the suggestion said to me, "Now, you understood that the bills that will not be paid include your salary."

"That's okay," I heard myself saying. We had two children, and we were living hand-to-mouth.

On Sunday morning I asked the ushers to receive the offering. At the evening service, a smaller crowd gave an offering. After the evening altar service two deacons counted the money. When they came to me, their faces were beaming. The church had given more than \$1,300.

In that church's 25-year history, they had only given a bigger offering once. And that, too, was a missions offering.

I was praying in my office the next day and I felt the Lord say, *I'm not interested in building this church on your personality. I'm interested in building it on Mine. Put my Kingdom first, and I'll take care of you.*

It was amazing — the church began to grow.

## Giving and Growing

Over the following months we were faithfully paying our bills and making our \$257 a month missions pledges. In September, I began preaching through the Book of Leviticus. Some people might wonder how a pastor can grow a church while preaching from Leviticus. Our church, however, grew from 100 to 300. It was an unbelievable time.

While I was preparing a sermon on the Levitical sin offering dealing with the sins of omission, I felt the Lord say, *George, what have you neglected to do?* I realized while we were making our missions commitment of \$257 a month, we were not making any effort to grow in our missions support. The Lord was telling me to have a missions convention.

I called six itinerating missionary families and invited them to our convention. All of them had the date open. We held our convention in late October 1971.

I told our congregation we would set a goal of \$12,000 in faith promises. Then I felt the Lord say to me, *Believe Me for \$30,000.* I had no idea how I would generate that kind of commitment.

Attendance was 100 in our first service and 200 in our second service. I scheduled a Friday night banquet, Saturday night service, Sunday

morning service, and a concluding Sunday night service.

About 100 people came to the banquet. I thought that was good. Saturday night was a disaster. We had 15 people leading the service — six missionary couples, a guest speaker, my wife, and me. Twelve people were in the congregation. I was mortified.

I had already told the missionaries that I believed God would supply \$30,000 in pledges. These missionaries were receiving \$5 or \$10 in monthly support from our church, so this sounded good to them. Now in the middle of our convention with 12 people in the audience, I had more missionaries than people to support them.

As I tried to work up the energy to lead a hymn the Holy Spirit began saying, *George, remember the storm at sea? Why did Jesus rebuke the disciples during the storm? Because they had no faith. Did I put \$30,000 in your mind, or did you imagine that?*

I was arguing with the Lord internally while I was singing. *I think, Lord, that came from You.*

*Well, if it came from Me, then stop the song service and tell everyone that tomorrow you will have \$30,000 in faith promises.*

After the last verse, I stopped the music and said, "I'm going to do something a little unusual. I felt the Lord talking to me while we were singing this song, and I believe the Lord has \$30,000 for us to pledge."

I could almost feel the missionaries sliding down in the pews, asking themselves why they had come.

The 100 people who attended the first Sunday service pledged \$18,000 in faith promises. I did not report their pledges to the people attending the second service. After taking faith promises in the second service, the total for the convention was a little more than \$30,000.

That Sunday night I invited all the missionaries to our home and announced that the board had pledged each of them \$100 a month. John Stetz from South Korea asked, "Brother Wood, did you mean \$100 a year?"

I said, "No, \$100 a month."

He began to cry — it was the miracle they needed.

By 1981, the church had grown to 600, and we were preparing to build a new sanctuary. We had raised about \$1 million, but we would need to carry a \$2 million loan. Interest at the time was in the double digits.

"We've got a lot of bills," I told the board. "We're stepping out of a \$1,200 monthly

*I felt the Lord say, I'm not interested in building this church on your personality. I'm interested in building it on Mine. Put My Kingdom first, and I'll take care of you.*



*We discovered a surprising solution illustrated by an equally surprising object lesson.*

mortgage into a \$30,000 monthly mortgage. I'm recommending that we hold all the budgets for this year and the next, including missions."

I was not suggesting that we reduce our pledges. I was just calling for a moratorium on any increases.

"Pastor," the board said, "that's not how we've operated."

A sense of faith came into that board meeting. Over the next year our missions budget grew from \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year. This increase occurred during our building program, during our capital campaign, and while we were in transition and meeting in temporary quarters.

By the time our building was completed and we had been in it 2 years, we were approaching \$500,000 a year in missions giving. By the end of my 17 years at the church, we had gone from \$257 a month to \$45,000 a month in missions giving.

### **Chocolate Cake and Faith Promises**

So, where does chocolate cake fit into a church's missions giving? During my last missions convention as pastor, I talked about faith promises in terms of a three-layer chocolate cake.

The first layer of the cake represents *disposable income*. It is what you put on the dresser at night. If your wife takes it, it is not the end of the world; it is what you use to buy a newspaper, a Coke, or coffee at Starbucks. Does your faith promise include disposable income? The Assemblies of God as a Fellowship gives a huge amount of money to missions. But when you break it down per capita, it is about 25 cents a day per person. This means many people are not making their disposable income available.

The second layer of the cake represents *sacrifice*. I learned about sacrifice from my parents. My mother, a missionary to China at age 26, lived a simple life. In her retirement, while living on Social Security, she bought her clothes from Goodwill. "I can buy a good dress for \$2 that has only been worn a few times," she would say, "and I then have money to give to missions."

Sacrificial giving asks: *Am I willing to alter my lifestyle to advance the gospel?* Are Americans willing to live on less, drive a less-expensive car, wear less-expensive clothes, buy things on sale, and alter their lifestyle to advance the gospel?

The third layer of chocolate cake represents *faith*. That is the kind of giving motivated by a prayer: "God, I don't know where this is

coming from, but if You enable me over the next 12 months, I'll give it."

When I shared that illustration, Doug, Beth, and their four children were in the service. They had all come to Christ that year. Their eldest child was Becky, age 13. By this time we had about 2,000 people in attendance, so I had not even met them until the Sunday after faith promises when Beth came to me dragging Becky with her.

"Pastor," Beth said, "you've got to hear this story."

The family had never been to a missions convention. Doug was the wage earner, Beth, a stay-at-home mom. The children did not have jobs, and did not get allowances. But when I suggested that everyone make a faith promise, Beth noticed that Becky had pledged \$5 a month.

"Pastor," Beth told me, "I almost stopped her because Becky never sees \$5 a month."

But Becky dropped the \$5 faith promise in the basket as it went by. That Tuesday Becky was at the beach with her friends. She was walking along, not intending to go into the water, when she saw something in the surf — a piece of paper or something. She felt an inner prompting to go into the water and get it.

*I don't want to get wet*, she told herself.

The second time, *Go in and pick it up*.

*No, I don't want to get wet*.

The third time she finally went in. When she picked up the paper, it was a \$5 bill. Her first month's faith promise came floating in on a wave.

From the time Jesus told Peter to pull a coin from a fish's mouth, there has probably never been a faith promise filled that way. I jokingly tell people, "Don't make a faith promise and then head for the ocean."

Over the next 11 months, the Lord gave Becky babysitting jobs. She made her faith promise. She got out on the edge of faith, and God met her. That is what a faith promise is all about.

Pastors need to release their people to exercise their faith. Faith is like a muscle. If you do not exercise it, it will never grow. In 17 years of pastoring, our church never had a surplus. When I left, we were spending \$45,000 a week in ministry. Yet, at any given time, we might have \$1,000 or \$2,000 in the bank. God met us so many times when we had a need. The Holy Spirit continually encouraged us then — and still speaks to my heart today — not to wait for the money to do something for the Kingdom. 🍪







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## Pastors: More Respected Than Actors, Less Than Teachers

**T**he not-so-good news is that being a pastor is in the middle of the pack of “most prestigious occupations.” On the bright side, though, unlike many other vocations, respect for those engaged in full-time ministry is not falling.

The 30th annual Harris Poll measuring public perception of 23 professions ranked the “priest/clergy/minister” grouping eighth for having “very great prestige,” with 42 percent. Firefighters came out on top, with 61 percent.

Real estate agents barely registered, with only 5 percent calling that a prestigious occupation.

Being a minister is up 2 points from the previous year, fourth best among the jobs examined. The 2007 results are a full 10 points higher than the 32 percent registered in 2004. The high point was 46 percent in 1998. When Harris began polling the question in 1977, clergy had a 41 percent prominent rating.

In the 2007 questioning, an additional 23 percent said clergy had “considerable prestige,” 26 percent said “some prestige” and 9 percent “hardly any prestige at all.”

Many professions have dropped considerably in the past three decades. Scientists, while still ranked second, have fallen 12 points to 54 percent. Doctors are fourth but have dropped to 52 percent from 61 percent. Athletes have dipped to 16 percent from 26 percent, including a decline of 7 percent in 2007 alone. Bankers are down to 10 percent from 17 percent. And entertainers have decreased to 12 percent from 18 percent. “Actor” had the highest rating for “hardly any prestige at all” with 38 percent.

Bucking the spiraling downward trend is the occupation of teacher. Now tied for second with a 54 percent esteemed rating, educators measured had only 29 percent prestige 30 years ago. Military officers also have shot up, to 52 percent from 22 percent when first included in the survey 25 years ago. 🌱

## Insurer Deems Pro-homosexual Church Too Risky



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**A** local Michigan congregation of the nation’s most liberal Protestant body has been turned down for property insurance coverage because of the denomination’s pro-homosexual viewpoints.

In the first such incident in the country, Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana, refused to provide a quote to the West Adrian United Church of Christ. Regional underwriter Marci Frenz cited the potential for increased property damage and litigation because the denomination has affirmed the controversial position of homosexual marriage. Michigan voters barred same-sex marriage in 2004.

The United Church of Christ became the first mainline Protestant denomination to support same-sex marriage in 2005 and the first to ordain homosexual clergy in 1972. But the West Adrian congregation, which numbers about 100, is not at the forefront of gay activism. In fact, the local church is not among the 700 UCC congregations that have publicly endorsed the denomination’s “open and affirming” of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons.

Frenz noted that the for-profit company

is not making a moral judgment about homosexuality but merely seeking to minimize risk. The company did not have specific examples of pro-homosexual churches that had sustained property damage.

Some insurers have canceled policies in the past because of violence that occurred against churches for other reasons. For instance, several Southern black congregations in the 1990s lost coverage because of racist-inspired arson incidents. But the pre-emptive refusal to insure because of potential violence is a new approach. Brotherhood Mutual, started 91 years ago by a group of Mennonites trying to protect themselves from fire and storm damage, now insures 30,000 churches and related ministries.

John Kottke, pastor of the West Adrian church founded in 1836, had sought a bid from Brotherhood Mutual in an attempt to lower costs. The church has been fully insured by Safeco Corp. for several years. 🌱



## Unchurched Cite Multiple Stumbling Blocks

**P**eople who will not set foot inside church have a couple of chief reasons for staying away: They think they can have a relationship with God without weekly worship services, and they believe the pews are full of hypocrites.

LifeWay Research of Nashville, Tennessee, in January released a study of more than 1,400 people who had not attended any type of religious service in the past 6 months. A whopping 86 percent said a person "can have a good relationship with God without being involved in church." And nearly 3 out of 4 — 72 percent — indicated they consider the church "full of hypocrites, people who criticize others for doing the same things they do themselves." Nearly 8 out of 10 regard Christianity as "more about organized religion than about loving God and loving people."

While respondents largely decried the

institutional church, its founder fared much better. Seven out of 10 agreed that Jesus "makes a positive difference in a person's life." In addition, they are not so hardened as to reject all evangelism efforts. Almost 8 out of 10 (and 9 out of 10 unchurched people under age 30) said they would enjoy having an honest conversation with a Christian friend about spiritual beliefs. Nine out of 10 said they have "close friends" who are Christians. However, a minority of respondents, 44 percent, stated,

"Christians get on my nerves."

"Many are tripping over the church before they hear the message of the Cross," said LifeWay Research Director Ed Stetzer. "What is it about the faith we live that causes our culture to like Jesus but reject the church?"


Many people who avoid congregational life do not really understand who Jesus is, the report found.

Just under half agreed that only one God exists. More than three-fifths say the God of the Bible is no different than spiritual beings depicted by Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. Just slightly more than half accept Jesus' resurrection as real.

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"The study clearly documents the 'Oprahization' of American Christianity," Stetzer said. "It's very much a generic 'big-guy-in-the-sky' view of God."

Despite the confusion and skepticism, Stetzer is encouraged that many nonchurchgoers are open to learning about the Savior.

"We think religion is a topic that is off limits in polite conversation, but unchurched people say they would enjoy conversations about spiritual matters," Stetzer said. 

## Pastors Wives Have Internet Resource

resources can equip us to faithfully and enthusiastically partner with our husbands for ministry and service," says President Becky Hunter of Orlando, Florida. "There is an ever-growing list of places and people to connect with on a personal level."

The Web site (<http://www.gpwn.tv>) has a host of resources updated weekly to assist women married to pastors. There are various videos, articles, and blogs to help women improve relationships with their husbands, children, church members, and other pastors' wives.


"Help is available in areas such as hospitality, prayer, and discipleship," says Arlene Allen, who is director for the national Women's Ministries Department. "And a pastor's wife

has the same challenge as any other wife in keeping the right priorities with her husband and children before other responsibilities."

One of the primary benefits of GPWN is that it provides encouragement to women who may not know where else to turn in facing various difficulties.

"It's a safe place to go," Allen says. "Women realize they aren't the only ones going through a certain problem."

Although GPWN is primarily a Web-based ministry, the organization also sponsors Free to Soar Conferences.

Allen notes that Women's Ministries groups in many Assemblies of God districts also are endeavoring to minister to wives of clergy, with annual conferences and a variety of Internet resources. 

**W**omen who are looking to enrich their lives with their minister husbands and families, as well as seeking support from other pastor's wives, have a

**nondenominational Internet resource in the Global Pastors Wives Network.**

"GPWN believes that connecting with each other and sharing





# Going Far: Traveling Together Toward

BY L. JOHN BUENO

An African proverb says, "If you want to go quickly, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel together."

Every follower of Christ who has a sense of God's direction on his ministry has a natural passion to carry out the Great Commission on the strength of his personal mission statement. But learning to meld one's personal fervor for outreach with the leading of the Holy Spirit among the wider body of Christ has a multiplying effect with eternally significant results. The same holds true when individual ministry groups develop partnerships for worldwide outreach.

In the early days of the Pentecostal movement our leaders were not inclined toward organization. Most had left mainline churches after receiving Christ within the context of a Pentecostal revival. They looked with suspicion on religious institutions, a suspicion often

merited by the hostility of *organized religion* toward anything Pentecostal.

But our spiritual forefathers felt compelled to organize, even though it was not their preference or natural inclination. Careful reading of the minutes of the first several General Councils reveals among the principal reasons for organizing was for doctrinal clarity and unity, establishing Bible training schools to prepare people for full-time ministry, and to provide ethical accountability for ministers. The clearly overwhelming, driving force was the desire to obey our Lord's command and reach the world for Christ. One fact was inescapable: They could not possibly fulfill such a great task individually and divided. Necessity compelled them to unite their efforts for the greatest cause on earth — reaching a spiritually lost world before the Lord's return.





# Missions Success

David Dobson

The success of that divinely mandated mission rests on the commitment of diverse members of the body of Christ coming together while honestly accepting the spectrum of characteristics each brings to the ministry endeavor.

Worldwide missions succeeds when the *eyes, ears, and feet* the apostle Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 work together with Spirit-coordinated agility.

## **We Succeed When We Accept Others' Distinctives**

It is human nature for someone to say, "I'm going to get it done myself." A church may embark on its own ministry overseas by establishing its own contacts and perhaps building an outreach center or ministry outpost in a

foreign country. That congregation might honestly believe they can identify where the maximum number of people will come to Christ in response to every missions dollar invested. But philosophically, this congregation does not understand the mission Jesus gave the Church.

We cannot objectively compare a missionary working in Argentina — where revival is ongoing and hundreds of people accept Christ every month — with missionaries working in restricted countries where the government prohibits overt preaching and where it is not possible to carry out the traditional ways of evangelism. Jesus called the Church to plant the gospel in the hard soil as well as the fertile soil. This requires partnership.

One of the Spirit-inspired foundations of Assemblies of God World Missions is its willingness to partner with local believers without giving up our core values or doctrinal truths. Brazil, for example, is the largest Assemblies of God work in the world — more than 20 million strong. Brazilian churches do not have the same church polity as the Assemblies of God in the United States, or as in most other countries. Large churches in Brazil plant daughter churches and tend to keep them under a central church's authority. But they have found ways to do a powerful work for the Lord in that nation. We can partner with them and accept their differences in polity because we agree doctrinally and in our core values.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, we have partnered with many Pentecostal unions in that region. They have bishops and maintain different governance, but we agree

**One of the Spirit-inspired foundations of Assemblies of God World Missions is its willingness to partner with local believers without giving up our core values or doctrinal truths.**

doctrinally and in spirit. We unite with them in our passion to reach the lost of our world.

In partnering with these churches rather than competing with them, we have accelerated our outreach by decades. The Commonwealth of Independent States Pentecostal unions are well established. They survived as underground churches through years of communism. Now that they are flourishing, we can come alongside them with training and other resources they need.

## When we work through partnership, the Great Commission moves ahead much faster than when we are dogmatic about our methodology.

In the 212 countries and territories where the World Assemblies of God Fellowship ministers, our partnering fellowships have different church polities. By partnering with people on the field and foregoing our own systems, we are able to be more effective. When we work through partnership, the Great Commission moves ahead much faster than when we are dogmatic about our methodology.

### We Succeed When We Nurture Long-term Vision

Working together is a valid principle anywhere. If applied to the United States, our strength in working together today is unparalleled in history. God has abundantly blessed our churches with human and material resources. The challenge is to get our churches to take a long view of a mission field's potential harvest.

There are churches with the finances and personnel to pursue individual

projects overseas and do a quality job. But when you look at the total picture, will that ministry have longevity? Will it have long-term effect among local believers? Will the project survive when the church changes senior pastors or when it shifts its support to another country? Will the ministry fit into a fellowship or a structure that will guarantee long-term success? It may be easy for a U.S. church to say, *Let's do it fast. Let's do it our way.* But our African proverb would invite us to reconsider.

Pastors recognize this principle at work in their own congregations. A pastor, in many cases, could do a better job of a particular ministry task than most laypeople. But the wise pastor trains laypeople to carry out and expand his church's ministries. The pastor who thinks he has to do everything will lead a stagnant church that will never grow beyond the pastor's own ability to care for a limited number of people.

individuals to commit to this cause, be willing to partner, and agree to accomplish Christ's purpose together.

The Lord himself exemplified this. Jesus could have built His public ministry as a lone maverick. He could have taught, fed, and healed everyone himself. He is the Son of God. But Jesus gathered 12 flawed disciples and invested himself in them. Those men were to carry on after Him. We see in the Book of Acts how the Church multiplied and grew after Christ ascended to heaven.

### We Succeed When We Recognize Our Limitations

In my lifetime I have observed the ministry of many independent missionaries who were people of faith. They were willing to give up everything and live sacrificially. God honors a servant spirit that will pay any price to obey the Great Commission.

Too often, though, a person with an independent spirit passes by resources the Holy Spirit would invite him to accept. The lone missionary serving on a field where the government is restrictive and the culture is resistant to the gospel may go down in defeat if he does not find a ministry partner. It helps to have a colleague. It helps to have someone who shares your ideals, your faith, and your burden for people. Too many times those with a pioneer spirit start with great vigor, faith, and a willingness to give up everything, but end up leaving the field defeated. Maybe their support base dwindled. Perhaps they grew discouraged. Those wounded individualists underscore the value of working together as a team, of having a support system.

The world's challenges are staggering. In response to billions of unreached people, it would be natural to say, "That's too many," or "Let's find a shortcut." Some radio and television preachers claim they have found a new way to reach a billion people or to carry out a massive outreach. But in the end, they depend on

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**"I work with AGWM — Assemblies of God Whale Ministries. I help runaway missionaries get to their God-given assignments."**



Any system of any size will have bureaucratic challenges. I confess that I chafe under the system myself. A large organization, such as ours, may develop bureaucratic principles that may not be fundamental to our mission. But we have to face the requirements of the IRS, the requirements of our United States legal system, and the legal systems and governments overseas. We must make sure we do not put people in jeopardy, whether missionaries in the field, our national churches, or even our churches at home. But as we consider the impact of our missions endeavors around the world, the benefits are much greater than the liabilities.

### **We Succeed When We Maximize Our Resources**

I do not think any organization offers more specialized support to its missions personnel than does the Assemblies of God. Consider, for instance, our programs for missionary kids. We are committed to helping MKs not only when they are on the field but also when they are home and facing times of transition. This is a great blessing; I do not for a moment consider it superfluous. Our support programs are essential to the well-being

of our missionary families.

Speed the Light is another compelling example. Many organizations admire the way our missionaries are equipped. This cannot be done through individual effort. Tens of thousands of youth across our nation have partnered with us to provide our missionaries with the best tools possible. Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade has been a tremendous blessing by providing for many ministries around the world. Women's Ministries has been, from the very beginning, a program offering key support. Light for the Lost for many years has provided literature to facilitate evangelism.

No one missionary can raise funds for his personal support and, at the same time, raise money for vehicles, equipment, and literature for the unevangelized. But these Assemblies of God support structures help our missionaries in that process. And these support structures demonstrate again and again that we cannot do ministries alone.

### **We Succeed When We Minister in Unity**

On a recent trip to Southern Asia, I saw firsthand a missionary team

— our missionary body as well as the national leadership of the local church — working in the unity of which I am speaking. Every missionary family was working to reach the same goal. Everyone had taken on the task of being part of a team pushing forward a broad spectrum of ministries.

During my visit, I continually saw the results of this spirit of unity. This spirit of unity transferred to the national church. When the national church sees missionaries unified, they see the value of cooperating with them in ministry. The national leadership in that country then partners with our missionary body. This is how missions needs to work. This is what Jesus wants us to do. His mission and desire is to build the kingdom of God through a unified body of His followers.

When we individualize our ministries to the point we can no longer see the value of others, we detract from the real purposes of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is to glorify Christ and spread the name of Jesus in the world. But sometimes our own kingdoms get in the way. We dedicate too much time to building up and fulfilling our own ambitions in the name of ministry. The focus of our life becomes our own pet project. We fail to see the Great

## **Partnership**

**T**oday, more than 2,700 AG missionaries and associates work hand-in-hand with national leadership in 200 countries and territories around the world. The newest complexity that is enriching the work of the Kingdom is the partnerships national leadership develop with missionaries commissioned by the countries AGWM missionaries pioneered years ago. In many parts of the world, missions has come full circle. In some

**cases, multiple countries are represented in the Missionary Field Fellowships.**

In each region of the world we partner with other Pentecostal groups. Though the names of the fellowships may be different, our common doctrine and commitment to evangelism make these partnerships more effective and far reaching. Each partner's contribution is essential in reaching the lost and training leaders. One group may provide funding while the other supplies cultural understanding, language skills, and identification. Partnerships make ministry more effective.

Not all national leaders with whom we partner share the same priorities. Their framework of ministry may be different from the U.S. church. Don Corbin, former Africa regional director, understood this when he said, "We may go into a country with passion, vision, and energy, but they have experience and cultural understanding. Sometimes these two forces clash. ... The challenge is to blend the two. Nothing destroys partnering like an independent or domineering vision that doesn't allow for others."

## We are open to every ministry birthed by the Spirit in the heart of a dedicated servant of God.

Commission's broader picture and fail to value what others are doing to fulfill Christ's mandate.

### **We Succeed When We Remember the Larger Missions Endeavor**

Multiplication among the worldwide body of missionaries is a powerful outgrowth of our partnership with other fellowships. Emerging countries in the Assemblies of God family now sponsor more than 5,400 international missionaries. It is our responsibility to reach out and maximize their missions impact wherever possible. They may work in isolation if we fail to make a concerted effort to include them. They may struggle to build financial backing and gain the material resources we take for granted. As we expand our vision, we can partner with these new brothers in mission and multiply their ministry.

In Northern Asia, for example, the missionary fellowship consists of U.S. missionaries as well as missionaries from Guatemala and other countries. They are working as a team to accomplish a 21st-century mission. So much more can be done as we continue to make a deliberate effort to bring emerging missionaries into our Fellowship for encouragement, for partnership in their projects, for financial support, and for other logistical contributions to create new and powerful outreaches in our day.

As the exponential growth of these missionaries from emerging countries develops, a day will come when there will be far more of them than there are U.S. missionaries. It is vital that we find ways to work together to share our ministry journey. It can be laborious, time consuming, and an intercultural challenge, but the harvest of people

will prove it worth the effort.

In some cases, this involves working together with other denominations. I believe any level of cooperation that helps move us back to the unity of the Early Church is Spirit-led. This is not yet happening as it should, but the spiritual demands of this age point us in that direction. We need to be sensitive to the Spirit to hear what the Spirit is saying to us about our relationships, about our networking, and about our finding ways to work together, instead of competing with people of like faith.

### **We Succeed When We Innovate While Maintaining Focus**

As our mission continues to multiply and new challenges, opportunities, technologies, and communities open themselves to us, I am convinced the Holy Spirit is speaking with clear guidance to missionaries to draw them together in creative and innovative ways to fulfill the Great Commission. Today's missions milieu requires a challenging and sometimes paradoxical balancing act between flexibility and innovation on the one hand and commitment to core doctrine and missiological values on the other.

Any organization that would greatly impact the world must learn to walk a fine line between preparation for a wide variety of tasks relevant to its mission and a retained focus on the primary purpose they wish to accomplish. In the history of Assemblies of God World Missions, we have clearly prioritized establishing indigenous churches through four pillars of missions outreach — reaching, planting, training, and touching. Various authors will deal with these in more detail beginning on

page 54 in this issue of *Enrichment*.

An organization devoted to specialized ministries in missions can often best accomplish that purpose. For almost 24 years AGWM has had a partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators. We have 27 Assemblies of God missionaries working with Wycliffe. Our AG churches can support these Wycliffe missionaries and receive World Missions giving credit for doing so.

This partnership does not conflict with the many missionaries involved extensively in translation. For example, Sobhi Malek has developed an Arabic New Testament, and John Hall translated a Mossi Bible. But going into a primitive culture whose language is not yet reduced to writing, and dealing with that level of specialized translation is a task where Wycliffe excels. Our missionary leadership determined long ago to partner with Wycliffe in these areas.

We are open to every ministry birthed by the Spirit in the heart of a dedicated servant of God. As the Spirit convinces our leadership of that person's calling, commitment to building the Kingdom, and contribution to our primary task of establishing and serving the long-term health of our national churches, we make room for his ministry.

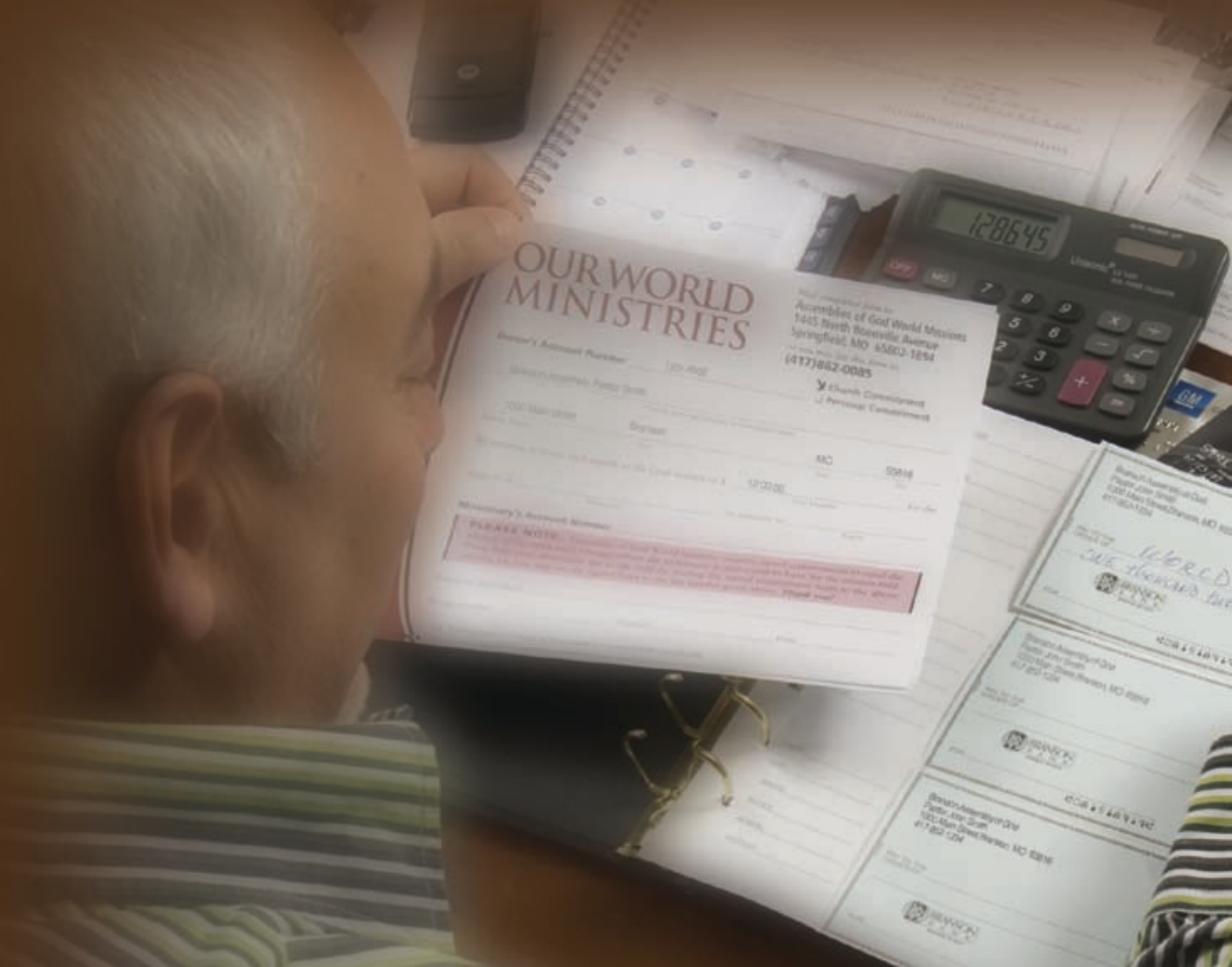
Are there ministry visions that our mission cannot accommodate? Yes. The article by Jean-Baptiste Sawadogo on page 68 in this issue speaks eloquently to that. But I am thrilled to see an ever-growing variety of missionaries and ministries coming together in these last days to bring the gospel to every corner of the globe and to every hungry heart. ☺



**L. JOHN BUENO**, executive director, AG World Missions, the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri







# The Key to the Mira

HOW SOWING SEED TO WIN PEOPLE TO CHRIST WILL





Jim Lersch / Dave Danielson

# culous

GROW YOUR CHURCH

BY RANDY VALIMONT

Most people who have searched for significance have encountered divine interruptions — moments when God arrested their intentions and reshaped their outlook. I remember one such event early in my ministry. The truth God communicated to me that day is the key to the miraculous.

Whatever victories you experience, whatever accomplishments God connects with your ministry, whatever level of success Christ brings to your life, all of it will be an outgrowth of your willingness to give. In particular, your willingness to give sacrificially to the cause of Christ around the world will most determine your ability to transform your immediate sphere of ministerial influence. I am talking about world missions.

The Assemblies of God, since its inception, has dedicated itself to sharing the gospel with the lost using every available means. As a church, we take the Great Commission very seriously. So does our Lord. Since the founding of the Assemblies of God in 1914, we have grown to more than 60 million adherents around the world. When you consider that this kind of growth occurred in less than 100 years, you can understand why we, as a Fellowship, embrace and understand the miraculous.

When you communicate a passion for world missions to your congregation, two things will happen. You will see your ability to minister to distant and desperate needs begin to multiply, and you will see your ability to meet the needs of your own congregation expand even faster. But I had to learn these lessons myself.

## Tested Wisdom

I learned about missions as a youth pastor while working for my father-in-law, Gerald Jordan, at First Assembly of God in Springdale, Arkansas. I could not understand why he was so interested in giving to complete strangers whom he would never see, never meet, and never personally influence. I understood the need to win the lost, but were the lost not right around us? In fact, that argument would even be more persuasive today because America ranks third in the number of lost people of any nation in the world. Were the lost not in our own hometown? Were the lost not in our own home state? Should we not concentrate our efforts on these people?

As I thought about this, I asked my father-in-law why we gave so much of our church budget to missions. He took me to lunch once he noticed the consternation in my voice

# The Key to the Miraculous

and the quizzical look on my face. He explained to me the heart of God in such a profound way that I have never forgotten that conversation.

He said one thing that stirred me more than anything: "Son, if you will care about God's world, He will care about your church."

I protested, and said, "I do care about God's world."

He said, "Our doing must be propelled by His going."

What a profound statement. He was sharing with me the very core of the church's existence. Jesus told His disciples not only to go to Jerusalem, but also to go to Judea and Samaria,

and the uttermost parts of the world.

True giving, my father-in-law said, was giving to ministries that would

— reaching people you may never see, touch, or hear. When I began to understand and apply this principle,

## God began to bless our church in proportion to how we prioritized missions in our monthly activities.

not benefit your church. As pastors, we sometimes forget that. We are so interested in winning the lost and building our churches that we sometimes get confused concerning this aspect of true giving. Nevertheless, that is what missions is all about

my life changed. God began to bless our youth ministry as we became more and more involved with missions.

### Applied Truth

Missions was an established foundation of my ministry as I began my first pastorate. It is one thing to be convinced of a truth, but it is another to convince your congregation. Your people will only catch what you believe and what you are passionate about.

The year before I came to Toccoa, Georgia, the first church I pastored, the church had given less than \$2,500 to world and U.S. missions. I knew that every church needed to give to experience God's blessings and expansion. But the church was barely meeting its own obligations and believed its current level of missions support was sacrificial.

I shared the concept of missions giving and what it means to be a missions-giving church. I worked the concept into my sermons. I looked for opportunities to invite missionaries to minister to us. I reminded the people of the world's needs even as we looked for ways to meet our own needs. The results were amazing. God began to bless our church in proportion to how we prioritized missions in our monthly activities.

After 9 1/2 years, the church's missions giving grew to almost \$60,000 per year. Incredibly, the overall giving of that church grew from \$30,000 to \$550,000 during that time.

## Sharing Testimonials Observations From Missions-minded Churches

**Assemblies of God World Missions** continues to expand its reach in ministry throughout the world because churches in America are growing in their missions visions, along with the mission in our world.

Testimonies will appear in several articles throughout this issue. They are from churches with fewer than 300 in Sunday morning attendance, but whose missions giving has consistently and significantly grown over a 5-year period.

Throughout these testimonies, pastors and others share the initiating factors that moved their churches into a significant increase in missions giving and the impact increased missions giving has made in the spiritual life of their churches and communities.

"Seven years ago our church made a deliberate effort to increase our commitment to share the gospel in our community and around the world. We determined to support every new candidate missionary from our district while increasing our support to every veteran missionary we supported who was home on furlough. Our people accepted the challenge and our missions giving has increased by more than 300 percent.

Four missions trips have given our people a firsthand view of the value and fruit of their world missions investment. Our awareness of God's plan for the world has also motivated us to share the gospel at home. Our congregation grew from fewer than 100 in attendance to more than 240 — the most new believers in our 97-year history."

**ALAN J. EHLER**, pastor, Warm Beach Community Church, Stanwood, Washington



During those years, even as we invested our funds in ministries around the world, God blessed our church. We constructed new buildings and improved our grounds. With our increased giving to missions, we experienced increased resources to meet the needs of our own growing church. During that time, God faithfully supplied. In fact, we always had more than enough. It is interesting to note how the numerical figures of the church grew proportionately to the missions giving figures.

### Expanding the Miracle

When we came to First Assembly of God in Griffin, Georgia, the situation

One of the miracles occurred when we went to a Light for the Lost banquet. The speaker shared that missionaries could use every piece of literature purchased with Light for the Lost funds over and over again. This would result in multiple decisions for Christ. It was as if the Holy Spirit turned on a light in my spirit. I knew if we sacrificially gave to Light for the Lost, we could reach thousands of people for the Kingdom. If we were in tune with the heart of God, He would use the money we gave sacrificially and multiply it back to us to meet our own needs. I knew if we wanted to grow a church, we would need to sow a seed to win people to Christ.

two major remodeling projects later, our annual income has grown from \$400,000 to \$10 million, and God continues to bless. Our church missions giving has increased from less than \$10,000 a year to more than \$3.6 million in recent years.

### Divine Constant

Nothing worth achieving will ever be easy. In your pursuit of ministerial significance, the seemingly impossible will often confront you. When you identify your need for a miracle, take that opportunity to dedicate even more of your resources to the Miracle Giver.

During the difficult months and years following 9/11, many in the church were suffering and needing to cut back, but God was blessing us. When the recession of 2005 hit Atlanta, the Ford and GM plants closed. Then Delta Airlines, as well as Northwest, filed for bankruptcy. Many of our people had to take 25, 30, or 40 percent pay cuts. To compound this crisis, one of our local plants that employed 500 people closed. Real

## Our church changed because we became interested in God's world, and God became interested in our church.

was even more desperate. The church was \$5,000 behind in its bills. The church income hovered around \$400,000 a year, but the budget was more than \$8,000 a week. We had a \$20,000 short fall that was compounding every year.

Missions giving in 1992 was nearly \$10,000. Some people might feel good about that number, especially in a church struggling to meet its financial obligations. In my estimation, missions giving of less than \$10,000 represents a genuine neglect of a key to the miraculous.


One of the board members asked me how we were going to get out of our financial dilemma. My response was we were going to give our way out. I am not sure that was the answer he wanted to hear, but that was how God began to do it.

I will never forget when God started the change for our church in Griffin.

We sowed a seed of \$3,000 as a faith promise. This church had never made a faith promise that large in its 65-year history. It is amazing what took place. Within weeks, people began to accept Christ — drug addicts, prostitutes, and gay bar keepers were attending and finding Christ as their Savior. The largest marijuana dealers in Georgia came to our church and accepted Christ. Our church changed because we became interested in God's world, and God became interested in our church.

Five building programs and





# How To Conduct a World-class Missions Week on a Small-church Budget

**W**hen the Holy Spirit leads a church to hold an event, there are always challenges. The biggest challenge is to try something in a church that has never been done before — whether it is an outreach event or a mission's convention. I have pastored only two churches. The first had 35 people in attendance our first Sunday morning. Finances were a major issue in that church, and missions was an afterthought. Even as a 23-year-old pastor, I understood the correlation between missions giving and a church's finances.

Statistics show how important it is for churches to hold a missions convention. Missions conventions highlight what God wants to do through the local church. When a church becomes missions minded, it affects the church's mindset, philosophy, and how the church sees itself, as well as how the community and the world choose to view it.

Having a missions convention is vital to a church that has a Great Commission attitude. What follows are some ideas that worked in Toccoa as well as in our church in Griffin.

Look at the end before you begin. Picture in your heart what you wish to accomplish. Some would simply say, "To raise money." But missions is much more than that.

The three things you must do in any missions convention are: educate, motivate, and dedicate. Ask yourself, *What does the congregation know about the heart of God for the lost and world missions? What do they not know?* Start 3 to 4 weeks ahead of the missions convention by sharing a biblical view on the depravity of man. Your missions convention needs to tell a story. Great stories have an exciting beginning, a great story line, and a thrilling ending. The sending of the gospel fits this description better than any other story.

We made sure everyone knew 6 months ahead of time when the missions convention would take place. We educated the church board and leadership on the importance of the convention and on what we wanted to accomplish. Everyone — youth, children, adults, and musical people — was involved in the event.

In our small church we could not afford flags or costumes, but we called some of our sister churches for help. The main Bible college for the Christian Missionary Alliance is located in Toccoa. They, along with their largest church in town, loaned us flags and costumes for our missions convention. We could not afford to cater the food, so we asked each department to be responsible for a country or a region of the world for our Friday

banquet. The youth took Italy, so they could provide — you guessed it — pizza. The children's department took America, so they could provide hamburgers, hot dogs, and apple pie. The adult Sunday School class took another country, and so did those involved in the musical areas.

Two things happened when we did this. First, each person took emotional ownership and became physically involved in our Friday missions banquet. Second, it cost the church nothing. The women's ministries was in charge of decorations. During the Saturday men's breakfast someone shared information on Light for the Lost and what this ministry does around the world.

During Sunday services, the speaker challenged the people on giving to missions and explained the faith promise concept. We collected faith promises during each Sunday service and at the banquet on Friday night. This was part of motivating our people for the lost. The Holy Spirit must be given opportunity to touch lives when and where He desires. It is common for a person to make a faith promise during the Friday banquet and by Sunday evening increase it considerably.

During my 15 years at Griffin First Assembly, I have seen incredible things happen during a missions convention. I have watched as people took steps of faith and saw their businesses blessed, their families healed, and their lives turned upside down.

We have seen how missions has affected every area of the church from children and youth to the senior adults. One of our young people became so enthralled with missions that when her parents planned to buy her a car, she asked them to give the money to Speed the Light. She plans on becoming a missionary.

The last, and perhaps most important thing we do, is ask those who feel called into full-time missionary or pastoral service to come forward at the conclusion of the final missions service. We ask the missionaries to lay hands on these people and pray for them. What an exciting time it is as families gather behind their loved ones and pray for them.

I have seen a father turn down a promotion because his son had a missionary call on his life, and he wanted his son to grow up in a Spirit-filled, missions-minded church. The spiritual tide of our church is very high at the end of our missions convention. Our missions emphasis is the greatest and most important weekend on our church calendar.

Together, let's finish the task so Jesus can come.

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**RANDY VALIMONT, PH.D.**, Griffin, Georgia



# The Key to the Miraculous

estate prices in the Atlanta area — that had seemed insulated from other areas — suddenly collapsed. Builders were no longer building homes. The real estate market was flooded with people wanting to sell their homes, and foreclosures were taking place. During this time, we never gave up our core belief: If we take care of God's world, He will take care of our church. If we have to choose between missions giving and building-fund giving, we knew we would give to missions, and

giving. As you teach your people to give sacrificially to missions, you teach them to love God's world God's way. This is one of the most significant truths we communicate as leaders — teaching people to have significance in their own lives as an outgrowth of their commitment to expand the Word of God. This is *finding significance in insignificant places*.

If you have ever been to the mission field and seen lost people saved or witnessed the completion of a major

drinking water.

- Every 16 seconds someone dies of hunger.
- 57 million people died in 2006.
- 10.5 million of those were children under the age of 5.
- 14 million were orphaned because of HIV/AIDS.
- 2 million children have died because of armed conflict during the last 10 years.

Meanwhile:

- \$8 billion was spent on cosmetics in America in 2005.
- \$11 billion was spent on ice cream in Europe.
- \$17 billion was spent on pet food in the United States and Europe.
- \$105 billion was spent on alcohol in Europe.

Have we done enough? Have we given as much as we can? In 2007, Assemblies of God U.S. churches gave \$208 million to World Missions through 2.8 million constituents in the United States. This means we gave \$6.19 per person per month, or about 20 cents per day per adherent.

We must feel the burden, and we must finish the task. God wants to pour His resources into churches that will bless the world with the message of Christ Jesus. Will we be available and willing to be a conduit of God's grace and mercy? 🙏



**RANDY VALIMONT, PH.D.**, senior pastor, Griffin First Assembly of God, Griffin, Georgia. He is currently executive presbyter of the

Georgia District Assemblies of God and general presbyter for the General Council of the Assemblies of God. This article is based on chapter 11 of his book, *Expand Your Reach: Finding Significance in an Insignificant Place*.

#### NOTE

1. Excerpted from *World Challenge, Inc.*, World Challenge Missions Update newsletter.

## When we do something extra for missions as a church, God seems to do something extra for us.

we did over and over again. Why? Because we knew God would take care of our building if we would take care of what was important to Him.

Miraculously, even through the most difficult economic time the Atlanta area had ever experienced, God continued to let our church grow spiritually, numerically, and financially.

When we do something extra for missions as a church, God always does something extra for us. It is the law of sowing and reaping, and your church's harvest field is no different. The question you must ask is: *What are my priorities?* Do you really believe God is your Source? The temptation is to see the numbers and then rationalize your giving. But when you prioritize missions, you connect yourself to your ultimate source for every blessing. You open the door for the miraculous.

In Malachi 3, we read God's promises concerning the tithe. God promises if His people bring all the tithes into the storehouse, He will pour out a blessing that they cannot contain (verse 10). This passage deals primarily with the tithe, but I am convinced it also applies to missions

project funded by your church's missions dollars and had people, through tear-stained eyes, thank you for your hard work and effort, you know the chorus to the hymn, *When We See Christ*, applies like never before.

"It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,

Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;

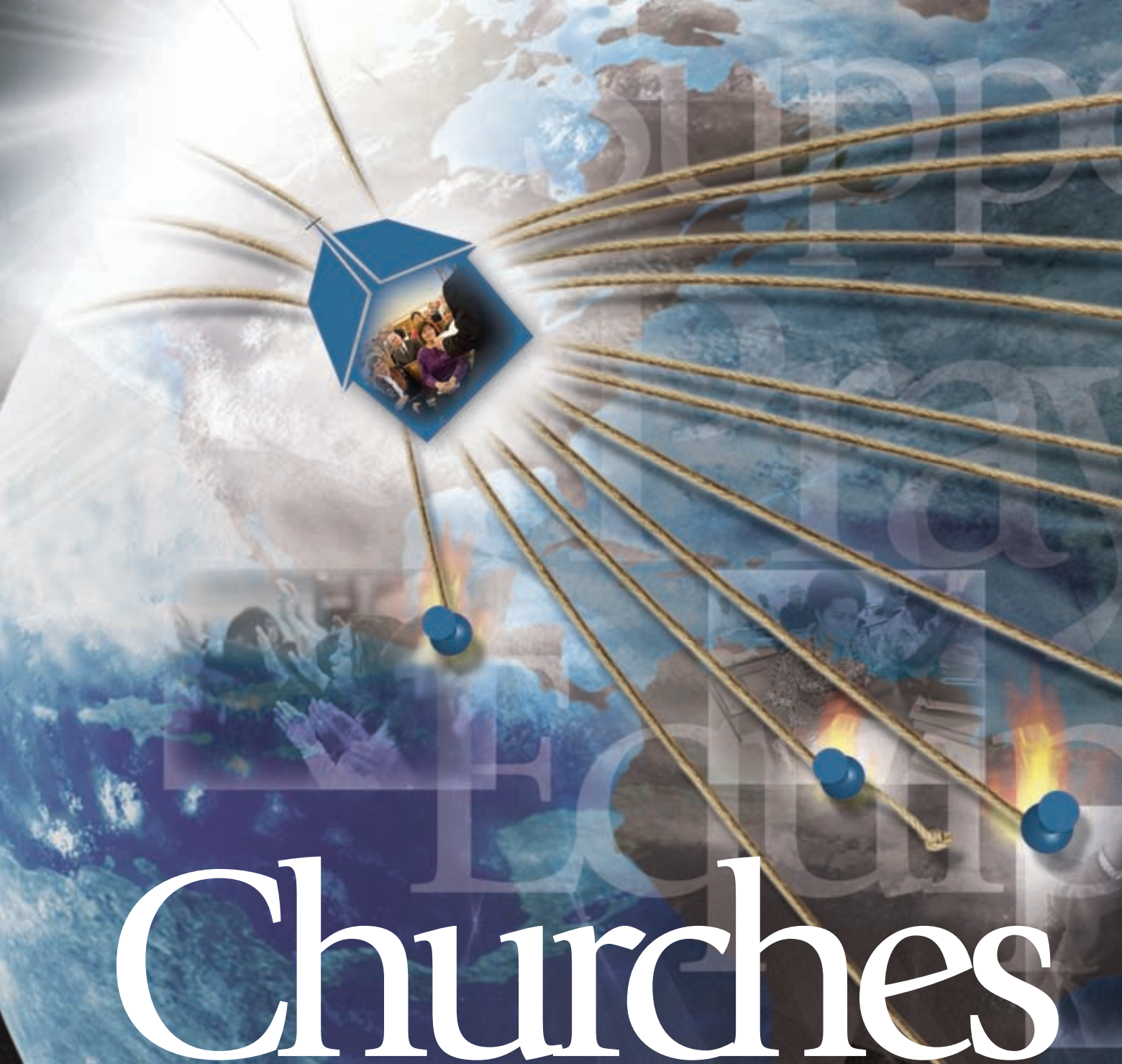
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,

So bravely run the race till we see Christ."

May we never forget the reason God birthed the Pentecostal church: to be the greatest missionary-sending agency the world has ever known. May God help us to stay focused on the task.

Some would say that we have done enough. I say a resounding, "No." Recent missions statistics,<sup>1</sup> as of 2006, tell us the following:

- Almost 6.6 billion people live on the earth.
- 1.2 billion people live on 23 cents a day.
- 2 billion people have no electricity.
- 80 percent of all people live in substandard housing.
- 1 billion people are without safe



# Churches & Mission

*A Marriage Made in Heaven*





Photo illustration: Dave Danielson

# aries:

BY DON JAMES and MARK LEHMANN  
with SCOTT HARRUP

Look in the back of your study Bible and you will most likely find several maps of Israel and its surrounding regions during different historical eras. Often included is a map of the Mediterranean coastline during the early years of the Church. Several color-coded arrows indicate the three missionary journeys of the apostle Paul as recorded in Acts.



## ► An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

**"The initiating factors in our increased missions giving include sensitivity to the Word of God, understanding and obeying the Great Commission, and the compelling testimonies of missionaries who decided to say yes to the Lord and, in complete obedience, left everything to share the gospel."**

"The most important thing is for each member to understand his responsibility in extending of the kingdom of God in this world. We have seen the fruit locally; every Sunday service people accept Christ in our church."

**HEBER A. PAREDES**, pastor, La Puerta Abierta Church, Irvine, California

If that final map were truly complete in its analysis of Early Church's missions endeavors, a large star would indicate the church in Antioch. Paul's journeys were only part of the missionary equation — his sending church was a silent partner whose influence Paul felt through the remainder of Acts.

Reading Acts 11 and 13, you learn that Paul and Barnabas first contributed their ministry to the church in Antioch. Later, the church in Antioch sent them to be a blessing to the church in Jerusalem (also meriting a star on the map, since the Jerusalem church had sent Barnabas to Antioch in the first place). Finally, after the church in Antioch gave itself to a season of prayer and fasting, the believers there sent Paul and Barnabas into the greater Gentile world with the gospel.

This was not a partnership of human design. Repeatedly, the text reminds us of the Holy Spirit's commanding and nurturing involvement. Nothing in this church/missionary relational dynamic has changed between the first and the 21st centuries.

**"After they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:3).**

Imagine a truncated version of the above verse: "They sent them off." Strip away the fasting and prayer,

and you have a group of Christians who heard of a need, identified two emissaries of the gospel, and merely provisioned them for a journey.

But the church in Antioch was not about entertaining the shallow enthusiasms of the moment. Those believers had a Spirit-driven commitment to the Great Commission. And their commitment had a solid foundation in prayerful communion with the Spirit.

Visit Cornerstone Church in Bowie, Maryland, pastored by Mark Lehmann, and you will discover the same ongoing process.

### Concerted, faithful prayer is just one aspect of the deep relationships built between both churches and the missionaries they support.

Pictures of missionaries line the walls of the sanctuary. During a regular Saturday evening missions prayer meeting people move from picture to picture, placing their hands on the images and praying fervently for God's provision and anointing on missionaries and regions by name.

No brief generic pleas here for God to "bless all the missionaries." They bathe their prayers with tears.

A similar drama plays itself out at Bethany Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey, pastored by Don James. Every service bulletin lists missionaries from

the 150-plus supported by the church. Every service includes specific prayer for specific needs.

Concerted, faithful prayer is just one aspect of the deep relationships built between both churches and the missionaries they support. At Cornerstone, the congregation views nearly 160 missionaries as members of the church staff. Why? Because they are a direct extension of Cornerstone's vision to reach the lost.

When missionaries and churches relate this closely, they create an environment of long-term mutual blessing. Early in Cornerstone's ongoing 12-year relationship with missionary Bill McDonald, it sacrificially gave toward the construction of a church in Cuenca, Ecuador. The tables recently turned when Cornerstone moved into its own building campaign. The Cuenca church flew its pastor to Bowie to hand-deliver a check toward that construction.

But the priority of relationship supersedes any dollar figure. Bethany's families are contributing more

than \$100 a month to each of the 150 missionaries they support. The church's large-scale commitment demonstrates an established missions vision. But the congregation at Bethany keeps a prayerful focus on the missionaries themselves and the people they are reaching.

The greatest impact any church will have on the nations is not merely through funded ministry projects. As exciting as it is to partner with local believers in building Bible schools or churches, the real focus is the people themselves. The greatest impact for



## The greatest impact for the Kingdom comes when the church sends missionaries supplied with a foundation of loving relationship and support to communicate Christ's love to people on a mission field.

the Kingdom comes when the church sends missionaries supplied with a foundation of loving relationship and support to communicate Christ's love to people on a mission field.

Missions is a people enterprise first and foremost. Any church that merely underwrites missionary budgets, large-scale outreaches, and building projects will accomplish little for the Kingdom. The church that weeps over lost people will reap eternal harvests.

**"The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus" (Acts 13:4).**

Paul and Barnabas did not embark on their ministry with a tether holding them to Antioch. In spite of the technological differences of that day and the lack of communication, these missionaries journeyed with the trust of their sending church. There is no mention of representatives from Antioch telling Paul and Barnabas that Seleucia should be their embarkation point, or that the church would expect a report on the first boat back from Cyprus.

Paul and Barnabas were "sent on their way by the Holy Spirit." The church in Antioch exercised trust in their missionaries — and in the Spirit's leading.

The same way in which a pastor desires the trust of a congregation, a missionary desires the trust of a pastor and supporting church. Missionaries need to sense a congregation believes in them and in their commitment to pursue God's

plan, hear God's voice, and obey God's leading on a distant field.

Missionary communiqués are not *stockholder reports* or memoranda to some collective board of directors. Excitement in reaching the lost, and trust in the missionary's God-given direction, should energize communication between the missionary and a supporting church. Our wired world allows for regular newsletters, e-mails, even teleconferencing and Internet video. All of these tools can serve to deepen

a partnership between a supporting church and missionary.

It is unrealistic for a church to expect a report from every missionary it supports on a monthly or quarterly basis. It is unrealistic to demand personal responses to every letter from a parishioner or Sunday School class. If a church places such expectations on a missionary, trust has evaporated. The church is treating the missionary like a ministry employee rather than a ministry partner.

On the other hand, when trust permeates the church/missionary relationship, information can flow between the field and the home base with Spirit-inspired timing and significance. Cornerstone and Bethany prize those opportunities to intercede for a missionary who calls or e-mails from the field with a timely plea for

## No Church Too Small

**When district officials invited me to pastor a small church that was suffering from a succession of annual pastoral changes, the first thing I did was look for the missions bulletin board.**

For several years Calvary Christian Assembly of God had faithfully supported five missionaries. Not knowing who would be leading the congregation each year, they tenaciously clung to history and were reluctant to commit to new partnerships.

During our first 6 months we built relationships and trust. In our 10th month we held our first Missions Emphasis. We invited two missionary speakers and had a fellowship meal. We added these two missionaries to our roster and doubled our monthly commitment to all seven missionaries. In 2000, our adult membership had grown to 20.

With 35 adult members, we now

support 11 world and 2 U.S. missionaries. Each summer we conduct our Missions Emphasis. The church gives each speaker a fixed honorarium and, other than tithes, all money in the offering for that service. As a congregation, we have built a bush church in Africa and a village church in Laos. In 2004, the church sent my wife and me on a 3-week missions trip to the Philippines and Laos. Over the years, national speakers from the Philippines and Malaysia have blessed us.

The heart of a pastor must be for missions, and he must communicate his heart joyfully to the congregation. Faith promises are just that — faith promises. "As God enables me, I will." As we do, He blesses the body of Christ.



**GERALD AND ALICE HORNE**, Calvary Christian Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri

prayer. Both congregations, above their regular financial support, are ready to take on momentary material needs created in crisis.

When trust permeates the church/missionary relationship, such appeals never carry the overtones of begging. Missionaries communicate their need with a supporting church as one partner sharing vital information with another in the context of a common endeavor.

The trust equation works in both directions. A visiting missionary will trust a pastor's sense of timing and will not question his understanding of the Spirit's direction for a church service. The missionary invited to share his ministry vision during a 5-minute window will not feel slighted because he did not have more time in the service. The missionary will trust that partnering congregation and pastor

to follow the Spirit's leading and give toward the need obediently.

**"The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11:29,30).**

The believers in Antioch had a history of outreach that went far

## When a Missionary Visits Your Church

Over the years, I have come to love visits from our missionaries. These visits are a highlight for me and for my congregation. Missionaries bless us, challenge our hearts for the lost, and report what God is doing on the field.

Because they are a blessing to us, we do our best to bless them. In fact, our goal is to be a greater blessing to them than they are to us. Financial support is important, but there are some dos and don'ts that go beyond financial support.

These simple, yet creative ways to bless missionary guests can work in a church of any size or financial capability.

### Ways To Bless Your Missionary Guests

#### Treat a missionary with honor

Missions is about missionaries. Scripture clearly states, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:14,15, KJV).

You cannot have missions without missionaries. Make certain you do not present them as just another *tool* to accomplish your mission goals.

Having missionary guests presents opportunities for a pastor to demonstrate to his congregation how to show honor to those who give their lives to the divine call of God. The pastor's attitude is of utmost importance if this is to happen. The congregation will develop the same attitude as their pastor.

#### Be a friend

Itineration is one of the most difficult tasks a missionary must do. Not many pastors would enjoy leaving their ministries for a year to travel full time so they could go back and pick up where they left off.

Itineration involves many things. A missionary must uproot his family and leave the mission field. The family must adjust to a different church culture than when they left years before. Itineration involves long hours on the road with and without family. It can be a difficult season for our missionaries.

As a pastor, you understand the need for someone to care. Our missionaries are no different. Remember that missionaries are people. They have needs that go beyond the ministry God has called them to. During itineration they may not be receiving the personal support their fellow missionaries provide. Situations may exist with their family or their health. They may be experiencing personal frustrations as well as personal testimonies outside of their ministries. They often need a friend and a safe place to share the highlights and burdens in their lives. Become that friend.

#### Express love in practical ways

We have a cupboard filled with practical necessities for our missionaries. We provide new clothing, bedding, school supplies, and other things for missionary families. By providing these practical things their finances can go toward other areas of need. Not every church can do this, but simple acts of kindness in practical ways can go a long way.

Missionary parents always appreciated gifts for their children. Pampering the missionary's wife with a gift card to a women's store is a way to make her feel loved. A fruit basket in their hotel room with a welcome letter can do wonders. At our yearly convention we buy personal gifts for each of our missionaries and their family members. Simple gestures like these send a message that says, "We are glad you have come."

When possible, invite the missionary and his family to a home-cooked meal. Eating out gets old after a while, especially when the family has young children, or when a missionary is traveling alone. It is usually easier to relax and fellowship in a home versus a restaurant. The relaxed setting in a home lends itself to a different kind of conversation.

If the missionary's family is staying overnight, make certain the accommodations are comfortable. Some well-meaning people open their





beyond their commitment to prayer and funding. They sent emissaries (in this case, the very men who would become their missionaries) to the church in Jerusalem when that sister group of Christians faced difficult times.

The missionary-minded church will involve its members in outreach in capacities far beyond their signatures on monthly support checks.

Bethany maintains a giving philosophy of *buying into lives*. A recent project took Bethany pastoral staff

Another Bethany team went to Poland to build ministry relationships and to offer encouragement in that nation.

## Missionaries today can inject vision and vitality into their sending churches.

to Italy to partner with missionaries Bob and Lynn Rose in training and encouraging local church leadership.

Cornerstone goes beyond support of missionaries in Asia or Central Eurasia or Europe to personally connect with

homes for missionaries to stay in, but their homes may not always be the most comfortable place for a missionary family to stay. A missionary needs to be able to relax and have some time alone. Respect that.

### Pray for them

Missionaries have told me that one of the highlights of our missions convention is our prayer time with them. During our convention our congregation circles missionaries and prays for them and their families. We also hold a tea party for the women, and we provide a reception with coffee and soft drinks for the men. If the missionaries have children, we have special activities for them. This arrangement allows us to have some adult time with their parents.

In this setting we give them personal gifts. We also pray for any needs they may have. During this time missionaries often bear the burdens of their hearts. Some might have a prodigal child, or are leaving one of their children stateside for college. Other missionaries know a parent will probably slip into eternity after they return to the field. Through this endeavor, missionaries gain prayer warriors who will pray for their ministry and their needs after they leave.

God has often moved our people to respond to the needs missionaries have shared. One of our home missionaries shared about his father's illness. He was concerned that he would not be able to see him before his death. He told how hard it was to be thousands of miles away and feel so helpless. Before the prayer time was over, God had moved on the heart of one of our men, and he gave money so the missionary could fly home to see his dad.

### Behaviors To Avoid When You Have Missionary Guests

Here are some things I have learned not to do when a missionary comes. Some of these are from my experiences as a pastor and some are from my experience serving on the AG World Missions Board.

#### Do not blame missionaries for things outside their control

Even though it is appropriate to ask missionaries about their budget, it is important to know they did not set their budget. If a pastor thinks the budget is not appropriate, he has a right to express his opinion.

But it is not appropriate to attack the missionary because of it.

Second, missionaries have no control over many of the decisions made concerning their field. It may not be appropriate for them to give details about decisions made by someone above them. Instead of confronting them personally, ask them who would be the appropriate person to talk with.

#### Do not get upset if they are not good fundraisers

Some of our most effective missionaries are not good fundraisers. In addition, each congregation is different. The missionary depends on the pastor to help him know what to do and how to approach the congregation.

#### Do not assume they know what you want from them

They probably will not remember how things were done the last time they visited your church. There may have been 5 years and many churches between visits. Communicate what you are expecting from their time with you.

#### Do not allow someone to corner and dominate them

Many congregations have people who will dominate someone. As pastors, we know the people in our congregations who have that tendency. We need to take the initiative to help our missionaries out of any awkward situations.

#### Do not make promises you will not keep

A missionary would prefer that you tell him upfront if you are not able to support him. Explain how your church processes missionary requests and what to expect. Do not give false hope; be upfront with him.

The next time a missionary comes to your church, do all you can to make his experience with you a blessed time of ministry and fellowship. You will find that you benefit from it as much as they do.



**MARK BOONE**, senior pastor, Heritage Assembly of God, Baxter, Minnesota



## ► An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

**"A few factors have been significant in increasing our missions giving over the past few years.**

1. Pastor James G. Nichols shares his heart for missions from the pulpit on missions Sundays and when talking about or introducing missionaries.

2. Members of our congregation make faith promise commitments at our annual missions celebration. We remind people on the first Sunday of each month to be faithful in giving their faith promise offerings.

3. Our pastor invites missionaries throughout the year. Seeing a missionary, especially one we support, is like seeing an extension of the church family. We promote missions services with enthusiasm — as exciting services that are not to be missed. Missionaries preach five to seven times each year.

4. A monthly missions focus can be done in a variety of ways, including media presentations.


5. We have a creative and thought-provoking annual missions celebration that piques the interest of the whole church. Last year was Mission China. On the final night of our celebration, we created stations where people could experience Chinese culture and spiritual need. People visited a house church, tasted Chinese food in a Chinese marketplace, and saw several of the false gods worshiped in China.

6. Church members, especially those who are new to the church or those who have not had exposure to missions, share a meal with missionaries after worship services.

7. We also e-mail prayer requests from missionaries to many people.

Some people and families have given generously to missions. This has generated excitement, enthusiasm, and energy for our missions ministry, which has become contagious and motivated even more people to participate by making faith promises."

**JANET CAREY**, missions coordinator, Calvary Church, Lemont, Illinois



**"Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people" (Acts 11:26).**

In the years before their travels, Paul and Barnabas began their ministry partnership as a powerful teaching force in their sending church. They directly contributed to the Antioch church's growth and vision development.

Missionaries today can inject vision and vitality into their sending churches. Pastors who invite missionaries to hold a service should do so with the expectation the visiting missionary will speak into the lives of the congregation. Certainly there can be the communication of need and ministry goals on the mission field. There should also be the communication of encouragement and direction for that supporting church's current and localized ministry.

The pastor needs to say to the visiting missionary, "Give me your heart. Share your heart with me. Go beyond the statistics and tell me what you sense God is saying."

Such an invitation for revelation will create a context for dynamic proclamation of both the foreign harvest and the local growth of the gospel.

Case in point, a missions service held several years ago at Cornerstone by a missionary to a restricted country pulled no punches when it came to the need in that nation. The believers in that region are under constant threat from a multifaction government that blindly enforces an aggressive majority religion.

The visiting missionary's presentation came in the midst of Cornerstone's capital campaign for its current building. A dual miracle took place during the service. The people caught the vision of the guest, their hearts resonating with his call for total sacrifice for the cause of Christ.


rescued Asian prostitutes, orphans in Uzbekistan, and struggling new churches in Europe.

Many local churches minimize and neglect the incredible advantage they have in connecting with missionaries and mission fields on a deeper level than just support. Missions is so much more than a fiduciary consideration. It is an expression and an extension of the life of the local church. As churches and missionaries partner on multiple levels to accomplish the Great Commission, they will reach people around the world for eternity.

Is partnership on the field always

possible? No. One of the unfolding miracles of missions today is the assignment of missions personnel to restricted nations where the gospel's propagation is challenged legally, culturally, and religiously at every turn. In such circumstances, a supporting church may only receive hints of the ministry going on. There can be no question of sending teams on-site or even sending funds directly to the missionary. But the church attuned to the Spirit and blessed with an ongoing partnership with the greater missionary family will find many creative ways to support the spread of the gospel in new and spiritually arid harvest fields.





Cornerstone gathered one of the largest missions offerings in its history. Along with that offering, however, came a greater sense of commitment to needy people living within the shadow of that church. Within 6 months, the entire

In reality, it does not matter at what level a church is giving to missions today, that pastor and that church started at some initial level of participation at the Holy Spirit's prompting.

## The church that listens to the voice of the Spirit and opens its eyes to the lost around the world will inevitably discover an expanded vision for local ministry and an expanded understanding of heaven's limitless resources.

building project had been underwritten with sacrificial pledges.

**"During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch" (Acts 11:27).**

The churches in Antioch and Jerusalem point to another powerful dynamic in the church world today. The Holy Spirit uses networks of churches to address spiritual need. One church can powerfully encourage another in carrying out the will of God.

God has blessed the Assemblies of God with a network of churches, districts, and missions leadership united in carrying the gospel around the world and building up local ministries and believers. This is not a network built on self-growth or selfish improvement, but on the indigenous church principle.

Our network structure creates an environment for encouragement. Churches that have yet to develop a vision for missions might never do so if left in isolation. But when pastors from those churches attend sectional or district functions where leadership has invited a missionary to speak, the Holy Spirit finds ways to call out new partners in ministry from the ranks of those pastors.

District leadership can also be an invaluable source of encouragement to missionaries. The missions director at a district council does so much more than act as a liaison between district churches and itinerating missionaries. Again and again, missionaries can attest to the timely advice and comfort offered by a district leader. The road to a foreign field can seem long and the task of raising support, daunting. But our missionaries are not making that journey alone. Multiple levels of leaders and partners within our Fellowship are resourcing them and holding them up in prayer.

**"The Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me'" (Acts 13:2).**

What is the Holy Spirit asking of you and your congregation in regard to world missions? That is a question every pastor and church family would do well to evaluate prayerfully and regularly.

The struggling church with apparent meager finances, humble facilities, and dwindling attendance may be tempted to circle the wagons and look to its own needs while leaving missions support to others. They could make no greater mistake. Such a view will only perpetuate meager

finances, humble facilities, and dwindling attendance.

Could there have been any more challenging circumstances than to begin a church in a corner of the Roman Empire dominated by a spectrum of Eastern faiths? In the very empire that only a handful of years earlier had crucified the Savior they would proclaim? Yet, the Christians in Antioch never shrank from the task before them. They were committed to obeying Christ's mandate to reach the nations even as their immediate situation must have appeared impossibly constrained. As a result, their church thrived and the Gentile world was turned upside down by the power of the gospel.

The church that listens to the voice of the Spirit and opens its eyes to the lost around the world will inevitably discover an expanded vision for local ministry and an expanded understanding of heaven's limitless resources. The growing partnership between a missionary and a church can only lead to two equally powerful expressions of God's love and generosity: on the mission field in the form of changed lives and growing churches, and on the home front in the form of changed lives and growing churches. 🌍



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# LOOKING BEYOND:

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## FINDING FAITH FOR HIS PROMISE

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BY RANDAL ROSS

I will call her Ruth. As a widow in Calvary Church in Naperville, Illinois, Ruth just gets by on her Social Security check. She stretches her money to the last penny.

Ruth would seem like the last person to commit \$2,500 a year to missions. But she did just that during one of our missions emphases. She trusted God to give her the resources to give \$50 a week.

God honored her faith and her obedience. Money began to come in the mail and through miraculous sources. Even though Ruth never shared her faith promise publicly, people continued to pour blessing into her life. At the end of that year, her income had increased.

I will call them Jake and Mary. They are small-business owners, moderately successful entrepreneurs, and not rich by any stretch of the imagination. For them to commit \$180,000 was sacrifice squared. The ink was hardly dry on their faith promise card when their business dried up. They could have withdrawn their faith promise and we would have understood. That is the reality behind faith promises. You make a commitment to God — not to a church, a pastor, or a missionary —

**That is the reality behind faith promises. You make a commitment to God — not to a church, a pastor, or a missionary — and you trust God with the results.**

and you trust God with the results.

Jake and Mary determined to trust God. As far as they were concerned, there was no going back. And God agreed with them. The sudden plummet in their business completely reversed itself. By the end of the year they had received the funds to honor their faith promise with money left over.

Then there is Henry. He had been unemployed for months when he made his \$100,000 faith promise. I have heard people make large commitments out of emotion, and I am quick to caution them to seek God's guidance. Henry hardly had a dollar to his name, but he was convinced God had led him to promise a six-figure offering to missions.

when our congregation was struggling to meet monthly expenses. Under those circumstances, many pastors will not lead their people to make faith promises because they believe it will take money away from the church's general fund.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Faith promises will energize a congregation to increase its giving. The key is to move ahead steadily and focus on faith, not on hype or emotion. Start small, determining you will increase your giving as God provides. Trust me, God will provide. When you put the kingdom of God first in people's hearts, it comes back and blesses your church financially in tithes and offerings. It is an amazing process.

Every church has bills and salaries to pay, and a building to maintain. Those are important issues, and there is nothing wrong with being honest with God about one's concerns and fears. But as you commit your church's needs to God, as you read the Word and let it fill your heart, you will begin to sense Him leading your church into uncharted territory of generosity and blessing. Perhaps you will sense the Holy Spirit leading you and your church to give \$1,000 or \$10,000 or \$50,000 for missions this month or this year. Seek the Lord, and let those first steps build a foundation.

We were a struggling church. We thought we were stretching ourselves to the limit when the congregation committed to give \$50,000 that year



A lawyer called Henry and told him he was the heir to a relative's estate. The first payment alone from his inheritance covered that \$100,000.

### **Looking Beyond the Red Ink**

Years ago, at a previous church, I discovered the blessing of faith promises. That discovery came during a time





to missions. But God provided. In the years since, I have seen God continue to provide. Today at Calvary Church, our faith promises amount to more than \$50,000 a week. And God responds with even more blessing.

### Looking Beyond Local Need

It seems counterintuitive during a time of financial stress to loosen a church's purse strings rather than tighten the collective belt. But God is at work in the hearts of your people. Steady, disciplined giving that stretches

long-term commitment as the means to a Kingdom harvest.

### Looking Beyond Single Faith Promises

Living with a faith promise mentality quickly becomes a lifestyle. Our people understand their giving is not just for that year; they are building the Kingdom by supporting missionaries and their work year after year. It is rewarding. Calvary Church has been supporting some missionaries for 35 to 40 years.

**It seems counterintuitive during a time of financial stress to loosen a church's purse strings rather than tighten the collective belt.**

beyond local vision to encompass a lost world is spiritually powerful. It produces a healthy long-term environment of faith in the church. An external focus on others' needs is always healthier, and a healthy church will grow. More people will be drawn to an environment of generosity.

We use two special emphases a year to connect our people with worldwide need. In the spring, we have our annual missions emphasis and give people opportunity to make a faith promise for the year. In the fall, we make the people aware of several special ministry projects. Many families in our church sense that God is leading them to make additional commitments toward those needs.

Our people look forward to these annual events as a chance to see what their money and their prayers have accomplished. I mention prayer because faith promises are about far more than finances. God is bringing about tangible life change in our people's hearts, and they see that

We build long-term commitment into our families by consistently providing teaching and opportunities to give. We begin 2 weeks before our main faith promise service by leading people into prayer and heart preparation. All our small groups have prayer for missionaries and for

God's will in how those missionaries need to be supported. Our people are praying that others will be saved and an impact made beyond any dollar amount.

A faith promise is not primarily about money; it is about reaching the lost for Christ and making them into His devoted followers. A faith promise never begins with money; it begins with the heart. And it does not focus exclusively on the believer's heart. Giving in faith is finding a special connection with God's heart. Our lost world is God's passion as demonstrated on the Cross; our lost world is why Jesus died for all people; our lost world is our mission.

The church that starts with prayer and vision will find the faith to believe for the money. When your congregation takes on a passion, vision, and a heart for the lost, when they are faithfully praying and talking to God, they will come to the place where they joyfully open their resources to reach a lost world.

## An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

"My intent when accepting the pastorate at First Assembly 4 years ago was to pick up the 19 missionaries the church had dropped, to add to their support each year, and to add some of the missionaries visiting our church. We currently support 40 missionaries and mission organizations at home and abroad. I have been amazed at the people's response to worldwide crisis needs and to overseas and U.S. Missions projects. Twelve people traveled to Fiji to help improve the Bible school there. For the first time in years we sent a ministry student from our church to Bible school. Our missions emphasis has an immeasurable impact on the spiritual life of our congregation."

**JOHN R. BLAKELEY**, pastor, First Assembly of God, Escalon, California

## Looking Beyond the Few to the Many

Have you ever daydreamed of starting into a building program or having a heart for a significant ministry project? You know it is going to cost your church a huge sum of money, so you enter your prayer closet and wait

**When people make a faith promise in the right environment, they should never need to worry that someone will call them or demand money from them.**

for God's provision. After a suitable season of prayer, someone knocks at your office door. You open the door to find your administrative assistant holding a check. Some wealthy member of your church or community has caught your vision and decided to completely underwrite your project.

There are true stories to this end. But I am convinced that in a healthy church everyone gives — above their

tithes and offerings — to missions. This key value of distributing a large need among all of God's people energizes a church far more than one or two spectacular gifts could. In fact, I am convinced a spectacular gift could discourage many of the members of your church from giving.

At Calvary Church, we teach on faith promises as every new believer and family becomes a part of the congregation. It is part of our new members class. It is part of our teaching from the pulpit. It is part of the scriptural truth studied in our small groups.

For example, we give occasional reminders when we receive our tithes and offerings: "Don't forget your faith promise now that we're getting toward

about money; it also concerns the results of their obedient giving. When they see those results enacted through the missionaries we sponsor, they soon begin to sense they can be part of that action in a more personal way. Because of this, every year we take dozens of missions trips.

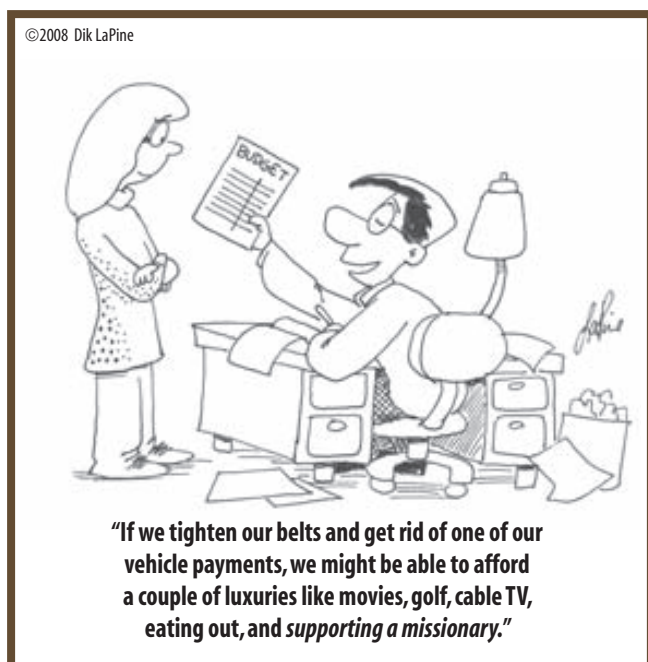
Imagine the excitement when we feature a testimony from our own people before we take an offering. We say, "Twenty people just returned from Africa; 100 were saved. We had such a great time seeing God's work done there. This was accomplished because of your faithful giving in faith promises."

Relate their giving to a Kingdom result, and offer them opportunity to move beyond giving to going. People do not want to give toward neutral things; they want to see lives changed. They want to see that their faith promises are eternally effective. They want to see people reached, as well as bodies ministered to through humanitarian outreach. What better way to do this than to join a short-term missions trip and go where their offerings have been going?

## Looking Beyond Goals to God

When people make a faith promise in the right environment, they should never need to worry that someone will call them or demand money from them. We make this clearly understood at Calvary Church. A faith promise is a commitment between that person and God. As they make progress on that promise, God will provide, and they will continue to give. It is a faith journey.

God can lead in different ways. Encourage people to pray about what God wants them to do. Let Him give them an amount to commit to or a



July. Be faithful." As we move toward our fall missions emphasis, each month we put a missions article in our newsletter about faith promises. We remind the people where the money is going, what is happening, and we encourage them.

## Looking Beyond Giving to Going

People need to see that missions giving is not only





project to give toward. They may not know how they will raise the money; they just ask God to provide and watch for a miracle.

Miracles can occur weekly, monthly, or yearly. Hourly employees may want to base their giving on each paycheck. Business owners may want to schedule their faith promise for every quarter or every 6 months. At Calvary Church, we make a point of showing what

Spirit to impress them with the right size gift to be given over the right amount of time.

In the final analysis, the heart of a faith promise is not tied to raising money. As a church leader, you need to promote faith promises to honor the Lord and to grow your people. As noble as missions ministry is, faith promises are not just about getting money for missionaries. Faith

## As a church leader, you need to promote faith promises to honor the Lord and to grow your people.

people's commitments will go toward, and we ask them to pray over their gift, trust God, and let Him speak to their hearts.

When that kind of focus on God is in place, we feel comfortable asking people to fill out faith promise cards, or take the cards home and return them later. We trust the Holy

promises are also about blessing your people and growing in them a sense of Kingdom values.

If you do not believe giving is a central part of your spiritual journey — that it is good for your people to grow through their giving — then you cannot teach on faith promises with integrity. But if you pray with integrity,

“Lord, I believe this is Your plan,” your people will sense it. Something happens in a congregation when a pastor discovers that missions giving is not primarily about money; it is about growing a passion in God's people for reaching the lost.

### Looking Beyond

In the end, the joy of a faith promise is looking beyond any limitations to an unlimited God. The joy of a faith promise is looking beyond the superficial number crunching that would place your church's giving in some kind of pecking order with other churches. The joy of a faith promise is looking beyond the challenges of today to the hope of what God will do in lives around the world tomorrow.

Be obedient to the Lord. Grow in Him. Help your people grow in Him, and let Him take you and your church on a wonderful journey.

Money is involved in God's plan for every Christian. When you have a passion for Christ and you are growing disciples, money will be part of that equation. God wants us to be givers, and He wants us to use our resources for Kingdom purposes. As you build a heart for Christ and teach your people to live devoted lives for Him, the Holy Spirit will convict them to make financial giving and serving a part of their spiritual journey.

Faith promises from your congregation will come together in a mosaic of giving inspired by the Spirit. It is part of God's plan to connect this hurting world with the healing power of the Cross. ☺

## ► An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

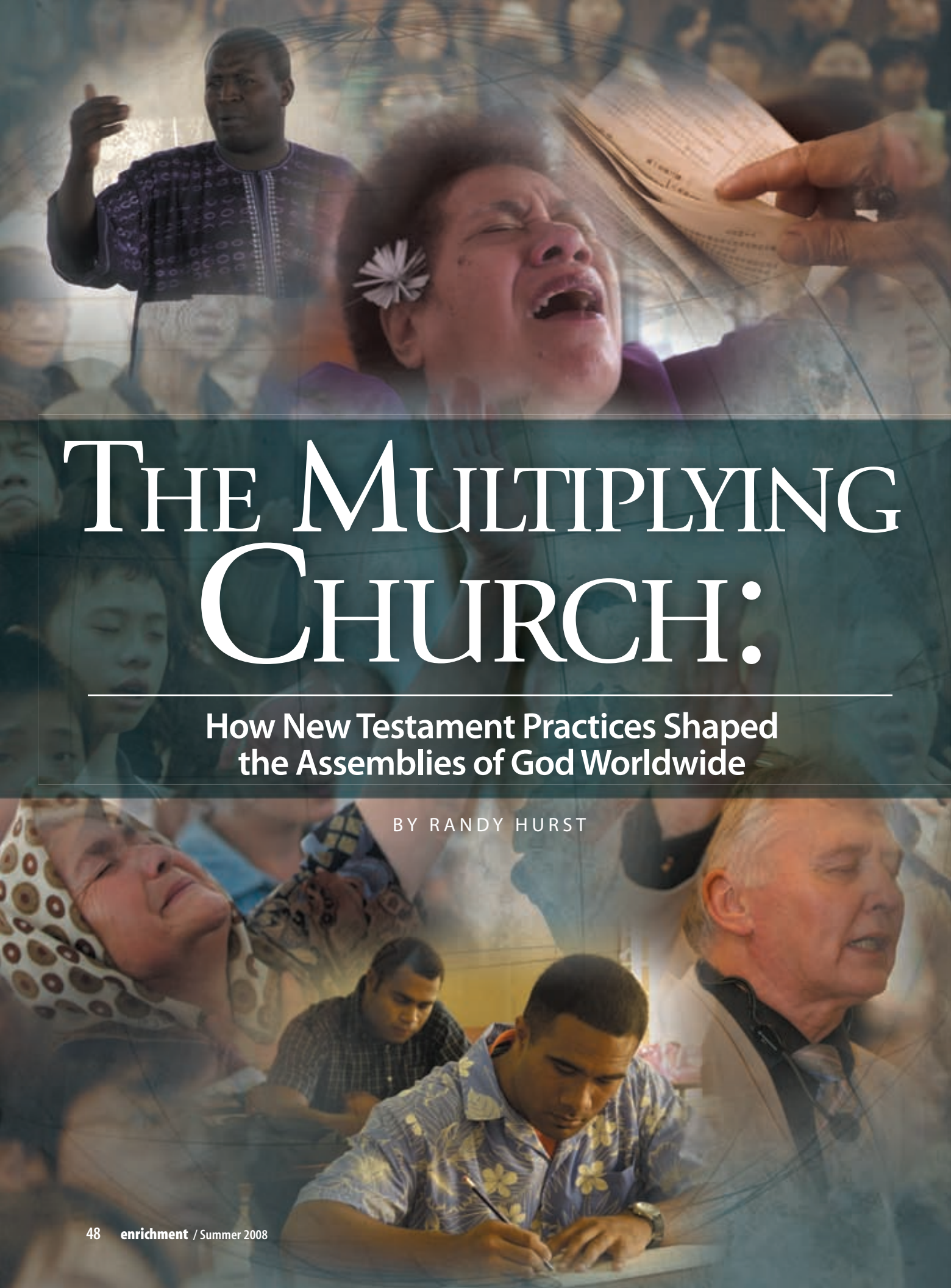
**“I came from a missions-giving church. On arriving at Roswell Assembly, we made missions giving one of our core values. Each year we set a goal for monthly support to missions, and we have increased that amount every year. Faith promises have been a vital part of increasing our missions giving. People continue to stretch themselves in giving to missions.**

**“Setting these goals has brought a continued awareness to our congregation that ministry is more than just about us; it concerns reaching the world. We emphasize not only reaching around the world but also reaching around the corner through community outreaches. Our missions core value is: Participation in and financial support of local, domestic, and world missions reaches lost people for Christ.”**

**CHARLEST. NEWBY**, pastor, Roswell Assembly of God, Roswell, Georgia



**RANDAL ROSS**, senior pastor, Calvary Church, Naperville, Illinois



# THE MULTIPLYING CHURCH:

How New Testament Practices Shaped  
the Assemblies of God Worldwide

BY RANDY HURST



More than 4 billion people still have not received an adequate witness of the gospel. How can we reach them?

After 94 years of Assemblies of God missions, we have more than 60 million believers in more than 310,000 congregations worldwide. But this represents just over 1 percent of the world's vast, unreached multitudes. When we consider this challenging task of reaching our world, how can we hope to see the Great Commission fulfilled?

In recent years the term *best practices* has become common. This term describes a management approach that seeks the most efficient and effective processes and methods to produce a desired outcome. Best practices, then, are based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time. Early Assemblies of God missions leaders were committed to a *best-practices* approach long before the term came into popular use.

We frequently quote a resolution made in 1914 at the second Assemblies of God General Council: "We commit ourselves and the Movement to Him for the greatest evangelism the world has ever seen." These words were not born out of fervent optimism or self-confidence, but a heartfelt, intentional response to the command of our Lord to go into *all* the world. Their tone reflects

*Indigenous* describes churches that begin, grow, and live in their own natural setting or environment.

both a comprehension and an apprehension of our Lord's promise concerning the Spirit's empowerment to accomplish the task.

Another resolution passed 7 years later at the 1921 Council was even more significant in the history of our mission because it determined *how* we could fulfill the declaration made in 1914.

The 1921 resolution stipulated that we would guide our mission using *New Testament practices*. Among the six practices listed were these: (1) "The Pauline example will be followed so far as possible, by seeking out neglected regions where the gospel has not yet been preached, lest we build

upon another's foundation" (Romans 15:20); and (2) "It shall be our purpose to seek to establish self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing native churches."<sup>1</sup>

A vital correlation exists between these two practices. The apostolic character of the first practice means that the mission will prioritize establishing Christ's church where it does not yet exist. The missiological character of the second practice defines the methodology. Effective fulfillment of the first practice depends on commitment to the second.

What the resolution describes as "self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing 'native' churches" is now known by the term *indigenous churches*. *Indigenous* describes churches that begin, grow, and live in their own natural setting or environment. Our early leaders determined that the Fellowship's mission was not to transplant the American church, but to plant bodies of believers that would live and grow without being dependent on the U.S. church that sent the missionaries.

Several missionary leaders were influential in establishing indigenous church principles and practices. The first, Alice Luce, was significantly influenced by Roland Allen, an Anglican missionary to China. Allen's book, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, was published in 1912. In the spring of 1921, Luce wrote a series of three articles for the *Pentecostal Evangel* entitled "Paul's Missionary Methods." These clearly had significant influence on the 1921 General Council resolution.

After Noel Perkin became foreign missions secretary (now executive director) in 1927, he championed the New Testament practice of establishing what we now call *indigenous churches*. No one was more influential than Perkin in comprehensively integrating these principles into Assemblies of God missiology.

Thirty-two years after Luce's writings, Melvin Hodges, missionary to El Salvador and Nicaragua from 1935 to 1953, documented the primary missiology of the Assemblies of God in his book, *The Indigenous Church*. Published in 1953, Hodges' work set the course for missions, not only for the Assemblies of God, but also for many other evangelical missions agencies.

The pervasive and lasting success of indigenous church principles, however, is due to the many little-known missionaries who practiced these New Testament methods throughout the world. In the 1920s through the early 1950s, AG missionaries began to aggressively plant indigenous churches around the world. The growth of those indigenous churches escalated. In 1953, the number of Assemblies of God believers outside the United States surpassed the number in America. (*See graph on page 52.*)

# THE MULTIPLYING CHURCH

## Empowerment and Indigenous Principles

The approach taken by the Assemblies of God in establishing churches throughout the world can be summed up in Paul's command to Timothy: "The things which you have heard from me ... these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2, NASB).<sup>2</sup>

The apostle Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to appoint elders and deacons in every new church. This practice set a pattern for an ecclesiology that acknowledges the Holy Spirit's ministry of raising up leadership. The Spirit equips believers for leadership wherever the church is established.

Recognizing a dependence on the Spirit's power is characteristically Pentecostal. Pentecostal missionaries expect national leaders in every culture to receive the same Spirit empowerment that the missionaries themselves received. What secular analysts might view as egalitarian is simply spiritual humility and obedience to God's Word. The confidence that the Spirit calls and enables national leadership drove Assemblies of God missionaries to develop ministry training institutions around the world, now exceeding/numbering 896 Bible schools and 1,237 extensions in more than 146 countries.

## A New Testament Example

Luke records the power of discipleship and multiplication in the early expansion of the New Testament church. Paul, on his second missionary journey with his companions, "passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;<sup>3</sup> and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit

them" (Acts 16:6,7, NASB).

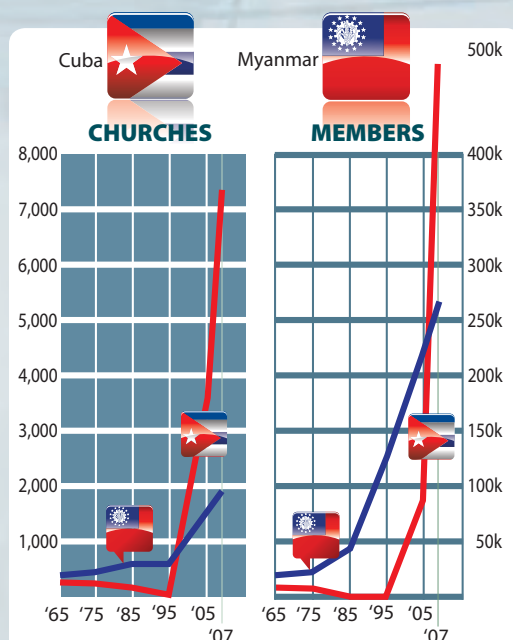
It seems puzzling that the Lord sent Paul to proclaim the gospel, yet the Spirit prevented him from going into Asia, where he had not yet preached the gospel. But the Spirit had a better method for reaching Asia. Immediately after the Spirit stopped him, Paul received a vision, often referred to as the *Macedonian call*. In that portion of his missionary journey, he established churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth.

What about the unreached in Asia? After going to Macedonia and Achaia, Paul came to Ephesus. Luke records: "He entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:8–10).

Had Paul followed his own inclination and planning, he would have traveled throughout Asia proclaiming the gospel in one town at a time. Instead, the Spirit placed him in Ephesus at the school of Tyrannus, where the message multiplied through those he discipled. The result was that "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord."

## Sustainability and Multiplication

A convincing test of effective parenting is what happens to children after they leave home and are no longer dependent on their parents' leadership. A similar litmus test takes place in missions — but in reverse.



Since 1965, the number of churches in Myanmar has increased 1,078 percent, with a 2,074 percent growth in membership. In Cuba the growth is even more dramatic: 2,354 percent in churches and 11,791 percent in membership. Both national fellowships were established firmly on indigenous principles before missionaries were forced by new governments to leave.

What happens when the missionaries leave? At times in our Fellowship's history when missionaries were forced by governments to leave certain countries, strong indigenous churches not only survived, they thrived.

When missionaries left Cuba in 1963, the national church consisted of 290 churches and approximately 4,200 members. Today, there are 8,363 churches and 550,000 members.

When a change in government took place in Burma (now Myanmar) in 1966, officials forced missionaries to leave the country. Other missions agencies working in Burma had adopted the practice of paying national pastors' salaries from abroad. But U.S. Assemblies of God missionaries had established the Burma Assemblies of God as a strong, indigenous church.

Ray Trask was the last AG missionary to leave Burma. At the airport, Trask



met a missionary from another denomination that had paid its national pastors from denominational funds. When the church could no longer utilize outside funds, this missionary had to inform pastors that they would no longer receive pay. They lost every pastor, and the denomination folded in Burma. The missionary told Trask, "You people did it right."

When American AG missionaries left Burma, the national fellowship had 172 churches with 12,668 members. Today, there are 2,027 churches and more than 275,000 members. (See graphs at left for growth in both countries.)

As Assemblies of God World Missions has expanded its outreach during the past five decades, a clear perspective has emerged. Wherever indigenous church principles are applied, the national church grows strong, healthy, and becomes self-multiplying. Wherever missionaries do not practice indigenous church principles, the national church remains weak, is dependent, and in some cases, missionaries must re-establish the work.

## Convincing Evidence

Simple but profound evidence confirms how essential indigenous practices are to the success of our mission:

- Other Pentecostal groups that share AG *doctrine*, but not the same *missiology*, have not experienced the same long-term, exponential growth worldwide.
- Dependence on the Holy Spirit's empowerment is essential to the effectiveness of a Pentecostal mission. But even non-Pentecostal groups that practice indigenous principles see greater results than Pentecostal missions that neglect or abandon indigenous practices.
- Our overseas statistics are usually quoted as an overall figure, but our growth is not the same in

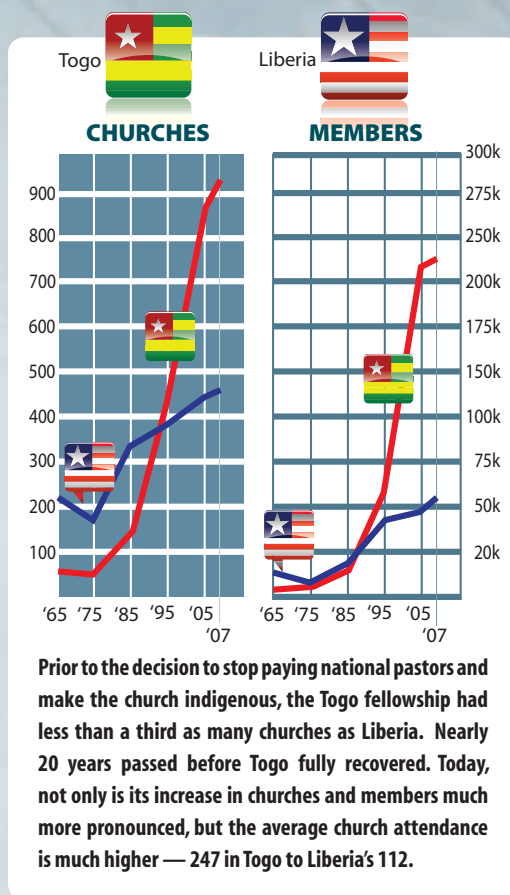
all countries. Some people look at the aggregate church growth overseas and compare it with that in the United States. However, averages are not norms. Our success stories overseas may overshadow the failures, just as the statistics of flat, declining, and closing churches in the United States can eclipse our view of the many thriving, healthy, growing churches.

Our history reveals this fact: In countries where we have been true to the course established by the Spirit through our early leaders, we have succeeded beyond their greatest hopes. In nations where we have compromised, we have failed. We are not only our own best example, but also our own worst example.

In some countries, Assemblies of God missionaries attempted to take shortcuts and adopted paternalistic approaches to planting the church, such as paying salaries to national pastors. Consequently, the health of those national churches suffered.

## Liberia and Togo — a Contrast

An example in which AG missionaries did not practice indigenous principles is the nation of Liberia. Missionaries did not encourage nationals to live a Christian life in their villages. Instead, missionaries brought nationals to a mission compound, where they received food, clothing, and pay for most of the help they rendered. Missionaries paid pastors to go to Bible school and fully subsidized their church salaries. These missionaries had good motives. There are 45 AG missionaries buried in Liberia as testimonies to their commitment. Nevertheless, they started a nonindigenous system that was difficult to reverse.

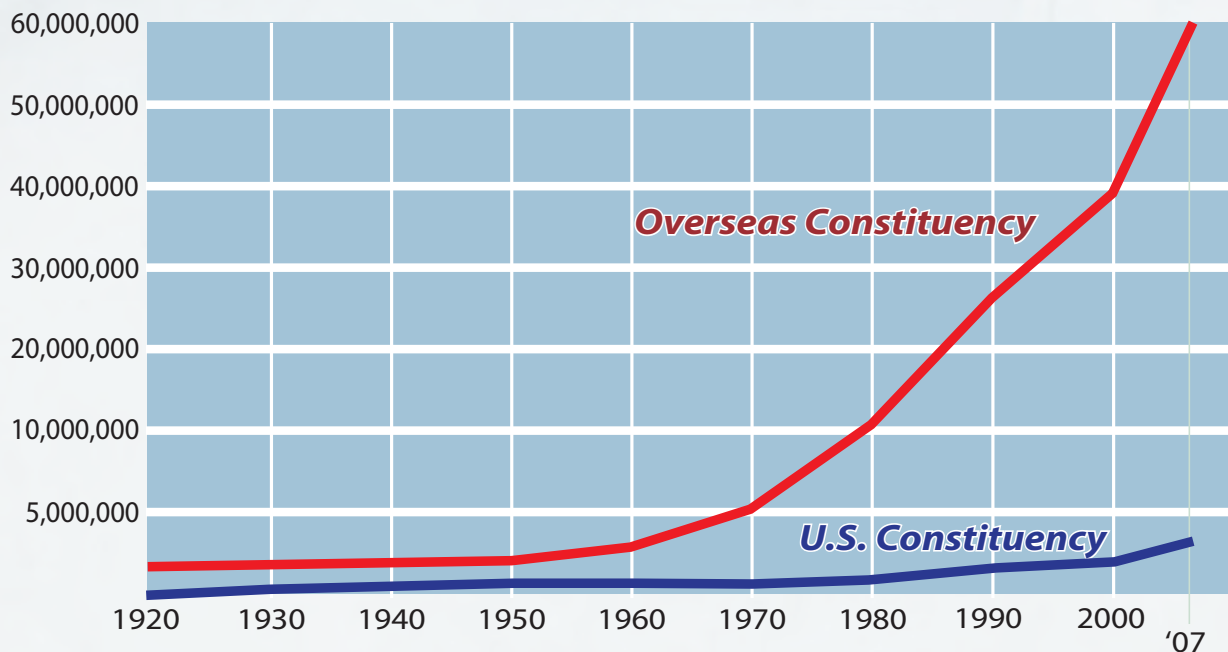


In other countries where indigenous principles were lacking, missionaries have been able to re-establish the church on indigenous principles. Togo is one example. National and AG missionaries from neighboring Burkina Faso started the ministry in Togo, and national pastors received their pay from U.S. funds. But in the early 1960s, African Field Director Everett Phillips requested that this nonindigenous church principle cease. The national Fellowship immediately lost 63 of its 74 pastors. Transition was slow and painful, requiring about 15 years to re-establish the work. But the national church of Togo became strong, and its growth doubles every few years. It now reports 568 pastors, 982 churches, and 242,657 adherents.

When we pay the price to re-establish a church on the right foundation, indigenous principles work. (See graph above.)

# THE MULTIPLYING CHURCH

## From 300 to 60,000,000



### From Parenting to Partnering

As a national church grows and matures, the missionary relationship progresses from spiritual parenting to spiritual partnering. This progression became increasingly evident in the 1980s and 1990s. As missionaries and national churches committed themselves to intense evangelism in the 1990s, the strategy of partnering with indigenous churches produced the greatest growth in the history of our mission. In the last two decades, Assemblies of God fraternal fellowships throughout the world have increased in membership from 16 million to more than 60 million believers. The founders of this Fellowship could not have imagined what we see today. The long-term results have most likely exceeded their greatest hopes and expectations. (See graph above.)

Indigenous principles and practices have proven effective throughout the world. The results in Latin America and Africa — where the consistent application of indigenous church principles has been the most widespread and pronounced — have been especially dramatic.

In the last 15 years the number of churches in Latin America has grown from 110,098 to 197,491 and membership has increased from 16,875,401 to 26,962,991. The number of churches in Africa has grown from 13,953 to 47,696 and membership has increased from 2,801,536 to 14,643,777. Countries where missionaries have strongly practiced indigenous principles have shown the greatest growth.

In early 1990, the Assemblies of God in Malawi had only 226 churches. Today, there are more than 3,100. The Kenyan Assemblies of God is planting an average of 10 churches every week.

Churches in other regions also have experienced astounding growth. In Chennai, India, New Life Assembly, pastored by David Mohan, has more than 35,000 members and has mothered more than 120 churches in the city. Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea, founded by David Yonggi Cho — the largest church in the world — has more than 800,000 members.

Many churches in Latin America have tens of thousands of members.

More than 3 million people — more than the entire U.S. Assemblies of God constituency — attend Assemblies of God churches on any given Sunday in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

We can trace the accelerating multiplication and lasting growth in Assemblies of God fraternal fellowships throughout the world to the New Testament practices to which our early leadership committed themselves in 1921.

The solutions to the challenges we face in the present and the future are not in new strategies but in a restored commitment to those the Lord established. 🌱



**RANDY HURST**, director of Communications, Assemblies of God World Missions, Springfield, Missouri

### NOTES

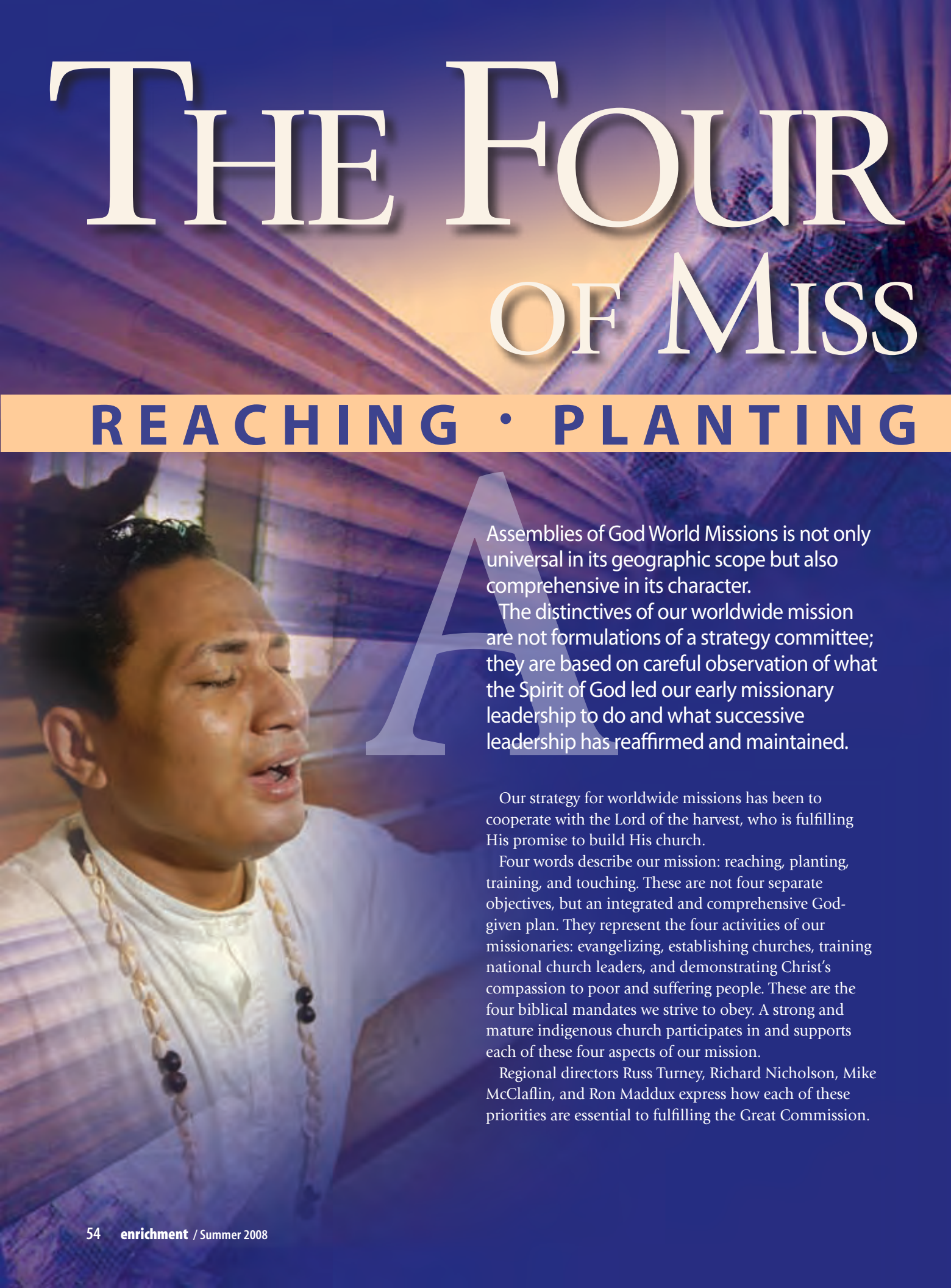
1. The combined wording of those two practices is still in our *Constitution and Bylaws* today. See art. 13, sec. 1.
2. Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)).
3. Not modern Asia.





# THE FOUR OF MISS

## REACHING • PLANTING



Assemblies of God World Missions is not only universal in its geographic scope but also comprehensive in its character.

The distinctives of our worldwide mission are not formulations of a strategy committee; they are based on careful observation of what the Spirit of God led our early missionary leadership to do and what successive leadership has reaffirmed and maintained.

Our strategy for worldwide missions has been to cooperate with the Lord of the harvest, who is fulfilling His promise to build His church.

Four words describe our mission: reaching, planting, training, and touching. These are not four separate objectives, but an integrated and comprehensive God-given plan. They represent the four activities of our missionaries: evangelizing, establishing churches, training national church leaders, and demonstrating Christ's compassion to poor and suffering people. These are the four biblical mandates we strive to obey. A strong and mature indigenous church participates in and supports each of these four aspects of our mission.

Regional directors Russ Turney, Richard Nicholson, Mike McClafflin, and Ron Maddux express how each of these priorities are essential to fulfilling the Great Commission.



# PILLARS IONS STRATEGY:

## • TRAINING • TOUCHING

BY RUSS TURNEY, RICHARD NICHOLSON, MIKE McCLAFIN, AND RON MADDUX

### Four Pillars From the Beginning

The foundation of any structure dictates its longevity. From its inception the Assemblies of God has based its purpose on the Great Commission. Excerpts from General Council minutes and early mission endeavors confirm our adherence to what we now call our Four Pillars.

#### Reaching

- 1914 — At the second General Council held at Stone Church in Chicago, Illinois, the Nov. 23 Council minutes read, "We commit ourselves and the Movement to Him for the greatest evangelism that the world has ever seen."
- 1915 — On Oct. 9, "Resolved, that this Council exert all its powers to promote the evangelization of heathen lands according to New Testament methods."

#### Training

- 1919 — At the General Council in Chicago, Illinois, the Council adopted policy for "the establishment of schools for the education of duly accredited native workers."

#### Planting

- 1921 — At the General Council in St Louis, Missouri,

the Council officially proclaimed its foreign missions goal was "to seek to establish self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing native churches."

#### Touching

- 1911 — Lillian Trasher opened an orphanage in Assiout, Egypt.
- 1913 — James and Esther Harvey went to India as independent missionaries. Later, they joined the Assemblies of God and returned to India on their official AG appointment date of Oct. 8, 1917. "Could we preach the love of Christ to these and turn them away naked and hungry to die along the roadside? We could not." They built a home for widows, young women who had been cast out, and children.
- 1916 — L.M. and Ava Anglin opened a group home in Northern Asia. By 1927, they had cared for 722 children, women, and other nationals. In 2006, AGWM celebrated their 90th anniversary.
- 1981 — The General Council Bylaws state, "The showing of compassion for suffering people in a manner representing the love of Jesus Christ."

AGWM administration



# REACHING

## Proclaiming the Message of Hope

The elderly man's wrinkled face caused him to look older than his 75 years. But it was his words, not his face that captured my attention. He said, "This is the first time I've heard this message."

By living in a little village on a small island, he had missed hearing the gospel for 75 years. After hearing about Christ's love and forgiveness, he responded by asking the Lord to change his life. He wanted to be a Christian and to know that he would be able to enter heaven. This man is typical of many who are coming to Christ in this generation. He had searched for answers but nothing had satisfied his deepest needs until he met the Savior.

Jesus was clear when He instructed the disciples to "proclaim the gospel to all nations." Matthew tells us it was a command. Luke records it as a promise from the Father as the Holy Spirit provides power to witness in the most remote places on earth. Jesus went to the villages bringing a message of hope to lost people who needed forgiveness. He set the example as a shepherd searching for one sheep lost in the darkness.

Today, it is not difficult to recognize the lostness of humanity in every culture of the world. When people

stand for hours praying in front of Buddhist statues in Bangkok, one can see the futility of their prayers. People spin prayer wheels in Mongolia believing the attached written prayers will go into the atmosphere and the spirits will respond favorably. People march around sacred sites with precision to ensure they do not offend the spirits. Animistic beliefs often cause people in Asia to call on shamans and witch doctors to perform incantations in hopes of getting relief

**Evangelism is a response  
to the lostness of  
mankind that comes  
from the heart of the  
Father. —Turney**

from their sicknesses. Fear dominates the lives of millions of families in every culture. As one watches these events and others like them, it is apparent that people are spiritually lost, confused, and desperately needing the Truth.

Evangelism is a response to the lostness of mankind that comes from the heart of the Father. God so loved the world that He gave the greatest gift — His only Son. His great compassion means even the worst of sinners can find forgiveness. His plan is so clear

that even a child can understand and receive salvation. His Spirit provides the power to effectively bring hope to the most remote places on earth. Jesus' commitment was so great that nothing could stop Him from completing His work and providing a way of salvation for all who will call on Him.

Today, the gospel is going to all nations. Within Asia Pacific we have seen the greatest growth during the past few years. Twenty years ago there were less than 6,600 congregations with 1.8 million believers. Today, there are more than 24,000 congregations and well over 4.75 million believers. During this time of unprecedented growth, evangelism continues to be a high priority. Evangelism is occurring through outreach ministries, compassion efforts, literature distribution, personal witnessing, media ministry, and friendship evangelism. Many opportunities exist for effectively sharing the gospel.

In the Philippines, every district is involved in a program called *Summer of Service* in which Christians give 6 to 10 weeks of their summer to reach other villages and communities. This involves going house to house, sharing the gospel, and praying for needs within those homes. People often experience answers to prayer as God heals the sick and families invite Christ into their lives.

Asia Pacific Media Ministry



produces feature-length movies that missionaries show in several countries. Millions of people in the Philippines, Cambodia, and Mongolia have viewed these family-based, moral-value oriented, Christ-centered films. National churches have reached many families through this ministry.

National churches respond during times of natural disasters and national crises to help hurting and displaced people. In Thailand and Indonesia national churches have reached many with the gospel while responding to the needs of refugees and those impacted by the tsunami of 2004. When people experience unusual distress and personal crisis, they are often ready to accept Christ. In times of desperation, they find the gospel alone can provide eternal answers.

I have often heard national pastors say, "Thank you for sending missionaries to our country. I would not have found Christ had they not brought the gospel." Through the efforts of missionaries, many people have accepted Christ and have become some of the finest pastors and evangelists in the region.

While in the South Pacific nations of Fiji and Samoa, national leaders reminded me that this was one of the *uttermost* parts of the earth Jesus had in mind when He promised power for witnessing in Acts 1:8. In both nations the national church has seen great growth in the past 40 years. The former general superintendent of Samoa, Max Haleck, was a young businessman in the 1950s. When a missionary began holding evangelistic services in a theater, Max came to hear the gospel and God powerfully saved him. He then used his transportation business to bring people to church, and over the years has helped thousands of people to come to Christ.

Today, Fijian and Samoan churches

are sending missionaries to other areas of the Pacific. Reaching the 1 billion people within the Asia Pacific region will require the united effort of national churches and leaders as well as mission personnel. Through partnerships an accelerated

**More than 700 least-reached groups exist within the countries of Asia Pacific, and reaching them is a priority. —Turney**

proclamation of the gospel reaches many remote areas.

From Mongolia to Malaysia, from Vietnam to Vanuatu, from Japan to Jakarta missionaries, national pastors, and committed Christians teach and preach the gospel.

Scripture encourages us that all tribes, languages, people, and nations will respond in these last days. On the Day of Pentecost the disciples spoke in many known languages. People in the crowd said in utter amazement, "Are not all these men who are speaking

Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?" (Acts 2:7,8). This was an encouragement to the Church that the message of salvation is for all people. John encouraged us in the Book of Revelation that God will fulfill this promise. The great host in heaven will include those from every people group on earth (Revelation 7:9).

More than 700 least-reached groups exist within the countries of Asia Pacific, and reaching them is a priority. Until every village, language, and people group has received the gospel, the work of the church is not complete.

When people become involved in missions by either supporting others or by going themselves, they are helping to complete the work of the Church and fulfill God's promise that the gospel be preached to the entire world. This generation is committed to completing the task, and when that occurs, the end will come. ☪



**RUSSTURNEY**, regional director, Asia Pacific, Assemblies of God World Missions

## ▶ An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

**"A personal passion for missions translated into an intentional effort to raise the congregation's awareness of missions. Shortly after we arrived at Waseca Christian Assembly, we began holding an annual missions convention. We also began to encourage our people to make personal connections with our missionaries.**

"We are beginning to see the spiritual impact on our church and on its mission in our community. Within the church, more people, especially young people, are feeling the Lord's call to vocational ministry. In addition, people are inviting friends or coworkers to church, as well as desiring to participate in short-term missions trips. The things happening in the lives of our people are beginning to spiritually affect our community, bringing a heightened awareness to many of their need for a Savior."

**BRADLEY WICKERSHEIM**, pastor, Waseca Christian Assembly, Waseca, Minnesota



# PLANTING

## God's Plan for Expanding the Kingdom

After graduating from Central Bible College in 1968, my wife, Cynthia, and I, with 6 Central Bible College students, launched a new church plant in La Grange, Illinois. In later years of missionary ministry in Argentina and Paraguay, Cynthia and I were involved in 16 more church plants.

Nothing has brought greater reward or more personal satisfaction in the ministry than our involvement in those church-planting experiences.

Wherever church planting is a priority, the church thrives. Church planting releases a spiritual energy that is unique and that invigorates the national or local church or the person who engages in it. Here are some samples of what is happening around the world:

- The Nigerian Assemblies of God has recently set a goal to plant 500 churches a year.
- The Kenyan Assemblies of God is planting 8 to 10 churches every week.
- The Indian Assemblies of God has recently launched an initiative to plant 7,000 churches in the next 3 years.
- In two decades the Cuban

Assemblies of God has grown from 89 to more than 8,300 congregations and 550,000 believers.

- Recently the Honduran Assemblies of God set a goal of planting 100 churches in a year. In 2006, they surpassed the goal and planted 120.
- The Korean Assemblies of God has planted hundreds of churches

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church or the person  
who engages in it.

—Nick Nicholson

worldwide, mostly among Korean expatriates.

Spirit-filled people around the world are planting churches, sometimes in seemingly impossible situations:

- In Argentina, Rosa Spagnolatti, a married woman, has planted at least 36 churches herself, not counting numerous home groups.
- In Siberia, missionary Michael

Chowning has planted churches in some of the most remote cities and villages in the world.

- Several years ago Joil and Leah Marbut set a goal to plant 100 churches among the Shuar people who live in the Amazon jungle. Joil reports that he is considering raising the goal to 1,000 churches.

Church leaders have said concerning the four pillars — evangelism, church planting, training, and compassion ministries — that almost all religious groups participate in evangelism and compassion ministries. Within the Assemblies of God, we do all four as integrated components of our mission with an emphasis on church planting and training. Our focus is planting churches. We now have a growing network of almost 300,000 Assemblies of God congregations around the globe. With 2,000 Bible training centers worldwide, we are prioritizing the preparation of leaders for those new and growing congregations.

People can plant churches in a variety of ways. Some churches are the spontaneous outgrowth of home groups or Bible studies. Some emerge out of underground or clandestine meetings in restricted countries.



Others are the result of a few believers sensing God drawing them together for a purpose. After Pentecost the Early Church was *scattered* through persecution. Churches also *sent* Spirit-filled believers to take the gospel to other areas or people groups.

Church plants often reflect the intentionality of a sending mother church whose goal is to reach locations through satellite congregations. Individuals or teams may have a God-given passion to form a new body of believers in a specific geographical area. Michael Chowning describes a mother church as “a church, reaching, impacting, and influencing its community; disciplining and equipping the saved; and empowering people for ministry. When leaders stay within their local regions, they are more likely to succeed because they have a support base. They have a healthy local church that gives them the necessary tools to be successful.”

In 1968 our church plant in La Grange, Illinois, resulted from the vision and passion of our *mother* church in nearby Naperville. This church, pastored by Robert and Karen Schmidgall, was a 1-year-old congregation of fewer than 75 people. They gave us two families who lived near our suburb, purchased an old Swedish Covenant church for \$10,000, and helped us refurbish it. Can anyone doubt God’s blessing on the Naperville congregation that has grown to more than 6,000 congregants in recent years?

Regardless of the method used to start a new congregation, one element that is evident is the transmission of the church planter or congregation’s DNA to the new group of believers. If the mother church is evangelistic, the satellite congregation will be

evangelistic. If the planting group is committed to discipleship and training new believers and leaders, the new congregation will share those same characteristics. If the mother church encourages the working of the gifts of the Spirit, the daughter church will do likewise.

**The miracle of church planting is the fact there may not be a church in a community today, but tomorrow a person can plant one. It may start small, but it is destined and designed to grow.**

—Nicholson

Church planting is not only a collection of individual believers or groups of believers but it is also the transmission of new life from one group of believers to another. While teaching a church-planting and evangelism course at River Plate Bible Institute near Buenos Aires, Argentina, my core message to students was, “Just start, somewhere, some way. After you plan, trust the Holy Spirit and work hard, and the church will grow.”

Ralph and Frances Hiatt planted dozens of churches during their ministry in Argentina. Several have grown to more than 10,000 members. Ralph is a father figure to the pastors of these churches.

The miracle of church planting is the fact there may not be a church in a community today, but tomorrow

a person can plant one. It may start small, but it is destined and designed to grow.

The guiding principles of church planting are:

1. Church planting is indispensable to evangelism and is the heart, passion, and plan of God for the extension of His kingdom in this world.
2. Church planters will experience the miraculous provision of the Spirit. God will bring partners and release resources that will help accomplish the work.
3. Church planting can be spontaneous, but it is primarily intentional. It is often the result of the vision and passion of a church or person who is committed to targeting a specific group or community. It involves sharing the gospel, investing financial resources, praying, releasing families or team members to participate, assessing and planning with clear focus, and committing to help make the church plant successful.
4. A church planter is a parent figure who receives his reward as he participates in the miracle of a new congregation that will demonstrate the Kingdom in the community where it is planted.
5. Church planting is an adventure. Whether one plants in the inner city, a thriving suburb, or a rural village, reaching unreached people through planting a church is the thrill of a lifetime and worth every effort and investment. ☪



**RICHARD NICHOLSON**, regional director, Latin America and the Caribbean, Assemblies of God World Missions

# TRAINING

## Cultivating the Church for a Harvest

In one of Christ's insightful discourses found in John 4:34–38, He balances the need for evangelistic endeavor (verses 35,36) with an ongoing awareness for those whose earlier work had made significant contributions to the advancement of the Kingdom (verses 37,38). In the team effort in missions, we need to accept the fact we stand on the shoulders of others.

The crop-producing process can be divided into four phases:

1. Land preparation.
2. Planting.
3. Cultivation.
4. Harvest.

If we link human activity, skill, and personality to these four, we would have a grid that looks something like this:

1. Land preparation — intuitiveness, insightfulness, strategy.
2. Planting — timeliness, availability.
3. Cultivation — patience, endurance, exactness, thoroughness.
4. Harvest — urgency, travail.

Harvest, whether in a scriptural context or related to the ebb and flow of life events, usually indicates a planting followed by an activity that results in benefit or reward.

Of the four phases mentioned above, none requires more patient

effort than *cultivation*. Cultivation involves spacing growing plants, removing weeds, preparing soil for irrigation, and applying fertilizer and insecticides.

Having grown up on a farm, I remember the long, tiring hours spent in the fields making sure we accomplished these critical aspects of cultivation. The effort was worth the cost, as evidenced by consistent, bountiful yields from my father's fields.

In a strategy designed by the Holy Spirit, Assemblies of God forefathers established local, self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing (indigenous) national churches as a core value of evangelism. Growing churches that are mature enough to trust God for their needs has made Africa one of the great modern-day miracles of church growth.

The fervor with which our African brothers engage in spreading the gospel is evidenced everywhere. In our exuberance to see multitudes won to the Kingdom, however, we must not forget that evangelism is only a part of the responsibility we carry in fulfilling the harvest. Our goal is to get people to heaven.

It is in this arena that the parallel process of cultivation takes place. In the church, we call cultivation *training*.

In Africa, people know Pentecostals for their emphasis on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit as

demonstrated across this vast continent. It is exciting and often overwhelming to see the explosive, regenerative birth of a new church in the most unlikely places. Yet this Spirit-led fervor can, if not properly cultivated, lead to heartbreak and division. The enemy can exploit this fervor to bring great harm to the Church.

As a missionary force in Africa, the backbone of our ministry has training at its center. Early missionaries planted churches and built Bible schools almost simultaneously. Spirit-filled pastors who have been trained to examine Scripture and exhort sound doctrine are a potent force. Nevertheless, unsound doctrine and false teaching can divide, destroy, and wither the seeds missionaries have planted and germinated.

Early in our history, most of our Bible school instructors and administrators were missionaries. As the church has matured and become increasingly indigenous, teachers and leaders of our resident schools are primarily well-trained, capable Africans. The missionary's role has changed to one of support and specialization. In countries where the church is still in its infancy, leadership and core staff may still be primarily missionaries.

One of the positive outgrowths of the modern missionary movement is the growing number of missionaries coming from *receiving nations*. African missionaries who receive national church support are increasingly



responding to the need for trainers in schools located in nations other than their own.

The levels of training at our resident schools vary. In the early years, every school offered diplomas through a curriculum primarily designed to equip pastors to interpret Scripture and offer effective care. With the growth and maturation of the church it became evident that schools must provide a higher level of academics for Africa to have a part in the academic world.

In the 1960s and 1970s, AGWM developed degree-granting schools. In most nations where there is a strong national church we have at least one degree-level school. For these schools to hire nationals capable of teaching on a bachelor's-degree level, however, their nationals' academic level needed to rise. The expensive solution for many years was to send qualified national workers overseas to complete graduate studies. In the 1980s and early 1990s AGWM

realized that the African church had reached a point where it could support its own master's degree-level schools. We prayed, partnered, and met this challenge. AGWM now has five master's-level schools in Africa.

In 2003, the late veteran missionary John York and key African leaders established Pan-Africa Theological Seminary at West Africa Advanced School of Theology in Lomé, Togo. This school offers a Ph.D. level program in the African context and completes the residential training program in Africa.

As grateful as we are for the progress in our residential Bible schools, these schools, however, present only a partial solution to our training needs. For example, Angola and Mozambique each have more than 4,000 churches and about 1.7 million adult believers, but only 600 to 700 trained pastors. Our residential schools cannot keep up with the demand to train pastors. In addition,

not every pastor can afford to spend 3 years in a residential program. The situation demands that we find other solutions to meet our training needs.

Extension schools offer options that allow a pastor to stay close to his place of ministry while taking resident classes for short periods at strategic locations. Today in Africa we have 140 extension schools with more than 4,143 students.

With this system, a mobile faculty travels to population centers or other areas with church growth needs. It is not practical to build a resident school at every wellspring of revival. Yet in increasing instances, we must endeavor to cultivate and train wherever the harvest is growing. Practically and relationally, the extension school strategy is finding favor with our national churches.

In recent years AGWM created Africa's Hope — a multifaceted ministry with training help, curriculum development, strategic partnering, computer-related opportunities, and library and book support — to assist our missionary and national churches to meet training needs. Spirit-filled, trained leaders are Africa's hope.

Training — the core of our strategy — is critical and effective in every national church worldwide. The fact the Assemblies of God leads the world as a mission body with the most Bible schools is a testimony to this fact.

To underscore the critical nature of the patience, endurance, exactness, and thoroughness of this cultivating process, in principle we could say that the last Assemblies of God missionary to leave the African continent will probably be a Bible school teacher. ☪

## ► An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

**"We have focused on missions since the inception of the church. A missions convention propelled our church to significantly increase our giving to missions. We designated the first weekend in October for our missions convention. We held services on Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday morning. At a banquet following the service, people made faith promises. This missions convention created excitement.**

**"Our church has become more sensitive to the lost as a result of giving to missions. Our youth have participated in Ambassadors In Missions trips. Adults and youth have been on missions trips together as well. These trips have changed people's lives and created excitement. People are motivated to personally participate in missions, not just through their giving. Our people are working to schedule more trips to other parts of the world to help missionaries and ministries.**

**"Our church is more sensitive to the needs of our community because of our increased missions giving. We try to find ways to meet those needs. As God prospers us, we plan to continue partnering with missionaries and ministries through increased giving and properly planned trips. These will allow us to link arms with our missionaries on the field."**

**JAMES W. WICKHAM**, pastor, Living Word Community Church, Mechanicsville, Maryland



**MIKE MCCLAFIN**, regional director, Africa, Assemblies of God World Missions



# TOUCHING

## A Perspective on Compassion Ministries

I served as a missionary in Asia for 30 years. Most of that time I was involved in evangelism and church planting. As a young candidate missionary I chose to do evangelism and to avoid social gospel endeavors. But I discovered that the gospel must also include a demonstration of the love of Christ.

I came to realize that while Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10, KJV), His life and ministry demonstrated the love and compassion of God.

Jesus’ inaugural address (Luke 4:18,19) serves as a model for our Spirit-empowered mission. As Pentecostals, we are uniquely equipped to perform ministries of compassion while maintaining a proper focus on evangelism.

In forming a basis for compassionate outreach, we must consider these four points:

- Jesus’ ministry was a ministry of compassion.
- Jesus’ vision statement included compassionate ministry.
- Jesus’ ministry was Spirit-empowered.
- The Pentecostal missionary is

best equipped to maintain an evangelistic focus when performing compassionate ministries.

### Jesus’ Ministry Was a Ministry of Compassion

Of the 36 recorded miracles of Jesus, 33 were miracles of compassion.

Jesus’ first miracle, turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana (John 2:1–11), saved the wedding host from embarrassment. This miracle demonstrated Christ’s concern for a person’s emotional well-being. John 2:11 records an additional benefit: “He thus revealed His glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.” This compassionate miracle revealed the nature of God — a glory that instilled faith.

Jesus cast out demons (Mark 1:21–26); healed the sick (Matthew 8:14,15); cleansed lepers (Luke 5:12,13); raised the dead (Luke 7:1–10); dispelled fear (Matthew 8:23–27); and fed the hungry (Mark 6:35–44). One cannot comprehend His earthly life absent from His miracles, or His miracles absent from His compassion.

### Jesus’ Vision Statement Included Compassionate Ministry

In Luke 4, Jesus stood in the synagogue and read from Isaiah. This inaugural address would serve as His vision statement. “The Spirit

of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18,19).

The ministry of Jesus (and ours) is a ministry to:

Throughout our history, the Assemblies of God has been cautious about its involvement in compassion ministries, fearing we would become like others who preach a social gospel of *deeds only*.

—Mad —Maddux

- The poor — spiritually and economically.
- The prisoners — captives to sin and literal captives.
- The blind — those who are blind to the spiritual truths of the gospel and those who are



physically blind (representing the physically infirmed).

- The oppressed — by Satan and by society.

The answer to all of these needs is the gospel. The gospel sets people spiritually free and lifts them economically, physically, and socially. Jesus' ministry model was a perfect blend of Spirit-empowerment, evangelism, and compassion:

- "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me" (Spirit-empowerment, Luke 4:18).
- "To preach the good news" (evangelism, Luke 4:18).
- "To the poor ... prisoners ... blind ... oppressed" (compassion, Luke 4:18).

The model Jesus embodied did not dichotomize the message from the ministry. The ministry was a practical demonstration of His message. It was word and deed — a proclamation and demonstration of the love of God through the message and ministry of the Spirit-empowered Christ.

## Jesus' Ministry Was Spirit-empowered

Something significant happened in the life of Jesus before His declaration at the Nazareth synagogue. Luke 3:21,22 describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus: "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'"

Luke 4:14 gives the practical result of that experience: "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus for ministry. His experience serves as the model after which we pattern church ministry.

## The Pentecostal Missionary Is Best Equipped To Maintain an Evangelistic Focus When Performing Compassion Ministries

Throughout our history, the Assemblies of God has been cautious about its involvement in compassion ministries, fearing we would become like others who preach a social gospel of *deeds only*. Out of that concern,

as a candidate missionary, I had determined to do *evangelism* and to avoid a *social gospel* ministry. Ultimately I discovered that such an approach did not fulfill the model or mandate of Jesus given in Luke 4. The Pentecostal experience that empowered me to preach the gospel also enabled me to maintain a proper focus while engaging in compassion ministries.

## ► Perspective: Why Relief?

How can relief efforts make a difference? Here are five ways:

**Impact.** Relief efforts enable missionaries and national churches to make a visible impact that serves as a great testimony, particularly in countries and places where traditional overt evangelism is restricted or prohibited.

**Inclusion.** Relief efforts include missionaries who may not be part of a social or medical profession. Missionaries serving primarily as church planters or Bible school teachers can hand out bags of rice or fill bottles with purified water to meet temporary, desperate needs without being diverted from their primary callings.

**Integration.** Assemblies of God World Missions administers relief that is integrated with sharing the gospel and establishing the church. Whether giving medical care to the suffering or feeding the hungry, our missionaries attempt to share the good news and connect people with a church.

**Efficiency.** We cannot possibly meet all of the overwhelming physical needs in this world, but we can help in significant ways in the most desperate, temporary circumstances. With a network of more than 283,000 local congregations in more than 212 nations and territories, the Assemblies of God is strategically situated

to reach out when catastrophes occur.

In times of crisis, missionaries and national believers are the most efficient means of distributing food and water and providing medical care. They are already in place to touch poor and suffering people with Christ's compassion and share the gospel in word and deed.

**Opportunity.** In Chinese, the word for *crisis* is a combination of two words — *danger* and *opportunity*. Fear focuses on the danger. Faith sees the opportunity. In the crisis spots of our world, God gives opportunity for us to demonstrate His love and proclaim the gospel.

Sometimes national crises — civil wars or natural disasters — give us opportunity to minister in places where sharing the gospel is limited. For example, an earthquake affected a country where American missionaries cannot preach publicly or establish churches or Bible schools. The need for immediate medical help, however, provided opportunity for American health care professionals to go and minister to the suffering.



**RANDY HURST**, director of communications, Assemblies of God World Missions, Springfield, Missouri

## TOUCHING



While Luke 4 demonstrates the model of Christ's ministry, Acts 1:8 provides the means by which we stay on target: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses."

The nature of the Pentecostal experience provides our ultimate

focus in ministry — to be His witnesses. While Acts 1:8 shows that the Holy Spirit *empowers* us to be His witnesses, Luke 4 demonstrates that the Spirit *anoints* us to proclaim the gospel as we participate in compassion ministries.

As long as we remain filled with the Spirit, we will keep on target in our ministry. Showing compassion is not the question — it is the model of both Christ and the Early Church. The Pentecostal experience equips us to bless others through ministries of compassion as Christ did — accompanied by a proclamation of the gospel.

### A Practical Application

God moves us toward the strategy of the Spirit. Early in my ministry I incorporated compassionate outreach into my overall program. Along with evangelistic campaigns and church

planting, I participated in ministry through clinics, mobile medical units, and feeding programs. However, when we began to enter restricted access nations, I began to see compassion ministries as a strategy.

In many countries we cannot enter as a missionary organization. Instead, we must enter

as a compassion organization. Through this strategy, we are able to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ

**The Pentecostal experience that empowered me to preach the gospel also enabled me to maintain a proper focus while engaging in compassion ministries.**

—Maddux

in places and settings where we would otherwise be unable to serve. Ultimately, declaration accompanies demonstration. Through word and deed, evangelism and compassion can be integrated by the Holy Spirit's power and anointing.

A strategy of Spirit-empowered compassion ministry can accomplish three things:

- Access — our willingness to perform compassion ministries helps us enter places we could not otherwise go.
- Accreditation — our deeds give credit to our message.
- Acclamation — ultimately, we acclaim Jesus as Savior and Lord. ☺



**RON MADDUX**, regional director, Northern Asia, Assemblies of God World Missions

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INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-BAPTISTE SAWADOGO

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# PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIONS

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The Assemblies of God has been committed to indigenous church principles since the 1920s. These principles have produced maturing national churches and exemplary national leaders throughout the world. In the area of missions, one of the foremost examples is Jean-Baptiste Sawadogo, the national director of missions of the Burkina Faso Assemblies of God.

In the following interview, Sawadogo offers instructive observations concerning indigenous church issues that are sometimes controversial in the church world. He speaks eloquently concerning the relationship between outside financial help and establishing a thriving indigenous church. He also shares an inspiring report concerning home missions in Burkina Faso.

Since its inception in 1993, more than 800 home missionaries have worked among unreached ethnic groups. At present, 150 home missionaries are working among 45 of 63 ethnic groups in Burkina Faso. After 2 to 3 years of ministry, most of the pastors transition from their missionary roles to pastor the indigenous church they have planted.

The Burkina Faso AG is a prominent example of a mature national church that has become not only fully self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating, but a missionary force in its own country and beyond.

**What would the Burkina Faso Assemblies of God be like today if early missionaries had not committed themselves to an indigenous model?**

**Sawadogo:** I do not even want to think about what the Burkina Faso Assemblies of God would be like without the missionaries' commitment to the indigenous church. The first missionaries committed themselves to laying a strong foundation based on our culture. They taught early converts to read and write the Scriptures in our language, helped them create and sing songs based on the music of our culture, and adapted a model of church leadership so African believers would recognize and respect it. If missionaries had tried to impose a model of leadership foreign to our culture, the result would have been catastrophic.

We thank the Holy Spirit who led missionaries to Mossiland, now Burkina Faso. That same Spirit gave them wisdom to see positive things here and to provide a pattern for us to follow.



For example, Christians were taught to tithe — not with money, for there was none — but with agricultural products or whatever else God had given them.

## How does a self-supporting church encourage faith in God's provision among believers?

**Sawadogo:** Through their teaching and example from generation to generation, missionaries helped our churches see the importance of doing their best to support their pastors and build churches. When the local leaders witnessed these efforts, they

\$50 a month and the people had given me more than 220 pounds of corn. The growth was phenomenal. When the Christians saw this, it strengthened their faith.

## Some say that support from outside the country is just another way of God's divine supply. Respond to that statement.

**Sawadogo:** I say yes and no. When a church or national fellowship does not teach its members to give and support its ministries but to depend totally on outside help, that is not God's provision. Instead, this dependency on outside support will weaken the church. But when the outside help comes as a positive partnership, the result is healthy and biblically based because it adds to what is done locally.

A strong, biblically based partnership can help us do what we cannot do by ourselves. This kind of help is God's provision, and it is a great encouragement to churches and leaders.

Over the years the Africa regional office of U.S. Assemblies of God World Missions has helped us buy new printing equipment. There is no way our Burkina

Faso fellowship could buy this equipment. Because of AGWM contributions, a talented national team now works hard to print Christian literature for our own churches as well as our neighboring national churches in West Africa. We have now built our own headquarters building and are also able to invest in new equipment.

Outside help must not and cannot suppress inside contributions. Instead,

it must motivate believers to invest and develop what they are able to do themselves.

## How is the church structure in Burkina Faso different from the congregational-democratic style of government in the U.S. Assemblies of God?

**Sawadogo:** The first missionaries did not try to impose the congregational-democratic style of church government used in the United States. Instead, they adapted their organization with respect to our culture, which acts in submission to leadership, whether young or old.

If a pastor feels led by the Lord to establish a church in a village, we allow him to continue that work as long as he feels he is in God's will. If, however, something should go wrong, the deacons will check on the situation. If the problem persists, they report it to the regional leadership for investigation. If they must take action, the leaders will solve the matter by applying discipline or moving the pastor to another place. If regional leadership decides to move the pastor, the leaders will consult with the now-vacant church before sending them a new pastor. Few churches receive permission to vote on their pastors, but whatever way the regional leadership chooses, they consult with the church. What we do here in Burkina Faso might be different from national churches in other African countries.

## What is your perspective on the increasing emphasis in much of the church world today concerning indigenous missions?

**Sawadogo:** Unfortunately, when some Americans use the term *indigenous missions*, they are referring to pastors in Africa who receive full support



were encouraged to have faith and to participate.

When I started my first church in 1973, the church had 75 cents after the first month. My support was 25 cents. Another 25 cents was set aside, and the last 25 cents was spent to buy kerosene for the lamp we used as we taught new converts how to read and write the Word of God. When I left that church 1 year later, I was earning about

from outside the country. Some U.S. denominations and parachurch organizations are now calling this *indigenous missions*. This is not a new concept at all — just a new name for an old practice.

The danger of this practice comes when something happens that causes outside help to cease. What will people do then? What will the national church do? What will missionaries do? Will they come home? The church would find itself in a catastrophic situation.

In my 20 years of missionary experience, I have seen this happen over and over again. I am grateful for our pioneer missionaries who, from the start, trained our predecessors to develop ways to support their own ministries. It was hard initially, but now we have a firm foundation.

When the Assemblies of God uses the term *indigenous missions*, it means self-propagating, self-governing, and self-financing churches that mature/progress to become missionary churches. This is what Jesus himself expected from His church of all generations. This is what the church of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Thessalonica, and now of western and eastern Africa are doing and will continue to do. The concept of indigenous missions is not a new thing. It should be the normal development of each church movement or organization.

Any outside help to indigenous missions, properly given and received as a mutual assistance in the frame of a well-defined partnership, could indeed be a great help. But before an indigenous church seeks financial assistance from the outside, it should first do its own part. We have a saying in Burkina Faso, "If you want someone to help you wash your back, first wash your face yourself."

Over the years the U.S. Assemblies of God has helped establish national

churches and Bible schools, particularly in Burkina Faso, so they can function financially on their own. Leaders must not use U.S. funds to pay the salaries of national personnel. Assistance from outside can help complete any local effort, but should never replace it.

Many times our church leaders in Africa have refused designated financial assistance, even if they were in need. We have even avoided outside help for a national missionary's salary, because if the help ended, they would have to come back home.

We have chosen, instead, to give minimal, monthly financial support to our home missionaries in Burkina Faso for 2 years. During that time each missionary must have a farm, raise livestock, or grow a garden in addition to preaching the gospel. After 2 years, we end his financial support and give it to a new missionary. Since 1993, we have used this method to send and support more than 800 home missionary couples who serve among 45 unreached people groups.

Our 25 foreign missionary couples currently working in other African countries receive monthly financial support as long as they stay on the mission field. They are encouraged to improve their income resources by planting crops or raising livestock. One missionary couple in Senegal is raising chickens and selling 250 eggs a day. In Mali, Niger, and elsewhere, missionaries are planting cotton fields.

Two of our missionary couples serve in Europe, where costs are high. The receiving national churches there agree to provide our missionaries with a decent home and a minimal salary. The church must also maintain appropriate paperwork for their legal residence.

There is no shame in helping a national church support its missionaries. However, leadership

## Growth of the Church in Burkina Faso

**Burkina Faso is one of the world's poorest countries. More than 80 percent of its population relies on subsistence agriculture. Annual per capita income is \$320 to \$1,400.**

Burkina Faso, however, allows freedom of religion. Since 1990, the AG in Burkina Faso has doubled, not once, but twice. Churches in Burkina Faso are built in stages. They often begin as no more than a roof set on poles. Later a small mud-brick building rises and the original roof becomes a Sunday School room. As the congregation builds slightly larger buildings, believers plant annexes or daughter churches. Churches in Burkina Faso also benefit from seven Bible schools and two extension classes.

The Burkina Faso church has placed great emphasis on reaching the unreached. Jean-Baptiste Sawadogo conducted the first missions convention in 1986. The initial missions giving was \$100 a month; it now exceeds \$100,000 a month. Since 1993, Burkina Faso has vigorously sent missionaries. Many of those missionaries are now pastoring the churches they started, and these churches are able to support them.

With membership topping 1 million, the Burkina Faso church is at the forefront of effective missionary work. The church is united in purpose, and committed to prayer and the Great Commission. The church's mission is to serve God with the grace that He has given them. Their vision is to reach, plant, train, and touch.

needs to think through all the details and strictly apply the guidelines.

## **What kind of help does the Burkina Faso church need most from its partnership with the U.S. Assemblies of God?**

**Sawadogo:** From the start, the U.S. missionaries God sent to Burkina Faso developed a respectful, active partnership with the early believers. They did not want us to become permanently dependent on them. In addition to teaching us how to read and write the Word of God in our

partnership, we can become more effective, especially in the following areas:

1. Education. We need teachers at the primary, secondary, and university level. We also need student sponsorships. Most of our primary schools are located in poor, rural areas, and many parents are unable to pay for school tuition and fees. A sponsorship program would help us maintain a reasonable salary for our schoolteachers and provide funds so needy children could go to school. A minimal

increasingly specialized in diverse fields of ministry such as education, evangelism, training, printing, children's ministries, and ministries to Muslims. Whatever qualifications and abilities these missionaries have, we are eager for them to exercise their gifts as the Lord allows.

## **What is the connection between an indigenous church and a missionary-sending church?**

**Sawadogo:** If a child naturally imitates his father, then one would assume that an indigenous church would follow the steps of its spiritual parents. The history of the Burkina Faso Assemblies of God shows that from the start a partnership developed between the missionaries and their early converts.

New believers helped the missionaries learn the language, and the missionaries helped the new believers read and write. When the missionaries learned enough of the native language to translate the gospel, they started Bible schools in which to teach the new believers. This kind of giving and receiving has always marked our relationships.

New converts went with missionaries from village to village. When they felt called to serve the Lord, they did not hesitate to commit themselves to the ministry. Today, new churches reach out to people in their own tribe and to people in other tribes. Believers see this as the normal way of ministry.

In Ivory Coast, 300 missionary couples serve as *tent makers* without receiving any support from the national church. Some high-ranking civil servants are working in other countries. God is using them to open doors for us to send missionaries.

As missionaries passed the torch to our parents and our parents passed it to us, we will pass it to our children until the trumpet sounds for Christ's return. 📞

## **Outside help must and cannot suppress inside contributions. Instead, it must motivate believers to invest and develop what they are able to do themselves.**

mother tongue, they taught us to be self-supporting through projects such as raising livestock. Their aim was not only to help us earn money or to become educated, but also to teach us to support God's work. Because of their vision, some of our key Christian laypeople have done much to support the ministry.

As a church we still have areas in which we need assistance. In most of our big cities we need to plant churches. Due to the high cost of living and rent we cannot afford to. Our partnership with the U.S. church can help us reach these goals.

Education is another area in which we need help. Educating pastors has helped our country reach new areas previously closed to the gospel. Many of our young people have participated on teams that have built schools inside and outside Burkina Faso.

With or without assistance, we will continue doing all we can. But within the structure of a well-planned

annual sponsorship of \$60 per child will help.

2. Training programs and Bible school scholarships.
3. Acquisition of property for churches in costly areas.
4. Low-interest loans for building projects.

## **Does Burkina Faso still need American missionaries?**

**Sawadogo:** Without hesitation, the answer is yes. We need missionaries not only from the United States, but also from other countries. Missionaries are God-sent ones, and we welcome any missionary God sends to our country. From time to time, according to our needs, we may ask for specific missionaries to assist us in certain areas of ministry.

## **How has the missionary's role changed over time?**

**Sawadogo:** Missionaries are becoming





BY BRAD WALZ

# Emerging World Missions

Tapping the  
Potential of the Other 90 Percent of the Worldwide Assemblies of God

**T**he term *emerging world missions* represents something much more exciting than it may imply. As a new force that is changing the face of missions, *emerging world missions* has the potential to tap into incredible spiritual, economical, and human resources for evangelizing the world.

*Emerging world missions* is a phrase recently popularized to avoid the often-offensive phrases *third-world missions* and *non-Western missions*. People in Latin America might ask, "How do you define Western?" They also live in the West.

The practical definition of *emerging world missions* is: Encouraging our sister national churches around the world to participate in world missions, not because they have a strong economy, but because Jesus said to.

Let's take a more in-depth look at *emerging world missions*.

## The Recent Trend and Growth in This Area

The phrase *emerging world missions* became popular in the mid-1990s. In spite of the recent popularity, David Kensinger, an Assemblies of God lifelong missionary to Costa Rica, formed the concept. In 1975 he wrote a prophetic article that was 20 years ahead of its time. His article addressed the importance of teaching our *national disciples* to become *worldwide missionary-vision Christians*.

# Some missiologists estimate there are now more missionaries

It may seem strange that such a voice was ahead of its time, but how often have we claimed that God has raised up America to reach the world? Even though God has used America in incredible ways, God has also — through America's generosity and missions vision — raised up in dozens of nations a strong national church that shares the same Great Commission. Jesus did not give the Great Commission to the United States; He gave it to the Church.

When a church becomes *indigenous* — self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating — it does not depend exclusively on outside forces for survival. At the same time, the final cycle of spiritual maturity is when the receiving church becomes a sending church.

This indigenous principle has been slowly developing in Argentina, where we have pioneered a foreign missions department. We now have approximately 150 Argentine missionaries serving in 35 countries. Latin American countries are sending 792 (not including Brazil) workers to more than 60 nations. Africa and Asia are also stepping forward as an indigenous church. Asia had developed an indigenous church prior to Latin America, but their growth has slowed in recent years.

Some missiologists estimate there are now more missionaries from the *emerging* world than Western nations. This is hard to verify, and it is also hard for all to agree on a common definition of the word *missionary*. For example, some countries might define an immigrant to the United States or Europe as a missionary. We might define this person as an immigrant because he is self-supporting, not sent by his home country. One thing is certain: There has been an explosion in the call of God among young

people in non-Western nations and countries that traditionally have not been missionary sending. The Holy Spirit is calling missionaries — and not just from America or the West.

## **What Emerging World Missions Is Not**

It is important to define what *emerging world missions* is not. It is not meant to replace our supporting missionaries

whom God has called from the United States by supporting *inexpensive* nationals instead. A popular Asian author published a book a few years ago stating that Western missionaries are expensive. He believed that people needed to stop giving to Western missions and start redirecting their giving to *inexpensive non-Western missionaries*. This may sound great, but



Imagine having 50 million people, instead of 5 million people, praying for the world harvest.



from the *emerging* world than Western nations.

it is not biblical.

In the early 1990s, many in Argentina said, "The West has the money and we have the people." Missions agencies based on that philosophy have since closed their doors, but our AG missions department in Argentina receives 98 percent of its income from Argentina.

For developing nations to expect the West to support their missionaries is a mistake. This concept reinforces the poverty mentality often found in developing countries. This poverty mentality has held back many developing churches from fully reaching their maturity. Developing churches must trust in God, not the West, for their resources.

The non-Western world has money. If every non-U.S. believer in the worldwide Assemblies of God gave \$1 a month, they would give three times more than the United States gives. The money is there, but a poverty mentality has held it back.

*Emerging world missions* is also not a substitute for sending Westerners to difficult places. Many believe that the Arab/Muslim world hates the West. Thus, missionaries from the West are not effective; non-Westerners would

## Missionary Networks

Besides Latin America, other nations — Asia, South Asia, and Africa — have formed or are forming networks to raise missionary vision and help orient countries sending missionaries. Africa had its first continental meeting in November 2005, with 18 countries participating. Asia has had a network for several years. One country, the Philippines, desires to put its missions program on a higher level, giving it more emphasis by making it part of the focus of the General Council.

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**BRAD WALZ**, Buenos Aires, Argentina

be more effective. We must remember that God is the One who calls. He continues to call and use Westerners.

Non-Westerners are not necessarily more effective because of their skin colors (in some cases) or differing first languages (in some cases). They might be less visible in a crowd, but as we saw with the Korean Christians and the Taliban, foreigners are foreigners.

Many of our Argentine workers

never finished high school because the church has often come out of the lower classes. As a result, these workers struggle to learn English, which is necessary to communicate within the international community. Even more important is the missionaries' need to learn the language of the people they are trying to reach.

Non-Western missionaries go through culture shock just like a missionary from the West. Because one comes from a less complicated nation politically or has a less complicated materialistic lifestyle does not mean he will have an easy road. Every culture and nation has its challenges. Missionaries from emerging nations also face challenges. The call of God remains the call of God. We must commit to send those whom God has called from the West.

### **What Is Emerging World Missions**

What emerging missions does, in a theological sense, is help the church return to a *biblical perspective on missions* in which missions is not related to a wealthy country. Missions is part of the Great Commission of the *Church*, not just the *Western church*.

The Great Commission needs to

## ► Argentina National Church Missions

**The Argentina National Church Missions program began in 1989 when Brad and Rhonda Walz arrived with a vision to raise a missions program. The program sent its first missionary in 1990, and hired its first full-time worker in 1992. The program sent its first workers to non-Spanish speaking countries (Cape Verde and Belarussia) in 1993.**

In 1995, there was a dynamic increase in new candidates, and the department

exceeded 100 missionaries before the year 2000. Currently, the program has 150 missionaries in 35 nations.

Missions giving during the difficult crisis of 2002 to 2005 did not diminish in pesos as it did in dollars. Giving more than doubled in the most difficult economic years of Argentina's history. The program now has nine full-time staff members overseeing operations in their Buenos Aires offices. Staff members are preparing for the next wave of new

workers, including more than 100 young people in a Future Missionary Potential program.

Brad had the opportunity, along with missionary Delonn Rance, to start a network of missions leaders from Latin America in 1997. Currently there are missions leaders in each of the 21 Latin countries. They meet annually and have a major congress every 3 years.

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**BRAD WALZ**, Buenos Aires, Argentina



# What emerging missions does, in a practical sense, is tap into



Aubrey George

be part of the church's identity and a natural element of the churches we plant. At times, our pioneers, with great sincerity, saw the country through the eyes of the West, and often unconsciously thought, *They are too poor to do missions*. Unfortunately, in some cases, they remained poor because they did not do missions.

Consider the example of Macedonia and Corinth. Paul told the wealthy Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 of the incredible example of the poor third-world Macedonian church.

What emerging missions does, in a practical sense, is tap into the other 90 percent of the worldwide Assemblies of God. Often when visiting with pastors in the United States, I hear them complain, "Twenty percent of the people do 80 percent of the work." While we cannot always avoid that dynamic, in missions we have indirectly allowed 10 percent of the people to do 90 percent of the work.

The worldwide AG now exceeds 60

million adherents. Less than 5 million of these adherents are in developed Western nations. That means 91 percent are in non-Western nations.

If only Western nations are involved in world missions, as has often been the paradigm in past years, that means we are not involving 91 percent of our worldwide Fellowship in the Great Commission. What pastor would purposely try to discourage 90 percent of his church from making faith promises? From prayer? Pastors wish to involve as many people as possible. For the same reason, we cannot have a vision of missions so narrow that it only involves Western nations.

Let us look at the incredible potential there is in the other 90 percent.

## People potential

Years ago I asked children in a Sunday School class, "What do you need to do missions?" After many responses of *money*, a 6-year-old replied, *people*. Missions does not begin with money;

it begins with people.

The U.S. Assemblies of God has more than 2,700 missionaries and associates. This number may exceed 3,000, if we include our Western friends and neighbors (Canada, Australia, Great Britain, and Europe). What would happen if the church tapped into the non-Western world's 90 percent people potential? There is potential for more than 20,000 missionaries in a worldwide missionary force.

## Prayer potential

Intercessory prayer has always been a cornerstone of world missions. Even with all the money and people in the world, without *prayer* missions is missing a key element for advancing the Kingdom. Imagine having 50 million people, instead of 5 million people, praying for the world harvest. Imagine multiplying committed intercessors by 10. The potential for prayer support

# the other 91 percent of the worldwide Assemblies of God.

for a world harvest is beyond comprehension. We have a saying: Missions is done with the feet of those who go, the knees of those who stay and pray, and the hands of those who give. Another missionary said, "We can go to the mission field

believers, could have a yearly missions budget of more than \$1 million if every believer gave just 10 cents a month. They could send dozens of missionaries. If every believer would give \$1 a month, even a first-world country would envy a poor country's

God's call the same way.

## What It Means to the U.S. Church

Many potential misunderstandings and wrong reactions can develop when we talk of emerging missions. One might say, "If these countries are strong enough to send missionaries, that means they no longer need missionaries."

My response is, "No."

God is in the business of calling. It is hard to explain how a country that is strong enough to send missionaries can still have weak areas that the Holy Spirit continues to supply through calling laborers. Some countries need the *right kind* of missionary. The Lord is Lord of the harvest. If the Holy Spirit calls a young person in Africa, Asia, or Latin America to another nation, this does not mean the sending nation needs to believe they no longer need missionaries.

Instead of creating a lack of motivation in U.S. churches to send missionaries, the fact countries still need missionaries must further motivate us. Consider the fruit God has raised up because we trained indigenous pastors. What fruit will there be in the future? This needs to motivate us to keep a strong sending vision.

The U.S. church also needs to be motivated to be more generous than ever. If a third-world church with little material wealth can give to missions and send missionaries, how much more responsibility do we have? Our current average giving sounds impressive at \$6.19 a month per capita. (Based on U.S. Assemblies of God Sunday morning church attendees.) If a person gave to missions each week what he spent on a hamburger and fries, the result would be about \$14 a month, or \$168 a year. This is much higher than our current giving. Using the more popular

## In a practical sense, developing churches desperately need a missions vision to help them break out of the poverty mentality that chains them.

with your financial support, but we cannot have success without your prayer support." We need prayer warriors from every nation, not just Western nations.

### Resource potential

We often think the developing world is *poor* in economic resources. Even though this is undeniable when we compare these nations to the United States, there are many resources in many poor countries. The problem is these resources have often been poorly administered. At times, the poverty mentality further creates a vicious downward cycle. The same is true in the church. If they *do not give because they do not have*, they will continue to *not have* and, therefore, they will *not have to give*. We need to break this cycle and replace it with a positive one. We have because we give, and we give because we have.

In a practical sense, developing churches desperately need a missions vision to help them break out of the poverty mentality that chains them. But just as important, there are incredible resources in developing countries because of the sheer numbers of believers. One of the poorest countries in the world, because it has more than 1 million

potential missions budget. A \$12 million-a-year-missions budget is nothing to despise.

If the remaining 45 million non-Western Assemblies of God believers in the world would give \$1 a month — an amount reachable in most of those cases — their giving would surpass \$540 million a year — almost triple our U.S. world missions budget. The problem is not a lack of resources, but a lack of vision.

A church in the United States might sincerely want to support a third-world missionary. But the national sending church can quickly lose a blessing. Even though the national missionary from that country can look to the United States for a surer route to the field, this route is not the best choice for the third-world church. Emerging missions is not the United States sending its dollars to support missionaries who are more economical; it is national churches raising and investing their resources to send their own missionaries.

The early Assemblies of God pioneers did not have an abundance of resources. Our forefathers were from the other side of the tracks. They went out with a call and with faith. A new generation of pioneers from developing nations is responding to

## Acts One Eight Project

**T**he Acts One Eight Project is an informal network of leaders from each region of the world. Their goal is to keep the response of the national churches to the Great

Commission before their areas. They estimate that 50 countries have some kind of missions program in formation or operation. They desire to double the number of countries in the next 10 years. They also wish to double the number of missionaries sent out by Assemblies of God national churches in the next 10 years. Finally, they wish to see 5 million intercessors raised up in

the next 10 years to intercede on behalf of the world harvest.

This network believes the Great Commission is not only for Western churches, but also for every Assemblies of God believer in every country. Visit their Web site at <http://www.theactsoneneightproject.org>.

**BRAD WALZ**, Buenos Aires, Argentina

barometer of twentysomethings — Starbucks®. Giving the cost of a latte a week to missions would be about \$16 a month, almost \$192 a person, or about three times more than we currently give.

Even in the United States people can have a poverty mentality by

comparing themselves to others and their lifestyles — and not find satisfaction with the abundance they enjoy and share. The fact developing countries can and are responding to world missions does not need to discourage us. It needs to motivate us to do even more, because we can.

the United States anymore."

I replied, "That is hardly the case. It tells me that the Lord of the harvest is saying, *the end-time harvest will be too big for any one country to handle.*

We need all the workers we can get. I am expecting the mission fields of the world to bring forth workers for the last great sweep of His merciful hand before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

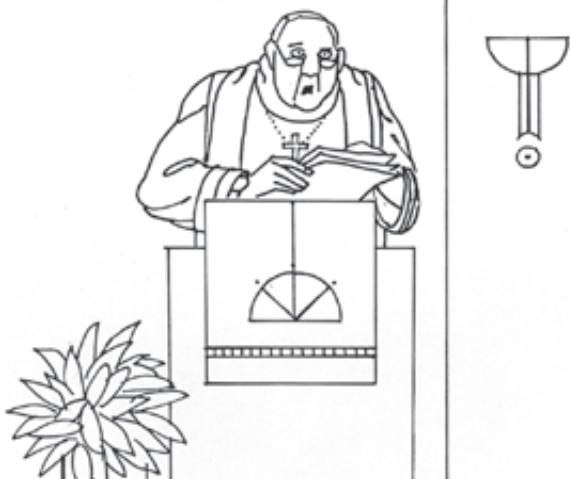
Far from discouraging us to do more, emerging missions needs to motivate us to do more than ever before. We need to respond to the Great Commission for the same reason the emerging church is beginning to respond to the Great Commission: Jesus told us to do it. 🌱

### Conclusion

Emerging missions will continue to change the dynamics of how we do missions in the next 10 to 20 years. By that time there will be more missionaries from African, Latin American, and Asian nations than from Western ones.

Someone once remarked to me, "This means that God doesn't need

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**"This congregation has the dynamics of faith, talent, and technology to leave evangelical footprints worldwide. So how do we start? Who just said, 'With orthotics'?"**



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American Missions Network, chairman of the Acts One Eight Project Committee, and a missionary to Argentina since 1986







The following statement from *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* — and other statements similar to it — often appear in various Assemblies of God publications: “From the early years of our Fellowship, Assemblies of God missionaries have established *indigenous churches* that support and govern themselves. ... As a church grows and matures the missionary’s role progresses from spiritual parenting to *spiritual partnering*.”

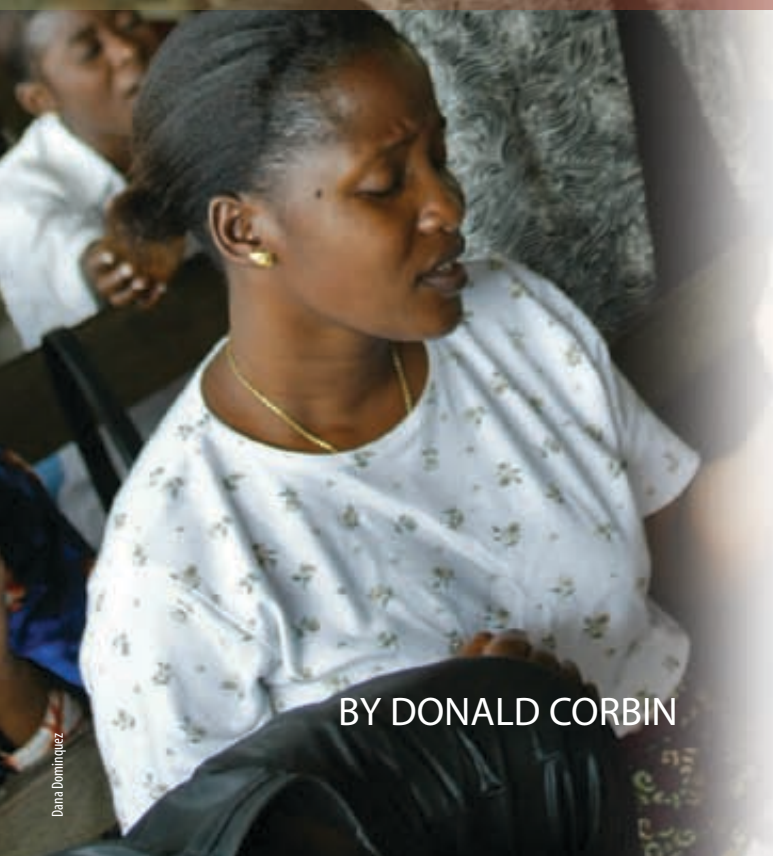
While it is a familiar phrase in the Assemblies of God, the far-reaching implications of the indigenous church and the importance of our partnership with indigenous churches around the world remain illusive for many. Repetition does not guarantee comprehension.

For example, during missions conventions people have said to me, “How exciting that you are in charge of

# “FROM DAY ONE!”

(Philippians 1:5)

## Partnering With Indigenous Churches



the churches in South Africa, or Burkina Faso, or Kenya, or Congo.”

Some people seem startled when I reply, “What is even more exciting is that these churches are led by able African pastors with whom we are honored to work in partnership.”

In many nations today, the role of the missionary has moved from *spiritual parenting* to our *spiritual partnering* with self-sufficient local and national churches — indigenous churches.

### Motivation Precedes Method

The terms *indigenous* and *indigenéity* come from two Latin words; *indu*, meaning *in* or *within*, and *gignere*, meaning to *beget*, to *birth*. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines this as “something that is born, lives, and grows naturally in its own setting or environment.”

Why is establishing indigenous churches so important? Establishing indigenous churches is foundational in New Testament missions practice and philosophy. Christ’s mandate to His followers could not have been clearer: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... and teaching them to obey everything

BY DONALD CORBIN

I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20).

Paul, chosen by Christ to be the apostle to the nations, traversed the Gentile-pagan world from Antioch to Rome and planted churches everywhere he went. His methodology was to "become all things to all men so that by all possible means, [he] might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Paul's intention was that the churches he planted and established would truly be Galatian, Ephesian, Corinthian, Philippian, or Colossian. These churches would live and grow naturally in their own setting. In fact, the decision of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 was that Gentiles — as they were — had direct access to God's grace through faith in Christ without first embracing Jewish culture and practices.

From our birth as a Fellowship we have followed this New Testament pattern. Our *reason for being* as a missionary Movement has been to establish Christ's church in every nation. In doing so, our missionaries have never sought to replicate the U.S. Assemblies of God in worship style, organizational structures, or church-growth methodology. Instead, they have intentionally sought to birth local bodies of believers that grow, sustain, and reproduce themselves; that worship God in a manner natural and familiar to the lifestyle, language, and social characteristics of the people they serve while maintaining their biblical integrity.

Early writings about indigenous church principles by Assemblies of God statespersons — Ralph Williams, Melvin Hodges, Alice Luce, Morris Williams — became our motivating guidebooks. The applied principles worked. Planting and establishing *self-supporting*, *self-governing*, and *self-propagating* churches have been the hallmarks of our missionary strategy.

These churches — now more than 300,000 strong in more than 200 nations — are member bodies of autonomous national church organizations. These entities stand tall without dependence on the North American church that sent and continues to send missionaries to them.

### Method Engenders Models

How do we establish indigenous churches? Discussing indigenous church principles theoretically is far different from practicing these principles among the peoples of a nation or in a burgeoning city. The overarching question must be: By what means will we establish strong, indigenous churches?

Unequivocally, the process begins and ends with intentional biblical partnerships. Relationships are more than important; they are everything. They call for:

### Intentional transitional partnership from day one

From the beginning of a church-planting venture, missionaries need to understand the transitional relationship that must exist between themselves and the church they are planting. This understanding is vital from day one.

The apostle Paul shows us this pattern in Philippi. Going in, he was committed to a *partnership* that eventually would result in a mature, reproducing Philippian church. His words to the Philippian believers are clear: "Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:5,6).

The following graphic shows the cyclical nature of Pauline partnership:



Missionaries may be the founding fathers of local or national churches. They do not, however, continue to be *primary* or even *equal* partners. Instead, in the process of church growth and maturation, primary and secondary positions change hands. The church is destined from its beginnings to be the primary partner and the missionaries working with it are secondary partners.

Though he was a church planter, Paul never sought to control, dominate, or pastor these maturing congregations long term. Early on he placed them in the hands of local, indigenous leaders — Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and Priscilla. By entrusting others, he avoided the containment of the Early Church. Containment would have resulted had he tried to hold onto the pastoral reins of the churches he had planted. This implies:

### The intentional contextualization of the missionary

Just as charity begins at home, this New Testament partnership starts in the heart of the *sent one*.

Step 1 in this process is the intentional indigenization, or contextualization, of the missionary himself. This carries missionaries beyond a surface call — one based on curiosity, adventurism, or a shallow



understanding that falters too easily when faced with the harsh realities of spiritual warfare — to the deep, all-consuming, mental, emotional, and spiritual embrace of God's relational-adaptive call.

Paul's life displayed this kind of call and the intentionality it produces. Getting inside the life, language, and values of people to see the church born in their midst was paramount to him. No wonder he said, "I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible" (1 Corinthians 9:19).

Remember the differences between Peter and Paul? Prior to Acts 10, Peter advocated Jewish circumcision and Law keeping as prerequisites for Gentiles to become Christians. Paul proclaimed *direct access* to Christ for all by faith rather than works. He was ready — even eager — to identify culturally, linguistically, and socially with slaves, the weak, the Greeks, and the Jews to win some to Christ.

It is not considered too much to ask Assemblies of God missionaries to learn a foreign language or to

respect and seek to understand the culture, history, and traditions of the people to whom they minister. They readily make lifestyle adjustments to fit in acceptably with the values of the people of their calling. Above all, people assume that they will honor the church and seek its development in all they do. This involves:

### Intentional visible and verbal modeling

John the Baptist is undoubtedly the most striking example of one who intentionally modeled partnership principles in Scripture. His is a model we do well to emulate. He clearly understood four things:

1. *His role in preparing the way for a greater One.* He declared himself "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord" (John 1:23, KJV).
2. *Christ's preeminence over His own person and career.* "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (John 1:27, KJV).
3. *His clear calling to proclaim Christ's divine Person.*

He announced, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, KJV).

4. *His task as an agent of transition.* He said boldly and humbly, "He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all" (John 3:30,31, KJV).

John the Baptist

brought multitudes to faith, yet he refused to exploit the fact he had a following. He understood that he was a forerunner of a coming King whose Kingdom would be more important and more enduring than himself.

Missionaries partnering with indigenous churches must understand that they are also forerunners of the church and its coming leaders — God-called men and women whose sandals they are unworthy to untie. Establishing biblical foundations for local and national churches is an absolute necessity if these churches are to become God's ongoing, multiplying communities in their tribes, languages, and nations. This requires:

### Intentional transferral of owner responsibility

Most observers understand the importance of transferring the preaching, evangelizing, pastoral, and leadership responsibilities from the missionary into national hands. This transfer, however, must also include all areas of accountability, especially financial support.

First Corinthians 9:14 is direct: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (KJV). Could any statement be clearer? While finance is a sensitive subject, we cannot ignore it. Instead, we must give it the most careful attention. Perhaps the following ideas will help clarify how our partnership with indigenous churches is lived out in this domain:

- **Assemblies of God World Missions** does not support pastors, evangelists, or church leaders in the nations in which we partner with indigenous churches. Instead, these leaders receive support from internally generated funds in each nation, principally by the tithes and offerings of



## An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

believers in each local church.

- These principles preclude from pastoral ranks opportunists whose objective is to look for financial support rather than to serve the Master.

It is important to note that in Africa's most affluent settings some of its most dependent churches exist. In these cases, many pastors have a profession or secular employment. Tithing is treated lightly, and both local and national church ministries struggle to survive. Sadly, church growth is virtually stagnant.

Conversely, Africa's most self-sufficient churches are often in much less affluent contexts. In countries where the per capita annual income is \$250 to \$500, members tithe and give faithfully. As a result, pastors are full time, local and national church finances are blessed, and the churches support missionaries both internally and beyond their borders. Such examples remind us that tithing is a biblical practice that God promises to bless, not a simple financial program. Biblical principles, when applied, work in every context.

### Intentional willingness to lose time now to gain time later

The process of building for the long-term needs time and attention. At times, major doses of both are required to establish strong, reproductive, indigenous churches. It is tempting, especially to success-driven North Americans, to go for the quick fix. Jump-starting the church or ministry by hiring and paying workers with external funds seems quicker and easier than waiting for leadership, initiative, and internal strength to develop.

Experience, however, has taught us repeatedly about the inherent dangers of trying to build a church on a foundation of externally funded

"Our senior pastor, John F. Clark, and his wife wholeheartedly support missions. Their consistent and passionate verbal support, steadfast prayer support, and their own generous monetary support for missions are contagious. This is the reason our missions fund has burgeoned in recent years. Our church leaders have led the way.

"Our emphasis and participation in world, national, regional, and local missions partnerships have affected the spiritual atmosphere of our church. The simple act of giving goes a long way in our self-centered society. The

generosity that our pastor has taught and encouraged through missions giving has carried over to every area of our church — bridal and baby showers, missions trips, and special projects. We have also supported community causes in our school and other organizations.

"The guest missionaries who share with us each year are like a breath of fresh air. The incredible testimonies of God's handiwork throughout the world are inspirational. If they can do it, we can do it in Jesus' name."

**ADAM CLAUSEN**, missions director, Evangel Life Center, Madison, Wisconsin

personnel. Employees, opportunists, or mercenaries are not foundational material. Our commitment to *not* hire and pay pastors shortens the shelf life of such persons. Only the called and committed will remain. They are foundational material.

It takes patience and persistence to bring people to this kind of spiritual maturity. However, when divine

### Models Lead to Multiplication

Do our partnerships with indigenous churches produce the kind of results hoped for? Yes. When the tide of Spirit-birthed increase starts to roll into the indigenous church, it produces unstoppable growth of exponential proportions. Note the growth of Africa's churches over just the past decade:

#### TOTALS

	1997	2007
Ministers and Lay Workers	16,234	45,623
Churches and Preaching Points	17,117	47,712
Believers and Adherents	4.5 million	14.6 million
Resident and Extension Bible School Centers	144	232
Resident and Extension Bible School Students	10,138	11,694

calling and servanthood — coupled with internal self-sufficiency — become the principle foundation stones on which we build the church, it is poised to be the spiritual superstructure God intends it to be. The church, built on the right foundations, will grow in strength, reproductive ability, and endurance. Jesus had these qualities in mind when He said concerning His church, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18, KJV).

### Africa 1996 to 2007

Some specific examples are noteworthy:

**Malawi.** In 1989, after 40 years of presence, the Assemblies of God counted 150 churches. By 2000, it counted 2,150. By 2007, there were 3,783 churches, with 776,491 believers.

**Burkina Faso.** After 50 years of existence, the church had grown to 25,000 constituents. After 75 years, the church had grown to 400,000. Today, it has approximately 1 million



## An Observation From a Missions-Minded Church

"We decided to commit at least 10 percent of our church's annual income to missions. We talk about missionaries to our congregation each month. When people take a short-term missions trip, they come back more motivated to give. When people experience missions firsthand, it makes giving come alive."

**KENT A. BOYUM**, pastor, Christian Life Church, Farmington, Minnesota

constituents plus children under 12.

**Nigeria.** From 1990 to 2000, the Assemblies of God added 4,044 churches, 1.2 million new constituents, 5,026 new pastors, and planted churches in 75 new ethnic and unreached people groups. While Assemblies of God World Missions encouraged the Nigerian church

experience grace.

- Relational partnership recognizes from the outset the church as primary, and releases pastors, elders, deacons, presbyters, and leaders to exercise full spiritual authority and responsibility.
- Relational partnership avoids the limitations associated with external

**As pastors teach their members to tithe, give, and support the church liberally, they promote individual and church growth.**


and participated when possible, the church financed advances internally. Today, the Nigeria Assemblies of God has 10,007 churches with at least 2,582,607 believers.

We could share similar reports from every region in the world — Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia Pacific, Northern Asia, Europe, and Eurasia — where we partner with indigenous churches. The results, however, are not limited to numerical growth alone. The qualities of internal sufficiency, doctrinal solidity, and reproductive vision are easily discernable as well. When the foundations of relational partnership are strong, amazing results ensue.

- Relational partnership helps the church born within nations and its people groups to bring God down to men with a familiar face, culture, and language by which to

support. To support 300,000 national pastors with only \$100 per month would require \$3.6 million annually. This figure is nearly twice the yearly world missions budget of the Assemblies of God. How then would we send missionaries, help build buildings, support Bible schools, as well as literature, radio programs, schools, medical centers, disaster relief programs, development, evangelistic campaigns, and church planting? Even a centralized support fund is a deformation of the indigenous principle — self-support. Why? A support fund takes away the initiative and responsibility from the local church to support its ministers and ministries, and from pastors to trust God as they train their people.

- Relational partnerships build internal strength into both the clergy and laity. As pastors teach their members to tithe, give, and



support the church liberally, they promote individual and church growth. The Burkina Faso church supports approximately 300 pioneer pastors at \$20 per month for 1 year. The church expects that in 12 months the planted church will be internally self-sufficient, freeing up the \$20 to support another pioneer pastor. In Nigeria, the church considers tithing so vital that the church disciplines those who refuse to tithe just as they do those committing adultery.

### Multiplication Reproduces Multiplication

Rising numbers of churches and constituents worldwide give us reason to celebrate. Numbers, however, are not an end in themselves. They are a tool in the hand of the Harvest Master. On the Day of Pentecost, the Church was born big. This gave it distinct advantages for even greater expansion — visibility, credibility, momentum, and position.

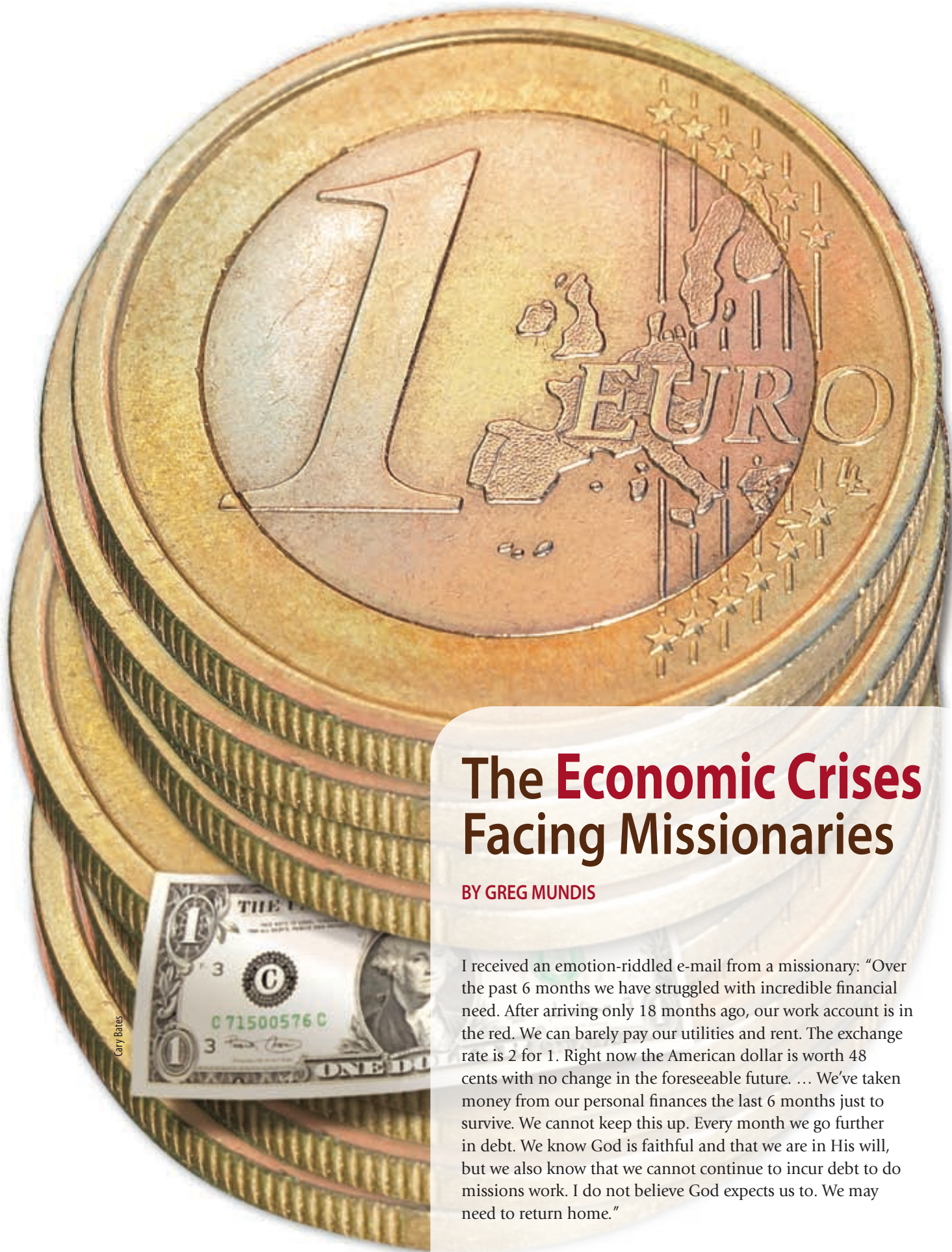
These growth components all seem to be in place today allowing the Assemblies of God to effect church growth in many nations. Many of the churches we partner with stand at the threshold of unprecedented harvest. In this unique moment in Church history we partner with these churches as they experience the fulfillment of Paul's words: "This grace was given me [us]: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. ... His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known" (Ephesians 3:8,10). ☪



**DON CORBIN**, former Africa regional director, Assemblies of God World Missions, the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri







# The Economic Crises Facing Missionaries

BY GREG MUNDIS

I received an emotion-riddled e-mail from a missionary: "Over the past 6 months we have struggled with incredible financial need. After arriving only 18 months ago, our work account is in the red. We can barely pay our utilities and rent. The exchange rate is 2 for 1. Right now the American dollar is worth 48 cents with no change in the foreseeable future. ... We've taken money from our personal finances the last 6 months just to survive. We cannot keep this up. Every month we go further in debt. We know God is faithful and that we are in His will, but we also know that we cannot continue to incur debt to do missions work. I do not believe God expects us to. We may need to return home."

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"The dollar is a basket case," says Peter Schiff, president of Euro Pacific Capital. "We are going to have to pay the piper for years of having the underlying fundamentals of our economy disintegrate beneath our feet."<sup>1</sup> On January 1, 2000, one U.S. dollar equalled 0.9947 Euro. At the time of this writing, one U.S. dollar equals 0.64247 Euro.<sup>2</sup> This is a 65 percent increase in the value of the Euro against the U.S. dollar.

### Struggling With Economic Crisis

The missionary mentioned earlier is not the only one who is facing an economic crisis. Many missionaries serving in world-class megacities as well as missionaries serving in remote places are facing major financial challenges: budgeting, raising funds, cost of living, inflation, and devaluation of the dollar. (See sidebar *World's 25 Most Expensive Cities, 2007 p.88*. Ten of the top 20 cities are in the Europe region.)

The struggle for these missionaries is not only financial, but on several other fronts as well that interrelate with finances: theology; family responsibility; calling; and the endorsement and support of their Movement, their district, and their sending churches.

The present and future economic crisis(es) reveals underlying issues that the Movement, Assemblies of God World Missions, and we as individuals in the United States do not deal with directly. Nevertheless, missionaries face these issues (consciously or subconsciously) when they experience an economic crisis. The quote at the beginning of this article reveals this dynamic tension regarding a

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**AGWM is responsible and accountable to the Movement and the government for how missionaries spend the funds given to them.**

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missionary's calling and the reality of a lack of funds. A foreign missionary is not the only one who may face a financial crisis. A person who has lost his job, a home missionary on a limited budget, a struggling new church plant, or a church that has had a split are other

examples of economic crises. The distinctive difference when a foreign missionary faces economic crisis is his environment. Economic factors such as inflation, exchange rate, and devaluation of the American dollar affect his

personal finances as well as his ministry. In addition, the missionary faces the issues of theology, calling, and AG endorsement and support in a context in which other means of a steady income (outside of missionary ministry) are not an option. Financial dependency and faith is ultimately in the Lord, but in reality a missionary's financial support comes from people and churches through monthly faith commitments and offerings.

From the time an individual seeks world missionary appointment, AGWM leadership addresses the issue of finances. AGWM does not appoint potential missionaries who have personal debt that exceeds \$200 per month. AGWM also conducts a financial background check. This protocol is in place because of experiences AGWM has had in dealing with missionaries in financial crises.

At their initial orientation, AGWM trains potential missionaries in accounting and reporting. This training is re-emphasized when they attend candidate school and School of Missions. A growing realization exists that crunching numbers does not address all the issues regarding financial crisis.

The old maxims regarding how to balance one's budget — cut expenses, increase income, or sell assets — do not always answer all of the questions in the context of meeting financial needs in spiritual ministry. Where faith, promises, life, and ministry expenses intersect, there is tension.

How can a missionary understand that God has called him, his Movement has commissioned him, his district and churches believe in him and support him, and his ministry is effective, yet he is not surviving financially? This is usually because of factors beyond the missionary's fiscal control. We read and reflect on the stories of early missionary pioneers, both inside and outside of the AG, and wonder at God's grace in their testimonies of His provision. These stories cause us to rejoice and encourage us. Some, however, wonder about the missionaries who came home because of financial problems and never wrote their testimony for others to read. What about them?

### Coming to Terms With Economic Crisis

Where does the responsibility of the sending organization end in regard to supplying finances, and the missionary's responsibility begin in regard to trusting God "to meet all our needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19)? When should the sending organization address the situation raised when a missionary is facing economic hard times? Even though the missionary has faith that God will supply his deficit spending (spending for ministry expenses that factors in the economic forces



# ▶ World's 25 Most Expensive Cities, 2007<sup>1</sup>



## Moscow tops Mercer's cost of living list; London is close behind

Moscow is the world's most expensive city for expatriates for the second consecutive year, according to the latest *Cost of Living Survey* from Mercer Human Resource Consulting. London is in second position, climbing three places since last year. Seoul moves down one place in the ranking to take third place, followed by Tokyo in fourth. Asuncion in Paraguay is the least expensive city for the fifth year running.

Mercer's annual *Cost of Living Survey* covers 143 cities across six continents and measures the comparative cost of more than 200 items in each location, including housing, transportation, food, clothing, household goods, and entertainment. It is the world's most comprehensive cost of living survey and is used to help multinational companies and governments determine compensation allowances for their expatriate employees.

## Top 50 Rankings

**Europe, Middle East, Africa:** Europe dominated the top 50, with 30 cities on the list and capturing six spots in the top 10. Strong currencies helped push most European cities higher for 2007.

Africa placed five cities in the top 50, with Douala, Cameroon, on top with a rank of 24. Four of the African cities climbed in the rankings while Lagos, Nigeria, dropped from 31 to 37.

Four cities in the Middle East were in the top 50 for 2007, led by Tel Aviv, Israel, in 17th place. Istanbul, Turkey, took the biggest drop in the top 50, from 15th to 38th.

**Asia:** Eight Asian cities were on the top 50 list, led by Seoul, Korea, in third place. The biggest mover was Taipei, Taiwan, which dropped from 28th to 48th.

**Americas:** Only two U.S. cities made the

list (New York City at 15th and Los Angeles at 42nd) thanks to the weak U.S. dollar. No Canadian or Latin American cities were in the top 50.

**Australia:** Sydney was the lone representative in the top 50, placing 21st.

## Mercer Human Resource Consulting Cost of Living Survey — Worldwide Ranking 2007 (including housing)

TOP 25 • BASE CITY: NEW YORK, USA (=100)

RANKINGS		CITY	COUNTRY	COST OF LIVING INDEX	
MARCH 2007	MARCH 2006			MARCH 2007	MARCH 2006
1	1	Moscow	Russia	134.4	123.9
2	5	London	United Kingdom	126.3	110.6
3	2	Seoul	South Korea	122.4	121.7
4	3	Tokyo	Japan	122.1	119.1
5	4	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	119.4	116.3
6	8	Copenhagen	Denmark	110.2	101.1
7	7	Geneva	Switzerland	109.8	103
8	6	Osaka	Japan	108.4	108.3
9	9	Zurich	Switzerland	107.6	100.8
10	10	Oslo	Norway	105.8	100
11	13	Milan	Italy	104.4	96.9
12	12	St. Petersburg	Russia	103	99.7
13	15	Paris	France	101.4	93.1
14	17	Singapore	Singapore	100.4	92
15	10	New York City, NY	United States	100	100
16	18	Dublin	Ireland	99.6	91.8
17	24	Tel Aviv	Israel	97.7	89.7
18	21	Rome	Italy	97.6	89.8
19	21	Vienna	Austria	96.9	89.8
20	14	Beijing	China	95.9	94.9
21	19	Sydney	Australia	94.9	91.3
22	25	Helsinki	Finland	93.3	87.8
23	36	Stockholm	Sweden	93.1	84.8
24	27	Douala	Cameroon	92.9	87.6
25	41	Amsterdam	Netherlands	92.2	83.4

GREG MUNDIS, D.MIN., Springfield, Missouri

### NOTE

1. Mercer Human Resource Consulting, "Moscow Tops Mercer's Cost of Living List; London is Close Behind"; available from <http://www.mercerhr.com/summary.jhtml?idContent=1095320>; accessed 6 September 2007. Used by permission.

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out of the missionary's control), how long should mission leadership wait before intervening? AGWM operates within an accountability plan. AGWM is responsible and accountable to the Movement and the government for how missionaries spend the funds given to them. It would not be responsible for AGWM leadership to allow missionaries to continually go further and further into debt. This scenario can become a stressor in the relationship between the missionary and AGWM leadership.

The supporting churches and individuals share part of the tension in an economic crisis. Whereas Hudson Taylor would *pray in the funds*, in our 21st-century paradigm, missionaries go to their donor base and ask for more funds. Soliciting funds takes place on a cyclical basis when a missionary comes home for itineration (usually the first term is 3 years and subsequent terms are 4 years). Now with the means of communication at the world's disposal and the inexpensive cost of calling, texting, e-mailing, skyping, or taking advantage of Vonage or some other phone service, the missionary can — at will — knock at the door of the church for financial help.

Some missionaries believe AGWM will bail them out when they get behind in their finances. Most of the funds AGWM handles, however, are designated for missionary or project accounts. AGWM has little reserve funding to bail out missionaries. In fact, if churches and individuals did not give anything for 2 months, AGWM might need to shut down. The question is: how does a church, district, or AGWM respond to a missionary in desperate financial need?

The pressure that a missionary feels in desperate economic circumstances puts his belief system to the test. *Who is his provider?* The missionary, as the head of his household and the provider for his family, asks, *Can we borrow from*

*personal funds and future resources to provide for the ministry need now? Do we believe God will miraculously meet our financial need? If God is not meeting the need now, is that a sign that we are out of His will? Should we press on and believe that God will supply the need down the road? Should we go into debt believing that God will supply the need later?*

### **Dealing With Economic Crisis**

Having served as missionaries in Europe for more than 17 years, my wife and I know the ups and downs of financial crisis — particularly with the rising expenses and the devaluing dollar. We have felt the pressure to continue our ministry with its expenses even though the money was not in our account. We have borrowed against our savings to finance our ministry and have often asked: *Where are You, God?* I offer these suggestions for dealing with economic crisis based on our practical experience, Pentecostal theology, missiology, and leadership observations.

### **God is our Source**

Jehovah-Jireh supplies our needs. Matthew 6:33 says to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Scripture is clear that the battle is the Lord's, and God's gifts and callings are without repentance. The assurance of the Word of God and our faith in the unchanging character of God give us hope in spite of difficult circumstances.

### **Our cooperative Fellowship is our friend**

Sometimes pastors and missionaries experience tension in their relationship with each other because both have financial needs. The pastor might feel the relationship exists only because the missionary has a financial need. The missionary might feel the pastor will not want to develop a

relationship because the missionary, of necessity, must look for funding to sustain his ministry as a missionary. Relationships in the body of Christ, however, promote loving one another and sharing the truth in love. God has given us fellow believers for mutual edification and each has special gifts with which they bless others. Finances are secondary to trust relationships.

### **Missionaries are collaborators, not competitors**

In the missionary family, missionaries must continue to foster a spirit of cooperation. It warms my heart to see missionaries who have funds in their account transferring money to missionaries who are in financial need. This speaks well of missionary collaboration.

### **Stewardship and sacrifice as well as suffering are not old-fashioned, out-of-date words**

Missionaries are in for the long haul in the country of their calling. They make sacrifices. At times suffering is a present reality in a missionary family when their funds do not stretch far enough. We wish no suffering on ministers and missionaries, yet we understand that sacrifice and suffering are part of the spiritual DNA Christ has given us.

### **As missionaries, we do not have rights and privileges; we have obligations and opportunities**

This is true of all ministers of the gospel. We surrender our rights and privileges when we say an unqualified “yes” to Jesus. We are obligated (as Paul declared) to preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles. Today we have unprecedented opportunity to preach the gospel. AGWM has entered 81 new countries since 1989. Missionaries and associates have increased since the year 2000 from 2,401 to more than 2,700

in 2007. Technology has served to amplify our message through new and creative means. This means that missionaries need more funds to take advantage of what God is doing in these last days.

### The career missionary on the ground is the most effective means of reaching the lost for Christ

Short-term teams, trips, in-country prayer teams, technology, and different building and creative projects are great resources for building the body of Christ. However, the most effective and beneficial resources for the Kingdom are the lifelong efforts of missionaries. They have learned the language and culture. They have built credibility with the national church and integrity with the government. They have established a continuous physical presence in the country of their calling. The growth, the trustworthiness, and authority of the Assemblies of God worldwide are

because of this distinctive missiology.

### District and church participation is crucial to fulfilling the Great Commission

If every district and church will teach the following principles, we can continue to support our God-given overseas mission effort: 1) support, as much as possible, the missionary from your church; 2) support every district

missionary; 3) support projects from the missionaries you support — this continues to build relationships; 4) support other AG missionaries from other districts; and 5) support whosoever.

### Conclusion

Regarding the missionary whose e-mail was mentioned at the beginning of this article,

## An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

"We began to regularly invite missionaries to speak. Twice a year we have a missions convention. We use the missions theme posters and banners as well as the missions musical. During these conventions we ask the congregation to make a faith promise for the next 6 months. This has worked well. Furthermore, we began tithing to missions. At the end of each month, we allocate 10 percent of our tithes and offerings to our missions fund. We did this gradually at first, starting with 3 percent, and then working our way up to 10 percent. Every time we increased the percentage, our tithes and offerings also increased.

"God has blessed our church over the last 15 years with steady numerical, financial, and spiritual growth. We have a great reputation in our community, and we regularly conduct outreach events."

**STEPHEN L. LANCE**, pastor, Noble Assembly of God, Noble, Oklahoma

AGWM Europe and his district sent funds to help bridge the crisis. He is also raising some additional support and finding ways to cut expenses. His ministry is continuing and prospering because of the cooperation between the mission, the church, the district, and the missionary. A report from this missionary has just come in that 17 young people have accepted Christ as their Savior.

Overcoming financial crisis is extremely important in the economy of God. We need to cooperate, work hard, and depend on God for His intervention. Financial crisis in a world economic system is inevitable. As believers, we have the promise of Jesus that transcends the world system and gives us hope for the future. John 16:33 says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." 🌟

**GREG MUNDIS, D.Min.**, Europe regional director, Assemblies of God World Missions, Springfield, Missouri



### NOTES

1. *International Herald Tribune*, 11 July 2007.
2. <http://www.xe.com>

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"Tithing, or nontithing?"





BY OMAR BEILER and JERRY PARSLEY with SCOTT HARRUP

# Creating Access:

## Discovering New Doors for the Great Commission

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**P**astor Smith at First Assembly of God is worried. A year ago his church pledged \$50 a month to support a new missionary headed to a sensitive region in Eurasia. He has not received a single newsletter in that time. He is wondering if the church's initial \$600 investment has gained any results on the field.

But he cannot see what is happening 5,000 miles away.

It could be a scene straight from a TV spot for the latest Sport Utility Vehicle. A dozen or more young people on mountain bikes compete for the best position on a wooded trail. You expect them to burst into a clearing and set up camp alongside gleaming Jeeps or Land Rovers.

But this group is a mix of twenty-somethings from one of the more impoverished regions of Eurasia. The bikes are courtesy of visiting Americans. The goal has nothing to do with corporate sponsorship.

The Eurasians need to hear a message that can change their lives, not merely their lifestyle — the timeless claims of Jesus Christ.

Their American hosts befriend them over the course of the tour. In a rural setting the young Eurasians can freely talk about things that, if mentioned in the city, would compromise their relationships with friends and family — perhaps even threaten their freedom.

Somewhere along those wooded miles of trail, first one and then another rider makes a decision. The gospel, under the gentle influence of the Holy Spirit, takes root in lives previously untouched by eternal truth.

The challenge is to get that field report back to Pastor Smith and all the other partnering churches that made this outreach possible. Because in this part of the world, the World War II adage is still in effect: "Loose lips sink ships," particularly any ministry vessel promoting Christianity.

### Forget the Headlines

If the visiting ministry team of American bikers had taken their cue from international news services — or even the journalistically less-sound missives of Web-based human rights organizations — they would have contented themselves with an outdoor evangelistic encounter in the American Rockies. No worries about confrontation with a majority religion or with a government peopled by adherents to that religion.

Western culture looks askance at the militant leanings of some regions' political and religious centers of influence. With surface tensions high in the wake of 9/11 and the subsequent U.S. military response, the natural tendency is to cocoon oneself within the perceived safety of home. That mindset never created world change.

On the other hand, wherever the gospel can penetrate, dramatic change takes place. Like the apostles of old who challenged the restrictions of the Roman Empire, a new breed of apostles is heeding Christ's call to take the gospel into all the world. All the world includes those regions where there is no official recognition of or welcome for foreign followers of Christ.

The Assemblies of God's history is one of consistent world missions outreach. Ninety years ago Assemblies of God missionary pioneers were opening vast regions of Africa, India, and the Amazon to the gospel, and to the societal development that accompanies Christian principles. Those early missionaries paid dearly to reach tribes and remote communities untouched by a biblical proclamation.



David Dobson

One might think that by this point in history — with 21st-century mass communications beaming the good news round the clock to a potential audience in the billions — no such areas exist. Such thinking could not be more wrong.

Studies indicate there remain 4,762 unreached people groups in Eurasia and 16,256 unreached people groups in the world. These cultures or subcultures do not have a church, do not have a Bible in their own language, and do not have cross-cultural gospel witnesses reaching their communities. Translated into men, women, and children, these people groups amount to more than 2 billion people in Eurasia alone — the region most concentrated with such groups.

Christians will only perpetuate this spiritual blackout if those who enjoy religious freedom are content to stay home, intimidated by the prospect of taking the gospel where it is not officially welcome.

### **Giving Caesar Plausible Deniability**

Thankfully, more and more men and women with a passion for the Great Commission are discovering another vista within this socio-religious panorama. Yes, governments may officially take a stance against public evangelism. But official stances do not



mean ironclad prohibition.

For many years now, Assemblies of God personnel have lived and served in regions once characterized as closed. Increasingly, Assemblies of God World Missions leadership is acting on the belief that there is no truly closed nation. There are only regions requiring a greater degree of creativity in serving people's spiritual and material needs. The key to establishing ministry anywhere is to understand the social, religious, and political cultures, and

## Because the Assemblies of God takes an inclusive stance toward other ministries, the gospel is accelerating in partnership rather than stalling over corporate identity.

then identify open doors.

From the point of view of local authorities, there are advantages to allowing ministry personnel to operate within their borders. AGWM only sends people of the highest professional and ethical standards. Ministry representatives often come into impoverished regions with an influx of financial support and humanitarian relief. The presence of Western humanitarian organizations, particularly those understood to operate from a religious motivation, allows the host government to claim a certain degree of openness and freedom.

Ministry personnel can enjoy effective, long-term outreach as long as they recognize the parameters in which they must operate. Any in-your-face methodologies, even though they may appear to be expressions of evangelistic zeal, are recipes for disaster. The gospel can propagate person to person when outreach moves forward on the strength of carefully nurtured interpersonal relationships.

In Northern Asia, for example, AGWM ministry personnel are active in a spectrum of community outreaches and educational projects. The local government knows of their presence and their practice. There has never been a single case of enforced deportation.

From the point of view of missionaries on the ground, working within the system rather than against the system steadily creates ever-growing opportunities for personal evangelism. But, unlike ministry

in an open environment, there are few avenues for getting word back to supporting churches at home. Often, missionaries are unable to tell their best success stories. If churches misunderstand that silence, the results can be catastrophic.

### Sorry, No Promises of Pretty Postcards

Yes, it is exciting to receive a newsletter, e-mail, or even a video from a missionary one's church is supporting. Think of the many churches that faithfully give to missions and regularly post news from around the world on a missions display. People want to know their contributions count, that their dollars are funding effective overseas ministry. When a missionary accepts a monthly pledge and travels overseas, his supporters expect him to write home with at least a semblance of regularity.

But missionaries serving in some regions are constrained by the need to respect a fragile détente with the host

government, and by the security needs of local believers. Not long ago, one missionary following that procedure avoided sending any surface mail home, then watched in dismay as his monthly support plummeted \$1,300. AGWM leadership heard of the need and personally solicited additional support, but the dip in funding illustrates a dangerous lack of trust on the part of some congregations.

Churches must recognize the level of sacrifice missions personnel make when they undertake outreach in such challenging environments. They are putting themselves and their families at risk for the cause of the gospel. They are prioritizing souls over public relations. The lack of a communiqué from the field must never be misconstrued as lethargy or a lack of commitment on the part of the missionary.

Information moves unimpeded in today's world. A newsletter intended for a supporting church can find its way onto a church Web site or into an e-mail. Once online, anyone using a search engine to root out disapproved religious activity can retrieve that message. Jane might think she is doing Missionary Smith a favor by e-mailing a prayer request to 10 trusted church friends. But the mention of Missionary Smith's name on the Web within a church context could become the factor causing her to lose her visa or receive a disturbing invitation from local police.

Of much greater concern is the fate of local believers. Should a nation's government force a missionary family to leave their country, they will most likely make a safe transition to another location and continue their ministry. But ministry partners on-site do not have the luxury of relocation. Their house church gatherings could be shut down and their members could be persecuted or worse.

What is the alternative? Any church that has a heart for reaching the world's

most challenging mission fields can invite a missionary assigned to that field and listen with Holy Spirit-sensitized ears to that guest speaker's message. It may not be a message peppered with statistical fireworks. Specific locations and people may of necessity be blurred. But that missionary's passion will speak for itself. And the discerning congregation will recognize a worthy recipient of its missions support.

### Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Churches misunderstand the ministry dynamics within a creative-access nation. Consider this situation.

It is a crowded Aeroflot flight awaiting take-off from Moscow. An AGWM representative has just visited the region and interfaced with local church fellowships. He is reflecting on the latest evidence of the Holy Spirit's move among churches that once operated on the edge of survival.

A burst of enthusiasm a few rows behind him interrupts his thoughts. He turns, already knowing what to expect.

Sure enough, there sits another energetic outreach team from the United States. Their matching neon t-shirts sport John 3:16, or Romans 3:23, or some cleverly worded week's theme. Testimonies are flying across the aisles of people confronted on street corners, in public squares, and at various scheduled outreaches. It is usually unclear just how many contacts have made salvation decisions, but there is no doubt that they have broadcast the good news far and wide.

From the point of view of this departing group of teens and counselors, another blow has been struck for the gospel behind the former Iron Curtain. They are going home to proclaim spiritual victory to family members and friends who underwrote their 7 days on the front

lines of spiritual warfare.

But these people miss the bigger picture.

First, the fact they can travel openly in this region is a testimony to the careful and prayerful work of many believers during decades past. Second, their weeklong presence is only a surface evangelistic tactic, again made possible by others who are committed to long-term, even lifelong service.

While short-term outreach is laudable wherever it can safely take place, it sometimes gives participating churches the wrong idea of how to go about overseas ministry in sensitive regions. They might believe a radical evangelistic tactic is worthwhile, and that risking eviction is a badge of honor. But they are hindering more than they are helping.

In contrast, whether the ministry mechanism is mountain bike tours, microenterprise development, or a friendly coffeehouse, the goal of committed AGWM personnel is to build long-term relationship and grow long-term presence. The best way to effectively accomplish this is to identify partners in ministry, and then selflessly work with those partners to transform a community.

### Lasting Partnerships, Lasting Impact

Western missions projects with name recognition will not be the primary means of reaching the aforementioned unreached people groups. For the most part, anonymous people from within their homeland will reach them. Western contact will bring an initial influx of resources and spiritual groundwork. Western missionaries will translate some Scripture, start small fellowship groups, and train a few leaders. But indigenous leaders will complete the greatest part of the task.

This has been a founding AGWM ministry principle. This focus has

never changed. Because the Assemblies of God takes an inclusive stance toward other ministries, the gospel is accelerating in partnership rather than stalling over corporate identity.

Whenever we have someone called to a region, we do everything we can to equip and send him. If a national church has someone it wants to send to a region and we can partner with him, we will do our part to get that person to that region. If a Bible society wants to put the Bible in the language of a people group that has no Scriptures, we will partner in that project.

It comes down to fulfilling Christ's Great Commission with every available means. At times this means getting behind a national believer or fellowship. Sometimes it means sending an American missionary. But with 16,256 unreached groups and more than 2 billion people, we will never be able to send enough





missionaries or enough funds. Our partnerships are the means for successful and significant outreach.

In the end, it really does not matter if Western missionaries ever build a single Assemblies of God church in a region as long as people in the community are coming together as fellow believers. Our Fellowship does not send representatives around the world to plant the name "Assemblies of God." We go all over the world to plant the hope of Jesus Christ.

### More Than Money

A missionary budget presents a staggering array of expenses. Missionaries to creative-access nations face the double challenge of raising a budget without the freedom to itemize every use of pledged funds.

We would remind churches on the front-end of financial missions involvement that money is not the primary component of missions support. Every church, regardless of its budgetary commitment to missions, can partner in prayer with a missionary.

Soliciting prayer support is not a tongue-in-cheek mechanism for avoiding a plea for funds. Prayer is the lifeblood of missions outreach. This is particularly true for missionaries working in an unofficial capacity, often in isolation in a challenging region. The opposition and spiritual darkness they face are monumental. Without prayer, they will not make it.

Prayer is also effective onsite. In the early days of church growth in one former Soviet nation, for example, local believers developed a simple but well-received community outreach through prayer.

The local economy had collapsed. Many people were losing their homes — usually just small apartments — because

they could no longer pay rent. Christians would respond to want ads for those apartments and show up for a tour.

"This is a beautiful apartment," believers would say to the owner. Then, before the owner could be misled into thinking a sale was imminent, they would add, "We have no money, but we would like to pray with you that your apartment will sell."

Many apartments did sell. That community of believers continues to grow.

"We have no money ... but we would like to pray with you." There is no missionary, no matter how challenged by the financial demands of ministry, who will not welcome such a pledge as gold.

### Just as I Am

In perhaps an ironic turn of events, ministry in the world's challenging regions has opened doors for a broader spectrum of believers to serve the Kingdom. Missions is no longer the purview of the credentialed minister. Creative outreach through microenterprise, for example, requires the expertise of committed entrepreneurs. Reaching into a nation through its university campuses requires qualified educators. And, we must not forget those mountain-biking athletes in Eurasia.

As we write this article, a man we cannot name is completing his Ph.D.

in a field of science at a U.S. university with the assistance of AGWM funding. He plans to take his expertise to a part of the world where that discipline can connect him with other researchers — a part of the world where Christians represent just the tiniest fraction of the population.

Entrepreneurs, educators, athletes, scientists ... the list is endless. Our Fellowship is expressing a broader missions philosophy that sees the Holy Spirit calling people from all walks and stages of life into strategic service. Whether a candidate is just out of college or recently retired from a career, we are finding ways to honor the Spirit's touch on his life.

We are equipping global adventurers. Perhaps their story will intersect with that of your church. 🌐

## ► An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

"Our church had passed through a difficult time. The congregation was unable to participate in missions giving. We scheduled a missions banquet and presented the faith promise program. The desire was there; we only needed to open the door of opportunity. Participation in missions has been a major stepping-stone in the church's return to its status as a General Council church. This entire process has encouraged the church. As a body of believers, we are looking beyond our own doors."

**JAMES L. DAVENPORT**, pastor, Hazel Dell Assembly of God, Vancouver, Washington



**OMAR BEILER** is Eurasia regional director for Assemblies of God World Missions



**JERRY PARSLEY** is the former Eurasia regional director for Assemblies of God World Missions



**SCOTT HARRUP** is senior associate editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*







Galyon Wampler / Cary Bates

# Why Missions Must Be Nonpolitical:

## Prioritizing the Gospel of the Kingdom

BY RANDY HURST

I tried to imagine gladiators in full combat — the sound of clashing swords and the roar of the crowd. Even while standing in the Colosseum in Rome, I had difficulty comprehending that people and animals were sacrificed at that exact site on such a grand scale — merely to entertain.

In A.D. 64, almost two decades before the spectacles in the Colosseum, the butchery of defenseless Christians began a few miles away in the Circus Maximus on orders of Emperor Nero. Wild animals tore apart peaceful followers of Jesus in the arena. Nero also used Christians as human torches in the royal gardens at night.

A few years earlier the apostle Paul wrote to Christians in Rome, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God” (Romans 13:1).<sup>1</sup> The apostle Peter similarly wrote, “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him.” He also promised that God will grant grace to the person who, “for the sake of conscience toward God ... bears up under sorrows when suffering *unjustly*” (1 Peter 2:13,14,17–19).

Jesus foretold that people would persecute His followers for His name’s sake. But, as Peter aptly expressed it, if people persecute followers of Christ, it needs to be “unjustly” — for doing what is right. God has ordained authority, including civil authority. Christians do not live in a vacuum, but in nations that have political systems and governing authorities. When conscience requires, Christians must be willing to pay the price for refusing to obey immoral or blasphemous commands, such as

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who would not bow to worship the king’s image (Daniel 3:1–18).

Peter and Paul became martyrs during Nero’s tyrannical reign — Paul beheaded, Peter crucified. The first Christians did not expect justice in the Roman Empire. They were not social revolutionaries, but they did change their world.

According to Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, gladiators ceased their combats because of the courageous sacrifice of one Christian, Telemachus. After intervening in a gladiator fight in the Colosseum, the crowd stoned him to death. Emperor Honorius, impressed by how Telemachus died, issued an edict banning gladiator fights. The last known combat was in Rome on January 1, 404, the date historians usually give for Telemachus’ martyrdom.

Roman rule dominated the civilized Western world for almost 1,000 years, yet it crumbled on its own foundations. Political, economic, and military might are no match for the power of truth.

### How Can Christians Best Influence Nations?

Jesus taught His followers were to be the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13,14). Throughout history the gospel’s power has transformed cultures and nations as redeemed men and women

**Both politics and Pentecost are about power — but different kinds of power.**

influenced the societies in which they live. The gospel in the power of the Spirit changes people ... and people change the destiny of nations.

During the 18th century, England deteriorated into moral decadence. Crime had reached its highest level, as had the birthrate of illegitimate children. Violence and drunkenness were rampant. But God raised up bold, passionate messengers of the gospel. Men such as John Wesley and George Whitefield preached in marketplaces and open fields. The established church did not willingly





receive them, but their churches could not have contained the crowds anyway.

The greatest spiritual awakening in its history swept England and had a powerful influence on the culture. Crime, violence, and illegitimate births declined drastically. For the most part, the nation underwent a radical transformation. Historians have rightly credited Queen Victoria for her positive influence on England. But some historians who are experts of this era credit this positive surge in morality to the Wesleyan revival. This positive impact on England lasted many decades.

While Christians are not of the world, we are to be active in the world by making a difference in the lives of those around us.

### **Why Should Pentecostal Missions Be Nonpolitical?**

Followers of Christ need to be involved in national politics. But the missionary has a sacred calling to take the gospel — the power of God for the eternal salvation of all who believe (Romans 1:13–16) — to a spiritually lost world.

Both politics and Pentecost are about power — but different kinds of power. The power Jesus promised His disciples when the Holy Spirit came upon them was to bear witness to Him “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The mission of our Fellowship is the mission of Christ himself. Standing bound before Pilate, Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting” (John 18:36).

Wherever people have proclaimed the gospel God has lifted humanity and changed the culture. But improving physical and social conditions is not our primary cause. Our task is to fulfill Jesus’ promise that “this gospel of the kingdom shall

be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). Human governments rise and fall, but the Church’s mission to proclaim Christ’s eternal kingdom endures.

In 1927, Noel Perkin became the first missionary to serve as executive director of Assemblies of God World Missions. Under his leadership, AGWM instituted two significant policies that shaped the future of the Fellowship’s mission throughout the world.

The first was the commitment to establish indigenous churches.<sup>2</sup> We do not transplant the American church abroad. The first Assemblies of God missionary manual, published in 1931 under Perkin’s leadership, stated: “The winning of souls to Christ and establishing of assemblies in all places where converts are won should be regarded as the primary objective of all missions.” It further stipulated that missionaries were to establish churches that were self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.

Several articles in this issue give attention to the priority given by Assemblies of God World Missions of establishing indigenous churches. Being committed to an indigenous church missiology is one more major reason why our missions must be nonpolitical. An indigenous church must be able to function effectively under any form of government. If the churches we establish are infused with values and priorities rooted in the political system and national governance of the sending church or agency, we render those national churches less effective in proclaiming the gospel and ministering to the spiritual needs of people in their nation. The church of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God are both transcultural and supracultural. This means the Church not only needs to

function effectively in every culture but also above and outside its natural cultural context. The church needs to be able to accomplish its purpose in any culture, while not allowing the surrounding culture to limit its ability to accomplish that purpose.

In addition, missionary activity is nonpolitical. The 1931 manual states, "Missionaries need to carefully abstain from all interference with the political affairs and institutions of the people among whom they labor." The executive presbytery reaffirmed that nonpolitical stance in 1976: "We cannot permit our testimony among the nations to be compromised or the presence of our missionaries in other nations to be subject to suspicion. ... We affirm further our policy to remain nonpolitical in character in all our missionary outreach."<sup>3</sup>

In the history of our mission, prioritizing the proclamation of the gospel to establish the Church has proven its effectiveness over time, especially after transitions of political authorities and governments.

More than 40 years ago, officials forced American missionaries to leave Burma (now known as Myanmar) and Cuba when new governments came to power. The national churches the missionaries had helped to establish not only survived, but they also flourished. Pentecostal believers have been exemplary citizens — not counter-revolutionaries.

When our missionaries left Burma in 1966, there were 12,668 Assemblies of God believers in the country. Today, there are more than 285,000. Similarly, the Assemblies of God in Cuba has proclaimed the gospel with great effectiveness and has experienced growth from less than 4,000 members in 1959 to 550,000 today. These national churches focus on proclaiming the gospel and

establishing churches, not on social justice and reform.

Our primary concern is not with temporary human governments that rise and fall. Like Abraham, who "lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land," we too are "looking for the city ... whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:9,10).

Cuba and Burma are compelling examples of the lasting quality of indigenous national churches when

time his exemplary life won him favor with communist government officials. They learned that Pentecostal believers did not have political agendas; they proclaimed the gospel and lived exemplary Christian lives. They were loving and compassionate neighbors to their fellow citizens.

One nation I recently visited had not allowed traditional missionary proclamation of the gospel for many decades, but indigenous churches

## **Both politics and Pentecost are about power — but different kinds of power.**

major political changes take place in a country. They are also illustrative of the critical nature of our nonpolitical stance in missions. In countries where political pressures on the church were a hindrance, these churches have not only survived, but also thrived under the new government.

In Burma and Cuba, national church leadership and Assemblies of God believers in both countries proved to governments that Pentecostal believers are exemplary citizens, much like first-century Christians who were obedient to the apostle Paul and Peter's teaching concerning submitting to the authorities of human governments. These believers do not violate their consciences because they receive instruction in and submit to scriptural truth.

A few years ago I interviewed a pastor who served as national leader of the Assemblies of God work in a communist country. Before his salvation, this man was one of the country's leading instructors who indoctrinated young people in communist ideology. After receiving Christ he resigned from the communist party, which immediately put him under suspicion and intensive pressure by the government. But over

are now thriving and multiplying at an explosive rate. At the same time, one major church is under extensive government pressure and suspicion — not because it is Christian — but because officials perceive that control of its government comes from outside the country. As a result, the government sees Christians whom attend that church, whether fairly or not, as having greater allegiance to an organization outside the country than to their own civil authority. As Christians we would acknowledge that the eternal kingdom of God is a higher authority than any civil authority, but that is just the point. As Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

### **How Can Peace Be Achieved?**

Our world contains much suffering. Poverty and disease cause desperate human needs, but crises resulting from human hatred and conflict often outweigh these needs. Since Cain and Abel, the greatest problems are between people, yet neither politics nor war can remedy the causes of human conflict.

Wherever people politicize religion, human conflict becomes the most irreconcilable. I have visited Bosnia, where centuries of ethnic

## ► An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

"Glad Tidings Church has long been a missions-minded church. However, when I assumed the pastorate in 1997, we discovered a deficit in the missions budget. We devised a plan to turn around the program, because it was solely dependent on tithes. We set a long-range plan to support every foreign and most of the U.S. missionaries in the South Texas District. We designated one Sunday each month as Missions Sunday. Annual faith promises became a vital part. We developed a comprehensive missions budget to ensure that every month we paid our missions pledges. Thus, once adopted by our church, that missionary never needed to worry about whether he would receive our support. We use this attitude of lifetime missions support in our promotions and outreach. We believe if we are missions-focused, then God will bless our church as a *sender*, much like He blessed the church at Antioch.

"Every area of our church has shown consistent growth over the past 10 years. The foundation we have laid by faithfully supporting missions has touched every area of the church's purpose and ministry. This has not only been evident in missions giving but also in compassion and outreach ministries in northwest Houston — our mission field."

**CALVIN M. DURHAM**, pastor, Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Houston, Texas

hatred erupted in 1992 and 200,000 people died in 4 years. I have traveled to Rwanda, where tribal genocide killed almost 1 million people in just 100 days. Compared to Bosnia and Rwanda, the more than 3,000 people who died in the Northern Ireland conflict during recent decades seem few. But with the possible exception of the Middle East, Northern Ireland's fractured society appears to be one of the most impossible to heal. Life in Belfast reveals how persistent and enduring conflict can be. Peace, debated and pursued, remains fleeting, fragile — and elusive.

Peace seems impossible between people trapped in age-old conflict. People seem less capable of building short bridges than long ones. We need peace not only on a global scale but also within nations and families.

Peace begins with one person and one act of forgiveness at a time. Only people can change circumstances. Only God can change people's hearts.

The antidote to human hatred is the love of God manifested on the Cross. Our only message for a strife-filled, war-torn world is Jesus. He gave His life to bring reconciliation — first with our Creator, then with our neighbors. Only the heart-transforming power of the gospel can heal this broken world. As believers we must have a vision for people and an eternal perspective. We must not designate as the enemy what God calls the harvest.

### What Does the World Need Most?

Any studied contemplation of the poverty, hunger, and disease that pervade much of the world — and the suffering endured by many — perplexes the mind and despairs the heart. Compassionate identification with people urges us to do anything possible to make things better. But how? Even the best human efforts are temporary. Nonbelievers who cannot discern the saving power of Christ think the hope of His followers is misplaced or futile.

They do not understand the gospel's transforming power.

In exile after conquering much of Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte reflected on the difference between Christ's kingdom and empires founded by conquerors like Alexander, Caesar, and himself. He concluded that "Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy; He asks for the human heart; He will have it entirely to himself. He demands it unconditionally; and forthwith His demand is granted. ... In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ."

The kingdom of heaven *is* and *is to come*. When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees about when the Kingdom was coming, He answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20,21). Ironically, it was the outcast Samaritans in the obscure village of Sychar who first declared Him to be "the Savior of the world" (John 4:42).

The reign of Jesus Christ can begin today — in the heart of anyone who will surrender to His lordship. What every person in the world needs most is a personal introduction to the King. 🙏



**RANDY HURST**, director of Communications, Assemblies of God World Missions

### NOTES

1. Scripture quotations are taken 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)).
2. The word *indigenous* describes something that begins, grows, and lives naturally in its own setting or environment.
3. Executive Presbytery minutes from March 29, 1976.





# Welcome, Missionary Associates

BY RICK JOHNSON

**“Our** missionary associate position opened our eyes to the needs of the world and helped us see how much work we have left to do in fulfilling the Great Commission,” says Kurtis Denton. He and his wife, Amy, served as missionary associates in Italy prior to becoming full-time missionaries to that nation in 2003.

Thanks to steps taken by Assemblies of God World Missions leadership in recent years, more short-term overseas opportunities with AGWM are available today than ever before.

“We have heard repeatedly that this present generation is more relational and wants hands-on involvement with the mission field and the ministries it represents,” says John Bueno, AGWM executive director.

“Our young people want to be involved in taking the gospel to the world — perhaps not as a career, but as a short-term missionary during the summer or following college. We do not want to limit their participation simply

because they are not traditionally appointed missionaries. Instead, we want to allow the Holy Spirit to guide men and women of every age in being involved in fulfilling the Great Commission.”

AGWM personnel is a growing missionary family of more than 4,000 — including 2,061 missionaries, 644 missionary associates, and 1,400 missionary children — taking the gospel to more than 200 countries and territories.

These dedicated men and women, along with their children, are sharing the good news with people worldwide in cities, urban areas, and remote villages. Together they work with more than 280,000 national pastors in six geographical regions — Africa, Asia Pacific, Eurasia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern Asia.

The 2,061 career missionaries were appointed by the AGWM executive committee, currently led by Bueno and composed of 12 additional members. Career missionaries

have sensed the call of God to leave their homeland and devote their lives to planting the church in other lands. Many continue for 20, 30, 40, or even 50 years of service.

### Number of Missionary Associates Increasing

The fastest-growing segment of our missionary force today is missionary associates. This program enables interested and qualified participants to go overseas for an initial 1- to 2-year commitment.

The MA program is available for laypersons and ministers, 18 years and older, who desire to volunteer their skills in supportive roles to career missionaries. Some MA applicants have ministerial credentials, but most do not.

This program links people with various vocational gifts with ministries overseas that urgently need their help. Missionary associates, using their unique gifts and abilities, help veteran missionaries by sharing the workload on the field. Today, 644 missionary associates are serving worldwide.

"The MA program gives young people opportunity to get acquainted with the needs of our world," says Bueno, "and to be participants, not just observers, in the message we

executive committee members began their missions careers with a 2-year, short-term assignment long before the missionary associate program was introduced.

The first World Missions Summit hosted in 2005 in Louisville, Kentucky, gave a great boost to our missionary associate program. This event created widespread awareness and welcomed into our Movement young people desiring to serve for at least 1 year on a mission field. More than 600 young people made a commitment for short-term service at that event.

### The Value of Missionary Associates

According to Ron Maddux, regional director for Northern Asia, "Missionary associates are different from the Missions Abroad Placement Service workers of the past.

"Missionary associates perform ministry tasks that are essential to the work of missions in many countries. In many restricted-access countries, missionary associates often get to the field quickly and perform tasks required by governments, thus providing a reason for our organization to remain in that country.

that will serve them well if they become career missionaries."

Nearly 70 percent of career missionaries in Northern Asia began as missionary associates.

Those working closely with the AGWM personnel process believe it is helpful

## Nearly 70 percent of career missionaries in Northern Asia began as missionary associates.

for people to go to the mission field as missionary associates for these reasons:

1. The MA experience often confirms a person's call to and capabilities for full-time career missions service. Many of our 2,061 appointed missionaries began as missionary associates.

2. If the MA experience does not confirm the person's call and they decide not to pursue further service, they have received firsthand exposure to missions without having to raise a full missionary budget.

3. Much of what our Assemblies of God missionary force is able to accomplish would be impossible without the help of missionary associates. Many are involved in strategic ministries.

AGWM leaders recognize the importance of the giftings the Lord gives the body of Christ. Many missionary associates have the abilities urgently needed on our mission fields.

"The missionary associate program, as with all AGWM ministries, strives to find the right people for the right places in God's harvest field," says Tim Southerland, area director for Northern Europe. "Many of our missionary associates work alongside seasoned missionaries for 1 or 2 years, while growing as a believer and being disciplined."

"Many times the MA helps the missionary move his ministry to

## Thanks to steps taken by Assemblies of God World Missions leadership in recent years, more short-term overseas opportunities with AGWM are available today than ever before.

proclaim. Many young people who go overseas for a one-time experience are challenged to serve Christ as full-time missionaries. This eliminates the fear that short-termers are detrimental to our career missionary status."

Bueno and two other current AGWM

"Furthermore, the missionary associate program serves as a *farm league* for career missionary service. Missionary associates serve in a country and sense what God is saying to them about long-term service. That experience exposes them to language, culture, and ministry



Adra George

## New Opportunities in Missions

Men and women who applied for career missionary service in years past often faced restrictive qualifications. In addition to applicants being certain of God's call to missions and presenting references of Christian character and service, some were told "You:

- must have pastoral experience."
- must be age 40 or younger."
- cannot have more than two children."
- cannot go to the mission field as a single (especially male) person."

These specific restrictions no longer apply to most missionary applicants. This is due in part to the vast increase in opportunities for missions service.

Today we have more opportunities for service and more locations where people can serve. As a result, AGWM leaders can more easily direct applicants to an avenue of missions service that best fits their call, abilities, and qualifications.

At the same time, AGWM does not approve every applicant for service. Our executive committee members recognize the responsibility they have in the missionary approval process. When considering each applicant, they continue to look to guidelines set forth in the official minutes in 1921:

"The Foreign Missions Committee shall define proper standards for the training and testing of candidates as to their call and qualifications for foreign service as the needs of the work shall require."

Twice a year, AGWM executive committee members meet with missionary applicants. They are eager to listen to their stories. Some sense that God is calling them to a lifetime of missionary service. Others have a burden for missions, but are unsure of the capacity in which they are to serve.

### Career Missions

AGWM has designed career missions categories for those called to full-time intercultural missionary service. Once the AGWM Executive Committee approves applicants for service, they receive assistance from the committee in determining the location and type of ministry for their missionary appointment. Within career missions are four types of service, and each one has varying qualifications:

**Appointed general.** This missionary has a proven stateside ministry and believes God is calling him to full-time overseas missionary service.

**Appointed special.** This missionary is called to full-time service, using his specialized vocational skills to meet needs and enhance ministries overseas. He may serve as a teacher (including Bible school), computer specialist, media technician, medical personnel, builder, accountant, and more.

**Special assignment.** This missionary is a specialist who will fulfill a ministry for a specific time.

**Specialized service.** This missionary has skills in practical or pastoral ministry. He may take an overseas assignment on a contract basis for 1 to 4 years when his professional expertise will complement the work of a career missionary.

### Short-Term Missions

Applicants for short-term service are provided missionary opportunity through one of several categories:

**Short-term Ministers Abroad (up to 6 months).** U.S. pastors, educators, and evangelists (credentialed ministers) can play a vital role in overseas discipleship and training by complementing the work of missionaries for a short time.

**Mobilization and Placement Service (1 to 11 months).** This program applies the skills and interests of dedicated individuals who wish to assist career missionaries in overseas missions ministries.

**Missionary Associate (1 to 2 years).** The missionary associate program is available for laypersons and ministers who desire to volunteer their skills in a supportive role to career missionaries.

Short-term missions categories — particularly the missionary associate — provide excellent opportunities for pastors and laypersons to work alongside career missionaries and discover if God is calling them to full-time service.

If you believe God may be leading you into missionary service, contact AGWM Personnel and Family Life, or visit the Assemblies of God World Missions Web site at <http://www.Goag.org>.

**RICK JOHNSON**, Springfield, Missouri



another level," says Paul Weis, Central America area director. "Sometimes this happens by his direct involvement with what the missionary is doing. At other times, the MA helps in areas that free up the missionary for more focused dedication to the ministry to which God has called him."

"Our experiences with MAs have been positive, especially in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru," says Ray Talley, area director for the Andean Region of Latin America. "They bring fresh enthusiasm to the missionaries, show creativity in their ministry tasks, and find ways to effectively contribute to and enhance ongoing ministries on the field."

"We've had several great MAs in the Caribbean," says Dale Coad, area director. "Often, in a spiritual battle when victory hangs in the balance and missionaries are weary, MAs have come in like Aaron and Hur, to hold up their hands."

### Training of Missionary Associates

Important to the missionary associate program is the orientation and training we provide. AGWM Personnel and Family Life Office conducts

training sessions, called Prefield Orientation, at least three times a year. We provide MAs with helpful information, stress the importance of teamwork, and explain the mentoring

## The MA program is available for laypersons and ministers, 18 years and older, who desire to volunteer their skills in supportive roles to career missionaries.

process they will be a part of once they arrive on the field.

"Missionary associates are thrust into a new culture where, because of the short-term nature of their assignment, they must quickly adjust," says Gerald Branum, area director for Western Europe. "We endeavor to provide orientation at the regional and area levels to adequately prepare associates for the challenges of walking the cross-cultural line. Further orientation takes place on the field with the missionary to whom the MA is assigned."

### Support for Missionary Associates

"In our existing short-term ministries

— Ambassadors in Missions and the 1- to 2-year missionary associate program — participants raise their own money, relying on the generosity of home churches or family members," says Bueno.

"It is virtually impossible for home churches or family members to completely support all of the young people

desiring to participate as missionary associates.

Bueno encourages pastors to find ways and means to help MA candidates commit themselves to the task.

He says, "It is time for us to open the doors of our churches to these volunteers, giving them greater opportunity for exposure to the needs of our world, and to satisfy their desire to be a part of what Jesus commanded us to do.

"We must continually look for ways to facilitate this process if we believe this is the provision of the Lord in supplying needed laborers around the world.

"Many people who come to us say, 'I don't have the experience to be a missionary associate.'

"I reply, 'We will provide you with the experience. We cannot give you a call to missions, a heart for service, or the giftings, but we can give you the experience.' "

If applicants come to AGWM with a teachable heart and a servant attitude, as a missionary associate they will gain the experience they need to serve effectively.

Anyone interested in becoming a missionary associate or participating in short-term missions can visit our Web site at <http://www.Goag.org> and explore the list of personnel needs that currently exists in many countries. 🌐



**RICK JOHNSON**, director, Personnel and Family Life, Assemblies of God World Missions, Springfield, Missouri







JAY RISNER



HANK WHINERY



CHUCK PADGETT



DAVID RICHARDS



RANDY CHRISTENSEN

# Nurturing the Call to Missions

## WITHIN THE NEXT GENERATION

BY JANET WALKER

**When** missionary Tom Lofton was a boy, he attended Central Assembly in Biloxi, Mississippi, where his parents pastored. One night he watched a film about J.W. Tucker, a missionary brutally martyred for his faith in the Belgian Congo. Although Lofton was only a child, the Holy Spirit touched his heart that night. "I knew from that day on I would someday be a missionary to a foreign land," he says. Tom and his wife, Lois, currently missionaries with Assemblies of God World Missions International Ministries, served more than a decade in the Czech Republic.

At age 14, Margaret Bishop listened to missionary Wilbur Taylor share about missions at her church. She learned about the Mossi tribe in Burkina Faso (then called Upper Volta) and the need for missionaries to take the gospel to them. In that service, God called Bishop to be a missionary to the Mossi. At Bible school she met and married Harold Jones. Together they served as missionaries to Africa for 38 years, ministering for 33 years in Burkina Faso.

Every year new candidate missionaries present themselves to the Assemblies of God World Missions Board for approval for service. AGWM commissioned a total of 94 men and women for missionary service to 29 countries at the 2007 School of Missions in Springfield, Missouri.



Where do missionaries come from? They come from churches — small and large — across the U.S. Assemblies of God fellowship. Why do they come? They respond in obedience to the call of God on their lives. (AGWM has no formal recruitment process.)

The story of a missionary's call may be nearly as dramatic as the burning bush Moses experienced in Exodus 3 or as gentle as the still, small voice Elijah heard in 1 Kings 19. But each candidate's call is unique, as is his or her salvation experience, talents for service, and preparation for the task.

Candidates' missionary applications ask them to give an account of how and when God called them. In a recent survey of approximately 600 missionaries, about 40 percent indicated that God called them as missionaries before age 20. Here are some brief examples of how the call came to several missionaries who are currently serving overseas:

- A man, called at age 7, was praying for missionaries during children's church. He knew God was telling him to be a missionary.
- A woman was called at age 8 during a missionary service on a Sunday evening.
- A man, called at age 8, was praying and asking God what He wanted him to do with his life. God said He was sending him to India.
- A woman age 9 felt God's call as her Missionettes (MPact Girls Clubs) leader read missionary stories to the class from *Mountain Movers* (*Today's Pentecostal Evangel World Missions Edition*) magazine.
- A woman was called at age 9 during an evening service at a district girls camp.
- A man, called at age 10, was attending a Sunday evening missionary service. While the family was on its way home that night after

church, this young man began to cry. His mother asked why he was crying. He told her God had called him to be a missionary, but he was afraid. His mother said, "Always say yes to Jesus. He will provide all you need to do what He calls you to do. There is no reason to be afraid." He believed his mother and said yes to God. God gave him peace, and he says, "That call set the course for the rest of my life."

While reading the files of candidate missionaries and noting that many were called to missions service as children, David Lee, director of U.S. Relations for AG World Missions, says he wonders "if churches are continuing to give children opportunities to interact with missionaries; hear their stories; and be changed, challenged, and called through a missionary's ministry."

### **Nurturing by Personal Contact**

Contact with missionaries is the most effective method of nurturing the call to missions in the life of a child, agree five U.S. children's pastors interviewed on this subject. Yet, at the same time they recognize the limitations that exist within the church to provide personal contact with missionaries on a regular basis.

**The story of a missionary's call may be nearly as dramatic as the burning bush Moses experienced in Exodus 3 or as gentle as the still, small voice Elijah heard in 1 Kings 19.**

Today in many Assemblies of God churches across the Fellowship, missionaries no longer have access to an entire service when they visit a church. Their presentation is often limited to a 10-minute window. Some churches only host missionaries on Wednesday evenings, which often

means fewer people are in attendance. When missionaries do visit the Sunday or Wednesday adult services, children are usually meeting in a separate service in another part of the building.

Because of these limitations, for children to have regular contact with missionaries, the pastor or children's pastor must make it happen.

"Missions can't be just a once-a-year highlight for kids; it must be a daily diet," says Jay Risner. Jay and his wife, Debbie, served as children's pastors at Timberline Church in Fort Collins, Colorado, from 2004 to 2007 and James River Assembly of God in Ozark, Missouri, from February 2000 through April 2004. They are currently preparing to return to missionary service overseas.

"If you're going to nurture the call to missions within the next generation," says Risner, "you must make sure children have continual contact with missionaries who have gone and are going overseas, so they feel that missions service is the norm. In anything you do, whatever becomes the norm rather than the exception will change people's lives."

At age 10, Rachel (not her real name because of her sensitive missions assignment) and her family moved to

Springfield, Missouri, and were part of the church family at Central Assembly for several years. Rachel was a sixth grader attending camp at the Southern Missouri District Campgrounds when she responded to the call of God on her life after listening to a sermon by Alton Garrison. (She still has the sermon

notes she took.) Garrison is now the assistant general superintendent of the Assemblies of God.

Rachel says her missionary call came because of a threefold process: 1) constant exposure to missionaries and missions instruction in the church since childhood, 2) being part of a lay family that loved and supported missionaries and was involved in ministry outreach, and 3) participation in church outreaches that required her to share her faith.

Rachel recalls how her Missionettes (now called MPact Girls Clubs) leader, a former missionary, taught the girls about missions and invited them to her home to sample a foreign dish. Sometimes when missionaries spoke at Central Assembly on Wednesday nights, Rachel's parents took her and her siblings with them to the adult service. She remembers that a missions film about Chile shown at the church impacted her heart regarding the need for people to go. But she was disturbed by the fact missionaries in the film were eating chicken's feet soup. She remembers talking to a friend

afterward and wondering aloud, *If we go as missionaries, will we have to eat that soup?*

Rachel's family and church encouraged her to participate in ministry outreach opportunities. She went on choir ministry tours to other parts of the United States. She participated in Warrior Weekends where youth would canvass neighborhoods and conduct children's programs.

"Watching the church's annual missionary parade also touched my heart for missions," says Rachel. "I remember asking my dad why one missionary portraying a Muslim was dressed like that." Year after year, I saw the sanctuary filled with missionaries representing the people to whom they were going and telling about Jesus." Rachel and her husband have served for 10 years as missionaries to Eurasia.

At Heritage Assembly in Baxter, Minnesota, "most missionaries are scheduled for the adult services," says Hank Whinery, former children's pastor. (Whinery is currently senior pastor at Wells

Assembly of God in Wells, Minnesota.) "So we often brought in the missionary's spouse to speak to the approximately 80 children in our kids service. We always asked the missionary, 'When were you called to the mission field?' Many of them say they were called when they were children,

and that gets our kids to thinking, *Well, can God call me?*"

Whenever missionaries come to Oxford Assembly in Oxford, Florida, Chuck Padgett, children's pastor, makes sure they also speak to the children and answer their questions about missions. He believes personal contact with missionaries has impacted the lives of many children with whom he has worked.

Missionary guests often come on Wednesday night to First Assembly of God in Fort Myers, Florida. "When we learn missionaries are scheduled for a Wednesday night service, we invite them to our MPact and Royal Rangers groups," says children's pastor David Richards. "They share snippets of what they do in the countries where they serve, and the kids get to ask questions in a small group setting. When missionaries come on a weekend, we invite them to our kids church. A few missionaries have even come and led our kids church services."

Before the missionary guest speaks at Willmar Assembly of God in Willmar, Minnesota, children's pastor Randy Christensen asks the missionary to come downstairs with the children. "Often, we have the kids pray for the missionary," says Christensen, "so we are getting them directly involved in prayer for missions. Keeping that emphasis in front of the children — that God has called us to reach others — is important. We know that God calls individuals. He doesn't call the masses."

### Nurturing by Instruction and Exposure

To teach children about missions, many churches — including the five churches represented by these children's pastors — utilize the missions education resources available from Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade at the Assemblies of God

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**"You know, after just one week of this, I'm sure those world missions people really have it made."**

# A call to ministry

A 2005 survey concerning the age when a person was convinced that God was directing him/her toward foreign missions showed the following results:

## 2005 SURVEY

AGE WHEN CALLED	# OF RESPONDENTS
1 – 4	2
5 – 9	44
10 – 14	72
15 – 19	129
20 – 24	142
25 – 29	54
30 – 34	49
35 – 39	30
40 – 44	27
44 +	40
Blank	23
Total	612

Call to Missions Influencing Factors for Missionaries — 2005 Statistics

A 2005 survey found the following factors influenced a missionary's call to missions:

FACTOR	PERCENT
Personal Prayer	94.9%
Reading Scripture	88.3%
Missions Sermon by Missionary	80.2%
Conversation with Missionary	77.7%
Missionary Biographies	64.4%
Missions Sermon by Pastor	62.8%
Missions Convention	51.6%
Family Influence	44.9%
Missions in College	38.9%
Missions Magazines	37.5%
Missionaries in Home	37.5%
Missions Sermon by Evangelist	37.4%
Sunday School Class	37.0%
Stateside Intercultural	36.6%
Dreams or Visions	36.4%
Missions Films/DVD	35.6%
Personal Travel Abroad	31.0%
Prophetic Utterance	30.4%
Small Group Bible Study	26.3%
College Missions Trip	22.9%
Missionary Associate Assignment	19.8%
High School Missions Trip	18.6%
Growing Up Overseas	7.5%
Overseas Employ/Study	6.3%
Military Service Overseas	3.8%
Missions Web Sites /Blogs	0.8%

## Lifetime Opportunities in World Missions

- Children
- BGMC
- Youth (Jr/Sr High)
- STL
- AIM
- College/Young Adult
- Chi Alpha
- MAPS Ministry (1-11 months – includes summer worker)
- MAPS Construction (1-3 weeks)

National Children's Ministries Agency (<http://www.4kids.org>). These resources help expose children to missions and encourage their participation through giving: Buddy Barrels and Boxes for missions giving, Go360 missions DVDs/videos, True Life Stories about missionaries, Speedy D. Light skits, and more.

"I believe in BGMC and use all of the materials available, including the Buddy Barrel, in our monthly

missions emphasis," says Richards. "But I take our missions focus a step further and call it *Beyond the Barrel*. We try to help the kids understand that missions is not just about filling the yellow Buddy Barrel and bringing the most offering. We want them to know how their offerings help the missionaries and other ways they can participate."

At a kids camp Richards conducted, he asked missionary Tamara Henkes,

camp speaker, what resources she needed for her work with children in Romania. She said she needed school supplies. He then asked children to bring school supplies as their first offering at camp. They brought pens, pencils, crayons, and glue. "The kids could see themselves in that picture of giving," says Richards. "They could visualize the kids in Romania using those items just like they do." The children currently support three



missionaries at \$25 a month, and Richards prominently displays pledge certificates for them to see.

Padgett constantly teaches the children about missions. An annual highlight is the BGMC banquet. "In that service we show the children what the culture is like in some of the countries where our missionaries live and minister. The children fill out faith promise cards, and we explain to them why we make a faith promise in our missions giving and the importance of keeping it. We also explain what it means for us to give sacrificially to missions and how our giving brings honor to God."

### Nurturing Through Involvement

First Assembly in Fort Myers, Florida, sees many children take the next step in missions involvement. "By the time some of them enter eighth grade at our church's Fort Myers Christian School," says Richards, "they're going on a missions trip to Mexico, and by the time they enter high school, they are participating in an Ambassadors in Mission trip."

Helping children gain a broader concept of world missions is a heart cry of Richards', the grandson of veteran AG missionaries. Richards helps children learn that they can do missions work now by reaching children for Christ in their own community. "We are currently training a ministry team of children to work with human video and puppets. Our goal is to take them to minister in U.S. Missions churches and other churches that do not yet have a strong children's ministry."

Missions is a part of everything the church does at Heritage Assembly in Baxter, Minnesota. "It's always a part of our prayers and teaching," says Whinery. Each year during the church's missions convention, the children carry flags or wear costumes

representing the countries where missionaries serve, while the speaker presents a roll call of the missionaries supported by the church.

"Many children tell us they feel God has called them to the mission field," says Whinery. "But in children's ministries, you must wait a few years to see what happens. One girl who came to us in fifth grade is now in high school and went on an AIM trip to Guatemala 2 years ago. She was impressed by God's call on her life. This past summer she returned to Guatemala and paid her own way. Now she's attending North Central University. Several other youth and college students, who came through our children's ministries are now participating in AIM trips or Master's Commission, or attending NCU."

Christensen says that Willmar Assembly's attitude is "this is a place for people to participate in and be a part of the Great Commission," and that attitude flows over into the children's ministries. "We teach children that missions is not just an event, it's a regular part of life — whether we're sharing the love of Jesus with people across the street or across the ocean."

Christensen helps train children's ministry teams including puppet, drama, and choreography teams. The teams participate in a musical, and children are encouraged to invite friends from school or their neighborhood to see the program. "We pray that this will be an evangelistic outreach," says Christensen, "not just a talent show, but something that has eternal purpose."

Padgett involves children in ministry opportunities constantly. He takes a children's ministry team to missions conferences to minister through puppetry and praise and worship. He

tells the children, "No matter if you're not called to a foreign field right now, you've got a mission field right here at home."

Ashley Kreisman, who learned about missions as a child from Padgett, is currently a freshman at Southeastern University of the Assemblies of God in Lakeland, Florida. She says, "Pastor Chuck constantly taught us children about missions service and giving through BGMC. He also encouraged us to participate in different community outreaches where we took the gospel to other children." Ashley has already participated in several short-term missions trips and plans to continue her involvement in missions in the future.

"When we involve children in ministry," says Risner, "we're providing the seed of missions in their lives, nurturing it, and watering it. Several children I have worked with, who are now in junior high, have told me, 'I feel called to missions.' Their openness to that call had to do with the fact they were given opportunities to experience going out and touching somebody else's life."

Risner took a group of high schoolers from Timberline Church with him to Kenya in fall 2007. They were part of his leadership team in kids church. Four of the 12 on the team have expressed a call to missions. "They are products of a daily diet of hearing and learning about missions," says Risner, "and their call was enhanced by experiencing missions. If we want adults in the church who pray, give, and go, we've got to have children who pray, give, and go." 🌟



**JANET WALKER** is assistant editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel World Missions Edition*



# Short-term Missions That Last



Aubra George

Nine principles to effective  
short-term mission trips

BY E. SCOTT MARTIN



# The Book of Acts

is replete with powerful, short-term missions experiences that had lasting results. Acts 8:26–40 records an important and effective short-term ministry encounter — Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Peter’s mission at Cornelius’ house lasted only a few days but had a fruitful outcome (Acts 10:48). Short-term missions are effective.

Over the past 10 years more than 90 percent of appointed Assemblies of God World Missions Chi Alpha missionaries have previously served on a short-term mission to their chosen field. Ron Maddux, Northern Asia regional director, states that more than 80 percent of missionaries in Northern Asia first served there as missionary associates. Short-term missions exposes people to the needs on the field and helps them open their hearts to God’s call.

My wife, Crystal, and I spent a year in Central Eurasia pioneering the first university student ministry in the area. A team of 13 missionary associates and MAPS workers assisted us. These college graduates had little or no training in the indigenous language. Although they had limited experience in campus ministry and missions, they wanted to learn and they had a willingness to serve. Hosting a team that size took a great deal of time, but the investment produced multiplied returns.

One of our team members, Rochelle Denton, is a graduate of North Central University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She had never participated in Chi Alpha or campus ministry, but she possessed every attribute for a fruitful short-term experience. During her year on the field she never complained. She learned how to navigate the city and did not depend on us for transportation. She studied the language diligently and learned it well. She was open to new ministry paradigms and never challenged authority. Her excellent work ethic served as a model for the other students. Her life and faith were contagious. We never found her without a smile.

Some might say these are her giftings, but I believe she chose her attitude and actions. As a result, Rochelle greatly enhanced our ministry in Central Eurasia. We had 12 others like her on the team. With them we accomplished in 1 year what might have taken Crystal and me 3 years or more to complete.

In many closed or restricted areas, well-trained, short-term missions teams are a tremendous resource. Teams contact people who are interested in the gospel but have no access to Bibles or Christian literature. Resident missionaries receive information from these contacts and then follow up. Many teams bring the gospel into homes and villages for the first time.

A short-term team from Chi Alpha serving in a restricted access nation met a university student named Aziz. He invited them to be guests in his home. No AG missionary had ever been to his village. During the team’s 3-day stay the host family overheard the students’ devotions and worship.

On the final evening of their visit the family invited relatives and special guests to a birthday party (really a meet-our-American-guests party). About 40 people — aunts, uncles, cousins, and Grandpa — attended. At a specific moment a family member said, “We have heard you sing in our home. Will you sing a song now?”

The team of six university students stood and sang *Be Magnified, O Lord*. As they did the Holy Spirit fell on everyone in the room. With tears Grandpa rose from his seat and Aziz escorted him to the team. He wanted to know the words they had sung — even though he did not speak English. “Because we all felt them,” he said.

This short-term team had opportunity to share the gospel, leave Bibles, bless the family in Jesus’ name, and secure names for the resident missionary. They brought the kingdom of God into Aziz’s home — a place no other believer had ever been. They described it as a Cornelius experience. We can tell many such stories.

## What Makes an Effective Short-Term Mission Team?

**Go where the need is.** Many factors — a minimal understanding of the language, interest in a particular area, knowing a missionary in a certain country, or favorable costs and accessibility — often become the litmus test regarding where a team decides to go. Although none of these factors are necessarily negative, they should not be the primary determination of where a team serves. Effective short-term missions teams go where they are both wanted and needed.

The team must match the missionary’s ministry goals in that field. People often ask missionaries to adapt their ministry to a team’s giftings and talents rather than matching a team to the needs on the field. At times missionaries may not need a team or the timing is not convenient, but for the sake of relationship with a church or pastor, they agree to host a group. In these situations teams can consume 2 weeks of a missionary’s calendar and

# MAPS Construction

MAPS Construction serves as the Assemblies of God World Missions construction project entity. For years AGWM has connected U.S. volunteers with Assemblies of God overseas missionaries to help with construction projects. Last year nearly 10,000 men, women, college students, and even high schoolers — representing about 700 teams — went on MAPS Construction trips. MAPS Construction coordinates these 1- to 2-week construction trips based on approved invitations from a country's national church and missionary fellowship.

MAPS Construction has a twofold vision. First, it provides opportunities for skilled and unskilled laymen to serve on the mission field by advancing and finishing missionaries' construction projects. Teams may schedule months in advance to participate in a particular phase of a project, or teams may help start a project, such as erecting a church structure.

Second, since MAPS Construction keeps information on all projects worldwide, many churches contact us when they plan their annual missions outreach. Many churches use a MAPS Construction trip as the focus for their missions program. When a church encourages its congregation to volunteer for this hands-on experience, it raises awareness of missions. People come home excited about missions; they pray, volunteer, and give more.

MAPS Construction also assists missionaries with project assessments, architectural concepts, final plans, engineering, project oversight, hosting teams, and recruiting teams. A strategic thought process is employed to give ministry projects quality, long-range plans, accurate cost estimates, and an effective and timely building process. This relieves missionaries from needing to be on site, allowing them to focus on ministry.

With nearly 2,000 projects around the world, the need and opportunities are great. In 2007, a record number of churches sent teams and people. Nevertheless, this represents a small percentage of the U.S. constituency. One of our goals is to increase the number of teams every year.

The volunteers who travel each year at their own expense, taking their vacation time, and making sacrifices to accomplish tasks, experience missions in a life-changing way. They, in turn, make stronger missions congregations. After all, missions is not something we do; it is who we are.

**GREG VENTURELLA**, director, AGWM MAPS Construction, Springfield, Missouri



In my experience I have found that statement to be true. Missionaries invest time and effort in planning an outreach only to have their efforts hampered by rain, power outages, or denial of a needed permit. Glitches occur in the most carefully crafted plans.

I remember participating in a short-term missions trip to Latin America. Our team prepared for 6 months. We learned a detailed, 30-minute drama, as well as Scripture verses and songs in Spanish. On our final day of ministry, the 70-member team gathered at the train station to perform its final presentation. We intended this to be the crescendo of the trip.

As we performed, a leprous woman and a young teenager from off the streets approached us and began to mock and make obscene gestures. The drama presentation was ruined. We ended the presentation and boarded the bus. We were not flexible when things did not go as planned; therefore, little ministry occurred that day. Be willing to adapt. A strong team will flow with changes without complaints or trepidation.

## **Be a blessing, not a burden.**

Every team wants to bless the missionary and the national church; however, not all teams do. A quality team will strive to bless its hosts, not burden them. Team members must be low maintenance and do things for themselves. A team often loses its ability to function if the missionary is not constantly with it to provide direction. A quality team quickly learns how to maneuver in a given locale and to access how to minister effectively. Teams with high demands for food, accommodations, and sightseeing are more of a burden than a blessing. Allow the missionary to establish the agenda. Be mindful of the culture and the missionary's schedule.

have little to show for it. A team will accomplish more if its members are willing to go where the need is.

**Go to serve.** A missions team must go with a servant's attitude. To *serve* means to be willing to do anything the host missionary asks, and to do it with a good attitude. Teams should not go with a preconceived agenda. Ask the missionary what his goals are and learn about his missionary

assignment. Ask him how the team can advance his ministry and vision. Do not tell him what the team can do until his needs are made clear. Plan the team's training around the missionary's responses. The team's primary goal is to serve the missionary and the indigenous church.

**Be flexible.** A friend who served in Southeast Asia told me, "In missions nothing ever goes the way you plan."

While Crystal and I were in Central Eurasia, we hosted six short-term teams. Each team brought unique giftings that accelerated the overall purpose of our mission.

One team came specifically to do Christmas concerts on university campuses. The members' energy and servant attitudes — and the fruit from their ministry — blessed us and opened doors for long-term outreach on those campuses. Since then, universities have invited us back to do more concerts.

We also hosted two Chi Alpha teams. One focused on campus prayer walks, teaching English, and assisting missionary associates with Bible studies. The other team assisted a church in another village. Each team brought life, hope, vision, and anointing.

Evangel University sent a football coach to lead an outreach to university student athletes in conjunction with a football training camp. A construction team assisted us by building baseball diamonds and batting cages for the Little League outreach we were establishing. They diligently worked 12 hours a day. They passed up a day of sightseeing to complete the project. A team of 23 Chi Alpha students then came for 2 months to implement the first-ever Little League in the country. Each team brought something special and greatly needed. We could not have accomplished the mission without the assistance and presence of these short-term teams. They were a blessing.

**Leave a gift with the host missionaries.** A team may develop a strong emotional attachment to specific churches or national pastors, but it needs to resist the temptation to give funds directly to them. The host missionaries will know the details of each situation. Share your intentions with the host missionaries and give

the financial gift through them.

**Bless the missionary kids.** The impact a short-term team can have on MKs is profound. The team brings a piece of home to a faraway place. Invite MKs to join the team and its work. Use them as interpreters. Bring them a gift from the United States. They will appreciate it.

**Live by this motto:** "Not a complaining word among us." Hosting a team is extremely hard work. Host missionaries are usually the first people

## Short-term missions with long-term vision is biblical, fruitful, and can greatly impact the church for God's kingdom.

up and the last to go to bed. Hosting a team creates extra work and puts pressure on the missionaries. Hosting takes time away from their families and sometimes even their primary assignment. Missionary hosts will do their best to serve the team; however, nothing is more disheartening to them than to hear complaints.

When I lead a team I do not tolerate complaining. Usually, I excuse a person once, and then I present him with a return ticket home. Missionaries do not need nationals to become disillusioned because they overhear Americans making complaints about their living conditions.

One day a team member came barreling down the stairs declaring that the bathroom setup "just will not work." Her attitude wounded the missionaries and the national believers who had worked hard to prepare for her arrival. I offered her a flight back to the United States the next morning. She declined and corrected her attitude. An uncomplaining team is a great team.

**Think small.** Most missionaries cannot handle large teams. Ask

what size team would best fit their needs rather than making their needs fit the team. Teams of four to six members work well for housing, transportation, and food. Large teams can leave members on the fringes of ministry, but a small team ensures everyone's participation.

**Think long term.** When sending a team, make a long-term commitment to the area and the missionaries serving there. Sending short-term teams or missionary associates to the

same missionaries or area each year enhances the long-term effectiveness of their overall investment and ministry. Provide prayer, finances, and personnel for the long haul. Do not simply take *trips*. Instead, be strategic in investing teams and missionary associates.

### Conclusion


As a receiver and mobilizer of short-term missionaries and teams, I believe in their potential to accelerate the gospel around the globe. Spirit-led, short-term missions — if done strategically — bring positive results. The duration of the mission is not as important as its effectiveness.

Jesus sent out short-term teams (Mark 3:13–15). Short-term missions with long-term vision is biblical, fruitful, and can greatly impact the church for God's kingdom. Reap a blessing and ensure that your church is actively involved in short-term missions. 🌀



**E. SCOTT MARTIN**, national Chi Alpha student mission director and pioneer planter of One More Friend, Central Eurasia





# GLOBAL VISION

## *for an* Ethnic Congregation

Courtesy of La Trinidad Church

BY DAVID ESPINOZA

**M**issions is a passion at La Trinidad Church, the congregation I pastor in San Fernando, California. La Trinidad began under the ministry of my father, Robert Espinoza.

My father was a minister for 62 years. He was 20 years old when he came to San Fernando in 1927 to start La Trinidad. At first, he focused on building a church. But he came to realize that building God's church is the greatest means of injecting vitality into a local congregation.

Over the years he built missions into the fabric of our church. Because of his vision, we have never been the same. As a result, for much of my life I have come face-to-face with the powerful force that missions represent in a church and in a believer's life.

Let me share some life-changing truths.

### **Missions Diversity**

A church becomes an effective missions church as God expands its understanding that the Great Commission is a

vision that encompasses the whole world.

For many years, La Trinidad developed its own missionary program. We supported missionaries throughout Latin America. As a Hispanic community we felt good about that. But one day I went back to the heart of the Bible — John 3:16. This passage reminded me how limited our focus was as long as we only directed our resources toward our own ethnic group.

God's vision is a world vision. God loves the world. I realized it was not enough to only send money to Mexico, Central and South America, and the islands of the Caribbean. Our vision for the lost needed to reflect God's vision for the lost. Because God loves the world, the church must have a world vision.

We started giving through Assemblies of God missions toward ministries around the world. We did not abandon our previous commitments. We continued to give to Latin America and Mexico.

If you want to teach your people to give to missions, start

at the most basic level by understanding their life focus. If someone is from a certain country, he will most likely give when you promote missions giving to his country. I use this desire to encourage our people to start in missions giving. But I also look for ways to remind them that God's vision is a world vision.

### Missions Prosperity

You will be an effective missions church as God reveals His blessing throughout your congregants' lives in response to their passion for people.

When you teach on missions giving, encompass that teaching with a well-rounded presentation on financial management from a biblical point of view. As we have taught our people to prioritize missions, we have also taught them to seek God's best for their lives and families. We have encouraged those who were renting to buy a house. We have encouraged those who did not have a car to buy a reliable car. We encouraged those who were working for someone else to take a step of faith and start their own businesses. We have seen that when our people begin to give to missions as part of a biblical strategy for life success, they begin to prosper.

At first, this might sound strange, but I teach our people not to tithe. I do not want them to ignore God's call to tithe; I want them to give beyond their tithes. If a believer tithes, he is obediently returning to God 10 percent of his income. I encourage our people to trust the Lord and begin stretching themselves financially. As our people have given 11, 12, 13 percent and beyond, God has blessed them.

I use the same principle when promoting giving in our annual missions convention. If someone pledged \$500 to missions last year, I encourage him to stretch his faith and trust the Lord for \$750, \$1,000, \$2,000, or more. The idea is to encourage growing and maturing faith at every missionary convention with regular graduation to the next level of missions support.

We believe in missions not only because of God's blessing on our congregation but also because we know God is saving people for eternity. We feel blessed whenever



Courtesy of La Trinidad Church

people recognize our church for missions giving, but the real reward is the people the church is winning.

### Missions Living

You will become an effective missions church as God guides your congregation beyond supportive ministry to a ministry of personal involvement.

It is good to collect offerings and send a check to a missionary or missions project. But it is better to challenge your people by providing avenues for them to go to the mission field themselves. Put them into the middle of ministry.

I have traveled around the world preaching the gospel,

**We believe in missions not only because of God's blessing on our congregation but also because we know God is saving people for eternity.**

and I take every opportunity to return with a fresh report of regional needs. I am not sharing something I have read, but something I have seen and experienced. When I travel and speak on missions, I challenge districts and sections to get involved by encouraging pastors and ministry teams in their area to go to the mission field. Missions challenges people's hearts and their passion follows them back to their churches.

You cannot challenge a congregation unless God challenges you personally. My father taught me that a congregation becomes a mirror of its pastor. People reflect



## ► An Observation From a Missions-minded Church

"We can trace our church's growth in missions to 1995 when we began holding an annual missions convention. According to our records, the church had given about \$2,500 to missions in the 12 months prior to our first missions convention. After this convention, the church gave more than \$13,000 in the next 12 months, and giving has increased ever since. At the end of August 2007, we concluded another missions year. Our church gave \$87,595 to missions. Our approach is simple: We keep missions before our people and let the Lord tug at their hearts as to how they need to respond. The specific things we do involve:

1. having six or seven missionary services a year when a missionary usually preaches on a Sunday morning.

2. showing *Newsbreak* (a monthly missions DVD produced by AGWM Communications) on the first Sunday of every month. Often, people will give an unsolicited offering for the featured country.

3. having an annual missions convention. We invite guest missionaries to share their ministry experiences and explain how faith promises help them. We give people a faith promise pledge card and ask them to pray about what the Lord would have them do in the coming year. We collect the faith promise cards the following Sunday.

4. paying tithes as a church on our

general income. This last year, we gave about 80 percent of our church tithe to missions-related ministries.

5. producing a bulletin insert every week that features two of our missions ministries. It briefly describes the ministry a missionary is involved in and instructs the congregation how to pray.

"These five things are reminders we are supporting others who do what we cannot do in other parts of our nation and world. We view our supported missionaries as our *sent-out* missionaries while we view ourselves as *stay-at-home* missionaries."

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**KEITH W. SHORT**, pastor, First Assembly of God, Beaumont, California

their pastor's heart. If a pastor is on fire for missions, the congregation will reflect that fire. I challenge and continually give my people a fresh vision of missions. I do that by going on mission trips. Everywhere I go — the world's great cities, wilderness communities, or jungle villages — I see needs. Go to the mission field, come back on fire for the Lord, and keep your people on fire.

### Missions Community

You will be an effective missions church as God translates your passion for a lost world into a passion for your lost community.

As we minister to our lost world we cannot forget our Jerusalem and

Samaria. God sovereignly plants His churches among communities of need. No church, while fulfilling the larger demands of the Great Commission, should forget the people on its doorstep.

When our people have accepted the challenge to win people in other countries, we have continued to challenge them to give toward their own communities. People who invest in their own communities become better witnesses. They develop a burden for evangelism that touches lives within their immediate circles of influence. They are more prone to witness to their neighbors if they have a missionary vision.

There is synergy between one's world vision and one's community

vision. A heart for missions affects the mission field and influences one's own neighborhood.

Our city sponsors a Christmas parade. One year the theme was *Heroes*. I thought: *We have the greatest Hero, the Lord Jesus Christ*. Our church entered a float in the Christmas parade as a community witness for the Lord. We depicted the manger, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. We had animals and a great deal of participation from our people. We were competing against Bank of America, Verizon, and other major companies. To our amazement, the judges awarded us first place. We have done well in the years since.

But most important is the community witness we can offer. After the parade participants go to the park. Many organizations — including Rotary and Kiwanis — have a tent. Our church also puts up a tent and gives away bicycles and baskets of food with Bibles. The longest line — even longer than the one for bikes and food — is the line for people who want prayer and to learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ.

As you and your church expand your missions vision, it must affect how you reach out to your community. When you give to missions, it must affect your giving to your own community. In the end, a commitment to your Jerusalem as well as your world becomes the avenue for God's consistent blessing. Once your people catch a vision for missions, they will talk to their neighbors and to whomever they can about this consuming passion that has energized their lives — a passion that will breathe new life into your church. 🌱



**DAVID ESPINOZA**, senior pastor, La Trinidad Church, San Fernando, California







# Q&A on AG WORLD MISSIONS GENERAL ISSUES

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**As Assemblies of God World Missions continues to grow and diversify, some aspects of missions change and others remain constant. Following are questions submitted by Assemblies of God pastors with responses from the AGWM Executive Committee.**

**Q:** In today's climate, is it possible to change the way missionaries are required to raise funds?

**A:** AGWM is addressing some ramifications to this process because there are fewer church services available to missionaries. Some missionaries have found success in a relational approach by connecting with pastors and our constituency through home groups, private meetings with pastors or missions directors, Sunday Schools, and other venues.

AGWM still recognizes the value of missionary itineration. Itineration is not just a means of raising funds; it is important to the entire missionary experience. A missionary limits his effectiveness if he does not share in our churches and enlist not only the open hearts of people and future missionaries, but also vital prayer support. AGWM could not provide the finances for our missionaries through other means and continue to expect them to have the support network that is necessary for successful missionary endeavors. Itineration not only raises funds but also involves

people in spreading the gospel around the world.

If AGWM does not expose people to the different concerns and burdens of our missions program, they will financially support another ministry. This is unfortunate. AGWM believes we have the most credible and viable missions organization in the world. As much as possible, we need to support missions through AGWM. This ensures good credibility because money goes to the right places at the right times.

Supporting missionaries will always be of vital importance to the Assemblies of God. The core of our missions endeavor is the *people* we support. We have a corps of 2,700 missionaries and missionary associates who are doing a tremendous job around the world. They are worthy of our support.

**Q:** How much of my missions dollar goes to the field?

**A:** Ninety-five percent of every donated dollar goes to the missionary or project's account. AGWM uses 5 percent for operations. Operations include administration, general emergencies, fundraising, communications, U.S. district relations, processing missionary candidates, and other services.

**Q:** Which is most needed: offerings for missionaries or offerings for projects?

**A.** While project funding is critical in our missionary endeavor, projects would not be possible if missionaries were not serving on the field. The most beneficial missionary giving is monthly missionary support. The most important component of our missionary strategy is the missionaries on the field. They have learned the language and the culture and are either planting or empowering the national church in a given location. The Great Commission speaks of committed persons whose intention is to go, preach the gospel, and make disciples. Missions has no greater objective.

Some priority projects are essential to the success of the missionary's work and national church endeavors. Historically, the Assemblies of God has placed high priority on developing Bible schools. Other projects may be important at certain junctures in the development of the work in a given country.

A church would be wise to provide support to missionary budgets and projects — with the priority slanted toward missionary budgets.

**Q.** Why does AGWM ask our missionaries to raise such large budgets that seem to exceed the cost of living expenses in their countries?

**A.** AGWM asks missionaries to raise budgets that represent not only their salary and living expenses, but also the expenses of their ministry. A missionary's budget is similar to a church or ministry budget. The budget includes salary, office expenses, and ministry expenses (evangelism, church planting, training, and compassion ministries). In addition, a missionary's health and retirement budget are a part of his overall budget. These items are critical because they play a large role in keeping missionaries on the field. Without health insurance, a major illness could cause a missionary family to leave the field. Adequate retirement planning helps create a greater likelihood that missionaries can serve long term as well as retire when they need to.

**Q.** Does AGWM embrace replacement theology concerning<sup>1</sup> Israel? What specific efforts and prayer does AGWM direct toward Israel?

**A.** AGWM does not embrace replacement theology. We believe God has a special plan for the people and nation of Israel. Israel will increasingly move to

center stage in world politics as we near the end times.

AGWM is involved with the Center for Ministry to Jews in Israel. Doug Clark, area director for Middle East and North Africa, reports that prayer for Israel is a regular and important part of what they do. Also, Executive Director John Bueno has appointed Jeff Friedman to facilitate ministry to Jewish people around the world.

**Q.** Why are missionaries seeking doctorates and using funds designated for general missionary work, especially evangelism and church planting, to pay for their education?

**A.** AGWM values its personnel and does all it can to empower them to be better missionaries. One way AGWM does this is through education. Second, education adds to the value of the missionary and the value of the mission. A well-trained missionary who has acquired a language, culture, and a network of relationships adds value to the mission of AGWM — reaching, planting, training, and touching. Third, missions activity is shifting. This shift increasingly involves the missionary as a specialist — a consultant — who helps empower the national church and our partners overseas.

AGWM has planted hundreds of Bible schools overseas and has accelerated training to the point where we have some well-developed national churches and institutions. We have raised the level of training, and AGWM must continue to provide leadership and partnership in critical training networks around the world. Fourth, higher education benefits the missionary and the national church, and brings recognition in societies that highly value well-trained professionals.

**Q.** Has anyone conducted a formal assessment of our foreign Bible schools and seminary programs to evaluate their effectiveness?

**A.** Regarding Africa, each national church that AGWM works with is an autonomous, self-governing entity. Therefore, we can only evaluate their educational programs at the invitation of each national church. Because many national churches across Africa sensed the need for quality improvement in education, in the early 1990s Africa Theological Training Service (a subsidiary of Africa's Hope) initiated





## Q&A on AG WORLD MISSIONS GENERAL ISSUES

a voluntary evaluation program called Endorsement.

A school wishing to be evaluated conducts a 10 standard self-study provided by Africa Theological Training Service. This evaluation is similar to an accreditation process. In fact, one might call it an *ecclesiastical accreditation*. Once the school completes the evaluation it submits the evaluation to the Africa Theological Training Service Commission on Theological Education for review. The commission sends a team of three educators to the institution to evaluate the program based on the self-study. The team includes an educator from an AG school, a member of Africa Assemblies of God Alliance, and a member of the AG mission. After the team completes its evaluation, it submits a report along with the self-study to the Commission on Theological Education for a decision on endorsement.

Because each school applies for the self-study individually and not all schools apply, AGWM has no consolidated study. The Africa Theological Training Service central office, however, keeps the individual studies.

**Q:** It seems we are increasingly moving more missionaries from the foreign field to either U.S. Missions or foreign missions based in the United States. If so, why?

**A:** Some people wonder how a *foreign missionary* can be *foreign* and be assigned to a U.S.-based ministry. Some have said, "I won't support a *missionary* who doesn't live on the field." One can understand these sentiments. It is necessary, however, to understand the reasons for U.S.-based global ministries.

Over the years AGWM has come to realize that there is a growing need for service and support ministries to come alongside our missionaries and nationals as

they minister in their part of the world. The need for training, resources, materials, and additional help in ministry is needed worldwide. Rather than duplicate these services in every country, AGWM has made these service ministries available to all areas. This approach is the most efficient in terms of personnel, energy output, and costs.

Consider the Center for Ministry to Muslims. The world today needs to understand ministry to the Muslim world. CMM has assembled a missionary team with field experience and ability in teaching and training, and has been sending this team around the globe. Team members teach and train missionaries and nationals in ministry to Muslims. Those individuals, in turn, train others. They raise a mighty force in many locations around the world. The missionaries at CMM and many of the other International Ministries carry an incredible load and travel a great deal. When they are in the United States, they keep regular office hours, prepare courses and teaching and training materials, and then go back on the road again. While in the United States, they are required to raise financial support and keep their accounts in good shape. They cover the costs of their own travel.

Another example is Global University. Global University has the most U.S.-based foreign missionaries, and they could use more. These missionaries travel, write, teach, speak, and personally follow up on those who accept Christ. Their field experience, academic preparation, and cultural understanding make them vital components in evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training around the world.

Some have said that the number of missionaries assigned to U.S. ministries is growing. Statistics show that the numbers have changed little over the last 5 years and, in fact, have recently decreased. The reason is that even though some missionaries are coming from the field into these specialized assignments in the International Ministries, God leads others back to the field. As we look at the incredible impact these ministries are having in the world, we continue to see the need to strategically assign missionaries to them. ☺

### NOTE

1. Replacement Theology essentially teaches that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Proponents of Replacement Theology believe the Jewish people are no longer God's chosen people, and God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel.





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## There Has Got To Be a Way To Melt the Cheese

BY T. RAY RACHELS

**C**hurches are like fast-food restaurants? Yes and no, says Southern California District Superintendent T. Ray Rachels. Citing a 10-point path to improvement McDonald's undertook several years ago, Rachels calls churches back to ministry basics. The parallels

are straightforward, as Rachels demonstrates between the call to "fix the food" and the pastor's responsibility to "create an atmosphere in which the taste, quality, and temperature of God's fantastic love and grace can be seen and experienced." And that's just Point 1.



## Mentoring: Investing in the Future

BY STEVE W. RAIMO

**Steve Raimo**, who serves as executive pastor, Life Point Church, Vancouver, Washington, presents mentoring as a tested means of ensuring leadership skills transmission from generation to generation. Raimo interviewed five mentoring leaders, asking each to evaluate (1) the importance of relationship in mentoring, (2) whether

mentoring is effective, (3) the qualities of successful mentoring, and (4) the benefits of mentoring to the mentor and protégé. Raimo is convinced Christian leaders interested in leaving a legacy of faith must be mentors.





## Was the Apostle Paul Seeker-Sensitive?

BY BOB COOK

**For Bob Cook**, executive vice president, Alliance for AG Higher Education, “seeker-sensitive” is too often misconstrued to mean a watered-down gospel message. Cook readily admits Paul the apostle’s ministry was never watered down and believes “seeker-sensitive” must define a clear presentation of the gospel to the unchurched. Cook examines Paul’s instructions to the Corinthian church regarding spiritual gifts and invites ministers to be “wise Pentecostal leaders who are full of the Spirit of God but also sensitive to the mindset of the seeker.”

## Community and the Altar

BY RAY BERRYHILL

**“Every major milestone of life really happens at an altar,”** says

Ray Berryhill, senior pastor of Chicago’s Evangel World Outreach Center. Getting

people to the altar requires reaching into

the community through

practical ministry, building people up and touching the next generation. “The bottom line at our church,” Berryhill says, “is to get people to the altar and lift their faith in God — the God who can help them, the God who can change them, the God who can change their circumstances.”



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## How To Be Heard

BY DON NORDIN

**“There should not be a communication gap between generations,”** insists Don Nordin, senior pastor at CT Church in Houston, Texas. “One should work with the other, bearing in mind that leadership is not a sprint, it is a relay race.”

Nordin examines the overlap of leadership generations through the prism of Elijah and Elisha’s relationship, and calls for three central disciplines from any young person seeking to earn a position of leadership in ministry — humility, submission, and service.

## Shepherd or CEO?

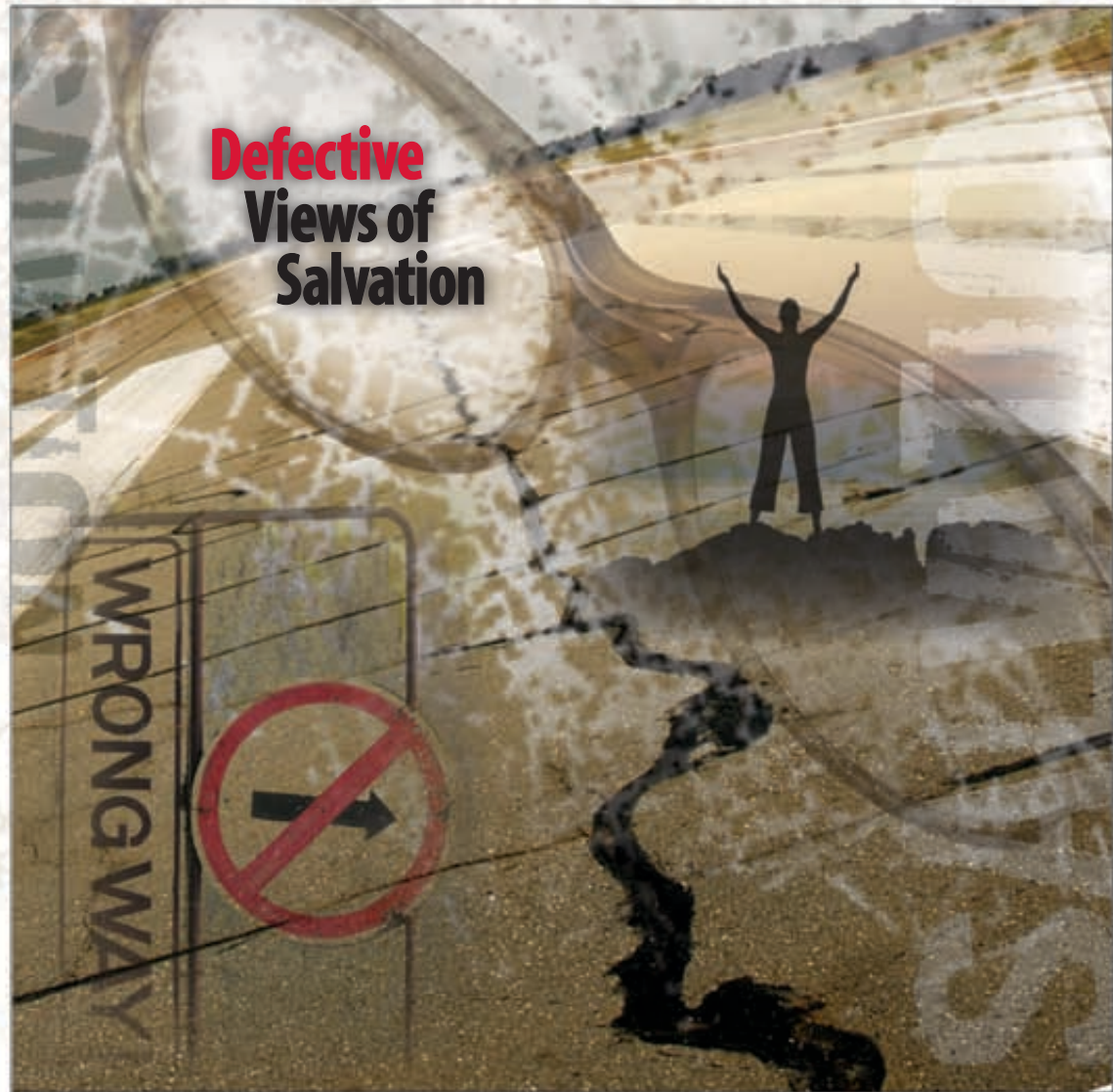
BY DONALD HAWKINS



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**The CEO’s title and reputation may appeal to a pastor,** Hawkins says, but the pastor’s function throughout church history has been that of a shepherd. While every church should be administrated with care and professionalism, the heart of ministry must be service. “The best answers to the questions, ‘What is a shepherd?’ and ‘What does a shepherd do?’ can be found in the Pastoral Epistles,” Hawkins says. “I suspect the most modern marketing techniques are dull by comparison.”

*From the first century to the 21st century, the gospel has suffered from fallen man's attempts to add steps to the way of salvation.*



### Introduction

**N**ot all teachings that deviate from the historic, orthodox teachings of the Christian church are labeled as *heresy*, nor should they be. Some teachings fall into the category of the silly or the absurd, and we can simply ignore them. Others are merely factually or historically incorrect. Still others are legitimate *false doctrines*. While these false doctrines are dangerous, some are not deadly because they do not involve any of the *cardinal doctrines*.

In practically every Protestant *statement of faith*, the doctrine of salvation is categorized

as one of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. This is true in the Assemblies of God as well. The official Assemblies of God Web site states "Salvation, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Divine Healing, and the Second Coming of Christ are considered *Cardinal Doctrines* which are essential to the church's core mission of reaching the world for Christ."<sup>1</sup> Categorizing modifications to the doctrine of salvation as heresy has clear parallels with the way the church has treated such aberrations in the past.

We are on firm scriptural ground in zealously guarding the purity of the doctrine of salvation because it is the only doctrine in the Bible for



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which an *anathema* (curse) is given to those who attempt to pervert (*metastrepsei*) it (Galatians 1:6–9). In this passage, Paul declared “eternally condemned” (NIV) or “accursed” (NASB)<sup>2</sup> the person or angel who distorts the *Ordo Salutis* (the way of salvation) as revealed in Scripture (stated twice for emphasis, verses 8,9). The apostle considered the *Ordo Salutis* of such foundational importance that to change it even slightly would compromise the entirety of the gospel. The result would be the creation of “a different gospel” (verse 6). Despite this dire warning against doctrinal deviation, the doctrine of salvation has suffered more heretical attacks than any other biblical doctrine. This article surveys some popular heresies associated with the doctrine of salvation and offers sound biblical teaching as an antidote to each.

## Universalism

In this context, Universalism teaches that all people are the children of God, in right standing with God, and are *saved*. Another version of Universalism teaches that all people will get a second chance to recognize Jesus as Lord *after death and before the final judgment*.

Society has long proclaimed the idea that the only criterion for judgment is whether we are *good* or not. We regularly hear the media claim, “One person’s faith is no more right than the next person.”<sup>3</sup> The mantra, “All paths lead to God,” has practically achieved proverbial status.

While people usually promote Universalism as the superior result of mankind’s theological evolution from the primitive belief in a judgmental god to a more enlightened view of God who is exclusively motivated by love, there is nothing new or evolutionary about it. In fact, Universalism is almost as old as Christianity itself.

The basic tenets of Universalism probably originated within second-century Gnosticism. This teaching appeared full-blown in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150–c. A.D. 215), Origen of Alexandria/Caesarea (c. A.D. 185–c. A.D. 254), and Gregory of Nyssa (c. A.D. 335–c. A.D. 395). Of these, Origen went furthest by teaching that even Satan and his demons would eventually be purgated, reconciled to God in the world to come, and restored to their place in heaven.

At one time or another most people have probably wished that Universalism were true. Whether the flashpoint came at the graveside of a loved one whose personal relationship

with God was ambiguous, in a conversation with a close friend who was a *sincere* follower of another faith, or when someone is trying to decide whether to marry a person he or she loves passionately but whose spiritual status



was unclear, most people have hoped that God in His mercy would expand the parameters of His kingdom to include these good, kind, loving, moral people.

Scripture, however, is unequivocal on this point. The points used in the Romans Road are still true: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23); and “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23, emphasis added). The inclusives of John 3:16 are still true. God does love the entire world, and He gave His Son for the “whosoever” of the world. But John 3:18 is also still true: “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (NASB).

If all people are right with God and all are going to heaven, much of the language used in the Bible becomes unintelligible if not irrelevant. No distinction between the righteous and the wicked would exist, no separation of the wheat from the tares (Matthew 13:37–43), the good fish from the bad fish (Matthew 13:47–50), or the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31–34,41), and no final judgment (Job 21:30; Ecclesiastes 3:17; Ezekiel 18:20–28; Daniel 7:9,10; Matthew 3:12; 16:27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1–8; 1 Peter 4:5,6; 2 Peter 2:4–9; 3:7–12; Jude 14,15; Revelation 20:11–15).

Society as a whole, including a segment

*Society as a whole, including a segment who call themselves Christians, has embraced an edited version of the gospel.*



*Those who proclaim the gospel must resist the pressure to make the way of salvation more palatable to the ears of our postmodern contemporaries.*

who call themselves Christians, has embraced an edited version of the gospel. For them, the “gate” is not “small,” it is “wide”; the “way” is not “narrow,” it is “broad” (compare Matthew 7:13,14). The pressure of political correctness and the emphasis on pluralism, diversity, and tolerance have recast the message of the church as too *exclusive*. In today’s world, it is arrogant to say that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one can come to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). Likewise, the world immediately labels anyone a bigot who states that there is no salvation in any name other than Jesus (Acts 4:12). Nevertheless, those who proclaim the gospel today must resist the pressure to compromise — to make the way of salvation more palatable to the ears of our postmodern contemporaries.

As believers, we need to deflect criticism of our message back onto Jesus, who is the Source

that no one opposes the exclusivist claims of Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Islamic groups. This is not true for orthodox Christians. Therefore, when others criticize our narrow-minded exclusivism, we need to place the responsibility squarely on Jesus’ shoulders, telling detractors that we did not make these claims and that they must take their complaints to Him. Next, we must remind them that Jesus voluntarily laid down His life for them and in so doing, earned the right to draw the parameters wherever *He* chooses.

### **Limited Atonement**

People who hold to the limited atonement interpretation of the doctrine of salvation believe the atoning death of Jesus is only for the benefit of certain persons. According to them, Jesus did not die for all people, only for the preselected few whom God knew would respond appropriately to the gospel. People who promote limited atonement speak of *the economy of Jesus’ sacrifice*. They explain that it would be wasteful to make His blood available to those who would refuse to respond appropriately to the gospel.

Although most adherents to this version of salvation are in Reformed circles, it is appropriate to discuss *limited atonement*. The number of Pentecostal pastors who accept a version of Calvinism increases every year, especially among younger pastors. Many may not be aware of the debate within Reformed scholarship whether John Calvin even taught this theological position that has come to bear his name. Fewer are aware that the limited scope of salvation promoted by this doctrine derives primarily from the teachings of Augustine. Augustine believed that the number of the elect could only equal the number of the angels who fell from heaven in Lucifer’s revolt.

Pastors need to consider the negative ramifications this view of salvation can have on personal evangelism and missions. Most important, those who accept *limited atonement* as a foundational element in their theology must not only proof text their own position (Mark 10:45; Romans 5:8; 8:32; Ephesians 5:2,25), but they must also remain unaware of, dismiss, or subvert many Scriptures that run contrary to this position.

Both Testaments clearly relate the will of God concerning the scope of salvation. Moses wrote that Abraham’s descendants were to be a blessing to “all peoples on earth” (Genesis 12:3).



of the *exclusiveness* of Christianity. We need to remind our audience that it was neither first-century nor 21st-century Christians who first said that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Jesus himself is the origin of that teaching.

The exclusivist teachings of Jesus in the New Testament are no different from the exclusive claims of Yahweh in the Old Testament (compare Isaiah 43:10,11; 45:5,6). Most detractors fail to lodge the same complaints against the Hebrew prophets, the Hebrew Bible, the God of the Old Testament, or the Jewish people. Today, it seems

Ezekiel recognized that it is not God's plan that any perish. Instead, He desires that all come to repentance (Ezekiel 18:23,32; 33:11; compare 2 Peter 3:9). Isaiah understood the role of ancient Israel as being "a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6; compare 42:6). In fact, the usually more ethnocentric, particularistic Old Testament ends: "'Great is the Lord — even beyond the borders of Israel'" (Malachi 1:5). Even in Old Testament revelation, the emphasis is on expansion, not limitation (compare Matthew 13:31,32).

More frequently and clearly, the New Testament holds this same emphasis. John the Baptist set the tone by describing the salvific ministry of Jesus, "Who takes away the sin of the world" (*kosmos*, John 1:29). Jesus invited every segment of society to enter into relationship with Him (Matthew 9:10). He rebuked those who would narrow the scope of the kingdom of God (Matthew 9:12; 23:13). He invited "all you who are weary and burdened" to come to Him to find rest (Matthew 11:28). He said that He had come "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This includes all of fallen humanity (Romans 3:23). This is because, as John reminds us, "God so loved the world (*kosmos*) that He gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16), who is given the title *ho soter tou kosmou*, "the Savior of the world" (John 4:42, emphasis added). Concerning His death (many incorrectly apply these words to worship), Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth [a euphemistic reference to His crucifixion], will draw *all men* to myself" (John 12:32, emphasis added).

When Jesus describes our mission, His words sound much like the language of the Old Testament. Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5), so we are also to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). We are to bring the good news of forgiveness and salvation to "all creation" (Mark 16:15) or "all nations" (Matthew 28:19). If we follow the logic of Reformed theology, God is less concerned about the *economy* of effort put forth by His fatigable human messengers than He is about the *economy* of His saving act in all His omnipotence.

In the proclamation and correspondence of the Early Church, the teachings of the Old Testament and Jesus are applied and clarified to an even greater extent. Paul preached that God "commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). He preached the message of salvation

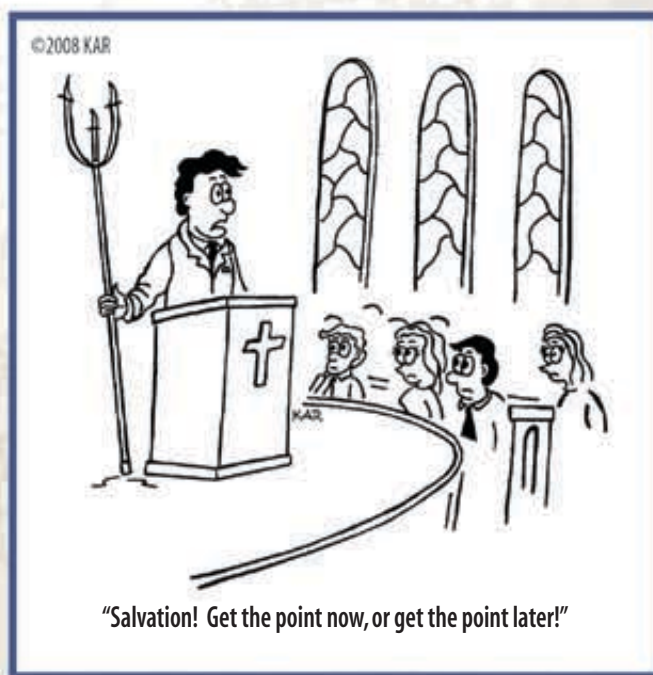
in Arabia and Judea, and to any Gentiles who might listen, saying repent, turn to God, and perform deeds appropriate to repentance (Acts 26:17,18,20). These three things are impossible for all but the elect according to Reformed soteriology.

Paul's message is no different in his writings. Paul told the churches in Rome, "Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6), words reminiscent of Ezekiel's "the wicked" and Jesus' "the lost" and "sinners." To the church in Corinth, Paul wrote twice that Jesus died "for all" (2 Corinthians 5:14,15), and that "God was reconciling the world (*kosmos*) to himself in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19). God's love motivated His act of reconciliation for all people, not just a preselected segment of mankind (Titus 3:4–7).

Paul's instructions to Timothy are equally enlightening. He reminds Timothy that "God our Savior ... wants *all men* to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3,4, emphasis added). In the next sentence, he declares that "Christ Jesus ... gave himself as a ransom for *all*" (verses 5,6, emphasis added). Later in the same letter, Paul spoke again of God, "Who is the Savior of *all men*, and especially of those who believe" (1 Timothy 4:10). Paul's juxtaposition of these two groups, *all men* and *believers* (a term not synonymous with but rather a subset of the larger group), effectively dismantles a favorite argument used by Calvinists. This argument involves redefining



*God's love motivated His act of reconciliation for all people, not just a preselected segment of mankind.*





*At the Judgment Day, those trusting in a false doctrine or gospel will be burned up, and those who preached will grieve at their demise.*

words such as *world* and *all* to mean *everyone* (in the world) who is a Christian/was preselected for salvation. Consistent with his instruction to Timothy, Paul reminds Titus that “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared [probably a reference to Jesus’ incarnation] to all men” (Titus 2:11, emphasis added).

Like the Old Testament writers — and like John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul — the remainder of the New Testament speaks only of a salvation that is available to all people. The writer of Hebrews speaks of Jesus, who tasted “death for everyone” (2:9). Like Ezekiel, Peter noted that God is “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, emphasis added).<sup>4</sup>

John also addressed this issue. He reused the title “Savior of the world” that appeared in his Gospel (1 John 4:14; compare John 4:42). Even more helpful, John describes Jesus as “the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).<sup>5</sup> This passage poses the same problem for Reformed commentators as does Paul’s juxtaposition of the same two groups (compare the discussion of 1 Timothy 4:10 above). Here it is clear that a *believing community* is contrasted to *the rest of the world*, and John said that Jesus died for *both*.<sup>6</sup>

### Perseverance of the Saints/Eternal Security/Once Saved, Always Saved

Another defective view of salvation is perseverance of the saints, eternal security, or more popularly called *once saved, always saved*. This doctrine teaches that once a person accepts Christ he cannot lose his salvation. Like limited atonement, Augustine popularized the doctrine of perseverance of the saints/eternal security. The Roman Catholic Church then adopted this doctrine. Later Protestant leaders such as John Calvin transmitted this teaching into Protestantism.

The Arminian/Wesleyan/Holiness/Pentecostal tradition rejected this version of salvation as biblically defective. The official Assemblies of God Web site states, “It is possible for a person once saved to turn from God and be lost again.”<sup>7</sup> Today, however, the doctrine of PS/ES is prevalent. Therefore, we must examine it along with the other aberrational teachings on salvation.

Within Calvinistic beliefs, there are those who hold to eternal security yet do not believe that eternal security gives license to sin: “Our understanding of the doctrine of perseverance

allows no room for indolence or laxity. It is questionable whether anyone who reasons, ‘Now that I am a Christian, I can live as I please,’ has really been converted and regenerated. Genuine faith issues, instead, in the fruit of the Spirit.”<sup>8</sup>

Those who believe in eternal security use several Scriptures to support their view. Only the most frequently used can be discussed here. (For a more complete treatment, see my article, “Do the Scriptures Teach Eternal Security?” in the Fall 2008 issue of *Enrichment*). PS/ES proponents often use John 5:24 to support their view: “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.” They insist this means the believer *eternally has life*. The syntax, however, makes it clear that the life is eternal, not one’s possession of it.

PS/ES proponents also appeal to John 6:37, “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away,” and John 10:27,28, “no one can snatch them out of my hand” (compare Romans 8:35–39). Neither of these texts, however, rule out the possibility that a person can exercise free will and choose to depart. We need to understand these Scriptures in light of John 15:1 through 16:1 where Jesus speaks of the distinct possibility of apostasy.

Some proponents also appeal to Paul’s words in Philippians 1:6: Paul was “confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” What Paul was sure of, however, was the Philippians’ desire to press on to maturity, the believer’s only real security (1:1–11; compare 2:12; 3:19).

A final favorite verse of PS/ES proponents is Hebrews 7:25, “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” The word “completely” is taken to refer to *those being saved*, but the second half of the passage and numerous other texts in Hebrews (verses 3,21,24; 6:20) require that the phrase be understood as referring to *Jesus* and the length of His saving ministry.

In contrast to the PS/ES position that believers forfeit the freedom to choose at salvation, the Scriptures teach that those who trust in and obey Jesus are even more free after salvation than before (John 8:36; Galatians 5:1,13). Furthermore, the possibility of apostasy is underscored by phrases such as “fallen away from grace” (Galatians 5:4);





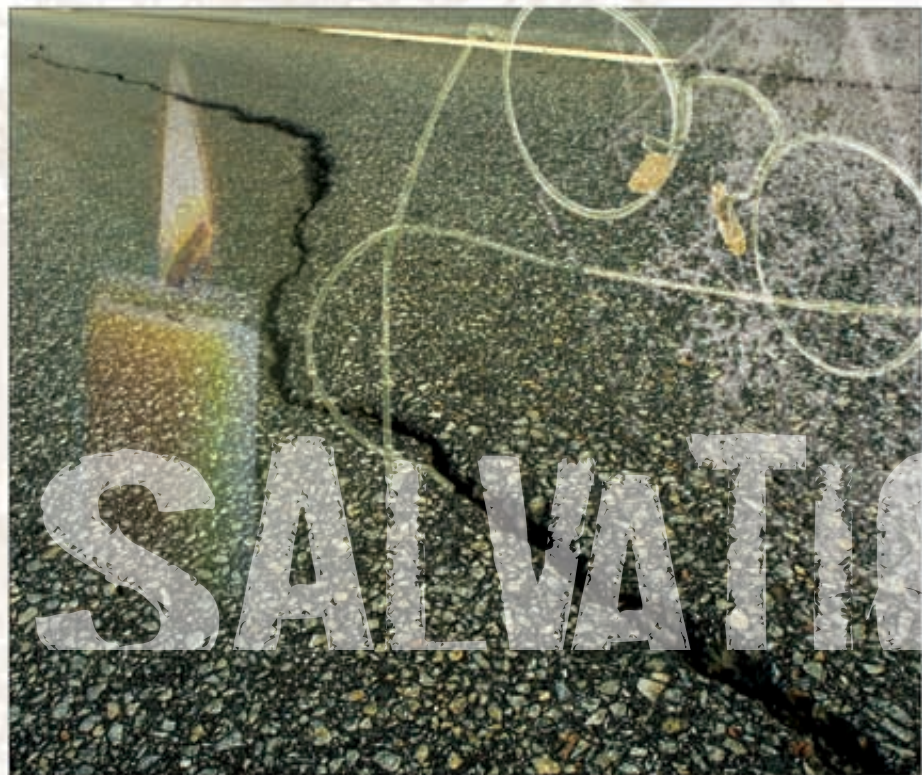
"turns away" (Hebrews 3:12); and "fall away" (Hebrews 6:6), whereas the phrases "security of the believer"; "eternal security"; and "once saved, always saved," never appear in Scripture.

In the Old Testament, God dealt with the Israelites almost exclusively through *conditional covenants*. God continually warned them to fulfill their covenantal obligations or their relationship with Him would be nullified (compare Exodus 32:33; Leviticus 22:3; Numbers 15:27–31; Deuteronomy 29:18–21; 1 Kings 9:6,7; 2 Kings 17:22,23; 24:20; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 7:19–22; 15:2; 24:20; Psalm 69:28; Isaiah 1:2–4; 59:2; Jeremiah 2:19; 5:3,6,7; 8:5,12; 15:1,6,7; 16:5; Ezekiel 3:20; 18:12,13; 33:12). Grace was available in the Old Testament (Exodus 34:6; Numbers 6:25; Jeremiah 3:12), but as in the New Testament, grace was never an excuse to continue in sin and never lessened the demands of the covenant (compare John 1:16,17; Romans 6:1,2; 8:7–11; Luke 12:48; compare also Romans 1:31, "faithless" or "covenant-breakers," KJV).

John the Baptist and Jesus continued this same Old Testament emphasis: "Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 3:10; 7:19). Jesus also taught that He will grant salvation only to those who endure to the end (Matthew 10:22; 24:13). He said that some would respond to the Word and produce fruit, but various things would destroy others (Matthew 13:3–23). He warned that false messiahs "will deceive many" (Matthew 24:5) and during persecution, "many will turn away" (Matthew 24:10).

The teachings of Paul complement those of Jesus. He constantly warned leaders and churches that apostasy is a distinct danger (Acts 20:29,30; Romans 11:21,22; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 15:1,2; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 1:6; 4:1–11; 5:4; Philippians 3:17–20; Colossians 1:21–23; 1 Timothy 4:1; 5:8; 2 Timothy 4:3,4). The Book of Hebrews warns against apostasy and exhorts believers to remain firm to the end (2:1,3; 3:6,12,14; 4:1,11; 6:4–6; 10:26,27,35; 12:15).

James wrote, "If one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death" (5:19,20). Peter described false teachers who will "secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves" (2 Peter 2:1). He also wrote, "If



they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: 'A dog returns to its vomit,' and, 'A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud' " (2 Peter 2:20–22).

John describes a sin that "leads to [spiritual, not physical, compare 1 John 3:14] death" that cannot be forgiven (1 John 5:16). Eternal life is promised only to those who overcome and remain faithful until the end (Revelation 2:10,25,26), but loss of eternal life to those who do not (Revelation 2:5; 3:11,16). To the end of the Book of Revelation, John continued to warn believers concerning the forfeiture of their salvation (Revelation 22:19).

Both Testaments warn that a believer can voluntarily forfeit his status with God. That believers have the option to continue in obedience or turn from Him is evident because many chose the latter and suffered eternal separation from God (Genesis 4:3–16 [compare Jude 11]; 22:8–19; 24:1,2,13; 31:7,8; Exodus 32:32,33; 1 Samuel 10:1–7, 9–11; 13:8–15;

*Paul constantly warned leaders and churches that apostasy is a distinct danger.*



16:14; 31; John 6:66 [compare verse 67];  
1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 1 Timothy 1:19;  
2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17,18; 4:9,10; Titus 1:12–16;  
2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 2:6,15 [compare  
Acts 6:5]).



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### **Jesus-plus Gospels**

From the first century to the 21st century, the gospel has suffered from fallen man's attempts to add steps to the *Ordo Salutis*. The Early Church witnessed the first of these attempts. The Book of Acts records a movement within the Early Church to add circumcision and observance of the entire Law of Moses to salvation (Acts 15:1,5). Judaizers claimed that Gentiles had to convert to Judaism before God would grant them salvation. Believers convened the first church council in Jerusalem to settle this divisive issue. After everyone had opportunity to speak, apostolic testimony (verse 14), the Word of God (verses 15–18), and the guidance of the Holy Spirit (verse 28) prevailed, and believers did not add these two requirements to the *Ordo Salutis*.

Victory was short-lived, however. Beginning

with the Book of Galatians, which was written soon after the Jerusalem Council, Paul began waging a relentless battle throughout his entire ministry with Judaizers who persisted in their attempts to change the way of salvation (compare Romans 2 through 4; 1 Corinthians 7:18–20; 2 Corinthians 11:4–22; Galatians 2:11–14; 5:6–11; Ephesians 2:11; Philippians 3:2,3; Colossians 2:11; and Titus 1:10). This contentious issue survived beyond the deaths of Paul and the apostles. Christian leaders such as Ignatius of Antioch continued to address this issue in the second century (*Epistle to the Magnesians* 8:1; 10:3).

Throughout the centuries, the *Ordo Salutis* has remained under continual attack. In the Middle Ages requirements for salvation included sprinkling, membership in right standing in the proper church, regular observance of Communion, and regular attendance at confession. After the Protestant Reformation, many groups began to teach water baptism as a necessary step for salvation.

More recently people expressed a similar emphasis within Pentecostal circles. In 1916, many pastors and churches left the newly formed Assemblies of God for a movement called *New Light*. Based on personal revelation rather than on the clear teaching of Scripture, followers of New Light teachings claimed that true salvation required the additional steps of water baptism "in Jesus' name only" (rather than the trinitarian formula found in Matthew 28:19) and the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. The United Pentecostal Church, the Apostolic Church, and Jesus' Name Only Pentecostal groups still maintain this form of the *Ordo Salutis* today.

In addition to these aberrant movements, people made similar claims in the most recent revival cycle. On many occasions preachers exhorted their audience, "Don't dare miss what God is doing in this generation," and "If you don't get on board with this, you'll be left behind." Many longtime believers returned from meetings claiming to have been *truly born again* because they had experienced some sort of manifestation attested nowhere in Scripture, especially with respect to the *Ordo Salutis*. My intention is not to denigrate the many wonderful experiences people have had in some places. I only offer this observation as evidence to show how easy it is for well-meaning and sincere people to fall into the age-old trap of adding to the simple, straightforward

way of salvation given in the Bible.

The teaching and practice called *generational curse* is also a Jesus-plus gospel. This teaching requires additional steps beyond repentance and submission to the lordship of Jesus for one to be in right standing with God.<sup>9</sup> Generational curse requires people to list the sins of previous generations, repent for those sins, renounce them, and pray special prayers to break the curses that cling to them because of their ancestors' sins. According to Scripture, however, the moment we accept Jesus He nails our debts to the Cross and all demonic bondage is broken (Colossians 2:8–15). Not only does Jesus declare us “free” when we come to Him for salvation, but He also proclaims us “free indeed” (*truly free* or *completely free*, John 8:36). Therefore, the teaching of generational curse is by apostolic definition a “heresy” (Galatians 1:6–9), because it adds steps to the biblical *Ordo Salutis* that have no foundation in the teaching/practice of the apostles or the Early Church.

What then is the simple, straightforward *Ordo Salutis* that appears in Scripture? It is nothing more or less than this: repentance of one's sins and trusting Jesus as Forgiver and Master. Only Jesus' blood sacrifice on the Cross can make forgiveness and reconciliation with God possible (Matthew 26:28; John 3:16; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:24,25; 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13–16; Colossians 1:14,20,22; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:14,26,28; 13:12,20; 1 Peter 1:2,18–21; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5; 5:9; 7:14). Repentance, trust, and submission to His lordship appropriate the effects of His sacrifice to believers (John 3:16; Acts 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38,39; 16:31; 17:30; 20:21; Romans 10:9,10; 1 John 1:9). According to Scripture, Jesus' sacrifice is *sufficient* to provide for our salvation. Faith (trusting and obeying Him) alone is required to apply it to the believer's life (John 3:16; Acts 11:17; 15:9,11; Romans 1:16,17; 3:27,28; 4:5,16; 5:1; 10:3–13; Galatians 3:1,2; Ephesians 2:8,9).

## Conclusion

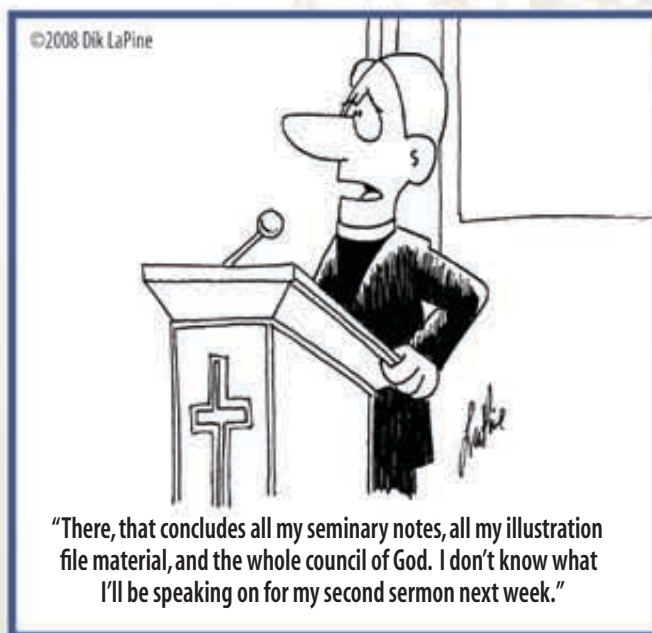
Salvation is crucial to a right relationship with God. It is at the heart of the good news, evangelism, and the health of the Church. It is no surprise, then, that salvation is the focus of all apostolic proclamation in Scripture. Nor is it surprising that the apostles reserved the strongest denunciations for those who attempted to alter, add to, or complicate the doctrine of salvation. In contrast, throughout the Book of

Acts and the Epistles, the leaders of the Early Church consistently proclaimed the same gospel. Today, pastors must follow their example and resist every temptation to compromise the gospel. This means church leaders must know the Word of God, proclaim it in its purity and power, and earnestly and boldly, yet humbly, resist teachers and teachings that pervert it (1 Timothy 1:3,4; 4:1–6,16,20; 2 Timothy 1:13,14; 2:15,25,26; 3:13,14,16,17; 4:1–5; Titus 1:9–11,13,14; 2:1,7,10; Jude 3). ☺

## NOTES

1. General Council of the Assemblies of God, “Sixteen Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God,” General Council of the Assemblies of God, ([http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement\\_of\\_Fundamental\\_Truths/sft\\_full.cfm#9](http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_full.cfm#9)) [accessed November 20, 2007], emphasis added.
2. Scripture quotations taken 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)).
3. For example, *The Practice*, ABC, Oct. 20, 2002.
4. “Not *purposing*” or *intending* (the author here employs ellipsis, so the verb supplied is parallel with *purposing*).
5. “But also for [*the sins of* (here the author employs ellipsis)] the whole world.”
6. Although this is merely a brief survey of the biblical evidence that mitigates against limited atonement, the reader needs to know that there is no lack of good material on both sides of the subject in print and on the Internet.
7. General Council of the Assemblies of God, “Security of the Believer (Backsliding),” General Council of the Assemblies of God, ([http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/gendoct\\_09\\_security.cfm](http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/gendoct_09_security.cfm)) [accessed November 20, 2007].
8. Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 1007.
9. Wave E. Nunnally, “The Sins of Generational Curse,” *Enrichment* 12, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 114–120.

*The apostles reserved the strongest denunciations for those who attempted to alter, add to, or complicate the doctrine of salvation.*







*Before pastors and church leaders can safeguard children against child abuse, they must understand what it is and how it impacts victims.*

NOTE: Photographs accompanying this article are used for illustrative purposes only. Individuals shown are models and have no connection to concepts, behaviors, or events referenced in the article.

# Child Abuse: What Should the Church Do About It?

**E**than knew about abuse. During the first 4 years of his life, his mother beat him daily and allowed strangers in the home to commit revolting acts against her son. During these years Ethan's mother locked him away in a dark, closet-like room. She never allowed him to leave. Not once.

When Child Protection Services received a hotline regarding the family and removed Ethan from the home, it seemed as though his life would finally improve.

Finding a suitable placement for Ethan was difficult. Horrific physical and emotional abuse and a lack of nurturing had created significant developmental delays and disabilities, severe attachment disorders, and anger issues.

Child Protection Services placed Ethan with the Duncan family, who had a good reputation for helping abused and neglected children. The Duncans worked tirelessly to help these children find love, consistency, and structure — things most of them had never experienced.

Like all children in this foster home, Ethan attended a small Assemblies of God congregation in the Midwest. The church had grown accustomed to the Duncans' foster children and embraced them as their own. These children were often in the nursery, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, or the youth group.

Ethan was not like the other children in his Rainbows class. He did not know anything about sitting still or the Bible. In fact, he had never seen a book until he was 4 years old. His verbal and listening skills were nearly nonexistent. To further complicate matters, Ethan was not potty trained.

Marie, the single 21-year-old college student who taught Rainbows, was dedicated to teaching

and loving the boys and girls in her class. Each week she prepared lessons and activities that would help the children learn more about God and His love for them.

Like many churches, there never seemed to be enough volunteers. Occasionally, Marie allowed her boyfriend, Oliver, to assist her in the class. He seemed to have a knack for corralling the children and making them laugh.

Week after week Marie began to see a noticeable difference in Ethan. With caution he began to smile and show emotions other than anger. Improvement was clear, and he seemed to be progressing for the first time in his life.

That is, until one night in March.

The Duncans remember that evening. "It was like someone flipped a switch for Ethan," they said. "One day he was laughing and at peace; the next day he was withdrawn and angry again — much like he had acted the night he first arrived."

The Duncans' experience with abused children helped them to take the next step. They invited a licensed Christian counselor to talk with Ethan. The counselor immediately suspected something traumatic had happened.

The Duncans later discovered that Oliver, Marie's boyfriend, had physically and sexually abused Ethan at the church. No one — the church staff or Marie — knew Oliver was a registered sex offender. He had a long history of preying on children, especially those who were vulnerable.

Amazingly, this true story has a happy ending. The Duncans adopted Ethan and, in time, Ethan made remarkable progress in his academic, emotional, and spiritual life. The state convicted Oliver, and the judge sentenced him to 7 years in prison.



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By taking a few simple steps, churches around the country can avoid similar incidents.

## Exploring Abuse

Before pastors and church leaders can properly train staff and volunteers to safeguard children against child abuse, they must understand what it is and how it impacts victims. Child abuse has many forms. Most notable are physical, sexual, emotional, and educational abuse.

**Physical abuse** includes hitting, biting, kicking, burning, or any action that causes physical harm to a child.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when an adult interacts with a child for sexual gratification, regardless of whether the child has consented. This can include physical contact, such as rape or fondling. It can also include forcing a child to view pornography or adults engaging in sexual acts.

**Emotional abuse** is difficult to identify because there are no visible signs. This type of abuse attacks a child's self-worth through shame, isolation, rejection, and humiliation. Those who emotionally abuse children may tell them they are worthless and have no value.

Children who suffer emotional abuse have low self-esteem and feel they are unworthy of love. Those who suffer emotional abuse often act out in anger and display destructive behavior.

**Educational abuse** is a form of neglect. Educational neglect includes allowing chronic truancy, failure to provide a child's special educational needs, and failure to enroll a child of mandatory school age in school.

According to the American Medical Association, family members or trusted friends or persons of authority commit nearly 90 percent of substantiated child abuse cases.<sup>1</sup> These statistics contrast the myth that child abusers are strangers in long trench coats lurking in dark alleys.

Child abusers often seek out young children who are shy, withdrawn, or from troubled homes. They may target children with mental and physical handicaps. A child abuser, especially a pedophile who commits sexual abuse, spends a great deal of time developing relationships. They move gradually from friendship to inappropriate conversations, lying, threats, and eventually abuse.

Children who grow up in homes of abuse, drugs and alcohol, incest, violence, and poverty gravitate toward these behaviors in adulthood. For this reason, adults who were victims of child abuse often commit child abuse.

## A Church Perspective

"If the church does not address these issues by giving biblical instruction, warning, and direction, we are ignoring aspects of the teaching of the Word of God and a great area of need in our culture," says Ron Hawkins, Sr., pastor of First Assembly of God Christian Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Hawkins views his congregation of 1,800 as a *spiritual hospital* that must be involved with the issues affecting the lives of people in our world.

But not every pastor shares Hawkins' perspective.

About 5 years ago I began working for Court Appointed Special Advocates, a non-profit organization that serves as an advocate for children who are victims of abuse and neglect. Through CASA I provide training and education on issues of child abuse and neglect.

In 2005, an Assemblies of God missionary helped me draft a letter that we sent to nearly every church in our community. We carefully wrote the letter using scriptural examples. We explained that we were not after an offering; we simply wanted to provide education and ministry opportunities to small groups of leaders.

We sent letters to more than 250 churches from various denominations. We received one response — a simple, "No thanks."

One might argue this response was a sign of indifference. I believe it was a clear, emphatic communication: *We want nothing to do with child abuse.* As one pastor told me, "Child abuse is offensive, and I don't want to scare my people."

Child abuse is one of the difficult issues the church must deal with in our increasingly demoralized culture. "I believe that Jesus would address this societal cancer if He were preaching in our pulpits today," says Thomas L. Moore, Sr., senior pastor of Carmel Assembly in Bonifay, Florida. "He never seemed to dodge any of the issues that presented themselves in the society that surrounded His teachings."

Child abuse is a nearly unspeakable subject; few would argue this. As Christians we share many of the world's feelings about child abuse — disgust, repulsion, anger, fear, and disbelief. Yet, we see a deeper root cause — sin.

Even so, church leaders have varying opinions concerning child abuse. Some believe societal problems, such as child abuse, drugs, and



*Child abusers often seek out young children who are shy, withdrawn, or from troubled homes. They may target children with mental and physical handicaps.*

domestic violence, are not part of the church's true mission of saving the lost.

"The attitude of many churches regarding these issues is one of *live and let live*. Many feel the church has no business dealing with these issues," says Larry McGarry, senior pastor of First Assembly in Prineville, Oregon. "I disagree vehemently. I believe that the absence of preaching and teaching on these matters has played, and is playing, a substantial role in the mess we now have in our society."

Jim Farrell, senior pastor of Newfound Life Assembly in Bristol, New Hampshire, shares a similar view. "As long as societal issues, such as child abuse, pornography, domestic violence, and drug/alcohol addiction, are part of the human condition, we, as the church of Jesus Christ, need to be doing everything we can to reach these people right where they are with the only thing that can save them — the love of Jesus."

Doing everything we can has many implications for the church. Possible steps for churches include:

1. Ministering to victims of abuse, perpetrators, and family members of both groups.
2. Training staff, volunteers, and congregations on difficult topics.
3. Establishing policies that ensure the church is safe for everyone, especially for children and youth.

### **Creating Policies and Procedures**

A pastor from a rural Assemblies of God church smiled when I asked him if he had any policies or procedures in place regarding child abuse. "We've never really needed anything like that," he said. "We don't have that problem here; we're just one big family."

His reaction was not unusual. Many small community pastors believe child abuse and other societal problems are *big city* issues.

But national statistics show child abuse crosses socioeconomic and racial barriers. In fact, the rate of abuse is somewhat higher per capita in many rural areas.<sup>2</sup>

While preparing for this article, I conducted a survey of 95 Assemblies of God churches in 24 states. The churches ranged in size from fewer than 100 to more than 3,000 in both rural and urban areas. The survey had 18 questions pertaining to training, policies, and procedures on child abuse in the church. It also asked pastors to express their opinions on the church's responsibility regarding this issue.

Of responding churches, 100 percent agreed

that training on child abuse is important and necessary. Yet, only 57 percent of the churches surveyed provided any such training for staff or volunteers. Eighty-three percent of congregations of 500 or more have established training and policies regarding child abuse. In contrast, only 20 percent of churches with congregations between 150 and 499 had training and policies on these issues.

"We are probably never trained enough," says Dominic Kriegbaum, senior pastor of Cornerstone Assembly of God in Watertown, New York. "We tend to extend grace and trust when we need to exercise a great deal more caution and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit when He warns us."

### **Simple Steps to Safety**

Protecting children must be a high priority for the church. Jesus welcomed little children to His side (Mark 10:14), and had harsh words for anyone who would cause a child to stumble: "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

When people enter a church, they need to be confident that their children will receive the utmost care, respect, protection, and love. "For many children, the church is one of the few places where they can, and should, find a safe harbor," wrote pastor McGarry.

Developing policies can help ensure the safety of your congregation's children and youth, protect your volunteers and staff from false accusations, and protect the reputation of your church.

In forming policies, the church will open up dialogue on these difficult issues, encourage accountability on the part of leaders and workers, discourage secrecy, and create new ministry opportunities.

"Addressing these issues and reaching the lost are pretty much the same thing," says Wes Shortridge, lead pastor of Liberty Church in Bealeton, Virginia. "These are felt needs in a majority of the people we are reaching, and are struggles within the church. Jesus provides all anyone needs to overcome these issues, and He provides healing for those hurt by abuse and neglect. The church is missing out if we ignore these areas." Here are eight simple steps that every church needs to consider:

#### **1. Provide child abuse training for staff and**



*Only 57 percent of the churches I surveyed provided training on child abuse for staff or volunteers.*



### **volunteers who work with children and youth.**

Training would include identifying signs, causes, and symptoms of child abuse, how perpetrators work, and the impact of abuse. Most communities have professionals who could assist with training. Health institutions, universities, and insurance companies often provide this training as well. (Fifty-seven percent of churches surveyed provide this training. However, churches with small to medium congregations rarely train their staff and volunteers.)

### **2. Conduct background checks on staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children or youth.**

Use local or state law enforcement agencies or a professional service, and include a nationwide criminal background check. Reputable companies that conduct background checks include:

- **ChoicePoint** —

<http://www.volunteersselectplus.com/>.

- **Oxford Document Management Co.** —

<http://www.oxforddoc.com/> or <http://www.protectmyministry.com/>.

(Eighty-six percent of churches surveyed do professional background checks.)

### **3. Educate workers and volunteers about state law requirements regarding abuse and the mandated responsibility for reporting incidents.**

State governments enact these laws, so it is important to refer to your local laws. In many states, state law makes church workers *mandated* reporters. The state will prosecute church workers if they fail to report child abuse. In addition to explaining these laws, provide clear procedures on how to file a report. (Seventy-one percent of all churches surveyed provide this training.)

**4. Use a two-adult rule, requiring a minimum of two workers with children at all times.** This protects children and also protects adults against false accusations that a person could bring against a worker who is alone with children. (Sixty-four percent of all churches surveyed do this. Forty percent of medium-sized churches use this rule.)

**5. Implement an identification system so the adult(s) who drops off a child is the same person who picks up the child.** This safeguard prohibits possible abduction. (Seventy-eight percent of churches surveyed do this.)

**6. Have church leaders and supervisors make random, unannounced visits to children/youth services and classes.** (Seventy-five percent of churches surveyed do this.)

**7. Set a minimum time a person must attend the church before serving as a volunteer with**



**children or youth.** (Seventy-eight percent of churches surveyed do this.)

**8. Do not allow teens (13 to 17 years old) to supervise children in the absence of an adult.** (Sixty-eight percent of all churches surveyed have this policy. In medium-sized churches, 40 percent allow teens to supervise children.)

Jesus was clear about the importance of children. "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14). If we truly embrace this verse, we will do everything possible to protect and bless these little ones.

It is true that a church with a nursery of three children and a children's church of five faces different challenges than a church with 600 children. Yet, both churches must take steps to protect children and workers. Once these policies and procedures are in place, the church can focus on the real task — ministering to their spiritual needs.

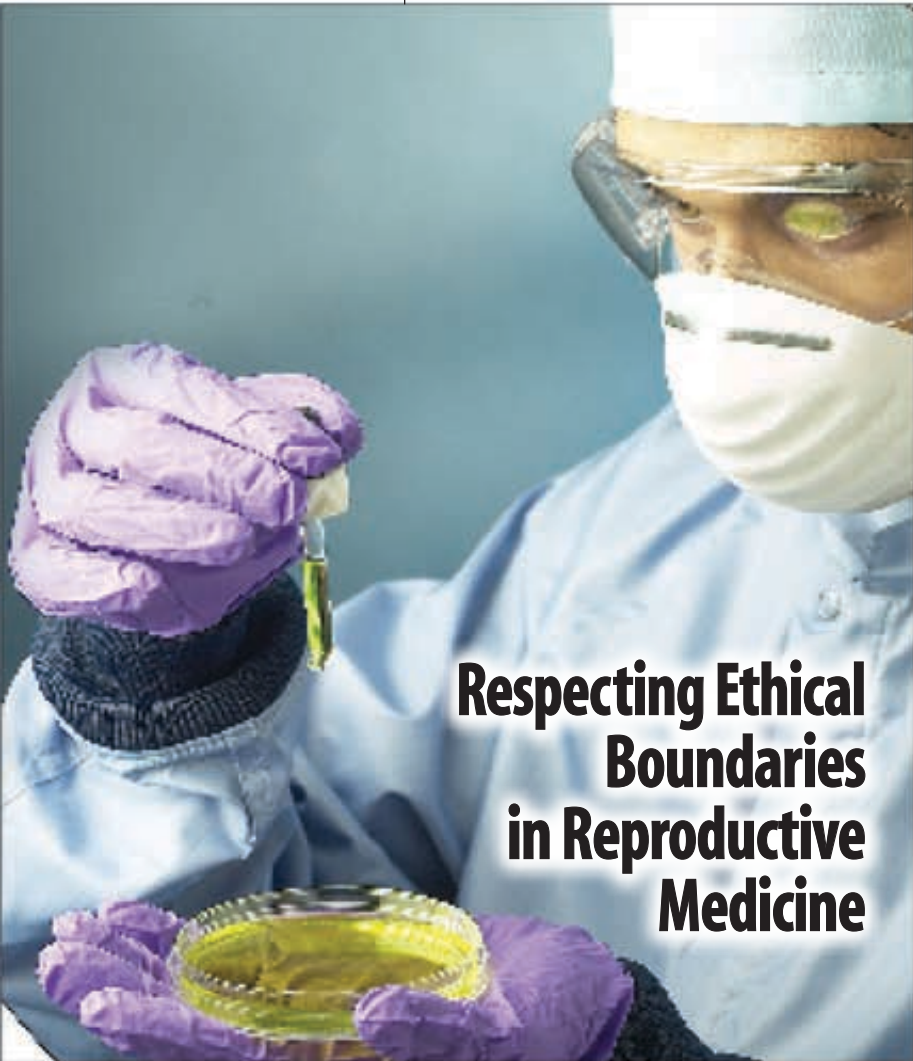
"If we are to reach kids with the love of Jesus, we need to take this seriously," says Farrell. His church is involved with the local community center, participating in after-school programs, sponsoring sports teams, and summer day camps as ways to build bridges to the children and families of the Newfound Lake region.

"We, as leaders, as shepherds, are commissioned to stand watch over our flocks and that means having our eyes open to all the dangers that can attack them. Better training makes us better pastors and leaders."

### **NOTES**

1. American Medical Association, "Child Abuse," Medem: Medical Library, [http://www.medem.com/search/article\\_display.cfm?path=\\TANQUERAY\M\\_ContentItem&mstr=/M\\_ContentItem/ZZBRKNPVAC.html&soc=AMA&srch\\_typ=NAV\\_SERCH](http://www.medem.com/search/article_display.cfm?path=\\TANQUERAY\M_ContentItem&mstr=/M_ContentItem/ZZBRKNPVAC.html&soc=AMA&srch_typ=NAV_SERCH) (accessed September 25, 2007).
2. Journal of Community Health 26, no. 4 (August 2001).

*When people enter a church, they need to be confident that their children will receive the utmost care, respect, protection, and love.*



## Respecting Ethical Boundaries in Reproductive Medicine

*Doctors and patients must be careful when devising treatment protocols to ensure that they maintain respect for the beginning of human life.*

**A**s a pastor, you probably have emphasized the importance of family through sermons and church programs. The Bible affirms that children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:3). Scripture shows that the Lord “settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children” (Psalm 113:9). Yet, in our churches there are some couples who struggle with infertility. A woman’s inability to conceive and bear children can generate pain and disappointment. These feelings are intensified in an environment, such as the church, where having a family is greatly valued.

In today’s society with its reliance on scientific progress, technology promises answers for infertility. People often regard medical breakthroughs

as God’s provision. Christian couples, however, must consider where to draw ethical boundaries in the field of reproductive medicine.

### Respecting the Beginning of Human Life

Reproductive medicine seeks to help couples bear biological children. This is a noble purpose. Successful fertility treatments result in a new human life that might not otherwise have come into being. Doctors and patients, however, must be careful when devising treatment protocols to ensure that they maintain respect for the beginning of human life. For a Christian, children are more than the result of a technological process; they are gifts from our loving Creator.

According to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, less than 5 percent of all infertility treatment in the United States involves *in vitro fertilization*. *In vitro* is Latin for *within the glass* and denotes a process that occurs in a laboratory instead of within a living organism. *In vitro* fertilization involves surgically removing eggs from a woman’s ovary and mixing these eggs with sperm in a petri dish. Fertilized eggs begin dividing into cells to make an embryo. These eggs are then placed into a woman’s uterus, thus bypassing the fallopian tubes where a fertilized egg normally travels to reach the uterus.

*In vitro* fertilization separates the moment of conception from the expression of love between a married couple. New human life begins in the laboratory, open to observation and experimentation, instead of within the protective depths of a woman’s body.

While the beginning of a new human life is a miracle regardless of the timing or place of conception, reducing conception to a laboratory procedure introduces possibilities for ethical problems. For example, not all of the newly formed embryos will develop into babies within a woman’s uterus. The embryologist may freeze some embryos for potential future development, discard others, and still others may become raw material for embryonic stem cell experiments. In addition, *in vitro* fertilization opens the door for the selection of an embryo with specific characteristics as



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well as the possible genetic manipulation of an embryo. While couples could use these approaches to select an embryo free from certain dreaded inborn diseases, a dark side of these technologies is the possibility of selecting offspring with certain physical, cognitive, or behavioral traits, reminiscent of eugenics.

Let us review several technologies in reproductive medicine and consider whether these technologies raise ethical concerns involving respect for the beginning of human life. For example, a couple may choose to have their sperm cells and egg cells frozen. A man who is about to undergo radiation or chemotherapy for cancer can have his sperm frozen to protect his ability to father children. Soldiers facing deployment to a war zone may also opt to freeze sperm to ensure future fertility.

Until recently, successfully freezing and thawing egg cells proved much more difficult. Human egg cells are the largest cells in the body — 10 to 15 times larger than other cells. There are several obstacles in freezing egg cells. Because of their size, egg cells contain more water than other cells. During the freezing process, destructive ice crystals can form within the eggs. Also, the genetic material in an egg cell is less stable than the genetic material within a fertilized egg (embryo). Furthermore, eggs do not fertilize well after thawing. The thawing process can disrupt the egg's membrane interfering with the penetration of sperm through the egg surface.

Technology for thawing frozen eggs so they remain viable continues toward perfection. Embryologists are now using a flash-freezing technique known as *vitrification* to successfully freeze eggs. This allows women to preserve their fertility when they need to undergo chemotherapy.

Another way for women to preserve their fertility before undergoing chemotherapy is to freeze ovarian tissue and later have it transplanted back. After transplantation of ovarian tissue, egg cells develop naturally in the woman's body with no need for in vitro fertilization. Since sperm cells, egg cells, and ovarian tissue are components of the patient's own body, freezing these cells and tissue do not present the same ethical concerns as freezing embryos.

An embryologist can screen embryos created through in vitro fertilization using *preimplantation genetic diagnosis*. Doctors developed this procedure so couples at risk of having children with serious genetic disorders could increase their chances of having a child without

that disorder. This procedure also enables doctors to analyze the genetic material of embryos before they implant these embryos in a woman's uterus, permitting the selection of only healthy embryos for implantation.

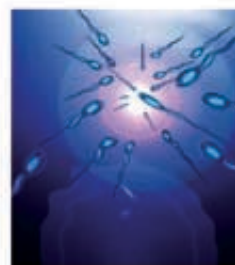
PGD involves removing one or two cells from an eight-cell embryo and testing those cells for genetic conditions of interest to the parents. Using this technique, doctors can determine the sex of the embryos as well. Thus, couples at risk of passing on a genetic disorder that affects only males may choose to have a female baby.

Before the development of PGD — used in conjunction with IVF — couples may have chosen to have an abortion if prenatal testing showed that the fetus had a genetic disease. While reducing the number of abortions performed after prenatal testing is a positive aspect of PGD, the destruction of embryos found to have genetic defects continues to raise ethical concerns related to the sanctity of human life.

Another ethical concern is that embryologists may use PGD to screen for late onset adult diseases as well as fatal diseases of early childhood. In some cases, embryologists screen for a predisposition for a treatable disease that may not occur until after the fourth decade of life. PGD does not cure any disease; it merely prevents the patient who someday may develop the disease from ever being born.

An additional ethical concern is using PGD to select a child to serve as a tissue-match for a sibling. The concern is for the welfare of the donor child. Even though donating umbilical cord blood poses no harm to the donor, any future expectation for the tissue-matched child to continue to donate stem cells, tissue, or an organ to an ailing sibling would be an inappropriate burden to that child.

The use of PGD for nonmedical sex selection, such as family balancing, also has ethical implications. Even though couples may use nonmedical sex selection to achieve gender



*Reducing conception to a laboratory procedure introduces possibilities for ethical problems.*



variety in most cases, certain cultures have a strong preference for male children. The availability of PGD for nonmedical sex selection could create a sex ratio imbalance within those cultures. Furthermore, some bioethicists feel that nonmedical sex selection opens the door for selection of other traits, leading to a view that children are commodities couples may choose because of their genetic attributes.

Another related technique used to screen embryos is *preimplantation genetic screening*, which involves screening for genetic abnormalities such as *aneuploidy* (an irregular number of chromosomes leading to conditions like Down syndrome or Turner syndrome). Embryologists use PGS to improve the success rates of IVF for specific groups of infertile patients such as older women, those with repeated IVF failure, or those with unexplained recurrent miscarriages. Such women are at increased risk of producing embryos with abnormal chromosomes. The aim of PGS is to improve the pregnancy rate and to reduce the risk of miscarriage

for these women. A recent study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, showed that women 35 to 41 years of age who underwent IVF along with PGS had lower pregnancy and live-birth rates — the opposite of the expected result.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the effectiveness of PGS for women of advanced maternal age remains a matter of ongoing study and scientific debate.

Finally, techniques such as PGD, which are currently used for disease prevention, one day could be used for genetic enhancement, raising ethical questions about the rights of parents to design their descendents. In addition to mere selection of desired traits in offspring, genetic engineering of embryos remains a future theoretical possibility. Clearly, current and expected advances in reproductive medicine compel us to define appropriate boundaries to ensure respect for human life in its earliest stages.

## Respecting the Marital Bond

Reproductive technologies raise ethical issues concerning not only respect for the beginnings of human life, but also respect for the marital bond between a husband and wife. The use of donor eggs, donor sperm, or a gestational surrogate mother brings a third party into the process of a husband and wife having a child.

Technology makes it possible to separate parenting into genetic, gestational, and social components. One or more of the genetic parents of the child could be different from the woman who will carry the child and different from the couple who will raise the child after the child is born. One or both of the genetic parents could possibly be deceased. It is theoretically possible for the genetic mother to have never been born, because embryologists can produce eggs from ovarian tissue extracted from aborted female fetuses.

For the Christian couple, there is wisdom in avoiding technologies that involve third parties contributing to the procreation process. Surrogate motherhood is at least as ancient as the biblical account of Abraham and Sarah who used Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, to bear Abraham's child. In this case, Hagar was both the genetic and gestational mother of Abraham's son, Ishmael. No technology was involved. But the result of this arrangement brought conflict and pain for all involved. God's grace, however, intervened to protect both Hagar and her son and to bless Abraham and Sarah. The story of Abraham and Sarah illustrates the potential relational problems of using a surrogate.

A recent development in surrogate motherhood is for couples to travel to India for infertility treatments and to select Indian women as surrogate mothers. The cost of surrogacy in India is about one-tenth the cost of surrogacy in the United States. The pay received by Indian surrogates is generous by local standards. The surrogacy fee is equal to about 10 times the annual per capita income in India. While it seems both the couple and the surrogate benefit from this arrangement, ethical concerns about avoiding potential exploitation of the women who agree to be surrogate mothers remain.

Another ethical concern in reproductive medicine involving respect for the marital bond between husband and wife is *posthumous assisted reproduction*. The birth of a child after the death of the child's father always has been a possibility because of the 9-month delay between conception and birth.



*Reducing conception to a laboratory procedure introduces possibilities for ethical problems.*



Techniques for successfully freezing sperm, however, have made it possible for a man to conceive a child after his own death. Even though the idea of a wife desiring to have a child who will resemble the husband she has lost is understandable and having a child to carry on his line seems noble, Romans 7:2 makes clear that the marital bond dissolves at the death of one's spouse. From a secular standpoint, ethical concerns surrounding posthumous assisted reproduction include establishing what constitutes informed consent on the part of the deceased spouse and defining the legal status of a child born under these circumstances.

### Respecting the Needs of the Next Generation

The final criterion for establishing ethical boundaries in reproductive medicine is respect for the needs of the next generation. In the quest to help a childless couple have a biological child, doctors focus most of their attention on fulfilling the desires of the couple seeking treatment. Yet, it is vital that medical professionals

keep in mind the best interest of the child being born.

For example, a child conceived with either sperm or egg cells from an anonymous donor may someday wish to access his own medical and genetic history. The Donor Sibling Registry, founded in 2001, has helped nearly 4,000 people who are genetically related — mostly half-brothers and half-sisters — find each other. The interest in this registry demonstrates that one ramification of anonymous sperm and egg donations is the creation of a person who someday might want to know the man or woman who contributed half of his genetic identity.

### Conclusion

Reproductive medicine that respects the beginning of life, the marital bond, and the needs of the next generation can be a gift to infertile couples longing to have a child. New medical breakthroughs can be a provision of blessing when governed by appropriate guidelines.

Pastors can help couples understand the issues that define where to draw the ethical boundaries in reproductive medicine so couples will be better equipped to make informed decisions when seeking treatment. Similarly, pastors can help parishioners understand the principles that need to guide their response as a society to these new technologies. The church can provide a safe place for infertile couples to receive ministry as they determine God's will for their lives and future families.

New technologies will appear on the horizon, but the principles that guide our application of those technologies are timeless. Equally timeless is the importance of upholding infertile couples in prayer. Remind them that God has a purpose for their lives that transcends their current struggles to start a family. May God provide you with the wisdom needed to minister to infertile couples under your care. 🌀

#### NOTE

1. S. Mastenbroek et al., "In Vitro Testing with Preimplantation Genetic Screening," *New England Journal of Medicine* 357, no. 1 (2007): 9–17.

*Reproductive technologies raise ethical issues concerning not only respect for the beginnings of human life, but also respect for the marital bond between a husband and wife.*







## David Wesley Myland's Vision of Spiritual Fullness<sup>1</sup>

*Myland was ready and willing to be surprised by God.*



### David Wesley Myland (1858–1943)

**D**avid Wesley Myland was one of early Pentecostalism's most creative thinkers.

He believed that words could never truly define or describe spiritual realities, and that one particular formulation of theology could never apply to everyone. God acted in whatever way God wanted to, and good theology had to acknowledge divine freedom. Thus, his approach to theology was more poetic and pragmatic than systematic. He was ready and willing to be surprised by God. Because of this, his writings still have freshness and appeal.

Myland's Pentecostal beliefs were deeply rooted in his own life story. We know little of his early religious experience, except that his mother laid hands on him as she was dying and dedicated him to the ministry.

Myland himself was not convinced about pastoral work. He preferred running the family retail business. Eventually, however, God called him into ministry in a way he could not ignore: His business was going bankrupt.

Myland later told others that it is better to heed God's call quickly because "it will cost you more the more you put it off."

While Myland entered the ministry with some reluctance, he was soon persuaded that this was his calling. Raised as a Methodist, he had a series of physical crises and subsequent healings that led him to embrace a dynamic form of faith. This placed him at odds with some of his more staid

ministerial colleagues. By 1890, he decided to sever his ties with the Methodist Church and joined the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Yet, he tried hard to remain on good terms with his Methodist friends. Myland was not a bridge burner. Even when he disagreed with someone, he tried to maintain cordial relations.

Shortly before leaving the Methodist Church, Myland had a deep and overwhelming experience of the Holy Spirit that changed his life and caused him "to see things in a way I didn't understand." Myland would later refer to this experience as the beginning of his baptism in the Spirit. He did not receive the completion of that experience — Myland called it the *residue* — until 1906, shortly before the revival at the Azusa Street Mission began to make news.

That timing is symbolic. Myland always thought of his own Pentecostal faith as separate from, but compatible with, the vision of Pentecost that flourished at the Azusa Street Mission. Thus, he never felt compelled to adopt the language of Azusa verbatim. In particular, Myland used the phrase "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" only rarely. His own preferred way of talking about the Pentecostal experience was to refer to it as the "fullness of God" or the "fullness of Pentecost."

Like many early Pentecostal theologians, Myland was influenced by the dispensational movement. But like many dispensational thinkers, he had his own views of what the end of history and return of Christ would look like. The image of the early rain and the latter rain



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drawn from the Book of Deuteronomy had significance for Myland. In fact, people sometimes called the early Pentecostal movement the Latter Rain movement, and Myland is largely responsible for that designation.

Key to Myland's theology was the importance of love — especially love that transcended the boundaries of race and ethnicity. For Myland, love was an action, not an attitude. To underscore love's active character he sometimes used the term *heart service* as a synonym for love.

Myland was significantly older than many other early Pentecostal leaders. In pictures, he looks like a kindly grandfather, and in some sense, that is how he saw his place in the larger Movement. He was a thoughtful moderate who encouraged others and cautioned those who might be pushing things too hard or too far. Myland combined genuine fervor with sincere moderation in his own winsome and unique way. That mix of attitudes is evident in the following excerpt from his book *The Latter Rain Covenant* (1910).

### Literal and Spiritual Latter Rain

"Spiritually the latter rain is coming to the church of God at the same time it is coming literally upon the land, and it will never be taken away from her, but it will be upon her to unite and empower her, to cause her to aid in God's last work for this dispensation, to bring about the unity of the Body, the consummation of the age, and the catching away of spiritual Israel, the bride of Christ. God said He would bring back this latter rain 'as at the first' and He is doing it. The *early* rain was for the sowing and the *latter* for the harvest; one for the beginning and the other for the end; one for the introduction and the other for the consummation of the dispensation.

"Now we begin to understand this great prophecy: 'I will pour out My Spirit' — literally on Israel, spiritually on God's church, dispensationally to bring in the consummation of the ages and open the millennium, the age of righteousness. To this great point we are converging, and we see enough now that ought to make anybody willing to go through life a continual sacrifice to help hasten that day. I am surprised at men and women who say they believe these things and then hold back their time, their talent, and their money. If the Lord should burst through the air today with the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the archangel, many who profess to believe these truths could

not go up to meet Him because they are bound down by bank stocks, bonds, and real estate — these are weights upon them. Oh, you must be light; you must have laid aside the weights and the sin that doth so easily beset you — the sin that is so common among us, the sin of unbelief, of not being sharp and quick in our faith. Our questions, doubts, fears, and misgivings — let us lay them aside.

" 'Oh for a faith that will not shrink  
Though pressed by every foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of any earthly woe.'

" 'God is able to make all grace abound toward us, that we always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' Glory to His Name! If God has His way, men and women who have come up to these meetings will find new places in God's earth to serve Him and bring forth fruit. Beloved, will you take time to get a vision of the Almighty? Will you take time to let God project in you, through you and upon you the vision of His purpose for you? If you do, some will soon find themselves in the uttermost parts

of the earth. Then there will be people living in Chicago united so closely with those God has sent to foreign lands that they will be living one life, one laboring here and one laboring there; one working here that the other might prosper there. This is the *intent* of Pentecost, that my heart might be bound with men and women in Africa; in Japan, in the vastnesses of Tibet; that my spirit might be bound with men and women in India and we are made one in working out the purposes of God. When we come up to meet Him it will be like one man, developed into the fullness of the stature of Christ, because we have come by the love of the Spirit, into the unity of the Spirit, through the wisdom of the Spirit, into the unity of the faith that works as one, believes as one, labors, and toils, and suffers as one."

### Fullness of the Godhead

"Pentecost then is *this*, and 'this is *that*.'" Jesus is at the right hand of the Father 'shedding forth that which ye see and hear'; for He said, 'I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter,' and I will pour Him out upon you. It was well-pleasing to the Godhead that in



*Myland had a deep and overwhelming experience of the Holy Spirit that caused him "to see things in a way I didn't understand."*





*Myland combined genuine fervor with sincere moderation in his own winsome and unique way.*

Him should all the fullness dwell (Colossians 1:19). He is made Head over all things, to the church which is His body, 'the fullness of Him that filleth all in all' (Ephesians 1:23). He is Head over all principalities and powers. He can take care of the things that hinder. He is the Head; let Him have the Body and He will take care that it shall be full of Him. Fullness!

"That is how I always like to see Pentecost. His fullness! Pentecostal fullness! If it is a tongue let it be the fullness of the tongue; if it is discernment let it be the fullness of discernment; if it is interpretation let it be in its fullness; if healing or faith, let them all be in fullness; whatever the display, let it be in its *fullness*. We must never stop short of that. But first, Pentecost was the promise of the Father, foretold by Joel, and reiterated by Christ. In Luke 24:49, Jesus said, 'Behold!' that is, look for the promise of the Father, I am going to send Him upon you; 'but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.' He didn't say, 'Behold, I send the promise of the Father on you, but tarry ye at Jerusalem until you speak in tongues!' Now I am no modifier of tongues, please remember that, nor am I a stickler about tongues, you never had any too much tongues for me, but I will not, I cannot, and I *shall* not magnify tongues out of its legitimate place, its scriptural setting, and its value compared with other gifts of the Spirit. Tongues is the least of all the gifts, and subordinate to other gifts, and when it is not kept so, there is some trouble.

"Now that is the strongest statement I have ever made on this phase of the subject, but I say again, it is the least of all the gifts and subordinate to the others. And when it is not, there is sure to be trouble. It is least because it is last, and because it is physical, and because it is dependent upon other gifts. Three of the gifts are spiritual, three in the psychical realm, and three in the physical. Satan can manifest all the three physical gifts. They are all gifts of God, but I am talking about the region in which they operate: miracles, healings, and tongues are physical, that is, they operate in the natural realm. Satan can imitate each of these three, but he cannot give you wisdom, nor can he give you intuitive knowledge. Satan cannot give you discernings of spirits nor true interpretation of tongues; nor can he give you true prophecy. Satan works from the physical, from the lower up. God works from the spiritual down. The spiritual must dominate the psychical and the psychical the physical; in other words, the spirit must control the soul and the soul the body.

"Keep in consonance with all the Godhead and His revealed will and you will never have any trouble. Tongues is a great gift; I will never minimize it, never modify it, but I will give all the gifts their proper setting.

"Do not think that all these displays are of the Spirit alone; the Father is there, the Son is there, and the Holy Spirit is there. Whenever God has come to anyone, the whole Godhead is manifested therein; it is the dynamics of the Godhead; the things of the Spirit are displayed in His sovereign working. This Movement must be saved from saying that there is never any Spirit until there is Pentecostal fullness, and also after we get Pentecost, from saying it is the Spirit only. It is God! the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Read Christ's own words in the 14th chapter of St. John, 20th verse: 'Ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.' Twenty-third verse: 'If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him.' It is God now in the house, moving around as He pleases, through your eyes, your lips, your tongue, your hands, your feet; it is God dwelling in mortal flesh; 'I will dwell in them and walk in them,' and speak through them. It is God — Spirit, Son, Father, the fullness of the Godhead bodily."



### Preparation for Pentecost

" 'But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye

be endued with power from on high.' Tarry! Wait! That is for preparation; that is not so much that God has a time and that He cannot give it before, but you must tarry for your own *preparation*. Historically, there had to be a completion of the Scriptures. The work had to be completed by Christ; He had to go to the Father and get the Godhead power put into Him. Peter comprehended it aright when he said, 'being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost,' (this great fullness of the Godhead) 'He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.' So we have the promise coupled with the demonstration in its realization. Seeing then that Pentecost results from the absolute oneness of the Godhead what oneness and unity ought it to produce in us *who* have received! It ought to make us as one Body, and it will do it. I am one with everybody that is at all one with God. I simply cannot help it. The only thing that can keep me from being one with others is some work either of the flesh or of the devil. Will you throw away your little scruples and colorings and shades of opinion? When Christ pours out the Godhead fullness upon us, who are we, as Peter said, that we should withstand God? This preparation moves us on into one accordness; and when it is complete through yieldedness, prayer, trust, obedience, and praise, He will flood you; yes, He will. The floods from above will meet the floods from beneath and there will be a blessed shower. Oh, it is wonderful! You will know it is real."

### Myland's Original Wisdom for Today's Minister

Myland emphasizes the theme of *fullness* along with the importance of Christian unity or one *accordness*.

1. How does the concept of *fullness* enrich your understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the world today?

2. Was Myland being unrealistic or prophetic (or both) when he expected the absolute oneness of the Godhead to be reflected in the oneness and unity of all Christians? If you were having a conversation with him, how would you have responded?

3. How do you encourage Christian *one accordness* in your congregation and with others? 🌀

#### NOTE

1. Portions of this article are adapted from Douglas Jacobsen, *A Reader in Pentecostal Theology* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006).



## Attracted to Another Man

*To extract yourself from your feelings you must take some drastic, painful steps. Remember, your marriage, ministry, and future are at stake.*

**Q:** I never thought I would find myself in this situation. Over the past several years my relationship with my husband has become increasingly tense and distant. He annoys me when we are together, and I prefer the times when we are apart. Recently I have developed feelings for another man in our congregation. We serve in the same area of ministry, and I feel alive and happy when we are working together. We have not talked about it, but I think he feels the same way. We have not done anything yet, but seeing him is one of the few bright spots in my life. I feel guilty. What should I do?

**A:** Asking this question requires courage, and I commend you for that. Your guilty feelings are danger signals, and they are accurate. This is a potentially hazardous situation. You feel distant from your husband and attracted to another man. Your emotions may seem compelling, but they are symptoms of something amiss in your life. In this case, they highlight problems in your marriage. Your difficulties with your husband need attention. Ignoring the root problem and pursuing these good feelings will eventually lead to greater despair.

Facing the disillusionment in your life can be painful. Your attraction for this man is an escape from reality. Though difficult to admit, your relationship with this man is shallow.

Real life is not the basis of your relationship.

You do not share the same tube of toothpaste or decide which way to hang the toilet paper. Your attraction to this man is only based on mutual need.

Your feelings for this man may bring moments of emotional relief and pleasure. Relief from pain is a legitimate desire. Pursuing this relationship with your friend, however, is a solution that will bring you much greater pain in the future. If you believe you can keep this relationship at the level of mutual admiration and friendship without *doing anything* for any amount of time, you are mistaken. Your feelings will compel you to move forward.

Attraction demands expression. This is the reason parents do not allow their teenage children to spend large amounts of time alone with their boyfriend or girlfriend. No matter what promises you make to yourself and God, you will be at war with your feelings, and your feelings will win given enough time.

As you know, the relationship with this other man does not stand still. You have already progressed from *acquaintance* to *mutually fulfilling service* to *mutual admiration* to *wondering what he thinks of you*. You have progressed through four levels in a relationship. If not stopped, this relationship will continue to progress to the next level and to the next.

No fulfilling, secure relationship can come from your attraction to this man. Many will be devastated in the wake of this relationship — your husband, your children, members of your congregation, and your extended community. You will feel regret and unfulfilled within a short amount of time. This is not the basis on which to build a long-term, intimate, mutually fulfilling relationship. You already have the potential for that with your husband.

To extract yourself from your feelings you must take some drastic, painful steps. Remember, your marriage, ministry, and future are at stake. Remind yourself of your commitment to God and to fulfilling His purpose in your life. Cling to what you know by faith. Then, follow these practical steps.

**First, tell someone.** Preferably, this should be your husband. If this seems too drastic, tell a trusted friend who will hold you accountable and urge you to take the right steps.



**GABRIELE RIENAS**, a pastor's wife for 27 years and a professional counselor, lives in Beaverton, Oregon. She speaks at retreats, conferences, and events worldwide. Contact her at 503-705-9230.



### Second, cut off your relationship with this man.

You cannot stop the feelings you have for him by an act of your will. Being with him only serves to intensify your desires. The only way to diminish feelings for another person is to starve your feelings. Extract yourself completely from this relationship and leave no room for further interaction or contact. You may grieve and go through a hard time. Expect it.

Use this time to strengthen your relationship with Jesus who is your Comforter. He understands your every pain. You will need support to walk through the pain of your situation just as a bereaved person needs support and compassion from others. Find a counselor, mentor, or trusted friend who will be more concerned about your future happiness than about your approval of her.

One warning — do not, under any circumstances, discuss your feelings with this man. This would be another step *forward* in furthering the development of this relationship. It will only inflame the emotional war and make it more difficult to extract yourself.

### Third, focus on your marriage as soon as possible.

Do something about the cold war that has entered your relationship with your husband. Talk about it, and request help. Let your husband know how serious the difficulties have become. Do not let your desire to stay at a church hinder your active pursuit of finding help for your marriage. No ministry is worth the break-up of a marriage. Hopefully, you will be in a fulfilling relationship with your husband long after the various ministry venues have ended.

You are at a crucial crossroad in your life. Remember, you are not powerless over your feelings. You have the power to choose your integrity, your family, and your future. This means trading immediate gratification for the long lasting joy won through pain and perseverance. Choose wisely. ☺

If you have questions you would like Gabriele to answer, e-mail them to: [enrichmentjournal@ag.org](mailto:enrichmentjournal@ag.org). You can also mail your questions to: Q&A for Ministry Wives, *Enrichment* journal, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

*The only way to diminish feelings for another person is to starve your feelings.*

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## Organizational Development and the Church

### Part Three: The Development Roles of Both Teaching and Mentoring

*Coaching and mentoring are not the exclusive property of the business or secular communities, where people first popularized them.*

**W**as Jesus a *coach*, helping His team study, practice, and enhance their performance toward specific outcomes? Was He a *mentor*, offering a certain way of being and creating a context for significant character development and critical thinking? Or was He *both*, using each of these related but distinct disciplines as the situation demanded? Do we expect the same of leaders in the church today?

During His approximately 3 years of earthly ministry, Jesus *coached* His disciples on many things, usually through modeling an activity for them and then critiquing them after they had tried it for themselves. For example, He taught them how to pray, evangelize, handle crowds

and difficult people, cast out demons, teach, and what was appropriate behavior on the Sabbath.

At the same time, Jesus *mentored* His disciples through His presence. By sitting at His feet, observing Him in action, and participating in much of His ministry, the disciples who endured with Jesus eventually received a multifold portion of His Spirit. They caught Christlikeness through spending quality time with the Son of God.

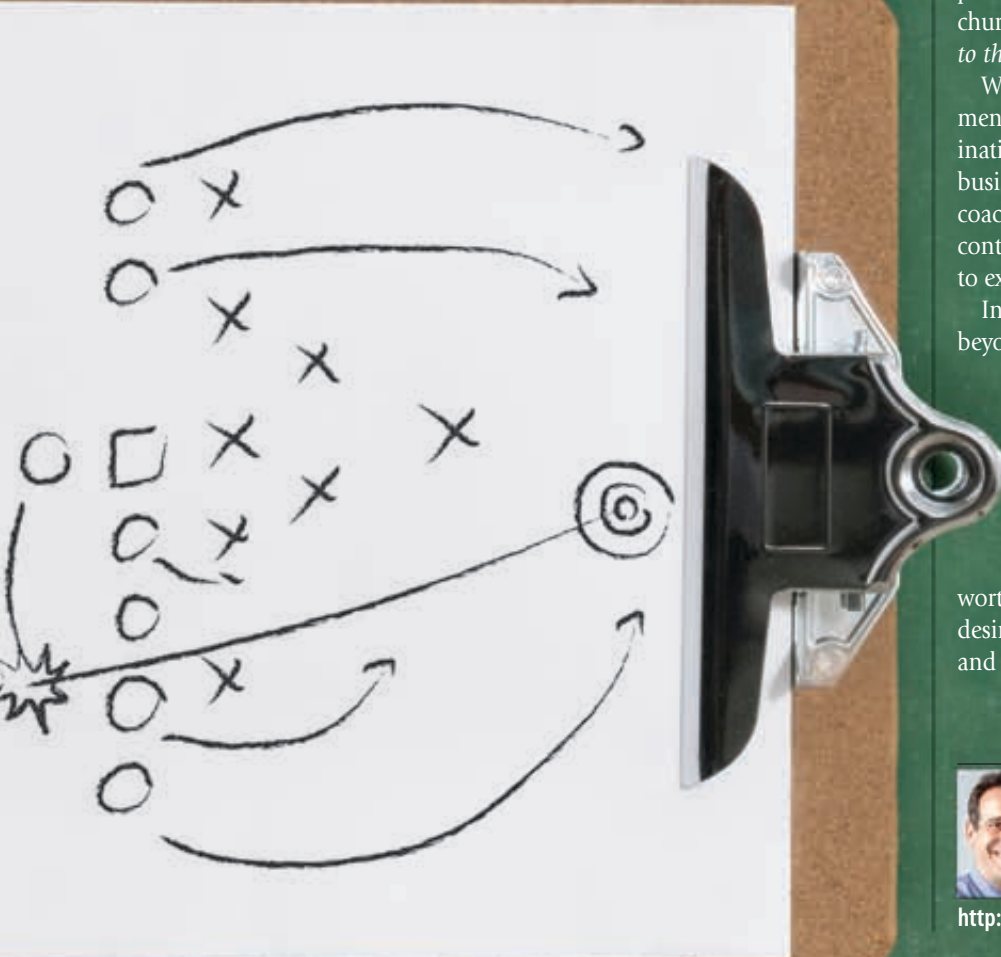
The fact Jesus powerfully employed both coaching and mentoring emphasizes how these endeavors are not the exclusive property of the business or secular communities, where people first popularized them. For many years church leaders dismissed these intentional practices as irrelevant to spiritual growth and church development; ostensibly, they belonged *to the world*.

When I was pastoring full time, coaching and mentoring were on the periphery of my denomination. I had to read *outside* books — such as business publications — to learn more about coaching and mentoring even though Scripture contains the best possible case studies for how to excel in these practices.


In recent times, however, people within and beyond the local church more readily recognize the transferable principles of coaching and mentoring that transcend business and ministry. Whether the setting is a congregation, financial services office, educational institution, or 501c3 charity, leadership development is leadership development — worthy and indispensable work for any entity desiring long-term influence with customers and community.



**JOHN MICHAEL DE MARCO** is an ordained United Methodist pastor, leadership consultant, and writer, based in Nashville, Tennessee. To learn more, please visit <http://www.johnmdemarco.com>.







*Leadership development is worthy and indispensable work for any entity desiring long-term influence with customers and community.*

### **Coaching and the Attitude Factor**

"To successfully coach or mentor anyone," says popular leadership author and speaker Ken Blanchard, "you must be committed to that person's ongoing development. Such commitment often requires saying things that might not be popular with that individual."

"Jesus had a small group of people whom He could be more intimate with," notes Blanchard. "We have become interested in the old concept of having a truth-telling group that can be there for you, to give you feedback, to keep you on track, to push you. A coach can play many roles, but the biggest one is to keep you on track and be a truth-teller when you seem to not be applying what you know."

"A person offering such coaching," Blanchard adds, "must coach with a sense of humility, and the person being coached must receive it with the same dynamic."

"One of the differences between self-serving leaders and serving leaders is how they receive feedback. Self-serving leaders think they own their position. The minute you think you own something you begin to protect it. And when you get feedback you do not like, you dismiss it. Serving leaders see their position as being on loan. When they get feedback they say, 'Thank you.' Coaching is not going to help anybody who is not open to feedback."

Blanchard's organization enlists coaches who

work with churches and ministry leaders by utilizing three key aspects.

"We talk about performance planning, where they agree on goals and objectives," Blanchard says. "The second step is day-to-day coaching, where you observe people, praise progress, and redirect. The final step is performance evaluation, where you evaluate performance over time."

Al Winseman, D.Min., the Gallup Organization's global practice leader for faith communities, has been observing a huge movement of coaching within churches.

"Coaching is about performance. It links the well-being part with the well-doing part," Winseman asserts. "We see a great deal of this happening around strengths development, with our StrengthsFinder — an online assessment tool popularized in books such as *Now, Discover Your Strengths*. This has become another program that a church offers as part of its DNA through the power of coaching. Churches are training people to give feedback to others and coach them how to best develop their talents into strengths and use those concerning service to the world."

In addition to Jesus, Winseman notes that the apostle Paul was a *coach* as well. "When you look at his relationships with Timothy, Barnabas, and others ... they wanted to accomplish something great for the kingdom of God. Paul was coaching them on how to better accomplish this. His letters are coaching letters — 'You have some issues here, and this is what you need to do to fix them.' Paul was forthright in naming the issues they were dealing with and offering corrections, but his letters also are full of praise as well for the well-doing aspect of what was happening in these churches."

Max Yearly has pastored Christian Life Center (AG) of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for 29 years. He has seen the church survive an early split and grow from 200 persons in



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attendance to an average of 3,500 today. Yearly says coaching is a frequent activity within his leadership team where they critique pastors after sermons and music interns after performances.

"We point out their strengths and weaknesses," Yearly notes. "We work on those things with them."

At North Little Rock First Assembly of God, Rod Loy has emphasized performance coaching to the point where he has eliminated annual employee reviews. "I think reviews are the antithesis of coaching," declares Loy, the church's senior pastor. "An annual review says, 'I am going to watch you for a year, and then I am going to have a little list of everything I think you can be better at. You are going to be stressed, and I am going to be stressed.'"

Instead, at the beginning of 2007, Loy had each member of the church's leadership team — pastoral, support, and volunteer — identify the one thing they were going to accomplish to make a difference in the church. Each person talked through his goals in front of the entire team.

"My focus for the year was to help coach and

guide them to accomplish that one thing. I almost had everybody's goal memorized; there are about 30 people. As we went through the year, I periodically said, 'If we would do this or tweak this, we can get there.' Peers did that as well because everybody knew others' goals."

Loy continues, "We were all coaching each other toward those common goals and objectives. At the end of the year the entire team sat down and asked, 'Where was the goal, and how did you do?' Everyone listened as each person shared."

John Lindell, senior pastor of James River Assembly of God in Ozark, Missouri, notes how his team practices performance coaching in real time. "After I preach, the two other guys on the preaching team talk to me between services. One might say, 'Here is an idea.'

"I do this with them also. We might say, 'There was a grace on this part when you preached,' or 'You know what, you don't need your notes. You have this down.'"

Lindell adds, "We are trying to create a culture of improvement. *Excellence* is a subjective term

## Ministry Coaching: A Powerful Tool for Growth

**Interest in coaching is increasing among ministers.** Coaching is beneficial to people in professions such as teachers, mentors, and consultants. Coaching is unique because of its indirect technique and nonthreatening approach.

### Coaching

What is coaching? The term originates from a British word that means horse-drawn carriage. In those days the coach (stagecoach) was a common method of transportation. Today, a coach helps transport a client to where he wants to go in life or ministry.

Coaching differs from the traditional lecture method of classroom education. Coaching is "helping people solve their own problems, not telling them what to do."<sup>1</sup> In one-on-one coaching sessions, the client is in control. The coach asks the client what he wishes to accomplish and then

helps him discern the optimum path and develop maximum performance to reach the desired destination.

### Coaching Utilizes Adult Learning

Coaching differs from many helping methods. For example, when a person asks a minister for help, the minister usually offers what he thinks is the best method by which to handle the situation (the lecture method). Conversely, a coach asks questions and helps the client discover the best solution.

Coaching has many advantages. The biggest advantage is the process of utilizing adult learning. Malcolm Knowles says in *Designs for Adult Learning*, "One of the most significant findings of adult learning research . . . is that when adults learn something naturally instead of 'being taught,' they are highly self-directing [that is, they feel ownership and act on it]. . . . What adults learn on their own initiative they learn more keenly and permanently than what they learn by being 'taught.'"

When people discover information for themselves, it is more meaningful and has a



and can create a pressure on people that can become unbearable at some point. Instead, we are always getting people to ask, 'How can we do it better?' "

### **Mentoring as Distinct From Coaching**

"I think coaching is much more specific to a situation," observes Nancy Ortberg, an internationally known church and business consultant. "Mentoring to me is more relational and broad based. I think God does both for us. They are two sides of the same coin — the leader who is more experienced than you coming alongside you and speaking into your life. I have had some stellar leaders in my life; I would not be where I am without those people."

Adds Blanchard, "To me, a mentor is someone who has been successful in what you are trying to be good at, whom you meet with periodically. You are there to pick his brain and ask his advice. A coach is there to help you accomplish your goals. A mentor is a resource for advice."

"We have some staff who are better at mentoring than others," observes Yeary. "But based on

the fact most of our staff has been mentored and brought to where they are, I do not have to convince them how important mentoring is. We have no one on our staff that came aboard simply because they finished our School of Ministry. Before that, they probably had latched onto one of our leaders, or one of our leaders had seen their potential and latched on to them."

Yeary says he sees fewer differences between *coaching* and *mentoring* but recognizes their distinctions. "When you are mentoring someone, that person has entrusted you with their education and ministerial preparation. Whereas in coaching, a person might not want you to coach him, but you are still coaching him. We use *coaching* to mean fine-tuning certain areas, trying to stretch them into other areas where they have giftings. Regardless, when someone enters our School of Ministry, we begin like Elijah did when he put his cloak on Elisha; we make a commitment to get them from where they are to where God has called them to be."

Yeary adds, "I can teach ministry to just about anyone, but I cannot change character. That has

*"I can teach ministry to just about anyone, but I cannot change character. That has to be between them and God."*

— Max Yeary



greater impact. This is participatory learning rather than passive data acquisition. Three benefits of adult learning are: First, the client retains the information longer. Second, the client develops greater ownership of the idea. Third, the coach completes his obligation when the client decides the best solution. Therefore, the coaching model leads to action more directly and efficiently than the lecture model. Conversely, many people attend seminars and afterward apply little, if any, of what they learned.

### **The Client Earns the Credit**

When a person learns by lecture, his teacher is the expert. Conversely, when a client discovers information on his own, he obtains not only the solution, but he also increases his confidence. Here, the client is built up rather than the coach.

### **Coaching Transforms Knowledge Into Action**

Coaching helps the client apply what he already knows. The coaching session begins by establishing an issue needing resolution. The coach asks questions that help the client evaluate

factors and alternatives. The coach leads the client to evaluate using information in his memory. He then chooses the best option and forms appropriate action steps. In this manner, the coach helps the client transform knowledge into action.

The discussion concludes when the coach evaluates the completion of the action steps at the next session. This creates accountability for the client. Having a coach who knows the plan of action, and who will inquire about its completion, motivates the client. Since progress cannot happen without action, coaching accelerates one's personal and ministry growth.

An elite athlete has many coaches. Why then do most ministers leave formal education and enter ministry without anyone committed to assisting them in their continued growth and development? Trained coaches can fill this void in ministry today.



**ARDEN K. ADAMSON**, former superintendent, Wisconsin-Northern Michigan District. His current ministry is coaching Christian leaders, pastors, and workers, and conducting coach-training seminars. Visit <http://www.maxpathcoaching.com>.

As district superintendent, I approached my work with ministers and church boards from a coaching perspective. On one occasion, some deacons asked for my advice concerning a difficult situation in their church. Instead of sharing my opinion, I began to ask questions. The deacons soon realized their best course of action and made a commitment to follow through on their decision. They thanked me for my assistance even though I never told them what to do. This is coaching.

In addition to teaching coaching skills to pastors over the past 10 years, I have enjoyed having a professional coach. My coach has aided me in my own personal growth, in discovering resolutions for issues, and in enhancing my leadership as district superintendent. Hence, I, too, need a coach. ☺

#### **NOTE**

1. Tony Stoltzfus, *Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills, and Heart of a Christian Coach* (Charleston, S.C.: BookSurge Publishing, 2005), 1.



*"Excellence is a subjective term and can create a pressure on people that can become unbearable. . . . Instead, we are always getting people to ask, 'How can we do it better?'"*

— John Lindell

to be between them and God."

Lindell mentors members of his executive team through individual meetings that usually take place once per month. Some members meet with Lindell weekly, depending on the area of leadership or the issues involved. These top leaders are responsible for mentoring those who serve on their teams. Lindell sees mentoring as a vital opportunity for transparency and honest communication, and he peppers coaching moments into its practice.

"I told one person concerning his wife, 'You are embarrassed by her. It doesn't make you look good, and it certainly doesn't make her look good. It is going to ruin your marriage,'" Lindell recalls. He added, "I needed to follow up that conversation with subsequent conversations."

Another team leader had experienced a great deal of turnover on his staff. "I realized I needed to talk with him. 'Listen,' I said, 'how do you create loyalty and joy in serving your department in the people around you?'" Mentoring, Lindell asserts, is "more trouble-shooting and discernment than just, 'Let's read a book.'"

Quality mentoring does not take place in the church by accident, Winseman has observed. "Part of leading is influencing and being selective in choosing people you identify as having promise and in whom you want to invest yourself," he says. "That takes a conscious decision on the part of most pastors and religious leaders. So many pastors are subject to the tyranny of the urgent; a great deal of ministry is reacting from one crisis to the next. You need to be intentional about mentoring, about stepping back, taking the long view and saying, 'If am going to succeed here, I have to invest some of myself into some of my best people so we can make the best difference.'"

In the final part of this series, I will address another challenge faced by leaders in all industries and organizations: How to constantly be leading change initiatives in the most effective manner. As the church is often slower to change than most other institutions and organizations, the savvy ministry leader will learn how to remain relevant to the culture without sacrificing the timeless message and power of the gospel. 🌀





## Creating

# SUSPENSE

**H**ave you ever stayed up late because you could not put down a book? What was it about the book that kept you reading? Odds are that the author succeeded in creating suspense through his or her skillful use of *complication*, and you had to see what was about to happen next. Compare this novel with a nonfiction textbook that contains good information, but can put you to sleep in the middle of the day, even after three cups of coffee. Have you ever wished that textbooks would read more like suspenseful novels while retaining the same level of instruction? Now put yourself in the shoes of a listener in a Sunday morning worship service.

Creating a more interesting, even suspenseful, communicator-listener dynamic in preaching is possible. It is easier to create suspense when preaching from narrative texts because the author has built suspense into the story. But it is possible, using basic *plot structure*, to craft sermons from any genre of Scripture that will interest your listeners.

### Stepping Outside the Box With Sermon Structure

Pastors need to consider *image* rather than *illustration* when attempting to make a message memorable. In fact, the traditional view of illustrations probably has outlived its usefulness in our culture. It is much easier for a listener to recall an image (photograph, movie clip, song, story) than other kinds of illustrative material. An image linking a key analogy to the central biblical principle of a sermon helps plant that principle firmly in the right — not just the left — hemisphere of one's brain. It is easier to recall pictures than verbal illustrations. Doug Green has even suggested using cinematic methods to transform sermons into movies in the minds of listeners.<sup>1</sup> The information in a sermon, he argues, becomes more deeply imbedded by the movie the speaker creates with his structure and rhetoric.

Consider structuring sermons around a plot,

instead of a traditional analytical outline. These sermons will build to a conclusion in a manner different from the more familiar analytical and deductive structures. You will not sacrifice substance, and you might even find that this structure helps you build interest more effectively. The more interested and *imaged* the listener, the more deeply embedded the truth claims of Scripture in his mind.

Finally, in regard to sermon structure, the *plot structure* is more amenable to a one-point sermon than a multiple-point sermon. There are advantages to this structure. Given retention rates among the average listeners in today's culture, if people remember only the central proposition of the message, the speaker has had enormous success.

There is no reason to clutter the minds of listeners with an overload of main points (true even when using traditional structures). So, driving home the one, central truth of the passage using plot structure maximizes the retention rate among listeners and, therefore, the probability they will implement the life-change goal of the sermon.

### Applying Plot Structure in the Crafting of One Idea, Expository Sermons

Yes, expository sermons. In fact, it is more difficult to try this when approaching the Bible from a topical perspective. Preaching through one passage allows your plot to follow the inherent flow of thought in the passage itself. If you are preaching from a narrative text, the plot structure will be inherent in the passage.<sup>2</sup> If the text is from a non-narrative genre, a contemporary story can be woven into the message to capture the suspense element for your listeners.

When selecting a contemporary story, keep three things in mind. First, choose a story with

*The more interested and imaged the listener, the more deeply embedded the truth claims of Scripture in his mind.*



**DOUG OSS, PH.D.**, director of the Center for Expository Preaching, professor of Bible exposition, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

a riveting analogy to the central proposition (one idea) of your biblical text. This story becomes the primary medium for communicating the *imaged* biblical principle to your audience.

Second, choose a story you can develop in rhythm with the flow of thought in your passage. The story needs to develop at the same pace as the biblical text.

Third, picture your sermon structure as a series of panels that progress from left to right, rather than a traditional outline format. This allows for the development of plot as the structure for the flow of thought in your message. Think of text and story as warp and woof.

As a starting point, use the following four-panel plot structure. It is straightforward, easy to use, and will help you identify pre-existing plot structure if you are preaching from a narrative text.

**Exposition.** The first panel of the story sets forth the status quo. This panel needs to answer the question: What should one normally expect in the light of the central proposition of this passage? Or, What challenge will the central proposition of this message bring to the *normal expectation* in this dimension of life? Begin the story by carefully laying out *normal*, so events can disrupt it as the story progresses.

**Complication.** This panel builds suspense through a series of disruptions of the status quo, or *normal* life. These disruptions inherently lead the listener to explore possible resolutions. Interest holds, and the listener begins to discern the blossoming connection between text and story. While events disrupt the lives of the people in the story, events also disrupt the central proposition of the biblical text as the awareness of the listener grows.

**Climax.** In this panel, you reveal the resolution of the contemporary story and the *one idea* that has served as the organizing center for your message. This central proposition becomes the *resolving principle* for each listener. Listeners begin to reflect on what it means to live in the light of this particular biblical truth claim.

**Denouement.** In literary usage, this signifies the return to what is normal, or the status quo. Except that, normal takes on a new definition. Some elements carry over, but there is always change.

The story concludes here, by describing the changes in the lives of the central cast of characters and what now lies ahead for them. The biblical challenge also occurs in this panel.

How do your listeners now live in the light of this biblical principle? How will it shape their everyday lives? What is the challenge of the life-change goal of your sermon? What result from the biblical text do you want in the lives of your listeners?

## Conclusion

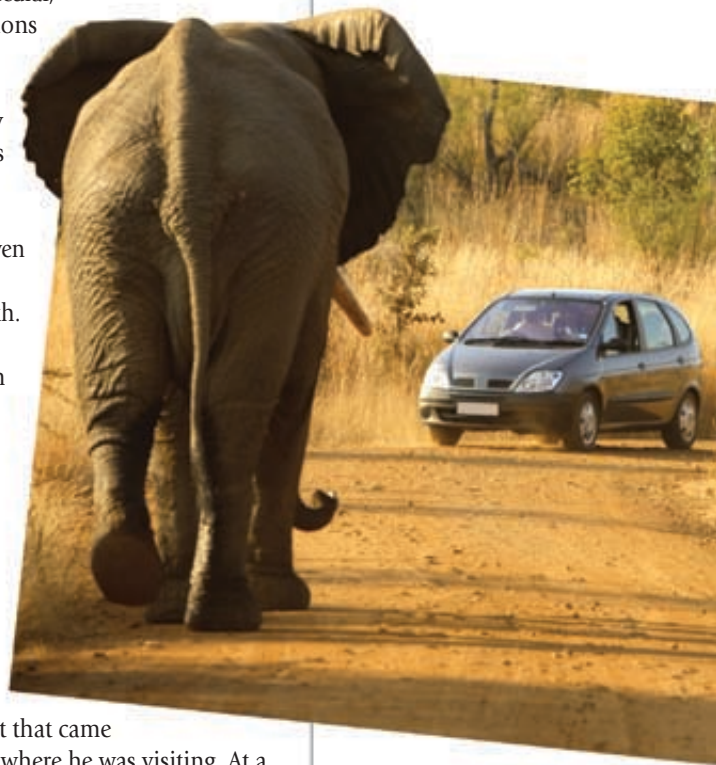
Narrative — one-idea preaching — appears to be one of the more effective methods of preaching in today's culture. It captures and keeps people's interest, and in particular, helps to make sermons memorable in life-changing ways. When supported by the media resources available through today's technology, this approach can even more profoundly imprint biblical truth.

A student and friend of mine from India preached a sermon about the power of speech from one of the *speech* proverbs. As he explained the effects of harmful speech, he wove a story of his experience with a rampaging elephant that came through the village where he was visiting. At a key moment, he clicked to a PowerPoint image of an elephant destroying a vehicle during a rampage. I have not forgotten the destructive force of the elephant, or the destructive force of speech when used unwisely.

Consider turning some of your sermons into narratives that your listeners can *watch*, not just hear — appealing to their imagination and thoughtfulness throughout your message. It will help you imprint the primary biblical principle from your text in the minds, hearts, and lives of your listeners. 🐘

## NOTES

1. See Doug Green, "Cinematic Preaching" (D. Min. project, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2005).
2. For further reading see Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1987). Also, Jerome Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001).



*The preacher's message on harmful speech was made vivid by the image of a rampaging elephant.*



## Know Your Limits

How to recognize when ministry takes its toll — and how to stay balanced

*As you recognize ministry dangers and implement safeguards, your life can stay in balance and you can weather the wear and tear of ministry.*

**J**ohn thought he had it together, but little by little his life had frayed at the edges. Ministry lights burned into the evening hours. John became exhausted with hospital visits, committee meetings, and hours of counseling. It was no wonder his ministry imploded when he had an affair.

"Pastors have the second highest divorce rate among professions."<sup>1</sup> Such is the demise of many ministers, but it does not need to happen to you. As you recognize ministry dangers and implement safeguards, your life can stay in balance and you can weather the wear and tear of ministry.

### **Danger 1 — Physical Fatigue**

When people feel drained of energy, they are less effective. Exhaustion sets in. Interest wanes. Their health suffers. Tiredness causes people to overreact to criticism and results in damaged relationships. Physical fatigue plays havoc with one's emotional, mental, and spiritual state of being.

Physical fatigue is a signal that a person is working too many hours. It is the classical mark of a workaholic. Most workaholics wholeheartedly embrace the sign seen in a workaholic's office: "Thank God It's Monday."<sup>2</sup> I am a recovering workaholic. Fourteen years ago I had a mild heart attack. It was a wake-up call.

In ministry, a pastor's desire to do the Lord's work while on 24-hour call can stretch his

physical resources to the point of collapse. When a pastor is overweight or out of shape, fatigue is more likely to occur.

### **Safeguard for Physical Fatigue — Sleep and Exercise**

Experts say that people need 8 hours of sleep a night. For pastors, this is not always realistic. How many pastors have received a phone call in the middle of the night because a parishioner is in trouble, there has been an accident, or someone needs emergency surgery? Yet, with attention and periodic power naps throughout the day, the 8 hours is within a pastor's reach.

Sleep promotes other body and ministry impacting benefits:

- It boosts your immune system.
- It makes you smarter.
- It helps you look better.
- It increases your concentration.
- It makes you a nicer person.<sup>3</sup>

If sufficient sleep fails to eliminate fatigue, check with your doctor for other factors or illnesses.

Along with sleep, exercise is important. Whether joining a health club, working out with weights, or taking daily walks, keeping fit increases endurance and allows our bodies to withstand long days and nights.



**DANNY RENARD VON KANEL**, minister of music/outreach, Memorial Baptist Church, Bogalusa, Louisiana

## Danger 2 — Mental Exhaustion

Are you unable to speak the right words? Do you fumble with clarity of thought? If you do, you may be succumbing to mental exhaustion. A simple definition of mental exhaustion is exhaustion that affects mental keenness. "Mental fatigue can manifest itself both as somnolence (decreased wakefulness) or just as a general decrease of attention, not necessarily including sleepiness."<sup>4</sup>

Long hours of study without sufficient breaks, tedious counseling sessions, extended days of attending to ministerial duties, and extensive research can contribute to mental exhaustion. Sleep deprivation greatly increases one's mental fog.

The result for ministers is burnout. "Burnout is the emotional exhaustion in the work arena associated with chronic distress leading to a depletion of resources, emotional and mental fatigue."<sup>5</sup>

As ministers we must examine our motivations. Certain behaviors can become addictive. If we are not careful, we may be nonverbally saying, *We will work ourselves to physical and mental exhaustion as long as the church provides the necessary status, appreciation, and financial recompense we need.*

### Safeguards for Mental Exhaustion — Breaks and Hobbies

A person's mind becomes weary when stressed. Take breaks. Finding brief moments of escape from mind usage rejuvenates an overworked psyche. I have found shutting the lights off in my office, closing my eyes, and listening to some quiet praise and worship songs refreshes and enlivens my thinking.

In addition, find a hobby. Nothing invigorates mental alertness more than pursuing a hobby. A more physical hobby is more energizing. Physical exercise increases blood flow to the brain and improves brain function and mental keenness.

Some hobbies may not impact overall brain clarity and may contribute to mental fatigue if abused. For example, my hobby is writing. But sitting at a computer for hours without breaks is just as mentally debilitating as overworking at my church.

## Danger 3 — Emotional Inertia

A pastor can become so enamored with doing ministry and hearing and responding to the emotional baggage of church members, that

he has no emotional energy left. This becomes crucial when he comes home and must meet the emotional needs of his spouse.

Ministry can be an emotional roller coaster. Dealing with congregants' many and varied emotional states can drain a pastor. Unless a pastor replenishes his emotional reserves he has little to give those he cares for most. The true danger of emotional inertia is when a pastor falls prey to spending emotional energy on someone of the opposite sex while neglecting his spouse. Affairs are likely to happen under such circumstances.

Daily time alone with God is essential to filling our emotional tank for our day's encounter with our church family and the evening return to our spouse. Only God can fully equip us for both.

### Safeguards for Emotional Inertia — Connections and Romance

A pastor must stay connected emotionally with

*A pastor's desire to do the Lord's work while on 24-hour call can stretch his physical resources to the point of collapse.*

## Breaking Point

Complete this assessment tool to measure how close to the edge you are and how you can address the dangers. Use the following point system to rate your answers: always (4 points), most of the time (3 points), sometimes (2 points), never (1 point).

1. I am physically fatigued.
2. I am a workaholic.
3. Being overweight and/or out of shape is a problem for me.
4. I struggle with having mental keenness because I am mentally exhausted.
5. Sleep deprivation is my constant companion.
6. I am willing to work myself to physical and mental exhaustion as long as the church provides the necessary status, appreciation, and financial recompense I need.
7. I feel emotionally drained at the end of my workday.
8. I am not meeting my spouse's emotional needs.
9. I am spiritually lethargic.
10. The spiritual blahs characterize my experience in worship.
11. Discouragement characterizes my state of being in ministry.

### SCORING

**1. Healthy and happy ministry (12 to 24 points).** You apparently know your limits and have safeguards in place.

**2. Faint and falling ministry (25 to 36 points).** You are struggling to know some of your limits and need to work on their safeguards.

**3. Sick and sinking ministry (37 to 48 points).** You need help. You are at the breaking point and need counseling immediately.

DANNY RENARD VON KANEL, Franklinton, Louisiana



*Problems in ministry can become so overwhelming that we must revisit our call.*

his spouse. When “80 percent of *pastors* believe pastoral ministry affects their families negatively,”<sup>6</sup> “81 percent concede their problems in their marriage are because of insufficient time together,”<sup>7</sup> and “46 percent admit sexual problems,”<sup>8</sup> it is paramount that ministers protect their marriages by nurturing their own emotional health.

Practice saying, “I love you.” Learn to listen. Do not separate from your spouse for long periods. Ask your spouse to express her feelings. Engage in intimate conversations with your spouse. Avoid personal and flirtatious language with those of the opposite sex in your congregation.

Renew the romance in your marriage. The emotional well will overflow when you intentionally become loving with your spouse. Love is the greatest of all emotions and when intimately expressed it connects the bond between partners.

Allow God to control your emotions. Fall more in love with Him and watch how your love for your spouse grows.

#### **Danger 4 — Spiritual Lethargy**

Ministry by its nature is about giving ourselves to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of others. Pastors constantly empty themselves because they want God’s best for His people. The danger comes when the pastor runs dry and has nothing left to give. Spiritual lethargy, spiritual weariness sets in.

One pastor put it this way, “I came to church, and as one of your pastors it is not easy to admit this, but I thought, *Why try to be something I am not?*”

“Pastor Steve was preaching that morning, so I was able to sit back, sing the songs, pray the prayers, give my offering, and follow along with the sermon. On the outside everything may have looked okay, but the songs seemed empty to me, my prayers seemed to stop at the roof, my offering was more routine than joyful, and the Bible seemed especially complicated and lifeless. I could not point to one great sin that consumed me, or some horrible situation or circumstance that had me feeling this way. I had the spiritual blahs. I knew if I did not do something about it, it would only grow. Yet, I lacked the motivation or the clarity to do what I needed to do.”<sup>9</sup>

Spiritual lethargy is further enhanced when a pastor sees little fruit from years of ministry. According to Blackman and Hart, “Twelve


percent of ministers report they were depressed often or always in their ministry.”<sup>10</sup> Discouragement and cynicism can take root and lead to a downward spiral.

#### **Safeguards for Spiritual Lethargy — Revisiting and Retreats**

At times all a minister has is his call. Problems in ministry can become so overwhelming that we must revisit our call. When our sense of God’s call underlies all we do, we can reignite our passion and turn our doldrums into enthusiasm. With many years behind me, revisiting my call has kept me in the ministry.

If after revisiting your call and difficulties continue at your church, consider going on a retreat. Allow God opportunity to refresh your spirit. Choose a retreat setting that will probe your inward man and encourage your ministry.

Retreat centers provide a self-directed and Christ-centered retreat experience where God can prompt Christian pastors to feel His presence, discern His will, and follow His leading. As a result, pastors can leave strengthened and empowered by God to transform their ministries and build His kingdom.

Pastors have a breaking point. When pastors know their limits and begin to address the dangers of physical fatigue, mental exhaustion, emotional inertia, and spiritual lethargy, they can balance their lives and ministries. The result is a lifelong capacity for fruitful service. 

#### **NOTES**

1. Dan Chun, “Pastors Often Succumb to Job Burnout Due to Stress, Low Pay,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2006/Nov/18/il/FP611180330.html> (accessed November 27, 2007).
2. “Workaholic,” *Sermon Illustrations*, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/w/workaholic.htm> (accessed November 27, 2007).
3. Vhi Healthcare editorial team, “The Benefits of Sleep,” *Vhi Health Care*, <http://www.vhi.ie/hfiles/hf-236.jsp> (accessed November 27, 2007).
4. “Fatigue,” *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatigue\\_%28medical%29#Mental\\_fatigue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatigue_%28medical%29#Mental_fatigue) (accessed November 27, 2007).
5. “Stress,” *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stress\\_\(medicine\)#Stress\\_and\\_burnout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stress_(medicine)#Stress_and_burnout) (accessed November 27, 2007).
6. “Statistics,” *smallChurch.com*, <http://www.smallchurch.com/06%20Statistics.htm> (accessed November 27, 2007).
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Glen Barnes, “How To Overcome the Spiritual Blahs,” *First Baptist Church LODI*, <http://www.fbcloidi.org/Sermons/How%20to%20Overcome%20The%20Spiritual%20Blahs%20-%20Feb%202012,2006%20-%20Romans%206.1-11.htm> (accessed November 27, 2007).
10. “Statistics,” *smallChurch.com*.







## The Seventy

GARY DENBOW, Springfield, Missouri

TEXT: LUKE 10:1–20

### INTRODUCTION

God has a heart — a seat of emotions. Scripture gives us insight into the desires of God. Jesus' emotional plea in Luke 10:2 shows that God's deepest desire is for all the world to hear the gospel and have opportunity to accept Christ. The Seventy were chosen for that purpose and sent by Christ. We are also chosen and sent by Christ to tell a lost world of His loving grace.

### MESSAGE

1. **The reason for the campaign** (Luke 10:1,2).
  - a. Jesus planed to visit several cities before His crucifixion. He organized the Seventy to go before Him to prepare the way.
  - b. He chose these men to do what 70 members of the Jewish Sanhedrin did not do. "He came to that which was His own" (John 1:11).
  - c. Many people wanted and needed to hear the gospel. Laborers were essential.
2. **The warning about perils** (Luke 10:3).
  - a. Their character.
  - b. Their enemies.
3. **The practical instructions** (Luke 10:4–15).
  - a. Be diligent in doing the work (Luke 10:4).
  - b. Depend on those to whom you minister for support (Luke 10:7,8).
  - c. Exhibit proper conduct in every place (Luke 10:8).
  - d. Preach healing and the coming Kingdom (Luke 10:9).
  - e. Deal with opponents without fear (Luke 10:10,11).
    - (1) The examples of Korazin and Bethsaida (Luke 10:13).
    - (2) The example of Capernaum (Luke 10:15).
4. **The power and authority of the disciples** (Luke 10:16).
  - a. Some will respond to the gospel.
  - b. Others will reject the gospel.
  - c. Still others will reject those who bring the gospel.
5. **The proper report they gave** (Luke 10:17–20).
  - a. Joyful report.
  - b. Report of supernatural power.
  - c. The importance of a relationship with Christ.

### APPLICATION

1. **A reason for the Great Commission.**
  - a. Jesus is coming. He has commissioned us to prepare the way for His coming.

- b. Laborers are needed to preach the gospel before His coming.

### 2. A warning about perils.

- a. Perilous times.
- b. Perilous people.

### 3. A list of instructions to follow.

- a. Christians are to be examples of the attributes of Christ.
- b. Christians are to prioritize the continual spread of the gospel.

### 4. A source of power and authority.

### 5. A proper focus in reporting.

Our priority is not the number of buildings built or programs started, but the number of converts who have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

## Why I Am Proud of the Gospel

JESSE MOON, Waxahachie, Texas

TEXT: ROMANS 1:16–18

### INTRODUCTION

"I am not ashamed of the gospel." What a statement for Paul to make. There were many reasons why Paul could have been ashamed of the gospel — philosophical, religious, political, and sociological.

By understanding why Paul was not ashamed, we can fully appropriate the benefits of the good news in our own lives and be motivated to share the gospel with others.

### MESSAGE

1. **We need to be proud of the gospel because of its substance** (Romans 1:16). The gospel is:
  - a. *good news* (the gospel). In contrast to the *bad news* of the world.
  - b. Christ-centered (of Christ).
2. **We need to be proud of the gospel because of its dynamic** (Romans 1:16). "It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone."
  - a. It is "the power of God." All other religions have dogmas and codes of ethics, but they do not provide the dynamic for achieving these.
  - b. It is "for the salvation of everyone." It saves the whole person.
3. **We need to be proud of the gospel because of its scope** (Romans 1:16). It is exclusive:
  - a. "For everyone who believes."
  - b. "For the Jew, then for the Gentile."
4. **We need to be proud of the gospel because of its mode** (Romans 1:17).
  - a. It is revelational. "A righteousness from God is revealed."
  - b. It is progressive. "By faith from first to last."
  - c. It is appropriated by faith. "The righteous will live by faith."
5. **We need to be proud of the gospel because of its results.**
  - a. Revelation of the righteousness of God to the believer. "A righteousness from God is revealed" (Romans 1:17).
  - b. Actualization of the righteousness of God in the believer. "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17).
  - c. Condemnation of unbelievers who suppress the truth (Romans 1:18–20).
  - d. Mental depravity of unbelievers who twist the truth (Romans 1:21–23).

- e. Moral abandonment of unbelievers who exchange the truth for a lie (Romans 1:24–32).

## CONCLUSION

Are you proud of the gospel or embarrassed by the gospel? If you are proud of the gospel for its substance, dynamic, scope, mode, and results, you will want to praise God for this good news.

If you have been ashamed to accept the gospel, I implore you to open your heart to receive it today. Gain the positive benefits and avoid the negative results that this first chapter of Romans denotes.

## Five Objections to Jesus

BLANE CONKLIN, House Springs, Missouri

TEXT: JOHN 4:1–26

## INTRODUCTION

In between two encounters with powerful influential people, we find an encounter Jesus had with someone who was not powerful or influential. The woman at the well had five objections to Jesus. At times, we also have these objections.

## MESSAGE

1. **The objection of prejudice** (John 4:7–10).
  - a. She assumed (prejudged) that Jesus was prejudiced against her because she was a Samaritan woman, but He was not.
  - b. Jesus' response: My water is for everyone.
2. **The objection of tradition** (John 4:11–14).
  - a. She said this well was good enough for Jacob, why was it not good enough for Jesus?
  - b. Jesus response: My water is better; My way is better.
3. **The half-truth objection** (John 4:16–18).
  - a. What she said was true, but not the entire truth. She was hiding her private life.
  - b. Jesus' response: I know all about you.
4. **The objection of controversy** (John 4:19–24).
  - a. The conversation was not going her way, so she tried to introduce a controversy to sidetrack Jesus.
  - b. Jesus' response: Showing her argument as a false dilemma and revealing God's nature to her.
5. **The objection of skepticism** (John 4:25,26).
  - a. She claimed that the truth could not be known, so she would continue in her own way until the Messiah came.
  - b. Jesus response: I Am. The Truth is here. You cannot hide anymore.

## CONCLUSION

Christ did not give up on her. Instead, He used her objections as tools to reach her. His responses are relevant to our society today. He brought an absolute to her wandering life. No longer could she claim ignorance. Christ arrested her with His piercing words. The Messiah had come. She would ignore Him at her own risk. Christ's work brought a great revival to her town (John 4:39–42).

## Send Me

CROFT M. PENTZ, Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

TEXT: ISAIAH 6:1–8

## INTRODUCTION

Isaiah had a vision of the Lord (Isaiah 6:1–8). When God asked, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Isaiah answered, "Here I am. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8). As God called Isaiah, He calls Christians to His work. He wants Christians to be willing to say, "Send me."

## MESSAGE

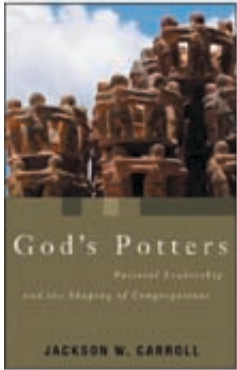
1. **Send me to the lost.**
  - a. Who are the lost? All who have not accepted Christ are lost in sin. "But unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:3).
  - b. Jesus said, "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3).
  - c. Jesus said He was the only way to heaven. "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).
  - d. When Jesus saw the lost, "he had compassion on them" (Matthew 9:36).
  - e. He has called us to "go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15).
  - f. We cannot ignore the command given in John 15:16.
  - g. It has been estimated that only 5 percent of Christians will win someone to Christ. Send me to the lost.
2. **Send me to the loveless.**
  - a. The Psalmist said, "No one is concerned for me" (Psalm 142:4).
  - b. Many people have Christian parents and families who care for them and love them. But others have no one to care for them.
  - c. God is "patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but every one to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).
    - (1) "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16).
    - (2) Jesus left heaven to come to a sinful world.
    - (3) "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).
  - d. Love wins people to Christ. Some people are hard to love, but God will help us love them. Send me to the loveless.
3. **Send me to the lonely.**
  - a. Many people are lonely. It is possible to live in a large city or have many coworkers and be lonely.
  - b. Many lonely people do not realize that knowing Christ can alleviate loneliness.
  - c. When we accept Christ, we become a child of God (John 1:12). God is our Father and Christians are our brothers and sisters in the Lord.
  - d. Jesus has promised to remain with us "to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).
  - e. Do you care about the lost? Send me to the lonely.

## CONCLUSION

Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). He does not call every person to be a pastor or missionary. He does call everyone to win people to Christ. A person does not need to be educated to witness for the Lord. Will you say to God, "Here I am. Send me!"



## Book Reviews



*God's Potters:  
Pastoral Leadership and  
the Shaping of Congregations*

“  
Who are  
[God's potters]?  
How are they  
faring? What does  
excellence in the  
craft of ministry  
look like? And how  
can it be nurtured  
and supported?  
”

## God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations

JACKSON W. CARROLL (*Eerdmans, 296 pp., paperback*)

**G**od's Potters gives a view of the church in America from “30,000 feet away” as well as from the emotional, physical, and spiritual energy of the 21st-century senior pastor.

The data for this book was collected, studied, and evaluated by church leaders from more than 20 denominations. Pastors were interviewed from more than 81 denominations and faith traditions.



Denominational leaders were also included in the think tank called *Pulpit and Pew*. Although this is by no means the largest survey of senior or solo pastoral leaders ever undertaken, it is arguably the most representative.

As a social scientist and an ordained minister, Carroll uses the expertise of numerous clergy leaders. His volume of research gives the reader an honest look at the health of today's pastor.

In his eight chapters he answers the questions of *who* is doing ministry today and *how* it has changed over the generations. Carroll makes a significant point when describing how pastors are producers of culture. His in-depth surveys ask: “What are the core tasks of this office?” “How do pastors divide their time between tasks?” “What is their core work?” Most significant is his research concerning how the 21st-century pastor is doing with his physical health, marital health, emotional stability, and sense of calling.

Why are denominations (including the Assemblies of God) having difficulty attracting young people into full-time ministry? Why are so many ministers dropping out of full-time pastoral work? What are the major reasons people quit this calling of being a senior pastor? Carroll, with the assistance of numerous denominational leaders and scholars, gives valuable insights into all these questions.

— Reviewed by Wayde Goodall, D.Min., missionary serving under the office of the executive director of Assemblies of God World Missions.

## Overcoming Barriers to Growth

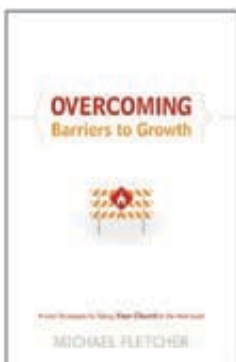
MICHAEL FLETCHER (*Bethany House, 139 pp., hardcover*)

**Michael Fletcher is a senior pastor of a church.** His latest book, *Overcoming Barriers to Growth*, is more than theory. Pastor Fletcher writes about the journey he has taken with a church that has grown from 350 to 4,000 active members under his leadership. This exciting 20-year experience of overcoming leadership barriers is clearly described in 139 pages.

Fletcher writes from the perspective of a pastor who has *done it*. He shares basic leadership principles that, when employed, will enable

today's vision-minded pastors to lead the churches they serve beyond barriers that would stifle their church's growth. Many churches, according to Fletcher, will plateau at either the 100/200 barrier or the 700/800 barrier. The reader will clearly understand the principles of internal change so essential in growing the church beyond these barriers.

Nevertheless, the author states that he is not interested in “simply helping churches get larger.” It is Fletcher's passion to help churches “become healthy, from the inside out, so they can grow.” He shares that certain internal structures in the local church that, if not properly aligned, will restrict its function and growth.



*Overcoming Barriers  
to Growth*

Fletcher states that the truths he shares will “work in any church because they deal with people and how people work.” It is true that people tend to respond the same to a reasonable vision and understandable growth strategy regardless of their place of residence or the size of the church they attend.

The pastor who is passionately committed to the continued growth of the church he serves will uncover timeless truths that he will treasure as he reads *Overcoming Barriers to Growth*. The insights in this book will greatly assist pastors to grow their churches — large or small — beyond the sightless barriers of numbing growth restriction.

— Reviewed by J. Don George, senior pastor,  
Calvary Church, Irving, Texas.

## Humble Leadership: Being Radically Open to God's Guidance and Grace

N. GRAHAM STANDISH (*Alban Institute, 186 pp., paperback*)

**Many ministers have read some of the finest books on leadership.** Most of these resources have a secular orientation with excellent principles that can be adapted to the ministry.

Standish confronts the reader with the need to keep God centered as leadership skills are developed and practiced. Standish pushes for self-examination and an exploration of ministry motives. The reader is asked: “Whose will is this, mine or God’s?”

Standish encourages church leadership to rediscover the spiritual discipline of leading through humility. The author defines humility as “a way of life in which we become consumed with seeking God’s direction rather than living purely according to our instincts, conditioning, and insights.”

The reader is reminded that following Jesus’ model of humble leadership results in a radical openness to God. God uses such humility to lead others into the same radical openness to Him.

A discussion of leadership busyness and the lack of connecting to God in prayer will produce some convicting moments. This discussion will result in reflection, confession, and joyful swift obedience to realignment of leadership priorities.

The book has a practical nature, and several illustrations and resources are given to enhance the minister’s walk in a humble leadership style.

A treatment of “Sacrifice Syndrome” is helpful. The topic of discussion is recognizing and

reversing leadership burnout — a lifesaver for the stressed minister.

The few political, social, and theological biases expressed are not sufficient to discount the work as a valuable contribution to life and ministry.

— Reviewed by Robert L. Nazareus, former  
Nebraska District superintendent, Grand Island, Nebraska.

## Great Leader, Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership

GARY BREDFELDT (*Moody, 208 pp., paperback*)

**The task of teaching God’s Word** with clarity, in its original context, and in a relevant way to those whose hearts are open to hear, is at the core of biblical leadership.

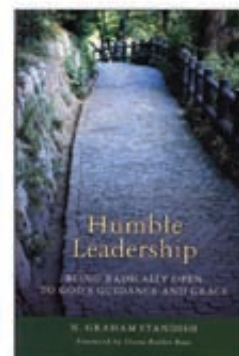
Visionary planning is important, missions statements are useful, and purpose-driven strategies can be invaluable in growing the church numerically. In the process, though, if the central task of teaching is lost, the church will have paid a steep price for its material successes. For, in the end, the goal is not numerical growth, but mature followers of Jesus Christ. Bredfeldt offers points like these throughout the book’s nine chapters.

Every chapter presents an interesting and practical mix of storytelling and truth for application. One example is 1968 Olympic Games Gold Medalist Dick Fosbury. Fosbury won the high jump using a new, unorthodox technique now known as the *Fosbury Flop*. Because Fosbury could not master the traditional technique, he began turning his back on the bar, throwing his body over with his back arched, and landing on his shoulders rather than on his feet. Fosbury was willing to confront and change his methodology to achieve his goal. The result changed the face of competitive high jumping.

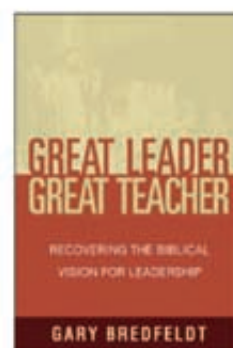
When elders of the church, teachers by calling, embrace the culture and its leadership trends, they are set adrift in the cultural currents and lose their ability to speak the Word of God with clarity and authority. The church becomes dynamic, cutting edge, and life changing in its impact only when church leaders teach the Word of God in a relevant manner, while restoring a firm commitment to the biblical text and biblical authority.

A well-done book.

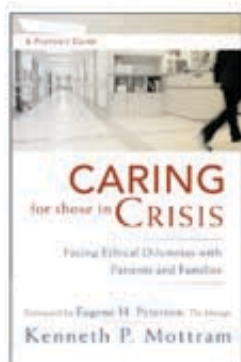
— Reviewed by T. Ray Rachels, Southern California  
District superintendent, Irvine, California.



*Humble Leadership:  
Being Radically Open to God's  
Guidance and Grace*



*Great Leader, Great Teacher:  
Recovering the Biblical Vision  
for Leadership*



*Caring for Those in Crisis:  
Facing Ethical Dilemmas  
With Patients and Families*



*Finding Ever After*



*Is Religion Dangerous?*

## **Caring for Those in Crisis: Facing Ethical Dilemmas With Patients and Families**

**KENNETH P. MOTTRAM** (Brazos Press, 160 pp., paperback)

**Pastors often face challenges assisting families** as they try to understand and make medical decisions. Mottram's book is a valuable resource for the struggling pastor.

As a healthcare chaplain, the author discovered that many Christians are unprepared to deal with the tragedies of life — terminal disease, debilitating illness, or making life-and-death decisions. Medical crises and ethical dilemmas are more complicated today than ever, and spirituality is multidimensional and complex. Advanced medical technology and spiritual concerns raise difficult questions that need to be answered.

Mottram addresses the situations that arise when a patient's rights need spiritual advocacy, or when issues need to be taken to the ethics committee of the healthcare center.

Frequently encountered ethical problems are carefully examined, such as patient treatment alternatives, truth telling, informed consent, organ donation, patients' rights, end-of-life choices, and withdrawal or withholding of life-support measures. These decisions become even more difficult when committed Christians in a family or church have opposite viewpoints within a truly biblical theology.

Mottram shares his real feelings, thoughts, and actions when called to be with someone in crisis. He gives a sense of humility and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

This book offers guidance a pastor needs when helping people in crisis.

— Reviewed by John C. Katter, D.Min.,  
former professor of Practical Theology and Counseling,  
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

## **Finding Ever After**

**ROBERT S. PAUL, DONNA K. WALLACE** (Bethany, 256 pp., hardcover)

*Finding Ever After* is a must read for Christian couples who feel their relationships have become stale, and for those who want to infuse adventure and romance back into their marriages. This book is fresh, thought provoking, and inspiring.

Paul, author of *DNA of Relationships for Couples*, and coauthor of *DNA of Relationships*, wrote this book in response to a theme he continually heard from countless couples attending

intensive therapy sessions at the National Institute of Marriage. Paul says, "I listen daily as couples privately confess to finding themselves restless, bored, even trapped in a reality worlds apart from their dream marriage. Whether outwardly cynical or quietly resolved, disillusioned partners ask, 'What's the point?' I'm saddened that so many feel bound to a commitment they can't define: 'I made a promise ... and now I will live in regret the rest of my life. I'll stay, but I'll never be happy.'" *Finding Ever After* offers hope, gives practical suggestions, and speaks to the heart.

A valuable resource for small groups or Sunday School classes, this book offers more than simple marriage tools and techniques, and includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

Paul's style is entertaining and interesting. His stories and personal illustrations drive home powerful concepts that will help couples grow closer to one another, as well as to the Lord.

— Reviewed by Tricia Cunningham, a marriage and family counselor with the Smalley Relationship Center, Branson, Missouri. Tricia Cunningham resides in Springfield, Missouri.

## **Is Religion Dangerous?**

**KEITH WARD** (Eerdmans, 208 pp., paperback)

### **Is religion dangerous?**

In recent books, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens argue that it is. Keith Ward disagrees. His new book rebuts four standard atheist arguments:

First, *religion causes violence* — the Crusades and Islamic terrorism. But as Ward points out, "hatred of life, of others, and of oneself" is the cause of violence. Anything human can be corrupted by such hatred, including religion and even atheism. After all, how many millions did communist regimes kill in the 20th century?

Second, *faith is irrational*. Specifically, it is unscientific. Ward responds, "Many of the most important beliefs we have in life are not scientifically testable, but we still live our lives by them." Intelligent people believe in God, offer reasons for their beliefs, and practice their faith humanely. They are not irrational.

Third, *religion promotes immorality*. There are many violent stories in the Old Testament that are hard for Christians to explain. But atheists fail to see that such hard cases make bad law. Jesus taught that love of God, neighbor, and self is our basic moral duty (Matthew 22:37–40). What is immoral about that?

Fourth, *religion is unhealthy*. Freud famously



called religious belief a neurosis. But citing numerous studies, Ward reaches the opposite conclusion: "The influence of religion on personal life ... is overall and, in general, good."

I disagree with Ward here and there. He occasionally defends Islam where I would not. He makes a few political remarks that I disagree with. But overall, I am impressed by his concise and intelligent rebuttal of atheist arguments.

— Reviewed by George P. Wood, pastor,  
Living Faith Center, Santa Barbara, California.

## Race and the Assemblies of God Church: The Journey From Azusa Street to the "Miracle of Memphis."

JOE NEWMAN (*Cambria Press, 225 pp., hardcover*)

Newman, Ph.D., M.Ed., is the secondary school principal of First Assembly Christian School in Memphis, Tennessee, and an ordained Assemblies of God minister.

This volume is well researched and carefully documented. Don Meyer, president of Valley Forge Christian College, has provided a sobering assessment of this work in his foreword. Having traced the history of race relationships in my own earlier research, I must agree with Meyer's judgment: "The Assemblies of God has not had a good track record on race. Whether one looks at this issue ecclesiastically, theologically, sociologically, or biologically, we have been 'weighed in the balances and found wanting.'"

Newman points out that the Assemblies of God was little different from other evangelical denominations in the matter of race relations. Most denominations, however, took steps toward improving race relations before the Assemblies of God did. Until the 1960s, it was almost impossible for an African-American to be ordained in the Assemblies of God. The standard response when receiving inquiries from African-Americans who wanted to secure Assemblies of God endorsement was to check with the largely African-American Pentecostal group, the Church of God in Christ. The fact the COGIC held a different view of sanctification than did the AG was brushed aside as inconsequential. It was an excuse, not an answer.

The truth is our theology did not engage this issue well. Decisions were made for many years on the basis of popular opinions and local social mores, not on what the Bible taught.

From the era of General Superintendent Thomas F. Zimmerman, serious attempts were made in the Assemblies of God leadership to alter the earlier course on race relationships. It

is gratifying to know that at the 2007 General Council, Zollie Smith was elected director of U.S. Missions — the first African-American to be given such a high office in the Fellowship.

Newman has set the record straight, a sobering and humbling story that must be told. Although the book is written in popular language, it is, nevertheless, a serious piece of scholarship. The strength of an organization lies in its ability to review its history in transparent honesty. Newman calls us to this endeavor.

— Reviewed by William W. Menzies, Ph.D., longtime  
Assemblies of God educator and missions consultant,  
Springfield, Missouri.

## Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth With Clarity and Relevance

DONALD R. SUNUKJIAN (*Kregel, 375 pp., hardcover*)

"[Biblical] preaching is the hardest and the best thing we will ever do," writes Sunukjian in the introduction to his latest book on preaching, one of several projected volumes in Kregel's new *Invitations to Theological Studies Series*.

The author divides the volume into two parts: "Look at What God Is Saying ..." and "Look at What God Is Saying ... to Us." The first part covers how to develop sermon content, while the second part covers how to make application.

I especially appreciate his philosophy of preaching. He maintains that "the purpose of the sermon is not to impart knowledge but to influence behavior — not to inform but to transform. The goal is not to make listeners more educated but more Christlike." I also appreciate his emphasis on staying true to the text and not twisting it to mean something it does not because of an over-concern for novelty, or worse, for alliteration.

Other strengths of the book include the avoidance of technical jargon and its abundance of examples of sermon outlines. A subject index, however, would have enhanced the value of the work for homiletical research.

Sunukjian serves his readers as a safe guide through the process of how to prepare biblical and practical sermons. I highly recommend this book as a primer for beginning preachers and as a refresher for veterans.

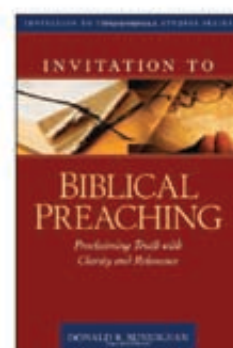
— Reviewed by Steve D. Eutsler, D.Min.,  
adjunct faculty, Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri.

### NOTE:

*Enrichment* reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not constitute a recommendation of the books.



*Race and the Assemblies of God Church: The Journey From Azusa Street to the "Miracle of Memphis."*



*Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth With Clarity and Relevance*

# Welcome to Holsom Adventures in Faith Comic Series

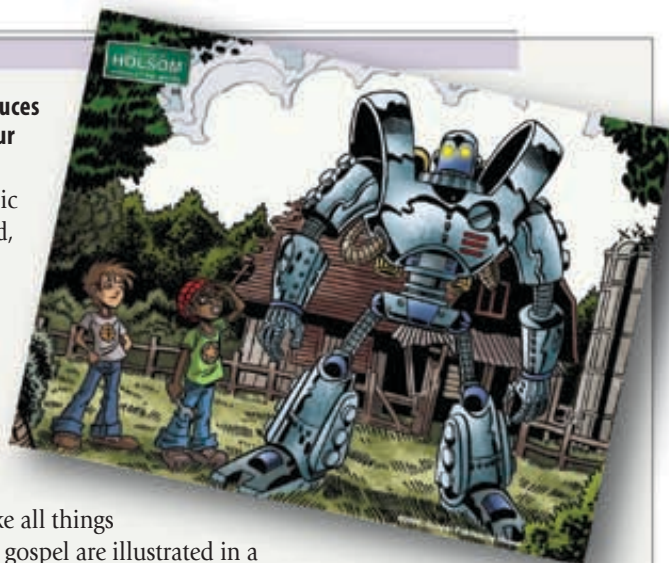
**G**ospel Publishing House introduces a radical tool for discipling your children. The *Welcome to Holsom Adventures in Faith* comic series takes a creative, story-based, highly interactive approach to helping children discover the basics of Christian life.

Featuring characters from the popular *Welcome to Holsom* comic series (available from GPH), the discipleship comic

starts with the salvation of Hugh and walks children step-by-step through the life-changing experience of having God make all things new. Concepts like temptation, prayer, baptism, and sharing the gospel are illustrated in a compelling story that communicates the depth of Christ's love for us.

This series offers interactive pages. Each section includes activities and discussion questions that challenge children to think about their faith and to become strong followers of Christ. As children complete the activities, they will discover the importance of living their faith and letting the Holy Spirit change them from the inside out.

For more information, visit <http://www.welcometoholsom.com>. To order, call 1-800-641-4310.



## New AGFSA Hillcrest/Highlands DVD Available

**R**escuing From Harm's Way, the new Assemblies of God Family Services Agency DVD

presenting the ministries of Hillcrest Children's Home and Highlands Maternity Home, is now available at no cost to AG churches and ministers. This DVD gives insight into the lives of abused children and expectant teens. It explains how Hillcrest and Highlands, compassion ministries of AGFSA, reach hurting individuals. Each DVD contains both long (7 minute) and short (5 minute) versions. Your church or group will get an inside look into the ministries of Hillcrest and Highlands. Contact AGFSA at 501-262-1660 or visit <http://www.agfamilyservices.org>.



## Charlotte08: LED BY FIRE Taking the Vision to the Next Level

On Aug. 4-8, Charlotte, N.C. and its convention center will host Charlotte08 — Led by Fire which includes the Everywhere: National Fine Arts Festival, Mega Sports Camp AIM Outreach, 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, Kappa Tau College Fine Arts and National Youth Convention.

National Youth Director Jay Mooney sees Charlotte08 as a strategic step toward equipping students and leaders to realize the Dreaming 2015 vision to reach 1 million youth in the Assemblies of God by 2015. "This event will synergize resources, like the FIRE BIBLE Student Edition, with LED BY FIRE workshops and opportunities for hands-on evangelism — a tangible model of the WIN-BUILD-SEND mission for the local church," Mooney said.

As well as the addition of categories, Charlotte08 strategically launches the new DEPLOY element into the Fine Arts mission — aligning with the 2015 vision. "The Fine Arts Festival has been intricate in helping students to discover and develop their gifts. Now is the time to DEPLOY these gifts in our churches campuses and communities," Student Discipleship Director Rod Whitlock said.

This year, Youth Alive will provide an opportunity for local church youth groups to reach out in their community by offering the first-ever National 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament.

For more information about Charlotte08 including special discounts to area attractions, visit [charlotte08.ag.org](http://charlotte08.ag.org) or follow the Charlotte08 links at [youth.ag.org](http://youth.ag.org).



## AG College Guide Now Available

The ninth edition of the *Assemblies of God College Guide*, a free resource highlighting the 19 endorsed Assemblies of God colleges, is now available.

This informative, full-color catalog includes current information about each school: tuition costs, majors and minors offered, admission requirements, housing, financial aid resources, ministry opportunities, and extra-curricular activities. A comprehensive chart lists the academic programs and degrees offered at each school. Business-reply postcards stitched into the catalog can be returned directly to the schools to request additional information. Web sites and other contact information are also included for each school.

Free copies of this guide are available for your church library and college-bound students when you contact the Christian Higher Education Department at 417-862-2781, ext. 3315, or visit <http://www.colleges.ag.org>.

## You're Under Arrest — Care To Read an *Evangel*?

Eleven people who have spent most of the year in the Beaver County Jail after being charged with operating a heroin ring in Western Pennsylvania are being disciplined with Assemblies of God literature.

Ten Mexican men and one Mexican woman at the institution began reading Spanish Bibles and Spanish editions of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* soon after their arrival.

Key Bearers donations make possible shipments of *Evangel*s in English and in Spanish to hundreds of jails and prisons across the country.

"It helps when you have the only Spanish literature available in the facility," says AG Chaplain Dennis Ugoletti.

Recently, because of a grant from Light for the Lost and the AG Pennsylvania-Delaware District, plus help from Chaplain Bob Durham of Global University, a Center for Evangelism and Discipleship started at the jail. Twenty-two LFTL-sponsored courses are offered to inmates through the center. Currently, there are 49 students, including 11 Mexican nationals arrested in the heroin bust.

The 11 students are taking Spanish CED courses. Seven of them made salvation decisions for Christ because of the Great Questions of Life introductory course, Ugoletti says.

The Spanish *Evangel*s offer a supplemental resource for spiritual encouragement.

"It's been clear for a long time that there is no better use for *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* than with our Key Bearers program," says *Evangel* Editor Ken Horn. "This story just serves to illustrate that. It's amazing to realize that someone can be arrested and one of the first things that happens to them is that they are confronted with the gospel in the *Evangel*. And Key Bearers helps that to happen."

To join the Key Bearers ministry, visit the *Evangel*'s secured Web site at <http://www.tpe.ag.org> and click on the KB logo, or call Light for the Lost at 1-800-988-0292. Donations via bank debit/credit card can be made by calling 1-877-840-8400 and specifying project 028-001-0085928.

## AG Web Services Creates Free Web Sites

With nearly 75 percent of Americans on the Internet, AG Web Services can be an invaluable resource to local churches. AG Web services creates free Web sites for Assemblies of God churches, missionaries, evangelists, district offices, and schools. Since June 2006, AG Web Services has created approximately 2,400 Web sites.

With an AG Web Services site, clients can post a calendar of events, photo gallery, prayer requests, an audio player for uploading sermons and music, and much more. Clients can also post AG news articles and daily devotionals that are updated automatically.

Keeping a Web site current is vital to its success. AG Web Services makes it easy. Clients use Web-based software to edit their site from any computer — at the office, at home, or on the road. The software allows for multiple administrative users, so clients can distribute the workload.

AG Web Services can save clients hundreds of dollars in Web site set-up fees, as well as ongoing monthly charges for hosting and maintaining a Web site. The client service team offers free training and support.

For those who are hesitant to take on the role of Webmaster, for a small fee AG Web Services offers an optional Web Site Starter Package. Clients submit site content, and AG Web Services staff designs the site, eliminating set-up work for the client. AG Web Services then trains the client staff to maintain and update their information.

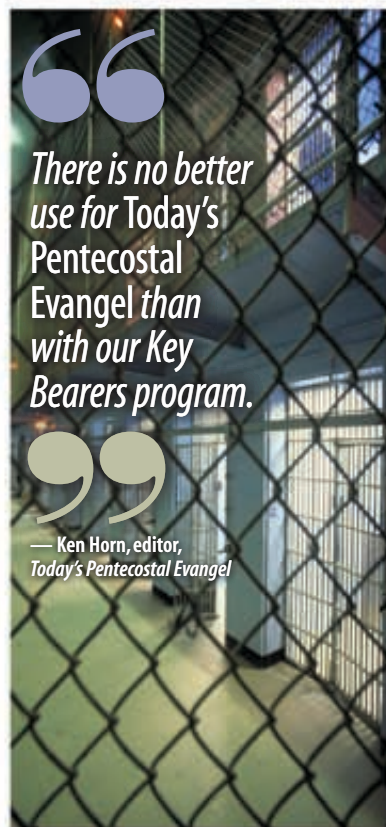
To learn more about AG Web Services and preview sample sites, visit <http://www.agwebservices.org/>.



Assemblies of God  
College Guide



AG Web Services can save clients hundreds of dollars in set-up fees as well as ongoing monthly charges.









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**Phillip R. Barrett**  
Forsyth, Missouri

**Peter Bedzyk**  
Springfield, Missouri

**Paul S. Beke**  
Mauston, Wisconsin

**Leon J. Boswell**  
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## Honoring God's Priority

Scripture reminds me that missions must be the key to walking in God's favor



*Do we trust God enough to step out in faith and do whatever it takes to send laborers into the fields?*



**RICK COLE**, senior pastor, Capital Christian Center, Sacramento, California.


**G**od desires that Christians reach the lost with the gospel. He gave His Son for sinners. This truth changes lives.

It is easy to recite the Great Commission. We talk about going from our Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth to proclaim the gospel. But how many pastors understand that mission as the key to the blessing God desires for their lives and congregations? How many of us believe that reaching the lost around the world is what gets God's attention, touches His heart, and releases His favor and blessing?

Too often we marginalize our responsibility to support missions. I have heard pastors express that if they give to missions, it will affect their own storehouse. These pastors suggest that their churches will not have enough for their own budgets because missions offerings take funds people would otherwise give to support their church and its work.

The experience of the church I pastor reveals that the opposite is true. I would be afraid to not prioritize missions because God might remove His favor and blessing from our church, and from my own life and ministry. Scripture reminds me that missions must be the key to walking in God's favor.

Consider this promise: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: 'He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness" (2 Corinthians 9:8-10).



Sowing seed was one of Jesus' most powerful pictures of worldwide evangelism. The Lord reminds us that the world's harvest fields are white and ready for harvest. Do we trust Him enough to step out in faith and do whatever it takes to send laborers into the fields?

God's Word says that when we nurture generosity in our hearts and help meet the needs of the world, God's blessing and favor will be released into our lives. The more churches give sacrificially, the more God's resources will pour into their storehouses.

Recently, we focused on a special project in one of our services. I urged our people to give generously toward this need. I was surprised at how God worked among us. We gave the largest missions offering in the history of our church — \$135,000.

I did not flinch when we wrote the check for that special project. I knew God would meet our needs. True to His promises and eternal character, He blessed us. Our financial records for that month showed no decrease in giving to our general fund.

We have seen it happen repeatedly. Whenever we do what God desires, we experience His favor and blessing. We are committed to missions. Our church believes that supporting missions is the most important ministry we do.

God sees our sacrifices on behalf of a lost world. Proverbs 19:17 shows His response: "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done." There is no greater poverty than living without the gospel. And there is no greater motivation for God to bless us than when we respond to that poverty.

We have experienced God's blessings in every way when we are committed to prioritizing missions. 🌾