

# Enrichment

Enriching and equipping Spirit-filled ministers



**Keep your leadership fresh** 16

When is your Sabbath? **20**

**Kingdom networking** 30

Blockbuster sermons **32**



# FREE HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

2% APY\*

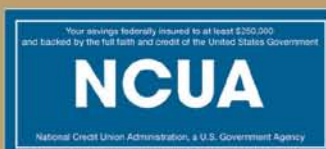
FREE Debit Card

NO Monthly Fees



\*APY means Annual Percentage Yield; accurate as of 7/1/12. Rate is subject to change. Minimum balance to earn interest is \$100.

[www.agcu.org](http://www.agcu.org)  
866.508.2428





# We may be separated by distance, But we are connected in prayer...

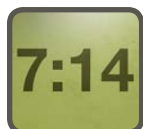
*and now by technology.*



Encounter the power of your AG  
prayer community every day.  
Download the FREE app **7:14 Pray**.

#### Distinct Features:

- Customizable personal prayer list
- Daily devotion
- Daily prayer reminder
- Live prayer feed and more

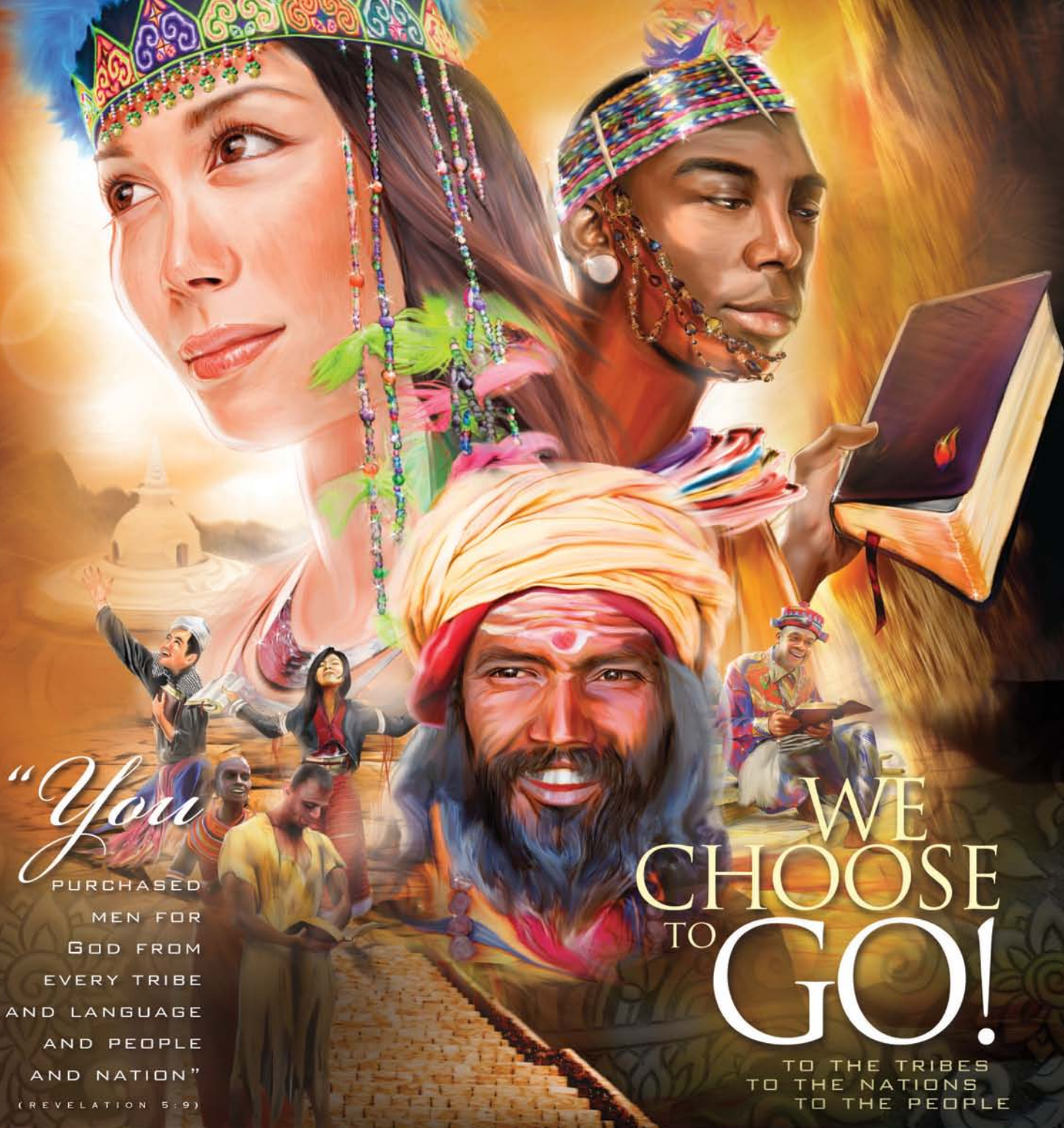


iPad, Android, and Nook coming soon

**714movement.org** coming soon.







*"You*

PURCHASED  
MEN FOR  
GOD FROM  
EVERY TRIBE  
AND LANGUAGE  
AND PEOPLE  
AND NATION"

(REVELATION 5:9)

WE  
CHOOSE  
TO GO!

TO THE TRIBES  
TO THE NATIONS  
TO THE PEOPLE

## ASSEMBLIES OF GOD BIBLE SUNDAY DECEMBER 8, 2013!

**GO!** HELP US MAKE AVAILABLE THE *FIRE BIBLE* IN SIX LANGUAGES FOR  
TRIBES AND PEOPLE GROUPS IN NATIONS ACROSS THE WORLD!

HMONG | KAREN | LINGALA | LISU | NEPALI | TSONGA



ASSEMBLIES OF GOD  
BIBLE  
ALLIANCE



ASSEMBLIES OF GOD BIBLE ALLIANCE | 1445 N. BOONVILLE AVE | SPRINGFIELD, MD 65802-1894  
417.832.0440 | 800.532.0440 | ACCT. #4755633 (40) SC:GK | [WWW.BIBLEALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.BIBLEALLIANCE.ORG)  
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD BIBLE ALLIANCE IS A MINISTRY OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD WORLD MISSIONS.





# Lord, give me THICK SKIN & A TENDER HEART



Christine Hoover speaks with clarity and poignancy about the unique ministry challenges and joys of being a church planting wife. This book will help both your ministry and your heart wholly reflect Jesus.

[gracecoversme.com](http://gracecoversme.com)

[moodypublishers.com](http://moodypublishers.com)

 **MOODY**  
PUBLISHERS

LEAD YOUR PEOPLE TO A **DEEPER WALK** WITH GOD.



also from  
James MacDonald:



Discover deeper, stronger engagement  
with God through spiritual disciplines.



[jamesmacdonald.com](http://jamesmacdonald.com)

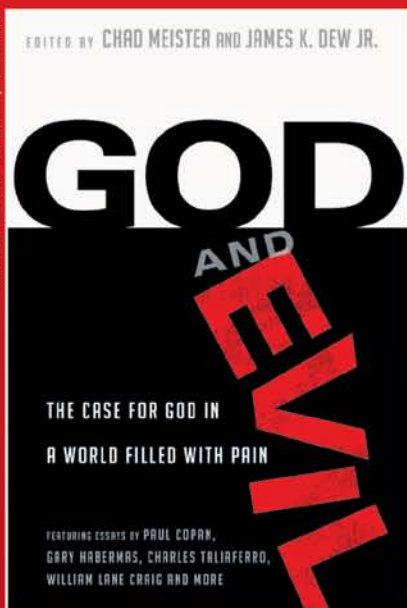
[moodypublishers.com](http://moodypublishers.com)

 **MOODY**  
PUBLISHERS



# A WHO'S WHO of PHILOSOPHY and APOLOGETICS

978-0-8308-3784-7, \$20.00




## GOD AND EVIL

*Edited by Chad Meister and James K. Dew Jr.*

Leading thinkers in Christian philosophy and apologetics take on the problem of evil and suffering. Their essays provide critical engagement with the New Atheists and offer grounds for renewed confidence in the God who is "acquainted with grief."

**FEATURING ESSAYS BY**  
**Paul Copan,**  
**Gary Habermas,**  
**Charles Taliaferro,**  
**William Lane Craig,**  
**Jill Graper Hernandez**  
**and others**

  
**IVP Books**  
Church. Culture. Mission.

800.843.9487 | IVPRESS.COM

## Editor's Journal

**N**o more pencils, no more books ...". As a child, did you cheer the end of school? The "no more books" part was only temporary, of course. Life is about learning. Semesters may end, coursework may be completed, but education never stops.

It's a life-long process. That's why professionals in all fields recognize the value of continuing education. *Enrichment* is our ongoing investment in your continuing education. Think of each issue as a seminar; each article, a workshop. You need travel no further than your desk to deepen your theological knowledge and sharpen your ministry skills. *Enrichment* exposes you to best practices in church leadership and shares the wisdom and experience of seasoned ministers. Best of all, there are no exams or research papers.

*What size is your church?* The question invariably comes up when pastors "talk shop." Nearly 7 out of 10 pastors who read *Enrichment* serve congregations of 100 or less. We believe this issue, "Small Church, Big Impact," will resonate with many of our readers. Be sure to share your thoughts on these articles — or on *Enrichment* in general — with us.

*Press on!* 📖



## Feedback



### Winter 2013 Preaching:

Credibility,  
Clarity, and  
Connection in  
the Ministry  
of God's Word

**I** read the Winter 2013 issue highlighting the essential role of effective proclamation in the life and mission of the Church. I rejoiced at the helpful information and healthy guidance that young preachers would receive.

Interesting to me, however, is that the issue neglected to give the same kind of visibility and emphasis to expository preaching as it did topical preaching. This left me disappointed, given the dearth of effective expository preaching in most Pentecostal churches.

Thank you for your emphasis on preaching!

**LeRoy Bartel, D.Min.**

Dean, College of Bible and Church Ministries  
Southwestern Assemblies of God University  
Waxahachie, Texas

**The article "Let's be Honest"** by Thomas Lindberg is so true. Too often, pastors set themselves up as icons untouched by the dirt of this world — too cool to get roughed up. What our people need to see is, "Yes, I burn. Yes, I struggle. Yes, I cry out. And every time, God answers."

**Cindy Lyon King**  
Jackson, Kentucky

**We look forward to** and enjoy *Enrichment*. We are in the small minority of people without a computer. Your magazine is of great joy and value to us. We especially enjoy articles by George O. Wood and James T. Bradford. Thank you.

**Larry and Pat Armstrong**  
Mondamin, Iowa

■ **Letters to *Enrichment* journal may be edited for length and clarity. E-mail correspondence to [EJeditor@ag.org](mailto:EJeditor@ag.org) or post comments on our Facebook page ([Enrichment-journal](https://www.facebook.com/Enrichment-journal)).**





## 16 LEAD LONG ... LEAD STRONG

### **Fast and Furious ... but Still Fresh**

By **SCOTT HAGAN**

Jesus was both the Great High Priest and the employee of a carpenter-father. Even after His public entry into ministry, Jesus kept the carpenter's persona and robe.

## 18 Q&A FOR MINISTRY WIVES

### **I'm Hurt Over Our Church Split**

By **GABRIELE RIENAS**

At one time or another, those of us in ministry will eventually ask, "Is it worth it?"

## 20 MANAGING THE MAYHEM OF MINISTRY

### **Since You Work on Sunday, When Is Your Sabbath?**

By **CAL LEMON**

Is your ministry anemic and routine? Are you exhausted most of the time? Then try these four regimens of rest.

## 23 MOVING LEADERS FORWARD

### **The Leader's Best Friend**

By **GLENN REYNOLDS**

The double play is a picture of teamwork in action. How do you move your team toward that level of collaboration?

## 26 DEALING WITH DOUBTERS

### **Did New Testament Writers Misquote the Old Testament?**

By **PAUL COPAN**

Did New Testament writers rip Old Testament texts out of their context just to suit some Jesus-is-Messiah campaign?

## 30 WELL CONNECTED

### **Five Habits of a Kingdom Networker**

By **JUSTIN LATHROP**

The more expansive your network, the greater the opportunity God has to multiply the work you are already doing.

## 32 ON PREACHING

### **Blockbuster Sermons**

By **DOUG GREEN**

Why am I willing to sit through a 2-hour B-movie yet struggle to sit through a 30-minute sermon?

## 34 MINISTRY & MEDICAL ETHICS

### **Abortion, Vaccine Production, and Moral Values**

By **CHRISTINA M.H. POWELL**

How should Christians evaluate the use of vaccines developed with cells derived from abortions?

## 38 IN CONTEXT

### **Location of the Day of Pentecost**

By **MARC TURNAGE**

Did the events recounted in Acts 2 take place in the Upper Room?

In  
Depth



Leading  
Your  
Congregation  
to Outsized  
Influence

## 40 Introduction

### **Pastoring a Small Church With Your Head, Heart, and Hands**

By **GEORGE PAUL WOOD**

Impact rather than size is the true marker of a well-led, spiritually healthy church — whether small or large.

## 42 Cultivating Faithfulness

By **GEORGE O. WOOD**

The most important truth his parents taught him was the real measure of success.

## 46 INTERVIEW

### **Challenges and Opportunities Facing Smaller Churches**

**DAVID CAMPBELL, KAREN RYDWANSKY, and DAVID SILVA**

Three small-church pastors share their successes and challenges. (continued on page 6) ►

10 eShorts

17 EJ Online

ENRICHMENT (ISSN 1082-1791) is published quarterly (January, April, July, October), ©2013 by The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65802. Assemblies of God ministers may reproduce nonbyline material from *Enrichment* in church publications, giving credit to the journal. Except for brief quotations, signed articles may not be reprinted without permission of the authors. Subscription rates: USA—1 year \$24; 2 years \$42. Outside USA add \$30 per year for postage. Subscriptions: All subscription correspondence, including change of address, should be sent to *Enrichment*, Customer Services, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802, phone 1-800-641-4310. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, Missouri, and at additional mailing offices. Printed in the USA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *Enrichment*, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802.



**Small Church, BIG IMPACT** (continued from page 5)

**52 The Healthy Church: How to Assess Your Church's Well-Being, Whatever Its Size**

By **L. ALTON GARRISON**

The road to church health, regardless of size, begins with asking the right questions.

**58 A Culture of Yes: How to Lead From Your Strengths, Not Your Weaknesses**

By **MICHAEL CLARENSAU**

Many pastors confront the limitations of their settings so often that a culture of *can't* cripples their thoughts. Must this be the plight of the smaller congregation?

**64 The Start-Up Funnel: How to Use Church-Planting Insights to Expand Your Circle of Influence**

By **STEVEN M. PIKE**

Consider this workable model that can be universally applied by any church desiring to increase its evangelistic effectiveness.

**68 The Externally Focused Small Church: How to Move From Maintenance to Mission**

By **ERIC SWANSON**

You may never be the best church in the community, but you can become the best church for the community. Here is how.

**74 Small Towns ... Big Possibilities: Leading Your Community to Become a Better Place to Live**

By **STEVE DONALDSON**

Here are six keys that will enable your church to take a leadership role in your community.

**80 Welcome! Seven Diverse Churches, One Inviting Atmosphere**

By **EFRAIM ESPINOZA and SCOTT TEMPLE**  
with **SCOTT HARRUP**

How seven small, ethnic churches are applying fundamental ministry principles, often on a scale belying their size, and experiencing steady growth and influence.

**86 The Other 80 Percent: How to Recruit, Resource, and Refine Big-Impact Volunteers**

By **WARREN BIRD**

If smaller-church pastors are to lead their congregations into greater influence, they must think rightly in order to lead well.

**92 No More Casualties**

By **LORI O'DEA**

Here are six effective strategies for conflict management in the small church.

**98 Tent Making in the 21st Century: How to Turn Bivocational Challenges Into Opportunities**

By **TIM LEATHERS**

God is calling a new generation of ministers to take the added responsibility of bivocational ministry and turn it into opportunities to be salt and light to their communities.

**102 Emotionally Healthy Pastoring**

By **PETE SCAZZERO**

Staying emotionally healthy in the ministry starts by confronting how you are doing in three major areas of life and ministry.

**108 INTERVIEW**

**Church Partnership: Models of Creativity and Synergy**

**RICH GUERRA, MIKE QUINN, and ERIC ROUNTREE**

The challenges of small-church ministry sometimes force pastors to realize they need outside help. Smaller churches are partnering with larger churches in creative ways with positive results.

**128 A Final Word  
An Open Letter**

By **KARL VATERS**

Small churches have already infiltrated the communities they serve, making them the largest, most readily deployable force for spiritual transformation, emotional encouragement, and material sustenance.

**116 ClergyCraft**    **119 News&Trends**    **121 With Christ**    **122 Books**    **126 News&Resources**    **127 Ad Index**



**Enrichment** is prepared under the direction of the Executive Presbytery: George O. Wood (General Superintendent) / Warren D. Bullock / Douglas E. Clay / L. Alton Garrison / J. Don George / Saturnino Gonzalez / A. Elizabeth Grant / Larry H. Griswold / R. Bryan Jarrett / Nam Soo Kim / Rod Loy / John E. Maracle / Jesse Miranda, Jr. / Greg Mundis / T. Ray Rachels / H. Robert Rhoden / Clarence W. St. John / Zollie L. Smith, Jr.

**Executive Editor:** George Paul Wood / **Managing Editor:** Rick Knoth / **Associate Editor:** Richard Schoonover / **ART Director:** Steve Lopez / **Office Coordinator:** Connie Cross / **Design:** Dave Danielson, Steve Lopez, Sarah Simmons, Josh Thommasen. **E-mail:** enrichmentjournal@ag.org / **website:** enrichmentjournal.ag.org

**Advertising:** For information on print or online advertising, call Connie Cross at 417-862-2781, ext. 4095; go to enrichmentjournal.ag.org (click on Advertise); or E-mail advertising-enrichment@ag.org. **Advertising Policy:** *Enrichment* does not endorse any advertiser or product. Claims made in an advertisement are the sole responsibility of the advertiser. *Enrichment* reserves the right to reject any advertisement that is inconsistent with the journal's objectives, editorial convictions, or Assemblies of God doctrine and practice.

**Member of** Evangelical Press Association; Pentecostal Press Association. All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

# EXPAND YOUR OPTIONS WITH THE MASTER OF DIVINITY\* DEGREE AT AGTS



“Never before have I felt **more stretched and challenged**. At the same time, I have never experienced this **magnitude of growth**. Because of AGTS, I know **my effective impact as a leader has increased immeasurably**. ”

**Broc Barton**  
*M.Div. Student*

## AGTS offers the following degrees:

Master of Divinity • M.A. in Christian Ministries • M.A. in Counseling • M.A. in Intercultural Ministries • M.A. in Theological Studies • Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies • Ph.D. in Bible and Theology • Doctor of Missiology • Doctor of Ministry

\*This degree is available as a resident program or, in part, through the M.Div. In-Service Track, a program that does not require relocation and offers classes across the country.

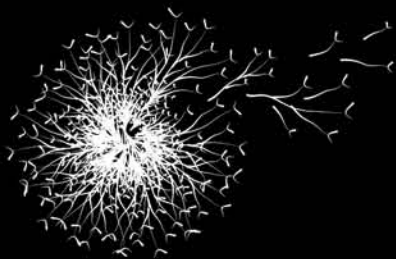


**1.800.467.AGTS**  
**info@agts.edu**  
**agts.edu**





# Q • WHAT DO ALL THESE • PEOPLE HAVE IN COMMON?



## BELIEVE

GENERAL COUNCIL  
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD  
ORLANDO 2013

### INFLUENCE CONFERENCE AUG 5-6, 2013



ROBERT MADU



CHRISTINE CAINE



CHOCO DE JESUS



# A: GENERAL COUNCIL 2013



**GENERAL COUNCIL  
AUG 6-9, 2013**



GEORGE O. WOOD



JOHN ASHCROFT



JIM CYMBALA

REGISTER TODAY AT  
**generalcouncil.org**





UTHTRAX



## The Most Important Thing You Might Be Missing

**S**tatistics can be an incredible motivator. According to the Barna Group, one out of nine young people who grow up with a Christian background lose their faith in Christianity. Barna labels this group *prodigals*<sup>1</sup> — those who have lost their faith after being a Christian at some time in their past.

Sometimes my motivation comes from a statement, like this one spoken by a teen I have invested years in: “I don’t think God would send anyone to hell. That’s what my friends say.”

Whatever the motivator, both of these speak one thing: something is broken.

In a time when Sunday School is nearly an archaic word, many of our students’ biblical foundation is anything but sure. Maybe there is a link between the way things were done and the way they are being done today.

We have gained so much in terms of relating when it comes to small groups, but we have also lost something — the weekly study and memorization of God’s Word.

Let us not throw out the Bible for the sake of relating better. I am not advocating going back to lecture-style teaching. As a student investor, however, I remind us that while relationships come and go, especially in the life of a student, God’s Word remains.

When temptations are bigger than the will and trials push to the limit, the Word of God that has been planted in a student’s heart is the one thing that will remain. God has promised that His Word will not return void (Isaiah 55:11). Our students may forget the title of the last book we studied, the name of the kid in his or her youth group, or the words to the camp worship song. But students that have the truth of God’s Word burned in their hearts, will have a foundation to build on and rely on for the rest of their lives.

— LYNN COWELL, Charlotte, North Carolina

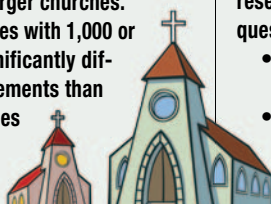
### Note

1. “Five Myths about Young Adult Church Dropouts.” Found at: [barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/534-five-myths-about-young-adult-church-dropouts](http://barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/534-five-myths-about-young-adult-church-dropouts). Accessed 28 August 2012.

### THIS I BELIEVE

## ARE SMALLER CHURCHES LESS ORTHODOX?

**R**esearch<sup>1</sup> is showing that there are significant differences in theological beliefs between those who attend the smallest and largest Protestant churches. In general, members of smaller churches reflect less orthodox religious beliefs than those who attend larger churches. Attendees of churches with 1,000 or more adults are significantly different in belief statements than attendees of churches with fewer than 200



adult attendees. In addition, beliefs and behaviors of people who attend house churches that average about 20 in attendance tend to be more like attendees of churches of 1,000 than those who attend smaller churches of less than 100. While this research does not examine the age of the churches attended nor the church’s stated doctrinal statements, it does reflect a more orthodox belief system among those persons who identify with larger churches.

The somewhat surprising aspect of this research must lead to several serious questions:

- How does the age of a church impact its doctrinal and evangelistic vitality?
- How does self-perception of a congregation, as to its core reason for being,

either detract or attract attendees?

- Forty-one percent of all adults who attend Protestant churches attend churches of fewer than 100 people. What would be the difference in statistics if we looked at only Assemblies of God attendance and compared it to general Protestant attendance?

Quality research describes facts we need to evaluate further. There are always more questions we need to ask to understand the deepest implications of the statistics we are analyzing.

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

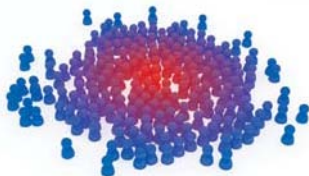
### Note

1. See “How Faith Varies by Church Size.” Found at [barna.org/faith-spirituality/289-how-faith-varies-by-church-size?q=faith+varies](http://barna.org/faith-spirituality/289-how-faith-varies-by-church-size?q=faith+varies). Accessed 27 August 2012.

Comstock / Design Pics / iStockphoto / Monkey Business / Photodisc / Thinkstock

iStockphoto / Thinkstock

## FROM BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS



## HOW TO INFLUENCE A GENERATION

**I**n a survey<sup>1</sup> by The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, global evangelical leaders noted the top three threats to evangelical Christianity: secularism (humanity as the ultimate authority), consumerism (humanity as a materialistic machine), and sex and violence in popular culture (humanity driven by its passions). Our youth are caught up in the vortex of these powerful influences which present a distorted image of humanity and establish themselves as the “gods” of the new millennium.

We have a historical tendency to wage war against these cultural influences in two ways, 1) by attempting to segregate youth from their surrounding culture, and 2) by creating dos and don'ts lists for how they should interact with this culture. These approaches are doomed at the outset for two reasons, 1) these influences are present in every arena of our culture, so getting away from them is impossible, and 2) behavior modification simply does not address the essential lie behind them.

How do we get the truth about how God has created humanity and given it an ultimate purpose in His creation to work its way into the lives of our zoomers? We must model and proclaim what it looks like to be a real human being.

— **RANDY WALLS, D.Min.**,  
director of continuing education,  
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary,  
Springfield, Missouri

## Note

1. Article online at [pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Global-Survey-of-Evangelical-Protestant-Leaders.aspx](http://pewforum.org/Christian/Evangelical-Protestant-Churches/Global-Survey-of-Evangelical-Protestant-Leaders.aspx). Accessed 20 August 2012.

## UPWORDS

## Proverbial Intake: Contentment

**I have spent most of my adult life chasing down success.** I now realize, because of Proverbial Intake, contentment should be my goal. Making my way through Proverbs, I am often reminded of this by Scriptures such as, “The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22, ESV<sup>1</sup>). I have learned to ingrain these verses into my daily activities.

The difference between success and contentment may seem easy to spot from the outside. In our lives, however, the spread may be so miniscule that we cannot see it. For me, the two words became synonymous, until 6 months ago.

In my quest to write top-notch, publishable fiction, I read Jeff Gerke's book, *The Art and Craft of Writing Christian Fiction*. He explores the topic of why we write, and brings up two valid points, which started a dramatic shift in my thought process.

1. We should write for the glory of God, not for our own validation of success.

2. Contentment comes from serving God. Discontentment comes from greed.

While I chased success, which Proverbs 23:5 says is fleeting, I never paid attention to what made me happy. I have missed out on years' worth of true contentment. The good news: There is still time to regroup my thoughts and goals to encompass what really matters — serving God.

In my case, this required a fundamental shift in my life. My work, my writing, and my priorities needed to be realigned not only with God's written Word, but also with His words spoken over my life.

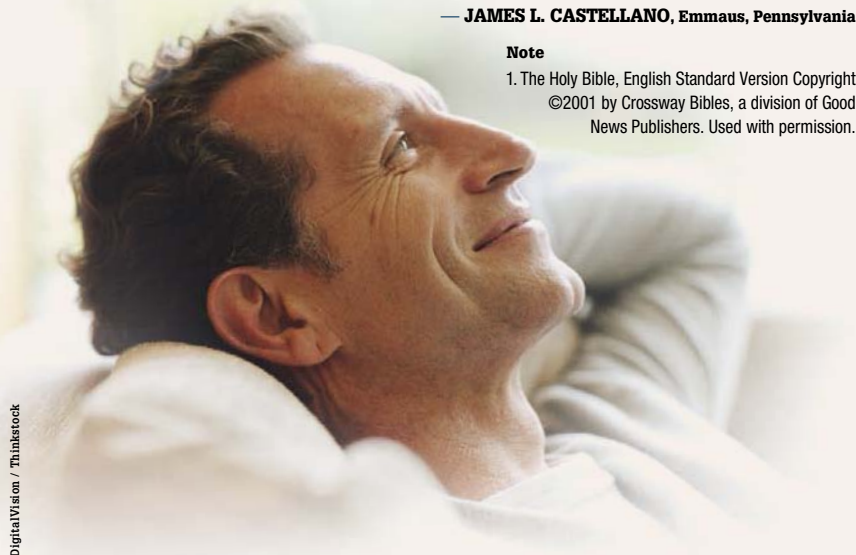
I am finding true success comes disguised as a by-product of contentment, which we attain from living in God's Word.

— **JAMES L. CASTELLANO**, Emmaus, Pennsylvania

## Note

1. The Holy Bible, English Standard Version Copyright ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used with permission.

DigitalVision / Thinkstock



“ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. **COLOSSIANS 3:16,** *New Living Translation* ”





Creates/Thinkstock

## HELPING HEARTS AND HOMES

# FAMILIES: FLEXING & FLUXING

Ministry leaders face a diversity of family types.

1. **Nuclear** — An original husband, wife, and children.
2. **Single parent** — A never married, divorced, or widowed parent with children.
3. **Stepparent** — An adult married to another adult with children.
4. **Blended** — Two adults and their biological children from two previous families.
5. **Grandparent** — One or more grandparents rearing their children's children.
6. **Separated** — One parent, separated from his/her spouse, and his/her biological children.
7. **Cohabiting Adult** — One or more adults of either gender living together.
8. **Homosexual** — Two adults living a homosexual lifestyle rearing children (biological, adopted, step, foster etc.).
9. **Homosexual/heterosexual** — Usually one male and one female with children.
10. **Expanded** — Any of these family types with a court-appointed child for a period of time.

How can churches minister to these diverse family types?

- Answer questions like, "Will my daddy/mommy come back?" sensitively and nonjudgmentally.
- Understand reasons for absences. Be sure you do not exclude children of divorce from church activities because of visitation schedules.
- Affirm children with a phone call or birthday card.
- Provide for single-parent children to attend events when finances prohibit.
- Learn as much as possible about the child and his/her family.
- Teach and show God heals the hurts of divorce.
- While we cannot condone all lifestyles, we can accept all parents, nonjudgmentally, from all family units.
- Realize you do not know both sides of the story behind a child's situation.

The combinations and complexities of today's families demand godly wisdom (James 1:5). Without it, we will not become the family God intends us to be ... the family of God.

— DENNIS FRANCK, single adult/single-parent families director, Springfield, Missouri

## Next time in *Enrichment*

### Spiritual Warfare:

Proclaiming Christ's Victory Over the World, the Flesh, and the Devil in Word and Deed

**T**he summer 2013 issue of *Enrichment* outlines the nature of the Christian's struggle and the victory that Jesus Christ won through His death and resurrection. Special attention is given to spiritual warfare in pastoral ministry and to worldview considerations. Read compelling essays by Paul Alexander, James Bradford, Terry Hanna, A. Elizabeth Grant, Stephen Lim, Doug Lowenberg, Greg Mundis, Gary J. Tyra, George O. Wood, and others.



istockphoto/Thinkstock

## MATTERS OF FAITH

### THE THREE SPRING FEASTS OF THE LORD



Hemera/Thinkstock

In the Winter 2013 issue, I listed the seven Feasts of the Lord that are historical, reminding the Jews of their history with God, and prophetic, pointing to future events. The first three Feasts occur in the spring followed by Pentecost 50 days later. The last three Feasts occur in fall.

The first three feasts:

1. **Passover** occurs on Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar and lasts 1 day. It corresponds to the Christian Easter because Jesus was sacrificed as the Passover Lamb of God.
2. **Feast of Unleavened Bread** begins the next day, Nisan 15, and lasts 7 days. In Scripture, leaven usually symbolizes sin. Jesus was without sin, symbolized by unleavened bread.
3. **Feast of First Fruits** occurs within the Feast of Unleavened Bread, beginning on Nisan 18, and celebrates the first

harvest, which is the barley harvest. First Fruits finalizes the historic and prophetic significance of the spring Feasts.

FEAST	HISTORICALLY	PROPHETICALLY
PASSOVER	Lamb slain	Christ slain (1 Corinthians 5:7)
UNLEAVENED BREAD	Bread without leaven eaten	Christ, without sin, buried (2 Corinthians 5:21)
FIRST FRUITS	First of harvest	Christ, first of harvest, raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20,23; Revelation 1:5)

Jesus the Messiah fulfilled the prophetic events these three feasts point to as well as the fourth Feast, Pentecost, which I will discuss in the summer 2013 issue of *Enrichment*. Together, the seven Feasts of the Lord reveal God's plan of redemption for humanity and His prophetic calendar, which is significant even today as we await the fulfillment of the final three Feasts.

— DIANNE E. BUTTS, Pueblo, Colorado

*Our passion is helping you*

# VISUALIZE



and **REALIZE**  
your dreams  
for new facilities



Dennis Batty & Associates  
architects & planners  
[www.dennisbatty.com](http://www.dennisbatty.com)



Highpoint Church Eagan, Minnesota

creating innovative and cost effective  
worship facilities since 1976



# BEYOND : *the*





*unreached peoples imperative*

so all can hear



**Is it fair** that some hear the saving message  
of Jesus again and again—when so  
many others haven't heard it even once?

**RESOURCES** to help your church learn and pray:

[beyond.ag.org](http://beyond.ag.org)  
[agwm.com/pray](http://agwm.com/pray)

 /AGWorldMissions  
 /AGWorldMissions

**FREE APP** — (iPhone, iPad, Droid) search "AGWM"







## Fast and Furious ... but Still Fresh

BY SCOTT HAGAN

**T**he most emotionally graphic and self-reflective question a pastor can ask his or her congregation might be: "Outside of the role I play on Sundays, do you buy into me as a leader?" Not far behind on the risk meter is: "Do you see anything in my life that will keep me from reaching my full potential?" Few leaders have the guts to ask this of their friends, let alone their critics.

I have come to slowly realize during my 30-year leadership experience that, if I am to make it as a lifelong leader, I must first commit to being a lifelong *learner*. No leader can merely love people into change. What a leader *can* do is create the conditions of the Kingdom so a person or a congregation can go "aha." A shift can then occur in both their desires and choices resulting in the God-turn-around for which we so passionately hoped.

The challenge though is that today's leader straddles the line between presentation and performance. More and more it seems like ministry requires that I act theatrical just to keep the fascination levels high with my congregation. Creativity is a beautiful thing. Borrowing someone else's song and dance just to keep the audience focused on the stage is not.

I do not know about you, but it is exhausting to feel relevant. Becoming a leader that people buy into, staying true to their perception, yet keeping them attracted is tough



Jesus was both the Great High Priest and the employee of a carpenter-father. Even after His public entry into ministry, Jesus kept the carpenter's persona and robe.

plowing. The demands come fast and furious in leadership. Continually presenting something deep that you have bathed in solitude and study sometimes feels impossible as an ongoing way of life. If leaders go through a long and drawn-out season where they feel compromised and fraudulent, that they have become more wardrobe than warrior, then at some fast-approaching point the flame inside them dies and the precious authenticity that marked the origins of their leadership dies with it.

The capacity to stay fresh ... believable ... current ... and most of all energized in your sense of otherness and their needs, is the Jordan that separates one leader from the next. Nothing about society is slowing down. Managing distractions is the new skill set that separates average from excellence in leadership. Some leaders simply stare at the moving waters instead of the shore beyond and remain where they are; others dampen their sandals and cross. Most leaders I know are effective at initial risk taking. But success requires more than first-step risk taking; success requires a second skill beyond risk taking. This involves staying reflective and flexible to the endless adjustments a leader must make over a lifetime to ensure that his or her freshness and credibility remain.

Here is one fast and furious suggestion to help us in leadership stay fresh and reflective in the midst of a high-speed society that demands everything of us, but nothing of itself.

### THINK LIKE A CARPENTER, NOT A PRIEST

Jesus wore an interesting garment on earth. He was both the Great High Priest and the employee of a carpenter-father. He represented two fathers — One in heaven and one down at the carpenters union. Even after His immersion and public entry into ministry, Jesus kept the carpenter's persona and robe. The Jews wanted a King; Joseph's son was too great a drop-off in their opinion. Had Jesus strutted, at the very least like a



**SCOTT HAGAN** is senior pastor, Real Life Church of the Assemblies of God, Sacramento, California.

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/fastandfurious](http://ej.ag.org/fastandfurious) or scan the QR code.

Pharisee, or the local high priest, He could have garnered widespread acceptance by the Jews. Instead, Jesus carried himself in the authority of His Heavenly Father, but the demeanor of His earthly dad. Throughout His public life, Jesus never ceased His carpenter likeness even though all authority under heaven and earth was His. No one ever sensed a shift in Jesus nor identified Him with the Pharisees or the temple priesthood. Against false teachers? Yes. Friend of sinners? No doubt. Arrogant? Never.

Too many leaders today go through a wardrobe change reflecting some type of programmed identity based on the title they bear. It is imperative we resist this wardrobe change as pastors — that we remain the donkey and not the Messiah. The cheers are for Jesus, not us.

When we walk into a room or stand behind the counter at Starbucks, people perceive us as either approachable or on edge. As already mentioned, we need to manage distractions. It goes with the call. People pull at us publicly; there is no clean guideline for this. A pastor gets bothered and interrupted. Mega-church or rural, it's all the same. But maybe the real reason it feels intrusive is because of how the leader perceives himself, and not because anything unusual is actually happening. If you see yourself as someone above everyday people and their concerns, then everyday people and their concerns will irritate you even with a good night's sleep.

Some pastors have intellectually delegated away their role in the everyday needs of people. Sermons and books are their contribution to society. Why? Because they think they have reached a new level that requires a more insulated life.

I doubt carpenters actually think like this.

I have never met a pastor yet who has figured out how to create a clean buffer from the world, while at the same time coming across as Christ-caring and accessible. It takes wisdom, savvy, and a willingness to engage in personal inconvenience to stay fresh and credible in leadership. No one will figure this out for you. Instead of beguiling an intrusive world, it takes forethought about creating personal conditions for spiritual self-safety while not appearing aloof.

But for all of us, thinking more like a carpenter than a high priest when we leave the house is a safe place to start. 🛠️

Zoonar/Thinkstock



## Encouragement: Our Gift to the Next Generation

By **Grant McClung**



While we may learn to navigate discouraging and cloudy issues, what about those who follow? This author provides practical ideas for encouraging and mentoring next-generation leaders.

iStockphoto/Thinkstock



## A Few Feet From the Edge: Navigating the Emerging Church Terrain

By **Steven E. Schofstoll**



Is the postmodern view of truth and focus on tolerance at odds with biblical teaching? How do we deal with postmodernism and still lead our churches into reaching an ever-changing culture?

Hemera/Thinkstock



## Memoir of a Pentecostal Minister

By **Marcus Tanner**



This author transparently shares major issues he faced on staff of two churches and how God brought him to a place of healing.

iStockphoto/Thinkstock



## Reaching for the Top

By **T. Ray Rachels**



Pastors may have talent, motivation, and knowledge, but still not accomplish their desires. What may be holding them back? Healthy personal attitudes can be the key to success.

Hemera/Thinkstock



## Responding to Tithe Terrorists

By **Dick Hardy**



Have you had church members say, "I don't like what the church is doing — and remember, we are the ones paying the bills"? Here are proactive ways to disarm tithe terrorists and keep them from hijacking your church.



# I'm Hurt Over Our Church Split



PhotoDisc/Thinkstock

BY GABRIELE RIENAS

**Q** I am ready to walk away from all of this. I wonder what the point is of all the sacrifice and effort of ministry. We have pastored our church for 8 years and, with God's blessing, built it up from nothing. Last month one of our

leaders and a group of families left to start another church across town. We had invested in this leader over the years, and now he is leading this group in criticizing our ministry and bad-mouthing us around town. I am shocked to hear that they believe that God is leading them. I am devastated. How can Christians behave this way? I know I am supposed to forgive, but I do not even know where to begin.

**A** I am so with you in wondering, *What's up with Christians and church politics?* It is easy to see why you would be devastated, angry, and confused. However, staying in that place in the long run is not an option if you desire to live abundantly.



At one time or another, those of us in ministry will eventually ask, "Is it worth it?"

The most important thing to do is to process this in a way that allows you to move forward with your life without getting stuck in the pain of it. Grief is inevitable, but progress comes when you move through it with a commitment to right thinking and forgiveness.

The first thing is to minimize the power the "leavers" have over your self-concept. Their opinion represents one group's opinion (and most likely one or two individuals' opinion) and cannot possibly be the defining assessment of your life and ministry. Come back to some basic, foundational truths. Constantly remind yourself and your husband:

- God is still God. He loves you, He approves of you, and He has a plan for your lives and ministry.
- God's agenda for your life is intact — no man can interfere with that.
- God is not walking away from you like those who have chosen to leave.
- When God addresses your shortcomings, it may be uncomfortable, but it is never demeaning or punitive.
- This group, no matter how many in number, does not represent the opinion of the whole world nor is the group a reliable measuring stick of your success in ministry.

You will feel the pain of this loss for a while. Allow yourself to grieve and express your sadness in appropriate ways. While you are in that difficult emotional place, take things one day at a time. When you wake up in the morning, trust God to walk with you through that day and thank Him for doing so at the

end of it. Depend on Him to make clear His plan for your life moment-by-moment and day-by-day.

Along with the pain will come feelings of insecurity, vulnerability in other relationships, and wondering what might happen next. You may feel insecure about those who seem to be staying with you. This is normal. As a word of caution, resist the urge to draw people who are associated with your church into the middle by discussing this with them. When it comes to other leaders and staff people, it should be a need-to-know basis only.

Avoid endless conversations and obsessive thoughts designed to analyze the situation and sort it out. Unfortunately, over-thinking only prolongs the pain because it keeps the offenses fresh in your mind. In time you will most likely be able to find greater clarity about everybody's contribution. But in the initial pain of the break, over-analyzing it will only lead you to go around in circles mentally. Do not let your whole life become consumed with this, no matter how big it seems.

Having said that, process your perceptions and feelings with one or two safe people in your life. Your spouse will most likely be one of them, but it would also be helpful to find someone outside your church. This should be a person who has some wisdom and possibly some experience in church life. Sharing your story in a safe, affirming setting can be a powerful, healing tool.

When it comes to moving forward without bitterness, remind yourself that all people are utterly in need of God's grace. This includes the Christian community: prone to selfishness, lack of grace, and wisdom. Commit to an ongoing journey of forgiveness. You will certainly need God's grace. There are days where it may seem impossible but take a stance that says, "With God's help, I am committed to pursuing forgiveness no matter how difficult it is or how resistant I feel to it at this moment." Then walk it out.

At one time or another, those of us in ministry will eventually ask, "Is it worth it?" My first response would be a resounding yes, pointing out all the ways your ministry has been effective in large and small ways in spite of the current situation. On further thought, I begin to wonder about asking the

Grief is inevitable, but progress comes when you move through it with a commitment to right thinking and forgiveness.

question in the first place. It implies that visible results validate the effort of serving Christ. However, if your efforts are out of obedience to God's call on your life, then the results are ultimately His problem. In other words, God looks at your obedience to His call and measures effectiveness by a whole different measuring stick. The fact you have served this congregation for 8 years is success in itself. Take comfort in this.

Even though it may seem doubtful at the moment, it is likely that in time you will bounce back from this experience. Let yourself grieve, pursue God's perspective with your whole heart, and avoid letting bitterness take root. Most likely you will never be the same. In the end good things can come of it if you emerge with greater compassion, grace, and wisdom. ■



**GABRIELE RIENAS**, a pastor's wife for 31 years and a professional counselor, lives in Beaverton, Oregon. She speaks at retreats, conferences, and events worldwide. Contact her at 503-705-9230. Visit her website: [www.gabrielerienas.com](http://www.gabrielerienas.com).

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/churchsplit](http://ej.ag.org/churchsplit) or scan the QR code.



©2013 Bob Schocher

"We've got a real problem. None of our adult children have a desire to leave home."



# Since You Work on Sunday, When Is Your Sabbath?

BY CAL LEMON



**Remember the Sabbath day** by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. ... For in six days the Lord

made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exodus 20:8-11).

So when is your Sabbath (not to be confused with "Sunday"), and how are you doing at keeping it holy?

You may be slightly indignant in response to that question. Of course you are holy because it is your job to be holy, especially on Sunday.

Notice your job and Sunday are professionally glued together. But I asked about the Sabbath, not Sunday.

On any Sunday you may bolt out of bed at 5 a.m. for one last, frantic review of your sermon, call the worship leader at 6:30 a.m. to make sure that sore throat will not create a no show, and then listen to the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir to quiet your mind on your manic drive to your reserved parking slot.

If you are in pastoral ministry, you work on Sunday. And since you work on Sunday, you are also violating the Fourth Commandment.

The command of the Fourth Commandment is to rest. In resting, God sanctified this special day (Genesis 2:3) as a time for remembering His faithfulness; and, in return, His people will experience restoration for the next 6 days.

So, if you, God's spokesperson, are working on Sunday, when and where is your Sabbath?

## BECOMING WEARY IN WELL-DOING

Do you often complain about your work in your ministry burying you?

Do you keep a to-do list that never gets smaller?



Is your ministry anemic and routine? Are you exhausted most of the time? Are there few items on tomorrow's to-do list that excite or renew you? Then try these four regimens of rest.

In the past week have you complained to your spouse, a staff member, or close friend that the top of your desk looks like a city landfill?

Do you subscribe to the adage, "burning out for Jesus," is a great way to use up one's life?

If your answer to these questions is yes, you need a Sabbath, not another Sunday.

## THE REGIMEN OF REST

The Sabbath is a biblical mandate to rest. Sunday is a day of the week when the church gathers to receive encouragement, instruction, and care provided by people who are often out of emotional breath.

So, the servers do their important work on Sunday. But Sunday may not be their Sabbath because the Sabbath is a day of rest, not work.

Dr. Garry Hamel, a prolific business writer, gives the context for our frenetic world in his book, *Leading the Revolution: How to Thrive in Turbulent Times by Making Innovation a Way of Life*: "Employees around the world have been strapped to the wheel of continuous improvement. With eyes glazed, they have repeated the mantra: faster, better, cheaper. Employees have found themselves working harder and harder to achieve less and less."<sup>1</sup>

Sound familiar?

The first regimen of rest, then, is to stop running.

Notice Scripture calls for a day of rest, not a power nap.

I grew up in a pastor's parsonage where the mandated Sunday rest was palpable. There was no TV, no sports, no playground ... just Sunday School and worship in the morning and the Christ's Ambassadors meeting and Sunday evangelistic service at night.

Within these tight, often suffocating parameters, I do remember the ease of taking a nap. It was a day like no other in the week. There was a pervasive quietude about the day that is still with me. A day when I stopped running.

There are two important qualities about this first regimen of rest. First, a Sabbath cannot succeed if we measure it in minutes. The length of time when the ministry merry-go-round comes to a grinding halt must be long enough for someone to lose track of time.

The second quality of rest is the discipline to get comfortable with silence. Thomas Moore, in his illuminating work, *The Care of the Soul*, said: "A common symptom of modern life is that there is no time for thought, or even for

letting impressions of a day sink in. Yet it is only when the world enters the heart that it can be made into soul. The vessel in which soul-making takes place is an inner container scooped out by reflection and wonder.”<sup>2</sup>

If there is no time or space to think, reason, and then pray, we never get to “scoop out” the inner container of our spiritual lives to receive the reflection and the wonder.

Practically, we only create silence when we block out time and let our colleagues and family know we will not be available and then go to a place that encourages a lot of staring and prayer. (I regularly use a remote Trappist Monastery in Ava, Missouri.)

The greatest threat to establishing this part of the Sabbath is what we fear most ... isolation. And, at the same time, if your iPhone is buzzing and text messages are cascading onto that screen, there is no rest ... just business (ministry) as usual.

We often neglect the third regimen of rest: accurately recording spiritual insights.

The apostle Paul, a role model for me of someone who struggled being good enough for God to love and use, had a lot to say about aligning his inner mind with the mind of his Lord. In 1 Corinthians 14:14,15, the apostle, giving instructions on glossolalia in personal worship, said, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.”

This balance between the mind and spirit is essential for us to exit the Sabbath silence with pragmatic instructions from our Lord. In other words, when rest reveals you have wandered onto holy ground, immediately write down or use a voice recorder to guarantee these spiritual marquees will not dim with time.

The final regimen of rest is worship. “But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:10). Here is my experience connecting worship with rest.

I am on a personal prayer retreat, seated on a forest floor, my cell phone off, my prayers rambling and disjointed. The only voice I hear is the whisper of a gentle breeze through fading oak leaves. I hum, “I am tired, I am weak, I am worn. ...” And then suddenly my spirit blossoms with an awareness that Someone has slid into the silence with me.

The length of time when the ministry merry-go-round comes to a grinding halt must be long enough for someone to lose track of time.



Homer/Thinkstock

Thoughts I have not visited before pour into my mind. Solutions are no longer gauzy and undefined. A plan begins to line out in my mind. I am humbled. I cannot speak. I start breathing Someone else’s breath. I breathe deeply. I begin to whisper, “Thank You, Jesus.”

James Emery White, in his enticing book, *Serious Times*, said, “We all need to start talking about the big issues again. But the call runs deeper — we need to think about such things in light of our faith. This is what a Christian mind is about: the difference between the shallow pools of information and the deep waters of wisdom.”<sup>3</sup>

Spiritual, emotional, and physical rest will always snuggle us up next to the heart of God. With every beat we will realign the cadence of our lives. He will vacuum clean the priorities of our self-induced hype and holiness.

And, we will worship ... with a simplicity and clarity that will stagger our spiritual imaginations.

## SUNDAY IS NOT YOUR SABBATH

If you look closely at the language and syntax in Exodus 20, the people were to remember and keep holy the Sabbath, and mark it by rest.

Is your ministry anemic and terribly routine today? Are you exhausted most of the time and find very few items on tomorrow’s to-do list that excite or renew you? Have you, over the past year, judged yourself to be spiritually out of breath?

If your answer to any of those questions is yes, you need a Sabbath, not another manic Sunday.

You work on Sunday, so when is your Sabbath? 📅

### Notes

1. Gary Hamel, *Leading the Revolution: How to Thrive in Turbulent Times by Making Innovation a Way of Life*, rev. ed. (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002).
2. Thomas Moore, *The Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990; reprint, New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), 286 (page citations are to the reprint edition).
3. James Emery White, *Serious Times: Making Your Life Matter in an Urgent Day* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 101.



**CAL LeMON, D.Min.**, president, Executive Enrichment, Inc., Springfield, Missouri, a corporate education and consulting firm

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/workonsunday](http://ej.ag.org/workonsunday) or scan the QR code.



# SERVING & BUILDING CHURCHES

## + REMODEL & EXPANSION



Assemblies of God State Youth Camp  
Sparks, Oklahoma



let us rise up  
and build  
nehemiah 2:18

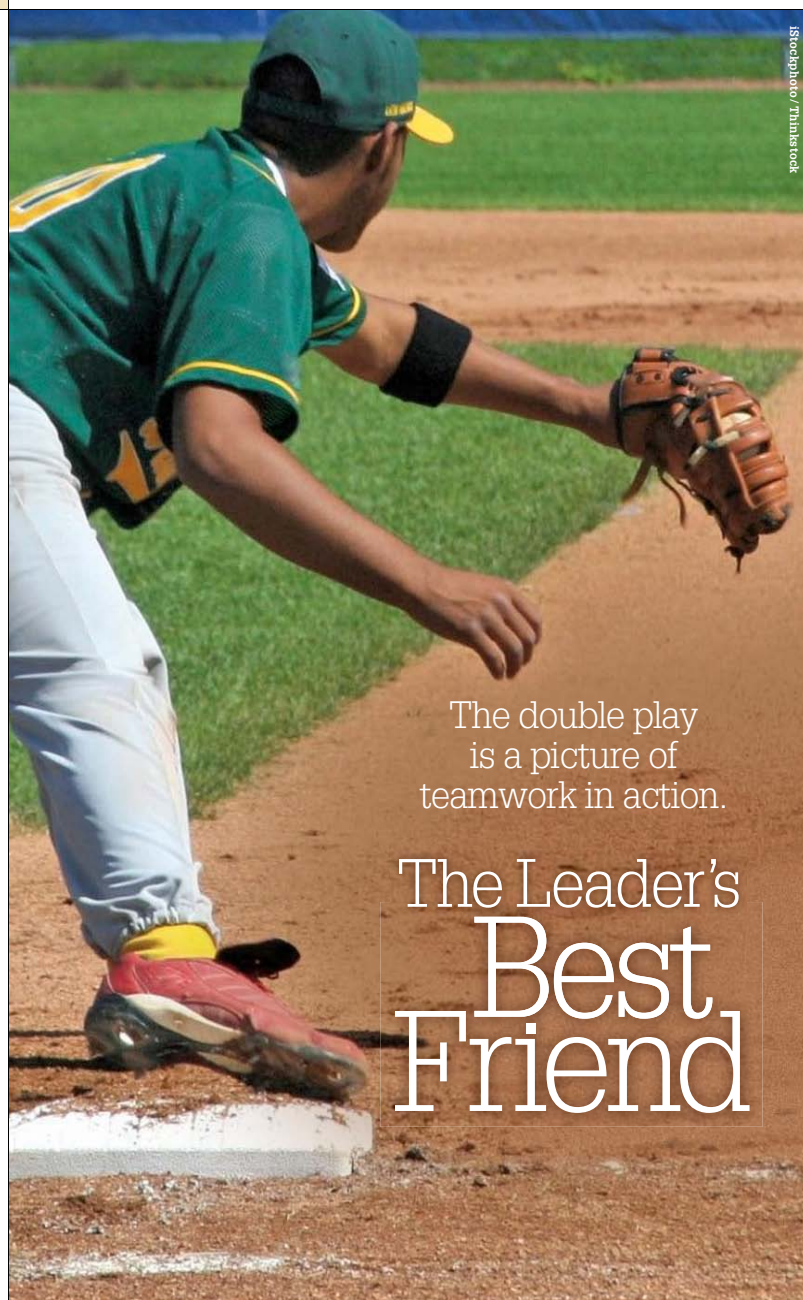


**CHURCHES BY DANIELS**

918.872.6006

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma  
[churchesbydaniels.com](http://churchesbydaniels.com)



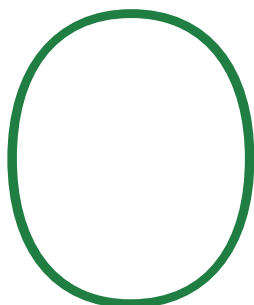


iStockphoto / Thinkstock

The double play  
is a picture of  
teamwork in action.

## The Leader's Best Friend

BY GLENN REYNOLDS



**ften described** as a pitcher's best friend, baseball's double play offers an incredible example of teamwork. Nothing disrupts an offense's momentum more than "turning two" to



end an inning, crushing the offense's threat to score.

The most common double play involves at least five players — the pitcher, catcher, shortstop, second baseman, and first baseman. The pitcher, in connection with the catcher, selects a pitch the batter will more likely hit as a ground ball. The shortstop scoops up the grounder, tosses it to the second baseman where he tags the bag for an out, he then throws the ball to the first baseman for the second out. An inning-ending double play usually results in high fives for the defense and dejection for the offense. The offense suffers the dejection of what could have been, while the defense celebrates the escape from near disaster.

The double play is a picture of teamwork in action — it's an acrobatic, synchronized execution of individual and team skill that keeps the team in the game — often in a pressure-packed situation. No wonder players call it the pitcher's best friend.

This kind of teamwork is not only the pitcher's friend, it is the leader's best friend, too. The best defensive teams usually average only one double play per game, while the worst defensive teams can only count on a double play every other game. So, how do you move your team toward that level of teamwork? The answer is the process of taking your team from competing with each other to collaborating with one another.

### COMPETING

Often leaders use competition for raises, bonuses, and promotions to increase productivity in the team, but too much competition can be deadly. In an overly competitive atmosphere, team members (both volunteer and paid staff) compete for budget dollars, public recognition, space for programming, and the attention of the leader.

Competition releases the toxins of distrust and doubt into the organizational culture. No team member is sure anyone else has his or her best interest at heart — so team members hoard information, end runs become common, and politics dominate the office atmosphere — whether a church board room, staff meeting, or meeting of volunteer leaders.

In the extremely competitive atmosphere, stakeholders become overly defensive of their territory — whether it is space, dollars, or volunteers. In a competitive environment,



classrooms become the property of ministries and volunteers become the pawns in the competitive game between department leaders. To break the competitive environment, the leader must accomplish three critical tasks.

**First, the leader must clearly explain the vision of the organization and how each part fits into the whole.** The shortstop does not pitch and the first baseman does not play shortstop. Without a clearly defined vision and clearly articulated roles for the various team members, each member defines ministry in the light of his or her department's vision. It becomes a youth ministry attached to a church or a small group ministry that happens to be part of First Assembly. Here, the tail begins to wag the dog. Department leaders fight for their departments because they do not understand the vision for the entire organization.

**Second, the leader must help team members see each other as people, not just opponents.** To fight and kill an opposing army, soldiers often dehumanize their foes. The same is true in the competition at work. The leader must reverse that process — humanizing the team to each other. When your team hears each other's stories, prays for each other's families, bears each other's burdens, it becomes much harder to see them simply as the competition.

**Third, the leader must put an immediate end to any and all systems that created the competitive dysfunction in the first place.** Is the budget process tilted toward a certain ministry? Does the leader's time exclude certain team members? Does the leader give unfair advantage to pet projects? Do some systems in the church serve to undermine collaboration?

## COMMUNICATION

Perhaps the team is no longer competing; now, it's communicating. The shortstop is calling for the ball so he does not run into the second baseman. This is a good step, but the team is not ready to "turn two" yet. When the team starts communicating, it simply means they are talking about budget, calendar, and volunteer management. The team still is not necessarily working together; instead, each part informs the other parts of what is going on in their areas.

The youth pastor tells the rest of the staff what is going on this month in the youth department and then checks out (usually playing Angry Birds on his iPad), while the care pastor talks about all that is happening in divorce recovery groups. The team is

iStockphoto/Thinkstock



Without a clearly defined vision and clearly articulated roles for the various team members, each member defines ministry in the light of his or her department's vision.

talking at each other, but that is about it.

There are three things a leader can do to take communication to a deeper level.

**First, use staff meetings to set the agenda.** Setting the agenda for a meeting is much more important than it seems. The agenda for the meeting is often the agenda for the organization. The agenda for the meeting should focus the entire organization on the goals as a whole and how each part of the team plays a role in those goals. In the meeting, the leader must engage in listening as much as talking and not let a single team member dominate the meeting or "nap" through the meeting without making a contribution to the discussion. The leader's goal is to get every brain in the game by setting an agenda that invites everyone's participation.

**Second, the leader refuses to have shadow meetings.** I was involved in an organization where the meeting was not the real meeting. The real meeting took place with a smaller set of team members who eliminated members who clashed with the leader. That type of meeting debilitates communication and teaches the wrong lessons to the team.

**Third, the leader works hard to keep the team on the same page by initiating a common language.** To defeat the enemy of competition, the leader must establish a common vision; to take the team to a new level of communication, the leader must initiate a common language. In other words, everyone has to be singing off the same piece of music.

For example, people from 36 nations make up our church, but we strive to build a church with one culture — not a multicultural church. At its best, our church is multiethnic, but not multicultural. If every team member does not understand and distinguish the nuanced difference of that language, then trouble is coming. The leader has to make sure each team member employs a common language to describe the common vision.

## COOPERATING

In the next level, the team not only talks to each other, but the team works with each other. Team members no longer simply report what is happening in their areas, they cooperate around the agenda of the ministry as a whole. The difference is remarkable. How

do you move from communicating to cooperating? By creating systems that engender cooperation.

**First, develop cross-departmental teams.**

Too often team members only work in their area of ministry. As a result, their vision narrows and they become insular in their thinking. Putting people from different ministries on the same team helps tear down the silos of individualistic thinking and moves the team from communicating about what each other is doing to working together.

One of the most important monthly meetings at Bethel is our synergy budget meeting. Here, representatives from a variety of ministries track through the budget each month to monitor progress concerning financial goals. Each person hears the heartbeat of the other ministries, celebrates financial wins, and (when it works right) shares financial resources with a team member who comes up with a great idea, but has no money left.

Often, we divide our staff into small groups for prayer or Bible study. This presents an incredible opportunity to get people from various ministries connected to each other cross-departmentally. But the leader has to do this on purpose because it will not just happen on its own. People gravitate to their own corner every time.

**Second, celebrate cooperation.** Do not just applaud what one person or one ministry did to succeed; instead, brag about how two ministries came together for a project or an outreach.

**Third, add cooperation to ministry descriptions and ministry job reviews.** In each yearly performance review, ask the team member to describe a time when he or she cooperated with another ministry for a church-wide goal.

## COLLABORATING

Sometimes cooperation can seem forced — like making up with your sister. The summit of the teamwork mountain is not just cooperation, but collaboration. Here, team members stop competing, don't just talk at each other, or cooperate because the boss says so; they collaborate out of a genuine interest in each other's success.

Here, team members offer to serve each other, share resources, and have each other's best interest at heart even when they are not in the room. This is a culture of teamwork

Teamwork is the leader's best friend, but it does not happen without the leader taking concrete steps to make it happen.

that becomes the leader's best friend. But it does not happen overnight. It is the lengthened shadow of a leader who refuses competition and embraces communication, cooperation, and collaboration. It bleeds from the heart of the leader into the DNA of the ministry.

In review, competition stops when the leader instills a clear vision. Communication starts when the leader initiates a common language. Cooperation starts when the leader creates systems that engender cooperation. Collaboration starts when the leader models the culture he or she wants to create.

Your staff may be volunteers, but competition may be just as real. The principles presented in this article also work with volunteer leaders. Look for ways to increase communication, cooperation, and collaboration among your volunteer leaders. ■



**GLENN REYNOLDS** is lead pastor of Bethel Temple (Assemblies of God), Hampton, Virginia. He is a doctor of ministry candidate at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, where his degree concentration is redemptive leadership and organizational development.

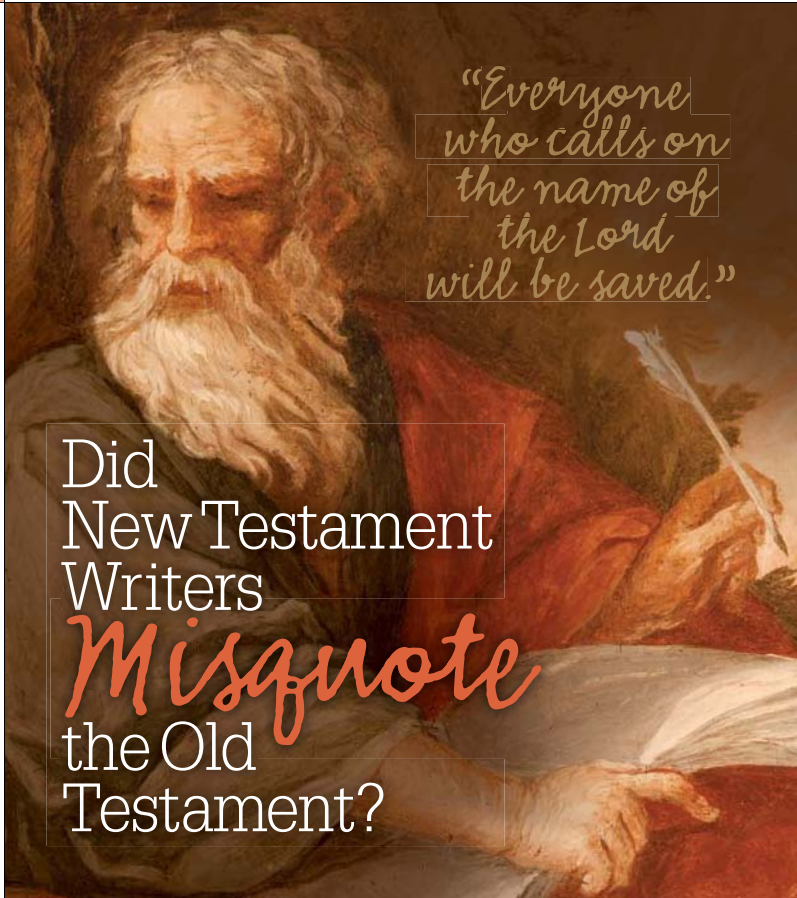
To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/leadersbestfriend](http://ej.ag.org/leadersbestfriend) or scan the QR code.



©2013 Bruce Robinson

"Oh, hi, Pastor. I figured I didn't need to go to church Sunday — I already felt guilty."





# Did New Testament Writers Misquote the Old Testament?

BY PAUL COPAN

**Y**ou are probably familiar with books such as *All the Messianic Prophecies of the Bible*.<sup>1</sup> They list hundreds of Old Testament “prophecies” and their New Testament “fulfillments.” But when we look more

closely, we are disappointed because many of them do not seem to *predict* that Jesus is the Messiah of Nazareth. No wonder many charge that New Testament writers unfairly mined or sloppily plundered the Old Testament for prooftexts to demonstrate Jesus is the Messiah. These critics believe New Testament authors make these texts say something Old Testament authors never intended; in fact, some charge that New Testament writers even *fabricated* stories such as the Virgin Birth.

So what is going on? Did New Testament writers really rip Old Testament texts out of



Did New Testament writers rip Old Testament texts out of their context just to suit some Jesus-is-Messiah campaign?

their context just to suit some Jesus-is-Messiah campaign? As we will see, this just is not so.

## FIRST, TWO EXAMPLES

Let's look at two sample passages. First, Matthew 2:15 cites Hosea 11:1: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” Anyone looking at the original context can see Hosea is referring to Israel's Exodus out of Egypt. Indeed, “Israel is my firstborn son” (Exodus 4:22). The prophet was *not* making a future prediction of Jesus' departure from Egypt once Herod was no longer a threat.<sup>2</sup>

The second is Isaiah 7:14, which Matthew cited in 1:23. Around Christmas, we hear the sounds of Handel's *Messiah* about a virgin conceiving, bearing a son, and calling him “Immanuel.” Isaiah predicted Mary and Jesus here, right? Well, it does not seem so when we look at the context of Isaiah 7:14, which clearly refers to an eighth-century B.C. setting. The prophet Isaiah is addressing Ahaz, king of Judah, who fears an invasion from the northern kingdom of Israel and its partner, Syria. God's message to Ahaz is this “sign”: “A maiden will be with child [i.e., conceive] and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (author's translation). Yet the context indicates the child will be born in *Ahaz's* day — not hundreds of years later. Moreover, *Ahaz* would *recognize* this sign-child: “before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken” (7:16, NASB<sup>3</sup>).

Who, then, is this young woman of marriageable age? Some scholars believe she might be *Isaiah's wife*: “I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived and bare a son” (8:3, KJV) — which sounds a lot like 7:14. His name is Maher-shalal-hash-baz (“quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil”). This son is a *sign* of God's protective presence with the people of Judah and Jerusalem and is called “Immanuel” (“God with us”).<sup>4</sup> So, “before the boy knows how to cry out ‘My mother’ or ‘My father’... the wealth of Damascus [Syria] and the spoil of Samaria [Israel] will be carried away before the king of Assyria” (8:4, NASB). God will extinguish the threat of these two kings through the Assyrian army. Earlier in Isaiah 7:3, we come across Isaiah's first son, Shear-jashub (“a remnant will return”) — a reminder that exile will not finish off God's people. Both of Isaiah's children are “for *signs* and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts” (8:18, NASB).

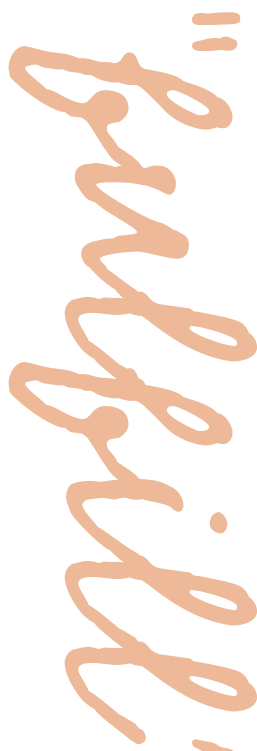
## GUIDELINES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW

If Isaiah and Hosea were not predicting Jesus' birth and departure from Egypt, then where is the fulfillment? How should we understand "prophecy" and "fulfillment" as New Testament Christians did? Let me offer a few guidelines for understanding the New Testament writers as they quote the Old Testament.

1. "Fulfillment" in the New Testament is much broader than "completion of a prediction." This is key: *Not all prophecy is predictive.* Not every mention of "fulfillment" implies "completing a prediction." The Greek verb "fulfill" (*plēroō*) means something much broader than this.<sup>5</sup> In fact, most instances of the word "fulfill" do not imply prediction. When Jesus came to fulfill "all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44, NASB; cp. Matthew 5:17), He was *bringing to fruition the significance of the entire Old Testament*, much of which was not predictive — Adam (Jesus being the second Adam), sacrifices, the high priesthood, Jonah's being in the fish's belly for 3 days, and so on.<sup>6</sup>

2. New Testament writers saw Jesus living out Old Testament Israel's story. This covers most of the passages they allegedly took out of context. How so? Whereas national Israel failed in faith and obedience to God, Jesus is the true Israelite who reenacted and faithfully lived out Israel's story. God called His greater Son, Jesus, out of Egypt. In baptism, He reenacted Israel's exodus from Egypt (cp. 1 Corinthians 10:1–4). Jesus, tested in the wilderness for 40 days and nights, proved obedient, unlike ethnic Israel. As Old Testament Israel consisted of 12 tribes, Jesus began a new community by choosing 12 apostles. On the cross, He took on the curse of exile, dying on a tree (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13). Jesus' bodily resurrection began a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) — a foretaste of the new heavens and earth when we will receive immortal resurrection bodies. Through this obedient Israelite, Jesus, (the Light of the World, a light to the nations), all the families of the earth now realize Abrahamic blessing, and Jews and Gentiles now comprise the people of God — the true Israel (Romans 2:28,29).

Jesus embodies and brings to completeness themes, persons, and theological pictures foreshadowed in the Old Testament: the sacrificial system, the priesthood, the Davidic kingship,



Not every mention of "fulfillment" implies "completing a prediction."

the feast days, the Jubilee year, the Sabbath, Solomon's wisdom, the sign of Jonah, and so much more.<sup>7</sup> Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross (Matthew 27:46) was originally the cry of David, who felt abandoned and was himself mocked (Psalm 22:6–8). Psalm 22 mentions divided garments, casting lots for clothing, (verse 18), and pierced hands and feet (verse 16). These were not predictions of Jesus, but they reflect David's experiences as a righteous sufferer. However, as one scholar puts it, it is not clear that David "would always have been aware of the ultimate significance of his language; but God could have so ordered his experiences and his recordings of them in Scripture that they become anticipatory of the sufferings of 'David's greater son.'"<sup>8</sup>

So when we read in Matthew, "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet," Matthew means, "This was to *bring to completion* what was spoken by the prophet." Fulfillment does not exclude prediction, but it presents a much broader, richer understanding. We should think more in terms of *foreshadowing or prefiguring* rather than *predicting*.<sup>9</sup>

We must more often than not think of *fulfillment* in terms of *types* or *foreshadowings* of things to come. What we see fulfilled in the New Testament are Old Testament *historical* events, acts, or persons — usually related to ethnic *Israel*; these then serve as patterns that are repeated in New Testament events, acts, or persons (which are centered around *Jesus*), and they make a *theological* point.<sup>10</sup> In the words of R.T. France, "Jesus uses *persons* in the Old Testament as types of himself (David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jonah) or of John the Baptist (Elijah); He refers to Old Testament *institutions* as types of himself and His work (the priesthood and the covenant); He sees in the *experiences* of Israel foreshadowings of His own; He finds the *hopes* of Israel fulfilled in himself and His disciples, and sees His disciples as assuming the *status* of Israel; in Israel's *deliverance* by God He sees a type of the gathering of men into His church, while the *disasters* of Israel are foreshadowings of the imminent punishment of those who reject Him, whose *unbelief* is prefigured in that of the wicked Israel, and even, in two instances, in the arrogance of the Gentile nations."<sup>11</sup>

The charge that New Testament writers ripped verses out of their Old Testament context *largely dissolves* in light of Christ's living



out Israel's story and mission. Jesus is the true Israel; the true Son of God that Israel failed to be; the true (genuine vine) that national Israel was not; the Good Shepherd Israel's leaders weren't; the True Bread from heaven that gives eternal life (unlike manna given to Israel in the wilderness).

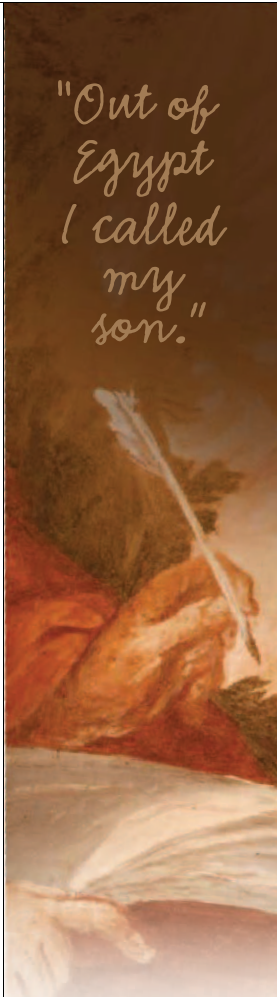
**3. New Testament writers handled the Old Testament as did many Jewish rabbis of their day.**<sup>12</sup> Jews in Jesus' day would quote the Old Testament in different ways to make a point. Here's a brief review. First, there was the *literal* approach — taking a text in its most straightforward sense. For example, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 in Mark 12:29: "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God. ..." The New Testament interprets this passage just as it was used in its original context.

Jews also used a second — *peshet* (or "this is that"). In Matthew 15:7,8, Jesus chastised religious leaders who honor God with their lips, but whose hearts are far from Him. He cited Isaiah 29:13, declaring that Isaiah prophesied about these leaders. Clearly, *Isaiah did not prophesy predictively regarding Jesus' opponents; rather he spoke of his own contemporaries*. Jesus is saying that the situation in which Isaiah found himself parallels or is comparable to/identical with Jesus' circumstances.

We call a third approach *midrash* — *discovering a thought or idea not seen on the surface of the text*. This method sought to go beyond the *literal* sense of the text to the *spirit* of the text. This approach begins with a passage or phrase, extends its meaning, and draws out its implications. For example, Hebrews 3 and 4 elaborates on the word *rest* found in Joshua and Psalm 95 to stress our rest in Christ and the ultimate rest that is to come.

A fourth approach is *allegory* ("that person/situation represents this person/situation"). New Testament writers, who were very sane and sober in their handling of the Old Testament, rarely used this fanciful method.<sup>13</sup> In Galatians 4, Paul stepped out of character when dealing with the Judaizers, who claimed that circumcision and food laws were boundary markers for God's people. To beat them at their own game, Paul used the Judaizers' favorite allegory, but he said Hagar represented the Mosaic Law while Sarah symbolized the divine promise to Abraham.<sup>14</sup>

**4. The New Testament authors read the Old Testament Christocentrically, and sometimes**



Jews in Jesus' day would quote the Old Testament in different ways to make a point.

**they go beyond what the human author originally intended.** The New Testament writers see the content of the Old Testament becoming clear in light of Jesus' claims and work. Paul referred to the "mystery" of Christ and the fulfillment of God's purposes through Him (Romans 11:25–27; 16:25–27; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 15:50–55; Ephesians 3:1–11; etc.). This mystery is rooted in the Old Testament though previously hidden — until Christ's ministry, death, and resurrection brought these anticipations to completion. The New Testament writers see their arguments firmly rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures, but enough obscurity remains that only Christ's incarnation and redemptive, but shameful death on the cross — acts of self-humbling to shatter human pride and pretension — could make them clear.

Scripture involves both human and divine authorship. So we should expect that the *human* authors' intentions were narrower than what the *divine* Author had in mind as He inspired them. Like a full-grown oak, the New Testament canon understandably gives us fuller clarity than the acorn-like Old Testament by itself could.

The Old Testament text does not have a "deeper meaning" — one that we eventually "see" if only we sought hard or prayerfully enough. When John says that Isaiah in his vision (Isaiah 6) saw Jesus' glory and spoke of Him (John 12:41), this is not something we would pick up just by reading Isaiah. Or when Romans 10:13 (citing Joel 2:32) refers to the *Lord Jesus Christ* as Savior ("Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"), that kind of specificity was not on Joel's mind. Paul sees Jesus as sharing in the identity of Yahweh ("the Lord"), but this is not clear in the Old Testament.<sup>15</sup>

## TWO CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

Having said this, we can make two closing points. We do not deny there are clear literal predictions of the Messiah in Scripture. For example, Micah 5:2–4 indicates where the Messiah was to be born — Bethlehem. King Herod's own advisors told him of the prophet's prediction (Matthew 2:5; cp. John 7:42). Also, Jesus is the Moses-like prophet to come (Deuteronomy 18:18,19; 34:10–12) and the promised "Son" on whose shoulders the government would rest (Isaiah 9:6). Isaiah 52:13–53:12 speaks of the coming suffering Servant (Acts 8:30–35; 1 Peter 2:23). The Triumphal

Entry of Jesus on a donkey (John 12:14,15) is another literal fulfillment of a prediction (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus' burial in a rich man's grave (Matthew 27:57–60) fulfills the prediction in Isaiah 53:9.

Another point on the New Testament writers allegedly “plundering” Old Testament texts to fabricate messianic prophecies: Why do they avoid prime opportunities to do so? For example, if Matthew *fabricated* the Virgin Birth story (from Isaiah 7:14 in the Greek, *parthenos* = “virgin”), why doesn't Luke, who also asserts a virgin birth, *not* quote this juicy Old Testament text? As N.T. Wright notes, this “plundering” argument “looks thin.”<sup>16</sup>

As we defend Christ's uniqueness, we should not deny these prediction-fulfillment connections between the Old and New Testaments. But we should realize that “fulfillment” in the New Testament is more complex than we have perhaps realized.<sup>17</sup> So if we come to terms with this, we will avoid much misunderstanding, and we will not weaken our case with skeptics when we claim that Jesus is the Messiah, Savior, and Fulfiller of the Hebrew Scriptures. ■

#### Notes

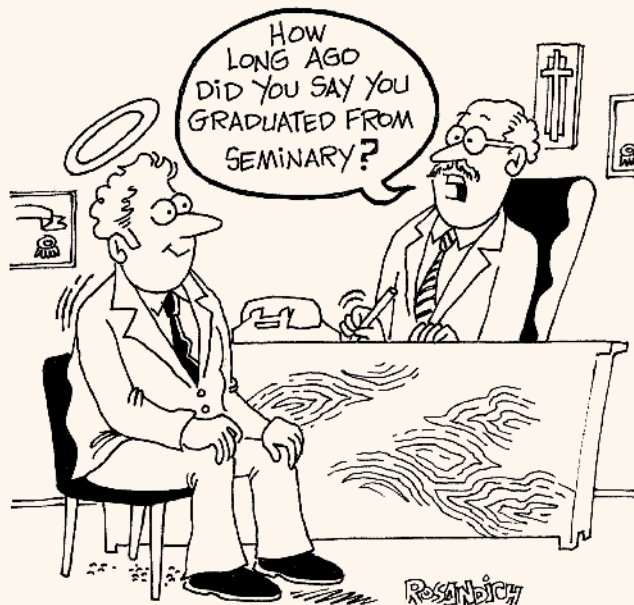
1. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Messianic Prophecies of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).
2. Craig A. Evans notes that the context of Hosea 11:1 “makes quite clear” that it “is looking back to the Exodus, not to a future deliverance.” See “The Function of the Old Testament in the New,” in *Introducing New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Scot McKnight (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 174.
3. 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).
4. Herbert M. Wolf suggests that Shear-jashub's mother (Isaiah's first wife) may have died — perhaps in childbirth; thus Isaiah took on another maiden (“almah”) as his wife (called “the prophetess”) in 8:3. See “A Solution to the Immanuel Prophecy in Isaiah 7:14–8:22,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 449–56.
5. See C.F.D. Moule, “Fulfillment-Words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse,” *New Testament Studies* 14 (1967/68): 293–320.
6. R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 168.
7. Moule, “Fulfillment-Words,” 314.
8. Douglas Moo, “The Problem of Sensus Plenior,” in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D.A. Carson and John Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 197.
9. John W. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 104.
10. R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 38,39.
11. *Ibid.*, 75 (my emphasis).
12. Taken from Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). There is another approach known as *targum* — or paraphrase. Once the Old Testament was canonized, it came to be paraphrased in Aramaic (the Targum). See also Craig Evans, “Function of the Old Testament,” 166.
13. Moisés Silva, “The New Testament Use of the Old Testament” in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D.A. Carson and John Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 159.
14. See Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* WBC 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 197–219.
15. Taken from Jared M. Compton, “Shared Intentions? Reflections on Inspiration and Interpretation in Light of Scripture's Dual Authorship,” *Themelios* 33/3 (2008).
16. In Marcus J. Borg and N.T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999), 174.
17. A good introduction to the discussion of the use of the Old Testament in the New is Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde, eds., *Three Views on the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); a more comprehensive work is G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

The New Testament writers see the content of the Old Testament becoming clear in light of Jesus' claims and work.



**PAUL COPAN, Ph.D.**, West Palm Beach, Florida, is professor and Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics at Palm Beach Atlantic University. He is author and editor of a number of books, including *When God Goes to Starbucks*, *True for You, But Not for Me*, *That's Just Your Interpretation*, *Creation Out of Nothing*, and *Is God A Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*. He is also president of the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/misquoteoldtestament](http://ej.ag.org/misquoteoldtestament) or scan the QR code.



© 2013 Dan Rosendich



# Five Habits of a Kingdom Networker



Zoonar / Thinkstock

BY JUSTIN LATHROP

**A**ll of us have habits. Some we are proud of, others we are not. A habit forms in the midst of repetitive behavior. It does not emerge after a one-time experience but is indicative of a series or pattern of experiences that reinforce a particular thought, action, or response. Habits can be positive or negative, but never both.

In a way, our habits define us. Perhaps we are the one who is always on time. Perhaps we are the one who always seems to be working on the same project but never making measurable progress. Whatever our habits, they greatly impact the way people perceive us and the chance to be good stewards of the time and resources God has entrusted in us to build His kingdom.

I have observed one thing while spending time with high-capacity leaders involved in church ministry: Success is rarely an accident. In fact, you might say the things that led to their success are a direct result of developing good habits and avoiding bad ones.

People often ask what contributes to success in church ministry. I believe forming the right habits ensures our priorities are in the right order and our focus is on the right goal. As someone committed to Kingdom networking, I believe there are five things we should do well around which to form our habits. This list is not intended to be exhaustive. As time goes by and I collect new experiences, I might modify this list. Life is dynamic, so it makes sense that we would grow and develop in the midst of it.



The more expansive your network, the greater the opportunity God has to multiply the work you are already doing.

One thing remains the same: Building a Kingdom network has never held anyone back, caused anyone harm, or inhibited God's movement in and through His people. The opposite is true. The more expansive your network, the greater the opportunity God has to multiply the work you are already doing.

Consider adopting these habits to accelerate the effectiveness of your Kingdom-building efforts.



## **HABIT #1: RELATIONSHIPS COME FIRST**

It is easy to become consumed with tasks and projects. There will always be opportunity to fill our schedules with things we will eventually check off our to-do lists. We each have 24 hours every day that come to us in 60-minute increments. How we use our time determines the kind of life we live and the legacy we leave.

Anyone in church ministry for any length of time understands why the apostle Paul talked about concepts such as endurance and perseverance. Without a commitment to endure, no one is likely to survive. Somehow, we must limit tasks and leave room to build relationships.

Kingdom networking is about people. Send handwritten notes, make calls, and travel a distance to meet someone and share a meal. Doing life together is where we influence and are influenced. This does not require much, but it does require time.



## **HABIT #2: VALUE YOUNG LEADERS**

The future is coming faster than anyone likes to admit. I am not the youngest guy in the room anymore. I now make it a point to surround myself with younger leaders to be sure I stay in touch with the way they view the

world. Their perspective, choices, and values may be different from mine, but I should not immediately discount them because of their age or experience level.

It is important to evaluate the connections we are making from time to time. We should make sure there is a balance between those older than us, similar in age to us, and younger than us.



### **HABIT #3: PREFER COLLABORATION**

We must never confuse Kingdom networking with personal agendas. Networking only works when you approach others with sincerity and integrity. We must not see others as stepping-stones to our success, but as people God has allowed us to intersect for a specific reason, purpose, and season.

Collaboration is most likely to take place when we find common ground with other people. Our culture and our theological training often condition our minds to constantly deconstruct the world around us. While this is profitable in an academic setting, it can become a destructive habit that robs us of our ability to see the gift God has given us in the people who cross our path.



### **HABIT #4: COMMIT TO RESULTS**

People are drawn together when collectively reaching toward a common goal. Possessing a Kingdom mindset means we must let go of any feelings of territorial ownership about our church, parachurch ministry, or other endeavors. God does not see His children separated by different 501(c)3 incorporations. Rather, He sees His children as one force working together to bring about the kingdom of God on earth until Christ's return.

We can make progress when we work together. There must be a sense of equality in our dealings with others. We must be willing to take the lead at times and follow at times. We must ensure we understand others before we require them to understand us.



### **HABIT #5: SEEK WISDOM FROM OTHERS**

Knowledge is cheap. The Web has ushered in the information age. The world has never had more access to more information than it does right now.

There is, however, a difference between

Technology allows us to stay connected in between our interpersonal encounters but should never serve as a substitute for them.



istockphoto / Thinkstock

knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom comes from experience, and we can only acquire it over time. It comes at a high price, that is why it is so valuable.

A good Kingdom networker knows how to ask questions and places great value in counsel from the success of others. Technology has also thrown doors wide open for crowdsourcing with people all across the planet. What an incredible opportunity to expose ourselves to an even more diverse group of leaders.

One common thread throughout these habits is a focus on interacting with real people. While I love every piece of technology I use in my work (and if I am honest in my play), it does not replace human interaction. Technology allows us to stay connected in between our interpersonal encounters but should never serve as a substitute for them.

Kingdom networking is not something that will yield immediate benefits. Just like starting anything new, it takes time to undo old habits and form new ones. If you will commit to rethinking your schedule, you will find time to build your network.

Commit to using this time to interact with others, whether it be by phone, in person, or video chat. Find a way to see the expression on their face or watch their eyes light up, more than just hearing their voice. You will find that even though the work of church ministry may be lonely at times, you are never really alone.

The benefits of building good habits around Kingdom networking boost our ministry potential both within and outside the churches we serve. Putting these habits into practice may not lead to fame, wealth, or success by this world's standard. It will, however, create the opportunities for God to shape you through other people.

Jesus could have issued a heavenly decree. He could have called the angels from heaven to announce that He was the Savior of the world. He chose, however, to work through 12 people in whom He invested himself during His earthly ministry. Maybe we should consider building similar habits into our own ministry. ■



**JUSTIN LATHROP**, director of Strategic Relations for the Assemblies of God National Leadership and Resource Center, Springfield, Missouri. He blogs regularly at [JustinLathrop.com](http://JustinLathrop.com).

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/kingdom\\_networker](http://ej.ag.org/kingdom_networker) or scan the QR code.





BY DOUG GREEN

**W**hy is a movie often more interesting than a sermon? Why am I willing to sit through a 2-hour B-quality movie yet struggle to sit through a 30-minute sermon?

We build our sermons on God's eternal Word. They are all about God. They ought to be amazing.

So, how can a movie be more interesting than a sermon?

Could it be this simple: Visuals are more interesting than abstract theories? Interesting sermons, like a movie, are visual sermons. Boring sermons are not. They are — and I have preached them just like you — a traffic jam of propositional truths, abstract concepts, and invisible theories. In other words, they are boring because people cannot see them.

Since no preacher I know sets out to be a boring preacher, what can we do to make our sermons more compelling and visual to a visual generation who needs to hear them?

Here is what effective preachers have discovered: Be more visual and less abstract.

Clarification of abstract biblical truths is vital. The appealing preacher takes a propositional truth and makes it visual — a movie



Why am I willing to sit through a 2-hour B-movie yet struggle to sit through a 30-minute sermon?

that remains true to the Scripture while relevant to the audience.

### VISUALS IN THE TEXT

In light of the biblical main idea, determine which aspects of the text are already visual. Most texts have more visuals than you might first recognize. Look for them, committing to see only what is authentically in the text.

Use Psalm 1 as an example. Visuals fill this psalm. Look at verse 1. What do God's paths — the paths that wisely lead to life — look like? The Psalmist answers his own question with a simile. The blessed man, he says, "is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither."

So, we have one visual of that blessed man: a vigorous, growing tree. With this, we visualize the biblical truth. We are ready to describe with words what we see in our minds.

The visual (tree) is a tangible representative of the text's main idea, but we need to enhance it. Although we understand the basic nature of a tree, we need to know more about this tree, using concrete language to describe what we see so the audience can see it too.

Concrete words add dimension, are specific, exact, and explicit. They are tangible. These kinds of precise nouns and active verbs add specificity and appeal to our experience. They bring something blurry into focus. They help us see the tree's height, colors, age, width, type, and anything else that brings this great visual alive. Describe how you see this tree. Every person in your congregation knows about trees, so help them see the one *you see*.

Why take time to describe this tree? Because the Psalmist used a tree to describe the wise, righteous man, knowing his audience would better understand the invisible, abstract concept (wisdom and righteousness) with a visible, tangible image (a tree). The preacher's job, then, is to illuminate this visual, connecting the audience with the text.

But who wants to come to church to hear a sermon about a tree?

Therefore, do not forget the tree is an illustration about the real topic: a wise and righteous person. After taking time to give the tree expanded visual depth, consider what this simile (the tree) is saying about people. How does the single mom on the second row apply this visual in her life? What is her teenage son supposed to do with this tree? Ask questions about the simile:

“How can I be like a tree planted by streams of water?”

“What story helps her bear fruit in season?”

“How can he have leaves that do not wither?”

What about life in your unique community answers these questions with visuals? Are there stories of others you know — full of visuals — that answer these questions? While you are describing what this looks like, show, in high definition, how ordinary people apply these biblical truths in everyday life.

**Application:** Susan Jones reminds me of the ficus tree in our backyard. It is so tall you can spot it throughout the neighborhood. It protects our house from the heat of the day. When the kids were small, we built a tree house, etc...

I have watched Susan tower above her circumstances. As a single mom, she's raised her kids to love Jesus. Always aware of their unique struggles, she taught them the Scriptures and asked them challenging questions, shading them from harm, etc. ...

### VISUALS NOT IN THE TEXT

Psalm 1:2, for example, says something important but does so propositionally, without a visual: “But [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord.” You need to help your people see this, too, for it is an important part of the text. What does this look like? How can you describe this aspect of righteousness? What would this person look like 3,000 years ago? What would he or she look like today? How can you help your audience see this person, complete with actions, living out the meaning of this verse? If you do not make this verse a visual story, you will lose the impact of what the Psalmist said. Take it from an invisible concept and make it a visual memory.

**Application:** When I think of verse 2, it is hard not to think of my father-in-law, John. He delights in God's Word. When he talks about the Bible, his face lights up. It is not a chore for him to read God's Word each day; you can tell he loves it. His conversations about life are always full of Scripture. Recently, when faced with a family crisis, he ...

### STORYBOARD YOUR SERMON

As you go through Psalm 1 and do this over and over again, collect all the biblical visuals and string them together, queuing up a walk through the text that is a visual candy store. These vivid pictures in your mind (they are all

Here is what effective preachers have discovered: Be more visual and less abstract.



istockphoto / Thinkstock

about explaining the text) become your sermon on Psalm 1. You are able to describe the Psalm well, engaging the audience to see with their “ears.” If they can see it, they can retain it. If they can retain it, they can apply it. If they can apply it, they can walk in righteousness.

Visuals are easy to remember. Concepts, propositions, and sentences are difficult to recall without memorization, for they exist invisibly. However, a visual story or image does not. You can talk about it because you see it.

If you can see it and you do the thorough job of describing what you see to others, then the audience will see it as well as the “reels of the movie” begin to roll. This is why turning truth into a picture is so effective. It assists you, giving you the ability to store the entire sermon in the film room of your head, not reliant on notes. It assists the audience, giving them the truth they can see with their ears, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform their hearts.

Hollywood filmmakers “storyboard” their movies, arranging the scenes in a series of visuals that sequentially display the plotline. Each storyboard is a visual setting of the scene they are going to film. This storyboard outline of the entire film tells the story, giving the basic structure of the plot. Likewise, taking each visual preaching point within the sermon and reducing it to one storyboard visual enables you to capture the sermon on the film inside your head.

The complete collection of these storyboarded scenes, spliced together with skillful segues, comprise your entire sermon in film fashion. As you proceed through the movements of your sermon, you see the entire sermon visually. If you can see it, so will they. If you cannot, your sermon might be headed down Boring Boulevard, a place where Good News ought not reside.

Jesus was never boring. His sermons, much like His Bible, the Old Testament, were full of visuals: parables, metaphors, similes, quoted dialogue, and stories. He was a great preacher.

After all, His sermons were, and still are, box office hits. ■



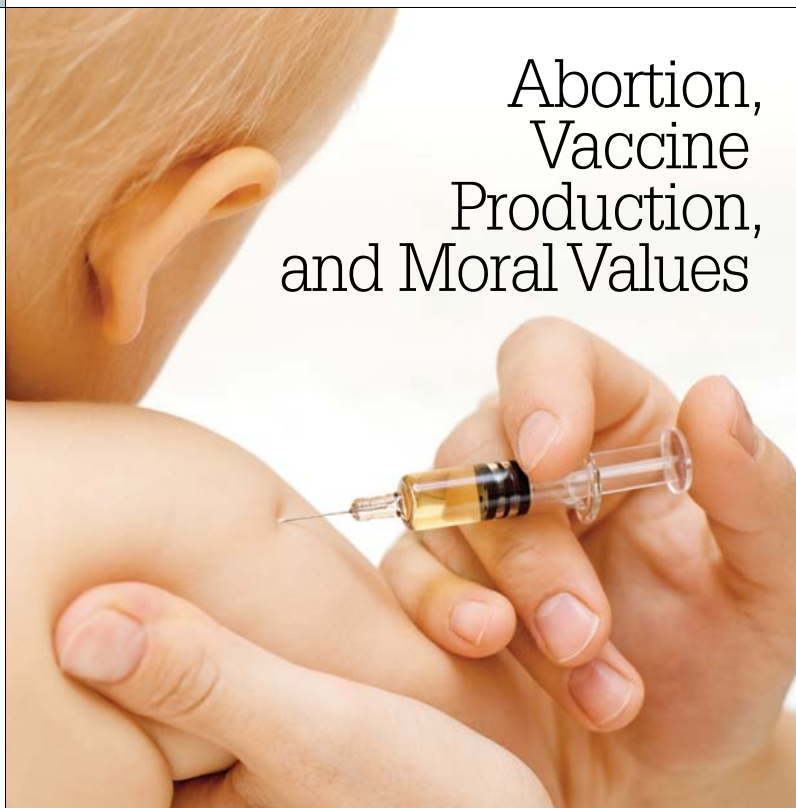
**DOUG GREEN, D.Min.**, founding pastor, North Hills Church, Brea, California

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/blockbuster-sermons](http://ej.ag.org/blockbuster-sermons) or scan the QR code.



# Abortion, Vaccine Production, and Moral Values

istockphoto / Thinkstock

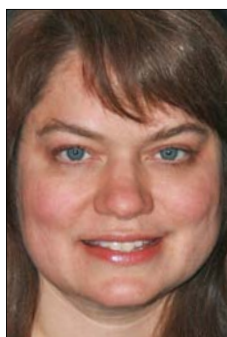


BY CHRISTINA M.H. POWELL

**W**hen my parents took me for vaccinations as a child, they connected the names of the diseases on the vaccine chart to stories from their own

childhood. Tetanus reminded my father of the older sister he never met who died from tetanus at the age of 4 after stepping on a rusty nail. Mumps and measles reminded my mother of weeks spent with swollen glands or an itchy rash. The childhood diseases these vaccines prevented were not just statistical possibilities to my parents. As a result, adults in my parents' generation viewed vaccines as positive medical advances worth the risk of an occasional rare side effect.

After decades of vaccination, most parents today have no direct experience with the diseases prevented by the vaccines. Furthermore, the number of vaccines available has increased, with children in the United States receiving as many as 24 injections by the age of 2, including



How should Christians morally evaluate the use of vaccines developed with cells derived from abortions?

up to 5 shots in one doctor's visit. Finally, the Internet allows information about potential vaccine side effects and myriad theories about vaccine risks to spread as never before. The nature of the materials used to manufacture some vaccines can raise bioethical questions for Christians who firmly believe in the sanctity of human life. Pastors may find concerned parishioners wanting to know if they can reconcile the use of certain vaccines with their spiritual values. In this article, I focus on separating fact from fiction in understanding the bioethical issues surrounding vaccines.

## GROWING A VIRUS

Many vaccines confer immunity to a virus. A virus requires living cells to replicate. Growing sufficient quantities of virus to make a vaccine means growing the virus on tissue culture cells, then purifying the virus away from the cells to make the vaccine. Jonas Salk grew the three strains of poliovirus for his polio vaccine in a monkey kidney cell line. However, the danger of using animal cells to culture a virus is the possibility of another animal virus contaminating the vaccine. Indeed, in 1960, after researchers discovered Simian Virus 40 (SV40), they found this virus present as a contaminant in the monkey cells used to grow the poliovirus. Researchers found that SV40 caused tumors in rodents, but the majority of evidence from long-term studies in humans suggests there is no causal relationship between receiving SV40-contaminated polio vaccine and cancer development. After discovery of SV40, researchers grew subsequent batches of polio vaccine on SV40-free monkey cells.

Concern over the introduction of animal virus contaminants, as well as the inability of some viruses to grow well in animal cells, makes use of human tissue culture cells an attractive solution. However, any human cell lines derived from tumors carry a theoretical risk of residual DNA contaminants from the tumor cell lines inducing cancer in vaccine recipients. So researchers view normal human cells as the only acceptable choice for growing a virus. They have grown two human diploid cell lines (normal cells) in the laboratory and used them extensively for vaccine production for decades. Researchers in the United States developed one of these diploid cell lines, WI-38, in 1961; researchers in the United Kingdom developed the

other diploid cell line, MRC-5, in 1966.

Researchers derived WI-38 cells from the lung tissue of a 3-month gestation female from an elective abortion. Researchers derived MRC-5 cells from the lung tissue of 14-week gestation male aborted for psychiatric reasons. Cell biologists removed fetal tissues after the fetuses were dead. They did not perform these abortions with the intent of harvesting tissues. The cell biologists who created the diploid cell lines from the tissues did not induce the abortions. WI-38 and MRC-5 cell lines no longer contain any of the original fetal cells, only descendent cells grown in a laboratory. These descendent cells were never a part of the fetus' body. These cells cannot form a living organism, nor do they constitute a potential human being, as they are only lung cells.

Using these cells to produce vaccines does not require any new abortions to obtain new cell lines for future use. The goal of current vaccine research is to create vaccines through molecular tools, bypassing the need for human cell lines entirely. For example, scientists now

Should Christian parents with a high value of the sanctity of human life withhold vaccination from their child because an aspect of the vaccine production has a distant historical association with abortion?

make Hepatitis B vaccines in yeast cells. Thus, using vaccines made in human diploid cell lines, derived from tissues harvested after an abortion induced in the 1960s, does not encourage the creation of new embryonic cell lines for vaccine use nor promote abortion.

#### JUDGING MORAL COMPLICITY

Should Christian parents with a high value of the sanctity of human life withhold vaccination from their child because an aspect of the vaccine production has a distant historical association with abortion? We call the bio-ethical concept involved "moral complicity," meaning whether or not a person becomes morally tainted by association with a previous immoral act.

Several factors help determine the extent of moral complicity. One such factor is *timing*. If a person's action or inaction will influence a future immoral act, a person is more culpable than if a person's decision occurs long after the immoral act took place.

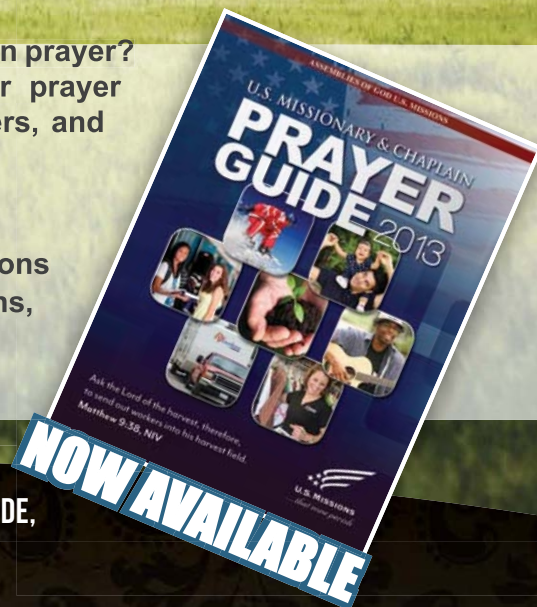
A second factor is *proximity*. A doctor who

# U.S. MISSIONARY & CHAPLAIN PRAYER GUIDE 2013

Will you join us each day as we lift up our U.S. Missions families in prayer? These missionaries, chaplains, and their children need your prayer support as they are reaching those in need, praying with others, and sharing the gospel,

*...that none perish.*

It would be our pleasure to send you a free copy of our U.S. Missions Prayer Guide. This pictorial guide lists our missionaries, chaplains, and their children by their birthdays.



FOR YOUR FREE COPY OF THE  
2013 U.S. MISSIONARY & CHAPLAIN PRAYER GUIDE,  
PLEASE CALL 417.862.2781, EXT 3254,  
OR E-MAIL AGUSMPROMOTIONS@AG.ORG.



performs an abortion is more culpable than a technician who grows viruses using cells derived from donated embryonic tissue.

Yet a third factor is *intent*. The woman who chose to have an abortion might have intended to end her pregnancy, but the intent of the researcher using the donated embryonic tissue was to develop a vaccine and prevent illness. The intent of a parent allowing his or her child to be vaccinated more than 50 years after the original abortion that produced the donated tissue is to make use of the vaccine created by the researcher to prevent illness in his or her child and other members of the population. The parent's intent follows the intent of the researcher, with clear separation from the intent of the original abortion.

Of course, if the motivation behind an abortion is to produce useful material for scientific research, those who use such material bear some culpability. However, in the case of the abortions used to produce the two cell lines used in vaccine manufacture, the motivation for the abortions was entirely unrelated to subsequent use of the embryonic tissue for cell line development. Thus, a Christian parent does not bear moral culpability for choosing to vaccinate his or her child if no other vaccine options are available.

### RESPONDING WITH WISDOM

Both the Christian Medical and Dental Association and the Vatican have urged vaccine manufacturers to develop future vaccines without the use of cell lines connected to abortion. However, both organizations also make clear that parents should feel free to vaccinate their children regardless of the historical association with abortion if no alternative vaccine is available. The risk to public health and the health of the parents' children outweighs the concern about the historical origin of the vaccine.

In the case of the rubella vaccine, developed by isolating the rubella virus from an embryo infected with the virus and aborted because of concerns over birth defects, the vaccine has prevented many future abortions — spontaneous (miscarriage) and elective — stemming from infection of a pregnant woman with rubella. Doctors did not perform the original abortion with the intent of isolating the virus for vaccines.

Pastors can help parishioners sort through the plethora of information available on the

Pastors can help parishioners sort through the plethora of information available on the Internet, including sensational and misleading news and opinions.

Internet, including sensational and misleading news and opinions. In so doing, pastors can prevent their parishioners from becoming unnecessarily anxious over issues for which they have no moral culpability and from making unwise decisions based on misinformation. At the same time, pastors can uphold the sanctity of human life and find ways for their flock to assist women experiencing crisis pregnancies today.

In the words of the Psalmist, "Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands" (Psalm 119:66). Reconciling vaccines available today with spiritual values becomes possible when you understand the bioethical concepts involved. Meanwhile, we look forward to the development of scientific knowledge that will move vaccines with a distant association with abortion from the doctor's office to the annals of history. Until then, may we respond in wisdom to the ethical challenges in our world. ■



**CHRISTINA M.H. POWELL, Ph.D.**, an ordained minister, author, medical writer, and research scientist trained at Harvard Medical School and Harvard University. She speaks in churches and conferences nationwide and addresses faith and science issues at [www.questionyourdoubts.com](http://www.questionyourdoubts.com).

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/reconcilingvaccines](http://ej.ag.org/reconcilingvaccines) or scan the QR code.



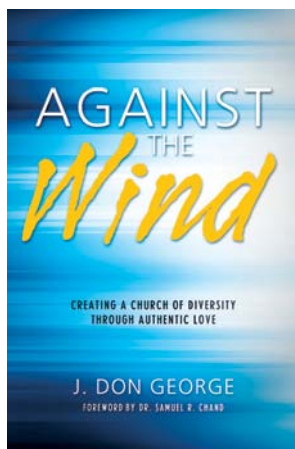
"If we're on earth to help others, how do I go about becoming an 'other'?"

©2013 Bruce Robinson

# REACH BEYOND COMFORTABLE TO POSSIBLE



J. Don George



## Get your church growing again.

J. Don George shares how his church shifted off a comfortable, 16-year growth plateau onto the bumpy road of change, which eventually led to the richly diverse and expanding congregation they now welcome. But it wasn't easy. Every step required sacrificial obedience. His hard-won lessons will propel you and your church forward.

*Read it with your team. Challenging questions are provided with each chapter.*

Find this great book and more at [www.MyHealthyChurch.com](http://www.MyHealthyChurch.com).

Get the eBook for less,  
plus save on shipping!



**MY HEALTHY CHURCH**  
Resources for a Spirit-Empowered People

MyHealthyChurch.com  
Toll Free: 855.642.2011

 @MyHealthyChurch  
 / MyHealthyChurch



# Location of the Day of Pentecost

BY MARC TURNAGE

**T**he Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts record that after Jesus ascended to heaven His followers remained in Jerusalem, with the temple at the heart of their activities (Luke 24:52; Acts

3:1). Luke recounts that on “the day of Pentecost” (the biblical feast of weeks, *Shavuot*, cf. Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 23:15,16; Numbers 28:26), Jesus’ followers gathered together (Acts 2:1), but Luke never specified the location of their gathering. Christian tradition came to identify the location for the disciples’ gathering on the Day of Pentecost as the same place where Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples, within the upper city of Jerusalem. These traditions, however, do not predate the Byzantine period (5th century A.D.). Luke and Mark describe the location of the Last Supper as “a large upper room” (ἀνάγαιον: Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12), which seems similar to Luke’s description of the place where the disciples gathered after Jesus’ ascension, an “upper room” (ὕπερῳον: Acts 1:13).

In spite of the general similarity between these locations, the Greek terms Luke used to describe both are different, which does not assume they were the same place. The Latin translation of the New Testament, however, translated the different Greek words with the same Latin word *cenaculum*. Based, then, on the Latin translation, Byzantine Christians began to identify the location of the Last Supper as the same place as the Upper Room in Acts 1. Even if the room of the Last Supper was the same “upper room” in Acts 1 where the disciples met, the narrative of Acts does not suggest that Jesus’ followers remained in the Upper Room for the events recounted in Acts 2. In fact, the Greek syntax at the beginning of the second chapter of Acts preserves a Hebraic-styled narrative break, “And when



Did the events recounted in Acts 2 take place in the Upper Room?

the day of Pentecost came,”<sup>1</sup> which separates what follows from everything that had previously occurred.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the narrative of Acts 2 indicates that Jesus’ followers have moved in time and location from the first chapter of Acts. So, where, then, did the events in Acts 2 take place?

## “THE HOUSE WHERE THEY WERE SITTING”

Luke’s mention of “the house where they were sitting” has suggested to many that the disciples gathered in the Upper Room mentioned in Acts 1:13. It seems more probable that Luke’s language reflects a manner of speaking within Judaism about the Temple of Jerusalem, i.e., “house (בית) of the Lord.”<sup>3</sup> Within ancient Jewish sources, and even until today, people refer to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in Hebrew as הר הבית (lit. “the mountain of the house”; cf. *m. Bikkurim* 3:4). In the first part of the Book of Acts, Luke’s Greek narrative frequently preserves Hebraic-styled syntax and idiom; thus, the mention of the “house” in Acts 2:2 likely reflects his preservation of the Hebrew idiom that identified the temple as “the house.” The location of the events in Acts 2 on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem seems certain in light of the festival of Pentecost, the crowds encountered by the disciples, and the ritual immersion of the large crowd that repented.

## THE FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST

After Jesus ascended to heaven, His disciples remained in Jerusalem and “were continually in the temple blessing God” (Luke 24:52,53). Clearly, Jesus’ followers did not interpret any of His actions prior to, and including His crucifixion as either rejecting the temple or rendering it obsolete. We should assume, then, that Jesus’ followers would have participated in the pilgrim festival of Pentecost in accordance with the commandment of God: “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place which he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and at the Feast of Booths (Sukkot)” (Deuteronomy 16:16). The first century Jewish historian Josephus mentions that the population of Jerusalem swelled at Pentecost as Jewish pilgrims came from all over the countryside (*War* 1:253; cf. 2 Maccabees 12:31,32). Luke also attests to the multitudes of Jewish pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost: “Parthians and

Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome" (Acts 2:9–11). Peter addressed these crowds of pilgrims who were participating in the festival, which took place in the temple.<sup>4</sup>

### THE CROWDS OF PENTECOST

These crowds of Jewish pilgrims from all over the Roman world heard the disciples speaking in their own languages and were amazed (Acts 2:4–8). In response to their amazement, Peter stood and addressed the crowd (Acts 2:14–39) proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel and identifying what the pilgrims saw and heard as the "pouring out" of the Holy Spirit. This signified the advent of the Messianic era, so Peter called the people "to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus" (Acts 2:38). Peter's discourse and the events that precipitated it suggest a public location; moreover, the only place in Jerusalem where such crowds would have gathered on the Day of Pentecost would be the Temple Mount.<sup>5</sup>

### THE RITUAL IMMERSION OF THE CROWDS

According to Acts 2:41, about 3,000 people responded to Peter's call "to repent and be baptized." The ritual immersion pools (*miqva'ot*) located around the southern and southwestern portions of the Temple Mount offer the only place in Jerusalem able to accommodate the ritual immersion of so many.<sup>6</sup> These ritual pools serviced the pilgrims entering the temple (cf. Luke 2:22; Acts 21:24), and could accommodate the swollen masses of pilgrims that converged on the temple during the festivals. The most practical setting for such a series of events on the festival of Pentecost would be in the vicinity of the temple in Jerusalem.

When the temple stood, the Jewish people identified it as the dwelling place of God's presence, i.e., His Holy Spirit; thus, it makes perfect sense that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost would occur in relationship with the temple in Jerusalem (cf. Joel 3:5). Moreover, Jewish tradition believed that the Holy Spirit manifested himself among those sitting together (Acts 2:2) studying the Torah (cf. *m. Avot* 3:2; and *b. Berachot* 6a). During the days of the Second Temple, the Temple Mount served as a center

Jewish tradition believed that the Holy Spirit manifested himself among those sitting together (Acts 2:2) studying the Torah.

for the study of the Torah (cf. *Antiquities* 17:140–163; Luke 2:48,49, 21:37; *t. Sanhedrin* 7:1; *t. Hagigah* 2:9; *m. Yoma* 7:1; *m. Sotah* 7:7,8; and *b. Pesachim* 26a), and perhaps, Torah study explains, in part, what the disciples were doing "together in one place" when they received the Holy Spirit (cf. *m. Bikkurim* 1:6; *t. Sotah* 15:12). According to Jewish tradition, God gave Moses the Torah on the festival of Pentecost<sup>7</sup> (cf. *Jubilees* 1:1),<sup>8</sup> that explains the appearance of many of the Sinai motifs, e.g., fire, wind, and language<sup>9</sup> in Luke's description of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. All the events of Acts 2 occurred in a public setting; given the date of Pentecost, the only natural location for these events to take place was the temple in Jerusalem — the House of the Lord. ■

#### Notes

1. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975), 208.
2. Cf. Deuteronomy 23:17; 1 Samuel 1:24; 3:15; 1 Kings 3:1; 6:37; 7:12; 9:1; Isaiah 2:2; 37:1; 66:20; Jeremiah 7:2; 17:26; 19:14. Usually the Jerusalem temple is identified throughout the Old Testament as the "house of the Lord."
3. S. Safrai, "Religion in Everyday Life," in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum; vol. 2; Van Gorcum: Assen, 1976), 810; and idem, "The Temple," in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, 893,94.
4. Cf. A.F. Rainey and R. Steven Noltey, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 370.
5. In recent years, a large number of Jewish ritual immersion pools have been uncovered in excavations around the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; see H. Geva, "Jerusalem. The Temple Mount and Its Environs," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. E. Stern; vol. 2; The Israel Exploration Society: Jerusalem 1993), 739,40. In 2004, the Pool of Siloam (John 9:7) was uncovered south of the Temple Mount. This large pool served as a ritual immersion pool for pilgrims during the Jewish festivals; see R. Reich, *Excavating the City of David: Where Jerusalem's History Began* (Israel Exploration Society: Jerusalem, 2011), 225–244, 328–333.
6. The Book of Jubilees also connects the festival of Pentecost with the covenant God made with Noah in Genesis 9 (Jubilees 6:17–19). The Qumran community annually renewed the covenant, in which they brought into the community new initiates, at the festival of Pentecost.
7. The school of Rabbi Ishmael interpreted the verse, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:29) as "Just as a hammer is divided into many sparks, so every single word that went forth from the Holy One (i.e., at Sinai), blessed be He, split up into seventy languages (i.e., the languages of the nations of the world; cf. Acts 2:5–11)" (*b. Shabbath* 88b).

Homera/Thinkstock



**MARC TURNAGE**, director, Center for Holy Lands Studies for The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri

To share or comment on this article, go to [ej.ag.org/locationpentecost](http://ej.ag.org/locationpentecost) or scan the QR code.



In  
Depth

# Small Church, **BIG** **IMPACT.**

Leading Your Congregation  
to Outsized Influence

## INTRODUCTION

# Pastoring a Small Church With Your Head, Heart, and Hands

By **George Paul Wood**

*Impact* rather than *size* is the true marker of a well-led, spiritually healthy church.

**According to official statistics**, 84 percent (10,560 congregations) of the 12,595

Assemblies of God churches in the United States have fewer than 200 people in their major worship services; 65 percent (8,174 congregations) have fewer than 100 people; and 36 percent (4,539 congregations) have fewer than 50. Given the number of churches without a lead pastor, and churches with a non-AG-credentialed lead pastor, we estimate approximately 80 percent of all AG lead pastors lead a small church.

Pastors of large churches write most of the books about leading churches. These books reflect the contexts, challenges, and opportunities of large congregations with multiple staff members. They assume that numerical growth is not only normal, but also normative. Many AG small-church pastors find these otherwise excellent books unhelpful because their personal experiences are so different from the authors'.

The purpose of the spring 2013 issue of *Enrichment* is to provide contextually appropriate leadership advice for the pastors of smaller AG churches. It does not assume that all pastors must lead their churches to numerical bigness. (In some communities — especially rural ones — numerically large churches are simply not possible.) Indeed, it rejects the assumption that numerical bigness is necessarily a sign of spiritual health. (Just as important, it rejects the opposite assumption that numerical bigness is a sign of spiritual compromise.)

Rather, this issue assumes that some well-led, spiritually healthy churches will remain small, from a statistical point of view. What makes such churches distinct is not the size of their Sunday morning worship attendance, but the size of their impact on their communities. In other words, *impact* rather than *size* is the true marker of a well-led, spiritually healthy church — whether small or large. This issue of *Enrichment* therefore offers small-church pastors advice on how to lead their congregations for greater influence.

George O. Wood inaugurates the issue with a personal reflection on the small-church ministry of his parents, George and Elizabeth Wood. Though they never grew large churches, by any measure, their faithful efforts in missions, church planting, and pastoring produced good results. Next, I interview David Campbell, Karen Rydwansky, and David Silva about the challenges and opportunities of leading a smaller

church. I think you will be inspired by their hopeful outlook and missions-mindedness.

The next group of article outlines what we might consider best practices of small-church ministry. Alton Garrison shows how to assess the current health of your church. Mike Clarensau demonstrates the importance of cultivating a culture of yes. Steve Pike suggests how to use church-planting methodology to reach your community. Eric Swanson points out the necessity of developing an external focus. Steve Donaldson demonstrates how rural churches can be leaders in their communities. Efraim Espinoza and Scott Temple report on how seven ethnic-minority congregations are creating a welcoming atmosphere in their churches.

The final group of articles addresses the challenges leaders of smaller churches face. Warren Bird offers practical guidance for mobilizing volunteers in the small-church setting. Lori O'Dea outlines a biblically grounded strategy for resolving conflict, which can feel especially intense in smaller churches. Tim Leathers provides a new way of looking at bivocational ministry, seeing it as an opportunity to expand your church's ministry. Pete Scazzero talks about cultivating emotional health in the pastorate. I interview Rich Guerra, Mike Quinn, and Eric Rountree about creative ways large and smaller churches can partner together for greater influence.

Finally, Karl Vaters pens the issue's closing editorial. A veteran small church pastor, Karl is author of *The Grasshopper Myth: Big Churches, Small Churches and the Small Thinking That Divides Us*.

It is our fervent prayer as editors that the spring 2013 issue of *Enrichment* will encourage all ministers who read it, whatever the size of their church. But we especially hope it will inspire small-church pastors to lead their congregations to greater health and influence. 📖



**GEORGE PAUL WOOD,**  
executive editor of *Enrichment* journal,  
Springfield, Missouri

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/smchintroduction](http://ej.ag.org/smchintroduction)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook



# Cultivating **Faithfulness**

By **George O. Wood**

The parents of the Assemblies of God general superintendent taught him many things pertaining to life and ministry, but the most important truth they taught was the real measure of success.

**If you measured my parents' ministry** by metrics, they were not successful.

I am the youngest of three children with a sister and brother 8 and 5 years older, respectively. Thus, I was the “only child” at home from 8th through 12th grades. I saw up close and personal how much my mom and dad struggled while pastoring dysfunctional and very small churches.

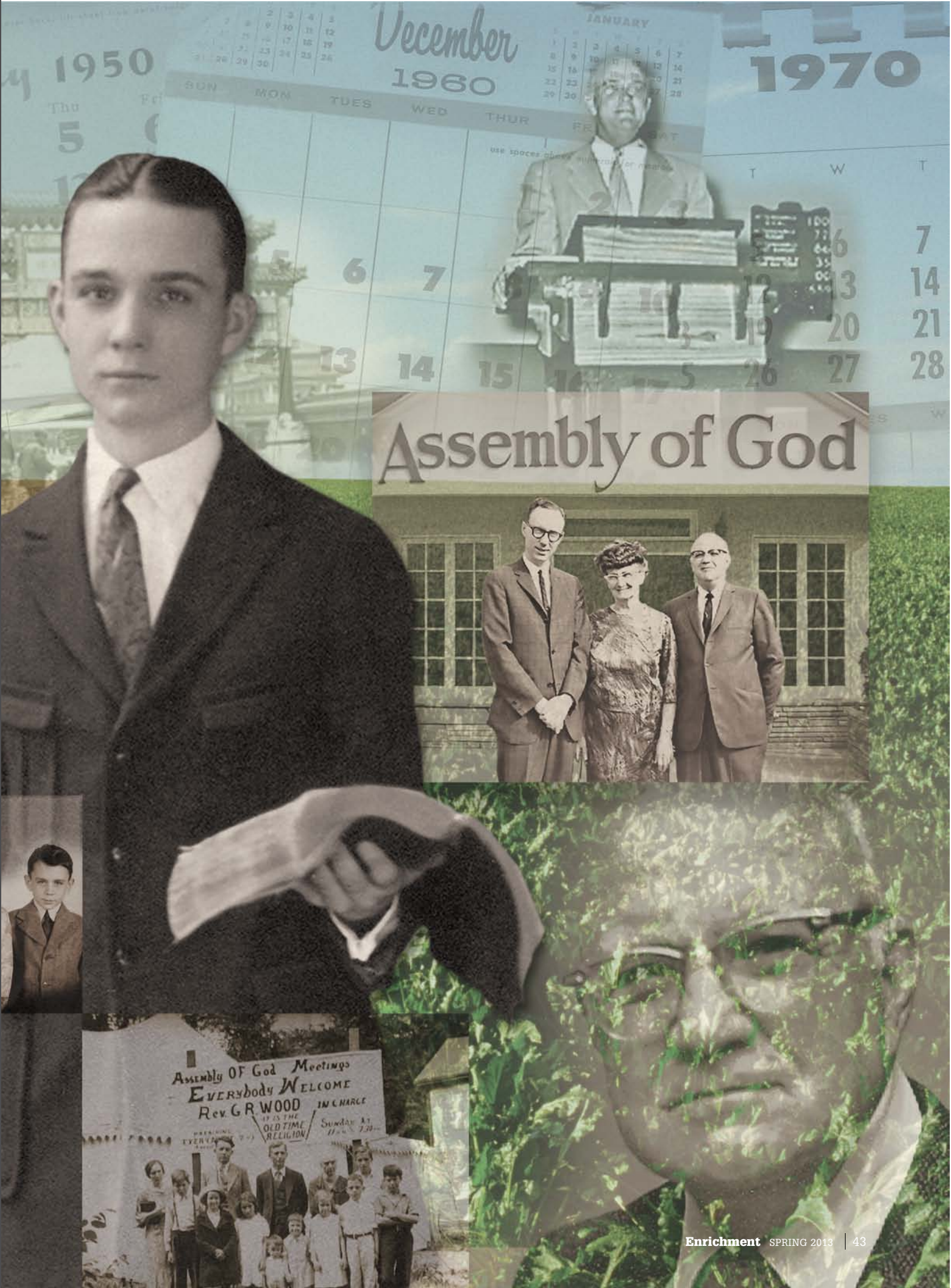
They had better success and satisfaction in their days as missionaries to China and Tibet. My mother was only 26 in 1924 when she went to China as a single missionary. My dad went as a first-term missionary in 1932. They courted some before they left the U.S. and more on the boat, marrying in Shanghai, November 14, 1932 — and headed the next day for the long and arduous trek to the Northwest China/Tibetan border. Someone robbed their earthly goods in transit. They returned home before the outbreak of World War II, pioneered churches in Ravenna, Ohio, and Traverse City, Michigan; pastoring also in Illinois.

Our family returned to China in 1947. When we left for the final time in 1949, there were not more than 200 Chinese converts to show for all the years they spent there. Their additional work among the Tibetans, like my Uncle Victor Plymire's, also had borne little fruit.

My parents always wanted to return to China, but the door never opened. While hoping for that opportunity they traveled from pillar to post during the next 30 years — pastoring small churches in Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas, Missouri, and California — plus one failed church plant in Indiana. Their longest tenure in a pastorate was 2 1/2 years — until their last church before they retired. That church, of about 30 souls, was blessed by their labors for 5 years.







# Assembly of God



## Cultivating Faithfulness

(continued from page 42)

Between pastorates, they did evangelism — or, actually in those days in the Assemblies of God, you booked meetings until you could “get” a church. Often weeks went by with no meetings and no income.

the next annual election. Twelve months went by and Mom and Dad called me, “We’ve been counting the votes and we’re one vote short. Can you drive down for the business meeting?”

My parents never lived long enough to see the fruit of their ministry. They are examples of the truth, “some planted and some watered.”

The longest stretch my dad was without a church came during my junior and senior years in high school. So I could have a stable experience, we moved to Springfield, Missouri. Mom stayed with me in a small rented home while Dad traveled. Mom and I rode the city bus as transportation, and our one weekly luxury was walking several blocks from church to Hamby’s restaurant where we could dine for a dollar.

I saw my parents’ dedication to the Lord and His work. Specific memories stand out.

I recall living for several weeks in a church basement in San Angelo, Texas, during a sweltering summer without air conditioning. I was about 12 years old. My dad and I passed the daytime playing Ping-Pong.

I remember the drama of the annual vote on the pastor. I now humorously say that in those days all forms of entertainment were denied the saints except the annual vote on the pastor. The church got to candidate three ministers, then vote in the one they liked. The new pastor experienced 3

months of honeymoon, 3 months of some discontent, 3 more months of growing discontent, followed by the last 3 months of active campaigning to get enough no votes to keep the pastor from being reelected by a two-thirds margin. My dad was smart. While I was a sophomore in college, he had me join the church he pastored even though it was 120 miles away. He thought he might need my vote at

That church didn’t need a secret ballot. Everyone knew who was voting for whom. I entered the church 5 minutes after the start time. When everyone saw me, they knew the result. Sure enough, Dad got another year by one vote — mine and the deacon’s daughter who drove down from college with me. The next year Dad knew he didn’t have the votes, so he got to the head of the parade and resigned before the business meeting.

When I was 10, Mom and Dad were pastoring a church that got infested (I chose that word deliberately) with the Latter Rain. It was charismatic craziness. Dad was never one to back off from a confrontation, so he preached against the excesses, all but naming the people in the congregation who were for the “new wave.” Mom would say at the Sunday family dinner, “Well, Dad preached a real zinger today.”

My call to ministry occurred in the middle of that schism. Two deacons accosted my dad one Sunday night at the altar, demanding he resign. The big tall deacon placed his fist against my dad’s chin saying that Dad wasn’t “spiritual” and needed to go. But Dad held firm. On a subsequent Sunday night I remember sitting next to my mother, looking up at her, and saying, “Mom, when I grow up I’m going to be a preacher just like Dad, and I’m not going to pussyfoot either.” To this day, I’m not sure I know what “pussyfoot” means — and I probably have been a tad more diplomatic than my dad, but his resoluteness for right doctrine made me greatly admire him. Dad saved that church for the Assemblies of God.

In my 2009 sermon at General Council, I told the story of my parents’ unsuccessful church plant in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Dad worked in a factory and Mom sold Avon to provide a living, and they paid pretty much all the ongoing expenses of the little mission they had purchased with their last \$1,000 in savings as down payment. To me, Mom and Dad were heroic ministers who led a life of sacrifice. I never want to see church planters have to go it alone like my parents did.

The memory that still brings tears to my eyes when I think of

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/cultivating  
faithfulness](http://ej.ag.org/cultivating_faithfulness)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook

it is a church they pastored near Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, when I was a college senior. One bitter cold weekend I drove up to see them. They were living in the cinder block basement of the church — having converted two Sunday School rooms



into living quarters. They couldn't afford to heat the place, so periodically they would turn on a little electric space heater to beat back the zero cold and dampness. They got the church back on its feet. Today there is a new sanctuary in that town.

In fact, most every church they pastored is now thriving. And, as for their work in China, the believers in our old city and area now number over 15,000.

My parents never lived long enough to see the fruit of their ministry. They are examples of the truth, "some planted and some watered."

There's so much more — especially about my parents' missionary experiences in Northwest China and Tibet. Their journals tell the story of their extravagant commitment to Jesus, their endurance in the face of hardship, the miracles that helped cement my faith as a young person, their risk-taking in bringing the gospel to people who had never heard the story of Jesus.

My mother knew she and Dad were not big preachers. They only attended two General Councils, and very few — if any — district councils in all my growing-up years. They could not afford it. I wish stronger churches could adopt pastors of smaller churches and make it possible for them to attend a General Council or district council. What an encouragement that would have been to my parents.

No, my parents were never in the headlines. They were like most unsung hero ministers of the Assemblies of God who serve faithfully with little or no recognition. But, as Francis Schaeffer said, in God's work "there are no little people, and there are no little places."

When I was a boy, Mom would often say two things to me, and she said them often. The first thing she said was, "It won't matter 100 years from now." Indeed that is true. One hundred years from now it won't matter if we led a small ministry or a large one, whether we lived in a nice house or a rented one-room apartment, whether we drove a new car or an old jalopy, whether we got our clothes from Macy's

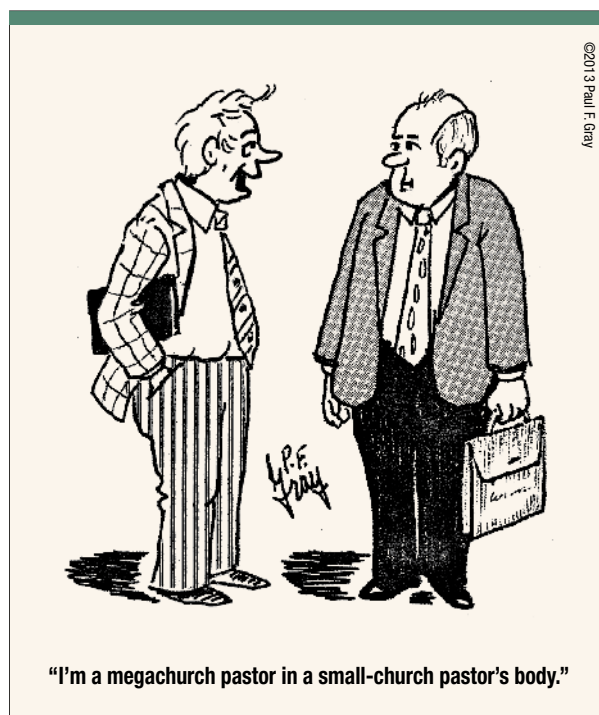
or Goodwill (where Mom got hers). What matters 100 years from now is whether we loved Jesus and loved the people Jesus called us to.

The second thing she said was, "Georgie (my family name), when we stand before Jesus He will not ask us if we have been successful, but if we have been faithful." Of course, in retrospect, I realize the Lord wants us also to be fruitful as well as faithful; but it is my parents' focus on faithfulness that informs my life to this day. I have been more successful than they if you examine success by metrics, but they were exceedingly faithful in spite of what seemingly was a lack of success.

I am grateful to have been blessed with the heritage of a mom and dad who lived their faith in the face of much hardship. Mom died first, at the age of 81, in 1979. We placed on her tombstone, "God's Faithful Servant." Dad died 5 years later at the age of 76. His tombstone reads, "God's Faithful Minister." I cannot think of two more fitting epitaphs to describe their lives and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. 📖



**GEORGE O. WOOD, D.Th.P.**, general superintendent of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri







INTERVIEW

# Challenges and Opportunities

## Facing Smaller Churches

**A**pproximately 84 percent of Assemblies of God churches are under 200 in weekly attendance. Pastoring the smaller church presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. George Paul Wood, Enrichment journal's executive editor, visited with three pastors of smaller churches to discuss how smaller churches can have a bigger impact on their community.

**David Campbell** is lead pastor of Timbo Valley Assembly of God in north central Arkansas. The church is located in a town of 40 people. Stone County has a population of 10,000. **Karen Rydwansky** is lead pastor of Crossroads Worship Center in Weymouth, Massachusetts. She also serves as the Boston area presbyter. She planted Crossroads 8 years ago in a suburban community with the same issues facing larger city churches. Crossroads is an international church with 45 nationalities. **David Silva** has pastored Elim Assembly of God, a Hispanic church, in Corpus Christi, Texas, for 8 years. Services are in Spanish with an English translation for second- and third-generation Hispanics who do not speak Spanish.



**CAMPBELL**



**RYDWANSKY**



**SILVA**



istockphoto/Thinkstock

**If you could tell other small-church pastors one thing about smaller churches, what would it be?**

**RYDWANSKY:** Think big. I never think about our church being small. It is more about believing God for great things and living in the anticipation and reality of the impact we are making in the lives of people and surrounding community. Little is much when God is in it.

**CAMPBELL:** We do not determine the spiritual power and influence of a church by its size. God's command to evangelize the world is the same for every church. The methods may differ according to size, but the goals are the same. Small churches are significant and necessary in small communities.

**SILVA:** If you are a smaller church, it does not mean you do not have the same heart as a larger church for what God is calling you to do. People in smaller churches love people and God just as much as the next person. We are excited about doing the work of God. We are making an impact on many lives in our corner of the world.

**Smaller and larger churches must focus on both church growth and church health. How do you integrate these two components in the smaller church?**

**SILVA:** To be a healthy church, you need to be a Christ-centered church. A Christ-centered church has a heart and passion for evangelism. We have a wide spectrum of ministries at our church, with discipleship occurring in both Sunday School

and small groups. As we mature as Christians and disciple others, we should carry on Christ's passion for evangelism. Jesus said go and make disciples. You cannot make disciples unless you reach out to the community. Pastors of smaller churches are not teaching their churches to be healthy if they are not teaching the heart of Christ — to reach the lost.

**RYDWANSKY:** I keep evangelism as a key focus. A healthy church must focus on evangelism, because a healthy church is a growing church. The church I pastor has initiatives to reach out to the community. In my preaching and teaching, I talk about having a heart to win the lost. I often say: "In your circle of influence, on whom is God already working? Invite them to church. Reach them through friendship evangelism." If we stop emphasizing reaching pre-Christians, we will stop growing and being a healthy church.

Not all discipleship takes place on Sunday morning, so I also emphasize growth groups, where the focus is on discipleship.

**CAMPBELL:** Church growth happens as the Lord adds to the church as people are saved. Church health relates to fulfilling the ministries within the church. Church growth and church health are intertwined. As we disciple new believers, God will often lay a burden for ministry on someone's heart. As you talk to them about the ministry God has given them, their ministry becomes a part of your church's outreach.

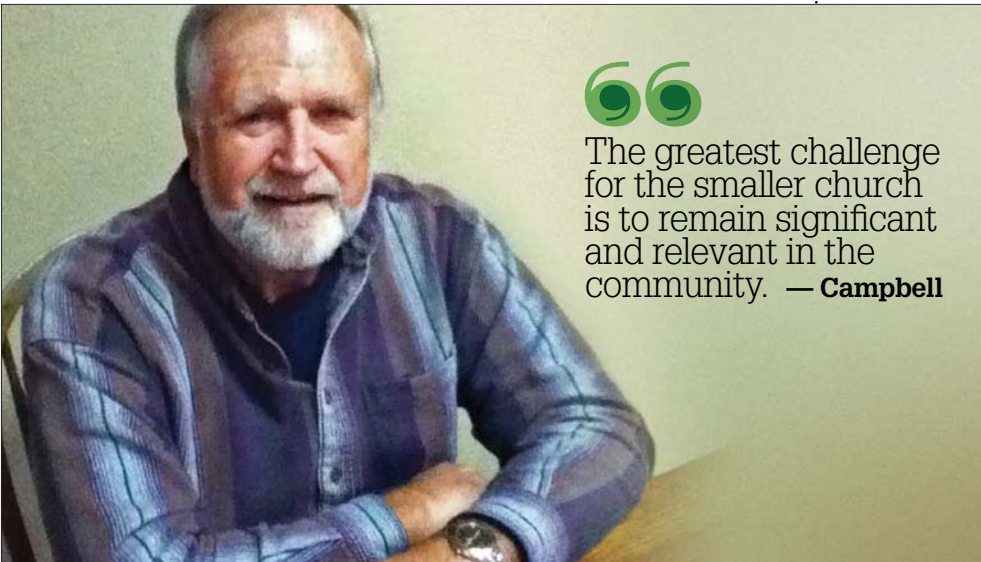
Effecting growth in small rural areas is different because people are scattered around the county. You evangelize by being in the marketplace. People come to church because they



## Challenges and Opportunities Facing Smaller Churches

(continued from page 47)

like you and like what you say. Hopefully when they come, they will turn their lives over to Christ.



“The greatest challenge for the smaller church is to remain significant and relevant in the community. — Campbell

### In what ways can smaller churches have a strong missions program?

**CAMPBELL:** A smaller congregation may not be strong financially, but smaller churches can play a significant role in supporting missions. The Lord laid it on my heart for our church to support all 19 missionaries from Louisiana. We also support about 60 missionaries from Arkansas. I asked the congregation if they could give a penny a month to a missionary. Of course, that's ridiculous. What about a nickel? A dime? Quarter? Half dollar? We continued to increase the dollar amount until the amount we had purposed in our heart to give was met.

God loves a cheerful giver. He says to purpose in your heart what you can give, and then give it. We support each Louisiana missionary with \$10 per month. If every church would do that, the church's missionary needs would be met. Currently we give around \$100,000 a year to missions. When God blesses us, we pass it on.

God promised me years ago that if we would give to missions, we would always have money to give to missions. This has been absolutely true. I am in my 34th year of pastoring this church. God has

blessed us abundantly. When someone has a project, it is not uncommon for our church to give \$20,000 – \$25,000 toward it. It is because God gives it to us. We do not have anything that does not have His fingerprint on it.

**RYDWANSKY:** When I planted Crossroads 8 years ago, I determined we would support every one of our Southern New England missionaries. Too often smaller churches focus on what they cannot do, rather than on what they can do. I was not going to be embarrassed if we could only support a missionary with \$10 or \$25 a month. We would trust God to give the increase. I attribute the strength, health, and growth Crossroads has experienced to its faithfulness in giving to missionaries.

I was shocked when I went to district council the last year we were in the district-supervised category. According to the annual report, Crossroads was the

top missions-giving church that year.

During a Communion service a year ago, God gave a prophetic word. He said, “You take care of the bread; I'll take care of the bricks.” As a church, we are not going to worry about the money for a larger building we desperately need. We are going to stay focused on having faith to give.

We have seen God's faithfulness. We have been able to increase all of our missionary support to \$75 or \$100 per month per missionary. We also give \$200 a month to Northpoint (formerly Zion) Bible College. Keep your focus. Do not be afraid of what you cannot do; focus on what you can do, and God will take care of the rest.

**SILVA:** I have looked back over the 56-year history of this church. The founding families and pastors decided to contribute to missions from day one. At first, the giving was a small amount, but they were faithful. God honors faithfulness. Some people in smaller churches feel they need to take care of their own needs first before giving money to help other ministries or missionaries. This is unfortunate.

We serve a huge God. He can supply all our needs. We move on faith and believe He will open the right doors and supply what we need. The church I pastor is a missions-giving church. We love our missionaries. We pray for them. We provide them as much as we can, as often as we can. When we make room in our budget for missions, God blesses us.

### What are some of the greatest challenges facing smaller churches and their pastors in America today?

**RYDWANSKY:** One of our big challenges was starting out with

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/challengesandopportunities](http://ej.ag.org/challengesandopportunities)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook

less than 40 people and providing a variety of ministries for the whole family. This church was in need of an active children's ministry, youth ministry, and also good musicians. Musicians are a huge need for the smaller church. Having enough people to staff these areas is always a challenge.

Another challenge for the smaller church is complacency. Many people in smaller churches like the small environment. It is easy for them to become complacent and stop thinking about reaching lost people in the community, bringing in new people, and seeing them come to faith in Christ.

**SILVA:** Churches have a challenge to have everything in place to accommodate visitors' needs. When people visit they are often looking for a significant youth and children's ministries that can address the needs of their family. But finding people to fill those roles is challenging. It can be difficult for the pastor to wear multiple hats.

I once thought it would be wonderful if God would bring in a millionaire to supply the funding for everything we dream and God wants us to do. God told me, "You have everything you need to succeed and move forward with who you have sitting in the pews right now."

We need to invest in our people. We need to take time to develop leaders and train them so they can help ease the pastor's responsibilities and help develop those resources.

**CAMPBELL:** The greatest challenge for the smaller church is to remain significant and relevant in the community. The main focus is always the message of Jesus Christ — the Cross. The church that has this focus will never fail.

**What opportunities for ministry are unique to smaller churches? How has God positioned them to do something that larger churches cannot do?**

**SILVA:** A smaller setting requires the pastor to invest in and develop people around him or her. The reward is seeing them grow in their leadership capacity and become key people who hold the pastor's arms up and offer encouragement.

We have many people in our church who gave their lives to Christ, and now they are a vital part of the ministry. This does not happen overnight. It takes a lot of effort.

Small groups offer more individual contact with the congregation. We listen to people, pray with them, identify with

their needs, and challenge them to believe God to do great and mighty things in their lives. We believe in God for the greatness that He sees in them, and we invest in them, and they have grown and work in the church. It is beautiful to see them mature and begin to take on responsibility, even eventually joining our staff. Without the additions to my staff from developing leaders, I could not do half of what I do now.

The smaller church can take the Word of God and run with it and be people of faith. We can believe God for growth, and believe God for supernatural things to happen in our smaller congregations.

66

Too often smaller churches focus on what they cannot do, rather than on what they can do.

— Rydwansky



God can turn a difficult situation around, and the pastor and congregation can rejoice in what God is doing in their life and in their church.

**RYDWANSKY:** The family is so broken today. The family environment of the smaller church attracts people. I live near Boston, the city of *Cheers*, where everyone knows your name, and says we are glad you came. This can be present in the larger church, but it is often more evident in the smaller church.

Smaller churches can bring people in and make them feel welcome and help them get to know others more easily. Sometimes a church can lose this relational atmosphere as it grows larger. Many of our young people come from families that are in disarray. Young people can be in a smaller-church environment where they have mothers and fathers in the Lord who can love on them and make them feel like they are significant.

Smaller churches are able to initiate change quicker. I have a saying, "We will try it for 3 months; if it doesn't work, we will change it." We have that ability as a smaller church to be able to adapt quickly.

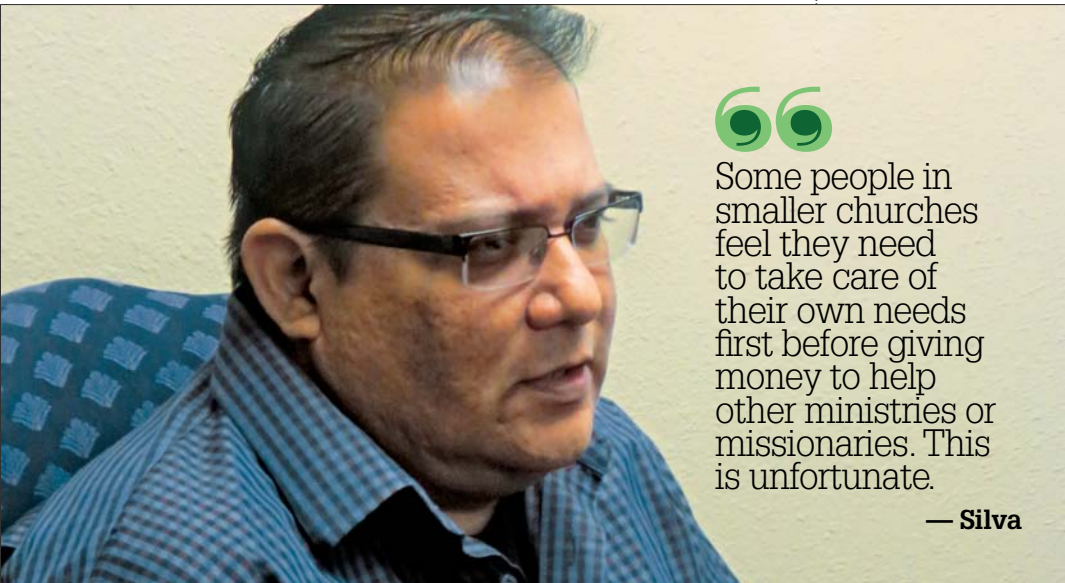


## Challenges and Opportunities Facing Smaller Churches

(continued from page 49)

**David, what are some of the challenges you face in pastoring a church in rural America?**

**CAMPBELL:** One of the major challenges is to overcome the small-church mindset. If God can use two fish and five loaves, then He can use a smaller church. In a rural church, nearly every challenge is too large. It would not be a challenge if you could handle it. This means you must depend on God. God is not only a supplier of physical and spiritual needs, He is a supplier of ideas.



“Some people in smaller churches feel they need to take care of their own needs first before giving money to help other ministries or missionaries. This is unfortunate.”

— Silva

It is important that a rural church network with other churches. God has placed on my heart to network with other Assemblies of God churches when a pastor goes to a town to plant a church. If all 420 Assemblies of God churches in Arkansas would give \$1,000 to a new-church plant, that pastor would have cash to purchase land and a facility debt free. Immediately, that church could support missions, and God would bless it for that. The Jehovah's Witnesses can teach us something about planting churches. In 3 days, they can erect a building in a neighboring community. If they can do that, the Assemblies of God can too.

When a smaller church is in a building program, we send it a substantial contribution. If we have a work crew in our church that has the particular skills they need, we help with their building.

Another challenge in a smaller church is staffing. The smaller church must rely on volunteers. The church needs capable teachers and musicians. When volunteers move away, they leave a big hole to fill. But we pray, and God brings others.

**Karen, you are in an urban multicultural environment with 45 nationalities in your church. Many**

**of these people come from traditional societies without strong female leadership. As a woman pastor, what challenges and opportunities do you face in leading your church?**

**RYDWANSKY:** I think this is probably one of the greatest times for women in pastoral ministry. When we look at the early history of the Assemblies of God, many women were pastoring. I have had few female pastor role models; I think we are in a new day and time for that.

A lot of people in this church have come out of ethnic churches that do not recognize women in ministry and may be reluctant to come to a church pastored by a woman. The anointing of the Holy Spirit breaks down their resistance. I do occasionally have people who are verbal about not believing a woman should pastor a church, but I choose not to fight that battle. I encourage them to find a church where they are more comfortable.

I am strategic about what our church's platform looks like. I make sure we have a blended male-female look and also an ethnic look on our platform. I have to be strategic about making sure that our church does not look too feminine. Even our graphics, visuals, and music have to be something that will be attractive to men.

We did a demographic study and discovered that Crossroads has a higher ratio of men to women than the average evangelical church in America. People coming into our church are often surprised by the strong male presence. We have strong men. A woman said to me recently, "The one thing I have noticed is the men really respect you, Karen." I am not heavy-handed with men. In fact, I put our men front and center. I often have men in the pulpit. Our church has not been hindered in any way by having a female pastor.

**David, over the last 8 years, you have led a traditional church into a turnaround church. What are the challenges and opportunities you have faced? Tell about the challenges in a Hispanic church where the first generation wants to continue speaking Spanish, but the cultural dynamics shift with the second generation.**

**SILVA:** I was 28 when I became pastor. My young age presented a challenge. Many people questioned my ability to

pastor because of my lack of experience. But God puts His hand on you, He gives you direction, and He gives you the knowledge you need to lead the church. If we lead by our own personal knowledge, we will always come up short.

The Hispanic church is in constant change. People are migrating into this country to make it their home. They want to be connected to their roots while others are born in the United States and only speak English, but they want to be close to their heritage and culture. This presents a challenge because we need to deal with a multigenerational culture where age, language, and education all play a vital role. Somehow God has given us the favor to place our hands on all of these areas and still be effective.

Coming into a 46-year-old traditional church and introducing change is hard. If pastors are not careful, their call for change makes it look like they hate what previous pastors have done. For change to be successful and to have a good effect on the church, the pastor needs to introduce it correctly. He needs to do it with prayer and with excellence.

I often use the analogy of the land of Goshen. God placed Joseph in a strategic place of leadership in Egypt to be a blessing to the people of Israel. God meant Egypt to be a transitional state, not a permanent state. The land of Goshen was good and plentiful, and the best the land had to offer. But God never meant for Goshen to be where the Israelites would stay forever. Sometimes God sends someone to ruffle our feathers and let us know it is time to move on.

Every church has the potential to be an excellent church where God moves and does strategic things and raises it up to be a light in the community. But it needs to leave those places where it has become comfortable and traditional.

If you feel strongly God is speaking to you to step out in faith, He will take care of you. I believe a church that is in decline or shows no growth can turn around. Such a church should leave the land of Goshen and head toward the Promised Land and take steps it has not taken before.

Our church has had a huge turnaround in 8 years. Our finances have flourished. Our attendance has flourished. I was the only person on staff when I came to the church. Seven people are on staff now. The changes we introduced were first God-ordained, and then we implemented those changes with excellence.

### **How do you encourage the lay ministries in a smaller church?**

**CAMPBELL:** Validation is extremely important. If God calls people to these ministries, you need to validate their call and what they do. When you validate the person, you also validate the ministry.

**RYDWANSKY:** Give people opportunity to minister. Come alongside them to teach them, but then be ready to make changes, if necessary.

**SILVA:** I believe in equipping leaders and empowering them for Kingdom work. Often we make the mistake of not giving people opportunities. It takes time and effort on our part to develop leaders, equip them, and empower them to do the work of God. This aspect of ministry is vital for the church to be healthy.

### **What advice do you have for smaller church pastors about maintaining a balance between ministry and personal life?**

**CAMPBELL:** Block some time for yourself and your family, or there will be no time. Take care of your personal responsibilities.

**RYDWANSKY:** Listen to your spouse. He or she will let you know when you are out of balance in this area. Also, even though I am the pastor, I do not need to be at everything.

**SILVA:** You do not have to be at everything. Sometimes you think that when you reach certain goals you will have more time. This is not true. You need to discipline yourself to make time for yourself and your family now. You need to take care of yourself. If you do not, nobody else will. You cannot do everything. God is in control.

### **If you could say one thing to encourage smaller-church pastors, what would it be?**

**CAMPBELL:** Do not think that smaller churches are not significant; they are. Do not think you are insignificant; you are significant. Do not think you have to do it all by yourself; you cannot. Be thankful for the help you receive, and always try to bless others.

Do not be too quick to leave a smaller church for a larger one. Know that for everything there is a season. Your church may be in the plowing season, the sowing season, the watering season, the cultivating season, or the harvest season. Recognize the season you are in, know what should occur in each season, work through each season, and you will enjoy the fruit of your ministry.

**RYDWANSKY:** Remember to be faithful where God places you and enjoy your church knowing God does not judge the size, rather your obedience to your call. Whatever you do, do it with passion and excellence.

**SILVA:** God has a purpose for you where you are. You may have dreams and aspirations for where you would like to be in ministry. But whatever your dreams and aspirations are, it is more important to be faithful where you are. You need to learn to trust God in the process, and enjoy it. 📖



# The **Healthy Church:**

How to Assess  
Your Church's Well-Being,  
**Whatever Its Size**

By **L. Alton Garrison**

The road to church health, regardless of size, begins with asking the right questions.



Illustration by Gary Locke



**or those who determine a church's effectiveness and success** by nickels and noses, the descriptive phrase *small, strong congregation* may sound as oxymoronic as *jumbo shrimp*. With an inordinate amount of emphasis placed on bigger is better, the thought that a smaller congregation could actually be a healthy, missional church impacting its community and achieving its Kingdom potential seems incongruent.

Bigger is bigger, not necessarily better, healthier, or more effective. Likewise, smaller is smaller, not necessarily sick, unhealthy, or ineffective. God invites you and your congregation, regardless of size, to share a mission that matches both the field where God places you and the strengths with which He blesses you. A church can be big and unhealthy just as a church can be small and unhealthy. God desires smaller churches to be healthy just as much as He desires big churches to be healthy.

I recently visited my hometown and spoke at an anniversary of the church where my dad spent the first 22 years of his ministry. The building is much improved, but it is still very small with a seating capacity of about 90 people. When I say small, I mean *little*. We did not even have a foyer — you were either in or out of our church.

Dad did not receive Christ as his Savior until he was 37 years old. At the time of his conversion, he was a high school dropout and hopelessly addicted to alcohol, which rendered him undependable as a provider and undesirable as a husband. But he accepted Christ, and Christ miraculously transformed him and delivered him from alcoholism; baptized him in the Holy

to become the pastor. God, however, called him and helped him in spite of his deficiencies. It was thrilling to hear the stories of the impact of his and Mom's ministry in that little community of less than 2,000 people and a church that would not seat 100 people.

#### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

We in ministry sometimes make basic assumptions that lead us to believe the incomplete or even false declarations made by others. Serving as district superintendent in Arkansas gave me opportunity to observe the vitality of churches serving small communities.

**Not all smaller churches are weak and dying, but some are.** In his book, *Small, Strong Congregations*, Kennon Callahan says there are three types of small congregations: "small and strong, small and weak, and small and dying."<sup>1</sup> Weak or dying is not the result of being a certain size; it is the result of a way of thinking, planning, and acting. If a church is small and weak or small and dying, the journey to health can be painful and slow. This is not only possible, it is also God's will. It is His church, and He wants every church to become everything He has designed it to be.

**Big churches are not just smaller churches, only larger.** No, they are entirely different. Smaller churches are not mini-mega

churches. In reality, they lack the people and financial resources to staff and finance multiple programs and ministries. Smaller churches have a distinct orientation, a unique culture, and a necessity for people and pastors to understand them for the value they have. Health generally leads to growth. A smaller church, however,

#### *First Assembly of God*

**Jeff Mantz, First Assembly of God, Yankton, South Dakota:**

"I will soon be involved in ministry 40 years. I needed to change my methods to relate to a new generation. I admit I was not prepared for the change required of me personally to leave behind the comfortable and forge new ways to do church and be the church that could relate to a lost world."

Spirit; and within 24 months of his conversion, the district appointed him pastor of Sour Lake Gospel Tabernacle before he had ever preached his first sermon. It was illogical for him

#### *Hope Fellowship*

**Bobby Richard, Hope Fellowship, Lafayette, Louisiana:**

"Since we have gone through the Acts 2 Journey, we have seen a 38 percent growth in Sunday attendance."



## The Healthy Church: How to Assess Your Church's Well-Being, Whatever Its Size

(continued from page 53)

may not necessarily be preoccupied with the numeric growth of the congregation but with the spiritual growth of the people that leads to transformed lives and eventually a new hope for the church to reach their friends for Christ.

**One size does not fit all.** Dr. Gary McIntosh, a well-known author, consultant, and professor at Talbot Seminary, has written a book, *One Size Doesn't Fit All*. He says different size churches have their own orientation, structure, and leadership styles. Roles of pastors are different; people make decisions differently; change occurs differently; and growth patterns and growth obstacles are different.

### FACING REALITIES

I am not excusing any church, regardless of size, for its lack of spiritual disciplines, dysfunctional behavior, absence of vision, or passion for fulfilling the Great Commission. But there are some realities that may be contributing factors to their size. These realities can bring a new level of awareness for becoming healthier.

**Reality #1: About 36 percent of Assemblies of God churches are 49 or less in attendance in public worship and almost 65 percent are 99 or less.**

**Our Challenge:** Current research by McIntosh says it takes at least 24 family units (attending and giving regularly) to sustain the necessary resources for a traditional church ministry. Attendance is not the only issue; there needs to be one leader for every 10 people attending. Lack of leaders and dedicated workers are always an issue in smaller churches. In surveys conducted in both Arkansas and South Dakota, the No. 1 need of pastors was recruiting workers, teachers, and leaders.

**Reality #2: Rural America is aging and shrinking in size.**

**Our Challenge:** While communities are aging, it feels like churches are aging even more rapidly than the communities they are in. When the average age of people in a church is 10 years or more above the average age in the community, the church finds it is no longer able to relate to the community. Fewer visitors attend; and, when there are visitors, there is a low retention rate. Demographic realities tell us when young people leave for work, military, or college, most never return.

- 1,769 (14 percent) of our churches are in communities of less than 1,000.

- 4,132 (33 percent) of our churches are in towns of less than 5,000.
- 5,702 (46 percent) of our churches are in towns of less than 10,000.

McIntosh's grid (see page 55) shows the drastic differences between the structure and orientation of small and large churches. Those differences are either not well known or rarely considered.

We tend to populate our conferences and teaching opportunities with well-known speakers who have had visible success (large churches). They frequently, and understandably so, share experiences and instructions with pastors of smaller churches

that may not work and may even be toxic. I am not insinuating that one cannot be inspired, challenged, and changed by an anointed message from a God-called man or woman of God, regardless of his or her context. But, based on McIntosh's information, trying to lead a smaller church in the same manner as a larger church can be ineffective at best, and at worst, extremely dangerous.

I have been guilty of giving directives based on my personal experience without considering how applicable my information might be to the hearers. As a pastor, I have said, "I am singularly responsible for only four things: casting vision, primary preacher, discipling staff, and stewardship development."

Implied, but not stated: "I am not the primary caregiver or the primary counselor." That may be appropriate for a larger church with an adequate pastoral care team and counselors; but, in a church of less than 200, it is not acceptable for the pastor to miss a hospital call or refuse to see someone who wants an appointment. That pastor may get introduced to the "U-haul" ministry.

In spite of the challenges, there are many small, strong congregations. Johanna and I recently visited our friends, Allen and Alice Cartwright, who pastor in Viola, Arkansas, a town of 381. The Sunday we were there, 200 were present in the service. That is a small church in a small town making a big impact.

Dave Campbell pastors Timbo Valley Assembly of God in Timbo, Arkansas, a town with less than 100 inhabitants. The

### *First Assembly of God*

**Scott Reed, First Assembly of God, Mountainburg, Arkansas,** (town of about 600): "Rick Allen and Mike Clarensau were great presenters and so important to this process. The Acts 2 Journey really helped us get a clear and compelling vision for our future. I believe every church, regardless of size or age, could and would benefit from the process. Record attendance Easter 2012: 265. Team unity like never before. Passion and purpose from pulpit to pew. Baptized 33 first-time converts in 2011. People are fired up and living out the vision."

To share or comment on this article, or to view author videos, go to [ej.ag.org/thehealthychurch](http://ej.ag.org/thehealthychurch) or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment* journal on Facebook

last time I visited the church, 117 were present and that church routinely gives \$100,000 annually to missions.

God's will is for His church to be healthy, accomplishing His mission.

The road to church health, regardless of size, begins with asking the right questions.

- Are we healthy? Can we agree on the definition of healthy church? Do we have the courage to assess ourselves? Will what has happened in the last 3 years likely predict what will happen in the next 3 years? The Healthy Church Network has assessment tools designed to help a church determine its current condition and prescribe a path to health.
- Why do we exist? What is our mission? Do we really strive to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment?
- Where are we going? What is our vision? What is God's picture of our preferred future?

- How do we behave? What are our values? What is our unique personality as a church — our DNA?
- What is our plan? Is our model producing the desired results? Do we have a strategy to get to where we need to be?
- Am I the right leader? Do I have a divine call to this church? Whom am I attempting to please — people or God? If the church has plateaued or is declining, am I willing to seek help?

#### A HEALTHY CHURCH IS GOD'S IDEA

Matthew 16:18 declares that Jesus is the head of the Church and He is the builder. You cannot imagine that the builder, Jesus, would use a faulty blueprint to build the greatest institution ever conceived.

The Early Church must be our model for a healthy church. The disciples birthed the Acts 2 Church in prayer and the Holy Spirit empowered it. Although it had some problems,

## Typology of Church Sizes: One Size Doesn't Fit All

FACTORS	SMALL CHURCH	MEDIUM CHURCH	LARGE CHURCH
Size	15 – 200 worshipers	201 – 400 worshipers	401+ worshipers
Orientation	Relational	Programmatical	Organizational
Structure	Single Cell	Stretched Cell	Multiple Cell
Leadership	Resides in key families	Resides in committees	Resides in select leaders
Pastor	Lover	Administrator	Leader
Decisions	Made by congregation; driven by history	Made by committees; driven by changing need	Made by staff and leaders; driven by vision
Staff	Bivocational or single pastor	Pastor and small staff	Multiple staff
Change	Bottom up through key people	Middle out through key committees	Top down through key leaders
Growth Patterns	Attraction model through relationships	Program model through key ministries	Proclamation model through word of mouth
Growth Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-church image</li> <li>• Ineffective evangelism</li> <li>• Inadequate programming</li> <li>• Downward momentum</li> <li>• Ingrown fellowship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate facilities</li> <li>• Inadequate staff</li> <li>• Inadequate finances</li> <li>• Poor administration</li> <li>• Increasing complexity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor assimilation</li> <li>• Increased bureaucracy</li> <li>• Loss of vision</li> <li>• Lack of member care</li> </ul>
Growth Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew a sense of purpose</li> <li>• Begin new ministries</li> <li>• Cultivate evangelism</li> <li>• Celebrate victories</li> <li>• Start new groups/classes</li> <li>• Involve new people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop distinct identity</li> <li>• Add additional staff</li> <li>• Use facilities multiple times</li> <li>• Offer multiple worship services</li> <li>• Write a long-range plan</li> <li>• Improve quality of ministry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew the vision</li> <li>• Design assimilation plan</li> <li>• Streamline procedures</li> <li>• Offer need-based events</li> <li>• Adjust leadership roles</li> <li>• Increase the number of small groups</li> </ul>

Reprinted from *One Size Doesn't Fit All* by Gary McIntosh (Grand Rapids: Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 1999). Used by permission.



## The Healthy Church: How to Assess Your Church's Well-Being, Whatever Its Size

(continued from page 55)

it was able to impact the then-known world.

Jesus and His Word are the foundation of a healthy church. Acts 2:4 describes the force of heaven that empowered the church at its inception.

With the challenges I have mentioned (and there are many more), it would be senseless to attempt to effect a change in the lives of people by just utilizing our own ingenuity, intellect, and human effort.

"You have an anointing from the Holy One. ... The anointing you received from Him remains in you" (1 John 2:20,27). Compare the flow of the Holy Spirit (the anointing) to electricity. Electricity is generic in its flow but specific in its output. The Holy Spirit tailors His empowering anointing to a person's individual gifts, temperament, and abilities.

- The anointing will help us *be* more than we actually are. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:8). The Spirit of God helped a shepherd boy become a king, a fisherman become a disciple, and a murderer become the most prolific author of the New Testament.
- The anointing will help us *say* more than we actually know. When they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them the utterance, the word Luke used is *apophtheggomai* — Spirit-inspired speech. On that same Day of Pentecost, Peter stood, possessing a holy boldness derived from a special anointing, preached a sermon, and 3,000 were saved. It is difficult to believe he was the same person who had recently denied he even knew our Lord. The same "Spirit-inspired speech," enabling those in the Upper Room to speak in a language they did not know, enabled Peter to speak in a language he did know. In response to his sermon, the people were cut to the heart and went from "what does this mean?" to "what shall we do?" The Holy Spirit can take our words and use them supernaturally.
- The anointing will help us *do* more than we can actually do. With the anointing, we can overcome impossible situations. Samson killed 1,000 with a jawbone; Shamgar killed 600 with an ox goad; and Gideon overcame odds of 450 to 1 when 300 defeated 135,000 with trumpets, clay pots, and lamps.

The Acts 2 Church had Jesus as its foundation and the Holy Spirit as its force. If we are to have healthy churches today, we need the same foundation, Jesus, and the same force, the Holy Spirit.

After God birthed the Church, the Holy Spirit gave a pattern for its ongoing behavior in Acts 2:42–47.

The National Leadership and Resource Center is using that pattern as our strategy to help churches become healthier. We derived our strategic plan from the functions Luke wrote about:

- Connect (evangelism, fellowship) — vertically to God and horizontally to people.
- Grow (discipleship).

- Serve (gift-oriented ministry).
- Go (evangelism/missions).
- Worship.

Our consultants, Mike Clarensau, Ron McManus, and Rick Allen, are engaged in several districts leading numerous churches to health in a 1-year process we call the Acts 2 Journey.

We are grateful to God for His blessings on our efforts. 🙏



**L. ALTON GARRISON**, assistant general superintendent of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri

### Notes

1. Kennon Callahan, *Small, Strong Congregations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 11.
2. Gary McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1999).



To view L. Alton Garrison's video "Introduction to the Acts 2 Model" and additional videos, go to [ej.ag.org/actsmodel](http://ej.ag.org/actsmodel) or scan the QR code.

YOU KNOW YOUR CHURCH IS SMALL WHEN ...



©2013 Steve Phelps

everyone has the same last name.

An evening to remember for women in ministry

# coffee chocolate inspiration laughs

with author  
**Ruth Haley Barton**



and comedienne  
**Anita Renfroe**



at **General Council, Wednesday, August 7, 2013, 7–9 p.m.**  
Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida

**Tickets: \$30**

**Door Prizes • Scholarships • Gifts For All Attendees**

**417-268-1082 • [www.agts.edu/link/womeninministry](http://www.agts.edu/link/womeninministry)**

Brought to you by







If my dreams truly hinged on dunking a basketball, then I had only nightmares of disappointment ahead.

# A Culture of **Yes.**

How to Lead From Your Strengths,  
Not Your Weaknesses By **Michael Clarensau**

Many pastors have confronted the limitations of their settings so often that a “culture of can’t” cripples their thoughts. Must this be the plight of the smaller congregation?

**I** **wanted to dunk a basketball.** After hours of watching Julius Erving and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — the stars of my childhood — prove that dunking a basketball shaped the path to athletic stardom, I was convinced that the ability to play above the rim would give me that treasured spot on my high school team.

So I spent hours jumping. I could not enter a room without testing to see if I could scrape my fingers on its ceiling. I exercised my fingers, seeking to expand them to the length necessary to grip a basketball in a way that I could achieve my acrobatic aerial goals.

Unfortunately, I was the smallest kid in my class. Even after hours of hanging on the swing set bars at a nearby park in an effort to stretch my tiny frame, it was clear I would fall at least a foot short of my goal of being 6’ 10” tall. If my dreams truly hinged on dunking a basketball, then I had only nightmares of disappointment ahead. Over time, reality sunk in. I faced the harsh conclusion that I could not, did not, and would not ever be able to dunk a basketball.



## A Culture of Yes: How to Lead From Your Strengths, Not Your Weaknesses

(continued from page 59)

Early in my first pastorate, a wonderful collection of about 75 redeemed folks in a small Kansas town, I struggled with similar disappointment. No, the church basketball team was not lacking a post player; I might have been the best athlete in the congregation. But we were a long way from where I wanted us to be, and my dreams for the church seemed as far away as that 10-foot rim.

Many small churches lack the people resources, the financial resources, and the ministry abilities to simply take the prepackaged success of someone else's reality and make it work.



I went to conferences, but there were Dr. J and Jabbar — or their church growth counterparts — setting the bar higher than I could reach. These leaders lived in the air above my head; and, though I admired their exploits and still dreamed of achieving my own, I knew my group of worshipping friends and I could not do much of what these hall of fame leaders were doing.

Many smaller church pastors know that feeling. Great books and boxed programs call from catalog pages offering paths to our dreams or conference notebooks promise the answers we want. But when we look inside, our hopes are dashed at the realization we cannot do what the author insists is easy.

We genuinely cannot. Many small churches lack the people resources, the financial resources, and the ministry abilities to simply take the prepackaged success of someone else's reality

and make it work. They do not have the musicians for that musical, the teachers for that discipleship strategy, the people to take on that service project, or the money to do things on that level. They say they can't, and many times they are right.

I should tell you that I made the high school basketball team. I never learned to play above the rim, but my dad took me out in the driveway and taught me what I could do.

He helped me master ball-handling skills and taught me to pass effectively. I even learned a jump shot that my skinny arms could manage. My dad helped me develop skills that landed me on the team, on the court, and on the winning side more often than not.

Many pastors have confronted the limitations of their settings so often that a "culture of can't" cripples their thoughts. (See sidebar "How Do I Know When I'm Stuck in a Culture of Can't?"). Must this be the plight of the smaller congregation?

If the pile of things you cannot do seems a bit daunting, look for a different pile. My dad would insist there are answers among the things you can do. For most of us our limited resources mean that the *can'ts* will keep outnumbering the *cans*, but there is amazing potential in refocusing our efforts on what is truly within our reach.

In his book, *Now Discover Your Strengths*, Marcus Buckingham underscores the common misconception that our greatest room for growth is in our areas of greatest weakness.<sup>1</sup> He argues that we will likely never succeed by focusing on what we cannot do well, but that great potential lies in the energy we give to our strengths.

Gary McIntosh, author of many resources for smaller congregations, affirms a similar idea. In *There's Hope for Your Church*, McIntosh encourages pastors to look for their direction among the things their people can do well.<sup>2</sup> In fact, he adds his voice to many others who mark out the following path for discovering a church's unique path to health and growth.

### THE LEADER'S PASSION

The heart of the leader is the first place to search for what we can do. Pastors are people too, and goals and passions filled their hearts even before they stepped into their current roles. One pastor dreams of healing broken people because that is what a church did for him on his road toward God. Another pastor cannot help but weep over the challenges facing children and students. He feels a desperate desire to make a difference for this rising generation. Still another pastor's heart turns toward embracing people whom no one else will touch. Others find no greater joy than when they see God's life-changing power at work around them.

Pastors have a tendency to become task-focused after awhile. They live in the weekly demands of ministry until they think their true passion lies in the tasks of ministry, like preaching. But the real passion is deeper. Sometimes they can only find this by remembering, "what [they] were when [they] were called" (1 Corinthians 1:26). A visit back to the passion that first led them to ministry can help remind them of the deeper "why" in their work.

Pastors cannot lead in every available direction; but, when they move in the path of their passion, they are uniquely equipped to lead that journey. That passion differentiates them from other leaders, demonstrating that God has designed a unique road for them to take, a road where they can mobilize those they lead toward amazing impact.

To share or comment  
on this article, or to view  
author videos, go to  
[ej.ag.org/cultureofyes](http://ej.ag.org/cultureofyes)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook

## THE CONGREGATION'S ABILITY

The second place to look for the right steps forward is among those things a congregation can do well. As previously noted, there are many things a smaller congregation cannot do well. But regardless of the level of its limitations, every church can do something well.

God demonstrates amazing creativity in His church. He distributes gifts and talents in such a way that every congregation's ministry can be unique. We are simply not all good at the same things. One congregation proves effective in its teaching ministry, and proves that ability with a strong Sunday School or children's ministry. Another church might be blessed with musicians that bring vibrancy to its expressions of worship. Still another church has a passion to serve and the capacity to find creative ways of doing so.

It seems that the longer a church exists, the more ministries and programs it will undertake. Congregational energy and resources are spread over a number of different efforts, many of which were begun because of denominational expectations or the success of another church with these ministries. Truthfully, the smaller church can be quite susceptible to *traveling vision*. Traveling vision is the ministry ideas someone brings from their old church to their new church. Since the pastor and church leaders are often more accessible in the smaller church, people can easily approach them and talk them into

launching a ministry that a new member experienced at another church. This happens most frequently at a church that lacks clear vision and direction.

The result is an accumulation of programs and ministries that continually keep the congregation from achieving clear focus. It is not uncommon for the smaller congregation to be operating a wider variety of initiatives and programs than you will find on the calendar of a larger church.

When a congregation discovers what it can do well and begins to funnel its resources toward its narrower list of strengths, momentum often occurs. People enjoy doing those things they can succeed at doing and their quality efforts make a much greater impact than they can achieve in moments where weaknesses are on display.

## THE COMMUNITY'S NEED

Community need is the third place to look for the "cans" of ministry. While there are issues that arise in every city or town, each town can also have needs that are unique in either its nature or its extreme. For example, a small town could have an abnormally high rate of alcoholism or juvenile crime. Single moms might exist in great numbers, or perhaps an expanding ethnic group may present new challenges for the community. When a church's ministry can step into a significant community gap, opportunities will follow.

## How Do I Know When I'm **Stuck** in a Culture of Can't?



**Often a leader can be one of the last to realize** that a Culture of Can't has taken hold of his or her thoughts. Having worked with a lot of pastors and leaders, many of them highly frustrated, I have seen the following traits begin to cripple creativity and hope.

### FIVE SIGNS OF A CULTURE OF CAN'T

#### 1. When you greet new ideas with criticism.

Frustrated leaders often react to suggestions with negative initial thoughts. Even if they later choose to pursue the idea, the initial negative reaction reveals higher levels of doubt than hope.

#### 2. When you distrust the success of others.

Frustrated leaders can begin believing that the successes of others underscore their own failings. So someone else winning makes me a loser. Often these feelings leak out in criticism of the successful, perhaps accusing them of compromising fundamental values or "cheating" in some other form.

#### 3. When you have tried everything and nothing works.

Occasionally I will speak to a leader who insists that he has tried

everything. In most cases, he could not possibly have the resources to have actually tried it all, but his weariness with failure leads him to reject every idea or imagine that he has tried things he has never attempted.

#### 4. When you have withdrawn from other leaders and opportunities for encouragement.

Sadly, many leaders trapped in a "culture of can't" pull away from ministry friends or stop attending denominational gatherings where they might hear about others' successes or encounter more helpful ideas. Commonly they will insist, "There's nothing there for me" or find a way to criticize the gathering that will justify their absence.

#### 5. When your congregation begins to echo the frustration.

Unfortunately, many frustrated leaders spread the virus that has stolen their hope. In such settings, volunteers are quick to resign, and staff members develop the pastor's same frustration and look for new ministry, insisting they "can't stand the way these people are anymore."

**MICHAEL CLARENSAU**, Springfield, Missouri



## How to **Conquer** a Culture of Can't



**Truth is, pastors locked in a “culture of can’t”** will either blame themselves or blame their congregation. Many will quit or create an unhealthy environment that new people will flee.

What steps can you take? Elijah’s journey back to emotional health offers a helpful path to recovery (1 Kings 19).

### **1. Eat healthy and get some rest (verse 6).**

Depression often impacts sleep and healthy eating habits. You are not invincible. Take care of your body and you will give your thoughts a greater chance to get healthy.

### **2. Get alone with God (verses 11–13).**

Elijah needed to revisit God’s greatness and see that He was bigger than the current threat.

Often a frustrated pastor needs that same vision.

Elijah’s self-pitying complaint ultimately melts in the renewal of God’s call on his or her life.

### **3. Go back the way you came (verse 15).**

Elijah had to repent of his running to get back on track. He walked back through the places he had run in frustration. Pastors must revisit things they have said or relationships they may have damaged in their frustration, and bring their newfound strength to each situation.

### **4. Get back to work (verses 16,17).**

Like Elijah, God will give the renewed pastor a clear sense of assignment forward. At this stage of recovery, the pastor will see his work through new eyes and find value in places where his frustration once blocked his view.

**MICHAEL CLARENSAU**, Springfield, Missouri

Amazing momentum and growth can occur when the pastor’s passion, congregation’s abilities, and community needs merge. Combining passion, ability, and need can create a ministry focus that becomes an “engine,” driving the church forward to a new and fulfilling future.

Unfortunately, many smaller congregations seem determined to find their success in the wake of large church success stories. So they launch new ministries that lack the caliber and community connection of their original moment. And the more frequently a church tries and fails, the more resistant its people will become to the next new idea.

## **AIMING OUTWARD**

Every church has something it can do well or learn to do well. Finding a way to aim that ability outward is often the missing step. Too often a congregation focuses its most effective ministry efforts on one another, and the community can only experience these gifts if they choose to attend a Sunday service.

For example, suppose a church has an excellent Bible teacher. Every Sunday that teacher offers one of the finest classroom learning opportunities in town, but the only people experiencing the wisdom she offers are the 12 to 15 learners attending. Suppose that same teacher took a quarter (13 weeks) away from her Sunday School class and offered a 6-week course on biblical parenting at the nearby community center. The church’s strengths would be on display in the community and that teacher might never be the same again.

A church’s excellent children’s ministries could take a similar approach. In smaller communities, schools are often open to high-quality children’s programs for a school assembly or

after-school event. If you do it well on Sunday, why not try it on Monday?

I remember my first congregation’s strong efforts in children’s ministries. They were doing a great job, but only a few families and about 20 kids in town knew it. Only when we found a way to aim that ability outward did it become a catalyst for growth.

Other churches excel in music. They may not have the resources or the high-tech production capacity of the larger church, but locals will still enjoy a concert in the park or a musical stage at the annual city celebration. Many churches have found a community concert on the 4th of July a more effective way to connect with new people than a traditional Christmas cantata at the church.

Many can find this outward capacity in serving the community. A year ago, a small church leadership team told me they were really good at funerals. At first, their admission seemed odd, but together we discovered that their pastor’s excellent care and encouraging message combined with the wonderful meal the ladies of the church could prepare might be a phenomenal way to impact the hurting people of their community. So now the local funeral home knows to call this small congregation any time they meet a grieving family that lacks the support of a church. What an amazing strategy to impact a community.

Of course, there are numerous ways for a church to serve its neighbors. Food banks, clothing drives, and single-parent care days are just a few of the dozens of ways a church can make a difference. But rather than making several such efforts, the smaller church would do well to choose one or two they can do well and continually find ways to do them better and better.

Maximizing strengths is the path to greater effectiveness.

For some congregations, discovering what they can do well might be a challenge. Many smaller churches are aging, and the ministry energy of the past does not seem to be readily available. In such cases, learning to love people and love them well can be a strong alternative. The need for relationships is as strong as ever, so the church that truly loves people will always have a reason-for-being.

Of course, love is the mandate for every church, regardless of its other abilities (John 13:35; 1 Corinthians 13:1). Those who fail to love will never build a truly healthy church, so each congregation must number this ability among the things they do well.

### SOLVING FRUSTRATION

Buckingham's insistence that operating in our strengths forms the path to effectiveness can be liberating to leaders of smaller congregations. Trying to develop ministries that compare with those who have greater resource keeps many leaders in a state of emotional inferiority. Thoughts like *our music will never be like theirs* or *our youth program could never do that* cause us to devalue the musicians and youth program we have. And that is a recipe for many unhealthy moments.

If every individual has unique gifts and abilities through which he or she can strengthen the church (Romans 12:6), then it follows that God has equipped every congregation in its own unique way. Discovering those abilities and growing them into strengths offer a path to health and growth that fits the congregation, and one it can sustain into the future.

Since the pastor's role is to equip people for the ministries God has gifted them to fulfill (Ephesians 4:13), then

helping people find and develop those gifts must be one of his or her primary assignments.

### CONCLUSION

If my dad had not taught me to give my best effort to bouncing a basketball and shooting it reasonably well, the high school letters that are stitched to a dusty jacket in my closet would be replaced by wishes and what ifs. I never threatened Dr. J's hall of fame spot, but more than 30 years later I still play a few nights a week. Memories would be clouded with disappointments, and I might not have gained the confidence to pursue other strengths upon which to build my own future.

So stop hanging on the swing set and dreaming other people's dreams. Give your best energy to your true best, and watch your congregation become what God designed it to be. ■



**MICHAEL CLARENSAU**, senior director, Healthy Church Network, Springfield, Missouri

### Notes

1. Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now Discover Your Strengths* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 7.
2. Gary L. McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 75.



To view Justin Lathrop's interview with Mike Clarensau about his book *Belonging to Becoming*, go to [ej.ag.org/belongingtobecoming](http://ej.ag.org/belongingtobecoming) or scan the QR code at left.

To view George Paul Wood's interview with Mike Clarensau or read a review of *Belonging to Becoming*, go to [ej.ag.org/belonginginterview](http://ej.ag.org/belonginginterview) or scan the QR code at right.



To read "Leading the Smaller Congregation" from Mike Clarensau's blog, go to [ej.ag.org/leadingsmchurch](http://ej.ag.org/leadingsmchurch) or scan the QR code at left.

To view a video introducing an upcoming Transforming the Smaller Church course on [www.ministrycoach.tv](http://www.ministrycoach.tv), go to [ej.ag.org/transformsmch](http://ej.ag.org/transformsmch) or scan the QR code at right.





# The Start-Up Funnel:

How to  
Use Church-  
Planting  
Insights to  
Expand Your  
Circle of Influence

By **Steven M. Pike**

Consider this workable model that can be universally applied by any church desiring to increase its evangelistic effectiveness.



S

## tarting new churches and growing existing

**ones** are complementary activities that can bring synergistic benefits. They have the same goal, but start at a different place. We must do both and we must do both well. The goal of every church, whether just starting or having been around for a long time, is to be a healthy congregation that multiplies disciples, ministries, and churches.

Since new churches often depend on existing churches as their primary source of launch teams and finances, many believe that church plants are a necessary burden on existing churches with no visible return. Actually, church planting benefits existing churches because church planters perfectly position themselves to learn new ways to reach people outside of Christ. They have little to lose and can attempt previously untried evangelism methods without risking a lot. More established churches tend to be more risk averse, because the longer a church lives, the more history and resources it tends to accumulate. The good news for existing churches is they can learn from the experiments of younger churches before attempting new ministry methodologies for themselves. Over time, the lessons learned by start-ups become a significant benefit to existing churches.

### START-UP FUNNEL

An example of a church-planting practice that has obvious application for existing churches is the start-up funnel that many church planters utilize to build a network of relationships in the community before the church begins holding regular public worship services. Church-planting teams using the start-up funnel effectively connect with the unchurched and dechurched. Existing churches can also use the funnel successfully because they can universally apply the underlying principles behind the funnel to any church desiring to increase its evangelistic effectiveness.

We base the funnel on the fact the vast majority of people who become Christians are led to Christ by someone they know. The foundation of evangelism is relationship. Relationship begins with a point of contact. Contact begins with awareness. The start-up funnel is simply a tool to ensure you have ministries and activities in place that work with the Holy Spirit to help people surrender to Christ.

The challenge for church-planting teams is that, more often than not, they are new to the community and have few relationships. The start-up funnel design

can help them meet people and build relationships that help people come to faith resulting in a community of disciples that can launch as a new church.

The challenge for existing churches is that over time Christians begin to lose their natural connections to the unchurched and dechurched. As a result, evangelism becomes rare simply because Christians in an existing church only know Christians. But existing churches that strategically utilize components of the start-up funnel are finding that their evangelistic effectiveness improves dramatically. So whether you are preparing to start a new church or helping an existing church get back on mission, the start-up funnel will be helpful.

Here's how it works. The goal of the funnel is to cultivate a network of relationships that lead to evangelism and assimilation into the church family. Four categories comprise the funnel. Each category applies universally regardless of the style, age, or scope of the church. The specific activities/ministries utilized will depend on the demographic characteristics of the community.

### AWARENESS

The first category of funnel activity is awareness. Awareness simply means people in the community know you are there. Activities may include mass media advertising like television, radio, or mailers. They may also include social networking strategies, using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Activities might involve public services/compassions projects like distributing water at the county fair or hosting a Convoy of Hope event. The goal is simply to make people in the community aware that you and the church are present.

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/startupfunnel](http://ej.ag.org/startupfunnel)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook



## The Start-Up Funnel: How to Use Church-Planting Insights to Expand Your Circle of Influence

(continued from page 65)

### NETWORKING

The second category of funnel activity is networking. Networking means you know names and they know you know their names. Networking activities include hosting community Easter egg hunts, Christmas services, etc., where you simply gather names of people with their permission. Opportunities can be as simple as remembering the name of your restaurant server or the bank teller. The primary goal is to collect the names of people you have connected with, record them in a manner that will keep the names in front of you, and systematically pray for each name. God then works supernaturally in the lives of these people.

### RELATIONSHIPS

The third category of funnel activity is relationships. A relationship means you know their story and they know you know their story. You have had a conversation that has gone

deep enough for them to share something about their story. It might be about where they grew up. Or it could be about their job or family. Relationship-building activities could be enjoying conversation over coffee at a coffee shop, joining a civic service club (Rotary or Kiwanis, etc.), playing on a community sports team, or helping at a community shelter.

### EVANGELISM

The final category of funnel activity is evangelism. Evangelism means they know you have a relationship with Jesus and you want them to have a relationship with Him. Activities might include reading a Christian book together, doing a Bible study in a small group or one on one, inviting a person to attend a church service, or other related activities.

We call this a funnel because each category describes the scope of a circle of people that is progressively smaller.

The awareness category will have the most people in the circle



## How the Funnel Works for New Churches: The Gateway Fellowship Story

**John and Stephanie Van Pay started Gateway Fellowship Church** in Helotes, Texas, in 2008. They prepared for their launch service by using the funnel approach. The Gateway Fellowship launch team created awareness through traditional advertising strategies and positive community connections. Every team member committed to track the names of people they met throughout the week. The focus of their weekly launch team meetings became sharing the names they had collected and praying for them. They recorded these names on a large paper taped on the wall. As they prayed for these

individuals, God began to work in their lives and some of them moved from just names on the wall to friendships.

John established a friendship with a guy named Val through his participation in a triathlon. John added Val to his prayer list. They started working out together. Through their conversations, Val discovered that John was starting a church. It was almost a deal breaker for Val. He told John he was not interested in religion. But John continued to be his friend, working out with him in preparation for the next triathlon.

One day Val shared some bad news with John. Doctors had diagnosed Val with an aggressive form of cancer. John asked Val if he was ready to give his life to Jesus. Val declined; but he indicated that if he ever did decide to follow Christ, John would be the first to know.

Shortly after this conversation, Val died suddenly while undergoing a procedure at the hospital. John was devastated. He had every reason to believe that Val was not ready for eternity. Val's widow contacted John and asked him to hold a memorial service for Val. She gave John Val's diary to help him with his preparation. As John read the next to the last entry in Val's diary, his sorrow turned to thanksgiving as he read Val's confession of faith in Christ. Dozens of Val's friends came to faith in Christ after hearing his confession of faith as John read from his diary at the memorial service. This all happened before the church ever had a public worship service. You can watch a video of Val's story at [agtv.ag.org/gateway-fellowship](http://agtv.ag.org/gateway-fellowship).

By the morning of their launch service in February 2008, the GFC launch team was praying for 1,310 people and had relationships with hundreds. Over 280 attended their opening day. Most of them were new friends the launch team connected with while participating in activities guided by the start-up funnel concept.

and is also easy for everyone in your church to participate in.

The people in your networking circle will come out of your awareness circle and be a smaller number.

Your relationships will come out of your networking number, and so the relationships circle will have fewer people than your networking circle.

Finally, your evangelism circle will be the smallest since most of those whom you evangelize will come out of the relationship circle.

Prayer, combined with actions with a purpose in mind, is the heart of the funnel. (See the sidebar, "Does the Funnel Approach Work for Existing Churches?").

Planning a variety of culturally relevant activities in each category gives everyone in your church a way to participate because each will understand the goal of the activity. The funnel also will help you measure your progress toward reaching your community.

Here's a sample: You are leading a church that currently has 100 attendees in a town of 10,000. Demographic studies indicate at least 5,000 people in your community are not currently part of a church. Your leadership team decides that over the next year they will aspire to lead 1 percent of the unchurched in your town to faith in Christ. This means the evangelism circle target number will be 50 (1 percent of 5,000). Multiply that number by 2. This will give the relationship circle target number of 100. Multiply that number by 3. This will give the networking number of 300. Multiply that number by 10. This will give the awareness number of 3,000.

Plan activities in each circle that will result in achieving the target numbers in that circle. What are the activities or tools to make 3,000 people who are not currently attending any church aware of your church in a positive way? What might you do to gather the names of 300 people in your community (who have been made aware of you through your awareness activities) and begin to systematically pray for them? What relational activities can you engage in that will result in the formation of 100 new relationships? What activities can you provide that will help 50 of the 100 to begin to follow Christ?

Some activities will allow you to make progress in more than one category. For example, handing out bottles of water with information about your church on the label could be an awareness activity. If those who are handing out the water bottles remember, record, and pray for the names of people they meet, you could also consider it a networking activity. Some contacts may result in deeper conversations that might qualify toward relationship goals.

You must align the activities you choose to do in each category with the felt needs and interests of the people in the community. Demonstrating compassion by distributing winter coats might be appreciated in Minnesota but create a different perception in Phoenix. Conducting a survey to assess the felt needs of the community is a way to identify the right activities for the different categories of the funnel.

## Does the Funnel Approach Work for Existing Churches?

**Don Ross, pastor of Creekside**

**Church** in Mountlake Terrace, Washington, ([www.thecreeksidechurch.org](http://www.thecreeksidechurch.org)) and leader of the Turnaround Church Coaching Network ([turnaroundchurch.org](http://turnaroundchurch.org)), learned that it does. Using these basic concepts as a foundation, Ross and his leadership team developed an initiative called "Every Conversation Counts." The Creekside team tied gathering names (networking) to their weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. As people came to receive Communion, pastors asked them to write down the first names of people they had met the week before. Staff then recorded these names on large sheets of paper hanging on the wall behind the four Communion stations. Church members consistently prayed for the names on the wall. The list grew to over 1,000 names. Ross believes this approach was key to a significant missional turnaround for Creekside Church. He reports, "As a result of this focus of collecting names, hearing stories, and then inviting people to follow Jesus with us, we've seen our church grow from 175 to just under 500 in the last 4 years."



Can existing churches learn new ministry skills from new churches? Yes. A growing number of veteran church leaders are benefitting from the successful experiments of church planters and leading their churches into fresh seasons of fruitfulness. 📖



**STEVEN M. PIKE**, national director, Church Multiplication Network, Springfield, Missouri





# The **Externally Focused** Small Church: How to Move from Maintenance to Mission

By **Eric Swanson**

You may never  
be the best  
church *in* the  
community  
but you can  
become the  
best church *for*  
the community.  
Here is how.

**W**hen two  
pastors  
meet, within  
the first 2 minutes,  
inevitably one  
asks, "What are  
you running?" or "How many folks do you have on  
a Sunday morning?" Men like to know how they  
measure up against their colleagues. But what if the  
conversation changed? Instead, ask, "Tell me about  
the impact your church is having on your commu-  
nity?" We begin to measure, not size of the church,  
but the size of the church's footprint in the com-  
munity. And the smallest church, pound for pound,  
is capable of having the greatest impact.



## The Externally Focused Small Church: How to Move from Maintenance to Mission

(continued from page 69)

### A DIFFERENT SCORECARD

Externally focused churches have a different scorecard. The definition I use for an externally focused church is a church that measures its effectiveness, not by attendance on Sunday morning but by the transformational effect the church is having on its community. Being an externally focused church is

not about trying to be the best church *in* the community, but being the best church *for* the community.

How can a small church have a big impact? In this article I outline the advantages of being small, expose some helpful theological constructs, put forth ways to get started, and through sidebars expose

you to small churches who are creating a big footprint.

### THE ADVANTAGE OF SMALL

Play to your strengths. You are what large churches are striving to become. Small is the new big. Read almost any book or article on megachurches and look at what they are trying to do. They are trying to become smaller. Through small groups, multisite campuses, smart use of common spaces, and building small on-campus chapels, they intuit that people want to be part of a community where people know their names, their children's names, and that they would be missed if they stopped attending and participating. They would love to have 58 percent of their congregants attend weekly, as small churches have, as opposed to the current 28 percent who attend weekly in churches over 2,500. They would love to have intergenerational worship as you have. They covet your percentage of volunteers and lay leaders and what you are able to do with such a few number. They sense that someone called pastor should really pastor and shepherd people, not just be a CEO of an organization. In

so many ways, they want to be like you.

### EXTERNALLY FOCUSED THEOLOGY

Movements of God begin when people read the Scriptures with fresh eyes. I have seen a few theological constructs that have emerged and taken wings around externally focused ministry.

**1. Serving is part of God's big plan for every follower of Jesus Christ.** Most of us can

quote Ephesians 2:8,9 as to how salvation occurs: "By grace ... through faith ... gift of God ... not by works." When we come to Christ through faith, this fills the God-shaped vacuum in our lives. Verses 8 and 9 tell *how* we are saved. But Ephesians 2:10 tells *why*: "For we are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus *to do good works*, which God prepared in advance for us to do." The fact He prepared in advance the works we are to do signals the presence of a second vacuum in the lives of believers — a purpose-shaped vacuum. So a critical part of being a disciple is to figure out through experimentation the intersection between our passion and God's purpose where we feel God's pleasure or where we feel fully alive.

**2. We learn through preaching, devotions, and Bible study, but we really don't grow (beyond a certain point) until we begin serving others.** In the past years, Diana Garland and her colleagues at Baylor University have researched how faith relates to service. They surveyed 7,300 people from 35 congregations and discovered that those involved in service to their community "reported that they prayed, came to worship services, and gave financially, all significantly more than those not involved in service. ... Children and teenagers — as well as adults — grow in faith by being engaged in service. In fact, service was more powerful than Sunday School, Bible study, or participation in worship for the faith development of teenagers."<sup>1</sup> Did you get that? If we want our congregants to be growing as disciples, we have to engage them in service.

My son and daughter-in-law have served in China the past 8 years. Many Chinese college students are coming to faith. My son told me, "Each week after we come together, before we do Bible study, we go and serve the poor or the migrants in our city for a half-hour or so." When I asked him why, he said, "Remember how Jesus ended His story of the Samaritan? 'Go and do likewise' not 'go and think likewise.' It is our goal to help people become like Jesus. I cannot tell if they are becoming like Jesus by the answers they give me in Bible study, but I can tell if they are becoming more like Jesus when they give themselves to those who can do nothing in return for them."

**3. Engaging outside the walls is something your people, as Christ followers, really want to do.** When I preach or teach I often ask, "How many here want to change the world? Raise your hand." Large church or small, young church or old, inevitably nearly every hand goes up. Everyone wants to make a difference. No one wants to feel they have lived life in vain. Indeed, God has planted eternity in our hearts. Could your church be that place where believers are regularly given the



To share or comment on this article, or to view author videos, go to [ej.ag.org/externalfocusedsmchurch](http://ej.ag.org/externalfocusedsmchurch) or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment* journal on Facebook

opportunity to change the world in such a way that something in the world would be different?

Again we turn to Baylor University for the requisite research. In 2007, Baylor researchers surveyed 50 congregations to

identify no more than three (of the 52 choices) topics that “you would like your church to help your family and other families with.” Garland sums up their findings: “Almost without exception, in the more than 50 congregations

we surveyed ... help in serving others is the most frequently expressed need in every congregation. ... Every kind of family asked for help serving. Never-married adult families named it more often than items like dating, preparing for marriage, and romance and sexuality in single life. Divorced persons listed it more often than reconciliation and forgiving. Widowed families listed it more often than help with grief and coping with crisis. Families living with major stress — financial, health, relational — still want guidance in serving others.”<sup>2</sup>

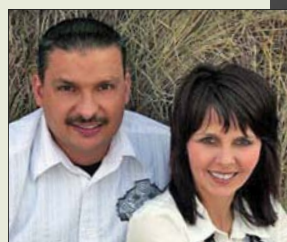
Most churches have goals for every year. What if you threw out the challenge that at the end of the year everyone had a story to tell of how he or she changed the world? We need to define “change the world” to mean: leading someone to Christ, teaching a third-grader to read, helping a single mom.

### TURNING LIABILITIES INTO STRENGTHS

**Recognize the power of small things.** One small, well-placed stone brought down a giant. The smallest of seeds grows into the mighty tree, a little leaven changes everything. The DNA of Jesus is in the individual Christ-follower, not in a church building. The smallest missional action is one Jesus-follower meeting the needs of another with the resources God has given him. No act is too small. How small is a cup of cold water? How small is a portion of bread and fish? How small is a mustard seed? Part of the pastor’s job is to help equip each saint (whether 30 saints or 3,000 saints) for works of service (Ephesians 4:11,12). Mother Teresa reminded us that “there are no such things as great deeds, only small deeds done with great love.”

In June 2012, I attended the Hampton University Ministers Conference on the campus in Hampton, Virginia. Each year, for 98 years, thousands of pastors convene for this weeklong gathering and celebration. Dr. David E. Goatly, the executive director of Lott Carey International, posed challenging questions: “What if you told your people on Sunday, ‘Don’t come back to church until you have blessed someone?’ It doesn’t make sense that we bless people just to bless them. We bless people so they too can bless others.” He then challenged: “What if you had a hundred people in your church and what if each

one went out to bless people during the week before coming back to church the following Sunday? What would happen in your community and church if that was the expectation?” What if your 35 or 50 or 200 people did the same? One hundred people doing one act of love just once a week for a year would



istockphoto / Thinkstock

**Steven and Gwen McBrien**



## Oswego Assembly of God, Oswego, Kansas (pop. 1,800)

**Oswego, Kansas, is a snapshot of rural America** — small town charm coupled with a sluggish economy, budget-slashed schools, single moms, and blended families. But Pastor Steven McBrien of Oswego Assembly of God looks at his town through a different lens — the lens of opportunity. “When you read about Jesus’ ministry, you see that 90 percent of it took place outside the walls of the religious structures. To be like Him as His followers is, by definition, to be outside our church walls, loving people, helping people, serving people.”

McBrien tries to model to his congregants what living outside the walls looks like. He serves as president of the Chamber of Commerce and chaplain of the local football team. Each fall the church blesses all the teachers in their town with “survival kits” — those supplies and niceties teachers need but must pay for from their own paychecks. The church includes a letter of appreciation, affirmation, and thanks to each teacher, letting him or her know the church will pray for them.

Each fall the church hosts a cookout for all the high school sports teams. Rather than having a church-based “fall fest” at Halloween, they join their strength to the city’s celebration to help create a “win” for the city. “We think the key of effective blessing is looking for what the city needs most and do that one thing. We have got to get the church into the community before we can ever expect to get the community into the church.”



## The Externally Focused Small Church: How to Move from Maintenance to Mission

(continued from page 71)

result in 5,200 acts of love. Small deeds done with great love change everything.

### SOME LOW-HANGING FRUIT

**Start by following the heart of God.** A good place to begin is with James 1:27 — “to look after orphans and widows in their distress.” For an easy-bake template, check out New Commandment Men’s Ministries ([www.newcommandment.org](http://www.newcommandment.org)). The idea is simple. Every church and every community has widows, single moms, and people who are in distress — including those who have a spouse overseas in the military. The church identifies people in distress and assigns teams of three to four men to each person. One Saturday morning each month the men do the basic list of chores or fix-ups that most of us find ourselves doing in our own homes — fixing leaky faucets, light painting, replacing a screen, raking leaves, replacing light bulbs, etc. After several hours, the men gather and pray with and for the person they are caring for. Over 600 churches, including mine, have adopted this model. If you have three men and one person in distress in your community, you can do this ministry. It’s like wheels on a suitcase. Why did it take so long to think of this one?

**Kids and schools.** Did you know that learning to read at third-grade level by the end of third grade is the most

determinative component of a child’s future? One administrator told me, “Up until third grade kids *learn to read*; after grade three they *read to learn*.” Not reading at third-grade level is tied to dropout rate, teen pregnancy, drug use, poverty, and incarceration. Eighty-five percent of U.S. juvenile inmates are functionally illiterate. Just investing an hour a week at your nearest elementary school could make a big difference. Many churches work through Kids Hope USA ([www.kidshopeusa.org](http://www.kidshopeusa.org)). Just having the presence of a caring adult improves academic test scores of children.

How about teachers? With leaner budgets teachers spend an average of over \$350 of their own money to buy school supplies and instructional material for their students. What could the people in your church do to bless the teachers in your community? Many people, each doing one small thing, could make a huge difference.

### THE EVANGELISTIC CONNECTION

Unconditional love, expressed through service, tees up conversations about Jesus because people always want to know “Who are you?” and “Why are you doing this?” Good deeds create good will and good will creates the opportunity to share the good news.

All over the world people find themselves thinking differently about what the church could be and should be. They are

## תקוות יעקוב JACOB'S HOPE

BRINGING HOPE TO JACOB'S CHILDREN

*Providing compassion ministries, food, clothing, medical care, and the gospel to bless Jewish people who are in need around the world.*

Jacob's Hope • 1445 North Boonville Avenue • Springfield, MO 65802

Account # 390907

417-865-3295

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



ASSEMBLIES of GOD  
WORLD MISSIONS

sensing that, if a church is not serving beyond its club members, it is really not the church for which Jesus gave His life. If this is what you find yourself thinking, that's your qualification for leading your church to move from maintenance to mission. You may never be the best church *in* the community but you can become the best church *for* the community. 📖



**ERIC SWANSON** is a missional specialist with Leadership Network (leadnet.org) and coauthor of *The Externally Focused Church*, *The Externally Focused Life*, *The Externally Focused Quest: Becoming the Best Church FOR the Community*, and *To Transform a City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City*. [www.ericjswanson.com](http://www.ericjswanson.com)

#### Notes

1. Diana R Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2012), 641
2. Ibid, 639



To view Eric Swanson's video "Externally Focused Churches Becoming the New Norm," go to [ej.ag.org/externalfocusnewnorm](http://ej.ag.org/externalfocusnewnorm) or scan the QR code.



Children's festival

## Calvary Heritage Church, West Hempstead, Long Island, New York

**In 2002, Pastor Chris Delmadge planted Calvary Heritage Church** as a daughter church of Christian Heritage Church, his church in Brooklyn. The church grew and plateaued at 30-35 regular attendees. In 2010, Chris attended Healthy Church Network's Acts 2 Journey ([http://healthychurchnetwork.com/the\\_journey/](http://healthychurchnetwork.com/the_journey/)). After a weekend of vision casting and inspiration, Chris became a part of a yearlong cohort of like-minded church leaders who wanted more for their lives and ministries. And he wasn't disappointed. "Leaders asked us tough questions about who we were as pastors and who we were as churches." The result was a fresh vision, direction, and plan. Delmadge says, "We exploded in numbers, purpose, and vision and are now pushing 100 people each week. Our church has been transformed. But this was just our first transformation."

The second transformation is the transformation of their community. "Our vision is 'Loving God, touching lives, changing the world,' so we are helping people inside our church understand how they can change their world outside the walls." The church's Christian school serves 280 students from multiple cultures and faith traditions. They host health fairs and working with Convoy of Hope (<http://www.convoyofhope.org/>), to meet the pressing needs of their neighbors. "Our natural tendency is to just want to be with people like ourselves, but New York is so diverse and people outside the church are searching for God. Salt does little good in the salt shaker. I tell our people that we need to spend less time inside these walls and more time outside these walls if we want to change our world."



# SMALL TOWNS ... **BIG** POSSIBILITIES:

Leading Your Community to  
Become a Better Place to Live

By **Steve Donaldson**

**I** heard an Ivy League professor lecture about a study he conducted of small communities. His research reflects what I observe as I travel from small town to small town meeting with pastors. He finds that in the past the family, public school, and the local church were the three foundations of a small town; with the church typically being the center of the community. His findings consistently indicate the family has splintered, the church has lost much of its influence, and the public schools remain the only foundation.

Illustration by Gary Locke





By building relationships in your community and serving others, you will encourage and ignite your congregation to do the same.



## Small Towns ... Big Possibilities: Leading Your Community to Become a Better Place to Live

(continued from page 74)

An effective church must engage in making the community a better place to live for children and their families. Pastor Robert Lewis challenges our imagination on what small churches can be like by describing your community's response to ministry from your church:<sup>1</sup>

*Can you imagine* your community being genuinely thankful for your church?

*Can you imagine* city leaders valuing your church's friendship and participation in the community — even asking for it?

*Can you imagine* a significant number of your church members actively engaged in, and passionate about, community service, using their gifts and

abilities in ways and at levels they never thought possible?

*Can you imagine* the community actually changing (Proverbs 11:11) because of the impact of your church's involvement?

*Can you imagine* many in your city, formerly cynical and hostile toward Christianity, now praising God for your church and the positive contributions your members have made in Jesus' name?

*Can you imagine* the spiritual harvest that would naturally follow if all this were true?

Currently I am witnessing a movement toward the church increasing its influence in rural America. The church can be a principal leader in all aspects of community life. Church walls are intended to protect us from wind and weather, but they should not separate us from our communities. We do not want people in our communities to know us as Catacombs Assembly of God. The church must be the "salt of the earth" and engage with our towns.

### RURAL IS A VITAL CALLING

I was in a town of 420 people where the pastor has served for

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/smalltownbigpossibilities](http://ej.ag.org/smalltownbigpossibilities)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook



Hemera / Thinkstock



## Faith Assembly Develops Community-Wide Outreach

**For Pastor Brenda Henson, practical and compassionate ministry** is key to Faith Assembly's influence in Greenville, Missouri. Greenville's 511 residents battle limited employment opportunities, drought-compromised crops, and widespread methamphetamine distribution. Faith Assembly is a life-giving presence in the midst of those challenges.

Partnering with Rural Compassion a few years ago, volunteers distributed bags of groceries to some 400 homes. The distribution center for the tons of bagged food? A thrift store the church has operated across the highway from its two original buildings.

The store became the most visible face of the church's outreach. Henson speaks of a woman who, with tears in her eyes, told volunteers, "If it wasn't for this store, my grandchildren wouldn't have anything."

14 years. Many of his friends and colleagues have said, "Tim, someday God is really going to bless you." Essentially, his friends were saying, "Someday you will be in a bigger city and a larger church." Despite his friends' assumptions, this pastor told me he would be satisfied if God's lifelong calling for him is to serve his current community.

Along with helping lay the foundations for Convoy of Hope and Rural Compassion, I was fortunate to pastor in rural America. I grew up in a bigger city; but, as He has for others, God called me to small places. My wife and I planted a church in a community in a valley surrounded by mountains, with a population of 1,200. Our church reached out to single mothers, widows, the schools, cowboys, and was involved in serving our county's poor and disadvantaged. We had three core commitments:

- Our valley will be a better place for families and children to live because of our church's involvement and presence.
- Every person in the valley will have opportunities to build a relationship with a mature follower of Christ.
- Every person who regularly attends our church will have opportunity to become biblically knowledgeable and a mature follower of Christ.

God gave us a huge vision to reach our entire community. He is calling many rural pastors to do the same.

## THE ANSWER

When our son Jordan was in the eighth grade, he severely broke his leg. Doctors sent him home with pain medication to decrease the swelling before setting the bone. The first night Jordan lay awake in tremendous pain. As we sat with him, we prayed for God's comfort. My wife gave him the prescribed medication to help control the pain, but the pain persisted. Finally at 5 a.m. Jordan fell asleep. In the morning my wife called her sister, an RN, for advice. Her sister asked what medication the doctors had prescribed. As my wife read the name of the medication to her sister, she started to laugh. "You're giving Jordan stool softener and not the pain medication," she declared.

Much like Jordan's wrongly administered medication, people in smaller communities will often take the wrong medication to address pain in their lives. Alcohol, drugs, pornography, and physical abuse are just a few of the ways people try to cover their pain. Your church has the right medication:

The thrift store provided the lion's share of outreach funding. Relying entirely on donated goods, Faith Assembly could offer clothing, toys, appliances, and miscellaneous items at yard-sale prices every Thursday through Saturday, earning some \$33,000 in 2011. But not everything was for sale.

"If we knew a family needed a refrigerator or small air conditioner, we'd try to find one and give it to them," Henson says. "If there was a house fire, we'd quickly get linens and dishes and clothes together."

Just minutes before she was to give an interview for this article, Henson received a call that Faith Assembly's thrift store had caught fire. Four fire departments from the area responded to the July blaze in the midst of 2012's

record-breaking heat wave.

"We were so concerned the fire fighters would be safe in that 100-plus degree heat," Henson says. "They were climbing into the top of the building with all that fire and smoke. It was an answer to prayer no one was hurt."

The building and most of its contents were lost. Assemblies of God churches across Faith Assembly's Southern Missouri section donated funds to assist with the cleanup.

"We really don't know yet what the Lord's solution is," Henson says. "But we believe He has a continuing purpose for the store and for all the ministries it supports."

Ministries like a weekly

recovery group for addicts. Every week Henson meets with people assigned to the recovery program who might never have come to her church otherwise. Some are also beginning to attend services.

Faith Assembly also offers Friday game nights at Jonah's Java, an activity center maintained in the original storefront building where Henson began her ministry in 2001. The church grew into a neighboring hardware store. Eventually they built a gymnasium to attract young athletes.

Henson sees all of Greenville and the surrounding area as the direct responsibility of her ministry team. But that view grew from her search for ministry significance.

"My husband and I have lived here for more than 30 years," she says, "But I was volunteering as a youth minister at a church we attended in another town."

As the new millennium loomed, Henson felt like her ministry was coming to an end. "I was sharing with someone that there was no place I could minister," she says. "Then God opened it up here in Greenville. I can see Jonah's Java from my porch."

"God opens doors you can never imagine. We can be pitiful and whine and cry, or we can say, 'Lord, what do You have for me to do?'"

**SCOTT HARRUP**, managing editor,  
*The Pentecostal Evangel*,  
Springfield, Missouri

UPDATE [January 4, 2013]: Faith Assembly is renting a doublewide trailer and is using it for their thrift store. The church would like to purchase a nearby building that is for sale but at this time lacks the funds.



## Small Towns ... Big Possibilities: Leading Your Community to Become a Better Place to Live

(continued from page 77)

it's Jesus. However, grace can be messy. As we strive to look past actions, we see people through Christ's eyes. Jesus set an example in the Gospels of love for people as they are rather than how they should be. Our prayer ought to be, "Let my

heart break with the things that break God's heart."

There are keys that will enable churches to take a leadership role that will influence their community.

**It starts from the top.** The pastor is the most important



### Keys to Influencing Spiritual Transformation in Smaller Communities

1. Pray.
2. Be willing to take the Spirit-filled life into your community.
3. Engage regularly with the community's stakeholders.
4. Believe God has called you and your church to be a significant influence in your community.
5. Train the people in your congregation to involve themselves in the activities and leadership roles in your town.
6. Be involved with local service clubs.
7. Avoid criticizing your community. Disparaging remarks limit opportunities to minister.
8. Build relationships with community members. Remember relationship, relationship, relationship.
9. Show the compassion of Christ by showing compassion for all people.
10. Look for ways to tell public service personnel (teachers, law enforcement, firefighters, social workers, etc.) thank You for what they do for your town.
11. Build a church environment that loves and welcomes people.
12. Keep your church relevant to the people God has called you to reach.
13. You must have longevity. It takes 4 years for your church to embrace you and 7 years for the community to embrace you. Persevere through tough times.
14. Adjust to your community's diversity.
15. Do everything with excellence.
16. Look for God to do miracles. You cannot solve some of the difficulties in rural communities through natural means; you need the supernatural power of God.
17. If needed, rebuild the church's reputation. In a small town, if the church has a tainted history, everyone knows it.
18. Work together with other Bible-believing churches.
19. Maintain an attitude of optimism. Because God is, what ought to be will be.
20. Create a balance between attractional and incarnational ministry.
21. Establish a vision to pastor the entire town and, as a church, serve your community.

**STEVE DONALDSON**

Image Publishing / Thinkstock

person to get involved in serving and building relationships. By building relationships in your community and serving others, you will encourage and ignite your congregation to do the same. You cannot teach what you do not know; you cannot lead where you will not go.

**Assess your community needs.** The culture and needs of each small town are unique, but similarities among communities do exist. Pastors can uncover needs in their community that others are not addressing. Websites such as [www.epodunk.com](http://www.epodunk.com), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), and [www.dataplace.org](http://www.dataplace.org) will help you. Survey members of your community concerning what they feel are their most pressing needs. Ask, "In your opinion, what would be the best thing our church could do for our town?"

**Meet with community stakeholders.** A rural pastor must be intentional in developing solid relationships with community leaders. Stakeholders can be the mayor, school principal, high school coach, business owners, or others. Community leaders know firsthand the issues their community is facing.

**Community involvement.** How can the church plug into the community calendar? Look for events that your church could host or join and partner with the community. Events could include:

- Meals on Wheels
- Hero Day for police officers and firefighters
- Senior center activities
- Tutoring program for local students
- Kids Fest in the park
- Mega sports camp
- Hunting clinic
- Horse-riding clinic
- School supplies drive

**Have an adoption program.** What groups, places, or organizations could your church adopt? This program could include adopting teachers, social workers, firefighters, sports teams, classrooms, the senior center, or the local park. One church in Kansas adopted the town's main street, and the youth washed all the windows of the downtown businesses. A church in Iowa painted the benches on Main Street.

**Partner with suburban churches.** These relationships include opportunities to serve the vision of the rural church. Suburban churches can take missions trips to small towns for evangelistic outreach, to work on facilities, and for humanitarian assistance. Some create a sister church relationship where they assist financially. Larger congregations with specialized staff can create structure for ministry to children, youth, seniors, or worship.

The process of change is slow, but God will be faithful in seeing your vision and dreams become a reality. Isaiah 58:11,12, "The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall

be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets to dwell in' " (ESV<sup>2</sup>).

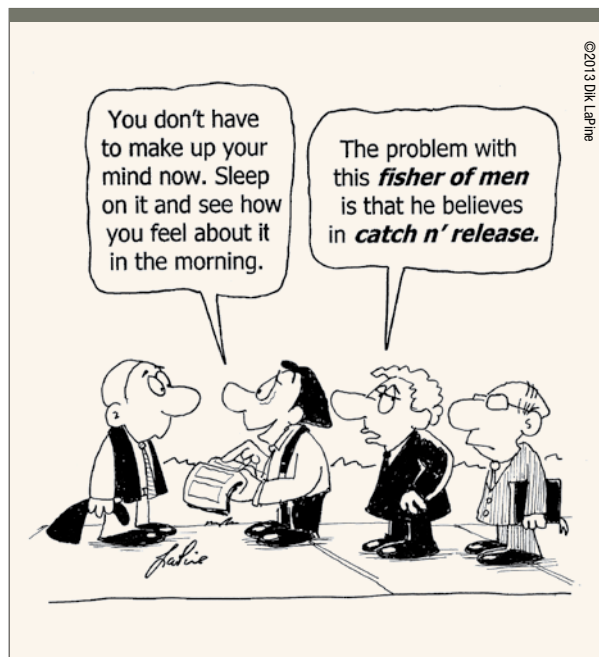
Your church can be a transformational force in making your community a better place to live. God wants to create a spark for Christ in our small communities to assist the spread of His kingdom throughout the United States and the rest of the world. You can reach the world from your community. As we get more intentional about reaching our towns, we will see the church expanding its influence and impact lives. And the church will once again regain its place as a foundation in rural America. 📖



**STEVE DONALDSON** is founder and president, Rural Compassion, Ozark, Missouri.

#### Notes

1. Robert Lewis and Rob Wilkins, *The Church of Irresistible Influence: Bridge-Building Stories to Help Reach Your Community* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).
2. Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version, copyright © 2001, Wheaton: Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





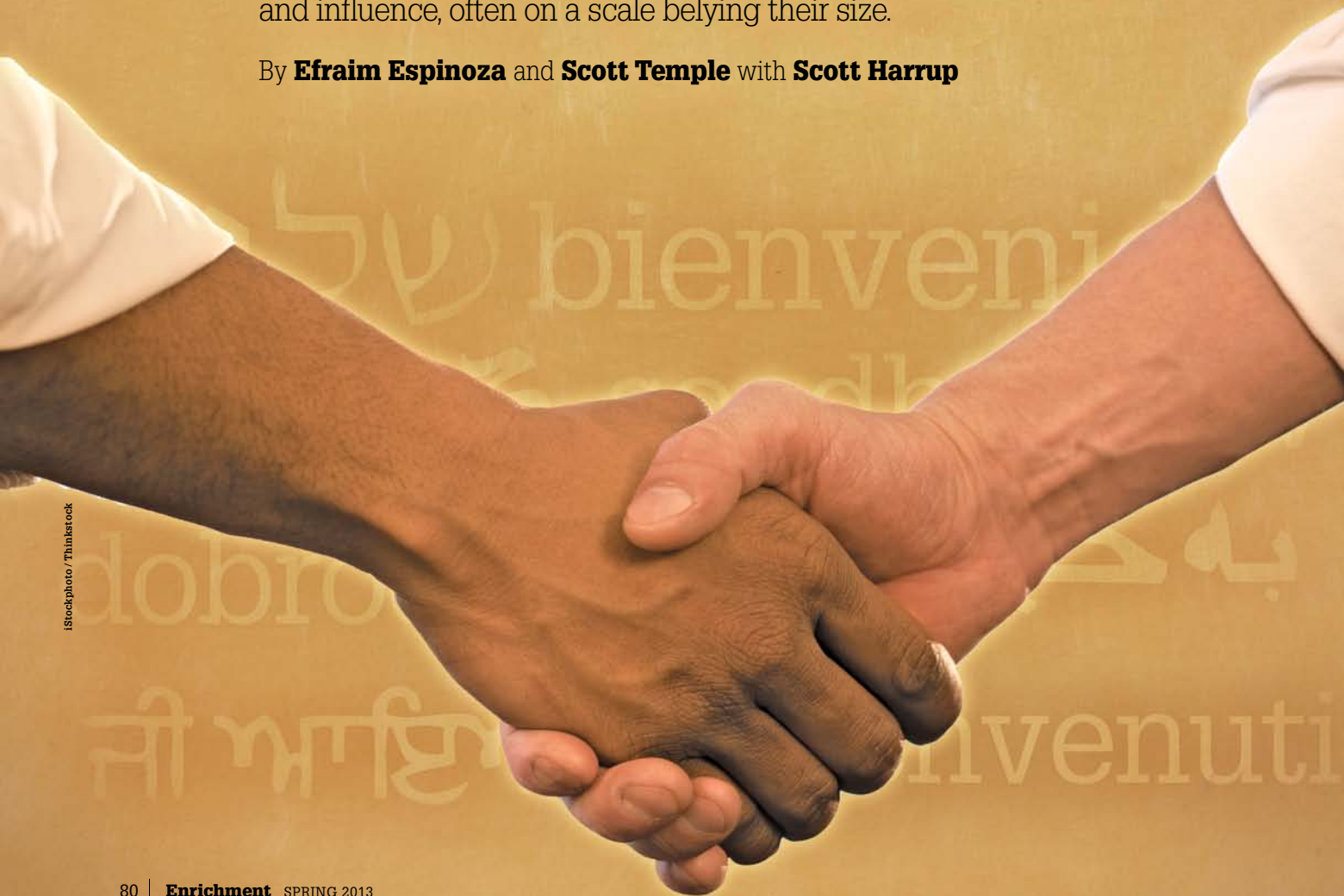


# welcome!

## Seven Diverse Churches, One Inviting Atmosphere

How seven small, ethnic churches are experiencing steady growth and influence, often on a scale belying their size.

By **Efraim Espinoza** and **Scott Temple** with **Scott Harrup**



iStockphoto/Thinkstock

*"I looked, and there*

*before me was a*

*great multitude that*

*no one could count,*

*from every nation,*

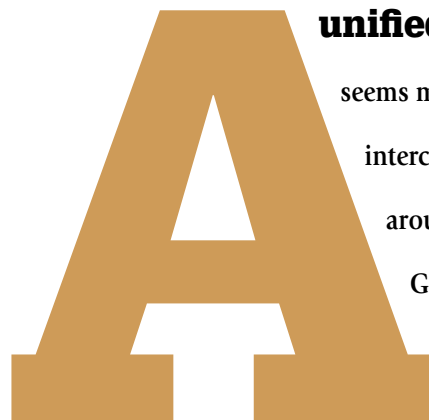
*tribe, people and*

*language, standing*

*before the throne*

*and before the Lamb"*

*(Revelation 7:9).*



## **unified and glorified Church**

seems more imminent in our increasingly interconnected world. Followers of Christ around the globe are cooperating in the Great Commission, strategizing at international conferences, and building interpersonal relationships through a range of Web resources. In the United States, an unceasing flow of internationals populate our colleges and communities and present an ever-expanding harvest of people for our churches.

The U.S. Assemblies of God is experiencing a 21st-century metamorphosis. A growing array of language and ethnic districts and fellowships are moving the larger Fellowship closer to an earthbound reflection of John's heavenly vision. Seven churches offer seven reference points within a much larger picture of Christ-directed domestic outreach to the nations. These churches are applying fundamental ministry principles and experiencing steady growth and influence, often on a scale belying their size.

### **INNOVATION FEEDS EXPANSION**

Ethnic churches understand their harvest field naturally precludes any kind of cookie-cutter approach to ministry. Creative and accessible locations, outreaches that connect the unchurched with a church community, and a commitment to be a daily presence are fundamental principles for an effective community presence.

Like many nascent churches of this generation, Hope of the City Church (AG) in suburban Seattle, Washington, is foregoing a traditional building to get a jump-start on reaching their community. By developing a presence at Westfield Southcenter Mall, in Tukwila, Hope of the City is striving to live up to its mission of "Bringing Hope to Every Life."

"We were willing to take a risk and take the gospel to the marketplace," says Ruth Solero, who leads the congregation with husband Luis Solero. Six days a week the Soleros, both from the Philippines, do just that. God has honored these risk-takers by bringing people into His kingdom. Most who attend Hope of the City have recently come to Christ.

From the second level of the mall near Sears, Hope of the City impacts their community by being accessible; the mall is a nonthreatening atmosphere, and the church maintains office hours throughout the week. The goal of Hope of the City is to build a strong and healthy multicultural church, but not just one. Surrounded by franchises in the mall, they have a vision to take that multiplication principle and open 50 healthy multicultural





## Welcome! Seven Diverse Churches, One Inviting Atmosphere

(continued from page 81)



churches like theirs.

Located 5 miles from JFK Airport, Bethlehem Punjabi Church (AG) in Richmond Hill, New York, is impacting one of America's largest and most diverse communities using an array of literature and media tools. Pastor Jatinder Gill coordinates the broadcast of testimonies, teachings, and music through local television channels and over the Internet.

Broadcasting a Sikh convert's testimony of coming to Christ is attention getting. When a Pakistani or an Indian comes to Christ, the church broadcasts his or her testimony. Bethlehem Punjabi Church also impacts its community through vacation Bible school and Community Gospel Festivals. Eighty people attend this church, small in size but great in impact.

Pastor Hang Lee and the families of Elevate Church (AG and formerly Hope in Christ Church) of Saint Paul, Minnesota, have a heart for the spiritual needs of 70,000 Hmong immigrants living in the state. A unique way Elevate Church impacts the community is through "Vision Videos." Media teams visit local businesses and record a 3- to 4-minute video interview on the vision of each business. They show these vision videos the last Sunday of every month during a service they call Community Sunday, and they encourage the featured business to bring their employees, families, and friends.

This creative interface exposes the church community to local resources, the church appreciates and honors business

owners, and most important, the church exposes people who have never heard the gospel to Jesus Christ.

### PRAYER BUILDS A FOUNDATION

Prayer must energize everything a church undertakes in the cause of the gospel. Regardless of church size, location, or congregational makeup, prayer maximizes any church's attempt to identify and fulfill its

God-given mission.

Just east of New York City, Pentecostal Mission John 3:16 (AG) in Stamford, Connecticut, is a thriving Hispanic congregation with attendance hovering at 200 and growing. Pastor Jesus Garcia, Jr., insists the prayer emphasis in the church provides a strong spiritual support for every other ministry of Pentecostal Mission John 3:16.

The church has at least two prayer services per week, but its commitment to prayer is not limited to scheduled gatherings. If an individual or family in the community is confronting a serious need, church leaders will offer to lead a prayer meeting in the home. These home prayer meetings provide opportunities to serve and to evangelize newcomers, especially immigrants who are new to the community.

Pastor Mario Gamez relies on the prayer service at Templo Betania (AG) in Oakland, California, to connect participants with the presence and power of God in their time of need and draw them to the church's other services and outreaches. He regularly observes individuals not connected with any specific congregation coming to these weekly meetings. As well, church members involved in the various ministries of the church come to the prayer services to prepare spiritually for their activities or responsibilities in the church.

Bethlehem Punjabi Church's mission is to bring salvation and healing to unreached people. It trains members to do the work of evangelism and is committed to planting disciple-making churches among Hindi-, Punjabi-, and Urdu-speaking peoples throughout the world. They are establishing prayer centers to back up these spiritual advances.

### LANGUAGE ENCOURAGES UNITY

Too often people perceive language as an exclusionary reality in ministry. Ethnic churches, perhaps better than congregations with less diversity, understand the attracting power of a language. Ethnic churches also navigate the generational shift in language use that can occur in immigrant communities.

At Templo Betania, the staff gives much care to ensure that they do ministry in both Spanish and English. The mission of Templo Betania is to reach individuals at their point of need and guide them beyond the experience of salvation to understand and grow in their relationship with God. Pastor Gamez describes that mission as "Kingdom ministry that is encouraging spiritual maturity to transfer a legacy of faith to the next generation."

Pastor Gamez assigns Bible school students returning home for the summer or between semesters to minister in the church and in the outreach ministries of the church. One student will minister in English while another translates into Spanish.

"We want to equip believers to serve all people at all times in all places," states Pastor Gamez.

Bethlehem Punjabi Church breaks through language barriers by reaching first- and second-generation immigrants simultaneously. The church does this through worshipping in a variety of languages. They translate messages into English. They

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/sevendiversechurches](http://ej.ag.org/sevendiversechurches)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook

also have Bible study groups in single languages to give members opportunity to gather with their own language group.

More churches are utilizing English not only as a drawing card for attendees during service, but as a means to connect with immigrant communities outside the church. For example, Hope of Israel Church (AG) in Brooklyn, New York, and Amazing Grace (AG) in Mesquite, Texas, offer classes in English as a Second Language.

### COMPASSION INVITES COMMITMENT

Immigrant communities face an array of challenges in the United States, and churches must address material as well as spiritual needs if they are to gain credibility in sharing the gospel.

Templo Betania's ministries extend beyond dynamic services

and scheduled activities at the church. Congregants focus on reaching people facing practical needs during the week. Some immigrants who move into the community do not have permanent employment. They gather on street corners and wait for opportunities for daily work. Members of Templo Betania prepare sack lunches and distribute them to those looking for work.

At times, the church becomes aware of a family or individual in the community who does not have the finances to travel to their home country when serious illness or death impact a loved one back home. Helping these individuals with an offering sows "seeds of kindness" in their lives. Pastor Gamez insists the church must be a place where all people can hear about the love of God and experience this love in a tangible way as believers serve them in their moment of need.

## All Tribes Christian Fellowship: Reaching Across Cultural, Denominational, and Economic Boundaries

**All Tribes Christian Fellowship**, a Native American majority congregation in Phoenix, has adapted to a shifting ministry landscape in recent years.

Hard-hit by the housing market crash, the Phoenix area has experienced an exodus of young workers formerly employed in the construction and labor industries. Adding to the city's aging demographics are elderly Native Americans relocating from reservations to assisted living facilities in the metropolitan area.

"There's a tremendous need to minister to senior Native Americans," says Marcus Collins, who has served as the church's pastor for more than 20 years. "Many of these seniors are unreached and speak only their tribal language."

Two years ago, All Tribes Christian Fellowship started a senior adult ministry, which includes outreaches to nursing homes and senior centers. With many single adults and young families leaving the community to find work, three-quarters of the congregation is now made up of senior citizens.

"You have to be open to the changes in your community and be willing to adapt your

ministry structure and paradigm to meet those needs," Collins says. "A church that is only interested in maintaining the status quo becomes inward focused and can't respond to the mission field that is there."

In addition to ministering to senior Native Americans, the congregation has broadened its evangelism focus over the past few years to reach people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The church's facilities serve as meeting places for Hispanic and Burmese congregations. A Croatian congregation previously met there as well. All Tribes Fellowship has also planted a church for African refugees.

"Our vision has really grown to include not only reaching out to Native Americans but also other ethnic groups in the community," Collins says. "We have outreaches that are meeting needs among a wide variety of people."

Twice a month, the church gives away more than 100 boxes of groceries through its food bank. The outreach always includes a devotion and salvation invitation. Though attendance at the service is not mandatory, about 90 percent of those receiving help

opt to stay and hear the gospel.

"We have a wide variety of people who come in," Collins says. "Most are homeless — living in cars or sleeping on the streets."

Collins took over the congregation in 1991 when his father, Carl Collins, stepped down after 13 years as senior pastor. The church currently has an average Sunday morning attendance of 80.

Collins says there is still a tremendous need for ministry in the Phoenix area.

"Here in Metro Phoenix, there are over 100,000 Native Americans," Collins says. "On the best Sunday of the year, across all denominations, less than 1,000 attend services."

All Tribes works closely with other local churches to bring together Christians for outreaches, community events, prayer, and fellowship.

"Partnering across cultural, denominational, economic boundaries and organizations is one of the most significant parts of our ministry," Collins says.

**CHRISTINA QUICK**, freelance writer,  
Springfield, Missouri





## Welcome! Seven Diverse Churches, One Inviting Atmosphere

(continued from page 83)

Amazing Grace is only 3 years old with some 70 attendees, and yet the church has impacted Dallas/Fort Worth in many ways and through various partnerships. Pastor Bright Osigwe and Amazing Grace families have connected at some level with 12,000 refugees in the area. But their outreach is not limited to ethnic communities. They have also fed more than 20,000 area residents through their efforts to combat hunger. They have a monthly outreach of food and supplies through partnership with World Vision. They have distributed 5,000 pairs of shoes to refugee children and their parents.

Amazing Grace has partnered with Convoy of Hope outreaches in their community. They provide job training and help immigrants get employment. Campus Crusade for Christ sent a team to work with Amazing Grace in cleaning 120 apartments, leading many refugees to Christ. Annually the church organizes a school outreach where they donate 150 backpacks. Amazing Grace set up 45 computers in the activity room of a refugee apartment complex where members assist refugee kids with their homework. They even teach refugees how to drive and help them get a vehicle.

"The greatest impact is seeing many of these refugees accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior," says Pastor Osigwe.

In Connecticut, having a food bank at the church, organizing a soup kitchen on a regular basis, and taking up benevolence offerings to people in need have been opportunities for

Mission John 3:16 to serve its community in a tangible way.

"We want individuals and families to experience the love of God in their lives, whether they make their home in Stamford, move to another state, or return to their home country," states Pastor Garcia, Jr.

### GENERATIONS PERPETUATE THE GOSPEL

Balancing assimilation with tradition is a key challenge to immigrant communities. And ethnic churches play a role in helping families achieve that balance. Ethnic churches, like any church, also face the challenge of perpetuating the gospel to each generation in a relevant manner.

"Mission Juan 3:16 (Pentecostal Mission John 3:16) has existed over 50 years yet is very young," says Pastor Garcia, Jr. "Our Hispanic community is young, and it is reflected in our congregation. We have 40-50 boys and girls in our children's ministries, and we have over 40 young people in our youth ministry."

Pastor Hang Lee and the families of Elevate Church see themselves as the transitional generation called to break the curse of traditional Hmong religions. Some 60 percent of their members have come to Christ in just the past 3 years. Four words summarize Elevate Church's vision: Come – Love – Find – Serve. *Come* as you are; the church is for everyone. Join with a community that *loves* God and people. *Find* and then follow Jesus Christ.

# MAKE IT COUNT.

THINK *academic* FRIENDLY.

Your ministry is calling you.

So is your education. Answer both with accessible, accredited and affordable distance learning created for spiritual leaders like you.



GLOBAL  
UNIVERSITY

ACCESSIBLE | ACCREDITED | AFFORDABLE  
DISTANCE EDUCATION

1.800.443.1083 • WEB: [THINK.GLOBALUNIVERSITY.EDU](http://THINK.GLOBALUNIVERSITY.EDU)   
1211 S. GLENSTONE AVE • SPRINGFIELD, MO • 65804

Serve where you are gifted and in an area where you are needed.

In Tukwila, Hope of the City focuses on strong children's programs and youth ministries, and by including youth in their worship ministry, they are reaching and discipling the second generation. The Soleros believe their focus on children and youth actually invites first-generation parents and grandparents to attend because they see their faith and Pentecostal experience passed on to the next generation.

"The amazing distinctive of Templo Betania in Oakland, California, is that at least 25 percent of the congregants are young people and the senior pastor, Mario Gamez, is one of our veteran ministers who is over 80 years old," states Roger Ovalle, superintendent of the Northern Pacific District. "Pastor Gamez is pastoring an exciting, vibrant church that is effectively ministering to the growing Hispanic community."

### GOD ORCHESTRATES EVERY STRATEGY

Whatever a church's makeup, whatever its ministry strategy, the fact remains — it is Christ who builds His Church in its many expressions, and the Head of the Church often surprises His servants.

No one would have expected Pastor Jan Berkman, an African immigrant pastor, to take the helm of an Assemblies of God Russian-speaking Messianic congregation. Hope of Israel Church is located in the epicenter of Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants in America — Brooklyn, New York. Most of the 70 people who attend are Russian by language, Soviet by upbringing, and Jewish by heritage.

Hope of Israel Church is committed to "Faith Working Through Love." They intentionally impact their community in many ways,

perhaps none more evident than through their essential diversity of Jew and Gentile, African and Caucasian, worshipping together. A sign on the building where the church meets declares, "Hope of Israel, Jesus is the Savior and the Light of the World."

Light impacts darkness through this smaller church. The power of the gospel emanating from 70 faithful believers is impacting countless thousands around them in ways that might never be reported in their church bulletin.

And that power is evident in Connecticut, Texas, Washington, Minnesota, and California as ethnic and Hispanic Assemblies of God churches carry out the Great Commission in its truest expression — taking the gospel to every nation, even when those nations are just down the street.

That mandate continues from generation to generation, with these pastors committed to passing the mission forward.

"I want our people to know that I believe in them and that I want to invest my life in them," says octogenarian Mario Gamez. "They will be tomorrow's leaders in the church and in the community. We want to transition so they will fulfill their calling to continue to lead individuals to the transforming power of God." ■



**EFRAIM ESPINOZA**, director of the Office of Hispanic Relations for The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri



**SCOTT TEMPLE**, director of Ethnic Relations for The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri



**SCOTT HARRUP**, managing editor, the *Pentecostal Evangel*, Springfield, Missouri





FOR PRAYER TEAM  
FOR NURSERY MINISTRY  
FOR CHURCH WORK DAY  
FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
FOR CLEAN-UP AND SET-UP  
FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

**I WANT YOU**

FOR TEACHING

FOR MISSION WORK



# How to Recruit, Resource, and Refine **Big-Impact** Volunteers

By **Warren Bird**

**H**ow well does the following statement describe your church? "We enjoy an abundance of gifted, deeply committed, and skilled laypersons."

That quote comes from Lyle Schaller<sup>1</sup>, whose consultations with over 4,000 congregations helped him identify elements of effective, big-impact churches. The truth, he says, is that most churches have far more people who match that description than most pastors realize. Many are likely present in your church, even if some of them are still in the rough. Your role in identifying, empowering, and supporting them is essential for the vitality of your church.

Foursquare pastor Wayne Cordeiro discovered this reality in the early years of the first church he pastored. Six months into his ministry in Hilo, the southern-most island in Hawaii, Cordeiro was at a churchwide picnic. He was having a great time until a man with a condescending tone struck up a conversation. "Do you know what kind of people you have in this church?" the man asked.



"Nice ones?" Cordeiro responded with a smile.

The man didn't laugh. Instead, he replied with a growl. "They're sick," he said, explaining he had lived in the community for a long time. "I know them," he affirmed.

He then gave Cordeiro a verbal tour of the congregation. He pointed to a teenager. "That girl was raised by a mentally handicapped grandmother because her own mother abandoned her," he said. "She does strange things."

Then he pointed out someone else. "That guy is on crack," he said, "and that one is on probation. He has to go back to jail each weekend. Better watch him."

Pointing out another cluster of people, he said, "That guy has a swindling problem. He can tap the church till, and you'll never know it."

After offering a similar commentary on other members, he looked at Cordeiro and sighed, "Your church is full of sickies."

Cordeiro didn't know what to do. Until recent moments, he thought they were wonderful people. After this narration, he started looking at them through different eyes. *That girl does act a bit strange at times*, he observed. He also began to wonder about the guy standing near her — the one on probation. *His eyes are shifty*.

After whining to God about all these "sickies," he sensed that God reminded him that all people, including, Wayne Cordeiro, need the restoration of the Great Physician (Mark 2:17). God also reminded him that God's power is "made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9), and that the church is a place for people to be restored into God's image (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; Colossians 3:10).

Cordeiro began to perceive his job as seeing God's potential in people. He concluded that not only his church, but *every* church, is full of people being developed to receive a huge spiritual inheritance, as described in Galatians 3:24–26 and 4:1–7. Cordeiro's job, along with the leaders of other churches, is to develop cultures in which believers, especially emerging leaders, can mature to the point where they can steward the inheritance of Christ.

Cordeiro's conclusion about the people in that Hilo church? According to his account in *Culture Shift*, "If you have the eyes of a pessimist, your outlook will affect all you see. If you're insecure, you will not see many options for empowerment. If your congregation embarrasses you, it will affect how you see them. You will treat them differently as a result. The culture you create will be largely a product of how

you see those whom God has placed you with. *You have to think rightly in order to lead well.*"<sup>2</sup>

This perspective enabled Cordeiro to learn to recruit, resource, and refine big-impact volunteers, and to develop that small church into a healthy congregation that influenced its community far beyond what its size would otherwise have warranted.

### WHO SAYS PARETO BELONGS AT YOUR CHURCH?

If smaller-church pastors are to lead their congregations into greater influence, they must "think rightly in order to lead well," as Cordeiro learned. One essential step is to believe that your congregation contains those gifted, deeply committed, and skilled laypersons that Schaller's opening quote describes. Another is to challenge stereotypes that only a small percentage of those people will step forward.

I recently coauthored a book, *The Other Eighty Percent*.<sup>3</sup> The subtitle describes what coauthor Scott Thumma and I believe can happen: *Turning Your Church's Spectators Into Active Disciples*. Our goal is to help congregational leaders reverse the commonly noted observation that roughly 20 percent of the people in a church do roughly 80 percent of the work.

Some have popularized this 80–20 concept by calling it the Pareto Principle. (See sidebar "What Is the Pareto Principle?") Our research found that the Pareto Principle is an observed and accepted pattern of behavior, but not an immutable law of nature for churches. It may happen that only 20 percent or so of your congregation is active, while around 80 percent stand too much on the margins, *but it doesn't have to be so*.

### JESUS DID NOT SAY, "FEED 20 PERCENT OF MY SHEEP"

Nowhere in Scripture are two different levels of participation encouraged for those who follow Jesus — the 20 percent and the 80 percent. Rather, God's call to church leaders is to watch over and spiritually develop the *entire* flock. Is it acceptable to neglect the one sheep that strayed, to allow the widow's mite to remain lost, or to write off the Prodigal Son rather than longing for him to return and rejoicing when he does?

The answer is obviously no. Each child, young person, and adult is precious in God's sight, and we need to nurture and mature them in our churches. That process includes helping them step forward to serve, and even to find their sweet spot where they will have the biggest impact.

To shift the analogy, the story in John 21:15–19 is almost too familiar: Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, three times Peter said yes, and each time Jesus responded with the commands, "Feed my lambs. ... Take care of my sheep. ... Feed my sheep."

Ministers know this passage and yet most of them feel fortunate to see even half their flock at church and only a portion of them volunteering. We acknowledge that too often at church 20 percent of the membership does 80 percent of the work. We know this falls far short of taking care of the

To share or comment on this article, or to view author video, go to [ej.ag.org/othereightypercent](http://ej.ag.org/othereightypercent) or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment* journal on Facebook

membership God has entrusted to our care, yet most clergy do not know how to change this reality.

### MOVING MARGINAL PARTICIPANTS MORE TOWARD ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

I began with these Scriptures and stories to emphasize that the essential foundation for recruiting and training volunteers in the smaller church is one of perspective. You will not see more volunteers surface if you are not willing to actively challenge the Pareto Principle.

Only after he has armed himself with the right attitude is a leader ready to explore the mechanics for understanding and motivating the marginal people associated with a congregation. If everyone is spiritually gifted, why isn't everyone working? Better practices in modeling, recruiting, training, and supporting will help a church move out of Pareto territory and toward every-member ministry.

*The Other Eighty Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators Into Active Participants* presents considerable research on more than 100,000 individuals, numerous church staff, and thousands of congregations. It proposes that the first action a church's leadership needs to take is to learn by *listening*. This listening can happen one-on-one, through a listening team, or through focus groups. In larger churches it also happens through surveys and forums, as our book explains.

### LISTENING TO THE MANY SEGMENTS OF YOUR CHURCH

You probably already know that we can identify the 20 percent of a church as the most active core. It is vital that we understand

God's call to is to watch over and spiritually develop the *entire* flock.

this group and how and why they volunteer. But do not assume their motivations and patterns represent the rest of the church.

For example, what about the next segment of roughly 20 percent — those who are currently moving *toward* the core? What excites them most about

ministry, and what causes them to be more greatly engaged? Their reasons may be different from what those already in the core would say. It is important not just to hear what is helping them increase their engagement, but then to open those same doors to others, if possible, and to draw attention to them as well.

What about yet another group — typically a segment also of roughly 20 percent — but who are currently moving *away from* the core? What is no longer working for them that is causing them to drop away? Do not be satisfied with general answers such as "not enough time." Probe until you find some specific themes, even if the news is painful to receive. Give serious, prayerful consideration to what you learn, and make changes where possible and if appropriate. Then loop back with this group to let them know you have heard them and the action you have taken.

What about yet another segment of roughly 20 percent who are not involved with any active role in ministry, but still connect with one or more persons in the congregation? Maybe Jim and Laschandra used to be part of the prison ministry, but have not been involved at church in any way since the church discontinued that ministry years ago. But they still regularly play tennis with another couple in the church. How could you help the active members of your congregation learn about the spiritual needs of these friends or relatives, and then report



## What Is the Pareto Principle?

**This rule of thumb** is derived from observations made by Vilfredo Pareto, an Italian economist at the turn of the 20th century. He realized by researching the distribution of wealth in Italy that the pattern of distribution showed an uneven relationship. The vast majority of wealth was concentrated in relatively few holdings. Specifically, in 1906, 20 percent of the population owned 80 percent of the land in Italy. We can see this

distributive principle, also commonly known today as the 80–20 rule or the law of the vital few, to hold true across many sectors of society. In other words, the majority of results come from a minority of the efforts.

For example:

- In business, 20 percent of your clients typically generate 80 percent of your sales.
- The richest 20 percent of the world's population controls roughly 80 percent of the world's income.
- In computer science, by fixing the top 20 percent of the most reported bugs, we can eliminate 80 percent of

the errors and crashes.

- In U.S. health care, 20 percent of patients use 80 percent of health-care resources.
- Several criminology studies have found that 20 percent of the criminals commit 80 percent of the crimes.

In the church world, a handful of members typically account for most of the effort in the congregation. Additionally, a few of the parishioners cause most of the headaches.<sup>1</sup>

#### Note

1. Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, *The Other Eighty Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators Into Active Disciples* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), xxi.



## The Other 80 Percent: How to Recruit, Resource, and Refine Big-Impact Volunteers

(continued from page 89)

this back in a way that the church's leadership can help your active members discern ways to reach out to these people?

Engaging volunteers is not one more thing for busy and perhaps already overworked pastors to take on. It is something for the whole congregation to own, and something to happen in a way that brings joy, energy, and new momentum to everyone, present leaders included.

Following are a few of the most important discoveries from our findings of churches that engaged more of their flock in ministry:

The most involved members are also by far the most spiritually fulfilled, engaged, and satisfied. This is also true for those members who have said they are becoming more involved, compared to those who have in the last 2 years become less involved. In other words: When people are involved, they also report that they are growing spiritually. This is good news.

The commonly accepted ideas for why people drift away from involvement have some validity — too busy, demands of their children, and illness — all contribute to inactivity, but people consider these less important than feeling spiritually unfulfilled, not having one's spiritual needs met, and perceiving that they are not growing spiritual or developing into spiritual leaders. The mundane everyday reasons are convenient excuses when someone's spirit isn't engaged and growing.

Even those who are decreasing their involvement or who are no longer involved claim that they still want to be involved. They long for fulfillment and for the church leadership to reach out to them. Many homebound, hurting, and unhappy/disgruntled former members still wish to be involved, saying

they want a connection if only the church would reach out.

Above all, we suggest that a focus on increasing member involvement is not just a church-growth strategy in disguise; it is a desire to care for the spiritual lives of the entire flock. Involvement and participation are the correlates of spiritual growth and a person's spiritual fulfillment. A full sanctuary is not the goal; spiritual growth of a healthy sheep is. And as people grow, they will want to volunteer — if you provide a meaningful framework to welcome and support their greater engagement.

### ONE CHURCH STARTED WITH 12 PEOPLE

Churches of all sizes can leverage their volunteers for greater impact. In the Assemblies of God, 82 percent of its churches in the United States have 199 or fewer people in their Sunday morning worship services; 65 percent have 99 or fewer; and 36 percent have 49 or fewer. This means most Assemblies of God senior pastors minister in one of these smaller-attendance churches.

Wilfred Bard, Jr., took a church near the bottom of that ranking. Today we know it as Liberty Church (AG), Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. It had 12 people when Bard became its pastor in 1994. Twelve years later [2006] the church had grown to the point that it planted a campus 18 miles away in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Bard and his staff estimate that about 50 percent of the new campus' initial core group volunteered in a significant way. "From the early days of Liberty Church, I worked hard to create a culture built on volunteers — by welcoming, empowering, cheering, and supporting them," says Bard. "We would not be who we are today without their vital role."

The congregation seems to enjoy an environment marked by an abundance of volunteers. "The uniqueness of Liberty Church is that we have an abundance of volunteers," says Luis Miro, campus pastor.

One example is the illustrated sermon production the media team creates once or twice a year. This involves dozens of volunteers creating a drama that uses the Bible as its script, presenting it during a Sunday morning service, and making a DVD from the live performance.

"Like everything we do around this church, it's not a spectator event. Everyone is participating in some shape or form," reports Luis Diaz, the church's graphics and media director. "Our volunteers are so excited about it and work such long hours on it that we have to kick them out at night to get them to leave. Otherwise they'd sleep on the floor of the church building if we let them."

These volunteers love what they are doing, and it is little wonder that their engagement through their church has generated a huge impact on their community as many people are saved through watching these dramas, and as they disciple many new Christians through being part of the cast or crew. Through illustrated sermons and numerous other community-impacting ministries, this church is contagious in helping people move from spectator to participant.

As volunteers step forward, not only do they extend the church



in ways that the pastor personally cannot, but they are also the same group that is most active both in inviting others to church, and then, helping each wave of newcomers also find ways to serve.

Clearly that passion for engagement starts with senior pastor Bard. "Outreach is my heartbeat, and clarity of vision and mission are critical," he says. "We are always on a learning curve to get people connected in ministry."

This is what Jesus did with a small group of disciples. This is what Cordeiro and Bard did with their nucleus groups. This is what you too can do. Veteran church consultant Carl George has pointed out that the need for volunteer leaders is the biggest ministry gap in most churches. "The creation of pastoral, ministry-capable leadership must become the core value of the church of the future, second only to listening to God,"<sup>4</sup> he says.

To view Warren Bird's video "The Heartbeat of Rising Influence Churches," go to [ej.ag.org/risinginfluence](http://ej.ag.org/risinginfluence) or scan the QR code at right.



To view a video in which authors Warren Bird and Scott Thumma share favorite quotes from their book *The Other 80 Percent*, go to [ej.ag.org/eightypercent](http://ej.ag.org/eightypercent) or scan the QR code.

Take the first step of listening to and believing God's promises that He has wired your under-involved members with a motivation for ministry. Then be prepared for some very pleasant surprises as you help these people not only step up into ministry, but step out to influence your community with an impact that is "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" (Ephesians 3:20). 📖



**WARREN BIRD, Ph.D.**, has authored or coauthored 24 books and over 200 magazine articles. His latest book is *The Best of Lyle E. Schaller: Wisdom From the Elder Statesman of Church Leadership* (Abingdon, 2012). He has served as pastor and seminary professor and is currently research director for Leadership Network. Follow him on Twitter @warrenbird.

#### Notes

1. Lyle E. Schaller, *A Mainline Turnaround: Strategies for Congregations and Denominations* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 150.
2. Story adapted from Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro with Warren Bird, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church From the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 25–28. Summary quote from page 28, emphasis added.
3. Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, *The Other Eighty Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators Into Active Disciples* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 2011.
4. Carl George with Warren Bird, *Nine Keys to Effective Small-Group Leadership*, rev. ed. (Taylors, South Carolina: CDLM, 2007), 46. See also page 68.



## Your Special Discount: Credentialed AG Ministers

### FEDEX

All Assemblies of God credentialed ministers and churches can now enjoy savings of up to 26% off select FedEx Express® and FedEx Ground® shipping services.\* Also, save up to 70% off FedEx Freight® shipping services.\*\* There are no obligations, fees, or minimum shipping requirements to take advantage of this program. Enroll today and start enjoying your special savings with FedEx.

**Up to 26% off** **FedEx Express® services**

**Up to 12% off** **FedEx Ground® services**

**Up to 70% off** **FedEx Freight® services**

Call 1-800-MEMBERS (1-800-636-2377, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. EST, M–F)

Visit [www.1800MEMBERS.COM/AG](http://www.1800MEMBERS.COM/AG).





# No More **Casualties**

By **Lori O'Dea**

Here are six effective strategies for conflict management in the smaller church.





BananaStock / iStockphoto Photodisc / Thinkstock

**E**

**ight years.** It was the longest pastoral tenure in the church's 73-year history, and it came to a heart-rending end at the hands of a brutal conflict.

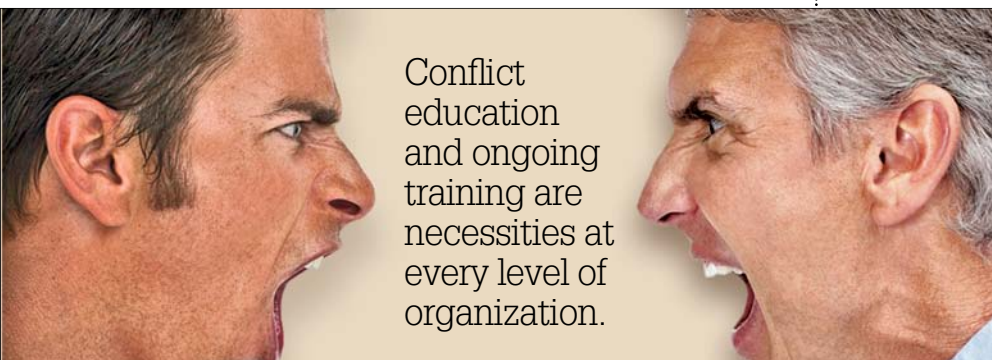
There was no bloodshed. No one ended up in jail. But the fruit of this small-town church conflict was no less ugly. A year-long trajectory of growth — in salvations, attendance (average Sunday morning 160), missions support, and finances — came to a sudden end. A year of lost ministry, settling for a poorly qualified candidate, hemorrhaging members, and near bankruptcy followed this event.



## No More Casualties

(continued from page 93)

How did it come to this? There is no one, simple answer. A retired member of the congregation became frustrated with the pastor's secular work situation, which the church board had approved. One day, after not finding the pastor at the church, he confronted the pastor's wife at her place of employment. He shouted and made such hateful accusations that left her in tears.



For the next few weeks the man met with groups of people from the church, attempting to stir trouble. The board advised him to stop or face the consequences. He agreed and apologized to the pastor's wife but continued with the same behavior. After another meeting with the board and a follow-up letter warning him to stop or face revocation of his membership, he persisted. The board revoked his membership and held a meeting to share the situation with the members.

The man continued to attend church. At the annual business meeting he disparagingly questioned every financial detail. For the next 6 months he groomed an increasingly critical spirit toward the church leadership (pastor and board). The pastor's wife suffered physically and emotionally under the stress. Finally, when the antagonist began to circulate a petition calling for the return of his membership, a change in the bylaws, and a review

of the pastor's effectiveness, the pastor resigned. He said, "God did not tell me to resign." He did so to protect his family.

They could have won. They had the votes. But it would have split the church.

Interviewing the pastor and his wife many years after this incident, they highlighted several things that surprised them during the incident:

1) The instigating troublemaker had not been a

perennial problem. Though occasionally exhibiting signs of spiritual immaturity, he had not been a vocal or behind-the-scenes antagonist prior to this situation. This man carried considerably more clout with the congregation than the leadership had previously been aware. Also, in the community, the man had a poor reputation. Until the problem, they had not known this.

**Fact:** Conflict situations may *out* your closet heathens (aka nominal believers). These people have perfected a double lifestyle — one for church and one for everywhere else. Incognito antagonists are not an anomaly. They often present themselves as the pastor's greatest supporters. Leaders should not live in paranoia but with fresh discernment. While it would be ideal to investigate and learn the reputations of members outside the walls of the church, it is neither practical nor always possible. We can rely on the Spirit to

lead us and open our eyes when we must exercise caution.

2) The presbyter provided little support. (His advice? "Sometimes you have to let them shoot you.") He also had a serious bias; he had grown up in the church so he backed the antagonist.

**Fact:** Conflict education and ongoing training are necessities at every level of organization. Poor accountability and unwise or miscommunicated direction opened the door for multiple errors in handling this situation.

3) The greatest amount of support came from non-Christians. Because the family was well established in the small community, people knew them and held them in high regard. People sent cards, visited, and even gave financial gifts. They expressed deep regret at the family's pending departure and provided much needed encouragement.

**Fact:** The communities we serve are watching, even if they do not attend our churches. How we conduct our lives in the good times and bad calls for awareness of our position before a watching world. Because conflict is universal, it provides a connection point with people, particularly those who want to see if Christians will conduct themselves with integrity.

### THE ENEMY'S PLAYBOOK

Satan's mission statement is to "steal, kill, and destroy." His strategies are equally simplistic; he only has a handful of plays — lie, deceive, divide, isolate, and attack. That's about it. Poorly managed conflict enables all of the above. Please note the qualifier: "poorly managed."

Conflict itself is neutral (and to be fair, not always instigated by the enemy). How we handle conflict determines how we will view the process. Changing our perspective from the outset — seeing the situation as a problem to be solved, possibly an opportunity for growth of the vision, the relationship, and

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/nomorecasualties](http://ej.ag.org/nomorecasualties)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook



## City Reach Network Envisions 50 Church Plants in 10 Years

**Church Planting Myth:** It takes a large, established church to plant a new congregation.

While City Reach Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was established through one such traditional partnership, it sees no reason to wait for its own growth before multiplying itself.

City Reach Church recently became City Reach Network. The Network is already energizing three main campuses, gaining a reputation for compassion ministry, and intent on planting 50 churches in 10 years.

Pastor Brian Bolt helped establish City Reach Church in 2006 under the leadership of Pastor Jeff Leake and nearby Allison Park Church (Assemblies of God). City Reach Church became sovereign in June 2011.

From their opening Sunday, Bolt and the congregation of City Reach have seen themselves as not just a church plant, but as church planters. “We planted our first church just east of the city in Braddock, Pennsylvania,” Bolt says, “and then we planted another in Reading. We felt like the Lord was expanding our vision, that He wanted us to plant 50 churches in the next 10 years.”

Two days in Bolt’s life — March 17, 2000, and April 13, 2012 — go a long way toward defining the man and his passion for church planting.

On St. Patrick’s Day 2000 Bolt got into a fight in a Los Angeles bar. The man he argued with shot Bolt point-blank in the head with a .22 caliber pistol. Before Bolt passed out and went into a coma, he remembers the ambulance arriving and a paramedic’s chilling words.

“He told me, ‘Son, you’ve lost a lot of blood. You’re not going to make it to the hospital. You’re going to die,’” Bolt says. “Then he said, ‘Before you die, I want to ask you this question: Do you know

Jesus Christ as your Savior?’ ”

In the back of the ambulance, Bolt said a simple prayer asking Jesus into his heart. That’s the last thing he did for 75 days.

On April 13, 2012, City Reach Pittsburgh was holding a Friday night service. “We were praying for souls, praying for church planting, praying for the mission of Christ,” Bolt says. “And then something happened, and this thick presence of God took over.”

The overwhelming sense of divine visitation carried over to Saturday when several healings took place. The weekend energized additional church services.

“We’re in a unique season at City Reach right now,” Bolt says. “We have services Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then two on Sunday morning.”

Multiple services fuel a continuing vision to plant churches, with eight sites planned for 2013. Besides spiritual preparation and revival, Bolt prioritizes a very practical key as well.

“A lot of times I hear pastors say they don’t have enough money or enough people,” he says. “Or I hear, ‘We don’t have the leaders.’ But if we’re intentional about seeing people fulfilled in what God has called them to be, the rest kind of falls into place. Keep it simple and just invest in people as God starts to raise them up and equip them.”

From his own transformative encounter with Christ, the former drug addict knows God can use anyone to plant a church — or many churches.

“God has been so good to me and to all our churches,” Bolt insists. “I’d like to say that I’m some strategic genius, but I’m not. It’s all Jesus. It’s the Holy Spirit.”

**SCOTT HARRUP**, managing editor,  
*the Pentecostal Evangel*, Springfield, Missouri



## No More Casualties

(continued from page 94)

or the organization itself — allows us to face the conflict head-on, rather than avoiding or mismanaging it.

As long as God's people are carrying out His Great Commission, the church will find itself in a context of change and conflict. We give the enemy more leverage with his feeble plots when we find ourselves surprised by them.

In a smaller church, conflict has the potential to wield greater impact than it might have in a larger church, which simply has more people to absorb and insulate an incident. In the smaller church, everyone may know about the problem before anyone has taken steps to resolve it. No leader — in small or large settings — can afford to avoid conflict. But smaller-church leadership must be especially prepared and proactive to address situations immediately.

### BIG PICTURE CHURCH CONFLICT MANAGEMENT Pray first

Prayer seems the obvious thing to do, but sometimes we come to prayer as a last resort. Human nature defaults to self unless interrupted. Let prayer be that interruption.

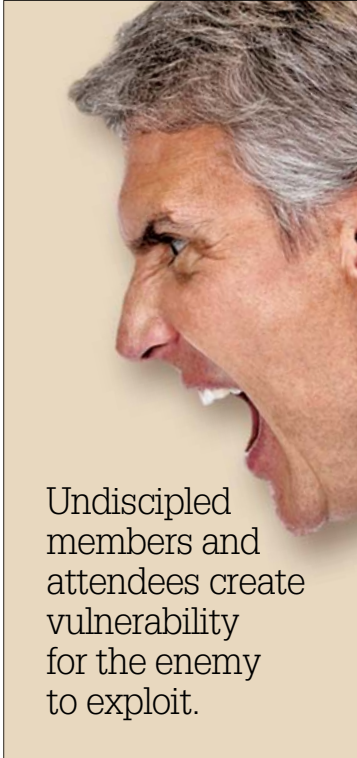
A.T. Pierson, speaking at a student missionary conference in 1896, testified: "I was the pastor of a great church, where I found that there was an irreconcilable feud between certain members, officers of that church. I laboured eighteen months and used every expedient I could think of, and was unable to heal the breach. Then I went to the Lord, and said with tears, 'My God, I cannot serve Thee in this church while this feud continues; I have essayed to heal it, but it has not been healed; lay Thy hand upon these parties, and remove them from the church, or bring them to a mutual understanding.'

"From that day, not one of these disputants has been inside the walls of that church. In my despair, 'This poor man cried unto the Lord,' and the Lord heard him. One of the members in question had sickness in the family, which demanded his removal from the town; the other had a rise in his rent and went away; another was found involved in a defalcation [embezzlement], and was forced to leave, and now the church is a perfectly harmonious body. My quickest way was by the roundabout process of the Throne of Grace."<sup>1</sup>

Roundabout? Not so much. Going straight to the Throne of Grace is the best kind of end run. We cannot triangle God into our conflict inappropriately. He will resolve it for us or give us the wisdom to lead through the conflict.

### Disciple, disciple, disciple

In nearly, if not every church-conflict situation, we can trace the difficulty to spiritual and emotional immaturity. Too



Undisciplined members and attendees create vulnerability for the enemy to exploit.

many churches become incubators for developmentally disabled believers. They continue to age, but not mature. Sadly, advanced age or lengthy tenure alone can open doors for leadership positions — official or unofficial — but every bit as influential.

Discipleship provides the antidote. We need to grow up in Christ. According to the directives of Ephesians 4, maturity is neither optional nor independent. When we refuse to speak the truth in love to immature believers around us, we perpetuate their conflict-inducing behaviors. Since conflict is already inevitable, let us make sure we are not exacerbating it.

Teach and carry out the process of admonition, as found in Galatians 6:1–3: "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves."

The stakes are simply too high to ignore this kind of confrontation. Anyone who has been through a moral failure understands that it functions as the IED (Improvised Explosive Device) of the church world. When a leader or a member fails morally in either their personal behavior or leadership responsibilities, it lays the church open to multiple conflict injuries, including loss of members, credibility in the community, and even faith itself.

Teach doctrine. Start with the fundamental truths. Our faith statement provides us with the foundation for a biblical worldview, but it also gives us a basis for unity. Theological and ideological issues represent the most difficult types of conflict to resolve. While you may never find common ground in the ideological realm (worship styles, Bible versions, etc.), you must build a solid foundation in the theological realm with those God entrusts to your care.

Undisciplined members and attendees create vulnerability for the enemy to exploit. Spiritual and emotional immaturities offer dual entry points to every kind of deception and potential division of the body of Christ. Relentless discipleship should be a church's chief security strategy.

### Teach conflict-resolution principles

Our discipleship and leadership training curricula are incomplete without solid, frequently revisited conflict-management subjects. Thankfully, there is no lack of relevant Bible passages and outstanding Christian and secular resources. One class, one brush with the topic will not cut it. Become a lifelong

learner. Preach and teach regularly on the subject. Dedicated series will help, but intentionally bringing primary conflict-resolution principles into view in the contexts of other teachings will remind people of conflict's pervasive nature, as well as equip them to deal with it practically.

Start with Matthew 18:15–17. Actually, if we just taught Matthew 18:15 (go directly to the person with whom you have conflict) and held people accountable to this, we would greatly reduce the length and influence of the majority of church, marketplace, and interpersonal relationship conflicts. Teach the importance of going to others directly and immediately, without making an end run to others and authorities. Teach people not to allow others to draw them into another person's conflict until they have held the person accountable for following the process outlined in Matthew 18. Ministry leaders, this means you, too.

Our desire to help can stunt other's spiritual growth, not to mention make us conflict magnets. If you are guilty of wading into other people's conflicts (called triangling), do what one church administrator vowed after his enlightening moment of self-recognition. He purchased a farm vehicle safety sign (fluorescent triangle), put a piece of black electrical tape over it, and mounted it above his office door.

Train at every level. This includes pastoral staff, elders, deacons, small-group leaders, ministry leaders, and every person in the pew. We make a mistake when we provide leadership training only to leaders. Pastors need to teach good leadership material at every level of the organization to strengthen it as a whole. This is particularly true of conflict-management training. We cannot hold people accountable to something we have not taught them.

Finally, create a church-discipline policy. Most church constitutions carry a general statement regarding church unity and a hint of dire consequences for conducting divisive activities. These are rarely specific enough to be actionable. Create a church-discipline policy applicable to all members and attendees with expectations and clear procedures. Then be willing to carry out the policy. Most churches do not practice church discipline. When required, their rusty, sometimes awkward actions complicate things.

### Communicate openly

Hidden things gain undue power. The more information you share with the community, the more likely you will be to kill the half-life of gossip. In conflict, the rule always is to keep the circle as small as possible. When one or both parties violate this within a church, the pastor has no choice but to call everyone affected to the table for a conversation.

Invite questions. Root out rumors. Respond to those you have heard. Ruthlessly avoid tones of ridicule or punishment. Be sure not to default to your inner autocrat, who, when given voice, generally says something to the effect of, "We'll do it this way because I said so." That may be

appropriate within the context of a young family, but it smacks of pride and poor communications skills in a leader of adults.

### Be financially sound

For many reasons, churches need to have beyond-reproach financial practices in place at every level of the institution. Some of the most serious conflicts arise out of suspicions over handling or using funds. For the record: The church is not a bank or a check-into-cash institution. No loans to anyone (including leaders), ever.

Get counsel from a trusted outsider on your current practices. Many ill-advised procedures have come about from years of habitually bad behavior. "Because we've always done it that way" does not work in change or conflict management.

Have you updated your church insurance policy lately? Have your agent walk you through every line of liability coverage and give examples of the occasions that may call for its use. The comprehensively stupid things churches have done and the things that people have sued for will stun you. You will also be convicted when you find some of your own practices among them.

### ACT NOW

In his book, *High Expectations*, Thom Rainer identifies the top 10 reasons people leave churches. Seven are conflict-centered. In smaller churches, where we live and die over the return of a visitor, where every new family is a hard won victory, where troublemakers sometimes gravitate in the hopes of big fish-small pond power, we cannot bury our heads in the sand and continue to treat conflict with hope. Hope is not a strategy. Hope needs to fuel immediate action.

For every generation reared in a conflict-adverse culture, the church will descend that much further into a conflict-ruled operation. These churches become pastor killers. Let our mindset be no more conflict casualties. The ministry we save may be our own. 📖



**LORI O'DEA, D.Min.**, pastor, New Life Assembly of God, Grand Ledge, Michigan

### Note

1. "Prevailing Intercessory Prayer Quotes," <http://www.path2prayer.com/article/250/intercessory-prayer/9e-daily-prevailing-intercessory-prayer-quotes>. Accessed July 9, 2012.





# Tent Making in the 21st Century:

## How to Turn Bivocational Challenges Into Opportunities

By **Tim Leathers**

**I**t is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why he does it." These words by A.W. Tozer are relevant as we look at bivocational ministry in the 21st century.

*Bivocational* — meaning "having more than one job" — sounds like a lot of work, especially working as a minister and holding a secular job. We search for meaning and fulfillment in our vocations. We long to see growth, achievement, and success. But in ministry, how do we measure success — by comparing ourselves to the church down the street or across town? Is the bivocational pastor less effective for the kingdom of God?

Scripture provides an example of a successful bivocational minister. God called the apostle Paul to minister, but Paul was a tent maker as well. Being a tent maker allowed him to support himself and maintain freedom in his ministry. Because he did not have to rely on people for his financial support, he had more freedom to preach as God led him (1 Corinthians 9:12–23). As you can tell by reading Paul's writing, being bivocational also gave him great sermon material.

In the past when I was with other pastors at seminars or district council, I would mention I was bivocational. They would say something like, "When will your church get to the place where you can get back into full-time ministry?"

God is calling a new generation of ministers who can take the added responsibility of bivocational ministry and turn it into opportunities to be salt and light to a lost and dying world.

My response? I would often say, "Don't feel sorry for me, because I get to minister to hurting people outside the church every day."

I believe being bivocational is full-time ministry. I believe God is calling a new generation of ministers who can take the added responsibility of bivocational ministry and turn it into opportunities to be salt and light to a lost and dying world.

### MY STORY

I was raised the son of Charles Leathers, a successful Assemblies of God pastor in the Southern Missouri District. While attending Evangel University from 1982–86, I was my father's youth pastor

in Marshall, Missouri. I received my first taste of bivocational ministry as a full-time college student doing ministry on weekends at my dad's church 2½ hours away from school. I had to find balance between my school life and my ministry.

I married my college sweetheart in 1989, and we spent the next few years in full-time youth ministry in churches in Missouri and Illinois. Following many years of full-time youth ministry, a small, struggling church in Wilton, Iowa, called us to be its senior pastor. One year after following God's call to this congregation of about 50 people, I felt He was asking us to support missions. Twenty-five people supported this vision and stayed at the church. We knew God had called us to this



## Tent Making in the 21st Century: How to Turn Bivocational Challenges Into Opportunities

(continued from page 99)

church; but due to dwindling numbers, we struggled financially. That is when I decided to find a second job.

After working in retail and construction for a short time, the chief of police offered me a job as a police officer in our town of 3,000 people — an opportunity that would provide for my family, meet our bills, and provide benefits, such as insurance. This position offered more than just money; it was an avenue of ministry to reach into the community and touch hurting people. So, at 40 years of age, I headed to the police academy. One year later, God opened the door to serve as the chief of police for Wilton.

Journalists mostly wrote newspaper articles about my position being a cultural oddity. Headlines read, “A Bible in One Hand and a Gun in the Other.” However, this unique position provides me opportunity to minister to people who are hurting, lost, and hopeless. While many people think these two jobs are a strange mix, I feel they complement each other. My bivocational necessity is a platform to help me accomplish the Great Commission of being salt and light in my community.



A secular job gives opportunity to touch people just like Jesus did — on a roadside, beside a well, in a home, or in a prison cell.

### BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

According to official statistics, 84 percent of Assemblies of God (AG) churches in the U.S. have 199 or less people in their Sunday morning worship services; 65 percent have 99 or less; and

36 have 49 or less. Most AG senior pastors minister in one of these small-attendance churches. With these statistics in mind, a majority of AG pastors are in smaller churches, which makes it quite possible that many are struggling to make ends meet. Many pastors search for ways to grow a thriving congregation, while lack of finances and pressure to pay bills sends them looking to “greener pasture.” All the while, God may be giving

opportunities to make tents; He may be offering new and fertile opportunities to minister to people outside the walls of the church. Many job opportunities can be platforms to preach the good news. A secular job gives opportunity to touch people just like Jesus did — on a roadside, beside a well, in a home, or in a prison cell. Most of Jesus’ ministry was meeting and touching people where they were in communities. I look at bivocational ministry like this; I have twice the opportunity to live what I preach.

God uses opportunities in my week as a law enforcement officer to enlarge my congregation on Sunday mornings. One night I spent the entire night with a young man I knew personally. As I walked into his home, he was sitting on his couch with a revolver to his head. He told me that his wife and children had left him, and he was going to “check out.” After hours of negotiation, he handed me the pistol. We prayed together, and he was in our service the next Sunday.

Obviously, not every one has opportunity to work in law enforcement while pastoring a church. Other vocations can also serve as a complement to ministry and life assignment. Some elements to look for in a second vocation are flexibility, alignment with your calling, and opportunity to reach the lost. First responders, teachers, substitute teachers, retail sales, and bus driving are all great opportunities. The important thing is to be ready to bloom in the place God plants you.

### MORE THAN JUST PAYING THE BILLS

If you look at bivocationalism solely as a means to pay the bills, you will miss opportunities for God’s Spirit to flow through you. Bivocational ministry provides many opportunities to touch a hurting world. When I was in full-time ministry sitting behind my desk, I longed for divine appointments. Not many people walked through the door of my office. Don’t get me wrong — at times someone would walk in off the street and generate an opportunity for one-on-one ministry. But because I’m bivocational, nearly every day I have opportunity to touch someone’s life for Jesus.

Just last week I was called to a car accident. I was the first officer on the scene. The victim was a 16-year-old girl; she was ejected from her car and killed instantly. Within moments I recognized the victim — Justice — a young lady from my church. Justice loved Jesus, so I knew she was in the presence of her Savior.

The coroner and county sheriff commissioned me to do the death notification. The mother was also part of my congregation. When I arrived at the mother’s workplace, I told her Justice had been killed in an auto accident. After the initial shock of the news — the screaming and the tears — we drove to her house to tell the siblings. Following a long day with the family and much weeping, I sat with the family and the funeral director to make the final arrangements. The mother grabbed my hand and said, “Pastor, there is no one in the world I’d rather have give me the news of my daughter’s death than you.”

While it was difficult to do my job that day, being the chief of

To share or comment  
on this article go to  
[ej.ag.org/bivocational  
challenges](http://ej.ag.org/bivocational_challenges)  
or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment*  
journal on Facebook

police gave me the opportunity to minister to a grieving family in a way I could not have otherwise if I had only been her pastor.

I frequently say: "The world is getting tired of *hearing* how much Jesus loves them; they need to *see* how much He loves them." I have had the privilege to lead more people to Christ in my office as the chief of police than I ever have in my office as a pastor. God opens doors for ministry that never open just sitting behind a pastoral desk.

As we pray as Jabez does in 1 Chronicles 4:10, "Oh, that you would ... enlarge my territory," we must realize that God

is using our second vocation to do just that. It is more than a second job to pay the bills; it increases the sphere of our influence that gives access to the fertile ground outside the church. It broadens our territory to a dark world that would never come to us inside the church.

An added bonus to bivocational ministry is the awareness it gives me into the hearts of those attending my church. I can minister to them in more insightful, personal ways through sermons, counseling, and relationships.

## MORE THAN A STEPPING-STONE

I used to look at bivocational ministry as a stepping-stone to greater ministry opportunity. I used to dream of a time when I didn't have to work two jobs. If I continued in this mindset, I would have missed opportunities to do great things for the Kingdom.

I began this article by letting you know why I am working a bivocational job, but the story does not end there. Financially, I no longer need to work bivocationally. My church has grown to a size that can more than take care of my family's needs. However, I choose to allow God to use me in my town as the chief of police. My church can use the extra money for other ministries — missions and outreach within the community. Someday God may call me in a new direction, but for now I am content where I am and with what He has called me to do. He gives me strength to do both jobs; He brings other people and staff alongside me at the church to do the work that needs to be done.

My church is supportive of my dual vocation status. When God calls you, He works out all the details. We must not minimize the importance of the ministry God has called us to at this time. Lives are in the balance. They need to hear the gospel and see Jesus in a real way.

"It's the same with Jesus. He was crucified outside the city gates — that is where he poured out the sacrificial blood that was brought to God's altar to cleanse his people. So let's go outside, where Jesus is, where the action is — not trying to be privileged insiders, but taking our share in the abuse of Jesus. This insider world is not our home. We have our eyes peeled for the City about to come. Let's take our place outside with Jesus, no longer pouring out the sacrificial blood of animals but pouring out sacrificial praises from our lips to God in Jesus' name" (Hebrews 13:12–15, *The Message*). ■



**TIM LEATHERS**, lead pastor, Heartland Fellowship Church, Wilton, Iowa

Photo Objects.net / Thinkstock



## Challenges in Bivocational Ministry

**Although there are many benefits** from being in bivocational ministry, there are also hindrances.

**BALANCE:** You must be able to balance your spiritual life, health, family, ministry, secular job, and social life. If you find any of these areas suffering, you may need to reevaluate your situation.

**UNDERSTANDING:** You need an understanding congregation. If you are bivocational, the church will need to designate a board member, staff member, lay minister, or congregant to do some jobs in the church that they may have expected you to do. Keep in mind that rarely is ministry ever a part-time profession. It is usually a full-time job, along with your secular job. Ministry is demanding, and it is no respecter of a time clock. Your secular employer may not be understanding of your ministry, and you may need to use vacation time for funerals, emergencies, special events, and pastoral conferences. Make sure your family is aware of this.

**PRIORITIZE:** There may be things you will not have time to do in ministry that you would like to see happen. You will need to prioritize a list of things that need to be done. God can give you wisdom on what to keep, what to place on the back burner, and what to throw out.

**BURNOUT:** You must depend on the Holy Spirit's power and leading to help prevent you from burning out and wearing out. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

**TIM LEATHERS**, Wilton, Iowa






# Emotionally Healthy Pastoring

Staying emotionally healthy in the ministry starts by stepping into the messy, painful truth of confronting how you are doing in three major areas of life and ministry.

By **Pete Scazzero**



**A**fter 20 years as senior pastor, I finally admitted I had been skimming in my leadership. Skimming is the way many of us cope with multiple demands, constant pressure, and overloaded schedules. We cover a lot of ground superficially, but we do not fully engage with our surroundings. Like skimming a book, this can produce an impression that we have everything covered; but, in reality, we are not completely there.



To view Peter Scazzero's video introduction to this article, go to [ej.ag.org/emotionalhealth](http://ej.ag.org/emotionalhealth) or scan the QR code.

How do you know you are skimming?

- When you go from meeting to meeting without an awareness of God.
- When you say yes to new commitments and expansions without properly following through on what you are already doing.
- When you realize you do not have enough time to allow the truth of what you are preaching to transform your own walk with Christ.
- When you avoid difficult decisions and truth because it will upset someone.
- When you engage in a pastoral phone call or visit — resentfully.
- When you cannot stop thinking about the unfinished work at church when you are with your family.

- When you are too busy to reflect on your own heart or cultivate your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- When you are not investing in your own personal growth and marriage.
- When you measure your success based on what other people say rather than your own internal values before God.

Many times skimming is a defensive mechanism of denial that blocks us from growing up spiritually and emotionally. It is a way of avoiding aspects of ministry that stir up our anxiety or suggest pain. It can work for a while, but eventually it catches up with us, and there is a price to pay. Here is how it caught up with me and forced me to confront my skimming.

For years our church board, in their annual review of my role, asked how I enjoyed my position as senior pastor.

"I love preaching, teaching, casting vision, and discipling



## Emotionally Healthy Pastoring

(continued from page 103)

people," I replied. "But God just did not gift me to do administration or run the organization. Administration is frustrating."

For years I, along with our board, attempted to find ways to provide administrative leadership alongside my role as pastor. Each time we hit a wall. Nothing seemed to work long-term. This was a problem when the church was 1 year old and 20 years old. The issue was not size. It was inside me.

Yet I continued to avoid making difficult decisions, managing key volunteers, taking time to plan for meetings, or following through on project details.

I clearly saw things that we needed to do, but I wanted someone else to do it. *That's all administration*, I told myself.

issues that were bogging us down. Truth be told, I was afraid people would misunderstand me, I would lose friendships, and people would leave the church, halting our momentum.

I complained. I got angry. I blamed. I sulked. But I did nothing.

### FINDING MY PERSONAL INTEGRITY — FINALLY

A number of events finally converged to break me out of this gridlock.

First, I reached a point of utter frustration. The inner workings of our church leadership did not reflect the message I was preaching. I could no longer preach a way of life that we were not living.

It is an illusion to imagine that we can lead our people on a spiritual journey we ourselves have not taken.



*That's something someone else should do. It's just not me.*

In hindsight I can see two factors that hindered me.

**I didn't trust myself.** Throughout my ministry I had plenty of administrative failures, and I had mixed emotions about trying again. Plus, other pastors, even my wife told me: "You don't have those gifts, so play to your strengths and find others to fill in your weaknesses. Spend your time in the Word and prayer. Let others run the church." This reinforced my mental block that I could not do it.

**I was a coward.** Each time I saw what needed to be done, I realized I feared getting into the nitty-gritty. We needed to make changes in leadership. We had not properly slotted a few key people. Others were not doing their roles well. This was now having an increasing impact on the church.

I had made difficult decisions prior to this, but now I was skimming, trying to stay above the fray, safely above the administrative

Around this time, my wife, Geri, spoke up: "Pete, I think the issue is courage, your courage. I am not blaming you. It is hard to make the kind of changes needed. All I know is that you are in the position to do it, but you are not doing it. You are not enforcing our values of emotionally healthy spirituality with the staff to the degree that is needed. You are angry and resentful. We have a great church but, ..."

She paused and then dropped the bombshell.

"This is about you. You may not have what it takes to do what needs to be done. Maybe your time is up and someone else needs to step in and lead."

She exposed me. While her words hurt, I knew there was truth in them. I spent the next day alone with God and my journal.

Yes, I wanted someone else to come in and get the house in order, to lead the church through the painful changes before us. But it was now clear. I admitted the truth: The greatest deterrent to New Life Fellowship Church becoming what God meant it to be was me, not any other person or factor.

Over the next year I learned that the skills for doing the executive work of an organization are not hard to learn. The real difficulty was making the time, thinking carefully before the Lord, summoning the courage to have difficult conversations, and following all the way through. I was now stepping into the messy, painful truth that would set both me and New Life free.

To share or comment on this article, or to view author video, go to [ej.ag.org/emotionallyhealthypastoring](http://ej.ag.org/emotionallyhealthypastoring) or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment* journal on Facebook

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN THE CHURCH

As not skimming in my leadership became a major learning curve for me, I pondered how much skimming was happening in other areas of my life.

You can skim on your Christmas shopping and cleaning your car. You can skim on your social life, your e-mail, and your reading list. But do not skim on what is most important.

I became aware of my temptation to skim in three major areas of my life. Each had profound and far-reaching implications, for myself and the people I serve. These same three areas apply if your church is 30, 50, 100, or 1,000 people. Leading yourself always is the greatest challenge.



## YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Cultivating a life with Jesus requires large amounts of focused time. Days alone with God, hours of meditation on Scripture, and time for reading are indispensable. Endless distractions and voices that call us away from sitting at the feet of Jesus, like Mary did in Luke 10:38–42, surround us.

Throughout church history, one of the seven deadly sins is sloth (*acedia*, “not caring”), which describes not just laziness, but busyness with the wrong things. We are busy, the spiritual guides argued, because we cannot bear the effort demanded by a life of recollection and solitude with God. There was no patience for activism, even godly activity, unless they nourished it by a rich interior life with God.

The Desert Fathers repeatedly warned about being engaged in activity for God before the time is ripe. They offer a timely warning to us.

So, to stop skimming on my relationship with God, I started building monastic rhythms into my life. For example, I began practicing daily trips to the office as a way to structure my days. I began planning my day around three to four small blocks of time to stop, center, read Scripture, and be still. I also became ruthless about days of silence as indispensable elements of my vocation as a pastor.

It is an illusion to imagine that we can lead our people on a spiritual journey we ourselves have not taken. No program can substitute for the superficiality and self-will that inevitably

permeates our ministry when we skim in our relationship with God. Imagine if the Twelve had allowed themselves to be distracted from the Word of God and prayer in Acts 6.

## YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

Most of us are overscheduled and preoccupied. We are starved for time and exhausted from the endless needs around us. Who has time to enjoy Jesus, our spouses, our children, life itself?

We assume we will catch up on our sleep some other time. We assume that the space we need for replenishing our soul and relaxing can happen later. Few of us have time for fun and hobbies. There is simply too much work we need to do for God.

Jesus models for us healthy self-care. With the weight of the world on His shoulders, we observe Him resting and enjoying what others bring to Him before going to the cross (John 12:1–8).

Bernard of Clairvaux, like Augustine before him, recognized that mature love does not exist without a basis of self-love. Unless we know what it is to care for ourselves, we cannot love others well. Only in light of the love of God can we love ourselves rightly. Bernard even argued that love of self for God’s sake is the highest form of loving God. Unrelenting duty can destroy the joy of the Lord, which is our strength.

A key to our freedom is a rediscovery of Sabbath-keeping, a radical, countercultural spiritual formation practice. I accept God’s invitation to stop, rest, delight, and contemplate Him for a 24-hour period. For me, this means stopping from Friday night at 7 p.m. to Saturday night at 7 p.m. — even if I have not finished my sermon. I stop all “have tos” and “shoulds.” I avoid the computer, e-mails, and church-related work. I spend Saturdays doing other work, such as cleaning the house, repairing the car, doing laundry, and paying bills.

The Sabbath calls us to build the doing of nothing into our schedules each week. We accomplish nothing that is measurable. It is, by the world’s standards, inefficient, unproductive, and useless. Yet it is one of the most fundamental elements God has given us that we might take care of ourselves.

## YOU AND YOUR MARRIAGE (IF APPLICABLE)

Few are willing to admit the sad state of many pastors’ marriages. Admitting this would potentially disrupt, at least in the short term, some of our fastest-growing churches.

The best leadership and denominational conferences, along with our seminaries and schools, do not train us how to have marriages that last and point to heaven. We ignore the unique pressures of the ministry, mistakenly assuming that a great marriage will happen naturally if we work for God.

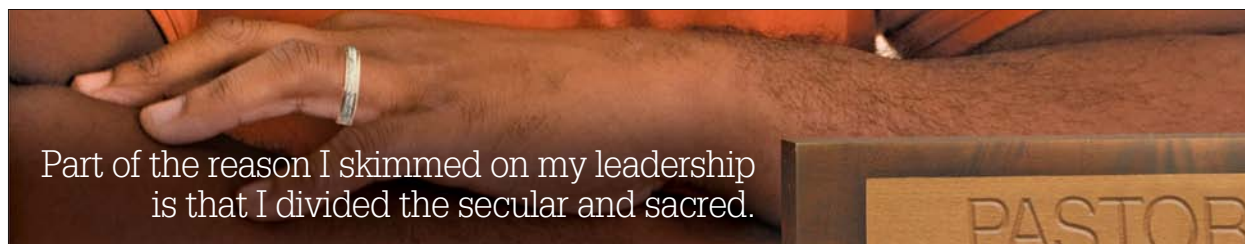
We forget the biblical principle: as goes the leader’s marriage, so goes the church. If we are skimming at home, we are not going to be able to lead a healthy church family (1 Timothy 3:5).

If you are married, your vocation is your spouse first, and any children God has given you. This covenant takes priority



## Emotionally Healthy Pastoring

(continued from page 105)



over your church and people.

Paul refers to the one flesh union of husband and wife as a foreshadowing of Christ's union with His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:31,32). For this reason God intends our marriage and sexuality to proclaim and reflect our union with Christ. Our marital union is to be a picture, and experience, of receiving and giving the love of God.

Who has time to invest in such a learning, growth journey?

Some pastors will say, "Pete, this will require I change the entire way I do ministry?" Yes.

Geri and I made a commitment 19 years ago that investing in our marriage was the highest priority of our lives after Christ. Our calendar began to reflect that change. We carved out exclusive, uninterrupted time each day and week to be fully present with one another. And we began regular overnights to nearby bed and breakfasts for getaways.

Of course, the temptation to skim on our marriage remains. But as our theology of marriage as a vocation, as a specific call and mission from God, has deepened over the years, this has weakened our temptation to skim.

### YOU AND YOUR LEADERSHIP

Part of the reason I skimmed on my leadership is that I divided the secular and sacred, treating the executive, planning functions of pastoral leadership as less meaningful and holy than prayer and Bible study.

For years I preferred to do the easy things, not the necessary things. I do not enjoy conflict and tension. Who does?

When I stopped skimming, I began to see how much external validation drove my life. I wanted people to tell me I was okay. I discovered that people did not move toward me after difficult conversations; instead, they distanced themselves from me.

I sometimes avoided meetings I knew would be hard. I skimmed on truth when it was uncomfortable. I preferred to not ask difficult questions or speak up when something was clearly wrong.

It is easier to rush into a meeting without planning. It is hard to spend the time needed to get clear on our goals and agenda.

It is easier to be reactive than to be thoughtful and prayerful. I had based more of my decisions than I care to admit on feelings and impulse. When I did this, it was hard to provide prudent leadership.

It is easy to say one thing and do another. It is hard to remain centered and follow through on my commitments.

It is easy to gloss over inconsistencies. It is hard to examine painful data that things may not be going well.

It is easy to engage in false peace by appeasing people. It is hard to speak truth when they may become angry.

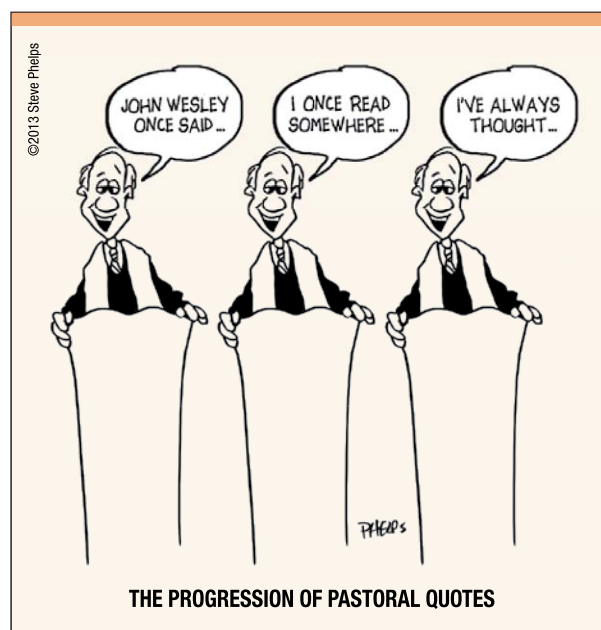
It is easy to justify our spin and exaggeration as vision. It is hard to combine faith and hard facts.

We need to remember our goal — people's transformation into the likeness of Christ. Loving people does not mean keeping them happy. Jesus models for us that hurting people is often part of helping them mature.

And remember: leadership that does not skim sets us and our people free — even if it is painful at first. ■



**PETE SCAZZERO** is senior pastor of New Life Fellowship Church in Queens, New York, and author of two best selling books: *The Emotionally Healthy Church* and *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. Visit Peter at: [www.facebook.com/petescazzero](http://www.facebook.com/petescazzero), and [www.emotionallyhealthy.org](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org).







**Get your kids in the game.**



» [www.MEGASportsCamp.com](http://www.MEGASportsCamp.com)



MyHealthyChurch.com  
Toll Free: 855.642.2011



**MY HEALTHY CHURCH**  
*Equipping Spirit-Empowered People*

Twitter: @MyHealthyChurch  
Facebook: /MyHealthyChurch



INTERVIEW

# Church Partnership:

*Models of  
Creativity  
and  
Synergy*

Smaller churches are  
partnering with larger  
churches in creative ways  
with positive results.

# **T**he challenges of small-church ministry

*sometime force pastors to realize they need outside help.*

*Smaller churches are partnering with larger churches in creative*



**GUERRA**



**QUINN**



**ROUNTREE**

*ways with positive results. George Paul Wood, executive editor of Enrichment journal, interviewed three leaders to gain their perspective on small and large church partnerships. **Rich Guerra** is superintendent of the Southern California District of the Assemblies of God.*

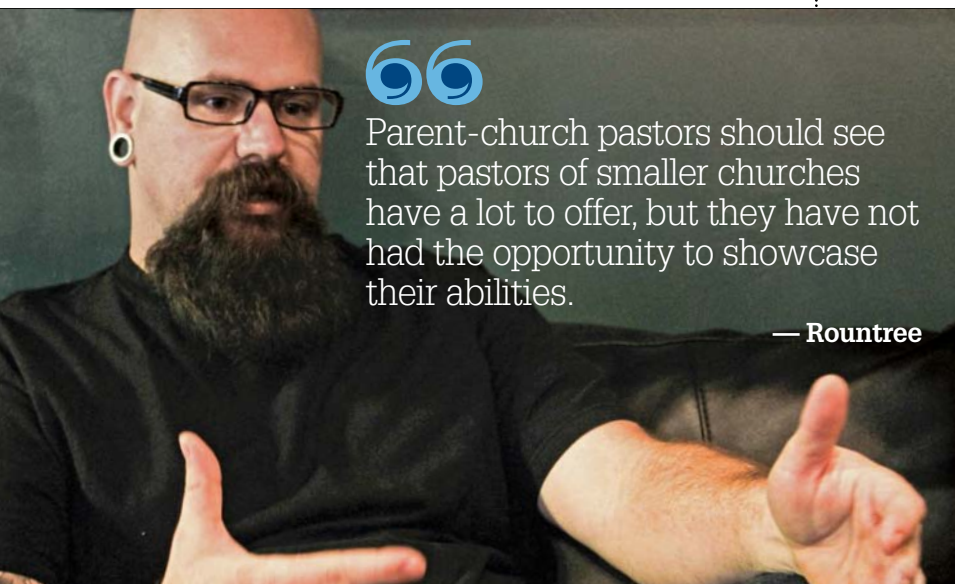
***Mike Quinn** is lead pastor of Newbreak in San Diego, California. **Eric Rountree** is the pastor of the El Cajon, California, campus of Newbreak.*

*These leaders discuss ways the Southern California District and Newbreak are successfully parenting smaller churches and bringing them to spiritual, numerical, and financial health. They present practical ways smaller and larger churches, as well as districts, can use their model for growing healthy churches.*



**Why would a smaller church and a larger church want to partner? What are the benefits of such partnerships?**

**ROUNTREE:** In a smaller church, budget and lack of people limit the ability to have a full complement of ministry. In smaller churches, pastors often try to do the majority of ministry because they may not have people to fill key roles. With the synergy of the partnership with a larger church, the smaller church can have a wider range of ministry and can reach critical mass faster. Also, the church gains expertise in areas that are not the smaller-church pastor's strengths. For example, a pastor may excel at evangelism but have trouble balancing the books. In a parent-affiliated church (PAC) relationship, the pastor does not need to be an expert at everything.



To share or comment on this article go to [ej.ag.org/church-partnershipmodels](http://ej.ag.org/church-partnershipmodels) or scan the QR code.



Visit *Enrichment* journal on Facebook

**QUINN:** From a missional standpoint, the larger church reaches outside its normal geographic zone, and perhaps even its demographic zone. It extends its ministry to outlying arenas that otherwise might be challenging. Plus, instead of only focusing on growing your own church campus, you become a blessing in helping other churches grow. In the case of Newbreak, we are all one

church meeting in multiple locations. Arguably, this is true of all Christ-centered churches from God's vantage point, but it is specifically true in our multiple locations.

From a business perspective, as long as the partnership works according to design, it grows and breaks barriers. Sometimes the finances of the adopted church are in the red. As the economics of the adopted church grow, it also benefits the parent church. This financial commitment requires strategic planning, but it does lead to economies of scale.

**What is the district's perspective on smaller churches and larger churches partnering?**

**GUERRA:** This is a growing need. Fifty percent of the churches in the district are under 100, and 23 percent are under 50 people. Smaller churches have a difficult time revitalizing on their own.

A church needs about 50 people to afford a facility. It needs another 50 people to afford a full-time pastor. How can a church with 50 members operate a facility and staff a paid pastor? They cannot. This partnership allows the parent church to provide a paid pastor to oversee that location, which is a huge advantage to any church. Instead of working full time at an outside vocation, the pastor can devote all his or her time to pastoral ministry.

**How does a smaller church pastor know when it is time to seek a partnership with a larger church? How do you help a pastor understand when it is time to seek help?**

**ROUNTREE:** The parenting model is a biblical model. It is dangerous when a church operates as a lone-ranger church; we are supposed to be helping each other.

Desperation is a great motivator. When you cannot feed your family, pay the church's mortgage, or buy curriculum for the children's ministry, it affects the pastor's ability to reach people. I do not like to see pastors wait until they reach that desperate place. Instead, I would rather see pastors embrace the reality that the relationships they develop in partnering with a larger church will make them better pastors. Why wait for desperation if you can realize your dreams through a parenting relationship?

When looking for a church to partner with, see if that church shares your church's DNA, your vision, and your heartbeat.

If your church is having trouble paying the bills and is not sustaining growth, or if members are leaving, consider a partnership. Some churches say they are waiting for the Holy Spirit to do the work in their church when He is ready. This takes away the active part we need to play in growing a

healthy church. Clearly, we need to invite the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and in our churches, but we must also do the hard work. If a church is not growing and is not healthy, the pastor should not be afraid to ask for help. I would encourage any pastor struggling to gain or sustain momentum to contact sectional or district leadership and ask about finding a parent church.

**QUINN:** Rich and his team have developed some memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that articulate different kinds of relationships. Pastors considering the parent-affiliated church model need to see the different variations of how churches do what we call parenting and adopting.

At Newbreak we work together. We are on the same team. I am the lead pastor and Eric is a campus pastor. We create everything together, we make decisions together, and we submit to each other. We even create our sermons together. It is a biblical model — perhaps one of the more advanced models in the MOUs.

I would never again choose to work by myself. Newbreak's partnership model offers creativity and synergy that is not available when a pastor works alone.

**You mentioned five memorandums of understanding or models the partnership between a smaller church and larger church can take. Briefly describe each memorandum of understanding.**

**GUERRA:** A trusting and respectful relationship between the pastor of the parenting church and the pastor of the district-affiliated church is key to a successful partnership.

The district has five memorandums of understanding. There is a MOU for church planting, merging of two churches, parenting an existing church where both the parent and parent-affiliated church agree that the end result of the relationship is to allow the PAC to return to General Council status after it becomes healthy again, and the PAC remains in a state of perpetuity — meaning it has no intention of becoming a stand-alone church again — it will always be a satellite church. The final MOU is when we assign a mentor to a district-affiliated church for a specific purpose and limited time.

We developed this set of MOUs after walking through the parenting process several times and discovering that churches are raising the same basic questions, and that both churches involved in the parenting process need a clearly outlined set of rules and expectations. The end result of talking through everything, praying over each step of the process, and putting everything in writing is a very smooth working relationship.



66

Leadership is the most important component to a successful transition: leadership that is open to change, open to growth, and submissive to the authority of a parent pastor.

— Guerra

We present the MOU templates early in the discussion to help guide the remainder of the process. For example, we are currently working on a parenting relationship where we expect the PAC to reach General Council status at a point in the future. As we dialogue with both churches, we are tailoring the MOU template to fit that specific situation. Simultaneously, the MOU is guiding the churches through the questions of membership, money, and management issues that they need to consider in this kind of relationship.

Allowing this process to happen and creating an MOU that is agreeable to both churches eliminates miscommunication and assumptions.

**How can a smaller General Council-affiliated church that is struggling also get involved in a parent-affiliated relationship?**

**GUERRA:** My first question would be, "Are you willing to give up control?" I don't see it working if the adopted church remains a General Council church with its own board while having another General Council church parent it. We would need to move them to district-affiliated status first so the district and the parent church can make the necessary changes toward becoming a healthy church. The key to success is that the smaller church must give up control to the parent church.

**What roles does the district play in bringing larger and smaller churches into partnership with one another?**

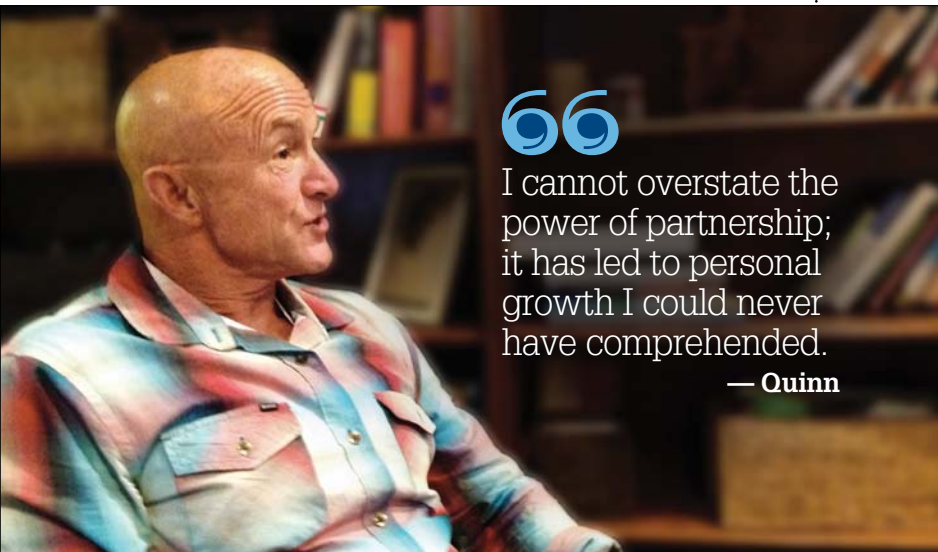
**GUERRA:** Our involvement often includes several aspects: 1) We may work with the leadership of the church in need to assess their situation and help them understand the transformation and resources a parenting situation could bring to the church. 2) We recruit a parent church that we feel would be a



## Church Partnership: Models of Creativity and Synergy

(continued from page 111)

good fit for the situation that the district-affiliated church is facing. 3) We walk both churches through the process of developing the MOU and help with decisions that we require for the larger church to parent the district-affiliated church. Our level of involvement varies in each situation and often goes beyond these three areas, but these are the three most consistent aspects in all parenting situations.



66  
I cannot overstate the power of partnership; it has led to personal growth I could never have comprehended.

— Quinn

### Mike, what are you looking for in a partnership with a smaller church?

**QUINN:** I love Rich's language of parent affiliation and adoption, because that language intuitively helps everybody understand the relationships. Like Eric said earlier, a DNA match is essential. The parenting experience varies depending on the church's size. Partnering with Eric's church was like adopting a 5-year-old child, because of the church's size and level of sophistication. Steve Bombaci is campus pastor at Pacific Beach. His campus was larger with a more robust infrastructure, making it like adopting a 12-year-old.

I look for potential. I also look at the ability of the adoptive church's leadership to complement the leadership of our church to advance the kingdom of God. You cannot have an unsubmitive spirit; you have to be willing to lay down your historic role. The adopted church's elder body lays down its mantle and submits to the authority of the parent church's elder body. I believe in Eric, and I believe in Steve. I believe in their leadership. I believe in their loyalty. I believe in their friendship.

### What are some challenges as churches transition into a partnership?

**QUINN:** I describe the "two Cs" of parent affiliation as costly and complex. It is more costly and complex than you think.

Larry Osborne, pastor of North Coast Church in Vista, California, explains that in planting the first campus it will be twice as complicated. But planting the third campus will be five times more complicated than planting the first one. He was correct. The parent church pours a lot of money into the adopted church — the additional salary expense, cost of launching a ministry, and any remodeling costs. You need to be honest and aware of this and make the infrastructural changes you need to make.

A DNA mismatch between the parent church and adopted church will present an enormous challenge. In our MOU, I made sure that each campus pastor was totally on board with Newbreak's philosophy and everything we do.

There are also spiritual dynamics that are essential to making a parent-affiliated partnership work. I must be a godly leader. I must submit my thoughts, opinions, and theology to the scrutiny of other godly men and women who will tell me what they think. I have to be humble. I have to be able to listen. I have to be patient. This has definitely been a growing experience for me. It is actually analogous to what you go through in parenting kids.

**ROUNTREE:** Pastors in the adopted church need to admit that they are not failing when a larger church parents them. Parenting is a natural growth process. Children cannot raise themselves. A parented pastor might fear the judgment of other pastors. Unwinding that old way of thinking and inviting new thinking is helpful.

Cultural differences among campuses sometimes present a challenge. Not everything that works at one campus works the same at another campus. Each church campus shares the same DNA but each campus might adapt its own methods to cultural differences.

**GUERRA:** Leadership is the most important component to a successful transition: leadership that is open to change, open to growth, and submissive to the authority of a parent pastor. In some cases, the parent church needs to close the adopted church and launch a brand new church. Sometimes that is a difficult choice. In those cases, we believe that the district does not help the church, the church's pastor, or the community by allowing a failing ministry to continue. Failing to act can result in lasting scars, so we move to help that struggling church move toward being parented.

**QUINN:** When Rich and I started parenting churches years ago, we closed several churches and remodeled or relocated them, then opened them later as new campuses. In these churches

the pastors had resigned. We knew the churches would probably collapse, which would be a difficult and brutal experience. The parent-affiliated model enabled the district to turn that collapse into opportunity.

**Eric, the focus of this issue of *Enrichment* is on the smaller church. In its partnership with Newbreak, your church has grown from 40 to 300. What is it like to pastor a smaller church in a parent-affiliated model of partnership?**

**ROUNTREE:** It is awesome. I can ask somebody who is ahead of me in the game, "How can I do this?" Honestly, what pastor

who has 30 or 40 people in his or her congregation is prepared for 300? To have somebody help me through that growth process is great.

We have a collaborative partnership. I do not simply have the right to be heard; I have an equal voice when I share an idea, and the other staff appreciate and implement my ideas. Parent-church pastors should see that pastors of smaller churches have a lot to offer, but they have not had the opportunity to showcase their abilities. I am at the place where I can use my God-given talents, spiritual gifts, and skill set, instead of having finances and numerics stifle me. I am living the dream because I get to use everything God gave me, versus being bogged down in some of the mundane things that I was not good at.



## Faith Tabernacle Reflecting Diversity in Ministry

**Growing up in Texas, Loren Hicks never imagined** he would one day wind up in West Los Angeles.

The Fort Worth native headed west in 2001 to lead a Chi Alpha ministry at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 2005, he became senior pastor at Faith Tabernacle, a historic Assemblies of God church in an upscale region near Santa Monica.

"It was a scary thing to pick up my family and move to a new state," Hicks says. "This is an expensive place to live, but we knew we'd heard from the Lord. Sometimes you just need to have courage and trust God. Where He calls, He also provides and equips."

Founded in 1924, Faith Tabernacle is located in a trendy, urban area that is a launching pad for young professionals.

"One of the greatest challenges is that our community is in rapid transition," Hicks says. "The young adults who are here are not established. They're here for a while, and then they move on. We laugh sometimes and say we're preaching to a parade."

The parade brings a diverse assortment of people through the doors of Faith Tabernacle. On any given Sunday, Hicks says, there are at least 30 nationalities represented in the congregation. That diversity is reflected in the church's ministry approach.

"We try to be very intentional about it," Hicks says. "Our current deacon board includes members from several nations. We're even deliberate about it at the front door. We would never have two white people together at the front door greeting people. We believe the church should reflect the community."

To reach its relatively youthful neighborhood, Faith Tabernacle maintains an active Internet presence — updating its website regularly and advertising through Google. Hicks says most of the church's visitors first discover Faith Tabernacle online.

Two years ago, as California was reeling from the economic crisis, the church started a food pantry. Though skeptics initially said the neighborhood was too affluent for such an outreach, Faith Tabernacle now distributes

50 to 75 bags of groceries each week.

"With the current economy, we've had people pull up in a Lexus and get a bag of groceries," Hicks says. "Some have confessed getting this kind of help is the hardest thing they've ever done."

The church provides free oil changes and car washes to single moms. The congregation also partners with a downtown homeless shelter, providing volunteer staff and other assistance.

Hicks says Christians can make a difference by responding to the unique needs in their communities and answering God's call to go where He leads.

"I would encourage other young ministers not to be afraid to take a step of faith," Hicks says. "There are communities of over 100,000 people here in this area that do not have an Assemblies of God church. There are incredible opportunities to plant churches and revitalize existing churches all over this nation."

**CHRISTINA QUICK**, freelance writer,  
Springfield, Missouri



## Church Partnership: Models of Creativity and Synergy

(continued from page 113)

**Pastors of a 50-person church typically are doing other work to support themselves while most of the ministry falls solely to them. How does a parent-affiliated model lift some of those concerns and liberate them for the ministry to which God has called them?**

**ROUNTREE:** As pastor of a smaller church, I worked in construction. Also, a smaller church pastor often fills several ministry roles within the church. I led youth ministry, children's ministry, worship, and pastored the church. Now I focus on my sweet spot — sermons — which makes Newbreak better. Mike has filled those other ministry roles with people who have those skills. As a result I am better, faster, and stronger.

**QUINN:** I pastored churches with memberships less than 200 for 20 years of my 32-year career. That experience does not compare with the reciprocity and the synergism of working together with other campus pastors. I cannot overstate the power of that partnership; it has led to personal growth I could never have comprehended.

a healthy way to create jobs for young ministers who might otherwise leave the ministry. A young minister who serves as a campus pastor in this model has the opportunity to gain valuable experience in leading a church without the financial pressure, and benefit from the mentoring of and accountability to a more experienced pastor.

**How do you move a congregation away from being sovereign into a partnership role? Does a move away from sovereignty present obstacles to doing the work God has called you to do?**

**ROUNTREE:** I saw attaining church sovereignty as the dream — the indicator of success. That is a falsehood, a half-truth. Being sovereign is not always the answer. Sometimes sovereign, and even district-affiliated, churches think they can do what they want. But the origin of the Assemblies of God was a group of pastors who wanted to have voluntary cooperative fellowship. This is what a multisite, parent-affiliated church is. This is what the New Testament is about. If the elders in

a smaller church agree to transition to this model, the church will not only fulfill God's call, it will do it more efficiently, and with more robust ministries that work more powerfully than the church could have done on its own.

A board of elders that refuses to relinquish control when the church needs help is holding that church and pastor hostage. That is a church that does not want to grow. I cannot imagine a truly godly board of elders who would not want to grow, who would not want to change the world, and who would not want to shape the planet. The only way to do that is through synergy and partnership.

**QUINN:** The parent church and the adopted church must design its MOU with the end in mind. We had to be clear about our goal, which was to be one church with multiple locations. The parent-church leadership must communicate that memorandum of understanding to its elder body, its deacon body, its membership, and its constituency, and it must engage in open conversations about its goals. During the transition, church leadership must demonstrate total honesty about the partnership's goals, agree on everything up front, and then live them out. You have to be Kingdom minded.

**GUERRA:** The goal is not sovereignty or self-governance. The goal of the local church is health. A lot of General Council churches are not healthy. We have found that healthy churches naturally grow, and a growing, healthy church will naturally

66

I would encourage any pastor struggling to gain or sustain momentum to contact sectional or district leadership and ask about finding a parent church.

— Rountree

The future of Newbreak's partnership model is churches of multiple thousands of people collaborating together. When Eric's church grows to 1,000 and that facility is full, I might place Eric in another facility and plant another campus. The power of this model improves local and global missiology, and creates a profound synergism of the ministry teams. It is a remarkable phenomenon.

**GUERRA:** It also creates job opportunities for younger ministers. When Eric called me he could not afford to remain as pastor of his church. He was about a week away from resigning. Because of this partnership with Newbreak, Eric has flourished and become one of the lead pastors. This is

become a General Council church. We are trying to change our model, and with pastors like Mike and Eric, we are seeing these changes work.

**What are your top three metrics to let you know the partnership is working?**

**ROUNTREE:** Obviously we measure nickels and noses. We also use an assimilation model. Are people in life groups? Are they in ministry? Are they doing outreach? Are they actively tithing? If they are, then most likely they are also growing spiritually.

**QUINN:** I measure quantitative and qualitative growth. Quantitative is how many people are getting saved, but we also count water baptisms. On the qualitative side we measure participation in four streams: life group, worship, ministry, and outreach. This is how Jesus made disciples. This is how we make disciples. Another metric is the emotional quotient — the emotional health of the whole organism as a family.

**GUERRA:** The district provides a matrix for churches that feel they are ready to become a General Council church. We use that same matrix to measure the health of a parent-affiliated church. We ask three questions: (1) Are people being baptized in water? (2) Is lay ministry being developed? The church has to develop lay leaders to staff for the rate of growth. (3) Does the church have a vision for tomorrow? Under the parent-affiliated model, we are seeing churches that have vision for the future. They are not only talking about yesterday, but they are looking forward to tomorrow.

**How would your models work with a church that is not in close proximity to the parent church?**

**GUERRA:** We have a church parenting a church in the Sierras, and these churches are over 350 miles apart (a 6-hour drive in good traffic). Both the lead pastor of the parent church and the campus pastor are committed to the relationship. I believe they have monthly face-to-face meetings and also utilize technology (Skype, Facetime, etc.) to have regular, weekly meetings. This would also be the case with the leaders of the ancillary ministries in the church. The accounting and business matters are handled online so there is an instantaneous communication between the parent and PAC. Both churches attend district functions, as well as other seminars and sessions together, which also builds the relationship and confidence between the two congregations.

**Any final thoughts you would like to leave with our readers?**

**GUERRA:** The parent-affiliated church model rises and falls on leadership. The Assemblies of God has an aging church

leadership. In the Southern California District, 7.9 percent of our ministers are under age 35 and 44.6 percent are over age 60. In 10 years, those 60-somethings are going to be 70-somethings, and those 30-somethings are going to be 40-somethings. The church does not have enough ministers to fill pulpits. This is a huge challenge.

**ROUNTREE:** Smaller-church pastors who are thinking about being adopted by a parent church must be honest with themselves. We are supposed to be godly leaders, but we often lie to ourselves. Be honest about the health of your church. Be honest about your ability to climb out of the hole, whether you dug the hole or not. If you need help, ask for it. Help is available. Be honest with your team and your leadership.

**QUINN:** I admit that growing a single-cell church is often simpler and cheaper. However, I believe God is raising up an apostolic church model that has a burden for whole cities and whole regions. This model is biblically robust, powerful, and submissive. God is raising up churches that are collaborative and multisite. It is time for pastors of larger churches to embrace the Kingdom rewards of this approach to ministry. ■





## THE CHURCH THAT WORKS

### A Healthy Church Works

**T**he answer for a sick world is a healthy church. A healthy church is a church that works. One aspect of a healthy church is the fact it will be a place where the people, not just the clergy, do the work of ministry.

Unity, cooperation, and mutual submission of its members for the sake of Christ and His mission are the marks of a healthy church. The pastor leads and gives priority to preparing and releasing all believers to do the work of ministry according to their gifts.

The healthy church works in that it keeps its own children, reaches its neighbors, blesses its community, and makes God known to its generation, and the next, around the world. When the church works, the world gains. People come to Christ, lives are changed, and families are transformed.

The New Testament church is a church that works. The people, not just the pastor, pray. The members, not just the ministerial staff, visit and serve the needy. Each believer, not just the paid worker or ministry leader, gives a witness for Christ in attitude and action. The first Christians changed their world through dynamic demonstration of their faith.

The church worked then because each person who came to faith in Christ took responsibility for passing it along. Leaders recognized their divine assignment to equip the people to serve God and others. Finally, the church worked because pastors and members all relied on the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

— MEL SURFACE, Crowley, Texas, and RICK DUBOSE, Hurst, Texas.  
Adapted from *The Church That Works* by Rick DuBose and Mel Surface

**With the rise in electronic communication** and new media, e-mail has become both a blessing and a curse. We usually appreciate the speed and convenience of correspondence, but we find ads and other spam quite annoying. And forwarded jokes, video links, and political messages can stuff our mailboxes. On the blessing side, we can receive regular ministry updates, prayer requests, and devotionals.

I do not appreciate most of the electronic clutter. But I have found three devotional resources to be helpful and uplifting.

Dan Wolgemuth, president of Youth For Christ/USA, broadcasts a weekly devotional to YFC staff, volunteers, and friends of the ministry entitled "Fragments." Relatively

#### E-VOTIONALS

#### TOTALLY DEVOTED



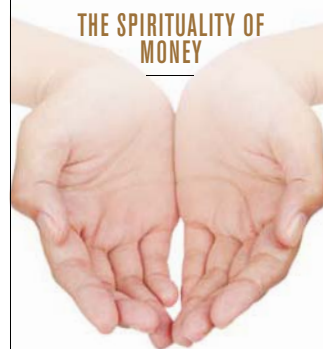
short but extremely well written, Dan's offerings engage and inspire. Subscribe at [fridayfragments.com](http://fridayfragments.com).

"One Minute Uplift" is written by a veteran pastor and writer, Dr. Rick Ezell. These devotionals come from a pastor's heart and are biblically oriented and practical. You can subscribe at [greerfbc.org/uplift](http://greerfbc.org/uplift).

"The Other 6 Days" devotionals come from a ministry focused on assisting Christian men and women with practicing their faith in the workplace and in their daily living. Dr. David Cox has written most of the devotionals, but Charles Ligon and others also contribute. Subscribe at [theother6days.com/index2.php](http://theother6days.com/index2.php).

— DAVE VEERMAN,  
Naperville, Illinois

## THE SPIRITUALITY OF MONEY



### GIVE AND GROW SPIRITUALLY

**G**iving is a way of growing spiritually. Examine your conscience concerning your attitude toward giving by asking:

- Am I a cheerful giver or a grudging one?
- Do I give liberally or minimally?
- Do I give freely or am I hesitant in responding?
- Am I generous and magnanimous or am I tightfisted and miserly?
- Do I truly feel blessed whenever I give or do I have resentment?

The answer to these questions determines whether or not we put our whole heart into giving. This examination helps ascertain whether our giving is truly sincere and from the heart or merely superficial, customary, and expected. Your giving can empower you to grow spiritually.

— VICTOR PARACHIN,  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

## APP TIME

# 3 ESSENTIAL MINISTRY APPS

**W**ith millions of mobile applications (apps) now available, finding the right app(s) has become increasingly difficult. As a ministry leader, here are three essential apps you don't want to miss:

## 1) EVERNOTE

Evernote is quickly becoming a standard in personal organization. Evernote has some incredibly robust features to make your life as a leader much easier. Using your mobile device's camera, you can take pictures of your whiteboard notes, name tags, or business cards, and begin organizing them. Evernote also works like a scanner, translating the text in the picture to searchable text within the app. This content wirelessly syncs to your desktop through Evernote's servers.

Evernote's free version offers 40MB per month of free



storage. The premium service expands that to 500MB per month for \$45 per year.

## 2) INSTAGRAM

Social media is becoming increasingly visual. Pictures communicate stories in ways 140 characters never could. Instagram is a social network in and of itself. Use the app to apply cropping and add effects to your photos, and then automatically send them to your favorite social networks. Find messages your church is trying to communicate and begin sharing photos that help relay that message visually. You will find an instant increase in the interaction and reach of your linked social media accounts.

Instagram is available for free download.

## 3) MINT.com Personal Finance

We are in a tough economy, and we all need a little budgeting help from time to time. Mint makes your endless spreadsheets, charts, and stapled receipts a thing of the past. Add all of your personal financial accounts to Mint. Once you add your monthly budget, Mint will begin tracking your purchases, automatically categorizing them and sending you push notifications for when you are approaching your budget for the month.

Mint is available for free download.

— MARK FORRESTER, Springfield, Missouri

## IN THE RED ZONE

# FINDING THE RIGHT RECEIVER

**E**very coach needs a game plan. So do pastors who want to equip their congregations for evangelistic outreach. Some lessons from football can help Christian leaders empower believers to share their faith with confidence.

In football, the best way to score is to get the ball to someone who is open. It is that simple. Receivers in the "Red Zone" — that last 20 yards before the goal — have even better odds of scoring. From there, a player is likely to go all the way.

This is also true for someone in the spiritual Red Zone. Jesus spent the most time with those open to Him. The

Ethiopian eunuch was already reading the Scriptures when God sent Philip (see Acts 8:30–39) to explain them.

After going through the "How to Share Your Faith" course at her church, Melissa realized that her personal trainer, Anthony, was in the Red Zone. Daily she texted him a Scripture verse. If she forgot, he reminded her. One night after her workout, Melissa explained the way to salvation. Anthony was wide open and accepted Christ.

Assessing spiritual receptivity is not always that easy, but

these strategic questions can help:

- "When I think of you, how can I pray?" makes someone feel you care about him or her. This often leads to insights about their spiritual journey.
- "What is your church background?" is less threatening than "Do you go to church?" This also can easily lead into a spiritual discussion.
- "What is the high and/or low point of your week?" frequently results in spiritually significant conversations.

Teaching Christians to ask such strategic questions can help them identify someone's readiness to receive Jesus. Such effective outreach will grow healthy vibrant churches.

— KENT TUCKER and  
PATTI TOWNLEY-COVERT, cowriters,  
*In the Red Zone: A Game Plan for How to Share Your Faith*. See [www.howto share your faith.com](http://www.howto share your faith.com).





## WISDOM FROM ABOVE



## Reflecting God's Character

**The Bible records that Jesus is the exact representation of the nature of God — the visible representative of the invisible God (Hebrews 1:3). He reflects God in His words, attitudes, actions, and life. Now He is imparting God's character to**

us. God is calling out His people, looking for those who are willing to allow the Holy Spirit to mold them into godly character. He is looking for that one element in His church that characterizes His people — His life.

First Peter 1:6,7 mentions various trials and tests we experience to help us develop God's character. These are not natural abilities; these are Holy Spirit-imparted characteristics worked out in those who have chosen to follow Jesus. Has God been prompting you in any of the following seven areas to reflect the example of Jesus in your life, church, or organization? Ask Him to work in you (Philippians 2:13).

1. Learning to **accept abuse** without

becoming bitter; to face persecution without being defensive or hating your enemy.

2. Learning to **be content** without complaining — to live within the means God supplies.
3. Learning to **love** without demanding a response.
4. Learning to **be ignored and misunderstood** without going into self-pity.
5. Learning to **recognize faults** in others without judging or criticizing.
6. Learning to **walk in holiness** in the midst of a corrupt world.
7. Learning to **stay humble** in the midst of public acclaim.

— PATTI ANN THOMPSON, Kansas City, Missouri

## ENGLISH LESSONS FROM THE PEW

### QUIT WHILE YOU ARE AHEAD

**T**here are several **problem phrases** in which people add too many words or letters.

#### At

- I don't know where my Bible is **at**.
- Where was she sitting **at**?

Leave off "at." It never belongs after "where." If a sentence finishes with "at this time," the prepositional phrase is complete. Leaving "at" on the end of a sentence is an incomplete or dangling preposition.

#### Of

- The kids played football outside **of** the church.
- The child jumped off **of** the platform during the Christmas play.

In both sentences, "of" is superfluous. Do not use "of" after a preposition because the structure results in a double preposition.

#### Way or Ways?

When referring to distance, use **way** instead of **ways**.

- Jesus went a little **way** (not ways) down the mountain and began to preach.

#### Redundancies

- They sin and do the **exact, same** thing over again.

About.com Grammar and Composition lists 200 common redundancies. (grammar.about.com/od/words/a/redundancies.htm)

#### Reduce and Restructure

Do not use "the reason is because."

- The **reason** the Israelites were punished is **because** they failed to ask forgiveness.

#### Instead:

- The **reason** the Israelites were punished is they failed to ask forgiveness.
- or,
- **Because** they failed to ask forgiveness, God punished them.

#### Is Where, Is When

Do not use "is when" or "is where" in definitions.

- Baptism **is where** you are immersed in water.
- Salvation **is when** you accept Christ.

#### Rather:

- Baptism is immersion in water.
- Salvation is accepting Christ.

## LET US AGREE

**We know that the subject and verb must agree** in tense. Or do we? There are some tricky sentences.

- Everyone wants more cake.

- Nobody cares about calories.

Easy, right? **Each, either, neither, one, everyone, everybody, no one, nobody, anyone, someone, and somebody** are usually singular and need a singular verb. But when a phrase comes between a subject and verb, watch out.

- Every one of the students deserves an A.

"Students" is not the subject but is part of the prepositional phrase. Those pesky prepositions again.

**Some, all, and most** may be singular or plural depending if they refer to a quantity (singular) or number (plural).

- Some of the money was lost.
- Some of the books were lost.

**Several, few, both, and many** are plural. **None** and **any** can be singular or plural depending on the speaker's intent.

— KARA BETH HUDDLESTON, Atlanta, Georgia

## WOMEN REPRESENT UNTAPPED SOURCE OF MINISTRY FUNDS

A first-of-its-kind study indicates that pastors may be wise to focus their financial sermons on women — both because they tend to give more than men, and they increasingly control the household purse strings.

The groundbreaking Women Doing Well Christian women's philanthropy research project, conducted in collaboration with the Sagamore Institute and Baylor University's Institute for the Study of Religion Program on Faith and Generosity, deciphered attitudes toward ministry giving among 7,300 respondents. The study found that many women believe ministries address requests for funds solely to men, even though women control more than half of personal wealth.

Although overall U.S. household charitable giving hovers around 3 percent, those Christian women questioned by WDW give an annual 10 percent of income — including 13 percent who say they donate 20 percent or more a year.

Faith is the vital shaping force behind their generosity. The top three influences women report as having had significant input in nurturing their giving are the conviction that God owns everything, personal disciplines such as prayer and Bible study, and biblical teachings on stewardship. By far, the most important motivation for charitable giving was a desire to be obedient and honoring God's Word.

Still, only one in five women indicated they were giving the maximum they could give. With a stronger sense of purpose, increased giving opportunities, and better financial planning, many women said they could donate additional funds. Only 37 percent of women said their church was very helpful in cultivating their financial generosity.

"The study shows clearly that most Christian women are very intentional and deliberate about the ways they invest their time and money," says WDW's Pam Pugh. "Their understanding of discipleship and their experience of God's faithfulness has compelled them to be active in supporting Christian causes, especially ministries that attend to both spiritual and physical needs."



## Social Networkers Largely Leave Out Religion

Although nearly half (45 percent) of Americans log onto Facebook accounts several times a week, a recent national survey shows very few people report following a religious or spiritual leader on Twitter or Facebook (5 percent) or joining a religious or spiritual group on Facebook (6 percent).

The Public Religion Research Institute found that a vast majority of Americans are not using social media

or technology to either share or supplement their worship experiences. Just 11 percent of respondents indicated that they had posted a Facebook status or on another social networking site about being in church. Only 13 percent have downloaded a podcast of a sermon or listened to a sermon online.

The survey shows significant religious and generational differences when it comes to social media. Nineteen percent of white evangelical Protestants report that they have posted status updates about being in church, compared to a mere 6 percent of white mainline Protestants and 2 percent of Catholics. Unsurprisingly, younger religious Americans are significantly more technologically involved: 20 percent of 18–34-year-olds report using a cell phone to take a picture or video during a worship service, compared to only 3 percent of those 65 and older.

"Despite prominent coverage of some high-profile pastors on social media, few religious Americans are using mobile technology or social media for religious purposes," says Daniel Cox, PRRI research director.

Overall, Americans report limited use of technology for religious purposes, both inside and outside of worship services. Ten percent say they have used a cell phone to take pictures or record video during worship.

White evangelical Protestants are significantly more likely than other major religious groups to use technology for religious purposes. One-quarter of white evangelical Protestants reveal they have downloaded a podcast of a sermon or listened to a sermon online, compared to only 6 percent of white Protestants as well as Catholics.

Four in 10 white evangelical Protestants say that their church has an active Facebook page or website where people interact, compared to 29 percent of white Protestants and 13 percent of Catholics.

Half of Americans do not describe their religious beliefs on their Facebook profile. One in five identify as Christian, 9 percent identify as Catholic, and 8 percent as a specific Protestant denomination. Among white evangelical Protestants, 53 percent self-identify as "Christian" on Facebook.

"White evangelical Protestants stand out as the most wired religious group in America," says Robert P. Jones, PRRI chief executive officer.

(continued on page 120)



iStockphoto / Thinkstock





# ETHICS

## NAE ADOPTS CODE OF ETHICS FOR PASTORS

**T**he National Association of Evangelicals, of which the Assemblies of God is a member body, has adopted a code of ethics for pastors in an effort to provide consistent guidelines across denominational lines.

NAE President Leith Anderson notes that most pastors are highly ethical, yet relatively few have signed a written code of ethics. According to a recent NAE survey, 71 percent of evangelical leaders indicated they are not required to sign a formal ethics statement. While some cited ethical expectations implicit in doctrinal statements and other organizational commitments to which they consent, the NAE document is a thorough exploration of ethical issues.

The NAE code focuses on five primary admonitions: pursue integrity, be trustworthy, seek purity, embrace accountability, and facilitate fairness. A task force that included pastors, ethicists, editors, and denominational leaders spent 18 months drafting the document before its unanimous adoption by the NAE board of directors. Assemblies of God General Secretary James T. Bradford and Assem-

blies of God Office of Hispanic Relations Director Efraim Espinoza helped formulate the document. Assemblies of God signatories included Mark Batterson, Saturnino Gonzalez, and Samuel Rodriguez.

"Although I believe pastors do their best to be ethical in every area of life, sometimes having it written out before you brings areas to light that may not have been considered before or that a pastor may need to place more focus on," says Assemblies of God General Superintendent George O. Wood. "This code will assist ministers in knowing what to do and how to respond, in times of stress as well as success."

The code exhorts pastors to pursue integrity in personal character, in personal care, and in preaching and teaching (1 Chronicles 29:17). The document also urges ministers to be trustworthy in leadership, with information and with resources (1 Corinthians 4:2). Clergy are advised to seek purity (1 Timothy 4:12) in maintaining sexual purity, in spiritual formation, in theology, and in professional practice.

As shepherds of God's flock (1 Peter 5:2,3), pastors are counseled to embrace accountability in finances, in ministry responsibilities, and in their denomination. And, citing James 2:1-4, the code advises ministers to facilitate fairness with staff, with parishioners, with the community, and with a prior congregation.

## Assemblies of God Continues Steady Growth Rate

**A**s the Assemblies of God approaches its centennial, the Fellowship continues to report gradual growth in terms of adherents, clergy, and churches.\*

The U.S. Assemblies of God General Secretary's Office statistics reports that the body had 3,041,957 adherents, 12,595 churches, and 35,483 credentialed ministers in 2011, each of which is an all-time high.

An examination of records back six decades shows how the Assemblies of God has expanded at different rates. In 1951, the AG had 7,210 clergy but the number increased to 9,428 by 1961. A huge surge occurred by 1971 when

18,089 ministers existed, as the Movement began to add the categories of certified and specialized license ministers. Another significant expansion came in the next decade, so by 1981 the Fellowship counted 27,046 ministers. By 1991, the clergy total amounted to 30,746. A gain, albeit slower, to 32,374 happened by 2001.

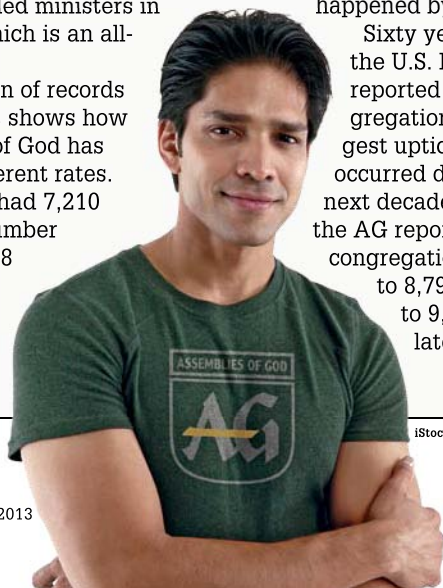
Sixty years ago, the U.S. Fellowship reported 5,854 congregations. The biggest uptick since then occurred during the next decade. By 1961, the AG reported 8,273 congregations. That rose to 8,799 in 1971 and to 9,930 a decade later. By 1991,

the Assemblies tallied 11,536 churches and in 2001 the total was 12,082.

In 1951, only 318,478 people in the United States considered themselves part of the Assemblies of God. That increased to 508,602 in 1961. Ten years later the Fellowship had 679,813 members. A hefty hike happened in the following decade, with 1,788,394 calling an AG church home by 1981. In 1991, the total stood at 2,234,708 and in 2001 it was 2,627,029.

Across the globe, growth has been most dramatic in the past 10 years, according to AG World Missions. Now there are 65,398,796 AG adherents worldwide, a huge boost from the 40,871,091 reported in 2001. Worldwide there are 357,760 AG churches and 371,427 ministers in 253 countries, territories, and provinces.

\* Some data are best estimates available.



**Virginia M. Aguilar**  
San Antonio, Texas

**Olan J. Andrews**  
Allen, Texas

**Lillian Bach**  
Shoreline, Washington

**Howard L. Ball**  
Pompton Lakes, New Jersey

**Mark A. Baumgartner**  
Crescent, Pennsylvania

**Loretta I. Blauvelt**  
Springfield, Missouri

**Roger L. Boyd**  
Springfield, Illinois

**Ethel Brandt**  
Littleton, Colorado

**Margaret Broyles**  
Alma, Arkansas

**Joseph Bukowiecki**  
Bronx, New York

**Fulton W. Buntain**  
Tacoma, Washington

**Richard N. Carpenter**  
Riverside, California

**George W. Carroll**  
Wichita Falls, Texas

**J. Donald Carroll**  
Fortson, Georgia

**Gabriel D. Chairez**  
Solomon, Arizona

**Edna W. Chandler**  
Bossier City, Louisiana

**Laverne L. Clute**  
Springfield, Missouri

**Inez Coffey**  
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

**Loraine Cohrs-Thackwell**  
Lake Stevens, Washington

**Judy Collier**  
Kansas City, Missouri

**Donnie E. Collins**  
Sumter, South Carolina

**Earl R. Collins**  
Stephenville, Texas

**Virginia D. Curtis**  
Santa Ana, California

**Elvin C. Davis**  
Samburg, Tennessee

**Winston L. Denker**  
Anderson, Missouri

**Pasquale A. DiMusto**  
Troy, Michigan

**James W. Dougherty**  
Bend, Oregon

**John L. Eller**  
Griffin, Georgia

**John T. Fennessey**  
Effingham, Illinois

**Paul M. Fliflet**  
Turlock, California

**Irene Fox**  
Bennington, Oklahoma

**N. Royal Freeman**  
University Place, Washington

**Harmon N. Furr**  
McCordsville, Indiana

**Howard L. Garman**  
Middletown, Pennsylvania

**Ronnie L. Gay**  
Rapid City, Michigan

**Mack E. Gore**  
Portia, Arkansas

**Thomas M. Gotcher**  
Fordyce, Arkansas

**Christy M. Groah**  
Ellendale, North Dakota

**John C. Gunderson**  
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

**Martha M. Hammack**  
Celina, Texas

**George C. Irving**  
Logan, New Mexico

**Annie L. Jackson**  
McDonough, Georgia

**Imageen Jeffcoat**  
Penrose, Colorado

**George W. John**  
Louisiana, Missouri

**Herbert L. Johnson**  
Grants Pass, Oregon

**J. Foy Johnson**  
Lakeland, Florida

**Spencer M. Jones**  
Pocola, Oklahoma

**Charles T. Kim**  
Staten Island, New York

**Daniel L. Kricorian**  
Alta Loma, California

**Sally B. Ladd**  
Lamar, Arkansas

**Wanda L. Little**  
Spanish Springs, Nevada

**Terry J. Lovelady**  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**Lowell O. Lundstrom**  
Savage, Minnesota

**Robert J. Lundstrom**  
Newark, Delaware

**Carl A. Malz**  
Clearwater, Florida

**Joel R. Mathisen**  
Virginia Beach, Virginia

**George T. McQueen**  
Rancho Cordova, California

**Douglas A. Mentze**  
Oregon City, Oregon

**James E. Morris**  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

**James E. Osborn**  
North Richland Hills, Texas

**William L. Patrick**  
Murrieta, California

**Jerry A. Pence, Sr.**  
Golden Valley, Arizona



**Joseph Perrello**  
North Chesterfield, Virginia

**J. Samuel Rasnake**  
Bristol, Tennessee

**Beverly J. Reeder**  
Stockton, California

**Wesley F. Reichelt**  
Hubbard, Oregon

**Willie O. Renfroe**  
Castleberry, Alabama

**Thomas W. Ridout**  
Yakima, Washington

**Daniel V. Rios**  
Round Rock, Texas

**Joseph Romero, Jr.**  
Fort Morgan, Colorado

**Rufus E. Quiller**  
Enterprise, Alabama

**Togiva L. Savini**  
Carson, California

**Eddie E. Schulz**  
Lakeland, Florida

**Davene B. Shell**  
Cape Coral, Florida

**Jessie J. Smalling**  
Idabel, Oklahoma

**John A. Spain**  
Moss Point, Mississippi

**Freda D. Spears**  
Harrison, Arkansas

**Junia K. Spradling**  
Duncan, Oklahoma

**Charles Sutterfield**  
Russellville, Arkansas

**Juanita Ward**  
Smiths, Alabama

**Roy Henry Willett**  
Lutz, Florida

**Orval M. Wyrick**  
Miami, Oklahoma

**Frances C. Youngblood**  
Braxton, Mississippi

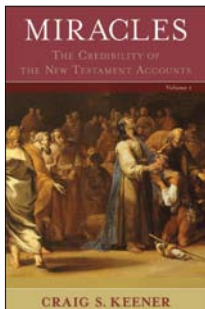
**W. Bernice Ziemann**  
Okeechobee, Florida

**Fred L. Zumalt, Jr.**  
Forsyth, Missouri



## Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts

CRAIG S. KEENER (*Baker Academic, 1,248 pp. hardback*)



**A**s I venture deeper into this colossal effort by Craig Keener, I experienced memories of college and seminary where I received relentless training on the benefits and limitations of historical criticism. Since I grew up in a Pentecostal environment, the inadequacies of such a methodological approach proved troubling. Why did so many historians and biblical scholars dismiss healings, exorcisms, and miracles?

Why did testimonies and eyewitness stories carry no freight in academia? I was often overwhelmed by disillusionment. Today's students find scholars more eager to engage the possibility of miraculous activity. Given recent methodological shifts, I am confident that the work at hand will become a standard on such debates for years to come.

Keener produces a candid apology for miracles and an impressive narrative of miracles based on eyewitnesses throughout Christian history. His purpose is twofold. First, he challenges the "prejudice of Western antisupeaturalist readings," particularly, scholars who too easily "dismiss the possibility of eyewitness information in the miracle accounts in the Gospels or Acts" (2). Second, he calls on readers to consider that "the kinds of miracle claims most frequently attested in the Gospels and Acts are also attested by many eyewitnesses today" and, therefore, "not to rule out the possibility of supernatural causation for some of these healing claims" (3). According to him, though eyewitness claims do not constitute indisputable proof, such claims surely warrant consideration rather than a priori dismissal.

In parts one and two, Keener locates miraculous accounts in the Gospels and Acts alongside the claims of other movements in antiquity. He demonstrates that the ancients employ worldviews not only open to but also expectant of extranormal activity: Pagans, Jews, and Christians share stories of divine healing, exorcism, and resurrection. As he turns to the contemporary possibility of miracles, he utilizes 18th-century essayist David Hume as a primary interlocutor. Hume, the consummate enlightenment philosopher, proclaims: "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature" (107). For him, "enlightened" thinkers need only look around: "what have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses, but the absolute impossibility or miraculous nature of the events, which they relate? And this surely, in the eyes of all reasonable people, will alone be regarded as a sufficient refutation" (107). Keener disagrees. He traces the postures of ancient historiographers toward extranormal phenomena. With the emergence of the radical enlightenment paradigm, thoroughgoing suspicion becomes the norm. Keener stands in stark contrast to the dogmatism of enlightenment-like scholars who fare poorly alongside the perspectives and claims of many other cultures or postenlightenment critiques (105,6). In contrast to the antisupernatural "cloud of witnesses" assumed by Hume, today hundreds of

millions of people claim to have witnessed miracles (209).

In part three, the longest section of the book, Keener offers a riveting church history based on stories of miraculous intervention. Ironically, he begins with the recent past. He narrates mind-boggling testimonies during recent advance of the gospel in the majority world. Only after, he returns to the Early Church and subsequently marches through patristic, medieval, and reformation eras, concluding with 20th-century accounts of early Pentecostals. Finally, Keener turns to the West and responds to Hume-like concerns. On the one hand, he recognizes the residue of a previous academic generation and its "death of God" language, namely, that the present Western world assumes naturalistic answers to miraculous claims. On the other hand, he provides a substantial narrative concerning the myriad record of miracles not only in church history and the global south, but also in the West. Keener notes that miracles have become much more fashionable, even among some of the earlier "death of God" theologians (e.g., Harvey Cox, now a friend and occasional participant in the Society for Pentecostal Studies [426]). Keener argues that whereas Hume may be granted some latitude for lack of eyewitness evidence, contemporary scholars are without excuse; they write as if in a social vacuum oblivious to overwhelming testimony against their assumptions (506).

In the final part, Keener returns to earlier questions. Though he does not set out to prove the phenomena of miracles, he challenges biases that attempt to make natural and supernatural explanations incompatible: "Most of us in the academy (including myself) have been trained to work only with naturalistic methods" (690). Why must one conclude that miraculous accounts conflict with the current teachings of science? Keener speaks to a new generation of scholars, many of whom are willing to take on such resistance (691).

Keener comes to this topic as a seasoned and prolific New Testament scholar, raised in the Assemblies of God, and who remains sympathetic to the Pentecostal/charismatic tradition. He includes countless stories from his ministry as well as those of Pentecostals/charismatics whose cosmology dominates global Christianity. Be assured, he does not limit his stories to a single tradition. Keener moves swiftly from one tradition to the next, whether Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, etc. However, he is no mere triumphalist. Though he includes firsthand testimonies such as the riveting resurrection account of his sister-in-law Theresa Magnouha (557), he acknowledges that "we could fill books with stories where such cures did not happen," and tells of personal pain including the numerous miscarriages he and his wife have suffered (10,11, 736). Finally, while he believes all healing comes from God, he "like most people with access to medical resources ... resort(s) to these medical resources regularly" (736).

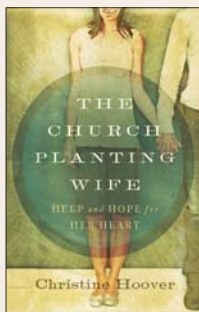
Keener produces a wonderful read. Though a mammoth volume, I could not put it down. Although many would find the work too long to serve as a textbook, educators will want to include various required/recommended readings for courses such as the Gospels, Acts, Pentecostal theology, and philosophy (not to mention nearly 300 pages of appendices and bibliography). Pastors, students, and scholars will find great resources and stories from early Christianity to the current day.

— Reviewed by Martin W. Mittelstadt, associate professor of New Testament, Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri.

This review originally appeared in *PNUEMA*, 34 (2012) 431–78.

## The Church Planting Wife: Help and Hope for Her Heart

CHRISTINE HOOVER (*Moody Publishers, 208 pp., paperback*)



**“Your heart is vital to the mission.”** *The Church Planting Wife: Help and Hope for Her Heart* describes the importance of maintaining a healthy heart throughout the church-planting process. Christine Hoover does not hold back or gloss over her own experience, but taps into common emotions to encourage other church-planting wives. Although at times this book seems written primarily for stay-at-home moms, all church-planting wives, regardless of roles or occupations, can relate to the topics she covers: preparing to plant, wounds, discouragement, fear, pleasing God alone, stress, pride, friendships, being a helpmate, and dependence on God.

In the chapter on discouragement, Hoover says, “In [the enemy’s] attempts to hinder what the Spirit is doing in our church plants, if he can’t get to our marriages, he uses discouragement more than anything else.” As a church-planting wife, this is something I understand well. Hoover says, “There is an aspect of battling discouragement that involves waiting, whether it is waiting on God to act or waiting for our emotions to line up with truth.” Church planting involves a lot of waiting. If we grasp Hoover’s point: “waiting with hope is the essence of faith and we know that faith pleases

God,” we have a weapon with which to battle discouragement.

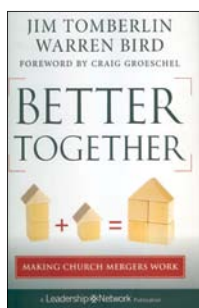
Another struggle church-planting wives face is fear. Hoover states that church planting “requires trusting God for the initial provision — financial support, direction, and a core group — but it also requires trusting Him for the ongoing provision of numerical growth, spiritual growth, networks, encouragement, financial support, favor, wisdom, fruitfulness, and heart change.” In my life I expected everything to be fine once we raised our support, once we got a team, once we launched. I then believed all would be well. Instead, countless times I have found myself on the edge, debating whether I can trust once more. Through the examples of Abraham and Sarah, Hoover reminds readers that God is faithful.

Although each church plant is unique, the struggles church-planting wives face are universal. I recommend this book to all church-planting wives, whether you are just beginning or have been in the trenches for a while. Even though focused on church-planting wives, others in ministry can also receive help and hope for their hearts through *The Church Planting Wife: Help and Hope for Her Heart*.

— Reviewed by Amber Woller, church-planter’s wife, Corner Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota,

## Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work

JIM TOMBERLIN and WARREN BIRD (*Jossey-Bass, 272 pp., hardcover*)



**Jim Tomberlin and Warren Bird state:**

“Mergers are not a strategy for maintaining the status quo. They are a strategy for dramatic change.”

*Better Together* is a mosaic of research, personal stories, and the realities of church mergers. This book is a reference for pastors, elder boards, or laypersons looking to understand the complexities and benefits of bringing two, three, or even more churches together under the common

mission of reaching people for Jesus. A quote from an Atlanta pastor speaks to the mindset when entering a merger: “When understood as a vehicle to change rather than to conserve, to displace rather than protect, to shatter the old rather than restore, mergers can be a powerful tool for advancing the congregation’s God-given mission.”

When considering a merger, churches and leaders have many questions. Tomberlin and Bird cover these questions in an orderly fashion. Chapters 2 and 3 cover models and motives. If a merger is in your church’s future, you must believe in and embrace your model and motive. If you and your church are involved in multiple mergers, your model and motive will be different for each experience because each experience is unique. After you merge, your church will not be the

same; so understanding these issues at an intimate level will be your best tools to make the merger a success. Understanding models and motives will also help you to decide early on, before investing too much time and money, if a certain merger is right for your team. You will cross this bridge, but you do not want it to be 8 months and \$100,000 later.

The next five chapters outline the stages churches go through, how to measure success and failure, how to deal with staffing changes, and present the legal ramifications of a merger. This section grounds expectations to reality. The authors map out what the first few years of coming together will look like by using a dating and marriage analogy. The authors caution that churches do not want to jump into a merger with the first church that comes along.

Transitioning to what a successful merger looks like “the merger . . . will have created a new congregational culture that embraces the future, provides financial steadiness, and sustains equal to or greater than that of the combined attendance of the two church bodies prior to the merger.” Churches must have these goal points set into play before they merge, or they will not be able to mark success or failure.

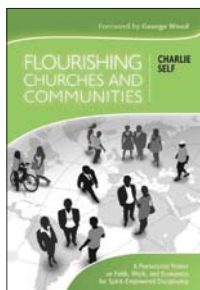
Finally Part 3, “Your Next Steps,” shows the reality of the vast amount of prayer, meetings, and research in which churches will need to participate. Ideally, churches should have these steps in a document to hand out at the first five or so meetings.

Having been involved in a church merger, I recommend this book as an invaluable resource you and your team will not want to be without.

— Reviewed by Eric Rountree,  
pastor of the El Cajon, California, campus of Newbreak.

## Flourishing Churches and Communities: A Pentecostal Primer on Faith, Work, and Economics for Spirit-Empowered Discipleship

CHARLIE SELF (*Christian's Library Press, 140 pp., paperback*)



**New Christian movements usually begin** by explicating the distinctive doctrines and practices of the movement. Only afterward can they pay attention to how these distinctives make a difference in the rest of their theological paradigm. Charlie Self's new book is of the latter variety and one of few Pentecostal attempts to develop a comprehensive theology of Christian vocation.

Self has written this primer for church leaders. He recognizes the need among pastors and small-group leaders to articulate a theology that animates the witness of the congregation's work. The author believes we must extend God's calling to equip the saints to equipping their work in all 7 days.

Many pastors and church leaders can articulate God's call on their lives, but Self wants to help them empower their people for their everyday callings. Thus he provides a theology that baptizes the work of mail persons, accountants, and entrepreneurs to be part of the Kingdom witness of all Christians. He does so not by diminishing God's call to church ministry, but by elevating the call to work and economic transformation.

For Self, work and economic activity outside the church are central acts of Christian discipleship. His justification for this is one of the theological moves that makes this book most distinctly Pentecostal. The Pentecostal doctrine of healing emphasizes an embodied spirituality whereby God's kingdom breaks into this present age and witnesses to God's healing for all. Similarly, the author claims that every act of economic transformation, reconciled relationships, and reformed communities witnesses to God's imminent coming Kingdom. This enhances God's call to evangelism rather than overshadowing it.

Business leaders create wealth among their communities and around the world in ways that promote justice and peace and thereby show the world what the coming age is like in the present age. But this is no optimistic social gospel. In good Pentecostal fashion, Self consistently argues that God's kingdom is dependent on Jesus alone. Work in this age will always be marred by the effects of sin, but each act of Spirit-led transformation witnesses to the coming age.

Books on Christian vocation often validate the work of doctors providing healing and entrepreneurs creating sustainable and just businesses that elevate the poor. This book does that but goes a step further. The dirty and repetitive tasks from manufacturing to cooking to garbage collection enable the commerce that feeds our world and are therefore of inherent value. Chapter 7 is one of the highlights of the book as Self elaborates the contributions of arts, sciences, communications, and education.

One might suspect a Pentecostal book about flourishing would promote a prosperity gospel. But Self claims that a biblical position entails prosperity for all, those inside and outside the church. Economic disparity is inevitable in a fallen world. But wealth creation empowers stewardship

and generosity. Christian discipleship calls those who benefit from that wealth to work sacrificially for the poor who can never repay the gift.

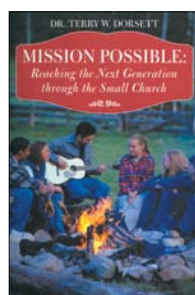
The author designed this book to empower Pentecostal leaders to equip the saints for a holistic life of discipleship. He does that well. Self has laid the groundwork from which future Pentecostals can draw on the theological resources of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, healing, and the imminent return of Christ to write a distinctively Pentecostal theology of vocation.

To order this book, visit [clpress.com/publications/flourishing-churches-and-communities](http://clpress.com/publications/flourishing-churches-and-communities).

— Reviewed by Jeremiah Gibbs, ABD-Ph.D., director of the Lantz Center for Christian Vocation, University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana.

## Mission Possible: Reaching the Next Generation Through the Small Church

TERRY W. DORSETT (*Crossbooks, 107 pp., paperback*)



**In *Mission Possible*, Terry Dorsett identifies** the church culture that will be able to reach the postmodern generation: "Churches that are willing to adopt certain levels of change to reach their community but are determined not to give up their core values and biblical principles in the process."

Dorsett directs his book toward the small church. He uses two chapters to describe, in easy-to-understand terms, what has changed in our culture. He dedicates the next three chapters to three areas that must change in the church to effectively reach the next generation:

- The church must regain its position as the social center of the community.
- The church must regain its position as the ceremonial center of the community.
- The church must use the church facilities as an outreach tool to the community.

Dorsett uses the remaining chapters to give the reader a working model for reaching the postmodern generation with the gospel. The following excerpt from the chapter, "Moving Beyond the Walls of the Church to Serve the Community" aptly describes why churches must make adjustments in their traditional thinking: "The truth of the gospel is going to be grasped one piece at a time by the next generation. The process is going to take longer than we want it to. Though the process may culminate in a precise moment where young people make deep commitments to Christ through prayers of repentance from sin and acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior, it will be the process itself that those young people will remember most and will refer back to as their journey to salvation."

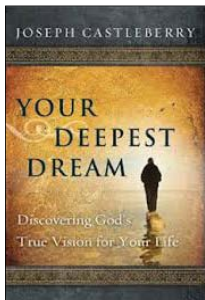
This book is an easy read, but it is not a book that one should read in one sitting. Pastors need to absorb and put into practice the material in this book to reach the next generation. *Mission Possible* contains real-life experiences that pastors can apply to any size church, but especially in the small church.

— Reviewed by Robert M. Bundy, senior pastor, Westside Worship Center, Elkhart, Indiana.



## Your Deepest Dream: Discovering God's True Vision for Your Life

JOSEPH CASTLEBERRY (NavPress, 144 pp., paperback)



**Dr. Joseph Castleberry**, president of Northwest University, posits that humans are “unique, irreplaceable souls with a divine destiny to fulfill.” That destiny to fulfill, the one that will most perfectly fulfill each person, is what Castleberry calls *deep dreams*. He argues that many people try to make themselves fit into the expectations of others — parents, peers, even enemies. Instead, people should strive for a future

that is described by more than goals, but rather big-picture aspirations. These deep dreams, when discovered, “will wake us up from either a life of aimless confusion or a life of confused aiming.”

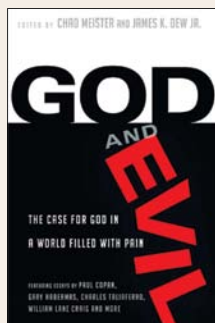
Throughout the book, Castleberry shows his excellent ability to weave great stories amidst the clear steps he gives to realizing one's deep dream. The 12 chapters are relatively short, and each contains at least one interesting story that illustrates the main point.

The book ends with the fascinating story of the author's great-great-grandmother. It culminates his basic assertion that deep inside each person is a God-given dream. But it is up to each person to aggressively follow that dream.

— Reviewed by **G. Robert Cook Jr., D.Min.**, senior pastor, Victory Life Church, Grand Junction, Colorado, and former president of The Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education, Springfield, Missouri.

## God and Evil: The Case for God in a World Filled With Pain

CHAD V. MEISTER and JAMES K. DEW, editors (InterVarsity Press, 368 pp., paperback)



**F**ollowers of Christ believe in a God who is all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere present, and full of goodness and love. A world of pain and suffering, moral confusion, natural disasters and inexplicable evil — with innocent people suffering — confronts all people. The problem of evil is *the* problem when it comes to defending our faith against agnostics and atheists.

For thoughtful believers, this collection of essays in *God and Evil* by prominent Christian thinkers will be useful for reference and teaching. This book is academically solid and accessible to most readers. *God and Evil* is not a casual read, but readers will find ample insights for answering the inquiries of skeptics.

As with such collections, some chapters are average while others sparkle with insight and power. All are worth reading. The work is divided into four parts. Part one contains three essays that examine the general philosophical problems of evil, including the evidential arguments about evil that lead many to conclude that a good, loving, and powerful God may not exist. These chapters evaluate the logical problem of an almighty and all-loving God and apparently meaningless (gratuitous) evil. The authors wrestle honestly and conclude that none of the skeptics' arguments defeat belief in God.

Part two focuses on God's reasons for permitting evil — from the consequences of freewill to maturing the soul through suffering. Garrett J. DeWeese's chapter four essay, “Natural Evil: A ‘Free Process’ Defense” is particularly creative. How do we explain recent earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis, and reconcile these events with a good, all-powerful God? Moral

evil that comes from an abuse of human freedom is terrible, but comprehensible (the freewill defense). But natural evil with unjust suffering is harder to understand. DeWeese argues that God created a dynamic world and human choices and natural processes are not always good or logical. He delves into chaos theory to explain natural calamities and changes (after the fall of humanity) and asserts that moral evil is not God's fault, but the result of our misuse of freedom. He also reminds Christian readers that angels and demons are real, and we should consider spiritual warfare as one reason for challenging phenomena.

Part three is a diverse group of works, ranging from the issue of original/primeval sin, to God's hiddenness and the mysteries of answered and unanswered prayers. This part evaluates the various ways atheists and non-Christian religions understand evil, and it compares these evaluations to biblical truth.

In the midst of these quality works, one chapter stands out: “Evil, the Resurrection and the Example of Jesus,” by veteran apologist Gary Habermas. Habermas is best known for his work with Liberty University and high-profile debates with skeptics. Habermas was a young widower with four children and had some questions for God — and he experienced a profound encounter with the Almighty. Here he brings apologetics into a new dimension. He confronts the challenge of deep emotional pain that evokes the heart-wrenching cry of “Why?” and argues that this may be the deepest suffering of all. Uniting the Cross and Resurrection narratives with insights from cognitive psychology and moving personal testimony, Habermas offers pastoral insights for understanding and alleviating deep pain and keeping faith when all seems lost. This essay alone is worth the price of the book.

Part four focuses on the issues Christians debate, including the nature of hell and divine judgment, intelligent design, and evolution. These essays are insightful and will help believers connect science and theology well, with no compromise of biblical truth.

The Appendix is a full transcript of a debate between Christian philosopher William Lane Craig and atheist scholar Michael Tooley. This is a helpful window on current debating points.

In our age of pluralism and relativism, reading insightful arguments for Christian truth is encouraging and empowering for followers of Jesus committed to the Great Commission.

— Reviewed by **Charlie Self, Ph.D.**, director of Ph.D. Studies in Bible and Theology, associate professor of Church History, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

## Faith and Science Conference



iStockphoto / Thinkstock

**The Faith and Science Conference is returning** June 23–25, 2014, to Springfield, Mo. The 2011 conference was the first of its kind in the history of the Assemblies of God. Organizers say their goal is to provide pastors and other leaders with tools to address issues of science in the context of faith with their congregations.

“Congregations are a lot more scientifically literate than they used to be,” says James Bradford, general secretary of the Assemblies of God, and one of the organizers of the conference. “There are a great number of issues where faith and science intersect — ethical and medical issues, genetic engineering, beginning and end of life issues, etc. We want to help equip pastors to be able to speak to those things and not just to avoid or demonize issues of science.”

Bradford holds a Ph.D. in aerospace engineering from the University of Minnesota. He says churches need not see science as a detriment to faith. “The church has tended to demonize science and has presented it as a threat to faith. Meanwhile, culture is deifying science,” Bradford says. “We want to show pastors how faith and science can be integrated.”

A distinguished speaker at the 2011 conference, Dr. Stephen Krstulovich, is returning in 2014. Krstulovich is a long-time member of Maranatha Chapel AG near Chicago, and is also an award-winning lead engineer at Fermilab. Operated by the U.S. Department of Energy, Fermilab is a research facility that focuses on particle physics — the study of the nature of the universe, time, space, and reality.

Additional speaker information and registration details will be posted at [faithandscience.ag.org](http://faithandscience.ag.org) as the conference nears.



## BEREAN SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE SPANISH MINISTERIAL CURRICULUM AVAILABLE IN DIGITAL FORMAT

**Global University is providing enhanced training** for AG Hispanic leaders. The 27-course Berean School of the Bible curriculum is now available in Logos' Spanish electronic library. The curriculum is offered in digital format at each credentialing level: certified, licensed, and ordained.

For over 25 years Berean School of the Bible has trained AG Hispanic pastors with a dedicated Spanish curriculum. This program is written and adapted by highly educated and Spirit-filled scholars and provides the education requirements for AG credentials. For more information, visit [www.globaluniversity.edu/news\\_article.cfm?id=48](http://www.globaluniversity.edu/news_article.cfm?id=48).

## AGTrust Scholarships Help Train Young Ministers

**M**iguel Guerreiro, one of the first Assemblies of God Trust scholarship recipients, graduated in December 2012 from Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) in Waxahachie, Tex. He is currently a student at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Mo.

“I cannot begin to describe the blessing that the \$30,000 Ralph Riggs General Superintendent scholarship, provided by AGTrust, has been to me,” says Guerreiro. “My education at SAGU primed me for the ministry God has called me to, and the scholarship completely covered my school bill, helping me graduate without debt.”

Since its formation in 2008, AGTrust has awarded \$868,000 through scholarships and loan repayment assistance to 363 students attending AG colleges and universities. For information on scholarship applications or to learn how churches, districts, businesses, and individuals can become members of Assemblies of God Trust, go to [agtrust.org](http://agtrust.org).

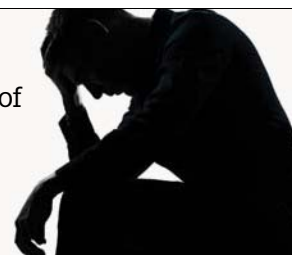


**Miguel Guerreiro**, an AGTrust scholarship recipient and graduate of Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Texas, led a missions team to South Africa as a college freshman.

# Need help?

**Call HelpLine at 1-800-867-4011** (Monday–Friday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. EST).

Confidential phone counseling is available free to Assemblies of God ministers and their immediate families living in the U.S.



## NETWORK 211

Today's technology connects remote locations, restricted access nations, and densely populated cities to the rest of the world. This means Network211 can transform every computer and smart phone into a tool through which it can present the gospel.

Through the Internet, Network211 reaches people one heart at a time, 24/7, and around the world. Visitors to Network211 sites

can indicate they accepted Christ as Savior and share life issues that burden their hearts. Network211's 1-2-1 Connection teams respond within 48 hours and interact with visitors and share the love of Christ. The teams then direct visitors to [www.GlobalChristianCenter.com](http://www.GlobalChristianCenter.com), an online church, where they can receive discipleship, encouragement, and life instruction.

Network211 is committed to proclaiming Christ to all people, building a global community of believers, and working with our partners in ministry. For more information visit [www.Network211.com](http://www.Network211.com).

## Assemblies of God Bible Alliance Launches Cebuano Fire Bible in the Philippines

**Guardy Guevarra** and his wife, Jing, are pioneer pastors of Jesus Saves Assembly of God in the Republic of the Philippines. Today, the Guevarras and thousands more Cebuano-speaking pastors and laypersons have the *Fire Bible* — a Pentecostal study Bible with emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit — available in their language.

The Cebuano *Fire Bible* is the 39th language edition completed, and 27 more language editions are in progress. Thanks to Assemblies of God Bible Alliance partners — missionaries and national churches and U.S. Assemblies of God churches, districts and laypersons — the *Fire Bible* is now the most widely translated and distributed study Bible in the world, according to overseas Bible societies.

## BRINGING HOPE TO JACOB'S CHILDREN IN ISRAEL

**The mission of Jacob's Hope** is to bring hope to Jewish people around the world. The Hope Center — a large multipurpose building in the heart of JH's network in Israel — will touch the lives of Jewish people in many ways. It provides warehouse space for materials shipped from America. It is also a distribution point to bless the needy people of Israel. The Hope Center provides meeting space for believers as well as communities to help people develop relationships. The Center plans on housing a job-training center to teach simple skills to struggling immigrants. It will provide housing for American volunteers desiring to minister to the people of Israel. The Center will also include an evangelistic coffee house to bring the good news of the Messiah of Israel to young Jewish people.

The Hope Center's vision is to touch the lives of tens of thousands of Jewish people and change the spiritual environment in the land of Israel. For more information visit [www.jacobshope.com/index.php](http://www.jacobshope.com/index.php).

## AdIndex

### Assemblies of God

- **Assemblies of God Theological Seminary** ..... 7, 52
- **Bible Alliance** ..... 2, 127
- **Credit Union** ..... inside front cover
- **Financial Solutions** ... inside back / outside back cover
- **General Council 2013** .. 8, 9, 52
- **HelpLine (phone counseling for ministers)** ..... 126
- **7:14 Prayer App** ..... 1
- **U.S. Missions** ..... 35
- **Women in Ministry** ..... 57
- **World Missions** ..... 14, 15
- **Jacob's Hope** ..... 73, 127
- **Network211** ..... 127

**Authentic** ..... 3

### Churches by Daniels

**Construction** ..... 22

### Dennis Batty & Associates

**Architects & Planners** ... 13

**The Church Planting Wife** ..... 3

**FedEx** ..... 91

**Global University** ..... 84, 126

**Good and Evil** ..... 4, 122

**IVP Books** ..... 4

**Moody Publishers** ..... 3, 124

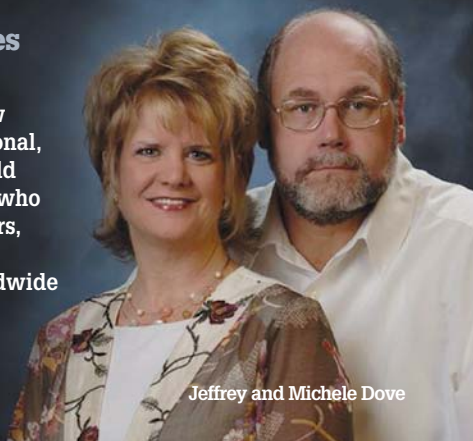
**MyHealthyChurch** ..... 1, 37

- **Against the Wind** ..... 37
- **MEGA Sports Camp** ..... 107
- **7:14 Prayer App** ..... 1

## Life Publishers Welcomes New Director

**Missionary Jeffrey Dove** is the new director for Life Publishers International, a ministry of Assemblies of God World Missions. Dove follows Guy Highfill, who served with Life Publishers for 8 years, 6 of those as director.

Life Publishers is recognized worldwide for its production of the *Fire Bible*, a Pentecostal study Bible now available in 39 language editions with 27 more in progress.



Jeffrey and Michele Dove



# An Open Letter

By **Karl Vaters**



## o my fellow small-church pastors:

God has entrusted into our care  
the most powerful force on earth  
— the smaller church. One survey

indicates that approximately 56 million Americans worship at Protestant churches each week.<sup>1</sup> Over 10 percent — or nearly 6 million<sup>2</sup> — of these worshippers are part of the approximately 1,800 congregations<sup>3</sup> that draw 2,000 or more in total attendance. Approximately 85 percent of churches in America have 199 or fewer people. Sixty percent of churches have 99 or fewer people.<sup>4</sup>

If these statistics are correct, there are 47.6 million worshippers on any given Sunday in churches with 199 or less in attendance. If this is the case, why do so many small-church pastors feel alone, frustrated, even bitter, instead of excited, empowered, and needed?

I know your frustrations because I am one of you. For over 25 years I have been a small-church pastor — 20 years at the church I currently serve. Our average Sunday attendance? It has been sitting at just over 200 for several years. But it is not unusual to hear people call us “big for our size.”

Small-church pastors feel frustrated because others have told them that a successful church is always a numerically growing church, and many of us have believed it. I know I did for many years. It is time for that to change.

I thank God for the ministry of megachurches. Most megachurches serve God and their communities in ways many churches cannot. Megachurch pastors are often the church’s only face for much of the world. We need to stand alongside them with our prayers. Personally, I want to say a huge thank you to those whose ministries I have benefited from.

But fellow small-church pastors, the size of their task pales next to ours. Megachurch

pastors serve approximately 6 million people, while small-church pastors care for approximately 47.6 million people. So smaller churches minister to many more people every week than megachurches. This is more than any Christian denomination, including Catholics.

Smaller churches can have effective ministry. Because smaller churches are small, they have already infiltrated the communities they serve, making them the largest, most readily deployable force for spiritual transformation, emotional encouragement, and material sustenance.

It is time to turn them loose. And, small-church pastors, our finger is on the trigger. We can withhold or release this redemptive power on a world that has never needed us more than it does now.

This is an awesome and sacred responsibility. But I fear we have not met that responsibility well. We need to do better. We can do better. With God’s help we will do better.

No more feeling guilty that Sunday attendance is not growing. No more wasting resources striving for growth that may be counter-productive to our calling. No more feeling jealous of the megachurch down the street or devising some theological justification to despise the preacher on TV.

Instead, let us embrace who we are. Let us answer God’s call for us. Let us pastor the church we have, not the one we wish we had. Not settling for less than, but discovering how big small can be. When we do that, the church we have may just become the church we want — at just the size it is right now.

Let us turn our churches loose under the power of the Holy Spirit. Then stand back and watch in amazement at what an army of smaller churches and the 47.6 million people in them can do to bring Christ’s healing power to a hurting world. 📖

### Notes

1. Warren Bird and Scott Thumma, “A New Decade of Megachurches,” Leadership Network. Found at: <http://leadnet.org/docs/RESEARCH-2011-NOV-New-Decade-of-Megachurches-2011Profile-Bird-Thumma.pdf>. Accessed 22 August 2012.
2. Ibid.
3. Warren Bird, “How Many Megachurches?” Leadership Network. Found at: <http://leadnet.org/blog/post-preview/3276>. Accessed 22 August 2012.
4. Philip Wagner, “A Pastor’s Dirty Little Secret,” ChurchLeaders.Com. Found at: [http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-blogs/159146-philip\\_wagner\\_a\\_pastors\\_dirty\\_little\\_secret.html](http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-blogs/159146-philip_wagner_a_pastors_dirty_little_secret.html). Accessed 22 August 2012.

To share or comment on  
this article, go to [ej.ag.org/  
smchinclosing](http://ej.ag.org/smchinclosing) or scan the  
QR code.



Visit **Enrichment**  
journal on Facebook



**KARL VATERS**, lead pastor, Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, Fountain Valley, California. Visit his website at [www.newsmallchurch.com/](http://www.newsmallchurch.com/).



Insuring thousands of  
Assemblies of God churches...

Doug LeClair  
Church Mutual  
Regional Representative

... and each one is special.

Every church has its own shape and size, with its own unique insurance needs. That's why we conduct a detailed on-site risk analysis to make sure your policy is individually crafted to match your needs.

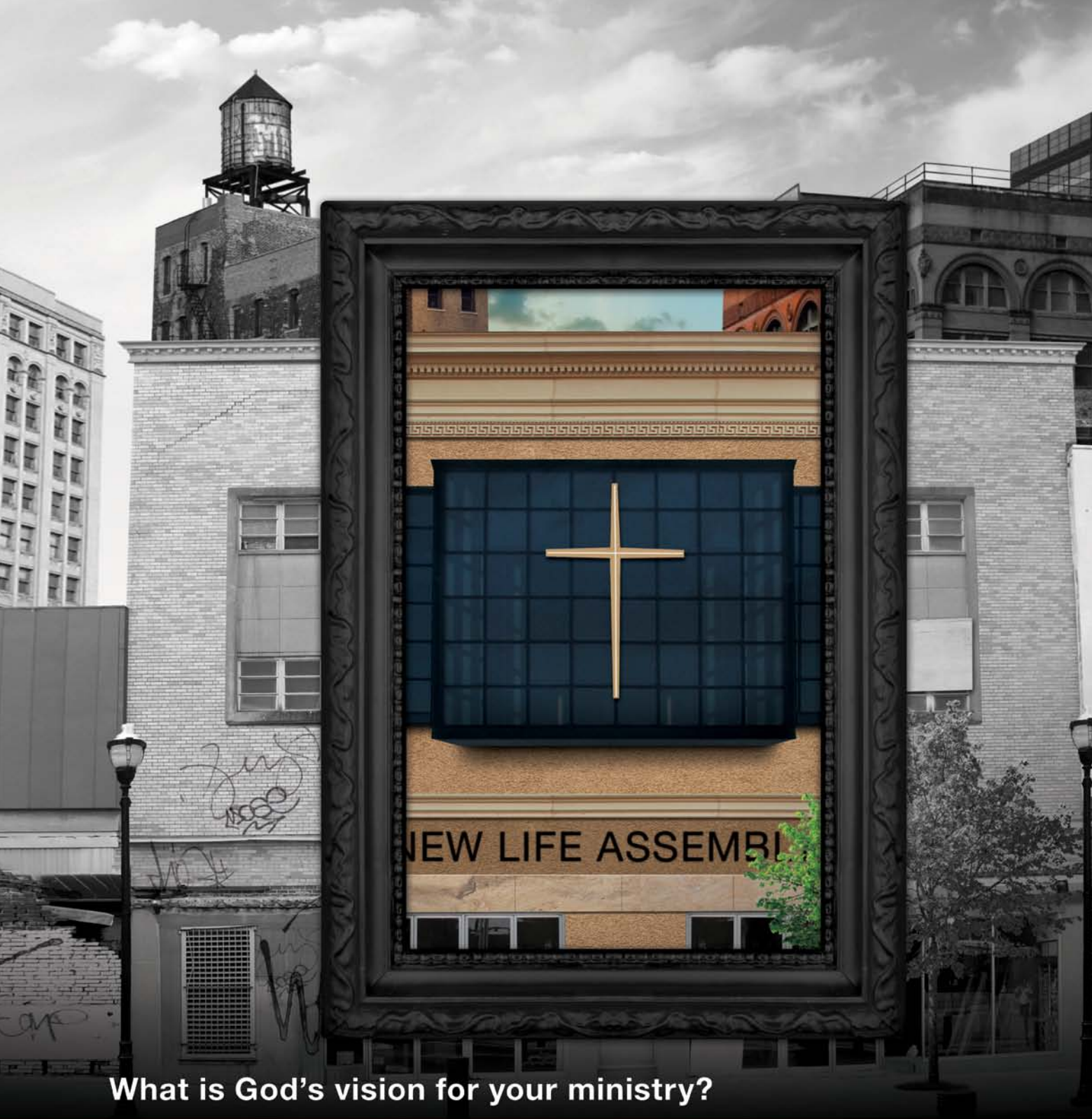
AG Financial Insurance Solutions — in partnership with Church Mutual Insurance Company — is committed to providing lower pricing, value-added services, broader coverage and other customized options designed specifically for churches. It's a portfolio of protection, strength and service you won't find elsewhere.

*Learn more about your insurance options or request a detailed on-site risk analysis for your church today. Call AG Financial Solutions at 866-662-8210 or visit [www.AGFinancial.org/insurance](http://www.AGFinancial.org/insurance).*



Listening. Learning. Leading®





## What is God's vision for your ministry?

Church financing is a big part of the picture for your growing ministry. As one of the largest church lenders in the nation, AG Financial Solutions understands the needs of churches.

With flexible financial terms and all-time low rates, there's never been a better time to connect with us. Please call **888.599.6014** or visit [ej.churchloans.ag](http://ej.churchloans.ag).

TRUST

STRENGTH

PARTNERSHIP

STEWARDSHIP

ETERNAL

