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ENRICHMENT (ISSN 1082-1791) is published quarterly (January, April, July, October), ©2014 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 \$42, 2 years \$42. Outside USA add \$30 per year for postage. Subscriptions: All subscription correspondence, including change of address, should be sent to *Enrichment*, tustomer Services, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, Mio 65802, hone 1-800-641-4310. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, Mio 65802.

⁵¹ The Next 100 Years: Challenges & Opportunities

Interview with GEORGE O. WOOD General Superintendent Wood discusses cultural changes and their impact on the future course of the Assemblies of God.

Evangelism: Is It Still Our Greatest Work?

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⁶⁴ Live | Dead: Reaching the Unreached

By SARAH DAVIS [pseudonym] Those with the least access to the hope of the gospel are being reached by a new generation of missionaries where a high level of commitment is required to reach the unreached.

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By MARK BATTERSON Our generation desperately needs to rediscover the difference between *praying for* and *praying through*.

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Discipleship for the Other Six Days By CHARLIE SELF

As we enter the second century of Pentecostal mission, the Holy Spirit is calling all believers to be and make disciples.

⁸⁸ Open Hearts, Open Doors: The Matthew 25 Church

By WILFREDO DE JESÚS What is the message, the mission, and method of a Pentecostal Matthew 25 church?

The Healthy Pentecostal Church: Measurements and Best Practices

By MICHAEL CLARENSAU A congregation that longs to become a healthier Pentecostal community can learn from the Early Church's ancient story and our modern reality.

Roots & Wings: What Young People Need From Us

By **CAROL TAYLOR** In an increasingly post-Christian culture, how can we nurture discipleship that produces oaks of righteousness with deep roots?

Strange Fire, Strange Truth, Strange Love

By **GEORGE PAUL WOOD** John MacArthur offers a highly negative assessment of the Charismatic Movement in his new book, *Strange Fire.* George Paul Wood offers a Pentecostal response.

A Final Word Copy and Paste By JAMES T. BRADFORD Our Fellowship would do well to emulate two qualities that characterized our first 100 years.

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

Executive Editor: George Paul Wood / Managing Editor: Rick Knoth / Art Director: Steve Lopez / Office Coordinator: Hilary Hartman / 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 Hilary Hartman at 417-862-2781, ext. 4095; go to enrichmentjournal.ag.org (click on Advertise); or E-mail advertisingenrichment @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.

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100 THE CENTENNIAL ASSEMBLIES OF GOD BE THERE FOR THE

There are moments that last a second...



Azusa Street Revival 1906 312 AZUSA STREET / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

In summer 1906, revival erupted at the Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles. Known as the Azusa Street Revival, it attracted thousands of curiosity seekers and pilgrims from around the world. The Assemblies of God traces its heritage in part back to this revival, which became a focal point of the emerging Pentecostal movement. E. N. Bell 1866-1923 GENERAL CHAIRMAN

Baptized in the Holy Spirit in July 1908, E. N. Bell, a former Baptist minister, issued the call to Pentecostals through his paper *Word and Witness* to meet in Hot Springs. He was then elected as the first General Chairman at the 1914 organizational meeting, and he donated his paper to the new organization.



What was to be a one-year mission assignment in 1954 to evangelize in India carries on to this day. Though Mark died in 1989, Huldah still runs the ministry they founded, and Calcutta Mercy Ministries now touches the lives of over 230 million people in eleven Indian states.

There are moments in the life of a fellowship. Moments where the past meets the present, where the present inspires the future, and where God moves in the collective hearts of those gathered.

We invite you to join leaders from around the world to be a part of the next great moment in the history of the Assemblies of God Movement. The Centennial is scheduled for August 5-10, 2014, in Springfield, Missouri. With captivating speakers, exalting worship, and energizing community, it will be one of the most memorable events in the history of the Assemblies of God Fellowship.

REGISTRATION

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NEXT GREAT MOMENT



Teen Challenge

David Wilkerson believed addiction stemmed from spiritual alienation from God, so he and other New York City ministers founded the drug rehabilitation program Teen Challenge. They wanted to give drug addicts the chance to meet God and find deliverance.



Birth of the Assemblies of God

Independent Pentecostals cherished their freedom but also sought fellowship. Three hundred gathered at a meeting in Hot Springs to explore the idea of a church organization. Ten days of singing, sermons, prayer and fellowship led to the delegates voting to legally organize as The General Council of the Assemblies of God.



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GEORGE O. WOOD Chairman of World AG Fellowship; General Superintendent, United States



LAZARUS CHAKWERA Former General Superintendent, Malawi; Candidate for President of Malawi



JOHN LINDELL James River Assembly of God, Lead Pastor, Springfield, MO, USA

ALSO FEATURING

Jason Frenn - Latin America Yong Mok Cho - South Korea Hal Donaldson - United States Barnabas Mtokambali - Tanzania Raegan Glugosh - Romania Ivan Satyavrata - India José Wellington - Brazil Nam Soo Kim - United States

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WILFREDO DE JESÚS New Life Covenant, Senior Pastor, Chicago, IL, USA





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EShorts

FROM BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS

ast year almost half a million millennials participated in 35th "tough mudder"¹ events² that required them to traverse 10-to-12 mile military-style

obstacle courses based on a design originally created by a former British Special Forces serviceman. In addition to the challenge of making it through the course, each one paid between \$60 and \$200 to participate to raise money for charities, such as The Wounded Warrior Project.³

What does this communicate to a below-the-surface observer? For a worthy cause, millennials will engage and endure serious obstacles as long as they can tackle the challenge with a team of loyal and committed peers.

The challenge for the boomer leader: inspiring millennials to participate in a worthy cause in which they can invest their passion and energy. Since there is no cause greater than the mission of God, it is time that we learn to articulate this mission in more compelling ways. There is too much pent-up passion and energy being consumed by other things.

 RANDY WALLS, director, continuing education, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri

Notes

- http://toughmudder.com/. (Accessed September 20, 2013.)
 Wall Street Journal online article: "Office Workers Run Amok" June 6, 2012. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1 0001424052702303918204577446943747331290. html?mod=WSJ_hpp_editorsPicks_1#slide/eos. (Accessed September 20, 2013.)
- 3. http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/. (Accessed September 20, 2013.)







THAT WE CHRISTIANS SHOULD BEHAVE DURING THE WEEK EXACTLY THE SAME WAY WE ACT, ON SUNDAY MORNING

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM OLYMPIANS

MAINTAIN A SENSE **OF JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS**

he best Olympians compete fiercely but also guide their lives by justice, fairness, and comradeship. At the men's pole vault event in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, five athletes reached the final competition. Among them were Earle Meadows of the United States - who took first place and two Japanese athletes — Shuhei Nishida and Sueo Oe. After 5 hours of competition, Nishida and Oe tied for second place. Olympic officials offered the Japanese teammates a final opportunity to have a jump-off for the silver medal but the two friends declined out of mutual respect for each other. For the purposes of Olympic medal record keeping, Oe agreed to accept the bronze while Nishada took the silver. On their return to Japan, Nishada and Oe had a jeweler cut their Olympic medals in half and exchanged one piece with each other. Putting the bronze and silver halves together, they created a medal the Japanese called the "Medal of Friendship."

- VICTOR M. PARACHIN, Tulsa, Oklahoma



f you are a pastor or a church leader, it is difficult for me to fully communicate the importance of your online platform. In fact, if you spend much time in the online world, like I do, you start to feel like a broken record for saying the same things over and over. I have been saying these things for years. If you have known me for very long, you might be tired of hearing them.

- An online presence is an opportunity to expand your ministry, and to bring depth to the ministry you already have.
- An online presence is a way for you to connect with other pastors who are doing the things you do.
- An online platform is a place to get ideas, have conversations, and innovate new ways of doing ministry.
- An online platform gives you a place to share sermons, thoughts, and what God is teaching you.
- An online platform is a place to begin real friendship.
- An online platform is a place for you to be human to show your brokenness, your day-to-day faithfulness, and even cute pictures of your family.

- JUSTIN LATHROP, Dallas, Texas

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BOOK SHELF

Finding Hope

These are difficult days for our nation as we struggle with a slow economic recovery, wars, and rumors of wars — but also for many individuals and families. The media seem to present a continual stream of personal setbacks and tragedies. We all have struggled under physical and emotional burdens, some to a much greater degree than others; but these struggles come from being human, finite, and living in a fallen

world. Light may be out there somewhere, but the tunnel is dark ... and long. In perhaps his best book yet — You'll Get Through This: Hope and Help for Your Turbulent Times — best-selling author Max Lucado offers hope and a strong promise of profound content to follow. And he delivers.

Lucado is known for his emotive, devotional style — his uncanny ability to connect with readers, naming and identifying with their deepest struggles, desires, and dreams, and pointing them to Christ. This book does that, but it is also intensely practical. Centering his content on the familiar story in Genesis, Lucado high-



lights Joseph's life struggles: betrayed and abandoned by his brothers, sold into slavery, seduced and falsely accused by his boss's wife, imprisoned, and forgotten. Few have had a rougher life. Yet Joseph made it through, his faith and character intact.

Max Lucado weaves God's love and care throughout, and points readers to the hope we have in Christ. One of my favorite passages reads: "Not often do you see the words betrayed and thanks in the same sentence, much less in the same heart. Jesus and the disciples were in the Upper Room. Sly Judas sat in the corner. Impetuous Peter sat at

the table. One would soon betray Jesus; the other would soon curse Him. Jesus knew this, yet on the night He was betrayed, He gave thanks. In the midst of the darkest night of the human soul, Jesus found a way to give thanks. Anyone can thank God for the light. Jesus teaches us to thank God for the night." (124)

Read it. Recommend it. Use it.

Insanity?

A book with an intriguing title has appeared recently on the Christian best-seller list: *The Insanity of God* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2013). Written under an assumed name for his protection, the author (Nik Ripkin, with Greg Lewis), tells his personal missionary journey, beginning in rural Kentucky, ministering in Somalia, and then traveling throughout the world as he meets with the underground, persecuted church and gathers their stories. Reading like an adventure novel, his account pulls you in and along, through dangerous liaisons,



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clandestine meetings, and divine interventions. More than an exciting tale, however, this is the true story, or rather "stories," of believers who survive and thrive despite incredible opposition and hardship. It is the story of amazing faith and perseverance.

Every pampered, spoiled, and take-the-faith-forgranted Christian should read this book — not to feel quilty or

sad, but to be encouraged, inspired, motivated, and challenged to serve our living Savior. God is at work.

This should be required reading for all pastors, church leaders, and mission team members. More than a treasure of sermon illustrations, *The Insanity of God* opens minds and hearts to the reality of God's work around the world, especially in those dark places where acknowledging faith in Christ means a death sentence.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

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- 1 It helps me believe in something bigger than myself, lest I become my own god.
- 2 It allows me to regularly give something of myself away my time and money — to a cause that matters.
- 3 It lets me add to the whole of my life, not subtract from it.
- 4 It gives me somewhere to grow a seriousness about my life. In the midst of TV sitcoms, comedic routines, and sarcastic twists, I need

the awareness of an otherworldly, eternal dimension.

- 5 It opens the door for me to say to God that I will affirm what He affirms, and will yield to what He says is important.
- 6 It helps me to be as disciplined in my spiritual life on behalf of God and His interests as I am about my secular job and its interests.
- 7 It lets me remember that it's a good place to prepare for life after death.

There is a place where these things happen, where struggling pilgrims like you and me go for a breath of God's fresh air: His house, the place of worship, the church, and where the people of God get together.

"Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:23–25, The Message).

> - T. RAY RACHELS, Huntingdon Beach, California

You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly.

Ephesians 4:4 The Message

THINK ABOUT IT

LOVING THE GOD WHO INSPIRED HIS WORDS

n the motion picture *The Words,* an older writer (Jeremy Irons) describes to a younger writer (Bradley Cooper) how he came to write a novel that resulted in the loss of his marriage.

The old man relates that when he was a young writer and newly married, his infant daughter died. When his wife could not cope with her grief, she left him. Despondent, the young journalist spent 2 weeks in front of his typewriter channeling his sorrow over his daughter and marriage into a story. After sending the novel to his wife, she returned to him. Lost in the emotion of seeing her husband waiting for her at the train station, she accidently left a briefcase containing the manuscript on the train.

The old man describes the joy of their reunion but also how he became so fixated on the loss of his novel that he failed to focus on the needs of his wife. In the end his relationship with her failed. To the young writer the old man admits, "My tragedy was I loved words more than I loved the woman who inspired the words."

Too often we worship the Bible more than the Author who inspired the words in the Bible. We dare not confuse a relationship with the Scriptures to a relationship with the One to whom they point.

- GREG ASIMAKOUPOULOS, Mercer Island, Washington

Be**AllIn**

UTHTRAX

feel like you are just my friend because you want me to get 'saved.' "

My best friend voiced these words my sophomore year of high school.

While technology, music, and media have changed immensely in the past 30 years, this issue has not. Young people who do not embrace the Christian faith still feel "Christians are insincere and concerned only with converting others," according to David Kinnaman in his book, UnChristian.

While we as leaders rightly care about the eternal future of our students, it is even more important they

know we just plain care. This generation, more than any other, has a high radar for the insincere. They can sense when we truly are invested in their lives and when we are saying the right stuff and doing the right things to get the right outcome. If we hope to reach a point where we can reach the deepest place of their heart with the life-changing love of Jesus, we must first cultivate a relationship that gives us the right to reach that place. We have to go to their ball games, listen over coffee. and be more than just a text away. We have to be in their lives. They want to know — they need to know that they are worth more than their soul. They are worth knowing. When we choose to listen without a lesson, they will learn the love we are living. Begin with being all in.

GIII WILII DEIIIG AII III. — LYNN COWELL, Charlotte, North Carolina



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IN THE RED ZONE

CROSSING THE LINE OF FAITH

s a pastor, (Kent) people sometimes ask me to visit a person who is dying. On one occasion, friends asked me to come with them to the

hospital. Steven was dying of a brain tumor. This 11-year-old had been in a coma, but when we arrived, he was alert.

I wondered if he knew the Lord, but his parents were not sure. With their encouragement, I leaned in close to their son to share the gospel.

Quickly, I sketched a simple bridge diagram on a scrap of paper. That image showed Steven how to enter into an eternal relationship with Jesus. When I finished the explanation, Steven's dad asked if he wanted to pray to receive Christ. Steven said, "Yes."

Afterward, I reviewed God's promises using simple terms. This young boy had absolute assurance that when he closed his eyes for the last time on earth, he would open them again in the presence of Jesus.

Whether for a life-or-death crisis or a more casual conversation, believers need to be prepared with an easy explanation for how to move a person from the spiritual red zone across the line of faith. My "How To Share Your Faith" DVD series (http://www.howtoshareyourfaith.com/) has been helping pastors across America equip their congregations with what to say. Participants not only learn how to lead someone in a prayer to receive Christ, they also know how to express the benefits of salvation. This training program inspires believers to share the good news with confidence. It's a plan simple enough that even a child can understand.

— KENT TUCKER and PATTI TOWNLEY-COVERT, cowriters, In the Red Zone: A Game Plan for How to Share Your Faith. See http://www.howtoshareyourfaith.com/.

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m and} \, Fusion}{Searcy}$

"The Renegade Pastor shows church leaders how to move their life and ministry from average to awesome! In this book, Nelson Searcy will inspire church leaders to dream bigger than ever. It provides valuable advice and tools for overcoming mediocrity and truly becoming a renegade pastor." Steve Reynolds, Lead Pastor, Capital Baptist Church, Annandale, VA Author of *Bod4God* and *Get Off the Coach*

"Want to be more than just average? Then embed into your life the Seven Commitments of a Renegade Pastor that Nelson shares in this book. It could change your life." Bill Easum, President and Senior Consultant, 21st Century Strategies

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A JILTED FRIEND

The main idea: Jesus died for you, so don't hurt His feelings and let Him down.

The problem: This approach appeals to people's emotions, fears, and sense of quilt. Most people do not want to disappoint or let down anyone, let alone God. But fear and guilt are not gospel motivations; they are tools of the enemy.

The result: This approach may get you emotionally driven responses, especially from those who want to please others. These individuals will make all sorts of radical promises about never sinning again. However, they will eventually find someone else (peer, boyfriend, girlfriend) whom they do not want to disappoint even more. That relationship will easily trump this type of change.

- DAVID HERTWECK, Liverpool, New York

Next time in Enrichment THE MAN ISSUE

n the last decade, a number of books have suggested that America has a man crisis. Men are increasingly absent from the home, the workforce, the church, and society. As Pentecostals, how should we address the man crisis? What does it mean to be a husband, father, friend, church member, and social influencer? That is what this issue of Enrichment sets out to investigate.



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Pastoral Longevity and Church Growth By Charles Arn · 🗖

What does it take to produce a growing, vibrant church? Some look to the latest church-growth material or technique. But the most important

path to growth might be right before your eyes pastoral longevity. While long-term pastorates do not guarantee that a church will grow, short-term pastorates essentially guarantee that a church will not grow.



The 15-Year Plan to Pick Your Successor By Dick Hardy

Many churches struggle after a longtime pastor leaves. The pastoral search may stretch on for months. But there is another way to make this transition as seamless as possible. The author provides a longterm plan to pastoral succession.

Let's Weep and Gnash Teeth Together: **An Insight Into Communal Grief**

By Shawn P. Stapleton **Every congregation experiences loss and grief** as the result of pastoral transitions, losing members, financial issues, or changes in worship styles.

This article offers several practical suggestions to make the grieving process more palatable.



Busyness Is Not a Spiritual Gift By Tammy Whitehurst

Pastors often wear the badge of

"**busyness**" with pride. They feel that being busy is a sign of spirituality. But busyness can crowd out the important things of life — including people. Allow this article to

challenge you to slow down and wait on God.



What Good Is Preaching? Vs. What Is Good Preaching?



increases 30 percent over last week? Here are three road-tested, biblical principles you can apply to your sermons to help you answer these questions.

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You wait in vour car for the mechanic to arrive at his shop. Suddenly a sputtering,

coughing noise from a careening, polluting automobile that shutters to a violent stop next to you assaults your ears. The mechanic vaults from the driver's seat and loudly opines. "Ol' Nellie, here, has been giving me fits this morning. Guess my last tune-up did not fix the problem."

The physician's exam room is cold and foreboding. You have been patiently waiting, without street clothes, for 30 minutes. The doctor walks in to shake your hand but suddenly erupts into a coughing fit accented by a dripping nose and fever-laced eyes.

In both of these scenarios there is an inherent contradiction. The messenger has to reflect his or her message.

What is the message of your ministry? Do you physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually mirror good news?

YOU ARE HIS MESSAGE

Marshall McLuhan, author of the best-selling book, Understanding Media: the Extinction of Man, said, "The medium is the message."



What does the person looking in your mirror communicate to a watching world about your Lord and Savior?

Yes, you are clergy, pastor, teacher, evangelist, educator, missionary, counselor, custodian, coach, friend, and, in the constellation of these roles, you become the flesh of a life of faith.

Your diction, appearance, emotional control, interpersonal resonance, ability to exegete biblical languages, patience, eye contact, and even the quality of your breath all breathe the presence of our Lord.

As people of the Cross, we glue our heritage to the words of Jesus, who said to the skeptical religious leaders of His day, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me" (John 12:44,45, author's paraphrase).

Therefore, people expect us, the people of the cloth, to be clothed in Christ. Our physical presence, facility with the language, demeanor, sense of humor, tolerance for diversity, and a thousand other nonverbal personal qualities all become ... His message.

So, what does the person looking in your mirror communicate to a watching world about vour Lord and Savior?

BODY LANGUAGE

Our bodies, according to our classical Pentecostal theology, are the "temple of the Holy Spirit." What does your "temple" nonverbally communicate to those who receive your spiritual leadership?

According to the National Center for Health Statistics in 2010. 33 percent of U.S. adults. age 20 years and over, were clinically "overweight," 35.7 percent were "obese," and 6.3 percent were "extremely obese."

Additional research conducted by Cynthia Woolever (2010) and Joelle Kopacz (2012) in their blog post Beyond the Ordinary, suggests clergy weigh 5 to 7 percent more than the average weight of the parishioners who sit in front them on Sunday morning.

Maintaining a healthy weight is really all about boundaries. At a dinner table, when is enough ... enough? Is there a spiritual component to controlling appetites?

When a spiritual leader is admonishing me to make Christ the Lord of my life, my marriage, my relationship with my daughters, my time with my grandsons, and my dealings with my clients, I am not only listening with my ears, I am judging this person's credibility with my eyes.

Eating too much or too little results in physical messaging. If the pastor is abusing the "temple" because he is consistently moving the "boundaries" (*Oh, I know I will pay for this, but pass me another piece of that cherry pie ... with lots of that blessed whipped cream ... and I will ask the Lord for forgiveness later.*), what is the real message to those who look to him for moderation and control?

BURNING OUT FOR JESUS

Another boundary issue for clergy is the willingness to work hard 12 to 20 hours a day so the ministry can grow.

It is an interesting phenomenon that a pastor's name, not location or a specific ministry, often defines our churches. Clergy who have a vision and then nurture this spiritual directive with incalculable hours of sweat, service, and selflessness will often earn preeminent places of respect.

And, what about the ones who did not make it to the finish line? You know, the clergy who worked 18 hours a day, experienced minimal numerical growth, and then had a heart attack, emotional breakdown, or just ... walked out the door at the annual business meeting? There is a law of diminishing returns in the ministry.

There are committed and anointed people who work hard and still gaze out over empty folding chairs and pews. So they work even harder. But the more energy they expend, the fewer parishioners show up. Over time a palpable penchant for passivity replaces their enthusiasm and extreme labor. And, the best ointment to salve this sorrow is to repeat the aphorism, "At least I burned out for Jesus."

We indelibly imprint the people we serve with our sorrow. As soon as the church begins to slip into regression, the congregation will reflect the unspoken angst of the spiritual leader. And, from there it is downhill.

THE "EYES" HAVE IT

The most expressive part of your body is not your hands, mouth, or even words. It is your eyes.

If you have ever been in some place of personal crisis and your spiritual leader is looking 6 inches over your left shoulder, sneaks a glance at a cell phone screen, or glances at a wrist watch, you know the nonverbal insult that screams, "He wants out of here ... my



You are clergy, pastor, teacher, evangelist, educator, missionary, counselor, custodian, coach, friend, and, in the constellation of these roles, you become the flesh of a life of faith. story does not matter to him."

As a child I learned, from my parents (who also doubled as my pastors), that I could not lie to either of them if they said to me, "Now you look straight in my eyes and tell me that again." This was the litmus test for lying in our family.

There are two types of eye contact when listening. First, there is "sustained eye contact" which usually communicates "interrogation" or "intimidation." Second, "intermittent eye contact" communicates "I am listening and following you, and I do not need to stare at you to prove my interest."

Obviously, as a spiritual leader, you want to provide intermittent eye contact that will invite the person to trust and then rely on you.

When I consider a few of the seminal spiritual leaders in my lifetime (J. Robert Ashcroft, Gladys Reynolds, George O. Wood, Liz Merrifield, Barry Corey), they leaped into the center of my mind and heart with their eyes. They "attended" me with their vision. They pierced through my feints and failures. I saw Christ in them.

THE WINDEX OF WORSHIP

Sometimes we have to clean our mirrors. Over the years they become smeared and streaked with sentimentality, selfishness, and secondguessing. The best solution I have learned is a cleansing application of tears ... the result of worship.

Worship, offering worth to God, will remind us our bodies must physically reflect the boundaries and healthy choices of a sinner saved by grace. Worship will whisper there is no virtue in becoming the next victim of spiritual burnout. And, finally, worship will give us clear eyes to see our families, our congregations, and our communities as Christ sees them.

Here is the best compliment you will ever hear in your ministry: "I saw Christ in you today." ₪



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

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The Presence of Absence

BY SCOTT HAGAN

eadership is about paying attention — not getting attention. It's about cultivating acuity and seeing what should be, not simply what is. Feelings of incompleteness are a lost leadership

art mainly because of our

intoxication with promotion and momentum. We are overly anxious to highlight the good while quietly not acknowledging anything that does not serve the cause or hints that the vision may not be working as we hoped.

But a good leader understands there is no such thing as a nonentity. Something is either present or it's missing. In other words, everything exists. And sometimes we find the more powerful message in what is omitted,



Sometimes we find the more powerful message in what is omitted. not what's present. Jesus understood that leadership starts with crossing the road and mingling with the dead. But Jesus went further in His leadership and demonstrated a keen perception for what was yet to be accomplished. Jesus did not fear making public the unfinished task.

The following narrative proves it.

AN IMPERFECT "10"

It began with a speck on the eyelid. A tiny blemish on the palm. A strand of hair going from premature gray to albino white. For the next week the farmer tried to believe it was a sun blister. The fisherman, the aftermath of a rope burn. The bearded sheepherder, well, age. But the small painless symptom does the unthinkable. It endures, then enlarges. Then suddenly the priest exiles a beloved neighbor or family member to a land where human benevolence dared not engage.

A leper township was the stamp of Satan's signet ring. A colony of the cursed. A forced resettlement of the happily forgotten. Rotting at will, the leprous body became a slow burning log cast upon a hot fire, transforming from solid wood to ash. For the leper, gravity was the final enemy as decomposed tissue fell like snowflakes, leaving appendages to hang by a thread like a loose button on a sport coat.

Get the picture.

Leprosy was like an inoperative social cancer — a malignancy that turned a normal successful human being into a cadaver on hold. Left to perish on his own, the leper was forced to watch firsthand his mummy-like oxidization. This kind of dreadfulness was only fit for the dark interior of the casket.

Easton's Bible Dictionary tells us that the word for leprosy comes from the Hebrew word tsara'ath, meaning "smiting" or "stroke." The word also means "the swelling redness caused by the sting of a wasp." People believed leprosy was a direct providential affliction; therefore, an emblem of judgment. In Christ's day, no leper could live in a walled town, though they might allow him in an open village as long as he kept several hundred feet between himself and the outside world. Wherever he went, society required the leper to tear his garment as a sign of grief and contrition while keeping his shaved head hidden beneath a mantle as if lamenting his own death.

Furthermore, society required him to warn passers-by to keep their distance by calling out, "Unclean, Unclean." He was the funeral processional and corpse all in one. Society forbade him to speak directly to anyone or receive any kind of comforting salutation, since in the East this would involve an embrace. Leprosy was a severe contagion, a silent bacterial mildew that could attach to a piece of clothing or hide itself inside a house before latching on to unsuspecting flesh. Its mission was to cling ... then condemn.

Ten such men found themselves under that condemnation. They were men of different backgrounds, race, and riches, but leprosy was their new nation. They had one agenda — get the attention of Jesus. Decorum was their last priority. As you read Luke's narrative, notice how carefully he notes the *noise* and character placements. They are key to the mercy. Of the 10 leprous men, Luke first says that they "stood at a distance ... and called out in a loud voice" (Luke 17:12,13). But of Jesus, Luke writes, "And when He saw them, He said, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests' " (verse 14). Nowhere does it indicate that Jesus had to raise His voice in His response. At first, the 10 were loud because they were at a distance. But Jesus answered them the way you would answer someone standing in front of you. So what happened to the distance between them? In other words, the lepers yelled but the Savior talked. How? Because Jesus closed the gap. This is the first role of leadership — to close the gap — to make the outsider feel like an insider.

The law of leprosy was a distant second to the law of love. After closing the gap, Jesus instructed the 10 to go visit the priest. Somewhere along the way the lepers noticed a change in their complexions. Whether they ever made it to the priest we will never know.

For nine of the 10 lepers normalcy was their goal. They wanted their ordinary lives back. But Jesus' goal has never been to return people to the ordinary; His purpose was to bring back the dead. When nine lepers got their ordinary life back, they kept walking. Because the way you celebrate the return to ordinary life is through more ordinary living. But how do you celebrate a resurrection from the dead? You find the source In the hopes of marketing positive results, or always looking good for the next set of potential investors, may we never slip into denial about the unfinished task.

and become His bond slave. As the nine returned to the ordinary, one went straightway to find Jesus. He forsook the ordinary. After receiving this man's love, Jesus then declared a key to effective leadership. Jesus then asked, "Where are the other nine?" (Luke 17:17). Jesus felt the absence of something, not just the presence of something.

For today's pastor and leader this aspect of leadership needs to return to the forefront. Certainly the one leper who reciprocated with love thrilled Jesus, but Jesus did not get carried away by this result nor did He try to hide the fact the majority, 90 percent, were still unresponsive to His kingdom. In the hopes of marketing positive results, or always looking good for the next set of potential investors, may we never slip into denial about the unfinished task.

It's good to stay in touch with what God has done, but it's better to stay in touch with what He still needs to do. ■



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

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ON PREACHING



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BY DOUG GREEN



It happens to preachers, even good ones like you. Pastors can easily lose passion in the study.

Every professional knows it is difficult to invest energy where there is no passion. However, preaching is no ordinary job. Handling God's Word is a unique calling. It is God speaking to *your* congregation through *you*; and, if *you* do not have any passion for *your* sermon, how can you expect it from anybody else? Simply put, without passion, you are sunk.



Here's how to turn a wilted speech into a strong and vibrant sermon. So, what does passion for the biblical text look like? It's the intuitive, gut-level feeling that goes off inside, ignited by the power of God, charging you with a rush of energy and fervor. In these moments, the words come faster than you can record them. Your mind gushes with an overload of expression. You are in the zone and you cannot wait to start preaching.

These moments are precious. There is nothing quite like them. When you find this feeling, you can do a day's work in an hour. Most important, your preparation is fresh and vibrant, not stale and limp. You can hardly wait to tell others because you know *exactly why* the sermon is important to you. You want to share the experience you are feeling with the congregation so they can experience it too.

So, what happens when this is not the case? Is there any way to rejuvenate your enthusiasm for the text?

Consider these steps to recapturing your lost passion, turning a wilted speech into a strong and vibrant sermon:

1. PRAY

Obviously, God knows you need help. He invites you to ask. Do so. Like a deer panting for water is the preacher needing a connection to the Lord's heart for His people. Pray in the Spirit. Invite the Lord to walk with you down the aisles of your soul and take inventory of what's really going on. David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts" (Psalm 139:23). Pray likewise and recover what is missing.

- What do you want to say to me, O God?
- What am I missing that You want to give me?
- What about this text exposes the condition of my heart?

2. FIND THE DRAMATIC CENTER

In all communication, there is something about what you are talking about that compels you. As you know, the Word of God is so powerful that, year after year, you can hear a familiar passage in a whole new way. You find fresh insights with the changes of life. If you are going to invest emotional energy in the correct handling of this text, you must find the aspect that compels you. Find the dramatic center of what God is saying to you today. Nothing beats fresh bread.

It is impossible to disguise ambivalence. At the climatic moment of your sermon, anything but absolute conviction on your part will be obvious, negating your message. What about the exposed human condition makes you weep? What makes you mad? What breaks your heart? Without being full of self-righteousness, what makes you want to get out of your chair and do something about it? What difference has the truth of *this* text made in your life? With this critical revelation from the depths of your soul, you will not have to manufacture passion. It will naturally exist. You already care.

• What about the text captures my heart?

- What about the text evokes gusto inside of me?
- Why should I care about this?

3. JUST BE HONEST

Even an admission of lackluster zeal in the pulpit is dynamically more powerful than a pastor trying to fake it. Honesty always trumps hypocrisy. Often, my honesty about what's *really* going on in my heart is the key to diagnosing my lack of passion, unlocking the power of God's Word to impact every part of my life. In a sober spirit of sincerity, God can heal my apathy and give me new grace for preaching.

Ask the tough questions. It is acceptable and reasonable, when spending time in the study, to ask the difficult (or troubling) questions. Why are you ambivalent about this subject? What is it you really believe about what God is saying? What experience in life made you lack belief about this Scripture passage? In the presence of God, be raw and honest. This type of prayerful evaluation, directed by the power of the Holy Spirit, ought to expose what's really going on inside.

- What are my honest feelings about the passage, even those I think I should not be feeling?
- Can I really commit my heart to this passage of Scripture? If not, why not?
- Am I violating my own integrity?

4. FIND FRESH EYES

Re-examine the way you see the text. Look at it from a variety of angles. See it from the view of a seeker who is hearing it for the first time. See it from the eyes of a child. Even an admission of lackluster zeal in the pulpit is dynamically more powerful than a pastor trying to fake it.



Consider what the original audience must have thought. See it from the perspective of the opposite sex, another race, a disabled person, or an atheist. Change up your perspective, and you might see something you have never seen before — something that will light a fire in your soul.

Do not limit yourself to personal experience. Although personal experience tends to be the most powerful way to convey information, do not restrict yourself to only what really happened to you. You may be passionate about things, whether or not you experienced them. For example, I was not abused as a child, but I once observed, at the grocery story, a small boy flinching as his dad violently yelled at him. This experience, although not my personal experience, helps me understand significant parts of Scripture — with new passion.

- What would ______ see while reading this text?
- What incites passion in the hearts of others I know?
- What about this can work to do the same in me?

Passionate proclamation should always be your goal. However, in the spirit of honesty and transparency, what if you have conscientiously run through all these steps and still feel less passion than you wish you felt, or less than you have felt before, or less than ever? Life is complex. Seasons of life are often full of challenge. Sometimes a period of time can even seem dark. In those situations, you may or may not have the passion you need. Yet, in those seasons step up to the pulpit, take your best shot, and trust God, who puts the power in His message even when you feel less than you wish. You are not alone when you preach. In your faithfulness, He rescues and redeems what you give in His name.

With God's help, preach His Word. It makes all the difference in the world, for the truth proclaimed with fire will ignite the work of God.

Especially in a good preacher like you. 🛛



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

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IN CONTEXT

First-Century Galilee: Contextualizing Jesus

BY MARC TURNAGE

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veryone comes from somewhere. And that somewhere affects who everyone becomes. Jesus grew up in the Lower Galilee in the first quarter of the first century; and, likewise, the Lower Galilee served as the primary land-

scape for most of Jesus' ministry. The Lower Galilee, then, provides the physical context in which Jesus lived and ministered. How we conceptualize this world of Jesus impacts how we understand Him and His ministry.¹

People commonly assume that first-century Galilee was a bucolic backwater removed from the Jewish religious and cultural life of Jerusalem. Galileans, by extension, were "hicks from the sticks," an uneducated mass distanced from the Judaism of Jerusalem. Archaeological excavations in Galilee over the past 30 or so years, however, have added to our understanding of first-century Galilee — the Galilee of Jesus — and have challenged this "common" perception of Galilee as a cultural backwater.² Recent excavations, furthermore, corroborate the presentation of first-century Galilean society and life portrayed in ancient sources including the New Testament.

After the Assyrian destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., Galilee became a sparsely populated region. Very

How we conceptualize the world of Jesus impacts how we understand Him and His ministry. little settlement remains exist in the region from the end of the eighth century B.C. to the second century B.C. Phoenician settlements along the Mediterranean coast thrived during this time; but, in the heart of Galilee, little evidence exists for population settlements. At the end of the second century B.C. and the beginning of the first century B.C., the population of Galilee increased in part due to the expansion of the Hasmonean kingdom in Jerusalem. The need for land and population overcrowding led Judeans (Jews) from the south to migrate into Galilee and settle (cf. Matthew 2:22,23). Some settlers took over preexisting villages, like at Yodefat, while other settlements came into existence. These Jewish immigrants joined a small Jewish population already living in Galilee, such that by the end of the first century B.C., Galilee was thoroughly Jewish.³

How do we know the inhabitants of Galilee were Jews? Different archaeological remains identify these inhabitants of Galilee as Jews: coins, stone vessels, Jewish ritual immersion pools (*mikva'ot*), avoidance of pigs, Jerusalem manufactured lamps, and synagogues.

Coins. From the late second century B.C., the coins minted by the Hasmonean rulers of Jerusalem dominated the currency of Galilee. The use of non-Jewish coins dropped off significantly at Galilean sites from the late second century B.C. onward. The use of Hasmonean money suggests a conscious choice by the inhabitants of Galilee, who typically avoided using non-Jewish money.

Stone vessels. The appearance of stone vessels, which are more difficult to fashion than pottery, derives from issues and adherence to Jewish ritual purity practices (cf. John 2:6). People could repurify and use stone vessels again, while they could not do this with pottery that became impure. Discovering stone vessels at sites dating to the first century B.C. and A.D., together with Jewish coins, suggests the inhabitants were Jews.

Ritual immersion pools. A number of Galilean sites have Jewish ritual immersion pools, mikva'ot (mikveh, singular). Jewish religious practices require ritual purity. In fact, within the literature of the first century, ritual purity was an important issue within Judaism of the period. Ritual immersion pools allow for people to ritually immerse to purify themselves. A Jew contracted ritual impurity through a number of activities, e.g., a woman after her menstrual period, a woman after childbirth, a husband and wife after marital relations. and coming in contact with a corpse. Jewish ritual immersion in general has nothing to do with sin (as none of these actions are sinful); rather, it addresses one's state of purity to enter sacred space. The discovery of ritual immersion pools at Galilean sites, like Sepphoris, Gamla, and Migdal, indicates that the inhabitants of these villages were Jews.

Pig avoidance. The animal bones discovered at first-century Galilean sites demonstrate a marked absence of pig bones. Of course, the Law of Moses prohibits the consumption of pigs, which is why Jews' cuisine lacks pork. Ancient Gentiles, however, ate pigs (cf. Mark 5:1–20), as can be seen in the regions surrounding Galilee. Pig avoidance is another marker of religiously observant Jews.

Jerusalem manufactured lamps. Ancient people used oil lamps to provide light in their homes and in the dark. They made most lamps from clay, and either manufactured lamps locally or imported them. Galilean sites yield imported lamps, as well as locally manufactured lamps. One type of lamp, which archeologists call the "knife-paired" or "Herodian" lamp, is particularly important. Analysis on the clay of these lamps indicates they were made in Jerusalem. Even though Galilean lamp makers knew how to manufacture these types of lamps, these lamps came from Jerusalem, which suggests a religious motivation.⁴ First, how did these lamps come from The discovery of ritual immersion pools at Galilean sites, like Sepphoris, Gamla, and Migdal, indicates that the inhabitants of these villages were Jews.



Jerusalem to Galilee? The most reasonable explanation, given their wide distribution and the numbers of lamps discovered, suggests that Galilean pilgrims brought these lamps with them when returning from their pilgrimage to Jerusalem and its temple. Second, the most likely reason why Galilean pilgrims brought these lamps home from Jerusalem lies in the connection with Jerusalem, its temple, and the temple's menorah with light. By taking these lamps home, Galileans sought to bring into their homes and daily lives a connection with the light of the temple and their spiritual experience in Jerusalem.

Synagogues. To date, archeologists have discovered two first-century synagogues in Galilee at Gamla and Migdal. These synagogues lack the ornamentation of later synagogues. Nevertheless, their layouts make the center of the building the focal point where Jewish leaders would read the Torah and comment on it, which was the primary activity of first-century synagogues. The collection of these archaeological evidences identify first century Galilee and its inhabitants as religiously devout Jews, with a strong connection to Jerusalem, its temple, and Judaism.

Two sites prove incredibly important for helping to reimagine the Galilee of Jesus: Yodefat and Gamla.⁵ These sites provide "time capsules" to first-century Galilee because Romans destroyed them during the First Jewish revolt in 67 (Yodefat) and 68 (Gamla) A.D.; and, unlike Capernaum, Nazareth, Tiberias, and Sepphoris, which continued to be settled in subsequent periods, the Jews never rebuilt Yodefat and Gamla, thus encapsulating the life of a first-century Galilean village.⁶ Both sites yielded finds suggesting a social stratification within Galilean villages.

Archeologists discovered evidence of a very wealthy class of people, whose homes display beautiful frescos and luxurious objects, like gold and jewels. Evidence also exists for industrial manufacture of products like olive oil. The industrial oil presses at Gamla indicate a lifestyle of business owners and exporters. Also, at both sites, archeologists found evidence for an artisan class of people — potters and weavers. We can also assume that poor people inhabited Galilee, but they do not typically leave evidence of their existence in the archaeological record. If we assume, then, that Yodefat and Gamla present a fairly typical picture of first-century Galilean village life, we find that first-century Galileans were not mostly poor peasants.

The picture that emerges from the archaeological discoveries of Galilee depicts a region composed of the wealthy, the business owner, the artisan, and the peasant. The discoveries also depict a region of religiously observant and devout Jews. This is the archaeological context of first-century Galilee, and it mirrors what we find in the ancient literary sources.

Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, described some Galilean homes as beautiful as those of Tyre, Sidon, and Beruit (War 2:504; cf. Life 204), which parallel the discoveries at Yodefat and Gamla. So, too, Josephus, the New Testament (cf. Luke 2:41; John 2:13; 5:1), and rabbinic literature attest to the Galilean practice of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and its temple. Of the sages from the first century of whom we know their origin, many came from Galilee and taught their disciples in Galilee. Most of the Hasidim, the pious wonderworkers, came from Galilee. People particularly knew the Galileans for their strictness in observing the Torah. Quite often the sages of Jerusalem and Galilee agreed together against the sages from other parts of the country. The Gospels likewise attest to the devout religious observance of the local, common Galileans. At the close of the Sabbath, when the sun was setting, Galileans brought those who were sick to Jesus for Him to heal (Matthew 8:16; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:40) — the same Galileans who used stone vessels and ritual immersion pools, who studied Torah in the synagogues, and brought the memory of the light of Jerusalem and its temple back with them from their Jerusalem pilgrimage.

Contextualizing Jesus ensures that we understand Him and His message. Failure to do so properly, at best, leads to fragmentary results. By understanding where He came from, we can better understand Him, and the results of recent archaeological activity in Galilee demonstrate that He was no "hick from the sticks." But, then again, the ancient sources never depicted Him in that manner either.

Notes

 Cf. Jonathan Reed, Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000). Archaeology depicts first-century Galilee as a region of religiously observant and devout Jews.



- Mark Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (SNTMS 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); idem, "Galilee and Greco-Roman Culture in the Time of Jesus: The Neglected Significance of Chronology," in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 2003* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 173–88.
- For a fuller treatment of this history, see Mordechai Aviam, "The Hasmonean Dynasty's Activities in the Galilee," in *Jews, Pagans, and Christians in Galilee* (Land of Galilee 1; Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 41–50; and Uzi Leibner, *Settlement and History in Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Galilee* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
- Aviam, "People, Land, Economy, and Belief in First-Century Galilee and Its Origins: A Comprehensive Archaeological Synthesis," in *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus* (Early Christianity and Its Literature 11; ed. D.A. Fiensy and R.K. Hawkins; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 5–48.
- Although the Gospels do not mention either of these sites, Jesus most likely would have been aware of them. Yodefat sits north of Nazareth across the Beit Netofa Valley, and from the plain of Beitsaida, one can see Gamla.
- Aviam, 5–48; idem, "Socio-economic Hierarchy and Its Economic Foundations in First-Century Galilee: The Evidence from Yodefat and Gamla," in *Flavius Josephus: Interpretation and History* (ed. J. Pastor, P. Stern, and M. Mor; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 29–38.



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"Everything is a competition with you, isn't it, Halbrook?"

"The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number"? Assessing Utilitarianism

BY PAUL COPAN

ow often have you heard, "Just as long as it makes you happy. ..." Or, "It's for the greater good"? The late quadriplegic actor Christopher Reeve

of *Superman* fame said in a CBS interview, "I still believe that the purpose of government is to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people."¹ And that's a great concept. These comments express the most common element in ethical theory embraced by Western academics and by our culture in general — utilitarianism.² It is a consequencebased ethic that looks at what will bring the "greatest happiness" to the most people. Whatever brings happiness is "good"; and, the more happiness, the better it is. In this



How should the Christian respond to utilitarianism? Consider the following eight assessments. ethical view, the *outcome* or *consequences* are more important than the *means* of getting there.

Well, who *doesn't* want to be happy? Christians are not opposed to this. Even the Christian philosopher Blaise Pascal — and before him, St. Augustine — said all human beings seek happiness, which they ultimately find in God. And while it may be possible to adopt a theological or Christianized version of the "greatest happiness" principle *if very carefully qualified*,³ most contemporary utilitarians have a secular or naturalistic outlook. It is *this* viewpoint I critique as I continue my series of ethical perspectives. We will see that, when we exclude God from utilitarianism (or any other ethical system), serious difficulties arise.

UTILITARIANISM: TWO PHILOSOPHERS AND TWO DISTINCTIONS

Utilitarianism affirms that *consequences* matter more than means, motives, or character. What produces the greatest happiness — or "well-being" or "flourishing" — for the greatest number is "good."

1. Two philosophers: Two prominent utilitarian philosophers approach this matter differently, though. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) was a *quantitative* utilitarian, advocating that we ought to *maximize as much pleasure and minimize as much pain as possible* (which is called "hedonism") to produce the best *results* for human beings. We can make moral decisions in a "scientific" manner by measuring a pleasure's *intensity*, *purity*, *duration*, *certainty*, *fecundity* (fruitfulness), and *propinquity* (nearness) — factoring in the *numbers* of persons involved.

By contrast, the philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-73) advocated a qualitative utilitarianism. He disagreed with Bentham when he said: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." Rather than using Bentham's crass pleasurepain hedonism by which to judge good or bad outcomes, Mill concluded that there are long-range and higher pleasures such as cultural and intellectual pursuits that include art, literature, and music. These pursuits take much work to master and appreciate, and there is not immediate gratification (shortrange, lower pleasures), but the pain is worth the result. They produce a greater and deeper pleasure in the long run.

2. Two distinctions: There are two types of utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism affirms that there is no such thing as an inherently good or bad action. Rather, an act is good if it produces more good consequences than any available alternative acts. While there may be some helpful rules of thumb that generally guide us about consequences (for example, when someone rejects the rule, "It is wrong to commit adultery"), we should focus on the consequences of acts.

By contrast, *rule* utilitarianism states that actions governed by a general set of rules can be called "good" if following them would lead to greater usefulness (utility) for society than it would with any available alternative rules. We can evaluate acts by the usefulness or utility brought by the results. So, we should outlaw rape because of the bad outcomes that have resulted from rapes in the past.

The most high-profile utilitarian today is Princeton University ethicist Peter Singer.



He is strongly opposed to the biblical ethical perspective of God's image in all human beings and the idea of intrinsic human rights. He claims it is ethically permissible to abort unborn children with Down syndrome and to kill handicapped infants or the elderly suffering from dementia. (Singer calls them "human nonpersons.") By contrast, healthy chimps and orangutans ("nonhuman persons") could bring greater benefit to society than handicapped humans.

How should the Christian respond to utilitarianism?

ASSESSING UTILITARIANISM

First, utilitarianism does emphasize a correct ethical point — that consequences are one factor in ethical decision making. Christians should recognize that while some acts are inherently wrong or evil (e.g., rape or torturing babies for fun) and that we have a duty to refrain from such actions, consequences are not unimportant. Jesus said, " 'By their fruits you will recognize them' " (Matthew 7:16). The problem comes when consequences are the only consideration in ethics.

Consider the postimpressionistic painter, Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), who abandoned his wife and children in Europe and headed off to Tahiti. There he pursued his "dream," where he could paint tropical scenes and topless women. Perhaps the utilitarian might say that, because of the sorrow he caused his family (the consequences), this act was wrong. But others might argue, on aesthetic grounds, that Gauguin's art has brought more benefit to humanity than harm to his family. So his action was good.⁴ We intuitively recognize, however, that we should not neglect fundamental duties, commitments, and loyalties, even if good results happen. Joseph's brothers were wrong to sell him into slavery, even if God brought about good results through this evil act (Genesis 50:20).⁵ It seems we must know what is intrinsically good to be capable to judge the consequences of an action.

Second, how can we measure the well-being of society without considering the well-being of individuals? We cannot separate the two — much like we cannot separate the building up of the body of Christ without considering the building up of individuals within that body (1 Corinthians 12). Part of utilitarianism's problem is that it tends to view human beings as a means to benefit "the greater good" rather than having intrinsic value themselves.

Third, why should we reject the basic, common-sense moral insight that humans have intrinsic value in favor of a utilitarian view of human beings that strikes us as counterintuitive and utterly false? Given utilitarianism, certain humans become objects or *instruments* that we can potentially sacrifice for the "greater good" of society.⁶ So, what if a group of Nobel Prize winners were in need of organ transplants to survive? One needs a heart, another a kidney, another a set of lungs, and so forth. These scientists and economists, we could well assume, could do much good for society. Now what if the Nobel committee, to "help" these Nobel laureates, considers using a healthy but aimless street person in Oslo, Norway, who has no family? Maybe doctors could harvest his organs to help many more people. What would be wrong with bringing benefit and happiness to a number of lives by sacrificing one (potentially wasted) life? Or why shouldn't a government engage in a "noble lie" to keep an uninformed people compliant and cooperative — or perhaps to mobilize a nation toward a particular course of action it deems best? For example, why not find a scapegoat of minority people to help rally a society's economic recovery — for example, a Nazi government blaming Jews for Germany's economic decline?

For utilitarians — Nazis or otherwise humans are like a pot or a cup used to carry food or fluids. Once the pot is cracked and no longer does its job, we can dispense with it. But with such a host of problems and contradictions and dangers, we should dispense with *utilitarianism* — not our basic moral intuitions.

Fourth, because of their essence or nature as God's image bearers, humans have dignity and worth. Utilitarian ethicists emphasize function over essence or nature. They will argue that a human has value because he is self-aware, thinks rationally, has various social skills, and generally contributes to society rather than being a drain on it. This makes him a "human person" rather than a "nonperson human," as Singer says. But this is confused language since all humans are persons. Think of a person in a coma. He may not be able to contribute much to society, but he may also emerge from a coma



If utilitarianism's version of doing the right thing requires us to treat those who are special to us as though they were not, then utilitarianism must go not family loyalties and commitments. operating at full capacity. Or what about persons who are sleeping? Surely they are not thinking rationally, are not self-aware, and so on. Surely they do not *cease* being persons in their sleep, do they? We readily recognize that humans have dignity and worth apart from any consideration of social consequences.

Fifth, another way in which utilitarianism defies common sense is that it ignores motives and focuses only on consequences. Two acts can be identical — two people giving a gift to their grandmother, for example. And the *outcome* can be the same — Grandma is very happy. But the *motives* may be starkly different: one grandchild gives a gift because he loves his grandmother, and the other does so only because she wants to have her name in her will. Motives can be evil or good, regardless of the outcome, and we judge acts to be good or evil partly because of the motives. Utilitarianism cannot be right in overlooking this important feature of a moral act.

Sixth, under utilitarianism, voluntary heroic acts — which are not duties — actually become duties or obligations. We may praise those who give all their money to the poor; we commend the person who throws himself on top of an explosive device to save the lives of total strangers. But while these are good actions with good outcomes, these are not *duties*. Acts that go beyond the call of duty — which are not actual duties but are more like heroic acts — are called supererogatory acts. But utilitarianism cannot make this distinction because it can only judge the rightness of an act (and thus a duty) based on consequences. Heroic acts become actual duties given (act) utilitarianism. If a dying patient is in need of a kidney replacement, and I am able to help this person through my act of donating one of my kidneys (thus bringing benefit to another human being), I *must* give this kidney. But this is strange: while such a supererogatory act is good, it isn't a duty. There is no good reason to turn heroism into a duty.

Seventh, utilitarianism tends to eliminate the natural importance of family loyalties and deep friendships in favor of a level playing field for all humanity. The utilitarian William Godwin (1756–1836) wrote that, if he had to choose between saving a maid and the French benefactor and Archbishop of Cambrai, François Fénelon (1651–1750), he would save the archbishop because of his value to society. When asked if the maid were his grandmother, he said he would still save the archbishop over his grandmother.⁷ But is this right? One philosopher correctly asks: Why should we do the "right thing" according to the utilitarian if this requires us to treat those who are special to us as though they were not? Utilitarianism violates our deepest sense of family commitments and loyalties. But it is utterly counter intuitive to treat family and close friends on par with everyone else. The apostle Paul said that even unbelievers know that they ought to take care of their own family members (1 Timothy 5:8). Are we really obligated to care for other children more than our own simply because they have a greater need than our own children? If utilitarianism's version of doing the right thing requires us to treat those who are special to us as though they were not, then utilitarianism must go — not family loyalties and commitments.

Eighth, utilitarianism is morally problematic in its obvious discrimination against the helpless. Given utilitarianism, why not just cut to the chase and eliminate compassion from our list of virtues? Have we been wrong all along about Mother Teresa who cared for the sick and needy in the streets of Calcutta?

Ironically, Singer teaches at a university where his own views are in violation of the school's ethics policy, which forbids abusive or harassing behavior that "threatens" or "injures" a person — including people who have a "handicap."⁸ As someone aptly put it, whether it is infants born with handicaps or the elderly suffering dementia, Singer targets those who cannot hit back.

There's a further contradiction in Singer's approach. Singer claims that if you favor humans above animals, then you are a speciesist — arbitrarily favoring your own species over other animals. But hasn't Singer singled out certain humans for abuse and injury — namely, the handicapped young and the enfeebled elderly? Is not he being the speciesist by favoring "persons" and diminishing the "species" of "human nonpersons"?

When it comes to Singer's own family, he cannot practice what he preaches. Although he advocates putting to death the elderly who are suffering from dementia, he made an exception when it came to his own mother, Cora, even though she lived with dementia.⁹



While utilitarianism does rightly emphasize the place of consequences in ethical decision making, this is not the only consideration. Duties, motives, circumstances. and character also figure into the equation.



She had even told him that when she could no longer tie her own shoelaces, he should go ahead and have her euthanized. But he refused to do this, and Cora received compassionate healthcare despite her son's ivory tower pronouncements. In fact, Singer rather sheepishly justified his actions by claiming he was employing people to care for his mother, which is good for society. Death for everyone else's mother with dementia — but not his own.

CONCLUSION

While utilitarianism does rightly emphasize the place of consequences in ethical decision making, this is not the *only* consideration. Duties, motives, circumstances, and character also figure into the equation. Despite its pragmatic appeal, utilitarianism poses many dangers and threats to human well-being, as we see illustrated in the thinking of Singer.

Dr. Seuss gets it right in his book, *Horton* Hears a Who: "A person is a person, no matter how small." How we treat human life from the unborn in the womb to those dying while under hospice care — is an indication of how civilized or uncivilized we are. Our caring for the weak and vulnerable is a test of not only society's moral integrity, but also its social durability. And this value is rooted in the existence of a good God who creates humans in His image. God makes far more sense of our commitment to universal human value, human rights, moral responsibility and duties than if we lived in a godless, valueless, purposeless, deterministic, material world. 🛛

Notes

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- "The Political Christopher Reeve," CBS News.com (31 October 2000): http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2000/10/31/ entertainment/main245551.shtml [accessed 11 July 2013]; see also USA Today, "Christopher Reeve Addresses Vermont Grads" http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/people/2004-05-24-reeve-speaker x.htm [accessed 11 July 2013].
- 2. Gordon Graham, *Eight Theories of Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 132.
- 3. It is possible to be a "Christian utilitarian" of sorts. Some Christian thinkers have argued that God himself is concerned with bringing the greatest good to as many of His image-bearers as possible (William Paley and R.M. Hare, for example). Also, in light of the fact all people seek happiness and that God desires our happiness when we are satisfied in Him, pastor John Piper adopts the view of "Christian hedonism" (Christian pleasure-seeking) in his book *Desiring God*. Rev. ed. (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah, 2011). Piper, a staunch Calvinist, argues that "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." Yet this really only applies to the elect; in the case of the nonelect, it appears

that God does not strongly desire that all humans would be "most satisfied in Him" since God has already damned them according to the pleasure of His will.

- 4. Gordon Graham, *Eight Theories of Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 138.
- Some of my comments here are taken from chapter 7 in Graham, *Eight Theories of Ethics*, Stephen Layman, *The Shape of the Good* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 70–84; chapter 12 in Arthur F. Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).
- Note: John Stuart Mill was committed to individual human rights, although this is not the view of many naturalistic utilitarians today.
- 7. Mentioned in Graham, Eight Theories of Ethics, 160.
- See Princeton's policy at: http://www.princeton.edu/pub/rrr/ part1/.
- See Gordon Preece, ed., Rethinking Peter Singer (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 2002). See my discussion of Singer's utilitarianism in chapters. 9,10, *How Do You Know You're Not Wrong*?

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"The sermon topic for today is 'sloth'."

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MINISTRY & MEDICAL ETHICS



BY CHRISTINA M.H. POWELL



July, when she went into premature labor.

Although the doctors did everything they

could to slow down the labor process, she

trol and Prevention, nearly a half a million

babies are born prematurely in the United

States each year, or about 1 out of every 9

births. The number of babies born between

22 and 25 weeks who survive is increasing

According to the Centers for Disease Con-

gave birth to her daughter at 23 weeks.

child's life. When birth comes too soon, however, parents find themselves putting their hopes and expectations aside to make difficult decisions. On the last day of March, Amanda was preparing the nursery for her daughter, who was due at the end of

Ministering to couples facing the loss or serious disability of their child can be one of a pastor's most heartrending challenges.

as a result of medical advances, as well as the number of children born prematurely who reach 3 years of age without experiencing a major disability. However, most babies born extremely early die or experience cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, respiratory problems, visual problems, hearing loss, and digestive problems.

Ministering to couples facing the loss or serious disability of their child can be one of a pastor's most heartrending challenges. Understanding the reasoning behind decisions for or against medical intervention will better prepare you to provide care to families facing decisions at the borderline of viability.

BASIS FOR THE DECISION

When the first neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) opened in the 1960s, a premature infant had a 95 percent chance of dying; now the infant has a 95 percent chance of surviving. While dramatic improvement in survival rate is certainly good news, technological advances require decisions about which young patients will benefit from the intervention and which should receive only comfort care.

Lungs are one of the last organs to mature in the womb, thus many premature babies must spend their first days and weeks of life on a ventilator. Their lungs have not yet developed adequate surfactant to stay expanded between breaths. If a woman is in premature labor or at risk of giving birth too early, doctors may give the mother a short course of steroids to help the lungs develop earlier, although the drugs need to be given at least 24 hours before birth to be most effective.

Where credible medical evidence exists that the benefits of a treatment outweigh the burdens, doctors are obligated to pursue treatment. Thus, doctors resuscitate most babies born after 26 weeks because medical evidence suggests they will survive treatment. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends not resuscitating babies born before 23 weeks because the overwhelming majority will not survive even when treated.

Between 23 and 26 weeks, treatment is optional because doctors have difficulty predicting which babies will survive treatment and which will not. For babies born within this gestational window, doctors and parents must make difficult decisions. In the same way we make a medical decision for adult patients approaching the end of life, the important question is whether a treatment is postponing death or enabling life. When we can only briefly postpone the child's death at the cost of great suffering, the treatment may not be beneficial to the child.

ETHICS BEHIND THE DECISION

When care is optional or investigational, the parents have a right to be involved in decision making. Doctors, on the other hand, do not have a responsibility to provide futile or unreasonable care. Gestational age alone, however, may not be a sufficient criterion for determining whether or not a baby could benefit from neonatal intensive care. In the same way the calculation of a baby's due date relies on certain assumptions, gestational age may be inaccurate depending on normal variations from the woman's average ovulation date. A baby a week older than suspected has a much greater chance of survival. Thus, doctors need to assess whether the gestational age is in error.

Furthermore, doctors should individualize treatment decisions. The baby's weight at birth is often a better indicator of survival than the gestational age. Girls usually survive prematurity better than boys. Singletons have a better outcome than multiples. Babies who receive steroids to mature their lungs do better than those who do not receive the treatment. A decision based on gestational age alone makes no allowance for the needs and best interests of a particular baby, potentially leading to the preventable death of a baby that would survive given the appropriate treatment.

Some discussions about deciding whether or not to try to save extremely early premature babies center on the burden a handicapped child might become to a family. An important ethical question is if the effects of a disabled baby on the parents and family should be a factor in the decision. In asking that question, we must be careful not to devalue disabled individuals.

Romans 13:10 states, "Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." Christians are not compelled to delay the dying process, especially when such a decision would place an unnecessary burden of suffering Understanding the reasoning behind decisions for or against medical intervention will better prepare pastors to provide care to families facing borderline viability decisions.



on a patient. While the decision to let a loved one go is heartbreaking — especially when the loved one is a precious child at the beginning of life — a Christian is not left without hope. A Christian has a faith and knowledge resting "in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time" (Titus 1:2).

MINISTRY AFTER THE DECISION

Good pastoral care and support from the church can make a difference in a family's life in the aftermath of a decision whether or not to begin neonatal intensive care. Parents who have had to say goodbye to their child much too soon need support for the grieving process. They may desire to take a break from baby showers and Mother's Day and Father's Day church attendance during their healing process. They will appreciate your prayers, willingness to listen, and the gift of your presence.

Parents who have a baby in neonatal intensive care will appreciate practical help for the family. If the baby has siblings, they will benefit from care and attention from church friends. Delivery of meals can make life less stressful as the mother cares for a baby at the hospital as well as family at home.

Finally, one of the best ways you can uphold the sanctity of life is to integrate disabled children into your church programs. When you value these children enough to help them participate in Sunday School or children's church, you send a strong message in support of human dignity. You and your church can make a huge difference in the life of someone like Amanda by walking with her in the difficult days after a premature birth. Your actions and concerns will reassure her that God loves her and has a plan for her life even in the midst of her present sorrow.



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CLERGY, CHURCH & LAW



BY RICHARD R. HAMMAR



ins expose a church to potentially significant legal liability. This article will review several recent cases involving lock-ins, review the main theories of church liability for injuries occurring at such events, and address ways churches can manage those risks.

CASE STUDIES

Consider the following illustrative case studies depicting deaths and injuries occurring during church lock-ins.

Case study: Two minor boys (the "victims") attended a "Youth Bash New Years Eve Lock-in" at their church. The church's youth pastor sponsored, planned, and promoted this event. More than 100 young people attended this event. Several "competitions" occurred throughout the evening, including a "food testing" game involving consuming offensive substances. The victims consumed some of the food at the youth pastor's urging and became violently ill. Their parents sued the youth pastor and church for battery, negligence, and emotional distress. A jury found in favor of the victims and awarded over \$100,000 in damages against the youth pastor and church.

Case study: The courts convicted a church's youth pastor on two counts of first degree sexual abuse of a minor, and he was sentenced to 10 years in a state penitentiary. One count involved the 12-year-old daughter of the church's senior pastor. This victim participated in a Friday-night lock-in activity at the church with other members of the youth group. As part of the event, youth group members stayed in the church overnight, participated in meetings, played basketball, and watched movies. At some point in the night, several of the children attending the event gathered in a church classroom to watch a movie. The youth pastor invited the victim to lie next to him during the movie. The victim claimed that the youth pastor repeatedly kissed her and touched her under her clothes, including beneath her underwear. She also alleged that she tried to stop him from touching her, but she was unable to do so.

Case study: A youth pastor took several members of his church youth group to an overnight lock-in at a church several miles away. The next morning the youth pastor drove the group back to their home church. En route, the youth pastor fell asleep at the wheel due to sleep deprivation, ran off the road, and crashed. One minor was killed, and all the others injured. Parents sued the youth pastor and his employing church for gross negligence. The plaintiffs also sued the church board members, claiming that they were personally liable on the basis of gross negligence.

Case study: A mother alleged that a Sunday School teacher sexually molested her minor daughter on two occasions. One of the incidents happened during a lock-in on church property. During the lock-in, the teacher and members of his Sunday School class stayed at church all night, watching movies, and playing games. The victim claimed that while



Lock-ins expose a church to potentially significant legal liability.
she was sleeping in the middle of the room, the teacher began fondling her under her blanket. When the girl's mother arrived in the morning to pick her up, she found the teacher sleeping next to her daughter, sharing her blanket. The teacher was later sentenced to 20 years in a state penitentiary.

RELEVANCE TO CHURCH LEADERS

The cases summarized above demonstrate some of the risks associated with lock-ins. Two of the most significant risks are sexual molestation and personal injuries. Here are some steps church leaders can take to reduce these risks:

1. Board approval of all activities. The senior pastor and church board should approve all games and activities that will be conducted during a lock-in. Youth leaders should not have the unilateral authority to expose minors to games or contests involving an excessive risk of personal injury.

2. Prohibit games and competitions that are unsafe. Churches should not tolerate games and activities that create an unreasonable risk of personal injury, no matter how appealing they may be to minors participating in the lock-in.

3. Parental permission. Have parents sign permission slips that describe the activities leaders will conduct during the lock-in. Permission slips also should contain parents' contact information (home and cell phone numbers, etc.), as well as the designation of a staff member to make emergency medical decisions in the event they cannot locate a parent.

4. Gender segregation. Churches that conduct lock-ins for both male and female high school students run the additional risk of sexual contact among the students themselves. Churches can only manage this risk by strict segregation of male and female students, and continuous supervision by an adequate number of adult leaders. Churches should consider conducting same sex lock-ins.

5. Lowest risk. Some lock-ins are inherently safer than others. For example, lock-ins that restrict participants to young girls, and limit supervisors or chaperones to adult females (including several mothers), in most cases would be safer than lock-ins with male and female adolescent participants.

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6. Adequate supervision. It is essential for a church to provide adequate supervision

Two of the most significant risks are sexual molestation and personal injuries. during a lock-in. If the event lasts all night, then adults must supervise the group all night. They can divide the responsibility by assigning adults to different "shifts." But, a minimum of two adults must be awake and "on duty" at all times. Anything less will expose participants and the church to an unacceptable level of risk. If young children are present, make sure to thoroughly inspect the area where the lock-in will occur to remove any toxic or dangerous substances or devices.

7. Restrict isolated areas. If possible, lock remote and isolated areas of the church.

8. Check with other local charities. It is a good practice to check with other charities in your community to see what precautions they use when conducting lock-ins. For example, consider contacting the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and the YMCA and YWCA. Make a written summary of the precautions these other groups follow, and align your practices with the "community standard." Note the adult to minor ratios they follow, as well as procedures to manage risk.

Key point. Remember, a church is not a guarantor of the safety of minors. But, it must exercise reasonable care when conducting activities involving minors. Reasonable care simply means complying with a community standard of care as evidenced by the practice of several charities in the area. Using local affiliates of national youth-serving charities is the best option, since some states define the standard of care with reference to a "national" standard.

9. Videos. As the cases summarized above demonstrate, acts of sexual molestation during lock-ins often occur when the group is watching videos in the dark. Churches can easily remedy this risk by leaving lights on when showing videos, and prohibiting adults from lying next to minors. Be alert to the use of blankets to conceal acts of molestation.

Key point. It is difficult, if not impossible, to adequately supervise a group with the lights turned off. A church can reduce the risk of molestation, and other injuries, by leaving lights on while showing videos. This will also reduce the risk of children wandering away from the group in the dark, either intentionally or accidentally.

10. Unauthorized departures. It is essential for supervisors to know if a minor has left the church building during a lock-in. The

church is legally responsible for the care and supervision of minors until it returns custody to a parent or guardian at the end of the event. If a teenager sneaks away during a lock-in for a rendezvous with a friend, the church is responsible for whatever injuries may occur. Churches must take steps to prevent such unauthorized departures from happening. These may include some or all of the following:

- Conduct periodic "roll calls." Read each name on the roster of participants and make sure they are all present.
- Keep the group together at all times, with constant monitoring by at least two adults.
- Monitor exterior doors.
- Pay special attention to use of restrooms. This excuse provides minors with an opportunity to leave the group, and the church.

11. Avoid power imbalances. It is unwise to have minors of significantly different ages at the same lock-in. Power imbalances can lead to acts of sexual victimization of younger children, as well as a greater risk of injuries caused by "roughhousing."

12. Encourage disclosures of misconduct. Encourage participants to report any inappropriate behavior that occurs during the lock-in to the senior pastor or any other staff member, as well as parents.

Key point. As the cases summarized at the beginning of this article illustrate, personal injuries and incidents of sexual molestation can occur during church-sponsored lock-ins. These are risks that church leaders must take seriously. Churches should not view adequate safeguards as nuisances to be ignored, but rather as essential measures to ensure the safety and well-being of minors whom parents have entrusted to the church's care. If the church cannot implement meaningful and effective precautions, then the church has no alternative but to discontinue lock-ins.

13. Restroom breaks. Restroom breaks present a significant risk. Appropriate safeguards will depend on the layout of the church and the age of the minors. Churches must not allow children to wander off to a restroom alone, or with one or more older children.

14. Screen workers. Screen all adult workers. Hopefully, the church already has implemented a screening program for persons

It is essential for supervisors to know if a minor has left the church building during a lock-in.



who will be working with minors. The church should prescreen, according to the church's policy, every person who assists as a supervisor or chaperone at a church-sponsored lock-in. At a minimum, such screening should include a written application; an interview; references from other churches or other charities in which the applicant has worked with minors (teaching, coaching, mentoring, etc.); and a criminal background check.

Churches can reduce the risk of incidents of sexual molestation by adopting a policy restricting eligibility for any volunteer position involving the custody or supervision of minors to those persons who have been members in good standing of the church for a minimum period of time, such as 6 months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to potential victims.

Another excellent practice is to require at least two adults to be present (and awake) at all times during a lock-in.



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"This candidate has very little ministerial experience ... but if attitude is significant, I believe we've found our pastor!"

My Pastoral Calling Is Fulfilling, Yet Challenging

BY GABRIELE RIENAS

I am a woman who is a pastor. I hold a full-time staff position at a church. I feel strongly called to this ministry, and I love what I do. My husband and family are sup-

portive, but I have few role models to follow as examples of what this should look like. Sometimes I feel alone, especially when struggles arise surrounding ministry. Both men and women in our church are generally supportive and affirming of my contribution. There are moments, however, when I become aware that they have not walked in my shoes and cannot relate to my experience.



Calling and passion are the foundation on which you move forward. A

You are a pioneer in a rapidly expanding ministry group — women who hold ministry credentials and/or pastoral positions. In 2011, females accounted for 77

percent of the net growth in U.S. ministers.¹ This surprising statistic brings great reason to celebrate as the volume of potential leaders expands to make a greater impact on God's kingdom. At the same time the addition of more women who are pastors introduces new quandaries we must work through.

CALLING

You mentioned that you strongly feel called to this ministry and that you love what you do. Two essential pieces are already in place: calling and passion. These two forces are the foundation on which you move forward even when it seems difficult or when you feel others misunderstand you. If you have a strong sense of God's leading in your life, it becomes a strong foundation to fall back on when you feel alone or marginalized.

Work to overcome personal issues of insecurity and inferiority. While these struggles affect almost everyone to various degrees, they will be particularly lethal in your present calling. Take responsibility for their presence in your life and intentionally pursue healing. Do not allow insecurity to either silence you or tempt you to lash out in toxic ways.

TOUGHER SKIN

Along with knowing your calling, remain clear about your purpose and refuse to go to war over mindsets that are not your obligation to fix. Reserve the best of your energy for the task at hand. Continually bring your mind and heart back to the job that is before you. Keep your eyes fixed on the goal to glorify God through your life every day. Do not let petty annoyances distract you from that passion.

One female youth pastor noticed a number of small inadvertent slights from the guys on their multigender staff. For example, the guys would occasionally go out for an impromptu lunch. For the most part, they were accepting and affirming toward her, but they rarely, if ever, invited her to lunch. Inevitably, they would end up discussing church business and making minor logistical decisions. Most of the time they forgot to tell her, and she found herself in the awkward position of being uninformed. These men's insensitivity was largely unintentional. Most likely, it did not occur to them that she might want to join them. Still, she struggled with the subtle message that she was less valuable to the team.

Fortunately, she recognized the crossroad when she came to it. She had to make a decision either to remain true to her calling and purpose or to allow these subtle messages of inferiority to derail her. Not wanting to be derailed she chose to give the male staff members the benefit of the doubt when it came to their motivations. It required something from her: a choice to be the bigger person (not easy by any means) and a determination to form a tougher skin.

In the above example, the slights were most likely innocent, if tactless. However, given that we live in a real, fallen world, you may even encounter blatant dismissal or machoism from others. By all means pursue grace and forgiveness and resist the urge to fight back. Nothing good can come from Give yourself grace for forging new territory and learning as you move forward. You can only learn some things by experience over time. this kind of a war. More than ever, turn your attention to the One who has called you. Remember your calling and your greater purpose. Focus on the task before you with resolve and determination. You will not be able to fix all of the injustices of your situation and still remain focused on your goals. Leave what you cannot control to God.

PERFECTIONISM

Deal with your perfectionistic tendencies. Most of the time, perfectionism is an indication of issues with control. In other words, it is striving for a false illusion of control by making your world as perfect as possible.

Do not fall into the trap of constantly having to prove yourself. Before God, you have nothing to prove. You are in the process of becoming more like Jesus just like anyone else who walks in faith. Live each day listening to God's voice, putting your hand to the present task, and doing the best you can. Do not become preoccupied with results or validation.

Give yourself grace for forging new territory and learning as you move forward. You can only learn some things by experience over time.

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FAMILY/HUSBAND

You mentioned that your husband and family are supportive. This allows you to be free to explore God's call without the restraint of family disapproval.

If your husband was not supportive of your current role, I would have suggested you take another look at the timing of your current ministry pursuits. Ministry callings are difficult to reconcile with a reluctant spouse. The same God who calls you is perfectly capable of calling a spouse to a supportive role when the time is right. If this is the case, continue to dialogue in an honest way, but wait until it can be a team effort.

Even with a spouse's support you will at times encounter difficulties, as all ministry couples do. You will need to negotiate time, finances, family involvement, your spouse's contribution, and the focus of your energy.

One of the issues that can arise in situations like yours is the challenge of having a spouse who is uncomfortable with a less visible role. I spoke with a pastor whose husband was by nature guite shy and contemplative in contrast to her outgoing, animated personality. The differences worked in their marriage and in their interactions with their children, but at church it became another issue. He often felt invisible and struggled with where he fit. Before accepting a ministry position, she had been the catalyst for building social relationships with other couples. This changed with her position because she was now more focused on her ministry group and the volunteers who worked with her.

This woman maintained an open dialogue with her husband about his level of comfort. She let him know that she cared about his well-being but asked him to extend grace to her as she figured out how to blend family and ministry. They discussed and revisited his crucial supportive and prayerful role in their ministry. She made an effort to invite him into church social situations and remained intentional about staying by his side when it was appropriate. Last, they used their creativity to find a niche for his involvement and input, giving him more ownership of the vision.

No matter what gender or nationality of the minister, family harmony and cooperation are one of the most important keys.

RESOURCES

 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{I}}$ cannot overstress the importance of support



A growing number of women are humbly and courageously following Jesus to new places of influence and impact in the world. from those who are walking in similar circumstances. Seek out other women who are church leaders and build relationships where there is mutual learning and support. At first it might seem that you are alone and that no such opportunities exist. However, begin by asking questions about resources in your ministry circles and turn your attention to the growing dialogue that is emerging on this very topic. Check out The Network: A Called Community of Women website: http://wim.ag.org/. This network resources women who are in your shoes.

I pray that you will know that you are not alone. As stated before, you are part of a growing number of women who are humbly and courageously following Jesus to new places of influence and impact in the world. I am convinced that everything you learn through this journey will be valuable not only to your own growth but to many others who will certainly be following you.

Note

From 2011–12, the Assemblies of God had a net growth of 384 ministers in the U.S. Of these, 294, or 77 percent, were female. Of the net growth of 294 females, 112, or 38 percent, were ordained; 125, or 43 percent, were licensed; and 57, or 19 percent, were certified.



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BLESSING

By S. ROBERT MADDOX

God revealed the promise He made to His creation in stages through events involving Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the Messiah, and the returning King — one covenant progressively revealed.

The name *Shaddai* was a favorite name of God in the Old Testament. *El Shaddai* translates into "God of my mountain," possibly "God of might." Similar to the heights of a mountain, the Lord mightily reigns above everything. God often connected mountaintop experiences to the revelation of His covenant. At every point of discovery God required an action on a mountain.

- Noah and Mount Ararat get out of the ark; trust God.
- Abraham and Mount Moriah sacrifice name and reputation; give God your future.
- Moses and Mount Sinai follow divine directives; live in purity.
- David and Mount Zion represent the righteous King; worship Him.
- The Messiah and Mount Calvary give your all; live crucified.
- The returning King and Mount of Olives triumph over evil; be fully restored.

Moses prepared the people entering the Promised Land with instructions from Deuteronomy, God's law to the conquering generation. They were to participate in a special mountaintop experience, half standing EMBRACE THIS SIMPLE TRUTH OF Leadership: There is a difference Between success and blessing. You need blessing.

before Mount Ebal and half before Mount Gerizim. The event emphasized the covenant as a blessing and a curse; a blessing if followed and a curse if rejected (Joshua 8:30–34).

Jesus reiterated the bless/curse concept in the Beatitudes: "'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger

MOUNT OF BLESSING (continued from page 43)

now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

'Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

'But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets' " (Luke 6:20-26).

Everyone and everything needs God's blessing. His blessing must saturate the church, congregations, ministries, communities, schools, businesses, families, individuals, and especially leadership. The world is starving for honorable and trustworthy leaders.

The book *Leadership Prayers* by Richard Kriegbaum, a leader in higher education, is a selection of heartfelt prayers for people serving in positions of responsibility. Prayers deal with reality, wisdom, hope, courage, values, and integrity. One prayer gives special attention to blessing. Two sentences are worth additional contemplation.

SUCCESS AND BLESSING

The author wrote, "Help me to know the difference between success and blessing." Believers often equate the blessing of God as similar to a successful venture. The measurement of God being involved in an activity, event, or organization is: How *successful* is it?

The church usually measures success the same as the secular market, via statistics. At Trinity Bible College, the Board of Regents regularly came on campus to review progress. The members wanted specific data – enrollment figures, new application numbers, financial reports. If enrollment, applications, and finances were increasing, then God was *blessing*. If enrollment, applications, or finances were declining, then a problem needed addressing so God could *bless* again.

Can people control, regulate, and *manipulate* God's blessing simply by human ingenuity? Is blessing associated with *skill* or *obedience*? Scripture reveals blessing is connected to obedience.



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We accomplish success by *preparation* and *opportunity*. Some are prepared but never get an opportunity. Some get opportunity but are unprepared. When both are effectively combined the result is *success*.

The church world continues to be deeply engrained in a church-growth mentality. Church leaders review attendance, finances, and ministry participation and God is blessing when the figures are up. Is this true?

My wife and I were invited to New York City to spend time with Jim and Carol Cymbala as well as Dave and Gwen Wilkerson. One afternoon, in casual conversation, Dave said, "I don't pray for church growth." His prayers centered on holiness, purity, righteousness, and churches faithfully proclaiming Christ in anticipation of His coming. He was praying for the church's obedience in order to secure God's blessing.

Blessing centers on *fruitfulness*. Is the church bearing fruit; namely, holy fruit, transforming fruit, life-changing fruit? What good is a well-attended church if people are not living in a right manner, if people are not fully engaged with Jesus?

In the Parable of the Vine (John 15), Jesus instructed believers to bear *much fruit.* Does it matter how much foliage there is on the vine, or how beautiful a bush has become, if it is not producing fruit? Does it matter if a church appears corporately successful, having little or no spiritual formation?

Can a congregation be few in number and be blessed? Yes. Can a church with limited finances be blessed? Absolutely. Do not misunderstand: more people need to attend church. God has a *huge* assignment for His followers. People need the *message* of His community and a genuinely transforming *environment*. Size, however, is not the measurement of blessing.

Look at blessing from another perspective: In most cultures leaders in their 50s recognize their abilities and skills start to lose value and decrease in marketability. Society often perceives elderly people as *too old* to be viable candidates for employment, at least in higher-paying jobs. Many leaders end careers in insignificance, as measured by *success*. Does this mean they are not blessed because of not being pursued for prominent positions? Of course not.

Jonathan Edwards ushered America into a wonderful spiritual awakening. After leaving a renowned pastorate, he gave oversight for 8 years to a small and remote congregation while serving as a missionary to the Housatonic Indians. During this time, however, he completed his celebrated work, *The Freedom of the Will.*

Leaders, even with Ph.D.s, having served with a high measure of success, sometimes walk away from prestigious titles and return to the ranks of insignificance by divine providence. Blessing is *bearing fruit* wherever planted.

PLEASANT AND UNPLEASANT BLESSINGS

Kriegbaum also wrote, "Let me know Your special favor, whether in Your



A BLESSED LIFE IS NOT WITHOUT CONFLICT, STRUGGLE, OR EVEN WORLDLY FAILURE. pleasant blessings or in the unpleasant ones. No matter what I may think of myself or what others may say."

Som e of God's blessings are unpleasant. The wilderness wandering people of Israel stood on the banks of the Jordan River being told the Promised Land would be a blessing, yet God's blessing would mean going to war with the Canaanites. Some Israelites were going to die in battle. Homes were going to become fatherless and widows would weep over the consequences of the blessing.

Are opinions about blessings too narrow? Blessing can include conflict, hardships, and suffering.

When I was giving oversight to the Stone Church in Chicago, a member had a nosebleed that would not stop. He went to an emergency room and they performed various tests. A test revealed a spot on one of his kidneys. The kidney was removed and the lab result showed a large and cancerous tumor. The surgery successfully removed all the cancerous cells. The nosebleed, not initially considered a blessing, proved to be a great blessing.

Corrie ten Boom helped protect Jewish people during WWII and was *blessed* with imprisonment. Out of the furnace of Auschwitz came a jewel of a woman.

Before producers released the movie *The Hiding Place* in theaters, they produced a small promotional film called *Corrie* for churches. A teenage girl saw the film and told her mother she hoped to be a "neat old lady" like Corrie when she was old. Corrie experienced humanity's worst to be deemed a neat old lady. She received a blessing few can comprehend, one purified through the refiner's fire. Out of horrible circumstances have come some of the greatest artworks, songs, poems, and books.

We often hear reports about the persecuted church around the world. People feel terrible remorse, and should, yet Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10).

To equate blessing with *pleasure* is a tragic mistake. Blessing should be equated with *presence*, the presence of the Lord. A blessed life is not without

conflict, struggle, or even worldly failure. God uses a variety of means to humble believers, and *humility* is the doorway to blessing.

Not all blessings are unpleasant; most are sweet and satisfying. Psalm 147:1 declares, "How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise Him!" One of the more pleasurable experiences in life is gathering with others and praising His name. You sense, in greater measure, the blessing of His presence and the sweetness of His fellowship when singing to the Lord.

Blessing is walking with Jesus, regardless the road.

The signs of blessing

Joshua 22:5 reveals blessing as, " 'To love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.' "

Two phrases deserve special attention: "walk in obedience" and "keep his commands." The statements are not the same. Obedience is responding to the *personal directions* of the Spirit. Keeping His commands is practicing the *declared directives* of Scripture. Adhering to His personal directions *and* declared directives are signs of blessing.

Judges 2:19 reveals the opposite, "They *refused* to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways." Improper activities, actions, and attitudes *(evil practices)*, as revealed in Scripture, remove God's presence and blessing: sexual impurity, greed, idolatry, lying, coveting, gossip, creating discord.

Being unbending and having an unwillingness to move in His personal plan *(stubborn ways)* removes God's presence and blessing. D.V. Hurst told a group of ministers, "Blessed are the flexible for they shall never break." Recognize the futility of rigidity. Stubbornness may be the No. 1 cause for people not experiencing God's blessing.

CONCLUSION

Embrace these two simple truths of leadership: There is a difference between success and blessing. You *need* blessing.

God's blessing occasionally involves unpleasantness. The end product is sweetness in your soul.



S. ROBERT MADDOX, former lead pastor Stone Church, Chicago, III., and executive vice president of Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, North Dakota. He resides in Ozark, Missouri, and blogs weekly at bob-maddox.blogspot.com.



SPIRIT STILL POURED OUT

By TERRY MINTER

PASTORS OF GROWING, SPIRITUAL CHURCHES UTILIZE SEVERAL PRACTICES THAT MAINTAIN SPIRITUALITY IN THEIR CONGREGATIONS. its explosive growth, Pentecostalism has made a spectacular impact on the Christian world since its emergence in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901. As the Movement continues to expand into different cultures and classes of people in the United States today, it is imperative for it to give attention to maintaining its spiritual underpinning regardless of the type of people it draws.

Many people who could be attracted to Pentecostalism today have never encountered a true manifestation of the Holy Spirit. When individuals have no anticipation of experiencing the presence of the divine, they begin living as though God does not exist. Pentecostalism's emphasis on individuals having direct encounters with God through the Holy Spirit is an appealing characteristic to the current society and one that differentiates Pentecostalism from all other forms of Christianity. These encounters can result in the transformation of personal lives.

Certainly the cultural worldview has changed significantly since the Movement arose, but the primary message of Pentecostalism continues to be that God has poured out His Spirit on all people. Pentecostalism's present task is to find ways of communicating this message in the current cultural context.

SPIRITUALITY IN TODAY'S CONTEXT

It is important that Pentecostal pastors design services that are both contemporary in the present culture and open to authentic spiritual outpourings. Today, many pastors desire to have spiritual manifestations in their services. But it is challenging to manage people from Pentecostal backgrounds who have had spiritual excesses in their past embarrass them, and attendees who have never witnessed worship services with authentic spiritual expressions. With some adaptations, however, it is possible to make provisions for church attendees to experience divine encounters in a way that will enhance their spiritual growth and theological reflection. These encounters necessitate some type of spiritual manifestations. As Karl Barth astutely stated, "Only where the Spirit is sighed, cried, and prayed for does He become present and newly active."¹

Many Pentecostals have developed their practices and theological emphases in church settings where it was conventional for members to give impromptu personal testimonies, stand and proclaim spontaneous prophetic messages, and request special

SPIRIT STILL POURED OUT (continued from page 47)

songs to be sung during Sunday morning worship. In these situations pastors and congregants knew the personalities and gifts of the members and could provide proper direction for those practicing spiritual manifestations. Today, however, it is difficult to manage such spiritual manifestations that may occur in church services because of the time element involved and the fact it is impossible to know every-one who participates in a large church service.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION METHODOLOGY

Churches that emphasize dynamic spiritual formation usually provide parishioners opportunities to escape their familiar contexts where they have developed defense mechanisms that frequently hinder openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. Pastors of growing churches utilize several practices that maintain spirituality in their congregations. Some of these practices include:

Church retreats: Some churches have had spiritual renewal as a result of weekend retreats conducted several times each year at nearby retreat centers. The classes in these retreats emphasize spiritual formation, and the worship services promote personal encounters with the Holy Spirit.

Several spiritual-formation models exists that churches can use, adapt, or examine when creating spiritual-growth days or weekend retreats. The Holy Trinity Brompton, a charismatic church in London, England, developed the Alpha Course.² This spiritual formation prototype begins with participants meeting once a week for about 10 weeks, and concludes with a weekend getaway. The preretreat sessions involve dinner, exuberant worship, individual testimonies, classes on basic principles of spirituality, and table discussions. The Alpha Course calls the retreat conducted at the end of 10-weeks the "Holy Spirit Weekend" and focuses on personal and spiritual renewal. Topics for class discussions prior to the retreat and during the retreat include prayer, sin and repentance, God's grace, reading the Bible as a spiritual guide, following the Holy Spirit, the purpose of the Holy Spirit, and how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Assemblies of God churches that use Alpha or Walk to Emmaus need to supplement its sessions by teaching our Fellowship's doctrine of tongues as initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism.

Walk to Emmaus is another model that Pentecostal churches could use for spiritual formation. This spiritual-renewal methodology also involves a retreat with opportunities for the participants to experience immediate encounters with the Holy Spirit similar to the one occurring after Christ's resurrection when He



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MANY WHO COULD BE ATTRACTED TO PENTECOSTALISM HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED A TRUE MANIFESTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

encountered His followers on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:15).³ This renewal concept begins with immersing participants into a 3-day retreat involving worship, personal stories of deliverance, and sermons about being open to the Holy Spirit. Then leaders of the retreat encourage participants to join a small group after returning home from the event.

Staff and leadership retreats: Planning spiritual retreats with staff pastors several times throughout the year and annually with church leaders has proven effective in some locations. Senior pastors of spiritual churches invest time and money in leading pastoral retreats where they encourage spiritual growth. Some of these spiritual formation retreats involve a 1-day excursion to a location outside the church, and others involve extended pastors' retreats near

the end of each summer, before school begins. Leaders in the spiritual formation retreats encourage pastors and spouses to grow personally as Christians rather than as "pastors/spouses" or "ministers/spouses." Because these retreats include the spouses, leaders must make some accommodations for children. Staff pastors frequently find it difficult to be open with senior pastors, so it may be advisable to encourage them to form confidential interpersonal relationships with other ministers during the retreat. Usually pastors are willing to confess personal issues, but they must have the leading of the Holy Spirit and exercise prudent discretion. Classes in these retreats can include anointing to serve rather than needing to serve, the pastor's need for blessing, and reading the Bible for worship rather than work. In every case the retreat must emphasize powerful worship experiences for all participants.

Spiritual-emphasis weekends: Planning a spiritual-emphasis weekend is perhaps the most common way to promote spirituality in a church. On these occasions, it is helpful for the pastor to invite spiritually mature guest speakers who are able to teach aspects of spiritual depth and lead quality worship experiences. In preparation for a spiritual emphasis weekend, the pastor needs to preach on the nature and necessity of renewal for several Sundays prior to the event. Also, he or she must organize special training meetings with worship teams, ushers, staff pastors, and altar workers. It is essential to organize prayer meetings to make sure the focus of the weekend meeting is on spiritual formation among participants rather than other issues that may exist within the church. Leaders design this one- or two-evening event to include lively singing along with powerful sermons or lessons. The agenda should include time for extended prayer and worship to conclude the event. One church organized a spiritual weekend and the guest speaker's topic was praying in unknown tongues. Remarkably, the service was extremely successful and well attended by church members and visitors from surrounding non-Pentecostal denominations.

Spiritually oriented small groups: Training small group leaders is one way to bring spiritual formation to a church. A person does not have to be ordained to be able to lead a small group that has spiritual manifestations. In the small group context, however, it is important for a pastor to be responsible for providing training on how to effectively manage the meetings and to have oversight of small-group leaders who are involved in these types of services. Many pastors find it advisable to provide small-group leaders with curricula for short lessons that do not require extensive preparation.

Many small groups exist within a church's culture such as deacons, ushers, worship teams, Sunday School teachers, drama clubs, and parking lot attendants. All of these small groups exist to build and maintain a powerful Spirit-filled church, and spiritual formation can occur within every small group of the church.

Service events: Another spiritual-renewal method a church can utilize is to sponsor community service or short-term mission trips. This method gets people away from their normal environment and leads them in community service activities designed to promote spiritual renewal. Choose participants from within the church and embark on a short mission trip, or assist a community by building, restoring, or repairing structures. Community-service projects improve impoverished neighborhoods and build relational bridges to the community. Community-service events can include: painting homes, performing minor car repairs, upgrading community parks, or serving on short-term mission trips to some of America's most needy urban centers.

Evening debriefing sessions can include follow-up discussions at dinner and conclude with worship services. Community-service spiritual renewal retreats have been successful in many churches. One church plans about four trips each year and allows enough flexibility to coordinate these trips in areas where natural disasters might occur. These type of events are rallying points for the entire church. The spiritual aspect of the evening worship service becomes meaningful and life changing.

CONCLUSION

Early in the history of the Pentecostal movement people were naturally attracted

to the message and style of Pentecostalism, but today it may be necessary to "revision" this tradition and find new ways to help seekers discover a personal experience with the Holy Spirit. If people attend Pentecostal church services weekly without ever experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, then pastors must find ways to purposefully communicate the accessibility of the Holy Spirit for them. It may be necessary for the church to create spiritual environments or create space for the Holy Spirit to freely minister in weekend services. These types of services are more successful when the senior pastor has trained his or her pastoral staff to be sensitive to the excesses that might arise. In one large church, prayer workers invite people raising their hands for prayer to go to adjacent rooms where they can pray for specific spiritual needs. For this to succeed, the pastor has to carefully manage the service and instruct the congregation about the parameters of a truly spiritual experience.

Recently, the pastor of a leading Pentecostal church shared a story about leading his church to a deeper spiritual level. He invited an evangelist whose ministry centered on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit to preach both the Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services. The pastor shared that he was nervous about inviting the evangelist because of the uncertainty these types of services could bring. The pastor admitted that he was comfortable with routine services where he always knew what to expect and when to expect it. As it turned out, the services were extremely beneficial to the church and pastor. This church benefited because the pastor was willing to step out of his comfort zone and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecostal movement must always be aware that the Holy Spirit is being continually poured out on the world. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit makes those who encounter Him primary witnesses of the risen Lord rather than secondary Christian apologists. Today, the Pentecostal movement is a sleeping giant in a world that desperately needs a spiritual awakening. Churches can rediscover ways to make divine encounters accessible to people who are crying for personal, supernatural reassurances. The modern Pentecostal movement can still witness the most exciting spiritual developments that Christianity has ever known.



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NOTES

- 1. Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology: an Introduction* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), 58.
- 2. Alpha Course: http://www.alpha.org (accessed 22 August 2013).
- 3. Walk to Emmaus: http://emmaus.upperroom.org (accessed 22 August 2013).



n April 2014, the Assemblies of God completes its 100th year of ministry and begins its 101st. God has blessed the Assemblies of God in the first century of its existence, granting fruitful-

ple. From humble beginnings with 300 pioneers in Hot Springs, Arkansas, the Assemblies has grown to encompass

approximately 66 million people in 252 countries, territories, and provinces. And for this, we thank God.

O N

Rather than cast a look backward at our first 100 years, we have decided in this issue of *Enrichment* to look forward to the next 100 years. How can we be faithful to the call God has given our Fellowship in the midst of new social and cultural realities? What must we do to experience new fruitfulness in ministry in a global culture that is very different from that of our Movement's founders?

In *The Evolution of Civilizations*, Carroll Quigley argued that the decline of a civilization is not inevitable. Rather, it occurs because the instrument of a civilization's growth becomes an institution. The instruments of a civilization are concerned with real social needs. Its institutions are concerned only with their own needs.

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Something similar can happen in churches. A church that focuses on the needs of the lost, the last, and the least is an instrument of divine love. A church that focuses on the wants of its current members has become an institution of human selfishness. Only the first type of church is faithful. Therefore, only the first type of church will be blessed by God with real fruitfulness.

The Assemblies of God Fellowship has four reasons for being: evangelism, worship, discipleship, and compassion. These four reasons have shaped the organization of this issue of *Enrichment*. After an interview with General Superintendent George O. Wood, Jeff Leake and Sarah Davis address aspects of our evangelistic mission. Mark Batterson and Scott Wilson focus on individual and corporate worship, respectively. Charlie Self explores how discipleship can prepare Pentecostal Christians for all of life, not just their spiritual life. And Wilfredo De Jesús describes what it means to be a compassionate, Matthew 25 church.

Alongside the articles that address our four purposes, Michael Clarensau combs through All Church MinistryReports (ACMRs) to outline the measurements and best practices of a healthy church. Carol Taylor offers sage advice about how we can provide spiritual roots and organizational wings to the next AG generation. And I explain why, contrary to

John MacArthur's latest book, *Strange Fire*, Pentecostalism is both biblical and good.

By George Paul Wood

As we begin the next hundred years of ministry — should the Lord tarry — let us keep in mind the words of 85-year-old Caleb, who was unafraid of the perils he faced in realizing the promise of God: "Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day [T]he LORD helping me, I will drive them [i.e., the Anakites] out just as he said" (Joshua 14:12).

Age, you see — whether individual or organizational — is never a barrier to those who are confident in and faithful to God. \blacksquare



GEORGE PAUL WOOD, director of Ministerial Resourcing for the Assemblies of God and executive editor of *Enrichment* journal, Springfield, Missouri

The Next 100 Years: Challenges & Opportunities

Interview with George O. Wood

of God concludes its 100th year of ministry, a number of important issues and questions must be considered: What challenges and opportunities does the AG face

s the Assemblies

A church that focuses on the needs of the lost, the lost, the last, and the least is an instrument of divine love.

Chris Lamphear / Elena Volklova / iStock / Thinkstock

in the future? What cultural changes will help Pentecostals evangelize and disciple the next generation? What cultural changes will hinder



Pentecostals from evangelizing and discipling the next generation? To answer these and other important questions, Enrichment interviewed

Dr. George O. Wood, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God (USA) and chairman of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship.

n August 5–10, the General Council is hosting a Centennial Celebration in Springfield, Missouri, to mark its 100th year of ministry. What events are planned for this celebration, and how can Assemblies of God ministers participate?

> **WOOD:** The Centennial Celebration is really three events in one: the Centennial Celebration itself, the World Assemblies of God Congress, and our firstever Global Church Planting Summit.

> > There will be plenty of time for celebration, inspiration, and encouragement during the meetings, of course. God has done amazing things in and through our global Fellowship over the last 100 years.

When we bring this many people together, however, it's important to offer opportunties for learning and networking alongside of celebrating. So we've invited some of our national and world leaders to speak at these events.

> I want to invite every AG minister here in the United States to Springfield for the Centennial Celebration. Visit **100 ag.org** for more information about it, the Congress, and the Summit. You can also register on that site to attend. The main sessions will be live-streamed for those who can't attend in person.

The Assemblies of God has grown tremendously in the last century. As it enters its 100th year of ministry, it faces the challenges of success: institutionalism, respectability, and longevity, among other things. How should the Assemblies navigate these challenges?

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WOOD: Before I address the challenges the AG faces, let's stop and give thanks to God for the growth He has produced in our Fellowship.

From small beginnings in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, the Assemblies of God has grown to over 66 million adherents in 250 countries, territories, and provinces. Today, an Assemblies of God church will be planted somewhere in the world every 39 minutes. Here in the United States, we have approximately 3.1 million adherents in nearly 13,000 churches. In 2012 — the last year for which we have complete records — AG church planters started a little over a church a day, statistically speaking.

This growth cannot be attributed merely to human effort, however. Yes, pastors, evangelists, and lay ministers labored hard over the years. But as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "God has been making it grow." This Movement is His Movement, and we ought to praise Him for the souls He has saved and brought into Assemblies of God churches.

Once we've given thanks, we need to get back to the hard work of planting and watering. A few years ago, my friend Scott Wilson — pastor of The Oaks Fellowship in Red Oak, Texas wrote a book called "Steering Through Chaos." In that book, he pointed out that churches make changes too late. They change when they begin to experience decline. The right time to make changes, Scott argued, is when your church is increasing in size or influence. You have to make changes in order to anticipate and accommodate the growth God wants to bring to your church. Scott's insight has several implications for us as a growing movement. First, as Loren Triplett [former Assemblies of God World Missions director] once said, "You don't measure yourself by your success. You measure yourself by the unfinished task." When it comes to the work of evangelism, then, we must relentlessly focus on the task God has given us to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Here are two statistics we need to keep in mind, both taken from the Pew Research Center: (1) Christians accounted for approximately 31.5 percent of the global population in 2012. (2) That same year, one-fifth of Americans claimed no religious affiliation. According to the American Religious Identification Survey, the number of religiously unaffiliated people — the so-called "religious nones" — was only 8 percent in 1990. Can we be satisfied with our Movement's growth when 68.5 percent of the world's peoples do not confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? Can we be satisfied with our growth when the number of religious nones in our own country grew by 250 percent in the last two decades? Clearly not! We have our work cut out for us.

Second, we need to remember that our message - the

gospel of Jesus Christ - is unchanging, but our methods aren't. When I became general superintendent in 2007, I discovered that our Foundations for Faith class still used a nearly 50-yearold curriculum to teach adolescents the basics of the Pentecostal faith. The content was sound, of course, but the delivery model was badly outdated. So we developed the Faith Case curriculum, which makes use of 21st-century technology to reach 21st-century kids. As a publisher, we realized that we were using Gutenberg technology in a Google world, so we made sure that our books were offered in tree-book and e-book formats. And we've

expanded our use of Internet technology to reach others.

The point is this: We need to use timely methods to deliver a timeless message. But this requires that we constantly evaluate how we're saying things to make sure that those to whom we're saying it understand what we're saying.

Third, we need to keep in mind that our institutions should serve our mission, not the other way around. People — especially unreached people — don't exist to serve the Church. The Church exists to serve them — to reach them for Christ, to

grow them in Christ, and to release them for Christ. If we're not doing these things, we're not doing what Jesus called us to do.

Since the AG was founded in 1914, American culture has changed, often drastically, for both good and bad. What are some cultural changes that will help Pentecostals evangelize and disciple the next generation?

WOOD: My family has a rich missionary legacy. My parents, George R. and A. Elizabeth Wood, were pioneer missionaries in northwest China and Tibet, along with my uncle and aunt, Victor and Ruth Plymire. My other uncle and aunt, Paul and Virginia Weidman, were pioneer missionaries in Africa. In those days, it could take months to reach the field. Living conditions were comparatively primitive and unhealthy. Communication with home was infrequent. It wasn't uncommon for a missionary term to last six or seven years between furloughs. Uncle Victor lost his first wife, Grace, and young son, John, during one especially cruel winter. Uncle Paul and Aunt Virginia lost their 7-year-old son, Paul Jr., to black water fever.

By contrast, travel is much quicker today. The journey to China that took my parents 30 days takes 30 hours today. Through the Internet, missionaries can Skype or FaceTime with family and friends back home. Better health insurance gives missionaries access to healthcare that would have saved the lives of many pioneer missionaries and their family members.

Obviously, these technological advances make the life of missionaries easier. But more importantly, they make the task of spreading the gospel easier. The Internet, satellite TV, and radio reaches countries where missionaries cannot go. Global University can send entire libraries of books about the Bible and Pentecostal theology to its students on Kindle reading devices. Network 211 is

using the Internet to evangelize and disciple people in countries where missionaries are prohibited to go. The information superhighway is to Christians in the 21st century what Roman roads were to Christians in the first century — a way to get the gospel out quickly.

Then there's immigration, which, combined with technology, has made the world much smaller. In my parents' day, if you wanted to evangelize China, you had to go to China. Today, if you want to evangelize China, you can go to China



We need to use timely methods to deliver a timeless message. But this requires that we constantly evaluate how we're saying things to make sure that those to whom we're saying it understand what we're saying.



The Next 100 Years: Interview with George O. Wood

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or you can evangelize and disciple Chinese exchange students at the local state university. I recently spoke with a Chi Alpha missionary here at Missouri State University. Over half of that school's exchange students come from China, and Chinese students make up about 80 percent of that Chi Alpha's international student ministry. In the past, we had to leave Amer-

ica to evangelize the world. Now the world is coming to America, and we need to seize the opportunity that immigration, foreign exchange students, and the global marketplace afford us without forgetting to send missionaries abroad, of course.

Another benefit of immigration has been the breaking down of racial, ethnic, and cultural bar-

riers that so often plagued American Christianity. Frank Bartleman said of the Azusa Street Revival that "the color line was washed away in the Blood." Too often in our own Fellowship we redrew the color line the Blood had washed away. Today, our Fellowship is 40 percent ethnic minority. Thank God for that! God is increasing the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our Fellowship, strategically positioning us to reach an increasingly diverse America.

A final positive cultural change is the increased respect for the contributions women make at all levels of society. The Assemblies of God ordained women for ministry before they had a right to vote. My mother and aunt made the most of that opportunity when they set out for China as single women missionaries. Today, women are stepping into positions of leadership in all levels of society, and this gives Pentecostal women unique opportunities to exercise salt-and-light influence on the world. If we're going to reach the whole world with the whole gospel, we need to make sure we're empowering the whole Church — men and women — to get the job done.

On the flip side of the coin, what are some cultural changes that will hinder Pentecostals from evangelizing and discipling the next generation?

WOOD: The first is the growth of so-called "religious nones," that is, people who claim no religious affiliation. In 2012, approximately one in five Americans claimed no religious affiliation, a percentage that grew 250 percent between 1990 and 2012. What is especially worrisome to me is the high number of young people among the religious nones. People aged 18 to 29 years old account for 22 percent of the American population. Religious nones are overrepresented in that age demographic (at 35 percent), while self-identified Christians are underrepresented (at 18 percent). In the Assemblies of God, people aged 18 to 34 account for 23.3 percent of our total population.

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Make room for the Holy Spirit in your church meetings. ... But make sure to include time in your meetings for people to respond.

Part of the reason for the growth of the religious nones is the Christian Church's bad reputation among people in that age group. In "unChristian," Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman argued that young non-Christians view Christianity as a damaged brand. In a subsequent book, "You Lost Me," Kinnaman showed that even young Christians often felt ambivalent

about the Church. A good deal of opposition to the Church among these young religious nones is political. Religious nones adopt liberal stances on issues like gay marriage and abortion more often than do self-identified Christians.

Some of the rise of religious nones may also be

explained by the decline of the traditional family, since children of single parents are less likely to attend church than children of married parents. Whatever the cause, there are more religious nones than 25 years ago, and they are less likely to think about social issues like Christians do.

A third cultural change has to do with the increasing hostility some sectors of American society display toward Christian beliefs and morality. We have a long history going back to the Garden of Eden that understands marriage as the union of a man and a woman. There are good reasons for this history, rooted in biblical teaching and what philosophers call natural law. But increasingly, law courts and popular entertainment dismiss these reasons as mere prejudices, akin to racism. It's hard to evangelize a group that perceives you as bigoted.

Some of the religious nones are atheists or agnostics. But many of them could be classified as "spiritual, but not religious." Put simply, they're interested in God but not organized religion with its institutions and doctrines.

Why is it important for Pentecostals to encourage a both/ and perspective — that is, vital spirituality together with sound doctrine and church membership?

WOOD: We should encourage a both/and perspective because the Bible itself does. Think about certain episodes in the Book of Acts. In chapter 1, the Church selects Matthias as the replacement twelfth Apostle. This is an institutional concern. Then, in Acts 2, the Church is gloriously baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is Pentecostal experience par excellence. But notice that Peter explains this experience in terms of biblical prophecy about Jesus Christ. This is doctrine. Those who believe in Jesus are baptized in water, added to the church roster, and begin to participate in the church's rhythm of corporate prayer, Bible study, and compassion for the needy. This is church membership. In just the first two chapters of Acts, then, we see a church that is characterized by a live encounter with the Holy Spirit, that preaches the truth about Jesus Christ, and that lives out His teaching in a community setting.

Think of it this way: emphasizing experience at the expense of sound doctrine and church membership is like gas without a car. Emphasizing doctrine and membership at the expense of experience is like a car without gas. It's only when you put the two together that you can go anywhere.

What can AG ministers do to make sure their churches and ministries embody this both/and perspective?

WOOD: Make sure that you've got gas in your tank!

Speaking from my own experience as a pastor, I know that it's easy to get so caught up preparing your messages and leading your church that you forget to seek the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. We preach Jesus Christ to others, but are we walking in close fellowship with Him ourselves?

So, the first thing I'd encourage AG ministers to do is to make sure you personally are walking with the Lord every day through prayer and Bible study. Find a group of friends — whether other pastors or people in your congregation — who build you up for the work of ministry God has called you to do. And don't forget to read edifying works of theology and devotional literature.

Then, make sure that those in your church's leadership circle are doing something similar. Whether they're staff members or volunteers, the people who lead your congregation need to lead by personal example. They can't lead others into a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ if they do not have one themselves.

And finally, make room for the Holy Spirit in your church meetings. Plan your worship service. Prepare your message beforehand. But make sure to include time in your meetings for people to respond. You are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. As you're doing this, the Holy Spirit is calling sinners to repentance. He's calling people to follow Jesus more closely in lives of ever-increasing holiness. He's calling them into the mission field. Do you have a time in your service where people can respond to the Spirit's calling and come forward for prayer?

I firmly believe that many people — including the religious nones — reject Christianity because they haven't seen the real thing. They've seen doctrine, and they've seen church membership, but they haven't seen a church on fire with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. So let's give them the real thing!

In recent years, the Assemblies of God has witnessed a decline in the number of people experiencing Spirit baptism. If this trend continues over the next 100 years, we risk being Pentecostal in name only rather than in practice. How can we best preserve our key distinctive for the next 100 years?

WOOD: Some of that decline may be a statistical trick. When

I was growing up, churches had Sunday night services that focused on helping people receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Many churches have stopped having Sunday night services and use camp meetings, weekend retreats, and small groups to lead people into an experience of the Holy Spirit. The results of those meetings often don't get counted on our ACMRs [Annual Church Ministries Reports].

But let's say there has been a decline in baptisms in the Holy Spirit. How do we reverse that decline? Three things:

First, we need to teach about baptism in the Spirit. People cannot learn what we do not teach them. So we need to preach regularly on this important experience.

Second, we need to make room in our weekend worship services for people to receive the Baptism. Let's not so over-program our worship services that we crowd out the sovereign move of God in them.

Third, we need to emphasize initial physical evidence as well as long-term substantive evidence. Jesus Christ baptizes us in His Spirit so that we might fulfill the Great Commission. Spirit baptism is power for service, in other words.

If there has been a decline in Spirit baptisms in our Fellowship — and I'm not yet convinced that there has been we must take appropriate steps to reverse it. Most of the world is not Christian. Increasing numbers of Americans claim no religious affiliation. If ever there was a time when the Church needed a greater, deeper baptism in the Holy Spirit, to be filled to overflowing with His divine power, this is that time! ■





Evangelism: Is It Still Our Greatest Work?

By Jeff Leake



Are we still as convinced that evangelism is the core of who we are as a Movement? Or has evangelism somehow become a secondary issue for us in our generation?

was talking to someone about my oldest son, David. He had just graduated from Bible college and was dreaming of being a church planter among unreached people groups. The person I was speaking with was unchurched. When he asked about my son's aspirations, I flinched. This friend was not only unfamiliar with the lingo associated with church culture, he was also suspicious of anything religious. I am not sure he even understood what a Bible college was.

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I searched for a word other than *missionary* to describe what David wanted to do. The word *missionary* suddenly sounded like I was speaking a foreign language to my friend. What would he think about my son traveling halfway around the world to proselytize people who had their own faith and perspective? It made me want to describe my son's passion in terms of some effort toward social justice or compassionate work. So I did. I explained that David was going overseas to do relief work among people who were poor and in need. That made sense to my friend, and I could see he was happy that my son had chosen such a noble profession.

I cannot help but feel, however, that I shied away from talking about missions, a fundamental part of Christianity, because of fear of cultural stereotypes. This reaction is common in our generation: to feel some degree of hesitation about the concept of evangelism in general. In my hesitation, I reduced the Great Commission into something much less controversial.

I am in favor of social justice. As a church we are active in drilling water wells in places that need clean drinking water, and in efforts to rescue women who are caught in human trafficking. In our community we have launched a nonprofit ministry called the Network of Hope, focused on bringing lasting change to the lives of individuals, families, and communities through programs that provide physical, emotional, and financial support.

But the concept of preaching the gospel to people who have never heard about Jesus is not popular within our culture. People often misunderstand, misjudge, and disapprove of this practice. And this cultural pushback we face can affect us more than we think. Without realizing it, we may undervalue the noble calling and commission to share the gospel with the lost.

So let's do an exercise in perspective. The year 2014 marks the 100-year anniversary of the Assemblies of God. Imagine how different the worldview was in our nation 100 years ago. Church attendance was approximately 50 percent.¹ Biblical literacy was fairly high even among people who did not attend church. Political correctness had not even yet begun to form as a way of thinking. Most people understood the eternal realities of heaven and hell. Therefore, society expected churches

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and Christians to evangelize. They not only expected it, they respected it for the most part.

My grandfather was saved in the 1950s. He had been a heavy drinking, chain-smoking, angry man who worked in the coal mines. When he came to Christ, not only was he set free from his addictions, he become a volunteer preacher. On certain days of the week he would grab a megaphone and ascend to a place on the street where people could see and hear him. Then he would preach about Jesus Christ.

I am not sure that megaphone street preaching is the right method for reaching people in the United States in 2014. At the time in which my grandfather spoke, many of his hearers responded to his message. It was a culturally appropriate method of evangelism for a rural Maryland town in the 1950s. My grandfather's story of transformation through Christ was something many people could relate to. The megaphone on a street corner added to the curiosity of those who would listen. Obviously, our culture has radically changed.

As the culture changes, our methods must adapt as well. But

as we search for the culturally appropriate form for sharing Christ, we can potentially fall out of touch with the mandate we have to preach Christ. We can, without knowing it, distance ourselves from the reason that Jesus died on the cross. The mission of the Church has always been to win people to Christ. Jesus' commission to His followers was and still is to make disciples of all nations.



Again, let's use the 100-year anniversary of the Assemblies of God to provide perspective and to consider again which values we continue to share with the previous generation that founded the Movement. In

November 1914, at the second General Council, held in Chicago, members resolved to achieve "the greatest evangelism that the world has ever seen." This was quite a goal to set for such a small group. Yet, we could argue that together we have succeeded in reaching that target with over 66 million people worldwide belonging to an AG church.²

So what is to become of the cause of evangelism today? Do we still feel as passionately about the purpose of preaching the gospel among the unreached? If we were to reestablish the Assemblies of God in 2014, would we adopt the same goal? Would we use different words to define this mission? Are we still as convinced that this is the core of who we are as a Movement? Or has this somehow become a secondary issue for us in our generation?

When faced with these questions, the best thing we can do is go back to the founding of the Church, as recorded in the Book of Acts. Our values extend, not just from 1914, but also from the days just after Jesus rose from the dead. The raw, organic, explosive nature of the Early Church is what I long for in 2014 and beyond. I want my children and grandchildren to live the adventure of the supernatural life and missional impact described in the Book of Acts. My desire is to lead the next generation in obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ to love God, love people, and make disciples of all nations. I do not want to compromise or shrink back from the calling God has placed on us as His church. At the same time, I want to properly interpret and translate the values of the Book of Acts in a world that does not understand the Bible, its worldview, or our mission.

THE MESSAGE: JESUS IS ALIVE

The apostles' preaching centered more on the declaration of a *Person* and less on the description of a *process* of steps one takes to get saved. Before they described to their hearers the need to repent and believe, they first declared who Jesus was and what He had done. The open declaration of the fact God had come in the body of Jesus, died on the cross, and then conquered death was the centerpiece of what they proclaimed to the world.

ministry when he said, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ... My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Corinthians 2:2,4,5).

There are two polar opposite mistakes we can make in this regard.

1. Cultural Irrelevance. It is not enough to preach the gospel. We must interpret it and explain it in a way that every generation and ethnicity understands it. Paul said we owe Greeks



Evangelism begins with the simple declaration of Jesus Christ. Too often we reduce the gospel to steps someone takes to get right with God. But before we begin to explain *what* they need to do, we need to declare *who* Jesus is and why He is different from anyone else who ever lived. This message stays relevant in every generation. So many other concepts can cloud the perspective of our hearers. The clear and compelling declaration of Christ cuts through everything else to touch the heart and ignite faith within the human spirit.

Paul describes the core of his ministry: "I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. ... For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (Romans 1:14,16). Read that part again, "It is the *power of God* that brings *salvation* to everyone who believes" (emphasis mine).

The good news of who Jesus is encompasses the *power of God*. When we speak it out loud it ignites something in the world. Without our declaring the gospel there is a lack of power to do anything significant. When we declare Jesus, we release power to transform lives and change eternities. Paul said we owe this to the world we serve. We need to preach the good news of who Jesus is, because speaking this to others releases the power of God that brings salvation.

Our gospel cannot just be actions. It has to be words. The words of the gospel carry the power of a risen Jesus.

Consider the radically restrictive strategy of Paul's preaching

and non-Greeks alike. Every culture, generation, and ethnicity needs the gospel explained in a way it can relate. Missionaries understand this. They take great pains to learn the language, be aware of the local customs and history, and process the sensitivities to various cultural taboos. So much has changed in the U.S. over the past few decades, and this requires us to learn again how to be clear and compelling in communicating the gospel.

2. Christless Christianity. It is also not enough just to understand the culture. We can modify our dress, adjust our language, utilize every form of available technology, and lead the way with loving action. But if we do not declare Jesus to people, we are failing to give them our most important possession. We can be relevant and powerless, and that approach will change nothing. We need both.

New Testament ministry requires that we make Jesus central to everything we say and do. Eternities depend on our proclaiming Christ. Transformation can happen only through an encounter with the risen Jesus and by faith in His finished work.

I love what Pope Francis said in his first Mass on March 14, 2013: "We can build many things, but if we do not confess Jesus Christ, nothing will avail. We will become a compassionate NGO (nongovernment organization) but not the Church, the bride of Christ."³

THE MISSION: MAKE DISCIPLES

Ed Funk grew up in a broken family and soon took to using and selling drugs. In fact, he was probably the leading drug

Evangelism: Is It Still Our Greatest Work?

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dealer in Hanover, Pennsylvania. One Sunday morning he awoke feeling a deep sense of emptiness in his spirit. The night before he had a one-night stand with a backslidden girl who had, in the past, attended Freedom Valley Worship Center (Assemblies of God) in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

"I just want to kill myself," Ed muttered aloud that morning. "I hate my life."

She overheard him whisper this to himself and she offered some help. "I know where you can get some help. There is a church in town that will tell you about Jesus Christ. He is what you need in your life." Then she added, "I'm not going with you because I'm not ready to get right with God. But you can go; it's what you need."

That day Funk went to church. He heard about Jesus who died to pay for his sins. The church explained how Jesus is alive and that He wants a relationship with us. The church further explained to him how Jesus forgives and offers us an opportunity for a new life. Funk could not resist this message. He chose that day to give his life to Christ.

This was the beginning of a new season in his life. He entered a recovery home to get off of drugs. The people at the church poured into him to help him learn what it was to walk with God. Funk began to grow in God. He eventually became the leader of the recovery home and felt a call into full-time ministry. After several years of faithful service, he planted a church in the North Borough's section of Pittsburgh. Once he led people down a path of addiction; now he leads them to find life in Christ.

This story could be told millions of times. Jesus saves. He redeems broken people. He restores them to lives of purpose. He uses us to make a difference in the world. This is the reason why Jesus came and endured the brutality of the Cross. He came for people like Funk. Everything Jesus did while here on earth, He did for the purpose of saving people.

Luke chapter 19 records when the tax collector, Zacchaeus, encountered Jesus Christ and was changed. Zacchaeus' life is the perfect representation of what the power of the gospel can do. Jews considered tax collectors unredeemable. Not only did they cheat their own people, they did it on behalf of Rome. Jesus entered this wicked man's house and invited him into relationship. Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus changed him completely. He went from taking from others to giving back to them, from hoarding to abundance, and from hiding to visibly aligning himself with Christ.

Zacchaeus' transformation is a vivid example of why God came in the body of Jesus. In fact, when some questioned Jesus about why He would enter the home of such a sinful person, Jesus stated: "For the son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus came to change the world. But He came to do it one life at a time. He wants to take tax collectors like Zacchaeus and turn them into people who start to think like, act like, talk like, and live like Jesus.

An incredible simplicity is involved in this kind of focus.



VISALIA FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Visalia, California / Mike Robertson, pastor

Responding to God's 'Nudge'

ocated in the agricultural San Joaquin Valley, 3 hours north of Los Angeles, Visalia First Assembly in California is a diverse church with a vibrant Pentecostal ministry. With attendance topping 3,300, it is the largest church in the community. The congregation is comprised of a blend of wealthy farm families, immigrant workers, and professionals from a variety of backgrounds.

Lead pastor Mike Robertson says new converts are continually added to the ranks, with as many as 50 people making commitments to Christ during services each week. Many new converts have limited or no church experience, and most are completely unfamiliar with Pentecostal teachings.

"We spend a lot of time working with the newcomers," Robertson says. "We have a pastor whose job is to track new converts for the first year. He keeps track of where they are in terms of getting plugged into discipleship classes and being exposed to teachings on the Holy Spirit, missions, and the basics of who we are and what we believe."

Robertson is intentional about maintaining the church's Pentecostal integrity. He schedules quarterly spiritual emphasis nights that focus on topics such as worship, prayer, healing, Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts, and revival. He says about a third of the congregation attends these special services.

"I haven't made it a big issue with the ones who don't show up," Robertson says. "I'm just trying to create an army out of those that do come. If I can get a third of the people being used in the

Disciple making is a one-life-at-a-time strategy. It involves love, time, and relationship. We measure it in individual transformation. When we practice disciple making, we



gifts of the Spirit, leading people to the Lord, and praying for healing, what an impact we can make."

Robertson highlights the work of the Holy Spirit in regular services as well. He routinely takes time to explain the biblical basis for the exercise of spiritual gifts. He also models these teachings by asking God to give him words of knowledge for the congregation.

Robertson says managing spiritual gifts in such a large church setting is challenging at times. He discourages members of the congregation from speaking without a microphone since most people would not be able to hear. And with disparate levels of spiritual maturity and understanding represented in the crowd, Robertson is careful to guard against falsehood.

Anyone who claims to have a prophetic message is instructed to tell it quietly to one of the pastors on the front row. If the pastor agrees it should be shared with the

congregation, the person is given a microphone at an appropriate time during the service.

Robertson

Robertson also encourages people to turn in praise reports and testimonies of what God did for them during the service. Special cards for this purpose are provided in the bulletin. The church staff reads and prays over the hundreds of cards received each week. Robertson regularly chooses several testimonies to share during the next service.

"I'm teaching people to open their eyes and ears to what God is doing," says Robertson, who recently wrote a book, *The God Nudge*, that explores God's desire to use willing believers to fulfill His mission in the world. "The Lord is looking for people who are open to hearing from Him. Every person is a candidate to be used and touched by God."

CHRISTINA QUICK, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri

are participating in changing the world. But this kind of global transformation happens slowly, from the inside out, one life at a time.

The temptation is to try to invest in faster or larger solutions to the world's problems. And we should consider how we can be involved in ending systemic and global injustices, and in initiating the change that can alter families and cities. But we can never afford to miss the simplicity of the life-to-life work of helping individuals become fully devoted followers of Jesus. This was Jesus' mission and it must be ours as well (Matthew 28:19,20). To paraphrase: Nations will change as God transforms individuals into fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

THE METHOD: PLANT CHURCHES

Let's go back to my premise. Is evangelism still our greatest work? Will the next generation continue with the vision to see the "greatest work of evangelism the world has ever seen"? Will my son's generation live out the adventure of following and proclaiming the Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit as described in the Book of Acts?

If so, we must return to the simplicity of the ministry modeled for us there.

Place a priority on effectively preaching the good news that Jesus died and now lives to biblically transform culture.

Never forget that Jesus came to change the world one life at a time.

Remember that the primary method through which Jesus does His work is through the planting and functioning of the local church.

I agree with Bill Hybels, "The local church is the hope of the world."⁴ Jesus' primary method of bringing change to the world is through His people, the body of Christ. Whatever the living Jesus is doing right now in our world He is doing through His church.

Most of us are familiar with the adage, "It's the message that is sacred, not the method. The method can change, but the message remains the same." I agree with that statement with one exception. The only sacred method is the planting and functioning of life-giving healthy churches. Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18).

In the Book of Acts the apostles declared that Jesus had risen from the dead. Miraculous signs and wonders followed this message as Jesus gave convincing proof He was alive (Acts 1:3). Thousands were transformed as they put their faith in Christ. Those who were saved became part of new church plants functioning as the body of Christ reaching their cities with the love and power of Jesus Christ.

If we are going to continue to be a part of the greatest movement of evangelism the world has ever seen, we must place a priority on planting new churches.

In 1996, my primary concern was for the health and advancement of my congregation. We had grown and yet were landlocked with no easy solution to expand. God spoke to me that He was allowing our geographic limitation so we could see a larger vision.

Evangelism: Is It Still Our Greatest Work?

(continued from page 61)

I felt the Holy Spirit say to me, "If I provide you with property and money to expand your church, and your congregation grows into the thousands, it will not solve the larger problem of living in a city (Pittsburgh) filled with communities that need a life-giving, Spirit-empowered church."



I embraced the challenge to make planting churches the first priority of my ministry. Since that time, we have planted 21 new churches, most within our own city. The total number of adherents (in all of these churches) has increased more than 7 times over the years. And each new church plant has a pastor and a ministry presence within its city or community.

Timothy J. Keller, in his book *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City,* observes: "The way to grow the number of Christians in a city is not mainly through church renewal but through church planting. ... Studies confirm that the average new church gains one-third to two-thirds of its new members from the ranks of people who are not attending any worshiping body, while churches over 10 to 15 years of age gain 80 to 90 percent of new members from transfer growth from other congregations. The average new congregation brings new people into the life of the body of Christ six to eight times the rate of an older congregation of the same size."⁵

It makes sense to engage with Christ in a massive wave of new church planting. Why not initiate a new wave of evangelism for this generation and unleash a new wave of church planting for the year 2014 and beyond?

CONCLUSION

I believe that the next 100 years for the Assemblies of God can be just as explosive and powerful as the first 100 years. Jesus is alive. He continues to be active in the world giving proof of His resurrection. The Holy Spirit is as present in our world as He was in the Book of Acts. The harvest is still ripe and ready for the taking, and we still have the same need for workers willing to go. Why not believe for a fresh wave of Holy Spirit empowerment? Why not carry the vision forward to be a part of the "greatest evangelistic movement the world has ever seen?" Is there anything more attractive to live for? This is the heritage I want to pass on to the next generation. Preach the gospel. Make disciples. Plant new churches.

Let's change the world, one life at a time through the power of Jesus Christ. This is what it will take for evangelism to remain our greatest work. ■



JEFFE LEAKE, lead pastor, Allison Park Church, Allison Park, Pennsylvania

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Live Dead: Reaching the Unreached

By Sarah Davis [pseudonym]

very morning I open the window shade

to let in the bright desert sun. I look at the rocky hillsides covered with thousands of sandstone apartments and dotted with minarets rising above Islamic mosques. The call to prayer punctuates the sounds of neighbors bustling in the early morning. As I linger a few moments at the window, I prayerfully muse, Where in this sea of humanity are the Bibles that people have so eagerly received? Did they hide them under a mattress awaiting the return of an anxious owner? Will the mother hide it in the folds of her robe as she shops for her produce today? Will the young man torn by thoughts of revolution once again tuck it into his small bag as he heads out to search for work?

"Sarah Davis" offers her perspective as one of the young missionaries in an especially challenging area of the world. Those with the least access to the hope of the Gospel are being reached by a new generation of missionaries where a high level of commitment is required to reach the unreached.

Live | Dead: Reaching the Unreached

(continued from page 65)

In the afternoon I listen to the growing cacophony of horns, prayers, and laughter as I walk the streets and talk with my neighbors, greet the butcher's new assistant, and share a courteous exchange with the old woman who always watches as I walk with my children down the street. Yet, my heart is not carefree or light. I know with certainty I am the only Christian to whom most of my neighbors will ever speak or confide. Our home may be the only believer's home into which they will ever step. I make eye contact with each woman so we might share a brief smile, while at the same time I conscientiously avoid eye contact with men. I dress carefully knowing that each day I am painstakingly earning a little more trust from those veiled eyes that scrutinize my every move. My life, my home, my children, my marriage - all are unique and strange to their way of thinking. So they watch me and my family. They wonder about our odd ways. They ask questions about our diet, our practices, our recipes, and our children. We laugh together over cups of tea as we share long hours of conversation. In each moment of the day I strive to live boldly and share truth wisely at every opportunity.

Sadly when most Americans think about the Middle East, disjointed pictures from movies or breaking news about protests and flag burnings flash before their eyes. They remember waving guns, angry veiled women, smoke grenades, bloodied bodies, and weeping families. Unfortunately, these stereotype images serve only to separate and emotionally distance the Church from the dear people trapped in spiritual darkness in this area of the world.

The challenge of living among unreached people is not exclusive to the Middle East or even Asia. In reality, there are 2.8 billion unreached individuals in 253 clusters scattered throughout the world.¹ They are "unreached" because they have little or no access to the gospel. Nuclear families, extended families, villages, towns, cities, and even entire countries are without access to the gospel. They have never seen a Bible, never spoken or interacted with a Christian, and never heard the life-changing gospel that brings hope. Believers have never presented them with the good news in a way they can understand. Some are wandering nomadic tribes who live in isolated desert regions. Others live in average-sized cities with transit lines and basic utilities. Still





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others reside in first-class metropolitan areas filled with splendor and extravagance. We do not define unreached people groups by poverty or wealth. They are unique because they lack the opportunity of access to hear God's truth.

REACHING THE UNREACHED

How can we reach these people for Christ? The first step is to recognize that "unreached" is not "unreachable." We have not fulfilled Christ's

AG PROFILES

JODI DETRICK

Assemblies of God Minister North Bend, Washington

Jesus-Hearted Woman

ot everyone is called to stand behind a pulpit, but Jodi Detrick believes every Christian has gifts God wants to use in ministry.

"God designed us all differently, and the ministry call has many facets," says Detrick, an Assemblies of God minister. "We're tailor-made for the life He's called us to live for Him. When we minimize a gift because it doesn't look like typical ministry, we're missing out; so are others."

Detrick is carrying out the Great Commission in both traditional and nontraditional ways. An adjunct professor at Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington, she is a sought-after Christian speaker and preacher. She is a certified personal leadership coach and chairperson for the Assemblies of God's national Network for Women in Ministry.

Detrick is also a writer with a presence in secular and religious markets. Since 2007, she has been a religion columnist for *The*

mandate to go into all the world. Billions of people are still waiting to hear the gospel, and upon hearing, many receive Christ with joy in spite of certain persecution.

The second step is to concentrate our focus and prioritize our efforts to reach those with the least access to the gospel. At present, 26 percent of our AGWM missionaries are working in countries considered least reached. As we concentrate our focus and partner with the national churches closest to these unreached peoples, we can increase our efforts. Since the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has continually driven the Church across national and ethnic borders, from places where faith blossomed to areas where people had not heard of Christ. As the apostles fanned out, the New Testament church trained and equipped believers to cross ethnolinguistic barriers to reach the unreached. Seattle Times, a daily newspaper with 1.8 million readers.

"I'm honored and amazed to have a voice for faith in Jesus to one of the most unchurched and post-Christian regions in the U.S.," Detrick says. "It's a culture that seems pretty closed, at least outwardly, to anything that smacks of organized religion, and especially traditional Christianity. As I write about life from the perspective of a Christ-follower, I try to build word bridges that connect sometimes-skeptical minds, and often hurting hearts, to the God who made and loves them. And I pray a lot. Spiritually hungry people are everywhere and sometimes more open to the gospel than you might think."

Detrick also has a passion for encouraging Christian women to step into roles of leadership and ministry. She recently wrote a book, *The Jesus-Hearted Woman: Ten Leadership Qualities for Enduring and Endearing Influence.*

"So many women long to fully use the God-given leadership and ministry gifts they know are in them, with or without an official title or position," Detrick says. "When it comes to maximizing godly influence, if you have the heart, you can learn the skills. The book is for women of any age, representing a broad spectrum of experience, who want to be Jesus-hearted leaders."

Detrick says an increasing number of women are answering the call to pastoral ministry, including preaching, teaching, church planting, and evangelism. She says she has also met women across the country who are finding new ways to reach their world for Jesus, such as rescuing women trapped in the sex industry, serving as institutional chaplains, doing marketplace ministry, writing Christian blogs, creating God-honoring art, serving as foster moms, and mentoring teens in the public school system.

"Whatever God has designed you to do, do it in partnership with Him, and find ways to touch the lives around you," Detrick says. "That is ministry."

CHRISTINA QUICK, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri

MAKE IT A PRIORITY

Reaching Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and other unreached groups in today's world requires that the Pentecostal church prioritize intentional and systematic evangelization of these groups. Because few within these people groups have ever heard and understood the gospel, there are no indigenous communities of believing Christians with sufficient numbers and resources to impact their societies.

The Assemblies of God has historically valued and nurtured the indigenous-church principle. Our initial efforts in any area focus on church planting to establish a self-propagating body of believers who will proclaim the gospel and establish the church among other people groups.

Planting indigenous churches can be a laborious process

with no simple answers or easy one-size-fits-all solutions. Most unreached people groups live in hostile spiritual and physical contexts. Long-term engagement requires a degree of old-fashioned grit and determination that is possible only through complete reliance on the Lord. Long-term residency requires appropriate visas and often the establishment of practical, government-approved business enterprises. The sheer magnitude of the task requires new strategies, such as church planting by an integrated team rather than by a single individual or a family. A team can focus outreach efforts on discipling individuals, connecting new believers, planting new churches, and nurturing the growing network. In many of these regions, evangelism is illegal and must be done via one-to-one encounters. This requires a determined investment in tilling rocky ground, a dedicated effort to plant seeds of hope in the hearts of many, and the disciplined labor of discipling and nurturing converts for years.

It is not enough to commit to focused prayer for an unreached people group or send a team for 2 weeks. We must actively engage each unreached group. This requires individuals in residence among the people who are committed to working in the local language and culture on a long-term basis with the goal of planting a church and developing an indigenous, self-supporting, self-propagating body of believers. Historically, pioneer Pentecostal missionaries have led the way, making the necessary sacrifices to take the gospel to regions where there were no or very few Christians. This legacy continues through strategic endeavors like Live Dead, which is renewing the emphasis on investing resources and personnel among unreached people groups. Pioneering individuals committed to learning strange languages, adapting their lifestyles, and changing their personal priorities are being molded into teams that will relentlessly love and boldly proclaim truth in a culturally appropriate manner to plant the Church where it does not yet exist.

Jesus offers us an invitation to "live dead" to our own comforts and share in the persecution and suffering that characterized the lives of New Testament believers. He is asking us to prayerfully walk alongside brothers and sisters in unreached people groups as they embrace the truth and join the great cloud of witnesses. Most new converts suffer social disgrace, and many will pay the ultimate price — their lives. In fact, researchers estimate that 400 believers die in the world for their Christian faith on an average day.² That averages out to one believer every 3.6 minutes — which is less than the time it takes to read this page.

STRATEGICALLY MOBILIZE

To penetrate unreached people groups with the gospel, we must purposefully and strategically mobilize a new generation of pioneer missionaries. Missionaries already engaged in established missions ministries have the vital role of orientating national churches toward reaching unreached people groups in their countries. They already know the language, understand the

Live | Dead: Reaching the Unreached

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culture, and have developed the necessary connections within the national church to instill both the will and the skill believers need to reach unreached people groups in their part of the world. This is the core of apostolic function. It does not require redeployment of current missionaries or cutting the support of one missionary to support another who is focused on church planting. Rather, it requires that every missionary, local pastor, and believer understands the priority to encourage, empower, train, and support the goal of reaching unreached people groups.

To challenge the American church regarding its role in reaching those who have never heard requires education and lifting the veil of misinformation. Excellent resources are available to illustrate the challenges and educate the concerned. Beyond. ag.org is a new website that provides informative profiles of the more than 230 unreached people groups with which the Assemblies of God is engaged. AGWM.com/pray and the free AGWM prayer app for iPhone, iPad, and Android highlight a specific unreached people group each day for focused prayer. Live Dead East Africa and Live Dead Arab World journals, websites, and Facebook pages are available to challenge believers in praying for the unreached in these areas of the world. Websites focusing on the unreached in Northern Asia (apostolos-na.org), Asia Pacific (pray4indonesia.com), and Eurasia (pray4maldives.com) are also available. Those specifically interested in the Muslim world can participate in the Jumaa Prayer Fellowship coordinated by Global Initiative (globalinitiativeinfo.com).

EMBRACE THE GREAT COMMISSION

Like the New Testament church, we must embrace the phase of the Great Commission regardless of the risk. We cannot let the possibility of suffering and even martyrdom deter us from deploying teams. We must commit to paying whatever price is necessary to reach gospel-resistant people groups with the Word of God. As Jim Elliot, one of the five missionaries who lost their lives trying to evangelize the Waodani people of Ecuador, put it, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."3 We affirm this concept, and we understand that we will face persecution to reach those who are active enemies of the gospel. In addition, we acknowledge that while prison, persecution, sickness, loneliness, abuse, rape, beatings, intimidation, injustice, difficulties, and every form of spiritual attack may come, we cannot allow this to deter us from living among gospel-resistant peoples and lovingly proclaiming the good news to them in Jesus' name.

What then is required? Does this commitment to church planting require funds? Yes. Does it require prayer? Yes. But it requires much more. Pastors need to encourage individuals within their congregations to prepare themselves and invest their talents, resources, and lives in pioneer missions. The goal is to equip teams to live among unreached peoples to plant the Church. This is the essence of the Live |Dead initiative. It requires an understanding that missionaries may minister for years or even decades before they may see spiritual fruit. There will be no large crusades or crowds to report back to donors. There will be no "feel good" dollar-for-dollar projects that promise an exact return on one's investment. In God's economy, some will plant, others will water, but God gives the increase and produces the harvest. He promises that His Word will not return empty but will accomplish what He desires.

The bottom line is that we must joyfully embrace the privilege of dying to self and living our lives that Christ be glorified among all people groups in the world. We must make it our priority to cross ethnolinguistic boundaries to establish communities of faith. If you are a Bible school teacher, inspire your students to go to the neglected places. If you are a children's or a youth pastor, actively disciple your young people to take the gospel to the lost. If you are a medical worker or a builder, use your gifts and talents to establish access to unreached people groups. In doing so, you are affirming God's passion that every people group everywhere knows Him.

An old Arab proverb says, "First pick your neighbor, then pick your home." It means that the features or quality of a house are meaningless if you do not get along with your neighbor. However, for missionaries living among unreached people groups there is a deeper meaning. We chose to live among Arabs to bring blessing into their lives. That means we spend our evenings in community, visiting with neighbors. The hours of tea and endless cups of coffee while sharing our faith have drawn us deeper into relationship with Christ and strengthened our love for those around us who are spiritually lost.

Each night as I close my windows and listen to the city settle into its restless slumber, I pray for each seed of truth that was planted and each person who was a part of my day. I pray that my joy in Christ and my love for the Savior will bring hope to the sea of unreached people around me.

May God give each of us the wisdom and the courage to respond to His Great Commission — and the courage to live our lives completely for His glory. ■



SARAH DAVIS is a wife, mother of two, and follower of Christ who is learning to die to self and live fearlessly each day surrounded by the people God has called her to love.

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Praying For Versus **Praying Through**

By Mark Batterson

Our generation desperately needs to rediscover the difference between *praying for* and *praying through*.

efore there was Mother Teresa, there was Mother

Dabney. In 1925, Elizabeth J. Dabney

and her husband went to work for a mission in the city of brotherly love, but there wasn't much love in their North Philly neighborhood. It was a hellhole. God had called her husband to preach. He had called Mother Dabney to pray. But she didn't just pray, she prayed through. At the outset of her ministry, Mother Dabney entered into a covenant to pray. Her burning bush experience happened early one morning on the banks of the Schuylkill River. The presence of God overshadowed her as she threw down the prayer gauntlet.

"Lord, if You will bless my husband in the place You sent him to establish Your name, if You will break the bonds and destroy the middle wall of partition, if You will give him a church and congregation — a credit to Your people and all Christendom — I will walk with You for 3 years in prayer, both day and night. I will meet You every morning at 9. You will never have to wait for me; I will be there to greet You. I will stay there all day; I will devote all of my time to You. Furthermore, if You will listen to the voice of my supplication and break through in that wicked neighborhood and bless my husband, I will fast 72 hours each week for 2 years. While I am going through the fast, I will not go home to sleep in my bed. I will stay in church, and


Praying For Versus Praying Through

(continued from page 70)

if I get sleepy, I'll rest on newspapers and carpet."

As soon as she made that prayer covenant, it was like a spiritual cloudburst. Every morning at 9, Mother Dabney greeted the Lord with a hearty, "Good morning, Jesus." Her knees would often go numb from kneeling, but God extended His powerful right arm. Soon the mission was too small to accommodate those whom the Holy Spirit drew. And the more she *prayed through*, the more God broke through.

Mother Dabney's prayer legacy would be a long forgotten footnote if it were not for one headline. The *Pentecostal Evangel* published her testimony under the title, "What It Means to Pray Through."¹ That one article sparked a prayer movement all around the world. Mother Dabney received more than 3 million letters from people who wanted to know how to *pray through*.

COUNTERFACTUAL THEORY

In the grand scheme of God's story, there is a footnote behind every headline. The footnote is prayer. And if you focus on the footnotes, God will write the headlines. It is your prayers that change the eternal plotline. Just like Honi the circlemaker, whose prayer for rain saved a generation, your prayers can change the course of history.

I love history, and in particular, a branch of history called counterfactual theory. Counterfactual theorists ask the *what if* questions. For example, *what if* the American Revolution had failed, or *what if* Hitler had been victorious in World War II? How would history have unfolded differently? What would that alternate reality look like?

Reading biblical history like a counterfactual theorist is an interesting exercise. And the Jericho miracle is a great example. What if the Israelites had stopped circling on the sixth day? The answer is obvious: *they would have forfeited the miracle right before it happened*. If they had stopped circling after 12 round trips, they would have done a lot of walking for nothing. Like the generation before them, they would have defaulted on the promise. And the same is true for us.

God won't answer 100 percent of the prayers you don't pray.

Our

PRAYING FOR VERSUS PRAYING THROUGH



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ing through. There are certainly circumstances where *praying for* something will get the job done. I believe in short prayers before meals because, quite frankly, I believe in eating food while it's still hot. But there are also situations where you need to grab hold of the horns of the altar and refuse to let go until God answers.

generation

needs to rediscover the difference between *praying for* and *pray-*

desperately

I've stopped praying ASAP



M PROFILE

NEW HOPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Greeley, Colorado / Rigo Magaña, pastor

A Church That Knows No Age

Ithough New Hope Christian Fellowship in Greeley, Colorado, is an old church, this designation only describes its over 50-year-old building. Since former District Youth Director Rigo Magaña took the pastorate in 1995, a better way to describe New Hope might be as a church that knows no age.

Hesitating at first to apply for the position because of the older congregation — which, Magaña says, statistically can be a struggle — Magaña and his wife felt the Lord calling them there. "God has blessed us, and we've been able to not only touch our community, but we have grown and planted churches all over the world."

When the Magañas came to New Hope, they began utilizing Master's Commission (now New Hope Leadership College) students to go to the neighborhoods and reach out to schools because many of the congregants drove in from outside the immediate community.

"We got a prayer team and map and said, 'Okay, we're going to concentrate on 10 blocks in each direction. We're going to pray over every street, every avenue.' That's what we did for several months."

prayers — asking God to answer *as soon as possible*. I have started praying *ALAT* prayers — *as long as it takes*. Praying in circles is a metaphor that simply means praying until God answers. You intercede until God intervenes.

Praying through is all about consistency

It's circling Jericho so many times it makes you dizzy. Like the story Jesus told about the persistent widow who drove the judge

Magaña says walking around praying over streets got people asking questions, which started conversations, opening doors for them to share Jesus.

New Hope also began addressing needs in the community with a daily children's program. As partners with a Denver-based church, they utilize federal grant money to feed area children and couple that with an 8-week vacation Bible school.

"We only do breakfast and lunch," Magaña says, "but we thought since they are coming out here, let's do more." They also take food to low income apartments. "[One] week, we fed about 1,200 kids," Magaña says.

Citing the words of a sign he saw, "If we can reach this generation, we won't have to rescue them." Magaña says New Hope wants to reach children when they are young, "before they really experience some of the difficulties, some of the pains of life."

Magaña encourages those 50 and older — "Warriors of the Faith" — to get involved with the younger generations. He acknowledges that some of them may not be up for the more physical outreach activities, but they can pray for the church and the community.

For New Hope, Life Groups are also a way of incorporating three essentials: connection to God, His Word, and other believers into the makeup of the greater community.

On Sunday, during service, attendees receive a questionnaire to fill out with answers from the sermon. These questionnaires are used for Life Group discussion — followed by prayer and fellow-ship — like the Acts 2:42 model, explains Magaña. "My goal is one day to have 100 churches throughout the city with Life Groups. That's what the church really needs, where you can invite your neighbors, your friends, and connect with them and eventually connect them to the larger body of Christ."

To do this more effectively, Magaña mentors lead pastors of other churches. "We have five church pastors who get together once a week and pray, fellowship, share frustration, share dreams, and encourage one another," Magaña says. "Once a month we plan our monthly messages together as a team. That way, if you go to their church, you will hear the same kind of message, just in their flavor. ... You're not going to miss anything. The thing we are going to see more of is [the need] to be more Kingdom-minded.

AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri

crazy with her relentless requests, *praying through* does not take no for an answer. Circlemakers know that it's always too soon to quit praying because you never know when the wall is about to fall. *You are always only one prayer away from a miracle*.

Praying through is all about intensity

It's not quantitative. It's qualitative. Drawing prayer circles involves more than words. It's gut-wrenching groans and

heartbreaking tears. Praying through doesn't just bend God's ear; it touches the heart of your Heavenly Father.

When was the last time you found yourself flat on your face before the Almighty? When was the last time you cut off circulation kneeling before the Lord? When was the last time you pulled an all-nighter in prayer?

DRAW THE CIRCLE

Gypsy Smith was born on the outskirts of London in 1860. He never received a formal education, yet he lectured at Harvard. Despite his humble origins, two sitting United States presidents invited him to the White House. Gypsy crisscrossed the Atlantic Ocean 45 times, preaching the gospel to millions of people. Everywhere he went, it seemed like revival was right on his heels. But it wasn't his preaching that brought revival. It never is. Preaching may move the hearts of men, but praying moves the heart of God. And that's where revival comes from.

Gypsy revealed his secret to a delegation of revival seekers who sought an audience with him. They wanted to know how they could make a difference with their lives the way he had with his. His answer was simple yet profound — as timely and timeless now as it was a hundred years ago. He gave them this advice: "Go home. Lock yourself in your room. Kneel down in the middle of the floor, and with a piece of chalk draw a circle around yourself. There, on your knees, pray fervently and brokenly that God would start a revival within that chalk circle."

It does not take a majority vote to start a revival. All it takes is one Mother Dabney.

Biblically and historically speaking, God often ushers in a new season of revival by raising up a remnant. That remnant sets a new prayer standard. That remnant introduces a new normal for the church-at-large.

THE 40-DAY PRAYER CHALLENGE

During our first 15 years as a church, I failed to lead our congregation in corporate prayer. This is tough to confess, but it just wasn't our top priority. That changed this past year, and everything changed with it. We did our first 40-day prayer challenge at National Community Church, and it completely changed our church culture. It ranks as the most significant season of spiritual growth in our 15-year history. If you have never done a prayer challenge as a church, you need to give it a try. If it helps, check out the sequel to *The Circle Maker* titled, *Draw the Circle: The 40-Day Prayer Challenge*. Or come up with your own 40-day plan.

As we prepared for our 40-day challenge at NCC, I felt like God wanted our church to circle 2 Chronicles 7:14 by hitting our knees every day at 7:14 a.m. I explained to our church that this time, in and of itself, wasn't significant but it did offer a daily reminder of the promise we were circling in prayer.

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will

Praying For Versus Praying Through

(continued from page 73)

forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Please read this carefully: The goal of a 40-day prayer challenge is not to get what you want by day 40. In fact, the goal is not to get what you want at all. The goal is to figure out what God wants, what God wills. Then you start circling it in prayer and do not stop until God answers.

One of the biggest misconceptions

about prayer is that it means outlining our agenda to God as a divine to-do list. The true purpose of prayer is to get into God's presence so He can outline His agenda for us. Here is my advice: pray about what to pray about. God will reveal a promise, a problem, or a person. Then circle whatever God has prompted you to pray for with the same kind of consistency with which the earth circles the sun.

Too often we pray for something once and then completely forget about it. So when God answers, we fail to give Him the glory because we forgot what we asked for. This is one reason why you need to journal. Document your prayers and God's answers. Next to my Bible, nothing is more sacred than my prayer journal.

During our 40-day prayer challenge, different people circled different things. We saw prodigals come back to God after years of running away. God restored marriages. Job opportunities opened up. Provision for financial needs came out of nowhere. Divine appointments happened on a daily basis. And there were even a few miraculous healings.

On a corporate level, we experienced God's favor in unprecedented ways. A \$1 million gift came out of nowhere. A Baptist church gifted their \$2 million building and property to us. And we received the kind of news coverage that money cannot buy. *The Washington Post* ran a front-page story in the weekend Metro section that parlayed into the *Today Show* filming one of our weekend services and airing it to a nationwide audience on Easter Sunday. That happened to be the last day of our 40-day prayer challenge. Coincidence? I think not.

THE LEVER

Archimedes of Syracuse is famous for his quip, "Give me a place to stand on, and I will move the earth."² He was referencing the lever, one of six simple machines identified by Renaissance scientists. A lever amplifies the input force to provide a greater output force. Simply put, the longer the lever, the greater the leverage.

Let me borrow this simple statement and substitute one word: *Give me a place to kneel, and I will move the earth.*

In the kingdom of God, humility equals authority. Call it bold humility or humble boldness. That is our lever. God honors bold prayers because bold prayers honor God. If we try to exalt ourselves, God will find a way to humble us. But if we humble ourselves, God will find a way to exalt us.

If we hit our knees in humble prayer, God will extend His mighty hand on our behalf.

There is no leverage like kneeling in prayer. If we hit our knees in humble prayer, God will extend His mighty hand on our behalf. He will leverage us in ways that are humanly impossible.

We have a motto at NCC: *stay humble, stay hungry*. If we do, there is nothing God cannot do in us or through us. Prayer is the difference between *the*

best we can do and the best God can do.

Prayer is the difference between us fighting for God and God fighting for us. Prayer is the difference between letting things happen and making things happen.

If we pray like it depends on God and work like it depends on us, revival is just around the corner.



MARK BATTERSON, senior pastor, National Community Church, Washington, D.C., and the author of *Lion in a Pit on a Snowy Day, Wild Goose Chase, The Circle Maker,* and *All In.* This article is adapted from *The Circle Maker.*

Notes

- Sarah Foulkes Moore, "What It Means to Pray Through," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, no. 1391, (January 4, 1941), 4.
- E.J. Dijksterhuis, Archimedes, trans. C. Dikshoorn (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 15.



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Here is one pastor's experience of being both spiritual and strategic concerning the public use of spiritual gifts.

The Order of Things: **The Use of Spiritual Gifts in Contemporary Worship**

By Scott Wilson

have pastored The Oaks Fellowship for 10 years. I have always prided myself

with how powerful and creative our services are. We spend hours every week praying and preparing for our

weekend services. We have weekly prayer meetings with the creative and worship teams. I have a teaching

L team of incredible Bible scholars who help me with the exegetical background on my preaching text and

support me in my message preparation. We spend a lot of money putting together creative, effective, life-changing

services. We plan every service down to the minute.

Many people have criticized our approach because we plan our services 6 months in advance. They say you cannot be Pentecostal and plan that far ahead. But, I say, "God knows what He wants me to preach 6 months from now, and He will tell me if I will listen. It is not anti-Pentecostal to plan — just like it is not Pentecostal to fly by the seat of your pants." While I still believe this is true, I now realize that I was not being as Spirit led as I thought I was — and no one could open my eyes to that fact but God.

One Saturday afternoon I was hanging out with a pastor friend. He spontaneously said, "I think God wants to do something in your services tomorrow that's different from what you have planned."

I asked, "Really, why do you think that?"

He replied, "I just feel God is asking you to give the services back to Him."

I responded, "What do you mean give the services back to Him? I haven't taken them away from Him."

He said, "Okay, I'm just telling you what I sense God is saying."

I could usually dismiss statements like this by thinking, *Oh that's just the perspective of an overly zealous Pentecostal who doesn't understand our church.* But, I trusted this guy; he is a man of God who cares about me. God has used him to speak prophetically into my life on many occasions. I couldn't just dismiss this.



I went home and prayed. I said, "God, what are You wanting to do tomorrow? I am open to whatever You want."

After several minutes of seeking God, I heard Him say, "Are you really ready to do whatever I want?"

I said, "Of course God, it's Your church. You can do whatever You want."

That is when God said, "That's not how you usually handle things. You usually put the services together and then ask Me to bless them. How about letting Me lead things and the services will already be blessed?"

This was one of those precious and threatening moments when years of assumptions explode in an instant. I answered, "O God, I'm so sorry. Of course I want You to lead the services. What do You want me to do?"

The Lord simply said, "Announce to the church that 'it's a new day' and you are giving the services back to Me, and I will do the rest."

A NEW DAY

Before our first service the next morning, I told our staff and worship team about my conversation with God. I took a deep breath and said, "Be ready for whatever God wants to do today. I am going to explain that it is a new day for our church. Then we are going to stop the music and wait to hear a word from the Lord."

People filed in and took their seats. Clayton, our worship pastor, led us in singing "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. There's just something about that name." I sensed the presence of God, and He told me, "Now, Son. It's time. Tell the people it's a new day."

I waved to Clayton to stop, and I walked to the front of the platform. I announced, "Friends, the Lord told me this is a new day for our church. He wants to do something supernatural in this place. But He will only do it if we give the services back to Him. So I declare that we are officially giving the services back to the Lord today asking Him to lead us and speak to us. Now, let's be quiet before the Lord and allow Him to speak."

The silence wasn't awkward. There was a sense of anticipation, of wonder, of reverence. Then, someone from the congregation spoke a prophetic word: "I am Lord and I am leading this. ... I will not forsake you." Some of the noncharismatic folks in the room may have thought we were performing a dramatic presentation, but we weren't performing anything. This word was God's assurance to me that I could trust Him to lead us.

At that moment I sensed the Lord whisper, "Son, you are the authority in this house, the pastor; you must lead the way. ... You give a message in tongues right now, and I'll give you the interpretation." So, I gave a message in tongues; and, then a few seconds later the Spirit spoke through me to interpret, "Why are you looking everywhere else for what you can only find in Me? Come to Me. Trust Me."

I explained to the congregation, "According to 1 Corinthians 14:22, the gift of tongues is a sign to all the unbelievers here today. God wants you to know that He is really here and He sees the secrets of your hearts. He is calling for you to repent of your sins and surrender your lives to Him. God is using the gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues as a divine altar call. If you sense the words I spoke are God's message to you this morning, respond to Him in faith. He's reaching out to you and inviting you to come to Him. If you want to take His hand, come forward."

About 40 people walked onto the stage to receive Christ. Many were kneeling. Some were weeping tears of relief and joy. They were meeting the Savior for the first time. I quickly realized some of the people in the room had no context for what they were experiencing. Before I prayed with those who were on the stage, I took a moment to explain how God uses spiritual gifts to draw people close to Him. I said, "Those of you who grew up Catholic or Baptist need to be thankful for your godly heritage. But if you ever exalt your heritage above the teaching of Scripture, you are wrong. If you are Pentecostal or

Charismatic and you love the gifts so much that you exalt them above the leading of the Spirit, you are wrong. We get in trouble when we idolize the gifts instead of utilize the gifts. God meant for the gifts to be used to draw people closer to Him, just like we see happening this morning."

After I prayed with those who were on the stage, I sensed God saying, "I'm not through. I have something for many more people this morning."

As the 40 continued praying on the platform, I turned to the congregation and announced, "Some of you have been Christians for a long time, but you sense the need to open your hearts to God. You want to say, 'Lord, I'm giving my life back to You. I've tried to run it, and I've failed. I want You to lead me.' If you sense God inviting you to return to Him, come forward, kneel before Him, and ask Him to take over." About 300 people came to the front to kneel and pray. I asked them to cup their hands in front of them and speak their fears into their hands. Then I told them to raise their fears up to heaven and let God have them. Many were deeply and visibly moved. During the next week, I heard story after story of people in the community who were touched by men and women who had been at our worship services. People heard the gospel, God spoke to some in dreams, He healed the sick, and people were baptized in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, without anyone praying for them. A new day had dawned at our church.

STAYING FRESH

The previous Sunday had been incredible, but what about the future? How did God want us to steward the moving of His Spirit in our services on an ongoing basis? Instead of trying to figure it out on my own, I asked God to give me directions. I studied the Scriptures and pursued insight from leading theologians and scholars. Then, I worked with our elders to craft a "participation process" so every believer could be involved in the moving of the Spirit in our services. Here are the principles of Scripture concerning the public use of gifts and how we implemented them at The Oaks Fellowship.



The Corporate Gift of Prophecy

- All prophecy must be for edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3,24,25).
- God can give a prophetic word through any believer for the purpose of encouraging and teaching His people (1 Corinthians 14:31).
- Godly men and women should judge all prophetic messages (1 Corinthians 14:29). If God gives someone a prophetic message for the church during a service at The Oaks, we ask the person to write it out and bring it to the elders on the front row who will judge whether it is for now or later. We get at least two or three prophetic messages a week.
- The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet (1 Corinthians 14:32). For those who say they can't "hold it." Scripture says they can.
- Everything should be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:33). The public gifts of prophecy and tongues are active in the services at The Oaks, but they only occur when the lead pastor senses the leading of the Holy Spirit. I will say something like, "I sense that God is wanting to speak to us right now. If you have a word of prophecy or a gift of tongues, feel free to give it now."

The Order of Things: The Use of Spiritual Gifts in Contemporary Worship

(continued from page 79)

• We should know those who labor among us (1 Thessalonians 5:12). We ask that people who give prophetic messages or who exercise the gift of tongues in one of our corporate gatherings be a member of the church in good standing. Otherwise, they should write it out and give it to the elders.

The Corporate Gift of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues

- People should be zealous to be used in the gifts so the body of Christ can be edified, and not because they want to be seen or heard. The public gifts are for the edification of the church, not for the messenger (1 Corinthians 14:5,12).
- The public gift of tongues is given as a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22–25). The gift of tongues is a divine altar call for unbelievers. So at The Oaks, we always give a salvation opportunity after any public gift of tongues.

Paul gave these instructions to the church at Corinth because their Pentecostal experience had become self-centered and had no regard for unbelievers who might come into one of their services. These ancient principles give guidelines to conduct our contemporary services in a Pentecostal, yet orderly way. Pastors and elders must prayerfully consider how to best implement these principles in their church culture and setting — which means this could look a little different from church to church.

The instructions we have given at The Oaks have not hindered the moving of the Spirit in our services. In fact, they have given God's people a safe place to practice the gifts. After all, our worship gatherings should be a laboratory for believers to learn how to flow in the gifts so they can be more confident when the Spirit prompts them to use the gifts in the marketplace. This is one reason why we tell people they do not need to give a prophecy or interpretation of tongues in the King James English. Traditionally, my "papaw" would start out a prophetic word with "Thus saith the Lord." But that does not mean every prophetic word has to be introduced like that for it to be valid. In fact, Spirit-empowered believers will probably be more effective in Wal-Mart and Starbucks if they just speak "naturally supernatural."

MY HEART, MY HOPE

The Pentecostal movement has a long and storied history of letting the Spirit of God flow in services and through people. My hope is that we continue to do so with the same heart that Donald Gee wrote about in his book, *Toward Pentecostal Unity*, when he said, "We ought not enjoy deep emotion at the expense of shallow thinking. 'I will pray with the spirit but I will pray with the understanding also' is the scriptural way of putting it. The three golden strands of order, faith, and experience need weaving into the one cord that cannot quickly be broken. A Pentecostal revival in the fullest measure will

not stress one at the expense of the others but will manifest a shining witness to all three." 1

Gee's right. The key to having a lasting Pentecostal revival is the balance of order, faith, and experience. We must be both spiritual *and* strategic — Pentecostal *and* planned at the same time. God can tell you in advance what to preach and what songs



LIFE IN DEEP ELLUM

Dallas, Texas / Joel and Rachel Triska, pastors

The Art of Worship

transform e want to be a church for a community, not a church *in* a community," says Rachel Triska of Life in Deep Ellum, described on the church's website as "a cultural center built for the artistic, social, economic, and spiritual benefit of Deep Ellum and urban Dallas."

Pastor Joel Triska and his wife, Rachel, are the leaders at Life in Deep Ellum. Although the website lists Joel as the lead pastor and Rachel as executive director, they share both roles. "I take primary responsibility for the cultural center, and Joel takes responsibility for the faith community, but we really share authority in both areas," Rachel says.

Joel says he and Rachel think more like missionaries than pastors in their approach to this unique area of downtown Dallas.

"How do we connect with the people here? How do we learn to speak their language? We learned about their customs and their rituals, and then we contextualized the gospel for them. We have a cultural center because we felt that is what speaks the language of Deep Ellum," Joel says.

[Hobby Lobby] donated an empty warehouse and helped renovate it, then gave it to the fledgling church to turn into the

to sing, and both can be anointed and powerful. He can also tell you to sing a spontaneous song in the middle of the worship time or interrupt the service plan with a prophetic message, and it have tremendous impact. So what should we do? We should prayerfully plan *and* prepare for every worship gathering we lead. Plan every element of the service down to the last minute with

cultural center it is today. After doing thousands of interviews with people in the community, they decided to frame the cultural center around what was deemed as the four pillars of the community: music, art, commerce, and community.

Clearly, Life in Deep Ellum, which an agnostic friend coined "the anchor for the neighborhood," is intentionally different from traditional churches. However, Rachel notes the most significant difference is in the language they use.

"In the same way that our building is designed for this neighborhood, the language we use is for this neighborhood," Rachel says. "There's very little Christianese in our services. Everything is accessible, so someone without any church background can come in, and they're generally not going to hear words like *sanctification* or *justification*. We don't dumb it down; we just don't use some of the words that are jargon within the traditional Christian setting."

Life In Deep Ellum focuses on the arts more than other churches, attracting a lot of artists and allowing them — believers and nonbelievers alike — to express themselves at various events or venues throughout the cultural center, including Sunday morning services. But doing so doesn't compromise or water down the faith-based message the Triskas want to bring to the community. In fact, Joel and Rachel's Assemblies of God backgrounds and experiences come through in the services. About one-third of the congregation comes from a Pentecostal perspective. The rest are from other denominations.

"No matter what denomination someone grows up with, we try to stretch them to experience the strengths of other denominations. If people grew up Baptist, Rachel and I stretch them in the areas of the Holy Spirit."

In their Life Groups, the Triskas are seeing people gradually open up to certain ideas, such as the Holy Spirit.

"We've found God wants us ... in everything we do, [to] be very patient." Rachel says. "What we have found in working with a representative culture of the next 15 to 20 years is that you go a lot slower, and you trust the Holy Spirit a lot more to do the work that you can't do. You plant seeds, and you don't see a lot of fruit for a while, but eventually it starts to come."

Joel believes the growth of a church is not just about numbers as it is about impacting the community around them. "A good question to ask is: If we left, would they miss us?" AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri prayer-filled planning. But, along with planning, prepare your heart in the presence of God so your spirit is tender and sensitive to His leading. If, in the midst of the service, you sense the Lord is leading in a different way, your preparation will give you the courage and confidence to follow His leading. We must be careful as Pentecostal people to hold fast to the gifts of the Spirit, but hold loosely to our traditions of how the Spirit works. God can move in great power, whether you are wearing a suit or jeans. He can change lives with or without a hymn or a choir number. And Jesus can baptize people in the Holy Spirit like it happened with me — at an altar, in a camp meeting, with my dad laying hands on me — or it can happen to someone sitting alone, in a folding chair, simply asking God to be filled. Let's hold tight to what is Scripture and hold loosely to what is our personal experience and tradition. We must have a *both/and* attitude when it comes to being spiritual and strategic — Pentecostal and contemporary - if we want a lasting, Pentecostal revival.



SCOTT WILSON, senior pastor, The Oaks Fellowship, Red Oak, Texas

Note

 Donald Gee, *Toward Pentecostal Unity* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 18.





YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD

Discipleship for the **Other** Six Days

By Charlie Self

As we enter the second century of Pentecostal mission, the Holy Spirit is calling all believers to be and make disciples.

> **erry was happy that the missionaries had ample time** to share their exciting and harrowing stories of church planting and rescue efforts in a sensitive country. Along with calls for prayer and faith promise commitments, the pastor invited the congregation to come forward to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.



Discipleship for the Other Six Days

(continued from page 83)

"Spirit-baptism is God's gift so we can fulfill the Great Commission across the street and around the world. Come forward, whether it is your first time or you want a fresh touch from the Lord," he said.

Kerry went forward, prayed in tongues as the Lord baptized her in the Holy Spirit, and felt God's presence in a way she had not experienced since youth camp 15 years earlier. As she drove away, she saw the church's sign: "You are now entering the mission field." She was excited but felt uneasy. At home she had a 9-month-old boy with an ear infection (her husband stayed home so she could go to church), loads of laundry waiting, and a project deadline looming at work. She wondered if she should accept the mayor's invitation to the Arts Council, helping her town celebrate its centennial. What did it mean to "make disciples" in Kerry's everyday life? Kerry had led a friend to the Lord recently and several girls in her M-Pact Girls class made decisions for Christ. Still she wondered how the missionary language fit her daily routine.

GOD'S MISSION AND OURS: PENTECOSTAL PURPOSE

Our loving God is on a mission. From His promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his heirs (Genesis 12:3), and culminating in the person and work of Jesus Christ, God is offering reconciliation through the Cross (Romans 5:1–11; 2 Corinthians 5:14–6:2; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:15–22). Five times Jesus commissioned His followers as partners in sharing the good news (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8), and then God baptized these disciples in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, receiving power for witness (Acts 2:4ff.).

The sovereign move of the Spirit that birthed the global Pentecostal movement — from Azusa Street to Hot Springs, from India to Wales — created communities that were excited about the Lord's imminent return and passionate about evangelism. Some purchased one-way tickets to distant lands; others brought the experience of Spirit baptism to their hometowns. We still enjoy the fruit of this outpouring as hundreds of millions have come to Christ in the past century, and the Assemblies of God has grown from a few hundred to a global

movement of over 65 million.¹

THE MISSING DIMENSION

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In our enthusiasm for evangelization, we often forget that most of God's work in the world takes place through ordinary people who spend most of their waking hours working at secular jobs. While we affirm the priesthood of all believers (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9,10) and believe that God poured out the Holy Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:4; 10:34–48), we tend to separate everyday life from spiritual things and elevate those in full-time ministry, causing some laity to feel less important than the ministers they support.

God does anoint and appoint spiritual leaders, and He sovereignly calls women and men as evangelists, missionaries, and pastors for equipping God's people and evangelizing in distant and local regions (Romans 15:14–22; Ephesians 4:11– 16; 1 Timothy 3). Jesus' commission is for all His followers. The key to the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world is realizing that God wants more than the leisure time of the laity. He deserves "every nanosecond" of our day.²

WORK IS GOOD

God is a worker (Psalm 19:1–6; John 5:17), and He appointed humankind to take care of His world (Genesis 1–2). God made us in His image and to share His creativity. Work is all



NEWPORT ASSEMBLY OF GOD Newport, Pennsylvania / Gary Bellis, pastor

Reaching a Community Through Compassion

ary Bellis was a drug dealer and an addict when he walked into Newport Assembly of God in Newport, Pennsylvania, on Palm Sunday 1971. When he walked out, he was a born-again Christian. His wife, Mary, then his girlfriend, accepted Christ as Savior the same day.

Sensing God's call to ministry, Bellis enrolled in Bible school within months. Four years later, he was back at Newport Assembly of God as a member of the pastoral staff.

"It's the only church I've ever known," says Bellis, who now serves as senior pastor.

Bellis says his personal experience compels him to reach out to others with Christ's grace and compassion.

"It's just my heart," Bellis says. "There are so many people today in spiritual and economic poverty. We're determined to meet those needs and reach the community in any way we can. It's the center of everything we do." meaningful activity apart from leisure and rest. The economy is the social system of value exchange we participate in every day. Work is not a consequence of the curse. The Fall makes our work difficult, and we may find ourselves in systems that are oppressive (Ecclesiastes 2:10,11; 4:4). Our Redeemer makes our work meaningful (2 Thessalonians 3:6–13).³

In Jesus, God is forever a human being. There is no greater affirmation of our human identity than God's own participation in human life. Jesus spent most of His earthly life as a carpenter in the Galilean economy of the first century. As we grow in Christ, He calls us to faithful work.

Matthew 25 places all facets of life in perspective. The Parable of the Ten Virgins (verses 1–13) reminds us we must be ready for the imminent return of Jesus. The Parable of the Talents (verses 14–30) reminds us the Lord expects a return for His investment in us. Then we have the Lord's teaching on

The church of 350, situated near the state's capital city of Harrisburg, operates a compassion ministry that serves more than 4,000 individuals. Since its founding in 1994, Bread of Life Outreach has distributed more than \$122 million worth of food, medical supplies, and other products to the needy.

"We're not trying to be another social agency," Bellis says. "We believe that if the gospel doesn't go with it, we've failed. Compassion is the point of contact that shows people we love and care about them."

Members of the congregation adopt families and individuals through the outreach. They develop relationships with them, invite them into their homes for meals, and introduce them to Christ's love.

"Once they get to know them, they minister to them through acts of kindness," Bellis says. "Along the way, God opens doors for sharing the gospel."

The church has a 7,000 square-foot warehouse stocked with groceries, household supplies, and other goods. Three days a week people in need are allowed to shop for free. Large-scale distributions of boxed items and frozen foods are held semimonthly.

The church also helps supply seven other churches with goods for their food pantries. In addition, it assists other community outreaches, such as the women's crisis shelter.

Plans are under way to open a satellite church in neighboring Thompsontown, Pennsylvania, where facilities, including a 300seat auditorium, were recently donated to Newport Assembly. The second site will allow Bread of Life Outreach to expand into yet another community.

"Everything we do is compassion based," Bellis says. "We aren't just providing meals for the body. We're reaching deeper — not to promote Newport Assembly but to promote and advance God's kingdom."

CHRISTINA QUICK, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri

the Sheep and the Goats (verses 31–46), reminding us selfless service is a sign of true discipleship.

Hal Donaldson responded to the Holy Spirit's prompting to understand the broken, and years later Convoy of Hope is ministering to millions around the world.

Robert Padgett left a successful pastorate, and in the past two decades Assist International has networked business and medical professionals and resources for Christian causes around the world, blessing the needy and opening doors for missions.

Brett and Lyn Johnson are beginning their third decade of empowering business professionals to consult with companies and leaders, transforming ordinary businesses into Kingdom enterprises. Instead of separating work and ministry, Christian leaders learn that their business *is* their mission by understanding the ways of God for their work and awakening to the Spirit's leading.⁴

A factory worker in charge of a machine press paused from his repetitive and skilled work as the owner stopped to say hello. When the owner asked, "How are you doing today?" the machinist replied, "I am king of my domain." God wants all followers of Christ to know where they fit in the economy. God is working through the:

- artist who brings beauty in the midst of brokenness.
- athlete who plays fair and inspires teamwork.
- entrepreneur who creates jobs that are answers to many prayers.
- prayer warrior that lifts up missionaries and pastors.
- politician who serves and stewards resources well.
- volunteer who mentors a child.
- missionary planting a church in the midst of persecution.
- retail clerk who makes people smile and goes the extra mile.
- pastor who preaches the truth on Sunday and sits with a grieving family on Thursday.
- reporter who goes where the facts lead.
- family who creates a community garden.

DISCIPLESHIP: MISSION AND TRANSFORMATION

Our Lord is not gathering decisions — He is transforming men and women into the image of Christ (Romans 8:28–30; Colossians 3:1–4; 1 John 3:1,2). The work of the Holy Spirit is more than anointing for mission. God has given us a new nature and called us to live by the Spirit, allowing God to transform every part of our character (Romans 12:1,2; Ephesians 4:22–24). From the Beatitudes of Jesus in Matthew 5:3–12, to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22,23, to Peter's list of virtues (2 Peter 1:4–10), discipleship is Christ formed in us.

We find the framework for our transformation in the Great Commandment of Matthew 22:37–40. Jesus declared that above all other commands we are to love God with all our being and love our neighbor as ourselves. In these words we find our way forward for practical Christian discipleship.

Life in Deep Ellum in Dallas, Texas, is an outreach led by Joel and Rachael Triska. Their building is more than a place for church. They incubate new business, lease space to community

Discipleship for the Other Six Days

(continued from page 85)

groups, oversee an art gallery and coffee shop, and gather believers for discipleship and worship. By their structure they communicate integration and 24/7 Kingdom life as they are cultural, economic, intellectual, and spiritual leaders (across from farmers' markets, art galleries, and professional sports headquarters).

MORE THAN RULES

Too often we convey discipleship as a series of classes or set of disciplines. If we take the classes (usually basic doctrine, morality and spiritual disciplines, along with discovering our gifts and committing to giving and serving), and practice certain disciplines (prayer, Bible reading, tithing/giving, sharing the faith, serving in the church, etc.), then we are good disciples.

The classes and disciplines are good as divinely appointed means to a greater end. Their aim is transformation. The important question is *how do we biblically measure and celebrate progress in our discipleship*?⁵ Look at each of these and discover the shape of a life dedicated to God.

LOVING GOD: OUR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

God's love created us (Psalm 139) and sent Jesus for our salvation (John 3:16,17). He delights in us (Zephaniah 3:17) and rejoices when we love Him (Luke 7:9; 10:21). Our weekly worship, daily Bible reading and prayer, fasting, and learning God's ways help us grow more in love with God. Discipleship is becoming like the One we behold (2 Corinthians 3:17,18). We begin to measure progress by:

- learning prayer "without ceasing," that praises God, offers our burdens, and intercedes for others.
- cultivating hunger for God's Word and how it applies to all we do.
- looking for opportunities to share Christ.

LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

First John 2:9 and 4:8 proclaim that true love for God leads to practical love for others. Love is the motivation for sharing Christ with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 5:14). Love is a new disposition and discipline that comes from God's love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Healthy relationships can include:

- serving family members.
- being a team player at work and in our volunteer activities.
- learning wise boundaries with some people so we serve without burning out.

Whole Life Discipleship

Whole life discipleship is not a curriculum or

one-size-fits-all program — it is a way of life that applies in all types of communities and churches. Here are some practical first steps for a new season of fruitfulness for Christ:

Pastors

- You are the chief storytellers of the work of God in the community. Your language becomes the language that your church members use to describe their deepest experiences with the Lord and the significance of their everyday labor.
 Honor God's special calling to spiritual leadership and elevate the significance of every member as a Spirit-empowered witness.
- From the pulpit: Illustrate biblical messages with examples from everyday 21st-century workplaces that connect with the congregation.
- At the altar: Encourage people toward being filled with the Spirit and have times of commissioning for all fields of service and work.
- At board meetings and other strategic gatherings: Take time to pray with and learn from

congregants and community leaders about how the Lord is at work in their arenas.

- For websites, bulletins, and other communications: Share testimonies of answered prayer for healing, salvation, and new jobs, new positions of influence, new businesses opened, and new opportunities to reach out.
- Retreats and summer camps: Make every altar a place of surrender. Call all participants young and old — to be empowered for the Great Commission through their particular callings and places of work.

Children and student ministry leaders

 Encourage elementary, middle, and high school students to discover their natural and spiritual gifts and strengths and begin researching and refining them before they graduate and go to college or enter the workforce.

For classes and small groups

Focus on biblical evidences/outcomes of discipleship, not just completing lessons or imparting knowledge. Ask for feedback and create a culture of continual improvement.

Church members at work

 Pray continually and ask the Holy Spirit to create divine appointments to share the gospel with coworkers. Ask the Holy Spirit to bestow knowledge and wisdom for the work itself, as you offer your organization your best as an act of worship (Romans 12:1,2).

Sectional meetings of ministers

 Begin to seek the Lord on how your church plays a part in the "prosperity of the city [or county]." Perhaps several churches can unite and work with city and county leaders in education, business, social services, and cultural events to create a flourishing place for all.

Church planters — both pastors land core team members

 Learn about the economy and history of your location and find key individuals who will help you contribute to a stronger community. Ask, "How will people sustain their families in 10 or 20 years?"

For everyone who loves Jesus

Let's make Colossians 3:23,24, our daily decision: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

CHARLIE SELF, Ph.D.

LOVING OURSELVES: PERSONAL WHOLENESS AND GODLY SELF-ESTEEM

From Hebrews 12:2 we discover, in the words of Michael Card, that Jesus would "rather die than live without us." The Incarnation (John 1:14) is God's affirmation that being human is good. We are worth the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; Romans 5:9; Hebrews 9:11–14). The world perverts self-worth into pride and self-absorption or inferiority and self-hatred. Jesus calls us His brothers and sisters (Romans 8:28–39; Hebrews 2:11). Some ways to measure this are:

- learning to forgive others quickly and completely.
- overcoming anxiety and fear by allowing the Lord to heal our hurts.
- taking responsibility for our decisions and getting help for addictions and habits that hinder growth.

LOVING OUR PURPOSE

In addition to the general will of God for all believers, God has specific good works prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). We discover our particular callings by doing the will of God where we are each day. Destiny comes through discipline. Growth in this area is measured by:

- being good stewards of resources.
- understanding how our work connects with the Kingdom and integrates in our community.
- developing all our gifts in service of the church and world.

THE OTHER SIX DAYS

God's work takes place through believers who spend most of their week working. In the past 3 years, Valley Christian Center in Dublin, California (Pastor Roger Valci), has commissioned its members to over 18,000 hours of service through more than a dozen nonprofits in the county. Here is being "salt and light" every day.⁶

What if our testimonies included creating jobs as well as physical healing? Will we count being on the local school board as Kingdom service as well as Royal Rangers leadership? What if every church sought the "prosperity of the city" by seeking God about what they can do for the local culture, economy, and safety of the community?"

THE EXCITING DAYS AHEAD

As we enter the second century of Pentecostal mission, the Holy Spirit is calling all believers to be and make disciples. All the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12–14; Romans 12:3–8) are operational outside the church walls. Opportunities for witness come naturally as we carry out our assigned tasks with excellence and joy. May the testimony of the next century of Pentecostal mission be even greater as the Holy Spirit empowers all disciples for their arenas of influence.

Kerry can now drive home encouraged that the laundry, work project, cranky baby, and opportunities in the community create the stage where she can fulfill the drama of the Great Commission. All her daily and weekly disciplines now have a context for her to flourish. ■



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Notes

- Statistics from The Assemblies of God World Missions Office as of October 2012. Personal conversation with administration.
- 2. Christopher J.H. Wright's summation of the Lausanne Movement goal for global evangelicalism. From a lecture in October 2009 at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. "Every nanosecond" is a quote from Mark Green in a presentation in South Africa at the Lausanne Conference, 2010.
- See the excellent white papers and Economic Wisdom Maxims of The Oikonomia Network, an outreach of the Kern Family Foundation. http://www.oikonomianetwork.org/
- The work of Brett and Lyn Johnson, including resources for Kingdom discipleship through business, may be found at the following websites: www.repurposing.biz and www.bizcipleship.com.
- 5. For more details on new discipleship frameworks and assessments, see www. discipleshipdynamics.com and especially the latest version of "The Discipleship Agenda" for measurable evidences of growth in Christ.
- See "Pastor Roger's Tracts" at www.comediscovervcc.org, the website of Valley Christian Center, an Assemblies of God church in Dublin, California.
- Charlie Self, Flourishing Churches and Communities: A Pentecostal Primer on Faith, Work, and Economics for Spirit-Empowered Discipleship (Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press) 2013.





Open Hearts, Open Doors: **The Matthew 25**

By Wilfredo De Jesús



What is the message, the mission, and method of a Pentecostal Matthew 25 church?

should have known better. I had lived around addicts and prostitutes for years, but I did not really notice them. When I met Marisol, her eyes were blank and lifeless, and my eyes were opened. She had been on the streets for years making enough money to buy heroin for her next hit. In the beginning, it was easy. She explained, "I was going through withdrawals, so I was desperate to get money to get high again." A friend took Marisol to a street corner and told her, "Just stand here and look pretty. Someone will pick you up." And someone did. Soon her life revolved around her new career and the ever-deepening, poisonous whirlpool of addiction and sex.

Open Hearts, Open Doors: The Matthew 25 Church (continued from page 89)

We try to avoid people like Marisol. They smell bad, and they might pollute our kids, our cars ... and our churches. A few encounters like my meeting with Marisol shattered my heart. I had to do something. I told one of our staff members, "Go down the street and hire five prostitutes for an hour. Pay them whatever they charge. Put them in the church van and bring them back here to me." She did what I asked. Before she came back, my wife, Elizabeth, and I put a linen tablecloth on a table in one of the rooms in our church. We got delicious food, lit candles, arranged flowers, and brought out our best china. When the five women walked in the door, they were stunned. I welcomed them and invited them to have a seat at the table. As they began to eat, Elizabeth sang a beautiful song, and we gave each one a lovely red rose. I told them that Jesus sees each of them as a gorgeous, precious rose. These street-hardened women melted. They cried; they laughed; and they hugged us. One looked at Elizabeth and said through her tears, "No one has ever treated us like this. Thank you so much." As they got back in the van, they reached into their purses and pockets to give us the money we had paid them for the hour.

This was the beginning of our church's ministry to prostitutes. In the years since that dinner, God has changed many lives — including mine. Our church did not have open doors to these women until God shattered my heart with grief ... and then filled it with His compassion and love.

Comfortable. Peaceful. Clean. Safe. Pleasant. Convenient. The powerful combination of human nature and the promise of the American dream creates an expectation of a lifestyle that minimizes risk and maximizes pleasure. Many in our country have moved away from cities to suburbs and towns to get away from people who might threaten their sense of security. It makes sense. Who in his or her right mind looks for trouble or puts their family in harm's way?

But that's not the message, the mission, or the method of a Pentecostal Matthew 25 church.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not talking down to "you people" who are "hypocrites." I was one of the most needy, confused, awkward young men in the world. I



was one of "them." After I met Christ during a summer youth program sponsored by the city, I became involved in the life of the church. But somehow, I stopped seeing the desperate needs in the lives all around me. Marisol was a wake-up call, God's blaring trumpet to get my attention. My life — and our church — has not been the same since. We started living out what it means to be a Pentecostal Matthew 25 church.



CHRISTIAN FAITH CENTER (NORTH CAMPUS) Nampa, Idaho / Jordan Hodges, campus pastor

Church Without Walls: Embracing God in the Hallway

he North Campus of Christian Faith Center (cfconevoice.com) in Nampa, Idaho, was not seeded like the typical church plant. And at 26, Campus Pastor Jordan Hodges definitely doesn't look like the typical senior pastor. In fact, just over 7 years ago he was in prison, serving time for drug running in the Boise suburb of 82,000 people he now ministers in with wife Amanda, who is also a former drug addict.

In prison, the former hard-core drug user and occult follower accepted Christ at the appeal of Assemblies of God Motorcycle chaplain Rick Rigenhagen. But even though God was working in Jordan's heart, when he first set foot in Christian Faith Center, he didn't feel like he fit in church. "I loved God; don't get me wrong," he says. Being fresh from prison, he still smoked, occasionally dropped the f-bomb, and struggled with pornography.

That insight, along with a community-integration approach of doing church without walls, became the bedrocks of the North Campus plant that Jordan's spiritual father and main campus pastor, Monty Sears, asked him to spearhead. God spoke to Sears



clearly that Hodges was going to play a role in what God was going to do in this area, so he offered him a job working in the church office, right out of prison. Then Hodges did an internship and enrolled at Berean School of the Bible.

"We don't have a church background, which plays a lot into our method of ministry," Hodges says. "But we love Jesus, and know we are alive to see people set free from things that enslaved us."

The church started and continues simply by doing one thing well — evaluating people's needs and going to where they are. "We built up a ministry called The Storehouse," Hodges says. "We renovated a garage that sat on a block of land outside a grocery store, and we have 15 gardens where we grow food. Members of the church unload hundreds of pounds of food every week. We distribute door-to-door, tell them who we are, and pray for them. We have people fall over in tears and accept Christ right on the doorstep. We do the same thing with clothing. We also have a building that we divided into four apartments. Now we house people who are coming out of prison or addiction."

When the church needed additional funds to provide for the expanding outreaches, a lady who owned a candy company donated the business to the church. The profits from Sweet Hope now fund the various outreaches and provide employment to some of the church congregants.

The church has a heart for the lost and wants to do whatever it takes to reach the city.

"We've seen 275 people give their lives to Christ in the last 2 years, and most of them still attend our church. ... We are seeing people's lives changed every single week," he says.

"A lot of people struggling with issues and addictions stand in the hallway of the church. The hallway is the place where God begins changing their hearts. They don't feel comfortable sitting on the front row of the church, so they stand in the hallway. As a church, we embrace people in the hallway."

"We've set up an environment where it's OK to have issues. We deal with these issues. We just don't put on a front or pretend like we have it all figured out. If we are not going to embrace a messy kind of ministry, I don't think we are going to reach the world we are called to reach today."

AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri

TWO MOTIVATIONS: EXAMPLE AND PROMISE

One irony of the modern Pentecostal church is that our hearts and our actions differ from the One we call Lord. Jesus hung out with prostitutes, tax collectors, and sinners. In their culture, these were not marginal people. They were despised, hated, and rejected by the proud religious people who were sure they were better — much better — than these outcasts. But Jesus was "a friend of sinners." When we get glimpses of His interaction with them in the Gospels, we realize He did not just teach them from behind a pulpit and tell them to repent. And He did not merely nod to recognize them when He walked past them on the road. He did not just tolerate them. *He loved them.* He genuinely, deeply, tenderly, tenaciously loved them. And they knew it.

Shortly before the soldiers arrested Jesus, and the Jewish leaders falsely tried, condemned, and executed Him, He gave people clear and powerful instructions about His kingdom. Someday, He explained, every person will stand before the King of glory to give an account. Their actions will reveal the content of their hearts. Jesus told them: " "Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

'Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

'The King will reply, "I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" ' " (Matthew 25:34-40).

In some churches and communities, the categories of people Jesus listed are hidden or extremely rare. Countless families have moved away from places where they would have to face those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, and sick, as well as immigrants and convicted criminals. But caring for the disadvantaged has always been on God's heart. The Scriptures are full of God's pleas and directives to provide mercy and justice for outcasts and misfits — primarily widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. (See Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 146:7–9; Micah 6:8; and Zechariah 7:10,11.) In Ruth 2:4–10, Boaz protects Ruth, a hated and vulnerable Moabite woman, and he provides for her without enabling her.

In Jesus' parable, care for the needy demonstrated that the Great Commandment had taken root in the King's servants' lives and was bearing fruit. The compassionate people were showing they love God with all their hearts by selflessly loving others who could give them nothing in return. That's the motive and measure of Pentecostal compassion and the

Open Hearts, Open Doors: The Matthew 25 Church

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nature of a Pentecostal Matthew 25 church.

In *Crazy Love*, author and pastor Francis Chan observes, "People who are *obsessed* with Jesus aren't consumed with their personal safety and comfort above all else. Obsessed people care more about God's kingdom coming to this earth than their own lives being shielded from pain or distress."¹

27 million people are enslaved through human trafficking around the world — mostly girls who are 12 to 14 years old. The FBI estimates that 293,000 children in our country are at risk to be exploited in the sex slave trade.² In America, 46.2 million people (15 percent of the population) live under the poverty line.³ A recent study showed that 23.5 million



It is never easy to step into the lives of broken people, but we need to remember where we would be if Jesus had not stepped into our broken lives.

Jesus goes a step farther than any of the Old Testament directives to care for those in need. He said — both thrilling and threatening — that He identified so closely with helpless people that our actions toward them are actually toward Jesus himself. The promised reward is not some abstract thing when we get to heaven. Our reward is the King's delight. When God's grace melts and molds our hearts by the Spirit's love and power, we follow Jesus' example to care for "the least of these." And Jesus made himself the ultimate "least of these" by stepping out of the glory of heaven to be mocked, ridiculed, and murdered for us. When Pentecostal churches care for the disadvantaged in their communities, they are caring for Him, too ... and He notices.

TO THE STREETS

Without a plan, a strategy, and some courage, the power of these beautiful and inspiring Scripture passages can fade very quickly. We are not blessed if we only *feel* compassion for hurting, needy people; we are blessed if we *do* something to help them. Let me make a few suggestions.

Notice them

Get data from the Census Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, nonprofit organizations, or other agencies to uncover the hidden people in your community. Or just drive around the neighborhoods. Ask God to open your eyes to see addicts, poor people, immigrants, the mentally ill, single moms, pregnant teenagers, prostitutes, pimps, and all kinds of other people we usually avoid. In every town, city, and suburb, people (even those in gated neighborhoods) live within a few minutes' drive of trailer parks, rundown apartment buildings, and houses bulging with far too many people for the number of rooms and beds. The statistics are alarming. For example, people in our country needed treatment for drug or alcohol abuse.⁴ The National Task Force on Prostitution estimates that over a million women in the United States have worked as prostitutes, and most of them are addicted to drugs.⁵

Mark Skalny / iStock / Thinkstoc

Sometimes we notice those who are down and out, but not with compassion in our hearts and tears in our eyes. Many of us have deeply rooted prejudices. Subconsciously, but powerfully, we have divided the world between "us" and "them." We are suspicious of people who do not dress like us, talk with an accent (or do not speak English at all), smell funny, and eat strange foods. We are afraid "those people" will move into our neighborhoods, ruin our schools, take our jobs, and consume the services we pay for in taxes. If we feel threatened by them, we bark accusations. If we do not feel threatened, we just ignore them.

Invest in them

Needy people represent Jesus Christ. What is He worth? What are they worth? We can invest in them in countless ways, spontaneously and strategically.

In his workout, a pastor ran on a path near his house. Every day he passed an old man sitting on a bench. The man looked Hispanic, and he appeared to be very poor. After months of running past him, the Lord prompted the pastor to stop, sit next to the man on the bench, and engage him in conversation. It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship that lasted for a decade. They ate many breakfasts together, had wonderful talks, and became genuine friends. The pastor explained, "If I'd kept running by him every day, I would have missed out on one of the greatest blessings of my life. We had almost nothing in common, but love formed a bridge between us."

We invest in needy people by taking the initiative to start

a conversation, show some love, and be a friend. If we make them feel like projects (and we can check them off after we have talked to them or given them a few dollars), we will run them off and ruin the relationship. But if we patiently get to know them — and let them get to know us — amazing things can happen.

Pentecostal churches do not have unlimited resources, but all of us can adjust our budget and time to care for people Jesus loves. At our church, we made compassion-focused programs the heart of our ministry. We created The Dream Center where God could rekindle hope in the hearts of hopeless women. Our program has three stages and takes 2 years to complete. Today, over 300 women have come and gone through our doors. The results are miraculous. These precious women have gotten off drugs, left the streets, regained their sanity, and found freedom and purpose in a new identity as daughters of the King. They have learned to trust again, and shattered relationships have been restored. These women have learned skills so they can be employed in productive jobs.

You and your church may not create a Dream Center, but you can do something that changes lives. It takes an investment of time and money; but, even more, an investment of love and courage. It is never easy to step into the lives of broken people, but we need to remember where we would be if Jesus had not stepped into our broken lives.

Be wise

Motives are powerful but slippery. When we move into the lives of hurting people, we need to analyze carefully our reasons for investing in them. We may have many motivations: some noble, some selfish; some relatively pure, some complicated. Far too often, people give a few dollars or spend a little time to relieve a nagging sense of guilt, not to genuinely care for those in need. In an article in *Christianity Today*, Bruce Wydick evaluated worldwide child-sponsorship programs. His concluding warning fits all our compassion-driven efforts:

"The key to ending poverty resides in the capacity of human beings — and their view of their own capacity — to facilitate positive change. Indeed, every time we provide something for someone else in need, we send a subtle message to them that we believe they are incapable of providing for themselves. While some interventions are necessary, especially in the area of health, they come at a cost of reinforcing an inferiority complex among the poor. Good development organizations understand this."⁶

At our church, we work hard to care for broken, wounded, needy people, but we never want to steal their dignity and responsibility from them. Instead, our goal is to impart strength, not dependency; to enflame desire, not to promote passivity; to point people to the wonder, love, and power of Christ, not to try to take the glory for ourselves.

Do you want to be a Matthew 25 leader and a Matthew 25 church? Ask Jesus to break your heart for the forgotten and despised people in your community. When He does, you

will be ready to step into their lives with a powerful blend of humility, wisdom, and strength. The Spirit is looking for leaders like this. Are you one of them? ■



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The Healthy Pentecostal Church:Measurements and Best Practices

By Michael Clarensau

For the local pastor and congregation that long to become a healthier Pentecostal community, consider these five recommendations drawn from the Early Church's ancient story and our modern reality.

s a second century dawns for the U.S. Assemblies of God, questions of health and –fitness now rise in the windshield of one of the strongest denominations to emerge from the past century's Pentecostal explosion. What does it mean to be 100 years old and healthy? Frankly, those are not realities we typically expect to see side-by-side. To find the muscle-bound and athletic, we typically drive past the centenarian's home, expecting to find more measurable strength among the youthful at a park or local gym.





The Healthy Pentecostal Church: Measurements and Best Practices

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But while even the most profitable organizations find their life spans growing shorter and with the strength of older denominations fading dramatically in recent decades, there seems cause to believe that the Assemblies of God is far from finished in its quest to make disciples of this and future American generations.

Numbered among the relatively few Protestant groups to show growth in the new millennium, the U.S. Assemblies of God currently celebrates increases in number of churches and worship attendance, though it has not kept pace with its own exponential growth overseas. Still it seems a new century offers the possibility of continued expansion alongside other growing Pentecostal groups and congregations.

But after 100 years in a rapidly evolving culture, we would expect the product of past priorities to now govern our potential future. Who we have been and how we have grown have a way of shaping the parameters of what we will be. Just as dietary choices and exercise habits have a way of defining your body in later years, so our church-health habits will have much to say about life in the next century. We can see positive proof in how today's remarkable harvests on the African, Asian, and Latin American continents stem largely from the sacrificial seeds sown by a previous generation. In the same, but not so positive way, many local congregations facing decline in their seventh or eighth decade can look to lost priorities in their not-so-recent history as the beginnings of their not-so-distant ending.

At one time, Methodist leaders wrestled with the question, "Are we yet alive?" At its 100th birthday, the U.S. Assemblies of God must at least consider a pair of somewhat less ominous queries, "Are we healthy?" and "What does a healthy Pentecostal church look like?"

ARE WE HEALTHY?

While we could argue for numerous standards and measures for determining church health, Assemblies of God leadership has recently adopted a simple statement defining a healthy Pentecostal church: *a Spirit-empowered community of disciples following Jesus, fulfilling His mission.*

Three ideas about this community are clearly overt in this definition: Spirit-empowerment, discipleship, and Christ's



mission — to "seek and save what is lost." Let's consider them in reverse order.

First, how are we progressing as a missional community bent on evangelism? In the Book of Acts, the Pentecostal church's biblical road map, spreading the gospel is the pinnacle of Pentecostal purpose. Acts 1:8 affirms worldwide evangelism as the principal goal of Holy Spirit empowering. At the Church's first altar call 3,000 respondents punctuated the arrival of that power on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4). From there, we define the spread of the Church by the missional efforts of the apostles and the other Pentecostal saints who followed.

While the priority of the question, "Are we healthy?" is both present and future, we can hardly overlook the missional priority of the Assemblies of God's first century. With unapologetic focus on evangelism, both in the U.S. and abroad, this Fellowship's remarkable growth offers ongoing proof that a healthy church is an outward-focused church.

So how are we doing now? While some of our churches have lost their zeal for evangelistic effort and succumbed to the downward spiral of inward focus, the numbers offer better news than some might imagine. Recent years have seen



By the Power of the Spirit

In 2000, he heard God's direction in a dream: To create a church dedicated to prayer and full-gospel practice and teaching for immigrants. And in 2001, following God's instruction, his family relocated from Houston, Texas, to Columbus, Ohio, home to 10,000 Ghanaians, to plant a church in the basement of the Akomeahs' apartment. No one showed up for 3 months.

Then a local church allowed the Akomeahs to conduct services in a remote food pantry of Living Word Chapel. Before the first service, Akomeah went around to local businesses and neighborhoods to spread the word. Twenty-seven people showed up. Jesus Power evidence of a strong commitment to and success in evangelism. A wave of renewed evangelistic fervor seems to have arisen in the past 15 years, perhaps due at least in part to a similar rise throughout the evangelical world, an increase in church planting, and the emergence of a megachurch era. In 2011, U.S. Assemblies of God churches reported twice the number of conversions than they reported just 25 years ago. This evangelistic wave, while currently fading a bit, seems to still be pounding the beach with significant force.

Second, while there are numerous ways to measure discipleship, we can see one piece of good news in an apparent renewed passion for water baptism. Our rate of baptizing converts is actually improving, even amidst the increase in

Assembly of God now holds services in the 1,500-seat, 62,000square-foot Glory Temple, and holds the distinction of being one of the biggest African churches in America. In 2010, at the dedication of the present auditorium, the building was filled to capacity.

The church has also reached beyond their walls to plant other Ghanaian congregations in Chicago, Atlanta, and Cincinnati. It also sponsors Swahili and French congregations in Columbus, and has assisted in church plants in Detroit and Frankfurt, Germany.

"I'd like to take the DNA of Jesus Power AG and put it in all 12,300 Assemblies of God churches in America," Dr. George Wood said during the building dedication sermon.

Akomeah credits the growth in the church simply to the power of God through the anointing of prayer. "Youth are not interested in coming to church today because they don't feel the power of God. People come, and they are looking for solutions. They are looking for healing. If they come to the house of God and find solutions to their problems, they will stay."

The vision that God gave Akomeah for the church was Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me." He elaborates saying, though Jesus was God, He was a man of prayer. That is why the anointing was upon Him.

"People cannot be set free just by counseling and what they might know. People must be set free by the power of God through prayer. Our church's emphasis is on prayer," Akomeah says. God's miracles continue to manifest, as many infertile couples are able to conceive and healings are a regular part of Sunday morning worship.

In 2004, Jesus Power AG started 2-week-long Fire Conferences that focus on intercessory prayer and embracing the power of Pentecost in this generation.

"I see our church as in the days of the apostles, because of the miracle power of the Holy Spirit," Akomeah says. "If what is in our hearts is the fire of the Holy Spirit, that is what makes the difference. So I'm encouraging the pastors: education is very good, but they should not neglect the power of the Holy Spirit."

AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri

conversions. A decade ago we were baptizing one out of every four reported conversions, but that number today is drawing closer to 3.5. Our smaller churches (under 200 in worship attendance) are leading the way in "baptism efficiency" by baptizing one person for every 2.2 reported conversions. Our larger congregations (200+), where we have seen the greatest increase in conversions, report one baptism for every 4.7 conversions. While that number seems high, it marks significant improvement over the baptism ratios of the previous decade.

Likely we see the most glaring concern in our current reality in our pursuit of Spirit-empowerment, the final overt priority of our healthy Pentecostal definition. While, as stated, conversions reported in 2011 were 100 percent greater than that of 1986, Spirit baptisms rose by less than one percent when comparing those same years. Increasing numbers of converts without a corresponding increase in this critical step of Spirit empowerment means many congregations may be becoming less Pentecostal in both pursuit and practice.

Twenty-five years ago, our churches reported one Spirit baptism for every 2.83 conversions. That means we could anticipate that one of every three people finding Jesus through the ministry of our churches would also experience their own Day of Pentecost at some point. By 2011, that ratio had nearly doubled to 5.62, meaning that now we can expect approximately one in six of our reported converts to someday be Spirit baptized. In our largest churches (1,000+), the 2011 ratio of reported conversions to Spirit baptisms stood at 9.12.

Conversions come in many scenarios. Some might be outof-town guests or responders to outreach efforts where the opportunity to assimilate them into church life and membership is complicated or even impossible. Still, if we are producing five, or even eight, non-Pentecostal converts for every one that will be Spirit-baptized, might this not diminish our Spirit-empowerment over time?

In Acts 1, the mission necessitated the pursuit of such empowerment. Jesus' clear directive to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit (verse 4) underscored a reality the 120 likely sensed — *they needed His help to do what He was commanding them to pursue.* Surely our passion for that purpose draws us to that same need.

Our current realities underscore that, while we can argue for many priorities in the search for healthier churches, surely expanding our outward focus and rekindling our pursuit of Spirit-empowerment must top the list for Pentecostal churches. Indeed, the concurrently running worldwide revival sparked by these same priorities underscores their potential for America's churches as well.

WHAT DOES A HEALTHY PENTECOSTAL CHURCH LOOK LIKE?

We have long held the Acts 2 Church with fascination, mesmerized by its effectiveness against seemingly overwhelming obstacles. Why wouldn't we want to be like it? After all, we can see

The Healthy Pentecostal Church: Measurements and Best Practices

(continued from page 97)

the clearest demonstration of the Church's missional success in the fact we in the Western world, along with millions in the East, are still pursuing its mission more than two millennia later. Of course, we have our own obstacles of secularism, moral decline, post-modernism, and consumer mentalities to overcome, but we certainly hope that future generations will find us as effective.

For the local pastor and congregation that long to become a healthier Pentecostal community into our second century, I offer five recommendations drawn from the Early Church's ancient story and our modern reality.

1. Amplify the priority of Spirit-empowerment

Urgency for Spirit baptism is the first way we must express the priority of Spirit-empowerment. As in Acts 1, all believers need Spirit baptism so they can join the missional journey in which we have engaged. It is reasonable to assume that the disciples might have bypassed the Day of Pentecost entirely were it not for Jesus' clear direction. Spirit-empowerment mattered to them, not because of their immediate perception or understanding of its need, but because Jesus communicated its necessity. In the same way, what we say about Spirit baptism sets the tone for our new believers and our long-time members.

While our culture has come to view spiritual pursuits as reflections of individualism, Christ's true mission goes beyond life change to target world change. When we limit the reason for Spirit baptism to personal blessing or advanced disciple-ship practice, it takes on a more optional feel to Christ-followers. For the soon-to-be apostles of Acts 1, their Pentecost was essential to the mission Jesus had given them — the mission we still carry into our communities and global village.

Second, we must make available *opportunity* for that empowerment. Just as Sunday morning altars open the way for people to make conversion decisions, there must be settings where people can pursue the power of the Holy Spirit. With modern times necessitating limited meeting schedules for some — existing services are more tightly time-managed, Sunday evening services are less common, and consecutive night revival services have become impractical for many — it seems we have lost key avenues from yesterday's paradigms. If people are to pursue this priority, we must find an Upper Room somewhere.

Many churches successfully navigate this challenge through focused ministry weekends, often engaging the help of guest speakers who can bring proven effectiveness to this priority. Others use small-group ministry settings or weekend retreats where they can give focus to the quest for Spirit-empowerment. Conventions and camps still offer opportunities for the young, while older saints gather in prayer meetings with this special pursuit. The point is that we must find opportunities to receive Spirit baptism. The numbers indicate that Pentecost is not going to occur without intentional effort to make it a priority. We need the power from on high, and this often requires waiting for it.

Mobilization is the third, and perhaps most missing, element. To be a healthy Pentecostal church, we must connect

the dots between Spirit-empowerment and missional involvement. If our greatest Pentecostal question is whether or not we allow tongues and interpretation in our main worship services, then clearly we have moved into a management mode and lost track of the greater questions.

How can we connect Spirit-empowered people to the marketplace? How can we exercise this missional power out there rather than simply try to manage its expressions in here? If church-house Pentecostalism is our sole legacy, then our next generation may be our last. Like the Church in Acts 8, we need to be "scattered everywhere, preaching the Word."

Did You Know?

- In 2011, smaller churches (1–199 in average attendance) reported one conversion for every 6.2 in attendance, while larger churches (200+) reported one conversion for every 3.2 in attendance.
- In 2011, smaller churches (1–199) reported one water baptism for every 2.2 reported conversions, while larger churches (200+) reported one water baptism for every 4.7 reported conversions.
- In 2011, smaller churches (1–199) reported one Spirit baptism for every 3.6 reported conversions, while larger churches (200+) reported one Spirit baptism for every 6.8 reported conversions.

	2011	1986
🐷 ALL U.S. AG CHURCHES		
Average Worship Attendance	148.7	136.0
Conversions (per church)	37.4	21.6
Water Baptisms (per church)	10.1	8.9
Spirit Baptisms (per church)	6.7	7.7
🐷 SMALLER CHURCHES (1–199)		
Average Worship Attendance	68.8	73.1
Conversions (per church)	11.0	10.1
Water Baptisms (per church)	5.0	5.0
Spirit Baptisms (per church)	3.1	3.8
	`	
🖾 LARGER CHURCHES (200+	·J	
Average Worship Attendance	571.0	461.4
Conversions (per church)	176.3	84.2
Water Baptisms (per church)	37.3	30.6
Spirit Baptisms (per church)	26.0	29.7

MICHAEL CLARENSAU, Springfield, Missouri

Jesus gave the Church the verb "go" as its mandate, and yet we spend a great deal of our current energy trying to get our target audiences to "come" to where we are. Surely in Christ's kingdom both are essential, but the greater potential likely lies in what dozens of Spirit-empowered saints could be doing all week long.

To be a healthy Pentecostal church, we must renew the urgency for Spirit baptism, identify opportunities to pursue, and develop strategies for mobilization that justify both the urgency and the missional pursuit. Spirit-empowerment is mission-critical, and we need to amplify it if we will find our way to enduring health.

2. Shorten the gaps between faith and experience

It's likely that a church's intentional effort to more quickly move people from salvation to water baptism and the pursuit of Spirit baptism would increase effectiveness for both discipleship and missional involvement. Churches that offer an annual baptism service or a Pentecost Sunday-only focus on Spirit baptism cannot expect a year's worth of new converts to connect with such a limited moment. We must shorten the gaps.

When the apostle Paul encountered a group of Ephesian believers in Acts 19, his first question was whether or not they had received the Spirit's power. For the Ethiopian eunuch, the presence of water made his immediate baptism a no-brainer. Why then should we relegate acts of water and Spirit baptism to later calendar moments? These can, and likely should, be matters of immediate priority once a person has expressed faith in Christ. Healthy Pentecostal churches will provide multiple opportunities for demonstrating that faith through water baptism and the hunger for Spirit empowerment.

3. Multiply contact with the unchurched

Often, especially in churches nearing their own centennial celebration, long-term Christians have lost significant contact with the unchurched people in their communities. Over time friendships center on fellow believers, making our Sundays even more isolated from the "them" of our mission. To be a healthy Pentecostal church, leaders must prioritize repeated efforts to help their people connect with the unchurched.

Among the Church's primary functions (worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism), most see worship and fellowship as strengths of their congregation while evangelism is a proven weakness. Why? Likely because we engage the other four together. Evangelism, however, is the one assignment the church expects us to carry out on our own. So most don't.

To be a healthy Pentecostal church, we must find ways to engage the unchurched together. Relational outreach activities, community service projects, and even just time spent together off of church property help make our missional task feel less threatening to those who timidly carry the assignment.

4. Emphasize the "Acts" of the Spirit-filled

We most directly define the word *Pentecostal* by the connection to what occurred on the Day of Pentecost. Spirit baptism is the threshold for what it means to be a Pentecostal. But that does not mean the entry is to remain the focal point of the life that follows, any more than the front door can be the full experience of the house. We call the fifth book of the New Testament "Acts" for a reason. That's where its focus centers.

Healthy Pentecostal churches do not see Spirit baptism as a terminal experience. It is a launching pad, not a mere deacon qualifier. What comes next is a life of missional activity that, when added to the others in the community, tells a world-changing story.

While the fruit and gifts of the Spirit will always be worthy of significant study, a healthy Pentecostal church knows that these are symptomatic of an active Spirit-filled life — the former is the byproduct of such a life, and the latter is the Holy Spirit's manner of resourcing that life. The greater goal is the work achieved by the Spirit in the life of power we live — that "full of the Spirit" was the original deacon qualifier among Pentecostals.

There is certainly so much more that goes into being a healthy Pentecostal disciple — far more than we can measure on an annual report or fully discuss in a brief article such as this. But clearly, healthy Pentecostal people known for living active Spirit-filled lives will populate future healthy Pentecostal churches.

5. Give your best energy to new horizons

Finally, to be a healthy Pentecostal church we must pursue new life everywhere it can emerge. New people, new ministry efforts, and new church plants are where we can find new vitality. Certainly such awareness does not abandon what exists, but Pentecostals find their greatest expansion amidst new horizons.

The days of burnt-over fields are no more. Green shoots are sprouting through sidewalk cracks nearly everywhere the Church thought it had paved over. This post-Christian era finds our own nation among the largest mission fields in the world. In even our smaller communities, the number of unchurched significantly outnumber those who celebrate faith on Sunday mornings. Where we could not find a harvest a generation ago, today new and even greater potential is waiting to be found.

There's a healthy future to be had for America's Pentecostal church, but we may not find it on the road that many are pursuing. We find the right path among the missional-minded and Spirit-empowered among us. Be that, and when stories are written of tomorrow's church, yours will be among them.



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





By Carol Taylor

In an increasingly post-Christian culture, how do individuals, churches, and institutions nurture a discipleship in our students that produces oaks of righteousness with deep roots?



This verse reflects the investment we all long for in the lives of our young people. Like the shiny acorn we find in the woods beneath the grand oak trees, we see these young lives full of promise, hope, and potential. I believe that the heart of our Heavenly Father for our young men and women is to find root in good soil and become oaks of righteousness for the purpose of displaying His splendor in the world — a splendor that draws men and women to Christ. This is a powerful image.

Roots & Wings: What Young People Need From Us (continued from page 101)

In my years of investing in students' lives, I have seen His splendor displayed in beautiful ways as young men and women become the presence of Christ in the world. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they minister from the art gallery to the pulpit to research hospitals, through the varied ways we feed the hungry, care for orphans, and translate His good news to all the peoples of the earth.

There is a growing challenge, however, to help students find roots and wings in our increasingly post-Christian culture. Brenda Creasy Dean, professor at Princeton Seminary, reflects on the results of another large-scale study of the religious beliefs of American youth. She concludes that increasingly Christian spirituality is about being "Christian-ish" and has little to do with the triune God of Christian tradition or with loving Jesus Christ enough to follow Him into the world.¹

David Kinnaman's Barna Group research reports that nearly 59 percent of young Christians who were regular churchgoers during their teen years disconnected from church life either permanently or for an extended period of time after age 15.²

The Barna research identified six significant themes related to the departure of young adults from church: churches seem overprotective; the experience of Christianity is shallow; churches come across as antagonistic to science; churches are often simplistic and judgmental in response to issues of sexuality; young adults wrestle with the exclusive nature of Christianity; and churches feel unfriendly to expressions of doubt.³

In the face of such challenges, how do we nurture a discipleship that produces oaks of righteousness with deep roots?

DEEP ROOTS: NURTURING COMMUNITAS

The blessing of being rooted in a godly family initially cultivated my own discipleship. The daily patterns involved seeing my parents read the Bible, pray together, live with faith and integrity, and take my brother and me to a church that nurtured us in a community of faith. Whether in Sunday School, in youth group, in the sanctuary, at camp, at dinners and other church events, in service projects — it was life lived in community, anchored deeply in the Word of God and in authentic relationship with a very real triune God. And then I was



blessed to attend Evangel College (now University) and later Assemblies of God Theological Seminary where the community of faith in Christian higher education poured into my life, and my roots grew deeper.

Not every young person has the benefit of an intact, godly family. This is where the community of faith has an opportunity to shine. I think of the day a call came from a public school social worker to my home church, North Hills RIVER OF LIFE MINISTRIES Paris, Kentucky / Krista Hampton, pastor

Back to School Bas

Powered by Prayer, Passing the Torch

he prayer room was so piled up with junk you could barely walk in it," says Pastor Krista Hampton of River of Life Ministries in Paris, Kentucky, in reference to the condition of the church when she made the transition from interim pastor to senior pastor. According to Hampton, it was just one of the physical signs of the congregation's discouragement in its decline to about 40 members.

"The day I was voted in as pastor, God told me, 'You will not grow until you build a foundation of prayer. Get up from that chair, get up there, and clean out that room and reestablish a foundation of prayer in this church,' "Hampton reveals. "So that was the first thing I did. Then I put a sign up in that room, 'Nothing is to ever be left in this room again except prayer,' and I wrote my name on it."

Once Hampton established the leadership team and put prayer in its rightful place — before each service, as well as a Tuesday morning intercessory prayer and a Tuesday night corporate intercessory prayer — God began reigniting passion and love in the hearts of the people.

Much of the ministry of River of Life is about being intentional in getting outside the walls of the church to reach and love people. In fact, with the leadership team in place, the various outreaches

Church in Brea, California. A young teenager in a foster home went home one afternoon to find her bag of modest belongings on the front step. Would any family in our church be willing to make space in their home for the next year so this young woman could finish high school? Not only did a family open their home, they opened their hearts and became a family to this young woman, and the community of faith surrounded her. Not only did her academic performance begin to soar as she finished high school, but miraculously a way opened for her to attend



and ministries have grown over the years to meet the diverse needs of the community as well as the church.

Since taking the pastorate, Hampton has seen the church flourish in a short time to over 300 in Sunday morning attendance. The church sees at least one new convert every service and eight to 10 water baptisms a month. River of Life also has a growing Spanish-speaking service, Rio De Vida, with Ernesto Martinez as its pastor, as well as a thriving prison ministry to the female inmates at Bourbon County Detention Center.

"This is the greatest blessing of being a pastor. ... You really get to do life with people, and you get to see people come in who are broken," Pastor Hampton says.

Hampton equates the heart of the church with a focus on loving people and prayer, as well as dynamic worship and a burden for the lost. She is also a firm believer in the power of Pentecost and has seen that power profoundly change lives.

"We are Pentecostal to the bone. I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. My desire, by prayer, is to create an atmosphere for people to have an encounter with the Holy Spirit every time they come in here. And because of that, sometimes I get accused of being a bit long-winded. Because we wait to do what He wants to do. To be what you are meant to be for your city, you have to be true to who you are. As Pentecostal ministers, we owe that to the next generation to pass down the fire that has changed our lives." **AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri**

university. Today the community of faith at Vanguard University is continuing to pour into the life of this young woman who now believes that God has a good plan for her life.

In both of these stories, the communities of faith believed that Christ redeems, that the Holy Spirit still miraculously changes lives and grows oaks of righteousness from acorns that some would trample or discard.

The Latin word is *communitas* — "an intense community spirit, the feeling of great *social equality, solidarity,* and *togetherness."* This *communitas* spirit empowers strong relationships in which this kind of nurtured growth occurs. But the question is — with so much competing for the attention of our young people, with major research studies reporting negative views of Christianity and the exodus of many young people from our churches,⁴ with the ubiquitous use of electronic devices and young people texting on average 87.7 times a day⁵ — what role do individuals, churches, and institutions play as a catalyst for building up these oaks? How do we strategically disciple our young people today?

OUR WINGS: EQUIPPING A NEW GENERATION FOR KINGDOM IMPACT

During my years at Biola University, I sat in many final interviews with prospective faculty and the president. President Clyde Cook asked every candidate one final question: "How will our students know that you love them?" Prospective faculty gave a variety of answers, but the most profound answer came from a young English professor, "Because I actually do."

It is that simple. As wired and plugged-in as our young people are with multitudes of Facebook friends, they long for relationship and community. They want to know we genuinely love them, we are available and authentic, and we will invest in relationship with them. They want to know that we value who they are and the plans God has for their lives. One-on-one investment is imperative in this or any generation's spiritual formation.

We have unique and rich opportunities to create living and learning spaces to challenge our young men and women to experience God and pursue a consequential faith. And this generation of students is passionate and willing to pursue God's call with abandon. It is important to create opportunities for real relationship, service learning, missional living, global experiences — an array of opportunities that accommodate multiple learning styles with group interaction and real challenges where students can engage their heads, hearts, and hands.

But we cannot give what we do not have. So to produce Spirit-filled disciples and mighty oaks of righteousness, we must first be Spirit-filled disciples willing to live in community, with authenticity and transparency, and evidence of Spiritempowered lives.

Both Creasy Dean and Kinnaman stress the importance of relationships where "disciples are handmade, one relationship at a time," where the best translators of faith are people, not programs. According to Creasy Dean, young people who demonstrated consequential faith — faith that exhibited authentically engaged Christian lives — shared four important traits: they could tell a personal and powerful story about God; they belonged to a significant faith community; they exhibited a sense of vocation; and they possessed a profound sense of hope.

I see ample evidence of consequential faith in our young people today. I see it in their worship, in their scholarship, in their passionate hunger for God and justice, and in making Christ known in the world — as Spirit-empowered men and

\bigcirc Ideas for Everyone

1. Be Honest

You don't have to perform or shine up your mistakes to look like a "real Christian" or "good Christian." The monster of pretending to be perfect has already been laid to rest. If you want to reach this generation and every generation to come, go first with your story and give everyone around you the gift of going second.

- Jon Acuff (Kinnaman, 214,15)

2. Increase Your Expectations

We have done everything humanly possible to make church "easy." We kept the services short and entertaining, discipleship and evangelism optional, and moral standards low. Our motives were not bad. We figured we could offer Jesus with minimal commitment. But we ended up producing nominal Christians whose unchanged lives have deterred others from being interested.

There is a new generation rising up. Young adults are studying the Bible without missing the obvious. They see how shallow methodology is incongruent with the Jesus of Scripture who asked everything of His followers. They are bored with Sunday morning productions and long to experience the Holy Spirit. We need to challenge them with the awesome responsibility of praying for, baptizing, and making disciples of their acquaintances.

— Francis Chan (Kinnaman, 215,16)

3. Preach a Better Gospel

The consumer gospel that promises a life of happiness for now until eternity is wearing thin for street-smart networked young adults. This gospel of personal fulfillment is either bolted onto the busy lives of twenty-and thirtysomethings as a lifestyle improvement app or dismissed as a cheap market pitch. Either way, this gospel is powerless to help the next generation resist the riptide of consumerism, individualism, and materialism that is the dark side of our modern culture. We need to rediscover the Bible's grand narrative and teach an all-encompassing, multidimensional gospel.

— Krish Kandish (Kinnaman, 216)

4. Recover Imagination

There is a reason the Bible begins with creativity, anthropology, and vocation — because these are what it means to be human. Miss this and you will miss a whole lot about what it means to be a follower of Jesus in the here and now and in the life to come. Why Christians fail to emphasize imagination and creativity when God's Book is about being human clearly does is a great mystery to me.

— Charlie Peacock (Kinnaman, 217)

5. Recognize Giftedness

It is tremendously freeing to realize that what God has uniquely created you to do is exactly what He wants you to do — that you do not have to spend three-fourths of your life toiling at insignificant work so you can afford to go on a mission trip. All legitimate work is significant; all of it is valuable because it's all part of God's common grace for the common good.

—David Greusel (Kinnaman, 218)

women committed to being the presence of Christ in every vocational calling.

Investing in our young people takes time, energy, and resources. It is a costly investment; and, at every step, we hold them loosely, palms up, fingers open, and say "Fly!" Isaiah wrote, "Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (40:30,31). I love these two images — the mighty oak and the soaring eagle. We give our young people wings and encourage them to soar when we see and affirm God's work in their lives and invite them to be participants in God's work in the world.

Another demonstration of the power of communitas that gives wings to our young men and women comes from Royal Family Kids Camp. Several years ago my church began sponsoring a Royal Family Kids Camp. Each year now the RFK team spreads across the front of the sanctuary for a prayer of dedication. The team includes high school and college students, young professionals, mothers and fathers, and retired adults - all taking a week to serve and love foster children. Each year I think this is what the body of Christ looks like at its best in community in the intensity of a 24-7 camp experience. Our generation includes everyone living at this moment, not just segregated age groups. The Royal Family experience gives 75-year-old grandpas and grandmas a chance to go to the camp to love on the kids. Adult professionals are volunteering their time. Our high school and college students are at the camp ministering alongside them and living out the community of faith.

I believe in loving young people up close. In other words, we look for and create opportunities where deep personal engagement can take place. Programs and technology are important but only as tools to pour into someone's life. Christ spoke to the masses, but He poured His life into a very small group.

I look out across my campus knowing that it is not humanly possible for me to have a close, personal relationship with a couple thousand students. But I try to pay attention, as I am interacting with students, to those nudges and opportunities that say, "Invest in this one."

College campuses and great church programming serve as the learning backdrop for these interactions to draw all generations together in the true essence of *communitas*. But it takes grandparents who are willing to "foster" children from single-parent homes. It takes programs where families are able to adopt a college or international student. It takes students who feel called to ministry and whom the church mentors and empowers to preach a Sunday morning service. This mentoring can take place through intergenerational game night or city, stateside, or overseas missions trips where people of various ages and backgrounds are grouped and working together toward a common goal.

For me, it was Alice Deese who opened her heart and home to me when I was a graduate student at Florida State University. She was a simple woman of faith who would never have said, "Let me develop a mentoring program. My goal is to come alongside a young woman who is pursuing her doctorate at a research university." Love just poured from her. And there were other young, single women in the church, so why did she choose to open her home and her heart to me? She listened when God spoke to her, and she was one of the oaks that impacted my life and taught me the value of prayer and faith and seeing God's beauty in all people.

A SACRED TRUST

Every year I see the students who fill my campus and wonder about the plans God has for their lives. And occasionally I get a glimpse of those plans. This summer I had breakfast with a young couple who graduated a few years ago and today are approved Assemblies of God missionaries teaching English at a national university in China, caring for young orphans, and discipling young Chinese Christians. André and Joanna have a bold faith with deep roots and wings to soar.

They remind me of the sacred trust we have to invest well in our next generation. They also remind me how much we have to learn from this young generation so committed to living their lives as an unqualified "yes" to all God asks of them.

There is something powerful about nurturing the voice of God speaking through the life of a young person. At its best, authentic relationship so values the other person, and has the perspective that in relationship we all learn, grow, and are transformed.

In this article I have focused on nurturing roots and wings in the community of faith. In his book and on the website www. YouLostMeBook.com, Kinnaman offers more than 50 ideas for cultivating disciples in our next generation and concludes that "as we follow Christ, teach and study God's Word, live in the Spirit, and practice community with the saints, we will become the kind of disciples who make disciples." May it be so.



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Notes

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Excerpts adapted with permission from "Ideas for Everyone" David Kinnaman. You Lost Me. Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church ... and Rethinking Faith (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 214–18.







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Strange Fire, Strange **Truth,** Strange **Love**

By George Paul Wood

John MacArthur offers an almost entirely negative assessment of the Charismatic Movement in his new book, *Strange Fire.* The book requires a Pentecostal response, not merely to correct the record, but also to advance the cause of Christian unity.



QUEER "GIFI" GIVEN MANY.

Burbank Hall Is the Scene of Strange Services.

Gift of Tongues" Is Visited Upon Several Women.

Hindu Priest Tells How Hc
n 2014, the Assemblies of God completes its 100th

year of ministry. From humble beginnings in Hot Springs, Ark.,

our Fellowship has grown to encompass over 66 mil-lion believers in 252

countries, territories, and provinces. Faithful saints have planted and watered gospel

seeds during these years, but God has made them grow (1 Corinthians 3:6).

The AG is part of the Charismatic Movement, which now numbers over 500 million persons worldwide.¹ That movement has shifted the center of Christianity from the global North to the global South, from the developed world to the majority world. Arguably, its growth makes it one of the greatest revivals in the history of Christianity, as well as one of the most significant people movements of the modern era. And for that, praise God!

John MacArthur offers a very different — and almost entirely negative — assessment of the Charismatic Movement in his new book, *Strange Fire*:

Charismatics now number more than half a billion worldwide. Yet the gospel that is driving those surging numbers is not the true gospel, and the spirit behind them is not the Holy Spirit. What we are seeing is in reality the explosive growth of a false church, as dangerous as any cult or heresy that has ever assaulted Christianity. The Charismatic Movement was a farce and a scam from the outset; it has not changed into something good.

He concedes that there are "sincere people" within the movement who "understand the necessary truths of the gospel" despite its "systemic corruption and confusion." Nevertheless, he contends that continued exposure to "the false teaching and counterfeit spirituality of the Charismatic Movement" places them and others in "eternal jeopardy."

These are serious charges to level against any Christian, let alone an entire movement of Christians. As a Pentecostal and an ordained Assemblies of God minister, I am tempted to ignore them because they are both ill-founded and intemperately made. Indeed, I cannot recommend MacArthur's book either as a constructive critique of the Charismatic Movement or as a good representative of cessationist theology. Nevertheless, the publication of *Strange Fire* requires a Pentecostal response, not merely to correct the record but also to advance the cause of Christian unity.

WHERE WE AGREE AND DISAGREE

Regarding Christian unity, there are several points where Pentecostal readers can agree with MacArthur.

In Part 1, he articulates five tests of authentic revival from a reading of 1 John 4:1–8, informed by Jonathan Edwards' "Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God"²:

- 1. Does the work exalt the true Christ?
- 2. Does it oppose worldliness?
- 3. Does it point people to the Scriptures?
- 4. Does it elevate the truth?
- 5. Does it produce love for God and others?

As Pentecostals, we wholeheartedly endorse these tests. However, whereas we believe that the Charismatic Movement, on the whole, passes them, MacArthur believes it fails them.

In Part 2, MacArthur argues that contemporary spiritual gifts do not operate the way the Bible says they should, so they are inauthentic. As Pentecostals, we agree that some individuals within the Charismatic Movement practice the gifts in violation of biblical order. However, we disagree

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that contemporary spiritual gifts, per se, are inauthentic.

In Part 3, MacArthur turns from critiquing the Charismatic Movement to outlining the work of the Holy Spirit in terms of salvation, sanctification, and the inspiration and illumination of Scripture. As Pentecostals, we affirm the basic thrust of his pneumatology. However, we note that he has downplayed a major theme of biblical pneumatology — namely, that the Holy Spirit empowers believers for service.

These points of agreement demonstrate that our faith as Christians is significantly and substantially the same as John MacArthur's. Unfortunately, he has chosen to interpret the much smaller points of disagreements as matters of orthodoxy. On the whole, then, he situates the Charismatic Movement outside the camp, describing it as a "false church," "cult," and "heresy" that is "assault[ing] Christianity." Indeed, he calls for "a collective war against the pervasive abuses on the Spirit of God."

How does MacArthur arrive at this outrageous and offensive conclusion? First, he portrays the Charismatic Movement as rife with heresy and immorality. This is the burden of Part 1, subtitled, "Confronting a Counterfeit Revival." Second, based on his exegesis of Scripture, he argues that contemporary manifestations of the spiritual gifts of apostleship, prophecy, tongues, and healing do not match biblical criteria. Consequently, he says they are inauthentic. This is the burden of Part 2, subtitled, "Exposing the Counterfeit Gifts."

A careful examination of the evidence will demonstrate that MacArthur is wrong on both counts.

PORTRAIT OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

First, MacArthur portrays the Charismatic Movement as rife with heresy and immorality. Consider these representative quotations:

Heresy: "What we are seeing is in reality the explosive growth of a false church, as dangerous as any cult or heresy that has ever assaulted Christianity."

Immorality: "The halls of Pentecostal and charismatic history are paved with scandal."

Any large movement — especially one with over 500 million adherents — will contain problematic elements. However,



problematic elements. Flowever, MacArthur argues that the Charismatic Movement consists of these problematic elements, arising from its "bad doctrine." After describing a variety of scandals involving well-known charismatic leaders, MacArthur writes: "Scandals such as these permeate charismatic history. Trace them to their source and you will discover that they are rooted in bad doctrine. Put simply, moral and spiritual failures such as we have chronicled in this chapter are the inevitable consequence of rotten pneumatology — false teaching about the Holy Spirit."

The basic problem with MacArthur's description of the Charismatic Movement is what scientists refer to as selection bias — that is, "[a]n error in choosing the individuals or groups to take part in a study."³ He has profiled charismatic leaders who teach aberrant doctrines or have committed moral failures and then puts them forward as representative of the Charismatic Movement as a whole. This is like describing the moral lives of American presidents by studying only the ones who cheated on their wives. Select a different group, and you'll get a different picture. (Contrast the charismatics mentioned in *Strange Fire* with the Assemblies of God adherents profiled in Gary B. McGee's *People of the Spirit*, and you'll see what I mean.⁴) Because MacArthur's description of charismatics suffers from selection bias, it cannot be taken seriously as a representative description.

MacArthur is aware of a report on charismatic beliefs and practices that is representative of the movement. Titled *Spirit and Power*, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life published the report in 2006.⁵ MacArthur cites both it and studies based on it to prove that "prosperity theology" is a characteristic belief of the Charismatic Movement. (More on that later.) Unfortunately, he fails to inform readers of *Strange Fire* about the report's broader conclusions regarding the Charismatic Movement's orthodoxy, morality, piety, evangelistic intensity, and social engagement.

Consider these representative quotations from the report:

Orthodoxy: "renewalists [i.e., Pentecostals and charismatics] also stand out for the intensity of their belief in traditional Christian doctrines and practices." This is evident, for example, in their view of the Bible. "[M]ajorities of non-renewalist Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word; but this view is even more common among pentecostals [sic] than among non-renewalist Christians."

Morality: "pentecostals [sic] often stand out for their traditional views on a wide range of social and moral issues, from homosexuality to extramarital sex to alcohol consumption."

Piety: "renewalists also tend to engage in more traditional Christian practices at somewhat higher rates than do non-renewalists" — i.e., practices such as church attendance, private prayer, and frequent Bible reading.

Evangelistic intensity: "Majorities of pentecostals [sic] in all 10 countries believe that Christians have a duty to convert people to Christianity." Interestingly, "the duty to spread the gospel tends to be felt more strongly by renewalists than by non-renewalists." Why? Because of "the widespread belief among pentecostals [sic] that faith in Jesus Christ represents the exclusive path to eternal salvation"; even here, Pentecostals "stand out for the intensity of their belief."

Social engagement: "strong majorities of both pentecostals [sic] and charismatics believe that if enough people were brought to Christ, social ills would take care of themselves. ... However, renewalists also see it as their duty to work for justice for the poor."

Does a movement that matches Pew's description sound like a "false church" to you? Would a "false church" of "renewalist Christians" be "more intense" about their orthodox doctrine, conservative morality, warm piety, evangelistic intensity, and social engagement than "non-renewalist Christians"? Of course not! But if not, then charismatic belief and practice cannot be the "inevitable consequence" of "rotten pneumatology," as MacArthur claims. If a movement is characterized by orthodoxy

(right believing) and orthopraxy (right living), then the Holy Spirit is genuinely at work in its midst — and this according to MacArthur's own five tests of authentic revival.

What about prosperity theology, however? Doesn't its prevalence among charismatics prove that "the extreme has become mainstream"? Indeed, doesn't it offer an alternative explanation for the growth of the Charismatic Movement? According to MacArthur, yes. He writes: "In reality, the rapid expansion of charismatic theology is primarily due to the popularity of the prosperity gospel. It is not the convicting work of the Holy Spirit that is drawing converts, but the allure of material possessions and the hope of physical healing."

Set aside the false disjunction in MacArthur's last sentence. After all, why can't the church grow because of both the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and the hope for God's healing and material provision? Jesus didn't criticize the crowds who came to Him for healing (Luke 4:38–44), after all, so why should we today?

Instead, focus on the ambiguity of the term *prosperity gospel*. MacArthur wants readers to associate that term with the Word of Faith Movement. If the prosperity gospel is prevalent among charismatics, if it is identical to Word of Faith theology, and if that theology is heretical, then the Charismatic Movement is shot through with heresy.

I hold no brief for the Word of Faith Movement, and I share many of MacArthur's concerns with its theological errors. (I'm not sure they always rise to the level of heresy, however.) Nonetheless, a careful reading of the evidence from *Spirit and Power* suggests a more sympathetic interpretation of the prosperity gospel than MacArthur allows.

Pew did not ask interviewees whether they agreed with Word of Faith theology, after all. They asked interviewees to what extent they agreed with the following two statements:

- "God will grant material prosperity to all believers who have enough faith."
- "God will grant health and relief from sickness to believers who have enough faith."

Overbroad statements betray MacArthur's weak grasp of the history of the Charismatic Movement, even as they reveal a well-honed skill at libeling an entire class of Christians.

Obviously, Word of Faith adherents will agree with these statements. But so might people who have read and taken to heart the Bible's robust promises of God's provision for and healing of believers in passages such as Matthew 6:25-34 and James 5:13-16. If, on the basis of such passages, you agree to some extent with Pew's statements, you wind up on John MacArthur's naughty list. On the other hand, if you disagree to some extent with these biblical promises, don't you show yourself to be a person of "little faith"? My point here is not to defend Word of Faith theology but simply to demonstrate that the route to

prosperity theology does not necessarily pass through Word of Faith teaching.

Moreover, the meaning of the word prosperity varies depending on context. One of the authorities MacArthur cites against prosperity theology is Signs and Wonders by Paul Alexander.6 Just as MacArthur passed over exculpatory information about charismatics in Spirit and Power, so also he passes over exculpatory information in Signs and Wonders. Relating a disagreement he had with a Nigerian Pentecostal named Lawrence Nwankwo concerning whether God wants Christians to prosper - Alexander argued no, Nwankwo argued yes - Alexander writes: "I was arguing against overabundance, hoarding, greed, exorbitance, and consumerism - and for enough for a healthy life. I argued for a simple existence. He was arguing against starvation, poverty, sickness, and hopelessness - and for enough for a healthy life. He argued against subsistence and for a simple life. I was looking up at the mountain of money and trying to bring the wealthy down; he was looking down into the valley of despair and trying to bring the poor up."

Once he realized that the word *prosperity* meant having "enough for a healthy life," Alexander realized that he agreed with Nwankwo. God wants people to prosper *in that way*. MacArthur wants readers to assume that prosperity means the greed of North American televangelists, who already have more than enough. Why not assume instead that Pew's interviewees hold Nwankwo's understanding of prosperity? Given that most of them come from poor countries, that would seem the more reasonable — and less uncharitable — assumption.

Indeed, when you consider that the prosperity gospel is not identical to Word of Faith theology and that the meaning of prosperity varies by context, it becomes easier to make sense of a point Pew raises but MacArthur ignores: Prosperity theology is prevalent among non-charismatic Christians too. "In all countries," according to *Spirit and Power*, "majorities of all Christians believe that God will grant good health and relief from sickness to believers who have enough faith.... Many Christians around the world also believe that God will grant material pros-

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perity to all believers who have enough faith, though this belief is somewhat less common, and held less intensely, than belief in God granting good health."

In summary, contrary to MacArthur's description of it, the Charismatic Movement is not rife with heresy and immorality. A representative sample of charismatic belief and practice shows it to be orthodox, moral, pious, intensely evangelistic, and socially engaged. And while Word of Faith theology is indeed troublesome and demands a response, there is a better and more sympathetic way to understand the Charismatic Movement's prosperity theology than MacArthur allows.

EXEGESIS OF SCRIPTURE

Second, based on his exegesis of Scripture, MacArthur argues that contemporary manifestations of the spiritual gifts of apostleship, prophecy, tongues, and healing do not match biblical criteria. He says they are inauthentic, rising from some source other than the Holy Spirit. Based on those assumptions, he concludes continuationism is most likely false, and cessationism is likely true.

(Continuationism is "the claim that all the miracles and spiritual gifts described in Acts and 1 Corinthians are still available to Christians today, that prophetic gifts and signs and wonders were not unique to the apostolic era, and that there is no reason to believe one or more of these phenomena has ceased." Cessationism is the opposite claim.)

Pentecostals and charismatics may find themselves nodding in agreement with certain aspects of MacArthur's argument. For example, I am sympathetic with MacArthur's critiques of C. Peter Wagner's views on apostleship, the notion of "fallible prophecy," and Benny Hinn's healing ministry. I don't think these positions are representative of the Charismatic Movement. I also don't believe arguments against them should count as arguments against the Movement as a whole.

Let's take a closer look at MacArthur's arguments regarding apostleship, prophecy, tongues, and healing.

APOSTLESHIP

MacArthur argues that, by definition, continuationists must believe that the spiritual gift of apostleship (1 Corinthians 12:28, 29; Ephesians 4:11) is still available to Christians today. As he reads it, the New Testament articulates three criteria of apostleship:

- 1. An apostle had to be a physical eyewitness of the resurrected Christ.
- 2. An apostle had to be personally appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- An apostle had to be able to authenticate his apostolic appointment with miraculous signs.

MacArthur concludes: "These qualifications alone conclusively demonstrate that there are no apostles in the church today," since no contemporary has seen Jesus personally, been commissioned for ministry by him personally, or has performed



LIGHTHOUSE WORSHIP CENTER Gloucester, Virginia / Ken Cramer, pastor

Living Out Pentecost

n a recent Sunday morning, the congregation at Lighthouse Worship Center in Gloucester, Virginia, prayed for 15 laypeople charged with taking the gospel beyond the sanctuary walls.

As Pastor Ken Cramer stepped to the pulpit to begin his message, the ministry team headed out the doors to reach Sunday bargain hunters at a local flea market. Within an hour, the group led 10 shoppers to Christ.

The church dispatches such ministry teams every other Sunday following morning worship. Like the apostles Jesus sent out in Matthew 10, they share the gospel and pray for the sick. They also hand out bottles of cold water and distribute Christian literature.

Cramer believes the Great Commission is all about Spirit-filled disciples of Jesus proclaiming God's grace and demonstrating His power everywhere. He says this is the model Lighthouse Worship Center seeks to follow — on Sunday mornings and throughout the week.

"The power of God isn't just a biblical revelation but a personal revelation," Cramer says. "We regularly have testimonies of God working in people's lives outside the church."

Cramer says one congregant, sensing God's prompting, recently offered to pray with an injured person in her workout group at a local

the number and variety of miracles that were performed by the New Testament apostles.

Furthermore, he argues, Paul claimed to be the last apostle (1 Corinthians 15:8,9), so none came after him. The apostles were "revelatory agents of God," so unless we are willing to reopen the biblical canon, apostles do not continue to receive revelations today. And Paul described the apostles as the "foundation" of the church (Ephesians 2:19,20) in a passage that "means nothing if it doesn't decisively limit apostleship to the earliest stages of church history. After all, a foundation is not something that can be rebuilt during every phase of construction. The foundation is unique, and it is always laid first, with the rest of the structure firmly resting above it."

Taken individually and collectively, MacArthur thinks these lines of reasoning are fatal to contemporary manifestations of apostleship specifically and to continuationism generally. "To acknowledge [that apostleship has ceased] is to acknowledge



Crame

fitness center. The simple gesture transformed an exercise class into a prayer meeting as a crowd gathered to hear the woman pray and deliver prophetic words of knowledge for more than 3 hours.

Cramer says the church's evangelistic focus arises from its Pentecostal experience.

"I find that when people make a point of being filled — and staying filled — with the Spirit of God, it affects the atmosphere and the environment of everything we do," Cramer says. "There's more dimensions to Pentecost than just speaking in tongues. Through the power of the Spirit, we have the capacity to be a witness and bring answers from God to a world in need."

The church was in crisis when Cramer stepped into the role of senior pastor 15 years ago. Reeling from the moral failure of a previous leader, nearly half the congregation had walked away.

Early on, Cramer relied on the Holy Spirit to bring healing and renewal

"I developed a ministry of leading people to Spirit baptism," Cramer says. "I would look around in the sanctuary and say, 'Lord, lead me to someone who needs to be filled with the Holy Spirit.' That has continued to be an emphasis as our younger leaders have also learned the importance of allowing the Spirit to work and move."

Today, with an average Sunday morning attendance of 350, the church continues to grow and influence its community. Cramer says the congregation's goal is to impact 2,000 people each month through various evangelistic and compassion outreaches.

"We're learning the value of being a good neighbor, encountering God, loving people, and serving others," Cramer says. "That can't just be something the pastor teaches and preaches. We have to live it."

CHRISTINA QUICK, freelance writer, Springfield, Missouri

the foundational premise on which cessationism is based. If apostleship ceased, it demonstrates that not everything that characterized the New Testament church still characterizes the church today."

Interestingly, in its position paper, "Apostles and Prophets,"7 the Assemblies of God follows a similar line of argument to MacArthur's and reaches a similar conclusion: "Since the New Testament does not provide guidance for the appointment of future apostles, such contemporary offices are not essential to the health and growth of the church, nor its apostolic nature."

Given that the Assemblies of God is the largest denomination within the Charismatic Movement — accounting for approximately one-eighth of the whole — the similarity of its reasoning and conclusion to MacArthur's suggest that at least some charismatics adhere to a more qualified definition of continuationism than MacArthur lets on. Indeed, he admits that C. Peter Wagner's New Apostolic Reformation "borrowed the apostolic emphasis

of Latter Rain theology and incorporated it into his Third Wave teachings," which means it's not characteristic of either classical Pentecostalism or the charismatic revival in the mainline churches. If that's the case, however, then the cessation of the apostolic office is not fatal to continuationism, which some Pentecostals and charismatics define differently than MacArthur.

Additionally, MacArthur's criteria of apostleship need to be challenged. MacArthur seems to limit apostleship to "the Twelve and Paul." This overlooks crucial differences between the Twelve and Paul. The Twelve, but not Paul, were eyewitnesses of Christ "the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us" (Acts 1:21,22). The Twelve, but not Paul, are the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:14). MacArthur's concept of apostleship overlooks the fact that the New Testament applies the term apostolos ("apostle") to a wider group of people than the Twelve and Paul, including Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14); James and others, distinct from the Twelve (1 Corinthians 15:7); Silas and Timothy (1 Thessalonians 2:6, cf. 1:1); and possibly Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:9, cf. v. 6). The New Testament does not say whether Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy were physical eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ. It does say, however, that prophets (rather than Jesus personally) appointed Barnabas and Timothy for ministry (Acts 13:2,3; 1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14). In his conflict with the false apostles at Corinth (2 Corinthians 11–12), Paul didn't make use of either criterion 1 or 2, even though these would have been probative. (Indeed, if apostleship were limited to the Twelve and Paul, why didn't Paul simply point out that the false apostles were neither the Twelve nor Paul?)

Finally, MacArthur's concept of apostleship excludes at least two things that Paul considered fundamental: to "preach the gospel where Christ was not known" (Romans 15:14-22; cf. Acts 9:15,16; 22:21; 25:15-23) and suffering (2 Corinthians 11: 16-33; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:9-13), which seem to be conjoined in Paul's mind. Recognizing the connection between apostleship and preaching the gospel, the Assemblies of God's position paper concludes that while the apostolic office may have ceased, the apostolic function has not.

One final point: Though MacArthur makes much of the "foundation" argument in Ephesians 2:20, I'm not sure it's as conclusive as he thinks. For one thing, he is asking that passage a question that it was not designed to answer. His question is, "Has the gift of apostleship ceased?" The question that passage was designed to answer is, "How are Gentiles saved and incorporated into the people of God?" The only passage in the New Testament that explicitly asks when the spiritual gifts will cease is 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, and its answer is "when completeness comes," i.e., the Eschaton. For another thing, and this cannot be stressed enough, "foundation" is a metaphor, and metaphors should not be pressed too far. If pressed too far, we would have to conclude that Paul could not be part of the church's apostolic foundation because he described himself as a "wise builder" who laid that foundation in 1 Corinthians 3:10. Obviously, the

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builder cannot also be the foundation. And doesn't Revelation 21:14 describe the foundation of the New Jerusalem, which is the Church, in terms of "the twelve apostles of the Lamb"? Obviously, Paul was not a member of the Twelve.

PROPHECY

Regarding contemporary manifestations of prophecy, MacArthur argues that the Bible lists three criteria for identifying false prophets:

- 1. Any self-proclaimed prophet who leads people into false doctrine and heresy is a false prophet.
- 2. Any self-proclaimed prophet who lives in unrestrained lust and unrepentant sin shows himself to be a false prophet.
- 3. If someone declaring himself a prophet proclaims any supposed "revelation from God" that turns out to be inaccurate or untrue, he must be summarily rejected as a spokesman for God.

With these three criteria in mind, MacArthur argues that "charismatics have made presumptuous prophecy a hallmark of their movement." As proof of this, he cites "the various heresies that are tolerated and even promoted within charismatic ranks" (criterion 1), as well as "the numerous scandals that continually plague the lives of the most visible and recognized charismatic leaders" (criterion 2), that he describes in Part 1 of the book.

I've already demonstrated that MacArthur's description of the Charismatic Movement suffers from selection bias and is therefore unrepresentative, so we can agree with his critique of some charismatic leaders' theological errors and moral failures without thinking that they are representative of the whole.

Unfortunately, this selection bias also plagues his discussion of "inaccurate predictions" (criterion 3). Why should we assume that the inaccurate predictions of Mike Bickle, Bob Jones, Benny Hinn, and Rick Joyner — the examples MacArthur cites by name — are representative of charismatic prophecy? Why should we agree with his statement, "From its inception by Charles Fox Parham to its most ubiquitous modern representative in Benny Hinn, the entire movement is nothing more than a sham religion run by counterfeit ministers"?

The entire movement? Nothing more? Overbroad statements like this betray MacArthur's weak grasp of the history of the Charismatic Movement, even as they reveal a well-honed skill at libeling an entire class of Christians.

At the end of the day, however, inaccuracy isn't MacArthur's real concern. "Not all who believe God speaks to them make prophetic pronouncements as outlandish as those broadcast by charismatic televangelists or the Kansas City Prophets," he writes. "But they still believe God gives them extrabiblical messages — either through an audible voice, a vision, a voice in their heads, or simply an internal impression. In most cases, their 'prophecies' are comparatively trivial. But the difference between them and Benny Hinn's predictions is a difference only of scale, not of substance."

His real concern, then, is the very possibility of "extrabiblical revelation." He writes: "modern evangelicalism's infatuation with extrabiblical revelation is ... a return to medieval superstition and a departure from our fundamental conviction that the Bible is our sole, supreme, and sufficient authority for all of life. It represents a wholesale abandonment of the Reformation principle of sola Scriptura."

Others will have to determine whether MacArthur has interpreted the Reformation correctly. What needs to be pointed out is the simple fact that the Bible itself, on a number of occasions, reports that people prophesied without reporting what they prophesied. Where are the extrabiblical revelations of Israel's 72 elders (Numbers 11:22–30); Saul, the "procession of prophets" surrounding Samuel, and "Saul's men" (1 Samuel 10:5–7,9–11; 19:18–24); "the company [or sons] of the prophets" (2 Kings 9:1–13); the prophets who went down from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 11:27–30); the Antioch prophets Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen (Acts 13:1–3); Philip's "four unmarried daughters" (Acts 21:9); or the Roman and Corinthian congregational prophets (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:28,29)?

Moreover, doesn't the ministry of Jesus Christ itself point to the existence of extrabiblical revelation? Jesus Christ is "the Word [become] flesh" (John 1:14). Regarding His deeds, the Gospel says, "he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son does also" (5:19). Regarding words, Jesus said, "whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say" (12:50). And yet, John tells us, Jesus "did many other things as well" that are not recorded in the Gospels. Indeed, they are too numerous to put into books: "I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (21:25). Isn't this the very definition of *extrabiblical* revelation?

The point is this: MacArthur demonstrates an (ironically) extrabiblical wariness toward extrabiblical revelation. His argument seems to be at odds with the Bible itself. This problem flows from his misidentification of canon and prophecy. The entire canon is prophetic (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:20,21), but not every prophecy is canonical, as I just illustrated. Scripture is the *kanon* (literally, "measuring rod" or "rule") against which all alleged prophecies must be evaluated, but it is not the sum total of all that God has said, is saying, or will say. Therefore, it is appropriate to "eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

TONGUES

Regarding speaking in tongues, MacArthur argues that tonguesspeech in the New Testament always involved speaking a human language, whereas tongues-speech today never involves speaking a human language. Therefore, contemporary tongues-speech is "gibberish" that has nothing to do with the New Testament spiritual gift.

There are good reasons to doubt both prongs of MacArthur's argument. Anecdotal evidence indicates that at least some

contemporary tongues-speech involves human languages. For example, *Global Witness to Pentecost* by Jordan Daniel May compiles 88 testimonies from reputable sources where one person spoke in a tongue that a second person recognized as a human language.⁸ Admittedly, such occurrences are rare. Nevertheless, if they happen, then what MacArthur himself considers biblical tongues-speech continues today.

More importantly, there are several reasons to question whether the New Testament teaches that tongues-speech is always a human language. According to MacArthur, "the only detailed description of the true gift of tongues in Scripture is found in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost — a text that clearly identifies this gift as the supernatural ability to speak genuine, meaningful, translatable languages" (Acts 2:4,6–11). This statement is false. Acts 2 is not "the only detailed description of the true gift of tongues." If anything, 1 Corinthians 12–14 contains an even more detailed description of tongues. Acts 2 is simply the only description that contains the detail that the tonguesspeech of Pentecost involved human languages. A different understanding of tongues-speech emerges through a close reading of 1 Corinthians 12–14.

MacArthur demonstrates an (ironically) extrabiblical wariness toward extrabiblical revelation. His argument seems to be at odds with the Bible itself. This problem flows from his misidentification of canon and prophecy.

First, whereas Acts 2:6–11 assumes that tongues-speech is naturally intelligible to hearers, 1 Corinthians 12–14 assumes that it is naturally unintelligible to them. Paul writes, "anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit" (14:2). And, "when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say 'Amen' to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying?" (14:16). And, "if ... everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?" (14:23).

Second, whereas Acts 2:6–11 assumes that the interpretation of tongues is a natural process in which a native speaker understands his or her own language, 1 Corinthians 12–14 assumes that it is a supernatural gift. "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good ... to still another the interpretation of tongues" (12:7–10). "For this reason the one

who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say" (14:13).

Third, in 1 Corinthians 14:6, 10–12, Paul analogizes uninterpreted tongues-speech (*glossais*) to an uninterpreted foreign language (*phonon/phones*). As Gordon Fee points out, Paul's "use of earthly languages as a analogy in 14:10–12 implies that it is not a known earthly language, since a thing is not usually identical with that to which it is analogous." Unless there is a difference between tongues-speech and human language here, Paul's comparison is tautologous rather than analogous.

Fourth, Paul's reference to "the tongues ... of angels" (1 Corinthians 13:1) may indicate that he and/or the Corinthians believed that tongues-speech could be angelic, rather than human, in nature. The Testament of Job, a roughly contemporaneous Jewish document, similarly refers to humans speaking angelic languages through the power of the Holy Spirit. This indicates that the notion of angelic languages was not unknown in Paul's time.

If these lines of reasoning are correct, then the fact that the majority of contemporary tongues-speech is not a human language does not count against its biblical authenticity.

> One more point: MacArthur derides the use of a "private 'prayer language' " as a form of "self-gratification." Given that tonguesspeech is a gift of the Spirit, it would be more accurate to say that the Spirit is edifying the individual who speaks an uninterpreted tongue, rather than that the individual is edifying him- or herself. Granting that interpreted tongues-speech is more beneficial to the congregation as a whole, the question remains why individual edification is wrong. If it is right to edify others, how can it be wrong to be edified oneself?

> MacArthur would answer that "Paul would never extol prayers that bypass the

mind." But that is arguable. Paul states that uninterpreted tongues-speech "edifies" the speaker (1 Corinthians 14:4). Further, he states, "my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruit-ful" (14:14). Taken together, this seems to imply that Paul recognizes such a thing as a spiritual but nonrational form of edification.

MacArthur also cites Paul's instruction that public tongues-speakers ask God to be able to interpret their tongues-speech (1 Corinthians 14:13,14). But this is a rule for public tongues-speech. MacArthur wrongly applies this rule to private tongues-speech without noting Paul's explicit, public-oriented reasoning. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul gives no rule whatsoever about private tongues-speech.

HEALING

In chapter 8, "Fake Healings and False Hopes," MacArthur argues: "Faith healers like [Benny] Hinn claim to be able to



Strange Fire, Strange Truth, Strange Love

(continued from page 113)

replicate the healings of the apostolic age. In reality, their shenanigans have none of the characteristics of the actual New Testament gift of healing." While conceding that "the Lord still answers prayer and works in providential ways to heal people according to His will," he nonetheless concludes, "there is no evidence that miraculous healings are occurring today as they did during the apostolic age." More bluntly: "The apostolic gift of healing has ceased."

Several points are in order by way of response. First, Pentecostal and charismatic readers can agree with elements of MacArthur's critique of Hinn without thinking that Hinn's ministry is characteristic of the broader Charismatic Movement. Once again, the problem of the representativeness of MacArthur's argument rears its head.

Second, obviously, we agree with MacArthur that the Lord still heals people according to His will. The difference between us, I would venture, is that we believe this happens more often than does MacArthur.

Third, the statement that "the apostolic gift of healing has ceased" is ambiguous. If by that phrase MacArthur means the apostles' gift of healing, then he may be correct, especially if the apostolic office — as opposed to apostolic function — has ceased. But Paul does not list the apostles' gift of healing in his list of spiritual gifts. He talks more broadly about "gifts of healing," where the focus moves from the one performing the healing to the one receiving the healing. In that sense, apostolic gifts of healing — i.e., the gifts of which the apostle Paul spoke — have not ceased at all.

CONCLUSION

In this review, I have made — and I hope sufficiently documented — three claims:

- 1. Pentecostal and charismatic readers of *Strange Fire* will agree with John MacArthur on numerous points of doctrine and several critiques of the Charismatic Movement.
- MacArthur's description of the Charismatic Movement suffers from selection bias, resulting in a portrait of the movement that is unrepresentative of the whole. A representative portrait shows that charismatics are orthodox, moral, pious, evangelistically intense, and socially engaged.
- 3. MacArthur's critique of the contemporary spiritual gifts of apostleship, prophecy, tongues, and healing contains some valid points. But the figures he cites as representative of charismatic opinion are not. His definition of continuationism does not track with how many charismatics understand their own continuationist hermeneutic, and his biblical criteria for the gifts are not as definitive as he seems to think they are.

That being the case, I think a revision of MacArthur's indictment of the Charismatic Movement, which I quoted at the outset of this essay, is warranted:

Charismatics now number more than half a billion worldwide. The gospel that is driving those surging numbers is the good news that Jesus Christ is the world's Savior, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and soon-coming King. What we are seeing is in reality the explosive growth of a church that self-consciously patterns itself along New Testament lines, as vibrant as — if not more so than — any revival in the history of Christianity. The Charismatic Movement was an outpouring of the Spirit of Jesus Christ from the outset; it has not changed into something bad since.

This alternate description of the Charismatic Movement doesn't mean that it is perfect or beyond criticism. Even the Church in the apostolic era had plenty of bad actors, theological errors, and moral failures. But it does mean that, on the whole, the Charismatic Movement is of God.

Rather than cutting down the Charismatic Movement, root and branch, John MacArthur should have written *Strange Fire* to help charismatic Christians prune the errant and spiritually unfruitful branches from their otherwise orthodox and moral root. Instead, he confused branch with root and consigned both to the flames.

"Love for the truth, without any lack of personal charity, is what motivates me to write a book like this," MacArthur writes.

What a strange "truth" that falsely describes Pentecostals and charismatics! What a strange "love" that fails to see one's brothers and sisters in the faith as coworkers in gospel ministry!

Notes

- I am using the terms charismatic and Charismatic Movement in this review as John MacArthur does, to refer to "the entirety of the classical Pentecostal, Charismatic Renewal, and Third Wave Movements"; John MacArthur, Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2013), 263n2.
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GEORGE PAUL WOOD, director of Ministerial Resourcing for the Assemblies of God and executive editor of *Enrichment* journal, Springfield, Missouri

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s you give this morning, your gifts will be a blessing to many people here and around the world. But, more than that, your giving also benefits yourself. You say, "How can giving benefit me?"

While giving draws you closer to God, makes you more like God, and provides an antidote to materialism, it also strengthens your faith.

Malachi 3:10 says, " 'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test

me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.' "

As you give, it stretches your faith and causes you to test God in all the ways He wants you to test Him. As He responds to your faith, it builds your faith in Him and His provision more and more.

So, this morning, I encourage you to enjoy the benefit of giving today — by strengthening your faith.

– GLENN REYNOLDS, Hampton, Virginia



RETURNED BLESSINGS

iving returns blessings to the giver. This is something Jesus clearly taught. "Give, and it shall be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38). Similarly, Paul wrote: "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows gener-

ously will also reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6). We find the same teaching in the Old Testament: "Be generous, and someday you will be rewarded (Ecclesiastes 11:1, CEV').

— VICTOR PARACHIN, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Note

 Scripture quotations marked CEV are taken from The Contemporary English Version [computer file]: with Apocrypha. — electronic ed. — Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995 by the American Bible Society. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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THE CHURCH THAT WORKS

PASTOR AND DEACONS — A POWERFUL TEAM

pastor and board functioning correctly make a powerful team. Deacons have a multifaceted purpose, but the heart of their ministry is to support and assist the pastor. Acts 6:1–6 illustrates the function and role, if not the origin, of deacons.

The office rose out of the need to expand church ministries yet keep pastors focused on prayer, preaching, and teaching. The apostles told the people to choose seven men, respected and recognized as full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, to whom they could commit the tasks at hand.

Deacons bless the church as they reinforce pastors in four essential ways. They pray for them, they extend their ministry arms, and they add their unique perspectives to help perfect their vision. Finally, they bless the church and back their pastor when they set their salary.

No one should pray more for pastors than the deacons. They take the lead in intercession, individually and together. They extend pastors' hands in service as they do whatever is needed, organize others, and help lead them in service.

In matters of finance, deacons deal with the Lord's tithe and how it should be spent. Good deacons make certain they keep right purpose and pure motives. Within the means of the congregation, they demonstrate the value of God's gift to church.

Incredible things happened in Acts 6. The team did the job, restored unity, and a new surge of revival multiplied believers as the apostles kept on praying and preaching.

- MEL SURFACE, Crowley, Texas, and RICK DUBOSE, Hurst, Texas. Adapted from The Church that Works by Rick DuBose and Mel Surface

STRESS MANAGEMENT

The Call To "Time-Out"

Once again, I'm sending myself to "time-out." I point my pointer finger at my calendar, glare with bloodshot eyes, and sternly command, "Go, take time to rest." I need to correct the problem of over commitment and stress; re-evaluate activities and relationships; determine what to plant and uproot; what to embrace and shun. I have learned the hard way to listen to my body, my mind, and my emotions, so I voluntarily go to my calendar and "pen" (not pencil) myself in for some rest and relaxation.

Leisure and rest need to be a part of everyone's life. Once, Jesus' disciples came back from ministry and had not taken time to eat because of the crowds. So Jesus said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place" (Mark 6:30,31).

Help, Lord. Show us how to balance our lives. Remind us to know our limitations and set boundaries. Help us remember if we do not take time to identify and meet our own needs, we will not be able to meet the needs of others

> Rest and recreation are not optional. God wired us so our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual parts need periodic breaks. The balance of work and fun in life is the key to stress management. Is God calling you to take a "time-out"? Here — I'll loan you my pen. - PATTI ANN THOMPSON, Kansas City.

Missouri

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News&Trends



Ithough they are held in higher regard than jour-

nalists and lawyers, clergy generally do not get much respect from the American population, according to a study by the Pew Research Center.

Just 37 percent of the public believes clergy contribute significantly to society, down slightly from the 40 percent who thought so in 2009, Pew reports. The perception does not improve too

much among those who go to church every week. Just about half (52 percent) of weekly churchgoers think clergy play a key role in improving society, while another 29 percent say ministers make "some" contribution, and 11 percent indicate religious professionals give little or nothing for the common good.

Demographically among religious persons, pastors find the most favor from white evangelical Protestants. Sixty percent of white evangelicals say clergy are prime contributors to the well-being of society. Such a belief is lower among white Catholics (47 percent), black Protestants (39 percent), and Hispanic Catholics (28 percent). One in five persons without a religious connection believes clergy are valuable contributors to society.

Weekly attendees of white evangelical Protestants, white Catholics, and black Protestants have a more positive view of clergy than members of those groups who attend services less often. There is little difference in priest esteem outlook between Hispanic Catholics who attend Mass regularly or infrequently.

The clergy are one of the 10 occupational groups listed in the Pew Research Center survey. The military topped the vocational rankings, with 78 percent of Americans giving those in the armed forces high marks, although that dropped from 84 percent in 2009. Teachers ranked second, with a 72 percent thumbs-up assessment. Americans also have a much better opinion of physicians (66 percent favorable), scientists (65 percent), and engineers (63 percent) than pastors, Pew indicates.

Journalists dropped the most precipitously in the poll compared to 2009, down to 28 percent from 38 percent. That still bested business executives, who finished at 24 percent. Although ranked ninth, business executives were the only vocation out of the 10 to actually be held in higher regard than in 2009, up three points.

Lawyers are at the bottom of the list, with 18 percent of the public considering attorneys as valuable to the country. That is a drop from 23 percent in the 2009 sample.

ONLY SEMINARY GAINS AMONG STUDENTS 50-64

eminary enrollment is declining except for one age group — those ages 50–64, according to figures compiled by the Association of Theological Schools.

Of the 74,548 students enrolled in 233 ATS schools during 2012–13 across North America, 14,405 are in the 50–64 age bracket. The highest number, 22,615 are ages 22–29, while 18,916 seminarians are in their 30s and 14,612 are in their 40s, according to ATS statistics.

Research by the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education shows that in the past decade enrollment has fallen gradually for all groups except the students in their 50s and early 60s.

"The 50–64 age cohort, once small, grew fast and continuously," write Barbara G. Wheeler and Anthony T. Ruger in an Auburn University report. The research indicates that virtually all theological schools are facing major challenges from declining enrollment. Student numbers showed a continuous slight gain for two decades, but peaked in 2004 and have been going downhill ever since.

Growth in the 1990s occurred because of gains in evangelical schools, but both independent and denominational institutions have been losing strength the past 7 years, the



report declares. By 2011, there were 40 percent more women in theological schools than 20 years before, but once enrollment for women began to dip 6 years ago the female rate fell faster than men, according to the Auburn study. Men still outnumber

women in theological schools by nearly two to one, 49,224 to 25,324. While that ratio is even stronger for those ages 22–29 (15,399 men, 7,196 women), the gender gap is fairly close for older students. Among the 50–64 crowd, 7,751 are male and 6,654 are female.

Typically, older clergy candidates have less stress than twentysomethings, for reasons that include less debt, no young children to care for, and increased coping skills.

"It is unclear what impels these students toward seminary and ministry," Wheeler and Ruger write. "It may be that changing cultural norms have made it respectable to retire fairly young from one occupation and begin another."

While white enrollment has declined 17 percent since cresting in 2005, the number of ethnic minorities has increased in the same span. The ATS indicates during 2012–13, there were 41,431 white students enrolled, 9,291 African Americans, 5,679 Asians, and 3,837 Hispanics.

Students at 117 different schools indicated they were a member of the Assemblies of God, according to the ATS.



For Most, Sermon Preparation *Not* a Breeze

Although pastors are expected to visit hospitals, counsel parishioners, organize staff meetings, and a host of other duties, for many it appears that sermon preparation takes up a fairly large chunk of their job requirements.

Researcher Thom S. Rainer conducted an unscientific Twitter poll questioning pastors about how much time is required to prepare one sermon. Only one in 10 indicated that it takes less than 7 hours to plan a message.

Fully 70 percent of the respondents said they spend between 10 and 18 hours hammering out one sermon. Of course, many evangelical pastors must deliver more than one sermon weekly, meaning they spend 30 hours a week or more readying to get behind a pulpit.

The median time for sermon preparation in the study was 13 hours, according to Rainer, coauthor of books such as *Simple Church, Vibrant Church*, and *Transformational Church*. Most of the respondents who spend under 12 hours on average planning a message indicated they are bivocational pastors. Only 6 percent of ministers said they take 19 hours or more to write a sermon.

Rainier said many pastors expressed frustration that they do not have more time to get sermons in shape. A number said they have difficulty finding consistent and uninterrupted time to prepare.

The average churchgoer does not appreciate the time and effort that goes into planning a sermon, Rainier believes.

"Most pastors have workweeks much longer than we realize because of the invisible nature of sermon preparation," Rainier says.

COMMISSION SEEKS END TO IRS RULES ON SPEECH

A panel of leaders representing every major faith group in the United States has proposed that clergy be allowed to say whatever they believe is appropriate in the context of religious services or other regular religious activities — even when such communication includes content related to political candidates — without fear of reprisal from the Internal Revenue Service.

The Commission on Accountability for Policy for Religious Organizations presented a 60-page report to Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), offering Congress and the Treasury Department new proposals for bringing clarity to current IRS restrictions on political expression by churches and other nonprofit organizations. The commission formed in 2011 after a lengthy Grassley investigation sought financial transparency from several high-profile televangelists. Grassley asked the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability to coordinate a national effort to provide input on

accountability, tax policy, and electioneering and political expression for religious nonprofits.

The panel maintains that an IRS prohibition against electioneering by churches and other nonprofits "lacks clarity, integrity, respect,

and consistency." The report suggests that the current guidelines need to be changed because they are vague and cause uncertainty over what is permissible. Consequently, many pastors avoid speaking out on issues for fear of government reprisal, the commission said.

IRS enforcement has been erratic or selective, according to the report, and there are ample cases of the IRS ignoring prohibited political activity. A 2012 Pew Research Center study found that black Protestant churchgoers are eight times as likely to hear about political candidates at churches compared to white Protestant congregations.



forbids churches from participating in a political campaign is the only such government regulation in existence, Batts noted. He said the IRS rules inappropriately authorize the government agency to "evaluate the content of a sermon delivered by a member of the clergy" and "could cause a church to lose its federal tax exemption based on the words spoken by its leaders in a worship service."

The commission agreed that existing IRS policies prohibiting tax-deductible funds to be disbursed for political purposes should be preserved and that pastors should not endorse specific candidates from the pulpit.

"It is both

disturbing and

chilling that the

federal govern-

ment regulates

gious organizations." Commis-

sion Chairman Michael E. Batts

wrote to Grassley

in the report. The

IRS code that

the speech of reli-

Books

In the Beginning ... We Misunderstood: Interpreting Genesis 1 in Its Original Context

JOHNNY V. MILLER and JOHN M. SODEN (Kregel, 224 pp., paperback)

his book surprised me. I am so grateful to have been given it to review because it turned out to be the best treatment of Genesis 1 that I have found. This subject is one I have studied and written on but not with the thoroughness and clarity of Miller and Soden. They consistently affirm the same things I have found, even using some of the same illustrations, while filling in some of my weak areas.

Miller and Soden, from my perspective, go into just the right amount of detail in presenting their case. They incorporate excellent endnotes that enable the reader to delve further into the issues. Helpful charts are included as well. The book's one weakness is a lack of indices. However, the style, brevity, and effective organization make it very usable.



The authors are refreshingly open and clear about their purpose and views. They begin by explaining how their personal backgrounds shaped their thinking. The book's purpose is to present an alternative to Young Earth creationism that is faithful to the intention of the Scriptures as God's Word. Both authors have served as pastors, and both have earned a Th.D. or Ph.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary.

I affirm them in their belief that their "greatest strength is in helping laypeople and students ask the

most vital interpretive question that needs to be asked in the study of any portion of Scripture: What did the original author (and Author) mean for the original readers?" (190).

I agree with the authors' approach to the Scriptures. If we take

seriously that God gave us His written Word through real people, over 3,000 years ago — in a real place with a human language and culture, including a worldview and world picture (how they viewed the physical universe) different from our scientific culture — then we must expect the Bible texts to be written accordingly. Therefore, we must do our best to read Genesis 1 "from the perspective of the ancient Near Eastern religious context" (188) of Moses.

Miller and Soden make a very convincing case that the Genesis creation account was probably not intended to correlate with the observations of modern science. Furthermore, the evidence they observe seems to indicate that Moses intended a figurative understanding of the week of creation days. They demonstrate this by a careful comparison of the Genesis account to the creation accounts of Egypt and Mesopotamia. This was the most beneficial part of the book for me. It added several more specific points to my understanding, such as the fact that it was common in the ancient Near East to conceive of light independent of the luminaries in the sky. Therefore, Moses saw no incongruity between the creation of light on day one and the sun, moon, and stars appearing on day four. Much of what Moses wrote was to correct the theology of the world of that day, a major point of which was the emphasis on the deification of the sun and moon. Miller and Soden show how the Genesis description of the creation week exalted the Lord in that ancient context.

The authors answer well several questions that Young Earth creationists raise, reassuring the reader they have not diminished any major orthodox doctrine. They do not support naturalistic evolution. I agree with them that we must strive to understand God's intent through the human author — and not just presume what our worldview and experience lead us to think the text is saying.

Miller and Soden do not seek to deny any teaching of the Scriptures but to understand what God intends to say to us. The book closes with an excellent chapter on a theology of creation from Genesis 1 and then the admission that this is not the final word in the debate. Instead, they hope the conversation will help Christians see that disagreement over the interpretation of Genesis 1 need not be a reason for division or doubt.

> Reviewed by Roger D. Cotton, Th.D., professor of Old Testament, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

READING GENESIS 1–2: AN EVANGELICAL CONVERSATION

J. DARYL CHARLES, editor (Hendrickson, 240 pp., paperback)



At the interface of theology, philosophy, and science lies an active field of interest to many Christians. Ministers theologians, scholars, and thoughtful laypeople recognize the Bible's unique importancein discussions about origins of people, the Earth, and the universe.

The essays in *Reading Genesis* 1–2 are the fruit of a symposium hosted by the Bryan Institute for Critical Thought and Practice. Dedicated to the authority of the Scriptures and the unifying affirmations of historic Christianity, this insti-

tute brought together leading evangelical scholars for a congenial conversation. Following an excellent introduction by symposium moderator Victor Hamilton, each scholar presents an essay that every other scholar critiques. The book concludes with chapters about teaching Genesis 1 at a Christian college and major unresolved questions.

Richard Averbeck of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School presents the first essay. Working within the so-called "framework hypothesis," he highlights how the "six/seven" literary pattern shapes the telling of creation in a way that makes sense within the cultural and literary environment of the ancient Near East.

Todd Beall of Capital Bible Seminary supports the claim that the entire Book of Genesis is historical narrative and therefore fitting of the same hermeneutical approach throughout. His literal reading affirms a young Earth created in six 24-hour days.

From Covenant Theological Seminary, C. John Collins focuses on what Genesis 1–2 is designed to teach the believer. He highlights the literary connections between the first two chapters, refusing to see them as two distinct accounts of creation. Instead, he says, Genesis 2 is an expansion of God's creative work on Day Six (Genesis 1:24–31).

Tremper Longman III of Westmont College likewise acknowledges the instructional value of Genesis 1–2, calling its genre "theological history." He discusses how it corroborates many other creation texts in the Old Testament, as well as New Testament teaching.

Finally, John Walton of the Wheaton Graduate School addresses what it means for Christian readings of Genesis to be competent, ethical, and virtuous. He interprets Genesis 1 as a functional, rather than material, account of creation as a cosmic temple. This is the same argument presented in his book *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (InterVarsity, 2009). He says Genesis presents God as the Great King who rules from the center of sacred space, entering into relationship with people who fulfill their role as faithful stewards willingly submitting to His authority.

This book brings the reader into a constructive dialogue with competent evangelical scholars representing a range of thoughtful approaches and interpretations. Excellent bibliographies make it a fitting introduction to this field of scholarship. Each contributor writes with personal expertise and respect for others, modeling the kind of honest and humble conversation that ought to frame a Bible discussion.

- Reviewed by Robert C. Stallman, Ph. D., Northwest University, Kirkland, Washington

FOUR VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF WORKS AT THE FINAL JUDGMENT

ALAN P. STANLEY, editor (Zondervan, 234 pp., paperback)



Zondervan's Counterpoints series addresses topics of concern to both scholars and laypeople, providing an overview of each subject and introducing points for closer investigation. This volume in the series examines the role of works in the doctrine of salvation by faith leading to the final judgment. Overall, it is a useful contribution to the growing body of literature in this genre. The book begins with the premise

that a relationship with Christ — provided by the grace of God and received by faith — is what defines Christians. Will believers face a final judgment? If so, what role will their works play in the dispensing of judgment in that moment? Can their relationship with Christ by faith be forfeited by works that do not align with their faith relationship? The editor, Alan Stanley, brings together four scholars with different perspectives to answer these questions.

Robert N. Wilkin, executive director of the Grace Evangelical Society, says Christians cannot forfeit their relationship with Christ. He claims Christians will face a "reward" judgment rather than the final judgment. The believer at the judgment may forfeit rewards, or receive diminished rewards, but will still receive eternal life, Wilkin says.

Thomas R. Schreiner, professor of New Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, agrees that the believer cannot forfeit salvation. However, he says everyone will face the final judgment, which will separate true believers from imposters. Some people may falsely profess a relationship with Christ. Therefore, each person's works must provide evidence of genuine salvation.

James D. G. Dunn, a leading British New Testament scholar, asserts that a final judgment of works will determine each person's eternal destiny. Salvation is by faith through grace. However, a lack of works demonstrates there is no relationship with Christ, Dunn says.

Michael P. Barber, professor of theology, Scripture, and Catholic thought at John Paul the Great Catholic University, argues that an evaluation of the believer's works at the final judgment will determine eternal life. Those good works, however, are only possible because of the grace granted from Christ.

Reading the positions of these four and their reactions to each other provides a broader understanding of the manner in which God may judge the believer's works. Each scholar uses biblical materials but interprets them quite differently. Christians influenced more by Arminian thought will probably see some affinity in the arguments of Dunn. This is a recommended book for those desiring a deeper understanding of the relationship between faith for salvation and the life of works that please God.

> --- Reviewed by James H. Railey Jr., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

SLAYING THE DRAGONS: DESTROYING MYTHS IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND FAITH

ALLAN CHAPMAN (Lion Books, 341 pp., paperback)



Allan Chapman is a lecturer on the history of science at Oxford University. He has also hosted a British television program covering the astronomical religions of early civilizations and another program featuring great scientists. This book is evidence of his vast knowledge of the history of science.

As a biochemist, I was skeptical of a science book written by a historian. Fortunately, I pressed past my disciplinary narrow-mindedness. Once I started reading, I had no trouble continuing. The author convinced me that science majors should study more history — particularly, the history of science.

Chapman writes as a believer in Christ, making no attempt to hide his Christian faith. He uses roughly five chapters to identify and refute common myths atheists often cite to reject Christianity. Especially interesting is chapter 2, in which the author reveals New Atheism is not new but repeats ideas that have been around for centuries, if not millennia.

Chapman's critiques of secular behavioral science and the secular social sciences in chapter 12 are thought provoking, though I wondered how my scholarly friends in these disciplines might respond to him. I found the final two chapters the most intellectually stimulating and encouraging.

In chapter 14 ("Rediscovering the Compass, Or Where Do We Go from Here?"), the author challenges Christians to become more confident and assertive in defending the Christian faith against its

Look Before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture



AUBREY MALPHURS (Baker Books, 272 pp., paperback)

This latest book, Aubrey Malphurs brings his attention to detail and easy-to-understand style to the subject of church culture, an issue of growing interest among ministry leaders. As he points out, culture can be difficult to define, but nearly everyone seems to have an idea of how it shapes perception, determines responses, and either limits or enhances efforts to make change.

Malphurs seeks to equip pastors to evaluate, understand, and influence local church cultures. Using the

"culture apple" as his consistent illustration, he speaks first of the apple's skin — the church's outward behavior — as the most visible cultural layer. By answering the question, "What do we see, feel, and hear?" we can observe what the church does on a surface level and evaluate its effectiveness before digging deeper.

Next comes the apple's flesh, representing the church's values. Here we discover the group's major priorities. These values explain why the church acts as it does at the outer, or behavioral level. To realize lasting change at the behavioral level, Malphurs insists we must first achieve change at this level.

At the core — the deepest level in the apple analogy — we find the church's beliefs. These fundamental convictions include, but aren't limited to, doctrinal matters. They also encompass beliefs about human nature, power, communication, time, technology, and more. So in the author's idea of church culture, beliefs yield values, which ultimately yield behavior. Understanding culture requires careful evaluation at each of these ever-deepening levels.



MALPHURS

After explaining the nature of culture and how it's to be evaluated, Malphurs offers quality direction in "reading" the church and its potential leader. Here the goals are achieving a good fit and providing the minister with needed tools to make informed decisions.

Malphurs concludes by offering detailed descriptions of church planters and turnaround pastors. To evaluate these, he relies heavily on available assessment tools. Some might find his conclusions about who can effectively plant or turn around a local church to be a bit presumptive. None-theless, the research he offers is clearly valid and quite helpful. While the content of this text is valuable, even greater treasure can be found in the appendices, where Malphurs provides assessment tools, values and beliefs audits, and other helpful resources. These alone make the book well worth its price, but taken together with his clear and precise work on church culture, *Look Before You Lead* is among the best of the many excellent books this author has produced.

- Reviewed by Mike Clarensau, senior director, Healthy Church Network, Springfield, Missouri.

attackers. He argues: "Christians in the twenty-first century need to have the courage to re-enter the hurly burly of public life, and in particular the media and politics" (225). He suggests those who see Christianity as requiring followers to be pacifistic in defending the faith need to learn that "turning the other cheek does not ... mean becoming a hand-wringing doormat" (225). Chapman lists two ideas he says are central to the Judeo-Christian tradition: an all-powerful creator made everything from nothing; and this "bequeathed a sense of linearity and direction to creation" (239). He posits that the latter brought the idea of a historical timeline into human thought.

Chapter 15 explores why secularists, who claim Christianity is false and full of superstition, have invested so much time and energy attacking it. "After all," he writes, "there is no equivalent line-up of heavy intellectual artillery launching a similar bombardment upon astrology, divination, or non-scientific medicine. So what is it about Christianity that so winds them up?" (242).

In answering this question, Chapman points to the crucifixion of Jesus. The author assembles the details surrounding this event as found in the four Gospels. He concludes that even if there had been "a modern state-of -the-art emergency unit at the foot of the cross, with resuscitators, drips, blood transfusions, a top-class surgical team, and the whole panoply of modern medicine, poised to spring into action the moment Jesus was cut down, they would have found their task hope-less." Instead, "the most learned medical team in the world could only have said to Mary Magdalene, '…Jesus the man is dead'" (246). The author concludes this chapter and the book by defending the historicity of the Gospels.

Chapman's book is useful for anyone trying to discover and understand the interface of the sciences and Christian faith. Those who teach any of the sciences, Old Testament, or philosophy (including philosophy of science) would also benefit from reading and discussing this book. It is skillfully written and accessible to nonscience laypeople, although a sprinkling of British phrases may give American readers pause.

 Reviewed by Steve Badger, Ph.D., Seminary, Mississippi, former chemistry professor, Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri.

ON THE CESSATION OF THE CHARISMATA: THE PROTESTANT POLEMIC OF POST-BIBLICAL MIRACLES (REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION)

JON MARK RUTHVEN (Word and Spirit Press, 340 pp., paperback)



Since cessationism "strikes at the

very heart of biblical revelation," Jon Ruthven pulls no punches in his challenge to classic cessationists who aim "to protect the canon of Scripture from extraneous revelations ... of so-called 'extraordinary' (and extinguished) charismata."

Ruthven confronts head-on the stereotypical fear of the ecstatic extremism that causes many cessationists to "throw out the baby with the bath water." Abuses not-

withstanding, he reverses the conversation and laments the monumental

loss of a legitimate "ongoing and biblically normative process of the revelation of God [given] directly and immediately into the hearts of believers."

According to Ruthven, if exemplary preaching applies but does not change the all-sufficient Scripture — and, if gifts of administration or hospitality advance the kingdom of God but do not revise doctrinal content — so also prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, miracles, and faith reveal human needs and direct people to biblical truth.

Ruthven applies what many Pentecostals call an "Acts 29" approach. What Jesus "began to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1) finds fulfillment not only in the apostolic community through Acts 28, but also in the Church's continuing work throughout history. Failure to advance Christ's work "denies to us today the central essence of Jesus' being and mission."

In defending the Church's mission, Ruthven points to Old Testament and early Christian expectations for transference of the prophetic Spirit to and from Jesus to believers and their children's children forever. (See Isaiah 59:21 and Acts 2:39.)

Ruthven provides a historic overview of prominent cessationist theologians, such as Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Aquinas, Calvin, and Benjamin B. Warfield. Ruthven says Warfield (1855–1927) represents the historical culmination of cessationist ideals. Warfield's title as professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology at Princeton Seminary (1887–1921) and his influential work "Counterfeit Miracles" helped establish him as the most enduring cessationist voice in modern times. Few groups remain free of Warfield's attacks, including Roman Catholics, Methodists, Irvingites, Christian Scientists, and faith healers associated with the "deeper life," "holiness," and "Christian perfection" traditions.

Ruthven chronicles the poignant death of Warfield's invalid wife, who suffered from a severe nervous disorder as a result of being caught in a lightning storm during their honeymoon, as a potential impetus for this work.

Ruthven serves as professor emeritus in theology at Regent University School of Divinity. This work, originally submitted as a dissertation at Marquette University in 1989, was published in 1993 as the third volume in the Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series. Now revised and expanded, the book signals the coming of age for the Pentecostal and charismatic movements.

Given the steady demise of cessationism in the last quarter of the 20th century, I would recommend this book for students, scholars, and pastors in need of a robust theological history of cessationist hermeneutics and for anyone seeking a helpful resource for dialogue with contemporary cessationists.

Though even a cursory glance at world Christianity reveals the diminishing influence and reality of cessationism, a few bullish proponents remain (not the least, John MacArthur and his recent Strange Fire conference, see tmstrangefire.org).

 Reviewed by Martin W. Mittelstadt, Ph.D., professor of biblical studies, Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri.

Note: Enrichment reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not necessarily constitute a recommendation of the books.

News & Resources



New Century. Renewed Commitment.

The Centennial Initiative

New Century. Renewed Commitment.

he Assemblies of God is approaching its 100th anniversary. Founded in 1914 in Hot Springs, Ark. — with 300 people at the founding convention — the Fellowship now has more than 66 million members worldwide, making it the world's largest Pentecostal denomination.

The Centennial Initiative aims to move the Assemblies of God into its second century by encouraging every individual, church, and district in the Assemblies of God to join hands with future generations and help provide for them a growing, healthy Fellowship.

The initiative presents a five-step plan to help ensure a strong, vibrant Assemblies of God for the future:

- 1) Create cutting-edge, educational materials to teach the Fundamental Truths to the next generation.
- 2) Plant new, innovative Pentecostal churches that will reproduce themselves.
- 3) Transform existing churches by promoting church health.
- 4) Train young leaders who will passionately proclaim Pentecostal distinctives in the pulpit and the marketplace.
- 5) Fervently pray for God's continued blessing on the Fellowship.

"We are asking each individual, church, and district to prayerfully consider investing at least \$100 in the future of the Assemblies of God," says Dr. George O. Wood, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God and chairman of Assemblies of God Trust. "Even better would be each church writing \$100 a month into their giving budget for this effort. We are believing God that He will help us present \$1 million at the 100th anniversary celebration in 2014 to be used solely to help implement the five-step plan above. The Assemblies of God Trust will administer the resources for The Centennial Initiative. Let's take the hands of the generations to follow and help ensure a strong, vibrant Fellowship."

Engage My Life Offers Study Abroad With a Purpose

Ah, the good ol' college days. Looking back, we remember with fondness the late nights of studying, the unidentifiable food, lifelong friends, memories

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that last a lifetime. While you may remember a college campus complete with dorms, classrooms, and cafeteria, groups of college-aged students around the world are making the same memories without attending a campus. These students are part of Engage My Life.

Engage is an Assemblies of God program for college-aged students. With sites in nearly every region, Engage is designed to provide a path to discover and clarify a student's destiny in a missional environment while



earning a college degree. The mission of Engage is to provide opportunities for students to pursue ministry experience while acquiring higher education. Engage seeks to fulfill that mission by:

Education: Students are enrolled in a university of their choice. Through online classes, students do not have to forfeit the necessary education to be a part of the Great Commission. Partnerships with multiple Assemblies of God colleges and universities provide a quality education at a reduced price.

Cross-cultural experience: Students live, learn, and love the countries in which they are serving. The sights, sounds, and smells become their college campus.

Intentional Mentoring & Discipleship: Led by Assemblies of God missionaries, each Engage site provides opportunity for personal growth and Bible study. Engage is more than a semester abroad — it is an opportunity to be mentored into a world-changing Christ follower.

Hands-on missions experience: Engage students are fully immersed in the ministry of the missionary with whom they serve. By being an active participant in the everyday life of these missionaries, students receive a unique opportunity to glean and gain experience and wisdom.

For more information about Engage, visit **www.engagemylife.com**. A full list of locations, partner schools, and admission information is available.

Global University Advances Missions

"Impacting eternity by winning the lost, training the found, EVERYWHERE!" is the heartbeat of our mission at Global University. We exist to take the gospel around the world so it can transform lives, and to train



e the gospel around the world so it can transform lives, and to train laborers in the harvest, equipping them for service to retain the harvest. We continually strive to develop strategic international partnerships to plant 40,000 churches by 2020 through training pastors and leaders for the Lord's redemptive work.

Through our many partnerships with Assemblies of God fellowships worldwide, we have been able to deliver our discipleship and training materials to people groups who might never have heard the gospel. To date, over 2 million people have made a decision for Christ as the result of Global University's evangelism materials.

Our university's unique combination of education and missions has enabled students in over 150 countries to receive training and preparation for ministry. Global University offers courses in multiple languages and delivers them in print, on the Internet, and via mobile devices.

"Look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35). It is this compelling mandate Jesus proclaimed that motivates us to take the gospel around the world.

To learn more about Global University's current missions projects, visit www.globaluniversity.edu/missions_ index.cfm, or call Donor Relations Director Nicole Vicari, at 800.443.1083.

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throughout the Global University network who write, facilitate, and evaluate GU courses and serve as tutors for students studying independently with the university. Most adjunct faculty members hold doctorates in their fields and have years of practical experience as pastors, teachers, and church leaders.

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Life Publishers' 3P-101 Provides Ministry Resources



Practical Pentecostal Pastoring 101 (*3P-101*) is a Life Publishers International project providing thousands of ministers in Europe with quality online ministry resources in their language, on Kindles, and in print, depending on the need.

One of the ministers benefiting from 3P-101 is Losif Popescu, a well-respected leader in a Pentecostal church in Romania. Following 20 years of alcohol addiction, Popescu came to Christ at an evangelism meeting in Bucharest. "I gave my heart, my life, and everything to Jesus," Popescu says. "At my water baptism, I declared, 'I am being baptized to profess that I have been set free from alcohol and that my life is changed!'"

The *3P-101* project provides a publication for ministers like Popescu in their language. The publication contains articles, sermon notes, testimonies, and wise counsel written by leading veteran Pentecostal ministers in the United States and Europe.

Popescu says *3P-101* is incredibly important. It helps provide "a tool that sheds light on the kinds of problems people are having and provides ideas on how to deal with them as a minister."

Life Publishers' goal with *3P-101* is to make available 12 publication issues (three issues per year for 4 years) in seven languages, and distribute them to every Pentecostal pastor and lay worker in nine countries: Albania, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Switzerland.

For more information about the ministry of Life Publishers International, go to www.LifePublishers.org.



"Greater Things than These": Network211's Project 100Million

Network211 is using 21st-century technology to communicate the first-century gospel. Dr. George M. Flattery and the Network211 team officially launched Network211's Project 10Million on Oct. 15, 2008. The vision from the Lord was to reach 10 million people in 10 years through evangelism videos, www.GlobalChristianCenter.com (an

online church), www.GlobalFriendLink.com (an online Life Group), and content syndication to equip ministry partners to use the Internet as a tool of the gospel. Network211's Project 10Million has fulfilled the goal of using the Internet to reach 10 million people worldwide for Christ in just 5 years.

While those at Network211 praise the Lord for what He is doing, they are now asking Him to do "greater things than these" (John 14:12) by launching Project 100Million. With 10 million people in 236 countries and territories presently viewing the gospel, the new goal is to reach 90 million more people in the next 9 years.

Network211's main evangelism sites are www.JourneyAnswers.com and www.WhoJesusIs.com. Presently, JourneyAnswers.com is offered in 10 languages and has teams that are fluent in these languages to interact with those who write about their salvation, recommitment, and prayer requests. A new website meeting needs of people across cultures is www.Family-Relationships.com.

Consider partnering with Network211 in Project 100Million. In production are new websites that address the world's religions, and sites that interact with global social needs.

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A Final Word



Rachel Sizelove, a Free Methodist evangelist living in Los Angeles, visited the Azusa Street Mission in the fall of 1906 and received a dramatic baptism in the Holy Spirit.

She later wrote, "There was a great open space in my

heart, and He just came in."

Months later, she travelled cross-country by train to visit her sister, Lilly Corum, in Springfield, Mo. Lilly was a 30-something-year-old housewife who loved Jesus but became hungry for more of God, spurred on in part by Rachel's experience.

After talking and praying all night with her sister, Lilly powerfully experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit at 5 a.m. on June 1, 1907. She said the rest of the day she felt like she had slept all night. Soon Lilly's neighbors started attending prayer meetings at her house and were also filled with the Spirit. Lilly, in essence, became the first pastor of what is now Central Assembly of God in Springfield, Mo. Years later, the Assemblies of God National Office located onto property adjacent to Central Assembly.

It was my privilege to be the lead pastor when Central celebrated its centennial anniversary. We held it over the weekend



of June 1, 2007, 100 years to the day that Lilly became the first Pentecostal in Springfield. The next Sunday, after the celebrations were over and the guest speakers were gone, it fell to me to preach.

As I prayed about what to say on that first weekend of our second century, a simple word processing image came to mind: "copy and paste." If you want to take something from one document on your computer and put it into another, all you have to do is select it and click "copy." Then go to the other document, select a location, and click "paste." There it is!

The question came to me, "If I could copy anything out of the first 100 years of our history and paste it into the second hundred years, what would it be?"

The two things I selected to "copy and paste" for Central Assembly are the same ones that I would select for our Fellowship as a whole at the beginning of our second hundred years: a primitive dependence on the Holy Spirit and a passionate desire to include others.

Our history began with God infusing people with His life-giving Spirit. Our forefathers were smart people, but their dependence on the Spirit was "primitive" in that they did not become impressed with themselves but constantly sought the dynamic moving of the Spirit through them and in their churches. Ministry in the young Assemblies of God was supernatural and spiritually alive.

Creativity, facilities, and programs may follow, but they do not lead. As we enter our second hundred years, may God unusually energize and empower us. May we not be embarrassed to talk about the Holy Spirit or pray for people to be filled with the Spirit. May we call people to the one thing that will put a fire in their hearts that is stronger than the fire of the world's affections. May the Spirit's power saturate and anoint our evangelizing, worshipping, fellowshipping, and serving.

The second thing I would like to copy out of our past and paste into our future is a passionate desire to include others. May we recover the passion of our roots to preach a Jesus-centered gospel to our local communities and to people groups around the world without access to the gospel. May our churches be marked in this second century with a new love for people that will take us past inwardness, self-fixation, or lack of vision. May we be less programmatic and more relational. May we open our hearts and churches to new people, not just to grow numerically, to disciple and serve them for God's glory and the expansion of His kingdom before Jesus returns.

A dependence on God and a desire to include others have brought us this far. May they also shape the century ahead with God's grace and favor upon us.



JAMES T. BRADFORD, Ph.D., general secretary for The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri



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