

WINTER
2019



engage

A Journal for
Church of God
MINISTRIES

IN THIS ISSUE

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Post-Traumatic Stress
Pastoring

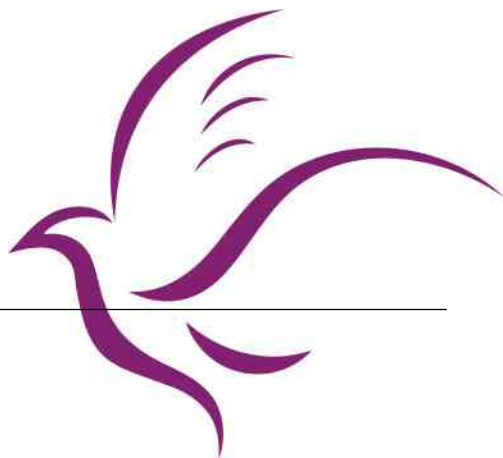
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An Issue for Pastors

EVERY FOUR MONTHS a group of leaders gathers to discuss and plan the next issue of *Engage*. The group consists of educators, ministers, laypersons, and employees of the International Offices. The group does not necessarily select a theme for each issue, thus we avoid being limited in what material might be featured. That being said, perhaps more than in previous issues, this edition of *Engage* has evolved into one for pastors. Pastor Steve Hall addresses a condition he has labeled *PTSP: Post-Traumatic Stress Pastoring*. J. Lee Grady, former editor of *Charisma* magazine, testifies of dealing with fear in the pulpit. Ruby Thompson Beckman shares her testimony of pastoring at age 99. Then there is a compelling account from Jeremy McGinnis about the journey he traveled with the church his father, Gerald McGinnis, planted as they made a successful pastoral transition from father to son.

While the target audience for *Engage* is the church staff, these articles offer a glimpse into the challenges and

triumphs faced by the senior-most person on a church staff. May we take this opportunity to once again affirm the role of the senior pastor of our local church and keep him or her in our daily thoughts and prayers. ■

Engage Journal is published in the interest of providing contemporary aids and resources to pastors and pastoral staffs.

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ON A RECENT SUNDAY, I stood in a pulpit, looked out over a congregation of mostly strangers, cleared the lump in my throat, and preached a message the Lord had laid on my heart from the Bible.

Thousands of men and women speak publicly like this every week. It's what preachers do. But even though I speak often, I've found that preaching the gospel is one of the most frightening assignments anyone could attempt. I feel as if I die a thousand deaths right before I preach, and I die several more times after I go home and evaluate what happened.

After one discouraging experience in which an audience stared coldly at me with their arms folded, I determined that preaching surely must not be my calling. I shared my struggle with an older pastor.

"Sometimes I feel discouraged after I speak," I said. "Does that ever happen to you?" I was sure he would counsel me to stop preaching.

His answer shocked me. "Son, I feel that way every Monday morning."

When I tell friends that I stubbornly resisted the call of God to preach because of my lack of confidence, they act surprised. They think most people who stand in pulpits want to be there. Think again!

We assume God always chooses gifted orators. But true preaching is not a natural exercise, like any other form of public speaking; it is one of the most supernatural tasks anyone can ever be called to do. It requires an imperfect human vessel to yield himself (or herself) to speak the very words of God.

If we deliver our message in our own human ability, the results will be miserable;

but if we wholly trust the power of the Holy Spirit, prophetic preaching unleashes supernatural anointing.

Most preachers in the Bible were reluctant. Moses made excuses about stuttering. Gideon tried to disqualify himself, blabbering on and on about his weaknesses. Jeremiah complained about the responsibility of carrying a prophetic burden. And Jonah bought a one-way ticket to the other side of the Mediterranean Sea so he wouldn't have to give his unpopular sermon to the people of Nineveh.

As long as God has been anointing people to speak for Him, people have been running from their assignments—and giving God all kinds of creative excuses for their delinquency.

The apostle Paul, who was a silver-tongued Pharisee before he met Christ, was stripped of his eloquence before he preached the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. He felt weak and totally incapable when he spoke.

He told the Corinthians: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:3-5).

Think about it: The premier apostle of the first century trembled as he spoke. Yet God used his words to spread the message of Jesus Christ throughout the known world.

Revivalist Arthur Katz, who died in 2007, wrote about the power of true preaching in his 1999 book, *Apostolic Foundations*: "The

only one qualified to preach ... is the one who wants to run the other way, like Jonah. ... The man who sighs and groans when called upon to speak, who does not want to be there, who feels terribly uncomfortable ... is the man out of whose mouth the word of true preaching is most likely to come."

That is certainly not the way most of us view pulpit ministry today. We celebrate the smooth and the polished. We look for the cool, hipster delivery style. We measure the impact of a sermon, not by whether hearts are slain by conviction, but by how high the people jump when the preacher tells them what they want to hear.

That kind of carnal preaching may win the accolades of men, boost TV ratings, and even build megachurches. But the Kingdom is not built on smug self-confidence. We need God's words. The church will live in spiritual famine until broken, reluctant, weak, and trembling preachers allow His holy fire to come out of their mouths.

If you have a message from God, stop making excuses. Run instead to heaven's altar, raise your hands in total surrender, and let the Holy Spirit touch your mouth with a burning coal. Die to your fears, doubts, and excuses, and let a holy anointing intensify within you until it becomes like fire shut up in your bones. ■

J. Lee Grady was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years before he launched into full-time ministry in 2010. Today, he directs [The Mordecai Project](#), a Christian charitable organization that is taking the healing of Jesus to women and girls who suffer abuse and cultural oppression.

GLOBAL MINISTRY FORUM LOCATIONS

IN RESPONSE TO THE MEASURE PASSED AT THE 77TH INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

That open Ministry Forums be conducted globally to provide opportunity for deliberate and meaningful discussion, dialogue, questions/answers and time for spiritual insight regarding the importance and understanding of ministry ranks, qualifications, and women in leadership positions with attention upon the meaning and usage of the title "bishop." Following the forums, appropriate motion(s) be formulated by the International Executive Council specifically addressing the stated issues and brought to the 2020 International General Council.

UNITED STATES

Thursday, February 7, 2019

West Coast

Living Waters (Fountain Valley, CA)

Tuesday, February 12, 2019

Heartland/Midlands

Southern Hills (Oklahoma City, OK)

Saturday, March 2, 2019

Hawaii

Ministry Center (Oahu, HI)

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

Mid-Atlantic

Life Source International (Baltimore, MD)

Thursday, March 14, 2019

Northeast

Rehoboth (Bloomfield, CT)

Thursday, April 18, 2019

Mid-South

Metropolitan Church (Birmingham, AL)

Friday, May 10, 2019

Alaska

N. Anchorage Church of God (Anchorage, AK)

Thursday, May 16, 2019

Tennessee / Kentucky

Parkwest Church (Knoxville, TN)

Friday, August 2, 2019

National Hispanic Congress

Dallas, TX (facility TBD)

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

Carolina

Praise Cathedral (Greer, SC)

Thursday, September 19, 2019

South

Sanctuary Church (Orlando, FL)

Tuesday October 1, 2019

Pacific Northwest

New Life Fellowship (Longview, WA)

Thursday, October 3, 2019

Midwest

Church on Strayer (Maumee, OH)

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

South Central Region

Life Fellowship (Hurst, TX)

Saturday, November 9, 2019

Romanian Convention (USA)

Philadelphia COG (Chicago, IL)

GLOBAL

Friday, April 26, 2019

Higher Education / Global Internet Forum

International Offices (Cleveland, TN)

Thursday, May 2, 2019

Lusaka, Zambia – Africa

Leopard Hill Conference Center

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Sonsonate, Los Cobanos, El Salvador

Royal Decameron Salinitas Hotel

Sunday, June 23, 2019

Canadian National Convention

West Toronto Church of God (Toronto, Canada)

Saturday, July 20, 2019

England National Convention

Birmingham, England

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

Caribbean National Congress

Barataria Convention Center (Port of Spain, Trinidad)

Friday, August 30, 2019

Europe Solemn Assembly

European Theological Seminary

Germany (Kniebis, Germany)

Friday, November 15, 2019

Asia/Pacific

Dasmariñas Church of God (Manila, Philippines)

To learn more about the dates, locations, schedule, and agenda, please visit:

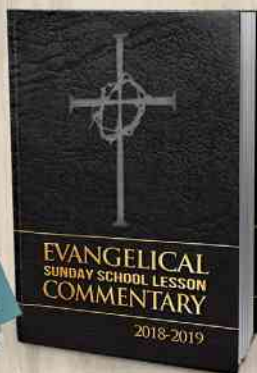
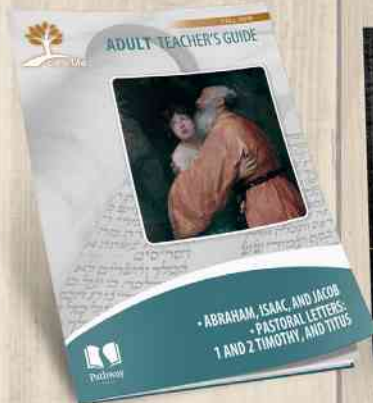
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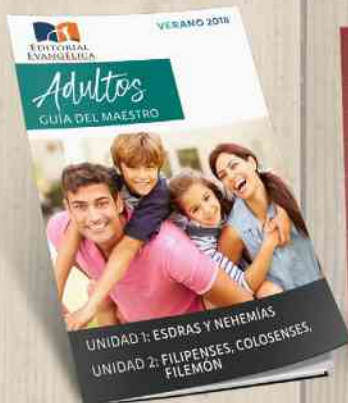
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by TIM HILL

Let's Talk About It . . .

WHAT WAS I THINKING?



*(Editor's Note: This article is the fifth in a series titled, "Let's Talk About It," by **General Overseer Tim Hill**.)*

A CHURCH ON FIRE

I did it again! I told myself last time I would never do it again . . . But on a long flight back to the United States, I put my earbuds into my iPad and began listening to what was probably one of the very best services I was ever in as a pastor. The choir was full, and they were knocking it out of the park. They had never sounded better. I had a "dream team" staff, and we were hitting on all cylinders—with music, youth, children, counseling, small groups, you name it!

Our church volunteers gave oversight to more than 100 various ministries. We had paid off all the church's debt and had just built a new Family Ministry Center. Our television, radio, and multimedia ministries had just expanded to include a wide regional market. Of course, live streaming and Facebook Live were still just a dream back in those days.

Our congregation had built three churches in Jamaica during that year. Also, we had sponsored missions trips to China, Russia, Ukraine, Israel, and Korea, and helped to support more than 30 missionaries.

On the very day of the service I was listening to, the church had flown in a young pastor from Kansas to celebrate the new church we had helped plant. More than 50 people from our church in Virginia had personally been involved in that church plant several states away in Kansas.

It was also on that very day that our church broke through a significant growth and membership ceiling—and we never looked back.

Sitting on the pews, I saw my three daughters who had spiritually matured in that church. It was there they had been baptized by their pastor—who also happened to be their dad. I could also see my wife, Paula, there. She was involved in women's discipleship throughout the city and was extremely happy to be raising a family, loving her church, and enjoying life in a small community.

The church had adopted a vision, embraced a purpose, and together we had built a tremendous work for God.

LIFE-CHANGING TRANSITION

And then . . . I left it. I left it to be a state overseer.

In one week, I went from preaching to more than 800 in my church to preaching to 35 in a church that hadn't had a pastor in four months. And I can assure you, those 35 people had no desire to see me riding up on my white horse declaring, "I'm from the Church of God State Office, and I'm here to help." I had left my church to be a crisis-relief administrator, knowing that almost every phone call and every appointment was going to bring a new round of trouble at another church within my state.

Some would say that I left that church to be a denominational leader in what more and more seems to be a nondenominational world. (I'll save my opinion about that last part for another time.)

I left that church a little more than 20 years ago—and seldom does a Sunday go by that I don't think about the church and the memories of the good times that my family and I had there. Granted, I am well aware that as time passes, I tend to remember only the good times. However, the fact remains, after all these years, I still have moments when I ask myself: *What was I thinking?*

WHAT WAS I THINKING?

Considering today's cultural nuances, the various demographic issues, and leadership complexities, you may ask, "What were you thinking to leave the pastorate and get into this thing called denominational leadership?"

Let me tell you what I was thinking . . .

- I was thinking—"I truly trust God with my future."

- I was thinking—"God opened this door, I didn't; so I must walk through it."

- I was thinking—"Maybe what I've learned as a pastor may help someone else in ministry."

- I was thinking—"Maybe I can be a leader that leads from a *revival* posture."

- I was thinking—"Maybe it's a time for a 'thirty-something' to get involved in speaking into this movement from a leadership level."

- I was thinking—"Maybe I can inspire other young men and women and infuse new life, new ideas, and a fresh anointing into a movement that's more than 100 years old."

- I was thinking—"The heritage of the Church of God's past, and the hope of the Church of God's future, deserve the investment of the strongest and best years of my life."

- I was thinking—"I love Pentecostal worship—and just maybe my small participation in leadership can lend itself to the

preservation and promotion of the Spirit-filled life in pastors, their families, and believers around the globe."

• I was thinking—"I really believe I can help make a difference." Do not get me wrong, I knew the church wasn't perfect and had its share of problems. However, I believed then—and still believe today—that I could make a valid contribution in fulfilling the Great Commission.

WHAT I AM THINKING NOW

But, back to now . . .

Here I am at 35,000 feet, being knocked around in this airplane by turbulence. My ear buds are plugged back into my iPad as I listen to myself give an altar call two decades ago. From what I just heard myself say, more than 20 people were saved that Sunday morning.

So, what was I thinking?

The same thing I'm thinking now!!

Nothing has changed, except the fact that I'm not a "thirty-something" anymore. I'm a fifty-eight-year-old man doing my best to not only keep up with, but also know the hearts and minds of—and help drive the dreams of—"thirty-somethings," "twenty-somethings," and "teenage somethings." Strangely enough, I'm a little energized by it all.

It is exhilarating to hear the heartbeat of God in the words and writings of younger

generations. I often read the posts and occasionally contribute to sites like the "Excellent Ministry of the Church of God" Facebook page. The posts and comments are meaningful, helpful, and at times very sobering in their content. When I see topics like "growing larger churches in or outside the denomination," you better believe it gets my attention.

I am also captured by those topics relative to doctrine, worship, and preaching styles—and even social issues with which our culture is wrestling. You can count on it: I am reading, and often I am learning from the comments. Sometimes, the topics or comments make me uncomfortable; but at all times, I'm challenged. And then occasionally, it leaves me asking . . .

"What was I thinking?" I was thinking then what I'm thinking now. We have someone to believe in—our Savior and Lord. We have something to do—fulfill the Great Commission.

We have a movement to help us deliver the message of a soon-coming Savior—the Church of God and its more than 40,000 congregations around the world.

And, we have ongoing opportunities to become better at all we do.

So, let's FINISH this thing for Christ's sake and go home.

That's what I was thinking then . . . and it's what I'm thinking now. ■

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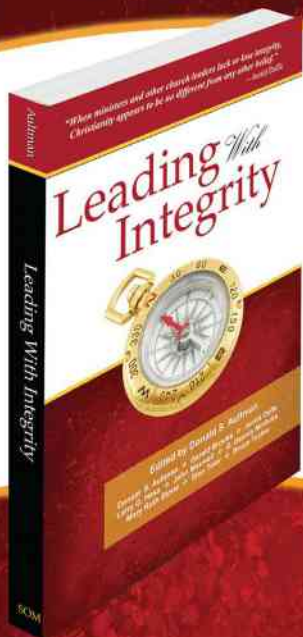


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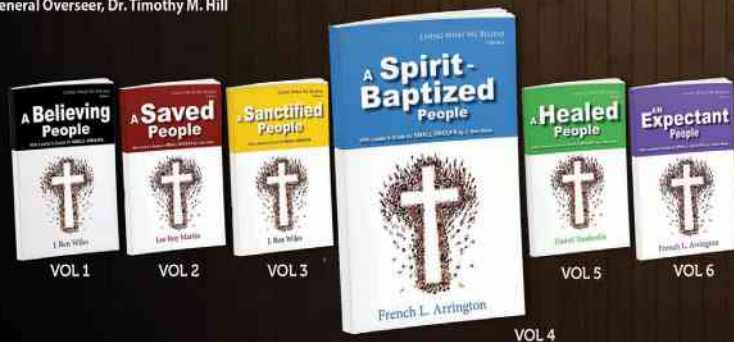
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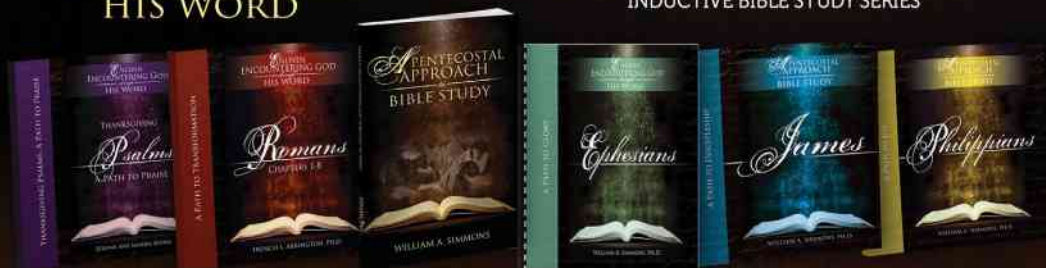
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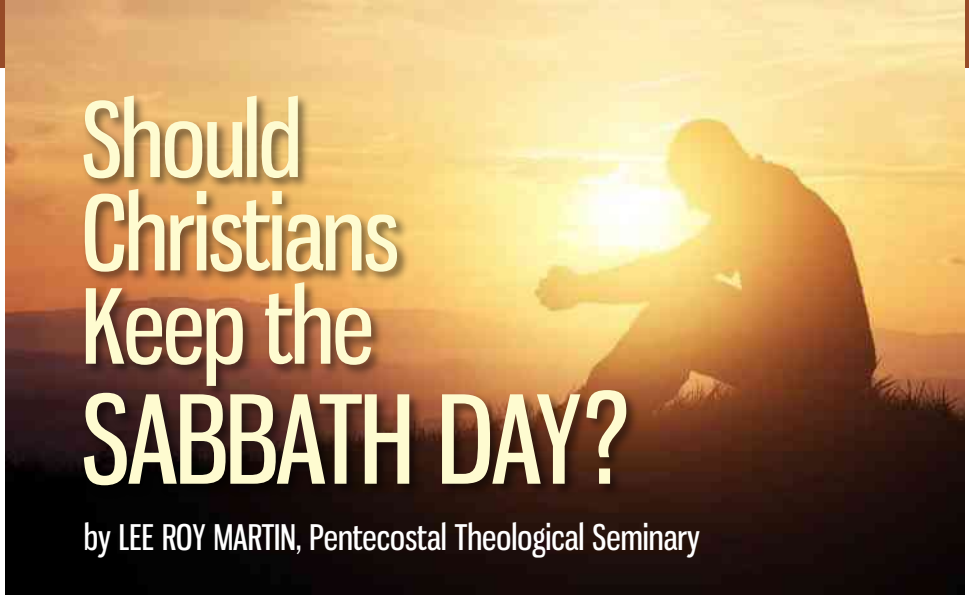
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Should Christians Keep the SABBATH DAY?

by LEE ROY MARTIN, Pentecostal Theological Seminary

(Editor's Note: This article is part of the series of papers released by the Church of God Doctrine and Polity Committee. Other papers, as well as endnotes and appendices for this paper, can be found at www.churchofgod.org and clicking on the BELIEFS tab)

ARE CHRISTIANS required to keep the Sabbath Day? Should Christians worship on Saturday? Some Christian groups insist that the Old Testament law of the Sabbath is still in force today and that Christians must worship on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. The purpose of this brief article is to explain why Christians worship on Sunday rather than on the Sabbath (Saturday).

DEFINITIONS

It may be helpful for the sake of clarity to define the terms *sabbath* and *Sabbath Day*. The word *sabbath* is a Hebrew word that means cease or rest. The Sabbath day refers

to the Jewish day of rest that is prescribed in the Ten Commandments: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8. All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version). The Sabbath Day is observed on the seventh day of the week (from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday), because it was on the seventh day that God ceased or rested from the work of creation (Genesis 2:2-3).

THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

The Church's official position is found in the Church of God Practical Commitments:

Sunday is the Christian day of worship. As the Lord's Day, it commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Matthew 28:1) and should be employed for worship, fellowship, Christian service, teaching, evangelism, and proclamation (Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5, 6; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Colossians 2:16, 17).

The first published listing of the Church of God Teachings cites Hosea 2:11; Romans 13:1-2; 14:5-6; and Colossians 2:16-17 as evidence that Christians are not obligated to keep the Sabbath (*Church of God Evangel*, August 15, 1910, p. 3). The position of the Church of God that Christians are not required to observe the Sabbath is supported by the teachings of the New Testament and by Church history.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON THE SABBATH

The New Testament teaching on the Sabbath can be considered from three perspectives: 1. The Old Testament ceremonial laws, 2. Specific references to the Sabbath, and 3. Examples of Christian worship.

1. *The Old Testament ceremonial laws.* The question of the Sabbath is directly related to the overall Christian use of the Old Testament ceremonial laws. Although Christianity arose from Judaism, the Sabbath Day (along with the sacrifices, circumcision, and food laws) is part of the ritual law from the Old Covenant that was fulfilled in Jesus Christ; and, therefore, is not required for Christians. It has been argued that the Sabbath requirement precedes the Law, but that argument is clearly false. Although God “blessed” the Sabbath Day in Genesis 2, He gave no command to observe the Sabbath, rest on the Sabbath, or worship on the Sabbath until Exodus 20:8. In any case, the practices of sacrifice and circumcision both preceded the law of Moses, and these are not

binding upon Christians because they too have been fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 6:15; Colossians 2:11).

The decision to abandon the requirements of the ceremonial law came early in Christian history. When a significant number of Gentiles began to convert to Christianity, disputes arose about whether the Gentile Christians would be required to observe the Jewish laws about circumcision, dietary restrictions, Sabbath observance, and so forth. Paul, Barnabas, Peter, James, and other Church leaders met in Jerusalem and decided, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that it was not necessary for Christians to observe the Sabbath rules and other aspects of “the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5-29). The decision of the “Jerusalem Council” is confirmed by the Book of Hebrews, which declares that the Old Covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant, for the Old Covenant has passed away (Hebrews 8:13).

Although Christians are not “under the law” as a means of salvation, we are still required to live righteously (Romans 6) and to keep God’s commandments (1 John 5:2). The New Testament instructs believers to obey all the Ten Commandments except for the commandment to keep the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath commandment is the only one of the Ten Commandments that is not repeated in the New Testament.

Even after the decision of Acts 15, the Church experienced disputes about the Jewish rituals. Jewish believers tried to force everyone to obey the law of Moses, but Paul

states clearly and repeatedly that Christians are not required to keep the laws regarding special days, kosher foods, and sacrifices. He goes so far as to rebuke Peter when he acquiesced to Jewish pressure (Galatians 2:11). Paul takes issue with the Galatians by asking, "But now after you have known God ... how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:9). What was the evidence of their turning back? Paul accused them, "You observe days and months and seasons and years" (Galatians 4:10). Paul also addresses the Sabbath in his letter to the Romans. In his discussion of Christian liberty, he deals with such issues as acceptable meats and drinks, and he also mentions the Sabbath question. Paul insists that Christians are free to observe or not observe the Sabbath according to their consciences. Paul states,

One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks (Romans 14:5-6).

It is no longer necessary for believers to practice the Old Testament rituals because they have been fulfilled in Christ. They are the "shadow," but Christ is the "reality." We read in the Book of Hebrews: "For the

law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect" (Hebrews 10:1).

2. *Specific references to the Sabbath.* The reference to the rituals as shadows leads naturally to Paul's word to the Colossian church. It seems that, once again, Jewish believers were attempting to force Gentile Christians to obey the law of Moses. Paul writes, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17). Paul indicates clearly that Christians are obligated to follow neither the Old Testament food laws nor the Old Testament schedule of holy days. These laws are fulfilled in Christ.

As a good Jewish rabbi, Jesus obeyed all of the Old Testament laws. However, Jesus pointed out the legalistic attitudes of the Pharisees regarding the Sabbath Day. On one occasion, Jesus healed a lame man on the Sabbath and told him to take up his bed and walk (John 5:5-18). Jesus' opponents seized the opportunity to criticize him:

For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God

was His Father, making Himself equal with God (John 5:16-18).

On another occasion, as Jesus and His disciples passed through a grain field on the Sabbath, the disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them. The Pharisees accused them of breaking the Sabbath, but Jesus replied, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Jesus, therefore, taught that the Sabbath laws should not be a legalistic requirement or burden.

3. *Examples of Christian worship on Sunday.* The first Christians were Jewish, and for a short time they worshiped according to their Jewish laws and customs. We read in the Book of Acts that they worshiped in the temple (Acts 3:1; 5:21, 42) and the synagogues. Paul's attendance at the synagogue, however, was a result of practical rather than theological considerations. In order to preach to the Jews, he needed to attend their meetings (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 18:4). Outside of evangelistic efforts, Paul reports that early Christians worshiped on Sunday, and they did not attend the Jewish meetings.

Sunday was chosen as the day of worship, because it was on Sunday that Jesus arose from the dead (Matthew 28:1). Because of the Resurrection, the Christians called Sunday the "Lord's Day." Also, the Church was established and the gospel was first preached in its fullness on Sunday (Acts 2). The following texts suggest that the earliest Christians worshiped on Sunday, the Lord's Day:

- "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight" (Acts 20:7).

- "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

- "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet" (Revelation 1:10). Nowhere in the New Testament does it state that the early Christians met together for worship on the Sabbath Day (Saturday).

THE TESTIMONY OF CHURCH HISTORY

In addition to the New Testament references to Christians worshiping on Sunday, the earliest Christian document outside the New Testament affirms the practice of Sunday worship. Believers are given the following instruction: "And on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions ..." (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 14:1). This text states that Christians should meet on Sunday, and the activities listed involve sharing in the Lord's Supper and confessing sins, as James instructed.

The early church fathers from the second and third centuries also report that Sunday was the Christian day of worship. Ignatius (c. AD 45-115), a disciple of the apostle John, wrote that Christians were

"no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in observance of the Lord's Day" (*Epistle to the Magnesians*, 8). Justin Martyr (AD 100-165), another early church father, wrote that Christians met for worship "on the day called Sunday." The reason for Sunday worship, according to Justin, was that Sunday "is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead" (*First Apology*, 67).

There is no evidence that the early Christians met together for worship on the Sabbath Day (Saturday). Further testimony of reliable servants of God throughout Church history shows that Christians have consistently worshiped on Sunday.

THE TESTIMONY OF PENTECOSTAL BELIEVERS

In an early issue of the *Church of God Evangel*, F. J. Lee (1875–1928), a leading figure in the denomination and namesake of Lee University, wrote a three-part article in which he argued against Sabbatarianism. Citing Hebrews 10:1, Lee stated, "The law is a shadow of good things to come." He then turned to Colossians 2:16 and wrote, "So if the Sabbath is a shadow, and the real is Christ . . . , How important, that we turn away from the shadow and cling to the real." According to Lee, a return to Saturday worship observance would be an act of backsliding and giving in to "the seducing spirit" (CGE 5:26 [June 27, 1914], p. 7). Lee

continued—after examining Hebrews 3:18; 4:1, 3, 4, 10, he pointed out further that "it is plain enough, the [S]abbath was a shadow pointing to the time when people could be brought out of . . . bondage of sin, and into the Pentecostal Rest." Lee explained that the law called for the observance of several special days, such as [P]assover, the [F]east of [T]abernacles, and the Sabbath. Each of these has teaching value, but they are shadows which are fulfilled in Christ (CGE 5:27 [July 4, 1914], p. 7).

Later in the same year, the testimony of L.B. Mosteller was published. Mosteller testified that his study of the Old Testament had "almost" convinced him to stop eating certain meats. He writes further, "With this seducing spirit, the keeping of the Sabbath was pressed upon me." However, after much prayer and after attending the General Assembly, he states, "After being there and seeing the wonder working power of God the scales all fell from my eyes and I felt so free and sweet ..." (CGE 5:50 [Dec 19, 1914], p. 4). Both Lee and Mosteller considered the requirement of Sabbath Day observance to be a dangerous practice that originated with a "seducing spirit."

CONCLUSION

Observation of the Sabbath was part of the Old Testament ceremonial law that is not observed by the Church. There is no record in Scripture of Jesus or His disciples instructing or teaching that the keeping of the Sabbath or any other Jewish custom is necessary

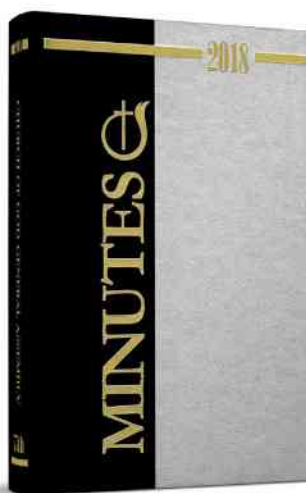
for the New Testament believer. The New Testament and Church history supports the Christian practice of worshiping on Sunday, the Lord's Day.

Although the Church of God affirms Sunday as the "Christian day of worship," the denomination has consistently focused on the quality of worship rather than the day of worship. Jesus declared that the outward aspects of worship (such as time and location) are peripheral, but the essential aspects of worship consist in the following:

1. Worship must come from the heart (Mark 7:6), and

2. Worship must be "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

It is the quality of our worship, not the day and location that will impact our witness to the world. The mission of the Church is to FINISH the Great Commission. We must not allow disputes over days and times of worship to distract us from our commitment to Find, Intercede, Network, Invest, Send, and Harvest. Our deep spiritual worship will supply the inspiration, strength, and direction for our mission; and it will attract the lost who are hungry and thirsty for God. ■



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by JERALD DAFFE

PASTORING AT AGE 99: Ruby Thompson Beckman

SOME OF THE LORD'S most faithful Kingdom workers have lived and served in relative obscurity. Knowing the call of God and seeing the need, they willingly ministered in small towns located in lesser populated areas where and when no one else would or could.

Many of these precious saints have gone on to their reward in heaven with few even knowing them or having the narrative of their ministry. However, such an individual, Ruby Thompson Beckman, is still alive at 101 and, until two years ago, was pastoring the Mound City South Dakota Church of God.

Mound City is a small community approximately sixteen miles south of the North Dakota border. This community with a population of sixty-nine is divided by highway 83, a major north-south artery and is the county seat of Campbell County.

From 1948 to 1953, Ruby and her late husband, Walter Beckman, pastored the Mound City, South Dakota church. They moved to other pastorates in South Dakota and Montana. Their pastoral role seemed to come to an end when Walter suffered a debilitating cerebral hemorrhage in 1965

which took his life in 1985. During these years, she was a dedicated wife who lovingly cared for her husband at home.

To be near her aged mother they moved to Glenham, South Dakota, which is a short distance from Mound City. With a dwindling church attendance and unable to sustain a resident pastor, closing the church was on the immediate horizon. At that point (1982), Ruby asked to be the lay interim pastor. Four years later, she was appointed as pastor (1986) and continued the ministry until 2017 when health issues made it impossible to continue. It should be noted that she was ninety-nine years



old at that time. Her pastoring in Mound City was a return to the church which she and Walter had pastored twenty-nine years previously.

Ruby's life is an interesting combination of ministry and education. Her personal education included attending Northwest Bible School (Lemmon, South Dakota), Northern State (Aberdeen, South Dakota), and the University of Montana (Missoula, Montana). Her master's degree was in speech pathology. She taught at Northwest Bible School and a number of public schools. A review of her life's chronology indicates she was the youth director for North and South Dakota (1940–1941).

Far more important than the previous specific details is the kind, generous, loving, serving person she is. Personally, I remember her when as a seven-year-old, she and Walter stayed in our home. She spoke so kindly and showed such interest in this little boy. (Some 50 years later, I received a note of encouragement from her about a book which I had written.) That same attitude and action was evident when she directed the Children's Ministry at camp meeting. The children loved Sister Beckman.

In spite of all her accomplishments during a long life, she exhibits no personal pride in what was done. Her humility was evident in her response to a 99th birthday celebration which documented her life. She basically said: "It's just what you do without expectations for reward."

Dr. Linda Thompson (a niece) describes Ruby as follows: "She remained an active learner until her eyesight dimmed considerably, and she entered the nursing home (summer 2017). She would read the Bible through in its entirety 4–5 times a year, reading different translations. She would read other commentaries, as well. It was not uncommon for me to receive a note from her in the mail asking if I could find a used copy of a specific book on the Internet . . . usually a book that an author she was reading had referenced. She was still doing that in her 90s!"

Another distinctive of Ruby and her little congregation was their generous heart for world missions. During her twenty-seven year pastorate with a congregation of as few as six, they raised more than \$250,000 for missions. Repeatedly, they were recognized at the International General Assembly for the per capita leadership in World Missions giving.

Ruby Gelinda Thompson Beckman, now 101 years old, has demonstrated to all of us what it means to be a Kingdom worker who sees a need and then proceeds to fulfill it, regardless of the importance which others may place on it and one's age. She continues to be an example to all of us, though now confined to a care facility. May God raise up more Ruby Beckmans! ■

Dr. Jerald Daffe is professor of pastoral studies at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee.

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FROM ERRAND BOY TO LEAD PASTOR

by JEREMY MCGINNIS, D.Min.
Lead Pastor at the Park West
Church of God, Knoxville, TN

MY JOURNEY to lead pastor of Park West Church begins like many others. My parents, Gerald and Dawn McGinnis, planted Park West Church 38 years ago in their home town of Knoxville, Tenn. They answered a call to plant a Pentecostal lighthouse for a “whosoever will” mission.

On our first Sunday in October of 1980, I was five years old. Park West Church has served as my context for.... well, everything. From our small family church of 26 to our larger contemporary church of 1,500, Park West Church shaped my philosophy of ministry, family dynamics, friendships, and overall theology.

My earliest memories are filled with the desire to be like Dad and preach the Word of God. I attended Lee University with the intent to enter pastoral ministry. I recall the week or so after my graduation from Lee. I had plans to interview at a local Church of God when Dad entered our kitchen and offered me an entry-level job at church. Since that day in August 1998,

I haven’t looked back. I have worked in multiple positions at Park West while saying “no” to other churches and opportunities. Errand boy (volunteer college pastor—pastor may be too strong of a term), minister of visitation, director of Pastoral Care, associate pastor (while leading offsite campus), main campus pastor/associate, and now sitting in this office. This is the office where I received stern rebukes during my high school and college years. It is where I sat through my own premarital counseling. This office is where I confessed sins, dreams, callings, insecurities, panic attacks, and other struggles—it is surreal.

For about eight to ten years, Dad and I talked about the possibility of a transition and God’s timing. In hindsight, it seems we had several false starts (to borrow from football). Discussions and plans for three- to five-year transitions would come and go. Eventually, I committed to the Lord to never mention the process of transition. I sensed that only Dad, as the spiritual head of our church—my boss, father, mentor, friend,

and role model—could hear from the Lord as to the timing of our transition. He, and only he, could and would know the timing of the Lord. It was a death of sorts to the desire to lead. It was complete trust in His timing, a commitment to serve Him, Dad, and our church without any added motive for leadership. I'm 100 percent sure I failed miserably at this, but it was the idea.

Three years ago, my mother fell and broke both arms. Dad had to do everything for her. For the first time in his 40-plus years of pastoral ministry, he did not preach for several weeks. This thrust me into the pulpit for several weeks in a row. Prior to this, I preached once a month in the main sanctuary. In a strange sense, our transition was unofficially inaugurated. One- to three-minute conversations transpired over the next year or so. These conversations were casual and vague, but they affirmed the sense that God was leading us toward transition. Once Mom healed, I continued to preach 50 to 60 percent of the time. There seemed to be a natural, yet unspoken flow to our transition.

In Orlando at our International General Assembly 2018, Dad told me “we are transitioning when we get home.” Enter the whirlwind. On the following Sunday, he announced that we had a major announcement the following Sunday. The next Sunday he made the announcement that he was transitioning, not retiring, but would no longer be the lead pastor. He recommended

me. Two weeks later our church voted, and here I am. What a whirlwind!

Even though I have spent 38 years growing up, attending, and serving, with 20 of those years on staff, nothing truly prepared me for the spiritual weight of the transition. It's one thing to go from errand boy to associate pastor in the span of sixteen years, but it's quite another thing to go from the second chair to the lead pastor. It's one thing to hold a romantic dream in front of you; it's quite another to see it unfolding before your eyes.

I have found myself often explaining the spiritual transition in terms of a weightlifting metaphor. Spiritually, it feels like I have been doing squats with 225 pounds; now I have stepped under 500 pounds! There is a spiritual burden that only the lead chair can carry. There is a spiritual battle that only the lead chair engages. However, there is a mantle that only the lead pastor can carry. There is an anointing that rests only on this office. At the risk of sounding hyper spiritual, there was a tangible shift on the day my dad announced the upcoming vote. At the risk of being misunderstood and viewed as egotistical, I tangibly felt a switch flip, a mantle rest, an anointing arise.

During all the hoopla of congratulatory comments, someone said I earned this; another said I worked hard for it. That felt wrong. I felt uneasy with that type of description of the fruition of the calling and the unfolding of His promise. It was nothing

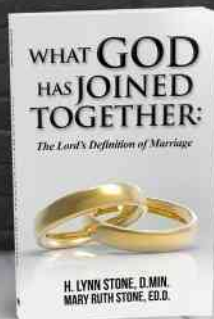
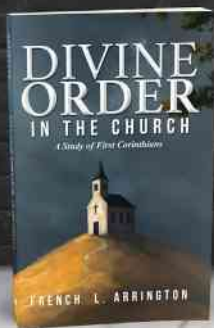
I earned or deserved. My immediate response was, “No, I have only been faithful.”

I’m not sure how unique my calling and my journey really are. One thing I can point toward that may be somewhat unique—I never simply felt “called” to the ministry. I have not only felt called to a city, but I have also felt called very specifically to Park West Church. My heart, passion, and love have always been centered on God’s will for Park West Church. As my dad has said for years, we are to advance the kingdom of God and destroy the works of the Enemy. That has always been my passion.

In an unprecedented season of succession and long-term pastoral transitions, there is not a one-size-fits-all formula for successful transitions. Faithfulness to the call and leaning into the Spirit’s leading is

necessary. Throughout the doctoral process at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Dr. Garmon instilled in us that leadership is context sensitive—it depends. Knowing the culture of the congregation, knowing the personality, passion, vision, and style of the exiting pastor is paramount. As the incoming guy, I am privileged to know these traits intimately. My calling is to build on what has been laid, and to carry on the DNA and calling of this sibling of mine. (During a counseling course at the seminary, we discussed how the church literally functions as a sibling within my family system. It is an interesting and lengthy discussion that space and time will not permit here.) Identity and complete understanding of the calling sustains through the shifting and uncertainty. ■

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PTSP

Post-Traumatic Stress Pastoring

by STEVE HALL

IN YOUR PASTORATE, have you ever experienced the shock and trauma of being blindsided by parishioners who were publicly supporting the ministry, while secretly undermining it? After discovering this betrayal and other similar events, did the cumulative traumatic experience(s) induce anger, anxiety, and/or helplessness? Did you begin to isolate yourself emotionally and avoid relational connections with church folks? Did you become emotionally numb and/or persistently hypervigilant to prevent

recurrent negative feelings? Has your sleep, concentration, eating, or mood been affected?

THERE'S A DIAGNOSIS FOR THAT

I've heard many pastors describe attacks from the very people they've dedicated their lives to serve. If this describes some traumatic encounters you've experienced throughout your pastoral career, then the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for mental health disorders indicates you satisfy the clinical diagnostic criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).¹ Surprised? I'm not. During 31 years of ministry, I've experienced dozens of these traumatic encounters, and listened to many pastoral colleagues describe similar traumas and the resulting symptoms. The invisible, but increasing stress resulting from ministry dangers, often leads to deep discouragement, loss of vocational satisfaction, and moral failure.

These all too familiar traumatic experiences, and many more like them, result in the buildup of toxic stress over time, which can debilitate ministers and afflict them with symptoms similar to those of clinical PTSD, which I am calling Post-Traumatic Stress Pastoring (PTSP). Many pastors suffering with PTSP report losing sleep by reliving the traumatic encounters in dreams, or waking up panicked in the middle of the night with a very real sense that it will happen again. In fact, many

pastors feel they could suffer a ministry mugging on any given Sunday, which could threaten their family's security. "Walking on eggshells and being "hypervigilant" is how many pastors commonly characterize their ministry posture. I am not suggesting that churches are filled with psychopathic Christians bent on destroying the pastor's health and well-being. I am suggesting, however, that all churches have what Marshall Shelley calls "well-intentioned dragons," who consistently wreak a unique genre of ministerial trauma.²

ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS UNIQUE TO PASTORS

Compounding the uniqueness of ministry trauma is the reality that pastors are frequently first responders after emotionally jolting events like deaths, accidents, stillbirths, house fires, domestic abuse situations, and many others. A career-long accumulation of what some psychologists term secondary or vicarious stress depletes a pastor's resilience and makes them more susceptible to PTSD-like symptoms.³ Moreover, pastors have little or no training in mitigating the effects of secondary stress as counselors, police, and firefighters do, which exacerbates the problem.

Perhaps the straw with the greatest potential to break the proverbial pastor's back is that of *marginlessness*. In the pulpit, on a plane, or at a playground, the pastor is

always the pastor. Every pastor is "on" 24/7, no matter what; only pastors and politicians bear this burden. Yet, the politician doesn't carry a burden for their constituent's eternal soul. Furthermore, a pastor's finances, work, social events, sports, spiritual life, and family life all revolve around the church. Most people don't live with the threatening stress that where and how they worship may affect their income and family security, which is unconsciously unbearable for the pastor and his family.⁴ This unique lack of life-zone margin creates another opportunity for the symptoms of PTSP to compound in the pastor's mind and heart, leading to compassion fatigue, burnout, or worse.

ADMISSION AND INTERVENTIONS

If you're a pastor, I ask rhetorically: Are you suffering from some form of PTSP? It's hard to confess, I know. To admit to PTSP is to experience all the shame and guilt that admitting to any struggle does. As all 12-step programs declare, however, the first step toward healing and health starts with admitting you have a problem. If you're ready to admit you likely suffer from some degree of PTSP, then follow this [link](#) to learn lifestyle interventions that will save your ministry, health, and well-being.

A FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

PTSP is no joke. Pastoring is unique and exceptionally stressful. In 2017, the

Clergy Burnout Inventory found that 65 percent of clergy surveyed were bordering on burnout or in full burnout mode. Common responses from the survey were: “I feel used up and spent.” “Me and my family feel fatigued and discouraged in ministry.”⁵ Kuhne and Donaldson found the work of ministry was “fast-paced and unrelenting.”⁶ If you’ve identified with anything in this article, you may be suffering from some degree of traumatic, ministry-related stress. Don’t minimize the impact. To take action, visit this website: www.ministryoasis.com. ■

Steve Hall is lead pastor at Heritage Community Church in Severn, Maryland.

NOTES

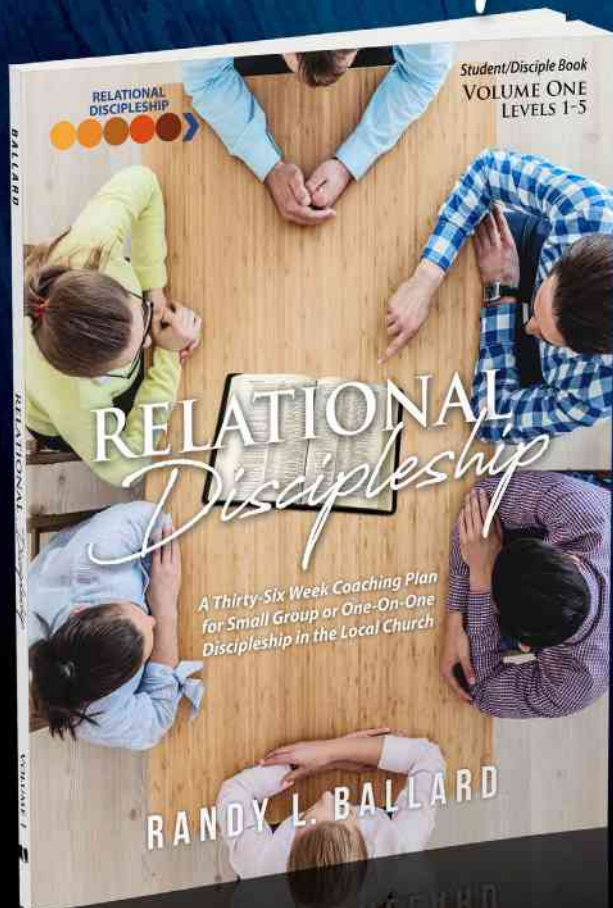
- 1 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders*, 4TR (2000). Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Association.
- 2 Marshall Shelley (1985). *Well-Intentioned Dragons: Ministering to Problem People in the Church*. Waco: Word Publishers.
- 3 Lorraine T. Benuto, Newland, Rory, et.al. (June 2018). Secondary traumatic stress among victim advocates: Prevalence and correlates. *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*. United Kingdom: Taylor and Francis Publishers.
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Hints On FINISHING WELL

by RANDALL
O. EUBANKS

HAVING JUST RETIRED, it became apparent that there were some things that I did well, but others could have been done better. So, this article consists of a few hints to my colleagues in the ministry about how to finish well. These hints are for those who are just beginning the ministry and those who are getting close to retirement. These are not all my ideas, but those I have gleaned from others, both by word and example (some even taught how not to do as well as how to do).

First, to finish well, one must plan. It seems like only yesterday when the first pastorate was accepted, the children were born, then off to school they went, then they graduated high school, college, and finally they were married! But as life and ministry were going on, I was also approaching the

day of my retirement. I didn't realize all this while it was happening. I was looking for Jesus to come, and I was doing everything possible to bring about His kingdom.

Now, what did I do to get ready? When I received my credentials, you were told that to be a loyal minister you were to participate in the various programs of the church such as the "retirement program," life insurance program, and health insurance program. We were instructed that young ministers need to participate so that the older ministers could have these programs. So, I wished to be a loyal minister and joined all these as soon as my pastorates allowed.

After I had pastored for about twenty years, the Church of God changed from the old "retirement program" to the program we now have which we call the "Benefits Board." When one refers to the old "retirement

program," it needs to be realized that the IRS would not even recognize it as a retirement program; it could only be counted as a contribution for tax purposes. When we had the opportunity, I switched to the "Benefits Board" program. But after twenty years of pastoring, I had only about \$6,000 in the fund. This caused me to realize that I needed to contribute as much as I could toward my retirement. So, I began to match the 5 percent the local church was contributing. And during various years as I was allowed by the IRS, I contributed catch-up amounts. Then about fifteen years before retirement, the local church generously increased the amount that they contributed to 10 percent of my salary. Instead of cost of living raise, it would be better to have an increase to your retirement. So, this enabled me to be able to retire when I wanted to, rather than when outside forces would dictate.

That brings up another hint. You need to retire when you desire rather than when the doctor or the congregation says to do so. I have seen pastors continue when it was not in their best interest. You need to retire when you still have health. I know ministers who continued to pastor in very trying circumstances, and they did not survive long after their retirement. I always wondered: *What if they had not continued in that difficult and sometimes even hostile environment?*

Now, one must get "ahead" in the game. What does that mean? It means you must set your mind to function as a retired

minister. I have seen ministers who were as happy as could be and others who were depressed and unhappy all the time. So, one must understand when you retire, you will not be preaching all the time. You will probably not preach when the pastor is present, but be filling in. You will be called to preach when they are away (if they can trust that you will support them and their ministry). Nowadays, churches do not have as many services as they once did. Many do not have evening services, and pastors feel the need to be in the pulpit when they do have service. Be ready to attend church with your family. Think! After thirty, forty, or even fifty years of not being able to sit on a pew with your family, you can do so with children and grandchildren and worship the God you have preached about.

Another hint is to make a niche for yourself. One of my colleagues has a drama ministry. He is now staying as busy as he wants, presenting his message in drama about twice a month. Another minister has been a supply pastor for at least half a dozen churches.

Remember, the structure of the church has hindered us from hearing one another preach, so being available is one of the best hints. Just remember, you don't have to preach forever to preach the everlasting gospel. One of our retired ministers, Brother C.B. Breland, told me years ago, "I go and tell two or three humorous stories and preach for about thirty minutes." He was busy preaching into his 90s. I have seen other

retired preachers, who felt they were not getting to preach as much as they should, preach for more than an hour. They were not invited back. Remember, it is better to leave them wanting more than for them to have their fill.

Another of my retired minister mentors has never felt the need to have to be in the pulpit to minister. He has visited the nursing homes in his city with no fanfare or recognition, but effective ministry. Of course, I am following a lifelong desire to sow into the lives of ministers by going on the mission field and teaching in our schools. Don't be disappointed if it does not come easy, for you must network with missionaries.

Let me add another hint—don't disappear from the Church of God. Go to the Prayer Conferences, camp meetings, and General Assemblies. I know you do not have a church putting you in a nice hotel or paying for your meals, but that is not the reason you went anyway. Only, as people see you and interact with you are you used for ministry. Make a point to connect with young ministers, you never know—they may pastor a church someday and need someone they trust to preach for them.

Be ready for setbacks and disappointments. Don't base your retirement on promises or some get-rich scheme; because if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. One minister was going to get a position

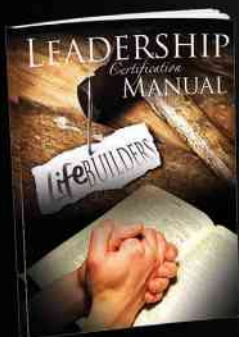
with a supermarket chain and make a lot of money, but it did not pan out. If the local church had not hired him as minister of visitation and seniors, he would have been about \$1,000 a month short of needed income.

Another hint for happiness in retirement is to get everyone on board. Your spouse needs to agree about your retirement. Remember, she has been pastor's wife, first lady, copastor for as many years as you, and she must be able to join in this decision. Many times, the companion has felt lost with no place for her. But remember, ultimately, you must decide when and where, but always considering the one who has stood by you in your calling and fulfilling of that calling.

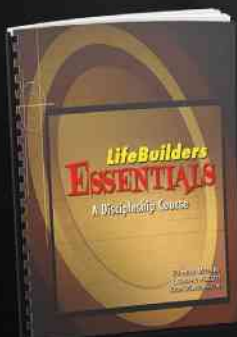
There are many more hints one could give, finance arrangements, tax shelters, connections, but the most important is to remember that God has you in the palm of His hand. He will lead you and help you to be all He desires until He comes for you or you go home to be with Him! Paul had the same desire you and I do, "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may *finish* my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24 NKJV). ■

Randall O. Eubanks, a longtime pastor and state board member in Alabama, recently retired.

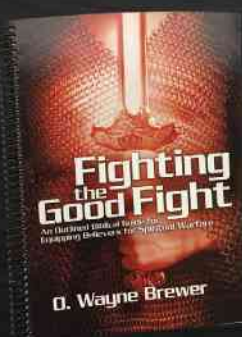
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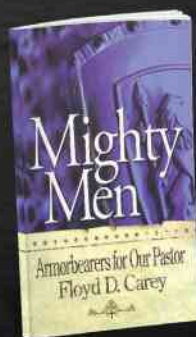
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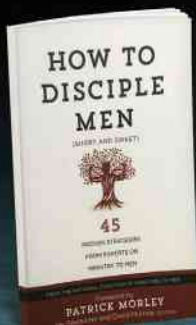


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PASTOR TOGETHER

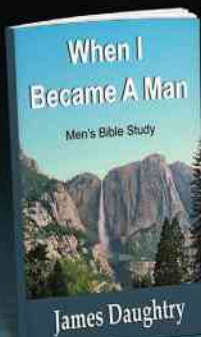
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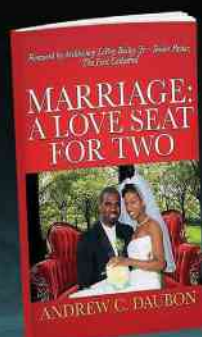
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RESTORING THE BROKEN

by BRAD BRIDGES

ONE OF THE most difficult things for us to confront is that our decisions aren't always the right ones, and they may lead us to a place we didn't intend to go. As a result, we may find ourselves broken, hurting, and wanting. Well-meaning, God-fearing Christians sometimes end up on the needy side of God's divine restoration.

Restoration is the act of bringing something back to its former owner, place, or condition.

Restoration includes bringing back something that was lost. Many of us have lost something along the journey of life which we desperately need returned to us, restored to us, and renewed in us. Such needs don't mean our shortcomings are deliberate, they reveal our humanity and our dependence

on a sovereign God who loves us and is endless in His mercies.

PERSONAL RESTORATION

Cause and effect are serious in the business of being a Christian. When our decisions have caused us to sin, to err, to have a fault, or to make a drastic mistake, the effect can be taxing, grinding, and devastating.

When we suddenly discover our spiritual devotion has become shallow, lukewarm, and mechanical, rather than powerful, anointed, and free-flowing, it is time we take a serious look at where we are and how to get back to where we need to be. Usually, we will find that our prayerfulness has been neglected and we've become so busy with the demands on our lives that we've fallen into a rut of getting by and perhaps have even become a victim of simple laziness.

Our time in the Bible has become minimal, and our soul is longing for the daily staples we need from God's Word.

In Psalm 51, after years of faithful devotion to God, David found himself guilty of living in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. He had committed adultery and ordered the murder of his mistress's husband. He was confronted by the prophet, Nathan. His first cry was, "Have mercy upon me, O God" (v. 1); this was based on his faith in God's lovingkindness and tender mercies.

He went to the only source which could restore him and thoroughly confessed that he had sinned and sought for the cleansing that only God can give.

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (vv. 4, 7 KJV).

He didn't seek the mind of the prophets or the priests, nor their approval. He sought for the giver of life to give back the life with God he had known before his transgression. That decision had interrupted his harmony with God.

Restoration required repentance and cleansing. There were no shortcuts. Restoration required desire for what once was, along with full accountability and owning full responsibility.

"Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;

and uphold me with thy free spirit" (vv. 11-12 KJV).

David recognized he had lost something, although not intentionally. Still, it was missing. He had allowed himself to fall into a snare. He needed the joy in his relationship with God to be restored. He needed his integrity and his inner freedom restored.

David would also need to forgive himself. How could he have done such a horrible thing? He could only forgive himself by trusting in God's forgiveness. He knew there was nothing more he could do to right the wrong he had done. He left the guilt of his sin at God's feet and trusted in His authority and ability to restore him. We must do the same if we want to experience true restoration.

RESTORING OTHERS

Christians are instructed in Galatians 6:1-2: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (KJV).

While the church has not always been kind to those who have fallen prey to their temptations, the church has always had a divinely appointed responsibility to restore when possible. It is the duty of spiritual individuals to restore those who have erred. Restoration should be as immediate as possible, even when at times, the act of restoration becomes a process.

“Overtaken” suggests a struggle has taken place and the one involved lost the struggle. A “fault” is literally a fall, offense, trespass, sin, or some form of moral failure.

Restoring others is most difficult when our trust has been violated or we feel we have been betrayed. We cannot restore others without forgiving them. We must consider how Christ has forgiven us. “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32 KJV).

Restoration goes beyond forgiving. It is to encourage and rebuild to strengthen against future temptations. We may have to hold people’s hands and be there for them as they experience the consequences of their fault. Asking for accountability is not out of order when helping people through the difficulties of their errors.

HOW DO WE CARRY OUT THIS DUTY?

God says we do this in the spirit of meekness. Attitude is momentary; spirit is who we are on the inside. A spirit of meekness is gentle, kind, and indulgent, even balanced in tempers and passions while patient in suffering injury without feeling the need for revenge.

We must allow compassion to take precedence even if we have experienced emotions of hurt, anger, sadness, or frustration over another person’s failure. God says to consider ourselves. We must be empathetic toward our brothers and sisters,

knowing that we are not above temptation and that we, too, could be overtaken in a matter of our own. In short, a similar thing could happen to you.

Restoring another does not mean you are condoning their sin or compromising holy practices. On the contrary, restoring a broken soul is the church putting the nature of God on display and doing what Christ came to do—to have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Jesus Christ came to redeem the souls of men and restore man back to his rightful condition and purpose for which he was created.

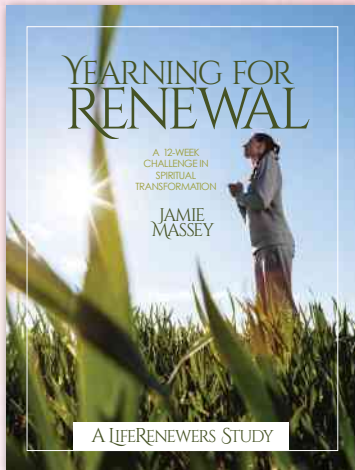
Bearing one another’s burdens fulfills the law of Christ. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans:

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves . . . For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me (15:1, 3 KJV).

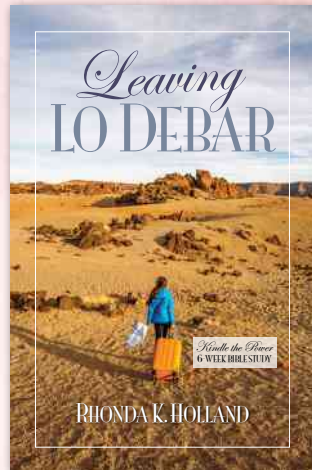
Brokenness is hardest on those who are the broken. The compassion of the church is the lifeline for which many fallen individuals are hoping—to be loved by their own and helped in their time of need by those who have what they need. Grateful is the erring soul who has received the love and tenderness of those who are spiritual and found restoration to God through their actions. ■

***Bishop Brad Bridges** is pastor of Mountain View Church of God in Bryant, Alabama.*

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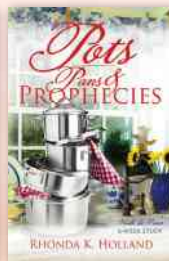


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LEGAL NOTES
Dennis W. Watkins

Child Abuse Reporting Laws: A New Era—Part 3

IN PREVIOUS ARTICLES, I presented a general overview of the prevalence of child abuse and how child abuse reporting is obligatory. I would now like to discuss the “how-to’s” of handling child abuse reporting issues. Let me start by saying, “Do Not Panic!” Remember that you are not alone and that resources are available to you.

RESOURCES

When confronted with child abuse reporting issues, some valuable resources to utilize are local lawyers, your overseer/administrative bishop, as well as our office in Cleveland, Tenn. *Church Law and Tax Report* serves as another beneficial source, which our office assisted in producing two articles: *Child Abuse Reporting Laws: 21 Facts Church Leaders Should Know* and *Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Laws*. I was interviewed in the first article listed which aimed to educate pastors and other church personnel on child abuse. The second article provides a detailed chart containing

state-by-state laws and requirements regarding child abuse. One of our team members, Michaela Micco, was recognized by *Christianity Today* as contributing to this second article. You can access both articles on www.churchlawandtax.com.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Child abuse reporting issues are not typically black and white; therefore, when in doubt, always err on the side of reporting. After a report has been made to the appropriate personnel, one should complete a documented record. Proper documentation is extremely vital for the sake of protecting the mandatory reporter. A thorough record should contain the following at minimum: details surrounding the reporting, including who, when, and where, as well as a summation of the account given to and received from the personnel. The record should also include any new or other pertinent information regarding the incident. It then becomes essential that the record be placed into a permanent church

In 2017, the number one reason churches were in court was due to child abuse. In fact, child abuse has been the leading reason for churches in court for the last 20 years.

file to prepare for unforeseen circumstances in which such information may be needed.

In 2017, the number one reason churches were in court was due to child abuse. In fact, child abuse has been the leading reason for churches in court for the last 20 years.¹ With that being said, the question of reporting is not even relevant—find a way to report it! If you are concerned about the legal ramifications of confidentiality, remember that most states do have some form of immunity laws regarding child abuse reporting. Child abuse immunity laws, which are applicable to mandatory and voluntary reporters, serve to protect the reporter from civil and/or criminal liability, assuming the report was made in good faith. Furthermore, mandatory reporters should be aware that there are laws protecting the identity of the reporter from the perpetrator in most states.²

DEALING WITH THE PRESS

In regard to the press, do not give on-camera interviews or phone interviews. Always use your attorney when confronted with the press. In my experience, the press is often looking for a “sizzling story” that will sell and is not interested in the growth of the kingdom of God; therefore, if you must

speak with the press, communicate through written-prepared press statements. In order to prevent contradictions, do not engage in multiple press interviews and only speak through one source.

CONCLUSION

Remember you are not alone, and if you have questions regarding this topic, feel free to contact our office in Cleveland, Tenn. May the Lord bless you in your endeavors for Him. ■

Dennis W. Watkins is legal counsel for the Church of God. The writer is not engaged in rendering legal or other professional services herein. If legal advice or expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

.....

NOTES

- 1 Richard R. Hammar, “Child Abuse Claims Against the Top Reason Churches Go to Court.” Church Law & Tax. October 16, 2018. <https://www.churchlawandtax.com/cltr/2018/november-december/child-abuse-claims-again-top-reason-churches-go-to-court.html>
- 2 Richard R. Hammar and Matthew Branaugh. “Child Abuse Reporting Laws: 21 Facts Church Leaders Should Know.” Church Law & Tax. February 20, 2018. <https://www.churchlawandtax.com/cltr/2018/march-april-2018/child-abuse-reporting-laws-21-facts-church-leaders-should-k.html?start=4>



Update on Ministerial Housing Allowance—Plus FREE Resources

AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, the ministerial cash housing allowance was held unconstitutional by a federal district court judge in Wisconsin on December 13, 2017. Pending appeal, the judge's order has been held in abeyance and will not be enforced until all appeals have been exhausted and an additional 180 days have passed. Early in 2018, the case was appealed to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago. Then in April 2018, the Church of God denomination and the Church of God Benefits Board filed a "friend of the court" brief in this matter, along with other similar organizations and denominations, expressing support for maintaining the housing allowance for both active and retired ministers.

On October 24, 2018, oral arguments were presented to the appellate court, and it is expected that the court will issue a decision in early 2019. Regardless of the outcome in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, it is

expected that the "losing" party will appeal the case to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Most observers of the U.S. Supreme Court do not believe that the highest court in the land will actually agree to hear the ministerial housing allowance case, and by such, will allow the final decision by the Seventh Circuit to stand, regardless of whether that decision is to keep the housing allowance or not.

Should the housing allowance be held unconstitutional, there are many concerns about how to move forward. Based upon the district court's December 2017 decision, the impact would not be felt for 180 days following all appeals being exhausted. Such time would allow for Congress to act if they so choose—but in a divided Congress, the possibility of getting action quickly is unlikely.

The additional burden of income taxes being assessed against the housing allowance would be detrimental to many active and

retired ministers. Therefore, ministers—and churches—should be discussing how they would deal with this increase in tax liability on the pastor. While normally we would expect that a decision in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals would only apply to Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois, it seems likely that the Internal Revenue Service will interpret a denial by the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case, assuming that happens, as a nationwide decision—and begin to tax ministerial housing allowances across the country. Because of potentially such a broad interpretation, all ministers should be looking at ways to address the possible loss of the cash ministerial housing allowance. And remember, for now, parsonages are not included in this discussion, just the cash ministerial housing allowance!



BENEFITS BOARD PARTNERS WITH CHURCHEXCEL

On a more positive note, the Church of God Benefits Board is proud to announce a new partnership with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) through their resource site, known as ChurchEXCEL. ChurchEXCEL is a FREE online portal that provides expert information and documents that can be

used in church finances, policies, procedures, administration, and so much more!

At the Benefits Board, we understand how overwhelming and complex church financial management and administrative work can be. We also know the struggles and frustrations involved in running a church during a time when the rules seem to be changing constantly. That is why we are excited to bring you this wealth of free information and materials to help you excel in ministry. We have a heart to see our leaders thrive and hope to provide you with as much assistance as possible through ChurchEXCEL, as well as our own resources at www.benefitsboard.com.

Please note that many of the eBook resources available on ChurchEXCEL are offered in English, Spanish, and Korean.

To start taking advantage of this opportunity and all the free benefits Church EXCEL has to offer, visit ChurchEXCEL.org/BenefitsBoard. You can also access the ChurchEXCEL site through the Church of God Benefits Board site, www.benefitsboard.com. ■

Art Rhodes is president and CEO of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc. The Board of Trustees and the staff of the Benefits Board are not engaged in rendering financial advice, legal advice, or other financial planning services.

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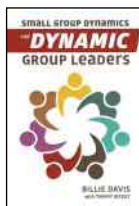
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SMALL GROUP DYNAMICS FOR DYNAMIC GROUP LEADERS

IF YOU ARE looking to create a small group ministry in your church, or if you want to enhance an existing small group ministry, *Small Group Dynamics for Dynamic Group Leaders* by Billie Davis is an excellent guidebook.

Dr. James T. Bradford, writes in the Foreword:

Few people have influenced the scope and shape of Christian education in the Assemblies of God more than Billie Davis. Her passion is contagious, and her insights into group dynamics are invaluable to true learning. From sitting in a little red chair as a young girl in Sunday school to teaching in the university classroom, Billie Davis lives and exudes Christ's call for His people to learn and grow. Whatever the age of your group, whatever its size—whether you're leading a Sunday school class, Life Group, cell group, small group, or Bible study—*Small Group Dynamics for Dynamic Group Leaders* lays out a pathway for interactive learning that will help you connect with dynamic, memorable, life-changing learning.

In ten highly informative chapters, Dr. Davis leads the reader on a journey toward building a community based on relationships. The ten chapters are:

1. Jesus and His Disciples: The Model Group

2. A Group Is People Sharing
3. A Group Is for Belonging
4. How People Act in Groups
5. Understanding and Misunderstanding
6. The Leadership Role in Teaching
7. Children Learn and Grow in Groups
8. Adolescence Can Be Defined as Relationships
9. Mature Christians Work Together
10. Relationships in a Pluralistic Community

A dynamic small group ministry is more than exciting topics and stimulating methods. Group members are not just objects of teaching, and the leader isn't just a facilitator. Building on the interaction of Jesus and His disciples, Billie Davis provides a model for small group ministry in which members use their strengths and gifts to help one another in the biblical sense of Body. Applying an age-level and intercultural approach, she examines the structure of groups, how the group influences learning and spiritual development, and the roles within groups.

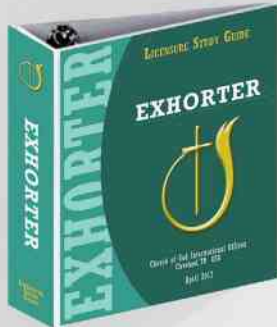
As the author says, "Understanding of leadership among Christians has been impeded by the fact that most work in the field has focused on the leader and techniques of management and control. Effective Christian leadership begins with the focus on people and God's purpose for them."

Small Group Dynamics for Dynamic Group Leaders, ISBN 978-1-595557278, is published by Elm Hill, an imprint of Thomas Nelson. The book sells for \$11.99. ■

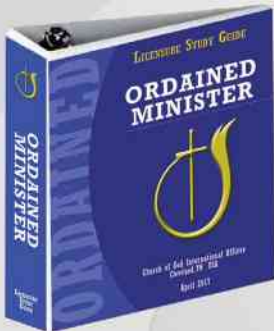


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CHURCH OF GOD HIGHLIGHTS

Summaries from Faith News reports between September 15, 2018, and January 15, 2019

Women's Ministries Exceeds Goal; Award Winners Announced

State and regional Women's Ministry coordinators were recently recognized for their efforts in supporting the 2016–2018 Women's Ministries project—the **Provisión de Amor Safe House** in Cota, Colombia.

The awards ceremony took place on August 1, 2018, at the *Faith, Fire, Freedom* international celebration during the 77th Church of God International General Assembly in Orlando, Florida. At the event, Paula Hill, president of Church of God Women's Ministries, announced the project had exceeded the challenge goal of \$500,000. Funds were raised through various projects and in partnership with Women's Ministries, Youth and Discipleship, and Girls Ministries programs across the United States and Canada.

The project is located in Cota, a city located

in the Central Savanna Province of Colombia. Founded in 1604, the population is around 25,000. Colombia has been a country at war for more than 50 years.

Rosalba Pérez Gómez opened the Asociación Jireh Provisión de Amor safe house as an answer to many small girls who were orphaned as a result of death, abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Provisión de Amor provides a loving environment in a beautiful setting on a hillside in Cota.

Girls have passed through the program and moved on to higher education and vocational opportunities, some ranking in the top 10 percentile within the country, and receiving scholarships to prestigious schools in Colombia.

The school currently hosts more than 270 students. Funds raised from the Women's Ministries project will furnish the school's 21 classrooms with desks, boards, iPads, and





computers for the technology lab (\$150,000), and update and remodel the safe house for girls, providing a safe protective home for young women and mothers (\$350,000).

Pentecostal Theological Seminary Receives \$1 Million Lilly Grant

Cleveland, TN—The Pentecostal Theological Seminary has received a grant of \$1,000,000 to help establish PTS Thrive. It is part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Thriving in Ministry—an initiative that supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they create or strengthen programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy. These clergy can serve as mentors to guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry.

PTS Thrive will assist a new generation of young pastors and seminarians by coordinating placement; facilitating mentoring relationships for a period of three years that will help young pastors negotiate points of conflict and discouragement; and, provide a variety of resources that will offer sustainable solutions to the challenges of pastoral ministry. Dr. Dan

Tomberlin, director of PTS graduate placement and instructor of pastoral ministries, will serve as executive director.

Pentecostal Theological Seminary is one of 78 organizations located in 29 states that is taking part in the initiative. The organizations reflect diverse Christian traditions: mainline and evangelical Protestant, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox.

Thriving in Ministry is part of Lilly Endowment's grant, making it possible to strengthen pastoral leadership in Christian congregations in the United States. This has been a priority at Lilly Endowment for nearly 25 years.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family—J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons Eli and J.K. Jr.—through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company.

Youth and Discipleship Announces 2019 YWEA Project

Keeping up a long-standing tradition in the Church of God, the Department of Youth and Discipleship announced its annual Youth World Evangelism Action (YWEA) project for 2019.



"The Asian Commitment" project is outlined to: (1) CREATE a holistic ministry center to equip the next wave of pastors to reach the 182,000 villages across the islands of Indonesia; (2) to PARTNER with Church of God World Missions' "Send the Light to the Cities" initiative to help establish ministry training centers in the world-class city of Bangkok; and (3) to RESCUE and PROVIDE for children in Thailand by coming alongside more than 200 orphan girls and boys in five orphanages in Thailand.

YWEA has been part of the Church of God for the last 56 years, empowering young people to work toward multiple projects, such as building orphanages, schools, and Bible schools around the globe. Many of the projects, which consist primarily of buildings to house ministries and programs, have stood the test of time and provided decades of training, shelter, and education.

The efforts of Church of God young people have realized the completion of 59 projects and more than \$37 million raised.

Church youth group leaders not already

involved are encouraged to explore the possibilities of supporting YWEA in 2019. To learn more, visit myywea.com.

Lee University Debuts First Doctoral Program

Cleveland, TN—Lee University will open its "second century" with the historic opening of its first doctoral program—the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). The announcement was made by Lee University President Paul Conn.

"This degree offering is a perfect way for Lee University to kick off our second hundred years," Conn said. The school has recently concluded a year-long celebration of its Centennial year, since it was founded in Cleveland in 1918. "We have considered offering doctorates in other areas in the past few years, and believe we are now in a good position to design doctoral programs in areas like education, religion, and music." The program will begin teaching its first class of admitted students on January 7, 2019.

The DNP can serve as a doctoral program for those nurses already possessing an advanced

Lee University Nursing Building



practice nursing (APN) certification or for those nurses in need of an APN program along with the doctoral degree. Students may enter the program with the baccalaureate (BSN) or master's degree in nursing (MSN), according to Dr. Sara Campbell. There are multiple specialty tracks that can be under the umbrella of a DNP program. The first specialty track that Lee will offer is the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP).

The Lee School of Nursing first admitted students in 2014 and has rapidly gained recognition as a "state-of-the-art" program, states Conn. Its first three classes of graduates all achieved 100 percent pass rates in their first try on the national nursing exam (the NCLEX), and dozens of them are already working in hospitals

in the area, including Erlanger, Tennova, CHI Memorial, Parkridge, Vanderbilt Medical Center, and numerous other health-care providers. The Lee undergraduate program has achieved full accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

The DNP program is designed to prepare graduates at the highest level of nursing practice, addressing the growing complexity of patient care and health care delivery. The uniquely structured program features innovative experiences such as use of telehealth robots, focus on rural and global populations, and leading disaster response as a healthcare provider. The DNP was designed in contrast to the Ph.D. nursing programs which are traditionally research intensive.

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