

Winter
2016



A Journal for Church of God Ministries

engage

IN THIS ISSUE

Multi-Site Churches

Pastoral Pet Peeves

Building Better Staff Relations

Ways to Protect Your PKs

EAGLES Leadership Initiative

WINTER 2016
VOL. 12, NO. 1

engage



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Navigating Crisis in the Church

WHILE NO ONE likes to talk about it, crises that arise in the church—and the aftermath that follows—are all too real in today’s world. As much as we hope tragedy will avoid our church family, it will come in some form and in various volumes. It could be a small electrical fire with minimal smoke damage, or a lightning strike that burns the church complex to the ground. A member’s car might be broken into during service, or they could be brutally assaulted in the dark church parking lot. It might be a storm that topples a tree, resulting in minor roof damage, or a tornado that sweeps the church off its foundation during Sunday morning service.

This issue of *Engage* contains articles from people who have navigated crises associated with the church. The stories are very personal and took great courage to put into writing. However, the authors agreed that experiences like theirs need to be shared to provide a

roadmap to recovery. While every crisis may not fully resolve itself and each situation is unique, there is common ground found through congregational support and fervent prayer. ■

Engage journal is published in the interest of providing resources for Church of God pastors.

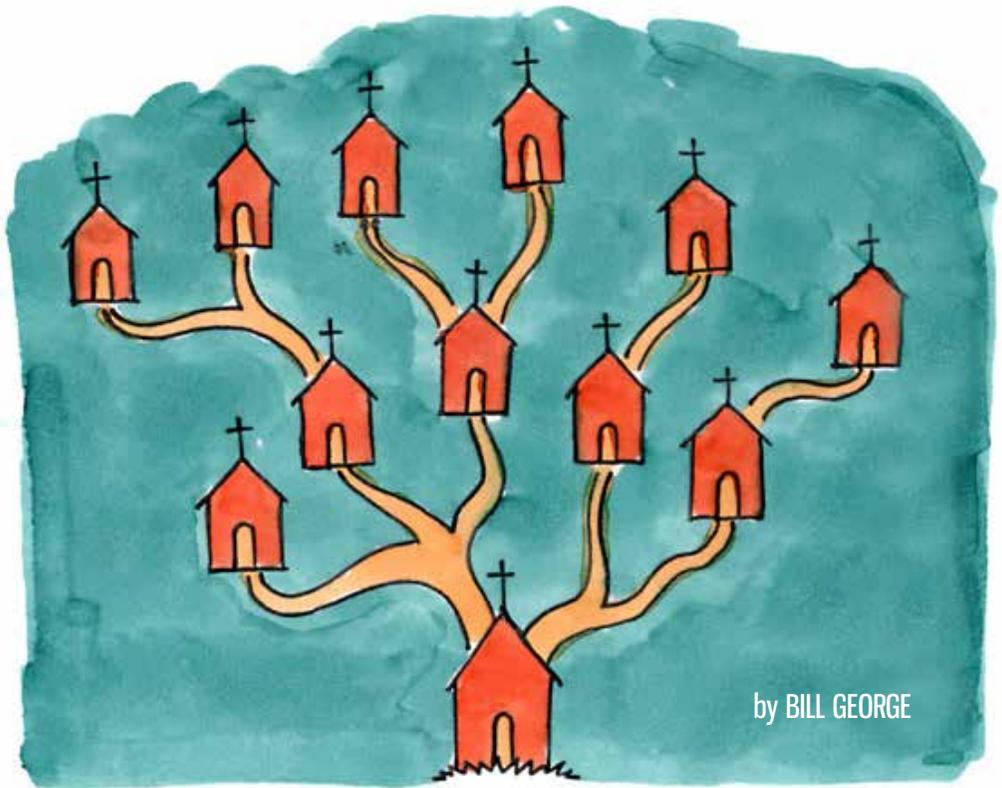
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by BILL GEORGE

MULTISITE CHURCHES: Craze or Constant?

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, less than 10 churches in America would probably have self-identified as “multisite congregations,” but a 2014 report by *Leadership Network* estimates that some 8,000 local churches today place themselves in the multisite camp. However else the phenomenon may be branded, one of the favorite labels placed on it in church litera-

ture is “revolution.” It offers a new twist on doing church.

Essentially, a multisite church is one church meeting in more than one location. This may be different spaces on the same campus, different addresses in the same city, different towns in the same region, or even different cities in the same part of the country. The ties that bind the multisite church

together are common leadership, shared vision, and a joint budget.

One multisite church may operate on quite a different model from another. A common prototype is a central, well-established congregation with satellite congregations that may meet in a theater, a YMCA, a school, or another church building whose former congregation has dwindled away. Some of the congregations may have a resident pastor who preaches “live” each time the church meets, while others may have a video-cast message preached once by the senior pastor and repeated in various venues. Some of the churches may have only a worship service, while others host a full range of ministries at each site. There is a great deal of variety.

What motivates a church to adopt a multisite approach? The most familiar answer to that question is the usual response to any evangelistic inquiry: to obey the Great Commission. “We can make more and better disciples, love people greater, and obey Christ more fully if we will go where the people are.”

All kinds of churches have decided to be multisite—old churches, new churches, those in the city and those in the country, mainline and fringe churches, in fact, all kinds. Probably, the most familiar churches found in the multisite camp are medium-sized and larger congregations, and especially those who have faced building constrictions. When the city will not issue a permit for an enlarged building, or when the cost is prohibitive for additional land, one sensible

alternative is to seek an additional kind of space. In that case, the church can look for rental space, a school building, or—as is often the case—an available sanctuary where the previous congregation has died out or is about to close. It can be reclaimed for the Kingdom and used to great advantage. People who have studied the issue declare that it is far more economical to repurpose an existing church building than to build a new one from scratch.

A dozen years ago, Pastor David Ferguson of Community Christian Church in Chicago wrote an article in *Leadership Journal* (Spring 2003, pp. 81-84) about the multisite church. He listed eight paradoxes that this approach to church can offer, as follows:

- Grow larger and grow smaller.
- Brand-new and new brand.
- Staff with generalists *and* specialists.
- Less cost and greater impact.
- New-church vibe and big-church punch.
- Move there and stay there.
- More need and more support.
- More outreach and more maturity.

Not everyone agrees that multisite is the way for a church to go, and some sensible objections need to be considered before a redirection is undertaken. Some who do not agree with multiple congregations under the covering of one church say that it appears to just be a fad; it is an approach that cannot yet be claimed to have weathered the test of time. Others complain that this methodology does not permit a pastor to know all his or her people. While it might be answered that there are multiplied circumstances where

people today are not known by their pastors, it is a question worth asking. Another objection is that there may be a tendency in multisite churches to elevate one leader too highly. Others believe this approach to church can transform a worship service into a show or a production. All of these points of view need to be considered.

I do now know of any published resources about multisite congregations that were available 20 years ago, but several good books that are extremely helpful can be purchased today. The multisite phenomenon seems to have originated as long ago as the 1940s, when Pastor Lee Roberson of Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, opened multiple locations for worship. Using a visionary congregation and the zealous students of Tennessee Temple College, his number of locations reached nearly

70. In the 1970s, one of the nation's largest congregations, Mount Paran Church of God in Atlanta, began worshiping in multiple locations, a practice that continued for more than 30 years.

I recommend the following books to a pastor who wants to explore the possibility of establishing one church in more than one location.

- Surrat, Geoff, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird. *A Multi-site Church Roadtrip*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Surrat, Geoff, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird. *The Multi-site Church Revolution*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Tomberlin, Jim and Tim Cool. *Church Locality: New Rules for Church Buildings in a Multisite, Church Planting, and Giga-Church World*. Bradenton, Florida: Rainer Publishing, 2014. ■



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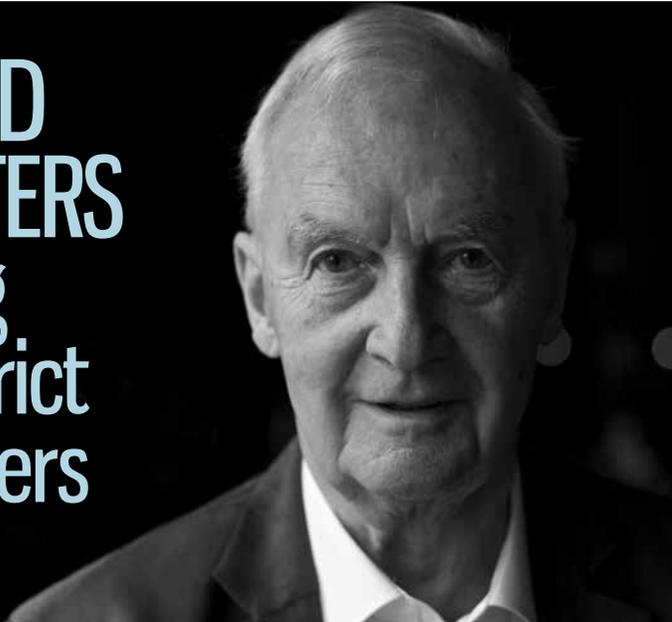
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RETIRED MINISTERS Serving as District Overseers

by G. J. CHANDLER



RETIRED MINISTERS serving as district overseers? While some people may question the advisability of this, such an arrangement makes perfect sense for several reasons. Chief among these reasons are more availability, flexibility, and experience.

AVAILABILITY

In most instances where the district overseer is one of the pastors on the district, he also is the pastor of one of the largest churches on the district. This, in itself, limits the availability of the district overseer, since he necessarily must care for his church and the myriad of responsibilities that are part the pastorate. He may not always be immediately available to assist with situations that arise in churches on the district.

However, a retired minister will be able to devote immediate attention to whatever situation arises. Many times, small situations, if allowed to fester, can become large problems. So, being available to deal immediately with problems that may arise can prevent trouble. This availability also makes it possible to develop a closer relationship and connection with pastors, other ministers on the district, and church congregations.

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility means “characterized by a ready capability to adapt to new, different, or changing requirements” (*Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*). All churches, pastors, and people are different; what works with one may not be applicable to another. Therefore, it is essential that a district overseer be flexible

enough in his approach to see each situation as it is and deal with it accordingly. Pastors, ministers, and laity will appreciate a district overseer who is flexible enough to understand their concerns and work with them for a resolution that will be beneficial to all concerned parties.

EXPERIENCE

Retired ministers are a valuable reserve of experience. This experience was acquired through many years of practical ministerial service. Retired ministers often will have experience serving on state youth boards, evangelism boards, and state councils. In addition, they may have served in various appointed positions. Some of them will already have experience as district overseers during their pastoral days. The corps of retired ministers also may include former state overseers. So, retired ministers are a valuable pool of practical ministry experience that will allow them to serve effectively as district overseers.

RELATIONSHIPS

A wise district overseer will establish close connections with the ministers and members on his district. I presently have the privilege of serving as district overseer of the Arab District in northern Alabama. Currently, we hold a monthly meeting with our pastors and their spouses. We also include associate pastors, youth pastors, and their spouses. We have a meal together, conduct any necessary business, and then have a time of fellowship. Also, we hold a

RETIREMENT MINISTERS OFTEN WILL HAVE EXPERIENCE SERVING ON STATE YOUTH BOARDS, EVANGELISM BOARDS, AND STATE COUNCILS. IN ADDITION, THEY MAY HAVE SERVED IN VARIOUS APPOINTED POSITIONS. **SOME OF THEM WILL ALREADY HAVE EXPERIENCE AS DISTRICT OVERSEERS DURING THEIR PASTORAL DAYS.**

district camp meeting each year. In addition, I meet regularly with pastors and ministers for a one-on-one discussion of their needs and concerns. In instances where a minister may need correction, I do this in a private meeting so that a minister is never publicly confronted and embarrassed. By meeting privately, I can show the minister that I am concerned about his situation and stand ready to assist him. This builds trusting relationships that pay great dividends.

WHO SHOULD SERVE?

Not every retired minister may be a good choice to serve as a district overseer. Even though a minister may have the qualifications to serve, unless he is willing to devote his time and effort to helping ministers and churches, he should not be appointed to serve as a district overseer. In other instances, while a minister may be willing to serve, and even have a desire for the position, unless he meets the qualifications for a district overseer, he should not be appointed.

The *Minutes* of the Int'l General Assembly sets forth duties of a district overseer:

S43. DISTRICT OVERSEERS II. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES

The district overseer shall:

1. Conduct conferences in each of the churches on his district. However, he may authorize the local pastor to conduct the conference, (65th A., 1994, Item 7, p. 88).
2. See that a general evangelistic effort is put forth in his district during the year.
3. See that the state program is carried out in the churches of his district.
4. Assist the state overseer in the appointment of pastors, when called upon to do so.
5. Together with the state overseer, pass on the selection, purchase, and construction of all church properties on his district.

The duties of the district overseer require considerable time and effort to carry out the responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Serving as district overseer is an honor for any retired minister who may be called on to fill this important position. It is an excellent opportunity for retired ministers to find fulfillment in their “golden” years, while using their experience to bless the “Timothys” whose lives can be enriched by their guidance, encouragement, and mentoring. ■

G. J. Chandler is an ordained bishop who has served the church as pastor, evangelist, district overseer, state board member, state overseer in Southern New England and New York, and national evangelist. Although officially retired (he prefers to call it semiretired), in addition to his district overseer responsibilities, he regularly conducts revivals and special services. He and his wife Carla reside in Cullman, Alabama.

MOBILIZE



Kenneth Trawick, Lead Pastor
Promise Land Church of God
West Haven, Connecticut

With the challenges facing ministry today, it is imperative that we stay on the cutting edge. Mobilize has been the key in training a team of leaders within my church to stay connected with what is happening.

I have often said that Mobilize is one of the best-kept secrets in the Church of God. In the past 10 years, I have put over 100 of my leaders through Mobilize.

[Click here to watch video on Mobilize.](#)



7 Situations Where Your Church Should NOT Have GREETERS

AM AN ADVOCATE for churches having greeters—most of the time. But there are a few occasions where I think it's best for the church to have no greeters at all.

Indeed, if one or a few of these situations exist, greeters in the worship services can do more harm than good.

So when should your church *not* have greeters? Here are seven such occasions:

1. If the greeters are not trained. Unfortunately, the majority of churches put greeters on the front lines of ministry with no training. They are thus simply not equipped to deal with guests.

2. If the greeters do not have scheduled meetings. Greeters should meet together about once a quarter. They are able to share experiences and encouragement with one another.

3. If the greeters are not naturally friendly. I've been in some churches where the greeters look like they are in pain. I've wanted to flee from them. An unfriendly greeter should be an oxymoron.

4. If they act more like ushers than greeters. A greeter is supposed to greet, to make guests feel welcome, and to direct them where they need to go. If all greeters do is hand out bulletins and

find a seat for guests, they are really not greeters at all.

5. If they don't intentionally seek out guests. A well-trained and experienced greeter is able to distinguish a guest from a member. Greeters should not wait for guests to find them; they should seek out the guests.

6. If they are unwilling to walk the person to their destination. While visiting someone at a hospital recently, I asked a nurse for directions. She offered to walk me to my destination. That one act gave me a favorable initial impression of the hospital. Part of the greeters' responsibilities is to walk the guest to the worship service, to the preschool area, or wherever they need to go.

7. If they are not knowledgeable about the church. I was recently in a church where I was to meet the executive pastor before the services. I asked a greeter where I could find him. The greeter had never heard of him. Seriously!

A good greeter is an incredible and invaluable resource for a church. A poor greeter is a terrible ambassador for a church. It would be better not to have greeters at your church than to have poor greeters. ■

—*Thom S. Rainer is the president of LifeWay Christian Resources. (Source: ministrytodaymag.com)*



Knoxville Church Partners With DREAM CENTER

by PAUL HARRIS

PARK WEST CHURCH at Dutch Valley, near Knoxville, Tennessee, is committed to serving their immediate community and neighbors. There is an intentional effort and vision cast to feed, clothe, and visit with folks who may otherwise feel invisible.

In conjunction with the Knoxville Dream Center, we are feeding nearly 750 people each week through our food-truck outreach and our homeless outreach known as Lost Sheep Ministry. We see the need around us and take to heart the church's responsibility to show the love of Christ to all men, women, and children.

Nearly 50 percent of those we feed are children under the age of 17 or elderly above 60. Children are innocent, and in spite of whether mom and/or dad have issues, these children

need to eat. It is hard for children to dream about their future when they are worried about eating today.

Viola Davis, a now popular actress who has also performed on Broadway, knew hunger as a child. In an interview, she said, "I can remember adults looking at me as a child and saying, 'Look at that little girl; she must be poor.' Inside I was screaming, just give me something to eat, and I will take care of the rest." Our food trucks go into areas known as food deserts. This is defined by low income and low access to real food sources. Knoxville has 20 identified food deserts. In these areas in the last year, we have helped to provide over 350,000 meals.

It is not uncommon for our volunteers to be asked about why we do this. People also ask for prayer and ask to be brought to the church that is behind all of this. In fact, at one location, a man said to us one day, "If there was something



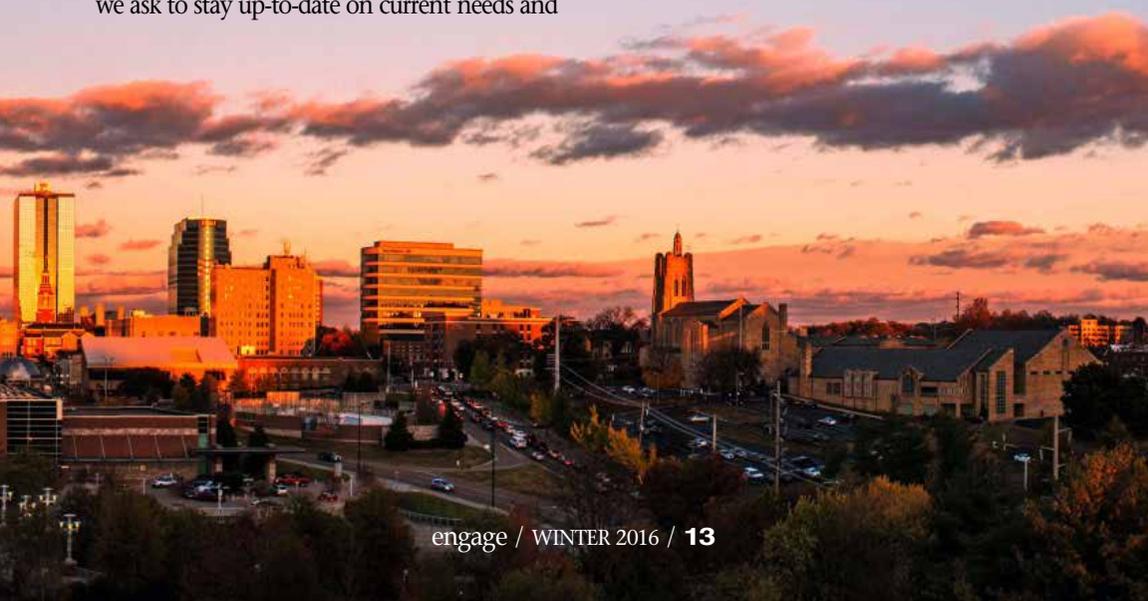


like this happening when I was a child, I might have had a better chance.” The people we touch know that we care, because we come to them with open hands and an open heart. The people are not a project; rather, they are individuals made in the image of God who need to see His love in a tangible way.

We also have identified Title I schools in our area, and we seek to come alongside them to support and encourage the staff and students. Title I schools are schools with a greater than 40 percent free- or reduced-lunch student body. These schools often lack parental involvement for several reasons, and they have very little funding or support. Weekly emails are sent to the staff to show appreciation and support. Though we cannot meet all the needs, we ask to stay up-to-date on current needs and

try to help meet some of those needs. Simply leaving a box of winter coats at the school to be available when the staff sees a need, makes their job easier. They do not have to go looking for resources; they just go to the box and find a coat that meets the need.

The local church can make a difference in so many ways by simply getting out in the community to discover the needs. By going out and discovering needs and being part of the solution before we ask them to come see us on our turf, opens doors that otherwise might not open. As a church, we seek out people who may feel invisible; we show them that there is a God who knows who they are and is revealing His love to them in a tangible way by offering them a place to belong. ■





by B. RANDALL PARRIS

EAGLES Leadership Initiative

(Possibly, the “Best Kept Secret” in the Church)

WANT TO KNOW A SECRET? Have you ever heard of “The Eagles Leadership Initiative” in Washington, DC?—probably not; and that is sad because it is a shining star among the ministries of the Church of God! No one is trying to “cover it up” or keep it “under the radar.” Yet, if anything is worth celebrating, broadcasting, and applauding, it is this ministry!

Youth and Discipleship is committed to raising up the next generation of effective, Christian leaders. The **EAGLES LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE/DC** is a beautiful expression of their commitment to do so. During the week of the Fourth of July, about 50 carefully selected young adults (target age 17–24) gather in beautiful Washington, DC for a leadership training experience that combines instruction, history, discipleship, motivation, sightseeing, inspiration, prayer, patriotism, the Word of God, and fun into five unforgettable days!

This summer Youth and Discipleship will host the seventh annual Eagles Leadership experience. That means almost 300 “Eagles” have been trained, loved, inspired, and prepared over the last few years! Veteran youth specialist, Randall Parris, who serves as the Discipleship and Leadership Development coordinator,

envisioned and founded this extraordinarily successful leadership “launch pad.”

HERE IS WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

Katelyn Rhodes, TN—“My absolute favorite moment of Eagles was EVERYTHING! Eagles taught me to be bold enough to talk about God and share His Word with others.”

Christen Bergeron, TX—“Eagles taught me the value of great leadership, as well as passion for God, country, and my fellow man. This was a life-changing experience!”

Jordan Spencer, MD—“Eagles Leadership training fine-tunes the instruments God has given us. It inspires the leaders of now to dream big and pray boldly, all in the motive of Christ’s love!”

Hallie Hnatek, NC—“Eagles Leadership brought out a side of me I never knew I had. It taught me the importance of being a leader in a lost nation.”

Colin Crooks, Canada—“Become an Eagle and rise above the storm! As an Eagle, you will find your calling, sharpen your ministry, or be directed to people who will help you find and develop your God-given calling.”

Desirae Trejo, GA—“The leadership sessions gave me not only boldness and courage, but also equipped me with the skills to make a difference in my community and church.”

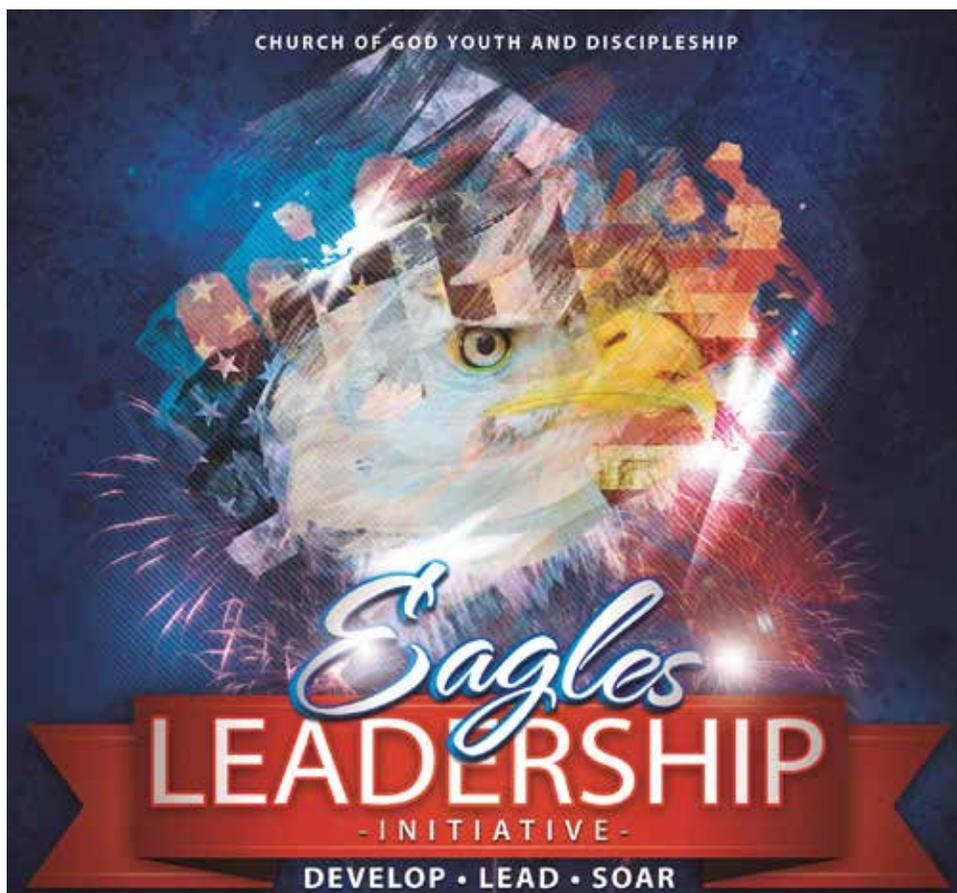
HOW, WHERE, AND WHY?

The coaching meetings take place at The National 4-H Conference Center in suburban Washington, DC. Top-notch speakers and presenters make each session valuable and real-world friendly. Impressive sightseeing and events in the nation's capital during the Independence Day Celebration galvanize this amazing leadership experience! Participants see how great leaders like Lincoln, Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., and

others built their lives and this nation on the Word of God and how they can as well.

Gary Lewis, international director and David Blair, international assistant director of Youth and Discipleship believe in *"equipping young men and women who are committed to scriptural disciplines, to become confident, skilled, and motivated to represent Christ in deed and truth, in order to transform their worlds."*

This DC Eagles Leadership experience finishes on the Fourth of July, with the group



singing and celebrating on a boat on the Potomac River as they watch the national fireworks display near the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. Unforgettable!

FOUR UNDENIABLE RESULTS

1. The Eagles Leadership Initiative has already effectively molded almost 300 young adults with spiritual disciplines based in Scripture.

2. This effort addresses a significant need and goal of the Church of God by successfully recruiting, training, and involving the next generation in life transformation found in the Bible.

3. “Eagles” has meritoriously trained students and young adults to communicate truths of the Bible, develop specific leadership skills, equipped them to reach and teach others for Christ, as well as how to share their faith.

4. Young adults gain a deep sense of how Scripture inspired the men and women who founded this country and led its great advances. This provides sufficient impetus for participants to then successfully engage in leadership in their local communities and campuses; and that is exactly what they are doing!

WHAT ARE THESE “EAGLES” ACCOMPLISHING?

- Ashton Groves was valedictorian of her graduating class. She orchestrated a fundraiser in her school to raise enough money to purchase and deliver a bus for an orphanage/school in Mexico.

- After Eagles, Aubrey Roach and Jon Sweeney graduated from the CAMS program and now hold an Exhorter’s license in the Church of God. Both of these young adults now preach regularly in their home churches.

- Several students have enrolled in Abante International and LEAD INStitute programs and are ministering around the USA and around the world.

- After spending one year in the LEAD INStitute Georgia program, Sarah Burns was part of a new church plant in Edwardsville, Illinois.

- Demetrius McCray has stepped into his calling to ministry and now ministers the Word at his home church several times a month.

- Caitlyn Harman is an intern reporter at *The Lebanon News*—the local newspaper in Lebanon, Kentucky. Hired at 16, Caitlyn is the youngest journalist intern in the paper’s history.

- Josh Schmutzer spent one year with Abante International after Eagles and has spent the last several months traveling the world with the Christian missions organization, World Race.

- Zach Prewitt has recently authored his second Christian book.

THE SECRET IS OUT!

Do you have a few exceptional young men or women at your church? This incredible leadership experience is available to remarkable young adults that you recommend! Let others know about this incredible opportunity, only available to a select, chosen group. One “Eagle” participant said, *“Every young leader should experience the Eagles Leadership Initiative. It will give them the tools, confidence, and perspective on what real leadership is all about!”*

For information about the Eagles Leadership Initiative, contact Randall Parris, at rparris@churchofgod.org /423-478-7883 or visit <http://www.cogyouth.org/youth/eagles-initiative> ■

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GENERAL OVERSEER ANNOUNCES ASSEMBLY THEME:



CHURCH OF GOD General Overseer Mark Williams has announced the theme for the 2016 International General Assembly will be a single word: “Go!”

The International General Assembly (GA16) takes place in Nashville, Tennessee, on July 19–22, 2016. Williams cited Matthew 28:19-20 as the foundational Scripture passage for the theme where Christ speaks, saying: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (NIV).

“We stand at a crossroads in time where certain things are clearer than they’ve ever been before,” Williams stated. “He has chosen us to carry His gospel into the world, and we need to take seriously the responsibility we have been given.”

“Jesus gives us a command,” Williams continued. “That command is called

the Great Commission, and it resonates throughout history as the singular driving force behind our mission ... individually and together as a church.”

This theme follows the 2014 International General Assembly emphasis of “ONE,” coupled with the tag line: “One Faith, One Lord, One Mission.” The theme has been adopted by many local churches, carrying over into the 2014–2016 Assembly period, with the ONE logo being sported on coffee mugs, shirts, and lapel pins.

Planning for the 2016 International General Assembly is well underway. The Music City Center in downtown Nashville will be the location, which will feature several preliminary events leading up to the official launch on Tuesday, July 19 with the gathering of the International General Council of ordained bishops. Williams stated that further development of the theme is to come, but in the meantime, he has issued a challenge to ministers and laypersons as the Assembly period approaches.

“Think about it,” Williams concluded. “He (Jesus) didn’t say, ‘If you have time.’ He didn’t say, ‘If it’s not too much trouble.’ Jesus simply said ... ‘Go.’”

In further sharing his heart, Williams asked, “What if, on one day, the Church of God around the world came together as one, and on that one day, we would commit to tell one person about our faith in Jesus?”

So, on May 20, 2016, the challenge will be put forth for all Church of God believers to share their faith story with at least one person. It is being called, “Go Day.”

For those participating in this event, they will be joining believers around the world as part of the International Global Outreach

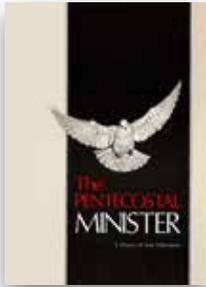
emphasis founded by Dr. Beat Baumann.

Videos are being developed to acquaint members and church leaders on the specifics of Go Day, where the question can be asked, “Have I ever told you I belong to Jesus? Here’s why!” On Go Day, the charge will be to tell someone about your relationship with God. Whether your church is around the corner or around the world—everyone is invited to tell someone about Jesus.

A website is being developed that will have additional resources, as well as a place for individuals to share their personal testimony of how they found Christ.

Please plan to join General Overseer Williams and the Church of God on May 20, 2016. ■





The Pentecostal Minister Flashback will reprint articles from the forerunner of Engage. The articles will be presented as they were originally written, so dates and cultural references will reflect the period. However, most of the advice and research is still applicable to ministry today.

Pentecostal Minister

FLASHBACK

BUILDING BETTER STAFF RELATIONS

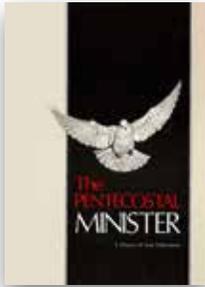
By James F. Byrd • Fall 1981

THE CHURCH is God's gift to the world, for which Jesus Christ gave His life. An effective pastoral ministry is also one of God's gifts to His church!

In terms of responsibility, the New Testament has a pattern for effective ministry. Ernest Mosley, in his book, *Called to Joy: a Design for Pastoral Ministries* develops a threefold focus for the pastoral model: (1) Leading the church in the achievement of its mission; (2) Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers; and (3) Caring for the church's members and others in the community.

Such a multidimensional ministry in this demanding age very often requires the skills of a dedicated pastoral staff to assist the pastor in implementing a full-orbed ministry for the total family. Ministry through a pastoral staff, although biblical in concept, must be cultivated and nurtured. By its very nature, it is a shared relationship—in purpose, goals, discovery, caring, devotion to duty, and acceptance. Most important, it means total surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Maintaining healthy, effective staff relationships is a continuing challenge for the pastor of the local church. The pastor is both



the enabler and the ennobler. Because the pastoral staff is made up of flesh-and-blood people, the pastoral function in promoting and maintaining good staff relationships that will be tested and stretched again and again.

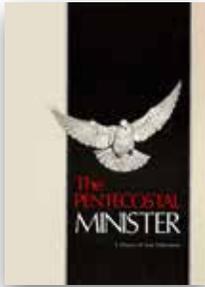
By definition, staff relationships are people relationships. Embodied in the concept is affinity, rapport, connection, association, alliance, affiliation, proximity, nearness, relevance, pertinence, bearing, concern, interest, respect, regard—but what is most important is kinship.

It is my judgment that on the basis of kindred relationship alone—to God, to the pastoral setting, and to the staff—that pastors successfully exercise their function in dealing with issues which challenge team unity, harmony, and practical effectiveness.

It may startle the reader to learn—or to be reminded—that Jesus Christ had staff problems. For example, in His ministry among the disciples, there was a period of perhaps three years during which Jesus had to meet the challenge of selecting, building, and guiding a staff. Some of those whom He selected did not have a clear and proper perspective of their role. Others were “haywire” over their places on the ecclesiastical ladder. There were problems relating to who was going to sit where, and selfishness surfaced from time to time. Who can forget when those closest to Him went to sleep when they should have been praying?

Through it all, Jesus Christ remained supportive, His staff members knew they were loved and appreciated, both for what they were and for what they were becoming through His aid. Jesus helped them to discover their own uniqueness and particular gifts.

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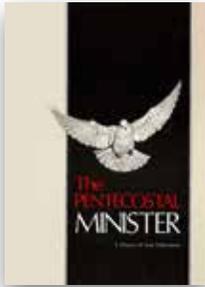


In equipping these saints to do the work of the ministry, Jesus helped them to become aware of that rich treasure that was in their earthen vessels; and by His enabling, they learned to labor with His mind and His Spirit, doing Kingdom service.

Those interpersonal conflicts referred to previously, and more, can become seed for troublesome breakdowns in staff relationships. On the other hand, they can become learning experiences which prompt strong personal growth and strengthen the ability of the staff to do God's work. Some areas of potential conflict strain pastoral leadership and hinder staff effectiveness. These must be considered serious enough for confrontation in a proper manner: (1) Unresolved personality clashes between staff; (2) A sharp tongue and critical spirit; (3) Unbridled competitiveness; (4) A sense of personal inadequacy in relation to the skills of others; (5) Poor avenues of communication; (6) Insufficient mutuality and supportiveness; (7) Fallout from salary differences; (8) Violated trust and lack of confidence and faith in peers; (9) Overlapping responsibilities and ambiguous job descriptions; and (10) Overload. There are other problems as well, and the alert pastor must continually lead the staff toward resolution of those problems which can divide, weaken, and perhaps even destroy.

To build effective staff relationships, pastors must understand the nature of their tasks. Pastors serve both the congregation and the community. Pastors also pastor the staff and their families. In that role, pastors must not be afraid to be very human and

PASTORS ALSO PASTOR THE STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES. IN THAT ROLE, PASTORS MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO BE VERY HUMAN AND DOWN-TO-EARTH. THEY MUST BE AWARE OF THEIR OWN INADEQUACIES AND HIGHLY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT GOD IS DOING A WORK IN THEIR OWN LIVES.



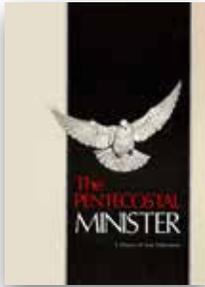
down-to-earth. They must be aware of their own inadequacies and highly conscious of the fact that God is doing a work in their own lives.

How the pastor conveys this attitude to the staff, both verbally and nonverbally, can produce growth in grace and dynamic personal development. Every person has value. Every staff member must be seen in light of what God is doing in his or her life. Knowing the individual staff member in a way that the staff member “knows that you know him or her” is critical.

In personal crisis, when a staff member may be “looking up to find the bottom,” he or she must be conscious of the fact that the pastor is “plugged in” to his or her experience. Indeed, our supreme example, Jesus Christ, “became flesh and dwelled among us.” In the words of the popular musical expression, “He was there all the time.” And so must the pastor be!

According to Hebrews 4:15, the writer says that Jesus Christ was touched with the “feeling of our infirmities.” The power of empathic fellowship—when the pastor “gets inside the skin” of the staff member and bleeds, hurts, and weeps with him or her—while, admittedly, requiring risk, is part of the unifying process that aids and abets a group of individuals in becoming “one body.”

Growth-producing factors such as patience, love, faith, and vision are important motivating factors and must be strategically centered in the life of the pastoral model. The goal of effective pastoral leadership in building effective staff relationships is personal growth, not perfection. The perfect staff member does not exist. Neither does the perfect pastor (in spite of what I keep telling myself). Humanity continues to abound. I once read a story about a statue of Moses, done by the great Michelangelo. It was said to be perfect in every detail, except for a piece that was chipped from one knee. Legend says that when Michelangelo had finished his work, he looked at it and decided that it was perfect. He struck it on the knee with his hammer, saying, “Why don’t you speak to me?” The result of that innocent and impul-



sive hammer tap on the knee was the “chip” out of the knee and a permanent marring of what was otherwise perfection. As it was with Michelangelo, perfection is still illusive for both pastor and staff. Sitting on a pastor’s desk in a northern city is a sign which says, “Growth is OK here.” In other words, “We are not perfect, but we are trying; and God is not finished with any of us yet.” In that kind of climate and atmosphere, staff relationships are certainly strengthened.

Effective staff relationships may be enhanced in other ways besides good, interpersonal relationships. Practically speaking, a pastor may build those relationships with meaningful staff meetings; clearly stated goals, which are constantly reaffirmed and reinforced; clearly understood lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability; and occasions for social interaction and staff retreats.

The Scriptures provide wonderful guidance in all things. More than fifty times in the New Testament, the expression *one another* is used. And that expression has implications for the contemporary pastoral staff. According to the Book, pastor and staff are privileged to minister to one another by (1) giving honor to one another (Romans 12:10); by living harmoniously with one another (Romans 12:16); by accepting one another (Romans 15:7); by caring about one another (1 Corinthians 12:25); by serving one another (Galatians 5:13); by being kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32); by forgiving one another (Colossians 3:13); by comforting one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18); by encouraging one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11); by stirring up one another (Hebrews 10:24); by praying for one another (James 5:16); and by loving one another (1 John 3:11). At the very least, these and other “one another” scriptures provide a pattern for building effective staff relationships—and, for that matter, for all of life! ■

At the time this article was originally published in the fall of 1981, James F. Byrd was pastor of the Riverhills Church of God in Tampa, Florida.

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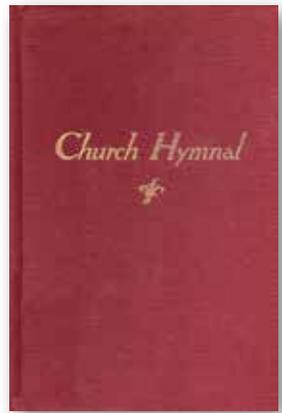
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Cleveland Museum Unveils Permanent Exhibit About RED BACK HYMNAL

by CAMERON FISHER



THE MUSEUM CENTER at Five Points, a regional history museum located in Cleveland, Tennessee, has unveiled a permanent exhibit on the history of the iconic *Church Hymnal*, commonly known as the “Red Back” hymnal.

Under the auspices of the Cleveland/Bradley County Chamber of Commerce, a committee was formed last year to explore the possibility of a museum exhibit that would address the gospel music heritage of the area with a particular emphasis on the popular hymnal, which has been produced at the Church of God’s Pathway Press for the past 64 years.

Melissa Woody, vice president of the Chamber’s Tourism Development division, spearheaded the effort and called upon the resources of several local Southern Gospel artists, conductors, historians, community, and church leaders.

“The Red Back Hymnal has touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world, and we want to share the story of this heritage which exists right here in our community,” Woody stated. “We

have visitors who inquire with the Chamber about Cleveland and Bradley County for many things, and the history of this very popular hymnal has been a regular point of interest, particularly as it relates to the religious and Pentecostal heritage trails passing through this region.” Woody was referencing two brochures produced several years ago by the Southeast Tennessee Tourism Association, “On the Glory Land Road” and “The Pentecostal Heritage Trail.” Both include several points of interest with historic ties to the Church of God.

The 410 pages of the *Church Hymnal* contain 429 songs. It was first published in 1951 by Tennessee Music & Printing Company, now Pathway Press, the publishing arm of the Church of God based in Cleveland. It contains standard hymns, traditional gospel songs, as well as Christmas and patriotic numbers.

The exhibit contains a touch screen with oral histories, the history of shaped notes, production, iconic authors, and the hymnal’s impact across denominations. There is a listening station, and various artifacts

tied in with the production of the hymnal. There is also a working Linotype—a mechanism critical to the early days of printing the hymnal at Pathway.

The large crowd who attended the ribbon-cutting on November 5, 2015, came not only for the unveiling, but also to attend a “Red Back Singing” that followed in the museum’s conference center. Led by Danny Murray, the crowd thrilled to the spontaneous outbursts of familiar songs and accompaniment.

“Like tens of thousands of Church of God and other denominational worshippers, my theology was shaped and affirmed by the words we sang from this book,” noted Church of God General Overseer Mark Williams, who participated in the

unveiling. “What we believe about the love of God, the power of the blood of Christ, the influence of the Holy Spirit, the value of the fellowship of the church—all these and more were fortified in our thinking by the compelling hymns and gospel songs of the ‘Red Back Hymnal.’”

Several Red Back Facebook pages exist, including a few for special Red Back singing events. The official page for the museum display proclaims the Red Back as “America’s best-loved hymnal.”

For more information, or if you have historical knowledge and/or contributions concerning the *Church Hymnal* that will benefit the exhibit, please contact Melissa Woody at mwoody@clevelandchamber.com. ■



5 Pastoral PET PEEVES

by DAN COOLEY



After decades in ministry, I've identified some Christian habits that get under my skin.

HAVE A LOT of church experience. I was a pastor's kid, a youth pastor for 13 years, and senior pastor now for 17 years. Over that time, I've developed some pet peeves. I assume lousy haircuts may be a hair stylist's pet peeve, and plumbers seem to avoid belts. But what bugs a pastor? Here is my top five. Drumroll please ...

5. SLOGANS

I'm talking church marquee signs, bumper stickers, and matching mission team T-shirts. I once saw a team in a Florida airport heading to Haiti with shirts boldly declaring, "WE HELP THE POOR." The shirts were complete with a Haitian map so all the Haitians would know they were talking about them.

Can you imagine Jesus writing in the sand, "I Help the Poor"? or "Choose the

Bread of Life or You Are Toast," or "Prevent Truth Decay; Brush Up on Your Bible," or "Why Pay for GPS? Jesus Gives Directions for Free." It's embarrassing. And to think—we could be posting Scripture, or posting nothing; and wearing normal T-shirts.

4. BLINDSIDED BEFORE CHURCH

I made the jump from youth pastor to interim pastor when our senior pastor left. It was one of my first Sundays in that role. As I was walking up to the front of the church to preach, someone pulled me aside. Then they unloaded.

"I hate to bother you with this, but Buddy just said he and his family are leaving, and you know they are related to half this church. I'm not sure we will make it through this interim, certainly not with your leadership. We're down

to just two weeks' operating expenses in the bank, and it is draining fast. And Elmer—you know, the chairman of our elders—he just came out as a past member of the KKK, and will be on TV tonight explaining the burnings. Oh, the music is starting. God bless your message today, Pastor."

OK, I don't remember exactly what they said, I just remember trying to wrap my head back around a sermon after being blindsided on the way to preach. Now I'm ready with evasive action. I've found these answers helpful.

- "Sorry to interrupt, but we will need to talk later. I'm getting ready to speak."
- "I've made it a policy not to talk church business on Sunday mornings. Can you call me tonight?"
- "Does Satan use you often?"

Lighten up—I'd never say that last one—out loud.

3. SPIRITUAL GIFTS TESTS

I've had my share of birthdays. And, even at my current state of senility, I can usually recognize the gift once I tear the wrapping off. Ah, a new shirt, a new laptop, a new set of teeth.

If God gave us something, why do we need a test to figure out what it is? Did He disguise it in some cosmic game of hide and seek? It seems to me we confuse latent talent with gifts. Here is a novel idea: What if God's spiritual gifts aren't the same as our birth talents? What if He really does make us strong where we are

weak, rather than stronger where we are already strong?

After all, didn't a selfish, scared missionary who wanted people to go to hell lead the greatest revival in history? (Would your Missions Committee have supported Jonah?) And didn't an 80-year-old stuttering fugitive free a nation? (I might have let Moses lead our nursing home ministry).

2. PROVERBS 29:18 VISION STATEMENTS

It seems like every book on leadership uses Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." The funny thing is we always use a modern translation (NIV, ESV, or whatever), until we get to this verse. Then it is KJV every time, and only when we quote this portion of the verse. Come on, we all know better! This verse isn't talking about vision.

The complete verse in the New King James reads, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law." It's similar in the NASB, NIV, NLT, etc. English has changed meaning since the 1611 KJV. When the entire sentence is read, it's clear this passage is about divine revelation, not what leadership books mean by "vision." That doesn't mean I'm peeved when people teach vision-casting and planning from other passages of Scripture, or even from other passages of Proverbs. It's not the teaching, but knowingly messing with Scripture that bugs me. But then again, maybe we just have different visions.

1. WANTING TO BE “FED”

I love people who want to grow. But often wanting to be fed is different. I see a red flag when someone new comes in the door and tells me, “We just weren’t being fed at that other church.” We all know some months or years from now, they will be at some other church saying the same thing, talking about me. The odd thing is I hear it from people who have been believers for years. I so want to ask, “Twenty-two years you’ve been a believer, and you still want to be fed? That’s a *long* time to be in a high chair crying for smashed peas. What do you think is wrong with you?”

So, when I become church dictator of the world (any day now), my Five Commandments will be:

1. If you feel compelled to advertise your Christianity in neon, post Scripture not slogans.

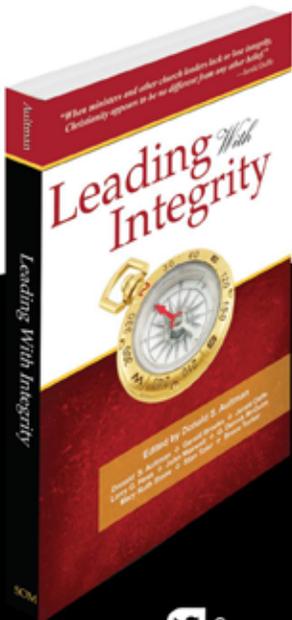
2. Honor the worship service as a time for worship—no exceptions.

3. Find your gifts by doing ministry in the body of Christ, not by a test.

4. Don’t manipulate Scripture to fit your proposals.

5. Grow up, reproduce, and feed others. Getting spoon-fed is for babies. ■

Dan Cooley is pastor of Cottonwood Church in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, and author of BIZARRE Bible Stories, and BIZARRE Bible Stories 2. You can reach him at DanielCooley.com.



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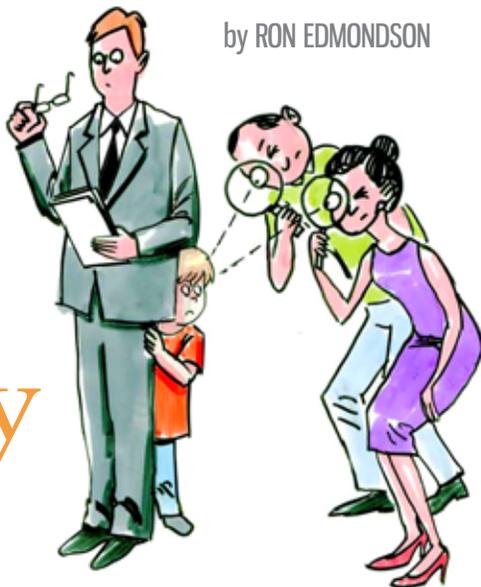
PATHWAY AD

#1

Seven Ways to Protect Your PKs in Ministry

How to avoid damaging a child growing up in the ministry world.

by RON EDMONDSON



MY WIFE HAS occasionally posted about the unique role of the pastor's wife on our blog. Some of the comments I have received are well taken. I have been asked, basically, "What about the PKs? Who is looking out for them? Many disappear from the church as adults."

PK = Pastor's Kids

I hear you. I have addressed the issue in generality, as a family, but I haven't written extensively about protecting children in ministry.

I am aware, however, of the commenter's concern. I'm blessed that my PKs survived well in ministry. Both my boys are very active in the church—one works for a private company, but mostly in the Christian sector, and the other is in full-time ministry. I understand, however, this is a problem for many pastors and their families.

By the time some pastors' children reach adulthood, they are often done with church. Actually, they are more done with the busyness and politics of church, and they want little or nothing to do with it. So, they sit on the sidelines of ministry—if they attend church at all.

Honestly, as much as I have heard it talked about, at least within my circles of ministry, it is rarer than it is normal for the pastors' children to not be active in church. I probably know more pastors who have children active in church than I do those who have children who have disappeared. I don't know the statistics (please share them with me if you do) but, if we could avoid damaging any child growing up in the ministry world, I think we should.

That's the purpose of this post. And, it's addressed to the pastor and the church.

Here are seven suggestions for protecting your PKs:

1. Level the expectations. Hold your children to biblical standards. Train them well. Discipline appropriately. Hopefully, you teach it, and you should parent what you teach. But, don't be surprised when your children aren't perfect. They aren't any more perfect than you are—or anyone else's children.

2. Let them be kids. Don't expect them to care as much about ministry as you do when they are seven or even seventeen. They might. Mine did—to a certain extent on certain days. And, then other days, they just wanted to shoot basketballs in the church gym while I went on church visitation.

3. Live what you preach. If you want them to appreciate the ministry, let them see you, the pastor, as authentic. Authenticity means you are in private who you claim to be in public. And chances are good they are observing both. They'll respect you when you are equally transparent and honest with how you live your life on Sundays and throughout the week. And, the more they respect you, the more they can respect the ministry. Remember, their primary concept of ministry is you.

4. Protect your time at home. When you are home, be home. This is HUGE! Let voicemail and email do their thing. Put down the computer. Say no to outside interruptions. There will always be exceptions in the role of a pastor, but they should be rare, not commonplace. The children need to know you value your time with your spouse

and with them, even more than your time with others.

5. Be their parent more than their pastor. You may be their pastor, but first they need a parent. I actually found others on staff, or even pastor friends in other churches, who were sometimes better at being their pastor anyway. But, no one could replace my role as parent.

6. Give them roles as they desire. My boys helped launch a youth group. They led at camps. They worked with children and preschoolers. But, I never forced it. I let them serve where they wanted to serve. Interestingly, when the idea was theirs, they seemed more likely to want to be involved.

7. Let them do ministry with you. My boys went to committee meetings, staff meetings, and visitations. I took my boys on missions trips. Unless it was a highly confidential meeting for the parties involved, I gave them access to my calendar. They came to appreciate what I do as a pastor, not resent it because I wasn't home. Again, this was voluntary, not mandatory.

Some may wonder why I didn't put anything about my personal walk with Christ as one of the points. Well, hopefully this is understood in the role of a pastor and a believer. This is number one for every question of how to do ministry effectively. Your children will likely never grow stronger in their faith than you are modeling for them. ■

Ron Edmondson is senior pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky. (Source: ministrytodaymag.com)

NAE

CODE OF ETHICS FOR CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

The National Association of Evangelicals has crafted a Code of Ethics that assists local churches in their conduct of ministry. It is worth sharing with pastors and local church leaders.

JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES gave the Church instruction in the responsible use of gifts, in the practice of unity and holiness, and in witness to the world. Jesus also gave gifts to the Church so that it might be built up and reach unity in the faith, knowledge of the Son of God, and maturity.

The Church of Jesus Christ is embodied in local congregations. Among the gifts Jesus provides the church are pastors to teach congregations, lead them, and care for their spiritual well-being. In return, the lay leaders of our congregations are responsible to provide for the clergy and to facilitate their work. They also have responsibilities to the congregation at large, to the family of churches to which they belong, and to the communities in which they live and worship. Therefore, responsible congregational leadership will:

HONOR AND SUPPORT THE GIFTS CHRIST GIVES TO THE CHURCHES

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12 NLT).

- Provide for the physical and spiritual needs of pastors and their families; pay an adequate salary and benefits to pastors and other staff; provide annual compensation reviews.
- Ensure that pastors have both weekly and annual times of rest and opportunities for study.
- Seek to enable and cultivate the spiritual gifts of the congregation’s members.

PROMOTE THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S BODY

"Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future" (Ephesians 4:3-4 NLT).

- Foster interaction between generations and between social and ethnic groups in the church.
- Affirm the strengths of differing worship styles.
- Honor pastoral vision and teaching, engaging an appropriate outside counselor to facilitate healing when a dispute with a pastor reaches an impasse.
- Present a united front in support of major initiatives.
- Confront those in the congregation who actively oppose the leadership or demonstrate apathy toward the leadership's vision.
- Work to reconcile dissident factions through mutual listening and sharing.
- Work to ensure that all members are engaged in opportunities for growth in discipleship.
- Strive in all things to live out Jesus' command to his followers, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 13:34 NKJV).
- Foster constructive connections with and keep commitments to other churches in its community, and to churches that belong to its denomination or the network of churches with which it shares a heritage.

FOSTER INTERACTION BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND BETWEEN SOCIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE CHURCH.

PRACTICE ACCOUNTABILITY

"The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!" (Luke 12:2-3 NLT).

- Model openness and clear communication in doing the congregation's business; work with the congregation to develop shared expectations about transparency.
- Open the church's financial records for periodic, independent review.
- Create periodic opportunities for both pastors and lay leaders to receive feedback from those they serve and give opportunity for personal and professional growth.
- Hold pastors and lay teachers to the truths found in Scripture, especially as they are embodied in the standards of doctrine and personal holiness established by the congregation or denominational family.
- Train pastors, staff, and volunteers in methods of preventing the abuse of vulnerable persons, particularly children.

- Establish and use a system of church discipline to deal with members who persist in sinful ways after attempts to guide and restore them have failed.
- Deal fairly and openly with causes of scandal when they occur, within the framework of the law.

PRACTICE GOOD STEWARDSHIP

“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?” (Luke 16:10-11 NLT).

- Pay bills in a timely fashion and take care not to encumber the church with unmanageable debt.
- Use gifts as they are intended.
- Maintain the property and equipment the church owns in good, safe, and attractive condition.
- Maintain appropriate levels of insurance.
- Practice wise stewardship in use of natural resources.
- Participate financially in the denomination or extended family of churches to which it belongs.
- Honor the financial recordkeeping and reporting practices involved in its membership in a denomination or network of churches.

PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

“Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it

to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:9-10 ESV).

- Maintain a safe and secure environment for public worship, study, and community events.
- Minimize barriers that would discourage individuals with disabilities from full participation.
- Affirm the varied cultural heritages represented in the congregation and community.
- Eliminate artificial barriers to welcoming the surrounding community to public events.
- Allow appropriate community use of church facilities, when such use is not inconsistent with the church’s witness and its ethical commitments.
- Be sensitive to the impact of traffic, parking, and the sounds of worship on its neighbors.

SEEK THE WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE GOD HAS PLACED IT

“Work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you” (Jeremiah 29:7 NLT).

- Demonstrate in the congregation’s own life the global and multicultural nature of Christ’s body.
- Speak through designated leaders to issues of injustice in the local community and beyond.
- Work to alleviate suffering and promote health and spiritual well-being of its community and the world. ■

WORLD MISSIONS AD



LEGAL NOTES
Dennis W. Watkins

Three Items Often Missed

WHEN I THINK about the fascinating and compelling topics regarding the church and law, I would greatly like to write about these interesting subjects; however, there are also some not-so-fascinating topics that keep coming back over and over. I see them on a regular basis, and failure to be on top of these subjects always seems to cost somebody a lot of money! Here are three:

CHURCH PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

This is the all-time, number-one area of offense for church pastors and business administrators—failure to timely file an application for exemption of property tax on church-owned property. Many people think that property owned by a church is automatically exempt from the payment of property taxes, but that unfortunately is not the way it works. In order for the property of a church to be exempt from property taxes, there must be the granting of exemption by the local or county tax assessor, and that comes into play only by the *timely* filing of an application for such exemption.

This is complicated by the fact that the rules for property tax exemption vary widely from state to state. In some states, if tax exemption is granted to a church for its property on an original basis, then that exemption is permanently in effect. In other states, the exemption is good for only a set period of time, for example, one year or five years. If a renewal application is not filed by the deadline date, then the exemption is lost and the local church gets a property tax bill! While the exemption may ultimately be granted again, the church still has to pay property tax for at least one year!

The message is simple: Make sure that you know how often you must renew your property tax exemption application in your locale, and get it filed on time! Remember, if you change the name of your church, you must submit a new application and start over in the new church name.

WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE

Workers compensation is a state statutory benefit designed to assist workers who are injured while on the job. It usually pro-

vides some type of temporary or permanent benefit, plus payment of medical expenses. It comes into effect for the church only by the provision and purchase of insurance covering this type of event.

Among the states, workers compensation insurance is required based on the number of employees that work for a church. In some states, that number can be as low as one! Thus, in those states if a church has one employee, the pastor, then there is a requirement that the church obtain workers compensation insurance. If there is a work-related accident and the church does not have this insurance coverage, then there are statutory penalties, in addition to paying for

the required benefits and medical expenses relating to the accident.

The message again is simple: Make sure that you consult with your church insurance agent and that you have complied with your state's workers compensation requirements!

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ENDORSEMENT

I can cover this subject very quickly. In church insurance, there is an "endorsement" or coverage provided which affords liability protection arising out of an incident in which a child or young person is wrongfully abused or molested. This is very important coverage, but it is not automatically provided in your church insurance policy. It must be purchased specifically. There must be a specific endorsement or binder offering this type of coverage.

Another simple message: Check with your church insurance agent and make sure that your church policy has a sexual misconduct endorsement in your coverage!

CONCLUSION

Take note of these simple, but extremely important subjects to stay on top of the administration of your church! ■

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.





MONEY MATTERS
Art Rhodes

The Affordable Care Act and the Church

IN AN EARLIER ARTICLE, we addressed the changing landscape regarding health care in America following the 2010 passage of the Affordable Care Act (often called “ACA” or “ObamaCare”). Although there is still political rhetoric that the law will be repealed, the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the constitutional validity of the ACA, and it is currently the law of the land. What is more important, however, non-compliance with the law as an individual, or as a church, could bring about hefty fines.

REQUIRED INSURANCE

The ACA has both an “Employer Mandate” and an “Employee Mandate.” Simply put, the “employer” mandate requires employers with more than 50 employees to provide health care for their employees. If your church has more than 50 employees, you should seek guidance immediately from a benefits specialist to assure your compliance with the ACA. Employers with less than 50 employees are not required, but may voluntarily, provide health insurance for employees.

On the other hand, unless you fit into one of the narrow exceptions, the “employee” mandate under ACA requires every person to have “minimum essential coverage” health insurance. If, as an individual, you do not have health insurance, the ACA imposes a fine (called a “shared responsibility payment”) on you. The fine is imposed when you file your tax return. For 2015, the shared responsibility payment will be \$325 per person (\$975 per family) or 2 percent of your household income, whichever is higher. In 2016, the shared responsibility payment increases to \$695 per person (\$2,085 per family) or 2.5 percent of your household income, whichever is higher. For example, in 2015 a couple pastoring a church and making \$50,000 a year that does not have insurance would potentially owe \$1,000 shared responsibility payment.

GROUP PLANS

Although group health insurance plans are required to now provide “minimum essential coverage” health insurance, the tax treatment of group plans currently remains

the same as prior to the enactment of the ACA. If a church offers a group health insurance plan to its pastor and staff, the premiums can be paid by the church and such is treated as a nontaxable fringe benefit to the employees, just as under previous law. Therefore, churches are encouraged to consider group plans so as to provide this nontaxable benefit to the church's employees. However, if the church offers a group health care plan, the church should be careful not to discriminate in who is eligible for coverage.

INDIVIDUAL PREMIUM REIMBURSEMENT PLANS

Based upon guidance given in IRS Notice 2015-17, after June 30, 2015, an employer/church must stop paying for or reimbursing

individual health insurance premiums under an employer payment plan ("EPP"). After that date, the ACA imposes a potential penalty of \$100 per day, per participant, if health care premium reimbursement arrangements are continued. The IRS has noted that even making these health care reimbursements for individual health insurance policies taxable did not eliminate the potential penalty. Most important, a violation of this provision after June 30, 2015, must be "self-reported" by the employer/church.

The process that many churches have used for more than 50 years became subject to a fine by this interpretation of the ACA. While a church can increase the pastor or staff member's salary to help with their insurance costs, the church cannot require that the salary increase be used



only for that purpose. Further, to assure that the church is not subject to the \$100 per day, per participant fine, no mention of health care or insurance reimbursement should be mentioned on the employee's pay stub or in the minutes of the meeting where the salary increases were approved. Of course, any increase in salary becomes reportable income to the employee and must be included on the employee's Form W-2 as taxable income.

“GROUP OF ONE” EXCEPTION

The original notice dealing with the ACA (Notice 2013-54) contained an interesting exception to the prohibition against reimbursing *individual* health insurance premiums under an employer payment plan, dealing with an employer/church which has “less than two employees.” Many refer to this exception as the “group of one” exception.

Under the “group of one” exception, if an employer/church has only **one employee**, the church can continue reimbursing health care premiums on a **pretax** basis, even past June 30, 2015. If the church qualifies for this exception, the church may still reimburse the employee's health care premiums and the reimbursement may continue to be a pretax benefit and not included in the employee's W-2 compensation. It is as though the church has a group plan for just one person.

Since the provision creates an exception if the employer/church has “less than two employees,” the issue has been raised

regarding the applicability of this exception if the church has a full time pastor, and a part-time secretary or a part-time janitor. While there is no clear guidance on this issue, it seems logical that one full-time person and a part-time person would be “less than two employees.” However, if in this situation, health insurance was reimbursed for the full-time pastor and not for the part-time secretary, it is assumed that such would create a discriminatory violation under the law that could bring other penalties. Therefore, without specific guidance from a benefits specialist well versed in the applicability of the ACA, it is suggested that the “group of one” exception only be used if you have **ONLY** one employee.

Please note that regarding the Affordable Care Act, the Benefits Board presents current information that may change due to new guidance issued by the Internal Revenue Service and further may be subject to unique circumstances or interpretation. For the latest information on the ACA, visit the Resources page of our website at www.benefitsboard.com. ■

Art Rhodes is president and CEO of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc. You may contact the Benefits Board at (423) 478-7131; toll free at (877) 478-7190; or by email at info@benefitsboard.com. 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. If such advice is desired or required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

PATHWAY AD

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FAMILY FOCUS

Drs. H. Lynn and Mary Ruth Stone

MARRIAGE: Created in Paradise; Redeemed at Calvary

WHEN JESUS discussed the marriage covenant in His answer to the Pharisees in Matthew 19:4-6, He made no reference to marriage as it was affected by the curse of sin. Instead, He indicated that the biblical marriage covenant looks all the way back to *the beginning* (v.4). Marriage finds both its foundation and definition in the paradise of Eden—and its ultimate explanation and exaltation in the marriage of Christ and the redeemed church.

Some argue that marriage today can never be compared to the marriage of Paradise—they insist that sin prohibits such a union. In a natural sense, this is true. Fallen man can never regain the purity of the Garden of Eden by his own works of righteousness. The sin of Adam condemned unredeemed man to an eternal life of death and damnation.

This is true for the natural man and woman in their own personal lives. This is also true in their married lives. A mere human wedding can no more redeem a

marriage than a mere human vow can redeem a soul. That is why the marriage covenant must be based on the redemption covenant of God.

So the wedding vow must be much more than a man and woman pledging their troth to one another. A true biblical marriage must be a covenant between man, woman, *and* God.

This is the only marriage covenant—a covenant sealed by redemption—that can fulfill what Jesus meant when He defined marriage as having its origin in “the beginning.” This is the marriage of Paradise. Through redemption, the marriage covenant enables Christian married couples to enjoy once again the joys of an earthly relationship patterned after divinity.

Genesis 3:8 describes the presence of God in Eden. “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool (*ruwach*) of the day.” The use of *ruwach* in this verse provides tremendous insight into the relationship between God and the first couple.

The Hebrew word *ruwach* is never translated by the word “cool” in any other verse of Scripture. The word should be translated in Genesis 3:8 as it is usually translated throughout the Old Testament. “They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the *Spirit (ruwach)* of the day.” The relationship of Adam and Eve was surrounded by the Spirit presence of God. Their love for one another before sin was as pure as the love of the Spirit of God himself.

Love is a word that is not easily understood by the Western mind-set. This is illustrated by the many ways the word is used in the English language. People say: “I love my wife”; “I love my house”; “I love my car”; “I love my dog”; “I love my God”—in every instance using the exact same word.



But the Greek language is not so. Three different words express the depth of human and divine devotion—*eros*, *phileo*, and *agape*. These three words are used to express three different types of love.

Eros is a natural and elementary type of love. But *eros* should be viewed as a *receiving* love. It's the natural love of a newborn baby. It is, in a sense, “selfish”—because a baby at birth knows only about itself. Likewise, in a manner, it can be called “sensual”—because a baby at birth knows only (or, at least primarily) through its senses.

But the baby innately “receives” the deeper love of a parent in the earliest moments of its life. In this way, *eros* love becomes the emotional door of every human child. It opens up the pathway to the higher forms of *phileo* and *agape* love.

Only after sin enters into the life of the individual is *eros* love contaminated with eroticism. In a child, *eros* is not erotic. In an adult, **pure** *eros* love is the love of romance—while **adulterated** *eros* love is the eroticism of fornication. The sexually-explicit society of Western civilization has often degraded *eros* into pornographic obscenity. But its enduring quality of romance continues to find root in the hearts of dedicated young men and women who are determined to have a biblical marriage.

Phileo love could be called the love of the family. Indeed it is the root of the English word “filial” which is closely related to the word family. *Phileo* is a “sharing” love. Even though the infant at birth can only receive

love, if the parents give to the baby the right type of love, in only a matter of days that wonderful bundle of life begins to respond. It soon shows its *phileo* love by sharing a smile of the lips, a twinkle in the eyes, a gurgling in the throat, or a babbling of the tongue. As the baby grows into childhood, and the child into adolescence, and the teen into adulthood, and the adult into maturity, through the love of Christ *phileo* also matures from its own nature of sharing into the fullest expression of *agape*-giving love.

Even as pure romance is born with *eros* love, true biblical marriage must be birthed with *phileo* love. No marriage can survive simply on the romance of *eros* love—even though this is a good place to start. It is extremely gratifying to enjoy the receiving of *eros* love. But a marriage must move on to the responsibilities of the sharing of *phileo* love.

- The romance of the kiss must grow into the shared responsibility of the kitchen.
- The romance of the date must grow into the shared responsibility of the day.
- The romance of the evening must grow into the shared responsibility of the morning.
- The romance of the bed must grow into the shared responsibility of the baby.

This concept of sharing love, however, does not mean that biblical marriage must lose its romance of *eros* love. *Phileo* love does not eradicate *eros* love. Rather, it assimilates and continues to build upon *eros* love. To take the romance of *eros* out of marriage greatly distorts and reduces *phileo* love. They

are not contradictory one to the other; rather, they are complimentary to one another.

Many marriages are held together with the romance of *eros* and the sharing of *phileo* love—even non-Christian ones. However, they never reach the paradise of “the beginning” without the covenant of *agape* love. Without *agape* love, the marriage bond of *eros* and *phileo* love is still nothing more than a human contract. It is a “fifty-fifty” proposition. You keep your half of the bargain, and I’ll keep my half. As long as both parties hold up their side of the “contract,” the marriage works. This is especially true if the marriage is able to balance both romance and family through *eros* and *phileo* love.

However, when crises or tragedies strike, an *eros/phileo* marriage is in immediate trouble. Mere romance and sharing love prove to be extremely weak in the face of a debilitating illness, a crippling accident, a lost job, an extramarital affair, an embarrassing bankruptcy, a terminal disease, or the death of a child. At such times, only the covenant strength of *agape* love—which comes only through redemption—can provide an Edenic paradise in the midst of a sin-cursed world.

Agape is an unconditional covenant love of giving. *Agape* love moved God to “give His only begotten Son.” *Agape* love drove Jesus to the cross. *Agape* love eternally sings, “God is love!” *Agape* is divine love. *Agape* is redemption love. That is why every marriage must be redeemed at Calvary if it is to regain the God-like love of the Spirit (*ruwach*) of Paradise. ■



BOOK REVIEW

Bill George

Haydn Shaw, *Generational IQ: Christianity Isn't Dying, Millennials Aren't the Problem, and the Future Is Bright* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2015). \$17.99.

PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS understand that major differences in thinking characterize the different age groups that make up a typical congregation—or if they do not, they should learn quickly. It is important to distinguish the disparity in opinions that mark Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, but it is even more vital to grasp how they interact—or not—with each other.

For those who want to get a healthy perception of all these age groups, a new resource recently became available. Haydn Shaw, who spoke to pastors about generational issues the day preceding the 2014 International General Assembly, has authored the new resource. His book is *Generational IQ: Christianity Isn't Dying, Millennials Aren't the Problem, and the Future Is Bright*. It will enhance the ability of church leaders to guide their churches forward with a minimum of discord and a maximum of harmony.

Tyndale House, the publisher, points out that within the last several decades, the world has shifted dramatically. The cracks of this fundamental shift appear everywhere: in the economy, in cultural debates, in the political

landscape, and, most important, in churches. The problem is Christians tend to overreact to these changes, fearing that Christianity is dying.

Church leaders need better generational IQ, so they can respond to the changes but not be terrified by them. What is needed is a wise generational coach. Haydn Shaw is that expert, revealing the roots of generational shifts and how they affect everyone. Each generation, whether it's the aging Traditionalists or the young Millennials, approaches God with a different set of questions and needs based on the times in which they grew up. Haydn Shaw walks readers through these generational differences and paints a vision of hope for the future.

Dr. Mark Williams penned an endorsement of the book that appears in its opening pages, recommending it for denominational leaders and local church pastors who want to increase their knowledge of generational differences. He wrote,

It is said that for a pastor to minister successfully, he or she must correctly exegete both Scripture and the culture. Haydn Shaw's thoroughly researched and imminently practical new book, *Generational IQ*, places in pastors' hands an invaluable tool for interpreting the world in which we minister. No one else has offered what he explains in this encyclopedic survey of our society and the critical implications that generational differences have upon ministry. The Church of God has benefited immeasurably from hearing Haydn speak at our largest gathering of pastors and church leaders, and we enthusiastically welcome this newest contribution to the work of church and Kingdom. In 2016 and beyond, any pastor who has this book close at hand will do a better job!

Generational IQ is available at PathwayBookstore.com or toll-free at 1-800-553-8506. ■



POINTS FROM THE PASTORAL STAFF

Arvil Ogle

Five Ways to Follow Your Senior Pastor Well

HAVE BEEN ON STAFF at Family Church for over 21 years. Sixteen months ago, Family Church transitioned senior pastors. Although our transition is going very well, I have found myself evaluating how well I follow. I consider myself to be loyal, a hard worker, and dedicated to the vision of the senior pastor. But this experience has given me the opportunity to take a look in the mirror and see how well I really follow.

So, for all of us who are privileged to serve on staff at a local church, here are five ways we can all follow well.

1. PASSIONATELY EMBRACE THE VISION.

The key word here is **passionately!** Are you ALL IN? Do your words or actions say anything other than I'm fully invested? Most likely your senior pastor has prayed, sought insight from God's Word, and poured his heart into casting a vision for your church. Most Sundays he stands in

front of your congregation praying they listen and follow what God has given him to speak. One of the best ways for a congregation to follow is to see us as great examples. Don't just embrace the vision, but embrace the spirit of the vision. There will be days that you just don't feel like being enthusiastic about the vision or what you do. Guess what? That's real life! Working hard and having an upbeat passion to follow, when you don't really feel like it, isn't being a fake; it is being a mature follower.

2. LEARN YOUR SENIOR PASTOR'S LANGUAGE.

Gary Chapman wrote a book called *The Five Love Languages*. I have recommended this book to every couple I know. In this book, Gary Chapman teaches couples the art of understanding how to speak "the language" of their spouse. Obviously, your relationship with your senior pastor is not equal to a marriage, but it does mirror some relational rules. Find out what speaks to

him, moves him, and gets his undivided attention. Some senior pastors are great “off the cuff” and some prefer scheduled meetings, written communication, or a follow-up email recapping your conversation. Find out what works with your senior pastor. If you want to be heard—find the best path of communication!

3. RESPECTFULLY FIND WAYS TO “PUSH BACK” OR PRESENT A DIFFERING IDEA.

This one seems to be the trickiest. If you feel stuck and you don’t feel you will ever be able to present a different idea without getting shut down, I am sorry. Remember this: Timing REALLY matters. Choose the best time, and you will be heard. Right before a big event or close to Sunday morning may not be the best time to push back. And remember to be humble. I’m not saying be weak, a pushover, or have no confidence! Be the strong, confident person, but be humble. Remember, you are trying to be heard. These may be trial and error, but in the long run, working at this will pay off.

4. GIVE YOUR SENIOR PASTOR A BREAK.

There is a spiritual significance to God calling and anointing someone to be the senior pastor of a church. I never want to forget that. But at the same time, the pastor is still a human being. He has good days and bad days. He has disappointments and regrets. He has bills to pay, children to

lead, aging parents, and other life issues. At times, he may feel lonely in his role of senior pastor. Don’t expect him to be perfect and make every right decision and every right move. His position does not exclude him from needing love, acceptance, grace, and forgiveness—just as you and I do. Pray for him every day!

5. GUARD YOUR SENIOR PASTOR’S BLIND SPOT.

I grew up as an offensive lineman. If you know me at all, you know I was built for that position. Being on the offensive line may not be the most glamorous, but when I did my job and guarded the quarterback’s blind spot, I gave our team a great chance to win. Every day you have the opportunity to guard your senior pastor, or expose him. In each conversation, with the rolling of your eyes, or being silent in the midst of gossip or dissension, you are not guarding him. Simply put, give him what you expect from your closest team members. Guard him with your words and actions. Getting credit for guarding him is not the goal—doing what is right is.

Being a follower does not make you weak, less significant, or less important. Everyone follows someone. Following well honors the Lord and makes you a great team member! Take some time, look in the mirror, and follow well! ■

Arvil Ogle is music pastor at Family Church in West Monroe, Louisiana.