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A Journal for Church of God Ministries

engage

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Guns in the Church

On Preaching: Where Do You Start?

Counseling as a Holistic Ministry Tool

Boundaries and Burnout

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Love the Sinner, Hate the Sin

AS CHRISTIANS, how many times have we heard that saying?

The last two publications of *Engage* have contained statements from the Church of God Executive Committee. In the last issue, there was an affirmation of traditional marriage in light of the on-going push for gay marriage to become legal across the nation. On the next page, there is a statement in response to the recent decision by the Boy Scouts of America to allow gay members into their ranks.

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

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Not surprisingly, these two statements have to do with homosexuality—a cultural issue which has permeated and divided America. No longer is the alternative lifestyle a “closet” issue; it is just the opposite. The Gay Community has succeeded in creating a recognized class, and they are pushing their agenda further and further each day.

While “Love the Sinner, Hate the Sin” accurately characterizes the way Christ would have us deal with homosexuality, the slogan has backfired in creating a stigma against anyone who believes it. If you don’t enthusiastically support the gay lifestyle, you are labeled a “hater.” Recently, pop star Miley Cyrus told *Entertainment Tonight*: “Haters keep me motivated. People that are . . . I guess . . . jealous . . . that kind of just hate on me . . . make me want to do even better.” She also addressed rumors that she’s a lesbian saying, “they aren’t exactly insulting [me] with such an allegation.”

Standing on the promises and accuracy of God’s Word must continue to be the guiding factor in the Christian’s life. The August 2013 Church of God *Evangel* devoted an issue to sexual intimacy and an article dedicated to homosexuality. The Church of God stands committed to addressing pertinent issues and pursuing righteousness through whatever avenues are available. ■



Church of God Executive Committee Statement on **BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

THE RECENT DECISION by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to admit openly homosexual young men to their membership ranks comes as a major disappointment to the leadership of the Church of God. This departure from the BSA's policy of not allowing individuals who practice homosexuality to become members contributes to the already confusing message of sexual orientation being sent to young men.

The Boy Scouts of America has served as a beacon of affirmation for generations. The May 23 decision by BSA did not include admitting homosexual scout leaders. We applaud the BSA leadership for upholding this critical element of its policy and support future efforts to defend it from attacks by groups who will no doubt feel empowered to further advance their agenda.

The change in BSA's policy in no way alters the Practical Commitments of the Church of God, which states the following:

Glorifying God in Our Body

Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and we are to glorify God in our body

(Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31). We are to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

*Examples of fleshly behavior which do not glorify God are noted in several passages of Scripture (Romans 1:24; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). Sinful practices which are made prominent and condemned in these scriptures include **homosexuality**, adultery, worldly attitudes (such as hatred, envy, jealousy), corrupt communication (such as gossip, angry outbursts, filthy words), stealing, murder, drunkenness and witchcraft...*

The Church of God recognizes the dilemma some local churches and scout leaders may face with severing a positive, long-term relationship with a Boy Scout troop, which may or may not be immediately affected. Should local churches choose to disband their relationship with BSA, the Church of God has had in place for many years a program that mirrors the standards and policies of Boy Scouts of America prior to last week's decision. It is called Royal Rangers and is available with supporting resources through the Division of Discipleship. To learn more about the Royal Rangers program, visit www.royalrangerscog.org.

While the Church of God condemns the sin of homosexuality as defined in Scripture, individuals struggling with an alternate lifestyle will continue to be loved and disciplined. As young people are constantly bombarded with one message from the church and another from culture, the Church of God is committed to those who may fall into this path to give counsel and to teach the forgiveness of Christ with the ultimate goal of redemption and restoration. ■

YOU AND YOUR CHURCH

You and Your Church has been revised to detail the current structure of the church and the exciting challenges it faces in modern times.

You and Your Church helps Church of God members discover who they are, what they believe, and how they can effectively fulfill the call and commission of Christ. It additionally serves as an informational resource and program of instruction for those who desire to unite with the church in membership.

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YOU AND YOUR CHURCH

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Cleveland, Tennessee*

Michael L. Baker

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Church of God Launches THE VITAL INITIATIVE

The *VITAL Initiative* has been formally introduced to the Church of God with the endorsement of Presiding Bishop Mark Williams in a video interview with its founder and director, Michael Nations, on July 9, 2013. The *Vital Initiative* is a ministry to, and movement among, the pastors of smaller churches. It presents a new paradigm of ministry that places high priority on the importance of small churches in Kingdom work in the twenty-first century. Nations is an ordained bishop in the Church of God and has served as a pastor since 1983 and for the last 19 years in Clyde, North Carolina.



According to Williams and Nations, the mission of *VITAL Initiative* is to “help the Church of God realize and utilize the place and power of small churches in twenty-first-century Kingdom work by revaluing pastors, reclaiming mission, and revitalizing small churches.”

Nations said:

The Church of God is a denomination of small churches, with the majority of pastors serving in small congregations. Eighty percent (80%) or 5,260 of our churches have less than 100 in worship on a given Sunday. But small churches are vital and necessary to the cause of Christ in the earth. The pastor is the key to the local church, yet pastors of small churches are regularly disconnected from the denomination. Many of these pastors do not see themselves as a significant part of the denomination.

Nations said these feelings have caused many small church pastors to withdraw from involvement in denominational efforts.

Nations continued:

No program or effort in the Church of God will be successful with this segment of pastors until they are affirmed and their ministries recognized as important and necessary to the work of God in the earth and to the denomination. Small church pastors serve under unique circumstances. Their numbers and importance to the missions task demand resources and relationships that realize their perspective.

Responding to this need and opportunity, *VITAL Initiative* is a ministry to pastors of smaller churches and a movement among these pastors that unapologetically targets these pastors in four areas.

Dr. Williams stated:

If the Church of God is going to impact the United States and Canada for Christ in the twenty-first century, we cannot overlook the place and power of the small church. We need every church pastor to take his or her place in the task and lead his or her church on mission. *VITAL Initiative* calls on the pastors of smaller churches to see themselves as missionaries and lead the local church to see itself as a missions station or outpost of the Kingdom in their community. This call is also to denominational leaders at the state/regional level and international level to view all churches as an asset and a blessing. This force of 5,260 missions stations will be unleashed!

VITAL is an acrostic for five key components focused on the smaller church pastor:

- V VALUE** every pastor as a servant of God.
- I INTEGRATE** every pastor into Kingdom work and denomination-wide effort.
- T TRAIN** pastors for impactful ministry in small places.
- A APPRECIATE** every pastor for his or her place in the missions task.
- L LAUNCH** pastors by providing a correct focus, applicable resources, and encouragement.

According to Nations, it was after hundreds of hours of research resulting in over 1,500 pages of documentation, and many personal interviews with Church of God officials and leaders of other denominations, that each of these six assumptions was found to be true. It is from this research that *The VITAL Initiative* has been formed.

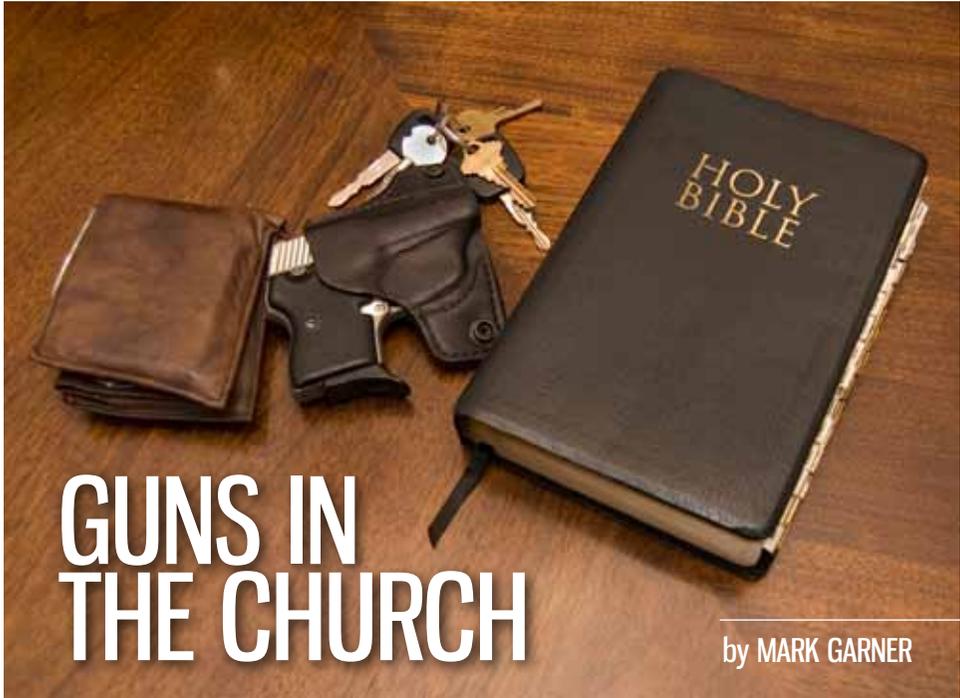
“A goal of *VITAL Initiative* is not only to connect pastors with other pastors of smaller churches, but also with pastors of larger churches and state/regional administration and international administration,” Nations said. “An interactive website is being developed for release soon that will connect small church pastors across the country.”

Williams stated:

We want to reach every pastor of a small church in every state or region in the Church of God—all 5,260 of them—in the United States and Canada with the ministry of *VITAL Initiative*. Every community is different and every church is unique; that is why a programmatic, cookie-cutter approach to ministry is not the answer for the small church. It is important to find what God is doing in each church and community and allow God to breathe creative ministry into that context. *VITAL Initiative* will encourage this openness to the Holy Spirit by trumpeting foundational Pentecostal spirituality and by highlighting Holy Spirit inspired creative ministry to take place across the country.

As part of the initiative, Nations said a network of small church pastors is being built called *The VITAL Initiative Network*. Over 200 pastors are already participating and others are invited to join by emailing michaelnations@charter.net.

VITAL Initiative has been issued a project number through Church of God World Missions, allowing churches and individuals to give tax deductible gifts, as well as receiving World Missions credit. Gifts can be directed to Church of God World Missions, P.O. Box 8016, Cleveland, TN 37320-8016, project number 102-9304. ■



GUNS IN THE CHURCH

by MARK GARNER

Protecting Your Congregation Against Armed Intruders

WHAT DO Colorado, Tennessee, Idaho, Missouri, Georgia, and California have in common? Not much, you might think. The answer is that these and more than a half-dozen other states have experienced church shootings—approximately fifteen since 2002. Unfortunately, in today's world, no church is exempt from a crazed gunman taking out aggression on the congregation. The reasons for these shootings are as varied as the places where they have occurred, but one thing is certain: churches need to be prepared for what could happen.

Some congregations have hired off-duty police officers; others have put together security teams from within their ranks. No matter

which option you choose, it is important to have a plan in place. I tell people who ask me about personal security that we should be prepared like we are when we are driving in traffic. If somebody pulls out in front of us or stops in the road, we don't take time to come up with a plan, we have trained our mind and our reflexes to react. We should have the same mind-set when it comes to church security.

Should your church decide to put together a team, several things are important to remember . . .

First, always comply with the laws in your state. Laws vary from state to state as to whether it is legal to carry firearms during worship services, the use of deadly force, self-defense

laws, and ways to obtain handgun permits. I recommend that you check with your local law enforcement agency or district attorney's office; they can explain what the law says. Nothing would be worse than a church or its members suffering severe criminal or civil penalties—not to mention bad publicity—by not complying with the law.

Next, be careful who you pick to be part of your church security team. Avoid choosing these two types of people for your team: (1) Someone with an itchy trigger finger who is just hankering for a confrontation; and (2) A person who would freeze up during an emergency situation.

A law enforcement officer—active or retired—who attends your church would be a great choice to head up your team. If there are no law enforcement officers in your church, retired military, ex-military, or current military, would be an option. There may be people in your church who feel comfortable with firearms and would be up to the job. Whomever you choose—choose carefully.

Finally, make it discreet. Only those who need to know you have armed security and who they are should know, unless you are in an area where there is a major crime problem and it is necessary to let it be known you have security on the premises. Several years ago, I was asked by the pastor of a church where I was a member to put together a security team. One of the things we agreed on was to make it as low-key as possible.

Once you have chosen your team members, it is important for them to train together and share information on a regular basis. They could practice shooting together at a shooting range, if possible.

Team members should know the layout of the building, including any places a person

AVOID CHOOSING THESE TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE FOR YOUR TEAM: (1) SOMEONE WITH AN **ITCHY TRIGGER FINGER** WHO IS JUST HANKERING FOR A CONFRONTATION; AND (2) A PERSON WHO WOULD **FREEZE UP** DURING AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.

could hide and all exits out of the building if an emergency arises. They should also be familiar with the parking areas and the area surrounding the church.

Someone associated with the team should be given the responsibility to dial 911 in the event of armed intruders. They should give a description of the suspects and let law enforcement know that there are armed security people in the church. The last thing you want is for responding officers to mistake your security team members for the bad guys.

Having a church security team is a serious undertaking, and for some, it presents a moral dilemma when it comes to the use of deadly force. For others, the question is: *If they don't protect their members, what then?* ■

Mark Garner, a thirty-year veteran of law enforcement, is a former police chief, detective, and DARE officer. He holds dual law-enforcement certifications in Tennessee and Georgia, and is currently a school resource officer (SRO) in North Georgia. He is experienced in church, school, and special events security. He holds the Minister of Christian Education credentials with the Church of God and serves as children's minister at Amazing Grace Church of God in Stevenson, Alabama.

by DOUG GREEN

ON PREACHING

Where Do You Start?

WHAT ARE YOU preaching this week? You must start somewhere. Every week a blank page is staring you down. Do you start with a question or the text?

If you start with a question, you are choosing the topic of your sermon, looking to the Bible for the answer. This is topical preaching. However, if you start with the text, you are letting God's Word both ask and answer the question. This is expository preaching.

Every sound preacher wants to turn a blank page into a life-changing worship experience

with the eternal God. But first you must start somewhere.

Throughout the calendar year, a biblical pulpit will start in both places—topical and expository—for both are appropriate origins for the various situations inside the church. Topical preaching is often correct for the occasion; however, over the long haul, the pulpit that predominately starts with the text is both healthier and easier. Pragmatically, expository preaching is the most efficient mode for preparation. Idealistically, it is a superior form of preaching. I know; I have done it both ways, and I have learned my lessons on the job—with the grace of a patient congregation. Let me explain.

I have been the lead pastor of North Hills Church in Brea, California, for over 18 years, trying to preach something new to the same congregation every Sunday. For the first seven years, I preached topically—a series based on the felt-need questions of life. I would ask questions that were relevant and try my best to give creative answers. I hustled each week, working hard to come up with new information.

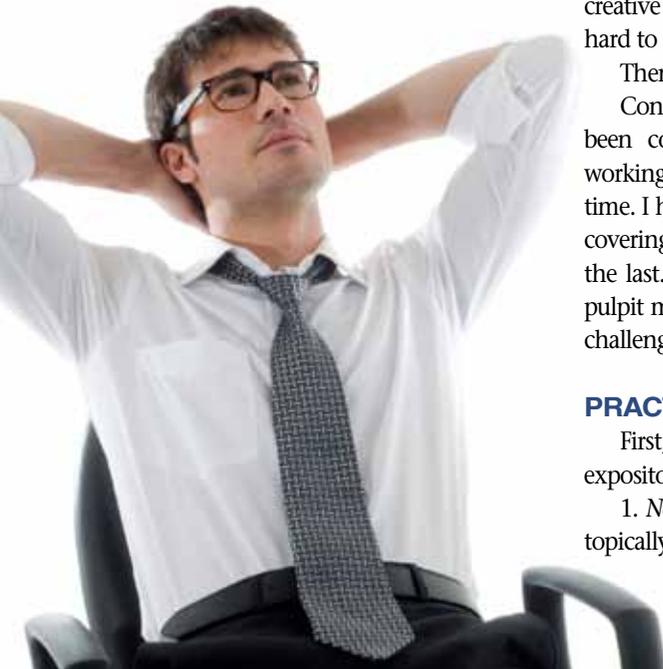
Then, I changed.

Consequently, for the last 11 years, I have been committed to expository preaching—working through one book of the Bible at a time. I have tackled books in both Testaments, covering every verse within—from the first to the last. It has changed everything about my pulpit ministry. If you are open-minded to the challenge, it will change you as well.

PRACTICAL BENEFITS

First, let me give four practical benefits of expository preaching.

1. *No wondering what is next.* If you preach topically, you will spend a chunk of time



trying to figure out what you are going to say each week. This is hard work, week after week, to be responsible for the content of a sermon. Topical preaching is a commitment to start over every week. Conversely, when you preach through a book in the Bible, for example, you simply preach what is next. When I took a year to preach through the Psalms (I only made it to Psalm 40, knowing some day I will return to the finish the other 110), I always knew where I would be next week—the next Psalm.

2. *Less time in preparation.* Preaching from the same book saves prep time. For example, I just finished 19 months in the Book of Romans, preaching one pericope (unit of thought) at a time. The hours I spent preparing to preach chapter 1 made preaching chapter 2 a bit easier, and so on. By the time I got to the “therefores” in the first verses of chapters 5, 8, and 12, I was fully prepared for what the “therefore” was there for. It is like this: last month’s preparation assists next month’s preparation. It is amazing how much easier it really is. Biblical preaching is all about context, and a commitment to a thorough exploration of one book makes more sense than a weekly plunge into a new context.

3. *No accusations of heavy-handedness.* When you preach through a book in the Bible—just preaching what is next—people can never accuse you of choosing a topic because of a situation in the church. God always amazes me how His Word in its given order seems to be timed with perfection for our church. This leaves the responsibility on God to deal with the difficult issues that happen in the church. Surely, I can trust His Word to say what needs to be said even before I know what it is. The

expository preacher leaves the coordination of the future wisdom of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

4. *A sense of accomplishment.* People want a sense of completion. When you thoroughly handle a book in the Bible—going slow enough to give it justice, fast enough to grapple with a unit of thought each week—you create anticipation in the beginning of such a series and admiration at the end of the same. Everybody, including the preacher, likes to see something all the way through. Rather than jumping all over the Bible week after week, plant some roots in one book and see it through from beginning to end. Modern believers will appreciate the biblical roots you will give them. They will understand the individual verses within the larger context of the book. They will appreciate biblical achievement.

IDEALISTIC BENEFITS

1. *Keeps you talking about God.* When you let the text dictate your sermon topic, your preaching will be more “theo-centric” and less “anthro-centric.” Many pulpits in America today are man-centered, self-help propagators, using Scripture to validate what the preacher decides to say. But when Scripture sets your content, you allow God to raise the questions as well as supply the answers. Guess what? He does not waste the pages of Scripture on man-sized solutions to our God-sized problems. (*God knows there are whole sections for this genre in your local bookstore.*) He demands you look to Him for answers. The text will always remind you how God’s ways are always better than man’s ways.

2. *Leads to better exegesis.* When you start with the text, you will tend toward exegesis, not eisogesis. By preaching through a book, you

have already rooted your mind in context, not textual isolation. Exegesis bows to the idea of the original author writing to the original audience, which, once understood, you can always apply to modern fixes. Expository preaching demands sound exegesis. Unfortunately, topical preaching often does not. Although sound preachers will handle the text correctly in a topical sermon, expository preaching, by definition, forces you to do so. It is the only option, for the expositor does not use the text to support his or her ideas, but declares the text is the idea you preach.

3. *Enables you to say, "Thus saith the Lord."*

When you begin with the text, you can have confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture. The Bible is written really well. As is, it always says it better than you can. After all, the Bible is God's words. Thus, when you read Scripture, grasp it, wrestle with it, and study it. You must understand something vital: God is talking. Your goal is not to give a sermon. Your goal is to give God's words—words that modern hearts are desperate to hear. When you take the time to carefully expose the text to your audience, you will then be able to say, "Thus saith the Lord." Afterward, in the lobby, you can take all the compliments you get and give the credit directly to God, for you were only borrowing His original thoughts, not squandering their time and yours.

4. *Will enable you to preach the full counsel of God.* When you walk through book after book in the Bible, intertwining the Old and New Testaments, you will demonstrate to your congregation that you are committed to the entire Bible, not just the familiar or favorite parts. Studies have shown that most people in the pews know little about the Bible; they are

biblically illiterate. Biblical preachers welcome the challenge to take them through virgin terrain, introducing them to new words of God, not giving them the same words over and over again.

Many years ago I was on a plane having a conversation with a New Age man. He told me he liked most of what Jesus said, but not all of it. I said, "You cannot say that. You have to take the whole message."

He replied, "Why? You don't. You pick and choose what you want to preach. Do you really preach everything that's in the Bible?"

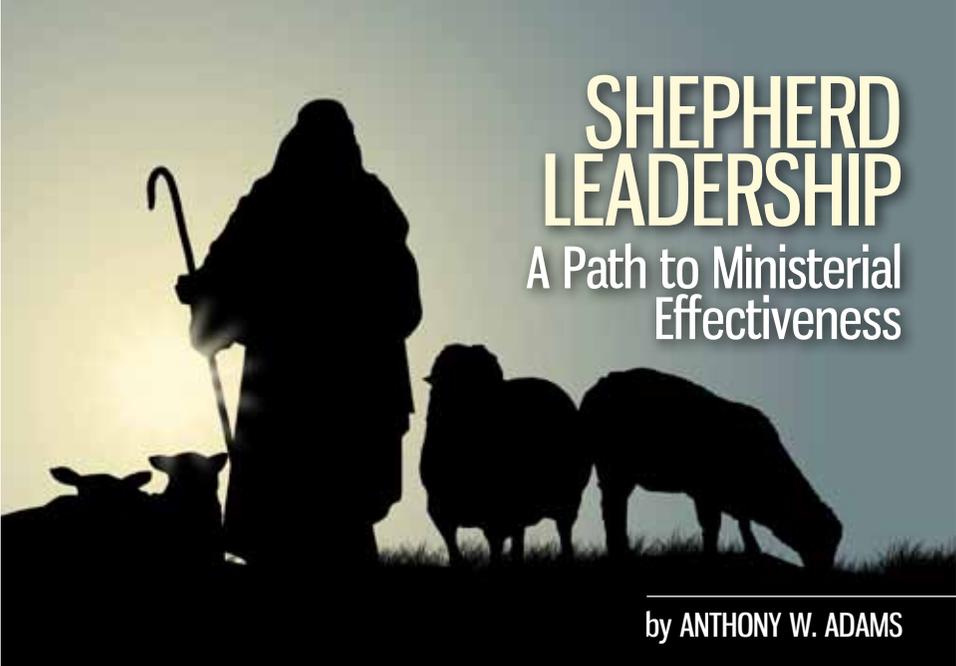
He was right. I was convicted.

Since then, without skipping any of the difficult portions, I have thoroughly covered the following books in this order: Psalms 1–40, Luke, Habakkuk, Ephesians, Genesis, Revelation, John, Judges, Ruth, and Romans. It has taken me 11 years to get through these 10 books. While I would love to finish all 66 books, I am in no hurry to rush through what is sacred. There is so much God wants to say.

Although it is occasionally appropriate for us to preach topically over the long haul, the pulpit that predominately starts with the text is both superior and easier.

When it comes to preaching, you will need to do what God tells you to do. However, I hope I have challenged your pulpit ministry, for there is so much God wants to say to you and to your church. He loves the ongoing opportunity to fill your blank page with His words of life. ■

Doug Green, D.Min., is founding pastor of the North Hills Church, Brea, California. From the Fall 2012 issue of Enrichment Journal. Used with permission.



SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP

A Path to Ministerial Effectiveness

by ANTHONY W. ADAMS

THIS ARTICLE is the culmination of a three and one-half-year study concerning shepherd leadership and ministerial effectiveness. The motivation behind the project was the alarming statistics concerning the state of the American church. Approximately eight out of every ten churches are stagnant or in decline, and more alarming yet, there does not seem to be any answers coming as to how this trend can be turned around. The question that drove the research was whether there was a biblical model of leadership that, if applied, would produce ministerial effectiveness.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

A change has occurred concerning America and her relationship to Christianity. Malphurs (1998) stated that 80 to 90 percent of churches in America are stagnant or in decline. Phan (2011) declared that church membership has declined 1.05 percent over 2010. One reason

for this is that congregants/constituents, as well as their expectations, have changed (Jones, 2005; Stewart, 2008). Because of these expectations and desires, many young parishioners are defecting from their home churches to larger ministries. One study cited that 90 percent of young adults 30 or younger attend the top 10 percent of churches (McIntosh, 1999). This younger generation, defecting from smaller churches to attend larger ones, may account for some of the clergy's frustration. How can a small church compete? How can a small church with 100 members or less become attractive to a generation that has become saturated with high-tech, spectacular, and breath-taking entertainment and events?

It was reported in the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) that there has been a decline among the percentage of the American population categorized as Christian—from 86 percent in 1990 to 77 percent in 2001. The ARIS study identified the

fastest growing religion, in terms of percentage, as Wicca, sometimes referred to and associated with witchcraft. The Wiccans' membership went from 8,000 in 1990 to 134,000 in 2001, doubling about every 30 months. Kosmin (2008) stated that Wiccans and self-described pagans were growing at a faster rate in 2008 than in the 1990s. The aforementioned studies are demonstrative of the declining interest in American Christianity. Grossman (*USA Today*, 2002) stated that 14.1 percent of America's population said they are not affiliated with any organized religion. Moreover, there are more Americans who say they are not associated with organized religion than there are Episcopalians, Methodists, and Lutherans combined (Kosmin, 2008). Barna (2005) observed that there does not seem to be a revival or a resurgent interest taking place in America concerning Christianity.

THE STATE OF THE PASTOR

Over the past 21 years, the clergy have reported feeling a great deal of pressure that has resulted in emotions of depression and related symptoms. The Alban Institute surveyed pastors concerning their emotional wellbeing. These pastors stated their feelings ranged from . . .

- occasional to very often depressed (42 percent);
- sad (55 percent);
- having crying spells (12 percent);
- not being able to shake the blues, even with family and friends (16 percent);
- experiencing sleeping problems (52 percent).

The American Baptist Association of the Dakotas cited the Church Resource Ministries 1998 study that declared that at any given

time 75 percent of pastors in America want to quit. Stephen Muse (2007) stated that more than 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month.

The frustration of many is not unwillingness to change, but rather confusion and uncertainty as to what they should change and what leadership approach they should change to. In Christendom today, there does not seem to be a cohesive plan or approach to address how leaders should guide their congregations as it relates to church growth and vitality. The local church needs a cohesive leadership model to ensure the future, health, and success of its ministry. The shepherd metaphor was used more than 500 times in the Bible. It is the foremost biblical model for spiritual leadership and is applicable for effective leadership in the twenty-first century (Anderson, 1999).

OBJECTIONS TO THE SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP MODEL

Some have objected to this model because they contend that shepherd leadership is only applicable to small congregations. However, there seems to be sufficient proof to dispel these claims. Job 3:1 states that Job had flocks that numbered as many as 7,000 and later it was reported that he had as many as 14,000 (Job 14:12). First Samuel 25:2 cites flocks of sheep numbering approximately 3,000, and at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, they had at their disposal more than 120,000 sheep that were later sacrificed at the dedication ceremony (1 Kings 8:63). In the case of these large numbers, undershepherds were hired to assist the shepherds and maintain a proper count of the sheep and goats (Davis, 1979). I think it should also be pointed out that many of those who object to this leadership paradigm are the same

people who believe that in every other aspect of ministry we should align our churches and ministry performance as closely to the Word of God as possible. The fact is, if the Bible is applicable to every other aspect of life and faith, it is also applicable to ministry leadership.

THE RESEARCH STUDY

A research study was conducted to discover whether the biblical shepherd leadership model, particularly its characteristics, practices, and responsibilities (CPR), were related to successful church growth. A 45-item Likert-type survey was used to ascertain the level of shepherd leadership of 106 pastors in the Church of God in Michigan. This score was then compared with statistical information found in the treasurers and ministry reports namely, attendance, tithe, and conversions that took place at these pastors' local churches within a five-year period.

In this research project, 33 percent of pastors in the Church of God in Michigan were eligible and willing to participate in this study. To be eligible, the clergy member had to have served as senior pastor of his or her current church for at least five years and be a licensed minister in the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee.

A pilot test was conducted using 20 ministers. These clergy received copies of the survey and were given the opportunity to review the definitions and rationale for each question. This group of ministers was randomly selected from two meetings, one in Kentucky and one in Tennessee. The purpose of this pilot test was to determine the construct validity of the questions in the survey. The pilot study results were then sent to subject matter experts (SME) to be judged reliable or not. The SME were

made up of two state administrative bishops, two district overseers, and one professor of management. The focus of the evaluation was the subjects' understanding of the questions and the questions intended meaning or construct. Because all the respondents shared the same understanding of the topic, it was determined that the survey had construct validity.

Cronbach's alpha test was applied to the data collected from 35 pastors in the Church of God in Michigan for the purpose of determining reliability in this correlation study. The range for results with the Cronbach's alpha reliability test should fall between 0 and 1, with the more favorable results toward 1 (Connelly, 2011). Six variables—duty, vision, relationships, culture, commitment to growth, and logistics—were tested for internal consistency, as several questions represented each variable or domain. Cronbach's alpha test results were:

- overall survey: 0.93;
- duty: 0.83;
- vision: 0.85;
- culture: 0.76;
- relationship: 0.81;
- commitment to church growth: 0.39;
- logistics: 0.28.

George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb: “_ > .9—Excellent; _ > .8—Good; _ > .7—Acceptable; _ > .6—Questionable; _ > .5—Poor; and _ < .5—Unacceptable” (p. 231). The test results indicated that the overall survey, as well as the shepherd leadership components—vision, duty, culture, and relationships—were deemed from acceptable to excellent.

RESULTS FROM THE STUDY

The study showed a relationship between shepherd leadership and attendance and tithe in the local church. The research also indicated

that pastors who focus a great deal on conversions normally use less shepherd leadership in their ministries. This finding concerning shepherd leadership and conversions can possibly be explained by realizing the focus of a shepherd is the condition and welfare of the flock. The person who was constantly acquiring sheep from the stockyard was normally not a shepherd, but a broker. Ephesians 4:11 declares that there are different offices: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. An evangelist focuses on new converts, whereas a shepherd or pastor focuses on the flock. The apostle Paul had to admonish Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5 KJV) because his focus seemed to be primarily on shepherding the flock.

Another interesting discovery was pastors who experienced growth in all three areas (attendance, tithe, and conversions) scored the highest on their individual survey questions in the relationship and duty categories. The top five churches that increased in attendance, finance, and had a conversion rate of more than 100 percent, scored the highest in the relationship and duty categories (relationship: 13.53, duty: 13.35). For the shepherd, the relationship that is developed with the flock is the lynch pin of their ministerial effectiveness. Relationships are the foundation and motivational tool for vision, duty, and the culture of the group. The research and findings of this study indicate a strong association between successful leaders and the ability to obtain, maintain, and retain relationships with their followers.

The study also revealed that the style of worship that a congregation chooses is associated to some degree with better attendance. The style of worship that was most condu-

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cive to better attendance was a blended style. A blended style of worship is logical from a shepherd leadership standpoint. A program-oriented pastor might focus exclusively on a contemporary style of worship regardless of the feelings of some in the congregation. A shepherd would seek to accommodate and make worship relevant to as many people as possible. Again, a shepherd removes hindrances and focuses on the individual needs of the sheep.

Finally, the education of the minister was shown to have a moderately positive relationship in regard to attendance. However, it had very little if any impact on finance or conversions or professions of faith.

The startling fact is 8 out of 10 churches are stagnated or in decline. Many people suggest that to revitalize American Christianity we should simply start more churches. Dr. Ed Stetzer stated, “Saving dead and dying churches is much more difficult and ultimately more costly than starting new ones” (2003, p. 9). However, the question is: what do you do with churches that are in desperate need of revitalization? Should these churches, (remember the church is primarily people, not buildings), be disbanded and forced to join a new work or faith community?

This research has shown that shepherd leadership is a viable leadership style for the twenty-first-century church. Shepherd leadership is a biblical approach to pastors and ministry leaders, for not only the administration and leadership of their churches or organizations, but also to provide a path forward concerning the revitalization of their churches. ■

Dr. Anthony Adams is pastor of New Vision Church in Holland, Michigan, and an adjunct professor with three universities.

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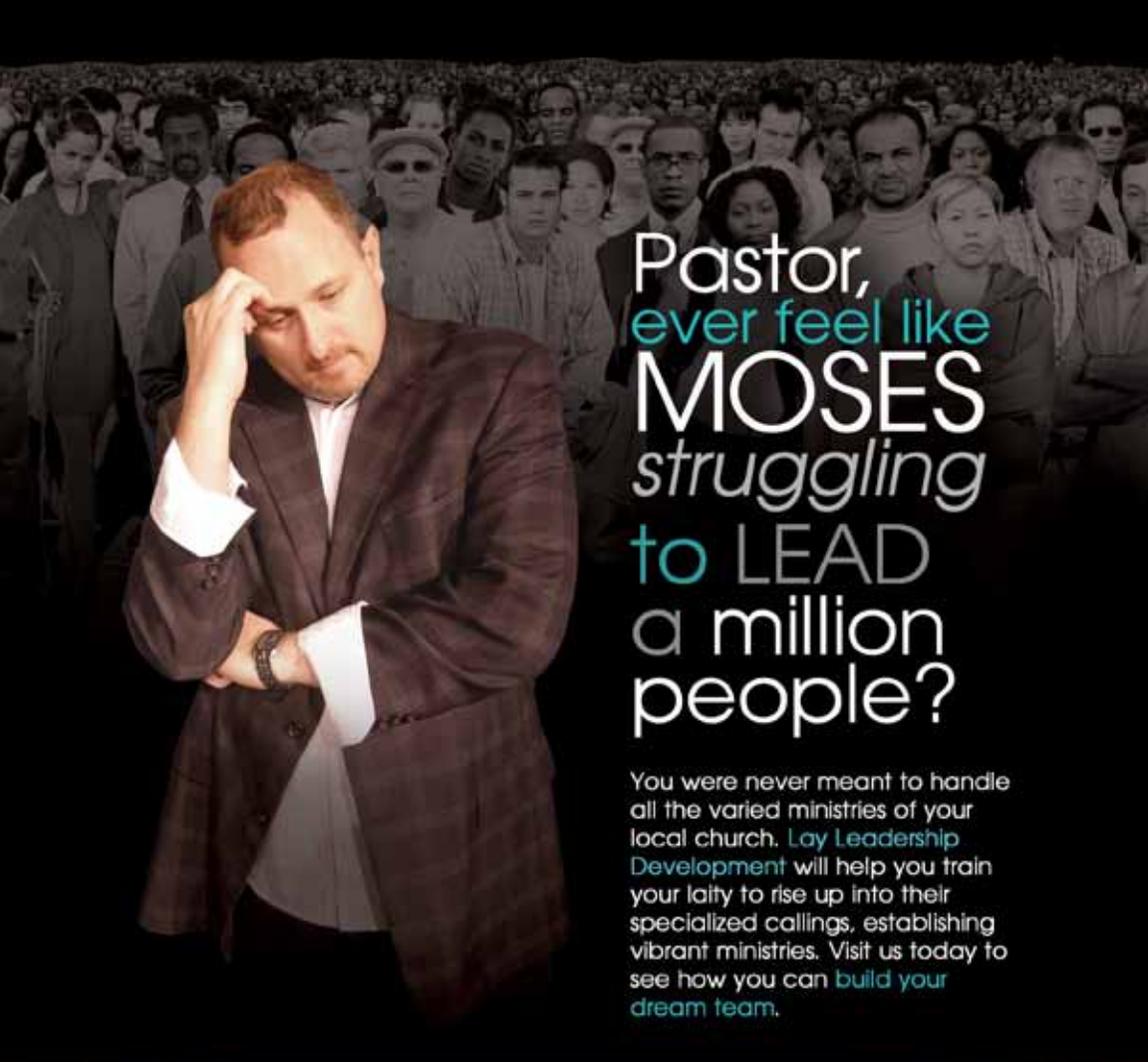
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PREACHING the TRINITY

WE RARELY HEAR sermons on the Trinity. In fact, most of us are Trinitarians in name only: Trinitarian doctrine shapes our worship and witness weakly, if at all. Why is that? I believe I can pinpoint at least three reasons.

First, most Pentecostal movements and denominations emerged from renewal movements that for various reasons contrasted the church's liturgical traditions and doctrines with the dynamics of a truly Spirit-filled, Spirit-led life. Over time, we came to regard authentic Christianity as a Christianity unencumbered by liturgy or doctrine. We wanted to "make room" for the Spirit by clearing away everything "religious."

Second, we convinced ourselves that the Trinity is simply *too difficult* to talk about, at least outside of the classroom, and that it basically has nothing to do with what really matters for the Christian's life anyway. Without question, talking about the Trinity is difficult. But that's because we are attempting to talk about *God*. We need sermons on the Trinity to remind us of the fact that the God we're preaching is not a God of our own making. While speaking about a Trinitarian God is a risky undertaking—it is a risk that needs taking. We are *meant* to talk about God. And if we're going to do this faithfully, we have to know *which* God it is we're speaking of and to.

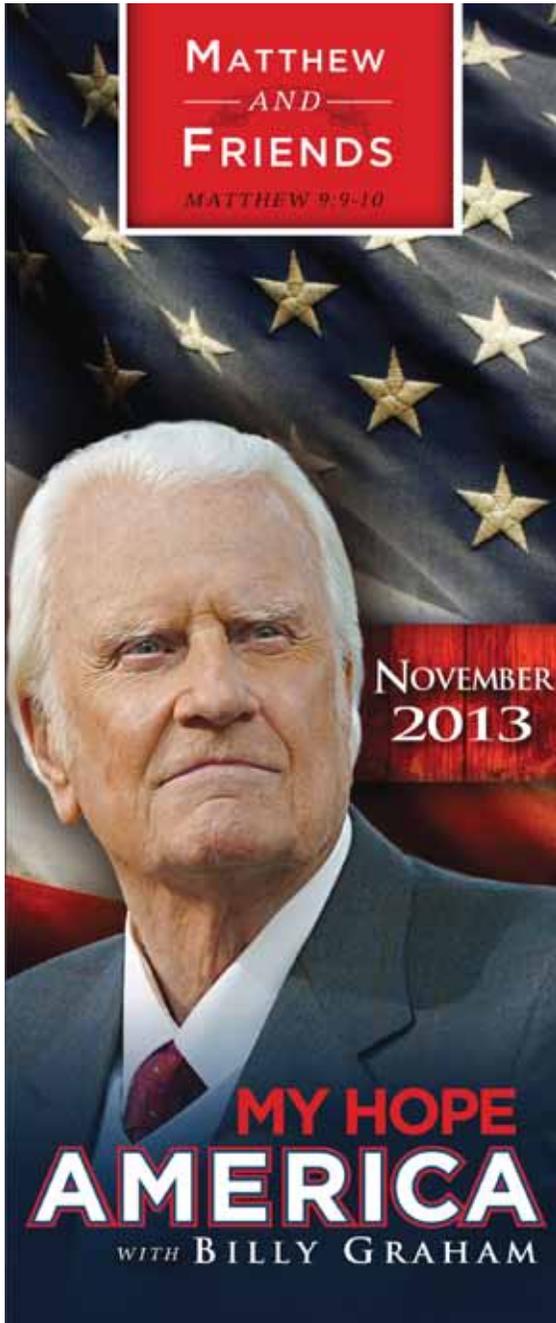
Third, and most important, I suspect our failure to talk often and clearly enough about the Trinity is due to the fact that we're all slaves to the "practical." We come to church expecting—perhaps even *demanding*—to

receive something that makes immediate, easy sense for us, and in some measurable way improves the quality of our lives. Certainly, those of us charged with preaching feel the pressure to deliver that kind of product. But as St. Augustine told us long ago, humans aren't just for *using* things. We are also for *enjoying* God. Above all, we are to enjoy God and neighbor, and to find ourselves through losing ourselves in God's enjoyment of our neighbor.

Preaching on the Trinity, then, is a kind of rebellion against and subversion of the tyranny of the practical. It's a way of reminding ourselves that we are meant for more than getting things done and having things done to us. It's a reminder that God gives us time but doesn't put us on the clock. It's a reminder that nothing is so enjoyable, or more *human*, than contemplating the beauty of *this* God and the glory of *this* neighbor.

Thomas Aquinas described salvation as basically nothing more or less than reflecting on God's character for now and always, into eternity. If that doesn't sound very flashy, it's because we don't really understand how beautiful and beautifying God really is! What we need, in my judgment, are more *worthless* sermons—sermons that direct our hearts and minds to the beauty of God. ■

Chris Green is assistant professor of theology at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tennessee. His doctoral dissertation has been published as Foretasting the Kingdom: Toward a Pentecostal Theology of the Lord's Supper (CPT Press, 2012).



MY HOPE WITH BILLY GRAHAM Event Set for November

(Editor's Note: the following is a reprint of an article first published in the Church of God Evangel, July 2013)

What is the My Hope With Billy Graham campaign?

My Hope With Billy Graham, scheduled for November 2013, is a grassroots effort to reach people across the United States and Canada with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Following a simple biblical model, *My Hope* combines the impact of video programs with the power of personal relationships. Under the guidance of local pastors, Christians will open their homes to share the gospel message with friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors using videos featuring Billy Graham, dynamic music, and testimonies.

How does the campaign work and what is its biblical basis?

Matthew and Friends is the heart of this national evangelistic outreach. After accepting Jesus' call to follow Him (Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-31), Matthew invited friends into his house to meet the Person who changed his life. Like the apostle Matthew, Christians in America will invite their guests into their

homes to learn about Jesus using prime-time television, while others will gather at a coffee shop or the park to watch the program on a tablet or smartphone.

So, the basic nucleus of the campaign is believers sharing Jesus?

Many Christians are nervous about sharing their faith with others. But as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) has done this outreach across the globe, people who are not necessarily powerful evangelists remark that it was well worth the effort. When you sign up, you will get all the training you need to . . .

- *Look around* and identify your friends, neighbors, coworkers, fellow students, and family who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

- *Look up* and pray every day for each person you have listed.

- *Look out* for opportunities to build your relationship with these people.

- *Look forward* to preparing your home and inviting every person on your list to view a program in your home or other comfortable place.

- *Look after* those who give their lives to Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith.

What specific duty is a “Matthew” expected to fulfill?

Four simple things:

1. *Invite*: Invite your friends and neighbors who don’t know Jesus Christ to your home for a meal and dessert.

2. *Watch*: Use a TV broadcast, DVD, laptop, or mobile device to show a special program featuring popular music, real-life stories, and short messages from Billy Graham.

3. *Share*: Briefly share how Jesus gave you hope and tell what He is doing in your life today.

4. *Ask*: Ask your friends if they would like to make the same decision you did to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and pray with them.

What training is available for those interested in *My Hope*?

BGEA has scheduled free training events all across America in many states and regions for both pastors and individuals. A list of training venues is available online at www.myhopewithbillygraham.org. For those unable to attend one of these venues, online training is available from the same website.

Why should Church of God ministers and members get involved?

The International Executive Committee and the USA Missions Board have both enthusiastically endorsed *My Hope*. Here’s why. If you live in the typical community—with 100 average neighbors—here’s the reality:

- Seven of your neighbors struggle with depression; some with suicide.
- Fourteen feel crippled by fear and suffer from some form of anxiety.
- Seven abuse or are addicted to drugs or alcohol.
- Eight are struggling with the loss of a job.
- Three are grieving the death of a loved one.
- SIXTY do not profess to be born again through faith in Jesus Christ!

To sign up, simply go to the www.myhopewithbillygraham.org website. Additional information can be obtained by calling USA Missions at 423-478-7103. ■



by KELLY MYERS

COUNSELING as a Holistic Ministry Tool

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:1-2 NIV).

IN MY MISSIONARY WORK in Prague, Czech Republic, I see a need for the gospel to become a living reality in the lives of so many people I meet. In fact, Prague is the most atheistic city in the European Union, with 70-80 percent not even believing that

God exists. In the face of this much unbelief among a recently post-Communist country of ten million people, how do you share the message of the gospel in a way that will change lives in both small and large ways? For me, the broad answer to this question is to be a channel for God's hope and healing in this part of the world. The more specific application is to use my gifting and training as a counselor. The ministry of counseling is the tool I use as a missionary to show God's love for the people of this country.

My ministry often involves teaching workshops to children on anger and healthy

emotions, leading parenting groups to impart positive techniques for being a responsible parent, working with university students on healthy body image, and training future church planters on biblical and pastoral counseling techniques. But some of my most challenging and encouraging work occurs day-to-day when meeting with individuals. During one-on-one counseling sessions with Czechs, I feel so powerfully God's heart for this people group. I sense the need for eternal hope that is not founded in temporary happiness. As we talk, I hear personal experiences where healing is clearly needed. Hopefully, my presence during these meetings will provide an opportunity for God to move in these particular ways in this person's life.

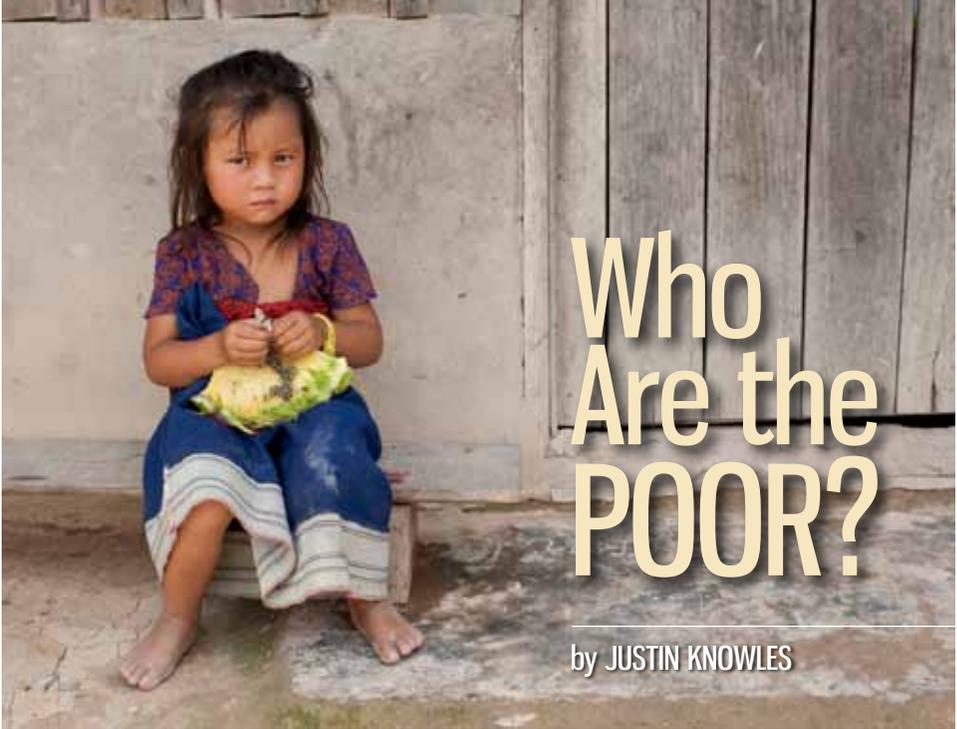
As I reflected on the integration of counseling into this context a couple of years ago, I felt God speak to me about the need for hope and healing here. In fact, these have been the two words that God continues to use as anchors for this ministry. Through my work as a counselor in this land, people can experience emotional healing. As individuals are able to work through issues such as grief, loss, identity, anxiety, depression, and acceptance, space is created. This is sacred space, a place where God can enter and dwell to provide hope for a future, better than the one that exists now. As freedom is experienced through the counseling process, God has room to move in and do a deeper work than I ever could on my own. As I use this tool of counseling on the mission field, I trust that God will use the talents I have to begin a process of others sensing His existence in this world and in their personal lives. I further trust that God will continue to show Himself faithful to this ministry of hope and healing that He has birthed at this particu-

AS INDIVIDUALS ARE ABLE TO WORK THROUGH ISSUES SUCH AS GRIEF, LOSS, IDENTITY, ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND ACCEPTANCE, SPACE IS CREATED. THIS IS **SACRED SPACE**, A PLACE WHERE GOD CAN ENTER AND DWELL TO PROVIDE HOPE FOR A FUTURE, BETTER THAN THE ONE THAT EXISTS NOW.

lar time to this group of people whom He has clearly not forgotten.

Revelation 22:1-2 has been prophetic for this counseling ministry. The hope that exists in visualizing the tree of life bearing fruit every month, without fail, is encouragement for me to rest in God's continual provision for this ministry. The image of the leaves of the tree as healing for the nations is refreshing; within the structure of the tree of life, this is intrinsic. God is offering hope and healing to the nations, and specifically to the nation of Czech Republic, through this counseling ministry. As a Church of God missionary, this is my most essential tool, and I pray to use it to the best of my ability for God's ultimate purpose in the land to which He has called me. ■

Kelly Myers is a licensed counselor who currently serves as missionary in the Czech Republic and is forming a center that will provide counseling, both to the Czechs as well as the missionaries in the field. She can be reached at www.facebook.com/HopeHealingPrague.



Who Are the POOR?

by JUSTIN KNOWLES

WHO ARE THE POOR, and what is the church's responsibility to them? This information seems essential if we want to be 'missional' and 'engaged,' and yet it seems to echo the lawyer's attempts at self-qualification in Luke 10:29—"Who is my neighbor?" The question in Luke is a great example of minimalism, which is one of the biggest hindrances to ministry to the poor.

Then there's pragmatism—valuing benevolent outreach to the poor based upon its ability to support other goals like evangelism. So ministers say things like, "You can't preach the gospel to them if they're starving." Such statements are true, but they unmask an underlying assumption that doesn't seem biblical. That is, the idea that the church helps the poor "in order that." But what if we move beyond minimalism and pragmatism to what C.S. Lewis called "mere Christianity"?

Consider the apostle Paul and his relation to the church at Ephesus. We think of the Book of Ephesians and its lofty spiritual language—mystery, heavenly realms, and spiritual forces. If we considered only the epistle, we could assume that the Ephesians had only a mystical spirituality that did not touch the physical needs of the here and now.

But when we look at Paul's words to the Ephesian church leaders in Acts 20:34-35, we get a different picture. Listen to his final words to this group:

You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (NIV).

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FACE TO US.
DISPLACEMENT
MEANS
FINDING THE POOR
IN OUR COMMUNITY
AND EVEN PLACES
BEYOND,
WHATEVER THEIR
RACE MAY BE.

I have the privilege of working on the Build a City project in Cambodia with People for Care and Learning, and I can see the truth in Paul's words. The BAC project is a plan to help develop an impoverished community of 5000 plus people with new homes, sanitation, medical, and educational solutions. Hard work? Yes! But it's also fulfilling. Indeed, it is better to give than to receive. Learn more about it at www.buildacity.org.

Now, I want to give a few principles that I have found in my experience to be essential to socioeconomic ministry.

DESIRE

It sounds simple, and really it is. But this fundamental to socioeconomic ministry is sometimes absent. In Galatians 2:10, Paul speaks of helping the poor as "the very thing I was eager to do" (NIV). Knowing that helping the poor is the right thing to do will only get us so far. If we don't have a desire, we need to begin to pray for the poor and God will give us a desire.

DISPLACEMENT

Many in the West do not have a strong desire to help the poor, and it is not because we are 'rich and greedy.' It is because we have become too insulated to feel moved with compassion. The poor do not have a name or a face to us. Displacement means finding the poor in our community and even places beyond, whatever their race may be. Not knowing the poor does not absolve us of our responsibility to them.

DISCOMFORT

Helping the poor can be uncomfortable. Their homes are often missing *modern* conveniences. Personal hygiene may be lacking as well. We must embrace discomfort and move beyond it, without obligating ourselves to an asceticism that makes us feel more spiritual because of our suffering. Apathy and burnout are not the only options.

In Cambodia, I can see the poor every time I leave my home, or I can choose not to. That is the starting point—*seeing*. How easy it is to stop seeing what is right in front of us! We have to teach our children to see as well. We move from seeing to praying, and prayer quickly leads us to practical acts of mercy.

Finally, whether your ministry is "across the street" or "around the world," be intentional in what you do. Set aside time and resources. By remembering the poor, you will be fulfilling a mission that is close to the heart of God. ■

Justin Knowles is a missionary serving alongside his wife Donna and sons Jude and Luke, with People for Care and Learning in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He can be reached at Justin.knowles1@facebook.com.

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Don't Throw Out the BABY With the BATHWATER

by CRAIG MOSGROVE

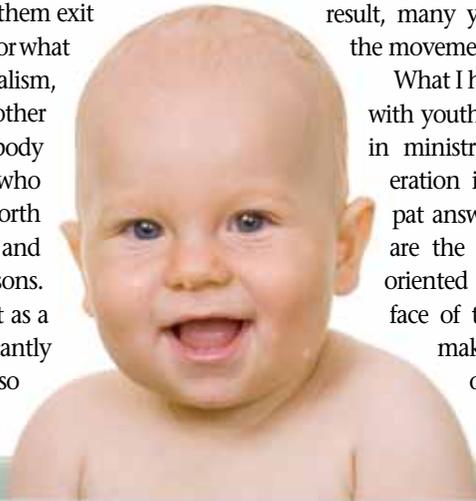
RECENTLY attended a seminar in Sevierville, Tennessee, called “Being Pentecostal” with Dr. Jack Hayford and Dr. Mark Williams, two men whom I highly admire and respect for the statesmen they are in the body of Christ. During this seminar, I was once again stirred by a question that has troubled me for some time: “How do we effectively engage the next generation with not only the tenets of the faith but also with the core values of Pentecostalism?”

Over the past few years, I have seen many younger leaders within the church make a difficult departure from the spiritual movement of their youth. I have seen them exit the Full Gospel Movement, or what we would call Pentecostalism, to join any number of other movements within the body of Christ. I've met many who grew up in the thick of North American Pentecostalism and left it for very similar reasons. I know that the movement as a whole has matured significantly in the last 20 years, and I also

know that Pentecostalism is still a relatively young movement.

Endemic to Pentecostalism has been a profoundly anti-intellectual ethos or bent, where in the past, there has been a deep suspicion of scholars within the movement. I do not, however, think the majority of the people today feel the same way. In fact, there are some very well-known Pentecostal scholars who are influential outside of the movement—men such as Gordon Fee, Amos Young, Russell Spittler, and Steven Land. But for too long, too many Pentecostal leaders held their own scholars at arm's distance with suspicion. As a result, many young leaders exited the movement.

What I have learned working with youth now for eight years in ministry is that this generation is not satisfied with pat answers. The Millennials are the most educationally-oriented generation on the face of the planet, and will make the largest impact on the church and



the world in the twenty-first century. But they are sincerely seeking out truth. They long for authenticity and dialogue about the things of God. They do not need another conference; they need a conversation.

Here is one of my major concerns. I have been asked by many, "Pastor Craig, how is it that you Pentecostals claim that Spirit-baptism enhances personal witness for Christ (Acts 1:8), and yet other movements and denominations are reaching more people for Christ than you all?" Very frankly, I respond, "With all due respect, your information is severely in error." Worldwide, there are currently more than 600 million Pentecostals. Pentecostalism now comprises the second largest communion of Christians in the world, more than Protestants and Anglicans combined.

With its continued growth and its unique understanding of Christian experience, Pentecostalism is promising to reshape Christianity totally in the twenty-first century. As recently as 1970, Pentecostals and Charismatics represented only 6 percent of the world's Christian population. By 1997, the figure jumped to 27 percent of the world's Christians, or 497 million people, exceeding the total number of Protestants and Anglicans. Now that number has gone to more than 600 million. Pentecostalism accounts for more soulwinning worldwide than all other sects of Christianity combined.

People tend to equate what they are seeing in the United States with what is taking place around the world. That is not true. In the United States, Pentecostals represent only 12 percent of Christians, depending on the measurement used. That figure is outnumbered only by Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans.

MILLENNIALS ARE THE MOST EDUCATIONALLY-ORIENTED GENERATION ON THE FACE OF THE PLANET. THEY ARE SINCERELY SEEKING OUT TRUTH. THEY LONG FOR AUTHENTICITY AND DIALOGUE ABOUT THE THINGS OF GOD. THEY DO NOT NEED ANOTHER CONFERENCE; THEY NEED A CONVERSATION.

Most of Pentecostalism's growth in the last century, however, occurred in developing countries. While the growth-rate for Western churches has reached a plateau, Pentecostalism worldwide is growing at an exponential rate. The majority of Pentecostals around the world are found among the poor and the working classes, the same socioeconomic groups that gave rise to Pentecostalism in North America in the early twentieth century.

The Pentecostal Movement is not simply a new denomination. "The rise of Pentecostalism is more analogous to the rise of Protestantism in Christianity than the birth of a new denomination. It's an example of the restructuring of Christianity," says Margaret Paloma of the University of Akron.

What is the reason for this growth? Missionary activity is at the center of the movement. Pentecostals link the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the "end times," which gives a sense of urgency to missionary activity. Thousands of Pentecostals have taken off for foreign lands within the past century,

spurred by biblical mandate, a personal sense of calling, and an empowering experience of the Holy Spirit. Now we are heeding the Spirit's call to a deeper, more mature theology.

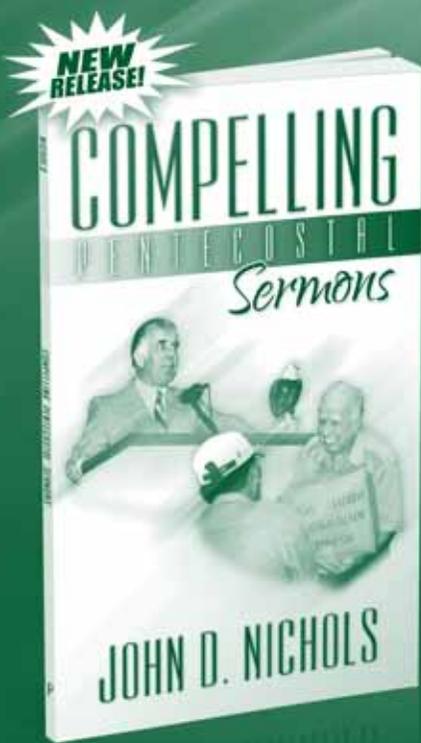
The lack of witness and harvest we see in the United States is probably due to the absence of the dependency on the Holy Spirit we hold, unlike Pentecostals around the world. The church is not dependent on its methodology for growth, but rather, it is dependent on the Holy Spirit. It is important to remember that the call to Pentecostalism is not a call to swear to a doctrine but to enter into the life flow of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit shouldn't be for a proof or a doctrine, but rather for a dynamic power for witness.

My prayer is that for those who are entertaining the thought of leaving the spiritual

movement of their youth, do not "throw out the baby with the bathwater." My fear is that many have categorized the theology of the movement with the bad experiences they have encountered with immature Pentecostals. In our theological pursuit, we must employ the intellect, but must never allow it to become a replacement to the point that we no longer depend on the Holy Spirit.

After all, the Word tells us that the Holy Spirit will indeed lead us into all truth (John 16:13). May that be the case for us as we engage this new century. ■

Craig Mosgrove is the high school, college, and 20-somethings pastor at North Cleveland Church of God (Cleveland, TN). His passion is to train and empower next generation leaders for the discipling of all nations.



JOHN D. NICHOLS' life of ministry spanned nearly six decades, and was first known for his fiery brand of Pentecostal preaching. This book contains many of those sermons. More than 6,800 people testified to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit through his ministry.

Nichols served on the Church of God International Executive Committee from 1986 to 1994.

During his twelve-year tenure as director of Church of God benevolence ministries (1994-2006), the Division of Care was begun. Under his leadership, a \$5 million General Assembly offering was received, enabling the establishment of thirty-five children's homes around the world. Also, Operation Compassion was organized, which has become one of the world's most

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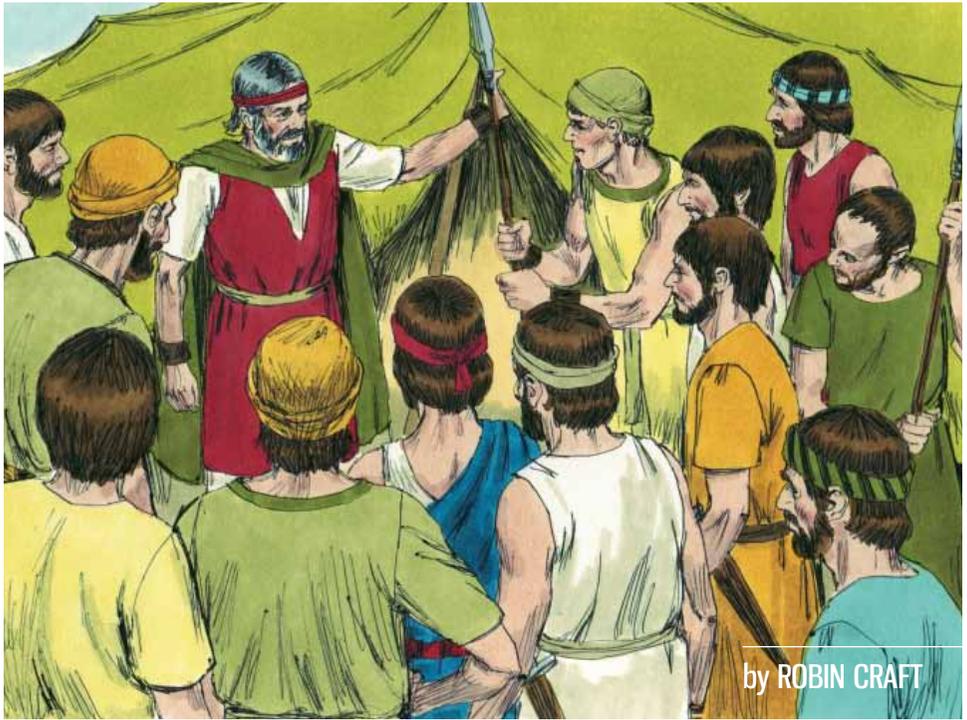
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by ROBIN CRAFT

TEN MEN the World Forgot

SHAMMUA, Shaphat, Caleb, Igal, Hoshea, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, and Geuel—these are the names of the men Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan. Moses called Hoshea, the son of Nun, Joshua (see Numbers 13:4-16). If you saw the list of names above (separated from their context), would you know who most of them were?

Twelve men with a family heritage were chosen to look at the land that God had

promised. Sounds like a considerably high honor—one anyone would want to have and bring back the best possible report. Yet for ten of the men (the majority), fear overruled faith. The majority's fear cost the Israelites forty years of wandering, the lives of hundreds of thousands, and what is most important—loss of the promise of God. They saw the Promised Land, they walked on its soil and carried its produce; they experienced the promise, but still they were fearful.

It is amazing that the spies were afraid the giants would kill them and their countrymen when they themselves had not even been harmed or injured. It seems the “eye of the beholder” revealed an unreal perception. Perhaps this was true because all they had known was captivity, and they did not want to be captured again or killed.

Their perception was that these giants would have no use for them and they would kill them. While in Egypt they had a purpose—they made bricks. The Egyptians needed them; therefore, they were allowed to live—at least most of them. At one point, the baby sons were required to be killed to keep slaves from becoming too many and rising up to take over. The Egyptians were afraid of the Israelites. Apparently the Egyptian fear bred fear into the Israelites, because fear cost them and their families and friends their lives. You could say fear killed them.

What fear is killing you and your potential? Joshua and Caleb outlived the fear. They came back with the report that was in the minority, and to some extent they were shushed. Scripture leads us to believe that the report was given only to the leadership; the congregation appears to have not even been allowed to choose to follow God’s direction—yet maybe they did and felt it safer to side with the majority.

Perhaps Joshua and Caleb were the two youngest men on this council. As youth of about forty years old, their words may not have carried the weight of the elder members on the team.

Yet at the end of the forty years (plus two thousand more), the two names everyone

**BEWARE OF THE
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remembers are Joshua and Caleb. Joshua’s words to the congregation were: “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15 NKJV). I wonder if the thought—*I will serve the Lord*—is what he lived with for forty years in the wilderness. Sometimes being in the minority can be painful, and sometimes it costs greatly. However, if you know with all your heart and hold on, the promise God has given will come through.

Beware of the majority; sometimes they die in the dust of unbelief and are never remembered. Hold fast to your faith. Stand strong in the power of His Word. Live the life you have been called to, even if you have to wander in the wilderness until the message of fear has died. He will bring you to the Promised Land, and you will not be forgotten. Most of all, He will be glorified. ■

Robin Craft, M.Ed., works with Sky Angel Network and is an author of children’s books.

ACTIVE BIBLICAL PARENTING

A Call to Tell the Stories of the Past to the Generation of the Future

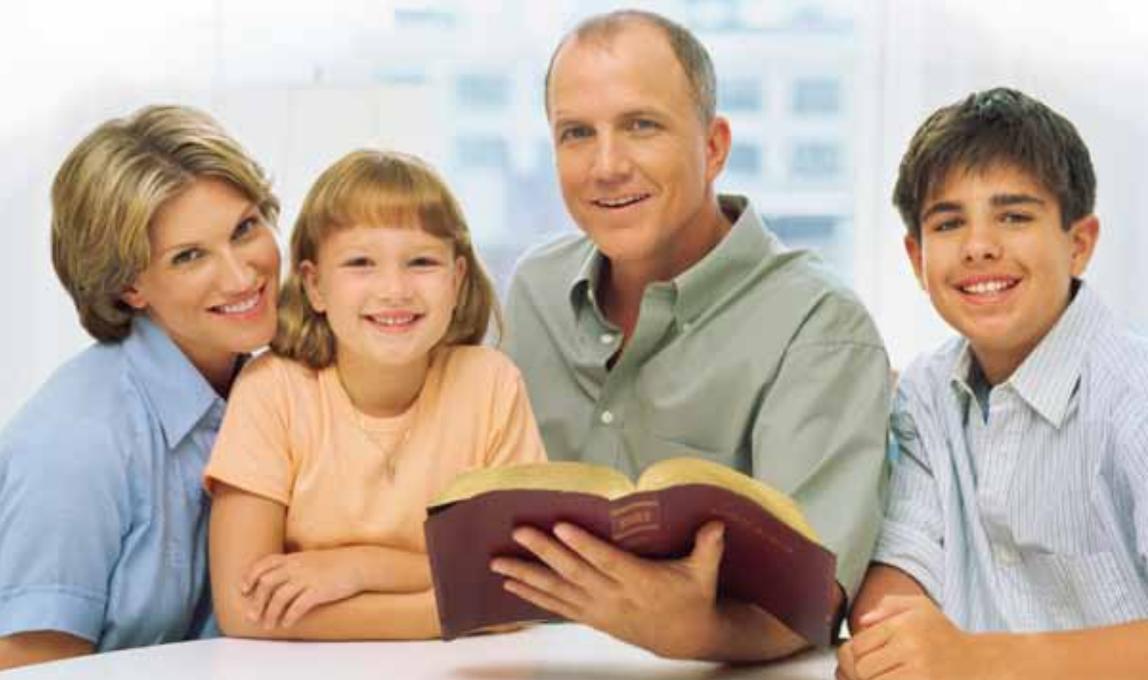
by ROBERT McCREADY

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY records Moses' last message to the children of Israel. The Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, and Moses would not be going with them. In Deuteronomy, he reminds them of the purposes of God for the nation.

The people to whom he is speaking were children when they left Egypt—some were not even born at the time of the Exodus. The first-hand burden and fear of slavery was not really part of this new generation. Yet, Moses knew how important it was to maintain an understanding of God's ability to deliver His people. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Moses gives a clear discipleship pattern that is centered on the

home, which would instruct the Israelites in the gracious deliverance of the Lord. He states:

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (NASB).



Moses understood that the Lord would deliver from Egypt only once, but the recollection of that deliverance needed to live on for each successive generation. So, morning and evening, sitting down and standing up, Israelite parents would rehearse to their children the power and majesty of God.

In the Christian home, discipleship must begin by rehearsing the mighty works that God has done. As Pentecostals, we often look to the Spirit's active work in the present—and that is important. However, we must also not forget to share with our children the Spirit's glorious work in the past.

How do we do this? Moses' prescription in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 aptly meets the need:

First, as Christian parents, God's Word must be on our heart (v. 6). As leaders in the home, we must read and meditate on the Scriptures. Our children will drink from the wells that we dig, and if our wells are dug deeply in God's Word, they will not go thirsty.

Second, this same Word that is in our hearts must be repeated to our children (v. 7). Our children cannot appreciate what they do not know. If the Israelites had never spoken about the deliverance from Egypt to their children, there would have been no understanding of God's fulfilling His covenant promises or of His setting the Israelites apart as a special people unto Himself.

Third, Moses gives the method by which we are to repeat to our children that which is on our heart (v. 7). He says we are to do it when we sit in the house, when we walk by the road, when we go to sleep, and when we get up. Training young people in the ways of

the Lord requires parents to use every opportunity to impute the Word of God to their children.

Training is much different than correction. Correction is the discipline applied when a child has done wrong. Training, on the other hand, teaches them how to turn to the Lord during their time of need. It is important that we train our children today to handle the temptations of tomorrow.

Finally, Moses reminds us that as parents, who we are and what we possess must be a testimony to the Lord (v. 8). The Israelites would bind scriptures on their foreheads and hands as a sign that they were being faithful to God. Likewise, they would write scriptures on their doorposts and gates to signify that all they had was the Lord's.

In like manner, parents must be a living testimony to God's faithfulness. If we consistently complain about our financial condition, our children will learn to have an ungrateful heart. Conversely, if we express gratitude—even for the little we have—our children will see that all good things come from the Lord.

Church leaders must help their parishioners understand that being a Christian parent means more than just bringing your child to church on Sunday and Wednesday evening. It means taking an active role in their faith formation. It means reminding them of the wonderful and amazing things God has done in the past so that they will faithfully persevere in the future. ■

Robert McCready currently serves as pastor of Cornerstone Family Church in Cleveland, TN.



by EMILY STONE

BOUNDARIES and BURNOUT

AS A YOUNG PERSON going into ministry I heard an older, much wiser minister offer these words of encouragement: “Ministry is a meat grinder.” I am not sure if it is ministry, or just adulthood itself, but along with all of its gifts and blessings, living the day in and day out of working with people is incredibly taxing. Burnout is a constant threat, which results in ministers

quitting, at best, and falling into behavior unbecoming at worst.

In 1 Corinthians 9:22 Paul seems to encourage us to “become all things to all people” (NIV 2011). Too often we interpret that to say, “DO all things FOR all people.” When we forget that we are human BEINGS. When we become human DOINGS, our risk for burnout is greater. Why do we do this? What puts us

at risk for sliding down the slippery slope of overextension and burnout? Why do we say “yes”...too much?

1. Insecurity. We often say “YES” or take on too much when we are operating out of an undercurrent of insecurity, anxiety, and fear...fear that “I am not enough,” fear that “I don’t deserve to be in this position,” fear that “No one really likes me,” or fear that “if they could, they would find someone else for this job.” When we are carrying these thoughts in our minds and hearts, we tend to do foolish things...and the result is MORE insecurity, anxiety, and fear.

2. Lack of trust. We don’t trust that God is in control...that Jesus is the Messiah...not ME! We don’t trust that anyone else can do it as well as we can. We don’t trust that God has equipped the person in front of us to handle their circumstances. We don’t trust that God is at work, so we better get to work instead!

3. Ego trip. Sometimes we say “yes” because we want to do everything so we can get all of the credit. We are not convinced that anyone can do things as well as we can. We are threatened if someone else does a task and does it well...will that mean I am not as needed?

Wow, what strain we put on ourselves and on our relationships when we become “human doings” rather than “human beings.” Also . . . it isn’t good leadership.

Think about it this way: Every time you unnecessarily say “yes” to help where you are not being called what you are really saying is, “Yes, you’re right. You really aren’t capable enough and neither is God...I better step in.”

An excellent biblical example of leadership that has good boundaries is the great judge,

Deborah. Deborah told Barak “No” when he asked her to go fight the battle with him. She knew it was not her battle to fight. God had called Barak, not her. So, she stayed on the mountain. She called the warrior out in Barak, who went to battle...and won.

How many times are you stepping into battles that are not yours? How many times is God calling you to be Deborah—the one who calls out the warrior? If you fight a person’s battle for them, they will not get the battle spoils.

Whose battle spoils are you stealing?

If people are not accustomed to your having good boundaries...to your saying “no,” expect discomfort and awkward moments at first as you learn to call out warriors as opposed to fighting battles that are not yours. Learn to be ok with the discomfort of saying “no.” Remember the old saying: When you say no, you give someone else the opportunity to say yes! ■

Emily Stone is an ordained minister, a licensed marriage and family therapist, and a former missionary. She lives in Cleveland with her husband, Jonathan Stone, and their four children. She writes more at www.stonewritten.com.

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RECOMMENDED READING

- *A Failure of Nerve* by Edwin Freidman.
- *People Skills* by Robert Bolton
- *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* by Henry Cloud
- *Growing Weary Doing Good? Encouragement for Exhausted Women* by Karla Worley

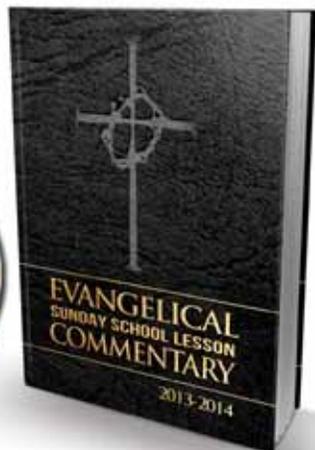
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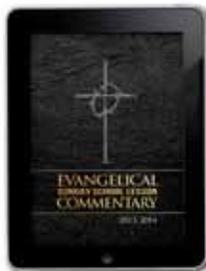
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by
DOUG
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ONLY A PRAYER MEETING

Spurgeon's Views on the Prayer Meeting

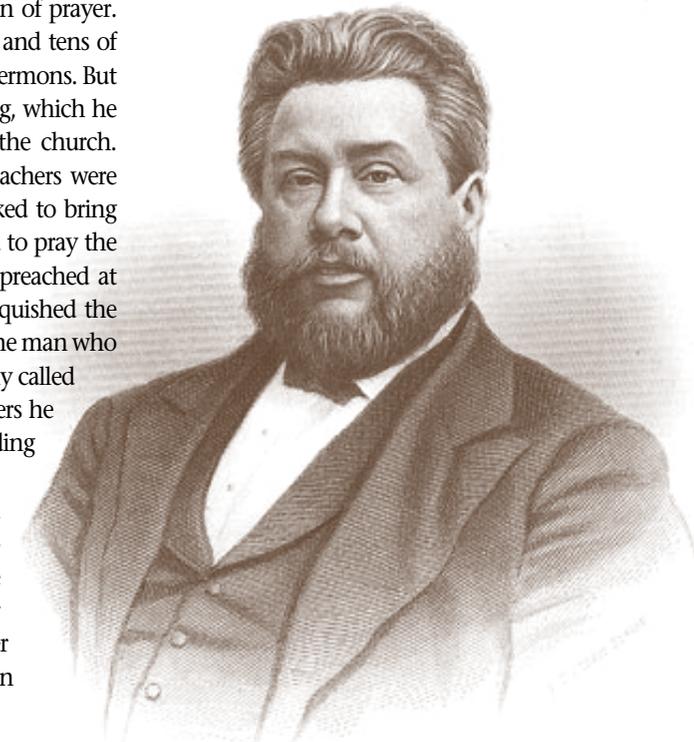
ONE OF THE greatest preachers of all times—Charles Spurgeon—had the “gift of the knees”; he was a man of prayer. He preached to thousands, and tens of thousands still read and adapt his sermons. But he also led a weekly prayer meeting, which he identified as the power plant of the church. At one gathering, the roles of preachers were handed out and Spurgeon was asked to bring the address. He declined. He opted to pray the pastoral prayer. Numerous guests preached at the Tabernacle, but he never relinquished the right to offer the pastoral prayer. One man who heard him pray with his own family called it one of the most wonderful prayers he had ever heard; it revealed “the hiding of his power.”¹

Spurgeon bemoaned the term “only a prayer meeting” as dismissive language. “We shall never see much change for the better in our churches in general till the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in

the esteem of Christians.” To “mix it [the prayer meeting] up with the weeknight lecture” was the beginning of the end for the prayer meeting. It will, he argued, “really make an end of it, [and that] is a sad declension.” And if the prayer meeting were to “degenerate into formality ... we shall be dead while we think we live.” He preferred to “mingle praise and prayer together as a delicious compound of spices, fit to be presented upon the altar of incense.”²

Spurgeon thought much about corporate prayer and described the following prayer-meeting killers.

1. Long-winded Prayers. Zeal must be tethered. Fire must be contained. Passion has to be tempered in a corporate context. Every prayer meeting is helped by a moment of passion, by tears, by a holy *yelp*—but when an



individual loses touch with the larger meeting, and this becomes a pattern, the prayer meeting experiences the “ruin of fervency.”

2. Trite Phrases and Clichés. Another prayer-meeting killer is the use of flowery clichés. Pseudo prayer language uses trite poetic imagery. The best praying, though it need not be dull, and at times may be poetic and delightful, is nevertheless sincere and authentic, not an echo of borrowed prayer phrases.

3. Fake Humility. Yet another prayer-meeting killer is self-applied humble descriptors—“thy poor unworthy dust.”³ Spurgeon called such “uncouth similes and ridiculous metaphors” a “sort of spiritual slang ... unholy ignorance ... imitation or graceless hypocrisy.” Attempting humble spiritual language dishonors the individual and is a nuisance to those who hear it.

4. Preachy Praying. Preachy praying is another prayer-meeting killer.⁴ It is a kind of horizontal prayer, not meant for God, but for those gathered. The holy platform of prayer is used to interject ideas and opinions offered as prayer—such a thing is breathlessly presumptuous, blindly arrogant.

Here is a condensed version of Spurgeon’s recommendations for a good prayer meeting:

1. Let the Pastor Place a High Value on Prayer. The minister himself has to set a very high value on prayer and talk about it. And when he prays, he must “throw all his vigor into it.” He must attend the prayer meeting, and be absent seldom. Spurgeon recommended a “warm-hearted address” of about ten minutes designed to “foster a love for the prayer meeting.”

2. Make Prayers Brief. Let each person pray “the petition most laid upon his heart by the Holy Spirit.” One prays, then another,

with no subject switching. Drive one nail home with repeated blows. Many voices “prevent weariness,” Spurgeon advised. No prayer longer than five minutes—better, if less, “... length is a deathblow to earnestness, and brevity is an assistant to zeal.”

3. Persuade All to Pray Out-loud. Encourage all to pray—“not to speak to man, but to God!” Sharing breaks the spirit of prayer abruptly. Urge, “Don’t share it; pray it.” We pour out our souls one to another, but sharing is not the same as praying. Say, “Talk to God, and we will agree.” The “first hesitating, stumbling, ungrammatical prayer of a confused Christian may be worth more to the church than the best prayer of the most eloquent pastor.”

4. Submit Needs in Advance. Spurgeon had his people send in prayer requests and he strategically used them as “kindling.” Needs were shared, and yet there was order and more directed prayer.

5. The Purpose of a Prayer Meeting Is to Pray. Spurgeon’s rule was “suffer neither hymn, nor chapter, nor address to supplant prayer.” We meet for prayer, and the environment should encourage “genuine” prayer that drives out “formality.”

6. A Planned Prayer Meeting. Spurgeon appreciated spontaneity and participation, but his approach was not haphazard. There is no rule for directing a prayer meeting. Develop a style that provides for fervency in the context of order. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit!

7. A People Prepared to Pray. Spurgeon believed, “The Lord is always willing to bless us up to the measure of our fitness to be blessed.” That meant times of repentance and breaking, an agony of prayer.⁵

In Spurgeon’s day, the trend was away from prayer, what he called “social atheism” whereby

“men forget God; He is not in all their thoughts, or ways, or estimates.”⁶ Practical atheism is reliance on the arm of our own flesh; organizing and executing Christian activities with little prayer revealing a startling level of pride and self-sufficiency. “Prayer is the grand cement; and lack of prayer is like withdrawing the force of gravitation from a mass of matter, and scattering it into so many atoms.”⁷ ■

Doug Small serves as coordinator of Prayer Ministries. He recently introduced a new “Prayer Trainers” program; and a new model for churches called, “The Praying Church Made Simple.” Check

out these resources at www.praycog.org. Contact Doug at dougsmaill@projectpray.org.



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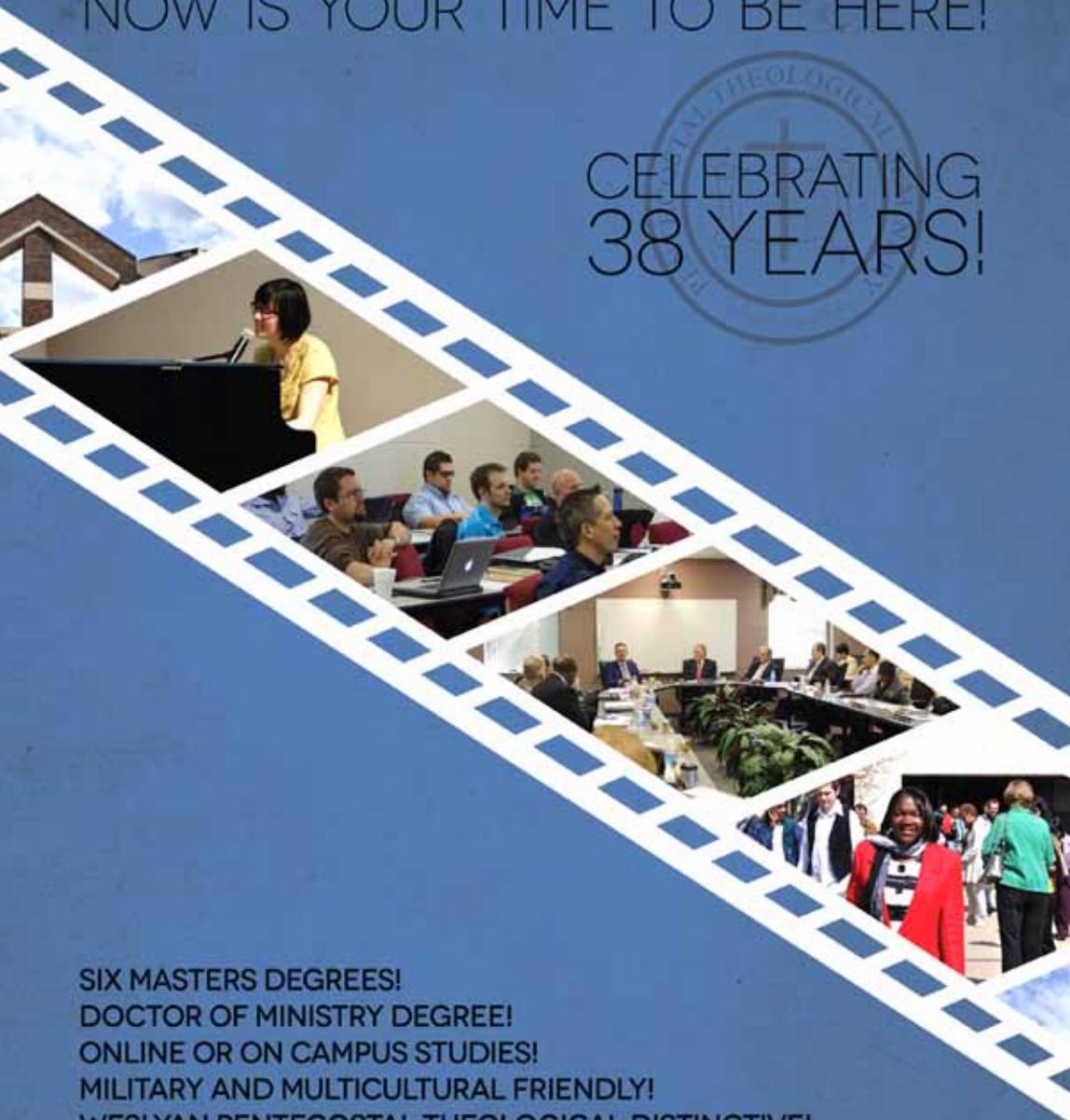
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Church Attendance by Convicted Felons: A Sequel

SOME TIME AGO, I wrote an article for *Engage* covering the topic of church attendance by convicted felons. Because of the significant increase in both the number of questions which I have received about this subject and the actual number of these incidents in local Church of God congregations, I would like to cover this subject again.

The inquiries on this subject almost always relate to the discovery that someone is attending a local church and that person is named on the state's child abuse registry. In one case I am aware of, a member of a local church inadvertently found the picture of a staff member on this registry!

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The first issue in these cases is whether or not the person attending church is coming out of a sincere motive of worship. If so, he/she should be willing to work with the church in safeguarding it from possible legal claims.

The next issue is one of supervision. The person attending church must be totally cooperative with the church in allowing himself/herself to be under strict supervision during church activities, both on and off church property. It also will be necessary to appoint some trusted chaperone to have the sole responsibility of watching this person at church and church activities, especially in restrooms.

THE ATTENDANCE PLAN

Central to the ability of such a person to attend church should be a written agreement detailing parameters for church attendance. This usually involves a clear understanding that only the sanctuary of the church should be entered into, and not other areas of the church.

I have drafted a sample attendance agreement form involving such circumstances and have included it below. The attendance agreement specifically sets out the church's desire to minister to the person attending, and then sets out definite and detailed guidelines of attendance. This includes a provision in which the person attending agrees not to place himself/herself in any circumstances which would appear to give him/her private access to children or youth. It also contains a provision agreeing to remain under the continuous supervision of the person appointed to observe this person in the church, at all times.

Failure to enter into this agreement and to abide by all of its terms should produce an absolute disqualification of this person to attend church services or other church events.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

One observation I have made is that in almost all of these cases, there is someone in the church who finds out about the attendance of such a person, and who becomes very upset. This can produce the complaint of "Our

church is allowing child abusers to attend.” The response must be that absolute supervision is being exercised regarding this person, and that such person is unconditionally following the agreed-to attendance plan.

In some cases, there are demands that there be some type of public announcement regarding the presence or attendance of such persons, but it is my opinion that the disadvantages of such announcements outweigh the advantages, so long as strict supervision is being exercised. In other cases, churches have determined that the dangers of such a person’s attendance are too great and have prohibited him/her from attending church.

In these instances, you are well-advised to contact your church’s insurance carrier and

your local attorney, to make sure that there are not probation, insurance, or other legal requirements applicable to your circumstances.

This is a very emotionally charged issue for churches, and one which defies a universal, general rule of applicability. However, by the application of strict supervision and a written attendance plan, your church can go a long way to alleviate a potentially serious problem, if such persons are allowed to attend church services. ■

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.



(SAMPLE) ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT LETTER

This letter is to confirm and set forth my agreement with _____ Church (hereinafter “Church”) that I will attend the worship services and activities of Church subject to the following conditions:

1. I understand and agree that Church desires to minister to my spiritual needs and to provide a place for me to worship God in spirit and in truth.
2. I further understand that due to my prior criminal conviction or the placement of my name on any public registry or public record indicating prior child or other abuse, it will be necessary for me to conduct my church attendance with discretion and wisdom.
3. I agree at all times to limit my activity on church premises to entering and exiting the building directly to the sanctuary for worship services. I agree not to place myself in any circumstances which would appear to allow me to have unsupervised access to youth, either male or female. This shall include my entering and exiting restroom facilities.
4. I agree to place myself at all times within the observation and direction of any usher or other person who is assigned to me for the purpose of supervision or observation while I am on church premises, and to comply with any requests of such person.
5. I agree not to attend or participate in any church or youth activities away from the church premises unless I receive permission from the senior pastor or one whom he designates and also to cooperate with whomever is assigned to supervise or observe me while I am participating in or attending such event or activity.
6. I agree to abide by any other terms or conditions of attendance suggested to me by Church. I understand that Church desires to minister to me and that conditions of legal liability and insurance concerns dictate the necessity of this agreement, and that this agreement shall remain in effect until otherwise indicated in writing by Church.

Letter signed and dated by participant and authorized church representative.



Understanding the “Valuation” Process

PARTICIPANTS in stock funds may not fully understand the process of how they make—or lose—money. While it is rather simple to understand earning interest in a savings account, the idea of net asset value (NAV) and volatility is more difficult to understand when trying to determine why and how your stock account moves in value.

For example, assume that you contribute \$100 to a stock fund. On the day that you made the contribution, assume that the NAV was \$10 per share. With your \$100 dollars, 10 shares will be purchased for your account. Further, assume that a week, a month, or even a year or more later, you are looking at your fund and the NAV has decreased due to market volatility. You still have 10 shares, but the NAV is now, say, \$9.75 per share. In other words, your 10 shares, purchased at \$100, are now worth only \$97.50. Of course, that same process works the opposite way as the NAV rises.

Using this very simplistic example, if you sold your shares when the NAV was \$9.75, you would have a loss of \$0.25 per share. If you did nothing and just held on to the shares, your account balance would show an unrealized (or paper loss) of the same \$0.25 per share. Of course, the NAV could increase and recover your lost value or it could decline further, depending upon the

overall economic conditions and movement of that asset class.

So why does the net asset value (NAV) move? The NAV moves based upon the underlying value of the stocks in the pool of assets you have invested in. For example, a fund may have as many as 80-100 different companies' stocks included in the portfolio. The value of a single company's stock may move upwards or downwards based upon a number of things, including the overall need for that company's products, expansion efforts of the company into new markets, the closing of certain markets to the company's products, a competitor coming out with a better product, changes in leadership of the company, profit margins above the actual cost to produce the product, and a thousand other reasons.

As in sports, there are always winners and losers. Take for instance, a year ago the price of Apple stock shot upwards. With the release of new iPhones and iPads, as well as other products, Apple surged to be a leader in the technology sector of the market. However, while Apple was gobbling up market share, other technology companies, like Dell and H-P, suffered. A fund might contain all three companies in the same portfolio. Of course, in the past year, Apple stock has become one of the big losers. The hope, of course, is that the “gainers” in your portfolio always outweigh the “losers.”

—Continued on page 49



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BOOK REVIEW

Jonathan Stone

Finding Our True Identity in Christ

**Prototype: What Happens
When You Discover You're
More Like Jesus Than You Think?**

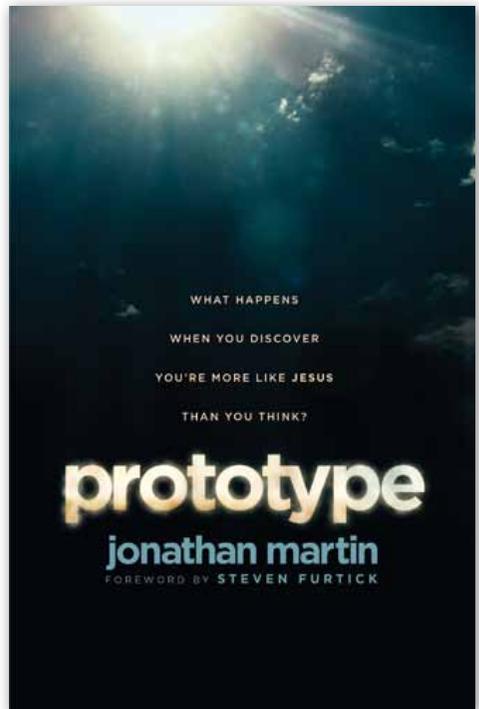
By Jonathan Martin

FOR THOSE who follow Jonathan Martin and his gang of misfits at Renovatus in Charlotte, the arrival of *Prototype* was much anticipated. Martin has long been admired for his unique blend of quirky style, charming authenticity, provocative intellect, spirited wit, and eruptive passion. Any who have come to appreciate Martin's distinctive gift mix will not be disappointed in what they find in *Prototype*. Any who have not yet encountered him or the community of Renovatus will discover what they have been missing.

In order to run into some standard Martinesque provocation, you have to look no further than the front cover where you are hit with the wonder-working question of a subtitle: *What happens when you discover you're more like Jesus than you think?* As it turns out, that is not mere rhetoric, nor a bold effort for a catchy subtitle. *Prototype* thrusts you forward by first throwing you back. Or perhaps I should say throwing you down. That is, down into the depths of buried childhood memories. Reading the first few chapters of *Prototype* is akin to stumbling upon a long-forgotten memory box in the attic. Martin does not call

out to the self you project to others, but to the self you hide from others. It does not take long to recognize that your heart is pumping because that hidden self has suddenly leaped with hope at hearing his or her name.

Perhaps all of that sounds suspicious or hokey or just plain deep. You need not worry; there are no Jungian archetypes in *Prototype*. In fact, the book reads in refreshingly simple fashion. That is due in large part to what seems



like a conscious effort on the part of Martin to avoid clever insights and catchy phrases. Martin claims from the very beginning to be offering nothing novel. In a day when a standard piece of Christian spirituality literature is marked most by its unrivaled verbosity, *Prototype* is almost shocking to the system.

I say all of that to say that *Prototype* is a spiritual book. If you read the book with only your mind, you will undoubtedly read it too fast and miss the steady burn that it will unleash in your soul once you read it slow enough to get your heart involved. After you slow yourself down and listen to the whisper of the Spirit, you will quickly recognize that God has done a powerful work in the life of the author—a work that He just might want to do in you as well.

That work begins by discovering the true identity that God created you with, which is likely to be found under a deep pile of rubble accumulated from years of hurt and success, letdowns and rewards, ambitions and mistakes, and just an all-around, sweaty, dusty life. Martin puts his finger on the legion of facades paraded by our culture that you might have picked up along the way in order to pull back the veil and point you to your true identity. The sense of meaning that is to be found in that identity is not the uniqueness so prized by the world around us. Rather, the meaning is found in discovering that you are profoundly loved in that naked uniqueness of yours. It is this idea of your belovedness that raises the sail of your soul and allows you to catch the wind of the Spirit blowing through *Prototype*.

It is quite a journey once you set sail. You will find yourself traveling through the wilderness of obscurity and into the calling of mighty misfits. It is a journey that plunges into the

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cavernous depths of personal wounds, only to see those wounds transformed into wells of healing by the resurrected Christ. You will find yourself rejoicing in the embodied sacraments, as well as burning with love for the community that shares those sacraments with you.

What is most important is that the journey will end by calling you to be a witness, and the kind of witness that only you can be. That is what the world is longing for; that is why creation groans for the children of God to be revealed. Martin says it this way: “The world does not need heroes; the world does not need more messiah complexes. The world does not need Christians who want to ride in on a white horse to save the day. What the world needs are *witnesses*. Nothing more and nothing less.”

Prototype is a book that will leave you achy and hopeful; weepy and giddy. It will do that in the best possible way. It is an experience—a journey. You will feel more deeply rooted in the love of God and bursting forth with His love for others when you are done. *Prototype* is not a book that will change your mind. It is a book that will change your heart. I highly recommend it. ■

Jonathan Stone is the pastor of Discipleship and Evangelism at Westmore Church of God. He writes regularly at stonewritten.com.



CHURCH TREASURERS

Julian Robinson

Treasuring Our Treasurers

THE POSITION of local church treasurer (formerly clerk) has been part of the Church of God from its earliest beginnings. Our forefathers grasped the importance and necessity of keeping good records to preserve certain aspects of our history and heritage and to be accountable to the church and to God, particularly in a critical area of the ministry—finances.

A big part of the ministry of the church treasurer is the importance of his/her relationships with the congregation, the pastor, and area businesses and banks. In many ways, today's treasurer in a local Church of God fulfills the same purposes of openness and accountability for which Titus and the "brother" were chosen and sent to deliver the offering for the saints (2 Corinthians 8:18-21). Like those men, a local church treasurer must be someone who is cooperative and is trusted by others in the congregation to properly handle the sensitive and confidential matters that go along with their tasks. Imperative to the health of the church and the treasurer's effectiveness is his/her ability and willingness to work in harmony with the pastor's vision, the other leaders of the local church, and the multiplicity of church ministries at the local, state/regional, and international levels.

Today, there are more than 6,000 active local churches in the United States, each with

a treasurer who is fulfilling his/her duties and responsibilities in this vital role of ministry in the Church of God. These individuals who faithfully serve as their church treasurer are real "hidden treasures" with their special talents and expertise required for accurate record keeping, general accounting and bookkeeping, assisting with counting of monies, and being responsible for preparing and/or making bank deposits. Additionally, the treasurer labors in the preparation of reports—financial, membership, and others—as needed by the pastor and the local church. Perhaps the most important report completed routinely by the treasurer is the monthly denominational report. The data compiled by the treasurer on the monthly report regarding the ministry and activity of his/her local church is meticulously maintained at the state/regional and international offices and represent tabulated facts that serve as a basis for many important decisions. It has been said that reports are mirrors of accomplishments, revealers of failures, and predictors of future possibilities. Thus, reports should be recognized as a means to a spiritual end in that they allow others to rejoice with us in our successes and to assist us to determine how we can be more productive in our search for lost souls.

While report books are still available and provided for sending reports each month, the increasingly popular and preferred method of

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reporting is electronically online. During the past year, more than one thousand Church of God treasurers have reported electronically via the Internet. Some of the benefits of online reporting are: (1) only one report is completed because when the data is received at the International Offices, it is automatically downloaded daily to the state office; (2) timeliness and ease of reporting, since the treasurer does not need to fill in the same information each month that doesn't change; (3) less possibilities of inaccuracies; (4) saves money on postage and printing of checks; (5) immediate access to past reports and data; (6) less risks of reports and checks being lost through the mail system; (7) the advantage of ACH (automatic clearing house) bank deposits; and (8) being able to readily see certain information the International Offices has on file for the local church.

Electronic reporting via the Internet is available for all treasurers! All that is required is to visit the Church of God website, www.churchofgod.org, and click on the link "church

reporting" from which you will be prompted how to continue. Pastors and treasurers who have questions or need further assistance can contact (by phone or email) my office or others on the team of dedicated employees in the Department of Business and Records. I encourage treasurers who have the capability of electronic reporting to try it, because when you do, like many others already, you will want to continue reporting by this method.

Thank you, Church of God treasurers, for your faithful and dedicated service to your church and for using your talents and gifts for the Lord. You are appreciated! You are vital to the overall mission of the Church of God! You make a difference. Simply stated, treasurers . . . we treasure you! ■

Julian B. Robinson serves as Director of Business and Records for the Church of God.

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MONEY MATTERS

Continued from page 44

Stock investing is not for everyone, especially the faint of heart. One day the stock market can make you look like a genius and the very next day make you look like a dunce. The goal is to maintain a long-term view and hope that over an extended period of time you will have substantial gains from your investment in growing and prospering companies through your equity investment.

Happy investing!!! ■

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.



PASTORAL CARE
Bill Leonard

The Pastor's Sabbath

WHEW! How can I get all of the busyness of this day done? I am so tired, and I know I need to rest . . . but how? When? Where? Pastoring is taking up so much time, and it seems to be getting more and more demanding as time progresses. I am drowning in the sea of "church busyness"! What can I do?

Does this sound familiar? I am certain many pastors can relate to these very words and pressures of life. As your brother in Christ, let me encourage you to seek rest in Christ today.

Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (NIV).

Do you feel peace and comfort as you read these words of Christ? In the midst of this busy, preoccupied world we live in, it is imperative that we learn to rest in Christ our Lord! We must take the time to lean back in His arms as a newborn baby gently snuggles close to the breast of its mother, and allow Christ to breathe into us a freshness of life untainted by the world.

Luann and I have elderly neighbors living behind us. Although they both are in their senior years, they are still active and take care

of a large plot of land. They keep it beautiful! But, the precious nugget of knowledge that we have retrieved from them is this: they never get in a hurry. They work. They rest! And, they respect the Sunday Sabbath! By watching these two wise people, we have learned to enjoy each day. They have taught us the beauty and benefits of rest.

Senator Joe Lieberman referred to *the gift of rest*. He says he takes off his watch and turns off his cell phone; then, he has a wonderful experience of rest and worshiping God. Someone once said the Jews have kept the Sabbath. But in reality, I believe the Sabbath has kept the Jews!

Pastor, have you chosen to set aside a rest time each week? Is this time for just you, Christ, and your family—a time of no church work, no hurry, and no business phone calls; a time when you can reflect on God's blessings to you and your family and enjoy God's creation; a time of prayer and thanksgiving for what He has done? This is your time of rest and peace, and it is essential for your spiritual and physical well-being.

Notice how Christ gives us rest in two areas of our life. First, He gives us rest in times of extreme weariness, when we have gone as far as we can go. Second, He gives us rest in times of extreme pressure, when we are about to explode and just cannot take it anymore.

Please understand—I am speaking from 30 years of pastoral experience and more than 10 years of ministerial care nurturing.

But, in the midst of life's turmoil and pressure, here is the answer for you and me, pastor. Jesus says, "Come unto me. I will give you rest for your soul." Remember the tombstone symbols *R.I.P.* (rest in peace)? Here Jesus is saying, "Rest in My peace." Do you understand what He is saying? Christ wants us to have His rest—rest from our worries, stress, battles, and demands. He wants us to be peaceful, enjoying this life with Him right now! How? It is imperative that we learn simply to rest daily in Him.

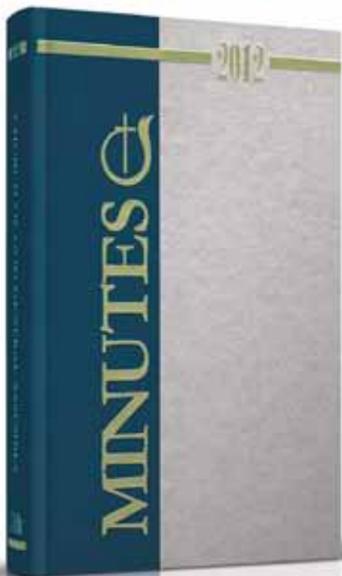
The Scriptures tell us in Mark 6:30-32 that the disciples enjoyed a time of fellowship and

discourse with Jesus. They had been so busy ministering to people that they had not even had time to eat. Jesus says to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (v. 31). W. E. Gladstone, the great Victorian statesman, once said, "I owe my life and vigor through a long and busy life, to the Sabbath Day." He had learned the importance of rest.

Jesus is the pastor's Sabbath. He is the *rest* we so desperately need; therefore, let us relax in His rest and watch miracles begin to take place. ■

Dr. Bill Leonard serves as Director of Pastoral Care in the Church of God Division of Care Ministries

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CHURCH OF GOD HIGHLIGHTS

Headlines taken from releases on Faith News between April 16 and August 1, 2013

Operation Compassion, Church of God Assists with Tornado Relief

Operation Compassion was one of the first agencies to respond in the wake of devastating tornadoes that struck Oklahoma in April. For weeks following the tragedy, relief came regularly in the form of trailers of food, clothing and water and crews showed up to lend assistance. In August, Church of God Business and Records reported over \$117,000 had been received for the Church of God Disaster Relief Fund, of which \$86,000 had been distributed to various agencies. A check for \$35,000 was received from an appliance company in response to the exemplary work of God's Pit Crew. Heartland Administrative Bishop M. Darrell Rice said, "God used this tragedy to demonstrate what it is to be the church, not just local churches, but the entire family of God." The relief effort will culminate October 19 with the dedication of two homes in Moore.



Covenant Team Presents Funds for Disaster Relief—Assistant General Overseer David Griffiths, right, presents a check to Heartland Region Overseer M. Darrell Rice while General Overseer Mark Williams looks on.



This photo is believed to have been taken at the time that National Overseer Carl M. Padgett, standing center with Bible, set in order the Church of God on Green Turtle Cay in 1913. The Reverend John A. Lowe, standing behind and to the left of Padgett, became the first pastor.

Oldest World Missions Congregation Turns 100

Missionary Carl M. Padgett established the Church of God on Green Turtle Cay, a small island in the Bahamas. Now the oldest continuing Church of God outside the United States, the local church was set in order on July 24, 1913. The first ministry of the Church of God outside the United States occurred when Bahamian Edmond S. Barr and his American-born wife, Rebecca, arrived in Nassau in November 1909. Robert M. and Ida Evans, along with Padgett, joined them the following January. Robert Evans and Edmond Barr reportedly visited Green Turtle Cay in 1911. Later appointed as national overseer, Carl M. Padgett returned to the tiny island in 1913 and set the church in order on July 24 with eight members. The congregation has

since adopted the name Miracle Church of God as a testimony to the miraculous way in which its current facility was purchased, furnished, and expanded.

Bishop Johnny T. Lowe has served as pastor for the past 19 years, during which time the congregation has grown significantly.

Church of God Responds to Supreme Court Ruling

In response to the United States Supreme Court ruling regarding the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a statement was adopted by the Church of God Executive Committee on June 26, 2013, reflecting the position of the denomination regarding the issue of marriage. The statement can be read in full by clicking on the following link: <http://www.faithnews.cc/?p=14976>.

Revised Edition of *You and Your Church* Released

Church of God General Overseer Mark L. Williams announced the release of a revised edition of *You and Your Church*, an in-depth overview of the Church of God. The book is designed for new members of the Church of God, as well as to reacquaint ministers and laity with the current structure of the church and the exciting challenges it faces in modern times. *You and Your Church* helps Church of God members discover who they are, what they believe, and how they can effectively fulfill the call and commission of Christ. It additionally serves as an informational resource and

program of instruction for those who desire to unite with the church in membership.

The back cover of the book states that *You and Your Church* seeks, "to acquaint you with the beliefs, organization, leadership, and purposes of the Church." *You and Your Church* was written by Dr. Michael L. Baker, administrative bishop for the Church of God in North Georgia. Baker wrote the first edition more than a decade ago when he was director of Communications for the Church of God. It was first revised in 2003.

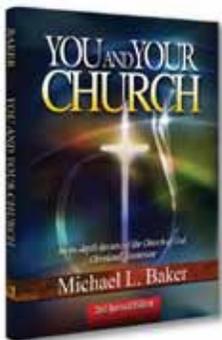
The book is available at www.pathwaybookstore.com.



Northeast view of the new communications building from Ocoee and Central Streets.

Lee University Breaks Ground on New Communication Arts Building

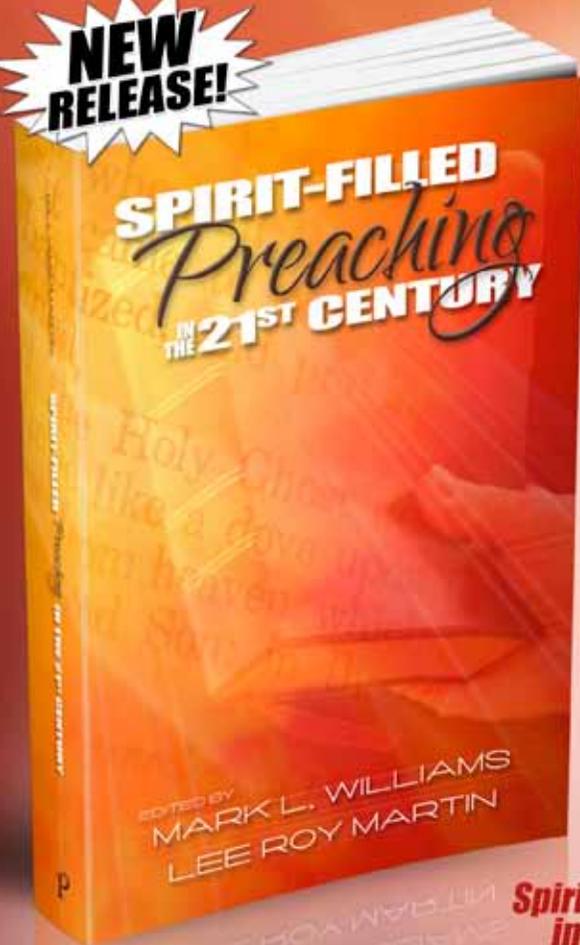
Lee University has begun construction on a new Communication Arts Building, which is projected to be in use by the start of Lee's fall semester in August of 2014. According to President Paul Conn, the design is a 360-degree view, with a main entrance off Church Street. The total project is slated to cost \$10 million, and will cover 40,000 square feet on two floors. The structure will feature a state-of-the-art "black box" theatre seating 200 for stage productions; a television studio and sound stage; a 120-seat film screening theatre; eight video editing suites; a student journalism lab; 22 faculty offices; classrooms of various sizes; and a computer lab. There will also be a new food service called Sandella's Flatbread Café.



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