



Perspectives

CREATING AN APOSTOLIC CULTURE



"None Saith, Restore"

Paul D. Mooney

"We sin when we fail to walk in holiness. We sin when we forsake the Apostles' doctrine. We sin when we marginalize the baptism of the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking in tongues."

It is hard to imagine that in the midst of a societal and spiritual breakdown no one saw restoration (the act of returning to something former) as a solution.

In Isaiah chapter 42, God's prophet, Isaiah, was anointed to broadcast the elements of a spiritual revolution. In summary, his message was that God, creator of heaven and earth, is the divine provider. And, although Israel was small, and perhaps in some ways insignificant as a nation, God gave them life, breath, and spiritual guidance in which to walk. He had made Israel unique in that they were separated by a specific calling "in righteousness" (v.6). They were kept by God's hand. They were given a covenant that was to be the ultimate light, even unto the Gentiles. The prophet desperately relayed God's message that the light was so powerful it could open blinded eyes, free prisoners and loose those who remained in the darkness of their houses bound by fear and uncertainty.

Isaiah prophesied that God would renew the people and let them experience new things, giving them knowledge of them even before they spring forth. He spoke of new songs and praises that would spread to the end of the earth and the mighty God reigning victorious, with all enemies defeated. The future was set for victory.

However, the prophet did not have only promises of provision and victory, he decried the shame and failure of idol worship. He described the alarming vulnerability of the spiritual culture among God's people. They had given up on the way of faith, independence and the supernatural plan of Jehovah. They were disobedient to the law, their hearts had hardened and they had sacrificed God's vision for the "present world."

Despite the desperate pleas of the prophet and the message of how a great victory and power could be received - the call to obedience and righteousness, the call for awakening fell on deaf ears. The masses were spiritually blind. They were out of touch with God's purposes and unable to imagine supernatural things that just "spring forth" (v. 9).

It was a strong rebuke and powerful command, "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see" (v. 18), but God's people were blinded by the love of their own ways. They could no longer see or understand what was possible, nor could they grasp that an awakening was even needed. The prophet is desperate to shake them into the reality of their calling and their purpose, but they choose blindness. The response comes in a painful lament, "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant?" (v. 19). How painful to the God of heaven, the God of all power for His people to choose darkness, to choose blindness, to choose not to hear, to choose silence. Perhaps this is the gross darkness Isaiah speaks of later in Chapter 60.

The depth of the problem that Isaiah was addressing came down to this central thing, and I believe we fight this same battle today. The issue was not God's unwillingness to step in or to intervene; there was a plan of great victory in place. Rather, the problem came when they were offered His hand, His blessing and His deliverance . . . And God's people rejected the overture and chose blindness and deafness. The prophet put it this way, "See-

ing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not" (v. 20).

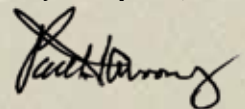
The shocking truth of their spiritual condition is revealed in one small phrase, "none saith, Restore" (v.22). Therein lies the breakdown. God's people had become weak, needlessly overcome by their enemies. They had become completely unaware of their ability to access the power to overcome the enemy. They were indifferent and neutralized by their desires to co-exist with their world. Thereby they sinned against God. And God released them to be robbed and spoiled (v. 24). Thus they stood, outside the will of God, detached from their role in God's great plan for eliminating darkness for the whole human race.

This Old Testament scenario stirs me. The three words, "none saith, Restore," pounds into my heart. No one was willing to step out and help make the "crooked things straight" (v. 16). There is a hastening darkness falling over our churches, our country and our world. We sin when we fail to walk in holiness. We sin when we forsake the Apostles' doctrine. We sin when we marginalize the baptism of the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking in tongues. We sin when we covet the world's endorsements and philosophies. This sinning is not just against ourselves or our churches, we must remember that it is against the Lord God Almighty that we have sinned (v. 24). Yet I believe He still stands ready to "spring up" new things, great revival, great victory if we only have faith enough to put our hand in His.

"None saith, Restore." Why? Were they altogether trapped in a prison from which they had no escape? No, we see from this chapter the very opposite. They were trapped in their own adaptations and their own choices. They were adopting false ideas, seeking the approval of the world and lusting after their friendship. It was not the right direction.

"Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). The trend toward worldliness among us must be fought against (including in the sweet church I am privileged to pastor). As leaders, we cannot choose to turn a blind eye toward our congregations, nor choose not to see areas where the world has encroached upon us. We cannot choose to block our ears so we do not hear the reports of slippage when it comes to our stand for holiness or separation from the world. He has great things in store for us if we are faithful, if we are obedient, if we are committed to the calling *in righteousness*. We will make a choice. There is no neutral. We will choose victory or defeat, light or darkness. We will walk in His Spirit or we will lead our congregations into profound bondage of powerlessness and serve patronage to the secular culture.

The Holy Ghost-birthed Church of the Upper Room cannot be defeated. Even in these stressful and stormy times we must never yield. Preach restoration. Preach us back to the Upper Room. Shout out the Word! See! Be restored! "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit" (Psalm 51:12).



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♦To promote revival and growth among Apostolic churches and pastors by encouraging unity and cooperation among those of like faith and by providing a forum for the sharing of new ideas, ministries and programs.

♦To report on those trends and events which directly affect the work of the church.

♦To promote and enhance the ongoing ministry of Indiana Bible College.

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FEATURE: CREATING AN APOSTOLIC CULTURE -AARON SOTO


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MINISTERING to the EMOTIONALLY & MENTALLY CHALLENGED

Interviews by Brittney Ragan



Note: The opinions on this page are entirely those of the individual and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Indiana Bible College.



Edward Sermon, Billings, MT -- Every individual battling a mental or emotional challenge is unique, and there is no simple procedure that covers every situation. If a distraction occurs, we have ushers and other leaders that have the authority to handle the situation. This may involve sitting with the individual, or inviting them to step outside the sanctuary where they can talk freely.

Our goal is to set up a Bible study. At times, the personal interaction has been more beneficial to certain individuals than a church service. Sadly, there have been those rare occasions when we have had to say that we don't have the resources or ministry to handle certain challenges. Such was the case with a mother who wanted her child to go to Sunday school, even though attendance was only possible with an aide that supervised the child at all times.

Sometimes the spiritual well-being and safety of a group has to be chosen over an individual. Prayer and adequate time should be given to explore all options. We also have partnered with a local biblical counseling firm that we refer people to when it is deemed helpful.



Randall Yeoman, Hazel Green, AL

-- No matter how "different" people are, they always have a common need for love. The church shouldn't isolate or stigmatize people but instead welcome them and create an environment for them to feel safe in. They get enough cruelty from the world. These individuals are looking for someone to treat them like a person, not a damaged person, just

a person.

We shouldn't be disappointed, afraid or embarrassed about having the mentally ill as part of our congregation. Like everyone else, they are looking for something, and if they choose your church . . . be excited! Reach out to them. The peace of Christ may be the only peace they will ever know. If they get "disruptive," they can often be "guided" back to acceptable behavior. My wife and I have been foster parents for nearly 20 years.

For the past 10 years, we have been a Level 3 therapeutic foster home, which means that we take in the mentally ill. If they live in our home, they go to church. Many of our "special" kids have repented, been baptized and received the Holy Ghost. In one particular instance, we took in a young lady who had been severely abused, which caused her to be depressed and completely withdrawn. My family and church worked with her, loved her and accepted her. We witnessed this young lady transform from someone who slept in her clothes, refused to shower and was totally withdrawn into an outgoing, friendly and Holy Ghost-filled Apostolic young lady! This is a young lady that most people would have thrown away because she had emotional issues. Are these "special" people worth your burden and message? Absolutely!



Leslie O'Dell, Springfield, MA -- Jesus' ministry was all about souls, and some had troubled minds. The man of the Gadarenes was a man that the scripture says "neither could any man tame him." After the troubled man was with Jesus, he was "in his right mind." God is able to help and heal individuals with mental and emotional needs. A young man with mental and physical challenges caused by

a bullet in the skull attended a New England conference. He began seeking for the Holy Ghost, and God filled him with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. He has since written a play about his life's story. A young teenage boy that has been attending our church since birth has had some emotional struggles. I have witnessed God continuing to touch and bring healing in this boy's life. In a recent move of God at the altar, God was using him to pray for specific needs in individual lives. Adults gave testimonies after the service that they were ministered to by this boy's prayers.



Lawrence Exum, American Canyon, CA --

Jesus did not come to minister to those that were not sick and in no need of a physician. It was part of Jesus' mission to heal those in need. He exemplified this numerous times in the Gospels by healing multitudes of people. Not all of the healings that Jesus performed were *physical*, but some were *emotional* and *mental* as well. For instance, when Jesus healed the demoniac, he was later found "... sitting, clothed, and *in his right mind*." If we are going to minister to all the needs of people

as Jesus said, then we must not neglect the mentally and emotionally ill. How a pastor treats the mentally sick will filter down to the rest of the congregation. That said, a pastor is foremost obligated to protect his congregation. People who are disruptive (children and adults alike) should be removed from the general services. A parent should remove a child and an usher should remove an adult as discreetly as possible. Alternative ways of reaching the mentally ill should be explored.



Steven Beardsley, Newark, DE -- When ministering to the mentally ill, the first thing is knowing if you are dealing with a physical illness or something with a spiritual element. If the illness is physical, one must understand if the illness is chronic, due to a chemical imbalance, or situational. Secondly, it's important to note what types of behaviors are present. Is the person a danger to anyone, or just "different" and requires accommodation? If the individual is a harm to others, then of course that person

needs to be removed. If they are just different, let them be different. If the mentally ill or emotionally distressed are not welcome in our services, then where are they welcome? God's sovereignty in dealing with the mentally ill is no different than dealing with someone with a broken body. Thirdly, it's important to note that each person needs to be dealt with individually to find a solution that gives them access to the church community, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God.

CREATING AN APOSTOLIC CULTURE

Appleton, WI

"If we will have Apostolic priorities, Apostolic culture, and an Apostolic atmosphere, we will have Apostolic results," said Pastor Aaron Soto of Apostolic Truth Church, a multi-campus church in Appleton, Wisconsin. "The culture is our responsibility; the results are God's responsibility."

The attendance of Apostolic Truth Church (ATC) has increased 30% in the last four years and was on track to increase an additional 11% in 2015. "While every church appreciates increase we recognize that some of our increase was from transfers; we do not consider transfer increase as church growth," Pastor Soto said.

Apostolic Truth Church currently averages 550 attendees. Pastor Soto reports that 67% of their members are committed to active ministry. Currently, 53 Bible studies are underway in their community. ATC has a very strong student ministry program with 12 P7 Bible studies being taught in their area schools and two Campus Ministry Bible studies.

The Harvest Mentality

"We have a foundational understanding that God is sending the harvest through our church," explained Pastor Soto. "The key is rightly relating to the harvest that God is sending to our services. Our church services are our greatest outreach tool. We want to be careful that our services are engaging and guest-centric. Experience has taught us that if we haven't made a meaningful connection with guests before they leave the church service, visitor follow-up strategies are very ineffective. We understand that there are relation-minded guests, and guests who want to keep a low profile and not be targeted or give out their personal information. We have two distinct plans to reach both kinds of guests."

"Our church family is very much invested in the invitational approach of evangelism. The woman at the well said, 'Come see a man.' She didn't know a lot of theology, but she invited someone."

"Much of our outreach involves highlighting a new sermon series that we're launching or special services that we're having. We market and brand our sermon series and special events. For instance, I preached a series called, 'Weapons of Mass Destruction.' We had teams hanging door hangers with the sermon series branding and series topics on them. We also printed business cards with the same branding for our members to use for personal invites."

Apostolic Excellence

ATC and its staff work really hard at having a spirit of excellence in church services, according to Pastor Soto. "We have a first impression pastor who oversees all the departments which impact the five senses of the guest," he explained. "Our ushers and greeters are highly trained, our nursery is

safe with a check-in program, and our facilities and campus are well cared for. Our announcements, media and handouts are carefully crafted with the guest in mind. In fact, many Apostolic churches love 'in your face' volume and blaring monitors, but we do not run our audio for our sub-cultural preferences; we train our technicians to run sound for guests. Frankly, there are no small things in first impressions. I could preach a home run message, but if there's no toilet paper in the bathroom stall, you tell me what kind of an experience the guest had!"

Apostolic Growth

Pastor Soto has a unique perspective on church growth. "Our primary focus is not on numerical growth but on church health. Not all growth is healthy; cancer is an example of unhealthy growth. Some churches have experienced numerical growth that overwhelmed their Apostolic culture. We want to make quality decisions that will bring about health in the body. Numerical growth will be a bi-product of a spiritually healthy congregation."

"A key to growing a church is knowing how to consolidate your 'Kingdom wins' through assimilation. It's one thing to have 30 people receive the Holy Ghost on a weekend. It's another thing to set those people on a clear path of assimilation into the body of Christ."

"At ATC, our core objective is that people will come to KNOW Jesus Christ, GROW in Jesus Christ, and ultimately SHOW the love of Jesus Christ to their world. KNOW, GROW, SHOW is our assimilation plan. For a guest, the KNOW step is having them say yes to a home Bible study. My wife, Heather, and I personally meet guests in the hospitality suite after services; we get a lot of Bible studies from that encounter."

"The GROW step is attending our Firm Foundations class. I personally teach this class every Sunday morning after we serve them a continental breakfast. This class begins with the disciplines of being a Christian and concludes with doctrine."

"The SHOW step is our Ministry Training class. We help attenders understand the servant leadership model, soul winning, Bible study teaching and our core ministry values. We help them discover their ministry SHAPE from Rick Warren's program. The student's training culminates with a personal meeting with me where he or she will say, 'Pastor, these are my spiritual gifts; this is my

heart, my passion, my personality, my education, and my life experiences.' We collaborate to pair them in a ministry within our local congregation."

"Revival is not just having good services and people receiving the Holy Ghost. Revival is also knowing how to retain the harvest that God is sending through our churches and then investing them in the harvest field."

Apostolic Priorities

Pastor Soto believes a revival pastor needs to make a priority of investing himself in prayer and having a 'right now' Word for the church. "He needs to spend most of his time with his highest



Pastor Soto preaches (above) and baptizes a little boy.

level of leaders,” explained Bro. Soto. “If a pastor is going to have a sustainable plan, he needs to be intentional about his life. Healthy leaders are very intentional about high productivity, normal productivity, and then no productivity: vacation! We are very intentional about this with our entire church.” High productivity seasons are during the start of school, the mid-fall, and the first quarter of the year. “We also spend times revisiting our goals and realigning ourselves to them. And we encourage our leaders to make individual goals for their families and personal relationship with God.”

Apostolic Organization

Pastor Soto has a very strong pastoral team. “I believe in sharing real-world authority and responsibility with others,” he said. “We have an outreach pastor, a youth pastor, an education pastor, a family pastor, a first impressions pastor, and a church ministries pastor. All of these pastors are over various departments; they develop leaders and train within their departments.

“We have Grow Group leaders or under-shepherds who minister to and schedule monthly fellowship groups for five different age demographics in our church family. We also have weekly Grow Groups that happen in many different settings for women, men, teens and hyphen age members.”

Pastor Soto also promotes servant leadership strongly. “In Mathew 10, Jesus differentiates between secular leadership and servant leadership. He said, ‘The greatest among you shall be the servant.’ Our flow chart is inverted; I am on the bottom of our church structure. It is my responsibility to provide support and stability to the church. I directly serve our pastoral staff. Our pastoral staff serves our department heads. Our department heads serve our ministries. Our ministries serve our congregation. Our congregation is reaching the lost, the harvest. If our church can be servant leaders with a spirit of excellence, we will accomplish the ministry of reconciliation that God has called the church to.”

Apostolic Administration

Pastor Soto holds a staff meeting every weekday except Friday. “We discuss every guest and what our follow-up strategy is going to be with them,” he said. “We go six weeks out in our calendar and discuss all events. We share our daily targets and goals for the day. We go over our whiteboard with logistical needs, people in the hospital and people we need to make connections with. We also do a tremendous amount of event planning in our meetings, although most of our project managing happens on a project management website called Basecamp.

“After we’ve had our staff meetings, we finish with prayer. We take time to call out the name of every staff member and their wives and children. We have a list of special needs written on the whiteboard. Together we pray over all of those needs. Yes, we need to take care of business and deal with logistical challenges, but we also need to pray and be spiritually minded about the work we are doing. We call this Apostolic Administration.

“I believe a team responds to a culture of expectation. I hold six-month staff reviews with our team members. The first part of that meeting is my review of that staff member, the second half of the meeting is the staff member review of me as their leader. The meeting allows me to encourage a culture of expectation, to appreciate them, to encourage them and to give meaningful insights and direction to advance their ministry. This time also gives me feedback about how I can better serve them.”

The Multi-Campus Church

“One of the ATC highlights in recent history is planting the Life Point Campus on the west side of the Fox Valley area,” said Pastor Soto. “We identified approximately 30 ATC attenders who lived in the area and asked for their buy-in to start a new campus. We started as a group Bible study that was informal and relational. In the beginning we taught basic Christians disciplines and built a trusting relationship that would eventually be strong enough to carry the load of a doctrinal conversation. After several months, we transitioned into a worship service. Three and a half years later we had 130 attenders. The first waves of attenders are now the core leaders of the church. I preach the 2 p.m. service on Sundays and the Tuesday mid-week service.

“We are currently planting a Hispanic church in our community as well. We spent last summer holding celebrations in the community designed for our Hispanic population.”

Concluding Remarks

When asked for any final thoughts, Pastor Soto said, “Don’t be afraid to be an original. I think that God wants our churches to be innovative and creative. We don’t always have to preach the newest book on the market or jump into the latest church growth fad. Utilize the Apostolic genius that God has placed in you to be an original in your community. Present God’s Word in such a way that people are able to understand it, embrace it and make right choices with it.

“Finally, treasure the harvest that God is sending through your church. Learn to rightly relate with that harvest. Build a bridge that takes a person all the way to maturity in God and be intentional about that. I think that’s the kind of church that God will bless.”



The Soto family, Appleton, WI



Sanctuary (top photo) and exterior of Apostolic Truth Church

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Why It's Important to Deliver a Sermon Without Relying on Notes

By Carey Nieuwhof, pastor of Connexus Church, Toronto, Canada

Why should you learn to speak without being dependent on notes? Because it will make you far more effective. Here are six good reasons to drop your notes:

1. *Your favorite communicators don't use notes.* Why? Because the best rarely, if ever, do. People connect better with speakers who speak without notes.
2. *You seem far more sincere and authentic when you don't use notes.* This isn't a good thing. It's just a true thing. When you read a speech or rely heavily on your notes, people think it's coming from your head, not your heart. Or worse, they think it's a series of points you're supposed to believe but don't. Freeing yourself up from notes creates a much more believable message.
3. *You will be far more natural.* There's a 'reading voice' and a 'speaking voice' people have. It takes exceptional skill to read in a way that sounds authentic, conversational and natural. Let's be honest. Almost none of us do it well. When you speak without using notes, you will be far more conversational, engaging and natural. And your body language will be 100 percent better.
4. *You can make eye contact.* That's just huge. It's annoying when people don't look you in the eye when they talk to you. It's completely disengaging when a public speaker doesn't.
5. *You will read the room better.* So much of communication is nonverbal. While you can't always see the audience when you talk (in the case of pre-recorded video or dark house lights), when you can, it's invaluable. You can see which parts of your talk are resonating and which aren't. You can see who's leaning forward and who's falling asleep. It can help you track how you're connecting. And best yet, you can adjust.
6. *You'll own your material more deeply.* Learning your talk forces you to digest it, internalize and own it. As a result, your talk will be more compelling and authoritative.



Not God's Plan!

By Stephen Judd, TCM President



Stephen Judd
www.mansionkids.org

Tupelo Children's Mansion is not God's plan for children. Sounds shocking, but it is true. God never intended for parents to abuse and abandon their children. He intended that children would be loved, cherished, nurtured and raised to follow Him. But we humans—we don't always follow God's plan. So He calls others to step in and take over the responsibilities abandoned by us.

That is what TCM does; we step in and take the place of parents. We take in children who are bruised, beaten and covered with cigarette burns . . . children who were kept in dog cages, traded for drugs, exploited sexually and half starved.

We are, quite literally, the hands, feet and voice of freedom for these children.

Tanner was 10. He loved crawfish, sweet tea, his mom and his baby brother. He loved to play baseball. He loved life.

Then the unthinkable happened. His precious baby brother died in a car wreck, and his mother died the next week. In just seven days, his world crumbled.

When Tanner arrived at the Mansion, he was a broken-hearted child. But he is beginning to make a home at TCM. Slowly . . . for pain takes time to heal.

Recently, Tanner spoke about his mother for the first time. One of the female staff members walked by, and he said wistfully, "She smells like my mommy, I miss her so much."

Tanner was able to go to youth camp a few days ago. And when his housefather unloaded his bags at the campground, Tanner said, "You ARE coming back to get me, right?" The housefather was able to reassure him that he was indeed ALWAYS going to come get him when he needed him.

These little ones—they have such fears. Life has robbed them of even the smallest of securities.

And while we do have licensed counselors to help with the trauma and doctors to help with the physical needs, I am so happy to report that the Great Physician—the Wonderful Counselor—came to live in Tanner's heart at youth camp, when he was filled with the gift of the Holy Ghost.

This is what makes TCM unique among children's homes. We do not merely meet their physical, mental and emotional needs. Because we are Apostolic in doctrine and experience, we are able to introduce them to Jesus, who meets their soul need.

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Tanner received the Holy Ghost at a recent youth camp.

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REACHING OUT TO MEN

RUFUS PARKER
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Written by Christina Li



Bro. Rufus Parker, author
La Crosse, Wis.

Bro. Rufus Parker, tell us a little about yourself and your ministry.

After 28 years of military service, I retired from the U.S. Army in 1998, with the rank of Command Sergeant Major. I am an ordained minister with the United Pentecostal Church International. I have

authored six books: *Developing the Man in the Mirror*; *A Reflection of the Man in the Mirror*; *If God Be For Us, Who Can Be Against Us?*; *According to the Pattern*; *Today's Morsel*; and *Building Blocks To Manhood*. My wife and I served as missionaries from 1996 until 2009, ministering to the Asia Military Ministries and Japan. We are now living in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where we pastor Calvary Apostolic Church, and I serve as presbyter in the Wisconsin District.

Churches often struggle to attract men into the church. What can a church do to appeal to men today?

One of the things I believe that can help is to offer more events and activities that get men outdoors, as well as events that men enjoy. Most men prefer to be outside working, playing, fishing, golfing, getting dirty, eating and building things, and having these as a part of our church activities affords men the opportunity for fellowship and interaction with each other in settings they are most comfortable in.

What has worked best in your church to reach men with truth?

I'm still working on this area as the enemy seems to have so many men blinded to the truth. However, when I assumed the pastorate here, I started what I call "Guys G.R.O.W." (Guys Getting Real On Weekends). The overall objective of these times is to teach men and young boys the truth of God's Word and to inspire them to become the men that God has made them to be based on that truth.

Society today often lacks good male role models, with many single parent homes

lacking father figures. Why is this and how can the church help?

Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10). To be honest, our young boys aren't being taught how to be men at the earliest stage in life anymore, and society has devalued the role of the father and male in the home. Another problem is that society has made the church out to be the enemy against people instead of Satan himself. I think it will take more one-on-one mentoring and training to turn this around. The church must get back to the basics of teaching character in Sunday school classes, youth groups, men's conferences, and other spiritual gatherings. The church must not be afraid to preach and teach truth if the cycle is going to be broken and godly fathers and role models are going to be developed.

Churches also struggle to retain men once they have won them to Christ. How can we best retain and disciple men?

When I was first saved, my pastor, Bro. Darryl Rash, would hold up his Bible every service toward me and say, "Bro. Rufus, you have to love this more than anything else in the world." I believed him because he lived it before me. We also had quarterly men's gatherings that brought men together for a time of teaching and fellowship. What I find today, in most men's gatherings and conferences that I have attended, is more preaching than teaching. And these times are not geared toward showing our young boys and men how to be strong men of God. In these settings, where we have only men, the subject matter has to be those that cause a man to examine himself and allow him to see if he is measuring up to God's requirement for him as a man. I also believe that if we can get men to see who they really are, how important they are to themselves, to their family and to their church, we will see many of them remain in the church.

In your book, *Building Blocks to Manhood*, you

address some of the key elements needed to develop strong men for Christ. What are some of these important keys?

There are so many men hurting today because of poor choices, poor decisions and mistakes. Many of them now feel trapped and see no way out of their situations. The purpose of the book is to help them examine themselves to see if they are aligning themselves with the Word of God, as it is the blueprint for being a man and overcoming wrong. I want them to see that through scripture and by applying the things that are written in the Bible, they can be overcomers. Jesus is our example of what a true man must be. There is forgiveness when a man has done wrong things, when he truly repents and becomes a doer of the Word. Some of

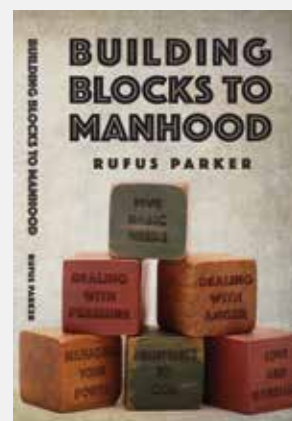
the most important elements I believe that are needed to develop men into strong men for God are: candor, commitment, competence, courage, wisdom, sexual purity, compassion, obeying truth, and getting dominion over anger and oneself. When a man understands these things and knows how to apply them to his life, he stands a better chance of becoming the man that God wants him to become.

What additional resources would you recommend if a church desires to launch a successful men's ministry?

There are many resources available for pastors today. Many of these can be found in bookstores and online. They just have to read through them and see what will meet their need in helping them to launch a men's ministry. They may also want to contact our UPCI Men's Ministry Department for suggested resources.

How do we order your book and what is the cost?

Building Blocks to Manhood can be ordered at: <https://squareup.com/market/rufusparkerministries>. It can also be ordered through Pentecostal Publishing House. And it is available at most major online bookstores as an eBook.



For information about these events, call the event coordinator. If you would like your event on this list, call (800) 8000-AIS. IBC Perspectives does not endorse any seminar or conference listed. This page is provided simply as a service to the greater Apostolic community.

apostolic alendar 2016

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	SPEAKERS	CONTACT / INFO
JULY 27-29	Mile High Conference 2016 Defending the Apostolic faith, family and future.	Calvary Apostolic Church Of Denver, 5900 E. Yale Ave. Denver, CO 80222	J.H. Osborne, Joel McCoy, Marney Turpin, Sean Libby and Calvin Jean	(303) 758-5900 www.cacdenver.org DEH2@comcast.net
AUG 17-19	The Apostolic Conference A conference designed for the North American Missionary and Church Planter.	Parkway Pentecostal Church, 601 Reunion Parkway, Madison, MS 39110. Host Pastors: Jerry and Jason Dillon	J.W. Dillon, Art Wilson, David Shatwell, Chester Wright, Raymond Woodward and Mark Morgan	(601) 853-2607 www.parkwaychurch.net ParkwayChurch.net/NAMRegistration
AUG 18-19	Investing in Futures A conference for those who invest in children. Educating, encouraging and equipping children's ministry workers.	Apostolic Sanctuary 1501 John Deere Pkwy Silvis, IL 61282 Host: Gary Randol	Donnie Sheerin, Brian Kinsey, Tim Gaddy	For more info: visit invest-in-futures.com (309) 792-0414
SEPT. 8-9	Mid-America Renewal Conference (MARC) Indianapolis, Indiana - A Power Packed Preaching Conference in the Heart of the Midwest.	Calvary Tabernacle 902 Fletcher Ave. Indianapolis, IN Host: Paul D. Mooney	To be announced	ibc@apostolic.edu www.go2ibc.com or call (317) 262-4030 or (317) 554-8069
SEPT 27-30	92nd Annual UPCI General Conference Don't miss it!	Indiana Convention Ctr. 100 S. Capitol Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46225	Ashley Leppo, Tes Stewart, Bruce Howell, Aaron Bounds, Art Hodges, Jerry Jones, Chad Douglas & David Bernard	Online registration, hotel reservations and exhibit registration available at www.upcigc.com
OCT 2016	Apostolic Doctrine Conference Strengthening Our Doctrinal Foundation	New Life Fellowship 7849 Wabash Avenue Terre Haute, IN 47803	To be announced	For more info: www.newlifeterrehaute.com or 812-877-9348
NOV 2-5	West Coast Conference - Fresno, CA 33rd Annual Fresno Meeting	Fresno Convention Center, 848 M Street, Fresno, CA	Paul Bertram, Larry Montano, Jess Parker, Sam Ham, O.C. Marler, Homer Looper and David Villegas	For more information call: (559) 225-1622 www.truthtabfresno.org
JAN 27	Indiana Bible College LIVE RECORDING Under the direction of Lindel M. Anderson, Dean of Music	Calvary Tabernacle 902 Fletcher Ave. Indianapolis, IN Host: Paul D. Mooney	Paul Mooney, Rob Rodenbush, Lindel Anderson, IBC Choir, IBC Chorale, IBC Praise, others	ibc@apostolic.edu www.go2ibc.com or call (317) 262-4030 or (317) 554-8069
FEB 2017	WinterFire 2017 WinterFire's focus is ministering to those in ministry. Our objective is that every member of your team will leave renewed and refreshed.	First Cathedral 1151 Blue Hills Ave. Bloomfield, CT 06002	To be announced	For more info: visit www.winterfire.org or visit Twitter: winterfire-conf or Facebook/Instagram: winterfireconf
FEB 6-15	Israel Holyland Tour An Apostolic 10-day Biblical tour of Israel. Apostolic, Academic, Anointed.	Israel Hosted by: David J. Sagil, Director of Ministry of Jewish Relations	David Bernard and Steve Cannon	For more info: contact David Sagil, 773-617-9550, email djsagil@sbcglobal.net or visit mjr.world
MARCH 2017	Passing the Mantle 2017 PTM exists to equip ministers and ministry teams with spiritual tools to better reach their communities for the Lord. Our goal is to make each attendee more effective in their place of ministry.	Bartlett United Pentecostal Church 270 E. Schick Road Bartlett, IL 60103	To be announced	For more info: visit www.passingthementle.org or call 630-837-9800
MARCH 10	Indiana Bible College All Night Worship Event Under the direction of Lindel M. Anderson, Dean of Music	Calvary Tabernacle 902 Fletcher Ave. Indianapolis, IN Host: Paul D. Mooney	Paul Mooney, Rob Rodenbush, Lindel Anderson, IBC Choir, IBC Chorale, IBC Praise, others	ibc@apostolic.edu www.go2ibc.com or call (317) 262-4030 or (317) 554-8069
MAY 2017	Impartation Conference Day and evening services are open for everyone; these services are full of powerful worship including singing and inspired preaching from anointed men of God.	Praise Tabernacle 2121 13th Avenue South Great Falls, MT 59405	To be announced	For more info: visit www.praisetabernaclegtf.com or email: praisetabernaclegtf@yahoo.com (406) 268-1780
MAY 2017	Ministers Only Book Rendezvous - Grand Rapids, MI No pre-registration required. Just show up! Enjoy the newly expanded Baker Book House. No business, no agenda. Just books, sharing and fellowship.	Grand Rapids, MI	Hosts: Paul D. Mooney and O.C. Marler	For more info: contact LaDusta Brown at labwn@aol.com or 317-262-4030
JUNE 2017	Power Conference 2017 Services begin at 7:30 p.m. nightly. Day sessions at 10 a.m. Thursday and Friday morning.	To be announced	To be announced	For more info: contact Josh Hodum @ 662-872-9999 or John Hodum @ 931-332-3926

Church Today: The Intimidation Factor



Robert L. Rodenbush

Church Today

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The Intimidation Factor

Kimberley Strassel's new book, *The Intimidation Game*, documents how our First Amendment right of free speech is being infringed upon. The *Wall Street Journal* columnist and author states that while liberals claim to be open-minded and tolerant of free speech, we are learning that this is simply not the case. Strassel gives many examples of instances where bullying and intimidation has beaten back our right to free speech. Well-funded groups go after people who don't think or behave in a "politically correct" or "socially correct" manner.

Today, business owners, educators and politicians feel that they must weigh every decision they make, every policy they wish to enact, and every position they take against the backlash of a liberal machine that stands at the ready to vilify any stance that has a basis in Judeo Christian morality. The cultural war is not really just being fought with the court system or with legislation; it is being fought in the hearts and minds of each of us.

Whether morality wins in the courtroom is irrelevant, if Satan can get people to silence themselves to avoid media or social harassment and an onslaught of bad press. Kids go to school and are mocked if they stand up against the LGBTQ agenda, they are bullied for being anti-abortion, and attacked for wanting a political candidate that is "too Christian."

Sure, we are told to go ahead, exercise our First Amendment rights, stand up for what we believe, but when the cost is so great, when the pressure so intense, there are fewer and fewer that are able to muster the courage or the resources to do so.

Sadly, I fear we are facing a similar intimidation factor in the church. Apostolics who stand for Oneness doctrine, holiness and separation from the world are not yet being legislated or otherwise forced out of their positions of influence, but there is an unprecedented level of bullying, harassment and intimidation that is taking place. Too often we hear of people leaving the church or changing churches only to bash what they left behind. Those who stand up for Apostolic distinctions are labeled as dogmatic, legalistic, negative or just simply out of touch.

The message of inclusiveness seems to include only those who have rejected the old paths. The intimidation leads some to silence. Holiness is harassed, morality is mocked, standards are shamed - and those who believe it, preach it and live it are paying an ever-increasing high price.



Bobby Killmon

Theology

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Doesn't John 1:1 show a close relationship between the persons of the trinity? I've heard the Greek word *with* is "pros" and shows clearly two things facing each other.

Well, no. This is simply about God and the Word, or plan of the Son, that would be made flesh. I will point out also there are not three persons or even three things represented here. There are two some-things. This fact demonstrates the only way to see a trinity here is by coming to the text with a preconceived notion to find a trinity. Further, the normal Greek word for spatial or literal "face to face" encounters is not "pros" but instead "para." So even the language used points this out as well.

Further, one must remember that wisdom is personified as a woman "with" God helping in creation (Prov. 8). Does that mean there's an eternal daughter? This is called personification and is a normal biblical literary device. The OT and NT writers personify many things. In Isaiah 55:12, as well as other places, Isaiah personifies creation which is just like Paul in Rom. 8:19ff. Too many cities to mention in the Bible are personified, as well as sin (Gen. 4:7; John 8:34; Rom. 5:21, 6:16), Abel's blood crying out (Gen. 4:10), the Red Sea (Ps. 77:16), and, of course, God's wisdom (Prov. 1 and 8). The point is John 1 is simply reflecting known normal OT and NT use of language. It is not meant to be speaking of literally facing another person.

The point is the above verses demonstrate personification is a common biblical literary device. The only way to see a trinity is to do the following things:

1. Dismiss the OT and NT use of this type of language.
2. Act like the NT writers were not Jewish and steeped in this understanding.
3. Then try to "read in" a theology that didn't come around until about 90 years after the Apostles.
4. Then use this later development of man's ideas to dismiss the total revelation of Scripture.

So, how should we interpret John 1 and other uses of personification language? Should we deny normal usage of Hebrew and Greek language? Require an interpretation that would be foreign to the OT as well as Jesus and the Apostles? Then demand as a statement of the "only orthodox" or correct position of interpreting these verses be based on a theology that wasn't even around at the time of the NT church?

I'll side with the OT, the Apostles, Jesus, and even the first century Church over traditions of men that resulted from mixing Greek philosophy with the Bible to come up with something that denies the truth of Scripture.



T. W. Massengale

Church Growth

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"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" James 2:17.

I truly wish that church growth would happen by simply praying and waiting upon God. While faith can accomplish anything (Mark 11:22-24), the clear commandment of Christ is to carry the gospel into all the world (Acts 1:8). When we do our part, God does His (Psalm 126:6). If you want your church to grow, you must first pray and then take decisive action, trusting that God wants souls saved even more than you do.

A good example of this paradigm is Nehemiah. He first prayed, then answered

the King about his desire to rebuild the walls (Neh. 2:4-5). Later, when faced with opposition from Sanballat and Tobiah, he again prayed and then posted guards to meet the threat (Neh. 4:9). First is prayer, then action.

Two important truths here. First, prayer is not just important; it's essential. Prayer builds faith. Prayer increases confidence. Prayer brings the supernatural into your plans. So if you want to grow, I suggest you launch a targeted prayer ministry. Target a specific area of your city. Target specific evangelism ministries. Target your God-called soul winners. Target specific unsaved people. God rarely answers general prayers (*God save souls!*); instead He answers specific prayers (*God save Mike Smith!*). When a church has a substantial percentage of its members praying and fasting for souls, it changes the

very nature of the church and revival is the natural result.

Secondly, a plan of action is essential. Every church needs a clear strategy for church health and growth. They also need the leadership commitment necessary to implement that strategy. Growing churches almost always grow because they are following an intentional strategy to reach more people: lots of special events to attract first-time visitors, a well-organized guest follow-up ministry, an emphasis upon home Bible studies, training saints in the art of personal evangelism and witnessing, motivating people to witness on a regular basis, a strong small-group ministry which includes singles, youth, bus ministry, seniors and more. Faith alone will not build a church, so put some legs on your faith.



NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS



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OUR SEMINARS

THURSDAY

ROOM 123

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

PASTORING IN A RURAL AREA | CURTIS HOWARD

10:40 AM – 11:40 AM

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN EVANGELIST | TIM GREENE

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

BREAKING INTO PRISONS | MICHAEL RICKENBAKER

4:40 PM – 5:40 PM

PREMIER CALLING OF CHURCH PLANTING | DAVID MCGOVERN

FRIDAY

ROOM 123

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED A DAUGHTER WORK | CARL MCLAUGHLIN

10:40 AM – 11:40 AM

OVERCOMING CHURCH GROWTH BARRIERS | SCOTT SISTRUNK

OUR MINISTRIES



CHURCH PLANTERS RENEWAL | CPRLIVE.FAITH



CHURCH IN A DAY | CHURCHINADAY.FAITH



CHURCH PLANTING SOLUTIONS | LAUNCHACHURCH.FAITH



UPCI EVANGELIST | EVANGELISTUPCI.FAITH



METRO MISSIONS | METROMISSIONS.FAITH



THE NEXT ONE

NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS SERVICE 2016



CHURCH IN A DAY

The Indiana District is building a Church in a Day on Thursday and Friday of General Conference at the corner of Valley Brook Drive & Buck Creek Road in Cumberland, Indiana. Stop by the North American Missions booth to see the live feed. The offering received this year will go to the Church in a Day program. A 1.5 million dollar offering would allow us to fully fund Church in a Day projects and create a self-sustaining program.



NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS SERVICE

UPCI General Conference 2016
7:00PM Thursday, September 29
Indiana Convention Center | Indianapolis, IN
Speaker : Art Hodges

northamericanmissions.faith

TEXT THE WORD NEXT TO 91999 TO GIVE.





Carol Clemans

Spiritual Growth

carol@carolclemans.org

Get Rid of Toxic Thoughts!

Toxic thoughts destroy the physical brain and affect the body, soul and spirit. The main weapon of Satan is planting toxic thoughts into the hearts and minds of people. Through the power of the Holy Ghost and God's Word we can defeat Satan! The devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness with negative words and Jesus rebuked him by quoting scripture, "Thus it is written!" We have the same weapon of warfare. We can have the mind of Christ through God's Word!

In Ephesians 4:23 (AMP) Paul wrote, "and be continually renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh, untarnished mental and spiritual attitude]." Romans 12:2 tells us, "be ye transformed by renewing your mind." Scientists have proven that our thoughts and words affect the human brain positively or negatively.

Proverbs 23:7 (AMP) "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he [in behavior—one who manipulates]." Our thoughts create our feelings that produce our actions. What type of "thought life" do you have? If we dwell on the negative events around us, our toxic thoughts affect the physical brain with a "blackness." If we dwell on the positive aspects of life, our brain starts building new connectors and "lights up" during this process. Our thoughts and words either bless or curse our body, soul and spirit.

In Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (AMP), God said, 15 "Listen closely, I have set before you today life and prosperity (good), and death and adversity (evil); 16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk [that is, to live each and every day] in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments (precepts), so that you will live and multiply, and that the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to possess." 19 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, you shall choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants." Are you choosing life thoughts or (toxic) death thoughts?

© Carol Clemans – Anointed Bible Teacher, Certified Pastoral Counselor, Certified Christian Life Coach. Carol provides nationwide counseling by phone/Skype (636) 448-0121. www.carolclemans.org - read 'About Ministry' details. Min. Ref: Pastor Daniel Batchelor, Duplo, IL & UPCI Supt. David Tipton, Jr., Raymond, MS.



Jim Sleeva

Jail Ministry

(317) 690-1970

Are You Overlooking a Ripe Harvest Field?

Ever notice how people who are occupied with pleasures of life with no major needs seldom realize their need for Jesus? Evangelism is more difficult among people who believe they can solve all their problems apart from God. Just ask Noah how it feels to preach to people who have had it too good for too long and only indulge in eating, drinking, marriage and giving in marriage. Not too many people wanted to listen.

But not too far from where you are there are hungry people who are desperate for change. They are convinced that there is not much hope outside of God. They would give almost anything to hear you preach today. They are located at your county jail.

Why should you get involved in jail ministry? Because many are seeking answers and are really motivated to change their situation. These are excuses you won't hear in jail, "Sorry, I'm really too busy to attend a Bible study" or "I don't have any nice church clothes to wear." What you will hear are inmates asking how to get rid of guilt, shame and how to be saved.

To be honest, many inmates will turn back shortly after they get their freedom because they lose their "need" for God, but for those who meet the Lord and continue to walk with Him, the change can be astounding. People whose lifestyles are radical, living for sin, will have a need to be equally challenged to live radical for Jesus, withholding nothing.

I met Anthony as a juvenile in an adult jail being tried as an adult for a gang shooting. Realizing his need for God, he prayed and God began to change his heart during the months of waiting for his trial. He repented, committed his life to Jesus and was baptized in Jesus name. After doing his prison time, he was deported to Mexico. We directed him to a United Pentecostal church there.

He began intense Bible studies and was filled with the Holy Ghost. Anthony now loves street witnessing and is part of a team planting a daughter work. This week Anthony will receive his ministerial license with the UPCI.

Why else should you go to minister in jails? Because the field is ripe but the inmates have no way to come to you.

Jim Sleeva is a graduate of Gateway College of Evangelism. He was a missionary pastor in Germany for 15 years. He has been a full time instructor/mentor for 22 years at Indiana Bible College and serves as chair of the Urban Missions Department.



Aubrey Jayroe

Finance

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My husband, who pastored for many years, received a housing allowance from the church. He is now deceased and I am blessed that the church is providing some continuing income to me. Can I classify any of this as a housing allowance?

me. Can I classify any of this as a housing allowance?

First of all, in order to receive a housing allowance the person must perform ministerial services such as weddings, ministering during services, baptizing, etc. The person must also be commissioned, licensed or ordained into the ministry.

So, in summary, to qualify for a housing allowance, the person has to be commissioned, licensed or ordained into the ministry and must perform ministerial services.

The IRS has ruled that church boards cannot designate a housing allowance for the surviving spouses of deceased ministers (Revenue Ruling 72-249). Also, according to IRS Letter Ruling 8404101(1984), any arrangement for paying a housing allowance for the deceased minister's spouse is "includable in the gross income of that spouse beneficiary."

Since the spouse of a deceased minister does not qualify as a minister, and since the housing allowance must be paid for ministerial services (a retired minister would qualify but not his spouse), the spouse cannot receive a housing allowance, thus taking advantage of a great tax break for ministers.

Aubrey L. Jayroe is an Accredited Tax Advisor, Accredited Tax Preparer and Enrolled Agent by the IRS, as well as an Apostolic pastor. Contact him at: (870) 633-6045. Jayroe & Company, P.O. Box 1217, Forrest City, AR 72336. Email: jayroeone@sbcglobal.net



Delano Sherley

Accounting & Tax

Church Balance Sheet (Part 2)

Previously we discussed what assets should be included in the "Fixed Asset" section of the balance sheet. Properly recording the assets results in a stronger balance sheet and also moves the assets out of the expense section of the Statements of Activities.

A properly prepared balance sheet will also include all of the liabilities of the organization. Short-term liabilities will

include any payables (expenses that have been incurred as of the balance sheet date but not yet paid) and the current portion of any long-term debt. Typical payables will include credit card purchases, utilities and expenses for items purchased later in the month but not paid for until the next month. Payables also include any payroll and payroll taxes owed for the prior month.

Long-term liabilities include any loans and obligations that have a maturity date of more than twelve months, after an adjustment is made for the portion that is due in the next twelve months (the current portion referred to above).

Lastly, if the church has any restrictions on cash (either from donors or from the bank), the restricted portion should be shown separately.

We have provided a brief summary of what is needed to prepare a balance sheet for a bank under GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles). We recommend getting the help of a professional in preparing the statements and prior to submitting them to the bank.

Delano Sherley is a CPA and president of Delano Sherley & Associates, Inc. He can be reached at 513-737-1314. Delano Sherley & Associates, Inc., 3189 Princeton Road, Suite 228, Hamilton, OH 45011. Email: Delano@dsacpainsc.com Website: www.dsacpainsc.com

THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS**Atheist Organization Protests Students' Visit to Creation Museum**

An atheist group has warned public schools that taking their students on a trip to Ken Ham's Creation Museum in Kentucky would be a violation of the Constitution.

Christian Today reports that atheist organization Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) emailed



Ken Ham, Creation Museum

letters to three public high schools, telling them that their planned trips to the Creation Museum violated the

Constitution's Establishment Clause.

"Public schools may not advance or promote religion. Bringing students on a field trip to a religious venue is a blatant promotion of religion," said FFRF Legal Fellow Madeline Ziegler in her letter to Nicholas Subashi, legal counsel for the Brookville Local Schools. The FFRF suggested that the public schools take their students on field trips to secular institutions instead.

Ham, the Creation Museum's founder, says having public school students visit the museum on a field trip does not violate the Constitution as long as teachers present Creationism as one possible viewpoint.

RELIGIOUS TRENDS**Prayer Meeting Forbidden For Chinese Christians**

Chinese Christians were forced to cancel a prayer meeting after government authorities said they did not have permission to gather together. According to *ChristianToday.com*, Bishop Stephen Yang Xiang-tai called for a prayer meeting after three churches in Handan were vandalized. A day of prayer and fasting was planned, and the Christians were set to meet in one of the vandalized churches. However, authorities from the Religious Affairs Bureau stepped in and prohibited the churches from engaging in the prayer meeting, claiming they did not have permission to gather Christians from different districts. Some clerics were even placed under surveillance after the prayer meeting was cancelled, and citizens were prevented from entering the village where the prayer meeting was planned.

Christian persecution in China has been growing worse. About 1,700 churches have been demolished or their crosses taken down by the government in the past two years.

**Traditional Outreach Being Replaced in Many Churches**

Almost every church leader understands that the congregation is called to be faithful to the Acts 1:8 command to be witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. However, in the '80s, the trends for traditional outreach began to shift, according to Thom S. Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources. People were becoming less receptive, even hostile, to drop-by visits.

Many pastors continued to use the traditional home visit as their church's primary outreach mechanism into the 1990s but saw it become less and less effective. Those most faithful members who showed up for outreach night were becoming more and more discouraged. It was not uncommon for a couple to attempt to make five or six home visits with no success.

Rainer conducted a survey of church leaders to determine what their saints are now doing to reach their community.

1. *Social and caring ministries.* Usually these ministries are effective in helping people, but not usually successful in getting them assimilated into the church. Often the socioeconomic barriers are too large, despite the church's best efforts.

2. *Big event.* The church puts many of its resources toward a major production at Easter, Christmas, or 4th of July, to name a few. Usually a good number of community residents do attend these events but most don't return to the church.

3. *New venues or campuses.* The multi-campus and multi-venue models are becoming increasingly popular. Because they are able to attract new segments of the community, this approach does seem to be more effective than most.

4. *Community events.* This approach is similar to the big event, except it is held in the community instead of the church facilities, such as a "Carnival in the Park." But most pastors don't report significant outreach success with this approach.

5. *Natural relationship building.* A number of leaders indicated problems with structural outreach approaches. They believed that the members should be naturally developing relationship with non-believers.

6. *New groups.* Churches that are intentionally and aggressively starting new groups are having significant outreach success. They are seeing more unchurched people accept invitations to join the new groups. But research shows relatively few churches are intentional and aggressive about starting new groups.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant denomination in the country, but it continues to lose members and baptize fewer people each year. The latest statistics show membership has dropped by more than 204,000, down 1.3% to 15.3 million members in 2015. Meanwhile, the Assemblies of God, the world's largest Pentecostal denomination, is continuing to see increases in this country, with

a 1.4% rise from 2014 to 2015.

■ The Church of England will be launching a new congregation especially for the LGBT community this summer. According to *ChristianToday.com*, the new congregation is called True North and seeks to bring LGBT people into community with the body of Christ. True North will meet in St. Matthew's Walsall where most of the leadership oppose gay marriage.

SCIENTIFIC TRENDS**Respected Scientist Says He Found Proof God Exists**

A world-renowned scientist says there is scientific proof that points to the existence of God.

According to the Geophilosophical Association of Anthropological and Cultural Studies, scientist Michio Kaku, known as one of the developers of the revolutionary String Theory, stated, "I have

concluded that we are in a world made by rules created by an intelligence."

In a video Kaku explains, using physics and mathematics and referencing String Theory, how science points to the existence of God (Youtube video: Michio Kaku: Is God a Mathematician?).

The very purpose of physics, says Kaku, is "to find an equation ... which will allow us to unify all the forces of nature and allow us to read the mind of God." Kaku has proposed a theory to that end, using what he calls "primitive semi-radius tachyons."

"To me it is clear we exist in a plan which is governed by rules that were created, shaped by a universal intelligence and not by chance," he stated.

Once these new scientific discoveries become widely known, "everything that we call chance today won't make sense anymore," he said.



Scientist Michio Kaku

LEGAL TRENDS**Mississippi Gov. Signs Aggressive Anti-LGBT Bill**

Mississippi now boasts the nation's most aggressive anti-LGBT law, after Gov. Phil Bryant signed House Bill 1523 into law recently. The first-of-its-kind law will take effect in July, and allow businesses, individuals and religiously affiliated organizations to deny service to LGBT people, single mothers, and others who somehow offend an individual's "sincerely held religious belief." It also directly targets transgender residents, effectively claiming that one's sex assigned at birth is immutable, and will be the only gender recognized by the state.

The Republican governor announced he had signed HB 1523 "into law to protect sincerely held religious beliefs and moral convictions." He stated, "This bill merely reinforces the rights which currently exist to the exercise of religious freedom. This bill does not limit any constitutionally protected rights or actions of any citizen of this state under federal or state laws."

Opponents say the legislation, formally called the Protecting Freedom of Conscience from Government Discrimination Act, is one of the broadest anti-LGBT bills in the nation.

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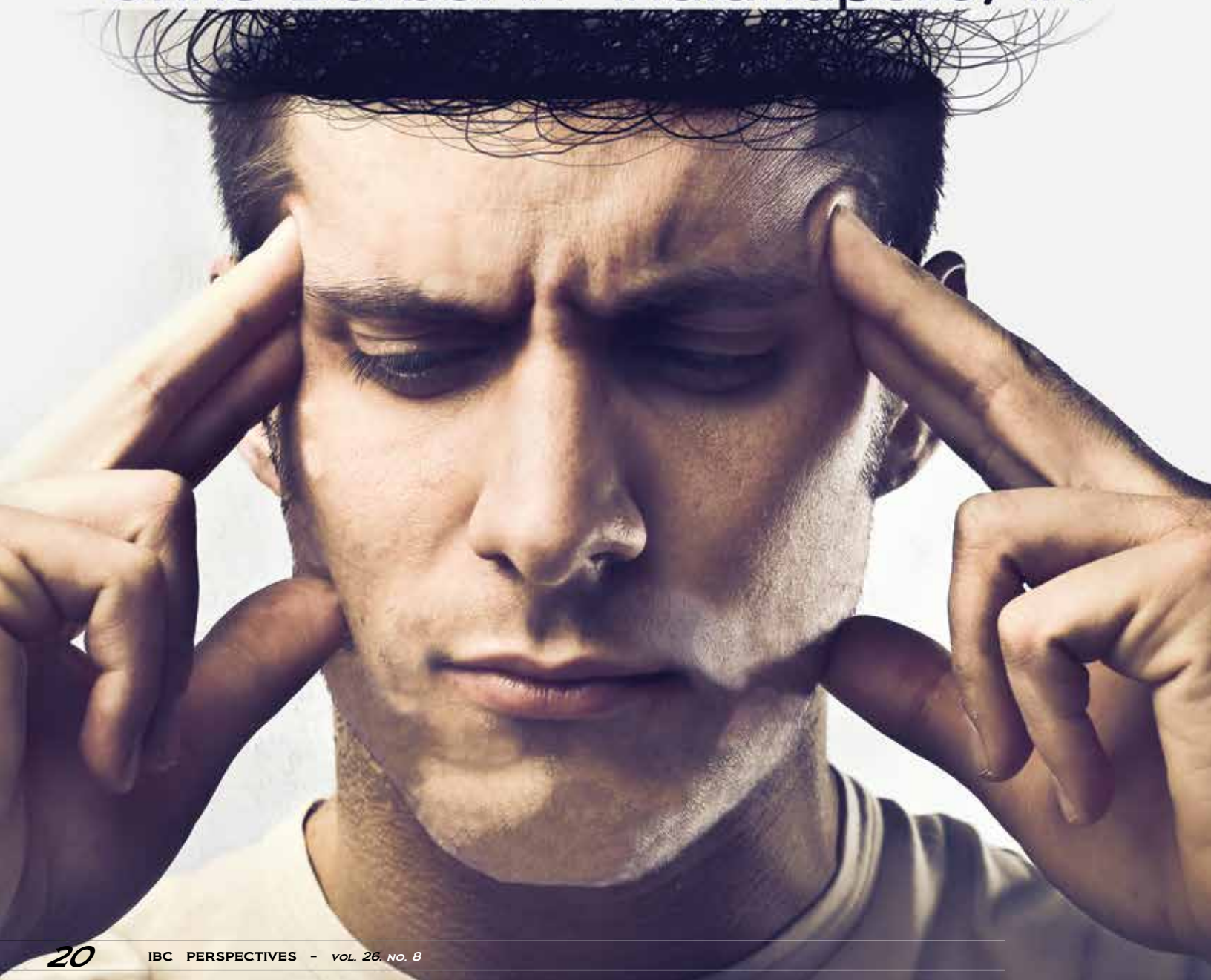


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LIES OF THE MIND

Chris Barber // Indianapolis, IN



"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." – Romans 12:1-2

Our generation, no doubt, is facing things today that we have never faced before. But I believe that sometimes we give the devil too much credit for the wrong that goes on in our world and in our lives. It's true that there are challenges facing this generation, but the Bible says in Acts 1:8 that we would "receive power." The spiritual war in our day is already destined to be won by the people who have been given this "power from on high!" When Jesus died on Calvary, the guarantee for the Church's victory was made. And yet we see that youth culture has developed a mindset in this generation that we have already been defeated.

A War of Mixed Signals

People go to the doctor for many reasons. They go to the doctor for legitimate injuries, many of which leave scars. Scars always remind us of the painful injuries (mistakes) that occur in life. But the most common reason people go to the doctor is because they have a pain in their body that they don't want to deal with anymore. When pain is normally processed in the body, the nerve receives the signal for pain, and then sends it to the brain, which determines what signal is going to be sent back to the body. Though the process is fast, a body part doesn't feel pain by itself, but rather it needs help from the brain, which is in control of all things in the body.

A recent problem in our society is that more and more people are coming to the doctor, claiming to have a chronic pain, when nothing is wrong at all! The brain is sending signals to the body indicating pain, but there is nothing that is triggering a signal to go to the brain in the first place. This means that somehow the brain is altered or harmed and is sending lying signals to the body that something is sick and broken. The doctors can tell their patients that they are healthy, that they are well and that nothing is wrong with them, but the patients are not convinced. There are even cases so extreme that people are dying because they believe they are sick to the point that death is imminent. The tragedy is that they are completely healthy, but their mind has been deceived into believing that they are injured and dying. Simply put, there is a war being conducted within the mind.

This same phenomenon is also happening in the spiritual realm, in terms of the mindset of this generation. I would make the case that many young people are becoming bogged down – mentally, spiritually and emotionally – when, in fact, they have been delivered and set free from the sins that held them bound for years. We are a holy people, set apart from this world for the Kingdom of God, and yet we can't see ourselves as purified, because our mindset is convinced that something is wrong with us. Essentially, the devil has tried to render the grace of Jesus to have no effect by making us believe the lie that it is insufficient in washing away the sins of our lives.

What if the devil doesn't necessarily have to turn people into drug addicts, pornography addicts, and fornicators to win the battle in this generation? What if the battle against the Church can be won by introducing a lie into the mindset of young people, a lie that will convince us that although we are redeemed, somehow we are destined to die in our sins?

We Should Not Identify with Pain

I understand that there are those in this generation who fall into sin, who become carnal and worldly, who walk away from God and His principles. But there are others who have been deceived by Hell into believing that they can never obtain God's victory in their lives, their ministries are insignificant and destined to fail, and the vices of their past are still shackling them today.

I have experienced this in my own youth group. I have had young people asking me for counsel and saying things like, "I don't know what it is, but I feel like something is wrong with me." They are unable to articulate exactly what they struggle with, but the pain is definitely real. They go to the altar and seek God, expressing pain, but they leave those altars unchanged. Something has placed itself deeply in the fabric of their minds, that although they are good young people and although they have so much potential, something

is deeply wrong with them, and they are no good for the Kingdom.

I was at a youth convention recently, and the same thing eerily took place. During the service, while some were giving their testimonies, there was little interest and response. But then a young lady got up to testify – and she started talking about all of the recent sorrow and agony that she had been going through. As soon as she mentioned the word *pain*, young people across the auditorium began to fall on their faces and cry out. They clearly identified with the word *pain*, but rather than thanking God for His deliverance and faithfulness, they cried out and still agonized over the pains of their lives.

I understand there is sorrow in the world, but when a room full of young people is uninterested when others are testifying about everything God has done for them, and yet someone speaking a word about pain brings everyone to their feet, there is a problem. This cannot be the generation that identifies with pain, when we should be identifying with the powerful moves of God and His many blessings. We can never see the fulfillment of end time revival if we insist on being the generation that identifies with the sensation and the lies of the pains of our past.

We are NOT Dead!

There once was a young man from Detroit, Michigan – Caleb – who lived in a dangerous part of the city. He asked his friend, Josh, to give him a ride to a particular location. When they arrived at the destination, Caleb asked Josh to go in with him, since they were in a scary-looking alleyway. But to Caleb's surprise, when Josh got out of the car, he shot Caleb twice – once in the arm and once in the chest. He approached Caleb to shoot him in the head, but Caleb swung at the gun with his good arm, and the shot barely missed his temple.

Luckily, there was an ambulance nearby, and the crew brought Caleb to the hospital. As they were wheeling Caleb inside on a stretcher, he heard them mark the time of his arrival – 10:35 – as the time of his death, even though he was not dead! He lay there on the stretcher, sure that nobody would come to save him, since he had already been pronounced dead on arrival. As Caleb began to drift off, a doctor suddenly came running from around the corner and said, "Leave him alone! He is not dead; this young man is alive! And I am going to save his life!" The physician was able to give proper care to Caleb and not only save his life but restore him to perfect health with no residue of the tragedy that had been intended to rob him of his existence.

The parallel speaks clearly to us. The devil can circle around us every day, taunting, "You're dead! You're not going to make it! You're going to lose!" But I believe so strongly that there is a Great Physician, who is running right around the corner, saying to this generation of young people, "You are NOT dead! You're going to make it!"

Whose Report Will We Believe?

We cannot afford to believe the lie that we are spiritually dead. When a lion roars, it is using its last option to hunt its prey—by scaring it into submission. When hell begins to wage war and cry out in our lives, that's how we know that we have the devil right where we want him. When the Israelite spies went out on their mission into Canaan, they brought back two different kinds of reports. Everyone knew and agreed that the Promised Land was prosperous, but the men of the land were of great stature, and while two spies believed in the promises of God, ten of the spies said that there was no way to defeat the Canaanites – they had already lost the battle.

We as a generation have two choices: will we believe the evil report of the enemy, dance around the promise of God, and leave it for the next generation to inherit? Or will we rebuke the lies of hell, embrace the good report and believe the promises from God? We are more than conquerors. We are not dead; we are surely alive!

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Psalm 23:4

Bio: Bro. Chris Barber lives in Indianapolis, Indiana with his wife, Allison, and two boys, Silas and Samson. He is Youth Pastor at Calvary Tabernacle in Indianapolis, as well as serving as the Indiana District Youth President.



Chris and Allison Barber, Silas and Samson
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"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up
the hedge, and stand in the gap for me before the land!"

Ezekiel 22:30

The Briar Hollow Series

Entertaining, Inspirational Historical Fiction With An Apostolic Twist

By Susan Pound



Sis. Lori Wagner, author
Clarkston, Mich.

What better way to enhance compelling and inspirational stories of Christian fiction than by blending Apostolic doctrine throughout the tales? Sis. Lori Wagner, a licensed minister and author who resides in Clarkston, Michigan, has done that with *The Briar Hollow Series* (trilogy). As a bestselling author of 19 books, she has added historical fiction to her repertoire of writings.

When Sis. Wagner was asked what led her to write historical fiction, she replied, "The Lord took me by surprise with this endeavor. My family and I were driving down the road from Michigan to Kentucky on vacation. As we passed road signs, the names became characters and locations in my mind. I wrote down what was coming to me, and by the time we returned home, I had the concept and characters for the first book in *The Briar Hollow Series*."

To get doctrinal material to fit into the stories, the characters include people of faith

and people in crisis and transition. "Their conversations, interactions and experiences provided plenty of opportunity to enhance the stories with doctrinal and inspirational pieces as well as interesting historical information," explained Sis. Wagner.

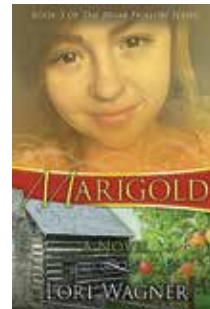
There is a principal message in each book. "The first book in the series, *The Rose of Sharon*, deals primarily with the idea that life comes with both roses and thorns, and it is beautiful even when things don't turn out the way we hope or plan," she said. "*Buttercup* has a mystery twist to it and a theme of second chances and forgiveness. *Marigold* delves into the realities of racism and prejudice and ends with a beautiful revelation of the oneness of God."

The Briar Hollow Series is geared for ages 12 and up. The series is being received by Apostolics as well as secular readers. "I'm excited to see these books do what I envisioned when I began writing," said Sis. Wagner. "They are successfully 'crossing over' and being well received by Apostolics and others—even some who do not go to church! The series is

affirming and encouraging for our ladies, and provides an entertaining, non-threatening outreach/discipleship opportunity for others. More than one reader has expressed regret that the series has come to a close. Maybe someday there will be a spin-off."

The books are available at the author's website: www.AffirmingFaith.com. They are also available through the Pentecostal Publishing House and other online distributors such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon. The books are \$14.95 each, but on the Affirming Faith website the three-book series is available for \$40, which includes free shipping.

Sis. Wagner is a licensed itinerant minister, an author, a teacher, an evangelist and public speaker. Her works include *The Pure Path Series* (discipleship and Christian growth for girls), and *Holy Intimacy* (dwelling with God in the secret place). Her most recent projects include a board game and *Wisdom is a Lady* (a small-group resource that includes video teaching sessions.) She and her husband, Bill, are active in their local church and community. They have four children.



Letters to the Seven Churches

Apostolic Book Includes Lessons, Devotions From First Three Chapters of Revelation

By Susan Thomas



Bro. Peter Connell
Oakley, Calif.

Why did Pastor Peter Connell write the book, *Letters to Pastors and Other Saints; Thoughts and Expositions on the first three Chapters of Revelation*? He explains, "I was a home missions pastor and was reading in Revelation 2, 'Unto the angel of the

church of Ephesus write....' As I read the passage, the Lord really dealt with me about some things—and I took notice and read on. The letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 have impacted me personally, and I felt the lessons that I have gleaned could be a help to others as well."

His book relates thoughts and expositions on the first three chapters of Revelation, with special emphasis on the letters to the seven churches found in chapters 2 and 3. "I dug into some interesting details regarding the background and character of the seven cities and their respective churches," explained Bro. Connell, who is pastor of Cornerstone Pentecostal Church in Oakley, Calif. and the Dean of Biblical Studies at the Institute of Conservative Apostolic Theology in Texas. "It primarily brings out the application of those letters to the specific

circumstances in those churches and outlines application of those letters to modern readers in a devotional manner which requires introspection on the part of the reader."

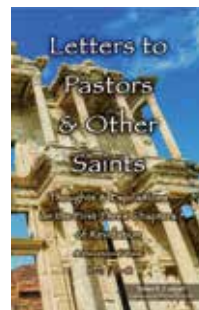
Pastor Connell said the book is targeted to both ministry and laity alike. "Certainly before Jesus calls us to be pastors, evangelists, teachers or anything else, He calls us to be saints," he said. "These letters were to the churches (Revelation 1:11), but they were addressed to the angels (messengers) of those churches, which most scholarship agrees were the pastors of those churches."

"They were messages to the churches, including the pastors, and the Lord intended 'the churches,' including ours, to benefit from the instruction given."

Because many Apostolics believe there were seven literal churches that Jesus addressed in Revelation 2-3, these chapters were very important for Bro. Connell to address. "It is certain that there were seven literal churches that Jesus addressed in their various settings," he said. "Benjamin Wallin, who preached repentance, baptism in Jesus' name and the infilling of the Holy Ghost in the American Colonies in the 1700s wrote: 'There are those who contend that these epistles are

prophetical of the visible church in different periods, succeeding each other to the end of time, and some go about to assign them precisely, to which others make considerable objections; but it answers my present design that it is generally allowed that a christian [sic] church did really exist in each city mentioned, and that these churches were actually in the circumstances severally described at the time the apostle John wrote, for he is expressly [sic] directed to write the things which are, as well as those which shall be hereafter, chap. 1.19. So that, if a literal sense may be admitted, a literal one cannot be refused.' It is without question that those lessons conveyed to the churches can and do ring with the same authority to those in our day who may find themselves in a similar state."

Individual books may be purchased through the church website's bookstore at www.cornerstonepentecostal.org, or through Bro. Jerry Ensey's online bookstore at www.advanceministries.org. The list price is \$14.95 plus shipping and handling, but when ordering from the church bookstore, there are discounts for orders of at least five books, and larger discounts for orders of at least ten books. To get the discount, orders should be made by e-mail to bookstore@cornerstonepentecostal.org.





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For more information, please contact Kent Russell at: krussell@upci.org or 314-373-4363.

Word To The Wise:

"Skill is successfully walking a tightrope over Niagara Falls.
Common sense is not trying."

* * * * *

A kid gave his teacher a blank piece of paper.

Teacher: "What is this?"

Kid: "It's a drawing of a cow eating grass."

"Where's the grass?"

"The cow ate all of it."

"Then, where's the cow?"

"It left because there was no more grass."

* * * * *

Pastor liked to tease Bro. Jacob, who sometimes missed church. After church one Sunday, he said, "Bro. Jacob, I dreamed last night I died and went to heaven. I looked and looked and you were not there."

Bro. Jacob nodded and replied, "Funny you say that, pastor. I also had a dream last night that I died and went to heaven. The Lord gave me a piece of chalk and said, 'Go over there and write down all your sins.' And just at that time I met you leaving."

"I said, 'Pastor, what are you doing? Why are you going that way?' And you said, 'I'm going to get some more chalk!'"



As he visited the restroom before coming out to speak,
Pastor Dale forgot that his lapel mic was on.

* * * * *

A large, two-engine train was making its way across America. While crossing the Western mountains, one of the engines broke down.

"No problem, we can make it to Denver and get a replacement engine there," the engineer thought, and carried on at half power.

Farther on down the line, the other engine broke down, and the train came to a standstill in the middle of nowhere.

The engineer needed to inform the passengers about why the train had stopped and, always trying to look on the bright side of things, made the following announcement: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have some good news and some bad news."

"The bad news is that both engines have failed, and we will be stuck here for some time until the additional engines arrive."

"The good news is that you didn't take this trip in a plane!"



While "parting the puddles" was not as dramatic as
"parting the Red Sea," Moses enjoyed it nonetheless.

* * * * *

While getting a checkup, a man tells his doctor that he thinks his wife is losing her hearing. The doctor says, "You should do a simple test. Stand about 15 feet behind your wife and say, 'Honey?' Move three feet closer and do it again. Keep moving three feet closer until she finally responds. Remember how close you were when she gives you an answer. That will help me know how bad her hearing loss is."

About a month later the same guy is at the doctor again and the doctor asks, "Well, did you do that experiment with your wife's hearing?"

The man says, "Yes."

"How close did you get before she answered?"

"Well, by the time I got about three feet away she just turned around and said, 'For the FIFTH TIME...WHAT??'"

* * * * *

The story is told of a father of five children who came home with a toy. He summoned his children and asked which of them should be given the present. "Who is the most obedient one here? Who never talks back to Mom and does everything that Mom says to do?" he inquired. There were a few seconds of silence, and then all of the children clamored together: "Okay, you win, Daddy! The toy is yours!"



Wanting to hit the higher notes in the church choir, Vern
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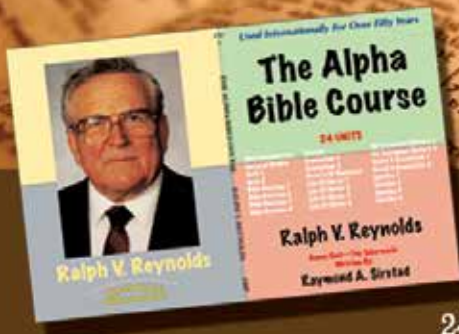
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