

# GOD'S REVIVALIST

March 2017

*and Bible Advocate*



**Finding  
the Right  
Church**



# about this issue

## FINDING THE RIGHT CHURCH

**A** new Pew Research Center study found that about half of U.S. adults (49%) have looked for a new church. The reasons are varied, with the most common being a move to a new location (34%). Disagreeing with the clergy and either getting married or divorced account for 11% each. Other reasons offered were personal, social, and practical (19%). Whatever the reason, there is a group of parishioners who are searching for their next place of worship.

The main tactic used during this selection process is to attend the services of congregations being considered (85%). The factors deemed most important are the quality of sermons (83%) and the warmth of the welcome (79%). So, it is extremely important that churches have a firm "welcome strategy" in place and clear job descriptions for all those involved in meeting visitors. How well this is handled may determine whether the visitor will become an active member of the congregation.

This issue focuses on various aspects of the search process. First, President Avery proposes that people love their church when it provides a place to *belong* (authentic community) and a place to *become* (spiritual growth) (p.3).

Mark Mander discusses his difficulties in finding the right church after his relocation for a new job (p.5). He was specifically interested in opportunities to serve. The Pew study found that this was considered an important factor (42%).

Jeremiah Johnson discusses the qualities people look for in a church (p.8), and Ed Stetzer gives some of the reasons people are not involved in their churches (p.10). Finally, Thom Rainer discusses some of the common mistakes greeters make (p.12).

It is our prayer that these articles will be helpful in giving churches the opportunity to reflect on how well they manage the process of greeting visitors and making them feel welcome and included, and to make adjustments to do an even better job. Also, we hope that individuals will become more aware of the part that all play in making their church appealing to every attendee.

Enjoy the issue. —Ken Farmer ■

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# the president's page



**People go to church for many reasons, but studies prove that faithful attendees love their church when it provides a place to *belong* (authentic community) and a place to *become* (spiritual growth).**

## WHY DO PEOPLE LOVE THEIR CHURCH?

by Michael R. Avery, President

America is blessed with a lot of churches. Some sit astride prominent street corners proudly displaying their architectural glory, while others are tucked away between a used shoe store and a day old bakery in a weary strip mall on the tired side of town. Some have one word names like “Grace,” while others have designations so long that you can’t say the full name without stopping to breathe. Most have the stereotypical church look, while others resemble something between a cinema and a warehouse. It is not, however, the architecture they display, the appellation they wear, or the affiliations they boast that attract millions of worshippers every week. People go to church for many reasons, but studies prove that faithful attendees love their church when it provides a place to ***belong*** (authentic community) and a place to ***become*** (spiritual growth).

### BELONGING

Just as the Divine Persons live in intimate Trinitarian relationship, so human persons cannot be complete without intimate relationships. We were created for intimacy. We need meaningful relationships with family and fellow Christians. A healthy church environment provides this. It provides a place to belong—a place where we are loved, valued, and needed. A place where we feel safe and comfortable and secure and ready to share life with others. A place where others can speak into our lives. A community.

**Community means availability.** It means time spent together. Time for conversation, interaction, and a deepening of communion, of intimacy between two or more people.

**Community means vulnerability.** If we aren’t willing to open up our lives to others, we will never experience true community. This is why mutual confession builds community. We come to the table with our strengths and our weaknesses and we lay ourselves bare, exposed to the scrutiny and, more importantly, the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of others.

**Community means “doing life together.”** This ties back into availability, but goes beyond it. Our life in one regard is made up of time. So, if we want a shared life, we must spend time together. But it is more than time. It is the sharing of our experiences, resources, and gifts.

**Community means stability.** If we want to experience community, we need to be rooted somewhere among some people. If we constantly move on in search of greener pastures, we will not be around long enough to grow the roots necessary for community.

**Community means identity.** The society around us is suffering from an identity crisis. Collectively and individually, people today don’t have a strong sense of who they are. They drift anchorless through life, following the whims and fads of this present world. Christians should not struggle with this kind of identity crisis. We have a very clear identity in Christ. But further, our church also provides a sense of identity by means of membership and fellowship.

### BECOMING

It is quite natural for Christians to grow and to change just as it is natural for human beings to grow from infancy to childhood to adolescence to adulthood. Christians not only *want* to experience spiritual transformation, but they *must* also experience it to remain healthy and alive. Although the church is not solely responsible for this process, it is central to the mission of the church as it certainly provides the means and the environment for it to happen. Christians who love their church and experience true spiritual transformation into Christlikeness will often acknowledge that the following things happen consistently at their church:

**Biblical Preaching.** I don’t mean just Bible talk. I mean more than the cognitive communication of biblical information. I mean preaching and teaching that is

rooted in Scripture, relevant to life, and applicable to our daily walk. I mean the anointed preaching and teaching of the Word of God that impact our deepest inner orientations and confront any obstacles that prevent us from fully surrendering to God. This kind of preaching makes going to church exciting and rewarding.

**The Holy Spirit.** The process of spiritual transformation is also supernatural in that it is something only God can accomplish in our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God has been given as our advocate, teacher, and counselor to lead us into truth and to communicate the deep things of God to us. It is important that churches both welcome and make room for the presence and the workings of the Holy Spirit. People want to sense the presence of the Holy Spirit while they worship and need Him working in their hearts and minds as they listen to the Word proclaimed.

**Spiritual Disciplines.** The church cannot transform people into the image of Christ, but it can create the conditions in which spiritual transformation can take place. This is where spiritual disciplines come in. Spiritual disciplines are not self-help programs by which we take control of spiritual transformation and change ourselves. Rather, spiritual disciplines are concrete activities in which we engage in order to make ourselves available for the work that only God can do. Churches where people are “becoming” are churches that teach and help implement the spiritual disciplines.

If you want people to love coming to your church, then make sure you focus on providing a place where they can experience authentic community and real spiritual growth. Belonging and becoming have been at the heart of the Christian Church since its birth, and they should be at the heart of your church today! 📌



**GBSC Alumni Reception**  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2017 | IHC | DAYTON, OHIO  
4:00–5:30 | ROOM 103

# I WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHURCH

by Mark Mander

*Constructive criticism, observation, or just plain old complaining—I sincerely pray what I am about to share is not the latter, because, as a minister leading a congregation for almost nine years, I certainly know how it feels when a disgruntled individual “unburdens” his heart regarding an area of church ministry.*

Several months ago I answered a call to minister in a different area of Christian service which does not require a regular Sunday commitment of leading worship. For the first time in my adult life, I am able to attend a church of my own choosing and worship without the responsibilities of leading worship, preaching, or teaching.

In my opinion, people will choose a congregation for themselves and for their family based on five areas. These are:

- Biblical teaching and preaching
- Worship
- Friendship / Community
- Service / Mission opportunities
- Pastoral care

Knowing for some time that this would be the case, I began looking for potential churches in the area in which my wife and I would be residing. We were both very excited about the possibility of working

from the pew instead of ministering from the pulpit.

Unfortunately, the experience was not as pleasant as I would have hoped, and subsequently, after spending three months of visiting churches, I was sad that we had not integrated into a local church.

## **Why has it been hard to integrate into a local church?**

Rather than criticize the churches which I have sought to become part of, as a minister I am asking myself this question: “Did I do a good job in encouraging my congregation to welcome and integrate new people into the life of the church family?”

When I return to church leadership, I will encourage my congregation to differentiate between a friendly welcome and an engaging welcome. Without exception, the churches which I visited had at least



a couple of individuals present who offered a good welcome, mentioning that they were happy that we had chosen to worship with them that day. In some circumstances the welcome included a short conversation during which I was asked if we had moved into the area. When I answered affirmatively, this should have alerted the church to progress from a simple welcome to strategies oriented toward connecting with us in hopes to integrate us into their congregation. I see that as a move from the level of “welcome” to “engagement.”

## Don't just welcome—engage!

I visited a church recently and was asked where I lived. My answer revealed that I was living approximately 35 to 40 minutes from the church. The next question asked was why would I want to travel so far on a Sunday to attend their church and not attend a church in the small town where I lived. This was not an engaging welcome. Quite frankly, as the visitor, I would have been more at ease if the conversation had not taken place at all.

Sadly, I am also aware of situations where individuals and families have been willing to become fully integrated into a local church, only to be dismissed by the leadership because their willingness was interpreted as being pushy, controlling, and self-seeking.


Also, a church should be careful not to read into a situation as to why a person or family is visiting their church; rather, they should be excited about the possibilities that can arise from the new person and family making this their church home. It is therefore imperative that the church has a plan in place for helping visitors to be integrated into the church family. This will take thinking and planning and needs buy-in from the church members to be effective.

## Don't advertise services and events and not be on time!

My wife saw a ladies' event that was advertised at one of the churches we were thinking of attending. When she arrived at the church on the given day, the front doors were locked. Thinking the event may have been held in the church hall, she proceeded to go there only to find another locked door. Not wanting to give up, she actually tried every outside door on the site. What was now obvious to her was that this advertised event had been canceled; yet the church notice board still had it listed!

A slightly different experience happened to us both as we attended another church. The service was advertised to begin at a specific time. We arrived and sat in the sanctuary by ourselves—potential new attenders and on our own. All the while, a worship group (who didn't acknowledge us) continued to practice, even though it was past the advertised starting time.

If a church is going to advertise, which it obviously must do through all forms of media as well as announcements during services, it is imperative that all information is correct and that schedules are considered sacrosanct.



# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

*Letters should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202, or emailed to [revivalist@gbs.edu](mailto:revivalist@gbs.edu). Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of God's Revivalist nor those of the administration of God's Bible School. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.*

The "World Pulse" page draws my attention quickly when I open *God's Revivalist*. The recent note on the absence of a "gay gene" by two researchers/professors at Johns Hopkins especially caught my attention. I have made copies of this page to give to several. This exposure of false studies on a gay gene providing a basis for gay rights should be widely publicized. Thanks for including this. This page contains significant news items. You are doing a great service in sharing these.

BOB BICKERT  
Wilmore, KY

I think you nailed it in these two articles ["Holiness in Eclipse," by Michael Avery, Nov. and Dec.] ... These days it seems like everyone holds to the "I'm not what God wants me to be, but His grace covers it all" mentality. It is so unproductive and unbiblical. As I was reading your articles, I was asking myself if I could share these with my earnest-hearted...friends [outside of the holiness movement]. I think I can. I find many of them are hungry for holiness. As usual, you strike a real balance.

JEFF KEATON  
Roanoke, VA

## **Don't simply evangelize—teach!**

I visited one church on several occasions. One would automatically think that this would have allowed me to receive some systematic teaching from the Bible. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Instead, I received sermon after sermon on becoming a Christian. While one cannot automatically assume that everyone in church is a believer, a swift look at the congregation indicated the majority did have a profession of faith. It is essential that people are presented with a message in which they are called to faith. However, this should not be the constant theme and message from the pulpit. The gospel encompasses much more than responding to a call to faith. It is the embracing of the fullness of life that Christ wishes His followers to embrace. The Word of God should be proclaimed for the purpose of teaching principles for Christian living, imparting knowledge about God and His character, as well as encouraging believers in their faith through preaching and applying the stories of what God has accomplished throughout history.

I was also alarmed at the state of biblical and theological understanding in churches. I have chosen to visit many churches on the basis of their theological position. Many times the theology being expressed did not reflect the denominational label above their door. Needless to say, I have been disappointed and also alarmed because people in the pews too often were not receiving good systematic teaching from the Bible and were therefore not as sensitive to theology as believers in the past.

## **Don't invite visitors to participate in after-church fellowship—host!**

I am shy! Take me out of my role and I am an introvert. At a recent church I visited, there was tea and coffee following the service. This was announced from the platform, so I was aware of the opportunity. Following the service, one lady who obviously thought she was being helpful, told me to go and participate in the fellowship if I wanted to get to know people and make friends!

What is wrong with this scenario? I did not want to go by myself—as I have experienced several times over the last number of weeks—and sit or stand with a coffee in hand, while the rest of the congregation chats to each other. I have found this scenario lonely and embarrassing as I stand—alone. If this is going to be the connection point for meeting and integrating people into the church, then it is imperative for someone to physically stay with and introduce the prospective attendees to other church members at this time. Someone must host!

## **Don't offer one-time welcomes—demonstrate pastoral care through follow-up!**

My previous place of ministry was located in a tourist area. As a result, I would expect a number of visitors to frequently visit the church during the tourist season. Before a service, I would purposefully walk through the sanctuary speaking to strangers in order to find out where they were from and if they might be in the area for an extended period of time. It is important to realize that not every person who comes into a church will be a one-time visitor.

I attended one church on four occasions. I assumed that the number of my visits would have alerted the pastoral staff that I was interested in attending this church on a regular basis. I also expected someone to contact me, explaining what activities and events took place so that I might become part of the church family. This would also give opportunity for the church to learn something about me so that they could effectively minister to my needs. Such a call, visit, or conversation did not take place. I had a similar experience in another church I attended, and I ended up initiating the contact by emailing the leadership asking what groups my wife and I could attend.

## **Why am I sharing these experiences?**

The reason why I have shared my Sunday morning experiences from the first several weeks of my “church hunting,” is because I genuinely love the Church, I love people, and I realize that I need the spiritual nourishment that one receives from corporate worship. I sincerely want every church to succeed. Therefore, I am disappointed when churches don't reach their potential.

The people in the pews should not be regarded as simply consumers and customers who are easily replaceable. They are more than just a number. They are known by God and have inherent value. Pastors and other leaders within local churches must demonstrate genuine interest in everyone, and it should be evident that they are willing to journey through life with those who are going to come alongside their church's ministry. It is essential for leaders to engage physically with visitors.

## **The answer is simple.**

Each of us must realize that this is our responsibility and no one else's—to engage with visitors and assist them in integrating into the church.

God help us to do just that! ■

*Rev. Mark R. Mander is a chaplain in the Royal Navy. Mark (BA '05) and his wife Deanna (Wolf) (HS '93, BA '98) served on the GBS staff until 2007, then moved to Northern Ireland where Mark pastored for nine years. They now reside in Scotland.*



# 7 QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN A CHURCH

by Jeremiah Johnson

*It's easy to find a bad church.*

Tragically it takes little to no effort to find congregations where God's Word is not considered authoritative or sufficient; where man's interests and felt needs shape the teaching; where ears are tickled with soft truth and self-esteem; where the power and work of the Holy Spirit are abused and blasphemed; where the gospel is little more than a get-rich-quick scheme. All those perversions permeate the Church today—in parts of the world, they *dominate* it.

It's much harder to find a good church. Some believers are exhausted and disheartened by the search—others give up altogether. But God's people must not forsake the fellowship found only in the Body of Christ (Heb. 10:25).<sup>1</sup>

We've not been called out of this world, renewed, and transformed just to live in spiritual isolation. God's people are meant to grow together in Christlikeness—"to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (Heb. 10:24). We can't do that if we're not faithfully connected to a local body of believers.

Understand that involvement in the local church is a vital non-negotiable. Consequentially, the next question is, "How can we spot good churches among all the bad ones?"

While many groups and congregations may self-identify as a church, there are some irreducible biblical essentials that define and drive the *true* church.<sup>2</sup>

## A GREAT CONFESSION

In Matthew 16, Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15).

The first way to identify a true church is by how it answers that question. Do its members echo the confession of Peter, who said in the next verse, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"? Put simply, do they have a biblical view of Jesus Christ?

A church that does not know, love, and worship the Christ of the Bible does not have a trustworthy foundation.

## A GREAT COMMUNICATION

Christ's response to Peter's confession reveals another fundamental of the true Church. Jesus says, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17).

The true Church doesn't receive its confession from a pope, a college of cardinals, or any magisterial group of men. God Himself communicated His message directly to us through His Word. And the true Church is home to people who are subject to the power and authority of Scripture.





The church that holds faithfully to the authority and sufficiency of God's Word insulates itself from all sorts of spiritual disaster.

### A GREAT CONTRAST

In 1 Peter 2:11, the apostle identifies his readers as "aliens and strangers" in this world. Hebrews 11:13 refers to God's people as "strangers and exiles on the earth."

A fundamental quality of a true church is that it stands in contrast to the world. This world is dominated by those who "not only do [evil things], but also give hearty approval to those who practice them" (Rom. 1:32). But the true Church lives out Christ's command in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

### A GREAT CONQUEST

The true Church *is* the true Church because of Christ's great sacrifice on its behalf. Through the suffering of Christ, we have been redeemed for eternity. Consider how Paul describes the Lord's redemptive work: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

The consistent message of the true Church is that Christ conquered death and hell on the cross. If the cross and the resurrection of Christ are not focal points of the teaching and worship, it's not a true church.

### A GREAT CONFLICT

While the true Church celebrates Christ's conquering work, it also understands that a great spiritual conflict still exists in this world. In fact, John MacArthur says "it is foundational to the life of the Church to confront everything that works against the purpose of God."

That starts in the Church. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that "after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be on the alert" (Acts 20:29-31).

The true Church is not blithely skipping through life in this ruined world. It understands the severity of the spiritual conflict all around us, and it works to keep out the corrupting influence of the world and guard the purity of God's people.

### A GREAT CONTRADICTION

Unlike the prosperity preachers on TV who feast on the gullibility and greed of their viewers, the true Church doesn't promise fame or a financial windfall. In fact, the life Christ promised to His disciples is anything but incentive-laden.

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:24-25).

Members of the true Church don't gather together to increase their fame, influence, or earning potential. They don't elevate themselves—they eagerly and humbly submit their entire lives to the Lord.

### A GREAT CONSUMMATION

Finally, the true Church is not consumed with the here and now. It's not caught up in the cares and trends of the world, or bound to temporal relevance and fleeting popularity. The eyes of God's people are fixed on the return of Christ and the reward that awaits in eternity.

In the end, the Lord will settle all accounts, meting out His wrath on unrepentant sinners and richly blessing His people. The true Church looks forward to this day—more than that, it lives and serves in light of it. The expectation of Christ's return animates and invigorates all aspects of life in the true Church. ■

*Jeremiah Johnson* is a pastor, author, and blogger. Copyright 2016, *Grace to You* ([www.gty.org](http://www.gty.org)). All rights reserved. Used by permission. All Scripture quotations are from the NASB.

1. See Cameron Buettel, "Grace to You is not Your Cyber-Church." Copyright 2016, *Grace to You* ([www.gty.org](http://www.gty.org)).
2. See John MacArthur, "How to Recognize a Real Church, Parts 1-2," *Grace to You* ([www.gty.org](http://www.gty.org)).

# 3 REASONS PEOPLE ARE NOT INVOLVED IN YOUR CHURCH

by Ed Stetzer

Not everyone avoids serving for the same reason



Virtually every church faces the issue of members who are perpetually uninvolved. They are the spectators in the congregation. Many are faithful enough attendees but never move beyond that to be involved actively in the ministry of the church and mission of God. They go for the show, but not to serve.

Why is that? The immediate assumption by many pastors and leaders is that all of the uninvolved attendees are simply lazy. They know they should serve, but they just don't see the need or have the desire. This can be a dangerous attitude to have. Not everyone is inactive for the same reasons.

I believe there are three basic reasons people stay comfortably seated in their pews instead of serving. Once we know why, then we can go about helping them to move into service.

## 1. Some People Feel Useless

These individuals feel as if they do not have anything significant to offer in ministry. They may believe that they personally are not qualified to serve in a ministry capacity, or they might think that only special “clergy” can truly be involved in God's work. What really needs to be corrected here is ignorance.

Those who feel useless simply may not know that they have been called and gifted by God for ministry. They need to learn what Peter wrote in his first epistle: “Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God” (4:10, HCSB).

Those commonly referred to as “clergy” and “laity” are both called to ministry—the only question is the kind of ministry they do. My fear is that we have created a class system in the body of Christ comprised of the “called” and the “not so much called.” Nothing could be further from the truth. All are called to the ministry—pastors have a different role, but it's a common call.

People are called to ministry at conversion, not at some subsequent event. It is the ordinary who are called to ministry, not the extraordinary. Those who feel useless have to be patiently taught that God has gifted them for service within the body. Once they grasp this as fact, they can become some of the best ministers in the congregation.

## 2. Some People Are Hurting

It is a simple fact that our church contains those who have been hurt and are still hurting. Some of them have even been hurt by church and church leaders. They left a bad situation at a previous church. They were serving in an unhealthy situation. Because of their past, they are hesitant to get involved again. Healing and help should be our goal for these members.

For those who have been severely wronged, the first priority must be to love them. Church leadership should be gracious and provide the help needed to bring that person into a place of healing. The time to serve will come, but they need to be served first.

For others, they may have experienced some of the frequent pains that come with service. Often times those who are hurting feel as if they are alone. They don't realize everyone who has served in church for any period of time has been hurt by someone or something.

That's ministry. It's messy.

These people need encouragement to become involved again. We should come alongside them and motivate them to "love and good works," as Hebrews 10:24 commands us to do.

### 3. Some People Are Lazy

Let's be honest. Some people simply do not want to serve. They want others to do all the work while they enjoy the benefits. People would rather be an object of the church's ministry than a partner in it. Too many church members maintain this "me first" attitude.

This is part of human nature. It's easier to be a consumer than a co-laborer. But that does not mean it is biblical. Churches must make it much more difficult for those who want to come and be lazy. They need to be challenged.

The thing about laziness is that it's contagious. Serving is hard enough. No one wants to work while dozens of other people sit around and watch. It causes those who are working to reconsider actually working. If it's not corrected, you go from a church with only a few working to a church with no one involved in the ministry.

All God's people are called to the ministry; all God's people are sent on mission. The only questions are "Where?" and "Among whom?"

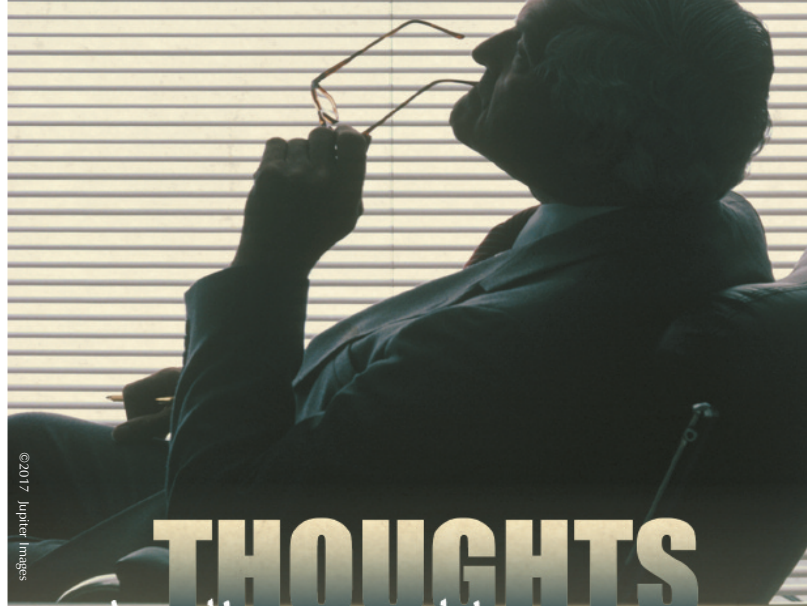
As Charles Spurgeon said, "Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter."

### Moving Everyone Toward Involvement

Every church has those who are not actively involved in the ministry of the local body, but not everyone is uninvolved for the same reason. It is up to the leadership of the church to determine who feels useless and needs encouragement, who is hurting and needs help, and who is lazy and needs correcting.

The Church has been commissioned by Jesus to make disciples. The only way you can accomplish that task beyond the walls of your church is by having engaged, involved, and active disciples within the walls. ■

*Ed Stetzer is the Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at Wheaton, a prolific author, and well-known conference speaker. He has planted, revitalized, and pastored churches, and has trained pastors and church planters on six continents. This article originally appeared at [www.outreachmagazine.com](http://www.outreachmagazine.com).*



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# THOUGHTS

for the quiet hour

by Sonja Vernon

## STAY AWAY!

***"Keep your way far from [the forbidden woman], and do not go near the door of her house"***

***—Proverbs 5:8 ESV***

We humans are curious beings. Many of us like to see just how close we can come to danger without getting hurt. I was the lone girl among the cousins close to my age. What but this universal game of "chicken" could explain their contagious love of explosives, fire, and daredevil feats? The rush of adrenaline was sweet when the fingers didn't get blown off, the BB didn't penetrate too deeply, the fire was put out just in time, or the long jump from rafters to trampoline was flawlessly executed. But it is one thing to risk a finger and another thing entirely to risk a soul. In the verse above, the writer of Proverbs issues a warning that echoes throughout Scripture. Joseph runs from Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39). Paul exhorts Timothy to "flee youthful passions" (2 Tim. 2:22). The message is consistent. When it comes to sin, run away! Don't even get close! Don't play around the edges. Don't strike the match. Don't go near the door. One of our great downfalls is trusting ourselves too much. We think we can handle it; but, to our destruction, we misjudge the cunning of the enemy. There are some doors that must never be opened, some options that must never go on the table, some words that must never be uttered. Do you want to be a man or woman of integrity, to maintain a clear conscience and a solid witness in a world where it is increasingly rare and difficult? Stay away from sin...period. Run from every form of evil, and run to a God who has unlimited keeping grace. ■

*Sonja Vernon is Dean of Women at God's Bible School and College.*

MARCH 2017

# Five Common **Greeter Mistakes** to Correct in the New Year

by Thom S. Rainer

*I guess I'm a bit picky here!*

If your church has a greeter ministry, it's already ahead of most churches. I should just be grateful you have such a ministry.

*But you do want it to improve, right?*

Greeter ministries, like any other ministries, can get in a rut. And as we greet this new year, let's have an honest conversation about how to begin with some improvements in your greeter ministry.

Here are the five most common greeter ministry mistakes. The good news is they are all easily correctable.

## **1. Greeters who only converse with people they know.**

Sure, they will give a perfunctory "hello" to those they see, but many only have conversations with those they know. Sometimes greeters spend most of their time talking to one another. A great greeter strikes up a conversation with someone he or she does not know.

## **2. Failure to have greeters in the worship center before services begin.**

This issue is commonplace. What happens when guests arrive to attend services? They usually go sit down and wait for the services to begin. With no one speaking to them. With no one seated by them.

## **3. Combining the greeter function with the person who hands out bulletins/worship folders.**

Greeters just have to be free to greet! They can't greet and converse if they are busy handing out a bulletin to each passerby.

## **4. Greeters who fail to introduce themselves.**

It's not a true greeting unless the greeter takes time to introduce himself or herself to a number of people. But what if the person receiving the greeting is a long-term member? You

know, I've never known members to get mad because someone is making an effort to get to know them better.

## **5. Failure to have greeters in place after the services have begun.**

Guests will be late. They may never have been to your church before. They may have had problems getting the kids ready. They may have underestimated the travel time. Sometimes we have asked "secret guests" to be 10 minutes late to a service intentionally. Nearly three-fourths of the time, there is absolutely no one there to greet them for their late arrival.

Yes, greeters can make a big difference in how guests perceive your church. I am grateful many of your churches have greeters. I am even more grateful when you strive for excellence with these ambassadors of hospitality. ■

*Thom S. Rainer, public speaker and author, serves as president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. This article was originally published at [ThomRainer.com](http://ThomRainer.com).*





## — Called Unto Holiness —

*In this space we use writers both past and present to discuss various aspects of Christian holiness.*

### DANGERS TO HOLINESS: PERFECTIONISM AND LEGALISM

*by John N. Oswalt*

One of the dangers for those of us who seek to live a life that is truly holy is perfectionism. That is, because we take seriously the Bible's injunction to be perfect and without defect in our relationship with God, we begin to demand of ourselves perfect performance in every area of our lives. We listen to inspiring speakers and we read biographies of holy people, and we become convinced that they never failed or fell short of their goals (unlike us)... On the other hand, we look at our own lives and see rather different conditions. We don't always see God's will very clearly; and sometimes when we do, it terrifies us and we don't want to do it. We don't always want to witness; and when we do, it is not always well-received. We don't always want to read the Bible and pray. Our homes are sometimes places of tension and argument. As a result, we live with a sense of condemnation and failure.

What has happened? First of all, we have created an unreachable standard. Few preachers or biographers have set out to create a false picture of their own experiences or of the experience of the one they are writing about. But because we do not see the whole picture, we think the limited picture is the whole picture. In virtually all cases, it is not the whole picture. There are failures and shortcomings.... To measure our acceptance by God on the basis of absolutely perfect performance in holiness is to condemn ourselves to failure. God is the only one whose performance is absolutely holy. The result is that we live with a constant sense of guilt and condemnation. Then, because we are afraid of failing again, we begin to stop daring for God. And in this whole process, we become increasingly fixated on ourselves and on our performance as holy people instead of on the Lord Jesus....

Coupled with perfectionism is legalism. How does one measure "perfect love"? How does one evaluate a "perfect heart"? What does "blameless in holiness" look

like? Those are all rather intangible, so there is a subtle tendency to attempt to measure them by more concrete matters, such as habits, lifestyles, and religious observances. How do I know I am holy? See! Because I do not use addictive substances, or because I do not dress in immodest or ostentatious ways, or because I fast and pray a lot, and am often in church.

But even these are general enough to allow a great number of variations. So there has been a tendency to narrow these down sharply in different religious groups. Thus, it is all right in some groups to smoke tobacco, but not in others.... In some groups a man could not have white buttons on his clothing, but could have black ones.

To most of us today in a society where license is the norm, these kinds of things sound ludicrous. Yet there clearly are connections between outer behavior and heart condition... Paul felt it necessary to prescribe what kinds of behavior (including dress and adornment) were acceptable.... So before we too lightly guffaw...we need to grant that there is an important issue here. A person who says that he loves God with all his heart and yet manifestly lives for appearance, pleasure, and pride has a serious problem.

Nevertheless, holiness is first of all a matter of the heart and a matter of relationship. Whenever relationships are put on a legalistic basis, something is awry. If my friend demands that I meet him a certain number of times a day if we are to remain friends, the friendship is in trouble. If my wife demands that I account for every moment of my time when I am away on a trip, our marriage is in trouble.... Holiness is a love relationship, and any attempt to quantify it will change it from the saving, freeing relationship it is intended to be into one of legalities and judgments. ■

*John N. Oswalt is a professor at Asbury Theological Seminary and author of 11 scholarly books. This is a selection from Called to be Holy: A Biblical Perspective, Evangel Publishing House, 1999, pp. 186-188.*



## WINTER REVIVAL 2017

The campus family welcomed Pastor Duane Quesenberry (BRE '94) back to GBS as the speaker for Winter Revival. His entire series of messages was based on Genesis 11-14, focusing on the journey of Abraham from Ur to Canaan and how he became a "friend of God."

It was in the midst of the ordinary routine days of life that God's call came to Abraham:

"Leave Ur and go to a place unknown as yet." For Abraham, the journey of becoming a friend of God had begun. Along the way he stopped in Haran and dwelt there a while, but Haran was not the place where God was taking him. For us, Haran represents anything that keeps us from doing exactly what God has called us to do—a half-way point between "obedience begun" and "obedience completed."



The second stop along the journey was Egypt. Like Haran, it was a lush place of wealth and culture. As in Haran, Abraham greatly prospered here, too. But it can be argued that untold damage was done to others, especially his nephew Lot, as a result of these stops.

Pastor Quesenberry suggested that we should follow Abraham's example. If we also want to be a friend of God, we need to walk away from our "comfort zone" and into the "trust zone," stepping out in faith and obedience for what God is going to do in our lives.

The seven messages can be accessed at [www.gbs.edu/2017Rev](http://www.gbs.edu/2017Rev).

## SPRING 2017 ENROLLMENT

College undergraduate enrollment for spring 2017 is 258 (full-time equivalency 203.34), which includes 87 (FTE 48.42) enrolled in

# REVIVALIST FAMILY

*On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.*

## BIRTHS



To **Elizabeth (Schenck) (BA '03) and Darrell Stetler II (BA '03)**, a son, **John Luke Asher**, born December 6, 2016. He joins a sister (Grace), and five brothers (Darrell III, Heath, Caleb, Gideon, and Will) to make a very full and happy parsonage in Oklahoma City, OK, where Darrell pastors the Bible Methodist Church.



To **Joanna (Wheatley) (2001-02) and Joe Reimann (BA '05)**, a son, **Lincoln James**, born January 2. Lincoln was welcomed by siblings Avery, Nia, and Kyra. The Reimanns are urban missionaries in Cincinnati, OH, where Joanna is also an occupational therapist.

## DEATHS



**Rosalie "Rose" Ann Frederick**, 80, of Cincinnati, formerly of Souderton and Philadelphia, PA, went to her heavenly home on Thursday, December 22, 2016, at Meadowbrook Care Center surrounded by her husband and family. Rosalie was born in 1936 to William and Anna (Timinski) Rosenberry of Flourtown, PA. She grew up in inner-city Philadelphia where her father started Calvary Holiness Church. After graduation from Messiah College High School, Grantham, PA, Rose started her working career as an administrative secretary at PMA Insurance, Pep Boys Automotive Parts, and later for her father's radio broadcast, Gospel Words and Music. She was also a homemaker while she raised her two children in Philadelphia. After the children left home, Rose was employed as a secretary for Timothy Academy in Philadelphia. Miss Rose, as the students called her, found great joy in the daily inter-

the Aldersgate Distance Education Program. Additionally, there are 16 students involved in the graduate program. Of these, eight are graduate students only, three are in the combined 3+2 program, four are undergraduate students taking some graduate courses, and one is auditing only. Adding those students not already counted in the undergraduate headcount brings total spring 2017 college enrollment to 266. Aldersgate Christian Academy enrollment stands at 135. Pray with us that God will make this a successful semester, both academically and spiritually.

### CAMPUS SAFETY UPGRADES

We have continued to update our access system securing the campus buildings. A GBS ID card is now required for access to the student center, dormitories, music



David Walker accesses the Student Center with his ID card.

hall, library, and chapel. Our Access and Safety Director Floyd Hyatt gave oversight to this project. Additionally, Maintenance Technician Loren Albright installed gates on the entrance and exit of the Facilities Building parking lot.

### RECRUITMENT AND THE GBS HIGH SCHOOL CLASSIC

The 2017 GBS High School Volleyball/Basketball Classic was held on February 9-10. This recruit-

ing event brought approximately 200 prospective students to our campus from various schools: Bird Lake Bible School (MI), Daystar Christian Academy (MI), Heartland Christian School (IN), Marion Home School (OH), Stone City Christian Academy (IN), Nazarene Christian School (IN), Frankfort Covenant Academy (IN), Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy (VA), and our own Aldersgate Christian Academy. Between rousing games of basketball and volleyball, guests attended a chapel service in which Daniel Edwards brought a challenging message. Congratulations to Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy (Coach Troy Keaton) for first place in basketball, and our own Aldersgate Christian Academy (Coach Steve Klotz) for first place in volleyball. We thank the Lord for safety, good attitudes, and a spiritual emphasis! ■



actions with the elementary children and treasured almost two decades working at the school.

Her two children are closely associated with GBS. Lori graduated with two BAs in 1992. She married Keith Waggoner II (BA '99). Both joined the staff after their graduation, Lori as Director of Financial Aid and Keith as Student Recruiter. David Jr. joined the financial department of GBS in 1995 and has been Director of Finance since 2000. His wife, Charlotte Potteiger (BA '86) has been on the faculty since 2006. Additionally, four of Rose's grandchildren attended Aldersgate Christian Academy at GBS, two graduated from the college, and one is now a sophomore in college. In 2015, the Frederick family established the Frederick Family Scholarship Fund, which enables students with financial needs to attend GBS.

Those left to cherish her memory include her loving husband, David L. Frederick Sr.; children, David Jr. and Lori; seven grandchildren; sister, Pearl; and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family. Funeral services

were held at Kenwood Bible Methodist Church, Keith Waggoner II officiating, with burial following at Rose Hill Cemetery in Mason, OH.



**Eunice S. Peyton**, 87, of Bedford, IN passed away Monday, December 19, at Garden Villa in Bloomington, IN. Born July 23, 1929, in Daniels, WV, she was the daughter of Herbert McKinley and Edna (Worrell) Shelton. She married Rev. Justus "Juddie" Peyton on December 25, 1952, and he preceded her in death on June 21, 2009. She was affiliated with Evangelistic Faith Missions and active in her husband's ministry and singing. They attended Faith Mission Church in Bedford.

Survivors include her daughter, Betty; a granddaughter, Lacy; siblings Josephine and Claude; and several nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held in the Elmwood Chapel of the Day and Carter Mortuary with Rev. J. Stevan Manley officiating. Burial followed in the Green Hill Cemetery. ■



**RICKY CHRISTMAN NAMED ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AT TREVECCA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY**

*Ricky Christman (BRE '90)* has been appointed Associate Vice President and Dean of the School for Graduate and Continuing Studies



(SGCS) at Trevecca Nazarene University. In his new role, Christman will provide direct and collaborative leadership for all facets of non-traditional academics, advising, and registration.

Subsequent to his graduation from GBS, he earned two master's degrees and an EdD from Indiana Wesleyan University, where he also served as the Associate Director for the Center for Life Calling and Leadership and Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies. For the past eight years he has served at Ohio Christian University in multiple roles ranging from professor to department chair and senior administrator, ending his tenure as Assistant Provost. Additionally, he has 24 years of ministry experience in The Wesleyan Church. He and his wife, **Cheri (Manning) (GBS HS '82)** live in Jackson, OH.

**GOLD STAR MARRIAGE**

**Mark Eckart (BA '83)**, current superintendent of the Indiana South District of The Wesleyan Church and former GBS employee (1984-97), recently completed a new project,



commissioning weekend

MAY 19-21

commencement  
Saturday, May 20, 10:00 a.m.

reflections on 22 years  
Sunday, May 21, 10:30 a.m.  
Outgoing President Michael Avery

installation  
Sunday, May 21, 3:30 p.m.  
Incoming President Rodney Loper

*Aldersgate* FORUM ||| October 24-26, 2017

*"Gender Identity and Gay Marriage: Speaking the Truth in Love"*

Higher Ground Conference & Retreat Center, West Harrison, IN  
Early Registration Fee: \$150 • [www.qbs.edu/forum-signup](http://www.qbs.edu/forum-signup)

*Gold Star Marriage*. It is an assessment tool to evaluate marriage that consists of a 24-question overview dealing with being FAITHFUL, an acronym representing the topics Faithful, Attitude, Intercession, Touch, Helpmate, Fun, Understanding, and Love. Each of these topics has three questions and the participants are asked to rate their marriage from one to five in the categories.



It takes about 15 to 20 minutes for each marriage partner to separately work through the *Gold Star Marriage Handbook*. Then they can compare notes to see what their strengths and weaknesses are in the marriage. The idea is to celebrate what the couple is doing well, and then commit to work on areas of weakness.

Also included are the three famous New Testament passages

dealing with marriage along with an inductive approach for studying these passages as a couple. Eckart uses the LEAP program he developed: Look, Examine, Add, and Practice, and he gives an example of its use.

Pastors are encouraged to preach or teach about marriage and the family and then use *Gold Star Marriage* as a follow up to their emphasis on this crucial topic. It comes with recommendations from Dr. Wayne Schmidt (General Superintendent, The Wesleyan Church), Richard Miles (Licensed Certified Counselor and GBS Vice President), and others. For more information, visit [www.markeckart.com](http://www.markeckart.com) or call Mark at 812.865.3979. ■

*We encourage our alumni to send updates and pictures of their lives and ministries. Email these to Keith Waggoner I at [w.ministries@comcast.net](mailto:w.ministries@comcast.net).*



# 1810 SUSTAINING DONORS

## Honor Roll

Special thanks to the alumni & friends of GBSC who gave to the 1810 Sustaining Donors program in 2016! Your monthly giving makes our ministry possible!

Thank You!

- Jeffrey Albertson ('15)
- Rowen & Janet Albertson
- Floyd Amburn
- Joshua ('02) & Faith ('03-'05) Avery
- Michael ('79) & Ruth ('80) Avery
- Tommy Banks ('76)
- Melissa Nichole Barr ('12)
- Glenn ('74) & Sharon ('70) Black
- Gary Bowell
- Rachel Boyd
- William ('65) & Sally ('64) Bramble
- David ('71) & Donna ('69) Brown
- Philip & Marianne Brown
- Daniel ('89) & Vicki ('88-'89) Bubb
- Steve ('02) & Mandy ('03) Buckland
- Mark ('95-'97) & Jana ('98) Burley
- Alfred Burroughs
- John ('77) & Aneita ('77) Burroughs
- Janet Burton
- Judie Burton
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- Anna Calhoun ('15)
- John Caster
- Harry Caylor
- James Chew
- Joseph & Patricia Christian
- Reo & Erma Clark
- Ronald & Joyce ('67) Clark
- Jeffrey Clarke
- Ambrose ('47) & Betty Clemens  
[Paul Clemens ('81)]
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- Jack Cooke
- Robert & Sandra Cox
- Chris & Julie Cravens
- Shane ('12) & Tamra Craycraft
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- Harry & Barbara Crouse
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- Larry ('56) & Betty ('56) Dahlberg
- Craig ('79) & Jo ('77) Dahler
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- Maggie Sosby
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- David & Nadine Spaugh
- Thomas & Evelyn Spoonamore
- Sproles Family Funeral Home
- Tom ('87-'89) & Mary Beth ('87) Sproles
- David Stearns ('94)
- Kent ('15) & Jananne Stetler
- Maria Stetler ('12)
- Linda Strunk
- Glen Thaxton
- Franklin & Charlene Thompson
- Jim & Anna Tremaine
- Teresa Troyer ('16)
- Nic ('08) & Heidi ('14) Turner
- George ('74) & Ruth ('63) Vernon
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- Steve ('78) & Kay ('83) Vernon
- Stephen Veyon ('87)
- Kerry ('87) & Wanda ('87) Viehdorfer
- N. Keith ('74) & Sharon ('75) Waggoner
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## Dear Phil

## ILLUMINATION BY THE SPIRIT Part 2

*If I pray for illumination, does the Spirit always illumine me? Is there some evidence of the Holy Spirit's illuminating a passage? When can I say the Holy Spirit has illumined something to me? —Brandon*

Dear Brandon,

Praying for illumination does not guarantee the reception of illumination (James 4:3). It does make it more likely. I know of no sure-fire evidence that the Holy Spirit has illumined a person. The Holy Spirit never contradicts Himself, so any claim to illumination that contradicts Scripture is a false claim. The fact that many Christians hold contradictory understandings of Scripture also indicates that the Holy Spirit has not illumined all of them.

Scripture does not tell us exactly how the Spirit illumines us. Very rarely, the Spirit directly reveals the meaning of a text to a person apart from any particular thinking or study on their part, e.g., by sending an angel to explain it (Dan. 10). Most often, the Spirit provides opportunity for people to learn skills in language, logic, and literature, and then aids them in the application of those skills (Acts 8:31-35). This is one reason why careful study of Scripture, usually in a formal educational setting, is necessary preparation for faithful preaching and teaching of God's word (2 Tim. 2:2, 15). When God's word is rightly preached and taught, God's people are illumined.

Psalm 119:18 teaches us to pray that our eyes would be opened to see wondrous things in God's word (cf. 2 Tim. 2:7). Precisely what needs to be illumined has often been discussed. The Spirit illumines us to at least the following four aspects of Scripture: *explicit meaning*, *implicit meaning*, *personal relevance*, and *practical implementation*.

First, **explicit meaning** is the meaning intended by the words the Holy Spirit inspired. Peter tells us that there are things in Scripture that are hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:16), and the Hebrew writer says one must be spiritually mature to benefit from some aspects ("meat") of Scripture (Heb. 5:10-14). Peter says it is the "ignorant and unstable" who distort difficult texts to their own and others' hurt (2 Pet. 3:16). We need the Spirit's help to understand its hard parts.

Second, **implicit meaning** is the unstated meaning intended by the words the Holy Spirit inspired. There is a great deal that Scripture doesn't say in black and white. Nonetheless, God expects us to infer its implicit meaning. Examples include the continued existence of dead saints (Matt. 22:31-32), other non-listed works of the flesh (Gal. 5:21), and

the necessity of suffering for the Messiah (Luke 24:25-27).

As we seek to understand Scripture's implicit meaning, we must distinguish between necessary and potential conclusions. A necessary conclusion is one required by the data. For example, if (a) All Scripture is God speaking, and (b) God always speaks truth, then necessarily (c) All Scripture is truth. Necessary conclusions from Scripture are part of its divinely intended meaning. A potential conclusion is one permitted by the data but not required. For example, the biblical data about baptism permits the conclusion that it should be by immersion but does not require that conclusion. We must never treat potential conclusions as if they have the same level of importance or certainty that necessary conclusions have.

Third, by **personal relevance**, I mean seeing how Scripture relates to my life (Rom. 15:4). It is a common experience among believers to have read and understood a passage of Scripture many times, but then, for the first time, to see how it relates to them.

Finally, by **practical implementation** I mean understanding the steps we need to take to obey God's word. Sometimes we know what to do (e.g., pray), but need help knowing how to do it (Luke 11:1).

I pray for illumination daily (Psa. 86:11; 90:14; 119:18, 36), read all of Scripture yearly, seek to use the tools of language and logic responsibly, regularly check my thinking against the Church's historical consensus, both ancient and modern, and trust that the Holy Spirit is illumining me. As you do these things, you can expect to be taught by the Spirit. ■

Blessings,  
Philip

*A. Philip Brown II is the graduate program director and a member of the ministerial faculty at God's Bible School and College.*



## student focus

### OK TO “IMPROVE” ESV

Crossway, the publisher of the English Standard Version Bible translation (ESV), had said in September 2016 that the current ESV would be maintained as it is for posterity in hope that in so doing the ESV would be a “uniformly standard translation” similar to the status enjoyed by the King James Version. However, the publisher now says it will continue to make updates and improvements based on biblical scholarship.

### STUDY: “GROWING” AND “DECLINING” CHURCHES

Researchers interviewed 2,225 churchgoers and 29 clergy members in Ontario, Canada. They defined “growing churches” as those with an annual growth rate of at least 2% per year over the preceding 10-year period, and “declining churches” as those with an average annual decline of 2% or more during the same period.

Their study found that growing churches held more firmly to the traditional beliefs of Christianity and were more diligent in prayer and Bible reading. In fact, 71% of clergy in growing churches read the Bible daily, while only 19% of clergy in declining churches did so. Also, 100% of clergy in growing churches said it was “very important to encourage non-Christians to become Christians,” compared to

only 50% of clergy in declining churches who said the same. Congregants of growing churches also read their Bibles, prayed more, and were more committed to evangelism. See study at [rdcu.be/nyf5](http://rdcu.be/nyf5).

### FOUR IN TEN MILLENNIALS RELIGIOUSLY UNAFFILIATED

A recent survey by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 25% of the American population is now religiously unaffiliated, a number which includes 39% of young people aged 18-29. PRRI also said these non-believers could be separated into three categories: rejectionists, apatheists, and unattached believers. Rejectionists (58% of the unaffiliated) believe religion as a whole does more harm than good in society. Apatheists (22%) believe religion generally is more socially helpful than harmful. Finally, unattached believers (18%) say religion is important to them personally.

### WAR ON MARRIAGE

The Pope confirmed that there is a “war on marriage” and further warned that “today you do not destroy with weapons, you destroy with ideas.” One of the ideas being used in this battle is “gender theory,” which he called “a great enemy of marriage.” He called marriage “the most beautiful thing that God has created.” ■

**AKASHI NISHIGATA** heard positive things about God’s Bible School from friends. As he was interested in both intellectual and spiritual education, he decided to make the trip from Japan to the US. At the age of 18, God had called him to be a youth pastor, and he was convinced that GBS would equip him for this ministry.

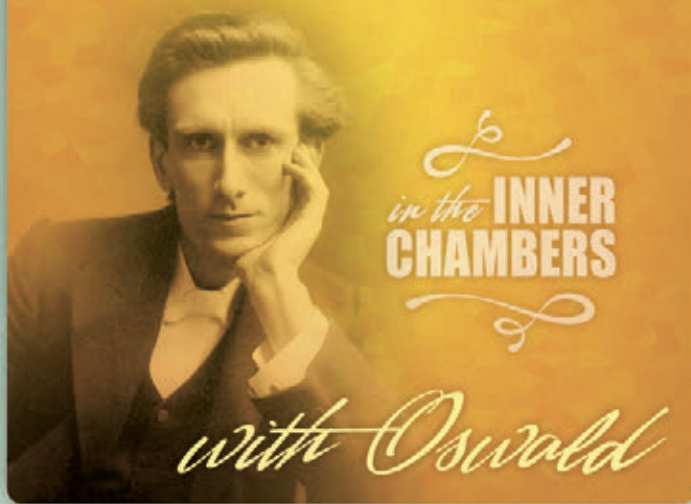
He was not disappointed. He “increased his knowledge of the Bible and how to apply it to his life and practical experiences.” He enjoys the Schmul Ministerial Library, which contains theology books, histories, and biblical references. As a ministerial student, he has a key allowing him unlimited access to this special library and study area. It is his “favorite thing at GBS.”

According to Akashi, “success is following God’s calling.” Although he sets ministry goals, he realizes that it is God’s goals which ultimately matter. Upon graduation, Akashi plans to return to Japan to be a youth pastor. ■

*Seventy-five percent of our students receive some form of financial aid which enables them to attend GBS. If you would like to support students with financial needs, you may send a gift to:*

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Following are favorite quotations from Oswald Chambers and comments from our readers about how the writings of Chambers have influenced them. Send your submissions to [kfarmer@gbs.edu](mailto:kfarmer@gbs.edu) for inclusion throughout 2017, the year which marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Chambers. We reserve the right to edit and condense as needed. —KF

“Wherever the providence of God may dump us down—in a slum, in a shop, in the desert—we have to labour along the line of His direction. Never allow this thought: ‘I am of no use where I am,’ because you certainly can be of no use where you are not! Wherever He has engineered your circumstances, pray.” (*So Send I You*) (p.1325)\*

MARICKA HERRER  
Duivelskloof, South Africa

About twenty years ago, a friend of mine gave me a copy of *My Utmost for His Highest*. Through the following years, I have read this daily devotional. Recently, I was reading the section “Getting Into God’s Stride” (October 12), based on Genesis 5:24 where, “Enoch walked with God.” The last part of that devotional really spoke to me. Here is how he describes that process, “Getting into God’s stride means nothing less than oneness with Him. It takes a long time to get there, but keep at it. Don’t give up because the pain is intense right now—get on with it, and before long you will find that you have a new vision and a new purpose.” (p.833)\*

When I was a student at GBS, I was unaware of how famous Chambers and his writings were around the world. What a privilege it was for GBS and Oswald Chambers to team up to advance the Kingdom of God!

MARK ECKART  
Orleans, IN

The talks on Job in *Baffled to Fight Better* were first delivered to soldiers in Egypt against the backdrop of WWI. Chambers said “there is no room for veneer and pretense in camp life.” (p.85)\* This book, perhaps more than any other, has taught me how to (try to) “let God be God” when life turns unexpected.

#### When my world crashes

“There are things in our heavenly Father’s dealings with us which have no immediate explanation. There are inexplicable providences which test us to the limit and prove that rationalism is a mere mental pose.” (p.47)\*

“Give God ‘elbow room’; let Him come into His universe as He pleases. If we confine God in His working to religious people or to certain ways, we place ourselves on an equality with God.” (p.51)\*

“Will I trust the revelation given of God by Jesus Christ when everything in my personal experience flatly contradicts it?” (p.57)\*

“The only thing to do is to be reverent with what we do not understand. The basis of things is tragic; therefore, God must find the way out or there is no way out.” (p.67)\*

#### When my experience does not fit my creed

“Remember what Job’s creed was. Job believed that God prospered and blessed the up-right man.” (p.46)\*

There is “the danger of putting theology first; it leads a man to tell a lie in order to be consistent with his point of view.” (p.61)\*

“Are we going to remain true to our religious convictions or to the God who lives behind them?” (p.62)\*

“Remain steadfastly true to what you have learned, and when you have to suspend your judgment, say it is suspended...” (p.65)\* But watch for the chance of getting fresh light on the matter.” (p.63)\*

DAVID ESLINGER  
Collinsville, OK

Instead of giving flowers or get-well cards to believers and non-believers while in the hospital, I give them a copy of *My Utmost for His Highest*. Patients and those sitting in the hospital with the patient find the book is tremendous reading and help.

WALTER HEDSTROM  
Pell City, AL



## WANTED: GODLY EXAMPLES!

by Allan P. Brown, Chair

GBS Division of Ministerial Education

**Scripture: Philippians 3:17-21**

***“Bothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.” (Phil. 3:17 ESV)***

The church at Philippi was in a unique situation. The city was a Roman colony located in Macedonia (modern Greece), about 800 miles from Rome, the capital of the dominant world power. Rome had conquered most of the known world and her armies had built roads to connect the various conquered nations. Philippi had a legal status that few other cities had: it was a Roman colony. It practiced Roman customs, was governed by Roman law, and therefore most of its inhabitants enjoyed Roman citizenship. A Roman could go to Philippi and feel right at home.

Paul is writing to the Christians living in Philippi and telling them, “As much as you value your Roman citizenship, you have a higher status than that—you are citizens of heaven!” (3:20). “Just as your Roman citizenship greatly affects the way you live, even more should your heavenly citizenship affect how you live. Don’t give way to the temptation to live like the people around you. Instead, pick out the people who properly model the Christian life and follow their example of Christian living.”

In the passage under consideration, Paul commands believers to choose godly examples as models (3:17). He then exhorts them not to live as people of this world live (3:18-19). Then Paul reminds the be-

lievers at Philippi of their future hope as citizens of heaven: receiving resurrected bodies just like Jesus’ glorious body (3:20-21).

### **I. A command to pick godly examples to follow (Phil. 3:17).**

Paul gives a two-fold command: (1) “be imitators of me,” and (2) “keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.” Paul is urging the Christians of Philippi to mimic his values and lifestyle, and to identify other Christians who model the truths Paul is teaching in his letter.

This is not the first time in his letters that Paul urged believers to imitate his life (see 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thes. 3:7-9). Of course, Paul’s emphasis is on imitating his life as he imitates Christ—no egotism intended, for he says clearly that there are other good examples available.

***Who qualifies as a godly example to imitate?*** To find an answer, one need not look further than the chapters and verses that precede this command. A brief review of what Paul has written up to this point reveals at least 15 desirable qualities. One should look for a person:

- Whose love for God and others abounds yet more and more in knowledge and discernment (1:9).
- Whose life is pure and blameless (1:10). (Please understand that “blameless” is not identical to “faultless.” Everyone has flaws and faults. “Blameless” means that from God’s point-of-view the person’s motives are pure, and from a human point-of-view no one can rightly say, “You did me wrong and never attempted to make it right.”)
- Who is filled with the fruit of righteousness (1:11).
- Whose sincere goal is for Christ to be magnified (exalted) in his body by the way that he lives (1:20).
- Who would rather die than to disobey or disappoint Christ (1:21).
- Who is not self-willed or contentious, able to get along harmoniously with other Christians (1:27).
- Who is not intimidated or terrified by worldly opposition (1:28).
- Who is not afraid to suffer for Jesus because of his obedience to Scripture (1:29).
- Who is of the same mind, maintaining the same love, and united in spirit with the other members of the church (2:2).
- Who is not motivated by selfish ambition or conceit, but regards others as better (more important) than himself (2:3-4).

- Who seeks to think like Christ in reference to himself and in service to others (2:5-11).
- Who lives without complaining (grumbling) or arguing (2:14).
- Who is blameless and pure, a child of God without blemish though living in a crooked and perverse society (2:15).
- Who holds fast to (obey) God's Word no matter what happens (2:16).
- Who continually walks in the light God has given him (3:16).

If, as you read the criteria, you feel that you do not measure up to one or more of them, don't be discouraged. Rather, encourage yourself by realizing that you now have one or more biblical goals to pray about and clearly defined attitudes and behaviors for which to strive.

Any Scriptural description of how a Christian is to think or behave is more than just a "target" to shoot for! By the power of the Holy Spirit, by the discipline of engrafting God's Word in your heart, and by fasting and prayer, one can be assured that they are attainable in this life. Purpose that, by God's grace, you will become a godly example whom others can safely imitate!

## **II. An exhortation not to live as people of this world live (Phil. 3:18-19).**

### **A. To live like the world is to be an enemy of the cross of Christ (3:18).**

The "cross of Christ" speaks to us of forgiveness of sins and of the necessity of death to self-centeredness. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). In the first century, the "cross" was not understood as a "burden" to bear, but as an instrument the Romans used to execute people brutally. When Jesus spoke of taking up His cross daily and following Him, He was speaking of the absolute requirement of total obedience to God's Word. From the moment of our conversion and new birth until we breathe our final breath, following Jesus requires our obedience. A person who deliberately chooses not to obey parts of Scripture he or she does not like or feels are optional is choosing to be disobedient and so becomes an enemy of the cross of Christ.

### **B. To live like the world is to face spiritual destruction (3:19).**

The phrase "their god is their belly" can be confusing. Is Paul speaking of Judiazers who were insist-

ing on the food laws and circumcision to be saved or focusing on the sin of gluttony? The majority of commentaries do not believe so. Perhaps it would be best to understand the phrase "their god is their belly" as a reference to the fleshly appetites that allure people to adopt worldly (unbiblical) lifestyles. This view would not only encompass the allure of food, but would also include the appetites of our mind and emotions. Anything can become a "god" to us if it supplants the place in our schedules, recreational pursuits, or priorities that rightfully belongs to God. We must take Paul's warning seriously and allow God to show us any corrections we need to make to our schedules, our goals, or our behavior.

## **III. As citizens of heaven we have a future hope (Phil. 3:20-21).**

### **A. Our citizenship is in heaven (3:20a).**

Paul reminds the Christians at Philippi that their citizenship is in heaven. This truth, as already stated, would have rich meaning to the Philippians. It would remind them that their ultimate loyalty is to King Jesus. He expects His people to live by Kingdom truth and to keep their spiritual perspective focused on obeying in all things.

### **B. When Jesus returns, He will transform our bodies to be like His glorious resurrected body (3:20b-21).**

Paul reminds the Philippian Christians that their body is destined for eternity. When Jesus returns, He will transform the bodies of believers into the likeness of His glorious body! This truth should help Christians in their struggle against the fleshly appetites that war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11).

In closing, the problem is that too many Christians, when asked, "Do you consider yourself to be a godly example for others to use as a model for their attitudes and actions?" demur by saying, "You had better keep your eyes on Jesus and use Him as your model! I'm only human, a broken and flawed human at that, so don't use me as your model!"

Dear reader, don't you know that if someone professes to be a Christian, people around them, whether Christian or non-Christian, expect different behavior from them? God wants each Christian to align his or her life to the teaching of Scripture and learn how to be a godly example for others to follow. May God help each of us to be a godly example for others to follow. ■



## SELF-CENTEREDNESS

by President-Elect Rodney Loper

We hear the words “selfishness” and “self-centeredness” in sermons and are reminded that there is an inclination within us that likes to be coddled and caressed or, frankly, just left alone. This is not something that has to be taught; it is stamped deeply into our fallen nature. This has been the “default mode” since sin entered the race.

This inward bent towards self is evident from our earliest days—the wail of an infant who “wants it now,” or a toddler lying on the supermarket floor kicking and screaming. Manifestations continue throughout life: a teen doing it his way; a married couple deciding that their marriage isn’t worth it; a grandpa giving in to grumpiness.

Before you ease your conscience by listening to the inner voice as it says, “That isn’t you,” bear in mind that selfishness is a master of pretense. Its costumes are vast and varied, enabling it to do a masterful job of disguising its motives. Selfishness is great at parsing words and walking a tightrope of veracity in its quest to appear what it is not. It is a great personal persuader, providing justification for why our inclinations are pure, genuine, just, and even spiritual. If you need someone to take your side, you don’t have to look far—just look within for a ready defense. Worried about conflict of interest? You won’t find it here—self always looks out for self! That voice in your ear suggesting that you are off the hook is likely the very culprit.

What is the answer? In his overarching call to discipleship, Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” Culture pushes and even praises selfishness, but, as usual, this is the opposite of what God intends for us. Jesus makes it very clear in this passage as he gives us three commands to follow:

**“Deny yourself.”** In context, this denial of self is not something we do daily. It is a final “no” to self and all its interests. Until we get to the place where we are willing to reject anything that fosters self, we will never live as Christ intended for us to live.

**“Take up your cross.”** We have made the cross a status symbol. However, in Jesus’ time, it was not something to wear around your neck or hang on your wall. It represented death. Jesus’ command is a clarion call to totally identify with Christ—even at the expense of shame, ridicule, or death.

**“Follow me.”** Self wants to go its own direction. Jesus says, “follow me.” The only way to follow Christ completely is to disown self and humbly follow Him.

While Jesus’ call to discipleship is clear, it is not automatic, easy, or natural...but it is necessary! ■

## **SYMPHONIC WIND AND STRING ENSEMBLE SPRING TOUR**

**March 31, Friday, 7:00 PM**  
Troy Holiness Church  
1224 S. Main, Troy, MO  
Steve Oliver, pastor  
(636) 528-4359

**April 1, Saturday, 6:00 PM**  
Bible Holiness Church  
13th and Cottonwood, Independence, KS  
Joe Davolt, pastor  
(620) 330-6771

**April 2, Sunday, 10:50 AM**  
Wesleyan Bible Church  
6600 S. 33rd West Ave., Tulsa, OK  
Mike Yancey, Jr., pastor  
(918) 640-9629

**April 2, Sunday, 6:00 PM**  
Calvary Bible Fellowship Church  
6606 NW 16th St., Oklahoma City, OK  
Mark Calderon, pastor  
(405) 789-6221

**April 3, Monday, 7:00 PM**  
Mt. Zion Church of God (Holiness) (Mt. Zion Bible School)  
Ava, MO (Go two miles north from Ava on HWY 5, turn  
left on B Highway, go two miles to church on the left.)  
Robert Thompson, Jr., pastor  
(417) 686-0048

**April 4, Tuesday, 7:00 PM**  
Moberly Independent Holiness Church  
349 Woodland Ave., Moberly, MO  
Terrie Hay, pastor  
(660) 414-7912

**April 5, Wednesday, 7:00 PM**  
Calvary Bible Methodist Church  
4465 N. Fortville Pike, Greenfield, IN  
Michael Mater, pastor  
(317) 468-8699

# **SYMPHONIC WIND AND STRING ENSEMBLE**

**2017  
TOUR**

