

Enhancing Communication in Sermons through Illustration
Reverend Larry Booze

ABSTRACT

The project proposed to create a seminar to address a lack by Assemblies of God ministers in Illinois in the area of sermon illustrating. Two factors were identified as contributing to this: (1) a failure to appreciate the value of and biblical precedent for illustration use and (2) insufficient training in illustration techniques.

To address these factors, research was conducted in three biblical areas: (1) Old Testament historical narratives, (2) Jesus' parables, and (3) Paul's illustrative material. The biblical studies revealed the great value placed on illustrations by the biblical writers setting a precedent for their continued use. Research was also conducted in the literature. This was done to discover effective illustration techniques. This portion of the study focused on the value of illustrations, guidelines and techniques for their effective delivery, specific types of illustrations (stories, personal anecdotes, and humorous illustrations), and the filing of illustrations.

The seminar was presented to the Central Section of the Illinois District of the Assemblies of God. Survey instruments were designed to assess the participants prior to the seminar, immediately following the seminar, and at the 1-month mark as to their perception of the value of and biblical precedents for illustrating and as to their appreciation for effective illustration techniques.

The surveys indicated an increase in appreciation for illustrating and a desire to use illustrations more frequently as a result of exposure in the seminar to the biblical and the literature studies

**A Training Seminar to Assist International Student Ministry Staff
Regarding Post Academic Transition**
Reverend Barry Chole

ABSTRACT

Ministering among university students involves many challenges. A major concern of international students deals with transitioning to their post academic lives. Cultural issues, entry, and re-entry stresses, and the effort to practice newly developed spiritual disciplines result in real concerns. Students who have become Christians while in their host culture face an added concern of understanding their role in God's global mission and how their faith will be reflected in their lives while in post academic transition.

Consequently, the purpose of the project was to train staff of international student ministries to help international students prepare for a positive post academic adjustment. The project seminar for international student ministry staff regarding post academic transition, with accompanying resource materials, had the following goals: (1) to increase awareness of God's mission, (2) to inform staff of available resource tools, (3) to increase awareness of and provide contact information for global networks to assist in post-academic transitions, and (4) to heighten awareness of the needs of international students during this transition.

The seminar was presented to ninety-five international student ministry staff at Wheaton College, in Wheaton, Illinois. The seminar was intentionally designed to follow a conference of the Association of Christians Ministering among Internationals (ACMI) to maximize the training opportunity. The project design involved the administration of a pretest and posttest instrument for gaining evaluative data to determine the effectiveness of the seminar to meet the stated goals. Additional evaluations were administered after the seminar to provide feedback for the entire seminar and each individual seminar component. The seminar components included the

following sessions: (1) discovering a role in God's mission, (2) understanding issues involved with transition and international students, (3) re-entry issues, (4) issues of preparation for departure and methods of follow-up after the student's new placement, (5) identifying opportunities for connecting international students with global networks, (6) identifying visa and immigration issues, and (7) a panel of former international students.

The findings of the project confirm that the seminar successfully attained each of the stated goals, and resulted in a resource and network for assisting international students experiencing post academic transition.

**An Evaluation of the Indiana Plan: Using Presbyters
to Nurture Relationships Among Ministers**
Reverend Robert Cook

ABSTRACT

This project will examine and evaluate a new system of organizational structure designed and implemented by the Indiana District Council of the Assemblies of God in 2000. The Indiana District, with 241 churches within its area, is part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, which numbers over 12,000 churches in the United States.

Since its early years of development, the Assemblies of God has organized itself by geographical regions called districts, which often follow state boundaries. Within those districts, further organizational structure has evolved with geographical areas within the districts called sections. Each section has always elected its own leader, called a sectional presbyter. That presbyter, who normally also serves as the senior pastor of a church within the section, is typically given administrative oversight of the section's churches and credentialed ministers. The portfolio of the minister would include oversight of all district-affiliated churches (churches that are not self-governing), assisting the district officers in any disciplinary matters among ministers of the section, and organization of regular ministers' meetings.

In 1999 the officers of the Indiana District surveyed their ministers, in which they found that the typical minister was not attending sectional meetings on a regular basis and felt a certain level of disconnectedness from the section and district. It seemed that the priority of relationship-building among the section's ministers was being neglected by the typical presbyter.

Because of these findings, the Indiana District began the process of sweeping change regarding its district and sectional program. In January 2001, the district revised its Constitution and Bylaws to completely dissolve the geographical boundaries of its sections. All sectional

offices, whether elected or appointed, were also dissolved.

In place of the old structure, a new plan was adopted. All administrative and disciplinary matters would now be handled by an expanded executive presbytery board. In addition, twenty-eight new presbyters were appointed, with their primary function being the nurturing of relationships between the eight to ten pastors assigned to them. Monthly meetings, called ministry groups, were organized to meet at least ten times per year. Spouses of pastors were included, and meetings included relationship-building exercises, with some discussion focused on equipping for effective ministry.

This project will give a detailed description of this radical change brought about by the Indiana District. This change is the first ever attempted on this scale by a district within the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Statistical results will be shared, along with an evaluation of the new structure.

**Managing Conflict Situations at the CoxHealth Trauma Center:
Understanding and Responding to the Difficult Family**
Reverend Larry Cooper

ABSTRACT

This project is the development of a workshop that assists the CoxHealth emergency department and trauma center supervisors identify potential conflict situations with family members and provide appropriate interventions with the goal of enhancing patient care. The family plays an important role—positive or negative—in the patient’s recovery; therefore, the emergency and trauma center staff must create an environment in which the family feels psychologically and physically safe and are thus able to participate positively in the patient’s care. This family-centered approach is not new; rather, it is the extension of patient-centered care already established by the hospital.

The first major phase of the project develops a biblical understanding of and response to conflict. The study includes biblical examples of healthy and unhealthy responses to conflict, biblical principles of reducing potential conflict, and a biblical model of caring for chaplains and caregivers.

The second major phase reviews current literature pertaining to family conflicts within the trauma system. It addresses changes in societal norms of family definition, family-centered care, identification of difficult families, predictable conflict cycles (healthy and unhealthy), conflict management styles, short-term interventions, and the care of the family from notification to their arrival at the hospital.

The third phase is the actual workshop where the participants gain insight into definitions of and insights on conflict, as well as personal conflict management styles. The workshop provides feedback from the attendees with the use of surveys—pre-workshop, post-workshop,

and a two-week follow up. The workshop design allows the participants to receive Missouri nursing credits and trauma credits as part of the professional continuing education requirements.

The findings from the composite scores reveal that the workshop was effective and immediate application was made not only in care of the families but also to patients, staff, and departments. Each survey showed increased retention of the content. The provision of resource materials and the immediate application of the concepts to real-life situations enhanced this retention.

The staff can continually improve their care-giving skills by understanding the dynamics of crisis and conflict, and conflict management styles. Though conflict in some relationships is inevitable, the conflict does not necessarily have to escalate to hostile confrontation. A better understanding of their strengths and limitations enables the staff to address the difficult family competently.

Leading the Pentecostal Worship Service
Reverend David DeGarmo

ABSTRACT

This project centers on the Church's effort to become an authentic worshipping community in the midst of cultural change. Opinions coalesce around two poles: cultural relevance and cultural distinctiveness. I recommend that churches and their leaders adopt a both/and and not an either/or stance. Churches that disregard their cultural context risk their future by refusing to adapt methodologically. Likewise, churches bent solely on cultural relevance, put their future at risk by adapting so much of the culture that they cease to be a people that uniquely belong to God. Scripture provides necessary theological footing for the Church to resist both syncretism and traditionalism, pursuing both relevance and distinctiveness with equal vigor.

This project developed a college course, *Leading the Worship Service*, which grounds students in Scripture and exposes them to the various models of worship that seek to provide authentic worship within an emerging postmodern context. It aims to develop leaders with discernment, who display the flexibility required to adapt to changing cultural realities, but also speak prophetically against the idolatries inherent in any human culture. This course gave special attention to the contribution of Pentecostal theology and spirituality.

At the conclusion of the highly interactive course, students displayed a developing ability to lead a worship service that seriously attempts to integrate relevance and biblical distinctives. Leaders in training benefited from worship education that treated theological as well as practical concerns.

**Women's Ministries for the 21st Century:
A Multi-generational Model**
Reverend Kay Gross

ABSTRACT

This project was designed to prepare the local leadership of Assemblies of God Women's Ministries in Ohio to minister more effectively to women of all generations. A seminar was created that dealt with generational issues and offered tools and strategies designed to attract and retain women of every age. These sessions increased awareness of the difficulties and opportunities inherent in ministry to the various generations and enabled leaders to create local programs that appeal to and meet the needs of multiple generations.

In order to understand the practical issues affecting today's ministry to women, insights were gleaned from leaders of Women's Ministries both inside and outside the Assemblies of God through discussion, books, websites, and personal observation. In addition, an appreciative inquiry questionnaire was sent to local Women's Ministries Coordinators in Ohio and district Women's Ministries directors throughout the United States. Through this investigation, the questionnaires and the study of salient literature, a greater understanding was reached concerning effective ministry to all generations.

This project brought qualitative growth to the participants of a seminar entitled, *Reaching the Generations*. The project findings confirm that those who attended the seminar gained highly significant assistance in understanding the needs and demands of each generation as well as practical ideas for creating a Women's Ministries that appeals to each generation.

**A Pentecostal Approach to Christian Witness
in a Postmodern World**
Reverend James Hatch

ABSTRACT

This project sought to improve the confidence of a group of people interested in Christian witness in the current postmodern setting of North America. A seminar was planned and conducted on a Saturday morning, May 4, 2002, at South Coast Christian Assembly in San Juan Capistrano, California. The idea behind the seminar was that a Pentecostal model for Christian witness might produce more confidence than typical evangelical models. The nature of the project did not allow for comparison: the project only looked at the effectiveness of the seminar training.

A one-day seminar examined the roots of postmodernism and its effects on current culture. The seminar then considered how Luke presented Christian witness in his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, with related material from the writings of Peter and Paul. The seminar concluded with a presentation of the ways Pentecostals could reach their culture while being faithful to Scripture and their tradition.

A survey measured the effectiveness of the seminar and looked at issues of comfort and self-esteem, particularly in the context of Christian witness. The same survey instrument was given before the seminar, immediately after the seminar, and two months later. Results of the surveys indicated growth in confidence of the participants.

The project offered an illustration of how Pentecostals may be better prepared to engage the postmodern world than they might think. The seminar provided this by looking at Christian witness and postmodernism through Pentecostal eyes.

**Equipping and Empowering the People of God:
Developing the People of God through Team Leadership and Ministry**
Reverend Michael Jaffe

ABSTRACT

According to its mandates, Central Bible College exists “to educate and train ministers and missionaries.” Since its founding in 1922, it has sought to meet the need of the Assemblies of God fellowship for qualified men and women to serve in various capacities of full time ministry. The institution presently offers twenty-one majors for the expressed purpose to prepare individuals for a variety of specialized ministries in the church.

The *Pastoral Theology I* course of study is required for all but one of the school’s twenty-one majors. The focus of *Pastoral Theology I* combines a study of leadership and administration with an overview of church government and Assemblies of God polity. While the course has for some time provided students with needed understandings and perspectives, it has traditionally considered leadership largely from a hierarchical point of view.

The church’s dependence on hierarchical leadership has been a contributing factor in bringing about some unintended consequences. One of these unintended consequences is the underutilization of its greatest resource, its people. In most 21st century churches, the majority of people are mere attendees who possess little understanding of their roles in the ministry. These people are generally satisfied to remain passive while professional ministers and a few dedicated lay people provide the services necessary to their spiritual well being.

The project *Equipping and Empowering the People of God: Developing the People of God through Team Leadership and Ministry* seeks to provide future leaders with a theological perspective of the people of God, as well as a fundamental understanding of the process of

discipleship and leadership training. It proposes to utilize the venue of the current *Pastoral Theology I* course as a means of helping Central Bible College accomplish this goal.

Research for the project examined biblical theological and practical theological considerations. Important emphases included: (1) a biblical understanding of the people of God, (2) biblical examples of teams and teamwork, (3) strengths and weaknesses of hierarchies and teams, and (4) empowering people in the local church. An additional aspect of the research involved interviewing district officials, church consultants, and pastors.

The academic and empirical research became the basis for a unit of study within the *Pastoral Theology I* course. The unit comprised ten fifty minute sessions which were taught during the fall, 2003 semester. During the presentation of the material, the seventy-eight students who made up the class were free to interact with the various aspects of the study. A pretest and post test surveyed students' attitudes and philosophies of leadership before and after the unit offering. A proposal to reconfigure the *Pastoral Theology I* course to include much of the unit's contents will ultimately be presented.

**A Comprehensive Strategy to Attract Generation X Servicemembers
to a Military Chapel Worship Service**

Reverend Douglas Kinder

ABSTRACT

This project identified and implemented specific steps to transform a traditional chapel worship service at the Ord Military Community Chapel into a contemporary worship format, to appeal to Generation X servicemembers and their families. When I became senior pastor of this chapel, the congregation was comprised almost entirely of retired military and their spouses. Active duty servicemembers were not attracted to this service, despite living within a two-mile radius of the chapel.

A survey was introduced at weekly Defense Language Institute newcomer orientations for twenty-two weeks. Survey results revealed servicemembers found military chapel worship services irrelevant and having little value. An overwhelming majority of respondents were not attending any church service. Many others visited various churches occasionally but had not found a home church.

During the course of two years at the Ord Military Community chapel, staff and parish council developed a comprehensive strategy to reach active duty servicemembers, focusing on contemporary music and relevant messages. Discipleship, fellowship, community, and evangelism initiatives were also introduced in order to create an atmosphere attractive to young families.

This project successfully brought quantitative growth to the congregation and more significantly, it transformed the composition from predominantly retirees to over 70 percent active servicemembers and their families.

**Beyond the Indigenous Church: A Biblical Model for Leadership
Development for the Assemblies of God in sub-Saharan Africa**
Reverend Bill Kirsch

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to develop a leadership institute to train African leaders in biblically informed leadership patterns. The goal is to shift attitudes about leadership from a culturally based to a biblically based standard. Current leadership practices were examined as well as the challenges African leaders continue to face as a result of exponential church growth.

The Africa Pentecostal Leadership Institute (APLI) was created as the vehicle by which leadership training can be provided to the Church in Africa. APLI will conduct training seminars dealing with (1) biblical servant leadership, (2) the call of God, and (3) the character of the leader. This training is needed to develop the leadership skills of current church leaders as well as to develop new leaders. The servant leader model will serve as the overarching emphasis.

To test the viability and effectiveness of the proposed training, a regional APLI seminar was held for the East Africa region of the Assemblies of God. Pre- and post-test were given to seminar participants to determine attitudinal shift as a result of the training.

The pre-test scores indicated that two-thirds of the participant responses were in the desired range. Evaluation of the participant's previous exposure to leadership training indicated that 95 percent of the subjects had prior exposure to leadership training. Nevertheless, the overall results for the pre- and post-test showed a significant shift toward servant leader characteristics on selected questions. However, since ninety-five percent of the group had previous exposure to leadership training, and the pre-test scores showed two-thirds of the responses were in the desired range, it is understandable why significant attitudinal changes were not seen on the

remainder of the statements. Apparently the time has come for leadership training, at least in East Africa, to move from the top level to a broader group of church leaders.

Training the House of God for Small Group Revitalization
New Hope Church, Southwest Ranches, Florida
Reverend David Lively

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to identify and eliminate obstacles hindering New Hope Church located in Southwest Ranches, Florida from fulfilling its stated vision to become a church of small groups. Before this project, New Hope Church had established a vision and value statement the congregation had adopted with great enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the vision did not become a reality.

This project utilized a dual strategy to remove barriers hindering implementation of the stated vision. It clarified the mission of the church for existing leaders and developed an organized system of small group ministry.

Internal discipleship dealt with current decision-makers and their understanding of the mission, purpose, vision, and values God has given to the church. Through a process of alignment, the existing ministries were united and focused on fulfilling the stated vision. External expansion of the small group ministry began with research to identify the primary reasons for lack of participation. Congregational surveys revealed church acceptance of the stated vision yet a lack of understanding concerning their role in fulfillment of that vision.

To respond to this lack of understanding, a three-month promotional effort began. Over the twelve weeks, a Wednesday night leadership class and a four-week Sunday morning sermon series focused on the importance of small group ministry. During this informational process, research was conducted to determine the most effective small group model for New Hope Church.

This project brought unity and understanding to the existing members of New Hope and training to prospective small group leaders. The result was both qualitative and quantitative growth of the small group ministry and the church at large, verifying the importance of a continued effort to keep the ministry aligned with its stated vision while developing the community through small groups.

**Faith in Suffering:
A Course for Pastoral Care Givers**
Reverend Vincent Marrandino

ABSTRACT

The project attempted to (1) develop a biblical-theological understanding of suffering and (2) equip local members of the clergy with training and materials to enhance their effectiveness in providing pastoral care at the Katherine Shaw Bethea Hospital in Dixon, Illinois. Prior to the project's research and development phase, the author developed a plan to address issues of suffering that frequently arise among the clergy persons providing pastoral care at the hospital. The research included a review of relevant literature on the topic of suffering and the biblical-theological understanding of suffering among Christians.

The venture culminated in developing a seminar on providing pastoral care to those who suffer. Overall, the seminar produced a positive experience for the attendees. The statistical analysis showed an exceptionally positive correlation between seminar attendance and the attendees' perceived growth in their abilities to provide pastoral care to persons who suffer. The project also facilitated the development of two tools for the pastoral caregiver entitled, *Rules for Calling upon the Sick* and *Ministry to the Dying*.

This venture brought about a deepening dialogue between the author, in his role as a hospital chaplain, and the local clergy members. As a result of the dialogue and seminar experience, he plans to present the seminar at a sectional Assemblies of God fellowship meeting and conduct seminars on related topics at Katherine Shaw Bethea hospital. The project verified the need for additional training aimed at current and future clergy.

**Building Effective Ministry Teams
for Aspiring Church Planters**
Reverend Paul Martinez

ABSTRACT

Relationships are one of the most essential facets of both humanity and deity. The importance of relationships seen throughout Scripture stands in stark contrast to the highly individualistic culture found presently in the United States of America and other Western nations. A specific example of the influence of an individualistic culture can be seen in the efforts of the singular church planter who often works in isolation to start a church. However, the church planter who works alone will encounter a sense of loneliness and discouragement because of the complexities of the church planting process.

Planting a church using a team-based model of ministry can help address this issue. Church planters who recognize the value of teams and consequently implement a team-based approach to ministry at the foundation of the planting process will ultimately have a greater likelihood of building a successful, healthy church.

The purpose of this project is to train a group of church planting students at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) in the team-building process of forming, storming, norming, and performing. The process will not involve the actual planting of a church, but will train students to build highly effective teams that can be used in church-planting endeavors.

The project is process-oriented and utilizes the methodology of small group discussions, mentoring, and team-building exercises. Throughout the project, participants

will be assessed according to their understanding, knowledge, and aptitude in building effective teams. It is recommended that AGTS subsequently use the principles of the project to develop courses that train and teach students the value of building teams for effective church planting ministry.

Developing Growing Evangelistic Churches: A Case Study of the Three Growing Churches in East Africa

Reverend Barnabas Mtokambali

ABSTRACT

This project will attempt to provide insights into how to develop growing evangelistic churches, insights that are needed to help reverse the stagnation that over half the churches of the Assemblies of God in Tanzania, East Africa, are experiencing. The key to successful church growth is to provide effective principles of evangelistic growing churches that will motivate pastors/leaders to raise up growing churches. The stated purpose of this project is to identify characteristics that contribute to church growth by conducting a case study of three vibrant growing churches in East Africa and apply them first to Bethel Revival Temple in Morogoro, and then to other churches in Tanzania.

The first major phase of this project will present a biblical and theological basis for developing evangelistic growing churches in Tanzania and all of East Africa. The development of growing evangelistic churches must be based on good theology; and good biblical theology should lead to evangelistic church growth. First, a careful study will be made of biblical characteristics of the Church with an emphasis on New Testament characteristics of evangelistic growing churches. Most characteristics of growing evangelistic churches which will be presented in this section will be derived from the Book of Acts.

The second phase will review the literature concerning evangelistic growing churches. This is necessary in order to understand evangelistic church growth factors, church health, leadership and laity participation, effective change process, and discipleship and assimilation. This section will identify evangelistic church growth factors from an enormous range of

possibilities that exist so as to motivate and aid pastors in Tanzania and East Africa to adopt the salient specifics for their own congregations.

The third phase of the project delineates the procedure and methodology that will be employed in discovering the characteristics of evangelistic growing churches. The methods for data collection will be interviews, document analysis, and direct observation. The main objective of this section will be to ascertain the distinctives of growing evangelistic churches through a case study of three growing churches in East Africa. The over-arching goal will be to present characteristics and common denominators of dynamic evangelistic growing churches that will extend the kingdom of God in Tanzania and East Africa.

In the last phase the evaluation, analysis, and synthesis of the progressive report of evangelistic church growth principles as implemented by Bethel Revival Temple will be reported. The main purpose of evaluation is to find ways to increase evangelistic church growth in Tanzania.

Conflict Management: Equipping Victory Family Centre's Church Planting Teams
Reverend Lily Soh

ABSTRACT

Conflict has existed since time immemorial. As long as two or more persons are in relationship, differences in perspective, opinions, values, and personality traits will materialize. These differences can evolve into conflict, harm relationships, and impede goal accomplishment.

For Victory Family Centre (VFC), a church that has sent and is still actively sending church-planting teams all over the world, conflict within teams must be managed effectively in order to enhance personal and working relationships and ensure the fulfillment of church-planting goals.

Since sending out the first missions team in 1981 until the present, VFC has proactively worked on ways to minimize and manage conflict within church planting teams. Nevertheless, a need existed to study the problem in depth and develop a constructive strategy to train and equip teams in conflict management.

Interviews were conducted with 31 returned missionaries. Their conflict experiences were a deciding factor for the topics covered in the seminar. Also, seminar illustrations were taken from the interviews to highlight the principles and make them as realistic and relevant to church-planting team contexts as possible.

Post seminar evaluation results and a completed posttest revealed participants benefited significantly from the principles taught, the personality test administered, and the conflict styles surveys conducted during the sessions.

**Organic Spirituality: An Organizing Principle and
Assessment Instrument for Christian Discipleship**

Reverend Randy Walls

ABSTRACT

This project is the culmination of a passionate pursuit to understand and demonstrate authentic, biblical spirituality. The purpose of this project arises from the clear evidence of a failing spirituality in the contemporary church. The continuing plateau and decline of the church in the United States offers solid proof that a passion to live out Christian spirituality is lacking. Nowhere is this lack more evident than in the lives of those who lead the church. Called by God to equip and release persons into ministry, they spend much of their time in a maintenance mode of ministry, trying to keep the ship afloat, while their communities sink into the depths of separation from God.

Therefore, the project has attempted to formulate an adequate understanding and application of authentic spirituality by creating an organizing principle and an assessment instrument. A focused search of the Scriptures and the professional literature has yielded the truths and principles articulated herein.

The organizing principle for authentic, biblical spirituality is organic spirituality—discerning the presence and operation of God among his people. The culmination of the project research and development is embedded in this phrase. It describes a spirituality that is alive and active—one that grows out of the interaction between God and his church. Thus, it is a spirituality that has as its heartbeat the mission of God in the earth.