

**RESTORATION: RESTORING REPENTANT BELIEVERS
BACK INTO THE LIFE AND MINISTRY
OF THE CHURCH**

Kenn L. Bongiorno

The church provides a loving community dedicated to leading people to Jesus, educates them to Christ-like maturity, encourages believers to use their God-given gifts in the world, and provides a safe atmosphere where God's people can exalt Almighty God. However, the Church must learn to assimilate fallen brothers and sisters who repent of their sins back into the life and ministry of the church. This study provides solid theological and conceptual principles for church discipline, the necessity of confronting sin, and the redemptive process of restoring people into the family of God. It teaches church communities the elements of restoration and the positive effects forgiveness makes on individuals and the Church community. This project aims to give the church a practical guide to assimilate believers back into the life and ministry of the church.

The project reviews secular scholarly literature to discover the elements of forgiveness from a psychological perspective and examines the effects of forgiveness upon a person's brain, body, and behaviors and focuses on the elements of conflict resolution, apologies, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Furthermore, the research presents five motives for forgiveness, defines the five social institutions, and relates forgiveness to occasions when people break folkways and morays.

Through two seminars, participants learned the elements of restoration. Survey results from the pretest and posttest revealed that people believe in a biblical restoration process, but do not practice the principles of restoration.

HELPING THE HURTING: EVERYDAY APPROACHES TO HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

Bryan R. Davenport

The gospel's message of forgiveness and reconciliation to God through Christ must include a concurrent confrontation of suffering. Despite the biblical models and mandates, both church and un-church people need healing and deliverance. Traditional Pentecostal or Charismatic attitudes and approaches to healing and deliverance have been problematic both in terms of expression and experience. Many approaches over-emphasize style, culture, or formula, leaving individuals with a residue of frustration. Believers may desire to engage in these ministries, but they often lack the comfort or confidence, or they feel under-equipped to approach those in need.

This project develops an approach to healing and deliverance rooted in the nature of the kingdom of God as expressed in Jesus. It encourages more active, confident, and loving exercises of compassionate ministry by believers. In addition, this project studies the nature and practice of healing and deliverance using key portions of biblical literature and select general, and even popular, literature.

The project culminated in a two-day seminar at Heritage Church of Vancouver, Washington. The sessions included a workbook for participants, visual presentations, and question-and-answer sessions. The seminar included a pretest and posttest that measured participants' comfort and confidence with regard to ministering healing and deliverance to those in need. The results of the survey data reveal several areas in which significant differences occur in the attitudes and confidence of the participants as a result of the workshop. Participants indicated that the seminar would also have behavioral impacts. Many indicated that the seminar contributed to or significantly increased their faith and confidence. Even more indicated that pursuing and practicing love and compassion would have a greater priority in their future ministry endeavors.

THE JESUS-HEARTED WOMAN: 10 LEADERSHIP QUALITIES FOR ENDURING AND ENDEARING, INFLUENCE

Jodi Detrick

Many women in the twenty-first century who are followers of Christ long to cultivate and maximize the ministry leadership gifts God has placed in them. They are, however, often hindered by certain cultural, spiritual, and sociological obstacles. As a result, women are often less likely to self-identify as leaders than their male counterparts, even though they may be equally gifted. Further, they may encounter impediments with the potential to cut short their early endeavors to lead in ministry settings. Consequently, the Church and the world may miss out on the rich contributions and enduring influence these women could offer.

This project combined research from current leadership literature, interviews, and examples from successful female ministry leaders, as well as an exploration of biblical leadership principles to create a written summary of those qualities that, if cultivated, can enable women to serve well and endure as leaders. The ten qualities are confidence, authenticity, humility, stamina, resilience, courage, self-awareness, kindness, soul-care, and vision. This summary was developed into a book published by Influence Resources entitled, *The Jesus-Hearted Woman: 10 Leadership Qualities for Enduring and Endearing Influence*. This book has received excellent feedback to date, such as inclusion in the Assemblies of God General Council 2013 launching of a new AG effort to support ministry wives. It will also be required reading for the next “Renewing the Spiritual Leader” course for the AGTS Women in Leadership cohort.

By developing these ten specific leadership qualities derived from Scripture and from the example and heart of Jesus, women are empowered to be enduring and endearing leaders whose much-needed influence will have a profound impact on their communities, the Church, and the world.

**WHY A DECREASING NUMBER OF YOUNG ADULTS SEEK
MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS WITH THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF
MINISTRY GRADUATES OF THREE AG UNIVERSITIES**

James Russell Jessup

Through a survey of ministry graduates from three Assemblies of God universities, this project seeks to identify reasons young people choose not to pursue ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God (AG). The project also includes a review of several other prominent denominations that face similar challenges and a study of the generational dynamics that influence the ability for AG leadership to connect with young constituents.

The student perception survey queried the graduating ministry students of Northwest University, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, and Southeastern University through an online survey. Of the 209 survey invitations sent to accurate email addresses, eighty-two students completed the online anonymous questionnaire providing a response rate of 39 percent.

This project includes the distribution of survey findings and recommendations to the three universities' college of ministry deans, the AG district secretaries associated with the three universities, and the president of the Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education. The project recommends that AG national, district, and university leaders initiate methods already employed on a limited basis by other universities and denominations.

THE WARRIOR BIBLE: FOR WARRIORS AND THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

Scott McChrystal

The Warrior Bible (TWB) is a fresh attempt to connect the military community with God and the timeless truths of His inerrant Word. The warriors who serve in our Armed Forces, together with their families and many others throughout our military establishment, continue to sacrifice for the freedoms we all enjoy. Ironically, many of these heroes do not know that the Ultimate Warrior, Jesus Christ, came to earth and laid down His life that we “may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b, ESV). They don’t know that Jesus’ sacrificial death and resurrection have given us “everything we need for life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3a, NIV) in this world and secured eternity with Him for those who choose to follow.

At a time when biblical literacy is on the decline, TWB is an application-oriented approach aimed at showing its readers that the Bible is God’s sure compass and guide for life: for getting to know Him, for discovering His plan for each of our lives, and for navigating the many trials along life’s journey.

Written in language and terminology common within military culture, TWB covers hundreds of topics relevant for those who live in the military community: leadership, preparing spiritually for combat, coping with separation from family during deployment, post-traumatic stress, reintegration into civilian life following the military, and much more. Toward providing both sound explanation and practical application for the topics and Scriptures covered, we have painstakingly attempted to present material in a balanced fashion, avoiding interpretations that represent unique or extreme views. Most contributors to TWB are not theorists, but Christian men and women who have lived the military life and faced the same challenges and hardships that readers have or will experience.

In addition to its direct value to members of the military community, we believe the TWB will also serve as a useful tool for military chaplains, pastors, counselors, teachers, and other spiritual leaders who minister to military people.

**ADVENTURE INTO THE UNKNOWN: LEADING YOUNG ADULTS
IN THE DIGITAL INFORMATION AGE TO REDISCOVER AND
EMBRACE THE MYSTERY OF GOD AS A DIMENSION
OF THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE**

Stephanie Lynn Nance

Embedded in the digital information age, today's young adults experience unique challenges to embracing the mystery of God in their lives. Evangel Temple's young adult community, 20Twenty, in Springfield, Missouri, ministers to an average of 350 people each week, primarily comprised of college students and young professionals. Born and raised in the digital information age, the 20Twenty community members struggle to embrace the mystery of God while living in a culture obsessed with information, accessibility, and speed.

This project led young adults in the digital information age to rediscover and embrace the mystery of God as a dimension of the normal Christian life. The delivery of a four-week sermon series in conjunction with spiritual direction resulted in substantial spiritual growth for the 20Twenty project participants. This project alerted young adults to the role of the mystery of God and how a Google world can lure them away from embracing that mystery.

Results showed that the project participants rediscovered the mystery of God in such a way that they reframed it from a negative to a positive, while also moving away from seeking certainty and security in their lives. They came to view God's mystery as evidence of His presence, not the lack thereof, revealing a transcendent, Wholly Other God coming near to work out His purposes in their lives and in the world, propelling them forward into a Spirit-led adventure of a life of faith.

**REACHING PEOPLE FOR CHRIST IN BEDROOM COMMUNITIES:
AN EVANGELISM STRATEGY FOR ELIM BAPTIST CHURCH,
ISANTI COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

Ryan Joseph O'Leary

All churches have the potential to exist as “spiritual lighthouses,” bringing both light and hope to a spiritually dark and stormy world. In order for this to occur, churches must seek to develop effective evangelism ministries. This project assists Elim Baptist Church in Isanti, Minnesota in developing its evangelism ministry so that people living in Isanti County can experience spiritual salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Biblical-Theological Literature Review (1) identifies reasons why the church should either engage in evangelism or seek to improve its existing evangelism ministry and (2) considers several New Testament leaders who practiced personal evangelism and provides application to the contemporary context of the Church.

The General Literature Review identifies four factors that affect church growth: (1) sociological factors, (2) smart business practices, (3) service with excellence, and (4) supernatural intervention, such as the role of prayer. The project also researches how a church can develop and maintain an evangelistic culture.

Through the use of an Evangelism Survey, the project uncovers the evangelistic practices of believers in Elim Baptist Church. In order to identify the reasons why people in Isanti County do not attend church, the project also conducted a Community Survey. Chapter 4 of the project reveals the results of these surveys and serves as a foundation for improving the evangelistic ministry of Elim Baptist Church by identifying specific action steps. In addition, churches located in bedroom communities and churches, in general, may glean principles and practical steps for improving their evangelism ministries.

**A LOCAL EXAMPLE TOWARD BRIDGING THE DIVIDE
BETWEEN SACRED AND SECULAR: A CASE STUDY
IN TRANSFORMATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Svetlana Papazov

Postmodern society has transitioned from Christendom to post-Christendom in North America. Consequently, the Church in America has lost its position as a moral herald and increasingly occupies a place on the margins of society. Separation between the secular and the sacred spheres of life has become so commonplace in America that many people struggle to find ways to integrate their faith with their daily lives. To address the need for public faith practice, this project created a long-term Faith and Community Partnership Prototype between Our Father's House (OFH), an Assemblies of God church in the city of California, Maryland, and Park Hall Elementary Title 1 School (PHES) in Park Hall, Maryland. The project provided tools for people to improve the quality of their lives and experience upward economic lift. The project tracked its results for the first year.

The biblical foundation of the project established the transformational role of the Church in the *missio Dei*, and research in current literature related to the practice of integrated faith provided the groundwork for the Partnership Prototype structure and curriculum. The Prototype met a felt need in the community, and addressed its primary goal of providing a means by which the Church can bridge the secular-sacred divide, and engage and influence the community toward transformational development.

Analysis of the data indicates that the Prototype enabled those who participated to make lifestyle changes that facilitated spiritual, social, and economic improvements. This project produced a ministry model that will contribute to OFH commitment to public Christianity, and will offer holistic help to the unchurched.

**THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE HEALING: A TRAINING SEMINAR FOR
LAITY AND CHURCH LEADERS IN THE NORTHEASTERN SECTION
OF THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND MINISTRY NETWORK
OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**

Francesco Passamonte

This project challenged pastors and leadership staff members within the Northeastern Section of the Southern New England Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God to engage in an ongoing ministry of teaching with strong emphasis on the doctrine and history of divine healing. The objective was to equip church leaders and, in turn, their parishioners, to withstand the winds of erroneous teachings on healing as propagated by the Word of Faith evangelists.

The biblical analysis (chapter 2) centered on four theological themes: sin, the atonement, faith, and grace. The section on the atonement included an exegetical (linguistic) review of Isaiah 53:4-5; 1 Peter 2:24; and Matthew 8:17. The historical-foundational aspect of divine healing in the Word of Faith Movement (chapter 3) included a review of the philosophical-metaphysical-theological teachings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, and Mary Baker Eddy. A review of the doctrine of Essex W. Kenyon provided an understanding of how metaphysics influenced the doctrine of divine healing in twentieth-century Pentecostalism. This project is a teaching tool for Pentecostal leaders in the local church; it assists them in refuting Kenyon and his followers' theology of healing.

The project seminar executed for this study evaluated questionnaire responses of thirty-one attendees regarding their attitudes concerning and understanding of divine healing. On the whole, the project seminar was effective. It affirmed and validated the belief and feelings of the presenter that a need exists in Pentecostal churches to clarify the doctrine of divine healing.

**TRANSITIONING THE MINISTRY-TEAM CULTURE OF
WESTOVER HILLS ASSEMBLY OF GOD
TO FACILITATE CONGREGATIONAL
GROWTH AND HEALTH IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

Jim D. Rion

Westover Hills Assembly of God (WHAG) is a megachurch with an average attendance of 4,456 over five weekend services on the northwest campus (main campus). As a multi-cultural church, unique features characterize both the leadership team and congregation. The church operates with a proportionally lean staff-to-congregant ratio and values congregational giftedness and participation. This project addresses the leadership challenges that have impacted the growth and vitality of the church.

Through biblical and leadership research, this project explores the challenges and best practices that facilitate numerical growth in a local church. Churches seeking to break historic growth barriers often face leadership, growth, and organizational plateaus. This project differentiates these plateaus and details a strategic plan to grow beyond these challenges.

The premise of this project asserts that leadership culture creates the congregational growth trajectory. The research involved in this project validates the effectiveness of various strategies in contributing to numerical growth. By confronting the challenges and complexities of leadership, WHAG broke through various growth barriers. The insights from this project will assist pastoral leaders who desire numerical growth in their churches.

**MANAGING THE LIFECYCLE OF A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY:
DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION
AND THE NECESSITY OF INTERMENT**

Lewis R. Shelton

Individuals and entities face the impact and implications associated with lifecycle realities. Physical life and organizational life have a beginning, but each, in turn, also encounters the fact that life yields transitions, maturity, and ultimately includes death. Intervention to the lifecycle may afford extended time, but inevitably the end will come.

In order to establish a foundation for this project, biblical-theological and contemporary literature reviews explored, identified, and articulated a basic understanding of the lifecycle issues. Narratives and stories connected to real life experiences shared by pastors, educators, district officials, and Christian leaders cast fresh light on the often-ignored realities impacting ministries. Twenty-two personal interviews, collected over a six-week period, became the source of personal narratives. This critical resource to the project added vitality and vibrancy to the discovery process and provided clear indication of the factors affecting the decisions leaders faced at the final stage of an entity's lifecycle. To help facilitate a dignified and honorable closure to a ministry, the proposed action steps will serve as a welcomed resource for individuals assigned the ominous task. At the same time, a more robust understanding of God's grand scheme and how each life, as an individual or entity, fits into that plan, begs for recognition and acceptance.

The project lends perspective and grants permission for a new conversation within the Assemblies of God by challenging theological assumptions, foregone conclusions, and inappropriate practices. This new perspective may grant new life out of the reality of death.

**BRIDGING THE GAP: EQUIPPING THE CHURCH TO ENVISION AND
EMPOWER WORKPLACE BELIEVERS AS KINGDOM CATALYSTS
OF TRANSFORMATION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES**

Sharon L. Smith

A tremendous opportunity exists for church and business leaders to work together to bridge an ever-widening gap in both dialogue and understanding of the needs of believers on the front-lines of workplace service. Church leaders are anointed and responsible for equipping believers for ministry in all spheres of life, including service in the marketplace (Eph. 4:13). Church and business professionals need each other; however, due to realities such as the sacred-secular divide and unbiblical working definitions of “ministry” and “vocation,” countless numbers of believers have a bifurcated, compartmentalized view of life and vocation. Research reveals that the vast majority of believers do not view their work as an expression of worship to God and service to others.

Phase one of this project involves research in the form of fifteen interviews with church and business leaders to understand their worldviews so as to better appreciate the factors contributing to the gap. Phase two involves the creation of a Workplace Roundtable Curriculum informed by the interviews and then piloted with church and business leaders at three Roundtable discussions.

The interviews and Roundtables yielded rich and thoughtful discussions about “whole-life discipleship” and revealed that participants believe workplace discussions are productive and worthwhile. These discussions help facilitate a greater understanding of the sacred-secular divide and its negative, damaging effects on believers, as well as a deeper appreciation of the biblical meaning of “ministry” and “vocation.”

MANAGING AND REDUCING CONFLICT IN KOREAN-AMERICAN CHURCHES: A SEMINAR FOR ATLANTA-AREA KOREAN PASTORS

Ruth Park Swalve

The number one reason why pastors in North American churches leave the ministry is conflict.¹ One of the main causes of church splits and pastoral position changes among Korean churches in America is conflict. Three major contributing factors to this conflict exist among Korean churches:

- Pastors are poorly equipped to deal with conflicts in the church.
- Both church members and pastors are under the stresses of adjusting to the new world.
- Church conflicts tend to jeopardize the opportunities to evangelization.

To address the problems above, this project developed a conflict management seminar providing resources to equip Korean Pastors to better manage conflict. To accomplish this purpose, the seminar taught biblical and secular conflict management principles and skills based on the project's literature reviews. These included the Interest-Satisfaction Conflict Management approach grounded in Trinitarian theology, contextual theology for the immigrants' new identity formation, a system theory of conflict management in the church, and the importance of emotional intelligence and conflict styles in leadership of conflict management.

The hypothesis of the project was that the seminar would increase effectiveness in dealing with conflict and that the result would show a measurable improvement in the participants' confidence, ability, and knowledge of conflict management. The results of the seminars were statistically significant and confirmed the project's hypothesis.

¹ Wayde Goodall, Guest speaker's lecture in "Navigating the Personal and Organizational Hazards of Ministry" (Elective Course at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary: Springfield, MO. October 17, 2011).

**STIMULATING CHURCH GROWTH THROUGH SCRIPTURALLY-BASED
BUSINESS STRATEGIES: TARGETING CHURCHES
PLATEAUED OR DECLINING IN ATTENDANCE**

Richard Varnell

Most Assemblies of God (AG) churches in the United States experienced either a plateau or a decline in attendance during 2011. This statistic has caused concern at the local, district, and national levels of the Fellowship. One of the largest denominations in the world, with significant growth overseas, the AG now realizes that the home base needs attention regarding church growth. This project provides hope that the 6,000 AG stagnated churches can grow.

The purpose of this project is to help pastors of plateaued or declining churches experience measureable growth in attendance through the implementation of proper business strategies for accounting and visitor retention. The biblical-theological literature focuses on how the image of God, community, and financial health in the local church can help a church grow. Review of the contemporary literature provides research regarding “closing the back door” (facilitating the retention of first-time guests and assimilating new attendees into the local church). The project thoroughly tested these concepts in four churches of varying sizes, backgrounds, ethnicity, and settings.

All four participating churches experienced growth ranging from 6 to 86 percent. Evaluation of the project reveals that growth cannot take place without a cultural change in the church that focuses primarily on the church’s attitude toward and treatment of first-time guests. The church must identify first-time guests and express genuine courtesy and hospitality to these people. The churches utilized an intentional and detailed plan for following-up on visitors; growth ensued with the implementation of the project plan.