

**PREACHING IN THE MIDST OF CULTURAL CHANGE:
TEACHING STUDENTS TO CONNECT
WITH POSTMODERNS**

J. David Arnett

Global society is in a period of great transition caused by the epistemological and cultural upheaval known as postmodernism. This tectonic activity of cultural change makes it necessary for today's Pentecostal ministers and missionaries to develop new paradigms for preaching that will connect with postmodern individuals.

The purpose of this project was to engage in biblical-theological research, review the contemporary literature, collect empirical data, and conduct homiletical experiments to determine the most effective approaches to preaching in a postmodern culture. The academic and empirical research became the basis for *Issues in Contemporary Preaching*, a homiletics course for Central Bible College.

The goal of the course was to assist students in developing the skills to: (1) summarize the biblical mandate, message, and methods of preaching; (2) trace a brief history of the significant culture shifts; (3) contrast the basic beliefs of premodernism, modernism, and postmodernism; (4) detail the problems facing preachers seeking to communicate to postmodern audiences; (5) describe and critique various methods proposed for preaching to postmoderns; (6) prepare and deliver a collaborative, problem-solving sermon that applies biblical truth to a contemporary issue; and (7) prepare and deliver an inductive, narrative sermon that evangelistically calls a postmodern audience to repentance and a restored intimacy with God based on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The findings of the project demonstrated an increase in student awareness of the challenges of preaching to postmoderns and student mastery of the basic skills required for preparing and delivering problem-solving and narrative sermons.

**A MODEL OF INTERIM PASTORAL COACHES FOR
OHIO ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCHES
IN PASTORAL TRANSITION**

David L. Bittinger

The principal focus of this project was the development of a model for training retired Ohio Assemblies of God (AG) ministers to serve as intentional interim pastoral coaches in Ohio AG churches experiencing pastoral transition. In recent years, congregations in the Ohio District of the AG have experienced an overall marked increase in pastoral turnover. The Ohio District is following the long-standing AG paradigm of providing Sunday morning pulpit supply and a hurried search for a new pastor. However, this paradigm neither addresses congregational needs during the transition period nor allows adequate preparation for the new long-term pastor.

Research for this project centered on assessment of the following: (1) receptivity of the Ohio District AG leadership to a new paradigm of intentional interim pastoral care in transition congregations, (2) the ability of retired Ohio AG ministers to learn and serve as intentional interim pastors, (3) perceived needs of pastoral transition congregations by congregational leaders, (4) the wider potential for intentional interim pastoral ministry throughout AG Districts in the United States, and (5) resources and training materials for intentional interim pastors available from other denominations. Data collection included surveys of Ohio District AG leaders, retired Ohio AG ministers who have served as interim pastors, congregational leaders of churches in pastoral transition, and AG district officials across the United States.

The author's completed assessment received such positive response from the Ohio District Presbytery of the Assemblies of God that a strategic plan was implemented for training retired Ohio AG ministers to serve as intentional interim pastors.

**RACIAL RECONCILIATION: A PILOT PROGRAM FOR ASSEMBLIES
OF GOD PASTORS AND THE BLACK BAPTIST MINISTERIAL
ASSOCIATION IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

Debra L. Brown

Religious and secular arenas have experienced problems attributed to racism and segregation. Despite Christian values and practices, racism and segregation permeate the church. This project sought to initiate reconciliation between Assemblies of God and Black Baptist ministers and churches in Kansas City.

The Assemblies of God pastors within the Kansas City Missouri Section of the Southern Missouri District primarily consists of Whites. The Baptists Ministers Union of Kansas City, Missouri, is exclusively Black. Both were invited to participate in joint fellowship gatherings and a mass celebration. Neither group had any prior interactions with one another. The leadership of both groups was to collaborate in the planning and execution of these events.

Doctrinal issues were not an issue although church traditions were different; it became clear that race and segregation were problems. This occurred primarily on a covert basis. Behavioral indicators were the lack of promptness or attendance at meetings. Verbal comments pertaining to race that had never been addressed were indicative of heart issues within individuals. Traditions of man superseded God's will for reconciliation.

Racism, segregation, and reconciliation were examined from a biblical and secular perspective in this project. This enabled a comprehension of historical precedents that contributed to racial undercurrents. Also, biblical understanding of these concepts provides hope that despite errors of humankind, God prevails in His will that there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free; we are all one in Christ Jesus.

PREACHING TO A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

David P. Crosby, Jr.

Much of preaching today has been reduced to pedantic explanation of biblical minutia or spiritual platitudes posing as pithy insights. The focus of my project was to write a textbook for Global University that would be used to train a new generation of Pentecostal preachers to present the timeless, unchanging truths of Scripture in a timely fashion and to show its application to everyday life. The goal in contemporary preaching is not merely the presentation of information, but to see people experience authentic life transformation.

The most effective preachers in the twenty-first century will view preaching as part of a much larger worship experience. Contemporary preachers will create engaging, multi-sensory worship experiences that leverage advancements in modern technology in an effort to reach the unchurched. Much like the Early Church used stained glass, incense, Holy Communion, artwork, and storytelling to communicate the faith, the twenty-first century preacher must use media, lighting, sound, screens and modern digital technology to pass on the faith to the next generation. As the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22, “To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”

While the message of the gospel must never change, the methods must always change with each new generation. It is my hope that this course will help the next generation of Pentecostal preachers to gain new insights and practical tools to create irresistible, multi-sensory worship experiences. At the center of these worship services lies the dynamic preaching of the Word in an effort to reach today’s contemporary audience until Christ returns.

**MINISTRY CONTINUITY DURING PASTORAL CHANGE:
THE ROLE OF THE OUTGOING PASTOR**

Paul L. Curtis

This project focused on pastoral transitions and the role of an outgoing pastor in a church experiencing ministerial change. The biblical-theological research and literature review aided in developing a seminar intended to cause participants to reflect on their presuppositions concerning the role of a departing pastor. The project exegeted Scripture concerning pastors and leadership transitions in order to establish biblical principles for ministers' responsibilities to churches. Using those principles, the remainder of the research examined literature, which aided in transitioning from biblical theory to everyday ministry. Additionally, the author interviewed people in church leadership positions, obtained data from a pretest/posttest assessment tool for seminar participants, and collected information from the ratings and comments of seminar evaluators.

Based on the results of the pretest/posttest and the evaluators' comments, the project educated participants concerning leadership transitions and the scriptural obligations of pastors to their churches. Further, the data indicates changes in participants' philosophical beliefs concerning a minister's responsibilities to a church experiencing a pastoral change.

The presenter encouraged participants to use the knowledge to educate laity concerning pastoral transitions. The seminar emphasized that the intent of the presentation was not to bring ministerial control to leadership transitions, but rather to enhance continuity in the church's ministry.

PLANNING PENTECOSTAL PREACHING

Steve D. Eutsler

For years the sages have warned, “Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.” Experience has proven this advice to be true in the spiritual realm as well as in the secular. Without careful planning, even Pentecostal ministers of the gospel often repeat certain texts or topics while neglecting other critical truths. This frequent phenomenon inspired the integrated approach in this project.

Dr. Quentin McGhee invited the author to write this project for the *Faith & Action* curriculum series, a missionary effort designed for use in Bible schools around the globe, especially in the Third World. This project will serve as the textbook for the Homiletics II course.

Unit one covers the “Characteristics of Pentecostal Preaching,” its uniqueness, its preparation, and its special sermons for healing and deliverance services. The next unit develops “Sermons That People Will Never Forget;” topics include how to personalize funeral sermons, preach creative first-person sermons, and preach sermons with props. A third unit, “Planning Sermons,” explains how to preach series of sermons: on books of the Bible, characters in the Bible characters, doctrines in the Bible, and problems in life. This unit concludes with a section on how to prepare an actual preaching calendar. Each chapter focuses on preparation with complete dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Every lesson states principles to understand or identifies a process to follow. Explanation, illustration, and application of those principles or that process follow. The book is based on sound scholarship with ample footnotes from the best of both past and present homiletical scholarship.

NATIVE AMERICAN MARITAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

John Hart Knoles

Marriages are in crisis in the new century. Native American couples are not immune from the disease of divorce; it continues to infect their lives in epidemic proportions. As they face today's challenges, natives are desperately searching for answers to marital dilemmas. Native millennial couples face challenges such as poor educational opportunities, racial discrimination, rapid urbanization, and acculturation. The fast pace of urban living, compared to less stressful reservation life, has increased the need for improved native marital communication skills. Because natives tend to guard their privacy, they are less likely to seek marital counseling. Couples need readily available, pragmatic communication studies.

Increased computer literacy among native millennials has presented new opportunities to reach and teach native couples via cyberspace. Native American Marriage Enhancement, under the direction of Assemblies of God U.S. Missions (AGUSM), provides pragmatic biblical and marital teaching. NativeMarriage.com works in tandem with on-site workshops to furnish couples with free and relevant resources.

The long-range effects of this project will continue to make a significant contribution to Native American marriage. Posting new studies on line enables those who click on to avail themselves of free materials. Myriads of American Indian tribes and more than one hundred countries around the world have accessed studies from NativeMarriage.com. Through the application of biblical truth and the power of the Holy Spirit, native couples will enjoy effectual communication and lifelong marital intimacy.

**A CALL TO COMMITMENT FROM HEBREWS, JAMES, 1 AND
2 PETER, AND JUDE: A DISCOVERY SERIES TEXTBOOK
DESIGNED FOR BIBLE COLLEGES IN AFRICA**

M. Annette Newberry

In the first five years of its existence, the Assemblies of God developed a policy which called for the establishment of strong national churches and the training of national workers to accomplish that goal. The desire to educate Christian workers produced Bible schools, training institutes, and theological colleges all over the world, including 226 training centers in Africa presently educating 14,000 students. That impressive number dims in the light of reality. Education has not kept up with phenomenal church growth in Africa and the lack of credentialed ministers for those churches.

In order to make education available to African pastors in an affordable format, Africa's Hope, the African Theological Training Service of Assemblies of God World Missions, commissioned this textbook, *A Call to Commitment from Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude*. This book, part of the Discovery Textbook Series, works in tandem with courses on the General Epistles found in African Bible School curricula. This user-friendly textbook, written and illustrated especially for an African cultural context, will be available for translation in French, Portuguese, and various African languages.

The textbook contains twelve chapters divided in three units. Each chapter includes an explanation of the biblical text written in a narrative style commentary. Charts and illustrations enhance the impact of the lessons, and a bibliography provides resource materials for further study. Review and Application Questions focus students' attention on what they have learned and how to apply it to their particular situations. Chapter Review Exercises test the student's retention of key concepts and biblical knowledge according to Bloom's Taxonomy.

MANAGING CONFLICT: TRAINING STRONG PEOPLE TO PULL TOGETHER IN THE SAME DIRECTION

Ronald I. Sommers

Destructive church conflict is a painful problem in many churches throughout the world, hindering unity, causing hurts, and spoiling mission and ministry. However, in many countries, pastors and leaders lack access to teaching, training, and tools that will assist them in understanding and managing church conflict productively. To provide those leaders with access to conflict management training, a degree-level Independent Study Textbook (IST) on Managing Conflict was developed for Global University, using Global's independent study methodology. (Global University specializes in long-distance education on multiple academic levels for international church leaders.) The target student in the writing of the course was a non-Western, 30-year-old married emerging church leader for whom English was a second language.

The textbook gives the Christian leader an overview of conflict and its management in the Church. The intention is to inform and refocus the Christian leader's thinking concerning the principles, actions, and creativity needed in conflict management. The leader will gain increased knowledge, improved thinking, and new skills to manage personal conflicts and build stronger relationships in the local church, small group, ministry team, or leadership group. In addition, the leader will be able to take insights from this course and train other church leaders in managing conflict within their teams, facilitating the development of relationships in the local church. Finally, the leader will be stimulated to take additional training, resulting in healthier managing of conflict in the church.

**EQUIPPING THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN HONDURAS TO
RAISE AWARENESS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

Barbara Strickland

This project attempted to equip the Honduran Church to raise awareness and thus influence the prevention of sexual abuse of children. Pre-seminar research indicated that few leaders had been able to rise above cultural restraints to address the pervasive problem of child sexual abuse in their churches or social agencies.

The purpose of the project was to develop and produce a seminar that could be reproduced to proactively address the problem of child sexual abuse in Honduras. The three-hour *Seminario Abuso Sexual Infantil* (Child Sexual Abuse Seminar) sought to accomplish the following: (1) increase awareness of the nature and scope of child sexual abuse in Honduras; (2) point out biblical principles that demonstrate that child sexual abuse is sin and that God demands social justice; (3) inform as to spiritual, emotional, and physical consequences of abuse; (4) educate parents and children's workers to recognize symptoms of sexual abuse; (5) equip parents to discuss sexual abuse with their children; (6) equip parents, neighbors, teachers, and church leaders to respond appropriately when abuse is discovered; (7) inform as to community resources available in helping to educate children about abuse; (8) present video testimonials demonstrating the difference the "God factor" has made in the healing of adults who were victimized as children; and (9) encourage attendants, especially church leaders, to respond in mercy to the needs of victims and their families.

The seminar was presented to 360 church and community leaders in the Assemblies of God Evangelistic Center in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The findings of the project confirm that the participants gained both increased knowledge of child sexual abuse in their country and an understanding that the Church has a role to play in promoting awareness of this sin of social injustice.

A RESOURCE TO PROMOTE LONGEVITY IN THE CAREERS OF YOUNG MINISTERS

Gerry Annette White

The project's goal was to identify the prominent motivators that foster the premature exit of young ministers from career ministry and then to create a seminar that could minimize the effect of these motivators. A survey of ministry graduates between 1995 and 2005 from Southeastern University revealed that the graduates experienced a significant gap between their ministry expectations and the realities they found after beginning their ministry careers. However, those who were no longer in ministry experienced a greater gap between expectations and realities than those still involved in ministry. The assumption of the project is that a reduction of this gap should reduce premature ministry exits and thereby aid in increasing career longevity.

Survey findings were aligned with a general literature review that addressed key issues inherent to ministry and their impact on premature ministry exits. The seminar, *Increasing Longevity in Career Ministry*, was presented to senior level ministry students at Southeastern University. Its purpose was to empower these students to proactively address issues that promote premature ministry exits by: (1) lessening the expectation-reality gap through the discussion of motivators known to promote premature ministry exits, (2) presenting proactive means by which to lessen the effect of key motivators of premature exits, and (3) promoting a determination to seek out or personally establish a peer support system in order to honestly deal with these issues as they arise in ministry. Although long range effectiveness of the seminar is not presently measurable, pretest and posttest evaluations of the participants revealed an increased awareness of ministry realities, an increased determination to proactively address the issues presented, and an increased determination to establish peer support systems.

SEMINAR IN MORMON THEOLOGY AND HOW TO WITNESS TO MORMONS

Willard (Woody) Wilkinson

The purpose of this project was to develop and present a seminar to instruct members of the Independent Christian Church regarding the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The seminar provided an overview of orthodox Christian teaching and presented techniques for communicating the gospel more effectively to members of the Mormon Church. The four-hour seminar endeavored to do the following: (1) authenticate the fact that Joseph Smith was a false prophet; (2) demonstrate that the literature used by the Mormon Church as material equal with the Bible—the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price*—is false and untrustworthy; and (3) convince members of the Independent Christian Church to oppose such false teaching and to develop an improved method of personal evangelism.

The four-hour seminar took place at College Heights Christian Church in Joplin, Missouri. Pretests were administered to determine the level of awareness regarding participants' knowledge of Mormon beliefs. Test results confirmed that neither area pastors nor members of the Independent Christian Church were aware of the significant growth in Mormonism throughout southwest Missouri nor how to effectively reach them. Seminar posttest data evidenced increased attendee knowledge of Mormon practices and beliefs. Participants also developed better techniques for witnessing to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The seminar also provided opportunity for a growth in ecumenical relationships as Christians from several Bible believing denominations worked together yet could still remain loyal to their own church backgrounds.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED PASTORAL
CARE RESPONSE SYSTEM TO ILLNESS, CRISIS,
AND GRIEF AT NORTH POINT CHURCH,
SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI**

Peggy Jo Wobbema

An estimated one million Americans will die every year. A percentage of those who are ill, dying, or grieving will be members of a local congregation. Because of this, the local church has the opportunity to minister comfort and compassion toward those who suffer.

This project is the development of an integrated pastoral care response system to illness, crisis, and grief at North Point Church (NPC) in Springfield, Missouri. NPC began on September 7, 2003. By the start of this project, the average church attendance was 1,300 during the Sunday morning services. The quick growth of the church resulted in an underdeveloped pastoral care ministry.

The development of this project concentrated on creating new ministries to enhance the ministry of the pastoral staff. A team of trained laypeople now minister to those who are hurting. This releases the pastoral staff to focus their energies on other pastoral leadership issues. It has also helped to create a culture of care in this church.

The project describes this ministry from a biblical perspective and supports its therapeutic effectiveness through a review of the literature. Scripture mandates that the church's response toward those who suffer be with the compassion of Christ. Based on the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, this project challenges the local church to develop an active pastoral care ministry that will offer a continuum of care toward those who suffer from illness, crisis, and grief. The development of this project is in response to Christ's mandate in Luke 10:37 to "Go and do likewise."