

MIDWEST

PILGRIM NEWS

Fall 2021

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THE HARVEST TRULY IS

PLENTEOUS

SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?



Beyond the Welcome Mat

If your church is like mine, there is a welcome mat on the front porch. Visitors are assured before entering the building that they will be well received in this place. The church will be warm and friendly to them and they will, no doubt, want to come back. But is that always the case? Is a welcome mat “insurance” that visitors will want to return? Sadly not, for many visitors have walked across a welcome mat to find the experience anything but positive.

I think of the man who told the visitors that they were sitting in his seat. Or how about the visitors who were turned away at the doors when they couldn’t pay a nominal fee for the Christmas Program? Others have told of being preached at from the pulpit, being pressured as to when they would return, or worse yet, being ignored by the regular attendees.

Evidently the welcome mat doesn’t always mean what it says and such tacky behavior by Christians simply reenforces the mistrust that people already feel toward the Church. It also increases the likelihood that they will not be returning to our services.

Maybe it’s time to look within and consider what lies beyond the welcome mat at our church. One bad experience can undo much prayer and effort.

The following is a list of principles from church growth researchers that can assist us in making a positive impact on those God sends our way.

Neat, Attractive Facilities

Appearance is important. There are many churches to choose from today and people are unlikely to choose one that has their grass uncut, hedges untrimmed, and the facia unpainted. People need to feel proud of their worship center from the inside out.

In fact, an article from Outreach Magazine tells us that young parents today are especially concerned that the children’s areas are safe, secure, and sanitary. An unkempt nursery or a dank, creepy basement as a Sunday School room does not foster any loyalty to your church. Parents want to feel they are providing the best for their children. If a basement is all you have, make sure it is as clean, well -lit, and cheerful as possible.

Friendly Greeters

It has been said that visitors decide in the first 11 minutes whether or not they will return to your church. This of course makes first impressions critical. Do not allow a visitor to walk into your church without someone to say hello, hold the door for their stroller, and direct them to where they need to go. Friendly, competent, well-dressed greeters are a must.

Many un-churched people polled also commented on the necessity of an information booth. They want a place where they can find answers to their questions. (Restroom locations, Sunday School and Junior Church ages, nursery availability, etc.)

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Mission Statement: The mission of the MPN is three- fold: 1.) We desire to glorify God and facilitate the worship of His person. 2.) We seek to promote the Gospel of Christ with its beautiful message of heart holiness. 3.) We seek to be an encouragement to our readers spiritually, as well as an informative source of information to those who relate to, or are interested in, our Conference.

Cover Photo: The cover graphic was created by Cody Price. Cody lives in Elwood, IN with his wife Elizabeth and his daughter Kate. They attend the Noblesville, PHC.



YOUTUBE
www.midwestphc.org

The President's Page

By Rev. Don Nichols

One of the saddest days is the day that a church must close. It is generally the outcome of a convergence of circumstances beyond the control of any one person, but it is sad, nonetheless. Sometimes the dynamics that brought about the planting of the church no longer exist. Changing demographics, like job transfers, that have caused the migration of people away from the church location, or other similar situations may challenge the church's ability to survive. Unfortunately, most of the time, it is because the founding vision has not been maintained. The vision, passion, and commitment that birthed the church has waned over the years and the outreach of the church has died; many times long before the church doors close. It is sad to see so many churches that are just a few deaths away from closure.

This issue of the MPN deals with the important subject of outreach. The term describes the action of reaching out into the community with the gospel message. Methods vary, but the only thing that will save your church from going the way of so many others is a continuous work of outreach. Jesus commands us to go, preach and teach, with the promise that He will be with us.

As you read the articles in this issue ask yourself, "Am I involved in outreach?" Only as all of us do our part can we expect the church to thrive numerically.

There are three biblical principles that I believe can be applied to outreach. First, if we "sow in tears, we will reap in joy." Secondly, "If we sow bountifully, we shall also reap bountifully." The third principle is that if we sow faithfully, without getting discouraged, we will reap "in due season." These are all precious promises that have been given to us by God. Let's apply them to our outreach and trust God to give us the increase.

Galatians 6:9 "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Rev. Don Nichols is the president of the Midwest Pilgrim Holiness Church Conference. He also pastors the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Lima, OH. He and his wife Ruth have 3 adult children.





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The Life of Kate

Kate Price is in charge at the Noblesville, PHC

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Conference Calendar

- Youth Lock-In, September 24, Noblesville, IN.
- Fall Ministers Retreat, Oblong, IL: October 14-16, 2021
- Conference Christmas Dinner, December 3, 7 P.M.
Family Life Center, Noblesville, IN.
- "It's About Time". September is Self-Denial Month.
What will your church give? Proceeds will remodel the
mission house kitchen in Dominica.
- Need a past issue of the MPN? Dan Plemmons
has archived past issues on our website. Go to
midwestphc.org and click on Links then click on
Midwest Pilgrim News.
- Huzzah! We have reached our goal of 200 hard copy
subscriptions for the MPN. This drops the price from \$13
annually to \$10 annually. Renew your subscription today.



The Hart's Happy 50th

SEPT. 24TH

Service starts at 6:00 PM
Speaker: Rev. Tim Forsee
Music: Various Pilgrim Churches
Recreation Following Service

6:00 PM - MIDNIGHT
PILGRIM YOUTH RALLY

LOCATION: Noblesville Pilgrim Holiness Church
1413 Westfield Road, Noblesville, IN 46062



Happy Engagement
Callie Line
Zachary Potteiger
Oct 8, 2021

Editor: From Page 2: While an information booth may not be as necessary for a smaller church, churches should still have a method for answering a visitor's questions quickly and efficiently. A well-equipped visitor's packet can do this job nicely. *

Since first time visitors often visit a church's website before they arrive, some churches are even posting an expectation sheet that informs a visitor of what will take place and the timeframe involved for each aspect of the service. This explanation can go a long way in helping visitors feel comfortable in a strange environment.

Implement Gospel-Centered Services

It can be easy for a pastor to revert to entertaining programs and gimmicks to draw the crowds. After all, the modern mind gravitates toward what is comfortable and popular. People like to feel good about themselves versus being made to feel guilty about their sin. However, there is no substitute for God's presence. Spirit-filled services that emphasize the gospel will do what all the gimmicks can never do - transform lives; and sincere seekers will appreciate that. It does not do much good to be the biggest church in town if we are not getting people to Heaven.

Another important consideration is to spend much time in prayer and service planning. Remember that doctorate level theology and religious catch phrases tend to frustrate un-churched people. A good rule of thumb is to strive for services that teens can enjoy and keep the message to about 30 minutes. That is plenty for the modern attention span.

Be Gracious to Your Guests

Don't embarrass your guests by awkward "We just wanna love all over ya; Come on down to the front and get your visitors button," moments. Studies are showing that almost two-thirds of the un-churched maintain that they would like to remain anonymous until at least their second or third visit. Attenders of mega-churches are even admitting they attend these congregations because they don't have to worry about accountability or being singled out.

This should make us be think twice before trying to turn a visitor into a church soloist on their first visit. Seek balance in your approach. We don't want to come off as standoff-ish or rude, but we don't want to smother people either. Be happy that people are there, without the over-eagerness that tends to repress.

Furthermore, don't be offended at a visitor's sin and offer half-veiled suggestions of all that needs to change in their life. Non-Christians are already expecting you to be prejudiced against them; therefore tattoos, hairstyles, and gestapo-style interrogations as to "when they will be back" should be strictly off limits. God respects free-will and so must we. A warm smile, respectful conversation, and a "If you're looking for a church, we would love to have you attend here." is sufficient.

If the opportunity presents itself you should connect with newcomers outside of the church setting. This will go much farther in winning their trust than a punch in the arm and an accusatory "See, the roof didn't cave in after all" comment.

Be Sure to Follow Up

It defeats our purpose of inviting people into our church if we do not follow up on them. A letter or visit from the pastor, superintendent, or layman during the week can impress people to our authenticity. Many times, this opens a door that was not otherwise there. Our goal is not just to keep them coming but to minister to their needs.

Conclusion

Are these principles a magic formula for success? Unfortunately, not. There are many visitors that simply will not allow us to connect with them. Their prejudice will not be overcome and we will wonder why they came in the first place.

But should we concede defeat? Of course not. Christ has given us a charge and we must do the best we can to fulfill it. We must strive to make what happens beyond the welcome mat the best that it can be for every visitor that comes our way. With God's help we will be successful and new souls will be added to the Kingdom of God.

Now, if you will excuse me, I need to get back to attending what lies beyond my welcome mat. ~TRF

*(Order Visitor Packets at <https://www.spire-resources.com/home.php>)

*Resources: 9 Signs Your Church is Ready to Reach Unchurched People, By Carey Nieuwhof; 6 Ways to Keep Visitors Coming Back to Church, By Trillia Newbell; The Top 10 Reasons Church Visitors Don't Return, By Thom Rainer

Praying the Scriptures

Are you wondering how you should pray for lost souls? Start by following these scriptural guidelines.

- Pray that people's hearts will be prepared to receive the gospel: Matthew 13:1-23
- Pray that the Word of God will have free course, (or run without hinderance): 2 Thessalonians 3:1
- Pray for opportunities to share the gospel and boldness to carry through: Colossians 4:3, Ephesians 6:19
- Pray that those sharing the gospel will speak the truth in love and clarity: Ephesians 4:18, 1 John 3:18, Ephesians 6:19
- Pray that sinners will develop friendships with believers: Mark 2:13-17

- Pray that Christians who do witness will pray for those they witnessed to: Romans 12:12
- Pray for God's protection over those who are faithfully sharing the gospel: Matt 9:38, Ephesians 6:18-20, 1 Thessalonians 5:25
- Pray for conviction over sin: 1 Thessalonians 1:5
- Pray for true repentance that leads to salvation: Acts 20:20-21
- Pray that God will be glorified in unsaved peoples' response to the gospel: Philippians 1:9-11
- Praise God for the privilege of praying for the lost: 1 Timothy 2:1-6, Psalms 103:1-6

This list is adapted from lifeloveandjesus.com

Fishing for Men

By Darlene Line



Many people want new ones in their church, but they do nothing to bring them in or, once they come, do little to keep them. It takes time, money, and hard work. When the Lord first called me to go out and knock on doors, that was just the beginning of finding lost souls to become disciples.

Using Jesus as an example, we see He went out to find His disciples. He walked along the seashore and found the fishermen- Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Then, Matthew the tax collector, Phillip, and on it went until He had gathered His twelve disciples. How many churches only have a few? How many churches are waiting for someone to come who is already a Christian? (Probably from another church.) I will tell you, there's nothing like having new people come and get saved. What a blessing! We live in the end times, and it is not always easy to get people to come to church, but we must still invite and look for that "one". I'd like to give you a few examples of some lost souls that God was able to help me see become disciples.

I remember knocking on a trailer door and inviting a family to church. They came with their two children. Every week we went to visit and had them over for supper. Three Sundays went by, and I told them, "Once you've come three Sundays in a row, you've already made a habit!" Well, she wanted to prove me wrong, so she told her husband the next Sunday morning, "I'm not going". I had invited them for Sunday dinner, and he said, "You can stay home if you want to, but I'm not missing a Sunday dinner with the Lines." She came that morning, and in just a few weeks both were gloriously saved. They were at the Pilgrim Camp this year rejoicing in the Lord.

One Saturday I knocked on a door. The father came out with tattoos all over and his hair braided down his back. Yes, he agreed to send his three children to Sunday School. Saturday after Saturday I took cookies, cupcakes, and muffins but the parents wouldn't come to the door. They would, however, send their children to the door to let me know that they were coming to Sunday School. I called and invited them for Sunday dinner – no show, and to a church outing on a Friday night – no show.

One day I came to the house, and they were both outside waiting as their carpets were being cleaned and I finally got to talk to them. Wow! Were they ever talkers! I was there a long time, but it was the icebreaker. After that, instead of just sending the kids to the door, they came to talk to me. Finally, at Christmas program time they came both Sunday morning and evening. Just a few weeks later they gave their all to Jesus. What a service!

**IN TIME HE BECAME A PASTOR OF A
PILGRIM HOLINESS CHURCH AND NOW HE
IS IN HEAVEN. HE WOULD CALL ME QUITE
OFTEN AND ALWAYS THANK ME FOR
KNOCKING ON HIS DOOR!**

One more story out of many. We moved to a new pastorate. There were fourteen people in church on the first Sunday. The first door I knocked on was right across from the church. The mother was friendly. She didn't know that it was a church; she thought it was some sort of club. She let her two girls come and they loved it so much that within a few weeks they had brought twenty-seven of their friends and cousins. How great! We kept visiting weekly. The mother would always come for church dinners and programs. Five years later, she started attending

every Sunday morning, then every Sunday night. One Monday morning she walked by my house while I was out shaking rugs and said, “Sister Line, next week I’m going to settle it.” And settle it she did! She’s a blessing in the church to this day.

These days it can be more difficult to get people and children into church. It takes much prayer, fasting, and knocking to get them in, but we still need to be faithful! One by one a church van or bus can be filled.

A few weeks ago, someone knocked on a door and two children started to come. They knew nothing about Jesus. The boy was eight years old, and he didn’t even know that we celebrate Christmas because of Jesus’ birth. As I taught him, he had so many questions and hardly even moved during Junior Church. How exciting it is to tell a young boy that he can go to Heaven and live with Jesus.



When the Lord called me to knock on doors, I promised Him I would knock on as many doors as I could. Through the years hundreds have come and heard the glorious message that Jesus can save and deliver from sin. It is our business as Christians to sow the seed of God. Only eternity will reveal how many repented.

To sum it up: personal relationships with the unsaved is the key to winning souls for Jesus. I’ve always said, “Do all you can to win the lost without sinning.” May the Lord help us to be faithful!

Darlene Line attends the PHC in Frankfort, IN. She and her late husband Charles have served our conference in ministry for many years.

The Secret Formula for Church Growth

1. Live like Jesus.
2. Get out and meet people who don’t know Jesus.
3. Tell them about Jesus and bring them to His church.



Frustrated by the slow growth of your church? Are you thinking of compromising biblical principles for the sake of numbers? Maybe you should compare your ideas of ministerial success with that of the Master.

1.) Jesus never played to the crowds: While Christ preached salvation to the multitudes, He never compromised or lowered the standard of repentance to see results. He always told people what they needed to hear versus what they wanted to hear and let them choose accordingly. (Mark 10:21-22) As tempting as it may be to do otherwise, we must follow His example. Numbers are not as important as gospel integrity.

2.) Jesus never said the masses would be saved: We need not despair because we haven’t won our city for Christ when Christ didn’t win his city either. He knew that many people would remain unrepentant and made it clear in Matthew 7:13-14 that those who would be saved were few in comparison to those that would be lost. We are simply called to be witnesses to as many as possible and trust God for the increase.

3.) Jesus built relationships: Jesus didn’t offer a “Take your church from 4 to 4000 in 40 days” formula, but he did build his kingdom by surrounding himself with sinners and ministering to them. (Mark 2:15-16) He was even known to go out of his way to minister to solitary individuals such as the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, and blind Bartimaeus. (John 4:4, Luke 19:1) This was not wasted time to him.

Our responsibility is to follow his example by building relationships with non-Christians so that we might lead them to him. We can then disciple them so that they can assist us in the task of soul-winning. Person by person the kingdom of God will be built.

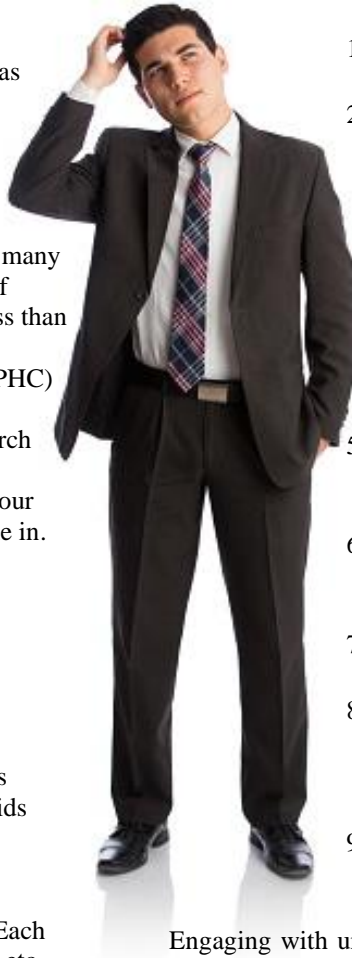
4.) Jesus didn’t feel like a failure: Christ’s earthly ministry ended on a cross with the multitudes scorning him, but he didn’t consider himself a failure. He declared in John 4:34, and John 6:38 that he had come to do the Father’s will, and he stated in John 19:30 that he had finished that task. Jesus Christ was not a failure and neither are we when we are faithful to the will of God.

We should never justify laziness or complacency regarding outreach. Our hearts should yearn for all men to be saved, and our work ethic should reflect that. However, we should not lose hope over the slow progress of our number board. Building a church takes time and hard work. Keep the correct perspective, stay passionate about lost souls, and be faithful to the task before you. Faithfulness in the small things tends to bring the bigger picture together. One thing is for certain; there will be a harvest. Our Father will see to it. (Ps 22:7-8)

outreach

HOW CAN MY CHURCH ENGAGE WITH LOST PEOPLE?

1. Set up a Prayer Station in your town. (See <https://prayerstations.org/store/> for supplies.) This has been rated as one of the most effective and powerful street evangelism methods available today.
2. Enter a float in your town's parade: Pass out candy, water bottles, and tracts. The exposure to your church is invaluable and it enables you to plant many seeds in a short period of time. With a good group of volunteers, you can pass out 500 or more tracts in less than an hour. Just be sure your tracts are quality tracts. Livingwaters.com can help you with this. (Franklin PHC)
3. Sponsor a Trunk or Treat on Halloween in your church parking lot. A grill and some gospel music can help counteract the darkness and provide fellowship for your team. Take advantage of opportunities to draw people in.
4. Have weekly church calling days. Make sure your community cannot say they were never invited to church. Be sure to have attractive, colorful, fliers with the necessary information and a quality gospel tract stapled to it. (Noblesville, PHC)
5. Hold a weekly Good News Clubs on the night that is most effective. Have an incentive program. If the kids fill your church bus, they win a picnic, or prize of your choice. (Lima, PHC)
6. Hold special programs throughout the year such as Each One - Reach One Sunday and Around-To-It Sunday, etc. Take new converts for coffee. (New Castle, PHC) Schedule a Rolling Picnic. Rent a grill and give away free food and gospel in your community. (David Spivey)
7. Advertise a Prayer Drive-Thru in your local newspaper and provide free coffee and donuts for those that come to drop off their requests. (Hobe Sound Bible Church) Get involved in jail or nursing home ministry. (Batavia, PHC)
8. Help out needy families with groceries and other practical needs. (Madison, PHC)



HOW CAN I ENGAGE WITH LOST PEOPLE?

1. Follow up personally on any contact made through church outreach efforts.
2. Take a personal interest in a non-Christian's problems and let them know you are praying for them. Follow up on their situation.
 3. Invite your neighbors/co-workers for dinner, rather than people already saved.
 4. Take your neighbors a plate of cookies at Christmas and otherwise. Be as friendly with them as possible initiating a relationship. Host a block party or fall party on your property.
5. Never turn down an opportunity to spend time with an un-believer: (Building a deck, fishing, helping them move, etc.)
6. Frequent a restaurant for breakfast or a park for your children to play. Cultivate as many relationships as you can.
7. Visit the nursing homes or jails personally to befriend the residents.
8. If your church services are online, host weekly watch parties, or share the services with your unsaved friends. Connecting with people online can lead to real time friendships.
9. Visit the SS children in your church weekly and seek to befriend their unsaved families.

Engaging with unbelievers should be a mindset and lifestyle for Christians, not something that we occasionally do. We should not allow the pastor, or Sunday School Superintendent to carry this responsibility alone. We are all disciples of Christ and it is our duty to make disciples as Christ commanded us.

70% of unchurched people have never been invited to church in their whole lives.

"Eighty-two percent of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited."

"Only two percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church. Ninety-eighty percent of church-goers never extend an invitation in a given year." —Dr. Thom Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door*

CONSIDERATION QUESTIONS

- A. Can this list be made better? What are my ideas?**
- B. What can I do personally to connect with unbelievers?**

Statistics show us that inviting people to church is not enough. We must establish relationships with non-Christians and issue our invitations to church and the gospel within that context.

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS NOT REACHING OUT?



BY ROWAN FAY

Cause and Effect Evangelism

I'm sure that many Christians would like to be involved in helping lost sinners become devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Well, let's take a look at the law of cause and effect. It's all through scripture.

1.) Psalms 26:5 "They that sow in tears (cause), shall reap in joy." (effect)

Here's a sobering question, "how long has it been since you've wept over a soul?" If you can't remember, a prayer I recommend is, "Oh God, give me tears over the lost."

2.) Psalms 2:8 "Ask of Me, (cause) and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." (Result)

God does the saving but we are part of the "cause." One of the "causes" is prayer for the pre-Christian. Did you pray for a pre-Christian today? John 16:24 says "Ask (cause), and "ye shall receive." (effect)

3.) Proverbs 3:6 "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, (cause) and He shall direct thy paths" (Effect) There lost people all around us. They have needs that we can meet. Ask God to guide you to a needy soul each day.

4.) John 4:23 "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

God is looking for worshippers, not watchers. A lot of people who attend church watch more than they worship. True worshippers affect the atmosphere. And the effect is, that sinners are hungrier for God. Cause and effect! Isn't it amazing that the first step in becoming an influence on sinners is to become a good worshipper?

Also, consider 1 Samuel 2:30 "Them that honor me, (cause), I will honor." (effect) Look for ways to honor God and God will look for ways to honor us. Cause and effect! When we praise God, we honor God and God honors us. If you want to become a great soulwinner, start by becoming a great worshipper.

5.) Lastly, look for opportunities to connect with pre-Christians. Visit them and invite them to your house. Look for ways to serve them. As I like to say, "find a need and fill it and find a hurt and heal it." That means loving pre-Christians.

Jesus said the two greatest commandments are to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love thy neighbor as thyself. Winning people is the result of loving people. Loving them is cause, winning them is effect.

Rowan Fay currently resides in Hobe Sound Florida with his wife Judy. They have 4 adult children, 10 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. He works with his son Scott in his landscaping and irrigation business. He also takes revival meetings.



A Conversation w/ Justin Jackman

How my church engages the lost is a loaded question. When I think of engagement, I think ongoing

contact versus short- term outreach. For true engagement I think this needs to happen more on a personal level than a group level, especially in the beginning. Because of this I had our whole church go through a 40-day discipleship program. As we progressed throughout the lessons, we did discussion-based services on Sunday and Wednesday evenings to review what we had learned that week. Our goal was to train everyone in the church in the same theology and principles; to both understand the needs of new contacts and how those needs might be met.

Historically, our best success has been families where we started with the children and moved on to reach the parents or grandparents. That is typically a slow process, but immensely valuable when it sticks. I'd love to have faster, more direct methods to reach the heads of the families, but it is a struggle to do so effectively. The success we've enjoyed with that is generally with non-Christians with whom our established church people have worked. We try hard to push the workplace as our local mission field.

Justin Jackman pastors the PHC in Evansville. He and his wife Sarah have two children and one on the way.

Has your church been trained to invite, receive, pray through, and disciple new people in the faith? It is the pastor's job to facilitate this Christian duty.

Grace Stories



IF THE SON THEREFORE SHALL MAKE YOU FREE, YE SHALL BE FREE INDEED. JOHN 8:36

By Mark Clayton

My life hasn't been an easy one. From the beginning I have faced numerous difficulties. I was born at Methodist hospital in Indianapolis with fever convulsions. I had to take Phenobarbital Dilantin until I was 14 years old. At age 14 my brainwaves reverted to normal versus grossly abnormal.



I graduated High School in 1977 and enlisted in the US Navy's delayed entry program. My stint in the Navy was cut short by an accident in late 1978 when I was hit by a 2.5-ton truck. I was in a coma for 6 months and came out of it with a plastic knee cap in my left leg.

I had been raised in a Pentecostal church, where my uncle was pastor, but from that time till early 2015, I ran with a pretty rough crowd. I drank alcohol, did drugs, and ran around with women. I had a motorcycle and surrounded myself with the biker culture. Many members of a biker club in Indianapolis were friends of mine and nicknamed me Cujoe.

That name came from an incident in a bar where I was the bouncer. One night while I was chatting with some women, a male customer got out of hand. Our altercation ended with me dragging him out by his ankles. From that time on I was Cujoe from the rabid dog in the Stephen King novel.

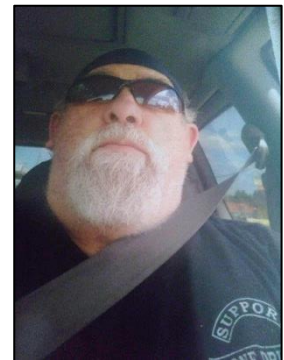
If I needed anything, all I had to do was call on my biker buddies. I remember asking for their help when a man was making trouble for my family. Six of them visited him at his work and "suggested" he change his course of action. He left town that night. It's not wise to ignore a suggestion like that.

During these years until May 2014, I had 7 strokes and 7 heart attacks. It is a miracle I am still alive.

Then in mid-2015 I was introduced to the people at the Pilgrim Holiness church and started attending. I realized right away this was what I needed and I remember the service that I came to the altar and asked God to save me. He did and I am no longer the man I used to be. God has done a lot for me and I now want to make it to Heaven.

Life still isn't easy. Since becoming a Christian, I have been hospitalized several times. I have had two stints put in the left side of my heart. I had Covid with double pneumonia where my oxygen was down to 76%. Yet, God has pulled me through it all. He has had His hand on my back for a long time. GOD IS GOOD!

Mark Clayton lives in Greenwood, IN and attends the PHC in Franklin. He constantly looks for ways to bless his church and is an encouragement to everyone.



By Roy Roach

I attend the Pilgrim Holiness Church in Newcastle, IN. It hasn't always been that way. When I was a young boy, a preacher walked up in the middle of his sermon and told me I was going to hell. I was so scared, I purposed never to go back to church again and never did for 60 years. I was invited to the Pilgrim Holiness Church for an Easter cantata. The story of Easter changed my life. I have now surrendered fully to God. What a change he has made.

Roy Roach is now in a full time -care facility. He loves the Lord and maintains a good testimony.

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PETER'S CHOICE

Written by Janella Thompson

Peter squirmed in his dress clothes as he looked out the car window. The familiar sights passed and he knew they only had about ten minutes until they would arrive at church. He slid his phone out of his pants pocket and looked at the screen. There were two notifications. One was for his favorite game encouraging him to get to the next level, and the second was a reminder for him to read his Bible. Peter thought, "I only have enough time to do one." **Go to 3:** If Peter reads his Bible. **Go to 2:** If Peter plays his game.

1 Peter raised his hand, "Pastor John Mark, this verse has a lot of big words in it. What is it saying? I mean 'Advocate' and that big 'P' word...I can't even hardly pronounce that word." "That's a great question Peter," said Pastor John Mark. "In this verse, Advocate means that Jesus is our helper, He comes to our aid and pleads our cause to the Father (God). He's kind of like our lawyer. God's righteous law would find us guilty of our sins. How many of you have been guilty of sinning?" Peter looked around the room and saw many kids raise their hands. Peter slowly raised his hand. Pastor John Mark placed his lesson book on a chair and grabbed his Bible and began flipping thru it till he found what he wanted, and began reading, "1 John 1:9 says, 'If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Peter, I think this verse will help us better understand that 'P' word" and it's pronounced 'pro-pit-shee-ay-shn' or 'propitiation'. God knew He would not allow any sin into heaven and that there needed to be a sacrifice that would cover the sins of all men. So, He sent His Son Jesus Christ to be the propitiation, or in easier words the sacrifice, that would satisfy God's anger towards our sins. This would allow us to be able to be redeemed into God's family, if we choose to accept it." "So, Pastor John Mark," Peter slowly asked, "if I confess my sins to God, Jesus will be my Advocate and let Him know my heart is serious about quitting sin? And then because of Jesus' death on the cross, which is the 'Propitiation' part, God will be faithful to forgive me?" "Exactly! Peter, would you like to do that today?" asked Pastor John Mark. "Yes, Pastor I would!" said Peter as he bowed his head. Together they prayed that Jesus would come be his advocate and forgive his sins. **Go to Final.**

2 WIZZ, BANG, BLEEP! The familiar sounds of Peter's game made him smile as he punched the keys on his phone doing his best to beat the level he had been trying to achieve all week. The music played letting Peter know he had accomplished his goal! A few minutes later, he walked into his Sunday school class, grabbed a lesson leaflet, and took a seat. Peter knew he probably had not made the best choice about his Bible reading that morning but was determined to listen as Pastor John Mark read the scripture from 1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sin but not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The scripture being read was really good but Peter didn't understand it. **Go to 1** If Peter raises his hand and asks about the verse. **Go to 4** If Peter gets distracted by the pencil game on the lesson leaflet and only half listens to the rest of the lesson

3 Peter clicked open his Bible app and found where he had stopped reading the day before. He began reading 1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, these things I write unto



you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation???" Umm, I have no idea how to say that word or what it means, thought Peter as he continued to read the rest of his scripture...."For our sins: but not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." **Go to 5:** If Peter asks about the word, he doesn't know how to pronounce or understand. **Go to 2:** If Peter closes his Bible app and plays his game for the rest of his trip.

4 "What's a 5-letter word for God's Son?" thought Peter, "oh, that's easy J-E-S-U-S" Peter twiddled the pencil between his fingers. He knew he should really pay attention, but lately Pastor John Mark's lessons had really begun to make him uncomfortable. "I'm a good kid" Peter convinced himself, "I read my Bible a few times this week, and I even resisted the urge to punch my brother in the nose when he kicked my Lego town down! That's gotta count for something! But what about that verse 'And if any man sin'...I am pretty sure I am sinning with the way I've been disobeying mom and dad, lately! What if Jesus heard that word I used on the playground? I wonder what will happen to me if I don't confess my sin?" RRRRIIINNNGGG! That was the bell for class to dismiss. Peter walked out of class pushing the thought aside that he should talk to Pastor John Mark about some of his

uncomfortable feelings he had been having during Sunday School. Peter left church that day very unhappy in his heart. He felt scared and alone knowing he had not asked Jesus to forgive his sins. **Go to Final.**

5 “Mom, can you help me with this word I don’t know how to pronounce it or know what it means?” “Let me see,” said Mom taking Peter’s phone, “Oh yes, that is pronounced ‘pro-pit-shee-ay-shun’. Propitiation means Jesus was the sacrifice or the replacement for our sins. So that God’s anger against your sins and the sins of the world would be satisfied.” “Thanks, mom, for explaining that to me,” Peter said as they pulled into the church parking lot. Peter walked into his Sunday School class feeling good about making the choice to read the Bible instead of playing his game, but he was still a bit confused about the verses he had read. There was that word “Advocate”, what did that mean? He grabbed a pencil off the desk and began playing the game on the back of the lesson leaflet as Pastor John Mark started reading the scripture for the lesson. Peter heard the same familiar verse he had read just minutes before he walked into class. **Go to 1:** If Peter raises his hand and asks Pastor John Mark more questions about the verse. **Go to 4:** If Peter continues to play his pencil game and half listens to the Sunday School lesson.

Final: In today’s story Peter was faced with a lot of choices. Each choice led him to a different possibility. Some were good choices that led him closer to Jesus and some were bad choices that distanced him from Jesus. We all have many choices every day. Some are not so spiritual, like “Should I brush my teeth today?” But some could be very spiritual, like “Should I ask a question about a Bible verse when I don’t understand it?” Understanding God’s word helps us draw closer to Him, Jesus is our Advocate, the one who goes to the Father on our behalf. It’s His sacrifice on the cross that is the propitiation (or the replacement) for our sins. All we have to do is accept that Jesus died for us and confess our sins to Him. He will forgive us and make us a part of His family! Won’t you accept Him today? If so, go get your parents right now and ask them to pray with you! It will make their day!

Janella Thompson is a children’s worker at the PHC in Noblesville. She is married to Jonathon and has two daughters, Natalie and Kaitlyn. They currently reside in Fishers, IN.

From Page 10

By Martin Laramie

I was a typical youth of the 70’s with long hair, bell bottoms, silky shirts, and platform shoes. I had no contact with a church or a pastor. I had very little knowledge about God and conversion.



It was in this state that I began to read the bible for the first time. I memorized the Lord’s prayer and said it every night at my bedside. I was so pleased I had learned to recite a prayer from the Book. Next, I read the gospel of John where Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh to the Father but by me.” (Jn 14:6) I then read where Thomas asked Jesus to show him the way. That night I began to pray “Lord, show me the way.”

I prayed that way for several nights when a deep sense of my sinfulness pervaded my consciousness. I felt so wicked I dropped to my knees and cried out, “Lord, I’ll change!” Instantly, I was changed. I was so very happy inside and felt a deep peace within. I didn’t even know what to call what had happened to me. I didn’t know I had been saved from my sins and that it was Jesus who saved me. I had no church, no pastor and very little understanding of spiritual things. The “spiritual” themes of some of Cat Stevens songs were the only thing I knew.

After that experience a great desire came to find a church and live right. One night while I was sleeping, I dreamed that I went into a little church and saw people worshipping. Once I knelt and prayed, Jesus appeared in the sky and I saw myself going up to be with Him. This dream made such an impression on me I shared it with my mother the next morning.

Little did I know I was about to meet those people I had dreamed about. The next Sunday God spoke to me and said “Martin, I want you to go to a little church you passed yesterday. There is a purpose for you going there. The people will be happy to see you.” I had never had God speak to me like that before and it startled me.

I walked into that church and saw a handful of people worshipping God. Someone handed me a hymnal and I started singing with everyone else. Before long I felt drawn to the altar, so much that I asked the man sitting next to me if I could go and pray. He went with me and soon all the people were around us praying. I realized then that my dream had come true. The pastor explained the plan of salvation to me but I knew in my heart I was already saved. I had been saved without knowing what it was.

But the story doesn’t end there. The fact is that a little woman from KY had been helping the pastor and his wife. She had begun to pray, “Lord, I want you to save a young man from this community. I want you to lead him to this church. I want you to call him to preach, and Lord, I want you to make him the pastor of this church.”

That young man was me. I got saved at home and was led to a holiness church, and years later I was called to be the pastor of that congregation. The faithful prayers of a little, woman from KY, helped me get saved and called to the ministry without a church, pastor, or any understanding of the plan of salvation. God can do wonderful things for a person if they will only let the Lord guide them.

Dr. Martin Laramie is the pastor of the PHC in Bloomington, IL. He has been married to his wife Nancy for 40 years.