

# PILGRIM NEWS & NOTES

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## Seeing Church Through a Pastor's Eyes . . .

By Dan Plemmons

I'll never forget the Wednesday night that Joann looked at me while exiting the church and she said, "Oh, Bro. Plemmons, if I feel on Sunday morning like I do right now, don't count on me being here!" My immediate thought was, "Wow, I've heard of women having an uncanny sense of intuition, but this dear lady takes the cake! She knows 4 days in advance that she's going to be sick!"

Have you ever wondered what it's be like to be a pastor? When you think of your pastor, do you envision him having a job where everything is always a bed of roses and he doesn't have a care in the world? If so, I hate to burst your bubble, but that's not how it is at all!

Every church is different and the same goes for people! No two are alike! I have pastored individuals that you never had to worry about, but I have also pastored those who were offended at the least little thing. There are some parishioners that expect a visit from the pastor every few weeks, but there are others that only want a visit from him if they are in the hospital!

**What about the pastor? Would you mind if I told you what your pastor desires from you?**

### **He Wants Your ATTENDANCE**

You might not be aware of it, but often, Sunday morning (prior to service time) is a very discouraging time for a pastor. That's when he will start receiving calls or text messages that different ones will not be there!

I'm perfectly aware of the fact that situations arise and sicknesses come to all of us, but what if your pastor called in sick as often as you do? Would you be wishing for a different pastor that didn't have so many health issues? (This isn't popular thinking, but if people would live healthier lifestyles, maybe they wouldn't have to miss church so often!)

There are individuals in your church that your pastor can always count on to be there, and if they are not, he knows that there is definitely a valid reason! I would urge you to strive to be that kind of parishioner.

### **He Wants Your ATTENTION**

JM Sullivan, an old Evangelist from many years ago used to say while preaching, "I see you out there, but are you really there?"

Far too many people come to church services and while they may be there in body, their mind is someplace else off in the distance. They are not engaged in the service. Your pastor has spends many hours during the week preparing for that service, and the last thing he wants is to see is people who may be there in body, but are not actively engaged in the service! There is a huge difference between the two!

Many years ago my daughter was invited to a very large church to play the offertory. The pastor walked up to me prior to the service and I was surprised to learn that he had Pilgrim Holiness roots! His aunt had been an ordained minister in the Pilgrim Holiness Church long before the merger era. The church had sort of a "U"

shape to it and so as the pastor was preaching, I was able (with little effort) to see pretty much all around the church. To my delight, I noticed that as he took his text, people all around the church took out a pen and a sheet of paper and were jotting down notes of his sermon! It impressed me that his people were engaged in what he was doing!

### **He Wants ASSURANCE of Your Salvation**

Above all else, your Pastor wants to know that you are in a right relationship with Jesus Christ. What happened 40 years ago is wonderful, but he is most interested in what is happening now.

Dr. RG Flexon used to tell the story of a pastor who was having a very restless night and he just couldn't get to sleep. His wife asked him what was wrong, and he replied, "There are over 1,000 people that call me their pastor, and I know not how it is with many of their souls!"

Not all ministers have a true "pastor's heart", but if your pastor does then he's genuinely concerned about your spiritual well-being and his ultimate goal is to see that you make it to Heaven.

Friends, your pastor isn't perfect. More than anyone, he recognizes his own shortcomings, and he doesn't need to be reminded of them. He lives with them every single day.

**October is Clergy Appreciation Month** and your pastor needs to know that you appreciate the sacrifices that he and his family make to shepherd the flock in your local church. He is not pastoring your local church just so he can have a job and live in a parsonage. He could be doing other things, but he willingly entered the ministry because he felt God's calling on his life and he knows that he must be faithful to it.

He may preach too long.

He may not be as friendly as you would like him to be.

He may not visit you as much as you would prefer.

He may not have the personality to which you tend to gravitate, but . . . he is your pastor, and he is the one that God has chosen to help you on your way to Heaven.

May I encourage you to let your pastor know that you appreciate him? (Also, let his wife and children know that you appreciate them.)

### **Here are a couple of suggestions:**

**Vocalize your appreciation.** You might be surprised at how the enemy fights him! He needs to know that you appreciate him. There will be many Sundays that he walks down from the platform feeling like a failure, and your words of affirmation may be exactly what he needs on that Sunday.

**Show your appreciation in a tangible way.** Don't just tell him that you appreciate him, show his family that you love them by doing something for them. Many years ago, a lady in our church went around to the entire church and had every family to do something special for us throughout the month of October. It was such a special month for us.

It's not a grandiose occupation, but there is no greater honor than being called by God to preach the Word!





# Exploiting the Joy

By Valorie Quesenberry

*Valorie Bender Quesenberry is a pastor's wife, mother, musician, speaker, author and the editor of The Ladies' Companion. She has been married to Duane for 29 years and they are the parents of four children, Ashley, Autumn, Stewart and Kaley.*

*Duane and Valorie have been in pastoral ministry for 24 years and currently serve a congregation in Westfield, Indiana. You can connect with Valorie on Facebook and at [valoriequesenberry.com](http://valoriequesenberry.com).*

There have been a few Sunday nights during our years in pastoral ministry when joy was not the predominant emotion in my heart. In fact, at those moments, I might have been easily persuaded to sign off and enter some other avenue of life. There have been a few weekday evenings or Saturday mornings when I might have done the same. Thankfully, those times have not been the guiding moments of our ministry journey. And we had to make the decision to make that so.

Let me be honest. Ministry isn't easy. It isn't even really fun. At least, not most of the time. It's work. It's challenging.

But it's also fulfilling. And rewarding. And that difference lies with us.

Attitude is important no matter one's vocation. And let's just apply it to those in ministry. There is no shortage of pain in the church, pulpit or pew. If you've been around the church world very long, you've heard the stories. People get hurt in the place where they're supposed to get help. Why? There are various reasons and usually more than one at work in a particular situation. The Enemy is on a mission to steal, kill and destroy and he does not pause at the church door. Rather, I think it is one of his favorite fields of attack. When he disrupts the harmony of the congregation and the families in it and tries to impede the march of the Gospel, he assaults the very Bride of Christ, those cherished by the Son. He cannot ultimately win, of course, but his diabolical nature is pleased with any carnage. And there is always carnage when there are church problems.

I've listened to tales of malice and ill will, of backbiting and deception, of wounded spirits and damaged lives. Perhaps so have you. It happens. Not only to our parishioners, but to us. And that's why I say we in ministry need to exploit the joy in it.

Exploit is not a word commonly associated with a positive meaning. We usually think of it in a negative context, as in a person being manipulated and taken advantage of. But it actually means to "make full use of and derive benefit from; to utilize or harness." That sounds like a good thing to me! So, let's talk about how to exploit the joy of ministry.

## **The Reality**

Too many times we believe that joy is an ephemeral thing, present in some pastorates and absent in others. And I will confess that there are some ministry situations which are more naturally inclined than others to warm

fuzzies and feelings of security and fulfillment. But, whatever the setting, it is possible to exploit the joy, however miniscule that may be! And in the process to deny the ever-present temptation to bitterness.

Pastors and wives are human, lamentably so, I'm afraid. At times, it would be so helpful to be more robotic, to be able to program ourselves to act and react correctly without feeling. But it just isn't so. And the upside of that is that we can more fully enter into the sorrows and celebrations of our congregations. Hospital waiting areas, funeral homes, counseling rooms, even jail cells give us the opportunity to minister through our shared humanity as well as through the Word and the Spirit's guidance. When we can relate to the trauma and drama of typical family life we become better conduits of grace, one human being ministering to another through the God of all comfort.

But the factor of our humanity also inclines us toward self-protectiveness and makes us sensitive to insults and slights. This is the part of our natural makeup that can become predominant unless we have a plan to the contrary. And this is true despite our spiritual status or the longevity of our testimony. Being a Christian or being in ministry for multiple years does not insulate us from this proclivity. While it is true that the longer one is in relationship with the Lord the stronger he or she is, it is also true that even seasoned saints can be tripped up by a hurtful situation. So, it is vital that all of us, and especially those of us in ministry, have a plan, not only to deal with the negatives, but also to focus on the positives.

### **The Plan**

**Embrace the call for life.** No, this doesn't mean that there might not be seasons when a pastor won't have a fulltime position or that he can't take a sabbatical, etc. But one must approach this life in a similar manner to marriage – commitment and determination to make the best of it, no matter what. When we approach it from this angle, we are more motivated to let the small things drop off and even to address the big things from a calm perspective. At her father's memorial service, I heard pastor's wife, Jan Miller, relate how Rev. Agan would say that some hurtful situations are like mud on your clothes. If you try to wipe it off right away, it will smear and cause a bigger mess. But if you wait a while and let it dry, you can flick it off with your fingers. While I realize that not every problem in the church can be handled this way, sometimes a little waiting and cooling off makes a big difference. And the Spirit can help us know the difference, if we want to know. I heard Rev. John Zechman remark that, when dealing with sensitive ministry situations, many things get better with just a little time. I believe he's right. A little time coupled with prayer can make a big difference.

**Discover the delight in people.** People have irritating traits. But they also have delightful ones. And those of us in ministry can choose to love the good things and either ignore the bad ones (especially if they're just annoying habits or personality quirks) or try to help them overcome them. A "big picture" approach can be a great asset here. Does this small trait really make a difference to the big picture of ministry or God's kingdom? A proper view of others can also be helpful. I like what I heard Sonja Vernon, Vice President for Student Affairs at God's Bible College, say recently about remembering that every person we see is an "image-bearer" of God. Obviously, not without flaws or hang-ups, but an image-bearer all the same. And as such, deserves respect and dignity. We can exploit the joy in ministry by training our eyes to pick up on the winsome ways of those around us. Maybe they tell great stories (ignore the exaggerations). Perhaps they are always the first volunteer for projects (work around their less-than-perfect performance). Could be they are generous (refuse to be bothered by their lack of finesse). I promise that, if you train your eyes to see it, you can find fantastic things in others. Does that mean

that you won't recognize the things that frustrate you? No, but it does mean that you will derive joy from knowing them as people who have something good to contribute to the church community.

**Confront the traumas with hope.** There will be trauma in ministry. It's a given. Not if, but when. Some disasters are worse than others. Church splits, harsh criticism, negative pastoral votes, difficult board members, etc. can all be traumatic. It's no use pretending that they don't matter. The pain is real. Choose ahead of time that you will confront them head-on and with hope. By head-on, I don't mean in a bullheaded fashion but not letting the details simmer and get worse. Own the problem. Acknowledge the challenge. Hug the pain and grieve it fully. And have a plan going forward. During a difficult time in our ministry, my husband and I realized that no one was going to fix it for us. Not even God! WE had to make the choices necessary to get help for us and to move back into a good place. The Lord will nudge us toward what we need to do, but it's up to us to make it happen. And it's okay for that to take a little time. At the Dayton Convention one year, Pastor Jonathan Heath made this wise observation, "Emotions dictate the pace of reconciliation." Emotions require time to heal and balance out. The length of time isn't as important as the fact that progress is being made. Surround yourself with those who have survived ministry trauma and survived it well. Run from those who carry their wounds like trophies. There is nothing quite as destructive to God's work as bitterness in the heart and on the countenance of those who use to be in ministry. It's human to be hurt, but it's wrong to let it define you. And even worse to glory in it.

**Expect the future to be fantastic.** Pastor Rowan Fay is a joy to be around because he embodies this idea. He is always looking forward. With great expectation and delight. Of course, he can't be sure of the outcome, but he has made it a life habit to anticipate the good things God is going to do in the coming days. This has been a hallmark of his ministry and his person. And all of us love it. The thing is . . . all of us can make the choice to imitate that. Will we do it as well as he? Probably not. I think he has a natural disposition toward positivity. But I once heard that the best way to acquire a trait is to act like you already have it. Want confidence? Act confident. Want enthusiasm? Act enthusiastic. Want joy? Act joyful. You see, much of life is determined by choice. The free will God gave us is much more powerful than we usually understand. We are not victims of our circumstances, our limitations or our wounds – unless we allow ourselves to be. I've been in some tough pastoral situations. And it's easy to pull into a shell, to be polite and nothing more, to do the nice thing but not necessarily the kind thing. And that will get you through. But it won't get you through with joy. And often, the results will show up in your children. Don't give them a reason to turn against ministry. Don't provide them with an easy out ("I've been hurt so many times in the church."). Don't hand them a motivation for seeing church involvement as an add-on and not as a center for their adult lives. Am I recommending a lack of authenticity? No, I'm suggesting wise authenticity. Our young people need to know things, but not everything and not in moments of extreme reaction or recoil. Tell it well, tell it kindly, tell it maturely. They need to see you expecting the future to be fantastic. If you can convince your children, you are doing well.

Ministry is a life of joy . . . if you look for it, decide to embrace it and allow it to find you. Make the decision to squeeze every drop of delight from the life to which God has called you. There is joy in doing the will of the Father and there is joy in ministering to those in Christ's church. Robert Shannon, preacher, missionary and Bible College professor, said, "Never pity missionaries; envy them. They are where the real action is – where life and earth, sin and grace, Heaven and Hell converge." I think we could substitute "ministry families" there and not spoil the meaning. Those in ministry are in the unique and fabulous place where kingdom work is happening every day. As we learn to handle both this calling and the people in it with open hands and hearts, we will find that there is abundant and ongoing joy.

# News from around the Conference

News articles on this page have been submitted by various Pilgrim Churches. We reserve the right to edit the submissions as necessary to fit space requirements. E-mail all news to: [midwestphc@gmail.com](mailto:midwestphc@gmail.com)



## Conference Related News . . .

In a recent trip, the Conference President and his wife visited some Conference ministers who have retired, or are facing health challenges. (Above) President Don Nichols poses with Rev. Harold Jackman (left) and Rev. Keith Gibson (Right).

*The Madison PHC* recently remodeled their parsonage, and the pastoral family has now moved in.  
*The Corydon PHC* is planning to begin construction soon on their new 6,000 sq. ft. Fellowship Hall.  
*The Palestine PHC* recently broke ground on their new Family Life Center.  
*The New Castle and Kokomo* churches are currently searching for larger church buildings.

## Prayer Requests:

*Rev. Anthony Frankum* — He will receive his last chemo treatment soon. Please continue to pray for him.  
*Rev. Stanley Hedden* — His cancer treatments are continuing. Please continue to pray for the Heddens.  
*Churches needing Pastors* — There are still 3 PHC churches that are in need of a pastor.

## Rochester Hills, MI—(by Pastor Dan Plemmons)

God is blessing here at the Rochester Hills PHC! On Sunday, August 5th, we were privileged to have the Union Bible College *Sounds of Praise Quartet*. There was a good crowd and the presence of the Lord was felt in the singing. Our own, Clayton Plemmons, did a wonderful job giving our people an update on the wonderful things that are happening on the campus of Union Bible College.

Pastor Dan recently started a part-time job in Livonia, MI and was able to come into contact with Don & Kris Scholz, a wonderful couple that have been searching for a Conservative Holiness Church. They have started attending and have been a blessing to our church.

Clayton Plemmons will be going on a mission's trip to China this Winter and we are looking forward to him visiting in the near future to talk about this future endeavor.

## **Lima, OH—(by Pastor Don Nichols)**

We appreciate the help of the Lord in Lima. The third week of July we held our annual Vacation Bible School. Using the kit from Answers in Genesis, our able volunteer staff did a great job of planning, building props, inviting children and producing Time Lab. Both of our church vans were used along with personal minivans to transport children to the VBS. A number of unchurched parents attended the program. The \$500 VBS offering was designated for a pulpit for our sister church in Antigua. Attendance was good, and we are thankful for all who helped make the VBS a success.

Recent upgrades to our facility include remodeling the back of the sanctuary to include a small nursery, a storage area and an upgrade of the sound booth. Having used chairs for sanctuary seating since we moved into this building in 2006, we were blessed to receive the donation of 22 16' pews. We will need to re-carpet the sanctuary to use them, but we are thankful to a church in Dayton, OH, for the donation. John Yohe, an alumnus of Pilgrim Christian School, donated and installed security cameras in our facility.

Hunter Blaize Rose was dedicated to the Lord by his parents, Rachel (Spencer) and Ryan Rose. Rachel is the middle daughter of Bill and Lynette Spencer, assistant pastor. Bro. Nichols performed the dedication. Several family members attended the dedication service.

A going-away party was held for Caleb Hunter and Ryan Burley in the School Commons after the PM service recently. The décor was “fishing” and the young adult ladies led by Marea Pouzar did an excellent job of making things nice. Ryan is attending Hobe Sound Bible College and Caleb enrolled in Penn View Bible Institute. Wesley and Janna Cressman presented their missionary work in Honduras during that evening’s service.

Pilgrim Christian School marked its 36th year as school opened this fall. We are thankful for our faithful staff including, Mrs. Marea Pouzar, beginning her 22nd year of teaching at PCS; Mrs. Stephanie Burley, beginning her 21st year, and Mrs. Brenda Hunter beginning her first year as a teacher, though she has worked as a teaching assistant for several years. Mrs. Geraldine Snyder volunteers as billing secretary. We’re blessed with a fine staff.

Sis. Cheryl Barnt, our Missionary President, launched the annual Self-denial mission’s offering on the first Wednesday in September. The goal for the adults is \$4,000 and that for the children is \$140. The proceeds will be put together with offerings from the other Pilgrim churches of our Conference and used to help rebuild and furnish the facilities destroyed in the hurricane in Dominica last October.

Pastor and Mrs. Nichols led a group of our teens in worship ministry at our church in Maryville, TN, Sunday, September 9th. The Plemmons were celebrating their 61st wedding anniversary up north with their family. Evan, Kaitlynn and Allison Burley, Hannah and Isaac Hunter, and Emilee Hunsaker sang, quoted scripture, led the singing and led in congregational prayer. The Nichols took them to Pigeon Forge on Saturday for a time of fellowship and fun. The church shared a pitch-in lunch together and was blessed by the ministry of the youth. The teens had a great time!

### **Note from the Editor:**

*Do you have news that you would like to share with the Conference body? We’d love to hear about it! There are several Pilgrim Churches that we haven’t heard from in some time. If you have news or photos of happenings around your church that you would like to share, please send an email to the editor along with any applicable photos to:*

*[midwestphc@gmail.com](mailto:midwestphc@gmail.com)*

# PASTOR TO PASTOR

Ministering to those who minister to others

## Advice to Young Pastors . . .

By Rev. Dan Stetler

I have been asked to share some lessons I have learned from my experience as a pastor, preacher, and educator with beginning ministers. I will gladly do that, although I do not profess to be an expert in the field.

I have not served in many different places. In fact, I have only served in two places – Middletown/Franklin, Ohio Bible Methodist Church and Hobe Sound Bible College in South Florida. I spent 20 years in Ohio and I am in my 23rd year here at HSBC.

If you are going to be able to come to the end of your life and look back with any sense of satisfaction, there are some things you are going to have to control! Please allow me to share with you three specific areas you need to take control of in your life as a young minister.

### CONTROL YOUR TIME

If you have not learned yet, your time is a precious commodity! Everyone in your world will be asking for a chunk of it. If you are not very careful, you can give too much to the wrong people and end up with too little time for very important things! So, let me give you what I believe should be the top time priorities in your life.

**A. Take Time for God.** It should not be surprising that I would first admonish you to take time for God. If you brush me off here, you do not understand yourself, the Devil, or the realities of spiritual life!

Satan knows your time with God is your spiritual lifeline so he will try in a thousand ways to rob you of that lifeline. I cannot list every potential point of attack, but you will quickly learn that what I say is true.

Often we learn with hindsight. After Satan has robbed us, we see his tactics. You cannot go back and undo what is done but you can learn from hard experience and be on guard for future attacks. **YOU MUST TAKE TIME FOR GOD!**

**B. Take Time for Your Family.** I know there are good people who have operated from the philosophy – If I take care of God's work, God will take care of my family! The result of that philosophy in their everyday life is that they pour everything they have into ministry and never take time for their companion and their children. I'm sorry, but I do not believe that philosophy is what God intended! God will never do for us what he commands us and equips us to do for ourselves.

Scripture repeatedly calls us to personal involvement with our wife and children. Scripture says we should love our wives as Christ loved the church. It repeatedly commands us to be personally involved with our children. The Psalmist said they are a heritage from the Lord. We are to train them, discipline them, love them and bring them up to follow God. Our commitment to our family should be right up there following our commitment to our relationship with God.

Far too many people have poured their lives into ministry while forgetting their families. Many have ended up heart-broken because their children were far from God and bitter against a church they perceive to have

robbed them of their parents during their childhood. **YOU MUST TAKE TIME FOR YOUR FAMILY!**

**3. Take Time for your People.** You can go to all the seminars available. You can read all the latest books on pastoring. You can sit at the feet of church-growth gurus. But when all is said and done, pastoring is about people. It is about regular people, ordinary people, happy people, sad people, kind people, mean people, hurting people, lonely people – PEOPLE!

You need to spend time with your people. You need to go where they are, listen to them, pray with them, and encourage them. Sometimes you will need to confront them, but even then, they need to know that you love them. You need to be a constant in their lives! Then you can point them to the God they can trust even when they cannot understand.

### **CONTROL YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

**A. Surround Yourself with Good People.** You will become like the people with whom you regularly associate. Avoid negative, critical, pessimistic people. Avoid people who are perennial line-pushers (those who want to get away with as much as possible, those who always gravitate to the careless, edgy side of life). Avoid people who are always talking negatively about other people. Don't forget, if they talk negatively to you about others, they will also talk negatively to others about you.

Don't surround yourself with people who always agree with you. Develop friendships with people who care enough about you to look you in the eye and disagree with you. If you know you can trust them to tell you when they believe you are wrong, then you can trust their judgement when they agree that you are right.

Surround yourself with balanced people. My mother used to tell us we needed to be well-rounded. It was her goal that we would learn to read books, study hard, love a wide range of music (classical to bluegrass), play sports, ride horses, fish, hunt, work on cars, fix broken things around the house, cook a little, do laundry, and learn a special skill or trade. People who are one-dimensional are really good at one thing, but life can get really out of balance if you surround yourself with too many one-dimensional people.

**B. Surround Yourself with Good Information.** Read! Read! Read! Read books, periodicals, and book reviews. Read history and theology. Read news reports and the sports pages. Read cutting edge material and old material. Have at least one book "going" all the time. Online books or sermons can be listened to while you drive. Instead of constantly listening to talk radio, sports radio, of nonstop music, spend at least some of your time listening to things that will fill your mind with information.

There are many online sources for sermon-starter ideas and there are organizations that will send you email ideas every day if you sign up. Unfortunately, there are also sites that will give you entire sermons if you are lazy enough to use them! I sincerely hope you will not be that lazy. If you do, you will stunt your mind and your soul will wither and die. On the other hand, reading and listening to sermons can provide you with a wealth of ideas for your own development. Surround yourself with good information!

**C. Surround Yourself with Organization.** Get up at the same time every morning so your body clock can be set and you will wake up more easily. Go to bed at a reasonable hour. Have a regular time for devotions and keep that time every day. Plan for specific times to study and do pastoral visitation. Plan time for recreation. Budget your money. Determine how much it will cost you to pay your tithe, pay your bills, buy groceries, keep gas in your car, and save a little, then keep what is left for spending money. Cell phones can be an awful curse in some respects, but they can be a wonderful blessing in others. I have a file on my cell phone for

words I want to learn, sayings, quotes, and illustrations. I have one for sermon ideas. My phone is with me almost constantly, so I use it for more than talk, news and games. Get organized! It will be a wonderful blessing in all you do.

## **CONTROL YOURSELF**

**A. Keep Yourself Fit.** You must do something to preserve your physical and emotional health. I know from my own experience that anything you do recreationally can end up controlling and dominating you, but you still must do something that gives you a sufficiently strenuous level of activity to maintain your physical health. Don't allow this activity to take too much time, cost too much, compromise your principles, or keep you from fulfilling your responsibilities, but you must do something!

Your emotional health is also very important. You need to do something that allows you to get your mind completely disconnected from people, problems, and circumstances. If you can find something that provides both physical activity and emotional release in one activity, you will maximize your time. Unfortunately, you can walk or jog and worry at the same time. You can read and get your mind off problems, but it does nothing for your physical health. Maybe you can walk a treadmill while listening to a book or the Bible being read. Whatever you do, you must keep yourself fit physically and emotionally.

**B. Keep Yourself Clean.** Now, it sounds like I'm being trite, but I'm not! In most cases, a person who is smelly, messy, or cluttered has similar problems in their spiritual life. Carelessness is a lifestyle and it often spills over into our spiritual lives and spiritual carelessness will destroy you. Keep everything about yourself, your family, your home, your car, and your church clean and neat. You represent the King of Kings and He is in favor of beauty, symmetry, and order. Remember, conservative and sloppy look terrible together!

Cleanliness is not only an issue in our physical world, it is also incredibly important in our mental and spiritual world. I don't believe there has ever been a day when more evil was right at our fingertips! The internet is incredibly helpful and beneficial, but it is also incredibly dangerous!!! **WHATEVER IT TAKES**, keep your mind clean!!!

**C. Keep Yourself Connected.** If you are part of a Conference, Connection, or Association, make sure that you participate! Don't stay off to yourself and have nothing to do with everyone else. You need them and they need you. Go to Ministerial Conference. Go to camp meeting. Go to revivals. Go to IHC. You may not like or agree with everything, but you need the exposure and the fellowship. Iron sharpens iron and exposure to a broader world helps to keep us in balance.

A man who always stays to himself usually develops oddities and eccentricities that limit his effectiveness in a larger world. Keep yourself connected!

I have already been too lengthy, so I will not mention any more areas, but there are many! The good thing is, if you have a need or problem, God will show you and help you! His corrections are always for the best – our good and His glory.

I wish you God's very best in life and I **HIGHLY** recommend an entire lifetime of earnest-hearted, faithful ministry!!!



Rev. Dan Stetler is married to Joan and they have five children. He has been President of Hobe Sound Bible College since 1995, and the College has grown tremendously under his leadership.

He began his preaching ministry in Ohio at the Middletown (now Franklin) Bible Methodist Church where he served for 20 years as Senior Pastor. He is also in great demand as an Evangelist.

Bro. Stetler is extremely busy and we are honored that he took the time to share with our readers.

# Who Does the Work of the Ministry?

By Dr. Randall McElwain

The question arose during a conversation with Chinese house church leaders. Under laws passed earlier this year, churches that have operated with a level of toleration are facing new restrictions. I was meeting with the leaders of a church that plans to divide into four churches in order to reduce their visibility. During the discussion, one of the leaders asked, “What defines a church? What is necessary in order to call our group a church?”

How do you operate a church when you must abandon your building and when your leaders might be arrested? Before reading further, take a moment to answer this question for your own local church: “If we suddenly lost our building and our pastor, could we function as a church?”

As I discussed the requirements for a biblical church with these Chinese church leaders, I realized that we can have a church without many things that we Americans have come to expect. We can have church without a church building. We can have church without a piano, organ, or other musical instruments. We can have church without a choir, special songs, or song leader. We can even have church without offering plates (that might be stretching it for American churches)!

The church is more than facilities and programs. The one thing that we *must* have is people. Paul wrote that the pastor is responsible to prepare members to do the work of ministry.

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ... (Eph 4:11-12)*

As the pastor accomplishes his calling, members are matured (“the perfecting of the saints”) and are prepared for “the work of the ministry.” Chinese pastors are preparing their members to continue to do the work of ministry even if the church is closed by the government and the pastor is taken away. If the pastor accomplishes his work, the members will be equipped to carry on the work of ministry.

What about the church in America? Most of us in middle America will never face a situation where our church is closed and our pastor is arrested. Does this matter to us? Absolutely! Preparing “the saints for the work of the ministry” is one of the pastor’s most important tasks.

**It is important theologically.** One of the key doctrines of the Reformers was the “priesthood of the believer.” This doctrine recognizes that every believer has a place in ministry. There must be no artificial separation into “clergy” and “laity.” Yes, some are called to “full-time” or “professional” ministry. But every believer is called to minister in some way.

**It is important practically.** Laymen, you have friends who will never respond to a pastor’s visit, but who will welcome an invitation to your home. They will not come to a revival service, but they will join a home Bible study around your dinner table. They may never attend a public church service until *after* they have given their heart to Christ in your living room. The ministry of the pastor is multiplied when each of us becomes part of the “work of the ministry.”

One of the great examples of this principle was the Moravian missionary movement. The Moravians believed that every Christian is an evangelist. As they recognized that every believer is called to serve, the Moravians began to mobilize their laymen for ministry.

What was the result? In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a time when few churches sent out foreign missionaries, the Moravians sent more than 300 missionaries to the Caribbean, Africa, and South America. Most of these missionaries were laymen, not trained pastors. One of every sixty Moravians served as a missionary and dozens of them died for the sake of the gospel.

Pastors, are you preparing your members for the work of the ministry? Laymen, are you available to do the work of ministry? **Think about it.**



Dr. Randall McElwain is married to Sue, and they live in Hobe Sound, Florida, where he serves on the staff at Hobe Sound Bible Church as Discipleship Pastor, as well as Teaching Pastor at the Palm Beach Chinese Christian Chapel. They have two grown children.

Dr. Randall McElwain is a very busy person, and we really appreciate his willingness to share his thoughts with us in each issue of *Pilgrim News & Notes*.



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*The main goal of Pilgrim News & Notes is to be an encouragement to our readers, as well as a valuable source of information to those with connections or interests in our Conference.*

*All submissions are welcome, however, we reserve the right to edit as necessary to fit design/space needs. Not all submissions will be published.*

*Please email all submissions to the editor via the contact info below:*

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The Midwest Pilgrim Holiness Church strives to not only be relevant, but we want to be accessible to those who want to learn more about our Conference, as well as to those who are interested in possibly becoming a part of us!

Our Conference website has been in existence since 2004, and is updated frequently. We also have an active presence on Facebook. Check us out via the links below!

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