MHITE WING

MESSENGER

April 2018

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY



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WHITE WING

MESSENGER

WE BELIEVE in the Holy Trinity—one God, eternally existing in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe in one God the Father, creator of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. All things were made through Him and for Him. He is true God and true man. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin, Mary. He suffered, died, was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, and He will return to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who eternally proceeds from the Father. He is Teacher, Comforter, Helper, and Giver of spiritual gifts. Through Him the saving and sanctifying works of Jesus Christ are applied to the life of believers. He is the empowering presence of God in the life of the Christian and the church. The Father has sent His Son to baptize with the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues and bearing the fruit of the Spirit are New Testament signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross; and that He died in our place. The believer's sins are forgiven by the shedding of His blood. We believe that healing of mind, body, soul, and spirit is available to the believer through the blood of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the grace of God brings forgiveness and reconciliation to those who repent, as well as transformation in holiness, enabling them to live a Christ-like life. Sanctification is both a definite work of grace and a lifelong process of change in the believer brought by the blood of Jesus, the Word of God, and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in one holy, universal church, composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ, offering fellowship and calling for service to men and women of all races, nations, cultures, and languages. We believe in the spiritual and ultimate visible unity of the church.

We believe that the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is the inspired Word of God. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and His will to humankind, sufficient for instruction in salvation and daily Christian living. The Bible is the Christian's rule of faith and practice.

We believe that God will ultimately reconcile all things in heaven and earth in Christ. Therefore, we look forward to new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Executive Editor: Sam N. Clements

Publisher: Brian Sutton **Editor:** DeWayne Hamby

Assistant Editor: Marsha Robinson Editorial Assistant: Roxanne Corbett Graphic Artist: Jonathan Lovvorn



About the Church of God of Prophecy

The Church of God of Prophecy is a vibrant, worldwide body of believers, united in worship, working hand-in-hand to share God's love and a message of hope to the brokenhearted. The organization has more than a million members and more than 10,0000 ministers, worshiping in more than 10,000 churches or missions in 135 nations of the world.

Church of God of Prophecy Core Values

Prayer • The Harvest

Leadership Development • Stewardship

OUR VISION

The Church of God of Prophecy will be a Christ-exalting, holiness, Spirit-filled, allnations, disciple-making, church-planting Movement with a passion for Christian union.

OUR MISSION

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, through prayer, we will plant churches and equip leaders to carry out the biblical mandate to make genuine disciples of all the peoples of the world, to the glory of Christ our Lord, Head of the church.

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WRITERS If you are interested in contributing articles or news to the magazine, email editorial@cogop.org or visit www.whitewingmessenger.net for guidelines.

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wwm@cogop.org • (423) 559-5540 • PO Box 2910, Cleveland, TN 37320-2910

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Cover photo unsplash.com

APRIL 2018 • Volume 94, Number 9

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FACING FORWARD

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHURCH GROWTH

Gabriel Vidal General Presbyter



As we reflect on the decline of Pentecostal power in our churches, I remember a time in my home country when a new pastor was appointed in my local church. Almost every newly appointed pastor brings new ideas to the local ministry, this was not the exception. Pastor Antonio Payano Placencia reintroduced the idea that every member of the church should be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in other tongues. From that moment on, every service, sermon, and altar service had one main purpose, to guide the members into a deep search for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues. I still remember those days of searching because they are still moving me to a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit. Yes, I speak in tongues and I am not ashamed to say it.

It is interesting that many of the historical churches are now realizing that what happened the day of Pentecost was not an isolated case or simply a first century experience. A good portion of those churches are releasing the impediments and forsaking the prejudice with respect to speaking in tongues. Meanwhile, we, the historical classic Pentecostals, are somehow abandoning the experience. So, we can safely say that we are going the opposite ways, again.

Nevertheless, there is something we must never forget: the Holy Spirit experience (including the manifestation of speaking in tongues), has always been a predecessor of growth and the manifestation of other gifts of the Spirit in the church. The book of Acts presents the amazing reaction in the life of the Christians after Pentecost. They were basically empowered for service and the church grew in numbers and unity. What it seems happened in Acts was the impartation of "a prophetic endowment granted to the converted that enabled them to participate effectively in the mission of the church." So, we see with clarity a charismatic theology of the Holy Spirit experience in Luke-Acts.

Furthermore, Paul presents another dimension of the Holy Spirit work. It is crucial we include it in this article and stress that is a soteriological truth. It is a more developed view than Luke-Acts, but harmonious in its development, as Howard Marshal points out. This soteriological view of the work of the Spirit "helps us understand that the Spirit is the source of the Christian's cleansing (Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11), righteousness (Romans 2:29; 8:1–17; 14:17; Galatians 5:5, 16–26), and intimate fellowship with God (Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 4:6), as

well as the source of power for mission (Romans 15:18, 19; Philippians 1:18, 19). Paul attests to both the soteriological and the charismatic dimensions of the Spirit's work.

Then I asked these questions: if the experience of the Holy Spirit is the one that helps us be a living, multiplying, and holy church, why are we discarding it? Why have many of our local churches discontinued the altar services where we used to search for the source of all power? We are constantly asking ourselves, why is it that we are not growing? We have changed the names of our local church, we have "improved" and "modernized" worship, we have built gyms, bought new instruments and replaced our old carpet but, yet we are not growing. Could it be that we have forsaken the experience and practice of the first century church that provided growth? Dear family of the Church of God of Prophecy, we need to return to a period of time where the Holy Spirit gave the growth and not our own doing. Let's go back to the altar!

Menzies, William W.; Menzies, Robert P.. Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience (Kindle Location 970). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Menzies, Locations 991-994). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

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CONNECTIONS

ASSEMBLY



Chaplaincy Training Before the Assembly

Dr. Douglas R. Stephenson will be teaching an intensive two-day Community Service Chaplaincy (CSC) course prior to the Assembly in Chattanooga, Tennessee, July 16 and 17, 2018, at the Chattanooga Convention Center beginning at 8 a.m. Monday and ending Tuesday evening with graduation and certification. The course is open to all ordained ministers and their spouses.

This instruction will prepare you to become community chaplains to minister to persons who are incarcerated, emotionally, mentally or physically ill, or experiencing other crisis situations. This course will be a hybrid of the CSC 1 and 2 courses taught previously. For pastors who have had difficulty getting into jails and prisons in the past, this training will certify you as a chaplain and provide you greater access in these situations.

The cost of the training is \$200 per person. In the past these courses have cost as much as \$360. We need to have a minimum number of 16 students for the course to proceed. Please register for the course NLT 1 July 2018. Go to our Chaplaincy Ministries website: www.ichaplains.com and complete the registration form and send in your fees of \$200 each to 211 Columbia Avenue, Cedartown, GA 30125. Chaplains who have completed CSC 1 and 2 may monitor the course for \$15. For more information contact Dr. Stephenson at drstep@aol.com or 423-432-2715 or 678-861-5238.

CHURCH LIFE



Most Churches Offer Wi-Fi, Have Facebook Pages

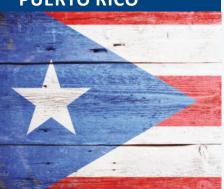
According to a recent study by LifeWay Research, most churches in North America offer free Wi-Fi to visitors. Seven in 10 churches (68 percent) provided Wi-Fi for both guests and staff, the study found. Most of these churches (84 percent) also have a website and a Facebook page. The study found that fewer (16 percent) had engaged in the Twitter platform.

"Once wary of technology, Protestant churches now seem all in, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. It's another way to connect with guests and worshipers alike.

"Not long ago churches' use of technology was often limited to a website that functioned like the Yellow Pages or a bulletin board," said McConnell. "Now they see technology as a way to interact with people. Wi-Fi is just one more way to do that."

—Source: Most Churches Offer Wi-Fi but Skip Twitter, January 9, 2017, Bob Smietana, LifeWay Research, www.lifewayresearch.com

PUERTO RICO



Puerto Rico: 3,000 Churches Damaged, Fewer Christians Left to Rebuild

The evangelical church in Puerto Rico won't be the same after Hurricane Maria. Even congregations that have resumed their regular gatherings after repairing buildings and regaining power are still missing a major part of church life: some of their members. An estimated 400,000 of the island's more than 3 million residents have left the US territory for the mainland since the record-setting September storm. Like every other aspect of Puerto Rican life, church attendance has taken a hit.

Meanwhile, Spanish-speaking congregations in the States have welcomed the Puerto Ricans who have fled, particularly those in Orlando, where the "great migration" is expected to transform the city. Of all the people who moved to the continental US from the Caribbean island in the past four months, more than 300,000 settled in Florida alone, according to the Sunshine State's division of emergency management.

Members of Calvario City Church greeted arrivals from Puerto Rico as soon as they landed in the Orlando Inter national Airport, where they served as

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CONNECTIONS



Throughout history, we see that in every generation God has been faithful to bring revival to His people and spiritual awakening to entire nations. In almost every one of these cases, these movements of the Spirit were evidenced most strongly among young people.

Prayer Points: April 2018

Many young Christian leaders sense another awakening stirring among young people and there are encouraging signs of revival as God's Spirit moves in fresh ways among them. It is quite possible that we stand on the cusp of the greatest revival and awakening in all of history. Do you desire to see a dynamic demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power in our generation and in the lives of young people in your life?

If we truly desire to see this mighty move arise among our students and emerging leaders, we should seek the Father, through prayer on their behalf. Throughout this month, we will unite our prayers to pray specifically for the students in our lives—covering each area of their life in specific ways. We invite you to call out the specific names of the young people in your life as you pray through the directives below.

PRAYER DIRECTIVES:

- Thank the Father for His loving care of young leaders in your life and for the plans He has for them. Ask Him to give them a divine passion and passion for living (Jeremiah 29:11, Psalm 139:13–16, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Jeremiah 1:5, John 14:13, Romans 8:28, 29).
- Pray for wisdom in their choosing of friends and that God will bring people into their lives who will point them to Christ and encourage them as fully-devoted disciples (1 Corinthians 15:33, Hebrews 10:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 1 Samuel 16:7).
- Ask the Father to transform the mind of your student so that they are renewed and He is honored through their speech, love, faith, and purity (1 Timothy 4:12, Romans 12:1, 2, Psalm 24:4).
- Ask the Father to birth a hunger for righteousness in the relationships of your student and that they would recognize the lies of the enemy. Ask God to strengthen them to enable them to flee sexual immorality and remain pure until married (John 8:32, 1 Peter 1:5, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 John 4:4, James 1:12–14).
- Ask God to grant an anointing of extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit in the life of your student so that he/she will be a great witness for Christ (Acts 1:8, Luke 4:18, 19, 1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 28:19, 20, Galatians 5:24).
- Ask the Father to give your student help to view money as a resource for Kingdom purposes. Ask that they be granted contentment whether in possession of plenty or poor (Philippians 4:19, Matthew 6:24, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:10).
- Pray that your student would submit to Christ as well as those in authority over them. Ask for an extra measure of grace to love, respect, and honor their parents, teachers, spiritual leaders, and government officials (Ephesians 6:2, 3; Hebrews 13:17, Mark 12:17).
- Ask God to nurture the soil of the heart of your student so that they have greater sensitivity to the things of the Spirit and grow in their knowledge of His ways (Luke 2:52, Galatians 2:20, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 3:16).
- Ask for a knowledge of the truth of God and spiritual eyes to see so that the enemy would not be able to deceive them (1 Timothy 3:9, 2 Corinthians 2:11, John 17:17, Ephesians 6:14).
- Pray to the Father that He would fill your student with the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and protect his/her mind and heart from hopelessness (Galatians 6:9, Ephesians 6:13, Philippians 4:8, 2 Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 10:23, 1 Peter 5:8, 9).

Download this prayer guide as a bulletin insert, access prayer guides on additional topics, or find resources for your local church prayer ministry online at www.COGOPprays.org. Let us know you are praying with us by using #COGOPprays on social media to share your requests, inspirations, and praise reports.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information, visit www.cogop.org unless otherwise noted.

April 10, 2018 CM Live Webinar Online

May 4–7, 2018 AMD/GCTS Theology Survey 2 Manchester, Jamaica Register by April 2

May 22–26, 2018 AMD/GCTS Church History Miami, Florida Register by April 9

May 24–27, 2018 AMD/GCTS Mark in Depth Englewood, New Jersey

June 7–10, 2018
AMD/GCTS
COGOP History/Theology
Kirkland, Washington
Register by April 21

July 17, 2018
Pre-Assembly Rally
Fields of the Wood
Murphy, North Carolina

July 18–22, 2018
International Assembly
Chattanooga Convention Center
Chattanooga, Tennessee



The youth and children of the Medan Orphanage in Indonesia offer prayers of thanksgiving and praise to their heavenly Father. #yminternational

Kirk Rising serves as International Youth Director for the Church of God of Prophecy. In his 28-year ministry, he has served as state youth director of Hawaii and North Carolina. He has served as youth pastor and as missionary to the countries of Germany and French Polynesia (Tahiti) in the South Pacific.Kirk studied business administration at the University of South Carolina. His business career includes owner of High Rise Sports and serving as head coach of the French Polynesia, Olympic-qualifying basketball program in Tahiti.

SHOULD KNOWABOUT SHOULD KNOWABOUT

Taken from the Youth Ministries
Certification Manual: Level One

—**Kirk Rising** International Youth Director

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A GREAT YOUNG LEADER

What makes a great young leader? Many times pastors look for the wrong things when searching for someone to lead the young. The best youth leaders do not have to wear the right clothes or fit in with teenagers to be effective.

The best youth leaders do not have to be the most wellrounded speakers or worship leaders. These qualities are all fantastic but the greatest "youth leaders" are actually just some of the greatest "leaders."

In the book, The 5 Levels of Leadership, John Maxwell clearly describes the di erence between level one and level five leaders. Though generic, the principles can certainly still be very applicable when considering or even interviewing a potential youth leader. (See chart on next page.)

Knowing God's will for your life and having a close relationship with Jesus are obviously non-negotiable. A great indicator of a potential leader is the amount of influence they have over others when they are not yet in a leadership role.

Planning events, creating growth strategies and staying relevant with current youth ministry trends and models can all be learned thanks to the world-wide web. Unfortunately, many "polished" youth leaders are not leaders at all. Having a college degree does not guarantee that these leadership traits will always be recognized. Before appointing or hiring anyone make sure to take time to consider these indicators. It will make a huge difference. Also, talk to people they have worked with in the past. Be brave enough to ask honest, candid questions. Sometimes the past is one of the greatest indicators of the future.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND YOUR YOUNG LEADER

Young Leaders and Youth Leaders often feel misunderstood and under-appreciated. Youth Ministry can be very challenging and at times even discouraging. Here are some ways a Pastor can better understand his or her Youth Leader:

Your youth leader wants you to communicate how they can win. Your youth leader desperately wants to succeed in ministry. They want to win more than you could ever imagine. Most youth leaders are actually very driven. They are volunteering or investing their time because they want to make a difference in people's lives. Don't take that for granted.

Your youth leader wants you to invest time into helping them create clear and achievable goals. They may not tell

you this but it is very important to them. Obviously, leave room for them to develop their own creative ideas and vision but at some point you have to take time to paint a picture of specific wins that you both want to see accomplished.

Your youth leader needs to understand that you genuinely **believe in them and want them to win.** Unfortunately, many pastors get so focused on growing their church that they fail to pause to think about the growth of the very people God has called them to lead. To grow a church, grow the leader.

Make sure that you have provided your youth leader with a very clear job description. This is to provide direction and to serve as a standard for measuring effectiveness. Job descriptions can vary from church to church in order to cater to the specific needs and culture of a particular community so consider writing your own.

Youth leaders can't be empowered and elevated until they are educated in what to do. This needs to be happening on a regular basis. One time is not enough. Having a meeting about their productivity only when things are not working does not work.

If you don't consistently have this conversation, your leader will constantly be frustrated and discouraged. Once a plan is in place, remember to inspect what you expect.

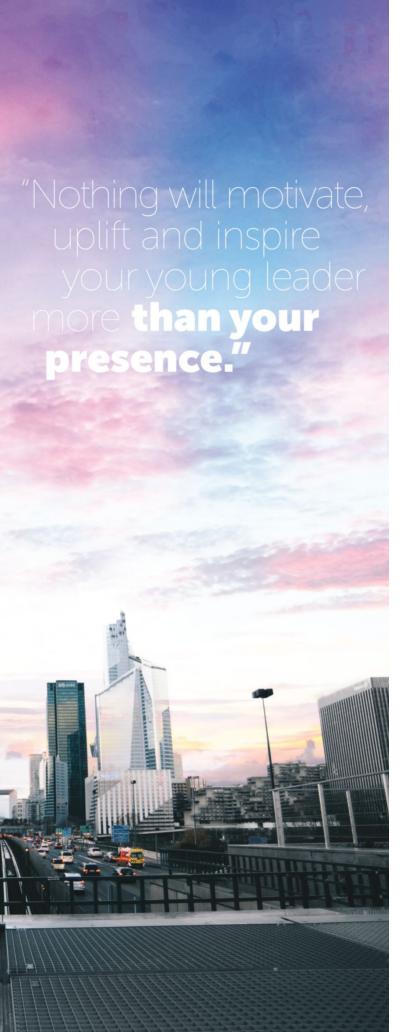
Your young leader wants you to help them grow. Your young leader wants you to help them grow their leadership capacity. They are craving your attention and they want to learn how to be better leaders. Constantly ask yourself, "What can I do to make my young leader better? How can I help them be all God created them to be?"

It's impossible to e ectively coach from a distance. Your youth leader wants you to walk alongside them. They want you to find ways to understand them.

Train your young leader by including them on your ministry journey. Learn together, read books together, pray together Ruth 1:16 – Wherever you go, I will go.

This level of leadership requires intentionality and an investment of time. Make a point to let your youth leader know that you understand and care about what is going on in his or her world and thatyou love them for who they are as a person, not just as an employee or church volunteer.

Be there in big moments of their life (surgeries, kid's games, birthdays, etc.). Leadership development happens when



about being involved in your youth leader's life that it will become much more natural for you to be involved in your youth leader's ministry.

Allow your leaders to have access to your life that others in the church do not have. Isn't that how Jesus modeled it for us? Twelve men had backstage passes to the show that everyone else was watching and within that twelve, Peter, James and John had access to encounters that the rest did not. As you open your life to your leader, they will open their life and ministry to you.

Be there for your young leader. Nothing will motivate, upli and inspire your young leader more than your presence. Make it a priority to attend his or her youth service. When you show up, you are telling your youth pastor that you value the ministry that God has placed them over. Attending youth events shows your youth leader that you support their vision and approve of their work. They want you to see them in action.

Your youth leader wants you to encourage them. For a youth leader, encouragement is the fuel that leads to motivation, passion and inspired leadership. To encourage people means to put courage in them. Often times, the only thing standing in the way of a person's success is their lack of courage. The greatest thing you can do for your youth leader is praise them any chance you get. Encourage them when things are not going well and when things are thriving. Take advantage of birthdays and holidays to publicly praise him or her in front of the entire church for all they do. Use any way possible to make them feel uplifted.

Your youth leader wants you to empower them.

When your youth leader is ready, it's time to turn them loose. Every great youth leader is already asking the following questions:

- Am I needed?
- Does my input matter?
- Will they ever let me lead?
- Will I ever get to do something significant?

It's easy to give the youth leader tasks that no one else wants to do. Give your youth leader jobs that matter and let them know that failing is okay. Your role is to help them develop their ministry.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND YOUTH

As culture has continued to advance, it is vital for pastors to have at least a general understanding of what is happening in

the lives of young people. Viewing ministry the same way it was seen a decade ago is no longer an option.

Today youth are connected, but lonelier than ever. Culture has changed the way they receive information, how they relate to people, how they see themselves and even what they believe about God.

Today, teenagers measure their lives by how many followers they have and who the followers are. Because youth show only what they want others to see they are constantly discontented with their own lives. The comparison trap has started dominating their lives causing them to constantly be concerned that they never seem to measure up.

Even the meaning of the word "friend" has now evolved. Youth can now have friends they have never met in real life. Currently, the average American Facebook user has 338 Facebook friends but surveys indicate that the average American only has two close friends.

Social media has caused the young to be addicted to immediate affirmation. As they strive to meet their short-term need for affirmation, they are actually deferring a deeper, longer term need.

Current studies indicate that 70 percent of 18 to 24-year-old males visit porn sites during any given month. One in three porn users are female. Unfortunately, the highest percentage of consumers of pornography are kids 12 to 17. One in five teenage girls have posted nude or semi nude photos of themselves online.

Eighty-seven percent of teenagers sleep with their phones.

The effect of social media is a dominant topic in youth ministry today. Everybody knows that youth live on their phones but the question remains, "How can pastors and youth pastors help?" Telling them to stop getting on phones is not the answer. Staying away from social media is not the answer. The answer is meeting their needs.

We do this by:

Teaching them not to compare themselves with others.
 "We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

- Teach them to explore deeper relationships with others.
 "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:25).
- Teach them to be authentic. Students' lives are filtered (only show people what they want them to see). This takes away authenticity.

"We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ it is taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil (filter) covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:13-18).

When we are insecure, when we don't feel good about ourselves, when we sin instead of confessing, we hide – we put on a veil and filter our lives.

HOW TO LOVE YOUTH

One of the greatest ways for pastors to genuinely relate to students is by being themselves. Young people can spot a fake a million miles away.

Pastors, you are not the latest musical artist, so don't try to be. You are not the greatest athlete, so don't try to be. Your job is not to act young. Your mission is not to always be the coolest adult in the room. Being culturally relevant is an advantage but it will not cause youth to flock to you, that is a myth. Just. Be. Real. Your job is to love. Let's not make it too complicated. If you love, you win. Love your youth's immaturity. Love their passion. Love their creativity. Love their story. Love their bad moods and up and down emotions. Love them just as they are.

Youth are impressed with many things: money, movie stars, artists, and talent. But guess what? They tend to stay in love with the ones who do a decent job of loving them back. Don't always try to fix your youth, sometimes you just need to be with them.

If God called you to reach youth, He gave you everything you need. Don't doubt that and don't cheapen it by trying to be a fake. You don't have to have everything right. You just need to love.

11

DeWayne Hamby is the editor of the White Wing Messenger, Chief Clerk, director of Communications (comprised of editorial, social media, and graphic art) and a member of the International Assembly Task Force for the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices. He is also the chairman of PCCNA Proclaim, the media and communications commission for the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America. In 2016, he published his first book, Gratitude Adjustment: Finding Joy through Thankfulness (White Wing Books).





One summer, when I was on youth camp staff, I broke a camper's leg. During swim time, I threw him into the pool like a rag doll and his ankle fractured. I was a fresh-faced, 15-year-old working in a camp of 11, 12-year-old children. It was only the second year of my youth camp ministry journey. I faced the haunting realization it might be over before it ever really began.

I was already on shaky ground. The year before, I had been lumped in with a small group of other disgruntled young staff. I had to talk my way into being allowed to work the second year. In the days leading up to the pool incident, I had already been scathingly ridiculed by the older staff. This boy getting injured was a horrible ending to a humiliating week.

As the next summer rolled around, working in camp never crossed my mind. I prepared to just go and enjoy life as a camper—until I received a postcard in the mail. My longtime favorite director from an older camp wrote, "DeWayne, I'm so glad you'll be old enough to work in my camp this summer." I had received an unexpected lifeline when I needed it most.

Has anyone ever believed in you when no one else did? Maybe the perception people had of you was shrouded in assumptions. Maybe you had taken previous opportunities and wasted them. Yet, you can look back and think of someone who threw you a lifeline, someone who, for whatever reasons, decided to ignore the crowd and see the potential in you. Thank God for them.

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells the story of the Unforgiving Debtor. The king went through his books and discovered a servant who owed him the equivalent of millions of dollars. Filled with rage, the king demanded the man, his assets, and his family be sold to pay the debt. When the man begged for mercy, however, the king granted it and forgave his debts. The servant, now free of that burden, now decided to target someone who owed him.

"But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt" (Matthew 18:28–30 NKJV).

Hearing about this turn of events, of his servant showing unforgiveness when he had been extended mercy, the king threw the "wicked servant" in jail for his debts. "Should you not also have compassion on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" (v. 33).

In this story, Jesus directly relates the concept of forgiveness and compassion toward each other and what we receive from Him. The way it speaks to me is that as I mentally line up the heroes in my life who have spoken words of encouragement and poured themselves into me, how can I do anything but the same to those coming after me? This is the legacy God wants us to have, of encouraging each other in the Lord.

We all know that not all leaders are so forgiving or willing to pour into others. Perhaps it's because of insecurity or some grudge they carry about how they were treated. I have faced the mindset of "This is how I was done, so I'm going to do the same to you." Instead of treating others as they wish to be treated, they fall back to treating others as they had been treated. There is a better way.

When God gives you the opportunity to pour your knowledge and direction into someone, you could view it as being given an unformed piece of clay. You could be upset at how far the piece of clay has to go before turning into a finished piece or be excited at the prospect of unlimited potential. As an amateur artist myself, I also know that sometimes the finished product takes on a life of its own and may not stay on the same course I think it should. Many times, it is better.

Recently at a child's birthday party, I picked up a Nerf gun and ran around acting like a kid. I'm a little old for that, but because my girls are so young, I have to get in the trenches more than others my age might. As one little boy started shooting at me, he said, "Bring it, old man!" Old man. He called me "old man." It stung a little.

In his eyes, I am very old. In my eyes, I'm older than I've ever been. Some of you reading can relate. Our shelf life has an expiration date. We have a precious amount of time to make a difference. We have an incredible way to do that through mentoring and encouraging. If that little boy needed anything beyond target practice from me, I may be too advanced to make a difference. But perhaps I can make a difference to a younger leader who would in turn, impact his life.

At one youth workers' convention that was very cutting-edge at the time, the owner, the late Mike Yaconelli stood up and shared from his heart about youth ministry. He acknowledged the ticking clock and narrowing window of opportunity and even said he prayed for younger leaders to rise up and "put us out of business." What an amazing perspective; blessing the new generations. He had worked his way out of taking anything personal, or feeling anyone was encroaching on his territory. The end game was just too important.

The apostle Paul was a great hero in the faith and yet he knew the ministry was not all about him. He poured into others, including young Timothy, who he encouraged with the familiar verse, "Let no man despise your youth; but be an example of the believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12 NKJV). I wonder if Paul could ever have imagined the billions of believers that would be encouraged by this simple encouragement. His time was limited, but that impact was eternal.

One of the greatest singers I've ever heard was told by a choir director that she'd never be good enough to sing a solo. A successful businessman was told by his insecure boss that he'd "never amount to anything." Someone spoke blessings to override those cursings. We all carry around negative pronouncements from the past. You may have people in your life who are so uplifting they make you feel you can do anything. What type of leader do you want to be remembered as? What words are you leaving with the next generation?

NURTURING YOUNG LEADERSHIP

One day, with only a few moments to spare before an appointment, I stopped at a fast food restaurant for lunch. I parked and went into the restaurant to find there was no one in line. Getting my food was going to be a pleasant experience. I stood at the counter and waited for a worker to take my order. No one came. I could hear laughter and see a few bodies moving in the background. They were all interacting with each other and having a wonderful time but they were not taking my order. I cleared my throat and coughed into my hand. Finally, someone came to take my order. I looked into the eyes of the young lady who had finally arrived and realized that all her co-workers were young teenagers. There was not one adult on site. What a missed opportunity, I thought, by someone who could be mentoring these young workers and giving them guidance on properly serving the public.

As a mother of five girls, I have experienced many "fast-food-worker moments." Situations have occurred in my children's training that needed guidance and I was too busy or occupied with other things. There is no middle road with my crew. It is either a blazing success or an abysmal failure. Thankfully, God is gracious and allows many lessons to be unlearned and relearned. God's guiding hand and presence make all the difference with my children. They all have various and different leadership gifts that God can use and as they grow into young leaders; it's my honor to help guide them through it. "Come, my children, and listen to me, and I will teach you to fear the Lord" (Psalm 34:11).

In working with my children as young leaders, I've resolved that it is very important to be present. Christ shaped His disciples by walking with them and experiencing their journey. He stood on their boat, made them a meal, and revealed His loving heart to them. Most importantly, Christ shared the life-changing relationship He had with His heavenly Father and told them, "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does" (John 5:19). This relationship is vital to their growth and development. Young leaders need the solid relationship that Christ offers us through His invitation of the cross.

Vulnerability is also a crucial part of training for young leadership. Leaders often work at giving their very best because showing weakness or failure is unacceptable. Excellence is important but learning that failure is not the end will encourage growth. Walking with Christ will include imperfect moments. Understanding those mistakes and the pain they bring teach us that our fallen human nature needs the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who, ". . . will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (John 16:13).

Opportunities to serve others and follow God's timing are other areas of development for a rising leader. If success comes before a leader is ready, the results can be detrimental to one's spiritual life and also to the heart and soul of the ministry. Peter thought he was ready to die with Christ when in reality he was full of fear and shame. Christ, however, revealed the truth of Peter's heart but also saw him as he was going to become. "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). Peter was not ready even though he walked with Christ daily, but when the change came he was a powerful force for the kingdom of God. We witness this in Acts chapter two.

Young leaders need training by mentors who are present and willing to help them learn from mistakes. They can flourish by trusting Christ to heal pains and open doors for those who are willing to serve. It is His presence that equips a young leader. A relationship with the Holy Spirit as a teacher and guide creates a dependency that will minister to leaders as they mature in the ministry.

I went back to that restaurant several weeks later only to observe that the management had changed. Adult managers were engaged with the young staff teaching them correct procedures and how to treat the customers. I did not receive my food any faster, but nevertheless it was progress!



-Roxanne Corbett
Cleveland, Tennessee



There is an innate desire to create change, for each generation to respond to the calling of God and make a difference for the kingdom. Sometimes this unction has been met with a "if it's not broke, don't fix it" roadblock. Never has there been a generation so keen on acting to create this change as there is with the millennial generation. Over the last 10 years or so, millennials have begun to challenge the idea of "cookie-cutter" leadership. They have challenged the idea that everyone and everything must be the same and have made it a point to allow individuality, personal creativity, and support of those around them, whether they agree with them or not. This change has sometimes created multi-generational frustration and conflict.

Good leaders are constantly changing and adjusting as they learn and grow, and developing leaders must allow this same opportunity for growth. Those who are mentoring now must learn how to teach and allow young leaders to break the mold set by those before them through authentic relationships, mentoring, and leadership opportunities.

Leadership development begins with intentional leaders who make it a point to cultivate relationships and invest in those they are working with. When young leaders know that you truly care, they are not only more accepting of your feedback and thoughts, they will desire them. Jesus gives us the best example of this when we see how He was with His disciples. He built personal relationships with each of His disciples by being with them, investing in them, and loving them, so that when the time came for Him to teach them, they cared about what He did and said.

There is not a quote that defines this generation of young leaders more than John Maxwell's statement, "People won't care how much you know until they know how much you care." If you want those you are trying to develop to hear what you say, it begins with authentic investment into their lives.

Trust is key. Constructive criticism and genuine feedback will feel like nothing more than an attack against someone you have not built a relationship with. Establishing mentoring relationships between

leaders creates a movement of empowerment on both sides of the spectrum. Leadership is most successful when leaders work together rather than competing against each other. Mentoring creates a safe space for young leaders to share their thoughts, fears, and ideas with an experienced leader who has been there before. The danger of leadership competition is broken down as leaders work together to grow, creating a movement of success. Deep down, young leaders do not want to go it alone and try to figure it out on their own. They desire to surround themselves with mentors like the examples shown in the Bible of Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, and Jesus and the Disciples, and it is up to you to be that example.

Experience is the greatest teacher. Presenting opportunities for young leaders to learn for themselves is the most beneficial way for them to learn through action rather than speech. Pastor Craig Groeschel said in his leadership podcast, "People don't retain truth when you dump it on them, they retain it when they discover it for themselves." True mentoring happens when you allow young leaders the freedom to lead their own way. Micromanaging and constant criticism of young leaders will bring destruction upon their self-confidence, their leadership abilities, and their relationship with you. Allowing for leadership opportunities is only beneficial when they know without a doubt that you support them and believe in

You may not always agree with their decisions and methods, but it is so important that you show your support through your speech and actions both to them and to those around them like we see in Philippians 1:18. Empowering young leaders begins with you. If you want to see your young leaders grow, you must continue to invest, mentor, and support.

Groeschel, Craig. "How to Develop Leaders." https://www.life.church/leadershippodcast/how-to-develop-leaders/. Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. Life Church: Craig Groeschel. Sept 2017.

THE 100TH INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

CHATTANOOGA CONVENTION CENTER
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE, JULY 18–22, 2018



Come celebrate what God has done in the Church of God of Prophecy! More than 10,000 are expected to be here for this Centennial Celebration!

COME AND EXPERIENCE:

- Exciting Opening Night Celebration with Drama, Music and the Parade of Nations
- "Songs of the Church" on Wednesday Afternoon
- Prayer and Intercession Opportunities
- Assembly for Children on Friday and Saturday
- Youth Ministry Events on Friday and Saturday
- Mission Encounter on Friday Afternoon
- Mission Breakfast on Saturday Morning*
- Hispanic Celebration on Saturday Afternoon
- Caribbean Celebration on Saturday Afternoon
- The Centennial Assembly Mass Choir!
- The Bahama Brass Band in Concert!
- Tomlinson College Reunion on Saturday Afternoon
- Instructional Workshops on Thursday Afternoon

INTERNATIONAL OFFICES

The International Offices will be also open for tours during select days of the Assembly as well as before and after the event. Come tour the building and visit the new Ministry Training Center.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

Hotel rooms are still available in the Chattanooga/Ooltewah area. Call 702-675-6570/833-245-3814, Monday - Friday 6am-5pm PST or visit www.cogop.org/assembly for a list of available hotels.

If you cannot make it to this grand celebration, make plans now to join us online live.

For more information, visit www.cogop.org/assembly.



^{*} The Mission Breakfast is a limited, ticketed event. Contact Global Missions Ministries to purchase a ticket and reserve your spot.



YOUTH MINISTRIES



Youth Ministries International was delighted to serve the nation of Indonesia during the second mission experience of 2017-2018. The Canopy Project in Paraguay was the first in 2017. A group of eight from California, Florida, Tennessee, and Virginia spent eight days serving and ministering in local churches and refurbishing the mother church in Medan.

YM was able to bless the country of Indonesia with the following:

- purchased a new sound system for the mother church in Medan
- purchased new bedding and mosquito netting for the young students of the Bible School
- repainted and refurbished the sanctuary of the local church in Medan
- purchased exhaust fans and cooling fans for the boys and girls dorms

The team ministered in three of the local churches through song and the preaching of God's Word. We were also able to facilitate a New Year's party for the children at the Medan orphanage.

All mission trips are planned and carried out by those wanting to bless our membership in other countries. Although, as usual, the blessing seems to be ours! The youth, and the people of Indonesia filled our stomachs with delicious food and our hearts with love only they can give.

The team members were:

Omar Gonzalez / California Myra Hernandez / California Merilou Matel / California Chloe LaCasse / Virginia John Faraar / Virginia Keri Mullens / Florida

Below are a few testimonies and experiences from the team members of YM Mission Team:

VOLUNESIA: that moment you forget you are volunteering to help change lives, because it is changing yours.

Volunesia is exactly what I experienced in my short but sweet time in Indonesia. Every time I close my eyes to worship, I still burst into tears as I recall the sound of how beautiful and authentic their worship is. Whenever we arrived at a place, a warm welcome always awaited us. As you reach for a handshake, with a soft bow they gently lock hands with yours, raise it up to their foreheads or cheeks and upon release of your hand, they touch their hearts, ending their greeting with beaming smiles. Little did they know, with every smile, hug and welcome I encountered with them, they have permanently taken residence in my heart. I left a piece of my heart in Indonesia.

This mission trip has indeed changed me forever. I definitely came back home blessed, changed, and transformed. God revealed so much to me during this trip. He showed me that His love moves beyond the cultural and language differences. Our hearts understood each other more than the words we spoke with one another. I left with my heart full and at the same time heartbroken that we had to leave. I would definitely go back in a heartbeat and do it all over again.

- Merilou (Mimi) Matel

People always say that mission trips are a great way to make an impact in the world. However, they are not just about us giving of ourselves, but receiving as well. The people of Indonesia blessed me more than they can know. They are so loving! They went of their way to welcome us and serve us, as we served them, reminding me that we are all brothers and sisters in God's big family.

This trip grew me, not only in my understanding of the world, but in my relationship with God. He is using my constant contact with my new friends to remind me to pray more and to seek Him in all that I do. He is also teaching me to trust Him no matter what happens. I do not know where my life is going, or how I will get to serve Him next. I do not know what He will ask of me, but I am learning to wait and to believe that He has big things for me if I will just trust Him and follow, one step at a time.

— Keri Mullens

Indonesia was an unforgettable experience. It was my first time traveling to Asia and I was so blessed to see the Lord provide protection and peace as we left home and ventured to a new side of His creation. The people of Indonesia are so kind and welcoming. They are filled with a joy that could inspire many, including myself. It was an honor to watch them worship our Savior and to worship along side a people of such strong faith.

However, Indonesia needs our prayers. Looking out the window of the car into the city of Medan brought tears to my eyes. It's extremely impoverished and is a shocking reminder of all that we are blessed with here in the States. Though they have little physically, the have faith that could move mountains spiritually. I feel so blessed to have worked with these people and grow connections and relationships with them. It was an honor to serve them and be a part of this Indonesia Mission Trip.

— Chloe LaCasse

This was my first official mission trip ever, and to have the blessed opportunity to go to Asia became an unforgettable experience. It was a group of eight amazing individuals from California, Virginia, Florida, and Tennessee. This mission trip was one to love, serve, and connect with our brothers and sisters of COGOP in Medan, Indonesia; only to arrive being so loved by them all. It became a time where we loved and served each other. We sang, prayed, cried, celebrated New Year's, created music, ate together, and were in a ton of pictures together. Though we spoke different languages, we praised and prayed to the same God. Seeing this gave me a beautiful insight to what heaven will be like.

With the fundraising and donations from several churches and the team, we were able to bless their orphanage center and Bible school facility with clothes, financial support, a new sound system with microphones and stands, new fans, new beds, new paint, and school supplies. Thank you to all of our churches, friends, and families that helped make this trip possible for us to go and invest in the Kingdom-building that's being done in the COGOP churches of Medan, Indonesia. They are a people that love God with all their hearts and they are thirsty for Him. It's evident that God is raising up young leaders not just in the US, but all over the world. I can only praise God that I had the opportunity to see a glimpse of that and be a part of it for a couple of days. This will definitely not be the last mission trip for me. "Send me, Lord."

— Omar Gonzalez (California)



ecently, I was blessed to be in a church service where Londa Richardson was preaching. She recounted the story of a time she was asked to speak at the funeral of an elderly woman. Sister Londa asked the woman's daughter to bring a pair of her mother's shoes to the funeral; they didn't have to be fancy church shoes, just an everyday pair. As Sister Londa began to speak, she placed the shoes on the end of the casket. They remained there as she spoke of the godly life this woman lived, how her influence had affected others, how she had served Jesus to her utmost. Sister Londa asked those present a question, "Who is going to fill this woman's shoes?" A granddaughter of the woman later went to her mother and told her she believed she was the one to whom God was speaking. She had seen the presence of Jesus in her grandmother's life and felt the call to fill her shoes. This granddaughter went on to become a powerful minister for Christ. As a small child and through the years, she had watched her grandmother's life. Who is watching you?

I, too, was blessed to have someone in our family that everyone watched, admired, and went to for spiritual advice. His name was Leonard Dodson. He was my uncle. He went to be with Jesus in June 2014. He served the Lord from an early age and pastored more than 50 years, teaching even after retiring from his pastorate. We considered him to be our "family minister." I can confidently say that each of his nephews and nieces, grandnieces and grandnephews, as well as his own children, watched his life. They all observed the way he conducted himself, even in tough situations. In all my years of knowing him, I never saw him say or do one thing that was not Christian. We learned from him how to conduct ourselves and what is expected of a spiritual Christian leader. By watching him, we learned the ways of the Lord. Who is watching you?

On our secular jobs, at the kids' ballgame, at the grocery store, the beauty shop, out to eat, there are eyes and ears watching your conduct.

There have been others throughout my childhood, teenage, and young adult years, including parents, aunts, uncles, Sunday school teachers, and youth directors who were role models. Even now, there are those I consider mentors and friends who have a major influence in my life. Take a few moments to think back, whether you were raised in church or came to Jesus later in life, who did you watch? What type of persona or demeanor did they portray that caused you to want to be like them? Were there some you watched who you were certain you did not want to act like? Who is watching you?

I am realizing that I, too, am being watched. I have 11 grand-children who have watching eyes and listening ears. I have been in teaching positions as well as several other leadership positions where the things I do, the reactions I have, are being watched. It is so with you, as well. Even if you do not have children or grandchildren, someone, somewhere, is watching you. They are watching your life as a Christian, watching how you handle situations that arise. What do you show them? Those children playing in the nursery or the younger Sunday school and children's church classes, what do they see in you? Who is watching you?

We, as leaders in today's church need to remember, we are being watched. The children who have grown up within our church walls have been watching from birth. Some of these may already be in leadership positions. They are still watching those above them. Children mimic what they see. You can tell them all day long how they should act but if we act differently

in front of them, they will act as we act. We need to ask ourselves, "What kind of light are we shining?" Is it bright and cheerful, full of grace and mercy to others? Does our light exude a welcoming spirit to those who enter our church doors? Or is it dim, dirty, and dingy with judgmental attitudes toward others who may not act the way we think they should? Are we full of gloom and despair when life's hard knocks hit us? Is it shaded and blackened with our own bad attitudes when we are having an off day, full of complaints and murmurings against our brothers and sisters? Who is watching you?

What about the new convert, who may know little to nothing about leadership and the responsibilities of such? Do they see in us what a true spiritual leader should be? Do they see us turning to God in times of need? Do they see love, patience, kindness, honesty, integrity, a willingness to work with others, a willingness to serve those less fortunate? Or are there times when we are cranky, unforgiving, jealous, unwilling to accept good changes because "We've never done it that way before"?

Do you have places you go and things you do outside of church? Guess what? We are being watched there, too. On our secular jobs, at the kids' ballgame, at the grocery store, the beauty shop, out to eat, there are eyes and ears watching your conduct. Being a Christian has a responsibility to live a life of higher standards. If we get upset because we must wait longer than we feel we should, if our order is wrong and we lash out at the cashier, if our co-worker or boss was unjust or cheated us, how do we react? Is it godly? Can they see Christ in our actions? Will what we do give them a desire to serve Christ? Who is watching you?

Those children, those teens and young adults are the future leaders of the Church of God of Prophecy. Without them our church dies. We need them. We have a responsibility to them to be good examples. Each of us should seek God more now than we ever have. None of us knows when the return of our Lord and Savior will be. Sure, we would like to think that we will still be living when Jesus returns but there are many of our brothers and sisters going home every single day. At some point, all of us will be passing on our mantles. Our bodies grow weak and unable to serve as we used to. What legacy are we leaving our youth? Let us all examine ourselves to see what we need to change. None of us will be perfect until we enter heaven's gates. We can all improve and strive to be more Christ-like. When we pray, we need to ask God for His guidance in our life, to help us be a mentor, an example to those who are coming up to fill our shoes someday. Who is watching you?

YOUNG LEADERS



—Sharon Farruggia Knoxville, Tennessee When I was first asked to launch #Cover22, the mentoring ministry for the Tennessee Church of God of Prophecy, I did my due diligence. I researched and sought after any viable material that might help with the task at hand. I was responsible for recruiting men and women who were veterans in the faith, active in ministry, or had been pastoring some time to teach, train, and empower the next generation.

Over the months that followed, I came to the startling realization that there was not much information out there regarding this topic. I was in a dilemma. Even after prayer I relied more on my intellect than I should have. In the end, after writing a manual, organizing meetings, trying to pour into leaders so they could pour into young leaders, I realized it was not as complicated as I was making it out to be.

We have this incredible teacher, the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost. He began to speak into my spirit that He would teach us how to teach them. I realized then that Jesus did not give out pages of information to His disciples, there were no training manuals or equipment for the task of winning the world and discipling those who accepted the call of salvation. Instead of passing out pamphlets, Jesus empowered them. Jesus did not teach them methods, He imparted principles.

We want to raise them up to be mighty warriors, but we will not, if we are not.

Jesus demonstrated faith in front of them, including opening the blind eyes, the deaf ears, feeding the multitudes. His lessons on constructing a sermon consisted of Him kneeling, hidden away with the Father, and preparing Himself for the day ahead. I love the thought, "More is caught than taught." Jesus was not threatened by the disciples' potential power, boldness, and courage to win the lost, it was part of His earthly journey and responsibility.

If we desire to be good leaders, we must intentionally invest in the lives of young leaders. We must not be threatened when they excel or shine. Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs, I believe part of that was so neither of them received the glory when something noteworthy was accomplished but that all the glory would return to the Father. Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, the son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees the father doing" (John 5:19). This passage always causes me to think, "Is what I am doing something worth duplicating?" You will most likely mentor someone unintentionally along the way as well. Someone will listen to the way you preach, the way you teach, sing, or pray. Someone will watch the way you handle crisis or conflict. If a young leader is watching, what is he or she gleaning from you?

Recently we had an influx of college students and career-age men and women into our church. The lessons I've learned from them are invaluable. I compare it to Elijah throwing out his mantle (casting adventure) upon Elisha. In 1 Kings 19:19 we read the two journeyed together. Elisha duplicated Elijah's ministry and then went further than Elijah had ever gone. Their relationship has taught us that you cannot just throw out a book, tell the student to read it, and hope it catches.

The next generation needs to know they have a confidante and a lifelong friend in you. They need to know you are going to do battle with them and hold them accountable. They need to know you will pick them up when they fall; you have their back and they have yours.

These young men and women in our local congregation are all anointed to preach, teach, and pray. If a prayer meeting gets canceled due to a funeral, they remind me that we must have prayer before we have another service. We pace together and pray together and I am so in love with their love for prayer and people, it ignites something in me.

We have initiated something called "generation to generation" in our local ministry. We pair a veteran teacher, minister, preacher with a young student. The student takes the pulpit for the first 10 minutes or so and then tags the veteran. The veteran encourages, cheers, shouts as the student is proclaiming the Word, and the veteran who may not need their applause, is cheered on by their student regardless! When the mantle gets passed it is with joy, the joy of seeing the next generation rise and take their place.

We do not want any gaps. We want to raise them up to be mighty warriors, but we will not, if we are not. We want to raise them up to be mighty preachers, but we will not if we have gotten lazy in our own preparations. We want to teach them how to hear from God but we will not if we have too much noise in our own lives.

We must hone our skills again, rise from under the juniper tree where we think we are going to die, and stir ourselves so we can cover the next generation.

When I consulted one of my students about this article on the mentee's perspective, he said, "Be sure the leaders really pass the mantle on, and do not try to take it back." Once we covered this young man, we empowered him, and now he is an anointed and an able minister. We are so proud of the ministry flowing through him when he takes the platform. Moses had Joshua, Elijah had Elisha, Jesus had His disciples, Paul had Timothy. Who will you raise up, empower, and release into the greatest journey of their life? Ministry!

GLOBAL MISSIONS



CHILD FUND

Church of God of Prophecy

BULGARIA

Dear Sponsors of One Child Funds,

On the behalf of the Bulgarian orphanage and the very poor and needy children in Bulgaria, we wish to express a BIG THANKS to all of you. Your funds touched 195 kids and inspired joy and happiness in the children's hearts during this Christmas season!





God bless you abundantly in your life!

Yours in Christ, Peter Georgiev National Overseer of Bulgaria

HAITI

Thank you for helping the children's home.



INDIA

Thanks, from Mission Home Children!



MALI

Greetings in Jesus Christ!

We had two big events for the children of the orphanage. One, on December 24, 2017, was with some of the COGOP children, who celebrated with us and the other was on January 3, 2018. During the second one, only children from the orphanage attended and we gave them their gifts.



MYANMAR

Thank you, with all our hearts, for the Christmas gifts given to Carmel Children Home & New Orphanage. I would like to give you a comprehensive report of our progress from January—December. Today, we, the staff and all the children in Carmel Home & New Hope Orphanage, spent a wonderful time at one of the famous national parks in Myanmar. We all enjoyed the Christmas gifts you sent for the Children's Home. We never cease giving thanks to God for what He has done in this ministry through your generous support since we first began this ministry. Since it is a clear vision from God, He give us strength to carry on and He meets all our needs through your sacrificial donations. Thank you very much for your Christmas gifts. May the Lord reward you and your ministry with more than one hundred times what you have sown.





NEPAL

Many thanks from Nepal!





Top: Bethany Children's Home- Kathmandu Bottom: Grace Children's Home- Gorkha

PHILIPPINES

We had a wonderful Christmas present this year, his name is Andrew Wesley, born on Christmas day!





The children enjoyed Christmas with friends and a dinner.

RWANDA

I hope this message finds you and your family blessed with the full blessings from our loving Father and Jesus Christ our Lord!



Here are pictures of the children's Christmas festival. I want to say thank you to all our One Child Fund donors who helped us to have a wonderful Christmas festival for the children. All the children received and gave a gift to plant the culture of sharing among our children.

May the Lord bless you mightily Bishop Redias Nkundabera

UGANDA

Thanks to all our donors!



James Ntezimana National Overseer of Uganda



A discussion with Joy Hensley and Kathy Creasy



—Kathy Creasy & Joy Hensley Cleveland, Tennessee JOY: Most young leaders who feel called by God have a genuine desire to serve and be an active participant in ministry. The idea of being a part of something bigger than themselves is appealing. One of the best ways to nurture young leaders is by simply providing opportunities for them to lead. Ministry opportunities should not be assigned thoughtlessly or simply because the ministry leader needs an "out." Instead, assigning a ministry opportunity to a developing leader should be intentional and well planned so that the young leader can succeed and develop.

KATHY: I agree that providing intentional and well-planned ministry opportunities to young leaders creates a culture of nurture. But there are many experienced leaders who are hesitant to release ministry responsibilities to young leaders. They fear the assignment will fail. They feel it is easier to take on the assignment themselves rather than to provide coaching to a young leader as he fulfills the assignment. And sometimes mature leaders are challenged by the young leader's abilities, personality, or persistence fearing the young leader will "outdo" them. To create a culture that intentionally releases young leaders into meaningful ministry opportunities is a culture that truly embraces the role emerging leaders will play in sustaining ministry and advancing ministry vision.

JOY: Young leaders need people surrounding them who are honest with them. This open line of communication helps them to realize they are supported, valued, and trusted. One of the best ways to nurture an honest environment is through affirmation. Affirmation is best given when it is genuine and from a pure heart. Most likely, failure or discouragement will be experienced at some point; when this happens, it is important to have proactive conversations that can help the young leader learn and grow. When affirmation is given out of place, problems and negative experiences will reoccur. Honesty is also important for young leaders because as they enter ministry, they will need the support system of leaders and mentors who can come alongside of them in prayer and encouragement. Cultivating honesty can help sustain longevity of a young leader's ministry.

KATHY: Honest and open communication does help to create a nurturing environment for young leaders. I think such communication is built on trust. For young leaders to respond and participate in honest and open communication they must trust that the mature leader really cares about them and desires them to succeed in ministry. A trusting relationship provides the foundation that allows the mature leader to not only affirm but to challenge the young leader and enables the young leader to receive and respond in ways that lead to greater maturity. Again, the experienced leader must take the lead in building a trusting relationship and discerning how and when to affirm and/or challenge. The affirmation or challenge he gives to the young leader must be motivated by love not by pride, judgment, jealousy, or any other self-focused emotion

JOY: Young leaders should be encouraged to surround themselves with people of various ages and experiences so that they grow in their understanding of the value of every individual and every generation. Within the church context, we are aware how scripture points out that each generation is to share the goodness and faithfulness of God with the next generation. (Psalm 78) When young leaders are surrounded by people of all ages, the invitation to share and learn can be both cultivated and reciprocated. Wisdom and understanding is gained when a person hears the stories and testimony of God, but true empowerment for ministry leadership comes when she is also able to share her own stories and testimonies with others who are younger and older.

KATHY: Joy, I think you are talking about a culture of honor where every generation is valued, heard, and engaged. It is very important that leaders work to create that culture of honor—refusing to speak or act in any way that would dishonor anyone including the elderly, disabled, mentally handicapped, poor, young, etc. When there is a culture of honor every person regardless of age, status or ability has something to offer and his offering is valued and even celebrated. A culture of honor allows young leaders to explore their gifts and calling. It invites them to seek supportive relationships not just with their peers but also with people of various ages. It encourages them to find ways to serve those who may not be like them and to be served by them as well.

CONNECTIONS

CHURCH LIFE



Five Major Questions and Answers About Losing Church Members

I still have painful memories about the first time I experienced losing church members as a pastor. I took it personally. Too much so. In fact, I didn't handle the situation with much maturity at all.

But it's still a common concern I hear every week. Allow me, then, to address the five most common questions I get about losing church members:

Why do they leave? There are three broad categories of church members who depart. The "movers" are relocating to another community. They are common in our transient culture. The "dropouts" stop attending church altogether. Third, the "transfers" move to another church in the community. The dropouts typically leave because they were not connected in the church. The transfers move for a myriad of reasons, some legitimate, but some are self-serving. Those in the self-serving category typically see church as more of a country club where they pay their dues and get their perks. If they don't get the perks the way they expect (if they don't get their way), they will move to another country club church.

Should I contact the disgruntled members who leave? That's a tough one to give a uniform answer. On the one hand, it helps to find out why people leave so we can make legitimate changes and improvements. On the other hand, listening to a series of self-serving complaints can be a draining distraction.

Should I do anything about a member who is moving to another community? Absolutely! You should view that departing member as a missionary sent by your church to another area. Some churches actually have commissioning services and commissioning certificates. It is a really healthy process to send a member. Indeed, you begin to view them as "sent" rather than those who "left."

Other than members who move out of the community, what can I do to reduce the loss or inactivity of members? Remember, the more a member is involved and connected to others, the more likely he or she is to remain active within your church. You should be moving all your members to groups. You should seek to get members involved in ministry. And you should exhort your members to give as an act of stewardship and discipleship.

Losing a member makes me feel sick. Am I alone in my feelings? Not at all. You are among the majority of pastors who have the same feelings. Accept your pain as real and common, and then channel those feelings to lead your church to become more effective at assimilation and discipleship.

These are the type of questions we answer every day, almost every hour, at Church Answers. If you are interested in becoming a part of the largest ongoing gathering of church leaders in the world, you can join us during this brief seven-day registration period.

Thank you, pastors and church leaders, for your ministries, and lives. You are truly my heroes!

This article was originally published at ThomRainer.com on February 5, 2018. Thom S. Rainer serves as president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. Among his greatest joys are his family: his wife Nellie Jo; three sons, Sam, Art, and Jess; and ten grandchildren. Dr. Rainer can be found on Twitter @ ThomRainer and at facebook.com/Thom.S.Rainer.

PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico: 3,000 Churches Damaged, Fewer Christians Left to Rebuild

continued from page 5

bilingual volunteers. Dozens of families ended up joining them in worship—a bittersweet transition from the churches, homes, and jobs they left behind.

"Nobody wants to leave, but the options are so minimal," said Gabriel Salguero, co-pastor of Calvario City and president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC). "We've even had pastors come because their churches were so hard-hit."

Salguero's denomination, the Assemblies of God, lost 50 churches in Puerto Rico, while a fellow Pentecostal body had 150 churches undergo severe damage. His uncle, a pastor on the island, now shares space with a fellow congregation since his building was among the wreckage.

In addition to Florida, Puerto Ricans are settling in New York, New Jersey, Ohio, and Texas.

"The majority of those that have left seem to indicate a desire to remain within the continental US rather than return to the island," said Tony Suarez, vice president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC). "Many have lost their homes and possessions and are simply seeking to start over."

NaLEC and NHCLC have rallied American churches on the mainland to support the Christians who are staying in Puerto Rico to rebuild, giving millions in aid toward relief efforts. The NHCLC estimates that 3,000 Puerto Rican churches were damaged in Hurricane Maria.

—Source: The National Hispanic Leadership Conference



→ IN HIS PRESENCE ←

MINISTERS

Jane Clarke

Spanishtown, Jamaica November 11, 2017 Licensed minister for 64 years

Norris James Williams

St. Andrews, Jamaica
January 1, 2018
Licensed minister for 39 years

Vara Elizabeth Hartley

Gastonia, North Carolina December 23, 2017 Licensed minister for 37 years

Gladys Childers

Smithfield, North Carolina January 31, 2018 Licensed minister for 61 years

Earlene Whittington

Cary, North Carolina January 5, 2018 Licensed minister for 37 years

Martha Raines

Asheville, North Carolina December 13, 2017 Licensed minister for 8 years

Herman Neil Hartsfield

Bay City, Texas
January 8, 2018
Licensed minister for 64 years

Stewart Slone

Oliver Springs, Tennessee
January 11, 2018
Licensed minister for 28 years

Timothy Aukerman

Charlotte, North Carolina January 4, 2018 Licensed minister for 19 years

Kathleen Thomas

Decatur, Georgia December 25, 2017 Licensed minister for 54 years

Beatrice Gardiner

Nassau, Bahamas October 14, 2017 Licensed minister for 12 years

Bessie Corlew

White Bluff, Tennessee
January 19, 2018
Licensed minister for 60 years

L.V. JONES

Bishop L. V. Jones of Birmingham, Alabama, claimed his eternal reward on Friday, November 24, 2017. Bishop Jones was the state overseer of Alabama at the time of his passing. In addition to Alabama, he previously served the Church of God of Prophecy as state overseer in Wyoming, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah for a total of 32 years in state overseer work.

Bishop Jones served as a member of various international committees such as Questions and Subjects, Ways and Means, and Church Boosters. He was a licensed minister for more than 48 years. Bishop Jones was a mentor and spiritual father to many.

JESSE CAGLE

Bishop Jesse "J.C." Cagle of Cleveland, Tennessee, finished his earthly race on July 14, 2017. Bishop Cagle was a member of the Church of God of Prophecy for 66 years and was a retired bishop with 42 consecutive years of service in various ministerial positions, including pastor, state and national overseer, and serving at the International Offices as International Sunday School Director and Sunday School Literature Editor.

After his retirement in 1994, Jesse continued ministering by preaching and teaching as called upon, and served in appointed duties in his local church



FRANKLYN WILLIAMS

Bishop Franklin R. Williams of the Turks and Caicos Islands went home to be with the Lord on December 15, 2017. He joined the Church in 1959. Bishop Williams served the Church of God of Prophecy as the English Mission Representative to Africa and the Caribbean as well as pastor in the Bahamas. He served as overseer of Turks and Caicos Islands for more than 29 years. Bishop Williams was a licensed Church of God of Prophecy minister for 51 years.



Heritage Ministries Coordinator HERITAGE MINISTRI



HERITAGE UPDATE

MIRACULOUS HEALING TAKES PLACE AT FIRST ASSEMBLY **COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE**



At 11:00 a.m. on January 30, 2018, more than 50 people gathered in the First Assembly House near Fields of the Wood to commemorate the First Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy. The First Assembly House—where the first General Assembly of the Church of God took



Darren Schalk

place on January 26 and 27, 1906—is the former home of J.C. Murphy, one of the founding members of the Church of God. The room in which the Assembly was held has been kept in its original condition except for the floors.

Each January, a special service is held commemorating this First Assembly. This year's meeting was a special commemoration, as the Church of God of Prophecy will convene in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in July to celebrate our 100th International Assembly.

The meeting was moderated by Darren Schalk, Heritage Ministries coordinator. It opened with Bishop Adrian Varlack, church historian, reading the minutes from the First Assembly. Michael Hernandez led worship. Dr. David Roebuck, historian for the Church of God, shared a few thoughts. Afterward, Bishop Sam N. Clements, general overseer of the Church of God of Prophecy, preached the message.

To conclude, a special time of prayer for healing was offered. The Spirit moved mightily in worship and in the Word and while the people prayed, a miracle occurred. A woman who had never been to the service before was there with a group. She had suffered with continual pain in her feet and was in pain that morning. When the small group of believers who were gathered in the First Assembly House began to pray, she felt a surge of heat rush through her feet. All the pain left! Praise God for this miraculous event!

God is moving in and around Fields of the Wood. We appreciate your prayers and support as we seek to continue hearing and heeding the voice of the Spirit.

Work continues to take place at Fields of the Wood as we renew the park. Would you pray about being a part of this worthy endeavor? Donations can be made at FOWrenew.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

This year marks our 100th International Assembly! As was the tradition when the Assembly was held in Cleveland, Tennessee, we will begin the week with a special day at Fields of the Wood. Mark your calendar to join us as the park on July 17! Service will begin at 9:00 a.m. and special events will be held throughout the day. See you there!

HAVE YOU MADE PLANS TO JOIN US AT FIELDS OF THE WOOD ON JULY 17, 2018? Mark your calendars! Service will be held from 10:00 a.m. till noon with more events to follow during the afternoon.

HELP US RENEW THE PARK!

Is God asking you to help with the park renewal? If so, you can simply go to www.fowrenew.org and give!

-Darren Schalk Heritage Ministries Coordinator

HELP US PROCLAIM GOD'S FAITHFULNESS!

VISIT WWW.COGOP.ORG - click on "DONATE" then select "QUICK GIVE" and select "FIELDS OF **THE WOOD**" from the drop-down list, or make your check or money order payable to Church of God of Prophecy and mail it to P.O. Box 2970 Cleveland, TN 37320-2970.

Still in the Spirit

Most COGOP people have heard the centennial International Assembly is convening in July of this year. We are celebrating our heritage and the first gathering of a group of people who wanted to be led by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The first half of the twentieth century brought the advent of several Pentecostal denominations who each experienced an outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the second half of the twentieth century, millions more Christians in non-Pentecostal denominations embraced these gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12, we are given a list of some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

- the word of wisdom
- the word of knowledge
- faith
- gifts of healing
- the working of miracles
- prophecy
- discerning of spirits
- divers kinds of tongues
- the interpretation of tongues

Those who have read the Bible know spiritual gifts operated in the first-century church. The question is: Are these spiritual gifts necessary in the twenty-first century church? The answer lies in the Great Commission:

Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,

but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well (Mark 16:15–18).

These verses, along with the verses in Matthew 28:18-20, are intended for the entire church age, stretching from Jesus' ascension to His Second Coming. Jesus intended for the church to continue preaching the Gospel, and to preach it with accompanying supernatural signs. The apostle Paul declared: "Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (1 Thessalonians 1:5). We are to seek spiritual gifts until the Lord returns, according to 1 Corinthians 1:7, 8. "Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong until the end . . ." The early church was promised they would "not lack any spiritual gift" all the way to the end, up to the Second Coming of Jesus. Millions of Christians around the world today continue to believe these Bible promises, and they are personally receiving gifts of the Spirit and seeing them regularly manifested by God—exactly as promised!

To fully explain the richness and breadth of the gifts of the Spirit is not possible in this space. There are many more scriptural proofs of the validity of these gifts. This is not meant to be a theological treatise. The goal of these few paragraphs is to instigate a hunger to know what the Word says about spiritual gifts and then teach it to the ones coming up behind us. Who will if we don't? Let's remember those great and glorious times the Spirit showed Himself mighty in our midst and then pass along those stories, the truth of the Spirit's work among us.

Jesus began His church in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our Movement was born of the Spirit, its members baptized in the Spirit. Those saints ministered in the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have heard their stories and we were taught the Word. The foundation was laid for us to believe those gifts were for us, too. We must guard against drifting from those truths concerning living and ministering in the Spirit. Galatians 3:3 is a warning: We have begun in the Spirit, we cannot finish the race in the flesh. We who have seen miraculous signs must now pass on the reality of the gifts of the Spirit to younger believers. The gifts are for them! Until Jesus comes! As we teach a new generation to preach the Gospel, let us expect God to confirm it with "signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Hebrews 2:4).



Marsha Robinson Assistant Editor

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