



## March 2023

# Church Press Newsletter

Dear Julie,

Welcome! Please come in. We need to be reminded again and again that we're not going to live on this earth for very long. Then death comes followed by your funeral. But since you will not be in attendance at that service, we have the following message to give you some insights as to what will happen the last time your body goes to church. God bless you as you read.

[Visit Our Website](#)

### Why Have We Come to Our Funeral?

***Some years ago I asked the local funeral home to park their hearse in front of the Church one Sunday morning with the back door open. They then placed a casket in front of the Sanctuary. They opened it and then placed a mirror in it. When worshipers entered the Church the ushers asked them to go to the front to view the deceased. The Sermon was on John 11:25-26 by Pastor Don. The entire service had a powerful and positive impact on everyone.***



Many years ago in the city of Jerusalem two wonderful Christian women, Mary and Martha, lost their brother in death. Lazarus had become sick. They sent word that Jesus should hurry and come and heal their brother. But Jesus delayed until Lazarus died and then appeared on the scene. It is then that Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die" (John 11:15-16).

Jesus just doesn't say that He is able to raise people or that He can give life, but that He is Life and Resurrection itself. He then went on to prove it. Even though Lazarus had been dead for four days the Bible says, "Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'" Can you imagine the joy that family had?

And on this day, when we celebrate our own funeral, we have an atmosphere of joy and victory. Christian saint breathed his last breath of earthly air last Thursday. It was on that day, alone in his hospital room, that the angels of God paid their visit to this man. The angels always come when God's people are ready to go Home. That's one of their major functions. They came for Abraham. They came for Moses. They came for Lazarus. They came last Thursday for Christian.

Now, this is our funeral, and we've come. Yet, why have we come? I can think of at least three reasons.

1. We've come to deal with reality!
2. We've come to see if there is victory!

### 3. We've come say to God: "Thank You!"

**What is the reality?** The Bible teaches us again and again that in the middle of life we are in death. The tensions that we have in life are a sign that we are going to die. The sufferings we go through are a process leading to death. The wrinkles on our faces, the slowness of our legs, the aches and pains – these are all things leading to death.

[\[read more\]](#)

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## Stack of Stuff

### **Pastor,**

although your speaking "voice" sometimes projects more, it still needs to be authentically your voice. The best way to do this is to recruit a few trusted friends to listen to recent messages and give you feedback. Warning: This is not for faint hearts or fragile egos!



### **Surveys show that most**

Americans are curious about the religious devotion of others and are willing to discuss the topic, but most say they rarely have conversations about faith with their Christian friends.

### **This has to do with with bringing people to Jesus**

Simply put, find ways to be a blessing to others. This not only blesses you and produces incredible fruit in your own life because of your own giving, but it shows the world that your actions line up with what you say. It shows that you live what you believe. Saying you're a Christian is one thing, but living it authentically on a daily basis is something else.

### **It is crucial to listen to our bodies.**

When we are feeling tired or drained, we need to recognize that we need rest. So often we pile things on our plate until we collapse of fatigue or become so overwhelmed that we can't handle our duties. Listen to your body. Know when you've taken on more than you can handle, and delegate what you can or ask for help. - Dustin Neeley

### **We like this:**

Donna and Mark joined our Wednesday morning Bible study at Church on what the Bible says about the end of the world. The next day I emailed Donna and thanked her and Mark for being with us. I asked why they wanted this study. She emailed me: "Mark and I are very focused to make sure we follow God's instructions so when we stand before Jesus on Judgment Day He will say, 'Well done My good and faith servants. You mentioned that we should beware of false prophets like Joel Osteen. Thanks for the warning!" - Pastor Don

### **After the termination of this life,**

we can have one of two combinations: both God and happiness or neither God nor happiness. What we won't be able to have is God without happiness or happiness without God. - Randy Alcorn

### **Quote worthy**

"I've noticed that everyone who is for abortion has already been born."- Ronald Reagan

### **Nursery provided**

An excellent sentence for bulletins and letters to prospective members: *"A church nursery will be available at the time of the adult membership class at no charge."* This gesture is really appreciated by parents with children.

### **A good time**

to plan (this is most important) your next successful adult membership class is now. Date? How about the first Sunday after Easter? [Click](#) to order more copies of *I Have Good News for You*.

### **"An Atheist**

is one who believes he has absolute knowledge that there is no one who has absolute knowledge." - Frederick Copelson

**There are**

good reasons for closing our southern border down. Here is just one big one: Each day nearly 200 young Americans die from fentanyl. And still our Government acts like everything is just fine. Sad. Sad.

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## Special Paragraphs

**Some time ago,**

George Hunter III described the North American Church landscape in sobering terms. He stated that of the 400,000 churches in the USA, 80 percent were either stagnant or declining. For the remaining 20 percent, most of their growth (95 percent) was either biological growth or transfer growth. In other words, congregations experiencing growth through conversions are a rare species. Hunter called this data “brute facts about old-line Christianity in the USA.” This should agitate us, since Jesus declared, “the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

**Please share with your pastor friends**

"Thank you Pastor Don for your book on Heaven. I want to read it and then share it with my sister. Unfortunately, she and her husband started listening to Kat Kerr on the internet and have been misled by her false teachings about heaven. They have always been such committed, sincere Christians, yet, somehow they have been hoodwinked by her false testimonies about heaven. It is upsetting. I have tried to share scriptures and point out that what she's saying doesn't line up with God's Word, but they've fallen for her hook, line and sinker." - Nancy (*last name withheld by her request*)

**A witnessing tip**

We want to impress upon ourselves the three characters that God uses to make the Good News of Calvary come alive in an unbeliever:

1. **A person who is spiritually lost.**
  2. **A Savior with the power to forgive and heal.**
  3. **A friend who brings the two together.**
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## A Lesson in Humility

**By Richard J. Foster**

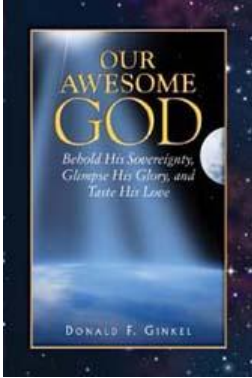
**Humility, *humus*, is being close to the earth.** It is being clear about ourselves so that we see when we're trying to control or manage or be in charge. It is learning to let go and have open hands. It is a freedom from the need to always get our own way or control a conversation. It is the freedom to say, *I don't know, but I'm willing to learn.* To me, that's one of its great values, because humility makes us teachable. And that's why it's really the most foundational of all the virtues and the most essential for spiritual formation and transformation. If we're not teachable, we don't move into character formation.

**It was St. Augustine who emphasized humility as a key Christian virtue.** That is because the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus redefined humility. But something is going on culturally, because it's been probably a century that we have not thought of humility even in a religious context. Narcissism, greed and egocentric stuff seem to be everywhere. I can find people and situations where folks have common courtesy and care for one another, but they feel like tiny specks of light on an ocean of darkness. In March, my beloved wife, [\[read more\]](#)

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## OUR AWESOME GOD

The concept of God by many religious people is that He is simply a higher power, a cosmic force, and a loving grandfather who is especially fond of America. But the God of the Bible is anything but. Even in many conservative and evangelical churches today, a



proper understanding of God and His true characteristics is lacking. This has a negative reflection on all of his thoughts and actions.

A. W. Tozer writes: "The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils among us . . . With the loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consequences of the divine presence . . . If we would bring back spiritual power to our lives, we must begin to think of God more really as He is."

*Our Awesome God* is a ten-lesson Bible study on the truly Biblical teachings of His make-up. Written by Pastor Ginkel, this study will take fifteen to twenty hours to complete. Student Guide, 120 pages

#160 \$6.95. Leader's Guide, 120 pages #161 \$6.95. Consider placing your order now. Just click [order](#).

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## Couple of Practical Ideas for Pastors (and others)

*By Pastor Don*

**Idea # 1: Be Careful** - about sharing private information about people with your elders and with your wife. Years ago I remember a fellow pastor who shared this info with his wife. She, in turn, passed it on to other ladies. When folks confide in you, it should remain confidential.



**Idea # 2: Hymn Selection.** For each service choose a variety of hymns. For the traditional service include one or two contemporary or "evangelical or Gospel hymns." For every contemporary service include one or two old favorites like "Abide With Me" or "Beautiful Savior." For a blended have a real blended service - a mixture of hymns. Have three or four hymns of praise to begin each service. Stay away from "draggy" music. Some organists or pianists play ever so slowly. This is not a dirge. Let's have joyful singing.

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## "But I Tell You..."

**A sermon by Rev. John Larson preached in February at Ascension Lutheran Church, Littleton, Colorado. An excellent Law - Gospel message. Note how he uses the four words, "But I tell you...", over and over again.**

Four words got Jesus into trouble. Did you know that? Just four words but He kept on using them over and over again. The four? **"But I tell you..."** In Matthew 5 He uses that phrase 6 times. "You have heard it said, 'Do not murder'. **But I tell you**, anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment." "You have heard it said, 'Do not commit adultery'. **But I tell you** that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." "You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' **But I tell you:** Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

When Jesus said those four words He got into trouble. He quotes Moses ("You have heard it said") and then says that He – Jesus – has a better word, a final word. **"But I tell you..."** Can you imagine the big shots in the church listening to Him say that? They questioned His right to say such things. They questioned His authority. [[read more](#)]

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## What Attracts People To Your Church?

*By Dan Reiland*

The people who attend your church are incredibly busy, but they make time for the things they care about. They show up to the things they think are important and value the most. When the long-anticipated movie comes out, their favorite band comes in concert, or it's their kid's birthday, people just don't miss.



One thing that's true every Sunday is that the people who didn't come to church that day are somewhere! They decided that something else was more important. Many good reasons are normal and natural such as family vacation, sickness, a destination wedding, and many others. That's part of life.

The point here is more about the "every-week" Sunday options, other than church, that present a greater benefit or value than attending church. The days are gone when pastors can merely say, "You should attend church." Or quote Hebrews 10:24-25 and expect people to come back next week.

The people who attend your church need to experience the benefit of attending your church. I don't mean that in a purely consumer frame of reference, although that's not a bad place to start. It's a good thing if people attend your church because they "get something out of it." [\[read more\]](#)

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## Dear God Letters

Dear God - Please put in another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There is nothing good in there now. - Ginny

Dear God - If we come back as - something - please don't let me be Jennifer Horton. I hate her. - Denise

Dear God - Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy - Joyce

Dear God - I bet it is very hard to love all of every body in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it. - Nan

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## 8 Characteristics of Churches That Embrace Evangelism

### By Chuck Lawless

Most churches in North America are not evangelistic. My role as Professor of Evangelism and Missions, though, allows me to learn about churches that are breaking this trend. Here are some characteristics of these churches:

- 1. They're led by pastors who are themselves evangelistic.** I've written before that I've never seen an evangelistic church not led by an evangelistic pastor. The passion of the leader grabs the attention of the congregation he leads.
- 2. They believe and teach the exclusivity of the gospel** (that is, Jesus is the only way, and no one can be saved apart from a personal relationship with Him). This truth compels them to teach the Good News through all they do.
- 3. They emphasize the significance of baptism.** It's not just a "tack on" at the end of a service; it's a central part of the church's worship and celebration. They genuinely rejoice when people illustrate their faith by baptism. Check out this post to hear some of my memories about baptism that drive me to evangelize more. [\[read more\]](#)

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## What Is Conversion?

*A Children's Talk By Pastor Don*

*Needed: one cup and a small pitcher of water*

In John 7:38 Jesus makes a promise. I'll say these words and then we'll all say them together. "Whoever believes in Me, ( *let's say it out loud*), out of his heart (*out of his heart*) will flow rivers (*together*) of living water (*together*)." What is conversion? Let's look at this upside cup on my hand. Right now this cup has three lacks:

1. **DARKNESS - no light can get in**
2. **EMPTINESS - There is nothing in it**
3. **USELESSNESS - It is good for nothing as it is**

This cup needs to be converted. It needs to be turned over. Cup, please turn over. This cup can't. The cup cannot convert itself. It needs someone to convert it or turn it over. Can we convert ourselves? NO! We need someone to convert us. That's what God does when we are baptized and believe in Jesus. Let convert or turn the cup over. There. Now see what it has.

1. **LIGHT - light has filled up the cup**
2. **FULLNESS - let's fill the cup up with water**
3. **USEFULLNESS - now I can take a drink from it.**

Ummm - good. Do you believe in Jesus as your Savior? (Yes) Great! Now what does Jesus say? "When you believe in Me as your Savior, out of your heart will flow living water: Enough water for you and for you to give to your friends. Now let's bow our heads and pray. I'll say a few words and then you pray them after me. (*ex corde prayer - you can flesh this talk out for more details depending on the age of the children*)

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## When We Feel Forgotten

**By Martin Luther (Faith Alone - 365 Devotional Readings)**

*Nevertheless, the chief cupbearer didn't remember Joseph.  
He forgot about Him.. Genesis 40:23*

After being forgotten by the cupbearer, Joseph struggled with the temptation of becoming impatient and complaining. When the devil saw this, he attacked Joseph with even more fiery arrows. Christ Himself felt these arrows when the devil tempted Him: "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread" (Matthew 43). In the same way, the devil might have said to Joseph, "Go ahead and continue your miserable struggle. You know that your prayers are useless. You cry to God and that God would free you and restore your honor because you interpreted the chief cupbearer's dream. Well, let God save you if he feels like it." The devil continued to torment Joseph with his fiery arrows, even though Joseph was already weak and wounded.



When faithful people are happy and when they sing, "The Lord is my strength and song" (Psalm 118:14), the devil stays far away from them. All complaining and impatience soon end. As long as believers praise and thank God, then temptation, sadness, and unbelief disappear. Heaven is opened wide and hell is shut with words like these: "I will thank the Lord at all times. My mouth will always praise him" (Psalm 34:1).

But as soon as we stop praising God, miserable, lonely, sad thoughts return. That's what happened to Joseph when he remembered how his brothers had sold him. They were at home having a good time while he was lying in prison, tied up and miserable. This is how the devil works. When the water becomes troubled, he likes to fish. He uses these opportunities to tempt people to abandon their faith and give up in despair.

**I once asked a lady in our Wednesday morning Bible study if she sinned. She said, "Yes." I said, "Tell us about some of**

your sins." She said, "No!" We understand. But be sure you tell Jesus. He loves you and will forgive you. dfg

## The Old Rugged Cross

Ron Mangrum writes, "Hallelujah to His holy name, Jesus Christ. Let the angels in heaven rejoice! And I will rejoice also." Listen carefully to the words and rejoice with Ron and the angels. Click [cross](#).



**NOW SEND THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A FRIEND**

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