



July 2023

Church Press Newsletter

Dear Julie,

Welcome! Please come in. This will be my last Newsletter. I am glad and sad for the two reasons listed below.

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Glad! Sad!

By Pastor Don Ginkel

J. Nadine Ginkel - My dear wife, the love of my life, whom I love more than words can tell, entered into the presence of the Lord on Saturday, June 3, at 2:20 p.m., at the age of 72. "Dine" had three heavy trials. First, she lost her son, "T.J.", at age seven, when he was run over by his school bus. She carried this loss the rest of her life. Second, she carried the cross of breast cancer. The Lord graciously healed her. Third, four years ago she was afflicted with Multiple System Atrophy (MSA), which is a rare condition of the nervous system that causes gradual damage to nerve cells in the brain. She has donated her brain for further study of this terrible disease. The last year of her life she received strong pain medications. One evening, not long ago, I stood by her bedside and asked, "Shall we pray?" She replied, "No." I was surprised. Then she whispered, "Hold my hand." Yes!

I am so very glad that her suffering is gone. She is with Jesus, with many people whom she loved, and the myriad of holy angels. I praise the Lord for this. It is empty in my house. I am glad. I am sad. Both at the same time. I sincerely thank the Lord for her little comfort dog, Teddy, who was next to her for four years, care givers Patti, Nathalia, Jackie, many other care givers, the nurses, doctors, Pastor John Larson, and the saints at Ascension Lutheran Church. Thank you Jesus for all these. You are very kind. Now, more than ever, I want to go Home. I confess the words of David as he lamented the death of his son: *"I shall go to him, but he will not return to me"* (2 Samuel 12:23). In all this all glory be to Jesus who suffered, died, and rose again. So we confess the words of Henry Alford -

*Ten thousand times ten thousand, in sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints throng up the steeps of light,
'Tis finished, all is finished, their fight with death and sin,
Fling open wide the golden gates, and let the victors in.*

*Bring near Thy great salvation, Thou Lamb for sinners slain;
Fill up the roll of Thine elect, then take Thy power and reign,
Appear, desire of nations, Thine exiles long for home;
Show in the heavens Thy promised sign; Thou Prince
and Savior, come! AMEN!*

The Sale of Church Press - As some of you may know, I am 91 years old, and I have Parkinson's disease. Next to the parish ministry, Church Press has been my great love for fifty years. I love serving the Lord. I love serving His pastors and people. I am glad. I am sad. For 64 years God has permitted me to serve. I thank You, my God, my Creator, and my Savior. St. Paul always seemed to thank God for the saints he wrote to. I sincerely thank Him for so many of you brother pastors and people. I have loved serving you. We

have supplied you with one million Bible studies and books. God is truly good! Rev. Blaise Sedney, lead Pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Bel Air, MD, is taking over. He will write the Church Press Newsletter. He also hopes to expand the inventory. The transfer will take place around the middle of July. We hope to supply contact details to you then by email. May the Lord richly bless Pastor Blaise and those who work with him in the years ahead.

Stack of Stuff

This summer

Try to do more things that energize you in ministry and few things that drain you. When you're on vacation visit other churches to get ideas and encouragement.

A truism for pastors

If your people see the results of your inviting people to worship services and to your adult membership classes (and they notice things like this), it won't be long before they'll be doing the same thing. This is contagious, and it is a truism.

Brit Hume:

"Everyone is fighting a battle, so be kind."

Proverbs 1:7

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning (just the beginning) of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Concerning next Sunday's sermon

Will there be any practicality to it? And will it be carefully spelled out?

It's time

to order the twenty-lesson course *Getting Closer to God* for Junior Confirmands and Christian Day Schools. Click [Getting Closer](#).

Very important:

Always strive to maintain good eye contact with people you are speaking to and who are speaking to you. Keep working on this until it comes automatically.

If you want to make a connection in a loving relationship:

"Tell me often that you love me through your talk, your actions and gestures. Don't assume I know it. I may show signs of embarrassment and even deny that I need it - but don't believe it, do it anyway." - Leo Buscaglia

Less time spent in the church office

and more time ringing the doorbells of members and prospects pays huge dividends compared to time just spent in the office.

Pastor, where can you get the names of good prospects?

At WEDDINGS and FUNERALS. There are a lot of people who attend both and who are without a Savior. Pastor, be sure you meet them after both events. Get their names. Then make plans for follow-up.

Special Paragraphs

Evolution: My Marvelous Body

Here is an excellent reproducible Bible study CD. The six Lessons with questions and answers include: 1. What Are the Odds? 2. The Perfect Machine - Our Bodies. 3. Ape-Like Ancestors. 4. The Devil's Disguise. 5. Humanism and Evolution, and 6. No Time to Despair. **Regular price \$39.99. Sale price \$20.00.** Great BIBLE study and questions. Click [#260](#) to order. Include address.

For July 2 include THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Put in your bulletin: "I pledge allegiance to the flag Of the United States of America And to the republic for which it stands. One nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all. (Then sing "The Star Spangled Banner")"

3 Motivations for Caring for Your Physical Body

By Mark Dance

There are many motivations for taking care of your body—a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in us. Why is it so much harder to talk about our physical health than it is to talk about our spiritual or emotional health? Perhaps it is because our motives are not always clear. Do we take care of our bodies in order to look better or feel better or to better honor God? Are these motives mutually exclusive? There are many motivations for taking care of our bodies, temples of the Holy Spirit who is in us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). But here I will highlight my top three. [\[read more\]](#)

When Christians Get Depressed

By Brandon Cox



A few weeks ago, I read a tweet from another believer who said, "You don't need a therapist, you need Jesus." Her tweet also received a lot of affirmation. Obviously, we have some confusion in the body, and I strongly and passionately stand on the side of the depressed. Because I've been one. I am one.

A decade ago, I went to see my doctor and she diagnosed me with depression and anxiety and started treating me for it, checking in with me every six months. I also see a Christian therapist who has helped me unlock a lot of doors inside my soul. As I study the Scriptures, I've come to believe that discouragement can be sin—when we choose to give into fear and self-pity rather than believing in God's promises and faithfulness.

But depression is not a sin. It's a state. It's a condition. Depression can be situational, brought on by circumstances. It can be spiritual, resulting from unforgiveness, unconfessed sin or demonic oppression. It can be chemical, resulting from something unhealthy in the brain. It can be physical, fueled by poor health or other conditions. And it can be mental and emotional, the result of trauma or heredity. This much I know—depression itself is not sin. [\[read more\]](#)

Couple of Practical Ideas for Pastors (and others)

By Pastor Don

Idea # 1: Doing something with your men

Years ago I invited all of our men to join me in a "fishing retreat" at Lake of the Woods on the Canadian border. The men took turns preparing meals (that was something to see). Among other things, we went fishing under the hot sun and for refreshments we drank warm beer and ate chocolate chip cookies. I know, I know, that's not spiritual, but great things came out of the venture. Consider doing something special with your men this summer. Encourage them to bring unchurched friends along. It pays big dividends.

Idea # 2: Suggestions for hospital visits

Always bring your Bible so the devotion is based securely on God's Word.

Always close with prayer.

Always speak loud enough so that other patients in the room can hear the devotion.

Always give a greeting to other patients in the room.

Always leave copies of Portals of Prayer for the member and for other patients.



Don't Resign on a Monday

By Chuck Lawless

Welcome to Monday. It's the first day of a new workweek – a time for expectation and excitement. For some church leaders, though (and, to be honest, for folks employed outside the church, too), Monday isn't always a good day. You've probably heard about the proverbial pastor who offers his resignation every Monday. If that's who you are, I am reposting here some reasons you may not want to quit today.

1. It's Monday. That's obvious, but when you're struggling, Monday isn't the beginning of an exciting week; it's the first day of another long week you think you just have to survive. Don't let that thought capture you today.
2. Whatever you're facing is likely fresh. Yesterday's criticisms are still ringing in your ears. You're still recalling that messed up sound system, that blown sermon illustration, and that lower-than-expected attendance. All of these thoughts will diminish as you get busy during the week.
3. The fatigue of the weekend can be lasting. "Weekend" sounds restive, but that's not always the case for church leaders. The emotional and physical stress of Sunday can bleed into Monday. Tired people aren't always the best decision makers.
4. Making life decisions in a storm isn't wise. I once read about a fighter pilot who taught his students, "Set your flight instruments in the clear, and trust them in the storm. If you change them in the clouds, you might regret it when the storm clears." That's wise advice for life.
5. Storms are almost always temporary. Sure, they can be intense. The winds can be tornadic, but even the most violent storm passes. And, no storm is ever outside the control of the Creator who loves you. Hold on to that truth today.
6. You may not have taken enough time to reflect on the good from yesterday. Before you quit, at least take time to search for glimpses of God's glory this past weekend. Seek Him with a genuine willingness to see His hand above any turmoil.
7. Faith requires you to see beyond today. If all you're seeing is today's anguish and frustration, you're not seeing enough. Believe God is at work even when you don't understand what's happening.
8. You've probably worked through Mondays like this one before. If you've been in ministry for any length of time, my guess is you've been here before. The God who brought you through those other Mondays is still Lord of this Monday.

When We Savor God's Word

By Chuck Lawless

We who seek to lead churches toward growth and revitalization *must love and obey* the Word if we want God to bless our efforts. With that truth in mind, I am mindful today of the psalmist's view of the Word:

- "They [the laws of the Lord] are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb." (Ps. 19:10).
- "How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey." (Ps. 119:103).

The psalmist felt that way, but I'm not convinced all of us are. At least, I know I'm not always there. Here, though, are some things that would happen in our lives if we truly saw the Word of God this way:

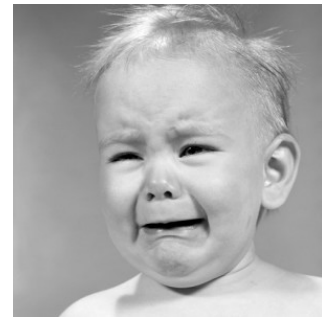
1. **We would read the Word more.** That's because it's so sweet to us. No matter how busy we are, we would make the time to read it. Even a few minutes tasting the Word would encourage and change us.
2. **We would hunger for it.** It would be so potent in our lives that our soul would long each day to meet God through His Word. We would crave Him more and more each day.

3. **We could never get enough of it.** Even if we were to “eat” it every day, we would want more. The Word is so sweet that the more we get, the more we want; it both quenches our hunger and increases it at the same time.
 4. **We would miss it when we don’t read it.** Gone would be the days when we simply neglected reading the Bible. We would not rest well knowing that we had missed the opportunity to taste its sweetness on a given day.
 5. **We would no longer be enamored by what the world offers us to “taste.”** We chase temporary stuff that might taste sweet for a moment, but burns us in the end. All those things would lose their power once we’ve tasted the true sweetness of God’s Word.
 6. **We would delight more in teaching the Word.** When the Lord’s teachings are so powerful in our own lives, we can’t wait to teach others. We would want those we lead to have the same experience with the Lord and His Word.
 7. **Others would take note of our passion.** The godliest, Spirit-filled leaders I know have the Word of God dripping from their lips. They *live* in the Word—and it’s noticeable. That’s what would happen in our lives if the Word truly were sweet to us.
 8. **Our churches would be stronger.** That happens any time we leaders deepen our own walk with the Lord. What the Lord does in us then spills over into the lives of those we shepherd. The sheep will then also find the Word to be sweet like honey—and hunger for more. How about you? Is the Word sweet to you?
-

Attitude

By Charles Swindoll

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude in life. Attitude is more important than fact. It is more important than the past, than education, money or circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company - a church - a home.



The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for the day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happen to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitude.

Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 11 Things I Learned

By Thom S. Rainer

I was their church consultant in 2003. The church’s peak attendance was 750 in 1975. By the time I got there the attendance had fallen to an average of 83. The large sanctuary seemed to swallow the relatively small crowd on Sunday morning.

The reality was that most of the members did not want me there. They were not about to pay a consultant to tell them what was wrong with their church. Only when a benevolent member offered to foot my entire bill did the congregation grudgingly agree to retain me. I worked with the church for three weeks. The problems were obvious; the solutions were difficult.

On my last day, the benefactor walked me to my rental car. “What do you think, Thom?” he asked. He could see the uncertainty in my expression, so he clarified. “How long can our church survive?” I paused for a moment, and then offered the bad news. “I believe the church will close its doors in five years.”

I was wrong. The church closed just a few weeks ago. Like many dying churches, it held on to life tenaciously. This church lasted ten years after my terminal diagnosis.

My friend from the church called to tell me the news. I took no pleasure in discovering that not only was my diagnosis correct, I had mostly gotten right all the signs of the impending death of the church. Together my friend and I reviewed the past ten years. I think we were able to piece together a fairly accurate autopsy. Here are eleven things I learned. [\[read more\]](#)

7 Ways to Handle a Disgruntled Group Member

By Ken Braddy



It seems like disgruntled people are everywhere today. You don't have to look very far to find them. In some cases, they find you. Just take a quick look at your Facebook or other social media stream and you'll find plenty of people with an axe to grind about something political, religious, or social in nature. Perhaps you work for a company and you've received an ear full from a disgruntled customer about a product or service offered by your business. Today people are quick to threaten withdrawal of support or the ending of a relationship when they aren't happy. At times even trivial, not substantive

things, are enough to push a person over the edge of reason. What do you do when that disgruntled person has an issue that's causing the members of your group to be uncomfortable? You're the leader. What are you supposed to do? The disgruntled person may have an issue with the pastor, a decision made by the church, or someone else in the group. Or the disgruntled person could have an issue with you, the group leader – something you said, or didn't say. The flash point could have been a myriad of things, but nonetheless, it's yours to deal with. What are your options?

Option 1: Do nothing. This isn't a real option, so let's move on to option 2. [\[read more\]](#)

Between Arrogance and Despair

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

God opposes arrogant people, but He is kind to humble people
James 4:6

We shouldn't become proud in times of prosperity nor despair in times of trouble. On the one hand, we must keep our arrogance in check by fearing God. On the other hand we should cling to His mercy in those times when we think He is angry with us. By doing so, we won't crash into heaven with our big heads or fall flat on the earth.

But the person who is humble and has a broken heart is neither proud nor full of despair. Yet, it's difficult for us to avoid both arrogance and despair. In our weakness, we sometimes swerve to the right and sometimes to the left. Whenever we feel overconfident or full of despair, we must make an effort to resist such tendencies. We cannot give in to either one. When an archer misses the bull's eye, he is still awarded points for hitting the target. Similarly, God is pleased when we at least fight against arrogance and despair. Even if we may not show enough joy in times of trouble or enough reverence for God in times of prosperity, He won't hold that against His faithful people. We have Christ as our mediator. Through Him, we are considered true saints even though we have barely started to act like holy people.

In summary, those with many troubles should lift their spirits by acknowledging God's mercy and remembering what Christ has done for them. Those with few troubles should drive out arrogance by living in fear (holy awe) of God.

And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with

my hand until I have passed by." Remember, it won't be long until you see Him face to face. May He speed the day.

He Hideth My Soul in the Cleft of the Rock

By Frances J. Crosby - All Glory to Our Lord God Almighty

Click [He Hideth](#) to view and sing along. Go full screen.

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