



May 2023

Church Press Newsletter

Dear Julie,

Welcome! Please come in. Does a small church need to stay small? Not at all. I share with you this verse by Margaret Seebach:

**What is the Church to me?
The Church to me my joy shall be -
A house to build both strong and fair,
An influence to spread abroad
That men may know the Son of God
Such offering to Him I bring
Who is the Church's Lord and King
And Savior unto me.**

Now the important topic below -

[Visit Our Website](#)

How to Grow a Small Church

By Pastor Don Ginkel

My first Church out of Seminary was Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS) at Creston, IA. It was a mission congregation 33 years old. The attendance at worship my first Sunday was 19..Giving was bad. The District was ready to close it down. When I left Trinity six years later average attendance was over 250 a Sunday. Giving was on the increase. It was a self-sustaining Church with many people being led to Christ. You ask, "What happened?" Let me tell you.

First it was not me, but the Holy Spirit who came down on us. My confession was that of St. Paul: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). On my second day in Creston I started going house to house. The first was a little white house across the street from the Church. I canvassed perhaps 50 homes when it became apparent that I would never reach many homes in this small town. I told the 19 members that I needed help. We prayed for growth, inward and outward. Asked these folks to join me on four consecutive Sunday afternoons to go canvassing. I would train them how. We would then go out in pairs. After four weeks we had 2,500 prospects. That was enough to start calling on them. We met each Thursday evening to visit and then returned to share. We called our group Fishers of Men. The Lord was pouring out power and joy. Spent little time in the church office, but a lot of time visiting prospects and members. We conducted membership classes. A lot of them. 24 weeks long. People brought their friends. These classes numbered 20 to 40 people. They came to Jesus. When they joined the Congregation on Sunday, we had a great celebration.



I shared with the folks my goal to average 85% of our soul membership in worship and 85% of our worshippers in Sunday School and Bible Class. They joined me in that goal. We studied. We sang. We prayed. All glory to God! I loved them. They kinda liked me. I must emphasize that this was not about me. It was about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I firmly believe most small churches can grow and that it is God's will that they grow.

Now, three points. **No. 1:** Brother Pastor, I invite you to call me (303-980-8863) and pick my little brain. I would be happy to listen and share. If you wish, a second call can be made with the leaders of your church using a speaker phone. **# 2:** I invite you to read an excellent article by Dr. Gary Linton titled, "How to Grow a Small Church." Just click [GROW](#). **No. 3:** Please print out and share this article and the one by Dr. Linton with your church leaders. God bless you, my dear brother. God bless you. Love you and the work you are doing. - Don

Stack of Stuff

Please feel free

to use any part of this Newsletter in your Church Newsletter.

The future of Church Press - by Pastor Don:

Some time this year Church Press will come to an end. My wife, Nadine, has MSA which is terminal. If you have a prayer list, please add her name. I am 91 years old and am finding it more and more difficult to take care of everything. If you are interested in acquiring Church Press, please call me for more info. Just call 303-980-8863.

Remind members

that their social media offers a great way to invite people to your church. Post a photo, tell a story about how your church impacts your life, link to the church website, or say "Join us Sunday at 10!"

Little things that really count

Smile. Be approachable. Make eye contact. Master friendly conversation. Ask simple questions. Compliment others. Use people's names. Make an effort to talk to new people. Befriend people. Make a decision to like people you meet. Always be polite. You be the first one so say hello and introduce yourself.

The quicker

your response to follow up with guests at your worship services, the better the chances are they will return to your church.

The Surprising Reason Most People Choose a Church

Most say sermons are the primary reason they choose a congregation, and not just any sermons but sermons focused on the Bible. - Aaron Earls

Something more important

for most first time guests is not doctrine, but the friendliness of your church. Pastor, at the end of the service, encourage everyone to shake hands with someone and share first names.

Church secretary and/or office administrator

Do your pastor a big favor. When you see something in the Newsletter you think he really needs to see, run it past him.

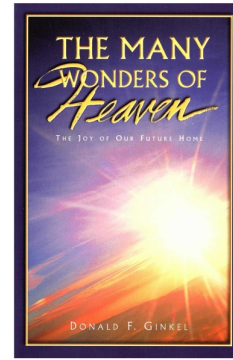
Thom Rainer:

"Detail distraction happens when there is too much focus on minor issues to the detriment of major issues." "There are a lot of churches doing good things when they should be doing great things." "Churches should focus on the things with eternal value more than the minutiae that has little value."

Special Paragraphs

To the first three people

who [email](#) us, we'll send a free digital copy of *The Many Wonders of Heaven* by Pastor Don, both the Student Guide and Leader's Guide. Run off as many copies as you wish. A \$19.95 value. Eight intensive lessons: The Wonder of Entrance, The Wonder of God, The Wonder of the Saints, The Wonder of God's Family, The Wonder of Reward, The Wonder of Activity, The Wonder of the City, The Wonder of Anticipation. Ask for #147.



A study from the Holy Bible. Can either be printed out or the pdf can be opened on any electronic device. Printing on both sides of a sheet will save paper. You may wish to have one person in your class print off all the Bible verses and hand them out at the beginning of each lesson.

Get important info

from your guests at worship. We have two successful methods. **No. 1: Church attendance cards, #501.** \$3.95 per 100. One side for guests and the other for members. Guest side gathers a wealth of pertinent information for those who may become prospects. Insert in bulletins or place in pew racks. We sell hundreds of thousands of these cards each year. **No. 2: Church attendance pads, #502.** \$1.50 per pad with 50 sheets. Ask for a sample of both, and we'll send them to you at no charge. Just [email](#) us with your address.

What Disappearing Churches Do

By Joe McKeever

- They run preachers off, one after another. After a business meeting in which the congregation voted to fire the minister, an elderly member told me, "This is the fifth pastor in a row we have fired." A generation ago that church ran 600 in attendance; today, it struggles to hit 50.
- They keep the ministers on starvation wages, guaranteeing that they will not stay long at this church. Carnal members will argue that ministers should not be preaching "for the money," but God's Word says one must look after the needs of his family. If a church is not paying a living wage, it should not be surprised when the minister has to take outside jobs.
- When a financial crisis hits, instead of calling the congregation to rally—to awaken to their situation, increase their giving, and be more committed—the leaders simply cut salaries and missions. Cutting the budget is far easier than asking people to sacrifice.
- They will not allow the minister to speak prophetically to the congregation or strongly to the community. I once told a congregation, "I would not join this church. There is so much ill will and anger among our people. God is not going to let us experience revival until we get our hearts right with him." To their credit, they took that and repented. God sent revival to that church and it became healthy and strong.
- They allow a few carnal members to dominate the congregation. They run off healthy Christians who want the church to have a wide range of ministries different from what they've always done.

What to Say to the Worst Critics

By Sam Rainer

One pastor had a group of people circulate a petition to get him fired. They tried to get signatures in the foyer as members walked into church for Sunday services. Another pastor experienced the creation of a Facebook page dedicated to criticizing every aspect of his preaching and leadership. In a small town, a pastor became the fodder for regular op-ed pieces in the local newspaper. They were not flattering.

In each of these cases, some would claim the criticisms were warranted. Perhaps they were right. Or maybe the critics had impure motives and were overly harsh. Criticism can be either constructive or destructive. Constructive criticism comes from a pure motive to help the one criticized. Destructive criticism grows out of selfish motives and desires to tear down the one criticized. Criticism can also be either public or private. Both have a place. Typically, the critic should start with private conversations and escalate to more public statements when others are at risk. In rare cases, a whistleblower may need to inform the world about a particular situation.



Consider the below matrix. This article addresses destructive and public criticism, which is often harmful. How should sensible pastors react after receiving unwarranted, harsh public criticism? [\[please read - excellent article\]](#)

Couple of Practical Ideas for Pastors (and others)

By Pastor Don

Idea # 1: Order business size cards containing a warm invitation to come to worship. They will be for church members to hand out to folks. Encourage them to carry these cards each day. At least four times a year have ushers at each exit give all worshipers exiting the sanctuary around six or seven cards. Keep extra cards at church for members. This will lead to many more visitors and gives members the opportunity to be active in outreach. It's a win-win situation.

Idea # 2: Develop the habit of reading your Bible just for yourself, same time and place each day. Since you brush your teeth and eat at about the same time each day, it follows that feasting on the bread of life each day makes sense. If you already do this, good for you! If not, the time to start is today.

Faith Struggle, a Synopsis of a Journey (please read)

by Rev. Michael Zehnder, Music Director, Ascension Lutheran Church, Littleton, CO

As a young child I was a strong believer in God and in Jesus Christ, my Savior. I was confirmed in the eighth grade and learned my catechism well, believing the more I understood intellectually, the better a Christian I was. I had no doubts. But doubts started in early high school when I was taught evolutionary theory as the answer to the existence of the universe and was told that the world was not created in six days as stated in the first chapters of Genesis. My instructors said that the universe began with a massive explosion called the Big Bang at least 13 billion years ago and that man evolved over time from lower life forms all directed by "mother nature."

Considering myself an intellectual I began to view the Bible as a collection of myths and contradictions and thought it my job to sort out what was real and what was made up. At age 14 I took a list of what I saw as contradictions in the Bible to my father who was also my pastor. The timing was bad as he was trying to watch a game on the TV and after about just 10 minutes he said in frustration, "You don't believe? Well, you better just START believing!" as he pounded the table. That unhelpful advice really just sent me into a tailspin of doubt which increased each year until I found myself enrolled in a Christian college of my parents' choice at age 17.

I was the only unbeliever at St John's College in Winfield, KS and was very vocal about

it. The other students sort of took me on as their missionary project and I was in daily discussions with earnest faith-filled students whom I considered brainwashed and duped into believing by well-meaning parents and mentors.

One day I was having a discussion with a strong believer named Conley on a sidewalk in front of Baden Hall. He said to me, "Michael, you say you don't believe but I've never met anyone who talks more about God than you." I responded, "that's because all of you are all so brainwashed and I'm trying to help you see that you are wasting your lives by believing these myths when you could be free-thinkers and having a good time." He said, "I don't think so. I believe that the Holy Spirit has one foot in the door of your heart and He's trying like crazy to get in the rest of the way."

I immediately shook my head and responded with "No" but as I did so I felt something start at the top of my head that was similar to the feeling of the tingling of a foot when it falls asleep. I felt this strange sensation begin to grow throughout my scalp. It became much bigger and moved down through my shoulders and quickly through my entire body. Even my legs and feet were tingling. It felt like I was on fire and I couldn't speak anymore, so I ran quickly away thinking I was having a medical emergency. As I did, I passed the chapel on campus where the students were singing "He's everything to me." They had just come to the line which states, "Till BY FAITH I met him face to face, and I felt the wonder of His grace, then I knew that He was more than just a God a way up there, who really didn't care and now He walks beside me day by day helping me to find the narrow way..."

Those words hit me like a thunderbolt from heaven. For the first time in my life I realized from the combination of the words from that song and the fire of the Holy Spirit coursing through my body that I had been trying to know God merely on an intellectual basis and that by definition, I could never hope to know the depth of the mind of my Creator. I had not realized the role of FAITH and TRUST in a good God, thinking that belief was some kind of intellectual activity and accomplishment of getting all the facts straight. That challenge of experiencing the certain hope of God's promises BY FAITH sparked a question in my head, "What if I really DO believe?" and from there, over days and months, that tiny spark of faith grew and became an avalanche of conviction by the power and grace of God not only in Jesus, but in the trustworthiness of the Bible in all its parts.

It was such a pivotal event, I've likened it to Paul's Damascus road experience or Luther's experience in a lightning storm and His own thunderbolt experience reading in Romans that "the just person lives BY FAITH." I think some of us are just more stubborn, not more special, and that God literally has to shake us up and put us on fire in order to get through to us. And of course, I invited Conley to my service of ordination who once again graced me with his presence!

A Commentary on 1 Peter 4:10-11

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms . . . so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."

God wants to be praised by the things that you say and do as you serve others. Do you desire this? Sure you do. Be like Jesus. Put others before yourself. Oh, what an example Jesus gave us in His earthly ministry. Will you be like Him?

Let's illustrate: I'd like you to think of a little boy who, one day, came into a store and stood before the candy counter to buy some candy. The man behind the counter waited and

waited while the boy looked. The man said, "Please tell me what you want. I'll take your money, and you can have your candy. The boy said, "Okay." He looked and looked and looked some more. Finally the man said, "Hurry up. Will you please tell me what you want? This is not a big deal!" The little boy looked up at him and said, "Mister, when you've got only one penny, it IS a big deal" To the man it was no big deal. To the boy it was a very big deal.

What is your "penny"? How many do you have? Right now you're spending those "pennies." Are you satisfied with the way you're spending them? And is God pleased and praised? What changes need to be made as you spend the rest of your "pennies"? (This is an example of explaining Scripture as found in the *I Have Good News for You Leader's Guide* by Pastor Don, p.192. This book is a must for good teaching. [Ask for #102](#), \$16.95 (a \$25 value). You will use it a lot in your teaching

What a Bird!

For her birthday, Mrs. S. received a handsome yellow and green parrot, and she was delighted. She spent the better part of several weeks trying to teach the bird a few phrases, but all she could get it to say was, "Who is it?" One day the faucet in her bathroom developed a bad leak. She phoned a plumber who informed her that he would be there shortly. Being a hospitable person, Mrs. S. thought that she should have something to serve the man when he came. Coffee perhaps? But when she checked her pantry, she discovered that she was out of coffee. "I'll just be gone a moment," she said as she put on her coat and left to go to the supermarket.

But in the meantime the plumber came and rang the bell. The parrot answered the ring: "Who is it?" and the workman answered, "It's the plumber." Again the parrot said, "Who is it?", and the plumber raised his voice a bit, "It's the plumber." The only response from inside the house was the parrot's repeated "Who is it?" The plumber was getting frustrated: "IT'S THE PLUMBER!", he shouted, but again he heard the maddening question: "Who is it?" Now he was really in a frenzy, screaming, "IT'S THE PLUMBER!!!!" And the poor man had a heart attack and died. A few minutes later Mrs. S. came home and gasped when she saw the dead man sprawled on her stoop. "Oh dear," she cried, "Who is it?" To which the bird replied, "It's the plumber."

There Are Many Frustrations for Mothers these Days Consider mailing or emailing a note like this to Your People



Patricia Rushford put it ever so nicely -

**God gives me hope in hopeless situations,
And helps me see the rainbow
On the other side of the rain.
He heals the thorn-infested wounds
That I might smell the roses.
He gives me tears to wash away the pain;
Oh, but then... then...
He gives me joy so I can laugh again.**

May 14th is Mother's Day. Our Mother's Day Services should help everyone look at life and Heaven afresh. We'll build on God's promises such as: "Weeping may remain for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). Please invite a Mother or a young woman who will be a Mother some day to join you for these special services. You can do someone like that a big favor by doing it. May this be a most meaningful Mother's Day for you - and for the one you bring with you.

Successful Sermons Ask for Change By L. Carell

In lower-impact sermons, a majority of preaching time is spent on explanations, sermons that are more informative than transformative. In addition **listener's responses indicate that what's being explained is already known to them. If listeners already agree with sermon content, how can they be expected to change? Successful sermons move believers to action.** Rather than merely motivating a desire to be different (for example, "Yes, I'd like to be more forgiving"), sermons with lasting impact develop practical implementation of ideas, proclaiming the power and grace of God to enable that spiritual growth. Whether the action plan is illustrated through stories or specific steps, **a call to change is most likely to be successful when "how to" ideas are included.**

Looking Back on Life

By Martin Luther (Faith Alone - 365 Devotional Readings)

A person may plan his own journey, but the Lord directs his steps. Proverbs 16:9

No one sees the hand of God working in his life more clearly than when he reflects back on the years of his life. Augustine said that if a person had a choice of either dying or reliving his life over again, he would certainly choose death because of all the danger and evil he so narrowly escaped. In one sense, this statement is certainly true.

Looking back, a person can see how much he has accomplished and suffered without trying or thinking about it, even against his wishes and will. He gave such little thought to what he was doing before it occurred or when it was happening. Now, after everything has been carried out, he is amazed and says, "Why did these things happen to me when I never thought about them or thought something completely different would happen. So Proverbs 16:9 is true, "A person may plan his own journey, but the Lord directs his steps," even against his plan and will. So we must agree that our own cleverness and foresight don't guide our life and actions. Instead, God's wonderful power, wisdom, and goodness guide us. Only when we look back do we fully recognize how often God was with us when we neither saw his hand nor felt his presence at the time it was happening. Accordingly, Peter said, "He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Even if there were no books or sermons to tell us about God, simply looking back on our own lives would prove that he tenderly carries us in his arms. When we look back on how God had led and brought us through so much evil, adversity, and danger, we can clearly see the ever-present goodness of God, which is far above our thoughts, mind, and perceptions.

Make a commitment to invite someone to your church every week. Make a checklist of people you encounter: grocery clerk, boss, teacher, nurse, friend, yard guy, relative, hair stylist, mail carrier, neighbor, etc.



Here I Am Lord

If you are a child of God, the words of Isaiah are yours. Just listen or sing along. Click [Here I Am Lord](#). Go full screen.

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