

COMMUNICATOR

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More Than You Know

It's not a new revelation. It's just that in this part of my journey it was good to remember that in ways I never know about, in ways I could never name, God is taking care of me.

I was preaching from 1 Corinthians 2 where Paul makes the amazing declaration, “*But we have the mind of Christ*” (v. 16). I have to admit that sometimes when I hear this verse my first reaction is, “Umm, I don’t think so.” What can Paul mean by this?

The language of our religion is typically language of the heart and rightly so, for the essence of God’s relationship with us is love. What Paul seems to know, however, is that somehow in the mysterious mix of what makes me a human being, it is really in my mind where God is most revealed. I understand that God relates to me “heart, mind, soul, and strength” but living a Christ-life has much to do with how I *think*. As I proclaimed this gospel truth to my people, I shared with them a bit of my own journey:

“I have been engaged this week in a real struggle. I’m still seeking to discern all of the reasons for it, but somehow I allowed my thinking to get aligned more with the world than with what God says is true. Consequently, my heart was overtaken with fear. It happened in part because I was physically drained and spiritually depleted. I also believe that there has been an ‘Ephesians 6 battle’ going on that I don’t completely understand but do acknowledge. I simply want to testify that there is victory. One afternoon when I was feeling particularly heavy of heart, I began to recite the truth about the armor of God (Ephesians 6) that is our possession as those who belong to Christ. I literally went through the list: *belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of gospel, helmet of salvation, shield of faith, and sword of the Spirit*. As I said those verses out loud and thought about their implication to re-align my thinking, the cloud began to lift. I felt the fresh wind of the Spirit blow

through my heart and I began to see the way out of the darkness. *Loved ones, we have the mind of Christ!*”

None of this is particularly remarkable. You’ve had similar experiences. What really impacted me, however, was what happened when the service ended. A man came up to say, “My accountability group had been praying the ‘Armor of God’ scripture around our lives when we noticed that in verse 19 Paul says, ‘Pray for me also.’ So we decided that we should pray that scripture on your behalf. On Thursday I was praying those exact words for you.” Wow! I’ve heard those kinds of stories before, but somehow this became as a special way in which God reminded me, “Child, I’m always thinking about you and caring for you.”

That would have been enough, but just before the second service a dear sister said, “When you were sharing your story this morning I got chills, because on Thursday you were so heavy on my mind. I prayed for you throughout the day, not knowing what you were facing.”

Can you imagine the encouragement that flooded my heart that morning? I learned in a fresh way that no matter how great the struggle may become God’s love pursues us even when we’re not mindful of it. Like you, I’ve proclaimed that truth for many years to hundreds of people. It’s not a new revelation. It’s just that in this part of my journey it was good to remember that in ways I never know about, in ways I could never name, God is taking care of me.

And God is taking care of you, my friend. No matter how alone you might feel right now, no matter how burdened, the God who called you is caring for you. More than you know.

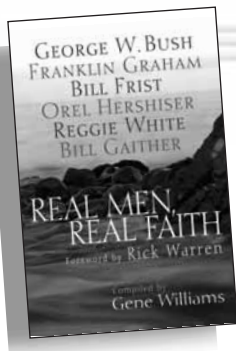
—Jeren Rowell



Real Men, Real Faith

FEATURED BOOK

Compiled by Gene Williams



Both national and personal tragedies cause us to ask the question, "Where is God when we're hurting?" Discover the common thread of faith in our Father that sustains, regardless of the devastations of life. *Real Men, Real Faith* is filled with stories of

faith that are shared by godly men from around the world. Featuring President George W. Bush, Franklin Graham, Reggie White, Paul Burnham (father-in-law of Gracia Burnham) and many more! Celebrate God's faithfulness to His people and join these men as they share their inspirational journeys.

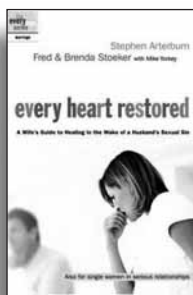
(Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2004, 160pp., \$14.99, paper, COZZ083-412-1352)

BOOK BRIEFS

Resources for Pastoral Ministry

PASTORAL CARE

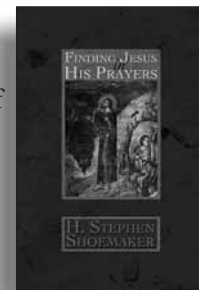
Every Heart Restored: A Wife's Guide to Healing in the Wake of a Husband's Sexual Sin. By Stephen Arterburn, Fred and Brenda Stoeker. (Waterbrook Press, 2004, 272pp., \$13.99, paper, COZZ157-856-784X). Over the past decade, more than 500,000 men have found inspiration and hope in *Every Man's Battle*, the best-selling men's guide to victory over sexual sin. Now, here is the book for every woman who has become a casualty in the fight for sexual purity. *Every Heart Restored* offers godly guidance and wisdom for a woman facing such personal betrayal. Filled with stories from wives and husbands at every stage in the struggle for sexual purity, this book addresses the questions and real-life issues that matter most to women.



According to Stanly Ott, senior pastor of Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, the power of ministry teams lies in their unique capacity to generate genuine Christian fellowship, grow disciples, develop leaders, and mobilize people for ministry. Where traditional church leadership organizations concentrate almost exclusively on task, policy, and program, ministry teams are designed to enhance faith development and, therefore, ministry effectiveness. This book offers clear guidance for building the leadership of a mission or church into a true ministry team.

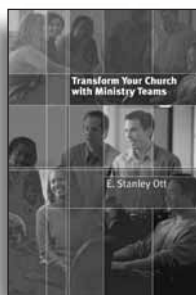
PRAYER

Finding Jesus in His Prayers by H. Stephen Shoemaker. (Abingdon Press, 2004, 118pp., \$14.00, paper, COZZ068-735-2533). This is a refreshing and insightful study of the "nine prayers placed on Jesus' lips in the four New Testament gospels". The author begins with a brief story of the life of Jesus and includes a chapter on the place of prayer in the life of Jesus. In his use of the text of the prayers, he uses the term "Abba" in the place of "Father" to give a feel of intimacy with the Father. The study includes Hebrew backgrounds of terms and customs as well as appropriate applications to modern life. Extensive notes and resources are provided as well as a guide for small group study organized for four sessions. A valuable resource for pastors and other Bible study leaders. (Reviewed by Bill Bridges).



GROUP MINISTRY

Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams. By E. Stanley Ott. (Eerdmans, 2005, 195pp., \$16.00, paper, COZZ080-282-2339). The concept of "ministry teams" is rapidly taking hold in churches, but what are they and how do they work? This book outlines what effective ministry teams look like, describes what they have to offer local congregations, and gives concrete advice for making them happen.



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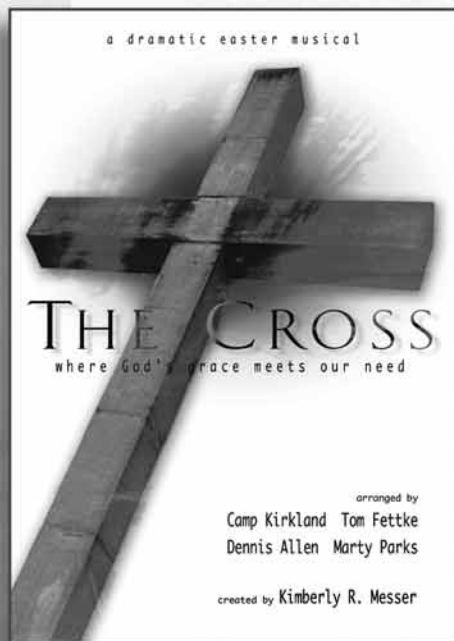
Some of the books featured in *Communicator* have not been reviewed for theological content and are not endorsed by Nazarene Publishing House or the Church of the Nazarene. They may have significant value, but readers should exercise theological discretion.



The Center of Our Salvation

AT A GLANCE:

ME-61
083-417-4014
\$8.99
Level: Moderate
Voicing: SATB
Performance Time:
Approx. 45 minutes



The Cross

Where God's Grace Meets Our Need

The cross is a symbol that represents the intersection of saved lives after Jesus' death and resurrection. In the script for *The Cross*, each character has a time of reflection before the cross—the place where life changed for each of them.

This multi-sensory musical with DVD multi-media options involves choir, staged scenes with several speaking characters, and opportunity for the worship leader and/or pastor to invite congregational response. There are optional scenes during two songs for staging the crucifixion and the resurrection. An optional accompaniment DVD is available that provides visual images for the other six songs, as well as complete accompaniment tracks.

AT A GLANCE:

ME-60
083-417-1945
\$5.99
Level: Easy 2, Excel Flexible
Voicing: SATB
Performance Time:
Approx. 43 minutes



Thank You for the Cross

A Musical Praising Christ, the Risen Lamb

Symbols serve to remind us of an event, concept or idea that has played a profound and significant role in our lives. More than the thing itself, a symbol, like the cross, points us to a greater reality, often something "larger than life" and in the best cases, something greater than ourselves.

Thank You for the Cross is an exciting, new musical with a distinctive praise & worship feel, appropriate and useful for Easter. . . and beyond! It includes an array of best-loved praise & worship material, updated hymns settings, and new worship songs in a flexible format incorporating generous use of unison, 2-part and easy 4-part vocal writing.

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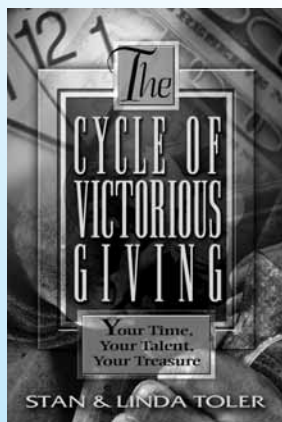
1-800-849-9827



www.lillenas.com



DISCOVER A POSITIVE PLAN FOR STEWARDSHIP



COZZ083-412-0992 \$7.99

A very small percentage of Christians tithe faithfully. While many of us argue that we can't afford to give money to the church, we seldom realize the importance of giving of our other resources. Gifts of time and talent are equally important to help advance the kingdom.

The Cycle of Victorious Giving outlines a positive plan for stewardship in all areas of our lives. Stan Toler shows us, as Christians, the relationship between giving, faith, spiritual growth, and ultimately, an eternal reward. The phases of the cycle are:

- Trust to Live
- Commit to Grow
- Delight to Give
- Rest to Inherit

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CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp

