

COMMUNICATOR

NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE

Clergy Marriage

**No matter where you are in your marriage, hold on.
God has promised to be our strength, our comfort, our wisdom and our future.**

There is no doubt that clergy marriages face unique pressures. This has become evident to me over the years as I've worked with countless lay and clergy couples on their marriage relationships. Many of the issues are the same, but there are indeed some special dynamics of the clergy marriage that can place immense pressure on a couple.

That's probably why celebrating a marriage milestone became such an important thing for Starla and me recently. In December, we were able to mark the 25th anniversary of our wedding day. What a joy it was to stop and remember that through "thick and thin" God has been faithful to help us keep our covenant. Reflecting on our experience, Starla wrote an article for our church newsletter that I want to share with you. Sorry for the extremely personal touch, but I thought what she had to say to our congregation could bear repeating to you, our colleagues in ministry.

"On December 14th, Jeren and I will celebrate 25 years of marriage. As a 17-year-old I had no real idea about the huge commitment that I was making. However, my very mature 18-year-old husband seemed to have no fear in establishing our home at such an early age! Seriously, his strength of character and determination to follow God's plan have been my strength. Here are just a few things I have learned over the years:

- **Communication isn't just a lot of talking.** *It is mostly listening and putting yourself in the other's shoes. It requires space and time actually to hear one another. I have a tendency to talk as I walk. Stopping long enough to look into Jeren's eyes and really hear what is being said has helped me tremendously.*

- **Conflict is inevitable.** *We are as different as night and day. Our differences drew us to one another at the beginning. However, it wasn't very long before those things that I loved about him became extremely irritating! Rather than allow those differences to separate us, we have learned to embrace them and negotiate through them to a stronger place.*

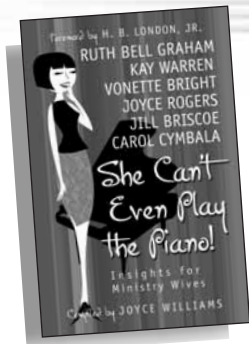
- **Even though we were both Christians our marriage was not an automatic Christian relationship.** *We have had to bring our marriage intentionally under the lordship of Jesus Christ. I have learned to pray that God will show me how to be the best partner, and not to pray my list of wants for my husband. I have learned to be content and to rest.*

"No matter where you are in your marriage, hold on. God has promised to be our strength, our comfort, our wisdom and our future. This will mean trusting in something that we cannot see, or at times feel. But stand firm! 'He who began a good work will see it to completion.'"

I would only add one thing to Starla's words. I am convinced that most marriages could be much healthier, grow much deeper, and experience much more happiness if only we would truly embrace the call of Jesus to serve one another. It's so easy to get focused on what I want or what I need. The mystery of the kingdom of God is that when we lay down our lives for another we find real life. If you are married, what would it mean for you to lay down your life for your spouse in new ways this year? And if you haven't yet had the joy of celebrating your 25th wedding anniversary (or 35th or 50th), please make it! Do whatever it takes to make it. It's worth it!

—Jeren and Starla Rowell





Compiled by Joyce Williams

Unfortunately the job of pastor's wife doesn't come with a job description and how-to manual. Ministry wives face many unwritten expectations from the church, their families, and even their husbands.

She Can't Even Play the Piano! is full of stories from veteran ministry wives

who have more than 1,000 years of combined experience ministering alongside their husbands. This collection of stories and testimonials provides insight and advice for balancing the demands of ministry and family while making time for one's own priorities as a

pastor's wife. *She Can't Even Play the Piano!* is guaranteed to encourage and uplift any woman who has ever felt overwhelmed by the stereotypical expectations that come when serving as the wife of a minister.

Joyce Williams is a native of Roanoke, Virginia. She and her husband, Gene, are founders and directors of Shepherds' Fold Ministries, a ministry of encouragement and affirmation to pastors and their families. Joyce and Gene speak in many settings in the U.S. and internationally including special assignments with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. They reside in Wichita, Kansas.

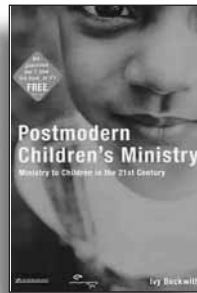
(Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2005, 152pp., \$14.99, paper, COZZ083-412-2006)

BOOK BRIEFS

Resources for Pastoral Ministry

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Postmodern Children's Ministry. By Ivy Beckwith. (Zondervan, 2004, 176pp., \$16.99, paper, COZZ031-025-7549) Ivy Beckwith does a great job boiling down the main points of interest concerning the postmodern child. This book takes a hard look at how ministry by and for children is different in this new era. Drawing upon the foundational work of James Fowler and Erik Erikson, Beckwith reiterates that, despite the change from a modern to a postmodern society, a child's developmental needs remain unchanged. Children must still progress through the stages of psychosocial development and faith formation, which take place best in community. Intergenerational experiences within the faith community allow the child to develop socially, emotionally, and spiritually. *Postmodern Children's Ministry* challenges pastors and children's pastors to recognize the significant role of the family in the faith formation of children.



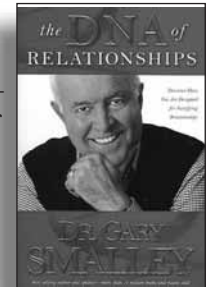
She recommends the church involve children in the worship of the church. She recognizes the challenges this presents, but believes the benefits far outweigh any challenge. Noise, restlessness, and the service being "over their head," are often cited as reasons for not involving children. Mrs. Beckwith points out that most children, though not understanding and catching everything, pick up more than we realize. She also points out that intergenerational worship is a must in the development of children.

Leon Blanchette, professor at Olivet Nazarene University, says, "I am extremely impressed with the book. She addresses many issues that have been ignored in the church. One of her objectives seems to be helping the Church recognize that the world is changing and has changed. If we are going to be effective in reaching the world with the Gospel we need to understand these changes and adjust our ministry to address these new needs and ways of thinking. She does a good job of explaining Modernism and Post-Modernism and how each affects the church."

This book will help senior pastors, children's pastors, and children's workers recognize the changing culture, and begin to rethink ways of reaching a new generation for Christ. (Reviewed by Eric Wright)

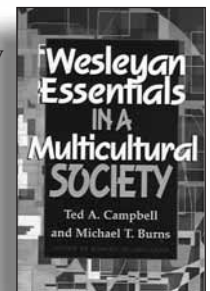
PASTORAL CARE

The DNA of Relationships. By Gary Smalley. (Tyndale, 2004, 240pp., \$22.99, cloth, COZZ084-235-5308). Dr. Smalley has come across another great resource for developing relationships through the work of his son and his son's coworker. This is an excellent resource on helping thinking individuals to take a look at themselves or for ministers to use in helping others communicate with those in the sphere of their living. It is easy to read and understand. (Reviewed by Lawrence Gill)



PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Wesleyan Essentials in a Multicultural Society. By Ted A. Campbell and Michael T. Burns. (Abingdon Press, 2004, 136pp., \$11.00, paper, COZZ068-703-9940). This book is researched and written by two ministers. One is a Methodist and the other is a Nazarene. If the Church of Jesus Christ is to fulfill its mission on earth, we must return to the vision of earlier days and proclaim the full Gospel of salvation. The "Essentials" of the Gospel were proclaimed by John Wesley during the Industrial Revolution. His teachings have brought about the formation of numerous denominations and have influenced many more to proclaim the holiness message. Christians, especially pastors, will find the book helpful. I recommend it to all believers, especially to ministers. (Reviewed by Lee McCleery)



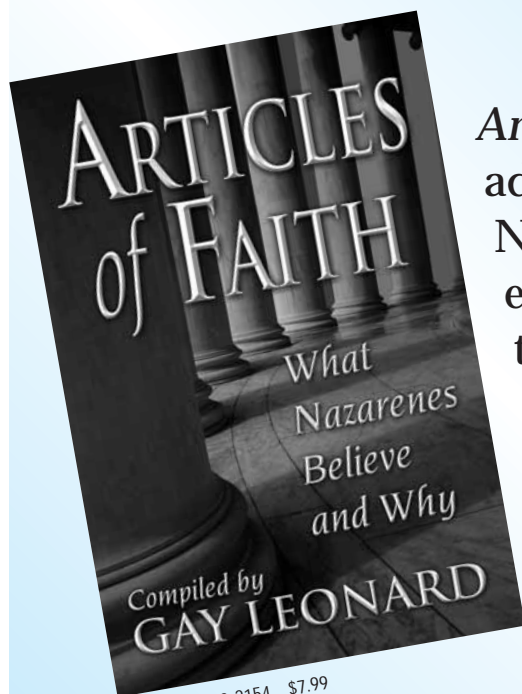
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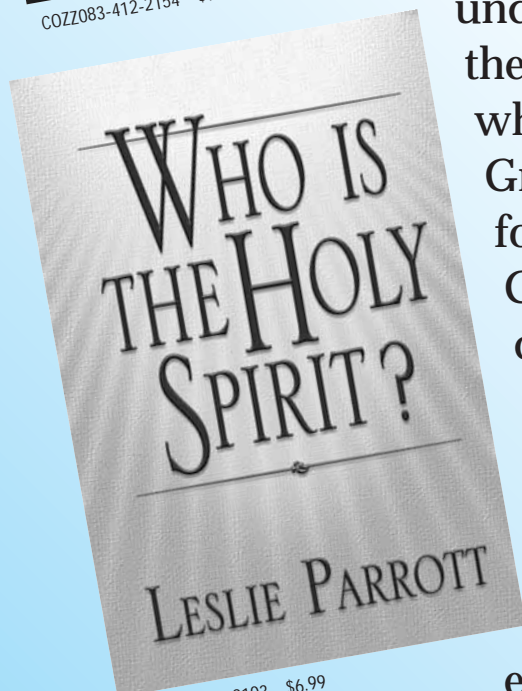
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COZZ083-412-2154 \$7.99

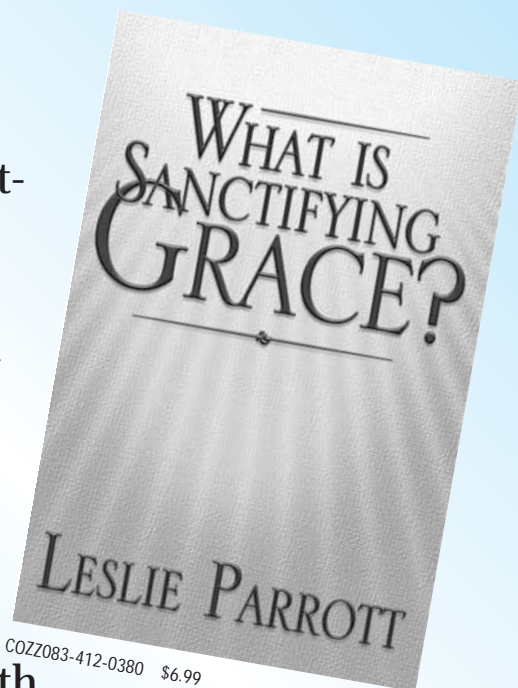
Articles of Faith examines each of the 16 articles addressed in the manual of the Church of the Nazarene and explains in an informative and easy to understand style the foundation and truth on which the Church of the Nazarene was formed.



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There are numerous scholarly books devoted to the purpose of understanding who the Holy Spirit is and what Sanctifying Grace is about, but for the everyday Christian these can be dry and weighed down with

theology. With simple, straightforward language and scriptural foundation, Les Parrott addresses these theological questions in a way that everyone will understand and enjoy.



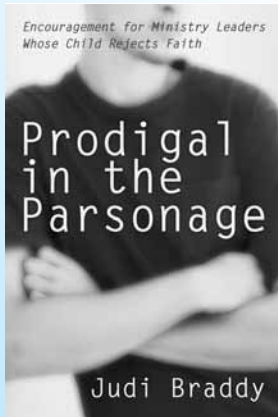
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ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE PASTOR WHOSE CHILD HAS GONE ASTRAY



COZZ083-412-2065 \$12.99

Judi Braddy is an ordained minister and pastor's wife who knows firsthand the pain and suffering of watching a beloved child walk away from God. *Prodigal in the Parsonage* offers parents, especially those in ministry, an insider's perspective and time-tested encouragement for struggling with the daily trials that come when your child rejects faith.

Braddy addresses topics such as:

- Whether or not you can be an effective minister if your own family is in disarray
- Dealing with the stages of grief as your child slips further from the faith
- Remembering that your child is not the enemy, and much more.

Prodigal in the Parsonage offers the insight and encouragement parents need to endure the grief and anxiety of parenting a prodigal.

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