

COMMUNICATOR

NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE

Advent's Answer to Divorce

No one relates to marital pain and disappointment more than Joseph and Mary.

During Advent, you will work with families who are facing that ugly monster called divorce. For whatever reason, dreams turned to nightmares. Optimism changed to cynicism. Divorce became an attractive alternative to marriage.

What do you say to these hurting couples? What relevance does the familiar message of Advent bring to such harsh realities? Dare to look them in the eyes and say, *"I bring you good news of great joy for everyone!"* (Luke 2:10 NLT) Remind them that no one relates to their pain and disappointment more than Joseph and Mary. Their marriage was almost destroyed before it began. Imagine the hurt and embarrassment that Joseph experienced when he learned that Mary was pregnant with someone else's child. Who can blame him for immediately considering a divorce? He had been faithful to Mary. She claimed that she loved him. But now she was pregnant and he knew it was not his child. Imagine the searing pain that Mary experienced when Joseph assumed the worst about her. What can be worse than being falsely accused by the one you love the most? What could be more confusing than being pregnant and not understanding how it happened!

Don't minimize the fact that the parents of Jesus began their lives having to overcome a major rift in their relationship. We will never know what hurtful things they may have said to each other and understandably so.

Only one person could have put that marriage back together. His name is Jesus. The same is true for the families in your congregation. You will preach to numerous people whose marriages are not going to make it unless they make a radical choice to embrace the child God sent to their home named Jesus. They may treat Him as a nuisance and believe Him to be too demanding. And like Joseph and Mary, they may consider divorce.

Or they will do as Joseph and Mary eventually did and embrace Him as their Savior and only hope. Just as with Joseph and Mary, He can be the glue that unites their hearts in love.

It is significant that both Joseph and Mary had their own private moments of surrender to God without knowing what the other would do. Mary's took place first. Luke describes it in his gospel in 1:28-37. Her familiar response is a model for all of us. *"I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever He wants. May everything you have said come true."* (Luke 1:38 NLT) Joseph's own private moment of surrender took place when the angel confronted him with the fact that all his well intended but false charges against Mary were going to have to be dealt with. Matthew describes it in his account in 1:19-21.

Imagine being commanded to marry your pregnant fiancé knowing the baby she is carrying is not yours. Imagine explaining this to your parents. Imagine being asked to trust God and His Word this much! Can you imagine being asked to love a child that is not yours?

In allowing that baby boy into their home, Joseph's and Mary's marriage not only survived but became vibrant and indestructible. The very one they viewed as a problem and a nuisance became the one who literally saved their relationship. It was their common commitment to Jesus that shifted their focus from their own hurts and needs. Remind your people that nothing heals a marriage like the birth of Jesus. His coming brings a different set of challenges but divorce and animosity are not among them.

—Mark Goodwin, Senior Pastor,
Portland First Church of the Nazarene

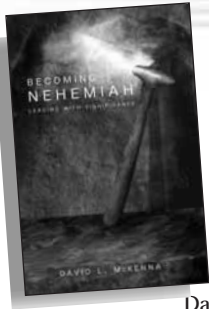
Coming February 2006!

The *Communicator* will have a new look and format in 2006! Designed to provide you with practical tips, usable information, and valuable resources, we hope this new *Communicator* will be a valuable tool to assist you in ministry. In order to prepare for the launch of this new and improved resource we will not be printing a January issue.

Have a blessed Christmas and Christ honoring New Year.

Rev. Matthew S. Zimmer, Editor





by David L. McKenna

There are a myriad of books, seminars, self-improvement web sites, and traveling speakers that inform and debate leadership skills and qualities in today's book market. However, a significant model of leadership, who cannot be ignored in the 21st Century, is Nehemiah of the Old Testament. In *Becoming Nehemiah*,

David McKenna invites you to join this exceptional man of God on a journey of leadership that matches the trials and challenges leaders face today. Through Nehemiah's story, we recognize the promises of biblical leadership with the premises of secular leadership and learn how Nehemiah was able to serve with full integrity in both settings.

Becoming Nehemiah will give pastors, church leaders, teachers, business professionals, or leaders of any kind compelling insights and practical advice as they begin to explore more deeply how to lead with balance and significance. *Becoming Nehemiah* is not only a look back at the leader that Nehemiah was, but it provides a context for leadership traits that you can examine in your own life which mirror those of Nehemiah. In *Becoming Nehemiah*, you will explore leadership for survival, leadership for security, leadership for significance, leadership for succession, scales of greatness, and much more. Full of Scripture, illustrations, and relevant examples of personal leadership situations from McKenna himself, *Becoming Nehemiah* is more than a trendy leadership reference. It offers biblical strategies from a timeless biblical and political leader.

(Beacon Hill Press, 2005, approx. 120 pp., \$11.99, paper, COZZ083-412-2170).

BOOK BRIEFS

Resources for Pastoral Ministry

LEADERSHIP

Leading from the Second Chair. By Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson. (Jossey-Bass, 2005, 208 pp., \$23.95, hardcover, COZZ078-797-739X.)

For every Vice-President, for every church staff member, for every paid and unpaid leader in a sacred or secular supporting role in a variety of careers *the leadership book that stands heads and shoulders above the rest is *Leading from the Second Chair* by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson. There has possibly never been a definitive treatise on the role of the leader from the view of second chair. First chair leaders get the lion's share of seminars, workshops, and books, but second chair leaders, with their distinct roles, get few direct and authoritative words like they do in this book.*

What makes this book so unique is the progressive and developmental nature of how the authors approach leadership. They are two men who have not fully achieved the dreams they have for themselves in their own places of leadership and yet the insights and practical guidance they share are so rich and understandable. They touch on what being a second chair leader really is—which is "a person who leads for positive change and positively influences his or her organization." Bonem and Patterson also define the paradox that second chair leaders face—the paradox of *both/and*. In this sense, they balance being a leader with being a subordinate. They balance being an influence for change and humbling themselves under "the final word."

This book also takes a biblical look at the ultimate second chair leader in Joseph. Looking at Joseph's life from Genesis and the lives of other second chair leaders from a variety of church and business back grounds this book is a must read for second and first chair leaders of any organization. However, the reader must be careful to understand that this is not a success manual on how to climb the ranks in leadership or navigate around leadership to accomplish personal goals, rather, it is a book steeped on the philosophy of biblical servanthood. It's a great read for any minister.



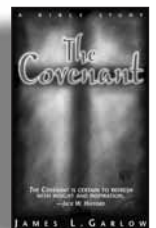
Do you ever find yourself asking what happened to your once healthy relationship with your young adult child? Everything seemed to be going well—then he or she started resisting advice and pushing away from your attempts to communicate. Many parents experience this as their child transitions into adulthood.

Parenting 20-Something Kids shows parents of young adults how to adapt to their changing role in their child's life. Author Martha Gorris draws from her own and others' parenting experiences to point you along the way of how to surrender your child to God, help him or her develop decision-making skills, set boundaries that promote mutual respect, release unrealistic expectations, communicate beyond giving advice, and develop a growing friendship. The chapters on fine tuning communication and surviving bad decisions are two of the strongest chapters in this book. If you, or someone you know, find your relationship with your 20-something slipping from what it once was or away from what it could be, this book is a valuable resource to help you and your child get back on track.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Covenant. By James L. Garlow. (Beacon Hill Press, 1999, 96 pp., \$10.99, paper, COZZ083-411-8149).

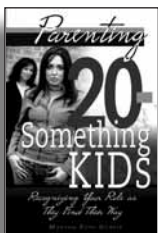
Truly kept promises and covenants are not dusty relics of the past. For Christians today a promise and a covenant, at least from God, is as good as the day He made the covenant to Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and David. In *The Covenant*, James Garlow takes us from shallow relational waters with God to the deep waters of what biblical covenant with God really means. He explores the irrevocable ties of covenant between God and His people and the covenants that men made with each other that meant more than just temporary promises—they were ties that would bind through all generations.



If you are a pastor looking for small group material for new believers this book will help them discover the biblical meaning behind the radical promises of God to His children and what that means to them as His children. If you are looking for material for more mature believers this book will also serve as a source of biblical study as to what God meant by blood covenant, the exchanging of robes, rings, and robes as a sign of covenant. In either case, for new and mature believers, *The Covenant* is a fresh reminder that God is the "Covenant Maker" the "Covenant Keeper" and that we can rejoice in the lasting Covenant of Jesus Christ himself.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Parenting 20-Something Kids: Recognizing Your Role as They Find Their Way. By Martha Pope Gorris. (Beacon Hill Press, 2005, approx. 144 pp., \$12.99, paper, COZZ083-412-2243).



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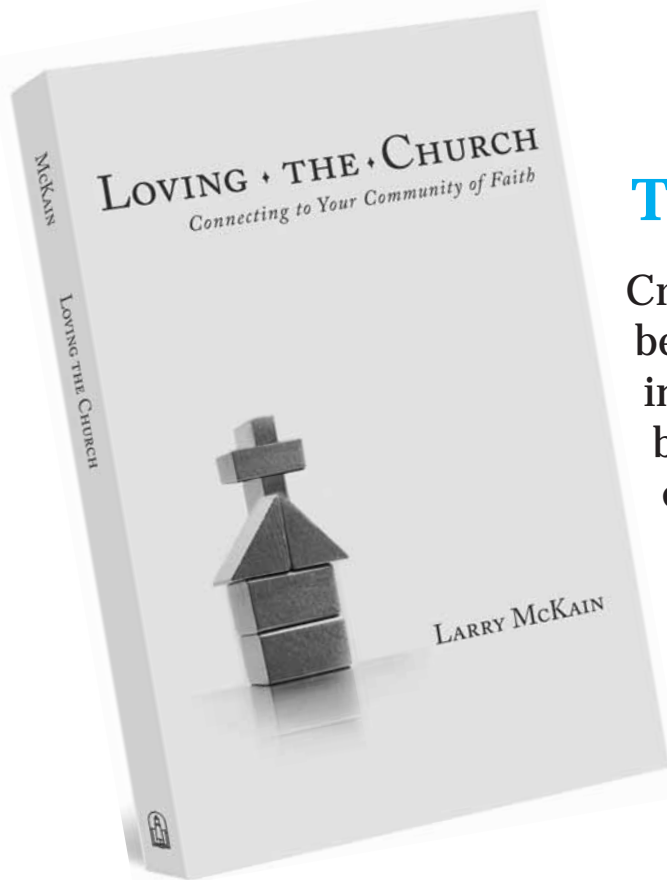
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"I miss the good old days when
pastors wore suits and ties."

