

BACK TO THE BASICS OF GOOD HEALTH

by Michael P. Morris

While flipping through a leading health magazine a while back, I discovered an interesting contradiction. Most of the feature articles focused on the importance of practicing basic self discipline in order to achieve long-term health, while the advertisement section in the back offered an abundance of health and fitness products that used short cuts and quick fixes to achieve short-term goals and ideals.

Our culture is increasingly willing to sacrifice long-term health in order to attain a fashionable appearance as quickly as possible. Fad diets, weight loss medications, and exercise gimmicks flood the media. With this in mind, we're forced to consider this question: What condition will people be in tomorrow because they have bought into the health gimmicks of today?

An obsession with fads and trends is just as tempting in ministry today. For every fad diet promising quick results, there's a trendy ministry model promising instant growth. For every exercise device guaranteeing a new physique, there's a new shortcut to creating a mega-ministry in your church. As church leaders, we need to consider this question: **What condition will the church be in tomorrow because it has bought into the ministry gimmicks of today?**

The way we lead is significantly different when our objective is the long-term health of the church rather than its short-term appearance. Here are some of the guiding principles of leadership that contribute to successful long-term church health.

- **Unwavering commitment to the core mission of the church.** There will always be a temptation to detour down the rabbit trails of ministry trends, but no matter how tempting these are long-term health is achieved by staying close to the mission of the church. As the twentieth pastor in a 92-year history, I'm privileged to lead a strong and healthy church because for almost a century those who've come before me chose to remain true to the church's original mission.
- **Uncompromising leadership in the decision making process.** Because church leadership turns over more frequently than the clientele, there's a tendency for pastors to let likeability and popularity influence their decision making. This leads to short-term gratification without considering how it will affect the long-term health of the church.
The pastor, being the primary vision-caster, has the unique opportunity to foster the health of the church by contextualizing decision making. When individual decisions are understood in the broader context of the church's mission and history, the right choices become clear. This perspective enables us to make decisions today that will be a blessing to the church tomorrow.
- **Undying devotion to the call of God and His ministry.** It's challenging to be a leader. People are freer than ever to voice their opinions concerning the performance and productivity of their pastors. While we certainly want to maintain a gracious and sensitive relationship with our congregations, there must be the underlying understanding that our ultimate responsibility is to the call of God on our lives. Ministry is significantly different when a pastor's motivation is based on following God's calling instead of managing a career.

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Jim Sanders, Greenbrier, Arkansas

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BACK TO THE BASICS OF GOOD HEALTH

[continued]

In his book *Good to Great*, author Jim Collins describes this principle as it relates to business leadership with what he calls a "Level 5 Leader." Collins writes, "Level 5 leaders want to see the company even more successful in the next generation, comfortable with the idea that most people won't even know that the roots of that success trace back to their efforts."

I hope you're enjoying the blessings of leadership at your church because of great leaders before you who followed God and took the time to consider the long-term health of their church. But even if your church's health is struggling, don't give up hope. We have the ability to improve our church's future. The pastoral leadership of the Church today is strategically positioned to pass on a healthier church to the generations to come. May we always be willing to go back to the basics.

**Good to Great* by Jim Collins
COZZ978-0-0666-2099-2 \$27.50



— Michael P. Morris, Senior Pastor
Richfield Church of the Nazarene
Otisville, Michigan

For more on lasting leadership . . .
Becoming Nehemiah
COZZ978-0-8341-2217-8 \$11.99



JIM SANDERS, SENIOR PASTOR
GREENBRIER CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
GREENBRIER, ARKANSAS

One of my first assignments when I came to Greenbrier was to re-locate the nursery so I could have an office. While I was painting the wall one day, a couple in the church, Lewis and Nell, dropped by to welcome me as their new pastor. In the course of the conversation, Nell said, "Pastor, all we want is for you to love us and stay with us."

This statement may be a given for most pastors, but it hit me pretty hard. I'd been loving people through my pastoral ministry for twenty years, but not staying with them. I had a pattern of serving three to three and a half years and then I'd move on, many times after a building program. So that day I began to pray, "Lord let me love these people and this community with a love that will not let go."

Twenty-two years later that love is deeper than I thought possible. Here are a few things I've learned over the years.

1. A rejection of my ideas is not a rejection of me or a threat to my leadership. Many times it simply was a bad idea or the timing wasn't right. One of our general superintendents once said, "You can't turn a truck around in an alley without skinning the fender. Wait for an opening." I've had to apply this wisdom many times.
2. Don't be defeated when people leave the church. You may have an opportunity to minister to them in the future, which may help bring them back.
3. One of the greatest rewards of a long pastorate is the opportunity to watch infants grow into childhood, come to know Christ, join the church, graduate, get married, and then have children of their own.
4. Even though our culture has changed, the answer to every issue is still the same . . . Jesus Christ.

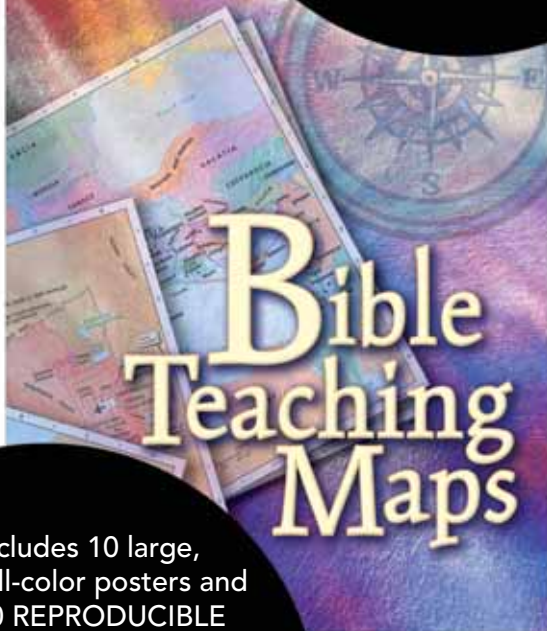
Just this last Sunday morning when the altar call was given, Larry, a man in his late 60's, came forward and gave his heart and life to the Lord. Larry is the son of Lewis and Nell. I believe there was a little extra shouting in heaven that morning.

For more resources on ministry . . .
Quantum Ministry: How Pastors Can Make the Leap
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JAMES HEYWARD, LEAD VISION PASTOR
CALVARY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
ANNANDALE, VIRGINIA

SERMON TITLE: *48 Hours, Day 3: You Bring the Son Out*

SCRIPTURE: John 20 (from *The Message*)

TOPIC: Sin, death, and the grave converged to create the “perfect storm” on Good Friday, but because Christ conquered the storm and rose on Easter, believers have hope in the midst of their storms.

PURPOSE: To help the Body of Christ experience fresh faith and hope in Jesus

ADDITIONAL TOOLS USED:

Videos: *Sunrise Countdown*, eleven72 (distributor), 2006; *Sunday's Comin'*, Igniter Media Group (distributor), 2006; Stage design: two scenes—the Last Supper and the Garden Tomb; and a PowerPoint presentation

QUOTES & ILLUSTRATIONS: *The Case for Faith* by Lee Strobel; *USA Today* editorial, “We Are Easter People,” by Diane Cameron, April 9, 2006 (Actual quotes and illustrations can be viewed in the full-text version available online at www.planworship.com.)

SERMON SUMMARY: Following the video, *Sunday's Comin'*, we focused on two characters from the John 20 narrative. Mary Magdalene and Thomas battled Good Friday's storm...until they had an encounter with the risen Lord. It transformed them from Good Friday doubters to Easter Sunday believers. We too battle a stormy life filled with doubt, but just like Mary and Thomas, a one-on-one encounter with Christ can move us to new faith.

FAVORITE POINT: Because of Easter we don't have to embrace and settle into a Good Friday world of doubt. By God's grace we can dwell in the faith-filled reality of the Risen Son.

RESPONSE: I pray that our unchurched listeners embraced faith in Jesus and that our people gained a new perspective of Easter Sunday faith—that they can survive life's storms because God brought the Son out.

To download the full version of this sermon and its PowerPoint companion, visit NPH's Church Resources home page, www.planworship.com.

(For more information on this sermon, contact Pastor James Heyward at james@calvary-church.org or call (703)573-4200.)

Improving Your



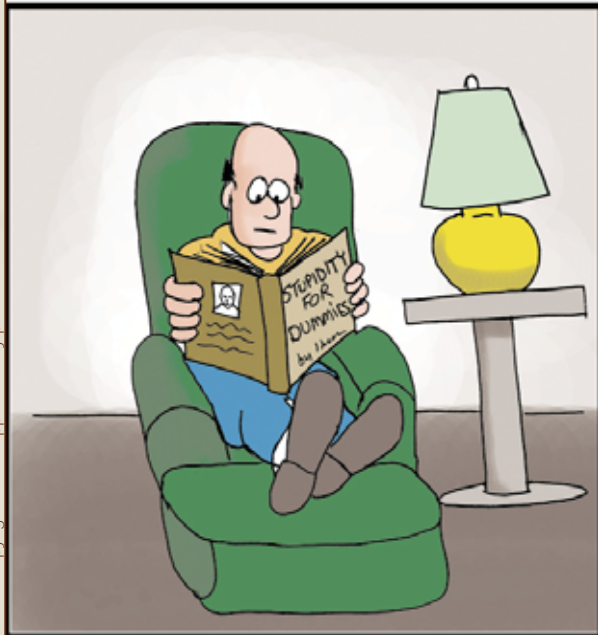
Women's Ministries



Come On In

Taking the Hassle out of Hospitality
Lisa Bogart
COZZ978-0-8341-2311-3
\$14.99, Beacon Hill Press
This book provides recipes, decoration ideas, and games that can be easily adapted for ministry outreach. It's a gift of hospitality and hospitality for all ages and includes creative small-group devotions.

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



Copyright Thom Tapp. Used by permission.

A Way with Words. . .

There are times when you can't understand why you cannot do what you want to do. When God brings a time of waiting, and appears to be unresponsive, don't fill it with busyness, just wait. The time of waiting may come to teach you the meaning of sanctification—to be set apart from sin and made holy—or it may come after the process of sanctification has begun to teach you what service means. Never run before God gives you His direction. If you have the slightest doubt, then He is not guiding. Whenever there is doubt—wait.

—Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Updated Edition)—January 4th devotional

Corny Pastor Joke

Reasons to always proofread the announcements...

1. Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
2. The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.
3. Evening message—6 p.m.
4. Ushers will eat latecomers.
5. The third verse of “Blessed Assurance” will be sung without musical accomplishment.



The Complete Women's Ministries Kit

Everything You Need to Run a Successful Program

Janelle R. Parker

COZZ978-0-8341-2309-0

\$99.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2007

This creative notebook for churches of every size is a valuable resource for establishing or expanding a church's connection with the women inside their church and in their community. This kit provides ministry models and activity outlines, craft and decorating tips and ideas, leadership and committee structuring suggestions, helpful websites, and much more. Women need to feel connected to one another, and this kit provides them with an organized, comprehensive way to build meaningful relationships and have a lot of fun as they do.



Living a Milk-and-Honey Life

Letting Go of What's Holding You Back

Sharon Norris Elliott

COZZ978-0-8341-2248-2

\$12.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2006

This book is directed to women who struggle with temptations and attitudes from their past that hold them back from experiencing the abundant life God has for them. It's a great book to help women release their obsession with the past in order to embrace the possibilities of a spiritually healthy present and future. It's also easily adaptable for group study.



It All Comes Out in the Wash

Sorting Through Priorities When Your Load Is Out of Balance

Judi Braddy

COZZ978-0-8341-2259-8

\$14.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2006

This is a great book to help women balance the unbalanced load of decisions, demands, and duties in their lives so the spin cycle doesn't get the best of them and God's voice can be clearly heard. It also evaluates the pros and cons of "having it all" and offers insight for establishing healthy priorities and goals. It makes a great small-group teaching resource for women of all ages.

Bible College Learning Trends

One of the many positive and exciting trends at Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs is an amazing increase in online learning student enrollment. In 1998, NBC had 40 students enrolled in online learning and, as of the fall 2006 term, they had 646 individuals enrolled in at least one online course. In addition, NBC offers online delivery of CEU credits through their Institute for Ministry Enrichment. From a predominantly on-campus learning style in 1967 to a healthy mix of campus and distance learning formats offered today, NBC has raised the opportunity for hundreds of men and women to receive quality ministerial training in a style that fits their lives and time commitments.

(To learn more about the NBC online program visit www.dcourseweb.com or www.nbc.edu. To learn more about online CEU courses visit www.nbcime.com.)

—Stats provided by Dr. Laurel Matson, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Development

The U.S. Center for Disease Control released new data that nearly four in ten U.S. babies were born outside of marriage in 2005—a record high. However, teen pregnancy is at a 65 year low. Unwed births among 30-44 year olds are up 17% since 1991. Among 25-29 year olds they're up 30%.

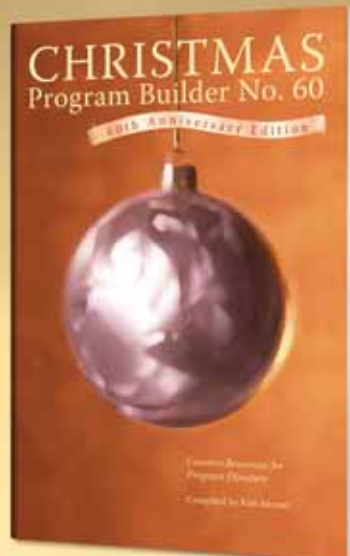
—Debra Rosenberg and Pat Wingert, "First Comes Junior in a Baby Carriage," *Newsweek*, December 4, 2006, p. 56.

Family Devotions

The family devotional magazine *connect!* is in its third edition and continues to generate interest and enthusiasm for churches and families across North America. A new appreciation for family devotions or having a "family altar" could easily be started in your church with *connect!*

To learn more about *connect!*, visit www.nph.com or www.wordaction.com. (Single price issues are \$2.99 per quarter. Bulk subscription rates are available.)

A Complete Service Planner for Christmas



Grab this 60th anniversary edition with recitations for children and a variety of other choices for multigenerational worship.

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STATISTICS,
SOUNDBITES,
and Suggestions

Young people in the U.S. view more than **40,000** ads per year on television alone.

70% of Americans describe shopping as a recreation.

In 2005, there were **36 million** Americans over age **65**. This number is expected to double within **30 years**.

35% of U.S. employees said they had elder care responsibilities in **2006**.

—Excerpted from The Foster Letter-Religious Market update, (12/1006). For more, visit www.garydfoster.com

Poverty's Tipping Point

Moving to the suburbs no longer means you've left poverty behind. Last year for the first time, the suburban poor outnumbered their inner-city counterparts with more than 12 million suburban residents living in poverty, according to a study of The Brookings Institute. Suburban McAllen, Texas had the highest poverty rate (43.9%), while suburban Des Moines, Iowa, had the lowest (3.7%).

(In 2005, the federal government defined the poverty level as \$15,577 for a family of three.) For more on 1999-2005 City and Suburban Poverty Trends, visit www.brookings.edu.

—excerpted online from *The Brookings Institute Living Cities Census Series, Two Steps Back: City and Suburban Poverty Trends, 1999-2005* by Alan Berube and Elizabeth Kneebone.

"A church without a clear understanding of God's vision for its ministry is like an octopus on roller skates."

—Dennis Bickers, *The Healthy Small Church*, Beacon Hill Press, 2005, p.32.



COZZ978-0-8341-2301-4 \$9.99



2007 Continuing Lay Training Denomination-Wide Study

Written by educators and licensed counselors, *Making a Marriage* teaches couples the essentials of marriage so they can honor their lifelong vows, improve their relationships with their spouses, and counter our culture's destructive influences. Whether couples are contemplating marriage, struggling with communication, stress, and intimacy issues, or just desiring to make a good marriage better, *Making a Marriage* will maximize their marital satisfaction and lay a strong foundation for the lifelong task of building a loving and lasting marriage.

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www.tfnaz.com – Twin Falls, ID, Church of the Nazarene

This site is colorful, concise, and relevant. Its layout is exciting yet simple, making it a great web model for any church.

www.librarything.com – If you love books, you'll enjoy this site. It's a great way to discover other people who share your taste in literature, catalog your own books, and also receive suggestions for new things to read.

www.crummychurchsigns.com – This site reminds pastors and church leaders of the importance of carefully considering the impact of what you post on your church's sign. Some of these will make you laugh—a few may make you cry.

You can readily recall, can't you, how at one time the more you did just what you felt like doing—not caring about others, not caring about God—the worse your life became and the less freedom you had? And how much different is it now as you live in God's freedom, your lives healed and expansive in holiness?...[You've discovered] a whole, healed, put-together life right now, with more and more life on the way.

[Romans 6:19-23 TM]

A Word from Matt



"More." There's no doubt that as Americans we're consumed with the idea of wanting more. In an age of supersized value meals, consumerism-saturated entertainment, and continual technological advancements, it's no surprise that we've given way to the spirit of "more." And the influence of "more" easily fools us into thinking we need "better." Better sports teams, better pay, better buildings, better worship, better everything. But, always focusing on "better" can lead to a constant dissatisfaction with our lives and ministry, which still leads to the empty feeling of wanting more. The best way to fill the emptiness created by the influences of "more" and "better" is to learn to just "be"—to be who you are now, to be satisfied with what you have today, and to be passionate about where God will take you tomorrow.

As pastors, we want to "be" in God's presence, to be practicing His teachings, to be in Him and move in Him and to have our being in Him (Acts 17:28.) And we want our people to desire this too. But shifting from wanting "more" to learning to just "be" is often a difficult transformation.

Rendezvous, a new book and church campaign from Beacon Hill Press, doesn't focus how to be a better Christian or do more for God. Instead, it explores ways to simply be with Christ, to feel His presence throughout our day, and to engage in a variety of spiritual practices that allow us to encounter Him in every area of our lives.

I'd like to encourage you to take a look at *Rendezvous* (www.sacredencounter.org) and see if its message might be what you and your congregation need to hear in order to help you "be" with God as never before.

I pray you have a blessed Palm Sunday and a rejuvenating Easter. May the celebration of His resurrection enrich your commitment and love as you continue to serve and be with Him.

— **Matthew S. Zimmer, Editor, Church Resources Manager**
Nazarene Publishing House

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COZZ978-0-8341-2309-0	The Complete Women's Ministries Kit*	\$99.99	\$79.99
COZZ978-0-0666-2099-2	Good to Great*	\$27.50	\$22.00
COZZ978-0-8341-2259-8	It All Comes Out in the Wash*	\$14.99	\$11.99
COZZ978-0-8341-2248-2	Living a Milk-and-Honey Life*	\$12.99	\$10.39
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