

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

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**CHRIST HAS
COME AND HE
WILL COME AGAIN**

BY DOUG BEACHAM

Jesus Christ Came, and HE WILL COME AGAIN

During the Advent season, it is appropriate for us to focus on Christ's return.



BY DOUG
BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Superintendent, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries. You can follow Bishop Beacham on [Facebook](#) or Twitter [@DougBeacham](#).

At the close of 1 Corinthians 16 in a letter where the Apostle Paul addressed numerous problems, he concluded with the appeal, “O Lord, come!” (16:22, NKJV). Christ’s first coming brought the kingdom of God “at hand, near” (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15). But we, like the Apostle Paul, await the fullness of that kingdom when Jesus Himself returns.

November and December 2017, conclude our emphasis on our core value of Christ’s Kingdom. Through this year, we have considered the IPHC as “a Place of Hope and a People of Promise” in light of this kingdom. We studied the kingdom as revealed in God’s purposes in creation, Israel, and the life and teaching of Jesus. Now, it is appropriate that we focus on Christ’s return as we enter the Advent Season.

The 13th IPHC Article of Faith reads, “We believe in the imminent, personal, premillennial second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:10–14; Matthew 24:29–44), and love and wait for His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).”

The Article of Faith is a relatively simple statement affirming the central teaching of the New Testament about the second coming of Jesus Christ. “Imminent” implies a nearness that is measured by God’s timetable, not our efforts to determine dates.

“Personal” makes explicit the New Testament conviction that “this same Jesus . . . will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). We do not await a new idea or a new revelation. We await the same Person who was born of the Virgin Mary, died, buried, rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven. We await Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son of God!

We confess that it is Jesus who will return to bring perfect peace on this earth. This future history is called the Millennium, and it is described in Revelation 20. While we do everything we can to be instruments of peace, justice and love in our times, we do not believe that humankind is capable of living free of the destruction and limitations of sin.

Only Jesus is able to bring about that reality. That is why we are “premillennial” in our view that Jesus Himself will return and usher in this longed-for reality.

This year Advent begins on Sunday, December 3, and concludes on Sunday, December 24. I love the Christmas season. I love the lights, the traditional Christmas carols and the excitement of children. I love the wealth of Scripture related to Christ’s first advent, from Isaiah to the records in St. Matthew, St. Luke and St. John. I love listening to Scripture when I hear Handel’s *Messiah*.

But I know that something is missing. We sing of light, love and peace on earth, but the twenty-four-hours-a-day news broadcasts remind us that we have not arrived. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day” describes this reality. Written on Christmas Day 1863, it reflected Longfellow’s personal sorrow related to his son’s battle wounds during the American Civil War.

Though major victories had been won by Union armies in 1863 at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, the outcome of the war remained in doubt. Thousands of families in the nation were grieving over the deaths and wounds of their sons and daughters. Longfellow penned these lines as he reflected on the war:

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
their old, familiar carols play,
and wild and sweet the words repeat,
of peace on earth, good-will to men!*


*Then from each black, accursed mouth
the cannon thundered in the South,
and with the sound the carols drowned,
of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

*It was as if an earthquake rent
the hearth-stones of a continent,
and made forlorn the households born
of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

*And in despair I bowed my head;
“There is no peace on earth,” I said;
for hate is strong, and mocks the song
of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
‘God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
the Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,
with peace on earth, good-will to men.*

The 13th Article of Faith concludes with “we love and wait for His appearing.” This is not an expression of escape. Our love expresses God’s love for the world and the redemptive purposes of the body of Christ in the world.

Our waiting is not a passive disengagement from the righteous struggle each generation faces. Our waiting is an active waiting of engagement. The resurrection of Jesus means that our labor is not in vain (see 1 Corinthians 15:58). The second coming of Jesus means our love and waiting will be worth it! 

Encourage

A place of hope. A people of promise.

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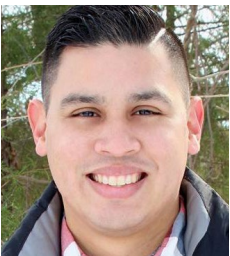
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Five Steps to Healthy Leadership Transition

I learned some valuable lessons when I stepped in to lead my father's church in Colombia.



BY
**SERGIO
CASTRO**

SERGIO CASTRO is an ordained minister of the IPHC and a graduate of Emmanuel College. He is married to Kristi Horne Castro and they have two daughters. He currently serves as the lead pastor of the Way, Truth and Life Church in Barranquilla, Colombia. Sergio also serves as the new superintendent of the IPHC in Colombia.

In the fall of 2013, after six years of serving as an associate pastor in Franklin Springs, Georgia, my family and I followed the call of God to move to Barranquilla, Colombia, in order to assume the leadership of a church. But it was not just any church, it was the church where I grew up. And not only the church where I grew up, but the church my father founded and successfully pastored for thirty-three years.

All changes in leadership don't happen for the same reason. Some are due to healthy circumstances like the retirement of a leader; but other changes are due to bad leadership, moral failure, or simply, a lack of chemistry and unmet expectations. In my case, this change was due to my father's retirement after a lengthy ministry.

Regardless of the circumstance, every incoming leader desires a successful transition of leadership. If you are in a leadership transition you may be wondering how you can partner with God to make this transition work.

I am starting my fifth year as the lead pastor of our church. My father died two months ago, leaving behind a great legacy. One thing I know for sure, this transition was done at the right time because my father knew when to stop and when to pass the baton. This can be a difficult thing for leaders; but, as Peter Drucker once said, "There is no success without a successor."

I would like share with you a few things I've learned in this process. Some steps were accomplished intentionally from the very beginning, and others I learned from falling and failing. Here are a few tips that will help:

1. HOLD YOUR HORSES!

In my first year of transition I had so many thoughts and ideas in my mind and in my spirit—things that I knew were coming straight from heaven. But I also knew that just because God gives you an idea doesn't mean you need to act on it immediately. Some things must marinate for a while to get the right flavor. Good things take time.

During our first year, our only priority was to please God and to know people. We didn't strive to change the church's vision, programs, or style; we just watched and prayed. Changes came later. During a transition it is important to focus on people over programs. I remember a college professor saying: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Waiting may be one of the most difficult things for a leader, but it is crucial. This step will vary from church to church. For example, a healthy church needs a careful and slow transition because they have a lot to lose. The bigger the boat, the slower the turn.

On the other hand, a declining church allows more room for taking high risks and making fast changes. In a declining church, the people may expect big changes and quick results. But even in this case, be careful. If you do things right in the beginning, then you will have plenty of time to make big changes in the future.

2. HONOR THE FORMER LEADER.

I have seen successors who put down their former leaders and criticized their programs and methods. Guard yourself against this. If you unleash a critical spirit toward leadership, your attitude will backfire. People will follow you because they choose to honor you. Regardless of the reason you are replacing a former leader, you must do it with grace. Be careful with your words. Give vision for the future, but never at the expense of dishonoring the past.

Remember that you are standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before you, regardless of their abilities or inabilities (which you still

learned from). You may think that I had it easy honoring my predecessor because he was my father, but you are wrong my friend. In fact our close relationship made it even more tempting to point at his flaws. But remember, no leader is perfect. You also have flaws.

3. DEVELOP A PLAN.

After calling Habakkuk, God told him: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it" (Habakkuk 2:2, NKJV). Ministry is never successful without prayerful planning. We Pentecostals often like to "go with the flow" in everything we do, and by doing this we justify our negligence. Someone once said, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." The Bible puts it another way, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," (Proverbs 29:18 KJV).

When people are ready to follow, they need a vision—a road map of where God is taking you. Believe me, God has changed our plans many times. But the only reason I know God changed something is because we had something planned.

Develop a plan for every stage of the transition. What are your goals for the first six months? For the first year? For the first three years? You need clear expectations of you, your staff and the organization during the transition.

If you don't know the vision for your ministry, ask God to show it to you. You also need a plan for personal and spiritual growth. This is the foundation of all your planning.

4. REMEMBER THAT HONEYMOONS DON'T LAST LONG.

When you are new to a position, people will give you the right to lead them simply because of your position. This is the honeymoon period of

leadership. Your team, your church or organization may allow you to do some things during this stage that you may not get away trying later. Take advantage of this green light.

Even though you must be patient during the initial stages of a transition, you must also make sure that the transition is moving forward. The newness will eventually wear off and you may encounter resistance when you introduce new things.

During our first year of ministry, we made a lot of changes to our facilities. This raised the morale of our team, kept the people motivated and improved the overall image of our church. We knew we had a short window of time to produce some

"I have seen successors who put down their former leaders and criticized their programs and methods. Guard yourself against this."

necessary results before the honeymoon was over. We thank God that He has given us favor to continue to make bigger changes as He leads us and guides us.

5. ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LEAD YOU.

You may have done ministry before, and you may have years of experience, but every new call of God comes with new challenges. Relying on experience is good, but relying on the Holy Spirit is better. Speak only what He gives you to speak, do only what He asks you to do and pray only what He asks you to pray.

I am 32, and I took over this ministry when I was only 27 with little experience. Trust me when I tell you, I would not have called me if I were God! I feel unqualified sometimes, but I've seen that God gives us mercy and favor to do the things that can only be accomplished through the power of His Spirit! ■



God Wants to Restore Your **HOPE**

Every leader must
understand the difference
between faith and hope.
You need both!



BY JON
POTTER

JON POTTER is the pastor of Canvas Church in Hoover, Alabama. He and his wife Lisa have a unique marketplace ministry where they serve as coaches and prophetic voices to leaders in the corporate and political spheres. Jon graduated from Lee University and later attended the University of Georgia, where he completed a master's degree in education with an emphasis in rehabilitation counseling. Jon spent eleven years in corporate America. This tenure ended when he accepted the call to full-time ministry in 2001. The Potters have three children.

At the entrance of Dante's mythical inferno these words are inscribed: "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here." Though Dante takes poetic and scriptural liberty describing his vision of hell, I believe he nails the core sentiment of hopelessness that will eternally echo through the hearts of those who miss heaven.

In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul tells us, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." I want to take a few minutes to encourage you concerning the second of these three.

Growing up as a Pentecostal pastor's son, I have heard scores of messages on faith, and maybe even more on love; however, hope wasn't preached about nearly as much. Now that I'm fifty years old I've come to believe that hope is the catalyst that pushes the faithless person towards a loving God.

Allow me to give a quick biblical example. We likely have all heard the story of the bleeding woman who touched the edge of Jesus' robe. We know by virtue of her condition that she was ostracized from the synagogue because she was considered unclean.

For twelve years she lived as a pariah, separated from friends, family, and especially the Temple and hearing the Word of God. Since faith comes through hearing the Word, I can only imagine that her faith was depleted.

What then was it that pushed her to even imagine she could permanently escape her religious penal colony? What drove her to literally risk everything to press and push through the throng surrounding Jesus on his way to Jairus' home?

I believe a flicker of hope was imbedded deeply in the recesses of her memory. She wondered if, just maybe, the God of her childhood might be willing to show kindness to her again. Faith ultimately healed her, but it was hope that got her close enough to reach out.

Hope and faith are different. God created the worlds and sinless mankind through faith, but He *hoped* that they would stay that way. We understand that faith comes through hearing the rhema word of God: that present-tense belief in your spirit that God will honor his Word. However, I believe hope is much deeper, and resides in the corpuscles of our souls.

Hope is a confident, unshakeable expectation in the promises of God; but even more, hope is based in believing in the consistency and reliability of God's character. It asserts that He is every good thing that we've ever heard about Him, that His nature exceeds every amazing testimony of all the saints through time.

Hope is not just belief in the great Word of God, but that the God of His Word is great and that just maybe He will be great towards me. That is hope.

But what do you do when your hope chest is empty? I have great news for you my friend! The truth is, the hope inside you may be dormant, but it is never dead, and let me tell you why.

1 Peter 1:3 (NKJV) gives us the following promise: "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Child of God, our living hope is connected directly to Jesus, the resurrection and the life! The writer of Hebrews further admonishes us that our hope is anchored in the most secure fortress possible. "...It is impossible for God to lie, that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which enters the presence behind the veil" (Hebrews 6:18-19).

When I think of an anchor, it is always in the context of a massive ship that has connected to some submerged rocky crag in attempt to weather a



"David was a worshipper. He understood that by getting into God's presence, he could replenish his hope."

dreadful storm. However, the writer of Hebrews completely changes the paradigm! He says that our hope is connected upward, all the way to the highest Heaven.

Imagine an unbreakable and eternal grappling hook that has been thrown straight into heaven and securely connected by Jesus himself to the Ark of the Covenant!

Upon our profession of faith, it rockets upward through the first heaven, passing the cosmos of the second heaven; and ultimately, secured in the third heaven in the very Holy of Holies resting behind the veil! That is where we are anchored. The strongest forces of hell are powerless to pry its connection away!

Our hope is eternally fused by the blood of Calvary's Lamb to the mercy seat and is ever under the watchful eyes of the Ancient of Days. Our hope is secure. You are secure. Your future is secure.

If you're grappling with hopelessness today, there is a tried pathway to replenish hope. It happens

in worship. David said in Psalms 27:13-14, "I would have lost heart, (literally hope), unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

If we study the Psalms, we understand that David did not wait idly. David was a worshipper. He understood that by getting into God's presence, he could replenish his hope. Notice how these five Psalms demonstrate a direct correlation between praise and hope:

V "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." (Psalm 42:5)

V "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, the help of my countenance and my God" (Psalm 42:11).

V "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, the help of my countenance and my God" (Psalm 43:5).

V "For you are my hope, O Lord God; you are my trust from my youth. By you I have been upheld from birth; you are he who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of you" (Psalm 71:5-6).

V "But I will hope continually, and will praise you yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of your righteousness" (Psalm 71:14-15).

Today your hopes may be crushed like a bruised reed, or possibly flickering in and out of life like a smoking wick. If this is the case, go to a place where you can praise and worship God with abandonment. He will not leave you empty handed. He will restore your hope. □



God Wants to Multiply Your **SPIRITUAL IMPACT**

Last year I gained a spiritual son, and learned a valuable lesson about discipleship.



**BY J. LEE
GRADY**

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who directs The Mordecai Project, an international outreach focused on confronting gender-based violence. For 18 years he served as an editor with Charisma magazine, and he is the author of several books including the newly released *Set My Heart on Fire*, a Bible study on the Holy Spirit. He and his wife, Deborah, live in LaGrange, Georgia.

My wife and I have four grown daughters, and the youngest of them is 25. We are not planning to have any more babies. Our girls, our sons-in-law and our grandchildren are the joy of our lives—and we love it when they visit our empty nest.

But even though we're finished with the task of bringing Grady children into the world, I'm not finished reproducing. I believe every Christian is called to bear spiritual children. Jesus called us to make disciples, and this is what He was referring to when He told His followers: "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit ..." (John 15:8a).

So for the past several years, I've invested most of my waking hours discipling younger Christians. I offer them counsel and share the life lessons I've learned in ministry. We meet for coffee or meals and take trips together; we also chat using every medium available—phone, text, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Skype. I love watching young leaders grow spiritually.

Discipleship is not just a hobby—it's my passion. But something dramatic happened in late 2016 that proved to me how serious God is about this process of spiritual multiplication.

I was preaching at Berean Church in Pittsburgh on a Sunday morning in October. After my message, I invited people to the altar

who wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I also had a word of knowledge that there was a young man in the audience who had an addiction.

Many people responded, but I noticed a tall guy right in the middle of the group at the altar. I laid hands on his head and prayed, and then moved on to pray for the others. When I looked back I saw that this young man was on the floor. He was trembling and speaking in tongues. It was obvious that God was doing something profound in his life.

When I finished praying for everyone, Pastor Mark Moder closed the service and dismissed the congregation. Everyone at the altar left. But the young guy was still on the floor, so I sat down next to him and prayed quietly. He must have stayed horizontal for 20 minutes.

He finally sat up, looking rather dazed. After he gained composure, I asked him a few questions. He told me he was 20 years old. He told me he came to the altar because he'd been a slave to pornography. He said it was his first visit to this church.

"What's your name," I asked.

"Dante Lee Grady," he replied.

"Huh? You're kidding," I said.

"No, seriously! I was surprised to find out the preacher this morning has my name!" he said.

Since that day, Dante Lee Grady and I have become close. He came to my home in Georgia in January for a discipleship retreat, he traveled with me three times in 2017 and attended a men's conference I hosted. People are used to seeing him as my sidekick. And we jokingly tell them that when I come to preach, they get two Lee Gradys for the price of one!

Dante is on fire for God now. He's ravenously reading the study Bible I gave him, he's plugged into Berean Church and he feels a call to fulltime ministry. And he texts me often to ask questions about his faith.

I never had a biological son. But now I have a spiritual son who actually bears my name.

When I asked God about this unusual experience, I sensed that my encounter with Dante was a prophetic sign—not just for me but also for the body of Christ. God is reminding us that we must take the command to make disciples seriously. Our priorities must shift.

We've all read the research about the younger generation in the United States. Statistics show that many young adults have left the church or have no

interest in Christianity. Yet I've also seen that when I offer to be a mentor or a spiritual father to young people between the ages of 18 to 34, they are eager to latch on.

When I offer love and encouragement to these young adults, they can't get enough. This generation isn't

interested in dry religious programs, but they crave an authentic and relational connection with a mature Christian who is willing to spend time with them.

The spiritual sons and daughters I'm investing in today love worship, they want to experience the Holy Spirit's power and they are eager to share their faith everywhere. Dante has almost 10,000 followers on Twitter (@whoknowsante), and he loves to tell them about Jesus. He has become a social media evangelist to Generation Z.

Watching Dante Lee Grady become a mature follower of Christ gives me great hope for the future. It reminds me that every Elijah should have a young Elisha following him and begging for a double portion of the Holy Spirit. And if you read that story in the Bible, you learn that Elisha surpassed his mentor. This is my heart's cry—that the young leaders I invest in will do greater things than I ever could!

Don't miss the greatest adventure of the Christian life. Don't let the life of Jesus end with you—pass it on to the next generation. Be a multiplier. God wants you to reproduce His life in others. □

"This is my heart's cry—that the young leaders I invest in will do greater things than I ever could!"



A vague resemblance: Lee Grady and Dante Lee Grady

I Had to Grow a Beard to REACH THE LOST

I had the gospel message. But I needed to take a key step to gain credibility in my community.



BY KEVIN
SNEED

KEVIN SNEED serves along with his wife, Summer, as an IPHC missionary and director of East Africa Bible College in Eldoret, Kenya. Kevin is a 2005 graduate of Emmanuel College. They have two children.

After working in Kenya for three years, I went to visit a former student working in an Islamic area of the country. He took us to meet some local officials including the area chief. We found the chief sitting under a tree in the heat of the day on that semi-arid landscape. He slowly rose to greet us.

I was introduced as the Bible school director as we shook hands. Immediately his hand let go of mine and went up to my face. He began to rub his hand against my clean-shaven cheek and said, "How can you be a director of a school and you can't even grow a beard."

That event vividly illustrated for me that I lacked the credibility I needed to interact with this man. The titles in front of my name and the degrees hanging on my wall did not matter as much as the lack of beard on my face. Rather than demand respect I spent the next month trying to grow out a beard I didn't really want!

Nevertheless the beard grew and my wife was pleased. So I wear it to this day. My desire to cultivate credibility and remove any obstacle to my influence in the larger community took priority over my personal preference.

Although growing a beard was an easy task, I realize that often the work required to establish credibility is much more substantial. Yet the need to have credibility in our community is vital if we want to reach our full potential.

One Saturday afternoon when my daughter was one year old, two ladies came to our home in Eldoret, Kenya. They were casually dressed and had a white foam cooler. They introduced themselves as representatives from the Ministry of Health, and they had come to give my daughter a vaccine.

When I asked for official identification, they could not provide it. They were not even wearing clothing that indicated they were legitimate. I refused the vaccine and told the ladies that I would take my daughter to our regular doctor on Monday.

They seemed shocked but I was adamant. Even if the vaccine they carried in that cooler was exactly what my daughter needed, they lacked the credibility I required to administer it. I would rather wait two days and go to a doctor who had earned my trust. This same attitude is often (and rightfully) expressed by communities towards churches.

It is true that we have exactly what the world needs. Mankind has a sin sickness and we have the cure. Yet we often lack the credibility our community requires to effectively share it.

We could withdraw in judgment from a community that refuses to believe, or we could engage that community by first seeking to earn their trust and gain credibility.

It's understandable that a community would recoil from someone who demands to be heard without first seeking to be trusted. Imagine walking down the street, and someone jumps from the bushes wielding a syringe asking to vaccinate you. In most circumstances, you would immediately refuse.

A person who assumes they are healthy would definitely reject the offer, and even a person who knows they are sick would seek help from someone they trust. Even if that unknown man in the bushes had the best vaccine available, few would allow him to administer it.

What must we do to establish credibility in our community? The first step is obvious: We should examine ourselves and our church to ensure that we are leading a life and ministry that pleases God and, thus, fosters credibility.

Paul writes in Ephesians 5:3 that we should strive to remove even a hint of immorality from our lives and seek to imitate God as demonstrated in the incarnate Christ. Peter advises his readers in 1 Peter 2:12 to live such good lives in the community that even the unbelievers will glorify God.

The second and more neglected step is to look externally. Inward examination is just the beginning. In order to gain the trust of our community we must understand the needs and expectations of those outside our church.

While it is true that we cannot meet every need or expectation (nor should we) we must recognize how credibility is earned in our larger community and work to

remove any obstacle possible. This is not compromising the gospel for the sake of relevance.

Sometimes our quest to be relevant diminishes our credibility, especially with youth for whom authenticity is a priority for credibility. I am advocating, however, for an active engagement of our community to eliminate mistrust and foster credibility by taking (as far as possible) the action required by our community to gain respect and influence.

For me that required growing a beard, but it may not always be that easy. Every community has unique hurdles to overcome. If we are serious about getting the gospel to that community, we will not remain behind the hurdles hoping for someone to take the vaccine from the man in the bushes. We will do the hard work of cultivating credibility for maximum impact. It may not be quick or easy but it will be effective.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ... I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel."

The principle was so important to Paul that he even required Timothy to be circumcised before joining him on the second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3). Paul, who was adamant that circumcision was not required for salvation (Acts 15:12; Galatians 5:2-6) did require it of Timothy because Paul didn't want anything to hinder his credibility in the ministry.

Timothy had examined himself and was known to be a person of integrity by the church. Yet Paul knew those outside the church (unbelieving Jews) might never hear his message (even though it was truth) if he remained uncircumcised. Timothy endured this painful task

(which was unnecessary for his salvation) in order to have a greater impact in his ministry.

We too must understand what is required by our community to be heard and believed. We must be willing to undertake even painful changes (as far as possible) to gain a voice among our neighbors.

We only go to doctors who have spent many hard years and thousands of dollars in medical school and practice just to write our prescriptions. Why would we expect our community to compromise that standard for people offering something far more important and valuable than medicine?

Many have said: "God doesn't always call the qualified but he qualifies the called." Unfortunately, some have accepted their call but chosen to remain unqualified. Before we can reach our community we must first grow, even Jesus did, "in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). What steps can you and your church take towards greater credibility in your community? □

**"What steps
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credibility in the
community?"**