

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

Who Will Take Your Place?

Why we must empower younger leaders **NOW**



ARTICLES THIS MONTH:

Feed on
**God's
Faithfulness**

Don't Despise
the Day of
**Small
Beginnings**

Take the
Challenge: Start a
New Church!



WHY WE PRAYERFULLY VALUE SCRIPTURE

It is imperative that the IPHC remain focused on a healthy understanding and knowledge of the Bible.

A few years ago I was on an overnight flight. Having trouble sleeping, I noticed an inflight movie titled *The Book of Eli*. Intrigued by the description, I watched a movie about the horrible conditions of a post-apocalyptic world where lawlessness and death abound.

The main character Eli, played by Denzel Washington, was given a divine assignment to preserve the only known surviving copy of the Bible. Eli's difficult journey leads him to where a group of survivors attempt to collect the important books and music of the pre-apocalyptic world.

Lombardi, the leader of the library, explains to Eli that they want to be able to tell people about the world they lost. They have collected many items but are missing a Bible. This conversation occurs as they walk through the collections:

Lombardi, "What condition is the Bible in?"

Eli, "It's beat up, but it will do the job."

If you've not seen this film, I'll not spoil the context and tell you how it ends!

But to me those lines are powerful. The Bible not only tells us about the world we lost in the first three chapters



BY DOUG BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Director, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries.

of Genesis, it gives us the good news about the kingdom we gain in Jesus Christ.

"What condition is the Bible in?" is a relevant question. Many think the Bible is just one more book, not dependable, too legalistic, used to hurt people, or too hard to understand. The irony is that though the Bible is ridiculed, marginalized, and dismissed, it remains true that it does the job of diagnosing our real problem and providing the more than sufficient solution.

Perhaps the better question is: "What condition is humanity in?" The Bible gives

that answer. We are more than beat up by sin; we are “dead in transgressions and sins” (Ephesians 2:1 NIV). The Good News is found a few verses later, “But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses—it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4–5).

We are into our second year of learning from the Bible that IPHC is to be *A Place of Hope* and *A People of Promise*. Though 2014, we continue to emphasize our first core value: *We prayerfully value Scripture*. Many of you have heard this emphasis as members of the Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops have spoken at your conferences. In these moments of human history, it is imperative that we remain focused on our understanding and knowledge of the Bible.

As Pentecostals, our emphasis on revelations from the Holy Spirit, our dreams, visions, and interpretations must line up with Holy Scripture.



Everything we are as part of the Body of Christ, corporately and individually, is rooted in the Bible. Our faith arises from hearing the message revealed in the Bible (Romans 10:17). The Living Word, Jesus Christ, speaks to every generation in ways that are measured by the Bible, the canon of Scripture.

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A place of hope. A people of promise.

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As Pentecostals, our emphasis on revelations from the Holy Spirit, our dreams, visions, and interpretations must line up with Holy Scripture. The confessional creeds of the historic Christian church, to which IPHC holds through the *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, and the *Definition of Chalcedon*, are also judged by their faithfulness to the Bible.

The Bible gives us the message of God's love, God's kingdom, and how we are to live as its citizens. God's Word provides the understanding of how our Christian community should demonstrate Christ's love, grace, truth, and wholeness.

We are in the second half of 2014. I encourage you to find your courage, hope, message, confidence, and peace in the message revealed and given in the Bible. ☐



DON'T DESPISE THE DAY OF SMALL BEGINNINGS

Don't ever get discouraged if your work seems small. God rewards those whose work is never noticed by men.



BY RACHEL KING

RACHEL KING worked as a children's pastor for 19 years. She has served as director of Discipleship Ministries for the IPHC's Sunshine Network Ministries since 2007. In June 2014 she was elected as secretary/treasurer for the executive council of the Sunshine conference, and is the first woman to be elected to conference leadership in Florida. She and her husband, Mark, have three children and seven grandchildren.

Years ago, while watching one of my children's school programs, I remember thinking, "I could do that," and believed that I could help in children's ministry with a program or two. I started assisting with the music. Before long I was the one in charge of the entire children's ministry.

Suddenly my lucrative career in children's ministry began. (Yes, I'm being sarcastic!) It was exciting to receive creative ideas from the Lord, especially when I could see the kids' enthusiasm. In the beginning I had about 30 children ages five to 12, but I wanted to see the group grow. So I set my goal for 100 kids.

I would have great response for events like VBS and the fall festival, but my best number for Sunday morning was about 65. I was not a paid staff member, but even as a volunteer I put my best effort into everything I did—from props to curriculum to music and games.

Several years later our family made a church change to a much larger and growing church in our community. Several members knew the work I had previously done with children's ministry, so after enjoying being with adults for six months I was back in the children's church saddle again! I began there with about 30 children, and it soon grew

to 50, and then to 130 on a regular basis.

I loved it and the parents were happy. We had our own facility decorated just for children, and the kids anticipated every service. Then our church merged with an even larger ministry, and I went from managing 130 children to over 400 children in one week!

After all the dust settled, I was now the full-time, paid staff children's pastor. Wow, I felt like I had arrived! I had recognition, responsibility and a paycheck. What more could I ask for? Within a short time our church began multiple services, the place was booming and churches from all over were interested in how we ran everything from our choir to our nursery.

Our pastor seized the moment and began an annual conference for churches to bring all their people to see firsthand what we were doing, and of course that included our fantastic children's department. I was speaking to people everywhere, answering phone calls and emails, even serving with other children's pastors as a curriculum advisor for a publishing company. People wanted to know what I had to say, what I thought and how I did things—all because I was in a large exciting ministry. The really great thing was that I was getting new ideas from them too.

I remained there as children's pastor for another five years, but in that time I was able to reflect on one thing I knew for certain: I had been the same children's pastor back in the small church where I began. Being in a mega-church did not really matter. God gave me exciting ways to present His Word, whether I was in the small place or the large one. Logistics and facilities were certainly different, but my creativity was the same, my delivery (with a

few more bells and whistles) was the same, and the Savior was the same!

Today, I work in ministry helping those involved in working in local churches, most of which are considered small. Whether it's children, youth, seniors, Sunday school, small groups, even men's ministry or women's ministries, there are many people doing exceptional work. These men and women are volunteering their time and relying on the creativity of the Holy Spirit to write programs, create skits and dramas and disciple new converts.

The things they do are excellent. Their hearts are devoted. The rest of the world rarely sees their work, yet they are never insignificant. That's because the size of a church really does not matter.

One of the greatest children's pastors I know taught a group of 6 to 10 children. She always had current and exciting lessons for the kids. They were learning the Bible each week from someone who was doing a phenomenal job. Yet no one was calling her to speak and she seemed to go almost unnoticed, even in her own church.

If you are working in a small ministry today, realize it may not remain that way. Do not be discouraged when looking at the success of others.

Since most of you are working other jobs, try to find people to help

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on your team. They can be an encouragement to you and lessen the load a bit. Try and go to as many informative conferences as you can. They will stimulate those creative juices! Connect with sources on the Internet to get ideas, but do not remain isolated, especially if you do not see the results you may have anticipated.

We give thanks for all of you working in small ministries: youth pastors who spend endless hours with

kids whose lives are in the balance; women's directors who are planning the next fund raiser; or children's workers who think up the coolest games.

Keep up the good work! Your hard work may not be seen by the world, but you are doing a great job none the less. Continue to get ideas from every place you can, and don't be ashamed to share your ideas with others.

Never take lightly the responsibility you have. Be prepared and do things with excellence. And please remember: As your ministry grows, don't forget those in smaller ministries. Sow into them with encouragement, resources and even supplies. Never look at their ministries as less significant than yours. They are preparing faithful servants for the next generation who will expand the kingdom of God. □



TAKE THE CHALLENGE TO START A NEW CHURCH!

We are witnessing amazing growth in the Philippines after planting a new congregation in the city of Cebu.



BY AL
ARGO

AL AND COLI ARGO, also known as “the A-Team,” have lived and ministered as IPHC missionaries in Asia since 2003. Their mission is to see souls saved and to teach, equip, activate and mobilize the Asian church to finish the great commission. (The estimated annual budget for the LifeCoffee Corner outreach is only \$12,000. If you’d like to donate please mail a check payable to World Missions Ministries, earmarked for Life Coffee Corner. Their mission support account is 28061-S.)

In November of last year, shortly after the largest typhoon in known history slammed the southern Philippine islands, I was scheduled to speak at the annual PPHC (Philippines Pentecostal Holiness Church) conference. So I somewhat reluctantly took a break from our relief efforts to make the one-hour flight and eight-hour car ride trip to the beautiful mountain location.

While there, our Philippines National Leader, Bishop Ariel Moneda, challenged each local church to plant two churches during the next two years. As we later careened down the curvy road back toward the airport in Manila, our conversation turned to how to carry out the challenge Bishop Ariel had given.

I had only shared with a select few that God was already leading us in this direction, so I was thankful Bishop had laid out this challenge of church planting to the entire country. I was further encouraged when one of our traveling companions, Pastor Sam Legaspi, said, “If we are able to start a new church in Cebu, I’d love to help. That’s something I’ve been praying about for a while now.” **We immediately began to pray, plan and look for meeting space.**

In January, we began to reach out to a few families who were unsaved,

unchurched or who we knew were 'in-between' churches. We initially met for Friday night worship, fellowship and prayer while casting vision for what we felt God was speaking for our community.

As we drew closer to Easter, the hunt for regular and affordable meeting space intensified. At the last moment the idea hit us to approach some local theater owners to ask if we could rent their facility. They readily agreed to a fair rental agreement and on Palm Sunday we held our first service with 24 adults and children in a 740-seat auditorium!

LifeChurch Cebu member John Lawas wrote on Facebook: "Great space requires great faith!"

Our attendance grew from 24 to 29 and then from 34 to 39. We got excited when we reached 60 for Mother's Day. Our best attendance so far has been 245 when we hosted a Fathers Day VIP event. About one third of these families have stayed on and we are planning to do

another big event in September and December.

Nelson, a member from Papua New Guinea, told us: "We were looking for a church to attend and then this church just appeared out of nowhere. Everyone is just so friendly, and the word and worship is great, so we knew this is where we belong."

Rhea, a pediatric critical care nurse, asked Jesus to come into her heart after attending two Sunday services. Her friends have questioned her faith but she says, "I love God and I will praise him all the days of my life. It is only him that I should please."

Dennis, from Manila, was looking for a church where his young daughter would receive ministry appropriate for her age. The weekly LifeKids video on the big screen was a hit with all the kids and adults!

From the weekly LifeGroup meetings to the monthly LifeChurch picnic, **we are doing our best to have people connect outside of the**



If God is for you, nothing—including an earthquake or a typhoon—can be against you!

Sunday morning service. From the focus on evangelism and outreach in our neighborhood to the focus on missions across Asia, we are trying to emphasize that if you love God, you will also love people.

Our next project is the LifeCoffee Corner in the same mall as LifeChurch Cebu. This coffee shop will be open eleven hours a day and seven days a week (as per mall requirements) and will serve as a connecting point to the 8,000 students, professionals, homeless people and others who will walk directly in the path of the coffee shop each day. It will be a place for small groups to meet and for people to bring their unsaved friends and family.

Amidst all this growth, I'm still learning three lessons. First, if God is for you, nothing—including an earthquake or a typhoon—can be against you! Second, attempt great things for God and expect great things from God. And third, love God and love people! ☐





PLEASE GIVE YOUNGER LEADERS A CHANCE TO SHINE

Now—not tomorrow—is the time to identify potential champions who can lead your church into the future.



BY J. LEE
GRADY

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who serves as contributing editor of Charisma magazine and editor of Encourage. He also directs The Mordecai Project, an international missions organization based in Florida. He is a member of the IPHC's Sunshine Conference.

When I met Jason Cook five years ago he was a discouraged Bible college graduate. He had experienced failure in his personal life, and he had disappointed the leaders he served. Even though he still had a strong desire to be in ministry, the 27-year-old paid his bills by waiting tables at a seafood restaurant in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Jason could have dropped off the spiritual map like so many people his age who have abandoned faith or given up on the church. But a miracle of grace unfolded.

Jason shook free from his discouragement, and he was eventually invited to pastor a struggling Pentecostal Holiness church in Conway, about 15 miles from Myrtle Beach.

The congregation had shrunk to just 35 people. A few members of the church resisted when Jason tried to introduce new music and an innovative ministry style—but then new people began to show up, and people in the community began to find Jesus through Jason's passionate preaching and the church's relevant outreach.

The church grew to 170 in just one year. Then last year, Jason and his wife, Chloe, celebrated with the rest of the congregation as they dedicated

a new 300-seat sanctuary complete with a 5,000-square-foot youth center. They renamed their church The Refuge—and Jason now has plans to not only fill the building with new converts but also to construct a battered women’s shelter on the property.

Today up to 300 people attend on Sunday mornings. The church hosts a Hispanic service twice weekly. The congregation also operates a weekly jail ministry, a bus outreach and an annual vacation Bible school.

“I’m at a total loss for words when I see the Lord’s grace and favor,” says Jason, who is now just 32. “The Refuge is what it is because my team has an unwavering commitment to reach people that some churches turn their backs on.”

The revitalization of The Refuge clashes with the negative statistics we hear about churches closing and denominations aging. USA Today reported last year that the number of Protestants in the United States has dropped from 53 percent in 2007 to 48 percent today. And the number of people who claim no religious affiliation (called “Nones” by statisticians) has climbed from 15.3 percent to 19.6 percent during the same period.

Yet Jason Cook’s story in Conway proves that dying churches can indeed be revitalized. I believe we’re going to see a wave of renewal in American churches over the next few years. But for true revitalization to take place, we must be willing to take some painful steps:

1. CONFRONT THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOUS TRADITION.

Nothing is more toxic to the church than a religious spirit. It clings to yesterday and fights change. It resists

It may be true that greater numbers of young people today are abandoning the church, but we can be certain the Holy Spirit has raised up a faithful remnant of young warriors.



the Holy Spirit. It persecutes the prophetic word. It hates genuine worship. When Christians lose their first love for Jesus and become religious, they lose all concern for the lost. Religious people want church to revolve around them, so they have no vision for outreach.

The religious spirit says: “We like our church small. We don’t like those new songs. We want to sing the same songs we have been singing since 1965! And we don’t want those new people around here—especially those tattooed, spiky-haired teenagers or those Hispanic immigrants who refuse to learn English.” This attitude must be exposed from the pulpit for what it is: Hateful, stubborn, arrogant religiosity.

2. IDENTIFY ANOINTED NEW LEADERS.

Just as the young David was called from the fields of Jesse and anointed by Samuel to be king, there are many young leaders today who are waiting to be discovered. It may be true that greater numbers of young people today are abandoning the church, but we can be certain the Holy Spirit has raised up a faithful remnant of young warriors.

There is a Gideon somewhere in your church, but he may be hiding in a winepress right now because he needs encouragement. There is a John Mark ready to blaze a trail for the gospel, but his past failures may have made him feel disqualified. There may be an Esther ready to liberate captives, but right now she lacks the confidence to speak God’s Word with boldness.

We must find these potential champions, encourage them and give them opportunities to serve. Give them a voice. Give them an older church and let them revitalize it!

3. PASS THE BATON BEFORE IT’S TOO LATE.

Many churches and denominations today (and even loosely organized charismatic networks) have aging leaders who are clinging to power. Some refuse to give up control simply because they were never trained to find their successors; others hang on because their identity is so tied to their careers.

Whatever the reason, younger leaders will go elsewhere if they are not empowered. The New Testament model requires us to train Timothys and put them in place while they are still young.

We are entering a season of revitalization. Don’t miss this moment. Churches can experience new life and new growth if we are willing to uncork the new wine of change. □



YOUR FAITH IS FED BY HIS FAITHFULNESS

You will grow as a leader when you realize how faithful our God is to fulfill His promises. Have you thanked Him for his faithfulness lately?



BY BRAD REYNOLDS

BRAD REYNOLDS is the superintendent of the IPHC's Ephesians 4 Network, which has churches in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and parts of Kentucky, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. He also pastors Crossroads Worship Center in Howard City, Michigan.

The Ephesians 4 Network is celebrating its thirteenth year of being a conference in the IPHC. In July 2001, former Presiding Bishop James Leggett flew into Dayton, Ohio, to oversee the formation of Ephesians 4 Network, the IPHC's youngest conference. E4N was originally formed by several churches from the Appalachian Conference, the churches of the former Great Lakes Conference, churches that were a part of Acts 2 Today (just a few years later, the North Central Latin District also merged in with E4N).

The Lord has brought us a long way. As I was praying about our upcoming conference this year, God impressed on my heart that the theme for our conference was to be about His faithfulness. It has been because of God's faithfulness to E4N, our churches and ministers, that E4N is alive and doing well today.

When God spoke to me about His faithfulness, it was in a very specific way. He imparted the way His faithfulness applies to His children.

I know that most leaders are already quite familiar with the faithfulness of the Lord. I'm sure that many have testimonies of the same faithfulness at work in their lives, so I'm not going to try to convince anyone of how faithful He is. However, I believe that with each experience with Him, we learn something more. I would like to share a few thoughts with you regarding His faithfulness.

In Psalm 36:5 (NASB), King David writes, "Your lovingkindness, O Lord, extends to the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the skies." The Hebrew word for faithfulness here is *emunah*, and it means "security" or "faithfulness in fulfilling promises."

Emunah comes from the Hebrew root word *aman*, which means to support, uphold or to be certain.

It's our faith, along with His faithfulness, that works together to bring about the fulfillment of all God has destined for us.



Much like a baby who is helpless and must depend upon the security of its parents to care for and protect it. God's faithfulness is certain, and certain means "known for sure; established beyond doubt."

One commentary, *The Theological Wordbook of The Old Testament*, says this about *aman*: "This very important concept in biblical doctrine gives clear evidence of the biblical meaning of 'faith'...At the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty. The basic root idea is firmness or certainty." So we can be certain in God and His faithfulness to us.

Here are three important points to remember about God's faithfulness to us:

1. HE IS FAITHFUL EVEN WHEN WE ARE NOT.

God's faithfulness is sure—even when we fall short. In 2 Timothy 2:13, we read, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." How many of us can look back and see where God was faithful to us when we were struggling or when we had made poor decisions? God faithfully showed up and worked everything out. God is always working and "watching out after His word," making sure that not one promise He has made will be forgotten.

2. HE IS FAITHFUL TO NOT ANSWER CERTAIN PRAYERS.

One thought that came to me recently is how God does not answer prayers that are outside His will. We should always pray within God's will, as stated in 1 John 5:14: "... that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." However in James 4:3 it states: "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with

wrong motives, that you may spend it on your pleasures." The Greek word for amiss is *kaks*, and it means improper or wrong. Many times we pray amiss, asking out of carnal desires (including wrong motives or intent) or in our frustration.

I'm sure that the Samaritan people who rejected Jesus as He was en route to Jerusalem were thankful that He did not answer James and John's petition to call fire down from Heaven and destroy them! I'm sure we've all wanted fire to come down from time to time on people we thought deserved it. Thankfully, God remains just as faithful to His Word here as well, by not answering prayers outside His will. Sometimes, as the saying goes, unanswered prayer is the answer.

3. HE IS FAITHFUL TO FULFILL ALL THAT HE HAS PROMISED US WHEN WE FULLY PUT OUR TRUST IN HIM.

We see the same Hebrew word *emunah* used again in Psalms 37:3 (AMP): "Trust (lean on, rely on, and be confident) in the Lord and do good; so shall you dwell in the land and feed surely on His faithfulness, and truly you shall be fed."

Commentator Adam Clarke translated the latter part of this verse to read "and feed by faith," implying that it's through and by your faith that you shall be fed. In Habakkuk 2:4 (NASB), *emunah* is used once again, "...the righteous shall live by his faith." Faith is the key that opens the door to God's promises.

It's our faith, along with His faithfulness, that works together to bring about the fulfillment of all God has destined for us. I encourage you to keep doing good and having faith in Him, because our God is faithful! ☐