

# Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

## DON'T QUIT!

When Life Gets Tough, Stay Focused

BY FRED MCCARTHY

Only the Gospel  
Is the Cure for  
the World's Sin

BY DOUG BEACHAM

Contending for  
Kingdom Authority  
in a War Zone

BY RUSSELL BOARD

Beware of the  
Toxic 'Apostles'

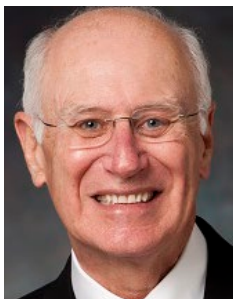
BY J. LEE GRADY

7 Ways to  
Develop a Healthy  
Children's Ministry

BY JASMINE CRILLY

# Only the Gospel Is the Cure for the WORLD'S SIN

This Easter, let's preach the "old, old story,"  
not a weak substitute.



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](#).

**T**his year, Easter Sunday is April 16th for Christians around the globe. This means our IPHC congregations in Eastern Europe, who often follow the Orthodox calendar, will celebrate Easter, or Pascha, on the same date as in the western world. So, as a global family, we join with a third of the human population in declaring that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, NKJV).

During this holy season, I find myself reflecting on what it means for us as followers of Jesus in a world with little awareness of God's presence: past, present, or future. Bloggers and podcasts warn us that we are preaching to people who do not listen to us; that we are answering questions no one is asking. That may be true. But if it's true today, then it's the same truth God revealed to Isaiah following his prophetic call.

I've always felt some partiality to Isaiah 6:1-8. It was the text preached by the late Rev. Durant Driggers in early October, 1967, at King Memorial Lectures on the Emmanuel College campus. At the close of his message, I responded to the call to preach the gospel.

The photo on the next page is of the Bible I was using that night. It was given to me as a high school graduation gift earlier that year by Rev. John W. Swails and the congregation of the Franklin Springs Pentecostal Holiness



Church.

I have marked early October this year to remember the 50th anniversary of God's call. I've taken that old Bible off the shelf and begun reading notes written in those days. That Bible is very worn and falling apart; but its message is eternally true.

What I didn't come to know until later was that Isaiah's experience, after his glorious call, was quite challenging. The prophet's ministry would be basically what contemporary pundits are telling us today. God told Isaiah:

"Go and tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." Then I said, "Lord, how long?" (Isaiah 6:9-11a).

I'm not sure how I would have responded if Rev. Driggers had told me that I, along with you, would minister in a time much like Isaiah's. Perhaps he was wise to get me into the game, and let me discover the harsh reality of a culture of hardened hearts, cynical leaders and people with no awareness of the need for repentance.

So perhaps this Easter weekend, we and Isaiah are not that far removed. John Swails used to preach that the gospel is the panacea, or the cure, for what ails humankind. But if the preacher does not diagnose correctly, how can the proper cure be administered?

If the patient refuses to accept the reality of the condition, and rejects the only medicine that will cure, what can the doctor do?

What if the questions "they" are asking are the wrong questions? What duty do I have to proclaim the truth of the condition and its cure? Is Ezekiel talking to me and you when God spoke to him of "watchmen" (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:1-7)?

John Wesley preached to thousands of people in the 1700s. As the diminutive preacher proclaimed the truth in fields across England, opponents heckled him, threw rocks and tomatoes at him and did all they could to keep the message from being preached and heard. But Wesley knew the truth of the crowd's condition, and he knew the truth of the only cure.

From the pulpit of St. Mary's Church in Oxford, England, on June 18, 1738, Wesley preached his now famous "Salvation by Faith" sermon

from Ephesians 2:8: "By grace are ye saved by faith." He carefully laid out the truth of our sinful condition, and the truth of God's merciful antidote. Wesley's message, as recorded in *John Wesley's Forty-four Sermons* (Epworth Press), included these words:

*The Christian faith "acknowledges His (Jesus) death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal, and His resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality; inasmuch as He 'was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification.'*

*Christian faith is then, not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of His life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon Him as our atonement and our life, as given for us, and living in us; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with Him, and cleaving to Him, as our 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' or, in one word, our salvation."*

If the world's questions to the church are like this: How can I be successful? How can I be happy? How can I be fulfilled? How much can I disobey and still

# Encourage

**A place of hope. A people of promise.**

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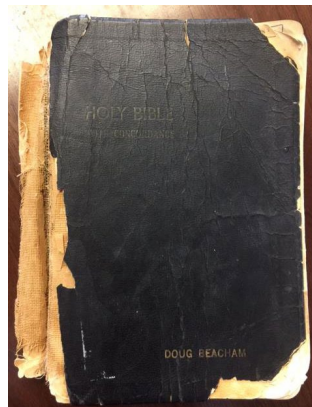
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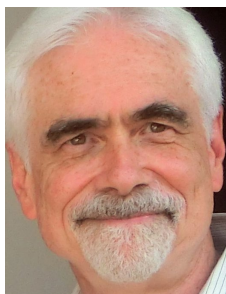
be acceptable to God? Then our answers must not fail to confront the foolishness of such questions with truth.

But if the questions are: How can I be saved? Is there any hope for me? How can I inherit eternal life? Then our answers must echo John Wesley as we preach, and personally testify of God's grace toward us in Jesus Christ.

So, this Easter, I find myself returning to the "old, old story." Good Friday and Easter morning do not need my psychological or sociological reinterpretation, or my demythologizing, or my puny efforts at relevance. They need my prayerful and faithful re-telling with confidence that the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, will touch the ears, eyes and dull hearts of us all. □



This was Bishop Beacham's Bible when he was called into the ministry in October 1967.



BY RUSSELL  
BOARD

RUSSELL BOARD and his wife, Sandra, have served with IPHC World Missions for more than 30 years. Since 2002, Russell has served as continental director of World Missions for the Asia/Pacific region, overseeing IPHC work in 19 countries. He authored Sunday school curriculum for LifeSprings for 15 years, and his books *First Things First* and *Grow* are used by many IPHC churches in the United States and abroad. Russell and Sandra reside in Saitama, Japan.

# Contending for **KINGDOM** **AUTHORITY** in a War Zone

God's kingdom was inaugurated through Christ,  
but that doesn't mean we don't have conflict.

**A**s the Messiah-King, Jesus brought the presence of the kingdom of heaven to earth. He demonstrated the power of the kingdom through miracles of healing, deliverance and authority over natural forces. He explained the priorities and values of the kingdom in His teaching and displayed them in His life. He defeated the enemies of the kingdom through His death on the cross. And He ascended to the throne of the kingdom after His resurrection.

However, the kingdom of God is not yet fully established on earth. The full consummation of the kingdom awaits the return of the King. In the meantime, we live in a world pervaded by both light and darkness, a world where both divine and demonic powers are at work.

Never forget: This world is a war zone. We were not put here merely to relax and enjoy the scenery. Sure, the world contains an abundance of beauty, and God intends for us to live joy-filled lives. But struggle and opposition should not be viewed as unexpected intruders upon our comfort, but natural effects of the conflict raging around us.



Isaac Watts put it in his famous hymn *Am I a Soldier of the Cross?*

*Must I be carried to the skies / On  
flowery beds of ease?  
While others fought to win the prize,  
/ And sailed through bloody seas?*

*Sure I must fight, if I would reign /  
Increase my courage, Lord!*

*I'll bear the toil, endure the pain /  
Supported by Thy word.*

The outcome of the battle is not in doubt. Jesus has already defeated Satan. But our enemy is still at large, and still fighting. So, we must fight as well.

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (see 1 John 3:8), and He has enlisted us in this mission. "... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7 NASB). But if we don't resist, he isn't likely to flee.

Within this war zone, we can expect to engage the enemy on many fronts. These including:

## 1. THE HEART.

This is the key battleground that Satan seeks to occupy. He uses the temptations of the world and the lusts of the flesh to try to displace Christ in our affections. We must counter his lies with the Word of God (see Matthew 4:1–11), and be ruthless in evicting every idol (1 John 5:21). We battle to maintain the lordship of Christ over our thoughts, desires and choices (2 Corinthians 10:5).

These days, the screens on our televisions, computers, tablets and smart phones furnish the devil with multiple access points to hurl temptations and distractions our way. If we let down our guard and fail to reflect kingdom values and priorities in our use of screen time, he will assault our imaginations and set up strongholds to work mischief in our lives.

## 2. OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

Satan works aggressively to poison our attitudes and wreck our relationships, knowing that these are strategic areas where the kingdom of God is manifest. Paul directs

our counter-attack: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Colossians 3:12–13 NASB).

It is in our unity with other believers that the world sees the reality of the love of God in Christ (John 17:23). And the Holy Spirit works to form within us the character of Christ, the definitive fruit of the kingdom (Galatians 5:22–24).

## 3. OUR FAMILY.

The enemy has infiltrated influential sectors of Western culture (government, education, media, entertainment) to unleash an unprecedented attack on the God-ordained institution of the family. Divorce, abortion, adultery, cohabitation and homosexuality have proved to be potent weapons in his arsenal. Now he has sown confusion to the point where reality is denied, the roles of husband and wife and father and mother are blurred, and bogus definitions of marriage and gender are substituted for the plain truth.

God created male and female in order to present a rich and complementary picture of the image of God (Genesis 1:27). He instituted marriage to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22–32), and to provide a foundation for the family, which is to be the primary setting for discipleship (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7). Strong marriages and families that exhibit the values of love, commitment, and sacrifice serve as examples and citadels of the kingdom.

## 4. THE MARKETPLACE.

This battleground pits fraud against integrity, greed against generosity, and exploitation of human and natural resources against respect for both. Every business, every profession,

every vocation is to be redeemed for kingdom use. Christian entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists, laborers, farmers, accountants—all are commissioned to do their jobs well in order to glorify God and to bless their colleagues, customers, and communities (Colossians 3:23, 24).

## 5. GOVERNMENT.

Government is ordained by God to preserve order and

peace, and to execute justice (Romans 13:1–7). Unfortunately, Satan often corrupts leaders with the perks of power, or deceives them with godless ideologies. As a result, injustice and oppression are rampant across the globe.

We are specifically commanded to pray for our rulers (1 Timothy 2:1, 2), and to submit to their directives (1 Peter 2:13, 14) unless they contradict the commands of God (Acts 5:29). As citizens in a democracy, we also have the right and responsibility to vote, to speak out and to work for just laws and godly leaders. While the kingdom of God can never be inaugurated through political action, as kingdom citizens we stand against evil and strive to promote justice and freedom.

In short, wherever there is darkness, we counter it with the light of the kingdom. The battle is on, and is raging all around us. We must take Joshua 1:9 as our mandate: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." □

**"Never forget:  
This world is a  
war zone. We  
were not put  
here merely  
to relax and  
enjoy the  
scenery."**



# When Life Gets Tough, STAY FOCUSED!

Have you felt like quitting the ministry lately?  
Don't let trials distract you.



BY FRED  
MCCARTHY

FRED MCCARTHY has been the pastor of Oasis Christian Centre in Rahway, New Jersey, for the past 30 years. He has a passion for missions and assisting those that are on the frontlines around the world. Most importantly, he is the proud father of Brittany and Andrew.

The Apostle Paul had his fair share of opportunities to quit on the mission God had called him to, but he kept *pressing on*. He refused to lose his focus, and he was determined to fulfill God's call on his life. His writings in Philippians 3:12–14 are verses that have become a constant motivation for my life. He wrote: “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” (v. 12, NIV).

I was twenty-one years old when I began pastoring. I felt alone and ill equipped—but I knew with all my heart that I was exactly where I was supposed to be. Despite that assurance, I struggled like many new pastors.

One day while reading this passage in Philippians, the words took on a personal meaning for me. I realized that even though I did not have this pastoring thing all figured out, God had still called me. Even though I was still learning and making mistakes—God had called *me*! He gave me a purpose to fulfill, and I was determined to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus had laid hold of me.

This past January marked thirty years of my pastoring the same church. I continue to make mistakes, and with each new level of growth, I still get those feelings of not being fully prepared to take on the next challenge. I have to remind myself that God has called me, and as long as I *press on*, he will equip me for the task. And He always does.



Paul wrote in Philippians 3:13: “Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.”

Paul was focused! He was determined that nothing would keep him from the goal. We cannot move forward while looking in the rear-view mirror of personal or ministry failures, hurts, disappointments and unmet expectations. They are distractions. Distractions always work to get our focus off the mark.

Satan will use anything to get your attention away from the mission God has called you to. He looks to get a foothold in the weakest spots of our lives—don’t give him any place! Not in your marriage, not in your relationship with your children, not in your personal life.

I cannot live life in focus without clear vision—a basic clear picture of *who* I am, why I am here, and *where* I am going. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:14: “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

To press forward speaks of resistance, an opposing force that requires us to push through it and past it. Some of the resistance that Paul had to press through is listed in 2 Corinthians 11:21–33, and it’s quite a list.

Again Paul speaks of focus. He’s focused on the goal. I find that as long as I keep my eye on the goal, and I keep pressing on despite the resistance, I stay on track.

As ministry leaders, each of us will have moments in life where it feels like there is no way we can move forward. It may be a church you have invested your life into, a marriage that feels like the sinking Titanic or a doctor’s report that you didn’t see coming. Each of us has had our fair share of breaking points.

One of the greatest challenges of my life was when my late wife, Leslie, was diagnosed with ALS at thirty-two years old.

We had only been married nine years. Suddenly we were sitting in the office of a prominent neurologist in New York City for an appointment that we waited three long months for. We were hoping that he could shed some light on why my wife was losing strength in her hands, legs, and her speech. Within one minute of meeting him, he shattered our world with his diagnosis that she had three to five years to live, and there was no cure.

Up until that time, we had no concept of what ALS was. Now we were face-to-face with this horrible,

terminal disease that would affect our family for the rest of our lives.

We drove home with an indescribable numbness. We walked into our bedroom, sat down, and in the dark just held each other and cried. In that moment, all the things that we had striven for and viewed as important in our lives, became insignificant. Everything was stripped away.

In that moment of crippling uncertainty, anguish and fear, one word began to rise in my heart: *live!*

That night, we chose to live. Whatever that would mean in this situation. We chose to embrace the moments that we had together. We embraced the moments with our three-year-old daughter, the calling God had on our lives, and eventually the son that we were unaware that she was pregnant with. We chose to press on.

For eleven years, despite every challenge, God faithfully provided. He miraculously met the monthly uncovered medical expenses of \$8,000. Our church increased from one to eventually three services on Sundays. Leslie was able to watch our children grow. God gave me the strength to be her main caregiver and still pastor full-time, and He did many countless other miracles.

For Leslie, despite her weakening body and her growing inability to speak and to be mobile, she continued in her passion to serve our women’s ministry and couples until nine months before she passed in 2011. She chose not to be angry or bitter, but to press on and complete her race by challenging others to live out God’s calling on their life.

You have a unique call on your life through which God will impact the world around you. So, set your eyes on the goal...and press on! □

This photo was taken about two years before Leslie McCarthy died. She is shown here with her husband, Fred, and their two children, Brittany and Andrew.

“One of the greatest challenges of my life was when my late wife, Leslie, was diagnosed with ALS at thirty-two years old.”



# JESUS LOVES ME

## Seven Ways to Develop Healthy CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

A vibrant, growing ministry to the youngest generation is possible—but you must have the right ingredients.



BY JASMINE  
CRILLY

JASMINE CRILLY is from Perth, Western Australia. In 2008, Collective Hope Australia sent her out as a missionary to serve with the IPHC team in London, England. She now serves alongside Harold and Kathleen Presley, regional directors for IPHC Northwest Europe.

From the moment people begin coming into your service, they pick up on what your church values most. Those values will be communicated through the music, the quality of the fellowship and the structure of the service. It will also be reflected in the way your children's ministry operates.

If you want to add families to your church, you will need to value ministry to the whole family. Of course, some churches can minister to kids without a separate children's service, but for those who choose to have a children's ministry, there are some aspects that should be highly valued.

**1. ENVIRONMENT.** How you value the environment affects what parents see when they drop off their children. Place yourself in their shoes. Does the space allow for children to comfortably and safely learn, play, fellowship and connect with God?

Think about what your classrooms need and make them more inviting for new families. A fresh coat of paint, new carpet, a different room completely, or that storage cupboard you've been talking about could be the lift your ministry needs. If physical changes can't be achieved right now, think creatively about the space you have. Keep it neat, clean and safe!



**2. THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS.** When volunteers for children's ministry are lacking, asking for volunteers can be like pulling teeth. I have learned that begging doesn't inspire people to help.

You have an opportunity to nurture and disciple a young person's relationship with the Lord when they volunteer. Promoting volunteering in this way will attract people who have prayed about it and who will be committed. Offer trial periods and training, and be flexible with participation levels (participation can be weekly or once a month).

Make room for advancement from junior assistant, to assistant, to teacher. Do everything you can to honor and show appreciation for your volunteer workers.

**3. TRAINING AND EQUIPPING.** This is an investment that will pay back great dividends. Many of our workers do not have a background in teaching children. Some are parents, grandparents and other willing helpers. A willing heart is wonderful, but more is needed.

We need people who can teach the Word of God accurately and who understand the needs of the young hearers. Offer plenty of training. Research available children's ministry conferences or run workshops in your own church.

Whether a weekend training event or a daylong workshop, your workers will feel not only geared up for the task, but will overflow with inspiration. This will also encourage long-term commitment to the ministry with less chance of burnout.

**4. EVALUATION.** Our goal should be to disciple young believers, not simply preserve a method that worked five years ago. It is okay to admit that something new is needed.

Each generation of children brings with them unique needs and interests. Evaluating the program gives that window of opportunity to try fresh ideas, keep what works and set new goals. Questionnaires, interviews, regular team meetings and strategic planning offer great methods for evaluating.

**5. INFLUENCE.** When Moses addressed Israel in Deuteronomy, he did so from a relationship with God that was dynamic, tangible and life changing. When he implored them to love the Lord their God with their whole being, he was asking them to do something that he, himself, had done.

This is what I call a heart-to-heart style of teaching. "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children..." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Note that Moses' instruction is followed by, "Impress them on your children..."

Regarding my position as a teacher, I must ask myself: Do I make an impression by letting the Word change me? Am I walking closely with God, myself? Do I put into practice what I am teaching?

Teaching heart-to-heart refers to more than the

transference of knowledge and facts. It comes through the example of the teacher's life, as we submit to the Holy Spirit we inspire students to pursue the Lord for themselves. This can only take place if I, the teacher, value my influence.

**6. THE WORD.** The foundation we build on is the Scriptures. Our top priority and every other aspect should enhance the presentation of God's Word.

The church and even schools are struggling to keep up with the effect of technology on children. It has caused shrinking attention spans and over sensory stimulation. There is a danger of over-emphasising entertainment while neglecting the part that contributes to true discipleship.

Games, prizes and fun are vital aides to our programs, but they should never replace the Word of God. Be sure to explain with enthusiasm why the Bible lesson is the most important part of the class. If you are convinced that God's Word is valuable, then children will be too. It's all in the delivery.

"What if we concluded that our children can connect with God, can grow in their knowledge of Christ and that they can be active members of the local church?"

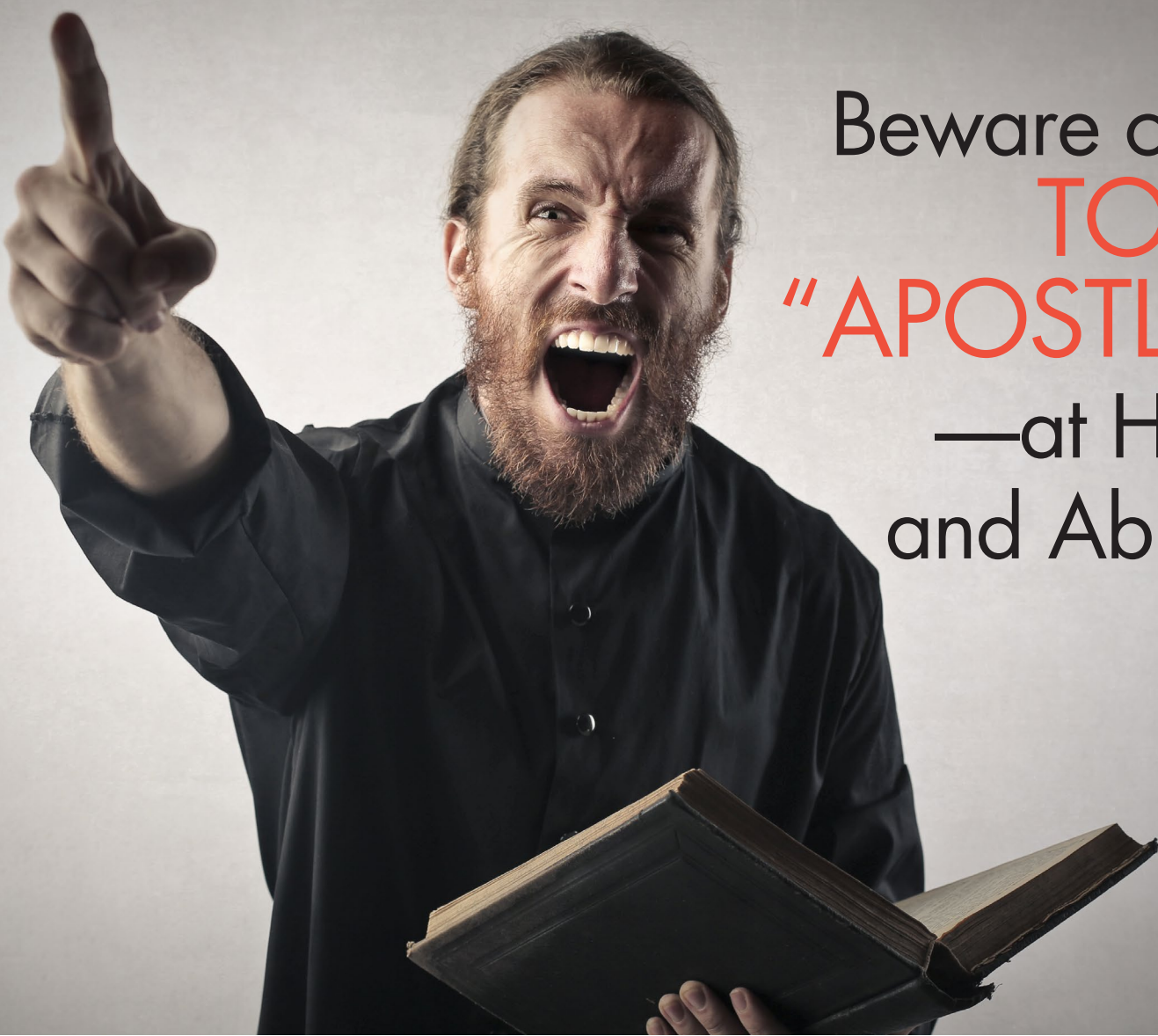
**7. EXPERIENCING GOD.** We must create an atmosphere in which children can experience the move of God's Spirit. Often we assume that our children are not interested or are too young to practice spiritual disciplines. The results have been just as we expected: indifference and reluctance.

I wonder what might occur if we turned that thinking around? What if we concluded that our children can connect with God, can grow in their knowledge of Christ and that they can be active members of the local church?

We need God to help us understand what He meant when He said, "the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14 NIV). Then we will be able to see children through His eyes. Let's show them how through demonstration, and give them an opportunity to try it themselves. We will be surprised at how eager and willing they really are to experience God and grow spiritually.

The value you place on each of these aspects will help ensure that young discipleship is taking place, that your workers are not neglected and that families will keep coming back for more!

# Beware of the **TOXIC** "APOSTLES" —at Home and Abroad



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.

I recently spent two weeks in South America, where the Holy Spirit is moving in unprecedented ways. Churches are growing and average Christians are sharing their faith passionately. One recent Pew Research study showed that 1 in 5 Latin Americans now identifies as an evangelical Christian—and a majority of these are Pentecostals.

But this growth is not without problems. While there are certainly many healthy Christian movements in the region, other churches are suffering from a lack of trained leadership. And untrained, untested leaders often result in spiritual abuse, false doctrines and financial corruption.

I've become more concerned lately with leaders who declare themselves "apostles" when they have absolutely no business wearing that label. I believe true apostolic leadership is certainly needed today, but a small army of imposters is threatening to damage the work of God. It is time to heed the apostle Paul, who warned of "false apostles" and "deceitful workers" who were "disguising themselves as apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13).

The IPHC, in fact, has endorsed the vital need for apostolic ministry. In a position paper endorsed by the IPHC's board of administration in 2007, we affirmed three levels of apostolic ministry: 1) that of Jesus Christ, our chief apostle; 2) the foundational apostles of the New Testament time; and



3) “functional apostles” who have advanced the church even into modern times.

Yet in that document (which you can read [here](#)) the IPHC also warns of the danger of imposters. The document reads: “We also recognize that false apostles appeared in the apostolic church as well as in church history, and that we must remain alert to the continuing danger of these emissaries of Satan.”

Discerning the difference between a true and false apostle is not complicated. Since Scripture clearly tells us that Paul is our apostolic model (see 1 Cor. 4:16), we can use his surrendered life as our standard. Here are six signs that a man or woman who claims apostolic leadership is actually a dangerous influence in the church.

### **1. A TOXIC “APOSTLE” REQUIRES THE TITLE.**

One popular television preacher in the United States typically sends a letter to his hosts before any preaching engagement and specifies that his name must be preceded by the “apostle” title. Compare that arrogant attitude with the humility of Paul, who referred to himself as the chief of sinners (see 1 Tim. 1:15). If a man requires people to elevate him to an elite status, you can be sure he has a serious character flaw.

### **2. A TOXIC “APOSTLE” CARRIES AN AURA OF SELF-IMPORTANCE.**

In some churches I have visited in Africa, the “man of God” waits until after worship to enter the auditorium—and then he is followed by an entourage. Someone carries his Bible, another carries his handkerchief, someone else carries his water bottle and another brings his iPad. This spectacle is designed to impress people—but it is all just religious theater. It is an offense to God. You can be certain that a man with this much pride will soon fall.

### **3. A TOXIC “APOSTLE” IS INACCESSIBLE.**

One pastor I know in a Latin American country belongs to a network of churches ruled by powerful preacher. But when I asked my friend if he gets advice or mentoring from this leader, the answer was no. The “apostle” does not offer counsel, training or personal interaction of any kind to the leaders in his group. He simply steps into his pulpit to preach and then vanishes.

The apostle Paul’s style was totally the opposite. Rather than being aloof and impersonal, Paul spent time with those he was mentoring. He told the Thessalonians: “So having great love toward you, we were willing to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you were dear to us” (1 Thess. 2:8). If an “apostle” cannot get on the same level with people and interact with them, he is in the wrong profession.

### **4. A TOXIC “APOSTLE” DOMINATES AND CONTROLS PEOPLE.**

The apostle Paul told Timothy that church leaders are required to be gentle and “not argumentative” (1 Tim. 3:3). Yet I have known so-called apostles who used their violent temper to manipulate and intimidate their followers. A man who is full of anger is unbroken and un-surrendered; God would never entrust an apostolic ministry to someone with that fatal flaw. The Lord will first drain out his anger and replace it with the sweetness of Jesus before letting him shepherd God’s people.

### **5. A TOXIC “APOSTLE” REFUSES TO WORK WITH CHURCHES OUTSIDE HIS NETWORK.**

False apostles are insecure because of their lack of training, so they feel threatened by other leaders’ successes. They develop an atmosphere of elitism—and pretend that their doctrines and preaching styles are superior to everyone else’s. False apostles also demand strict loyalty to their churches and may even curse members who leave. True apostles are not controllers or elitists; they work to expand the kingdom of God, not just their own church or denomination.

### **6. A TOXIC “APOSTLE” DEMANDS FINANCIAL PAYMENT.**

I asked one friend in Latin America if his “apostle” offered him marriage counseling, encouragement or ministry training. He replied: “No, the only discussions we have are about the tithe I owe him.” How tragic that hard-working pastors are being ripped off by wolves in sheep’s clothing.

It should also be noted that false apostles often preach false doctrine—but this is not always the case. They may in fact hold to a form of godliness even while they deny the true power of Christ in their behavior and character. This is all the more reason why we must be vigilant. Imposters may say the right things and still be wrong.

As we contend for true apostolic leadership in today’s church, let’s avoid the pitfalls of immaturity. We need character, humility and integrity as well as powerful anointing. Don’t follow the false apostles. □

“A man who is full of anger is unbroken and un-surrendered; God would never entrust an apostolic ministry to someone with that fatal flaw.”