

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

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I believe the Holy Spirit has been preparing us to minister and thrive in these dark days.



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.

On June 26 the United States Supreme Court in *Obergefell v Hodges* ruled that same-sex marriages are now legal in the United States. In response, the IPHC released an article (<http://iphc.org/gso/2015/06/26/iphc-response-to-us-supreme-court-ruling-on-marriage/>) and a Position Paper (<http://iphc.org/position-papers/>) joining almost every other Pentecostal, evangelical, Orthodox Christian, and Roman Catholic church in condemning this ruling.

In light of the continuing moral shift in western nations, it is appropriate that the Holy Spirit has led the IPHC to cast its vision as “A Place of Hope and A People of Promise.” This year our core value emphasis has been “We Prayerfully Value Pentecost.” Next year, our core value emphasis will be “We Prayerfully Value Holiness.” Over the months of July, August, and September of this year, our attention is given to the fruit of the Spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit, who already knows the future, has been preparing us to minister and thrive in these dark days.

Besides the initial response of the church, I have personally weighed my own thoughts and responses over these weeks. I have prayerfully sought to weigh them in light of the fruit of the Spirit. From Galatians 5:22 we know the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In Ephesians 5:9 the Apostle Paul clustered righteousness and truth with goodness.

In light of this scriptural and cultural engagement, I humbly and prayerfully offer some reflections with you regarding these matters.

1. We hold that the Bible, God’s revealed Word, clearly teaches that homosexuality is a sin. In fact, it is described as an abomination (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9). It is more than simply missing the mark of God’s perfect will; it is a perversion of God’s purposes for men and women. It is one of the clearly identified reasons why God removes His protective hand from nations (Leviticus 18:24; Romans 1:26, 28).

2. Marriage, with its cultural variants, has nonetheless always been between male and female. Before now, no one has erred in identifying same-sex relationships as marriage. Personally, and as a movement, we only recognize marriage as being between a man and a woman.

3. I realize that most of us live in nations where government and religion have distinct roles. For the most part, we agree in distinguishing those distinct areas. However, as with other issues that are ultimately spiritual in nature (e.g., poverty, racial violence, abortion and sexual slavery), people of faith have a responsibility to speak openly and freely regarding the statutes of the Living God. Governments may separate church and state, but the Ruler of nations has no such constraints.

4. I remind the global IPHC family, especially those of us living in nations where these practices are encouraged, that as ministers we only perform and participate in marriages between a man and a woman. I refer you to the [*IPHC Manual*](#) for more information.

5. I remind us that our congregational, denominational, and institutional properties are only to be used for weddings and like celebrations between a man and a woman. Again, I refer you to the *IPHC Manual*.

6. Our affirmation of biblical marriage does not make us intolerant, bigoted or hateful.

We unequivocally reject such accusations and consider such accusations an attempt to intimidate and silence our witness to the truth.

7. Our commitment to truth is actually an expression of our Christian love for our neighbors. If we hated our neighbors, we would not share with them God's truth and warn them of the due penalty of their actions (Romans 1:27). It is because we ourselves know the redeeming power of Christ's love, that we

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prayerfully and gracefully speak the truth in love.

8. We do not ask God to judge and destroy those who choose to live in homosexual relationships. Rather, we chose to stand as Abraham did in Genesis 18:17–32, appealing to God's just and righteous character to save the cities and the people where this sin, among other sins, was so manifest. We do this because we know God's nature. He is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). We accept that God's long-suffering is meant to bear fruit in our lives through our patience in prayer and love.

9. God's law, the Torah, is not arbitrary or unloving. In fact, the Torah, further manifested in the person of the Messiah Jesus, holds love and commandment together for the sake of life and blessing (Psalm 19:7–14; John 13:34; 14:15, 21, 24, 31; 15:10; Romans 13:8–10; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Galatians 5:13, 14; Philippians 1:9; 1 Timothy 1:5; 4:12; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 2:5).

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A place of hope. A people of promise.

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10. While homosexuality and this particular court decision have been the major focus of this article, I am keenly aware of our failure as followers of Jesus to live holy, pure, covenant-keeping lives. We have allowed immorality to be treated as something we just can't help. We have allowed the leaven of worldliness to corrupt our holy witness in the world. We have substituted a religion of self-fulfillment and happiness for the life-giving message of denying ourselves and following Christ (Matthew 16:24). We have offered cheap-grace to each other rather than the disciplines of holy living that manifest the power of God. If we desire redemption for our land, then let us submit to God's judgment over His house, beginning with us (1 Peter 4:17).

As I have stated before and after this court decision, we do not live in fear, dismay, anger, or bitterness. We live as followers of Jesus Christ, manifesting His love and truth to all we encounter. ■



ARE YOU **STRUGGLING** AS A PASTOR? GET USED TO IT!



BY STAN
REYNOLDS

STAN REYNOLDS is senior pastor of Word of Life PH Church in Marysville, California, where he has served for 31 years. In 2014 he was elected bishop of the Pacific Western Network Ministries of the IPHC, where he serves churches in central and northern California as well as Nevada and Utah. He and his wife, Kathy, have three children and seven grandchildren. Stan has traveled and ministered in India, Thailand, Nigeria, Philippines and the Ukraine.

Are you struggling to grow your church? Welcome to ministry! Struggle is actually part of the process.

When I first started in ministry, an older retired pastor told me something that I never forgot. He said, “To lead is to struggle.” After thirty-one years of pastoring, I have found out that this man really knew what he was talking about.

I am not talking about personal struggles. A pastor may have these, but the majority of inner conflicts are due to temptations, bad habits or a lack of total surrender. The struggles I am speaking about come into pastors’ lives when they attempt to lead. Real leadership will trigger a struggle!

Being a true leader always involves growth and change. And there will always be resistance when you attempt change. When a church is in a rut, pastors must take the lead to facilitate healthy change. Revival or renewal

cannot take place in our lives and our churches without it. You might as well prepare for it!

If we are not careful as pastors, we will find ourselves avoiding the struggles that rock the boat. This includes conflicts and confrontation. But to avoid these struggles means to abdicate leadership. Our ministry will die a slow death; we will lose hope and the desire to fulfill the mission of Christ on the earth.

I have come across many unhappy pastors who are discouraged because of the condition of their churches. They are unhappy with the lack of true disciples, with the lack of heartfelt worship, with the lack of other leaders to help them, with a lack of funds, and the list goes on. But very often in these situations, those same pastors dig their heels in and decide to avoid the struggle change always brings.

As a pastor, I want everyone to like me and welcome my new ideas. But an insightful leader knows that there will be those who resist as well as those who will follow. If you want to be an effective pastor, you will have to learn how to deal, in a godly way, with those who resist.

Real leadership will always encounter the crisis of resistance. The word for crisis in the Greek, *krisis*, means “dividing” or “separation.” Those are two words that most pastors would rather avoid. Remember Moses was so overwhelmed by conflict among his flock that he complained to God that the burden was too much. He actually asked Him to take his life! (Numbers 11:14–15).

In the New Testament epistles, the apostle Paul attests to the many struggles of leadership. And those who wanted to hang onto the status

quo crucified Jesus, even though He was sent to earth to bring about the ultimate change—our reconciliation to God!

However, here is a word of caution: Do not attempt to bring about change in your church, and



“Being a true leader always involves growth and change. And there will always be resistance when you attempt change.”

take on that struggle, if you are carrying around unrepentant sin. Leaders must be strong and healthy if they intend to make it through this process. Make the necessary changes in your own life through repentance, confession and accountability before you lead your church through a conflict.

Jesus was able to deal with struggles as a leader only because he was free from inner struggles. As a young pastor I had an angry side to me that only a few people knew about. My wife knew about it, and at times she was the recipient of my uncontrolled wrath.

About that time, the church was growing. Growth had its pain and I tried to deal with these struggles from the growth. But because of my anger problem I made the problem worse. I caused myself a lot of personal anguish like Moses.

You must stay humble before God and always allow sanctification to have its work in your life. Only then you will be able to deal with the struggles that a pastor faces.

As a pastor you must discern where resistance is coming from. Struggles against evil and sin usually don't bring us to despair. How many times have you (by the Spirit) whipped the devil, and then the very next day had to walk through a struggle that almost caused you to resign?

Human beings are wonderful and yet weak and flawed. Dealing with someone who is headstrong is different from dealing with those who have fear in their lives. It takes discernment, gentleness and firmness to lead effectively. My advice to you in times of struggle is to deal with it in a timely manner while seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance and at times the advice of trusted counselors.

Avoiding struggle is not healthy for you or for the people it involves. I have found that some of my most profitable teaching moments in helping people to become disciples were when I dealt with these conflicts. Through our struggles, we learn important things about our people and ourselves.

Struggles are not comfortable, but God is more concerned with developing our character than our comfort. Struggles can cause you to draw nearer to God. And they will make you a better pastor. □



FIVE THINGS ABOUT MINISTRY I WISH I'D KNOWN WHEN I WAS YOUNGER

It took me a while to learn these important truths. Now I want to share them with the next generation.



BY SHARON
L. WOOTEN

SHARON WOOTEN, the daughter of missionaries, spent her childhood in South Africa and Zimbabwe. She and her husband, Ron, attended Emmanuel College, and they have served as missionaries with the IPHC for 15 years. As director of Women's Ministries for Africa she preaches, trains leaders and oversees projects.

When I was a young woman I wanted to have a successful ministry. I worked so hard until I eventually became worn out, discouraged and ready to quit. Then God spoke to me: "Sharon, you have been working so hard *for* me, that you are no longer working *with* Me."

That was painful to hear, but so important to learn. We must make sure that whatever we are doing in ministry, we are doing it *with* God—not just for Him.

This is just one of several truths I learned over decades of serving Jesus. Now that I am older, I want to impart these truths to the next generation of Christian leaders. Here are a few other lessons I learned that might equip you to serve God faithfully.

1. FOCUS ON YOUR JOURNEY WITH GOD, NOT MINISTRY.

Make your goal in life not to succeed in ministry, but to know God. See your life as a journey with the Lord. Determine to have relationship with Him—to know Him more and more. Talk to Him and listen when He chooses to speak to you. God judges success not by your accomplishments but by your desire to have relationship with Him (see Jeremiah 9:23–24).

This relationship should become your anchor for life. If your focus is on success in ministry, then you will only find your worth in your achievement. The Bible says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition..." (Philippians 2:3 NIV). If your focus is on relationship with God, then you will not be shaken, whether there is success or whether you walk through failure. Even failure becomes a

tool to make you stronger in relationship with the Lord.

Out of relationship comes the anointing to do His will. We are not the living waters of the Holy Spirit. But we are carriers of Him. Jesus emphasized the importance of waiting for the Holy Spirit, who brings the power to do God's will (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–5). Make sure you are full of the power of God, before you go out to minister.

If your output becomes more than your infilling, you will eventually dry up spiritually. There is nothing worse than trying to minister when you are on empty. When you're running on empty, your ministry becomes a chore; you will lose your vision, joy and first love.

Never minister to people out of dry obligation. This will make you bitter and offended. It will take away your love for those you are ministering to. If you find you are becoming critical, if you are losing the joy of the journey, then you must get away and spend time renewing your relationship with the Lord and being filled to overflowing again. Jesus set us the example in this (Mark 1:35; Acts 10:38).

2. INVEST IN PEOPLE, NOT MINISTRY WORK.

Choose to make an investment of your life in people. Love people with God's love. Instruct and correct them, but allow them the freedom to make mistakes as they learn and love them through it. Bring people alongside you as you minister. Teach them to fall in love with Jesus first, and then to love people.

I love the story of Peter walking on the water with Jesus. Peter was doing great! He was experiencing the miraculous. Then he lost focus and began to sink. But the Bible says: "Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him," (Matthew 14:31).

God spoke to me one time when I was preaching about this. He said: "I didn't let Peter drown. I could have left him and gotten someone else from the boat that looked more promising, but I didn't. Don't let those people drown who are like Peter in ministry."

Also realize that people are going to misunderstand you and hurt you sometimes. But if you are maintaining a fresh relationship with the Lord, then He will give you healing and love for those people.

Jesus got His directions from the Father and daily "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Make it your goal to do good to someone every day. Obtain your fulfillment not from people's response to you but in the fact that you have pleased God by obeying Him. Then you will have joy in ministry.

3. DON'T LOSE YOUR IDENTITY IN TITLES.

Know who you are and enjoy being yourself. Learn to have some fun along the way. Take time weekly to do something you enjoy. Take your titles off when you enter your house and when you enter the presence of the Lord.

Let your children see that the same man who stands

to preach the Word of God is also a loving father that can wrestle with them on the floor and pray with them about their concerns at home. Let them see that the same woman who preaches with great anointing is also a tender, kind and loving mother to them at home. Come before God as that little child (Matthew 18:1–3).

"As you walk this journey with the Lord, seek out what you can pass on as a legacy to the next generation. Let your life and your testimony cause the next generation to thirst for Him more."

4. BUSYNESS IS NOT SUCCESS.

Success is walking with the Lord in relationship, and in co-operation with His plan—being used by Him to fulfill His purpose. Don't get ahead of God's plan and His timing. It is one thing to know His plan. It is another thing to discern His timing. It is yet another thing to gain understanding in how to carry out His will. Remember always: relationship is primary, and then ministry is the natural overflow.

5. EVALUATE AND RE-EVALUATE WHAT YOU ARE BUILDING.

Nebuchadnezzar built a golden image of himself to be worshipped. It was a shiny, glittering, golden symbol of all the king's achievements. King Nebuchadnezzar's image was impressive but today it is gone.

Jesus sat at a well dug hundreds of years before by Jacob. Jacob's well was not glitzy but it was full of water long after it had been dug and can still be seen today. There, Jesus met a broken woman who needed to experience the taste of His living water.

The Lord once asked me: "What are you building that I can use hundreds of years from now to reveal myself to the hurting, broken and lost?" We must ask ourselves "Am I building something that will last for the Kingdom of God, or am I just busy making a temporary monument to myself?"

Determine to live life in such a manner that you finish well. As you walk this journey with the Lord, seek out what you can pass on as a legacy to the next generation. Let them hear again and again how God brought you through every situation. Let your life and your testimony cause the next generation to thirst for Him more.

Our prayer must always be, "Lord, let them know You and walk in even more freedom and power. May they be continue to build the Kingdom of God with You." □



Photo by Vitaly Vitorsky

SIX THINGS THAT BLOCK THE SPIRIT'S POWER

Are some people in your church struggling to be filled with the Spirit? You must remove the blockages.



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 Sonshine Conference.

Earlier this year after I had preached at a church in central California, a young man came to the altar to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. He was eager to go deeper spiritually. Someone prayed for him for a while, but nothing happened.

I walked over to the young man a few minutes later and told him I would pray for him some more after the meeting was dismissed. I've learned that sometimes there are blockages that can prevent people from receiving the fullness of the Spirit, so I always try to discern what must be moved out of the way.

In this guy's case, his heart was in a great deal of pain because his father had abandoned his family. He wanted God to baptize him with the Spirit, but the pain of rejection was like a gaping wound that needed urgent

attention. As soon as I began to address this problem, he began sobbing in my arms.

After we prayed about his father issues, and he got the healing he needed, he quickly received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A fresh joy filled his heart and a new heavenly language began pouring out of his mouth. I encouraged him to pray in tongues for a while as he received the Spirit's anointing.

I love to see people experience Pentecost. But in many Pentecostal churches, there are people who have never received this blessing because they have blockages in their hearts. Here are some of the most common reasons people don't receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit:

1. DOUBT OR INTELLECTUAL PRIDE.

In the 1960s a journalist named John Sherrill decided to write a book discrediting the phenomenon of speaking in tongues. But after he interviewed countless people about this experience, his doubts were shattered and he was baptized in the Holy Spirit himself. His book, *They Speak With Other Tongues*, became a Christian classic. Spiritual experiences cannot be figured out with the mind. To receive the Spirit's infilling you must let go of your intellectual arguments and display childlike faith (see Matt. 18:2-4).

2. RELIGIOUS TRADITION.

I knew an Episcopal priest who was filled with the Holy Spirit in the 1970s in New York City. He was excited about the new vitality he felt in his faith—and thrilled that his wife had experienced a physical healing. But when he shared his testimony with his bishop, he was told he was crazy! And the bishop referred him to a psychiatrist! Religious people who are locked into “the way we’ve always done it” find it hard to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit. You must be willing to break free from tradition.

“You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if you are full of yourself. Some people have not surrendered their plans, finances, relationships or time to God.”

3. FEAR OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

Some Christians grew up in denominations that taught against the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They were told that Pentecostals are all fanatics who go into trances, speak mindless gibberish and swing from chandeliers. Actually, the first disciples in the New Testament spoke in tongues and experienced miracles—yet their faith was not strange. It should be the norm! People who are afraid of God's supernatural power will struggle to receive it.

4. UNCONFESSED SIN.

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit can be “quenched” as well as “grieved” (1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30). Because He is so holy, our sinful habits and attitudes can cause Him to withdraw. This is why it's so important for us to walk in constant communion with God, and to be willing to repent quickly when we know we have sinned. Some people “stuff” their secret sins in the closets of their hearts. If you want to be filled with the Spirit, you must be willing to open those closets and invite the light of God's holiness into every dark corner of your life.

5. EMOTIONAL WOUNDS.

Like the young man I prayed for in California, some people are just too burdened with emotional baggage to be filled with the Spirit. Some have been abused, others weighted down by anxiety, others grieved or depressed. They need healing first. Like Lazarus on the day he was raised from the dead, they are bound by the grave clothes of the past, and they need to be unwrapped before they can experience God's full anointing (see John 11:44). Healing is often needed before a person can receive the blessing of Holy Spirit baptism.

6. AN UNYIELDED SPIRIT.

You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if you are full of yourself. Some people are too willful. They have not surrendered their plans, finances, relationships or time to God. They have their lives planned out and they don't want God interrupting their agendas. Yet God is looking to fill hearts that have been emptied and surrendered. Only the fully yielded can experience the fullness of His power.

If you want the people in your church to be full of the Holy Spirit, the blockages must be removed first. Let's pray that every hindrance is removed so they can experience a maximized Pentecost. □

DON'T CURSE THE TERRORISTS ... PRAY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST!



By RAY
BUCCIARELLI

RAY BUCCIARELLI is an IPHC missionary candidate. Ordained in the Ephesians 4 Network, he serves as the missions pastor at Faith Christian Church in Melvindale, Michigan. He and his wife, Kathy, have four children.

In recent months I have seen many who call themselves Christians spewing hatred toward Muslims because of the atrocities committed by groups like ISIS. It might seem understandable since it is especially difficult to hear about or even witness our brothers and sisters in Christ being brutally martyred.

There is no doubt that the persecution of the church is on the rise lately, and it does not appear to be diminishing. After learning about these murders, our flesh may want to cry out in retaliation, “Wipe them out!”

So, as the people of God, we need to ask ourselves what our response should be to all of this? At the end of the day, it is not about what we think or feel. Instead, it is all about what Jesus said.

Jesus told us: “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44 NKJV). Jesus did not stop there. He goes on to say that by doing this, we will be children of the Father and not like the pagans. Jesus also said when He was on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34 NKJV).

In God's divine mercy, He hopes that all will be saved. He also knows that all men can come to know Him in spite of their sinful history.

There once was a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus. We can read a specific account of him in the beginning Acts 8. Saul had just consented to the stoning of Stephen. He was hunting down men and women and throwing them in prison for following Jesus.

Saul was a religious man and he truly believed that what he was doing was right as he caused havoc in the church and scattered all the believers in his path. Most likely, Saul was similarly feared in his day, as ISIS is today. However, our God worked a greater purpose in that persecution for both Saul and for the Church.

The scriptures record something very beautiful about this that brings hope. It says, "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts 8:4).

The great news is that Saul, shortly after this event, had a life-transforming encounter with Jesus. Saul's whole mentality, existence, and purpose changed. He became an apostle to the Gentiles and was known by his Roman name Paul when he began to minister to them.

The letters he wrote to encourage and strengthen the early churches make up a good portion of the New Testament. What a miraculous story of redemption—a persecutor of Christians helped to establish the very church he once tried to crush!

Last year in Kuwait City, I had the amazing privilege to meet and train hundreds of believers who had escaped deep persecution at the hands of ISIS in Iraq and Syria. They now found themselves in Kuwait as homeless refugees.

It seems almost ironic, but they recited the very words that were once written by Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians: "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always

carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you." (2 Corinthians 4:8–12 NKJV).

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying I believe it is acceptable that these atrocities are happening. I am not saying that we should not stand by our persecuted brothers and sisters, especially in prayer.

I am saying that God has a plan in the persecution and His Kingdom is advancing. God is not taken off guard by these events; He is able to weave them into His redemptive plan—just as He did with Paul.

The words of these believers impacted me and gave me such a new, fresh perspective. I believe God is ready to raise great leaders up from among radicals who will have a vision of Jesus. It may sound different today than in the days of old.

Jesus might call out: "Abu, Abu. Why do you persecute me?" This is actually already happening. Thousands of Muslims are having dreams and visions of Jesus. Even though the believers are being scattered, they are preaching the Word everywhere they go. Their persecutors are beginning to believe, and the church is being established in our generation like in the book of Acts.

We must love the lost. We must forgive them for the sins they commit in ignorance—they do not know what they are doing! Lost people do very bad things. It does not matter if it's in Syria, Iraq, China or North Carolina. I will say it again; lost people do very bad things. As your brother in Christ, I am asking you to join me in praying for these lost persecutors.

Here are five simple prayer points for the Muslim world:

- **PRAY** that the scattered believers would remain strong and continue to preach the gospel everywhere they go.

"We must love the lost. We must forgive them for the sins they commit in ignorance—because they don't know what they are doing!"

- **PRAY** that Jesus would continue to reveal himself through dreams and visions to Muslim people.
- **PRAY** that the Kingdom would continue to advance in the darkest places on earth.
- **PRAY** that the persecuted believers would have the boldness of Ananias to take in those who are seeking Jesus (Acts 9:10–19).
- **PRAY** that we would obtain a new perspective toward the current global persecution of Christians and respond in His love and forgiveness.

If you and your church would like to know more about how to understand Islam and how to effectively witness to Muslims, please feel free to contact me personally at ray@reach1040.org.

See you at the altar! □