

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

We Prayerfully Value JUSTICE

BY DOUG BEACHAM

Understanding the Foundation of God's Justice

BY DR. FRANK TUNSTALL

The Very Personal Reason Why I Am Pro-Life

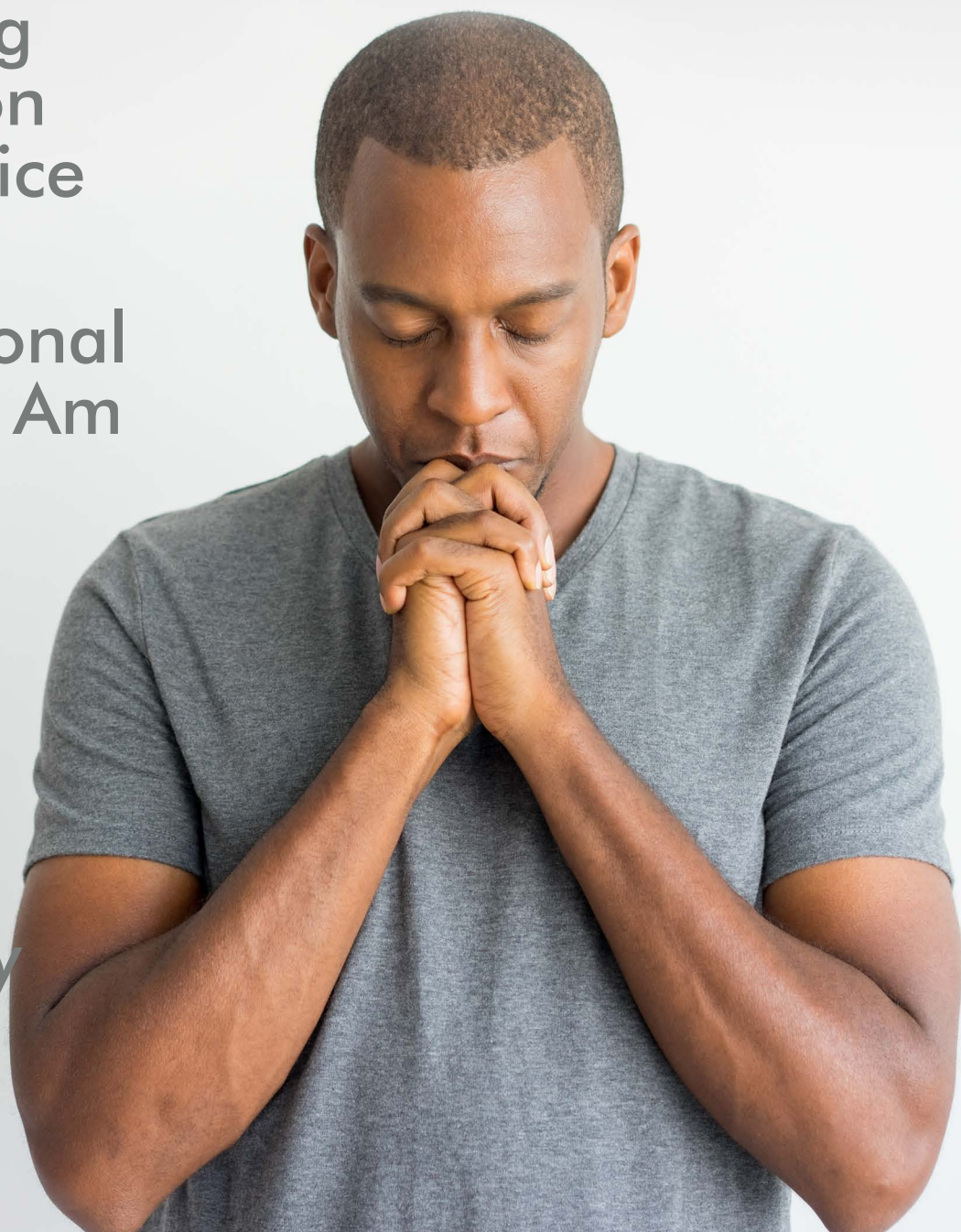
BY ARLETTE REVELLS

Set Your GPS for Your Best Year Ever

BY J. LEE GRADY

Are You Ready For a Season of Miracles?

BY JEFF FARMER



OUR THEME FOR 2019: We Prayerfully Value Justice



To be faithful to God, our movement must be willing
to speak for the oppressed.



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](#).

In 2019, the IPHC turns its attention to one of the most important and challenging of our seven core values: Justice. It is important because God's nature, our sinful experience and our treatment of others must be addressed. Thus Micah 6:8 speaks so powerfully to us: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Justice is a challenging topic because it is confrontational and controversial. Justice challenges our attitudes, actions and prejudices—as well as our sense of right and wrong. Justice has political implications that often divide us. Throughout history we "justify" our divergent political philosophies, agendas and policies. Christian unity and witness often fall short due to differing views of what it means to follow Jesus as Lord, and the political ramifications of such views.

In our divided world, IPHC leaders must speak to our churches and to our culture from the standpoint of what the Bible says about justice. Over the next twelve months, we will examine justice as we listen to "voices" that speak to us in the Bible. We will hear the voices of the oppressed, the poor, the marginalized, the powerless and the vulnerable. Most importantly we will hear the voice of God.

In the first quarter of this year various articles will reflect on "A Voice in the Darkness – Is God Just?" In the spring our theme will be "A Voice in the Wilderness – Justice in the Old Testament." The summer we will focus on "A Voice to the Church – Justice in the New Testament." We conclude the year with "A Voice for Today – Our Responsibility."

We start this first quarter with "A Voice in the Darkness." The noise from social media and news outlets is like a cacophony that blocks out any sense of silence, clarity or patience. It is moral chaos in a world that has intentionally rejected divine revelation. The irony is that while rejecting scriptural truth, we still blame God for the

evils of this world.

All of us have these questions: *Is there no justice? Why does God allow suffering? Why is life so unfair? Where is God if He really exists? How can God be just and yet violence continue in His name? How does God justify His sinful creatures?*

These are legitimate questions. The very fact that we ask them confirms that we know something is terribly wrong. We know there must be an answer.

In early December I saw the evidence of our fallen, unjust and callous sinful condition. I visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. Our guide, speaking with a broken voice, showed us the memorial tree for Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. He shared how Wallenberg's brave efforts saved his grandmother and mother from the dark night that fell over Europe in the 1930s and 40s. The indescribable horrors of that era continue to cast darkness over our thinking about God and justice.

Throughout history spiritual darkness has manifested itself in the realities of daily life. The Hebrew prophet Micah ministered the Word of God in such a time. In the period 750-700 B.C. Micah, along with Isaiah, delivered the Word to the southern kingdom of Judah. It was the time of the rise of the Assyrian Empire and threats against both Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel. Both prophets spoke warnings to Judah

and Israel and pleaded with them to repent. The northern kingdom was destroyed in 722 by the Assyrians as God used them to exact divine punishment on their idolatry and injustice.

The setting of Micah 6 is God's lawsuit against His people. God compelled the Israelites to appear with their complaint against Him, and in turn "the Lord has

a complaint against His people" (6:2). The divine complaint is directly related to Judah, as their sin is like the injustice of Ahab's corrupt reign some 100 years earlier (Micah 6:10-16; 1 Kings 16:29 - 1 Kings 22:39).

Ahab's sin was greed. He was willing to lie and murder in order to fulfill his lust (1 Kings 21).

The three main sections of Micah begin with the word "hear" (Micah 1:2; 3:1; 6:1). Given Isaiah and Micah's warning against idolatry and injustice, one cannot help but discern the fundamental creed of Israel: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one"

(Deuteronomy 6:1). The imperative "hear" means that someone is speaking. That someone is the voice of God.

God's voice calls us to the type of true worship that leads to transformed lives. The apostle Paul's warning in Romans 12:1-2 is also instructive. We so easily fall into doing the motions of public worship, but we remain conformed to the

"Over the next twelve months, we will examine justice ... We will hear the voices of the oppressed, the poor, the marginalized, the powerless and the vulnerable. Most importantly we will hear the voice of God."

Encourage

A Place of Hope. A People of Promise.

January 2019

Vol. 6 No. 1

Editor in Chief

Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr.

Publisher

International Pentecostal Holiness Church

Executive Editor

J. Lee Grady

Communications Director /

Associate Editor

Janese Bennett

Copy Editor

Deborah Delk Grady

Discipleship Ministries

Thomas H. McGhee

World Missions Ministries

J. Talmadge Gardner

Evangelism USA

Garry Bryant

Clergy Development /

World Intercession Network

Lou Shirey

Encourage is published monthly except in July and December by the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, P.O. Box 12609, Oklahoma City, OK 73157. Digital subscriptions are available free of charge by subscribing at iphc.org/connect. Images courtesy of thinkstockphotos.com unless otherwise noted.

world. Whether on Sunday or in our private devotional lives, we are meant to be transformed by the power of the Word and the presence of the Living God.

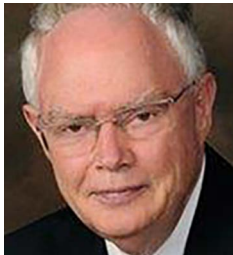
The prophetic call continually challenges us to live consistent with acts of worship of the Living God. Micah told us that true worship must include justice, mercy and humility (6:8). God's will is not hidden. He says: "He has shown you, O man, what is good."

God is clear about what holiness demands. We **do** justice. We **love** mercy. We **walk humbly** before God. Justice is done in relation to others; mercy flows from genuine love of God and others; and **humility** erases our pride and arrogance.

May this year be a season of transformative justice as we hear the voice of God. ☐

The Foundations of **GOD'S JUSTICE**

We will never understand God's justice if we first do not understand what happened on the cross of Calvary.



BY FRANK G.
TUNSTALL

DR. FRANK G. TUNSTALL is an ordained minister in the IPHC. He has served as bishop of the Heartland Conference, as well as the pioneer pastor of Northwest Christian Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In addition, he has served as president of Southwestern Christian University and editor in chief of IPHC publications. He and his wife, Lu, live in Yukon, Oklahoma. You can follow his blog at [Great Command Ministries](#).

My wife and I lost our youngest child at age 29 in a car wreck twelve years ago. The pain we experienced was terrible beyond words and has never fully gone away, but we did not blame God. We know He is just. Please let me explain.

Our understanding of the justice and fairness of God must be anchored in God's character, especially attributes such as His holiness, His love and His grace. Holiness means no blight can be found in God's character. This theme is woven throughout the entire Bible. "I the Lord your God am holy," the Lord told Israel through Moses (Leviticus 19:2; see also Rev. 15:4).

Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of the holiness of God (John 8:46). He achieved the provision for our holiness with His death on the cross. In doing so, Jesus opened the path for all people worldwide to approach our holy God.

The love of God is portrayed with the word *agape*, which implies that God will do what is best for us, as only He knows what is best, and will do it even though we do not deserve it or even want it. For example, parents routinely try to give their children vegetables that are best for them, even when they aren't sweet to the taste!

"God is love," the apostle John wrote in 1 John 4:8. "God commends his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8; John 3:16). The love of God manifests itself in grace, meaning the favor of God. God is good and merciful. He is "longsuffering with us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). His plan for our salvation is all about the grace that does us favors.

The closer we get to Jesus' manger, and His Cross, and His empty tomb, the fuller our understanding of His all sufficient grace becomes. Paul wrote, "God is

able to make all grace abound toward you" (2 Corinthians 9:8; 12:9).

God's forgiveness is the crown jewel of the gospel message. "If we confess our sins," John wrote, "he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us..." (Ephesians 1:7-8 ESV).

JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

Fairness is best understood as a synonym of justice. In the creation of man, the God who was just did what was best for us by giving us a free will. God did not want robots with whom He could have no fellowship. For freedom to be truly free, we must be able to say "Yes!" or "No!" even to God.

But then we must also live with the consequences of our free will. Our forefathers all said "No!" and all people since have followed in their footsteps. Worldwide consequences followed. People exchanged God's righteousness for their self-righteousness.

We think we know what is best. If God had left us in that condition, however, we would all spend eternity in hell because "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." But, thank God, all who repent are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:4).

Jesus hanging on the cross is the greatest portrait the world will ever see of God acting in our best interests (**agape love**). Since Jesus loves us this much, should we blame God for the consequences of sin in the world? Of course not.

Jesus hanging on His cross also shows the greatest portrait ever unveiled of the raw evil in the world. Satan himself, the very epitome of evil (worse than Hitler or Stalin), appeared in the Upper Room at the Last Supper. He entered Judas, who followed through and betrayed His Savior (see Luke 22:3).

In the face of this kind of gut-wrenching evil, Jesus said to His disciples: "The prince of this world... has no hold over me" (John 14:30). Jesus **gave** His life; Satan could not take it. Thank God! The price Jesus paid for our salvation was greater than even death by crucifixion, the worst evil Satan could devise. Jesus took the consequences due to me; He took yours too.

The curse of God on mankind for his rebellion against God was so great it took Jesus' death on the cross to atone for all sin and offer salvation to the whole world. Since Jesus was willing to pay that unimaginable price, should I blame God when trouble, even raw evil, knocks at my door? Surely not; instead, we blame Satan, the source of all evil.

Not only is God just, He is also fair. King David turned to God in genuine repentance after his sin with Bathsheba, and God forgave him. David's testimony was that God is "proved right when [He] speaks and justified when [He] judges" (Psalm 51:4). Yes, justice and fairness are synonyms in heaven's vocabulary.

"Since Jesus was willing to pay that unimaginable price, should I blame God when trouble, even raw evil, knocks at my door? Surely not."

"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:2). And "we are sure the judgment of God is according to truth," making it fair (Romans 2:2). The song in heaven of Moses and the Lamb includes the refrain, "Just and true [*or fair*] are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3).

God is the creator and sustainer of all and it necessarily means in an evil world He **must** protect His creation, including His followers (John 17:11, 17). And He does.

In God's righteous justice He has decreed sin's penalty: "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). He "will not at all acquit the wicked (Nahum 1:3). This is a certainty because "the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Psalm 145:17).

There is no perverting justice with God (Job 8:3). A point can be reached in man's rebellion, however, that God is acting in a person's best interests by turning him over to the eternal consequences of his choices (Romans 1:24-28). Such a person would surely be miserable and out of place in God's heaven.

The justice of God could, however, accept a substitute payment for the penalty of sin: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. So Christ was offered..." (Hebrews 9:27-28). Jesus is both just (or fair) and the justifier of all who believe Him (Romans 3:26).

Jesus' crucifixion also shows evil things happen to all, including even the perfectly righteous. Because sin is in the world, life is out of balance and pain and disappointment often come with senseless random. We live in a fallen world in which life is neither fair nor just, but we place no blame at the feet of our God who loves us with perfect love (Romans 8:18).

Ultimately, eternal life with God in heaven will balance all tragedies and prove Jesus does all things well (Mark 7:37).

The baby that Mary wrapped in swaddling clothes and snuggled to her bosom became heaven's priceless jewel. He made the gospel such good news. At the cross of Jesus, the richness of holiness, the mercy of love and grace, and the fairness and justice of God met together in divine embrace. Calvary satisfied the requirements of them all. □



The Very Personal Reason Why I Am **PRO-LIFE**

I suppressed the memory of my
abortion for 10 years. Today I am
happy to share how God forgave me.



BY ARLETTE
REVELLS

ARLETTE REVELLS is a writer, designer, business owner and public speaker. More than 20 years ago she founded Great Works Creation Company. She works with clients in many states and has received first place recognition for her graphic designs. She also runs a non-profit organization, ThreeInOne. Life with Arlette. A graduate of the IPHC's Emmanuel College, she is married to Lavon Revells, who also attended Emmanuel College. Arlette and Lavon are longtime members of Christian Life Worship Center, an IPHC congregation in Athens, Georgia. They have two adult children and 13 grandchildren. For more information about Arlette's ministry, email ArletteRevells15@gmail.com.

My husband and I had been happily married for three years. Lavon had recently graduated from the University of Georgia with a chemistry degree, and he had just started his first professional job. We had two beautiful children, and we loved showing off our babies! But then I discovered I was pregnant again. We faced what we considered a serious financial crisis.

The year was 1970. Back in those days, abortion seemed like a logical solution. I just viewed it as a form of birth control. After all, wasn't it just a cluster of cells in my womb?

But there was one problem. Abortion was not legal in Georgia at that time. So, six weeks into my pregnancy, my doctor gave us a referral, and we made an appointment at an abortion clinic in New York City.

I was impressed by the thrust of the jet engines as we took off from the Atlanta airport. The engines seemed to be symbolic of how we were taking charge of our lives. We arrived safely in New York and went to the clinic the following day.

As we entered the gloomy reception area, I saw a sad-looking young teenage girl sitting next to what appeared to be her mother. The girl had her head on her mother's shoulder. From time to time I think about her and wonder how she is doing. When my husband saw me come out of the procedure room, he was devastated by the look on my face.

We knew we had done something terribly wrong. However, we both felt a sense of relief. After all, we had a "new" beginning. That night we even

went to a couple of Broadway plays and enjoyed walking the snowy sidewalks.

But I will never forget the sound of the heavy glass door as it clanked shut behind us when we left the airport to drive back home. The door to a room in my heart also slammed shut.

Lavon and I didn't speak about that trip again.

Ten years later, the unexplainable happened. It was a Sunday morning. After church, a high school friend walked up and greeted my husband and asked, "How are you doing?" His next question was, "How many children do you have?"

My response surprised me—and Lavon.

"Three," I answered. It was as if my unexpected answer came from somewhere deep inside me. I saw three children. My husband looked at me with a concerned look and answered my friend, "No, we have two children."

I looked at Lavon and questioned why he would say two. Again, I said, "No, we have three." My husband jokingly said, "Sometimes two children can feel like three." Suddenly, I realized what I had done ten years earlier! I had aborted my third child.

My husband took care of the rest of the conversation and then escorted me to the car. I burst into tears after I got inside. On that day I finally began to mourn the loss of that third child. I was consumed with an uncontrollable grief. The mourning continued for weeks.

When I was around other people, I wore the mask of "everything's alright." No one knew the depths of my grief and remorse. I later learned that my husband was grieving as well.

But one day I heard words from a voice that changed everything. The tender sound of the Lord's voice was unmistakable. I had heard it many times before, but this time I heard words I never expected to hear: "Give me the empty blanket."

I suddenly saw what He saw: A musty, old, empty baby blanket. I responded quickly as I lifted my arms up and said, "Here is the empty blanket, Lord." I became sharply aware of God's presence again. God was offering to take the loss, the emptiness and the hurt caused by our mistakes. His forgiveness washed over me in that moment. He gave me healing instead of shame and guilt.

The Bible has every answer we need. One day as I was studying, Ecclesiastes 11:5 seemed to jump off the page. It says: "As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything."

This was my answer! This verse tells us that a living soul exists in the womb from the moment of conception.

I had suppressed my pain for so long. Even though I was ignorant of the cruel realities of abortion when I had the procedure in 1970, the guilt gnawed at me for a decade. It was as if I were pushing an air-filled balloon under water. Finally, it surfaced and exploded. The truth came out and I had to face it.

After God began to heal my heart, I began to sense that God wanted me to share my story to reach others. Yet my husband struggled with the thought of being so transparent. He even told me once: "We will never tell anyone about this."

Yet God began speaking to me from Proverbs 31:8, calling me to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. After a year of quietly writing, I approached my husband again. We sat in the same room where he had said we would never share this story. I read to him portions of what I had been writing. His reaction was different this time. He said, "Yes, I believe this is from God."

Statistics show that a surprisingly high percentage of women who consider abortion are church attenders. It is a difficult subject to address today, because abortion has become culturally acceptable. Yet I knew God was giving me the courage to speak out—not only for the unborn, but also for the women who face so much pain after ending their

pregnancies.

The Lord's mercy has been overwhelming to me. Our two children have married incredible mates and have given us 13 lovely grandchildren, all single births. I was privileged to witness the birth of all but three of them! And I heard the first cry of each one, each reminding me of the mercy of God.

From time to time I think about that

precious teenage girl I saw in the abortion clinic waiting room in New York. I wonder how long she struggled with the events of that day. I know that only God can heal her as He has healed me. God has truly shown me His heart for unborn life. And now, I have the opportunity to share alternatives to abortion with women who are in crisis situations.

The Lord has used my painful experience to offer hope to others. I have seen the reality of 2 Corinthians 1:4, which says, "He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us" (NLT).

God is merciful! My pain and emptiness are gone. I now feel pregnant with life, a feeling I didn't have for many years. My joy and privilege is to partner with the God of the Universe as He changes hearts. ■

"God has truly shown me His heart for unborn life. And now, I have the opportunity to share alternatives to abortion with women who are in crisis situations."

Set Your “GPS” for Your Best Year Ever

What do you want to accomplish in 2019?
Don't start the year without a plan.



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.

At the beginning of every New Year I always reassess my goals, sharpen my objectives and pray for God's blessing. I ask myself: What do I want God to accomplish in my life this year? How do I want to grow personally, in my relationships and in my career? In what ways do I need to expand or recalibrate my ministry? Then I seek the Lord to hear what He is saying to me about the next 12 months.

I call this exercise “resetting my GPS.” This exercise works for individuals as well as churches or other organizations. I encourage you to try it. Here's how it works:

G STANDS FOR “GOALS.”

People with goals have a sense of purpose, and they aren't easily distracted. On the other hand, those with no ambitions wander aimlessly. If you aim at nothing, you will surely hit it. Setting a goal is the first step toward success.

I see the power of goal setting in the life of the apostle Paul. He was motivated by a fiery passion to take the gospel to the Gentiles. In his lifetime he traveled on foot or by ship, chariot or horseback to what is now Turkey, Syria, Greece, Crete, Malta and Italy. His goal drove him forward.

He also set a goal to preach in Spain (see Rom. 15:24, 28). We don't know if he reached Spain or not, but that goal certainly stoked his zeal and motivated him to wake up every morning. When he wrote these words--“I press toward the goal to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14)—he was in chains in a Roman prison. Paul didn't let obstacles deter him.

There's a difference between a dream and a goal. Dreams can be elusive—always “somewhere out there”—if the dreamer never takes a first step. Your

most vital step is to write down your goal. State it clearly, and then aim at it. The prophet said in Habakkuk 2:2: "Write the vision, and make it plain on tablets, that he who reads it may run." You can't run toward your vision unless it is clearly articulated.

P STANDS FOR "PROPHETIC WORD."

For many years I've developed the habit of seeking the Lord for a word for the coming year. Sometimes God gives me a verse from the Bible. Other times I get a phrase or simply one word. As I was praying for 2018, for example, the Lord said, "Advance" and "Take possession," and He gave me the first chapter of Joshua. He also encouraged me to study the book of Joshua during the year.

You don't have to be a prophet to receive a personalized directive like this. God knows you, and He knows your future. He also knows the challenges you face and the storms that may come this year. Jeremiah 29:11 says: "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." God loves you. If you seek Him, He will speak a word to your heart.

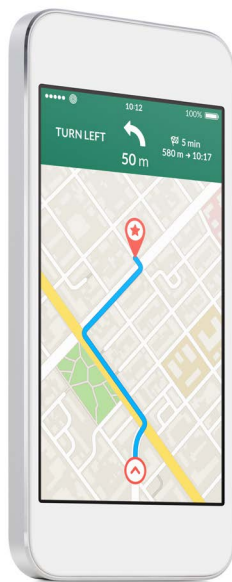
Once you receive that prophetic word, hold onto it no matter what happens. God gave Abraham and Sarah a promise about an heir, but it took 25 years before Isaac was born. God does not work according to your timetable; you must submit to His schedule. The prophetic word is certain; you can bank on it. It will fill your heart with the hope and encouragement you need to move forward, in spite of delays, setbacks, personal failures, relationship breakups, illness, job loss, miscarriages, deaths or disasters.

God spoke powerful words to the young Timothy—and then he became pastor of the church in Ephesus. I am sure it was not an easy assignment. He had to plow hard ground in a pagan city that was the central headquarters of goddess worship! Yet Paul urged Timothy to "fight the good fight" using "the prophecies previously made concerning you" (see 1 Tim. 1:18).

There are certain battles that require a prophetic promise. Those powerful words, spoken under the



"Your most vital step is to write down your goal. State it clearly, and then aim at it. ... You can't run toward your vision unless it is clearly articulated."



unction of the Holy Spirit, will become a weapon of war in your hand.

S STANDS FOR "SPECIAL PRAYER."

The most important part of resetting my spiritual GPS is setting aside time to pray. I call it "special" prayer because it's beyond the norm of

my daily routine. I feel most prepared for a New Year if I can unplug and devote a block of time to commit my plans and goals to the Lord.

Setting goals is a great step toward success, but goals are nothing if God did not inspire them. Proverbs 16:9 says: "A man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps." When we take our goals to God in prayer, we allow Him to override them if they are misguided; we also give Him permission to expand our goals if they are limited. We bow before God's throne and tell Him that we only want His plans, not ours.

Proverbs 16:3 says: "Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established." You can facilitate special prayer in several ways. You may want to fast for a few days; you might go away for a weekend prayer retreat; or you could stay up a few nights and have a prayer vigil. Some churches also organize special days of corporate prayer at the beginning of the year.

You don't have to adopt the same prayer routine every year. I like to mix things up so that I don't get into a religious rut. One year I invited several pastors to my home for two days of special prayer together.

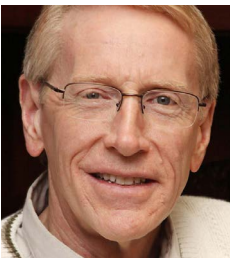
The important thing is to take your plans to God and ask for His grace, power and strength to overshadow you during the next season. Ask for big things. Seek God's wisdom and strategy. Knock on heaven's door for His miracles. Then wait on God. He has promised fresh strength to those who seek Him.

Expect God to speak to your heart. He will reveal His plans, rekindle your dreams, calm your fears and stir your faith so you can experience your best year ever. □



Are You Ready for A **SEASON** of **MIRACLES?**

**We must teach about the gifts of the Holy Spirit
if we want to see the supernatural.**



**BY JEFF
FARMER**

JEFF FARMER is president of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America, an association of leaders from various denominations, networks and parachurch ministries. The PCCNA represents over 40,000 churches in the USA, Canada and Mexico. Previously, Jeff served as president of Open Bible Churches in Des Moines, Iowa, for 16 years, and president of Eugene Bible College for seven years. Jeff and his wife of 51 years, Ramona, have three children and nine grandchildren. Today Jeff enjoys treasure hunting, fishing, and antiques—and just about any sport. This article was adapted from the new book *Miracle Invasion* by Dean Merrill. For more information about the book or about PCCNA, go to pccna.org.

I witnessed my first miracle in 1963, when my father was instantaneously healed from debilitating back pain. I will never forget the day he started shouting, “I’m healed! I’m healed!” in our kitchen. This was the same dad who normally had to be carried to bed. Yet that day he was doing jumping jacks and deep knee bends!

More than 50 years have now passed. Since then I have witnessed more miracles and manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit than I can remember. And every time God displays his power, I am humbled and awed to see beyond the veil.

Yet today I am concerned that many Christians—even those who wear the Pentecostal label—have lost faith for miracles. Many of us don’t even expect God to do supernatural things anymore. And fewer churches actually teach about the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture is clear that God does miracles—and that He wants to express His power through us. Some miracles God initiates by himself without any involvement of people. He dispatches an angel to save a life, or ignites a desert bush into a fiery ball without it being consumed, or strikes down the persecutor of the infant church with a flash of lightning that renders him blind. These are sovereign acts of God.

Other miracles occur when men, women or even children step out in bold reliance on God’s Word. The Holy Spirit anoints them with a *charisma* (grace-gift) and sets in motion a supernatural event that is beyond any power or resource of mankind. The result is completely unexplainable to the natural mind.

1 Corinthians 12 highlights the nine gifts of the Spirit. When one of them is in operation, it is nothing short of a miracle. Here is a brief primer on the gifts of the Spirit.

1. Word of Knowledge. The word of knowledge is a supernatural, Holy Spirit revelation of information known by God. It does not draw upon knowledge acquired by academic study or experience. It is knowledge miraculously revealed to one of God's children by the Holy Spirit.

God could, for instance, reveal where a missing person is, or the location of something lost. He might reveal the location of an event or the cause of a sickness. The word of knowledge is supernatural insight revealing specific information about a person, place, or thing, and may come to the believer through a mental impression, picture or vision.

2. Word of Wisdom. The word of wisdom is supernatural revelation by the Spirit of how to rightly apply knowledge. The word of wisdom has been employed, for example, to warn of approaching danger or conflict, to make known a divine call to service in the kingdom, to give counsel in problem solving or personal guidance in special circumstances. The tandem gifts of the word of knowledge and word of wisdom can have significant impact in building the church as they supply supernatural understanding of the will and purpose of God.

3. Discerning of spirits. This gift provides supernatural insight into the unseen realm of spirits. There are three kinds of spirits: divine (heavenly), satanic (devilish), and human. By this gift, a believer may know the origin of any spiritual manifestation.

This gift is much more than keen perception or psychological insight. It often partners with one of the power gifts (working of miracles, faith, gifts of healings) to deliver people who are afflicted, tormented or oppressed by the devil. It also discloses error and unmask the servants of Satan.

4. Faith. This gift is different from saving faith (Acts 16:31). Unlike the other gifts that represent miraculous *acts* of the Spirit, the gift of faith is more a *process* of the Spirit. It is a supernatural impartation aligned with the will of God (and often spoken by a servant of God) that shall come to pass in the future. Through this gift, the Holy Spirit gives resolve and power to believe for the impossible in the face of difficult circumstances.

5. Gifts of healings. These gifts (plural in the original Greek) are for supernatural healings of diseases and infirmities. Healings through these gifts are by the power of the Holy Spirit,

without human aid. They do not imply assistance or intervention by medical professionals, however grateful we are for them.

The Lord Jesus had compassion on the sick and exercised these gifts frequently throughout his public ministry. He also commanded his disciples to "heal the sick" (Matt. 10:8). In Scripture these gifts operated in various ways, either through a word, by the laying on of hands, by an apostle's shadow passing by, with a piece of fabric or by anointing with oil.

6. Working of miracles. A miracle is an event that contradicts known scientific, natural laws, which are temporarily suspended because of a supernatural act of God. "The working of miracles," according to Bible teacher Fuchsia

"Yet today I am concerned that many Christians—even those who wear the Pentecostal label—have lost faith for miracles."



Pickett, is literally rendered "operations of supernatural powers" in the Greek.

Clearly, all nine gifts of the Spirit are miracles. So what is unique about this gift? It refers exclusively to acts of power, and would exclude demonstrations of power identified in the other gifts. A healing miracle, for instance, is a case of the gifts of healing. With the working of miracles, however, the Spirit gives authority to a servant of the Lord to display explosions of God's supernatural omnipotence for the purpose of intervening and counteracting

earthly and evil forces.

7. Different kinds of tongues. This gift does not refer to the prayer language given to a believer at the moment he or she is baptized in the Holy Spirit. When uttering a prayer language, a person is speaking to God, not people, and therefore the tongue does not require interpretation. On the other hand, the gift of the Spirit referenced in 1 Corinthians 12 is given for the edification of the church and must be interpreted in the language of those present.

The gift of speaking in tongues is a supernatural utterance, prompted by the Spirit, in a language never learned by the speaker, and not understood by the speaker. In most cases it is not understood by the hearer. Jesus acknowledged this gift for "those who believe" (Mark 16:17). Edification is always the test for this gift's proper use.

8. Interpretation of Tongues. Interpretation of tongues is the follow-up interpretation of an utterance in tongues in a public service. The interpreter does not understand the exact words of the tongue spoken, and hence is not *translating* what was said, but rather *interprets* by the Spirit what God is communicating in the message.

9. Prophecy. Scripture specifically commands us to "desire" or "covet" this gift, and states plainly everyone may prophesy (1 Cor. 14:31). Prophecy is an in-the-moment, unrehearsed, divinely inspired, supernatural, anointed message. Many Christians unfortunately fail to distinguish between the office of the prophet and the gift of prophecy.

Both are referred to as gifts in Scripture, but the office is an ongoing gift of Christ to his church, and the spiritual endowment is a gift of the Spirit to an individual. To give an utterance with prophetic anointing is altogether different than giving an educated prediction. Prophecy is for the purpose of edification, exhortation, and comfort. It is a Spirit-empowered declaration that could include prediction of the future (foretelling) as well as proclamation of divine purpose (forth-telling). All true prophecy exalts Jesus and edifies the church.

My prayer is that we will return to the power of Pentecost. If you want to see this in your church, teach on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and expect to see an explosion of New Testament miracles! 