

**HELPING PARENTS MAXIMIZE THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH  
OF CHILDREN AT FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD  
IN WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA**

*Elizabeth B. Ashby*

Christian parents face a challenging task in helping their children develop a relationship with God and apply His principles to their daily lives. Today's postmodern culture displays little tolerance for Christian beliefs and values, and many parents feel frustrated and inadequate in helping their children grow spiritually. The need for Christian parents to develop deliberate strategies to help their children reach their God-ordained potential is acute. What parents neglect to teach influences children as strongly as what they do teach. Parents must strive to build the spiritual framework children need to develop as spiritual beings. A child's eternal destiny and fulfilling God's purpose and plan should be the priority for every parent.

In light of these realities, this project sought—through a seminar at First Assembly of God in Winston Salem, North Carolina—to help parents understand how children develop spiritually. The seminar took place within the context of the Young Families Sunday school class between August 3, 2008, and September 28, 2008. It identified key factors that affect the spiritual growth of children, provided strategies for parents to use to help their children grow in relationship with the Lord, and also presented practical ideas and relevant activities for parents to help make God's Word relevant and fun for children. Designed to equip parents with the knowledge, understanding, resources, and confidence to encourage and maximize the spiritual growth of their children, this project focused on key factors necessary for building within a child a biblical foundation on which all choices and life experiences center.

The seminar successfully achieved its purpose in building parents' skills and confidence and should be considered for use in other locations.

# **THE DYNAMIC ROLE OF A DOCTOR OF MINISTRY EDUCATION IN FACILITATING THE PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION OF PENTECOSTAL LEADERS**

*Mark T. Boucher*

In light of today's explosion of knowledge and the complexity of American culture, Pentecostal church leaders face the daunting challenge of making transformed disciples of Jesus Christ. To assure the development of healthy believers in the church, the leader must first become a healthy, growing disciple. Renewal and transformation in others requires a leader who willingly pursues and models personal transformation.

The specific objective of this project was to challenge pastors and church leaders to consider the dynamic role of the D.Min. program at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) in facilitating personal transformation. First, I developed a survey to gather information and testimonies from past D.Min. graduates. These overwhelmingly confirmed the positive effects of the D.Min. at AGTS in promoting personal and lasting change. Second, I challenged church leaders from the Southern New England District of the Assemblies of God (MA, RI, and CT) to consider a doctoral program at AGTS. Through a seminar combining personal testimony, AGTS course information, and the need for personal renewal, I endeavored to reveal to future participants the exciting potential of a D.Min. at AGTS. Results from the seminar evaluations showed that ninety-three percent of those who attended responded affirmatively to consider further investigation into a D.Min. degree at AGTS for their future.

Findings from the surveys and seminars indicated a strong correlation between lasting personal transformation and anointed education. As a result of God's transforming work in and through them, AGTS D.Min. graduates can serve as catalysts for transformation in the worldwide Pentecostal movement.

**A PILOT MODEL FOR COACHING SECOND- AND THIRD-GENERATION MEXICAN-AMERICANS AS YOUTH LEADERS  
IN SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI**

*George Cantu*

The Hispanic community is coming of age right at the time when futurists are saying that cultivating diversity and learning to live together on this small planet is the critical leadership issue of this time. Because diversity is the lifeblood of the Hispanic community, forging an identity has been an arduous and slow process. Identity and leadership are two areas critical to Hispanic leadership.

A two-month process of coaching emerging Hispanic youth leaders in Springfield, Missouri and the surrounding area of the Midwest Latin District was initiated for this project. These *Encuentros* (Encounters) addressed two areas vital to second- and third-generation Hispanic leaders: self-concept and leadership development applicable to the Hispanic ministry context.

The Hispanic church needs a concept of leadership based on its cultural makeup. Most leadership models focus on skills, techniques, and outcomes, rather than on relationships and community. The Hispanic leadership model envisioned for the Hispanics will focus on leaders' relationships to God and to their community—on the *being* aspect rather than on the *doing* aspect of leadership.

This project brought qualitative and quantitative growth to participants. Its design—multiple efforts aimed at these two critical areas of leadership—verified the need for a model of Hispanic leadership for Hispanic leaders in the Springfield, Missouri and its surrounding area. This coaching model is reproducible and will prove useful in Hispanic communities throughout the United States.

## **DEVELOPING YOUNG WOMEN FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

*Virginia A. Christel*

This project focused specifically on increasing leadership development and credentialing of female ministry students at Valley Forge Christian College (VFCC). But more generally, it addressed the problem of gender imbalance in church leadership.

In 2007, women accounted for only eighteen percent of the total number of credentialed ministers in the Assemblies of God in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The intervention proposed by this project sought to decrease this disproportion by intentionally preparing young women at an Assemblies of God college to be future leaders in the church.

A mentoring initiative, connecting female students with experienced women ministers in the Pennsylvania-Delaware (PennDel) District of the Assemblies of God, served as a most promising strategy for leadership development. By a survey of gifts and ministry callings, women ministers were paired with female students in mentoring relationships. Both the women ministers and the students received training in mentoring and met for mentoring sessions. In addition, women ministers from the PennDel district spoke at the Women in Ministry elective chapels at VFCC to provide further role models for other young women preparing for ministry.

As a result of the mentoring initiative, female students gained confidence as leaders, increased their awareness of personal gifts, and expanded their vision for ministry and openness to credentialing.

This project demonstrated the effectiveness of mentoring as a tool to prepare young women as leaders in the Church.

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<sup>1</sup>General Council of the Assemblies of God, "Summary AG Statistical Report," [http://ag.org/top/About/statistics/Statistical\\_Report\\_Summary/p3.pdf](http://ag.org/top/About/statistics/Statistical_Report_Summary/p3.pdf) (accessed February 22, 2009).

**BUILDING INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AMONG MISSIONARIES  
IN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD WORLD MISSIONS  
NORTHERN ASIA REGION**

*Beth Jeanine Davis*

Twenty-first century missionaries live in a unique world that combines unprecedented opportunities and monumental challenges. Mega cities, terrorism, and anti-Christian governments create cultural stress and social isolation. When asked about the nature of their greatest adjustment, however, many missionaries point to conflict and miscommunication.

Through biblical and psychological research, this project identified the best practices among interpersonal relationship skills. The project culminated in a three-day seminar within the framework of Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) to train first-term missionaries in the Northern Asia region in the knowledge and practice of interpersonal relationship skills. The seminar utilized a pretest and posttest instrument that measured the levels of change between the pre- and post- session knowledge of interpersonal relationship skills. The testing data confirmed that significant changes did occur among the seminar participants. After attending the seminar, participants indicated a strong awareness of the difference between healthy relationships and the danger signs for deteriorating relationships. They demonstrated measurable improvement on their ability to identify and practice the seminar's ten communication skills.

The evaluation process validated the need for interpersonal relationship training during a missionary's first term of service. This project produced a resource that will contribute to the effectiveness of AGWM efforts by strengthening bonds among missionaries, enhancing evangelism strategies, and reducing missionary attrition.

## **ALASKA THEOLOGICAL EXTENSION EDUCATION MODEL SEMINAR PRESENTATION**

*Tommy J. Davis*

For over ninety years, the Assemblies of God has had a ministry presence in the State of Alaska. However, a severe shortage of prepared ministry leaders for the Alaskan context remains. This shortage is especially acute in the remote areas—small towns and villages predominantly Alaska Native in population.

This project provides a solution to this problem by presenting a theological education by extension model to develop ministry leaders in their own cultural setting. It utilizes both an academic program and a practical component that upon completion will educationally qualify students for ordination with the Assemblies of God.

In an effort to raise awareness of the problem of the shortage of ministry leaders for Alaska and propose a culturally relevant implementation of theological extension in Alaska, this project model was presented in a seminar format to the faculty and administrative staff of American Indian College (AIC) in Phoenix, Arizona. The seminar addressed some of the hardships of pursuing ministry in Alaska, including the harshness of the climate, isolation, transportation problems, and cultural challenges.

Presentation of the seminar increased awareness and concern for the problem among the AIC faculty and administrative staff. The college is currently developing ministry leaders in the Native American community and has in place many of the components needed to establish an extension education program. They are amenable to the possibility of implementing this model, which could be very effective in meeting the ministry need in Alaska.

## **ETHICS FOR THE MILITARY OFFICER: TEACHING ETHICS AT THE MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER FOR ENGINEER OFFICERS**

*Peter O. Dissmore*

Upon entry into the United States Army, students are required to follow the ethical guidelines for their new profession. This requires them to understand basic ethical principles universal to humanity, as well as those specific to the profession of arms. American soldiers must understand the reasons for which they fight; otherwise, they may commit war crimes by going after the wrong objective. Tragedies, such as the Abu Ghraib scandal, are things the Army seeks to avoid. Such violations also increase the propensity for Post Traumatic Stress Disorders.

To address this need for ethical decision-making instruction, I, as the assigned chaplain, presented several class sessions on Ethical Decision-Making to over 1600 lieutenants and captains at the Maneuver Support Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri between August 2005 and February 2009. I taught monthly classes to the lieutenants attending the Engineer Basic Officer Leadership Course and quarterly classes to the captains attending the Engineer Captains Career Course. Instruction focused on understanding how each person derives his or her ethical principles and on the ethical decision-making model as described in the army regulations, especially for a combat environment where killing may be required. Though the course content is presented from a secular perspective, it was enhanced from the project's biblical-theological literature, focusing on a possible clash of values. It also reviewed the general literature relevant to combat and the Just War Theory. Following the Just War principles helps the soldier to fight better during the war and live at peace following the war. Assessment of the project required the students to use the ethical decision-making process in selected practical exercise scenarios. During the span of this study I observed an increased understanding of ethical principles and the ability to make tough ethical decisions for combat.

## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A BIBLICALLY INTEGRATED COURSE FOR A MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

*Timothy D. Moyers*

A relative revolution in the cognitive sciences has occurred. This journey into the brain has prompted both theologians and psychologists to reexamine many of their assumptions regarding emotion. This project affirmed the theological proclamation that humans are made in God's image. More specifically, it examined the challenge of integrating a biblical worldview and psychological science into an understanding of how emotion is utilized and managed within human nature.

The purpose of this project was to develop a biblically integrated introductory course in Emotional Intelligence for graduate students in Clinical Psychology at Vanguard University of Southern California in Costa Mesa, California. The project had five phases: (1) an investigation into the theology of emotion, (2) a literature review in the fields of emotion, intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence, (3) the construction of an introductory course in Emotional Intelligence for the graduate students, (4) presentation of this course in a one-semester format, and (5) measurement of the course effectiveness.

The findings of this project affirmed its effectiveness in instruction. Participants in the course reported individual change, professional growth, and increased awareness of emotional management.

**JERICHO COMMISSION: A CHRIST-BASED REENTRY PROGRAM  
ANSWERING THE TRANSITIONAL DIFFICULTIES  
OF CHRISTIAN EX-OFFENDERS**

*Michael L. Reighard*

The United States incarcerates more of its citizens than any other country in the world. Of those inmates released from incarceration, two-thirds reoffend and are rearrested.<sup>2</sup> Addressing this recidivism problem will considerably reduce the incarceration dilemma and must therefore become of greater concern to the Church.

This project, through the ministry of Jericho Commission,<sup>3</sup> provided a way for the church and local community to address the recidivism problem. Through the creation of a program of support and assistance centered on recruiting and training church members and local community organizations to work together, ex-offenders can be given the support they need for a successful reentry process. As a central hub of information and support, Jericho Commission resources its partners in ministry as they help Christian ex-offenders in their pursuit of jobs, housing, education, or other life necessities—as well as helping ex-offenders integrate more fully into the life of the local church.

While the statistics necessary to determine reduced recidivism will take more time than the scope of this project allows, initial assessment of the program indicates its success as a model that can be used in any local community. The creation of a community based reentry team also provides accountability for Christian ex-offenders and gives them a way to show society that two-thirds of ex-offenders need not return to prison within three years.

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<sup>2</sup>“In a 15 State Study, Over Two Thirds of Released Prisoners were Rearrested within 3 Years,” U.S. Department of Justice, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/reentry/recidivism.htm> (accessed March 7, 2006).

<sup>3</sup>A pilot reentry program for Christian ex-offenders in Springfield, Missouri. Ex-offenders who do not want to follow Christ’s teachings can be better served in secular institutions.

## **REVITALIZATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE CONTEXT OF HISPANIC MINISTERS IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

*Alvaro Maximiliano Rivera*

Many Christian leaders leave ministry every year. Among their reasons are low income, personal impropriety, and stagnation. The third condition mentioned has been described as when a person becomes stuck, dull, and unproductive, finding the work of ministry a burden rather than the joy it once was. Stress and burnout are frequently associated with stagnation. Ministerial stress has various sources, but a lack of personal healthy boundaries is largely to blame. Delimitations are needed to maintain a balanced life. Clear priorities must be established, allowing adequate time to be spiritually refreshed on a daily basis. Healthy relationships and reduction of conflict must be promoted.

Stressors common to all ministry are amplified for Hispanic ministers in the United States due to the other issues they face, such as immigration, cultural adaptation, language acquisition, diversity within the Hispanic-American culture itself, and low economic status. This project contended that Hispanic Christian leaders can overcome stagnation and reach a state of revitalization, so their ministry call can continue to be fulfilled.

The three main components for renewing Christian leaders are: (1) learning related competencies of Emotional Intelligence (EI), such as assertiveness, boundary-setting, and conflict resolution, (2) practicing classic spiritual disciplines, and (3) encouraging Church organizations to take initiative in assuring the ministerial welfare of its constituents. To address this need in the Hispanic community, a pilot “Seminar on Revitalization” was presented to two groups of Hispanic Christian pastors and leaders, one at the Southern Pacific Latin American District of the Assemblies of God (April 10, 2008) and the other at a Bible School of the Assemblies of God in Mexico (August 14, 2008). Participants offered positive, encouraging feedback, pleading that the seminar continue to be presented for the revitalization of their fellow leaders.

**BREAKING THE GROWTH BARRIER AT MUSKOGEE FIRST ASSEMBLY:  
FACILITATING ASSIMILATION AND DEVELOPING COMMUNITY  
THROUGH SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

*Steven M. Rose*

Muskogee First Assembly, a church of over a thousand adherents with three Sunday services, seven staff members, and a host of ministries, provides outstanding ministry to the community. Each week numerous visitors attend, and people find Christ; nevertheless, over the past seven years, the church experienced a plateau in attendance. For many people in this rural community, the church seems too large to facilitate a personal connection. To assimilate new people and help them experience community, this project established small groups at Muskogee First Assembly. In preparation for the launching of the groups, I designed a training manual for small group leaders and preached a seven-part sermon series, “Live Together, Die Alone,” in order to communicate vision. With the Great Commission as the focus, the ministry intervention trained leadership to produce a discipleship revolution.

The implementation of small groups resulted in both personal and corporate growth; it enabled Muskogee First Assembly to break the growth plateau and effectively retain people through authentic connections that result in true discipleship. Small groups motivated and challenged people inside and outside of the church to participate in fellowship opportunities.

Measurable results indicate a nine percent attendance gain from the previous year, a 300 percent increase in the number of adult groups, and a 54.5 percent increase in the number of adult disciples. In addition, small group leaders grew through ministry expression, and individuals grew through spiritual transformation. The information from this project provides a resource to assist other churches desiring to break their own growth plateaus.

## TEEN CHALLENGE BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

*George M. Thomas*

When one out of fourteen Americans, twelve years old and over, currently abuse illicit drugs, the role that Teen Challenge (TC) plays in discipleship and recovery cannot be underestimated from a financial, social, or eternal standpoint. In this post-fiftieth anniversary era in Teen Challenge ministry, an efficient corporate structure, transparent finances, ethical fundraising practices, adequate compensation, ability to resolve conflict, and spiritual integrity will translate into effectiveness and mission success. With over 210 accredited programs spread across the U.S., it is imperative that potential risks are reduced, efficiencies increased, and core mission emphasized.

The *Teen Challenge Best Practices Manual* serves as a tool that can address such needs as a ready training resource for program directors, staff, and interns.<sup>4</sup> It archives, in one location, answers to numerous administrative questions asked by new and veteran TC staff over the years. Not only does it present steps to organizing a non-profit corporation, relevant federal laws, financial policies, average compensation by industry, successful fundraising methods, and real life conflict situations, but it highlights non-profit industry standards as well. The structure, policies, and practices of five other non-profits were compared with those of Teen Challenge to achieve a reference point. Also, each major section included the biblical-theological foundation for that topic.

Initial evaluation of the manual determined that TC should provide more training regarding laws and best business practices, strive to modify its structure, diversify its governance, and pursue financial transparency and accountability.

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<sup>4</sup>The manual has been placed into the hands of all TC directors across America. The manual served as a training tool at the 2009 New Directors' conference and is downloadable from the national Web site. It will also serve as a primary tool for training TC directors and staff in Best Practices at all four regional conferences in 2009.

## **TRAINING THE LEADERSHIP TEAM OF TEEN CHALLENGE RUSSIA**

*Kevin D. Tyler*

A virtual explosion in alcoholism, drug abuse, homelessness, prostitution, and pornography has taken a heavy toll on the youth in the Post-Soviet Russian Federation. To its credit, the Russian church has responded to this crisis by opening numerous rehabilitation centers. Unfortunately, most of these centers continue to lack proper facilities, training programs, or trained leaders.

Russia Teen Challenge endeavors to serve the church in responding to the epidemic of life-controlling problems affecting Russian youth. In order to accelerate its growth, Russia Teen Challenge should replace traditional leadership structures based on position and hierarchy with empowered regional leadership teams.

To address the need for such a paradigm shift, this project provided a one-week seminar for training Regional Representatives in the areas of team dynamics, team leadership character, and team leadership competencies. The leadership team training encouraged the ongoing spiritual formation of the team leader and provided instruction in the development of team-building skills for Russia Teen Challenge leaders. Teen Challenge leaders received instruction in the topics of team characteristics, stages of team development, team member styles, conflict management, the team leader's character, and the team leader's competency.

The project provided a reproducible model to equip Teen Challenge leaders to move their present work forward by creating and leading empowered leadership teams in their own regions. These regional leadership teams will ultimately enhance the ministry of Russia Teen Challenge.

**FROM PHILOSOPHY TO PRAXIS: THE ASSIMILATION OF FEMALE  
CREDENTIALLED MINISTERS INTO THE NORTHWEST AND  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA/NEVADA ASSEMBLIES OF GOD  
ECCLESIASTICAL PROFESSION**

*Ralynn G. Willis*

This project identified reasons for disparity between the Assemblies of God (AG) position paper, “The Role of Women in Ministry”<sup>5</sup> and the published statistics revealing low numbers of credentialed women occupying advanced positions in AG ecclesiastical leadership. It addressed the difficulties credentialed women experience assimilating into the ecclesiastical profession and investigated whether the AG culture as a whole supports women in leadership.

The “Women in Ministry Survey,” distributed to the Northwest Ministry Network (NWMN) and the Northern California/Nevada District (NCN) ministers presented questions stemming from research on the development of female leaders, AG church culture, and the various relationship arenas that influence women ministers. Out of 668 AG ministers, 190 responded to the survey. The findings provided a snapshot of the support and challenges for female leadership assimilation in AG church culture. The survey findings and recommendations were distributed to NWMN and NCN district officials and Northwest University and Bethany University College of Ministry Deans. A presentation was also given to the female population at the NWMN Ministers’ Retreat.

The project recommended to AG leaders the biblical assimilation pattern that Jesus and the Apostle Paul implemented through their words, actions, and relationships as the trans-cultural and timeless remedy for assimilation challenges.

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<sup>5</sup>“The Role of Women in Ministry.” General Council of the Assemblies of God (USA), [http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/position\\_papers/pp\\_4191\\_women\\_ministry.cfm](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/position_papers/pp_4191_women_ministry.cfm) (accessed June 6, 2008), 3.