



Byron D. Klaus



Living Reminders

The longer I am involved in ministry, the more I am convinced that leaders who deal in eternal business must possess eternal resources to perform that task over the long-term. Pentecostal leaders must acknowledge the challenge that the world values “style” over “truth,” yet is thirsty for an eternal connection. We are good at events or visible displays that we are people of power. Yet we are not exempt from the reality that a deep walk with God relationally (that John 15 pictures as a vine and branches) is our only hope for bearing fruit (effective ministry) over a lifetime.

The challenge for the spiritual formation of leadership while studying at AGTS has never been clearer. Cultural shifts, disintegrating social systems, and aggressive antagonism toward Christian faith are the realities facing Pentecostal leadership. Spiritual formation is not just a pathway for “dedicated disciples”; neither is it an instantaneous experience that immunizes us for a lifetime. Spiritual formation is a central reality for all followers of Jesus Christ. It is non-negotiable for AGTS students who sense God’s clear call on their lives. Second Corinthians 3:17, 18 talks about the journey toward Christlikeness. That process goes against the very nature of American society. Our world values the ability to be in charge and to control one’s environment. Instant gratifications, or at least victories after great effort, are clear expectations, while spiritual formation and the transformation of our life into Christlikeness reverses these cultural priorities. This radical shift requires a movement from valuing our own performance to relying on God’s workmanship (Ephesians 2:10).

The commitment of AGTS is to provide a pathway by which spiritual formation is not merely an addendum to pursuing a degree. We believe our effectiveness as a seminary is directly related to devising pathways by which our students attain the deep rootedness necessary to help people connect to eternal resources. A basic truth conveyed in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 is simply that you cannot convince people of your faith if it is lacking in your own life. AGTS must make sure our graduates are branches integrally connected to the vine.

Henri Nouwen’s classic, *The Living Reminder*, is a deeply convicting book for me. Nouwen basically asks church leaders what impression they leave people with when, as leaders, they are not physically present with the people they work with. What “reminders” linger with those we love when we are not physically present?

Nouwen says, “Once we have heard, seen, watched and touched the Word who is life, we cannot do other than be living reminders...what counts is not our lives, but the life of Christ in us. Only Christ can break through human alienation and restore broken connections with each other and with God.”

At AGTS we are committed to developing leaders who have deep roots...a connectedness to Jesus that is continually empowered by the Holy Spirit. The “eternal business” that Pentecostal leaders participate in can only be energized by eternal resources. Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, today, and forever. [®]

“The church requires leadership that is passionate about God and rooted in His redemptive cause.”

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