

CLERGY

Connection

HOLSTON CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Some Things are Worth Remembering ...

Overwhelmed! I have heard others speak of it. We read it in the scripture. I have experienced it myself. Overwhelmed! This emotional state, in my experience, seems to relate to two factors – (1) our expectations of ourselves and (2) having and utilizing a support network.

Feelings of stress indicate a breakdown in our ability to satisfy all we understand to be our responsibility. Understanding our expectations and finding support moves us from being overwhelmed to a better place.

The symptoms are physical, cognitive, and emotional. We may feel trapped, burdened or pressured, anxious, or frustrated. Sleep may be interrupted. Common also are headaches or stomachaches or other bodily pain. Sometimes we are confused and unable to make decisions. Experiencing one or more of these when things are difficult clearly indicates our need to pause and be attentive to our well-being. However,

we tend at such times to ignore the symptoms, forget our self-care practices, and try to accomplish everything for which we believe we are responsible.

For clergy and other caregivers, in particular, self-monitoring of emotions is extremely important. When symptoms arise, we have to find ways to make changes that relieve the stress. The

clergy self-care regime includes intentioned time to nurture our relationship with God and others, sufficient time to rest and sleep, a nutri-

tious diet in regular meals, and exercise. We may ignore symptoms as they build and find ourselves in crisis, aware of only a need for immediate relief. We know what we would tell others to do at such a time, “Turn to God in prayer, pouring out your heart.” For Christians, turning to God is the first step in making change, and emotional crisis is a warning that some change in the order of life is needed.

Second, we reflect on the

The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. In my distress I called to the Lord. He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of the waters.

2 SAM. 22:5,7a, 17

The Clergy Connection

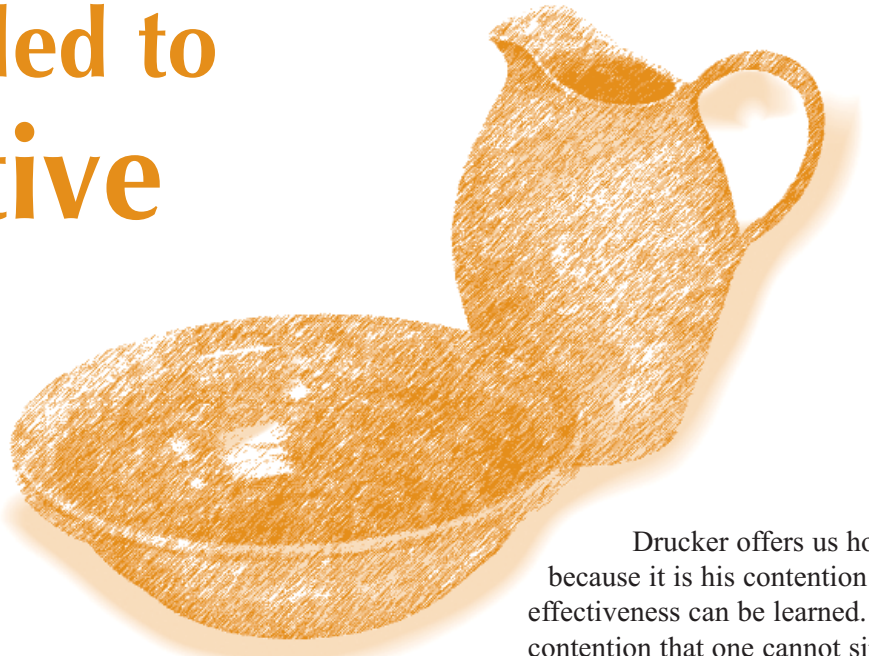
is a communication produced and written by the clergy of Holston Conference for the purposes of deepening relationships, encouraging spiritual growth, increasing awareness of challenging opportunities, imparting useful information, stimulating theological exploration, providing a forum for honest expression and sharing the joys of creative ministries.

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The Clergy Connection exists to call clergy into deeper covenant with God through Christ and to call clergy to live in covenant with each other.

We are Called to Be Effective



“We are called to be effective.”

These words are often spoken within the context of The United Methodist Church so much that often we use the term without ever exploring its meaning. Maybe this is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote to his young apprentice Timothy, “... make full proof of thy ministry” (II TIM. 4:5B, KJV). I like the way the New International Version says this, “... discharge all the duties of your ministry.” If we read *The Book of Discipline*, we see such a long list that it wearies us just reading it. In fact, in reading this list, instead of being inspired to good works, one might be tempted to feel overwhelmed.

Peter Drucker, one of the foremost writers and thinkers about leadership, writes in his book, *The Effective Executive* : “Whether (one) works in a business or in a hospital, in a government agency or in a labor union, in a university or in the army, the executive is, first of all expected to get the right things done. And this is simply that (one) is expected to be effective. Yet (those) of high effectiveness are conspicuous by their absence in executive jobs. High intelligence is common enough among executives. Imagination is far from rare. The level of knowledge tends to be high. But there seems to be little correlation between (people’s) effectiveness and (their) intelligence, (their) imagination or (their) knowledge.” Drucker addresses the issue, which I believe, is a particular one the Church faces today. Those to whom we have given the task of seeking out persons for ministry, in particular, Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committees, District

Committees on Ordained Ministry, Conference Board of ordained Ministry, the Appointment Cabinet and the Bishop, all find this to be a very daunting task. It is not merely a matter of finding those who can attend and graduate from a seminary. It is not simply a matter of psychological tests, papers written to answer questions (on doctrine, polity, history), preparation and delivery of sermons, preparing Bible studies, giving the correct answers in a verbal interview and a myriad of other tests we administer. The question is, even after having run the gauntlet we have set up, “Is this person effective?” In other words can he or she “... make full proof of ministry ... discharge all the duties of ministry ... get the right things done?”

Drucker goes on to say that in today’s climate, when we no longer need a great supply of people who do what they are told, we need people who are self directed. Drucker calls this new executive a “knowledge worker.” I am particularly drawn to his statement, “Every knowledge worker in modern organization is an ‘executive’ if, by virtue of position or knowledge, (one) is responsible for a contribution that materially affects the capacity of the organization to perform and to obtain results.”

Drucker offers us hope because it is his contention that effectiveness can be learned. It is my contention that one cannot simply learn this by osmosis. It is something at which we must begin to work.

I ask you, rather than simply read this article and argue with whether or not this applies to you, take the following steps:

- *Spend a full day in prayer and fasting about your effectiveness, seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit and listening carefully to the messages God will send.*
- *Make an investment in yourself by buying Drucker’s book: **The Effective Executive**, published by Harper Business.*
- *Before you read the book, enter into prayer asking God to give you openness and a spirit of discernment.*
- *Begin to put into practice the activities that Mr. Drucker recommends.*

If we are to make disciples who leave our churches and go out to make a difference in this world, we must commit (or in some cases recommit) ourselves to be effective in our service to God as we serve humanity.



James Swanson,
is Resident Bishop
of Holston Conference.

Keeping Your Call Alive

Writing an article on *Keeping Your Call Alive* has proven to be a spiritually nourishing exercise. It caused me to reflect on things I don't think about every day. After all, my call began 56 years ago; or at least, that's when I date my first awareness of it. When I was six I told my uncle, a Baptist clergyman now deceased, that I wanted to be a minister. Being the affirming person he was, he said that if I still felt that way when I was seven, he would give me a Bible, which he did. Although there was nothing particularly dramatic about my call, other than its having come at an early age - it was real.

Needless to say, the reality of being a minister has involved a range of experiences and emotions which a six-year-old could never have anticipated. But, after all these years of ministry, I still feel the call has been one of my greatest blessings. After all, what could be more rewarding than to live and work at the heart of what matters most in life?

I have always had great help in keeping the call alive. To begin with, I have a wonderful wife who loves the church as much as I do, and who I consider my partner in ministry. There have also been countless church members along the way who not only affirmed my call, but have inspired me as I watched how God used them in ministry.

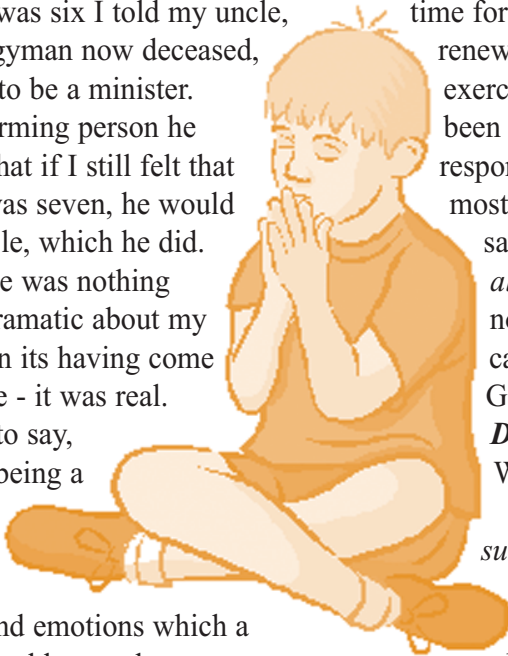
A life of study and devotional reflection has kept my call before me. Reading more deeply in biblical and theological studies and more broadly in the literature from the world around me has kept me aware of the impor-

tance of the call to preach. Regardless of how tired I might get during the week, there is always something exhilarating about stepping into the pulpit on Sunday morning to proclaim God's Good News for today.

Lifestyle issues such as making time for leisure and personal renewal, as well as daily exercise and eating right, have been essential in helping me respond to God's call. But, the most important thing I would say about *keeping the call alive* is that ultimately it is not me who can keep the call alive, because it's God's call. In *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren says:

"If you take a class on surfing, you'll be taught everything you need to know about surfing: how to choose the right equipment; how to use it properly; how to recognize a 'surfable' wave...But you'll never find a course that teaches 'How to Build a Wave.'"

That's how I feel about God's call. Like a wave, our call originates with God; we only answer. Although there are many things we can do that will help us to be obedient, it's still God's call. Our responsibility is to listen and respond, and whenever God shifts the call, we need to catch the wave. Otherwise, we could be left high and dry wondering, "Whatever happened to our call?"



Remembering

continued from page 1

situation and our expectations with others in our support system. We must clarify and distinguish among the demands that buried us. From whom do they come? Are they authentic to our calling? Are they important to the well-being of our parish, our family, or others? Which are unrealistic demands of others? This process is necessary in order to manage life effectively. Next we ask: Which can we delegate? Which can we choose to do at another time? Which can we simply forget?

It is vital that we as clergy are in relationship with others - peers, family, and friends - who will hear us and both hold us accountable and support us in our need for self-care. That, coupled with our attention to spiritual nurture as well as our physical needs, can make all the difference in how we manage busy or stressful times in our lives. We are in the midst of Advent, one of the most exciting but also demanding times in the year for ministry. Expectations of our parishes and our families may already weigh heavily upon us. May we be reminded today of caring for ourselves in order that we may honor our calling in the days ahead.

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When God Closes a Door, He Opens a Window

During my pastoral ministry over the past twenty-nine years, each preaching opportunity was special and never to be taken lightly. The sermon on January 30, 2005, was to have special importance for me. It was not the sermon I wanted to preach; it was a sermon born from much agony and prayer. It would be my final sermon as a pastor. I was entering "incapacity" status.

On that morning, I shared how my life had been blessed through living for and serving Christ and how my life was currently undergoing drastic changes. I have Parkinson's disease. It is a chronic, progressive, and incurable brain disease. Simply put, it is a disease where the brain cells that produce dopamine are being destroyed. Dopamine is a chemical transmitter that is responsible for coordinating and facilitating smooth muscle movements. As the cells continue to die, persons experience tremors, slowness, rigidity, impaired balance, and thinking and

***Incapacity Leave
Not End of Ministry ...
provides pastor different ways
to "do ministry"***

behavioral problems. I had progressed in the disease to the point where I was no longer able to perform many of the ministerial functions. For over twenty-nine years, my life revolved around my call as an ordained minister. I had given my energy, time, skills, talents, training, and heart to God, the Church, to those who need Christ.

I increasingly experienced "off times" where my legs and arms became rigid and slow. During those times, things I previously took for granted like walking, sitting, rising from a chair, feeding myself, removing or placing money in my wallet, and driving are most difficult. With grief and tears, I had to give up preaching due to my short-term memory loss.

In the midst of changes, all is not bad news. I have a framed message through which God speaks to me. "When God closes a door; He opens a window." He has opened windows where I can do ministry. I was chosen as State Coordinator for

Tennessee through the Parkinson's Action Network. I am an advocate for research and funding, but I also have opportunities to share my faith with our Congressional representatives. After Hurricane Katrina hit the coast, I served as a mental health counselor at the Knoxville Red Cross Disaster Shelter. I was able to provide emotional and spiritual counseling, assist in locating missing family members, and secure housing and jobs for displaced persons. When I experienced "off time," I simply made use of a provided cot.

My wife and I are members of Panther Springs United Methodist Church, and Rev. Garland James provides me with ministry opportunities as my health allows. I identify with the words of Paul: ***"But He said to me, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I (Paul) will boast all the more gladly about my weakness, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake I delight in weakness ... for when I am weak, then I am strong."*** II COR.12:9,10 NIVA



David R. Vaughn is a Clergy Member of Holston Conference on incapacity leave.



Holston Conference Ministers' Convocation 2006

This year, Convocation is your ticket toward becoming a healthier pastor leading a healthier church. Keynote speakers, **Rudy Rasmus** and **Juanita Rasmus**, have overcome much adversity to establish a vital and growing ministry (bringing a church from 9 members to 9,000 members), and will prepare us to confront two questions: What business is the church REALLY in? What will help pastors bring the church to new growth in spirit and community? Gary Mauldin will also lead a plenary session, inspiring each of us to live into our calling and our faith in ethical, authentic ways.

VITAL WORSHIP led by Barbara Day Miller from Candler School of Theology is designed for you to be refreshed and revitalized through special music, with preaching by Bishop Swanson, Rudy and Juanita Rasmus, and Steve Seamands.

WORKSHOPS FOR SKILLS YOU CAN APPLY AT HOME

Participants choose 1 of 5 possible tracks of 3 sessions each in order to gain practical skills to take home and apply for ministry, for life:

- Renewing your Passion for Ministry
- Leadership through Coaching led by a leading authority on coaching in the church.
- Prayer-filled Leadership
- Care of the Temple toward physical health and fitness
- Perspectives on Leadership:
 - 1) Evangelism and Church Growth, Rasmus
 - 2) Dealing with Conflict in the Church, Gary Mauldin
 - 3) Mountain Top Perspectives, Charles Maynard Hike

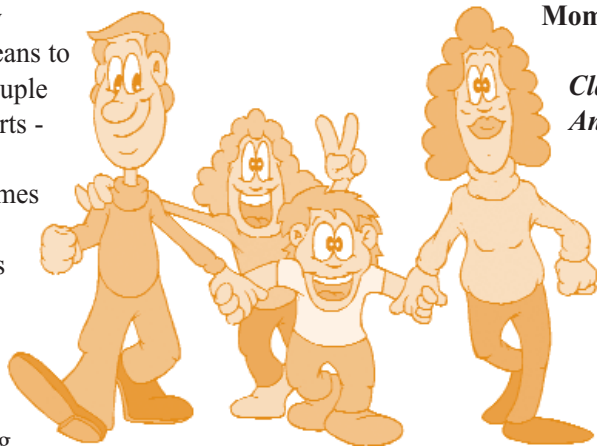
PERSONAL CONSULTATIONS will be available on a limited basis to provide physical, financial, and spiritual personal consultation.

EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES include a 5K run, walking around Lake Junaluska, going to a fitness center, walking the prayer labyrinth, sitting around the fire with friends and fellowship, sleeping, eating, and enjoying time apart.

Reflections of Two “Double PK’s” and Their Mom

When asked to write an article about the life of a clergy couple, I jumped at the opportunity. It would be great to share the ups and downs of serving with my spouse and partner of fourteen years, Tim Kobler. Since clergy couples are a relatively new phenomenon, I thought it would be helpful to write about our unique opportunity not only to live together in the same house but to serve together in the same vocation (although I would argue that clergy spouses have filled the co-pastor role since Priscilla and Aquila said “yes” to Paul’s invitation to join him in sharing the gospel).

The more I thought about the invitation to contribute to *Clergy Connection*, however, the more I realized that Tim and I are not the only experts on what it means to be part of a clergy couple family. The real experts - those who have lived through the joyous times of fellowship meals and church outings as well as survived the arduous times of mid-week committee meetings and emergency counseling sessions - are our children, Clara (10) and Andrew (6). I decided to ask them what it means to be part of a clergy couple family:



Mom: “What is the best thing about both your mom and dad being pastors?”

Clara: “We get to meet a lot of cool people. I’m never bored and I get to participate in the [worship] services a lot. At church events Mom and Dad can act as crazy as they want to, like when Mom did the wave at choir practice.” [I admit this did happen.]

Andrew: “[You] help people and I get to play in church.” [He means running down the center aisle when no one is looking.]

Mom: “What drives you crazy about the fact that your mom and dad are pastors?”

Clara: “Meetings!!!!”

Andrew: [He’s still thinking about his answer.]

Mom: “What do you like most about being a preacher’s kid?”

Clara: “I’m well-known and people say, ‘You’re the kid of the Emory & Henry pastor.’ That makes me feel good inside.”

Andrew: “I get to know a lot of people.”

Mom: “What do you like least about being a preacher’s kid?”

Clara: “I don’t enjoy moving that much.”

Andrew: “I have to go to church every Sunday.”

[Such an honest answer ☺.]

It’s interesting that my children had to think about the questions before coming up with an answer. Being double PK’s is all they have ever known and, for the most part, they love their lives.

As for me, serving with Tim as a clergy couple has been a great blessing. Sure, there are challenges, like when a child is sick on Sunday morning or when we both have a meeting on the same night. It’s

hard to leave work at home when Tim is intimately connected with the people and situations that affect me as pastor. We struggle with setting healthy boundaries around our family time and our alone time, although we’ve started having breakfast dates to catch up with each other’s soul journeys.

But for all of the challenges, the positive aspects of serving together make the hard parts worthwhile. Tim and I have very different gifts for ministry that complement and strengthen each other. Although separately Tim and I are good pastors, together we are even better.

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Conflict Management

Throughout our lives, we experience conflict. It is inevitable, whether in the workplace, family, marriage, friendship, or church. But we do not always manage it well.

Some typical responses to conflict are to deny it, ignore it, or become defensive and try to find fault or demean the one who differs.

Simply put, conflict can be defined as two or more people having different ideas on the same subject with strong emotions, and the issue is important to them. If something is not important, then there is no conflict. For example, if a couple has decided to purchase a green Toyota SUV, there is no conflict.

There are several steps one can follow to manage a conflict. These steps can be easily employed and may resolve a conflict within moments. On the other hand, it may take weeks to resolve some conflicts, if ever. The following are some elements in the healthy management of conflict.

- *A conflict needs to be recognized. One needs to know that it is okay in any relationship to have a conflict.*
- *The conflict, and any strong emotions that are present, needs to be acknowledged. Feelings of frustration, disappointment, anger, etc. can emerge quite suddenly. These emotions are natural. Jesus certainly became frustrated with the disciples, and he became angry on several occasions.*
- *The thoughts of each person must be stated, one at a time, without regard to what others are thinking or what others want. It is best to encourage the use of "I" statements, such as "I want" and "I think," and each person should give convincing reasons. Some people consider the cost effectiveness of an idea, others consider the idea's expediency, others consider*

the traditional values, and still others consider the morality of the idea. Each concern is of value and has its place. The goal is for each one to be heard.

• *Then a resolution needs to be sought. Effective conflict management is resolution-oriented. It seeks to create an atmosphere of a win/win and not win/lose situation. I recall very well an incident in graduate school when I could not find a book in the library. When I went to the librarian, she told me there was no such number. I explained that I had just obtained it from the card catalogue. She then went into the back room, and when she returned said to me "Isn't it wonderful that we are both right. That particular numbering system applies to the medical school library and not the main campus." She could have said, "See, I told you!" and I could have replied in like manner. As it was, we both parted feeling good about the encounter. It was a win/win situation. With an attitude of win/win, no one is told how "stupid" his or her idea is or how wrong he or she is. There are no accusations. An atmosphere needs to be created in which no one's ideas are considered right or wrong. They are just ideas and feelings like anyone else has, no more or less important.*

- *Many times a compromise is needed to resolve a conflict. The word "compromise" has had a negative connotation at times, especially in the church. It is a good healthy concept that needs to be utilized often, perhaps many times a day.*

Let's return to our couple who wants to purchase a new car. If they do not manage conflict well, they are most likely unwilling to express their ideas

to each other. They go to a dealership. He spots a red sports car. She spots a luxurious van. She says, "What a stupid little car!" He says, "What an ugly, boxy van. Who would want to drive that?" A conflict is obvious. They have choices to make. Here are some possibilities:

- *They can get very angry and make denigrating statements about each other such as, "That's stupid."*
- *One can decide that a new car is more important than the kind of car, so "Get whatever you want."*
- *They can say, "Let's not purchase a vehicle at this time."*
- *They can agree to buy a totally different vehicle, such as an SUV.*
- *They can agree to buy one kind this time and the other kind the next time around.*

The point is that people need to be heard, their ideas expressed (even campaigned for), and then a resolution sought in which each person wins something. This can apply to where one is going to eat, what color to paint the room, etc.

An atmosphere needs to be created in which all parties have the confidence that his or her ideas and feelings will be reckoned as valuable and in a respectful manner. Everyone should know he or she will be heard even if he or she does not get what is wanted. Being heard is part of the win/win resolution-oriented process.

Conflict management, at times can be easily accomplished or may be quite stressful. However, sometimes a conflict cannot be resolved because there are those who refuse to seek resolution. They want their way, period, because they think they are right!

Let us always be ready to pray for guidance and strength to effectively resolve a conflict.

James Titcombe

is a Part-time Local Pastor at Bethel UMC (Knoxville) and Grigsby's UMC (Oak Ridge District) and a licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice.



Small Membership Church Celebrates Outreach Victories!

Sometimes “knock-knock” is more than just the beginning of a funny “who’s there” joke. “Knock-knock” may open a door to a “...*field ripe for harvest.*” In 1995 and 1996 our church knocked on many doors in nearby subdivisions and invited lots of children to Vacation Bible School. Some came. None stayed long. In 1997 and 1998 we decided to also knock on the doors of nearby mobile homes. When our “knock-knock” touched every door, God blessed us with “who’s there.”

One 1997 “knock-knock” resulted in Megan* coming to VBS. She had a blast and invited Beth and her brother, Andy, to church. They loved the friends they made, within a year, an eviction notice sent them more than 20 miles away. They tried other churches but never found one just like “their church,” so they called and asked for a ride. Every time they called, we went to get them. Beth invited her neighbor, Charlene, to church. Beth and Charlene invited Danielle. Beth, Charlene, and Danielle loved attending together. Danielle’s mom called and told me that, since there were churches much closer to their home, she could no longer come to ours. I understood. We didn’t see her for a while. Then, one Saturday, Danielle’s mom called and said her daughter was miserable because she could not go to the church of her choice. Mom announced that she planned to visit the church the next day and “check us out!” She came. Today, Danielle’s mom regularly brings Beth, Charlene, Danielle, and Andy with her in the new van she bought so she could bring more kids to a church more than 20 miles away. Megan, Beth, Charlene, Danielle, her mom, and Andy have all professed faith in Christ and are members of our congregation.

Another 1997 “knock-knock” inspired two other girls to come to VBS. They loved it, but ultimately moved away. Before they moved, they invited

Emma and Fran (sisters) to church. They loved being there. One day Emma and Fran’s dad said they could no longer attend our church because “them Methodists don’t believe in the Bible.” When Emma’s birthday came around, we sent her a Bible. Early the next Easter morning, I went to pick up some kids who lived nearby and there stood Emma and Fran with their dad. He said, “I guess you Methodists are OK. Do you have room to take the girls to church today?” The smiles on the faces of Emma and Fran that Easter are a true treasure of ministry. A few years later, Emma and Fran moved 34 miles away. They had a hard time finding rides to nearby churches, so they called and asked if we would pick them up. Now, every time they call, one of three families from the church goes and gets them (136 miles each Sunday to transport Emma and Fran). Both have professed faith in Christ and are members of the church.

Still another 1997 “knock-knock” led to Grace (who lived with her grandmother) coming to VBS. She loved the church and invited her brother, Ben (who lived with their mom who had no car). He “kind of liked” church. Their journey over the next years, especially that of Ben, was an ever-changing struggle. Grace and her grandmother moved more than 15 miles away. Ben ended up calling more than eight places “home” (all more than 10 miles away). Despite our encouragement to do so, Grace and Ben never would visit other churches. So, every time they called, someone from the church would go get them. Grace and Ben ended up in state custody. A family in our church quickly obtained the training necessary to become foster parents and took Grace and Ben into their home. Grace ended up in another home, but Ben stayed and excelled at school. After about a year, Ben was able to return to his mom.

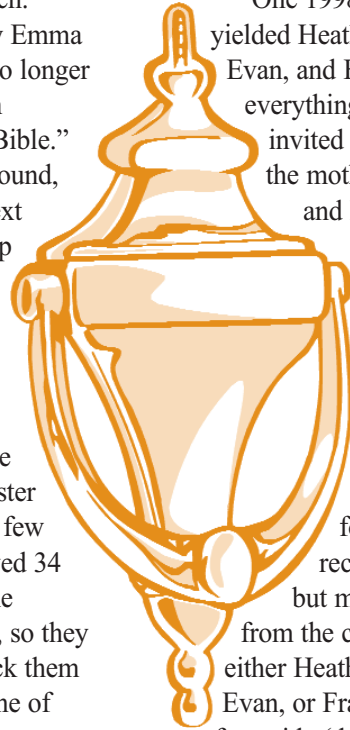
Grace may be back with her Mom soon. Today, Grace, Ben, and their mom still do not have a car, but they have professed faith in Christ and are members of the church.

One 1998 “knock-knock” yielded Heather, Zeke, Scott, Evan, and Frank. They enjoyed everything about church and invited their mom (actually the mother of Zeke, Scott, and Evan) and dad (actually the father of Heather and Frank). They loved the church but had a hard time keeping the family car running. They moved out of state for a while and recently moved back, but more than 25 miles from the church. Until recently, either Heather or Zeke, Scott, Evan, or Frank, regularly called for a ride (the car always seemed to be broken down and none of them felt welcome in nearby churches). A few months ago, I bought an eight-passenger vehicle (you probably know why) and my family decided to give Zeke, Scott, and Evan’s Mom and Heather and Frank’s Dad our old seven-passenger van (it actually works). Today, many Sunday mornings, Heather, Zeke, Scott, Evan, Frank, their Mom and Dad, come to church together in what they call their “new van.” They have all professed faith in Christ and are members of the church.

Because “who’s there” matters to Jesus Christ, I am thankful for every opportunity God gives us to know the eternal blessing of a heart-felt “knock-knock,” and that’s no joke.

**None of the names used is the actual name of any person in the story.*

Editor’s note: This story is shared by a part-time pastor of a growing small membership congregation in Holston. In order to protect the identity of the church and persons named in the story, he requests to remain anonymous.



WHAT REALLY CHANGES?

Observations and Reflections of a Holston pastor with 68 years experience.

Change is the only constant, yet we affirm God to be the same yesterday and forever. The good news message never changes; however, methods must change.

I believe some directions do not change. I share these:

- Our definition of God as Creator, who “... *so loved the world that He gave his son ...*,” our Lord and Savior, who gives us life abundant and life eternal. God who manifests himself through the Holy Spirit giving His presence and direction.

Most people in the world believe in a god, but the deity's defined nature makes the difference. To some, understanding of god gives rise to assurance in faith and caring for the poor; to others, violence and destruction of persons and nations.

- Biblical preaching with invitation and expectation when sermons are given with passion, love, and concern. Persons may make decisions or experience a new touch of God and leave worship determined to live a better life. Prayer, preparation, a caring life, and the witness of the Holy Spirit precede such results.
- Teaching children, youth, and adults the Bible. Interpret Jesus as “... *the way, truth, and life ...*” and that “... *the Church is of God.*”

The urgency of specific teaching is increased in that our generalizations have permitted many to be attracted to cults, other religions, and strange civil religion directions. Many of our well-educated people are religiously illiterate.

- The definition and role of the laity as the Church. The place of the laity is well delineated in our *Book of Discipline*. Clergy are leaders. Laity must be responsible and involved in the organization and outreach of the church.

I observe that some methods are changing. I have seen many changes in theology, methods, and structure in my sixty-eight years of ministry. Some are productive and some dead-end streets.

- I observe that many people are giving less attention to denominational labels, but are more concerned about what is happening inside the church. Several churches are using informal, contemporary worship with praise music, drums, guitars, wall-mounted screens, etc. Authentic worship is the real issue. Some churches with their traditional format have authentic contemporary worship.

A few of our growing Holston Churches have traditional and contemporary worship services. The music is different, but the biblical principles, the preaching are the same. Many pastors use the same sermon in both contemporary and traditional worship.

- I observe a Christian paradox. We can be the most professedly Christian person or nation and the least Christian in our behavior.
- I observe a change in the method and message of the church today. The church, I believe, is endeavoring to return to its biblical formation and to re-discover the power of the Holy Spirit. Traditional biblical evangelistic preaching with expectation is more often heard. This was very real in my early ministry when the church was growing.

In the midst of constancy and change, I believe a slow re-birth of the church is coming.



Edgar A. Eldridge
is a retired clergy member
who joined Holston
Conference in 1937.

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