

AS ONE APPROVED

by

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In the book, Today's Pastor, the research of George Barna reveals some sober insights about pastoral training and the church.

In this regard he states that "pastors are highly educated but generally feel poorly prepared for the job they hold" (p.135).

In this same vein a 1991, survey of pastors conducted by the Fuller Institute of Church Growth reports that 90% of the pastors surveyed felt they were inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands.

Against this background it is evident that there is a continuing need for pastoral training in order to meet the challenge of a secularized society and the commission of the church to prepare the world for the return of Christ.

This is not a new concept, for we, the church, find ourselves in much the same social scene as confronted the 1st Century Church.

According to George Hunter III, dean of Asbury Seminary's School of World Mission and Evangelism, we have four things in common with the early church and thus should take a lesson from them:

1. Because they faced a population with no knowledge of the gospel, early Christians had to inform people of Christ's claims and His offers. They had to educate them before they could witness to them.

2. Because the early Christians faced a hostile populace and persecution from the state, they had to influence people to have a positive attitude toward the Christian movement.

3. Because they confronted an empire with several entrenched religions, early Christians had to convince people of the truth of Christianity, or at least of its plausibility.

4. Since entry into the faith involves an act of the will, Christians had to invite people to make a clear choice and adopt this faith, join a community of believers, and follow Jesus as Lord (Christianity Today, December 16, 1991, pp. 43-46).

Obviously, to impact our world of high tech, new age and stressful personal struggle for survival, pastoral training is a must.

The Apostle Paul was keenly aware of this important need and admonished Timothy, his son in the Lord, "Do your best to present yourself AS ONE APPROVED, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, and who correctly handles the word of truth" ( 2 Timothy 2:15, NIV).

Catching this vision for a well trained and qualified Church of God clergy the General Overseer, Dr. Robert White, together with the Executive Committee have called for emphasis on New Horizons for the Church of God in the establishment of commissions for the motivation and implementation of every phase of church ministry to break through to a new and higher level of commitment and performance in the kingdom mission.

Commensurately, one of these commissions has been designated

the Pastoral Training and Development Commission given the task of providing a vehicle to bridge the gap between talk and action -- philosophy and reality -- theory and practice.

The goal is for every Church of God pastor to become "...as one approved..." (2 Timothy 2:15, NIV).

#### COMMISSION OBJECTIVES

After prayer, deliberation and consultation with the General Overseer a commission strategy for pastoral training and development has been adopted with the following objectives:

1. To conduct pastoral workshops for the purpose of inspiration, orientation, motivation, information and encouragement in perfecting skills for a more efficient pastoral ministry in each local church.
2. To develop ministerial resources for both the planned pastoral workshops and the generalization of the published materials for international implementation.
3. To offer information and encouragement for the involvement of pastors in the many opportunities for continued ministerial growth, development and revival spirit.
4. To inform pastors of the wide range of resources (developed by the various departments of the Church of God) available for pastoral and church leadership development.

#### COMMISSION WORKSHOPS

The theme for the workshops is Ministry Now. They are scheduled to be held throughout the United States at each state and

region level so that all pastors and their wives will have the opportunity to attend. Each workshop will feature a special session for wives.

Three ministry statements will be examined and developed in a workshop format.

These include:

1. Ministry now through relationship building - "As a pastor I am in relationship to God, my family and the Church of God."
2. Ministry now through scriptural leadership - "As a pastor I am called to lead within a Biblical framework in the priestly function of a shepherd/leader."
3. Ministry now through spiritual growth - "As a pastor I initiate spiritual growth through Biblical congregational interaction and experience individual spiritual development through renewed personal perspective in the fulfillment of ministry vision."

Each workshop offers a workbook and one of the most extensive resource material manuals ever compiled for continued reference in pastoral ministry.

#### COMMISSION THRUST

The overriding thrust of the Ministry Now Workshop is to increase ministerial effectiveness and lengthen the outreach influence of each local church.

Thus, in the effort to become "as pastors approved" the plan is to come together all across the nation:

1. To identify our leadership status.
2. To evaluate our efficiency level.

3. To enhance our pastoral productivity through acquisition of new information.
4. To enter into supportive relationship with others for renewed strength, vigor and revival spirit.
5. To articulate a new vision for impactful ministry in the 21st century.

Above all else the Ministry Now Workshops provide a context for pastors and their wives to study together recognizing that Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Col. 1:18) and that His commission is to lead an army of believers to growth and victory.

In the words of Barna:

1. To defuse our fears, he promises us ultimate victory.
2. To encourage our hearts, he provides glimpses of that victory while it is still in progress.
3. To shore up our weaknesses, He provides His strength through the working of the Holy Spirit within and through us.
4. To enhance our natural capabilities, He provides special gifts and fellow believers whose gifts complement ours.
5. To sharpen our minds, He has provided all types of technology, data and analytic tools to understand and reach our world.
6. To provide us with direction, He has left us His Word, which contains the principles we need to achieve personal holiness, corporate significance and eternal impact (Today's Pastor, p.168).

The challenge of the Pastoral Training and Development Commission is to motivate every Church of God pastor to get outside of himself, look at himself and dedicate himself anew truly to become - "as one approved."