

POWER

“the gospel is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16)

The Secret to Church Growth

by B.J. Clarke

The secret to church growth is really no secret. It is plainly revealed within the pages of God's word. You don't have to travel hundreds of miles to a soul-winning workshop to unlock the secret of church growth. You don't have to travel to the bookstore to purchase the latest volume written to reveal the mystery of church growth. Just travel over to the bookcase, pull down your copy of the sacred writings, open it to the New Testament and start reading.

Read of the life and ministry of Jesus. Read of how Jesus preached peace and went about doing good (Jn. 16:33; Acts 10:38). Read of how he demonstrated his love for the lost (Mk. 10:21; Jn. 15:13). Read of how he spoke the truth in love without ever compromising (Mt. 15:3-14). Read of the Jerusalem church and their common love for Christ and one another (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). Read of how the first century Christians went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4).

Read of the tremendous sacrifices endured by the Apostle Paul so that the cause of Christ might be advanced (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Note the duties and qualifications of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13). Read the epistles to understand God's will for each member of the Lord's body. After you've read and read and read some more, read Revelation 1:3 to learn that just reading is not enough. We must read and then live out that which we have read.

What is the secret of church growth? When preachers speak the truth in love, (Eph. 4:15) and reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering, (2 Tim. 4:2) the church will grow. When elders shepherd the flock properly under the direction of the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-4), the church will grow. When deacons serve well, it will be well with them and the growth of the church (1 Tim. 3:13; Acts 6:1-7).

When each member seeks to live like Christ and to love like Christ, the church will grow. Simply put, the church will grow when every part of the body does its share (Eph. 4:16). This is God's plan and it will not fail!

THIS ISSUE

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

THE SECRET TO CHURCH
GROWTH
BY B.J. CLARKE

THE POLLS ARE OPEN
BY NEAL POLLARD

WHAT A PREACHER WOULD
LIKE TO SEE IN THE ELDERSHIP
BY MIKE HIXSON

POWER FROM THE PAST

THE POWER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
BY JAMES D. BURNS

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

POWER IS A MONTHLY PUBLICATION
OVERSEEN BY THE ELDERS OF THE
SOUTHAVEN CHURCH OF CHRIST,
SOUTHAVEN, MISSISSIPPI.

EDITOR

AARON J. COZORT

ELDERS

LARRY EVERSON
CON LAMBERT

CONTACT US

PHONE: 662-393-2690

FAX: 662-342-7152

EMAIL: POWER@SOUTHAVENCOC.ORG

WEB: WWW.SOUTHAVENCOC.ORG/POWER

THE POLLS ARE OPEN

by Neal Pollard

Somewhere in the world right now, poll levers are being pulled, votes cast, and public offices filled by the winning candidates. It may be a nation's leader or a city clerk, but people in places of democracy are, at this moment, helping to decide the political fate of individuals vying for a place of public leadership. Those elected may or may not be persons of worth and integrity. Their careers may be starting, extending, or ending, depending on the majority's say. They may gain or lose a place of authority based on their political and social philosophies. After all, public officials are always vulnerable to the fickle feelings of the voter in places where freedom reigns.

Everywhere in the world every moment, everyone is casting a vote of a different nature. Only one figurative ballot is used in this worldwide decision. Only two choices appear on the ballot. The issues are paramount in importance. Many times, a righteous minority may be caused to suffer because of the foolish "majority vote" (cf. Proverbs 14:34). When all of life is over, the voting record of every individual will be made public. In fact, all people of all nations for all time will know which choice every individual elected to make in his life. And yet, with this poll, one can change his vote as long as life and opportunity are his.

Does The Kingdom take PRIMARY importance in your life? In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The head of this kingdom is Christ "and he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that **in all things he might have the preeminence**" (Colossians 1:18, emp. NP). God demands first place. We must love Him more than anyone or anything else (Luke 10:27). Whatever keeps us from attending the worship assembly, from actively seeking the lost, and from modeling true Christianity before the world takes priority over serving and obeying God in His kingdom.

Are you casting the VOTE of your life for or against Jehovah? All Israel stood before Joshua to decide to whom their life belonged. In Joshua 24:15, Joshua had said "God or gods." " And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the Lord: for he is our God" (Joshua 24:16-18). The people of God cast their vote out of appreciation, for they remembered the deliverance of God. The people of God cast their vote out of attention, for they recognized the power of God. The people of God cast their vote out of alarm, for they revered the justice of God. The people of God cast their vote out of aversion, for they rejected the enemies of God. Joshua reminded them that God would go with them only as long as they went with God. Because God is a jealous God who wants first place in our lives, He expects the import of our lives to reflect our submission and trust in His way.

Does King Jesus REIGN in your heart? The promise of Christ's coming included the announcement of Gabriel, who said, "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:33; cf. Daniel 2:44). The "throne of the heart" is often mentioned in figurative language. All of us place something there. We place our accumulation before that throne (Matthew 6:21). We place our affections around that throne (Colossians 3:1; Romans 12:2). We place our allegiance before that throne (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17). Is Jesus "a resident" in the "castle" of your heart? If so, is He King or peasant to you? The Bible calls Jesus "the King of the ages" (1 Timothy 1:17), "The blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings..." (1 Timothy 6:15), and "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16). How much greater than the mere prince of the power of the air (see Ephesians 2:2) is our Almighty King Jesus!

God created every person with the ability to freely choose. He will not rule us dictatorially (tyrannically). He leaves the power of choice in our hand. Yet, we must choose carefully. The decision we make has eternal consequences. King Jesus says, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the work that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. "For I have not spoken of My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50). Whether we elect Him King of our lives or not, He has been appointed by God to judge us on an appointed day. The polls are open. Will you chose Christ and His law?



WHAT A PREACHER WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE ELDERSHIP

by Mike Hixson

A harmonious relationship between preachers and elders within the framework of the local church is vital. This relationship necessitates mutual admiration and respect for one another's roles and responsibilities in the church of Christ. In view of this essential relationship, there are certain qualities that must be exemplified by both the preacher and the eldership. For the duration of this article, emphasis will be given to characteristics the preacher would like to see in the eldership.

Scriptural soundness is a must for every eldership in the Lord's church. There are not many problems in the church today that faithful elders cannot correct! What preacher doesn't appreciate elders who adhere to the words of the apostle Paul in Titus 1:9, "holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers." What preacher doesn't relish the opportunity to serve under elders who desire the gospel promulgated without compromise? The church desperately needs elders who demand "the whole counsel of God proclaimed" (Acts 20:27)!

A second vital characteristic of elders is keen understanding of the problems facing the church. The church is currently under fire by many of our own brethren. A number of our well-known preachers have **ceased** pleas for distinctive New Testament Christianity. They are critical of our teaching on the subject of **grace and law**, blatantly **deny "pattern theology,"** refuse to insist the issue of **instrumental music** is a matter of faith, and proclaim the need for a "**new hermeneutic.**" Unfortunately, many elderships are unaware of these problems as well as the men causing them. How can elders protect the sheep if they do not know the wolves? It would behoove elderships to rethink the warnings of Jesus and Paul (Matthew 7:15-30; Acts 20:28-30). Elders need to uphold the banner of truth and mark those who propagate error (Romans 16:17-18). The mouths of false teachers need to be stopped! This can be accomplished when faithful elders refuse false teachers access to their pulpits. Faithful proclaimers of the Word are thankful for well-informed elderships.

A third attribute of elders is a strong desire to lead the church forward into the future. Elders must initiate solid Biblical programs and classes to enhance and perpetuate spiritual

growth (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2). Every preacher is grateful for elders who purpose and plan for church growth, both spiritually and numerically. Thank God for elders who are constantly striving to become effective leaders in the church.

Fourth, as leaders of local congregations, elders must know the flock. There is no way to over-emphasize this point. The Hebrew writer lends insight into the responsibility placed on elders. The inspired record declares, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for this were unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). According to the sacred writer, elders shall give an account unto God for the precious souls under their care. This conflicts with the view of some elderships who think they have no right to delve into the personal lives of the souls they oversee. If an eldership faithfully performs their sacred duty, they will know the flock! Does an eldership have a right to know the marital background of every member in the local congregation? Absolutely (Matthew 19:1-9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Does an eldership have a right to know how much a person gives on the first day of the week in light of that member's professional salary? Surely they do, for this will enable elderships to determine whether or not a member has a problem with covetousness (1 Corinthians 6:9-10); Colossians 3:5-6). Other examples could be cited, but the point is this: elderships cannot afford to close their eyes to the personal lives of the flock. The stakes are too high. Ministers of the gospel are blessed to associate with faithful elders who consistently tend the flock.

A fifth appreciable characteristic among elders is a willingness to serve. Elders and preachers would do well to typify the life of a servant (Mark 10:43-44). Preachers and congregations are grateful for elders who "roll up their sleeves" and toil and labor for the Master. Preachers and congregations alike are stimulated to serve when they see their leaders exemplifying this trait. As a preacher of the gospel, I am indebted to men who exemplify these vital characteristics. May God bless us with strong faithful elders who rise to the challenge of serving in such a high office!





2016 POWER LECTURESHIP

JULY 24 - 28, 2016

SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS

SOUTHAVEN CHURCH OF CHRIST

1483 Brookhaven Drive; Southaven, MS 38671 • Telephone (662) 393-2690

Sunday, July 24

- 9:30 am - 10:30 am Am I a Soldier of the Cross?.....Robert Jefferies
- 10:30 am - 11:30 am Fear: The Great Enemy of Soldiers.....Don Blackwell
- 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Our Enemy, the Devil.....John DeBerry

Monday, July 25

- 9:00 am - 10:00 am The Soldier's Handbook: The Inspired Word
.....Mike Hixson
- 10:00 am - 11:00 am AWOL Soldiers and How to Get Them Back
.....Greg Dismuke
- 11:00 am - 12:00 pm GREAT BATTLES - David and Goliath
.....Chris Perry
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm SPECIAL FORCES - Elders: Leaders in the Lord's Army
.....Paul Sain
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - Adultery
.....Todd Crayton
- Ladies — 2:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION
Media: Music, Movies, Entertainment
.....Rose Crayton
- 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm KEYNOTE - Faithful Unto Death: Christianity is Not
for the Faint of Heart.....Eric Owens

Tuesday, July 26

- 9:00 am - 10:00 am Recruiting Soldiers: Effective Evangelism
.....Rob Whitacre
- 10:00 am - 11:00 am Wounded Warriors: Help for Struggling Christians
.....Jack Honeycutt
- 11:00 am - 12:00 pm GREAT BATTLES - The Walls of Jericho
.....Scott Cain
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm SPECIAL FORCES - Deacons: Elite Forces
.....Nathan Franson
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - Atheism
.....Matt Vega
- Ladies — 2:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - Hypocrisy
.....Courtney Ruiz
- 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm KEYNOTE - Hills Not Worth Dying For:
Matters of Opinion.....Cliff Goodwin

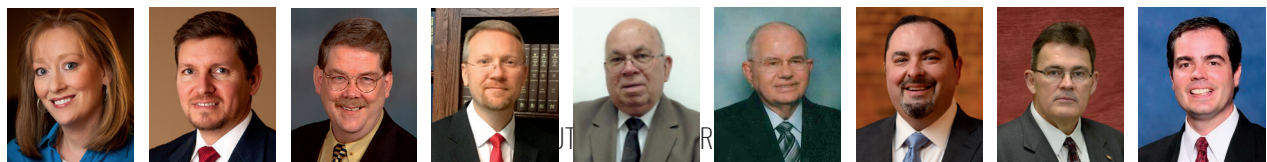
Wednesday, July 27

- 9:00 am - 10:00 am Basic Training: Training New Converts and Teaching
First Principles.....Will Anderson
- 10:00 am - 11:00 am Blessed is the Nation Whose God is the Lord
.....Don Walker
- 11:00 am - 12:00 pm GREAT BATTLES - The Battle of Ai
.....Dan Manuel
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm SPECIAL FORCES - Preachers: The Front Line
.....Gary Hampton
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - Homosexuality
.....John Grubb
- Ladies — 2:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - Materialism
.....Teresa Hampton
- 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm KEYNOTE - The Christian and Civil Government:
His Role and Responsibility.....B.J. Clarke

Thursday, July 28

- 9:00 am - 10:00 am Military Intelligence: Knowing our Enemy and
His Devices.....Ronnie Scherffius
- 10:00 am - 11:00 am War Stories: Learning from Battles of the Past
.....Garland Elkins
- 11:00 am - 12:00 pm GREAT BATTLES - Armageddon
.....Wesley Simons
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm SPECIAL FORCES - Parents: The Home Front
.....Kevin Ruiz
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - The Tongue
.....Charles Cochran
- Ladies — 2:00 pm WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION - Immodesty
.....Janis Dearman
- 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm KEYNOTE - Heaven: The Victory if Ours
.....Robert Taylor, Jr.

Ladies' Classes will be held in the Fellowship Hall



Courtney Ruiz

Kevin Ruiz

Paul Sain

Ronnie Scherffius

Wesley Simons

Robert Taylor, Jr.

Matt A. Vega

Don Walker

Rob Whitacre

POWER from the PAST

The archive of POWER is a vast storehouse of sound, doctrinal articles from some of the best writers in the brotherhood, past and present. The POWER from the Past articles will provide another generation of readers the opportunity to read the best of the best from previous POWER issues.

THE POWER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

by James D. Burns

Just think: ten righteous people could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction (Genesis 18:23-33). Even the unrighteous would have benefited from those who did not exist. The power of Abraham's righteousness is seen as he pleads for these cities. Lot's righteousness did permit him and his daughters to escape fire and brimstone (11 Peter 2:6-8). The account of this event shows the power of the righteous life. There are other examples.

Noah's righteousness before God saved not only Noah, but also his family. In effect, it preserved the human race (Genesis 6-8; Hebrews 11:7).

Joseph's rise to power in Egypt grew out of his righteousness (Genesis 37-41). In his position of authority, he helped Egypt and others in time of famine. Even his own family, including his own brothers who had sold him into slavery, were saved from the famine. His family prospered in Egypt until a new king arose "who did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1:8).

The people of Ninevah were spared the destruction God threatened through Jonah when they repented and turned to righteousness (Jonah 3).

Daniel, in captivity in Babylon, gained the favor of such kings as Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius while maintaining his righteousness.

Proverbs 14:34 states this wisdom: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Righteous lives can be more valuable to a nation than its wealth, military strength and technical expertise.

Each of us needs to realize that our own righteous life can have a great influence on our own family, at work or school, in our community or nation, and in the church itself.

Without distracting from the grace of God, it can be said that, at the judgment, our righteousness will exert an influence (Matthew 25:46).



**Sign up for GBN's
Daily Email
Devotional today
and get the
daily AUDIO
devotional
for FREE!**

WWW.GBNTV.ORG/DAILY

