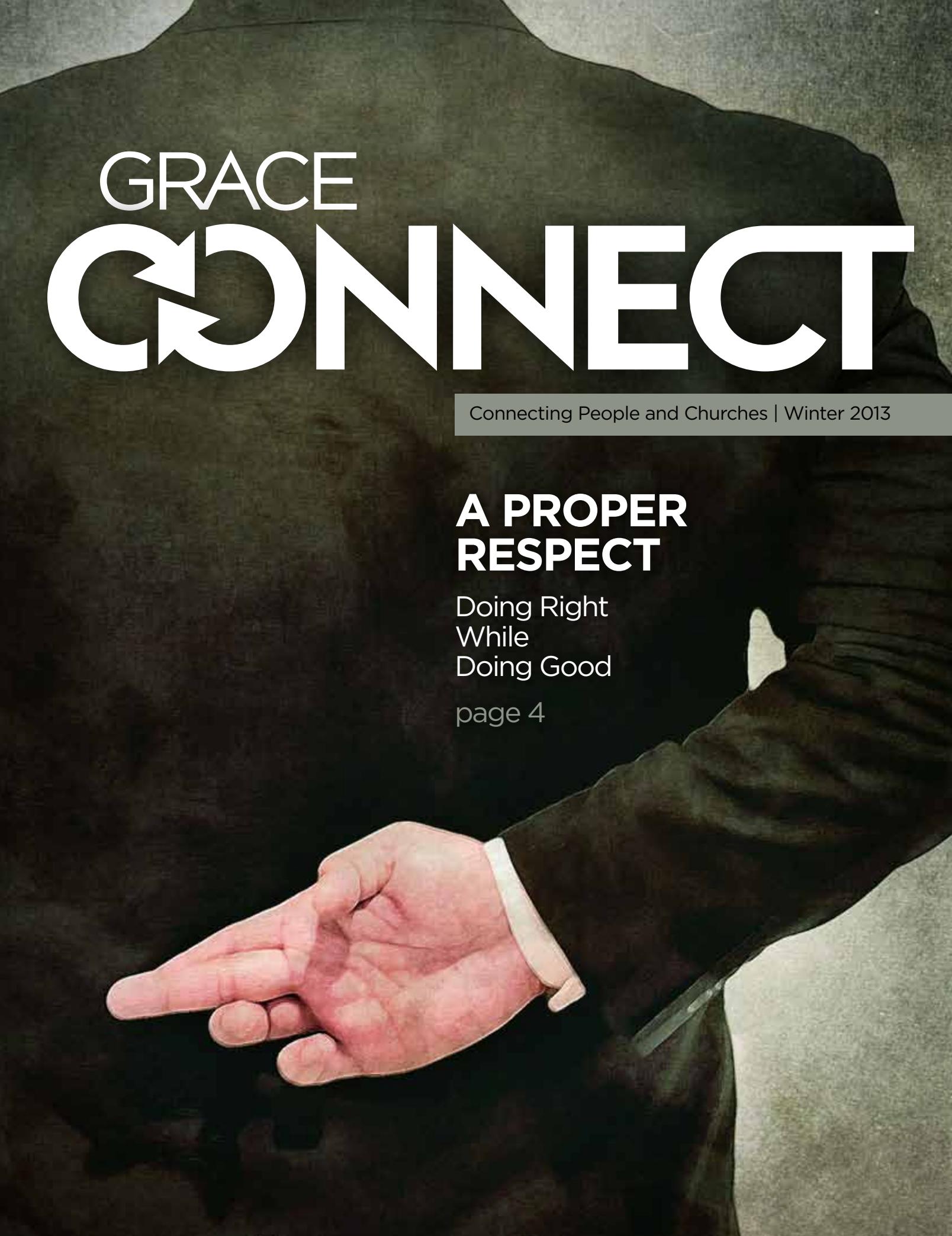


# GRACE CONNECT



Connecting People and Churches | Winter 2013

## A PROPER RESPECT

Doing Right  
While  
Doing Good

page 4

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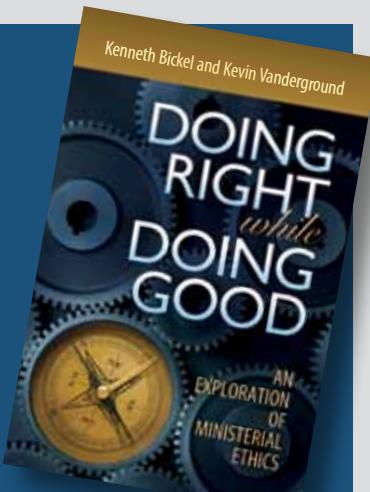
Sometimes the ethical path forward is obvious.

Other times, not so much.

***Doing Right While Doing Good***  
by Kenneth Bickel and Kevin Vangerground

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**GraceConnect**, founded in January 2004 as FGBC World, is published four times a year by the Brethren Missionary Herald Company (BMH), a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization affiliated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (FGBC). The publication's mission is to nurture Great Commission teamwork by connecting people and churches of the FGBC. Inclusion of an article or advertisement does not necessarily indicate endorsement by the Brethren Missionary Herald Company or the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

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# A FELLOWSHIP OF KINDRED MINDS

In the FGBC, our fears, our hopes, and our aims are one — knowing Jesus and making Him known.



*Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.*

It seems odd to quote an 18th century hymn to describe a 21st century undertaking, but what better way to introduce *GraceConnect*?

John Fawcett wrote the song after he decided to not leave his beloved small congregation for a position with a larger church in the city. He so valued those relationships that he chose to stay with them, rather than pursue what might be viewed as a better opportunity.

Recent conversations have described affiliation with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (FGBC) as a family relationship. It's like a blessed tie that binds, so it makes sense to unveil an initiative like *GraceConnect*.

For Fawcett, a decision to stay with the small congregation led him to write a song that has endured generations. Similarly, the Grace Brethren movement, a relatively small group, has impacted generations of believers around the

world with the Gospel. It has the potential to do more — as a connected body of Christ-followers.

For that reason, we've developed *GraceConnect* — the magazine, website, and social media links — to help those in the Grace Brethren movement (and beyond), well, connect.

It is our prayer that through *GraceConnect*, relationships between the people and churches of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches will be strengthened. Thoughtful conversation about topics related to the Grace Brethren commitment to the Word of God in all matters of faith and practice will be encouraged. The traditions and stories of the Grace Brethren movement will be preserved.

Check out *GraceConnect* — not just in the pages of this magazine, but online, too. The new *graceconnect.us* website is now the go-to site for news in the FGBC. Join the conversation on Twitter (@graceconnectus) and "like" us at [facebook.com/graceconnectus](https://facebook.com/graceconnectus). (You'll still find high quality books on theology and Christian living at [bmhbooks.com](http://bmhbooks.com).)

In the FGBC, our fears, our hopes, and our aims are one — knowing Jesus and making Him known. Let's pray for further connections that will unite us in spirit, in prayer, and in ministry.

*Before our Father's throne  
We pour our ardent prayers;  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one  
Our comforts and our cares.*



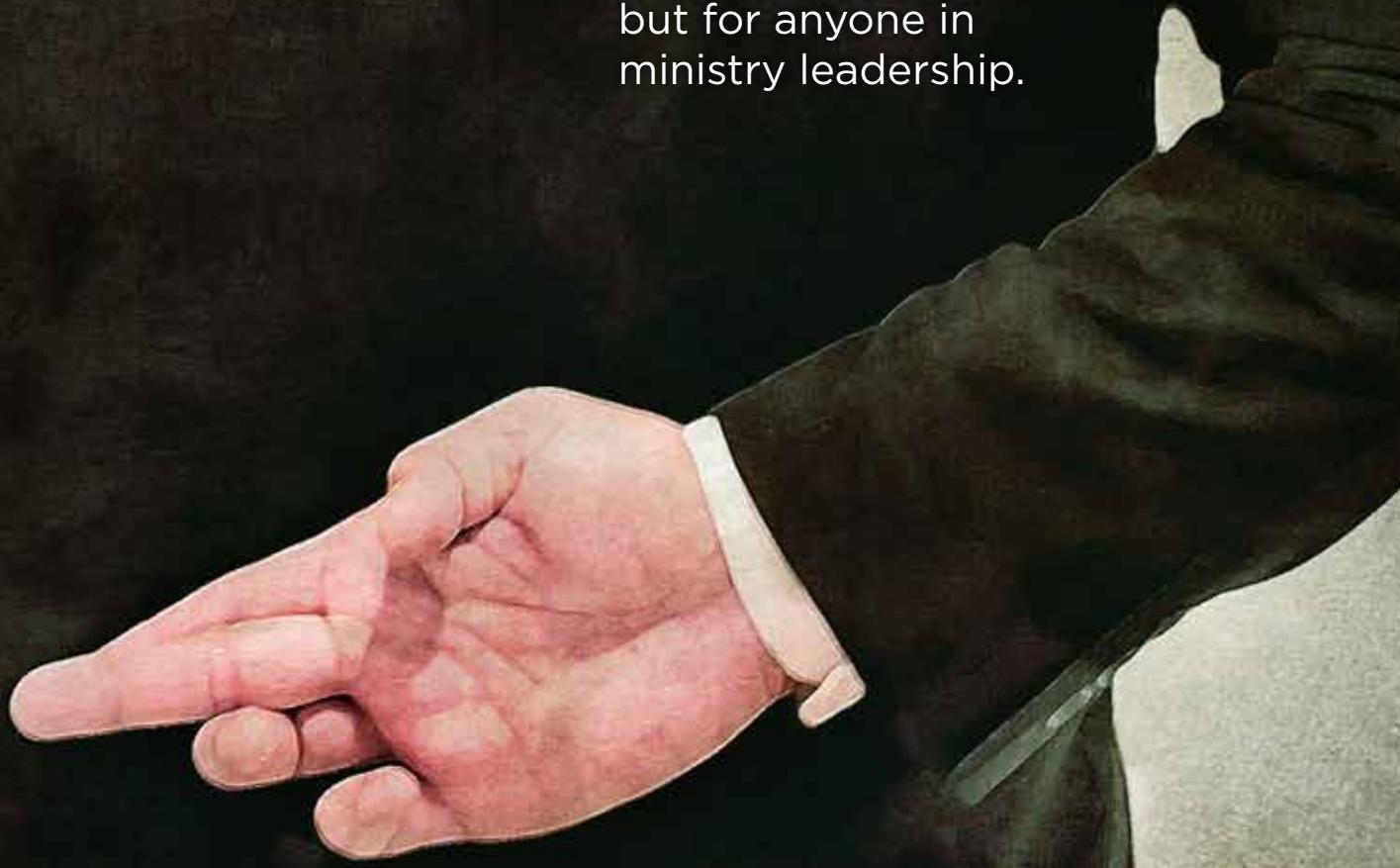
*Liz Cutler Gates is the editor of Grace Connect. Since 2010, she has served as executive director of the Brethren Missionary Herald Company. She and her husband, Doug, live in Warsaw, Ind.*

# A PROPER RESPECT

Doing Right  
While  
Doing Good

by **Ken Bickel and**  
**Kevin Vanderground**

When ministry leaders grievously fail, the ripple effects often extend well beyond what any one person can comprehend, according to authors Kenneth Bickel and Kevin Vanderground. This excerpt from their new book, *Doing Right while Doing Good* (BMH 2013), not only provides ethical guidelines for vocational pastors, but for anyone in ministry leadership.





**Back in the early 1990s** a very well-known sports figure in our society announced he was not a role model and young people should not look to him as one. The prudence of this athlete's statement, given his popularity, is not the issue here. Pastors are the issue. They can't attempt the same announcement. Disclaiming the responsibility of being role models cannot be done (1 Pet. 5:3).

Only a few ministers today have the Apostle Paul's courage to exhort the Corinthians to "follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1), but they should assume that responsibility.

As pastors preach their listeners take note of how they apply the biblical principles they proclaim—for example, do they preach with care and concern or with condemnation and derision? As pastors teach their flocks that the Bible calls Christians to "show proper respect to everyone" (1 Pet. 2:17), do they show that respect toward a wide variety of people in all contexts?

While virtually all ministers would acknowledge this obligation (of being a role model), many forget this responsibility in the midst of daily life. When misdeeds—moral sins, unethically handled funds, or ungodly treatment of others—become public, these actions injure those who look to them for spiritual leadership. They shame and offend their followers. Worse, the minister grants tacit license to sin similarly.

Ministers may dislike living in glass houses, but that's like admitting that firemen don't like heavy smoke and blistering heat. So what? It goes with the job. Moreover, when ministers willingly accept this reality and embrace the responsibility, it can provide helpful accountability. All of us might do some things knowing God is watching, but refrain from doing the same things if acquaintances are watching. Just about anything that keeps us from sin is good.

## Integrity

In this context, integrity speaks of living consistently with one's stated belief system. It surfaces when individuals practice daily what they profess to believe, when they stand true to their beliefs even if it means sacrifice. They act as they believe they ought even if no one is looking.

**Ministers may dislike living in glass houses, but that's like admitting that firemen don't like heavy smoke and blistering heat. So what? It goes with the job.**

In addition to providing a good model for others, integrity also provides a sense of satisfaction. We continue as imperfect followers of Christ until our time on earth is done, and that imperfection prompts us toward humility. It also prompts us to depend on God. It prompts us to show compassion to others who fail. Further, we believe that God normally allows us to make decisions about whether we are going to obey

Him or not. He has granted us the freedom to be volitional people. Thus, when we choose to obey Him, especially when it would be easier or more fun to disregard His commands, we can legitimately feel satisfied that we made a good choice. However, a track record of good decisions should not prompt us to become like the Pharisee of Luke 18:9-14. (There still remain too many wretched attitudes within us; they represent sinfulness even if we don't act upon them). But, those repeated good decisions can provide a sense of peace and confidence as we stand before the Lord.

While that sense of peace and confidence may seem oxymoronic—self-serving and God-honoring—it can stand as a reward for consistent faithfulness. Thus, a minister's integrity will not only provide a wholesome model for others, it will also provide a sense of personal well-being in life. We believe, if remembered on a regular basis, this should lead to a stronger dedication to ethical and moral behavior.

## Faith

We agree with the conviction that faith calls for more than mere cognitive agreement with truth. Biblical faith expects that believers will act on that cognitive agreement even if doubts cloud the heart. For example, if we acknowledge that God calls Christians to obey the government's laws (those that do not interfere with obedience to God), then faith calls us to obey the government's building codes, even if it's both expensive and seemingly unnecessary. Faith prohibits writing a charitable giving receipt for money donated as a personal gift. Faith requires us to tell the truth when doing so might make us look bad.

Many times, unethical behaviors do not represent confusion over what's right or wrong. They represent a lack of faith to do what's right and true because the cost of doing so seems too high.



But the Lord calls us to be people of faith, especially those who would present themselves as ministry leaders. Faith begins with an acknowledgement of proclaimed truth; but it becomes a living faith when decisions are made in concord with that truth, even if it's not particularly shrewd in common life.

## Submission

Many Christian leaders don't think much about the responsibility to live in submission to others, apart from their need to submit to those in authority over them (the Lord, the government, others farther up the ladder of authority). But Ephesians 5:21 calls us to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." In fact, this call for mutual submission is linked grammatically with being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

Why is this significant for ministerial ethics? While some aspects of the mosaic that represents ministerial ethics within a given church attach clearly to biblical principles, other aspects represent ideas that have arisen within the culture of that church. Is it wrong for a minister to earn more than the average member of the church? Some church cultures would say "yes;" others would say "no." Does the pastor have to wear a suit and tie when he preaches, even if the men in the pews do not? Again, some would say "yes;" others would not.<sup>1</sup>

We maintain that wise pastors will seek to understand the cultural rules that have arisen among the people they serve, and willingly submit to those rules (We do not maintain that pastors should submit to the individual notions of each person they serve, but to the ideas of the group as a whole). Some issues of style and practice are not important enough to contend for if they result in the undermining of the pastor's ministry. Submission is not a sign of weakness; it often demonstrates strength; it often demonstrates wisdom.

<sup>1</sup> Pastors should be aware of those who would attempt to claim the status of "weaker brother" and insist that they not be caused to stumble. These individuals should not be allowed to impede progress by their self-proclaimed immaturity. Immaturity is not something a pastor should submit to. However, a submission of the pastors' preferences to what is best for the body of believers should characterize their ministries.

**Unfortunately, breaches of ethics can readily become like a cancer, starting small but growing into a life-threatening problem if not dealt with through often painful measures.**

## Dependence on God

Jesus urged His disciples to remain vitally connected with Him because, "apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Much of the transformation in people's lives that pastors are hoping to see happen requires the supernatural working of the Lord. Pastors can't pull off an individual's salvation and sanctification with their own strength.

Furthermore, the intricate problems that arise in highly complex societies like ours require a level of wisdom that is far beyond our own abilities. Pastors deeply need God's wisdom and guidance.

Recognizing this would seem to help pastors live every day with an unwavering sense of dependence on the Lord. Unfortunately, some realities mitigate against such dependence. As pastors acquire ministry education and training, a measure of self-confidence grows. As they gain experience in the art and craft of shepherding a local church, that self-confidence continues to grow. Previously successful words, actions, and reactions can be employed customarily when similar (or apparently similar) situations arise. Self-reliance insidiously replaces a pastor's awareness of needing God's help.

But, the reality remains. The pastor's business is a supernatural enterprise, and it is good to cling to the need for God's help.

These thoughts intersect with ethical considerations. Many breaches of ethics represent pastors' efforts to handle difficult situations with decisions that arise out of their own sense of astuteness and expediency.

For example, the church budget may be very tight. Funds are insufficient to care for some of the current bills. The pastor fears that the reputation of the church will be damaged by the late payment of bills. A substantial amount of money lies fallow in one of the church's restricted funds—money donated by individuals who have instructed that it be used solely for supporting pastoral students in Africa. Drawing upon those funds to pay the bills will prevent ridicule from being directed toward the Lord's church. Also, it's relatively easy to convince the church treasurer to go ahead and pay those bills out of those restricted funds. It seems like such a minor sin; easily justifiable.

Unfortunately, breaches of ethics can readily become like a cancer, starting small but growing into a life-threatening problem if not dealt with through often painful measures. It's easier to depend on the Lord and allow His guidance toward alternative answers that might be harder to accomplish but are far more ethical in nature.

When dilemmas arise, they represent opportunities to reactivate internal awareness that Christian leaders really do need to depend on the Lord for righteous solutions. Living habitually with a keen awareness of how much we need God to live righteously—that's a good state of mind and heart.

## The Importance of a Group of Spiritual Minds

What is ethical or unethical in some situations of life can be very confusing. Wise pastors pray over those situations. However, wise pastors also know that we are very capable of hearing answers to our prayers that are favorable to our own leanings.

Decisions of considerable importance signal the time to seek the counsel of spiritual colleagues. In some church settings those spiritual colleagues would be the fellow elders of the church. In other settings, fellow pastors of other churches would be the best advisory group.

We believe the Lord speaks to us in nonverbal ways but, for a variety of reasons, Christian leaders don't always hear His words correctly. We believe the Lord also speaks to us through the voices of fellow Christians (particularly those who are spiritually in tune with Him). When their words sing in harmony with the words we hear in answer to our personal prayers, greater confidence in knowing God's will can abide.

We encourage pastors not to handle the sometimes complex decisions of this life as lone rangers. We challenge pastors to show humility and wisdom by seeking the advice of a group of other Spirit-minded individuals when the ethical path ahead is unclear.

\*Excerpted from the BMH book, Doing Right While Doing Good (2013), which is available at [bmhbooks.com](http://bmhbooks.com), online e-tailers, and your local bookstore.

*Ken Bickel is a former banker, pastor, and seminary professor. Kevin Vanderground is an attorney practicing in northern Indiana.*

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# HONOR BOUND

by Judy Daniels

The Promise of Honor program was designed to raise sufficient funds ... to ensure those retired pastors and widows that the promises ... would be fulfilled.

Pick up almost any magazine today, and you'll likely find an article about retirement planning. Making sure that income continues and needs are met after the regular paycheck ends is a concern for most people.

No doubt, the reasons we hear so much about it these days are the large number of baby boomers who are due to retire over the next few years, plus the uncertainty of the economy.

But retirement planning is nothing new. As life spans have lengthened over the years, people have sought to provide income that will continue after their years of employment end.

Grace Brethren pastors, missionaries, and ministry workers shared the same financial concerns. Several decades ago, a number of them

were involved in a retirement fund program administered by the Board of Ministerial Emergency and Retirement Benefits, which was affiliated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (FGBC). This program was designed to provide future monthly benefits for those participating in the program.

But in the mid-1980s, the fund was running low and participation was declining. It was predicted to be insolvent by June of 1987. Larry N. Chamberlain, then assistant executive director of Grace Brethren Home Missions (and retiring president and CEO of the Grace Brethren Investment Foundation), explains:

"As treasurer of the FGBC in 1985, I was asked to chair a committee to assess the financial viability of the Board of Ministerial Emergency



and Retirement Benefits, which had severely under-funded liabilities for future retirees and was approaching insolvency. Following considerable study over the next year, the FGBC conference delegates approved the committee's recommendation to discontinue the former plan and initiate a separate Retirement Investment Plan that would be made available for Grace Brethren churches, pastors, and staff.

"The Retirement Investment Plan is currently managed by a board of directors which includes Ken Seyfert (chair), Tom Avey, Bill Burby, Jim Custer, and Jim Johnson. This new plan has proven to be highly successful with more than 300 participants and more than \$9 million invested by its participating pastors and churches."

**But in 1986**, there were pastors and widows enrolled in the former program who were nearing retirement and were depending on income from the plan that was being discontinued. No one wanted to see those long-time ministry workers go without their promised benefits.

"Our committee wanted to fulfill those commitments of the former plan," remembers Chamberlain, "and so we formed the Promise of Honor program, using as our theme Hebrews 13:7: '*Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith.*'"

"The Promise of Honor program was designed to raise sufficient funds over the ensuing years to ensure those retired pastors and widows that the promises of the former plan would be fulfilled. We initiated in 1986 a

**'Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith.'**

major fund-raising campaign among the churches, and along with some designated delegate fees and major gifts from Grace Brethren Investment Foundation, the Promise of Honor program has issued monthly retirement checks to deserving pastors and widows for 25 years, totaling more than \$770,000. The highest number of monthly recipients was 43 and the current number is six [widowed ladies], ranging in current age from 91 to 102.

"Linda Leonard, on staff with Grace Brethren Investment Foundation, has served faithfully as the coordinator of administration for the Promise of Honor program since its inception," Chamberlain adds, "helping initially with the fund-raising efforts and processing the monthly checks to retired pastors and widows for 25 years. She has also served as the coordinator of administration for the new Retirement Investment Plan.

**"The response** to the Promise of Honor program has been very gratifying, with significant funds being raised in the first several years, and in following years by action of the FGBC delegates via conference funding and through the consistent generosity of Grace Brethren Investment Foundation."

The recipients have appreciated the efforts of those who set the plan in motion 25 years ago. Chamberlain shares a few of their words that have come in over the years:

*"Received my retirement check. Thanks so much for your faithfulness in seeing that these checks go out every month. They mean a lot to the retirees when the salary checks stop." – retired pastor*

*"You are God's means of fulfilling His promise. Thanks to Him and all of you for your faithfulness and loving care." – pastor's widow*

*"I wanted to tell you again how I greatly appreciate the check which comes faithfully, every month on time. My husband would say so, too, if he were here." – pastor's widow*

*"Again I want to say Thank You for your faithfulness and express my appreciation for those who make these checks possible. They are a real help from the Lord." – pastor's widow*

*"Thanks to all the faithful Brethren who are supporting this ministry. It's good to know that our labors are not in vain.' The check each month is deeply appreciated." – retired pastor*

### **The Promise of Honor**

program has accomplished what it set out to do in 1987: fulfill the words of Hebrews 13:7 and honor a commitment to those who served Christ in ministry professions in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

*Monthly checks continue to be issued. Gifts to the program are always welcome, payable to Promise of Honor, c/o Grace Brethren Investment Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 587, Winona Lake, IN 46590, Attn: Linda Leonard.*

*Judy Daniels is the former editor of Grace Magazine. She and her husband, Denny, reside in Winona Lake, Ind.*



# LIFE OVERFLOWING

Pierce believes that the church is a family, where there has to be love—for the Lord and for each other. “We’re really not focused on buildings. It’s about people.”



**“What we do should be an overflow** of what we are,” says Daniel Pierce, pastor of the Greensboro, N.C., Grace Brethren Church (GBC). It’s a philosophy that has driven Pierce and his wife, along with a few other families, as they started the church in July 2011.

The couple had previously planted a church in Greenville, Ohio. When they announced their plans to begin a new work, four families from Greenville moved to help.

It has not been without difficulties. Pierce says that a church plant like Greensboro GBC requires everyone to be a missionary in day-to-day life and that means they didn’t see much harvest right away. Pierce likens it to “taking two steps forward and falling back one.” Not only that, but the Greensboro church is in an area where the closest Grace Brethren Church is two hours away—a separation that makes church planting more difficult. (Though they are

**Despite the challenges, Pierce says he’s seen incredible growth among the members of his church, simply through being pushed out of their comfort zones to interact, build relationships, and share the Gospel with others.**

receiving moral support from the congregations in the Blue Ridge District of Grace Brethren Churches.)

However, Pierce is excited that “eight out of every ten people you meet ... [you could begin] a relationship with.” The missional nature of this effort requires that “each family, each person in the church is to be a missionary. They are to get connected. They have to learn the culture ... [once] the person receives

Christ as Savior, then they have the responsibility also to disciple them.” It is a big job, he says.

Despite the challenges, Pierce says he has seen incredible growth among the members of his church, simply through being pushed out of their comfort zones to interact, build relationships, and share the Gospel with others. They are “anxious to see a harvest” but are fully trusting in God and waiting on His timing.

Three counties and numerous communities are being impacted by these missionaries, in hopes that there will be separate pockets of people connecting, being the church, according to Pierce.

“Instead of one church creating multiple places, the multiple places create one place for central worship ... as they grow in their communities, they will become a church by themselves,” he says. Pierce believes that the

church is a family, where there has to be love—for the Lord and for each other. “We’re really not focused on buildings. It’s about people,” Pierce adds.

Consequently, Pierce is doing everything he can to get to know those in the community. From joining a committee with a community soccer league to volunteering to do Hospice Respite Care and helping at a fall fun festival, the church planter is meeting people.

His wife, Teressa, is working with the women, both encouraging them and trying to be a good role model. She says she would “love to ... see how God can use me in the role of what the women’s relationships can look like as they try to encourage their ... husbands.” In a family, there is a lot of sharing, so for the church to feel like family, you have to really get to know the people, which Teressa is passionate about doing.

The church’s surrounding communities have an interesting dynamic. “Even though it’s religious, there are so many people that don’t have a clue about what true Christianity is,” Pierce says.

He admits that being in the South, many people would call themselves Christians. However, they often do so because their parents or grandparents went to a certain church, and it’s where they grew up. Teressa notes that when members of the community went to church, it was

often “a Christmas and Easter kind of thing ... [they] are connected by way of Grandma.” She stresses that there is a lot of tradition and form; however, many don’t have a relationship with Christ.

The Pierces decided on Greensboro, in an area known as the Triad, because it is the third largest city in North Carolina. Five colleges, including the North Carolina School of the Arts, are in the region, with at least 70,000 students. Pierce saw the need, also realizing that “80 to 85 percent of the population ... does not attend church on a regular basis.”

Currently, the group meets weekly at Java House, a coffee shop just north of Greensboro, for prayer and encouragement.

On a recent Sunday, the youth group from the Ghent Grace Brethren Church in Roanoke, Va., joined the group. Then there was the week a couple from Canada visited.

“The Lord gave them both new life,” reports Pierce.



*Sarah Kraus interned with the Brethren Missionary Herald Company in the Fall of 2012. A graduating senior at Grace College in Winona Lake, Ind., she is from Eldersburg, Md.*

The poster features a large, stylized title "Pray around the world in 73 Days" in red, blue, and yellow. Below the main title, a smaller section reads "And NEW in 2013: Prayer Sprint—cover more ground in less time with 30 days of concentrated prayer! EncompassWorld.org/Sprint". To the right, a woman is shown in profile, looking down. The Encompass World Partners logo is in the top right corner. The dates "March 15 to May 26, 2013" are prominently displayed. At the bottom, the words "global PRAYER WALK" are written in large, yellow, textured letters, with a small figure standing on top of the letter "g". The website "EncompassWorld.org/PrayerWalk" is listed at the very bottom.



# INTEGRATING THE GOSPEL AND LIFE

As Americans we love to jump in to do relief, we're pretty good at restoring, but we do not often have the patience to help develop.



I heard Steven Haas of World Vision speak with good clarity and enthusiasm during missions' week in the chapel of Grace College a couple of years ago. Haas engaged and challenged the students with the opportunities we have to be

'firemen' to help the victims of the fire of child labor, slavery, refugees, and civil war. I agree, but he went on to say much more.

Haas spoke of the kingdom of God as a right relationship with God, with one's neighbor, and with nature. Jesus came, he said, to usher in the Kingdom, a 'new society' especially for the poor (Luke 4). This spread of the kingdom of God is the stewardship of the dominion principle of Gen. 1:28 so that God's will "will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

While an emphasis on good works to adorn biblical teachings would have been sufficient, his presentation clearly implied that a biblical approach to poverty needed to be replaced by a new understanding that being poor is the equivalent of being lost, that helping the poor is better than presenting the gospel, and that the kingdom of God is a better focus, goal and outcome than the church. I disagree.

Meanwhile, the Charis group of African, Asian, and Latin Grace Brethren leaders met at the Chateau de St. Albain in France and forged a Commitment to Common Mission. It was obviously much more connected to the spiritual and material needs of the lost than if it had come from North Americans. They called on the church "to assist those in need, to promote economic, family, and personal develop-

**The topic of social justice rages in the minds of young Christians and mission organizations that focus on good works, partly because we were slow in catching on to it.**

ment, and to encourage the development of businesses with a missionary focus."

Refusing to give it a hip name, these leaders simply called it what it is, 'integrated ministries.' We are to integrate the gospel and the lives of people. Paul called it good works, or adorning the gospel. In 2009 the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches adopted the Commitment statement as our own.

Now we must focus our integrated ministries efforts both biblically and wisely.

The topic of social justice rages in the minds of young Christians and mission organizations that focus on good works, partly because we were slow in catching on to it. We have also lagged in the application of Christianity to social issues, though we had medical works in Africa since the beginning in 1920. There is a great temptation among North Americans to jump in with what we 'know' will work.

Some people today want to talk about adorning the gospel using the more popular name of 'social justice.' If the social justice they are seeking is good works done in society by Christians in the name of Christ, then their confusion is understandable.

However, social justice is a very specific idea, developed by John Rawls of Harvard in the 1950s. It means relying on government institutions to assure economic justice in society. This is not criminal or civil justice, but assuring the people get a fair share of education, health care, food, and

income. This comes through a benevolent government leveling the playing field and redistributing income in a way that seems most fair to most people.

It is right to be concerned about issues of oppression and abuse that are not specifically illegal, and it is right to seek to help people in need, especially if they are right in front of us as if we were on the road to Jericho with a certain Samaritan.

Unjust situations are most often found in nations that are led by corrupt governments. We are tempted to try to reform those governments where we find injustice, but it is much better to help people as we can. These people tend to be in least-reached nations where we focus our mission efforts.

Many people groups already help themselves as their expats send money home from jobs they have abroad. This help is called 'remittances' and the global amount has reached \$300 billion. In the Philippines and Mexico remittances exceed \$20 billion each. This money goes directly to people—not to the government and not to helping agencies.

Here's how we can help:

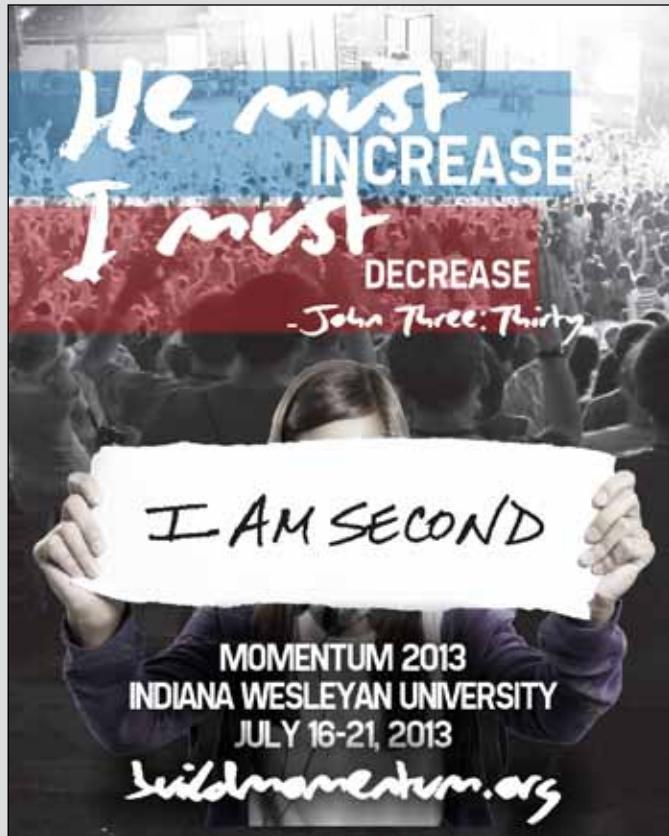
1. Relief: help people survive a crisis with food and immediate health care (*as in the days after Hurricane Katrina*).
2. Restore: help people put their lives and homes back together (*as in the succeeding months after Haiti's earthquake*).
3. Develop: help people discover their own ways to grow (*in areas of health, education, training, and other forms of economic well-being*).

As Americans, we love to jump in to do relief. We're pretty good at restoring, but we do not often have the patience to help develop. Of course, we are tempted to add 'reform' to usher in the new society. Since that is outside of the church, it is a political endeavor that is beyond the goals of the Commitment to Common Mission; it is, however, a central goal of social justice.

We must keep this in mind as we focus on integrated ministries even if it seems to have escaped the mission speaker in chapel a few years ago.



*Dr. John Teevan is executive director of the Weber School at Grace College and formerly led the prison extension program at the Winona Lake, Ind., school. He is a former Grace Brethren pastor who led congregations in Ashland, Ohio, and Winona Lake, Ind.*



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# TRAINING TO TRANSFORM

Hispanic Bible Institute equips Spanish-speaking pastors to preach the gospel.



**Nathan Zakahi**, pastor of the Grace Brethren Church in Sunnyside, Wash., sat next to Juan Marenco, pastor of Iglesia de los Hermanos in Mabton, Wash., at the April 2010 conference of the Pacific Northwest District Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

"I told him [that] we need to have him come and lead a Bible institute, using our church facilities and the classroom space that we have," remembers Zakahi. "He looked at me with amazement and said that he had just been praying about this about an hour before."

The two began meeting weekly. Soon they invited two other Hispanic pastors, Abner Solano, church planter and pastor at Iglesia Vida Nueva, Grandview, Wash., and Miguel Sanjuan, pastor of Iglesia De Los Hermanos, Yakima, Wash., to join them. Even in the early days, Marenco could see the future success and suggested they take photographs to chronicle the beginning, according to the Sunnyside pastor.

Now in its third year, the Bible Institute spans ten courses over three years—500 hours of total study. The curriculum includes classes such as Bible Study Methods and Rules of Interpretation; Old Testament Survey; New Testament Survey; Bible Doctrine Survey; Personal Spiritual Life; Church Ministry and Administration; Teaching Principles and Methods; and Missions, Evangelism, and Discipleship. At completion, certificates are issued through BTCP (Bible Training Center for Pastors).

In May, it is expected that 11 students will comprise the first graduating class.

The Institute's goal is to train pastors specifically for the purpose of planting new Hispanic churches in the Yakima Valley, the fertile south-central region of Washington State, where Spanish-speaking residents make up approximately 80 percent of the population.

"We are considering the planting of Hispanic churches alongside the Goldendale, Harrah, Kent, Sunnyside, and Toppenish Grace Brethren churches," says Zakahi, "as well as in the Naches area

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(photo) Pastors Nathan Zakahi, Abner Solano, Juan Marenco, and Miguel Sanjuan have partnered to begin a Spanish language Bible institute in Sunnyside, Wash.

**In May, it is expected that 11 students will comprise the first graduating class.**

in the Valley, where there is currently no Grace Brethren church, and in Walla Walla."

Bible Institute student Edgar Arreola is working alongside Chris Carlile, who is planting an English-speaking church in Walla Walla. Edgar drives one and one-half hours each week to come to the classes in Sunnyside.

Zakahi hopes that by equipping Spanish-speaking pastors they will reach the younger generations whose parents and grandparents might not bring them to an English-speaking church. It also might address a growing gang problem in the region. There are many good programs in place to keep youth off the streets, according to Zakahi, "but what's missing is the Gospel that transforms lives."

Solano emphasizes the importance of the Institute because of the lack of trained people in the area. He says that most of the students come to the Institute with only an elementary education. Many are migrant workers. "They work hard," he notes, "and they make sacrifices to come to the Bible Institute."

While the classes are designed specifically to train pastors, the faculty encourages women to take some of the courses in order to gain leadership experience.

Currently, classes in the Institute are led by five professors: Marenco, Solano, Sanjuan, Simon Perez (described by Zakahi as a 'stand-out student' and older gentleman who is a general contractor), and Adrian Showalter, a Spanish-speaking member of the Yakima church who moved his family from Akron, Ohio, to be involved with the ministry.

The effort has had some unexpected side effects. "Meeting consistently with the Hispanic pastors has formed deep friendships, not just with me, but with our Grace Brethren district ministerial group," observes Zakahi. "The Christmas dinner for pastors, pastors' wives, and church leaders, hosted by the Mabton Hispanic church and led by Pastor Juan Marenco, drew about 50," he adds. "It was such a fantastic time and the mingling between Anglo and Hispanic families was superb."

Zakahi also notes that considerable communication flows between him and the Hispanic pastors. "It includes the sharing of praises, advice, and counsel in difficult church situations," he says. "It has been deeply encouraging for me to see this kind of fellowship develop and grow."

## Calendar

Events of interest among  
Grace Brethren churches

Events of general interest among Grace Brethren churches.  
Details and registration information are available from the  
sponsoring organizations or at [fgbc.org](http://fgbc.org).

- March 14-May 25** Global Prayer Walk (EWP)  
**March 17-19** Leadership Summit for Youth Workers (CEN)  
**March 17-April 15** Global Prayer Sprint (EWP)  
**March 18-20** South Focus Retreat, Haines City, Fla. (FGBC)  
**March 22-23** Women and Scripture Class, Grace Church, Orange, Calif. (WGUSA)  
**April 18** Day Away, Rhodes Grove, Pa. (CEN)  
**April 19** Day Away, Lancaster, Pa. (CEN)  
**May 17-18** Alaska Focus Retreat, location to be announced (FGBC)  
**May 20-22** Northwest Focus Retreat, Camp Clear Lake, Washington (FGBC)  
**July 16-21** Momentum Youth Conference, Marion, Ind. (CEN)  
**July 26-31** Vision2020South Leadership Conference (national conference), Atlanta, Ga. (FGBC)

CE = CE National ([cenational.org](http://cenational.org))

FGBC = Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches ([fgbc.org](http://fgbc.org))

EWP = Encompass World Partners ([encompassworld.org](http://encompassworld.org))

GCS = Grace College and Seminary ([grace.edu](http://grace.edu))

WGUSA = Women of Grace USA ([wgusa.org](http://wgusa.org))

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## GRACE STORIES

# IMPROVISATIONAL WORSHIP

Surrounding him is an array of woodwind instruments. Across his lap is a flute; on a stand is an alto saxophone; there is an E-flat clarinet on the floor beside him.



instrumental teacher, who is part of the church's worship team. "It's where I'm led (by the Holy Spirit)."

Seated on the platform, Bob is playing a B-flat clarinet. Surrounding him is an array of woodwind instruments. Across his lap is a flute; on a stand is an alto saxophone; there is an E-flat clarinet on the floor beside him.

Participate in a worship service at the Grace Brethren Church in Toppenish, Wash. (Greg Stamm, pastor), and soon you'll be drawn in by the musical dexterity of Bob Ferguson.

"I can't tell you how that actually works," says the long-time

**As the worship team moves seamlessly from song to song, so does Bob, picking up any one of the instruments to play along with the melody.**

He practices with the worship team during their pre-service rehearsal, but his improvisational styling often changes during the service. "I just go where the Spirit leads me."

"For quite a number of years, I taught beginning band," the elementary school music teacher notes. "It is my belief that you cannot teach an instrument that you don't play." All the better to follow the Spirit's guiding.

As the worship team moves seamlessly from song to song, so does Bob, picking up any one of the instruments to play along with the melody.

"I try to find things that fit what we're doing," he says. "Sometimes I try one and think 'it's the wrong one,' then I try to pick up the right one," he adds. "The sound is very different with the congregation."