

# Going to the Tough Places

**YWAM aims to send church planters to every people group by 2015**

YWAMers have never been afraid to go to the tough places. And today they are seeing God do a breathtaking work among the millions who don't know Jesus.

"We are on track to have a church-planting team among every people group by 2015," predicts Gina Fadely, YWAM's director of frontier missions. "Then the task to evangelize will fall to the indigenous churches."

The face of frontier missions is changing dramatically, says Fadely, 49, who is based in Florida: "One of the greatest changes is seeing the mission field become the missions *force*."

In the early 1990s, YWAM had 400 church planters working among the unreached. Today it has 2,300 missionaries, including more than 1,500 church planters. "Our dream is to see indigenous churches among every people group," Fadely says. "The fastest way to see fruit is to go indigenous as quickly as possible."

In the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, YWAMers are planting churches among 248 previously unreached people groups and seeing churches multiply in more than half these locations. Increasingly, native missionaries are a growing force, but there's still room for missionaries from the U.S. and elsewhere, such as China. "If we're not looking strategically at China as the biggest sending force in the future, we're missing the mark," Fadely observes.

More than half of YWAM's frontier missionaries work among Muslims. In 1992, the ministry launched the 30 Days Muslim Prayer Focus, calling Christians to pray for the Islamic world during the month of Ramadan. Within a decade, more than 1

million participants were praying for Muslim peoples, with prayer booklets produced in 35 languages.

The global swell of intercessory prayer is unlocking doors in Islamic nations. Jesus is appearing in dreams to many Muslims, says a YWAM worker in the Middle East. Fadely adds: “Many young people in the Muslim world are dissatisfied with life, and they’re curious about Jesus. They’re using the Internet to explore faith, and that opens up huge potential for cross-cultural evangelism.”

Some 2,500 YWAMers took part in a Reconciliation Walk to express remorse for the way medieval Crusades—which were undertaken in the name of Christ—mistreated Muslims. Teams walked the entire 1,500-mile route from Europe to Jerusalem. In Turkey, which is 99 percent Muslim, people lined the streets to applaud them.

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## How to Find Peace With God

Perhaps you realized you have never made a Christian commitment. Don’t delay that decision! We encourage you to embrace God’s love today and receive the salvation that only Jesus Christ gives. Here are five simple steps you can take to find assurance of salvation:

**1. Recognize your need.** The Bible tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23, NASB). All of us are sinners, and we must admit our need for a Savior.

**2. Repent of your sins.** Our sins create a wall that separates us from God. By confessing your sins and turning from them, you will find forgiveness. The Bible promises: “If we confess

our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

**3. Believe in Jesus.** God wrought a miracle when He sent His only Son to die so that He could pay for all our sins. Put your faith in Him and believe in His power to save you. The Bible says, “‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life’” (John 3:16).

**4. Receive His salvation.** God has given us a great gift in His Son, but we must receive His gift. Thank Him for loving and forgiving you, and ask Him to live in your heart. His promise to us is clear: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

**5. Confess your faith.** The Bible assures us: “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). You have been born again and are now part of God’s family. Tell someone else what Jesus has done in your life!

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## **A Professor With Spirit**

**Considered the first Bible scholar of the modern Pentecostal movement, Gordon Fee has spent the last 40 years proving that the Holy Spirit and biblical scholarship can peacefully coexist.**

Gordon Fee knows how it feels to be a lone ranger. Regarded as the first Bible scholar of the modern Pentecostal movement, Fee is a maverick. For 40 years he has fought an uphill battle in Pentecostal circles, within a movement that has been traditionally wary of theological endeavors and has placed far

stronger emphasis on spiritual experience.

When dealing with such quarrelsome topics as the role of women in the church, speaking in tongues and prosperity theology, the sparks inevitably fly. "I've put up with a lot of balderdash," he says.

Yet his insights into the apostle Paul's teachings have influenced thousands of believers. And his writings have opened up the New Testament for Christians across the theological span.

Now, at the age of 76, Fee looks back on a life dedicated to the unveiling of scriptural truths—and insists there is room for both the Holy Spirit and biblical scholarship in the Pentecostal tradition of the 21st century.

The son of an Assemblies of God (AG) pastor, Fee grew up in northern Washington state. He describes himself as "a pretty miserable kid" who took out his anger on the basketball court. During high school, he placed his life in God's hands and experienced the baptism of the Spirit at a Pentecostal camp meeting.

"I changed so completely that people didn't know how to handle it," he recalls.

At the age of 20, while a student at Seattle Pacific University, Fee preached his first sermon. He was ordained in the denomination after college and followed his father into the pastorate. But when he accepted an invitation to teach at the Seattle university, Fee was captivated by a whole new world—the arena of musty manuscripts and scholarly study. "It was as if all the lights came on," he recalls.

Fee and his wife, Maudine—who thought they would head to the mission field—felt the Holy Spirit's nudge in a different direction. Maudine worked nights so her husband could juggle his Ph.D. studies and look after their four young children.

Poring over endless manuscripts put Fee under enormous pressure, but in 1966 he became the first scholar from a Pentecostal background to earn a doctorate in biblical studies.

As he pursued opportunities to teach and write, his reputation as an independent thinker and New Testament scholar grew quickly. Many Bible scholars, Fee says, write books to fit their theology. He strives to plumb the Scriptures without a preconceived Pentecostal bent, an approach known as *exegesis* in scholarly terms.

“I don’t think of myself as a Pentecostal scholar,” says Fee, who today holds a dual citizenship and lives in Vancouver, Canada. “I think of myself as a scholar who happens to be a lifelong Pentecostal.”

The AG hierarchy has always held him at arm’s length, unsure how to deal with one of their own who took the unprecedented leap into the world of biblical scholars. Fee’s exposition of the New Testament, especially some difficult passages, has raised eyebrows in his denomination, and his reluctance to automatically toe the theological line has caused some frustration at AG headquarters.

Today Fee is professor emeritus of New Testament Studies at Regent College, an interdenominational theological school in Vancouver. His willingness to stick his neck out on theological issues has emboldened a new generation of scholars who hold to Pentecostal and charismatic convictions.

Since Fee took his pioneering steps, other Pentecostals have earned recognition as Bible scholars, and many of them cite him as their inspiration. The Society for Pentecostal Studies in Cleveland, Tenn., is a forum for more than 600 Pentecostal and charismatic scholars. Director David Roebuck says of Fee: “His biblical studies have been very influential on the majority of our members.”

For the most part, though, Pentecostals remain resistant to—or indifferent toward—theology and scholarship. After all, modern Pentecostalism was birthed in spiritual experience, not intellectualism. As the movement spread, Pentecostals simply didn't see a need for theological pursuits. "We don't need scholars; we just need the Holy Spirit!" has been the mainstream Pentecostal cry for the last 100 years.

Among evangelicals, few have looked to Pentecostals for in-depth biblical teaching. A commonly held view has been: "Pentecostal theology? What's that?"

Says Fee: "In defense of my Pentecostal tradition, we grew up with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that swept the world like a storm. For many Christians, it was 'Father, Son and Holy *Book*.' They would say, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit,' but that was it. The Pentecostal movement brought people into a direct encounter with the living God."

So, do Pentecostals need Bible scholars?

"The question is not do we *need* Bible scholars, but are we willing to embrace them?" Fee responds. "If we are willing to embrace someone with a Ph.D. in history, why not embrace someone with a Ph.D. in New Testament studies, which, after all, is a branch of history?"

Fee adds: "Having a Ph.D. has not stopped me from being Spirit-filled."

Fee is a sought-after author, and many Christian publishing houses want the rights to his books that help readers delve deeper into the Word. His most popular, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (co-authored with Douglas Stuart), is in its third edition and has sold more than 1 million copies. Perhaps the reason for its runaway success is Fee's simplistic approach. "The worst enemy of Scripture is the numbers and verses," Fee says. "Get rid of the numbers, and you can read the Scriptures."

Fee admits to being amazed that no Pentecostal had theological books published before him. Students would listen to his lectures and ask, "Where can I find this published?" Realizing such a book did not exist, Fee decided he would fill the gap. Since the 1970s, he has written numerous books examining the New Testament and, in particular, the apostle Paul's teachings.

Outside Pentecostalism, Fee has been rebuffed by some evangelical critics who view "Pentecostal Bible scholar" as an oxymoron. He's been excluded from speaking in certain evangelical colleges because of his Pentecostal roots.

"You need to know that I am a committed Pentecostal," Fee explained to a peer at one college where he was invited to teach. "There was a silence on the other end of the line. They said, 'Thank you,' and that was the end of the conversation. They wouldn't touch me with a 10-foot pole."

In another instance, a group of scholars on an interdenominational study panel opposed every one of Fee's proposals. But not all non-Pentecostals clash with Fee. Many respect his deep understanding of the Scriptures and the insights he offers, even if they disagree with him on some points. "Our young people need the affirmation that it's all right to be an intellectual, to be a scholar *and* to be a Pentecostal," he says.

Yet the arena of biblical interpretation, or "textual criticism" as it's known in scholarly circles, can be a minefield of controversy. Fee has found himself repeatedly and unwittingly in the center of the debate over the role of women in ministry. After years of battling the issue, Fee is weary of confronting it. But he is adamant: God *does* gift women for ministry.

"It's a given," he says. "The real question is, Which comes first, gender or gifting? What [opponents of women in

ministry] are trying to tell me is that gender comes above gifting. How can that be? The Spirit gives the gifting. If a woman stands and prophesies by the Spirit, and men are present, does the Spirit not speak to them? Come on! How dumb can you get?"

His advocacy, Fee says, is on behalf of the Holy Spirit rather than women. "The Spirit is gifting women," he says, "but many evangelicals are not prepared to adjust because of the 'box' they're in.

"I've been blacklisted over this issue," he adds. "People have said, 'We can't have Fee speak because he's pro-women.' I am pro-Holy Spirit! I just can't get over that some people think gender comes before gifting."

Another area of contention for Fee is the prosperity gospel, or what he calls "health and wealth" teachings. His book *The Disease of the Health and Wealth Gospels* is a blistering rebuke of prosperity and perfect health teachings, which he claims have no basis in Scripture. What he describes as the "false gospel" of health and wealth has caused "immense damage" to the charismatic movement, he says.

"Fight over tongues and prophecy if you have to, but don't fight over something as unbiblical as [health and wealth theology]," he observes. Fee notes in the book that the theology of this gospel seems far more to fit the American dream than the teaching of Him who had "nowhere to lay His head."

"We shouldn't reconstruct the Christian faith into an advancement of the American way of life, which I feel is the great sin of the American church today," he says.

The problem with health and wealth teaching, Fee says, is one of hermeneutics, or "interpretation of Scripture." He believes much of the prosperity teaching is dressed "in biblical garb" but "flies full in the face of the whole New Testament."

Twisting certain scriptural passages to fit their theology, proponents of health and wealth are “guilty of selectivity,” Fee says, and then they “avoid ... texts that stand squarely in opposition to their teaching.”

He highlights 3 John 2 as a key example: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (KJV). Fee says prosperity teachers interpret this verse as saying, in effect: “We *should* prosper and be in good health.”

He contends, however, that the Greek word translated as “prosper” in the King James Version means “to go well with someone.” The equivalent of it today would be if someone wrote: “I pray this letter finds you all well.”

He concludes: “The combination of wishing for ‘things to go well’ and for the recipient’s ‘good health’ was the standard form of greeting in a personal letter. To extend [John’s greeting] to refer to financial and material prosperity for all Christians of all times is totally foreign to the text.”

Fee also questions the prosperity movement’s interpretation of the term “abundant life” in John 10:10. The meaning has nothing to do with material abundance, he says, adding that “life” literally means the “life of the Age to come.” The Greek word *perrison*, translated “more abundantly” in the KJV, means “simply that believers are to enjoy this gift of life to the full,” he says. “Material abundance is not implied either in the word ‘life’ or ‘to the full.’”

The teaching of perfect health is a distortion of the Bible’s teaching on healing, he claims: “Gifts of healing belong in the church, but [perfect health theology] has created ... neurotic believers, because they don’t seem to be able to muster up ‘enough faith’ [to be healed].” Again, proponents of perfect health theology “simply fail to do adequate exegesis, which has to do with determining the meaning of a text in its

original context," he says.

He cites Galatians 3:13, a favorite verse of perfect health advocates, in which Paul states that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law" (NIV). Proponents link this verse with Deuteronomy 28:21-22, he says, in which disease is named as one of the curses of disobedience to the law.

"There is not even the remotest possibility that Paul was referring to the curses of Deuteronomy 28 when he spoke of the 'curse of the law,'" Fee states. "And 'redemption' in Galatians has to do with one thing only—how does one have right standing with God."

The real issue, Fee says, is not how to get the biblical text "to work for us" but how to understand the text in the light of the full biblical revelation. He acknowledges that his sympathies lie with those who want to see God perform miracles of healing.

"One must ruefully admit that evangelical Christianity by and large does not expect much from God," he notes. "Most Christians' expectation level when it comes to the miraculous is somewhere between zero and minus five. Even though evangelicals often pray, 'If it be Thy will, please heal so-and-so,' they would probably ... faint if God actually answered."

Clearly Fee loves the Word, noting that heresies are creeping into the church because of lack of theological understanding and misinterpretation of Scripture. What's needed, he emphasizes, is Spirit-filled living and sound scriptural interpretation. "If I could say one thing to the American church," he cautions, "it would be this: Keep integrity with Scripture and spiritual experience."

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**Julian Lukins** *is a writer based in Sequim, Wash.*

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Visit to watch Fee discuss how Christians miss the mark when studying the Bible

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# Professor Pentecostalism Scholarship Can Coexist Proves and

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# Man (and 2.5 million Youth) With a Mission

Loren Cunningham and YWAM celebrate 50 years of reaching the world with the gospel

Loren Cunningham has always been a dreamer. As a young ministry student, he had a vision of waves crashing over the earth—waves that turned into thousands of young people taking the gospel to every nation. Fifty years later, that dream is one of the most influential missions movements in history.

At the age of 25, joined by a small band of “Jesus freaks” who shared his vision that Spirit-filled young people could be world changers, Cunningham founded Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Amid the hippie counterculture of the 1960s, at a time when short-term missions was virtually unheard of, YWAM ignited a missions revolution that sent waves of teenagers and college students proclaiming Jesus across oceans and continents.

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## Underground Church Growing in Muslim-Dominated Indonesia

✘ Pentecostals on the tsunami-ravaged coast of Indonesia are experiencing a wave of conversions and healings.

In the strongly Muslim Aceh province of northern Sumatra—where 167,000 people died in the 2004 tsunami—the underground church movement is growing, with Pentecostal congregations thriving.

Indonesia has an official policy of religious tolerance, but

in Muslim-dominated areas Christians face open hostility and persecution. In Aceh province, churches must register with the authorities and are not permitted to evangelize. Many Christians choose to meet in unregistered—or underground—churches.

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## The Faith of Sarah Palin

**She was vilified by the media, hated by pro-abortion activists and adored by many evangelical Christians. Her 2008 candidacy energized conservatives, broke tradition and made history.**

Sarah Palin was a little girl holding on to her mom's hand when she first attended Wasilla Assembly of God (AG) Church in her hometown of Wasilla, Alaska. The church's founding pastor, Paul Riley, remembers the pigtailed second-grader—then Sarah Heath—coming with her mom, Sally. They established a pattern of faithful attendance that continued through Sarah's childhood and teenage years.

Every week, Riley recalls, Sarah attended Missionettes, the church's program for girls. During those formative years, Sarah learned about the Pentecostal tradition, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, divine healing and the importance of living out her faith in the world.

By the age of 12, Sarah showed depth in her personal faith, Riley told *Charisma*. "She began to have a strong desire for the Lord," he says.

One summer's day in 1976, 12-year-old Sarah waded into the chilly waters of Beaver Lake, a popular location for church camps. She had committed her life to Jesus and wanted to be baptized along with her mom and sister. Riley immersed Sarah

in the lake, baptizing her in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. "I wish I could remember more about that moment," reminisces the retired pastor, now 78. "I know that she loved the Lord with all her heart."

At that moment, though, no one, including Riley, had any inkling of what the future held for the small-town Alaskan girl.

After her baptism, Sarah continued to attend Wasilla AG, growing in her faith and singing in the choir, Riley recalls. "I know that she did receive an experience of the Holy Spirit," he told *Charisma*, "and that she received a calling on her life." That spiritual turning point came when Sarah's youth pastor told her: "You are called by God for a purpose." Years later, Palin confided that the pastor's words were etched on her mind.

Last June, Palin spoke fondly of her years growing up in Wasilla AG when she appeared at a ceremony for graduating ministry students. "It was so cool growing up in this church and getting saved here, getting baptized by Pastor Riley ... my whole family getting baptized," she told the congregation, just two months before her vice presidential nomination.

Speaking to the ministry graduates, 44-year-old Palin said: "Just be amazed ... the umbrella of this church here, where God is going to send you from this church. Believe me, I know what I am saying, where God has sent me from underneath the umbrella of this church."

As she continued, Palin spoke of a "spirit of prophecy ... a spirit of revelation" that would "bubble over." Then, she told the ministry students: "Thank you so much for dedicating your lives to Jesus Christ."

### **Pentecostal Underpinnings**

Within hours of Palin's nomination as the Republican vice

presidential candidate, the video of her 10-minute address at Wasilla AG was doing the rounds on the Internet. News reporters immediately picked up on Palin's plea to pray for those serving in the military: "Our national leaders are sending them out on a task that is from God," Palin told the congregation. "That's what we have to make sure we are praying for, that there is a plan, and that plan is God's plan."

Suddenly, in the media frenzy that followed her nomination, every church Palin had attended came under scrutiny. Eager to unearth controversy, reporters probed into the Charismatic practices at Wasilla AG, especially the experience of speaking in tongues, which commentators often presented as bizarre.

"I don't know if [Palin] has ever spoken in tongues," Riley told *Charisma*. "I know she is a very strong Christian."

In the video, Palin quips about the Charismatic-style worship she experienced at Wasilla AG. She tells the congregation that she jokingly reassured the pastor of another church: "I grew up at Wasilla Assembly of God. ... Nothing freaks me out about [your] worship service!"

Following the vice-presidential nod, though, the McCain campaign seemed perplexed by the media attention directed at Palin's Pentecostal roots. Campaign staff told reporters that Palin—who stopped attending Wasilla AG in 2002—did not consider herself to be a Pentecostal.

In fact, since 2002, Palin has attended several different churches—nondenominational evangelical *and* Charismatic—in Wasilla and in Juneau, her base as Alaska governor. Most recently, when at home, she has attended Wasilla Bible Church, a nondenominational evangelical congregation with an emphasis on the Word, prayer and—according to the church Web site—fostering a close relationship with God.

How deep do Palin's Pentecostal convictions go?

"I think it's important to recognize how [Palin] herself answers questions like this," says Michael Leahy, author of *What Does Sarah Palin Believe?* (Harpeth River Press). "She is pretty clear in stating that she does not belong to any particular denomination but is a Bible-believing Christian. I don't think there is any evidence that she places the same emphasis on the Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit that some members of the Pentecostal tradition do. On these matters, [Palin] is very private in her thoughts."

Former pastor Riley has no doubt about the authenticity of her spiritual walk. Asked if he feels God's hand is upon Palin's life, Riley responds: "Yes, I very definitely do."

Other church leaders in Alaska who know Palin or have known her in the past attest to the genuineness of her faith.

Ted Boatsman was a youth pastor at Wasilla AG 31 years ago and remembers Palin as a young teenager in the church. "It was a very active youth group, and she was with the junior high," he recalls. "I remember this very nice, impressive young lady ... one you just enjoyed being around. She had a grounded sense of God."

That "grounded" faith continues today, Boatsman says, as is evidenced by her words and actions. Boatsman, who went on to become district superintendent for the Assemblies of God in Alaska, told *Charisma* that last April Gov. Palin attended the denominational banquet.

"She shared a little bit about her faith and some of the issues she was going through," he recalls. "We were thrilled to be able to pray with her. She seemed very comfortable with that and she said, 'I could always use your prayers.' I asked the Lord to protect her and keep His hand upon her."

Boatsman says Palin's faith is real. "Her faith is very consistent, and she does not go off on tangents," he says. "She has taken her honesty and lack of arrogance and turned

them into real strengths. She's the same person now as when she was Wasilla's mayor. She treats people just the same ... and she is completely comfortable around prayer."

David Pepper, pastor of the 1,500-member Church on the Rock in Wasilla, told *Charisma* that Palin was a regular attendee at the Charismatic church in 2005, before she ran for the position of Alaska's governor.

"My take is that she is a Spirit-filled believer," 41-year-old Pepper says. "She was very comfortable in the environment of our church." That environment, Pepper explains, sometimes involves dancing before the Lord and other Charismatic expressions of worship. "She still comes here occasionally," he added.

Pepper grew up in Wasilla and remembers Palin as a senior in high school when he was a freshman. "I'd say she is very genuine, very authentic, and her values resonate with so many of us," he says.

Pepper told *Charisma* that although Palin did not teach a Sunday School class or lead a Bible study, he believed she was involved in ministry "beyond being just an attender," although he did not elaborate.

"I believe there is definitely a sense of destiny over her life," Pepper says of Palin. Taking a line from the biblical story of Esther, Pepper adds: "There's a sense that she is here for such a time as this."

### **A Modern-Day Esther?**

Palin's sudden appearance on the national stage during the campaign excited many evangelicals who viewed her as a present-day Esther—hand-picked by God for "such a time as this." The comparison between Palin and Esther—the Old Testament queen chosen by God to save the Jews from genocide—was made by several church leaders interviewed by

## *Charisma.*

Prophetic minister Barbara Yoder, senior pastor of Shekinah Christian Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, says: "I believe this is a time of incredible breakthrough for women. I am simple enough to believe that we don't know everything about the way God moves and that [Palin] just might be an Esther."

Mark Arnold, a Charismatic pastor in Hamilton, Ohio, would have to agree. In fact, he felt the Holy Spirit had given him a message for Palin about being an Esther, but he had no idea how he would deliver it. His opportunity came at a McCain-Palin campaign stop in Ohio last September. Incredibly, Arnold found himself just feet away from Palin and McCain at the podium after being asked to escort a group of Boy Scouts to the front—even though he was not a Boy Scout leader.

What happened next was remarkable. "[Palin] was on her knees, hugging a lady who had lost her son in Iraq," Arnold told *Charisma*. "She spun around, looking right at me, and I told her: 'God wants me to tell you that you are a present-day Esther.' She began to cry and shake my hand in an affirming way. She said, 'Yes, I receive that. ... Please keep praying for me,'" says 47-year-old Arnold.

Barbara Wentroble, founder of International Breakthrough Ministries, describes Palin as "a picture of what God is doing with Christian women" as He calls them to positions of influence. "We need Christian women to make a bold stand for righteousness," she says.

Others point to Palin as a woman of prayer.

Mary Glazier heads an Alaska-based prayer ministry called Windwalkers International. *Charisma* caught up with her on her way to a prayer meeting in Anchorage, the purpose of which was to pray specifically for Palin. This is nothing new, according to Glazier. "We actually began to pray for [Palin] before she became mayor of Wasilla," Glazier says. "We felt then that she

was the one God had selected.”

For several years, Glazier and other members of Windwalkers have prayed for Palin regularly—first when she was the mayor, then when she was the governor of Alaska, and when she was a vice presidential candidate. Last spring, Palin called Glazier and asked her to pray with her over the phone, and they met at the governor’s prayer breakfast.

“She asked me to pray with her for wisdom and direction,” Glazier recalls. “I sensed a real heart of surrender to the will of God in her. God often chooses the least likely people to be at the forefront, and I do believe that God has equipped [Palin] for this hour.”

Glazier told *Charisma* that members of Windwalkers had received words of knowledge about Palin being “called to impact the nation.” At that point, they had no idea she would be running for the office of vice president of the United States.

Palin’s public prayer life in the Pentecostal arena caused a stir when a video surfaced that showed her being prayed over by a Kenyan bishop. In the video, Bishop Thomas Muthee is seen laying hands on Palin in 2004 and asking God to protect her from “every form of witchcraft.” Liberal commentators and bloggers described the video as “terrifying” and claimed it made Jeremiah Wright, Barack Obama’s controversial ex-pastor, appear “pretty mainstream” in comparison.

The episode reinforced the fact that Palin’s faith, and Pentecostalism especially, is at best misunderstood and at worst deliberately ridiculed by a large segment of the media.

### **A Bright Future**

Palin certainly needed prayer warriors during the grueling months leading up to Election Day. She was vilified by angry abortion activists (one blogger wrote that Palin’s son Trig probably wished he had been aborted), and voters criticized

her for using GOP funds to buy a \$150,000 campaign wardrobe.

She was also torpedoed by journalists. The *New York Times* admitted after the election that a report of Palin's alleged ignorance of African geography was traced to a policy adviser who does not exist.

Many voters turned against Palin because of her pro-life stance, her eagerness to drill for Alaskan oil or her embarrassing interview in September with Katie Couric of CBS. Some evangelical leaders also opposed her, including theologian John Piper—who chastised Palin because he believed she neglected her domestic role.

The question in the minds of millions today is obvious: Where is Palin's political career headed? For now she will remain Alaska's governor, but her name has been floated as a possible GOP nominee for president in 2012. She had considered running in a special election to replace U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska—who was convicted of ethics violations—but he was defeated by his Democratic opponent.

Biographer Joe Hilley says Palin's faith is intertwined with every aspect of her life—so her faith will determine her future.

"[Palin's] commitment to Christ forms the core of what I refer to as her moral center," says Hilley, author of *Sarah Palin: A New Kind of Leader* (Zondervan). "Around that core are three basic beliefs: the authority of Scripture, a clear sense of justice and an unavoidable ethic of personal responsibility."

Hilley told *Charisma* that Palin's relationship with Jesus is an integral part of who she is. "One could not adequately define her commitment to Christ without including family and politics, nor could one define her political life without including her relationship to God," he says.

Moreover, some black and Hispanic Charismatic leaders say

Palin's passionate faith appeals to minorities in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

"It's huge," says Bishop Harry Jackson, pastor of the 3,000-member Hope Christian Church near Washington, D.C. "[Palin's rise] marks the fact that Charismatics have become mainstream." And even though McCain lost the election, Palin's candidacy was "a watershed moment for our movement," Jackson adds.

California-based Sam Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, told *Charisma*: "Hispanic Pentecostals are excited about Palin. ... She resonates with us. She understands what it is to have a Charismatic experience."

Describing Palin as a "kindred spirit," Rodriguez says many Hispanics identified with the news that Palin's 17-year-old unmarried daughter was pregnant. "We understood her journey," Rodriguez says. "We identify with what she's going through."

Palin herself told journalists after the election that she's looking for divine direction. In an interview with Larry King on CNN in November, she said her life is in God's hands.

"If He's got open doors for me that I believe are in our state's best interest, the nation's best interest, I'm going to go through those doors."

Certainly, those who know Palin best believe she has the resolve—and the faith—to go as far as God ordains.

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**ONLINE EXCLUSIVE:**To read an excerpt from the biography *Sarah Palin: A New Kind of Leader* click [here](#).

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## **The Unborn Still Cry Out for Justice**

***How should pro-life Christians view the 2008 election?*** By Lou Engle

Many people in America, including some of my best friends, would probably not agree with what I say here. Most have been conciliatory regarding the results of the recent presidential election and have counseled unity and peace. But I stand by the words of Dutch politician, journalist and theologian Abraham Kuyper: "When principles that run against your deepest convictions begin to win the day, then battle is your calling, and peace has become sin; you must, at the price of dearest peace, lay your convictions bare before friend and enemy, with all the fire of your faith."

I have not been afforded the option of debating politics and reason around election results. Five years ago while I was reading the biography of British statesman William Wilberforce, God supernaturally apprehended me and called me to raise up a prayer movement for the ending of abortion, and I am under divine restraint to obey that commission.

I understand my friends' conciliatory responses, but when I consider that 50 million babies have been killed since the ruling handed down in *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion and that the incoming president plans to ensure the ongoing legality of this march of death, I cannot live in peace. It is easy to counsel peace when you are not the object of the abortionist's forceps and scalpel. But for me, peace with the

legal killing of unborn children becomes sin, and battle is my calling.

So how do we wage the war against abortion in our nation?

We must follow the pattern of revolution of the prophet Elijah. First, carrying a spirit of love, not hate, we must be exceedingly zealous for the Lord. We must allow the crisis to drive us to desperation for God and His purposes. We must shake off materialistic slumber. The future of our children and our society is at stake.

Second, we must think generationally. It became obvious to me during this election that we have lost the next generation to moral relativity.

It took Elijah's revolution two generations to overthrow the reign of Baal-worshippers Ahab and Jezebel. We must actively train a new generation of leadership and not entrust the discipleship of our sons and daughters to the morally relativistic professors in our Christian universities. We must raise them in the furnaces of prayer and fasting. We must anoint a generation of Elishas.

Third, we must let this election be a call to prayer and fasting such as we have never seen. Abortion is a spiritual battle. The blood of babies is not another socio-political issue. Blood fuels the demonic realm, and before heaven it demands a day of reckoning. We must have a spiritual awakening to turn the hearts of this nation—and I believe we will have it if we pray.

As my friend Allen Hood prophesied, "Let it be said that in the days of the rule of President Obama, stadiums were filled with prayer and fasting." We must raise up a grass roots prayer and activism movement among the young. Bound4LIFE is a movement we launched 4 years ago that is spreading across the country carrying this youth mantle for the ending of abortion.

We must pray for President-elect Barack Obama. He is not our enemy. My heart has been going out to him in prayer because racism is raising its ugly head, and he has received many death threats.

Pray for his protection. Pray that God would give him wisdom. If God could change Nebuchadnezzar by haunting him with dreams, He can change Obama. Our mandate is not to curse but to pray for those in authority (see 1 Tim. 2).

Fourth, we must return to the basic commandments of the laws of God for society to flourish. Our pulpits must preach them and train a generation to vote according to them. God's remedy to the social decline in Malachi's time was first of all remembering the law of Moses.

Fifth, men must stretch themselves out in fasting and prayer over their "dead children" and raise them from the dead. The book of Malachi declares that Elijah will come and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. The church must arise with an explosion of adoptions.

Today, homosexual couples are adopting thousands of children. This is their time and their moment, they believe. Who wants the babies more in America? The pro-life movement must take this on as their main mandate. Every church must adopt a Crisis Pregnancy Center. We must fuel the compassion movement with our finances by raising up pregnant mothers' homes.

Finally, we must speak out for righteousness. We must preach it, pray it, prophesy it, praise it and print it until the forces of hell cannot hold back the Word of life.

Of his God-given mandates Wilberforce declared, "God has set before me two great objectives, the abolition of the slave trade and the reformation of morals."

God has set before me two great objectives as well: "God, end abortion, and send revival to America." Let this be the battle

cry of the Pro-Life Movement in America today.

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**Lou Engle** is founder of The Cause USA and co-founder of TheCall, an international prayer movement. To read a longer version of this column online, [click here](#).

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## Getting Creative For God

The scarred intersection on Chicago's north side was the battleground for a dozen rival street gangs. At the corner of Sheridan Road and Sunnyside Avenue, memorials marked the spot where slain gang members had fallen.

But in the space of a few weeks, the violence subsided and the trade from the drug houses disappeared.

What brought about this startling transformation? Incredibly, a piece of art—a vivid mural depicting creation's beauty, sin's destructive power and Jesus' love for all races.

Artist Greg King invited neighborhood teenagers and graffiti artists to join in. The result was a striking image that won the respect of all the gang leaders. They ordered their members not to deface it.

The shootings stopped, according to Brian Bakke, a former staff member at a nearby church. "It became hallowed ground," he told Charisma.

The mural, Bakke suggests, is evidence of something much bigger.

Across America and around the world, Holy Spirit-inspired art is piercing the darkness, bringing God's healing touch to troubled souls and His breath of life to the spiritually dead. Christian artists are using their God-given talents to minister in the ghettos, on the beaches, in shopping malls and in prisons-everywhere people need Jesus.

"For too long, the church has neglected the imagination and the wonder of art," comments Colin Harbinson, a leader of the growing art-in-mission movement. "This is a new day for art and the language of imagination. God is about to do something that we have only dreamt of."

Mural painter King agrees.

"This street was the garbage can," says the 36-year-old artist, who lives in Brooklyn, New York. "But we created a piece of beauty ... an outpouring of God's love. I think the gang members felt it."

Bakke, former community director at Uptown Baptist just two blocks from the mural, recalls the gang leaders' initial response to the idea. "They said: 'If you're gonna paint nice pictures with positive thoughts, forget it.' We explained the mural would portray the destructive power of sin and the unity of all people in Jesus. 'Go ahead,' they told us. 'Jesus is OK.'"

The intense imagery spoke to the gang members—the beauty of God's creation wrecked by sin, symbolized by a mace shattering the world; the words "hatred," "lust," "racism" and "envy" springing forth; shards flying into the adjoining image of Jesus embracing all peoples.

"Most evangelical Christians are beholden to the spoken Word," says 44-year-old Bakke, a Chicago native. "But visual art is powerful, and the Holy Spirit uses our creativity."

**Messages in the Sand**

Beach sculptor Randy Hofman lives for the sun, the surf and the lure of sand art. During the last 30 years, his fantastic sand sculptures have captivated hundreds of thousands of beach visitors, vacationers and partying college students.

As a kid, Hofman made sand castles like other boys. Now he spends hours crafting elaborate sand portraits of Jesus, with titles such as "God Loves You" and "Wise Men Seek Him" etched in the sand.

The images are intricate, but the message is simple. "Jesus on the cross-people get it," says the 56-year-old from Ocean City, Maryland.

The beach is Hofman's mission field. In the summer, 10,000 people a day view his sand sculptures along the Ocean City boardwalk. Hofman hands out gospel tracts and discusses the images with onlookers.

During spring break, Hofman joins Beach Reach, a student mission ministering to the college-age party crowd. Students swilling beer stop to admire his sculptures on South Padre Island, a party mecca off the Texas coast.

Students hit the beach late morning, often nursing hangovers. "By midafternoon, many of them are drunk again," Hofman says.

But his sand images are a talking point for Christian students who come to mix with the revelers and converse about Jesus. In March, 70 spring breakers were led to Christ and 21 were baptized in the ocean.

"It revs me up," Hofman told *Charisma*. "My job is simply to communicate God's love to them through sand. It's like people walking past a newspaper stand-they scan the headlines and move on. With my sculptures, people see Jesus and 'God Loves You' and walk on. Yet it speaks the good news that God wants us in His family."

Art is a thread woven through the Christian experience, according to Harbinson, a recognized authority on how art fits into God's big picture. "God is calling artists to be culture transformers," says the 61-year-old college professor, formerly a dean at Youth With A Mission's (YWAM's) University of the Nations.

Many in America's Christian mainstream misunderstand art, viewing it as a "sideshow" and failing to see artistic expression as God sees it, Harbinson says.

"Throughout the Scriptures, we see clearly that God is an artist," he says. "Right back in Genesis 1, God created. In Exodus 31, God commissioned the first school of the arts. He chose Bezalel to make artistic designs in gold, silver, bronze and wood, including all the furnishings for the tabernacle."

In the biblical account, God tells Moses: "I have filled [Bezalel] with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works ... to work in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. 31:3-5, NKJV).

God also commissioned art to bring healing to His people, Harbinson continues, citing the story of the bronze snake in Numbers 21:4-9. In this passage, God sent venomous snakes to afflict the grumbling Israelites. Then, He commanded Moses: "'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.'" Moses obeyed by crafting a snake out of bronze.

"God knows that art speaks of Him in ways that words alone cannot," Harbinson told *Charisma*. "God's very creation is nonverbal, and it speaks of Him."

The Bible is strewn with examples of creativity and imagination, Harbinson points out, yet evangelicals in America still wrestle with "nonverbal" proclamation of the gospel and demote art's place in God's world.

“We are locked into thinking that it has to be ‘the spoken word’,” he observes. “We do not trust the Holy Spirit to use the image to do His work. We feel the necessity to interpret images with words. Well, Jesus is the Word, but He is also the image of God.”

Harbinson, who grew up in a strict Brethren church in England and watched his first movie at age 19, believes the tide is changing. “This generation finds it extremely difficult to sit in church and listen to a 45-minute sermon,” he says. “To put it bluntly, we are losing this generation, and we must recapture the imagination and the arts if we are to be relevant.”

Based in Jackson, Mississippi, Harbinson heads a ministry called StoneWorks that aims to break down barriers to art within the church and challenge Christian artists to engage their world.

### **Standing on Holy Ground**

That’s what British artist Paul Hobbs is doing in England.

His *Holy Ground* shoe-art display is causing a stir in churches, schools, shopping malls and even at Oxford University where a chapel minister reported: “Many students and others have found it to be incredibly moving. We had 50 people praying around it this morning.” Not bad for a bunch of old shoes.

Hobbs spent two years tracking down Christians around the world whose shoes tell the stories of their inspiring journeys of faith. The 30 pairs include a former prostitute’s high-heeled stilettos, an itinerant evangelist’s worn-out sandals and the shoes of a former Muslim woman in Asia who came to faith in Christ through a vision of Jesus.

Hobbs, 44, who lives in southern England, came up with the idea after receiving a vision from the Holy Spirit while in

prayer. He pictured shoes of all types, along with bare feet, and sensed Moses' encounter with God, when Moses removed his sandals because he was on "holy ground."

Hobbs sets up the art display in a circle on the floor, so that people can walk around it, looking at the shoes and reading the stories that accompany them. Hobbs' favorite pair is the unique sandals of an African evangelist who treks miles on foot and is often persecuted and beaten for the gospel's sake. The sandals-made out of old rubber tires-still have mud on the soles.

Perhaps the most emotive "shoe story" is told by Rosemarie's shoes. Rosemarie's father was Adolf Hitler's bodyguard for the 1936 Olympic Games, and Hitler was her godfather. Her dad-a Christian-risked his life to help persecuted Jews escape Nazi Germany before World War II. In 1938, he was forced to swallow a cyanide pill.

Many people slip off their own shoes as a sign of respect as they circle *Holy Ground*. In one shopping center, hundreds of people stopped to look-including Muslims who appreciated the custom of going barefoot.

"I often wonder what Muslims make of it," Hobbs admits.

For many, *Holy Ground* is an emotional experience. "I've seen people in tears ... some sobbing," Hobbs says. Sometimes, people are convicted about their own lukewarm walk with Christ and their need to run a strong race of faith.

One little girl, Hobbs recalls, came to view the display every day of the exhibition and asked her parents to read her a different story each time. Examples like this, Hobbs says, demonstrate that the Holy Spirit uses art He has inspired to probe the hearts and minds of young and old alike, crossing generational, cultural and racial lines.

**Healing Through Art**

Marge Malwitz, a Connecticut-based quilter, found this to be true when, through the ministry of World Relief, she took her artwork to a group of genocide survivors in Rwanda. The women—mostly widows who lost their husbands in the ethnic bloodshed of 1994—were skeptical when they heard an American artist was coming to share with them about pain, reconciliation and healing.

*What does she know about the pain of genocide?* wondered Rose Busingye, one of the women. Yet as Malwitz showed the women her quilt designs and discussed the imagery of darkness, bitterness and despair giving way to light and hope in Christ, Busingye and others softened.

“I was proved wrong,” Busingye admits. “This down-to-earth lady began to talk about her journey of pain, depression and hopelessness. She explained how God transformed and restored her life. ‘God wastes nothing,’ she told us. The Holy Spirit was using her art to bring healing to us.”

Malwitz, a 60-year-old grandmother, used her quilt art to share her own story about how God rescued her from a “dark pit.” Slowly, the Rwandan women began to talk for the first time about their web of hidden heartaches spun by the horrors of the genocide.

“It was as if a veil lifted,” Busingye recalls.

The women wept as they confessed their grudges and asked one another’s forgiveness. The quilt art, Busingye says, was the key to opening the floodgates of healing and restoration. “The Spirit of God was at work,” she says. “He tore down the walls.”

Malwitz’s philosophy is simple. “I give God my art, He provides the venue and the Holy Spirit does His work,” she told *Charisma*. “I don’t preach. The quilts tell the story.”

Says Malwitz: “People are looking at a piece of art and

talking about something that is removed from them, yet they are really talking about their own situation. They are pointing at the quilt, but they are really pointing at themselves.”

Malwitz is not alone in using art to communicate God’s love and healing across continents and cultures. A growing number of Christian agencies, including World Relief, Operation Mobilization (OM) and YWAM, embrace the use of Holy Spirit-inspired art. Through OM’s ArtsLink and other cutting-edge missions, a new breed of “art missionary” is emerging-artists who are not afraid to take their visual message to the darkest, most oppressive corners of the earth.

Paula enters prisons to share Christ’s love with violent offenders and rapists through her artwork. “My heart is for those in prison, refugees and the displaced,” explains the 48-year-old YWAM missionary-artist. Based out of Hawaii and Virginia, Dubill travels the world, often ministering in war zones and hostile areas.

“My heroes were Brother Andrew and Corrie ten Boom,” she says. “At first, no one seemed to want an art missionary.”

YWAM opened the door.

In a prison in South Africa, Paula staged art classes for violent criminals. Patrick came to class with the words “Son of Satan” tattooed on his forehead. As Paula sketched his portrait, Patrick told her he had AIDS, syphilis and tuberculosis. When it was the inmates’ turn to create, Patrick made a clay tombstone inscribed with “.”

“All I could think when I saw it was that there was a spirit of death over him,” Paula recalls.

Another missionary-once a member of a satanic church-counseled Patrick that only the Holy Spirit could transform his image of death into a glorious image of new life. A few days later,

Patrick bowed to his Creator and became a son of God.

Patrick's story is a mosaic of brokenness and marvelous restoration. A portrait of God's amazing grace. A tapestry of the Holy Spirit's gentle wooing. It is proof that our Creator is a God of art.

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## **The Church of the Undignified**

The bizarre-looking cross at the front of the church is made up of McDonald's cartons, beer cans and drug vials. At first glance, it might appear sacrilegious. But this is Church of the Undignified, where the "rules" of conventional church do not apply.

Fashioned out of chicken wire, the three-dimensional cross forms a cage in which people literally drop their addictions and their burdens—cigarette packets, fast-food wrappers, confession notes, even dollar bills.

"The beauty of the cross [of Jesus] to us is that it takes away all our junk," explains the church's 32-year-old pastor, Benji Rodes. "Addictions and destructive habits are left at the cross."

Visual acts of obedience and worship are important to those who are part of Seattle's Church of the Undignified—an eclectic band of spiritual seekers, many of whom have been dragged through the filthiest mire of life.

Located in a former trapeze gymnasium that adjoins a yoga

studio, the church meets in the Capitol Hill district of Seattle—a downtown neighborhood renowned for its artistic bent, extreme liberalism, prostitution, gay clubs and drug culture.

“Anything goes in this neighborhood,” Rodes says. “The other day I saw a guy in leather shorts wearing a leash. I mean, this is not the Bible Belt.”

The Church of the Undignified actually fits well in this rebellious environment. The hallmark of the church is freedom of expression, and their “undignified approach” draws those who would otherwise be unlikely to set foot inside a church.

As word has gotten out, even self-professed atheists have been coming regularly to check it out. Others come to place their burdens in the garbage-eating cross—and then slip out the back door.

The church takes its name from 2 Samuel 6:14-22, which records that King David leaped and twirled, dressed only in a thin cloth, as he danced before the Lord. The unstately public display caused his wife Michal to despise him.

In response, David said: “I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes” (vv. 21-22, NIV).

“We believe that God wants us to worship Him in total freedom, that we should not worry about appearing foolish in the eyes of others,” Rodes explains.

He adds: “This is not about trying to act cool. It’s about not being afraid to be whatever God wants you to be, no matter how silly you might appear.”

### **The ‘Undignifieds’**

Worship services are characterized by freedom to express oneself before God through dance, African drums, poetry,

watercolors—by any manner in which the Holy Spirit leads. The experience is something to behold.

As a former witchcraft practitioner beats an African drum in rhythm to the worship, an insurance actuary—an occupation normally associated with the most reserved and dignified of people—stomps in a most undignified jig, arms held high before the cross.

“Some people would probably say it’s a bit chaotic, especially if they have an image in their mind of what church is,” Rodes admits. “To me, our services seem quite normal.”

The “Undignifieds,” as they call themselves, do not want people to judge their church on its style of worship, unusual cross, unorthodox venue or peculiar mix of people. “Look at the fruit,” they say, speaking of the lives transformed by the Holy Spirit’s power.

From its origins three years ago, the Church of the Undignified has focused on humble service to the poor, addicts, social dropouts and other inner-city “undesirables.”

“We’ve always felt that the poor are the chosen,” explains 29-year-old Abbi Rodes, Benji’s wife. “They were the ones that Jesus was near to, and it’s a privilege to be with the poor.”

Several of the church’s young professionals choose to rent in shabby apartment complexes so they can live among the poor and give more money to missions. The Rodeses do not receive a pastoral salary but support themselves through their own photography studio. The missionary mind-set permeates the church.

“Why is this church here?” asks Greg Jones, a 28-year-old Canadian who says his connection with God has been electrified. “We’re not just here to wait for Jesus to come back, but to hasten His return. We’ve got to go.” This year, Jones plans to move to Turkey to be a tentmaker missionary

among Muslims.

Other Undignifieds, such as Hannah Chung-Cornman, 26, say they feel God's call to full-time ministry. Her own story is a remarkable testimony of the Holy Spirit's restorative power.

A pastor's kid raised in a Southern Baptist church, Chung-Cornman rebelled against her strict evangelical upbringing and the pressure she felt to conform. "Being a pastor's kid, I felt everyone in the church was always watching me [and wondering]: *What's she wearing? What's she doing?*" she recalls. "I saw hypocrisy in the church, and it made me feel sick."

While in her early 20s, Chung-Cornman moved to Capitol Hill, where she dabbled in drugs, alcohol and witchcraft. She became a drug dealer linked with a mafia-style group.

She hit rock-bottom while having a relationship with a married man who supported her financially in return for being his mistress. Living "like a prostitute," she says, drove her to attempt suicide on several occasions.

"I was looking for love, but in all the wrong places," she says, adding that all she wanted was "just to be loved and accepted."

In desperation, Chung-Cornman entered the Church of the Undignified. Overcome by the sense of love and acceptance, she says the Holy Spirit whispered to her: "You are OK now. You are Mine."

Two years later, Chung-Cornman radiates the joy of the Lord, is newly married to a fellow Undignified, and plans to attend seminary in Seattle and become a chaplain. The Church of the Undignified, she says, continues to draw people like her because its love and acceptance is real.

"Recently, a man came soaked in urine," she says.

“Immediately, people went to talk to him and invite him in for coffee. This is what Jesus wants. He wants us to be undignified for Him!”

The faith of her husband, Aaron, has also taken on a dynamic new dimension since he met the Holy Spirit at the church. Strolling home from work in Seattle’s business district, Aaron came across a homeless woman. Instead of ignoring her like everyone else was doing, he invited her to dinner at a restaurant where he talked to her about Jesus.

Meanwhile, gang member Chauncy Moylan had been dropping into the church on and off for months. At Thanksgiving last year he was in a vehicle with other gang members when a high-caliber gun was discharged by accident. Moylan was struck in the side of the head at point-blank range.

The bullet entered through his ear and passed out through his nose. Moylan was rushed to the hospital, where doctors were astonished that he not only had survived but also had suffered relatively minor injuries. The bullet caused loss of hearing in one ear and partial paralysis in his face but, amazingly, no life-threatening damage.

“It should have blown my face off,” he says. Answering the prayers of the church, God restored Moylan’s hearing. The ex-gangster has done a U-turn, and God has removed his thirst for violence. “He’s totally exuberant for God,” Benji Rodes says.

## **A House of Hope**

Stepping out in faith, the Undignifieds took out a mortgage on a \$510,000, three-story fixer-upper in Capitol Hill for use as a “healing house.” Through sacrificial giving, the small congregation came up with \$100,000 for the down payment. “Some sold their stuff and gave the money; others gave their savings; and others [gave] the little they could,” Rodes says.

A neighboring church donated another \$20,000, and volunteers

from Rodes' denomination, the Church of the Nazarene, renovated the basement. The house provides a home for Undignifieds in transition who have been sober and off drugs for at least a year—recovering addicts such as 43-year-old Tim Jeffs.

Rebelling against his experiences as a youth in the Methodist denomination, Jeffs plunged into a downward spiral. His life culminated in chronic alcoholism and drugs.

"I had no friends," he recalls. "I lived on beer, cocaine and frozen pizzas. Every day I would wake up ridiculously hung over and in a lot of pain. I was such a wreck that I didn't even want to leave the house. I would just sneak out to buy beer and then come home to drink."

Sometimes Jeffs would think about the things he learned in church years before. "In my mind, it was like I was in a prison," he says. "I didn't have the strength to overcome what the enemy was telling me. I just wanted to hit 'pause' so it would stop."

In dire straits, Jeffs stumbled into the Church of the Undignified because someone at the church was giving free haircuts. Drawn by the church's hospitality and openness, Jeffs returned.

Battling overwhelming anxiety, the alcoholic poured out his heartache before God. "All the anxiety suddenly left me," he says. "I knew that Jesus had paid this huge price for me, yet I was choosing to wallow in the filth. I realized I needed to value myself as Jesus values me."

A year later, Jeffs welcomes others to the church. He's another testimony of the Holy Spirit's cleansing, healing stream.

Formerly, Jeffs and other Undignifieds looked for new ways to get "wasted." Now, during the church's "Waste a Night on God,"

they spend the night in celebration and worship before the Lord—"losing ourselves in Him," as Rodes puts it.

"King David's energy was totally sapped as he wasted himself before God," Rodes says. "When we choose to 'rejoice crazy' like David, we're just joining in the dance."

The Undignifieds have seen God unleash His healing, life-transforming power, and they won't settle for anything less. Their confidence in the Holy Spirit is reflected by one word on a worshiper's T-shirt: "Himpossible."

Says Rodes: "Jesus has given us an escape, and the Holy Spirit is looking to make us like Him. We really can be little 'Hims.'"

Seeking to "be Jesus" to those caught in the web of sin around them, Rodes likens the Undignifieds to "sheep among the wolves."

"We're totally vulnerable," he says. "But feeling weak, feeling overwhelmed, we are in a position to receive power over the enemy. It is God's privilege and joy to spill out His power upon those who are desperate for Him."

That power flows from the cross, symbolized at the Church of the Undignified by a chicken-wire cage stuffed with the junk of life. Next to the cross, a simple sign reads:

"Think of it. All mistakes paid for; the slate wiped clean; that old arrest warrant cancelled and nailed to Christ's cross. He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the cross and marched them naked through the streets."

There's nothing dignified about that. Only awesome power; and—for all those who come to the cross—true Christ-given dignity.

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## **On the Winning Team**

**NFL superstar Napoleon Kaufman traded in his Oakland Raiders jersey in 2001 and became a pastor. And he has never looked back.**