

Reader Response

Thugs on notice, Shepherds in need, Unreasonable demands, Prophet problems

Bugged by Thugs

I was very happy to read "Thugs in the Pulpit" (May/June) by Richard D. Dobbins. We just left a large church because of the loveless lifestyle of the pastor. Money was the big issue around which everything else revolved. The church reminded me of an auctioneer's block, with statements such as "Who will give such-and-such amount?" "Stand up, those who will give blank number of dollars." After a year or so of this extortion, we left and shook the dust off of our shoes. When members of the family were sick, the pastors were inaccessible. However, we are mature Christians and have now found a loving church—not a perfect church—but a caring church whose main focus is not money.

name withheld

Money Trouble?

I read with interest "Feed the Shepherd" (May/June) by Ken Walker. In this neck of the woods, I know five pastors who used to draw full-time salaries from their churches, but have recently had to take outside employment because their congregations could no longer afford to pay them. Three of these pastors are now working full-time jobs. I myself have been pastoring a small, storefront church for the last 20 years and have never received a salary. Watching my brothers lose their paychecks has not made me very hopeful! I am submitting my address, because I'm wondering if anyone else is going through the same thing in any other part of the country.

Doug Hoffman

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REPLY It seems we've struck a nerve. Participate in our online poll in the "Pastors' Discussion" at to answer the question, "Do you have to work an outside job to supplement ministry income?"

High Expectations?

I have just finished reading Larry Keefauver's column, "Professional Shepherds?" (May/June), and I have just a couple of questions. First, who or what should we neglect to make these living-room, nursing-home and hospital visits? Our spouses? Our children? Preparation and prayer? The counseling appointments and other requests for our time? How about leadership time and administrative tasks? Second, what about the apostle Paul's writings in Ephesians 4 that the fivefold ministries are given the responsibility of equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry? Are we going to go back to the days of only the clergy being eligible for ministry? Is the pastor the only one God can speak or work through? Is a pastor only considered a scriptural or effective pastor if he or she shows up at the nursing home, drops by the home of every person with a problem, or personally attends to every person's need? No! It would seem to me that if we are to follow Keefauver's prescription, we had better make every church in America 100 people or fewer.

Jay Satterwhite
via e-mail

Fivefold Kudos

J. Lee Grady's article ("Stuck on Titles?" January/February) was an inspiration to me, in light of issues I am dealing with in my own church. I am glad you will be devoting future issues to the topic of the fivefold ministries. A member of my church, a self-proclaimed prophet, has been attending some charismatic meetings and is attempting to give "personal prophecies" to members of my congregation—even going so far as to say that they will die if they don't heed his words. This "prophet" feels no sense of accountability to me as the pastor of the church because of what he has been taught. In his eyes, he has more authority than me as the pastor. I finally had to ask him to leave the church. The Lord is using you to bring reform to charismatic churches and ministries, and I have been blessed by your articles.

Jim Williams

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REPLY Keep reading. In our September/October issue addressing the gift of prophets, we'll explore the topic of personal prophecy and offer practical guidelines for pastors and leaders who are seeking to release this ministry effectively and responsibly in the context of the local church.