

Spirit-Empowered Subversion

Tyler Burns is a busy guy. Beyond pastoring New Dimensions Christian Center in Pensacola, Florida—a full-time job for most people—Burns also serves as the vice president of The Witness: A Black Christian Collective, where he writes and co-hosts the podcast Pass the Mic.

With all that going on, we were grateful Burns took time to speak with us for our ongoing New Year, New Voices series on the Charisma News podcast—and it was an incredible conversation. Burns shares his own testimony of growing up within the charismatic movement, offers his perspective on why and how the church should cultivate diverse and international perspectives and even explains how speaking in tongues represents a spiritual game changer for victims of injustice and oppression.

This interview—originally recorded for our New Year, New Voices podcast series—has been edited for length and clarity. Listen to the full interview here:

Berglund: So Tyler, you're the vice president of The Witness. You're the co-host of the podcast Pass the Mic. And you're also the lead pastor of New Dimensions Christian Center. With all that going on, how's your life right now?

Burns: Another fun fact about me is I'm also married to my lovely wife, Mylena, and we have two kids under 2. So we have a 20-month old daughter and a 2-month old son, so life is a lot of fun in the Burns household. With two kids under 2, it's always a party here. So my life is interesting! But I just feel blessed and honored to have the opportunity to speak with you and to talk about all the work that God is doing in my life.

Berglund: Do you mind sharing your testimony?

Burns: I was raised in a pastor's home. In 1992, My father actually founded the church that I now pastor. In one of our early services, even though I was a young child, I remember very vividly my father talking about eternity and talking about heaven and hell from a very fire-and-brimstone mentality of preaching. He was sweating and making the evangelistic appeal, and he kept talking about hell. The only thing I could grasp about it was it was hot. And I grew up in the Panhandle, so being a Panhandle kid—a country boy from the South—I recognize heat. He was just giving these analogies about how hot it was going to be.

So we get in the car after the altar call and everything, and I'm like, "Huh." So I bring it up to my parents. I say, "Hey, look, whatever we need to do to keep me out of this hot place that y'all are talking about, let's go ahead and handle that." They chuckled to themselves. But later on that night, my father sat down with me at the edge of my bed. He opened up the Scriptures, which were not foreign to me; I was familiar with the Scriptures, because that was just a part of our house, as a part of our routine. And he broke down something about the gospel and something about Christ that just made it leap in me, and it just opened something up in my spirit in a way that hadn't been before.

I'd cognitively understood Christ and the elements of the gospel—the core tenets and principles—but the way he presented it? I now know it was the Spirit meeting me in that moment and awakening a dead soul. I remember knowing what repentance felt like and knowing what God forgiving me felt like. So I had this radical encounter with Jesus at that moment. I don't know if that was my official conversion experience, per se. I was very young, so maybe I didn't understand fully. What I do know is that I had an awareness of Jesus at that moment that I didn't have before. And then it was confirmed in other ways as I grew up. It was confirmed in other instances and experiences

as I grew in the knowledge of God and I was disciplined.

What's interesting about that is the intersection of the charismatic and the intersection of the gifts of the Spirit, it was always very closely aligned with where my father had placed us theologically. He went on to be a state director in the Azusa Fellowship under the direction of Bishop Carlton Pearson. (This was pre-doctrine of inclusion and all that from Bishop Pearson.) So I grew up in that environment and in that world.

At an Azusa national conference at the age of 12. I spoke in tongues for the first time. I'll never forget that. At a very prominent charismatic church in South Florida at the age of 16, I received a radical call to gospel ministry—one that I couldn't deny, one that consumed me and one that has continued to consume me over the course of my life.

All of that is to say the intersection with the gifts, as far as my testimony and my spiritual development, has been consistent with this charismatic stream and expression of faith, which makes me feel so privileged to be able to kind of talk from that vantage point and in that space, because I don't always get to do that. That really led to my introduction to Jesus, which was so precious that it was my father and my parents who introduced me to that. But then beyond that, the growing and the deepening of the Spirit's power and the growing and deepening of understanding how Jesus holistically changes and transforms someone's life, that's that moment for me.

Berglund: You're now pastoring at New Dimensions Christian Center. Tell me a little bit about how you got there and what the church is like.

Burns: Oh, man, that's so interesting. It's a great story because, again, it's one of these radical experiences.

So to connect it to its roots and the charismatic movement,

the name New Dimensions was inspired by Higher Dimensions, which was the church where Bishop Pearson was pastoring in Tulsa, Oklahoma. New Dimensions is the place where I met Jesus. New Dimensions is a place where I learned about the faith. It's a place where I memorized Bible Scriptures. It's a place where I had radical encounters. It's a place where I, frankly, cast out demons. It's a place where I saw people get healed. I saw radical transformation and miracles. I just never imagined that I would actually serve at my home church.

While the church was very large and big, I went off to college. When I went off to college, my mentality was that I was going to be a philosophy professor, and I was going to defend the faith in the academic, and I was going to have a broadcasting ministry of some sort. Those were things that I was very passionate about.

But when I received that call to gospel ministry at the age of 16, the two things I said to God were, "Listen, I'll do anything you ask me to do. Just don't call me to be a youth pastor. And don't call me to preach. Anything else I'll do."

And for 10 years I was a youth pastor, and I'm still a preacher. So it's just funny how that works itself out.

So it was my senior year in college at Liberty University, and the Lord would not let me sleep. Everything was laid out for me. There was a track I was supposed to do that was going to keep me in Lynchburg, Virginia, for the foreseeable future. I never intended to go back home to live permanently. I intended to leave all that behind. And God wouldn't let me sleep. So I didn't sleep for seven days. I also fasted for seven days as well. I felt like I was losing my mind. But God was communicating to me: "This is not the place you're supposed to be."

So I dropped everything in January 2010 and came back to serve my local community. That's the only thing I knew that God had

called me to do with any definitive certainty. In the midst of all that, through a confluence of events, he confirmed that now is the time for me to start gospel ministry. So I went into the ministerial practicum at our church and studied there for six months, and then was ordained right thereafter at 21. I came on staff in 2010 and was just recently ordained lead pastor a few months ago. It's just a joy and an honor to work with my parents and to walk with them through this new season of our church, and for them to trust me with that.

Our church is very interesting, because it's a nondenominational church, but at the same time, it's kind of a mash-up of a lot of different traditions. We have people who come from an AME [African Methodist Episcopal] tradition, people who come from a COGIC [Church of God in Christ] background, people who come from a traditional Missionary Baptist background and then people who just come from this radical Pentecostal side of expression of the faith.

What we say at the church is "our destiny is helping you to unlock your destiny," which means we want to amplify the gifts that God has given to you, so that the body can flourish, you can flourish and then your community can flourish as well. So we're built on core tenets: Christ, community and city. So we believe in exalting Christ. We believe in leaning into Christian community within the fellowship of the believers, and then also translating that in the overflow to our city, so that our city is impacted and changed as well.

Berglund: So after all that, how did you also get involved in The Witness?

Burns: That's a really interesting story as well, because The Witness started in 2011 under a different name. But I actually met the founder, Jemar Tisby, who's the president now of The Witness in 2012. We met at a conference and—I'll never forget—there was a session going on, but Jemar was trying to get me to go to a particular seminary that he was basically

hosting an exhibit for. We just stood there and talked for an hour and a half, and we saw so much symmetry—not in our life situation, but just in what we were feeling at that time. I remember that conversation being a moment where, even when I went into the next session, I just sat back and said, “There’s something special about this Jemar guy. Is that somebody I’m supposed to be connected to in the future?”

A few years later, through a mutual connection, he actually invited me to come up to a retreat for what was then the Reformed African American Network, and he asked me to be a part of it. It was kind of random. I said, “I don’t know if I have time.” A few years later, I actually fully committed to hosting the podcast Pass the Mic and being a part of The Witness team.

The Witness exists to address the core concerns of black Christians, and that includes theology, culture, sociology, justice—any number of sectors that would affect and be important to black Christians. We try as best as we can to pull on the expansive black church tradition. We believe that while we all have different kinds of perspectives and different tracks—as far as how we came to faith and express it and even some of the unique sectors we’re in right now—we all have a connection to the black church, and we all have a connection to black Christian expression of faith.

So what we try to do is give events and perspectives from that vantage point, from the unique black Christian vantage point—knowing that it’s not the only perspective to view things, but it’s a very important one and one that’s been historically marginalized. We try to give space and voice to people in groups that may not have had that opportunity to speak. And we’ve seen amazing things.

We actually recently just had our first national conference in Chicago, Illinois, at the historic Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, which is the birthplace of gospel music in America. We

were able to have hundreds of people come from across the country to talk about joy and justice. What is the reflection and what are the inflection points as we think about 400 years of black joy and justice in the American Christian context? God has done great things through that and through the podcast Pass the Mic as well.

Berglund: You mentioned Jemar Tisby. We had him on the podcast earlier this year as part of our Prophetic Activism series. During that series, we talked about that throughout the Old Testament, we often see that when the Holy Spirit comes on these prophetic people—people like Jeremiah, Elijah and Elisha—one of the first things that they go out and do is preach against injustice. Clearly, justice is a thing that's very close to the heart of God. And I know today that racial justice is an issue that has come to the forefront for the church. Throughout this New Year, New Voices series, a lot of these young leaders have brought up racial justice as one of the most important issues facing today's church. Why do you think that this issue is getting such attention right now? Because obviously it's always been important.

Burns: I think, to that point—the idea that it's always been important and why is it just such a big issue now? In previous decades, these things have been allowed to be covert and kind of under the surface, because we just haven't had the prevalence of media and attention. So it depended on where you grew up, where you lived, and your unique life experiences. And there wasn't the proliferation. There wasn't the pathway and the avenue for these justice causes and mentalities to get out into the mainstream, to cross borders and cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds and states and regions of the country. Now you're seeing the prevalence of that through instant interaction on social media, through the proliferation of viral videos.

So what a lot of people are seeing from 2012—when Trayvon Martin was killed—to 2014—when Michael Brown, Eric Garner and

all these prominent examples that continue today—is that now there is a virality to it. Now the church can't run from them. We can't get away from it. And many of us, especially those of us who are black Christians, have tried to address this in an evangelistic context.

What we take a step back and say is, "What tradition can we pull from? What can we pull from, out of our tradition of faith, that will give us answers?" And what we're seeing is that it's not that we were taught wrongly; it's that the way we were taught was incomplete. The way that we were taught didn't fill in the blanks and give the contours and the nuances that are necessary to have these types of conversations that intersect with the American experience. To talk about these things that relate to the Old Testament or how Jesus came in Luke 4. We're just not seeing these intersections in the same way within the American church.

So many of us are reapproaching this, and we're being moved in certain ways to take an honest, hard look at the ways we've been disciplined. To see if those ways were ... not insufficient, but maybe incomplete. Maybe there are things that we can add to it.

You know, you mentioned Jeremiah. I think about Jeremiah in Jeremiah 22, when he's talking about basically ranting and railing against unjust kings and wicked kings. He talks about the ways in which they built their throne. They built their palaces on injustice and unrighteousness. And then at one point, he's speaking on behalf of God, when he says, "Is that not what it means to know Me? To carry out justice for the poor and carry out justice for those who are marginalized and those who are oppressed?" I think that's what you're hearing a lot from young Christians—Millennial and Gen Z Christians: "Isn't this what it means to follow the Lord? That we would love him and love our neighbor holistically, so that our neighbor can flourish not just eternally but flourish physically right now?"

So many of us are sitting back and saying, “Isn’t this what it means to follow the Lord?” And the church has a decision to make. The church has a continuous decision with what we will do with this moment. And I believe it’s not going away. I don’t think this is one of those moments that can pass quickly and will shift. I believe that it’s something that the Millennial generation and Generation Z will continue to bring to the forefront and continue to call the church to account for. And it’s incumbent upon us to look at the whole expanse of Scripture—not just a few verses, not just the American contextual concerns—but to look at the whole of Scripture to inform our response.

Berglund: You grew up in the charismatic movement and even mentioned earlier praying to cast out a demon. Can you talk about the spiritual dimension to the fight over racial justice in America right now? Because I personally think that plays a large factor, and it’s not an avenue that gets addressed by a lot of people.

Burns: I’m so glad that you asked that question. Many of us think about the current divide solely from a cognitive, intellectual standpoint. So we say, “Well, if we present these facts, if we present this mentality, if we present this framework—or this rubric or this systematic theological perspective—that people will see it clearly. They’ll see it from my perspective. They’re going to understand it, and they’re going to come to a realization on their own.”

The reality of the matter is, that’s not how this works. We believe that we’re not wrestling against flesh and blood, as Paul would say. What we’re wrestling against are principalities and powers, the rulers of darkness over this world, spiritual wickedness in high places. A lot of times we don’t see that the fight for justice must be Spirit-led, and the fight for justice must be Spirit-inspired, because we’re not battling against human powers. We’re battling against forces of darkness that seek to divide, oppress, steal, kill

and destroy.

One of the things that really helped me with this is James K.A. Smith's book *Thinking in Tongues*. In it, he talks about the Spirit-led expression of speaking in tongues—the holy, heavenly language of speaking in tongues. He said that if you think about it from the perspective of someone who is not in a power position or from the perspective of marginalized people groups, speaking in tongues is actually unique in the way that it confounds the empire. It confounds the status quo. It confounds the powers that be, because it's not just heavenly communication, but in many ways it was being used as earthly communication between people who did not understand similar language.

If you think about what is subversive—Spirit-empowered subversion, Spirit-empowered protest and activism toward the powers—then what we see is these Spirit-led expressions that the powers cannot explain. That the powers that be cannot confound because it comes from a different place. What it does is it gives power to the marginalized where they have none. So we might not have political power, but we do have Spirit power, and that Spirit power gives us the energy and the strength to move in activism to correct the injustice that has been put on those who are oppressed and marginalized.

I think that's just one element. When I saw that, I was like, Man, that really helps me to understand that many of our churches must see the gifts not just as some spiritual exchange but as a spiritual gift for natural purposes, for human earthly needs. And not just personal needs, but also corporate and systemic as well. That's just one area, but I think there's so many other ways in which the gifts of the Spirit and Spirit-led living intersects with the call to justice.

Berglund: Honestly, if we had all day, I would love to get into all of the ways that you've observed that.

Burns: We need to do that one day.

Berglund: Trust me, I've already been blown away in this interview. You have an open invite to come back on the podcast anytime you want.

Burns: That's good. I appreciate it.

Berglund: I think those reasons are why it's so important that the Spirit-filled and charismatic church needs to be at the forefront of racial justice. Within that, then, what are some concrete steps that churches can take to make justice not just a trendy buzzword that's in the cultural zeitgeist now, but a real, practical, lived emphasis in their church?

Burns: I think the first thing we need to do is we need to shift the voices of authority in our minds. What I mean by that is, we live in the American Christian context. And in the American Christian context, the voices of authority are always those who come from our immediate locale, who come from our context, who come from our culture, who come from our country.

What we need to do is we need to take a step back and say that the average global Christian is a woman of color from the global south—and she is poor, typically.

So we have to take a step back and say, "Why are we privileging certain voices? Why are we elevating voices that come from one context?" If you elevate voices from one context, you will only get one perspective.

What the church needs to do is intentionally take a step back and say, "Have we privileged American voices—even American Pentecostal or charismatic voices—above the global perspective of the church?" God never intended for us just to glean from American voices. He never intended for us just to glean from privileged voices. But He intended for us to glean from the entirety of the body of Christ, and in that diversity, we find our strength.

One person said it like this in a private conversation with me when I was in South Africa. He said, "The answer to the problems that the American church faces will not come from America." It won't come from America. We believe it will just come from us. But it comes from the interdependence of the Spirit, which breaks down the barriers, which says that there is no distance in the Spirit of God. So whether it's someone who is Colombian or someone who is Nigerian or someone who is in the Ukraine, it doesn't matter, because the Spirit of God breaks down those barriers. And if the Spirit of God breaks down those barriers, there's an exchange there, even in the Spirit. So that is No. 1: We have to shift our voices of authority.

No. 2: I think what's important for churches especially to do is to examine why we're in the situation that we're in right now in our current context. We have to be honest. Are we repeating the same mistakes that previous denominations and generations have repeated? This is a shameless plug for Jemar, but that's why I believe his book, *The Color of Compromise*, is so important. It's important because it tracks many different ways in which the church has collaborated with racism in the context of America and American Christianity. And it's a difficult read. It's a frustrating read. But what it does is it gives us the background to say we won't make these same mistakes. Those who are unfamiliar with the past are doomed to repeat it.

Then I think thirdly and finally, the church needs a theological imagination to see that justice is not just an issue, but justice is integral to Christian discipleship. This is something that we're going through in our church now. What I am trying to push our church toward, what I'm telling them constantly, is that we cannot just simply highlight maybe me or another person within our church who does justice.

Typically churches do justice from a top-down mentality, which means one of the pastors, members or leaders is a figurehead

for justice. Because they're a figurehead for justice, we support their work.

But what the church must do is say we are all called to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with our God. Because of that, we all must move in that direction. That is a normal part of Christian discipleship. A normal part of Christian discipleship is taking an audit of how you use your funds, how you use your money. A normal part of Christian discipleship is taking an audit of how you use your body or your mind. And in the same context, it must be normative for us to say it is integral to Christian discipleship for the church to be equipped—every member of the church, from the most important to the “least important,” from the oldest to the youngest, no matter what your culture is. It is important for all of us to follow Jesus in the way that He preaches good news to the poor. That is an integral part of Christian discipleship. And in that way, the church will experience a true change and a true understanding, a true re-shifting of our perspective of justice from a buzzword to something that we truly believe.

Berglund: We're at an interesting point right now in the charismatic church. A lot of ministry leaders right now are people who came into the charismatic movement in the '70s and '80s, during the Jesus Movement. I think now we're starting to see those old leaders retire, and new leaders come up in their place. How are you seeing the Holy Spirit at work in that next generation?

Burns: I think the Holy Spirit is at work in unique ways because He's raising up young people who have a holistic perspective of Christianity and giving them access to arenas of culture that our parents and our grandparents—the fathers and mothers of the faith in our tradition—probably didn't have access to in the same ways. I think about my brother, Elder Mark Moore from Atlanta, who's doing amazing things with the Young Leaders Conference and being able to intersect—being able to preach and teach and hoot and do all these expressive,

charismatic things that we see, but also being able to pay off \$1.5 million of medical debt for patients who are in that situation. Being able to bless thousands of families and clear their medical debt, even while he brings thousands of young leaders together in Atlanta.

I think what the Spirit is leading us to is a re-presenting, to kind of steal Mike Todd's presentation, of Scriptures: a re-presenting of Jesus as the holistic Savior. He's holistic in addressing not just things that happen in church in the four walls, not just things that happen as they relate to evangelism, but things that happen as they relate to the entirety of our society.

Our Latin American theologian friends would say this is nothing new. They talk about it in terms of integral mission. But it's this idea that, yes, we evangelize and, yes, we are preaching Jesus. But at the same time, we are preaching Jesus, and we're involved in society. I see that being something that is unique.

I also see that there is a sense in which younger charismatic believers, younger charismatic preachers, are actually focused on institution-building. We don't just want to go around and be known as great preachers. We don't just want to go around and be known as great orators or people who can move a crowd or sing well or articulate. We also want to be doers as well, and we want to build institutions that will outlive us.

That's what I desire with The Witness. I desire that The Witness would be something my children and their children can be a part of, and that will continue to lead conversations into future generations. But I don't want it to just end with the church. I don't want it to just end with one sermon or being known as a great preacher. I want it to be something that continues long after me, as "This person was an example of how Jesus can refashion, reshape a community." I think younger charismatic leaders are understanding that and

thinking of that in much sooner, deeper and wider terms than our parents and the mothers and the fathers of the faith.

Berglund: In your own personal quiet time right now, what has God been laying on your heart? What does He have you really praying about and passionate about right now?

Burns: Man, that is such a loaded question. And I think it's an important question, because hopefully, as preachers, as leaders of movements, we are not just telling others that they should be shaped by Jesus, but we are being shaped by Him as well.

I'll say the first thing is a personal element. It's something I've been pushing towards over the course of years, and that's this push towards emotionally healthy spirituality. Pete Scazzero wrote this book by that name, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, that just drastically changed my life. I remember there was a point in my life where I was doing the spiritual disciplines well and had a fervent prayer life and I was opening up the Scriptures and studying it. I felt like I was doing everything I was supposed to do. I was in ministry. But there were just gaps in my interactions with people. There were gaps in how I talked to the people who are close to me. There was a joy gap. There were just all these other things that were really frustrating for me.

I read that book, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. The subtitle is, "It's impossible for us to be spiritually mature while being emotionally immature." It drastically reframed how I viewed my spiritual development. That became integral—that I needed to make sure that I observed my soul in a way that made sure I was emotionally healthy as a leader, as a man.

There's also a book, Emotionally Healthy Leader, that talks about it from a Christian leadership or overall leadership perspective. But it just drastically changed my life. I'm constantly going back to that, because it pulls on the

contemplative tradition, which I believe can work in multifaceted tandem with the Pentecost tradition. So what it's pulled me to do is to observe silence and solitude and Sabbath and to journal ferociously, to go back to go forward, which means examining parts of my life that have been unaddressed.

So that's been a personal thing that I've tried to push the people around me—our staff, our team—to ensure that we are emotionally healthy.

Secondly, this is kind of something that is external. (We talked about internal; now let's talk external.) The Lord has really been moving me in this direction that's kind of tangential to justice, but I think it's a little bit deeper and a little bit more of a heart posture, and that's this question: "What does it mean to wash feet? What does it mean to wash someone's feet? And when Jesus does that at the Last Supper, when Jesus washes the disciples' feet, what does it mean to humbly serve someone in a vulnerable, intimate way that truly shows them who Jesus is?"

I've been convicted that I talk about justice, and I say things about justice, and I fight for it, and I serve. And I think I'm doing well in certain areas. But the reality of the matter is, the Lord has been moving me to wash feet. That doesn't just mean externally in my community. That means in my home as a husband and a father. That means as a pastor, as a leader, as a brother, friend and mentor.

What does it mean to wash feet? What does it mean to humble myself and not to be the person who sits on the throne, not to be the person who has autonomy from any of the problems of people, but to truly be touched with the feelings of people's infirmities? To love them well and to love them as Jesus would? And in that, to sacrifice and to die to myself?

So those things have been very deep for me: emotionally healthy spirituality, and then what does it mean to wash feet

as Jesus has done?

Berglund: I heard about emotionally healthy spirituality when I spoke to Pastor John Mark Comer earlier this year.

Burns: John Mark is amazing. Oh my goodness.

Berglund: He's talked about that need for emotional health as well. This might be too strong, but I wonder if that trend toward valuing the emotional health of our leaders is a partial course correction from the last generation.

Burns: It's interesting, because every generation has gaps, right? Every generation has little blind spot areas. I think what has been so incredible about Baby Boomers and Generation X is that they have this capacity to work and to work and to work and to grind and to do things in service of the next generation that we will never truly understand until eternity. There are many crowns that my parents will receive, that older leaders who have mentored me will receive, just because of their discipline and consistency. That's something that Millennials and Generation Z must be challenged by and must be encouraged to emulate.

But in the midst of that, there was not a lot of teaching for Baby Boomers and Generation X about how to care for their own souls well. How to not sacrifice your body and your mind on the altar of Christian ministry.

As a generation, we're going to have our own battles to fight. We're going to have our own giants to kill. But we see the negative effects of just the human reality of how when you're pushed to the edge, when you're burnt out, when you refuse to engage in silence and solitude, when you refuse to know yourself so that you may know God, when you refuse to take Sabbath, what ends up happening? These massive falls. And I don't think these pastors were intending to get into ministry to misuse it or intending to get into ministry to fall away or to do things that make us gasp. I think it's just the reality

of emotional immaturity that's just gone wild.

If emotional immaturity is not dealt with, and not addressed at a young age, it will manifest itself in costly decisions at an older age. I don't say that as a put down for the previous generation, because we have our own things with social media, with technology, with the way we spend our money. We have all those types of things in our generation as well. But it's important for us as young leaders to make sure that we're healthy first. We don't want to get these big platforms and be international if we're not healthy, because we're going to lead people astray and we're going to destroy families and churches and movements. So I do think that is something that we're going to constantly see. That's OK.

Plus, with the mental health issues that we see continuously arising in the church, we're just going to see the importance of it. We have to take care of our minds, our emotions, our bodies, everything—holistically. We have to love the Lord with all of us. We bring our full selves even to our ministry. So that's something that I do see is going to be important. Man, we need counselors. We need spiritual directors. We need therapists. We need to be emotionally healthy while being theologically precise and Spirit-led in our powers as well.

Berglund: Like you said, each generation has its blind spots. That's why we need each other as the body of Christ. That's why we as younger believers need those older mentors who can give us those years and decades of wisdom. But I'm sure there are also things the older generation can still learn from younger leaders if they will have the humility to learn.

Burns: That's something my father and I are actually walking through now. We're in the midst of a church transition, which means working together and sitting down and talking with one another and having these very difficult conversations where I'm sure it's frustrating for both of us. I know it's frustrating on my side. I know it's frustrating for him. We're

just trying to work through what I'm calling "generational appreciation." What does it look like to take the best of the past and the best of the future, to work together in the present to accomplish the vision that God has given to us?

So working through those is going to be tricky, because what we're seeing is that, for Millennials [and] Generation Z, we have to have the patience and honor to sit under older leaders. And older leaders have to have the humility to listen to younger leaders, because we know the landscape. Those types of things, that push-pull—there's a generational beef that doesn't have to be. It doesn't have to be like this.

So my father and I are trying to figure out what that looks like in our local church context, in our small body. What does that look like? I know a lot of people are figuring that out as well. Not even just from father and son, but from generation to generation and transitioning well. That's going to be another big point as well.

Berglund: Is there anything that we didn't bring up that you want to tell our readers?

Burns: Man, there's so many things we could talk about. Love Jesus well. Love your family. Love your community. Serve your neighbor. Wash their feet. And God will be pleased and will say "Well done" in the end.

—Find Tyler Burns on Twitter and Instagram and read some of his work at The Witness.