

The Greatness of God Shown Through Jack Hayford

After writing about culture wars and other weighty issues in my recent Strang Reports, I pay tribute today to a great man, Jack Hayford, whose life, to me, shows the greatness of God. If Pastor Jack has touched your life, please leave your comments below.

I've just returned from an exciting commencement in Los Angeles on Sunday and pivotal board meeting Monday for The King's University. In 1997, Hayford founded The King's after he felt God told him, "Found Me a seminary"—at an age when most men would be slowing down. I've had the honor of serving on that board since its beginning, and it's been interesting to witness the ups and downs of following God's call in such a major undertaking.

In the process, a relationship has developed between us that goes beyond my serving on a board or the business relationship we have with Pastor Jack as an author or spiritual adviser. My wife and I consider Pastor Jack our "spiritual covering." When an important decision must be made or we are faced with some crisis, it is to him we turn.

I've written about Pastor Jack before. He's been on the cover of *Charisma* twice. For more than a decade, he was senior editorial adviser for *Ministry Today*. There's not much I can write here that's not already been written. In fact, when *Christianity Today* did a cover story on Pastor Jack several years ago and interviewed me, I described him as the "Pentecostal gold standard," a phrase they highlighted on the cover.

That's more true today than then. In a day when some preachers are denying the existence of hell or compromising their moral

standards or stretching the truth if it suits their purposes, Jack Hayford is still a paragon of strength, maturity and humility. He also provides a model of righteousness for thousands of pastors through his School of Pastoral Nurture, through his many books, teaching tapes or CDs, and now through The King's University.

An example of his humility was shown Monday when the board discussed Jack Hayford Ministries, which is now under The Kings. He asked to leave the room so his presence didn't impede any necessary discussion. There wasn't even anything badly wrong, and there was no legal reason for him to do so, but some routine decisions had to be made and he trusted the board to make decisions they felt best without his input.

He and I met privately for breakfast to catch up, and I ran a couple of touchy situations by him, including the need to confront an "apostle" in Central Florida who has caused controversy over his leadership style and use of money. I had approached the man in a spirit of humility, using a model of spiritual confrontation Pastor Jack taught me years ago. But instead of humbly doing what was right, the man is now accusing me of being an accuser of the brethren because I confronted him, along with other Christian leaders, in the spirit of Matthew 18. Pastor Jack encouraged me to stand my ground and shared some weaknesses he's seeing in the "apostolic" movement, which we'll be writing about soon in our publications.

As a board member, I also have been able to see up close and personal how Pastor Jack deals behind the scenes with some very difficult challenges The Kings has faced as it's grown from a church-based Bible college to a university. Now it has nine branches and is poised for some for great growth under the dynamic leadership of President Steve Riggle and Chairman Robert Morris.

Two years ago, Pastor Jack underwent a very difficult surgery

on his neck that nearly cost him his life. He's recovered, and now at 79 (as of June 25), he has the stamina of men half his age. He is accomplishing more for the kingdom than almost any other Christian leader I know.

Today I read parts of two books on the plane flying home—one called *Great by Choice*, a secular book on how great companies decided to be great; the other by Ray Beeson called *The Hidden Price of Greatness*, about great Christians from Augustine to Susanna Wesley to Catherine Marshall (whom I had the privilege of knowing before her death in 1983).

Jack Hayford never chose to be great. But as he has humbly served Christ, he's become great. If Ray Beeson updates his book, he should include a chapter on my friend and mentor, Pastor Jack Hayford.

If you agree, send this to friends. If Pastor Jack Hayford has touched your life, please leave your comments below.

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