

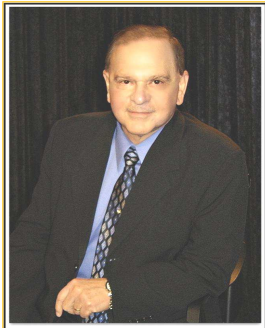
the Informer newsletter

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PCAI FELLOWSHIP
(PARAGON CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL) - NOVEMBER 2018

Leaders Know How to Jump-Start Themselves

By Dr. Henry A. Harbuck / PCAI Int'l President and General Overseer

Self-motivation is the key. Nobody will succeed in any field without the ability to motivate themselves during both the good and bad times. Self-motivated individuals do entertain doubts, but they press on towards their goals regardless. Usually these “jump-starters” have a definite plan, a burning desire and specific dates set to reach their goals. I have no idea how this characteristic is acquired, or how much of a role early childhood conditioning plays. However, I’ve observed that those in full-time ministry who previously held a 9-to-5 job often experience



problems “jump-starting” themselves (the exception being those persons who were in a supervisory or management position). When “self-starters” are placed in the role of pastor, they do well. However, those who lack the “jump-starter” mentality never accomplish anything.

Sometimes they wait for crowds to jump-start them. *However, crowd-pleasers never become God-pleasers, because they are not guided by a heavenly vision.* Notice that the Apostle Paul had the “jump-start” ability, as he said, “*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” (Phil. 3:14, quotation marks are mine).



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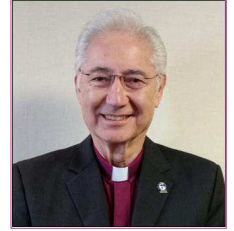
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We are Being “Equipped”... Let’s See How!

By Pastor Lynn Burling / Christian Faith Church Senior Pastor



There’s a real danger in being satisfied, filled up with the wrong things and ideas—even the right things cannot find a place. Proverbs 27:7 “A (full) *satisfied man loathes honey, but to a famished man any bitter thing is sweet.*” We must “make room” for God. ***THE MORE WE MAKE PLACE FOR HIM, THE MORE WE DISPLACE SOULISH THINGS.*** On “garbage pickup” day on my street, I have to wheel out a 96 gallon refuse container. God is not our garbage collector...in our uneducated walks, we ask God to do everything for us. “Lord help me to _____” as if He hasn’t already made it possible for us to do it with His grace. Scripture instructs us to “put on” and “take off” things that will benefit us but it’s our responsibility to do it. A lack of answers is no excuse. If we start demanding answers from God, then we’re walking in the spirit of offense toward Him...OUCH! Hos. 6:3 NIV, “*So let us press on to know the Lord.*” (Let us hunt-passionately pursue) in spite of not fully understanding Him or His ways.

We need to make room for God to do as He pleases and then cooperate with Him. Our problem is we have *forgotten His nature*—God is always good and always just—He loves us whether we like it or not. I was reading casually one day in my “study spot” and as my eyes came closer to Jer. 29:11, with anticipation, I hurried to get there BECAUSE IT WAS FAMILIAR TO ME! As I read the scripture, NKJ “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a hope and a future.*” When I finished and was set on reading the next verse, I heard Him say, “Read it again,” so trying to *impress* Him I said “Well, I can quote it to you if you like.” And He said, “No, just read it.” So I started over at vs. 11 again. “*For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord...*” and as soon as I got that far I heard Him say, “STOP!...a moment of silence and then He asked me a question...” WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW WHAT I THINK OF YOU?” At that moment, I began to get the most precious understanding and download based upon His Rhema words to me. I was undone. Sometime I think back to that time when all hell was attacking and I remember His words to me. <Prophetically speaking, this is a word now for all who read this.>

You and I can walk through an apple orchard in the first phase of growing season and notice “pea sized” apples on their stem...but they are just as much an apple as one that’s ready to eat...IT JUST LACKS TIME. Disease and sickness is not in God’s purposes at all, and certainly we should not blame God for circumstance we can’t explain...I know I’m trying to be good but why does God allow such pain. The answer lies in that Proverbs 27:7 scripture...we become so desensitized in our soulish realm, we leave little or no place to actually *know His nature.* Most of us by now should know what a caring loving Father He is and what His word and promises are towards us. As the Body of Christ, God wants to demonstrate through us the same things He demonstrated in the pages of scripture. It’s not meant to be only a historical book, it’s meant to be a living TESTIMONY OF WHAT GOD IS LIKE AND WE GET TO DEMONSTRATE the very heart of God in the earth. (Demonstrate: to prove or to make clear by reasoning or evidence.)

“Our history” declares the effectiveness of the blood of Jesus...and every time we visit our past, we visit a lie..., because it no longer exists! Paul writes in 2 Cor. 3:1-3 (My paraphrase) “We’re not bragging on our credentials, we do not need letters of endorsement either to you or from you.) s. 2 “You yourselves are all the endorsement we need. Your very lives are “living letters” that anyone can read. Vs. 3 “You show and make obvious that you are a letter from Christ, delivered by us, not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God on hearts of men.” Now I...would like to be a person like that! Referring back to the “apples,” it takes time...referring back to Proverbs 27:7, start emptying anything and everything of the flesh that satisfies and hunger only for the true meat...referring back to Hosea, Let us press on to KNOW the Lord...referring back to Jer. 29:11... Would you like to know what He thinks of you? Now you do! OK then connect that with 2 Cor. 3:13 “*Know* you are extremely loved, and **be His Word, written in you and act on it in a passionate, compassionate way towards all men.**” Now see how easy that is! You are more equipped now than when you started reading this. Love you all.♥

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a hope and a future.”

**Happy Veterans and
Happy Thanksgiving Day!**

Year-End Checklist for Church Bookkeepers



1. Housing Allowance. Church Boards and/or Congregations should designate an annual 2019 housing allowance for ministers who own or rent their home (and for ministers who live in a parsonage and pay some of their housing expenses).

2. W-4 forms. All employees should complete new W-4 forms to ensure accurate withholding.

3. Notice of donors. Donors should be advised in a church bulletin, newsletter, or by letter from the church, not to file their federal income tax return before they receive their Contributions Statement from the church. Some people may not be able to deduct certain contributions if they file a tax return before receiving their church contributions receipt.

4. Christmas gifts. Be sure to correctly handle Christmas gifts made by the church or congregation to a minister or staff member. In most cases, these gifts represent taxable income and must be reported as income on the recipient's W-2 or 1099.

5. Handling end of year contributions. The general rule is that a contribution is effective when delivered. This means that a check deposited in the church offering in January of 2019 becomes effective that day even if it is backdated to 2018. It is not deductible for 2018. One exception: Checks postmarked in 2018 are deductible in 2018 — even though not received until 2019.

6. Business Expenses. If your church reimburses some or all of a minister's business expenses, reimburse these year-end business expenses NOW.

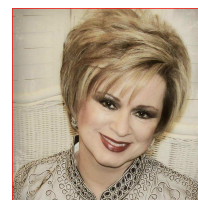
7. Reclassification of workers. Now is the time to decide if you want to reclassify any of your workers for tax reporting

purposes. If you have a minister or lay worker who is treated as self-employed for federal income tax reporting purposes, and you would like to reclassify the person as an employee, the ideal time to make the change is on January 1st of the new year.

8. Voluntary withholding. Ministers' wages are exempt from tax withholding. This means they use the quarterly estimated tax procedure to prepay their federal taxes. Ministers who report their income taxes as employees can enter into a voluntary withholding arrangement with their employing church. Under such an arrangement, the employing church withholds income taxes as it would for any other employee; and it can also withhold an additional amount of income taxes to cover the ministers' self-employment tax liability.

9. Order tax publications and renew subscriptions. December is a good time to order your new 2019 copy of IRS Circular E (withholding table) and copies of Forms W-2, W-3, 1099, and 1096 that you will be issuing for compensation in year 2019. To order forms simply call the IRS toll-free number at – 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676) or visit the IRS website (www.IRS.gov).

10. NEED HELP? If you need assistance on good tax information for churches and ministers, please contact the PCAI office at 1-866-268-5600 or email at info@paragonchristianalliance.org.



BLESSINGS!
Jan Harbuck, Ph.D.
Church Tax/Law Specialist
PCAI Headquarter Office

It's That Time Again...



By Dr. Elizabeth Foy / PCAI Board of Director

In January, we will be preparing renewal notices. This is a good time to check your contribution statement for accuracy. We all get busy or unexpected things come up, but remembering to send the tithe is important. Take time to review your giving to make sure it has been consistent every month and is accurately reflecting your current tithe.

If your giving is not up-to-date and is not brought current by December 31, 2017, we will not be able to offer renewal to you. Also, remember the office will be closed from December 23 to 31. We will come in on December 31st to make the last deposit of the year. Mail early in order for your check to arrive before December 31st. If you mail early we can hold it until December 31st if you put a note to that effect on it. For those paying by PayPal, December 26 is the last day you can send funds and have them arrive in our bank by December 31st.

Tax Date to Remember

November 10, 2018

Churches with nonminister employees (or one or more ministers who report their federal income taxes as employees and who have elected voluntary withholding) may file their employer's quarterly federal tax return (Form 941) by this date instead of October 31 if all taxes for the third calendar quarter have been deposited in full and on time.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter. We want to serve you as efficiently as possible because you are precious to us. We thank God daily for your friendship and membership in AEGA. You are invited to call anytime you need prayer or encouragement. We want to be there for you but we cannot if we don't know what is going on in your life. You are not just a number or file to us. You are family!!!



Technophobic Pastors of Tech-Addicted Churches

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Technology doesn't move backwards. Love it or hate it, it is here to stay, and it is moving forward at increasing speed toward infinity. It would seem the only choice for us is either becoming raging technophobes railing against the nefarious uses of technology, or enthusiastic tech-evangelist who extol the virtues and possibilities of all things shiny and electronic!

Those who fall into the camp of tech-evangelist (i.e. addicts) cannot resist the allure of the latest technology. These folks are those people who spend the night outside malls waiting to get their hands on the latest device. They eagerly sacrifice their time and money for the newest thing swearing they could quit any time. (If the mere thought of being away from your phone for more than two hours causes your eye to twitch, then I am speaking to you).

How are pastors to respond? Technology is generally amoral. Most things can be used for good or evil. Usually it comes down to how you use it – including when, where, how frequently, and the duration as well.

Here are three things that have shaped thinking about how to use and interact with technology and people.

1. **Set Technology Limits.** We are tempted to think if a little is awesome, then a lot must be uber-awesome! But as mom always said, "Too much of a good thing is a bad thing." Our family

practices screen-free time during dinner and all screens off between 8 PM and 8 AM every night. This prevents many wasted hours of trolling the Internet and social media or responding to email constantly.

2. **Focus On Doing Only One Thing At A Time.** In our hurried scattered lives, the ability to remain present to people and in the present moment is a great gift. Technology always tempts us to focus on more than one thing at once, which only serves to distract us or irritate the people around us. This is easier said than done, but it looks like this: Drive (don't text and drive); talk attentively to a coworker or loved one (don't talk and check emails or troll social media while mindlessly repeating "uh-huh"), etc.
3. **Fast From Technology.** Plan regular times in your calendar during your day, week month and even year when you intentionally are unreachable, unconnected, without screens, off social media, and off the grid (preferably some place quiet and outdoors). Grow in your ability to spend longer periods of time without tech. Realize the distracting effects technology has on your relationships with other people, your own soul, and even with God.

As pastors we don't want ourselves, our loved ones or those we pastor to be mastered by anything. With technology like everything else we need to live freely in Jesus.



Best Practice for Avoiding Cyber Liability Problems

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No amount of cyber liability insurance coverage can protect a church against a damaged reputation and loss of trust. That is why it's important to take steps to keep data breaches and other tech mishaps from happening in the first place. Prevention is extremely important, and it doesn't have to be that expensive.

Something as innocent as offering free public wireless networking can get a church in trouble. See the following: A Missouri church that neither password-protected nor adequately managed its open Wi-Fi by turning it off when it wasn't needed found a guy was coming into their parking lot in the evenings and using their public Wi-Fi was down loading child porn. When the FBI determined the IP address they traced it to the church and swooped in and confiscated all the computers and church servers.

Even though no one with the church was involved it did not stop the news story from being aired on the local news program.

Another important area is online sharing and posting. No church would knowingly steal someone else's property and use it in their newsletter, but they think since it is on the internet it must be free. Many churches and its leaders have a lack of knowledge about copyright laws. While there are some exemptions to cover churches and religious organizations churches most laws do apply.

A recent case involving the posting of photos of a church event in which a family in witness protection was exposed shows why some notices need to be very visible to members and visitors. It is suggested you post signs in your parking lots and at your entrances advising people that you broadcast your services on the internet or TV stations. That gives people who do not want their photo to be aired time to turn around and leave.

Checklist for safe operation of internet:

1. **Engage third parties to host payment information and Social Security numbers so that this sensitive information does not reside with the church.** Utilize established firms who have an established presence. Do not look to be anyone's biggest customer. Find someone for whom these transactions are a core competency.
2. **Use strong security defense tools to protect your devices and data.** Enabling software firewalls on your device will help fend off hacking attempts and use of encryption for sensitive data is the best method to protect it, especially if the data must be stored on a computer by a church staff member.
3. **Keep antivirus, anti-malware up to date.**
4. **Educate staff to exercise caution when opening and clicking through email.** Be suspicious of email you aren't expecting, either based on the sender or content. Do not click on unfamiliar links. If you have doubts follow up with the sender via a separate, new email (not a reply) or via a phone call.
5. **Do not openly distribute prayer list.** Always have written permission to publish anything and when you do leave out personal information such as names and locations. There have even been suits because a physical condition was published with someone's name.
6. **Have a social media policy and enforce it.** The policy should include a list of do's and don'ts to guide acceptable behavior. It should specify who can publish content on the church's behalf. Social media is more akin to a press release than a newsletter so keep in mind that your messages and posts may be read by the general public as well as your members.