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THIS MONTH

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In Loving
Memory

Coffee Cup
Corner

STICK TO THE PLAN

By Evangelist Richard Bolte, Mercy & Grace Ministries
Hattiesburg, Mississippi



"I know the plans I have for you." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Today God is saying to you, "While in process, stick to the plan!" Nothing takes God by surprise. He is a master planner. Joseph discovered that. When your family turns against you, your friends let you down, and you finish up in trouble, God still has a plan. Looking back Joseph could say, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good" (Gen. 50:20 NIV). When your situation seems too hard to handle and downright impossible to explain, remind yourself that God said, "I know the plans I have for you."

Some of us are not sure God has made up His mind about us, so we keep trying to earn His favor. Give it up! Receive the truth that God, for Christ's sake, has **decided** to bless you. And when God decides, temporary situations or the actions of others don't change His decision. There is nothing the enemy devises against you, for which God has not already made "a way of escape". Paul writes, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Observe:

- **In times of testing you discover how faithful God is.**
- **He knows what you can handle.**
- **He will "make a way" so you can exit this season stronger, and ready for what He has next.**

So stick to the plan. The fact that you have a problem is a sign that you have a promise. It is only a matter of time before God reveals the solution.

Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, yet He didn't stop Judas. He could have summoned twelve legions of angels to help Him, yet He didn't call on them. Under the weight of our sins He cried from the cross, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" That's because He understood it was all part of God's plan for Him. His words, "God, where are you?" teach us that:

- You can be in God's plan, yet at times feel overwhelmed and alone.
- When God doesn't answer, you must stand on the Word He has given you.
- The pain of this season will eventually give way to the joy God has waiting you on the other side. So stick to the plan; that is what disciples do.

The word "**disciple**" means to be disciplined. It means sticking to the plan when you are under attack. It teaches you how to function when you don't feel like it. The enemy will come against the plan of God in your life, because that plan is like a hedge of protection around you. As long as you stay in God's plan, nothing that the enemy does can destroy you. So, when you feel like you have reached the end of your rope and you can't go another step, do what Jesus did— pray, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46 NIV). Give it to God! Look up and say, "Lord, I'm trusting You to do what I cannot do. Bring me through this. Here it is; I am turning it over to You. My life, my future, and my all are in Your hands".

Peter proved that as long as you keep your eyes on Jesus and stick to the plan, you won't go under.

"Providing today's ministers the freedom they want and the fellowship"



Chairman's Corner

PREACHER, "SPEAK UP!"



"...lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! (Isa 40:9); Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression (Isa 58:1).

Having listened to a number of preachers and teachers of the gospel lately, I have concluded that many ministers of the gospel are "soft-peddling" the message of truth to their audiences. The political correctness crowd of our day has become the standard not only for colleges, universities, and the news media, but also for multitudes of preachers. It seems that in order to "not offend" some people over certain sin issues, preachers simply avoid certain subjects. It's time all ministers of the gospel take a spiritual inventory to make sure we're speaking up on matters that relate to where people live!

Deal with relevant issues: A preacher is commissioned by God to speak His mind and counsel on every moral issue. Not for a moment can we suppose that our government, media resources, public education, or political systems will communicate the truth to people. On the contrary, these systems are corrupt at their roots. This doesn't mean that good or righteous people are not functioning as messengers of light within the systems; they are. However, New Testament writers Paul, John, and James, refer to this system as the "cosmos" which is translated *world* in the Bible. Paul writes for the church not to be "conformed to this world" (Ro 12:2); John tells us "love not the world" (1 John 2:15); and James says that whoever is the "friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). God has given the church the honor of being the "pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tim 3:15) and ministers of the gospel as the heralds of His truth. Are we preaching the truth, or are we afraid that we might offend?



Don't back down from cultural sins: The above verses call us to lift up our voices and not be afraid to proclaim truth amidst a perverse culture. Preachers must declare God as He is; in all His righteousness, glory, and power. People need to see Him as Supreme and ruler of all, both in heaven and on earth. Preachers are trumpets that clearly "show" people their transgressions and sins in the light of God's holy word. I'm not speaking of being negative or speaking in reaction mode because of the evilness of our day. I am simply saying that God must be proclaimed in truth and people need to see the "err of their way" (Is 63:17) in light of who He is. This can be very difficult when congregants or their families are living in the very sins we are called to speak out against.

For example, pornography is sin and wrong. It falls under the category of "fornication" in scripture. Our church has dealt with five cases of Christian men (some were ministers) in the past two years. Even though people in the church struggle with it, I must still proclaim the truth. Avoiding issues or being silent about certain subjects will not make the problem go away. Preachers must speak up!

Delineate a clear path for faith and conduct: Evangelist Richard Bolte once said, "You can and should speak *against* sin and evil, but until you preach *for* something and give people hope, you have not preached the gospel!" Amen. Preachers must not only address sin, but also give people God's remedy and light the path as to how God desires us to live. It's the preacher's job to make sure the message he/she delivers clarifies truth and is relevant to hearers' situation. Martin Luther wrote, *A pastor who has preached his greatest sermon with the finest exegesis and elocution, but has failed to direct its application precisely to the area in which his congregation is most spiritually vulnerable, has deceived the people.* It is essential that the preacher makes God's will known, as Luther says, to the people's particular surroundings. Even if the preacher does not know exactly what the needs may be, the Holy Spirit can help direct the message to the listener's heart.



Preacher, you are a messenger and priest to reconcile the people to God; a king to help them overcome the challenges of life; and a prophet to speak against sin and for the truth! Preacher, speak up.





THE HOME OFFICE

Dr. Paul W. Todd, Administrator

This month I am taking this whole page because there are some business items that I need to write about. I will write about renewals and applications and then I will explain some of the features of the IMA WEB SITE that are available to members.

RENEWAL PROBLEMS

The membership renewals have 5 questions that need to be answered and the last question should be answered YES while the others must be answered NO. Some did not answer the questions at all and others got started answering NO and went right on and answered No on abiding by the rules and by-laws of the IMA. I assumed that all members are willing to abide by the rules so it was considered a mistake.

MEMBERSHIP LETTERS

Here at the office we take a lot of care in writing the letters that we send to the membership. The letters are the best way we know to communicate policy and procedures along with instructions. Don't just throw them in the trash. Please take time to read them because they contain valuable information. When people send renewals and applications without reading the letters and instructions it delays the processing because we set those aside until we have processed the ones that are correct. It takes a lot of time to deal with incorrect renewals and applications .

HOME OFFICE ERROR

The 2009 MEMBERSHIP CONFIRMATION LETTER sent with the membership cards to IMA members has an error in The DIRECTORY ACCESS DIRECTIONS Line #6. It should have read: For Password type in: **webdn!01** (**webdn** exclamation point, numbers 0 & 1). In the original letter the **d** was omitted. The letter was changed as soon as the error was discovered. I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.



The IMA WEB SITE is basically an information site for members and those interested in the IMA. There are not a lot of "bells and whistles" that take a long time to load and take up a lot of space on your computer's mem-

ory. But, there is a lot more there than what some of our computer savvy members may realize. I am writing this in an effort to get you to use the site and to send others there for information.

MANEUVERING THE IMA WEB SITE

At the top of the HOME PAGE are 5 Categories;

1. **ABOUT US:** Explains the scope of the IMA along with the information of how to contact us.
2. **CHURCHES:** IMA affiliated churches and membership churches, many with web sites that can be accessed from our site, are there. (We only make periodic changes so some may need updating) There's a map of the U.S and all you have to do is click on the IMA District to see where we have churches.
3. **MEMBER LINKS:** IMA members with sites. You will find some very interesting and innovative sites.
4. **MISSIONARIES:** Click on the country and get the name, address and web site of IMA missionaries.
5. **NEWS & INFO:** This is a new location on the web site. This is where the Blogs are located. There are three. Blog is a contraction of the term Web log where regular commentary and description of events are written.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S BLOG** is where the Chairman Dr. Warner can write his ideas and thoughts for the IMA.

2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** is used to get information about events and happenings in the IMA to the membership quickly. This is where I put the obituary information.

3. **NOTEBOOK** where we post notes about the IMA. This is where the information about the letter error is contained.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must clear the CACHE regularly in order to get the new postings. There is information about this on the Announcement Blog.

WEB HOME PAGE

The IMA HOME PAGE now has The Herald Newsletter that can be viewed. LEARN HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER where the Application Forms, our Doctrinal Position and the Constitution/By-Laws can be downloaded. The latest IMA DIRECTORIES can be viewed or downloaded with the information from the membership letter. Finally, you can view information about the National Board Leadership of the IMA.

My hope is that the membership will see the value of using the IMA Web Site as a tool for advancing the IMA by sending those who have questions to the site. You can also find the latest information there long before it is printed in the Newsletter.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Rev. Eugene L. Halonen, Sturtevant, Wisconsin, went home to be with the Lord on December 12, 2008. He had been a member of the IMA for 30 years. His sister Rev. Joan Gradinjan, is a member of the IMA. We send our deepest condolences to the family.



Rev. Lowell Hutsell, pastor of Harvest Ministries Assembly, Elkhart, Indiana, went home to be with the Lord on December 14, 2008. He was a member of the IMA for 26 years. We send our deepest condolences to his wife Rev. Patricia Hutsell, the family and the church members.

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE

APRIL 20-22

Higher Ground Church

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Phone: 661-836-0272

Pastor Ron Roberson

Dist. Chrmn. Bill Wilson (760-375-8271)

Dist. Sec. Dick Holiman (760-344-7819)

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COFFEE CUP CORNER

— From St. John the Beloved

A preacher was winding up his temperance sermon with great fervor: "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." And the congregation cried, "Amen!" "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it in the river." And the congregation cried, "Amen!" "And if I had all the whiskey and demon rum in the world, I'd take it all and throw it in the river." And the congregation cried, "Hallelujah!" The preacher sat down. The song leader stood up very tentatively and announced: "For our closing song, let us sing hymn #365, 'Shall we gather at the River.'"

After the dedication of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I want to stay with you guys."

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The views expressed in the Herald Newsletters do not necessarily reflect the consensus of IMA members