

Our Continuing Mission Focuses On . . .

# “Serving God’s Servants”



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## LIKE IT OR NOT, 2024 IS DONE AND 2025 HAS BEGUN.

### FRESH CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES LIE AHEAD.

How often we think we are in control of our lives. We control very little. We certainly have no control of **TIME**. We may stop a clock but we can't stop **TIME**. Each new year draws us closer to eternity. I keep thinking, one day, one year closer to Heaven. While we remain, may we use the **TIME** God has given us wisely. Philippians 4 “The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”



## WHERE WE'VE BEEN & WHERE WE'RE HEADED NEXT . . .

November—24 Mending Fences Fellowship, Spokane, WA (Hippe)  
January 5,12— Morris at New Hope Bible Church, Spokane Valley, WA  
January—5, 12,19, 26 Country Bible Church, Dusty, WA (Papst, Hippe, Morris)  
January– February – Sprague Community Church, Sprague, WA (Evans)



### WE ARE AVAILABLE FOR PULPIT SUPPLY EVEN ON SHORT NOTICE.

Do you need assistance with Pulpit Supply, Creative Outreach Programs, AWANA or Kid’s Clubs, Sunday School, Family Camp, Teen or Kid’s camps or other special events? Contact us. We are here to serve.

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## SERVANT, SHEPHERD OR SHOWMAN?

I have great respect for a man who along with his wife and family give their lives to meet the spiritual, emotional and often physical needs of a church. Pastoring a church is a calling, not a job. God instills a passion in the heart of a man to be a servant-shepherd, especially to pastor a church with a smaller congregation. This could be in a rural setting or a focused neighborhood city outreach. For a pastor to be effective, his wife must be in full agreement with this calling and serves alongside him.

A pastor who had been called to a larger church to serve as senior pastor shared with me that the most challenging ministry in which he had ever served was a small church. The pastor is often expected to meet everyone’s needs all the time. There are few, if any financial benefits. There will never be a large salary, an expense account, no plush office or staff to assist and usually few if any retirement benefits. Frequently he is even his own secretary along with being the janitor. Sometimes the pastor must work a second job to meet family needs and the pastor’s wife may have to work outside the home as well. This shepherd is not serving for glamour or for public acclaim. He has a servant’s heart. He is truly there to meet the needs of his flock.

A faithful shepherd’s purpose is to lift up the name of Jesus. His character reflects the character of Christ. He is faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He manages his own family well and his children obey him. He fulfills the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

A showman’s main purpose is to impress people with his presence, with his intellect, or his preaching skills, or personality. He is a one man show. He must be the center of attention. He tends to be one personality in the pulpit and another out of the pulpit. Some showmen seldom if ever are available to the dust of humanity without an appointment. His time is much too valuable.

An area preacher let others know how important he was when he said, “I am somebody in this community. If you want my influence, you need to get my attention.” A nice meal out, stroking my ego and letting others know how great I am would be a good start. Is this the heart of a Servant, Shepherd, or Showman? You decide.

Many were drawn to showmen of the past like Jim Jones and Jim Bakker who both ultimately proved their pulpit skills were merely a means to a selfish end. When U.S. troops went into Guyana, South America to recover the bodies of U.S. citizens who had committed suicide along with Jim Jones, the commanding officer reported that not a single copy of the Bible was found. That fact speaks volumes. Jim Bakker built a commercial empire around television evangelism only to see it collapse because of sex and financial scandals resulting in Jim’s conviction and imprisonment. Showman or Shepherd?



The pulpit is to be reserved for the declaration of biblical truth through the life of a man, a man with human flaws. In truth, a man preaches and teaches who and what he is. Arrogance has no place in the pulpit. Genuine humility must be modeled. John 3:30 "He must increase, but I must decrease." One nationally known preacher put on a performance every Sunday to 14,000. He forcefully preached against the very sins in which he indulged. After being exposed, he resigned and became an insurance salesman. That's probably where he should have started his career. Servant, Shepherd or Showman? You decide. Unfortunately, this has been repeated in pulpits across America. The admonition of Romans 12:3 has been ignored. "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought."

In the mid 90's the Christian Worker's Conference in Spokane was the largest three-day seminar of its kind in the nation with up to 6,500 attendees. I was on the organizing committee. One nationally known pastor we considered as the main assembly speaker required \$10,000 to speak twice and expected first class hotel accommodations. We were told that the finances were necessary to help meet the needs of his staff who would be assisting. The committee's plan was to provide transportation, housing and meals in addition to offering from the attendees. It was the consensus that we pursue another speaker. Joni Erickson Tada was asked. She readily agreed to speak for just an offering and of course, her travel and hotel needs were met. The offering given was over \$10,000. God honors the heart of a servant.

An entertainer's primary focus is to keep people happy and satisfied. A shepherd's heart is to empower people to become more like Christ. A true servant-shepherd challenges holds his flock accountable to biblical standards. An entertainer's goal is to make people feel good. A shepherd's goal is to see his sheep transformed by the power of God's Spirit. He trains and challenges them to make disciples. Entertainers focus on attracting crowds. Shepherds focus on encouraging those who will live godly lives and share the Gospel with a lost and dying world.

Entertainers perform. They crave public approval motivated by self-importance. Shepherds lead. Pastors who are showmen put all their effort into a public performance. They invest time and resources to become a more professional speaker, to have an innovative worship team and to have cutting-edge visual effects. Evaluating whether their flock is growing in Christ is of little or no importance. A shepherd should care about his public appearance but should be more focused on bringing people into a deepening relationship with God.

Entertainers gauge their success based on numbers, they "count nickels and noses." It's all about church attendance and offerings. Shepherds gauge their success on obedience to the principles of scripture. A biblical leader determines achievement based on faithfulness to the call of God. Entertainers may be remembered for being popular, but what will happen when they stand before God? In eternity it will be known that many loved the glory that comes from men more than the glory that comes from God (John 12:43). Servant leaders may not be popular while they walk this earth, but they will receive praise that matters most, "Well done good and faithful servant . . ."

Entertainers long for human acceptance and crave the praise of men. Shepherds yearn for God's approval and the respect of godly people. Entertainers live to be loved, while a man who has the heart of a servant protects and cares for his flock even if some don't like him. Good parents are not always liked, but they are respected by their children even after correction. Good parents have their children's best interests in mind. Likewise, Shepherds understand that obedience to God's word is more important than being liked. Jesus wasn't always liked and understood, but His followers always respected Him (John 6:60-71).

If your pastor is a servant-shepherd thank God for him. Listen to him and follow his godly leadership to a deepening relationship with God. Uphold him and his family in prayer. Take every opportunity as God directs you to encourage him and his wife. **IS IT POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE YOUR PASTOR TOO MUCH?** Serve alongside him by using your God-given spiritual giftedness to help your local body of Christ grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Help fellow believers develop Christ-like character. Hold your pastor's arms up in ministry. Serve alongside him. God will honor that.



## Thoughts from Dawna . . . Don't Get Cooked

In the fourth grade there was a girl named Margot who bullied me at recess. Margot was big and she was mean. She'd taunt and call me names, chase me around and push me into the corner where the chain link fence connected at the back of the grass field. Margot was not just a problem; Margot was the enemy. Knowing my enemy as a 9-year-old meant that I could develop a solid strategy to combat this type of evil, a strategy that consisted of running to Miss Temple on the other end of the field and "telling on" Margot when things got out of control. Miss Temple was going to take care of it, and I would win the battle.



Knowing your enemy provides you with an advantage, allowing you to strategize either offensively or defensively to be successful in battle. While the strategies might not be as simple as combating a fourth-grade bully, the fundamentals are the same. When you know your enemy, you have an opportunity to produce victory over evil.



In the Bible, the enemies were Satan and oppressive nations like the Philistines. In modern war the enemies have reportedly been Nazi Germany and China. Even now as we've anticipated World War III, we've been enduring an ongoing, raging war that's surrounding us. We've completely lost sight of who the enemy is between foreign nations, elected officials, technology, religious leaders, and financial rulers . . . "We're cooked" (as Gen Z would say).

Fifth Generation Warfare makes it impossible to know the enemy. For decades countless reigning powers have been destroying us, with opposing motivations, using many methods and means, including psychological. Without the discernment of the Holy Spirit, you find yourself completely lost while desperate for the truth. This is the time in history when only a remnant can distinguish who or what the enemy is due to the relentless firehose of news and information followed by instant counterintelligence, opposing theories, and endless arguments leaving you spinning, baffled, and confused.



The solution is found in **Hebrews chapter 5** reminding us that if we have not been preparing for this war, we will most certainly not be battle ready.

### The Great Falling Away

<sup>11</sup>We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. <sup>12</sup>In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! <sup>13</sup>Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 STANDING FIRM WITH MY MOM, DAWNA

## PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY WITH US AND FOR US

- Country Bible Church in Dusty, WA as they seek a new shepherd for their flock
- Wisdom and health for our son, George II, with ongoing health challenges
- Pastor Kevin Che'n and his wife Janell. Kevin's heart surgery went well and he is now on a transplant list.
- **Praise** for good personal health.
- **Praise** for God's goodness in 2024 with ministry finances \* we have no debt. **THANK YOU FOR GIVING.**
- **Praise** for men who have been available for pulpit supply assistance
- Continue to pray for wisdom in seeking a "Timothy."
- **PRAISE:** Our home church, New Hope Bible, has called Paul Pierce as Sr. Pastor

