

WHEN YOUR PREACHER LEAVES:
Interim Services for Churches Between Ministers
Newsletter, December, 2007, #18

When Your Preacher Leaves Is in Transition
by Jerrie Barber

John Parker and I started this newsletter a year ago last June. We wanted to inform brethren about the advantages and dynamics of interim ministry. I appreciate the encouragement and response we have received. With each mail-out come messages from friends who compliment, say “Hello,” and ask questions. Many are old friends. Others are friends, brothers, and sisters we have not met yet.

I began with much enthusiasm and little knowledge. I have learned during the year from continuing to study how to communicate better through this medium that I started the mailing list by “spamming.” I added every e-mail address in my Outlook address book. I apologize for this.

With the next issue we begin anew. **Every person who wants to continue to receive this letter must subscribe. This will be a double opt-in.** (1) You may go to the *Subscribe* page on my web site: <http://www.barberclippings.com/220733.html> . (2) You will receive an e-mail. You must reply to that e-mail to be subscribed.

There are two lists: (1) *When Your Preacher Leaves*: this newsletter. (2) *Jerrie Barber's Blog*: a notification e-mail of a new post on my blog. You can subscribe to either or both.

We hope to have a better format – easy to read and simple to select and ignore parts of the newsletter. I look forward to your comments, criticism, and suggestions. We are planning the new format to mail January 15, 2008, at 8:47 a.m., CST.

I am excited at this transition. As William Bridges teaches in his books on this topic, we are in: (1) an ending, (2) a neutral zone, and (3) a new beginning. John and I have been discussing this for months. I have evaluated many programs and read scores of reviews. Yesterday, I finally clicked the mouse on my computer, entered my debit card number, and committed to the new format. At ten past midnight, I am experiencing some of the confusion and uncertainty of the neutral zone. For the past nine hours, I have been orienting myself to the steps of the new program.

I appreciate the encouragement and gift of web site hosting and e-mail service from Sean Phillips, a friend and brother from Berry's Chapel. He has been helpful in getting me started in this new way of communicating.

To receive this newsletter, *When Your Preacher Leaves*, next month, you must subscribe: <http://www.barberclippings.com/220733.html>

Shakespeare Quotations for Ministers, by John Parker

The Merchant of Venice

You have too much respect upon the world;

They lose it that do buy it with much care.

1.1.

If you are overly concerned about business you spend too much care to be worth the expense.

His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search. 1.1.

Some results are not worth the effort necessary to achieve them.

I have disabled mine estate

By something showing a more swelling port

Than my faint means would grant continuance. 1.1

I have wasted my finances by living more lavishly than my small income will support.

You know me well, and herein spend but time

To wind about my love with circumstance. 1.1.

You waste time by approaching me cautiously for help when you know I love you. 1.1.

Smile of the Month

You know the children have grown up when you find yourself straightening up the house before they come home instead of after (*Reader's Digest*, July 1983, page 14).

Mustard Seeds from Favorite Books, Jerrie Barber

Biblical Eldership, by Alexander Strauch, Lewis and Roth Publishers, © 1995 by Alexander Strauch

Courage such as David possessed is an essential leadership quality. An internationally known statesman was once asked by reporters, "What is the most important quality for a national leader to possess?" His answer: "Courage." This is true not only for political leaders, but for church elders as well. To discipline sin in the church (especially the sin of prominent members or leaders), to confront internal strife, and to stand up to powerful teachers and theological luminaries who expound high-sounding false doctrines requires courage. Without courage to fight for the truth and the lives of God's people, the local church would be washed away by every new doctrinal storm or internal conflict (page 22).

Some people say, "You can't expect laymen to raise their families, work all day, and shepherd a local church." But that is simply not true. Many people raise families, work, and give substantial hours of time to community service, clubs, athletic activities, and/or religious institutions. The cults have built up large lay movements that survive primarily because of the volunteer time of their members. We Bible-believing Christians are becoming a lazy, soft, pay-for-it-to-be-done group of Christians. It is positively amazing how much people can accomplish when they are motivated to work for something they love. I've seen people build and remodel houses in their spare time. I've

also seen men discipline themselves to gain a phenomenal knowledge of the Scriptures (page 28).

Nowhere is this definition problem more evident than with the vocabulary Christians use to describe their church officials. Much of our church vocabulary is unscriptural and terribly misleading. Words such as *clergyman*, *layman*, *reverend*, *minister*, *priest*, *bishop*, *ordained*, and *ministerial* convey ideas contrary to what Jesus Christ and His apostles taught. Such terminology misrepresents the true nature of apostolic Christianity and make it difficult, if not impossible, to recapture it. As a result, most of our churches are in desperate need of language reform. I hope that this book will challenge church leaders to more faithfully adhere to the true meaning of biblical terms and concepts (page 34).

God cares about how people treat those who are in authority. The Bible exhorts us not only to obey, but to honor our rulers (Rom. 13:7; 1 Peter 2:17). When Paul, for example, realized he had spoken rudely to the high priest, Ananias, he apologized by saying, "I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people'" (Acts 23:5). If the disobedience and ingratitude of people toward their civil leaders concerns God deeply, imagine how much greater is His concern that His people properly honor their spiritual leaders!

Our natural tendency is to take our leaders for granted, forget what they have done for us, complain rather than be thankful, accentuate the bad, and disregard the good. For example, God gave Israel some of the greatest leaders in human history – men like Moses and David. Yet during difficult times, the people were ready in a moment to stone both Moses and David. Due to our basic ingratitude and complaining spirit, the Scripture exhorts us to highly honor our spiritual leaders (page 170).

Barber Clippings

During this month, we have graduated the *Learning to Love my Friends* class at Eddyville. We met and went through a *Time Line* of the Eddyville congregation. A poster 48" high and 20' long displayed the ups and downs of attendance and contribution, and elders, preachers, and deacons who have served. We discussed the past 47 years a decade at a time. We had excellent participation in both constructing the time line and in the number who met to discuss it.

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We mourn the loss this week of brother Willard Collins, one of the great preachers of his generation as well as vice-president and then president of Lipscomb University, but we rejoice in his service to Lord and the church. His preaching brought many souls to Christ and strengthened the church, and his counsel and warm personality positively influenced thousands of young people. He and his beloved wife Ruth were long-time members of the Granny White church.

Last month Jill and I conducted a marriage seminar at the Springfield Gardens congregation in Queens, near New York City. I addressed the couples and later the husbands, while Jill spoke to the wives. Bill Johnson continues his many years of excellent ministry there with his fine wife Faye. We are thankful for this strong influence in one of the most influential cities of the world.

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