

# WHEN YOUR PREACHER LEAVES: Interim Services for Churches Between Ministers

February, 2010, #43



Jerrie Barber and John Parker



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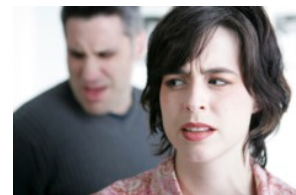
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## Making a Good Referral in Counseling

by Jerrie Barber

I picked up an idea a few years ago you might want to consider. It was a normal day with tasks going as planned. A couple came to my door to ask if they could talk. I could tell they were not happy. They had been discussing a newly discovered extramarital affair and wondered if there was any hope. We talked an hour or two. They came back the next day.



By the end of our talk the second day, the feeling of hopelessness had diminished slightly from the day before. But they needed more than Jerrie Barber's training. I told them, as I had related to others before, "I am a pretty good country doctor. However, you need heart surgery and I am not a cardiologist." I referred them to a trusted counselor, Phil Pistole. As they were leaving, a feeling that I had had in similar situations appeared: the feeling of abandonment.

I reflected on my father's bypass surgery in 1981. Although his family doctor was not a cardiologist and he had not done the surgery, Dr. Kochtitzky checked on him while he was in the hospital. He was still interested in his condition.

Using that metaphor as they were leaving, I told them that as their friend and "family doctor" I was interested in their progress and asked if I might check with them to see how they were doing. Even though I would not be doing the counseling, I was very interested in their progress.

Once a month, while they were working through this crisis, I made "house calls" and encouraged them in the process of reconciliation. It was one of the most satisfying referrals that I have made in my ministry. Someone with more training than I had did the work, but I remained concerned and connected.

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## Bearing, Sharing, and Casting Our Burdens

by John Parker

While most of us try to be positive and appreciate the joys that we have, we know that all of us face some burdens and difficulties, and some of us face many. Scripture offers solutions to dealing with burdens: bear them, share them, and cast them.

In Galatians, Paul tells us that "Each one shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:5). There are some burdens I must bear by myself: no one can bear them for me. I must bear the burden of doing the work God has given me to do.



"The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person" (Eccles. 12:13). And for his work, each person must give his or her own account: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

But Paul also tells the Galatians, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (NKJV). There are some burdens we can share. We can help one another in times of grief (1 Thessalonians 4:18; cf. John 11:19). We can share our worldly possessions with those in need. Paul said concerning the wealthy, "Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share" (1 Timothy 6:18). And we can share in supporting those who teach the gospel "And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches" (Galatians 6:6).

Some burdens, however, we neither can bear ourselves nor give to others to bear for us. In those times, we must give our burdens to the Lord. Peter said, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7). Only

the Lord can bear my sins, but he came to earth to do so: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Hebrews 9:28). Sometimes my burdens are so heavy I do not even know how to pray for them, but the Holy Spirit helps us:

And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

Let us have the courage to bear the burdens we each must bear alone, bear one another’s burdens when we can, and cast all others on the Lord who cares for us.

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### Shakespeare Quotations for Ministers, by John Parker

There was never yet philosopher  
That could endure the toothache patiently.  
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING 5.1

I know not how to pray your patience,  
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;  
Impose me to what penance your invention  
Can lay upon my sin. Yet sinn’d I not  
But in mistaking.  
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING 5.1



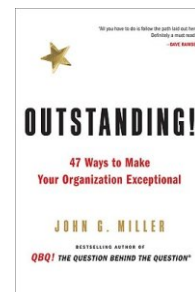
There’s not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.  
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING 5.2

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### Mustard Seeds from Favorite Books, Jerrie Barber

*Outstanding: 47 Ways to Make Your Organization Exceptional*, by John G. Miller, Copyright © 2010 by John G. Miller

An executive at H. B Fuller, an esteemed organization founded in 1887 in St. Paul, Minnesota, once shared with me this colorful metaphor: “John, it’s a bad day for us when a snake slithers into the lobby and we all encircle the reptile to assess the situation, discuss where it came from, who let it in, and what species it is. It’s a good day when someone just grabs a shovel and cut its head off” (page 2).



I’ve interacted with too many frontline people on the phone who, first, could not give me directions to the company’s building and, second, were unable to answer the

question “What does your organization do?” If they couldn’t answer those basic questions, what are the odds they would’ve known why the organization existed (page 10)?

So, a customer, viewed in this light, would be our boss, peers, staff, other departments, the home office, and so on—as well as any “outsider” who buys from, sells to, volunteers at, attends, or donates to our organization. Truly, anyone we might be in a position to serve on any day in any capacity—360 degrees around us (page 20).

In my experience, the main reason why people don’t speak up is a very human thing: We’re enslaved to the opinions of others. Other people’s opinions can at times be so important to us that they literally shape what we say and do—or don’t say and do. Our all-to-common need for approval can easily become the tie that binds, and it takes strength and courage to break free from that and say what we really think. But for the good of both the organization and ourselves, it’s imperative that we do it. We need to speak up (page 35).

Without question, having people at every level speak up is a necessity for an outstanding organization. We need a culture that supports that. And I mean *really* supports it, not just gives it lip service. I’ve facilitated many a session where the boss says, “Now today we’re taking off the stripes. No titles! We’re equals in this room.” But people know from experience that when the meeting ends, the stripes will go right back on, so they’d better watch what they say. We can do better than that—and we must (pages 36, 37).

When chatting with John Schnatter—Papa John himself, founder of Papa John’s, the pizza restaurant chain—he shared this: “I’ve always found that people who struggle are hard on others, but those who do well in life are hard on themselves (page 52).

The truth is, in spite of the platitudes we’ve heard to the contrary, the customer is *not* always right. Sometimes they are rude, selfish, mean, and their behaviors devalue an organization’s staff. Yes, every organization needs to mind its bottom line and define this important boundary for itself, but standing up for our people in the face of mistreatment by customers makes our staff feel truly valued. It means a lot to people to belong to an entity that has standards like that (pages 136, 137).

Having a culture in which people feel valued and appreciated is a big part of what makes an organization outstanding. Words of support between teammates go a long way toward making that culture a reality. In addition to the value it brings to the organization, it’s meaningful for each of us as individuals, too. After all, what we sow, we reap (page 151).

Bernie Marcus, one of the founders of Home Depot, who has served on several boards of directors for various organizations, said, “Whenever a new CEO is hired, we tell him or her, ‘Don’t do *anything* for the first three months other than shut your mouth, open your ears, and go around listening’ “ (page 152).

Whether you're a small business owner working with staff on-on-one or a large employer doing a formal survey, my advice is this: If you're not going to study the info gleaned and communicate the results back to people and then make some changes, then Do NOT ASK THE QUESTIONS (page 156)!

A problem is almost never about one person. Yes, someone committed an error, but why? What made them think it was the correct thing to do? How were they trained? What else was going on at the time? The truth is, when the onion is peeled and a human error is really examined, it's almost never about what one individual did in one moment, but more about the organization's systems, processes, and environment. So, looking for a culprit is simply looking in the wrong place. It represents flawed thinking, and almost never leads to a real solution (pages 170, 171).

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## Smile of the Month

When a simpleton abused him, Buddha listened in silence; but when the man had finished, Buddha asked him: "Son, if a man declined to accept a present made to him, to whom would it belong?" The man answered: "To him who offered it." "My son," said Buddha, "I decline to accept your abuse, and request you to keep it for yourself" (*The Story of Civilization I: Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant, page 429).



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## Barber Clippings

This month we have been regrouping. We moved out of our apartment in Hendersonville and brought clothes, computers, and miscellaneous back to our house in Bellevue. We gave away our furniture (\$300.00 worth from Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Sunflower Thrift). We are ready for the next opportunity. It takes a special lady to cooperate with and enjoy this process. Gail is outstanding.

I have sent out 720 emails, as of 2/1/2010, to tell people of this ministry and ask for contacts. There have been 142 bounces (incorrect email addresses) and 81 people who responded by email or phone. I appreciate each person who took the time to let me know they received the information, forwarded it to someone else, or recommended that a congregation consider interim ministry for their benefit.

I now have two "try-outs" for interim ministry scheduled and two workshops for the future.

I appreciate each person's encouragement.

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