



El Informe del comité de búsqueda de un pastor para la iglesia

Nuestro informe no es atractivo. No hemos podido encontrar un candidato aceptable para la iglesia, aunque había un candidato con promesa. Apreciamos todas las sugerencias que vienen de los miembros de la Iglesia. Hemos investigado cada una con una entrevista ó llamado por lo menos a tres personas para que nos den referencia en cuanto a la persona sugerida. Lo que sigue es nuestro informe confidencial concerniente a los candidatos bajo consideración:

Adán: Un buen hombre al principio; pero tuvo un problema con su esposa, también se dice que él y su esposa gozaron al andar desnudos en el jardín. **Noé:** Su pastorado previo fue de 120 años sin conversos. Tiende a realizar proyectos de construcción extraños. **Abraham:** Algunas referencias informan de que tomó otra mujer como esposa con permiso de su esposa. Pero nunca durmió con la esposa de otro hombre. A la vez parece que ofreció a su esposa a otros hombres. **José:** Tiene ideas grandiosas. Se jacta de sus sueños y cree en la interpretación de sueños. Fue encarcelado. **Moisés:** Un hombre humilde y manso. No se comunica bien, a veces tartamudea. Sabemos que tiene tiempos cuando se enoja vigorosamente y reacciona drásticamente. Dicen que huyó de su vocación previa bajo el cargo de asesinato. **David:** El líder con más promesa de todos hasta que lo encontraron con la esposa de su vecino; se rumora que planeó la muerte del esposo para casarse con su amada. Luego, se arrepintió de corazón. **Salomón:** Conocido como un gran predicador. Pero nuestra casa pastoral nunca podría acomodar a todas sus esposas. **Elías:** Dado al desánimo, aún llega a deprimirse. No puede aguantar la tensión ni la presión del ministerio. **Eliseo:** Hay rumor de que por un tiempo vivió con una viuda. **Oseas:** Es un pastor lleno de amor y comprensión; pero nuestra congregación nunca podría aceptar la ocupación de su esposa. **Débora:** ¡Mujer! **Jeremías:** Emocionalmente inestable. Alarmista. Negativo. Siempre lamenta la situación de la gente. Lloro mucho. Se dice que hizo un viaje largo para esconder su ropa interior en la ribera de un río. **Isaías:** Dice que vio ángeles en el Santuario. ¿Fantasioso? **Jonás:** Rechazó el llamado de Dios al ministerio misionero. Solo obedeció, dice él, cuando un gran pez se lo tragó. Dice que éste pez después de tres días le vomitó en una playa. ¡Colgamos el teléfono! **Amós:** Es del campo y no es muy suave en su trato. Si asistiera a un seminario tal vez tendría posibilidades. Siempre condena a los ricos. Sería mejor que pastoreara a una congregación pobre. **Timoteo:** Demasiado joven.

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Serving the Community

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Algo Sobre El Diezmo

Diezmos y La Confianza

Un miembro de la iglesia (no les voy a decir de cual iglesia) estaba teniendo problemas con el concepto de los Diezmos. Un día decidió revelarles esto a su pastor. “Pastor, yo simplemente no puedo ver como puedo dar el 10% de mis ingresos a la iglesia cuando estoy teniendo problemas pagando mis cuentas.” El pastor le respondió: “Mira, si te prometo cubrir la diferencia de tus pagos, ¿crees que podrías dar tus diezmos por sólo un mes?” Después de pensarlo, el miembro respondió, “Por supuesto que si, si en realidad me promete pagar la diferencia, yo creo que si puedo pagar mis diezmos por solo un mes.” Continuó el pastor: “Ahora dime, ¿que piensas de lo que me acabas de decir?” El pastor sigue: “Dices que estarías dispuesto a poner tu confianza en un hombre como yo, uno que posee casi nada materialmente, y sin embargo ¿no puedes confiar en nuestro Padre que es el dueño de todo el universo?” El siguiente domingo, este miembro de la iglesia comenzó a dar sus diezmos fielmente. ¡Y fue bendecido en gran manera!

Diezmos/Primeros Frutos

Mientras estaba el misionero en su casita en el África, un día alguien llegó a tocar a su puerta. Al abrir la puerta, el misionero se encontró a un niño con un pez muy grande en sus brazos. El niño le dijo al misionero, “Reverendo, usted nos enseñó como diezmar, de manera que aquí le entrego a usted mi diezmo.” El misionero al tomar el pez del niño le pregunta, “Hijo mío, si este es tu diezmo, ¿dónde pues están tus otros nueve peces?” Ya corriendo de regreso al río, voltea y le contesta al misionero, “Oh no se preocupe, todavía están en el río, voy para pescarlos ya.”

A Word *from the* Pastor

Rev. Carlos E. Espinoza



What Disease or Diseases Make Our Churches Sick?

A few days ago I was reading an article about certain diseases that can enter and destroy the church. To be honest with you, it caught my attention. I was in the dark with this topic and as I read on I felt the Spirit of God leading me to share this with you. I know that a cold can turn into something life threatening with complications added to an already weak immune system. But this article opened my eyes to a whole different kind of diseases that can literally destroy a church. If you will take note in the "Minutes" of our Annual Rio Grande Conference, you will note many churches either closed or are nearly at that point. I will admit, that this comes very close to me because of what I am facing here in Roswell. I hope you will have an open mind to this and let us all have a reality check while reading this article.

You will see that there is not only but many diseases that can do a church in. For the next two months we will learn more about these dreaded diseases and maybe at the years end, we will have re-thought out resolutions for our church in the coming year of 2012. As I stated already, I have felt the hand of God to share this with all who will listen and take heed to this wave of diseases that have plagued many of our churches throughout our conference and the world. It's time to recognize them and pray them out of our churches in the name of Jesus.

A Healthy church needs to develop an immune system to resist disease; or else the church will get sick and perhaps even die. We do not mean the diseases of viruses, such as whooping cough, but ones that are even more destructive to our soul and future in eternity! It is much more sensible in our physical health to eat right, reduce stress, and exercise to prevent illnesses and live a longer, better quality life. If we do not, we get sick and miss one too many sick days and are fired from work, or get that one disease that may take our earthly life away. Yes, no one can add days to his life, but he can add a healthier more energy filled life. The church is a body too, the church needs to eat right and exercise by building love and purpose. Then, when a disease comes along, the church's white blood cells of good leadership can recognize the disease, and get rid of it.

Nineteen of the Most Common Diseases That Infect OUR Churches Today

1. The Disease of Diotrepthes: (3 John) This disease is a reign of tyranny through gossip and slander in the name of Christ. John makes a strong and decisive stand against gossip, as does the rest of Scripture, yet this is the foremost problem in the church! John is representing the presence of Christ and gives us a stern warning in loving encouragement for us. The cure is that we must replace the temptation of spreading gossip with the love of Christ. (*Psalm 5:9; 12:3; 52:2; 109:2; 120:2; Proverbs 9:8; 10:19; 17:4; 18:8; 25:23; Jeremiah 9:8; Ephesians 4:25-32; James 3:1-12*)

2. Proudful Me, Me, Me, and Only Me-ism: The leadership, and even the lay person thinking they are the quintessential aspect and key to the church cause this disease. There is usually one or even a few leaders who refuse to share the power. They also tend to be puffed up with themselves and refuse to see others as children of the Lord! The cure is to confront them in love and educate them on the priorities and mission of the church and their role in it. If they refuse to get on board in Godly terms (*Matthew 18*) rid the church of them as if cutting out a cancer.

(*Job 41:34; 2 Chronicles 26:16; 32:26; Psalm 10:4-5; 18:27; 31:18; 56:2; 59:12; 62:10; 73:6-12; 101:5; 131:1; 6:17; Proverbs 8:13; 11:2; 13:10; 16:18; 21:4; 24; 29:23; 30:13; Isaiah 2:11-21; 13:19; 16:6; 23:9; Ezekiel 28:2; Obadiah 1:3; 1 Corinthians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 5:12; 7:4; Galatians 6:4;* --these are just a few!)

3. Hypocrisy-ism: This disease is extremely deadly and is caused by not living an honest Christian life as we should. We, who have been filled with the Holy Spirit, and who know the Scriptures should have no problem with honest living, yet we do! People with this disease are experts on seeing the hypocrisy in other people, but they fail to see it in themselves! The cure is to not play like a Christian, but to be a Christian. Our actions must respond to the transformation of Christ's grace by living honest lives. We must allow Christ's amazing grace to root out all the evil within us, especially the hypocrisy that causes so much destruction. (*Job 8:13; Matthew 23:23-33*)

4. My-Church-ism: This disease is caused by the leadership thinking that the church belongs only to them. It does not! They are the stewards to God's bride. The cure is to build interpersonal relationships within the church and neuter co-dependent and mutually absorbing mentalities. Strong teaching about the purpose of the church and the body of Christ, as well as about spiritual gifts is necessary. If the church ignores the neighborhood and world around them, then the church programs will become stagnated and meaningless and serve no real need. (*Mark 9:33-35; Philippians 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 3:15*)

5. The Dying Mentality: This is a disease usually found in churches whose membership has an average age of 50 or higher. The older members refuse to reach out and invite newer and younger people and/or refuse to share power, so no one is coming in to stay. Another symptom is that they are over- focused on the past, and will not look to the future. This disease is also found in younger churches where apathy and arrogance have taken over the Crown of our Lord! The cure is revival, prayer, and seeing the church as the body of Christ where each one is unique and essential, and cooperating to build the Kingdom. (*2 Corinthian 2:3-4; Revelation 2:4-5; 3:1-6; 3:14-18*)

6. Snob-ism: This is a disease caused by directly refusing to relate to others outside your social economic status. It is a refusal to know and understand the differences and similarities between various people groups within the church's community and even inside the church itself. Prejudice is a sin! This disease causes evangelism to die and missions to be stopped! The cure is massive humble-ism by strong preaching in the character of Christ about how we are to emulate Him. (*Proverbs 2:7-19; Galatians 6:2-5; Colossians 1:24-29*)

7. Committee-ism: This disease has the people serving on a committee believing and feeling that the committee is the ministry. Symptoms include having meetings for the sake of the meeting and for no other reason. For example, if you are on the evangelism committee, you think that when you serve on that committee you are doing evangelism. This disease will cause no actual ministry, such as evangelism, to be accomplished.

The cure is to realize that the committee is the football huddle in the game. The game is the task that the committee is assigned to do. It is as if you have a huddle, and then sit down with the satisfaction that you planned the game, but forgot to play it! A committee has the same purpose. The committee is the strategy and brainstorming session to get the work done. It does not exist in of, or just for itself! To prevent this disease, you



Women's Corner

with
Carmen L. Espinoza



My husband and I at times council with people that have doubts about their salvation. They say, "I'm not sure if I really know God..." In this issue of "La Voz Del Desierto" I want to share with you something that many, even myself, have gone through at one time or another. Doubt enters us in a way that we end up asking ourselves the following questions:

- Do I believe in God?
- Do I believe God sent His son Jesus to earth to live a sinless life and to die on the cross, as payment for my sin?
- Have I asked God to forgive me through the sacrifice of His son Jesus on the cross?
- Have I totally given my life to God?

If you can answer "Yes" to all four questions, then you do have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. This entitles you to call out to Him, by using the name of Jesus.

If you cannot answer "yes" to these questions, then we need to take a moment to reflect and pray through each item on the list.

Sometimes when we are going through a very difficult time, it's hard to feel God's presence. It does not mean He is not there, it just means that all the 'interference' in your life is keeping you from tuning in to His signal. That signal is still there, He is still loving you; but He is waiting for you to give Him your burdens.

If you are carrying a lot of burdens, then you need to pray this prayer: "Lord, my problems are now your problems. You know what I need to make it through. I give the whole situation over to you."

Now, the good news is, whether or not the situation turns out the way we want it to, God will turn it into a miracle. Romans 8:28 promises us that "All things work for the good of those who love the Lord, who are called according to His purpose." What this means, is that the things that seem so hard right now, one day, you will be able to look back and see the plan God was performing in your life.

Joseph said, many years after his own brothers betrayed him into slavery -- "What the enemy meant for evil, God meant for good."

When Joseph said these words, he could look back over his life which included his betrayal, slavery, more betrayal and imprisonment and see that all these things had come to pass so he could be in the right place at the right time. In the end, God promoted him to victory. Joseph was second in command to the King of Egypt. In his sufferings, he had overcome. How had he overcome? Through it all, he had trusted God!

That's just what you need to do. Are you willing to trust God with your circumstances? Stop looking at all the hurt and start looking to God. Thank Him for what He is doing and where He is taking you. You really can trust Him through your journey, one step at a time.

I can honestly tell you that I've been there and done it. If someone would have told me ten years ago that I would not only be writing these things to you, but married to a Methodist Minister; I would have said, God is not here because of all the troubles I was going through ten years ago. But I count my blessings every day now and thank God He gave me the courage to trust in Him. Remember my friend someone is praying for you.



If you would like to share a testimony or just have someone listen, write to me! I would love to get to know you. Sometimes as women we need to find a good friend to talk to. I would like to be that friend. If you wish to write, do so at Carmen.Espinoza@live.com or maybe you'd like to call me. I may be reached at (575) 208-0056. Rest assured that all is kept confidential.

Many of you have sent us cards, letters, and e-mails telling us how the music of my husband has blessed you. Some of you have even told us that you play his music in your churches. We are always blessed to hear that people are enjoying the talent of music God has given him. This year, we want to do something special, we want to share his Christmas CD with anyone who would like to have a copy. To the honor and glory of God, we have given away over a thousand copies of each of his four CD's. We give them away! Wherever he ministers, he just simply gives them out. But God has also blessed us. There have been times people come to us and give us a love offering. But we always make sure they are aware his music is free. Why? Because we feel God has blessed us so much in many areas of our lives that we want to share this with anyone who would like to listen and be blessed. When asked, we generally say a \$10.00 donation is accepted but any amount is welcomed. We have had some donations for \$1.00 and some up to \$100.00. We just want to make sure anyone hearing this music will be blessed for we use it as an Evangelical tool. With all that being said, if you feel compelled to and wish to bless our music ministry with a donation please respond to any of the contact numbers listed on the front page and request your "Christmas Music" absolutely FREE.

This is a two-CD collection. Some of the titles you will enjoy on CD #1 is: Jingle Bells, Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, Winter Wonderland, and many more other classical Christmas songs. On CD #2 you will enjoy the sounds of Christmas songs like: Do You Hear What I Hear? Silent Night, O Holy Night, Away in a Manger, and many more.

As an attachment to this Newsletter, you will find one song from each CD.

If you wish to use these as Christmas gifts we suggest you place your order on or before November 30th. Your first set is absolutely free! If you wish to order additional copies, all we ask is that you cover the shipping fees. From 2-5 sets, \$6.00; 6-10 sets, \$12.00; any more than 10 sets, please contact us personally. All will be shipped by "Priority Mail".

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must have a clear and effective mission statement that outlines goals and duties. Provide training and encouragement as well as supervision and accountability. (*Ephesians 1:21-23; 3:10; 4:15; 5:23; Hebrews 10:19-25*)

8. Koinonia-itis: This malady can be fun and inviting for a while only to those in a certain cliques in the church. This disease occurs where the people in power will not let others in the loop, or share resources or even refuse to build relationships with others. Some people may congregate in such tight knit groups/cliques, that outsiders are not welcome to join. They shut themselves out from their own church and community. This disease causes the death of the church through attrition as people leave and there is no one to come in and take their place. Nothing gets done in a church like this. The cure is to make sure the church has a defined purpose and mission that all the people have agreed to, so the church is the body of Christ working together, open to, and reaching others. Teaching on the precepts and character of Christ, and discipleship groups with open seats to invite friends and neighbors are essential. (*Ephesians 4:29-32; Colossians 3:12-14*)

9. Stuck-in-the-mud-of-Strangulation: This disease is caused by words such as, "We have never done it that way before." The church with this disease will not try new things or even surrender themselves to the precepts of Scripture. They may have solid theology and just have it displayed on the wall but not in the heart and will, and definitively not on the hands and feet. On the other hand, they can be liberal and use their theology as an excuse to do anything, such as hyper-Calvinism or liberalism. This disease will cut off the flow of people into a church to a slow crawl and even in reverse, so the back door will grow bigger than the front door! The cure is solid, non-compromising Biblical teaching, with application! (*Colossians 2:6-7; James 4:7-10*)

10. I-do-not-want-to-grow-ism: This is a disease caused by refusing to make changes in the facilities, so the church becomes bottlenecked and grid locked. This malady can be seen in churches that grow so fast they cannot keep up, or do not want to keep up. This kind of mentality will slow down the rate of church growth, as the people exceed the capacity of the facilities available to accommodate them, the people will get frustrated and leave. This disease is found in both good churches with good preaching as well as in small churches with small thinking. They either refuse to accommodate more people, or are so prideful with their facilities they do not want to make the necessary changes. The cure is to pray, and strategize on ways to accommodate people, while being sensitive to the facilities and the people who built them. (*John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4*)

11. Hyper-spirit-ism: This disease is caused when a church has an over emphasis of the work of the Spirit, over and against the Word. Often, they focus too much on emotionalism to the detriment of sound Biblical teaching. Experiences become more important than the Word. The cure is to try to get people to see the Biblical precepts of truth, and teach the works and roles of the Spirit from Scripture and not from experiences and emotionalism. This disease is very tough to beat, as it is unlike other diseases that drive people away. This disease will cause people to flock to your church so you think you have a revival, when in fact you have a counterfeit revival, or even a cult. As a result, the true purpose of the church is lost, resulting in no discipleship, no healthy Biblical teaching, just crazy stuff, like holy laughter. The cure is to switch to sound Biblical teaching and let people who refuse to yield to the precepts of Scripture leave. (*Isaiah 55:8-9; Jeremiah 17:9-11; Mark 8:34-38; Colossians 3:12-14; Philippians 4:6-7; 19*)

Next month I will touch on the last diseases still not mentioned: Legal-ism, Arrested Spiritual Growth, A Personality Addiction, The Saint Disorder, Hyper-Cooperative-ism, Grievance-ism, Apathy-itis, and Ethnic-ism. It is unbelievable the damage one of these diseases talked about today can do to one or any of our churches. As Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the power and authority to have these removed from the church if we do it the right way, "In the name of Jesus!" and in faith believing that God hears and answers our prayers. I know that in the three churches for which I am responsible for, we will begin a year full of prayer and fasting to get rid of what might be in our churches. God bless you all!

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Juan: Dice que es Bautista, pero no se viste como uno. Ha dormido en el campo por meses, come una dieta extraña y provoca a los líderes denominacionales. **Pedro:** Es obrero y pescador. Tiene mal humor, aún hay rumores que usa lenguaje de la calle por vergüenza de identificarse con el Señor. Es muy agresivo; se peleó con Pablo en Antioquía. **Pablo:** Poderoso líder y predicador atrayente. Pero, algunos dicen que no tiene mucho tacto. Por un tiempo no perdonó a un ministro joven que fracasó. Tajante. Enfrentó públicamente a Pedro. Es capaz de predicar toda la noche. **Jesús:** Anda con pecadores y publicanos. Le gustan los banquetes y las bodas. Escapa del trabajo y ora mucho. Una vez su Iglesia creció a 5,000 personas, pero El los ofendió y con excepción de doce personas todos le abandonaron. Aún a los doce les preguntó si ellos también querían irse. No se ajusta a los deseos de la congregación. No se queda en un lugar por mucho tiempo. Y, por supuesto, es soltero. **Judas:** Tiene buenas referencias. Conservador. Conoce a los líderes religiosos y como acercarlos. Sabe como manejar el dinero. Lo hemos invitado a predicar este domingo. Hay posibilidades..... ¡DISCULPEN, LA ÚLTIMA NOTICIA ES QUE JUDAS SE AHORCÓ! (¡Más triste!)

Debemos reconocer que en algunas ocasiones nuestros comités son demasiado rígidos y debemos comprenderlos y orar por ellos, a la vez que debemos confiar en el Señor como nuestro buen pastor y agradecerle por el pastor que nos ha dado como regalo a nuestra iglesia local.

Es por cierto interesante ver cómo buscamos la perfección en los demás como requisito incuestionable de sabiduría y cristiandad, desconociendo que por el solo hecho de ser carne, ya somos imperfectos, por cuanto esta carne nos sujeta a pasiones y deseos con los que debemos luchar y perseverar constantemente. Es precisamente esta idea que ronda en muchos cristianos la que debilita la unión de la Iglesia de Cristo, porque nos hace ver al hermano en cada acto que realiza, cuestionando la inspiración que lo mueve. En algunos casos, al conocer las experiencias de unos miembros de estas Iglesias, me ha hecho pensar si no es el evangelio el único ejército que no rescata a sus heridos. Esto lo digo por la dureza con que son tratados quienes aún no encuentran la fortaleza suficiente para no obedecer al mal y, ¿no es acaso nuestras carencias como hijos las debilidades de nuestros padres?

Como se ha demostrado en esta ingeniosa descripción ¿Quién está libre de fallas? ¿Quién puede decir que siempre hace el bien y nunca peca? Es por ello que la perfección es una meta a alcanzar, pero no en esta tierra y con esta vida, porque lo corruptible no puede heredar lo incorruptible, sino en la esperanza del encuentro con quien dió la vida por nosotros. Gracias por mostrarnos lo soberbios que somos en algunas ocasiones calificando a los demás y más aún, dándoles cargas que ninguno de nosotros puede llevar.

¿Quién es el perfecto? Jesús le dijo a un rico: **"Si quieres ser perfecto, vende todo y dáselo a los pobres y tomando tu cruz, sígueme."**