



*Dr. M. G. McLuhan,  
President*

## Dissidence — Ignorant-Arrogant Destroyer of Fellowship and Unity

by Dr. M.G. McLuhan, President

As I have prayed and meditated over the future of International Ministerial Fellowship, I have become absolutely convinced that if it ever disintegrates and ceases to exist it will be due to errors from within its own structure rather than from some satanic forces outside its domain of fellowship. For some time I looked for a word that I could use to express powerfully a warning to our members, and finally I settled on the word “dissidence.”

Dissidence means that insidious habit of picking imagined holes in others’ doctrinal positions behind their backs where they have no chance to explain their positions or defend them. I must say at the outset that whenever a man of God becomes more impressed with what he thinks he knows than with what he realizes he does not know, he has reached a point of mortal spiritual and intellectual peril. The evil of dissidence is spawned in the spiritually sterile cesspool of intellectual arrogance, and has been a curse to Christian fellowship and unity from the very beginning. The Apostle Paul, in I Cor. 8:2, declared, “And if anyone thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.” When I went to college I was almost embarrassed at how ignorant my parents were. After I graduated I was utterly amazed at how much they had learned while I was off at college.

Unfortunately, I have met men and women in ministry who deliberately left the distinct impression that they felt that they were God’s last word of revelation to the human family. If I wanted the very last word on

any subject, they were there to express it before anyone else had a chance to utter a word. Incidentally, many of them are now teaching grammar school, pumping gasoline, or involved in other lofty pursuits — a few are even gathering garbage! Also, I have noticed that a number of them have written books on church building and church growth, but their churches are not models of growth!

International Ministerial Fellowship is not held together by unanimity of doctrine but by unanimity of Spirit! If we ever forget that salient fact, we will be doomed to spiritual extinction! Christianity is essentially a social religion built around the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. To try to turn it into a solitary doctrinaire movement will destroy it almost immediately or reduce it to a mere Christ-less set of legalistic “do’s and don’ts!”

The curse of dissidence has continued through the history of the church. One of the paragraphs written in a letter from Archbishop Cranmer to John Calvin in 1552, reads, “Nothing tends more injuriously to the separation of the churches than heresies and disputes respecting doctrines of religion, so nothing tends more effectually to unite the churches of God, and more powerfully to defend the fold of Christ, than the pure teaching of the Gospel, and harmony of doctrine.”

We in IMF must remember that it is the basic doctrines of the Christian Faith that hold us together. We are all aware of the minor differences that exist in our interpretation of Scripture and the practice of Christian Church polity (not *policy*). The cardinal doctrines of

redemption, justification, propitiation and regeneration are the great links that hold the IMF chain of God’s people together. It is nothing less than a basic survival technique that we avoid all dissidence and divisive remarks about our insignificant differences in worship forms, minor doctrinal variations, scriptural interpretations and practices. We must always remember that there is a unity that is greater than union, and a communion greater than cooperation and mere perfunctory togetherness! As President of this organization, I trust that each of us will continually refuse — and detest — any teaching or influence that distinguishes us from other Christians, except for those who refuse to accept wholeheartedly those common principles of plain old-fashioned Christianity as revealed in the New Testament! These differences, and these alone, should distinguish IMF membership from any other form of Christianity that even ever-so-slightly deviates from the pure original.

Even in some denominational associations there is more competition than there is cooperation. Distinctions and varied emphases of truth are not for the sole purpose of identity or the declaration of truth alone, but are progressions toward change. Change is an element of growth and not for the purpose of some new ground for judgmentalism. As we all grow in our knowledge of God, His word and His character we need to keep dissidence out of the process. There was a great change in Paul’s life and philosophy during his days in the desert of Arabia. Those who accepted the changed Paul of Tarsus were blessed by his desert revelation of the plan of God that was new and different from Judaism. If we as a group of God’s ministers realize that changes are inevitable, then we must be prepared to accept them in the spirit of wisdom and avoid dissidence at all cost. Future significant changes which the Holy Spirit may lead us to make should be done in conference and then maintained in faith without the chit-chat of dissidence

Notices will be published in four consecutive issues upon each written request to our office. Please limit notices to name, address, phone and a maximum of 50 words describing your ministry. We recommend that all our ministers make their tapes, reference letters and other pertinent ministry information available to all inquirers.

Please address correspondence to the address indicated in the individual member's ad or by writing to them in care of:

**NETWORKING**  
**International Ministerial Fellowship**  
**P.O. Box 32366**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55432-0366**

All mail will be forwarded directly to appropriate members for their timely response to you. Current IMF members may call our office for addresses and phone numbers in order to make direct contact.

## Individuals Available for Ministry

### Rev. Bill & Barbara McClellan Tampa, FL

"Our God Reigns!" Ministry. Bill is an ordained minister of the Gospel who has retired from a very successful insurance business to serve God in the fullest way possible as a teacher and evangelist. "Revivalist" would be a good description of his ministry. His wife, Barbara, accompanies him with anointed singing and teaching. They are leading Holy Spirit-filled meetings where God manifests Himself through signs, wonders and miracles. The "joy" and "encouragement" of the Lord are particularly noticed. Please write to 9303 Alanbrooke St., Tampa, FL, 33637, or call (813)985-0729 for more information. (1)

### Rev. Larry Hilliard Lake Forest, CA

I have over 25 years of experience as a pastor-teacher, lecturer and with theological tape outreach. Currently I am authoring a book on the sovereignty of God. "The root of every need is ignorance of the nature of God. We are created to continually learn of God's nature and be conformed thereby." For scheduling information or a sample tape, contact by phone (800) 653-9924 or by e-mail, MARH1088@aol.com. (1)

### Rev. Tim Robbins Clinton, IL

I am seeking an associate position in children's ministries, missions, or both. Although my portfolio of paid, "professional" experience is not very extensive, I was a consistent and productive layman for 19 years before entering full-time ministry. I will invest my whole being into the little ones whom the Lord entrusts to me, without sacrificing my own family on the altar of a ministry. I have excellent teaching, writing and people skills; but most of all, I am wholly devoted to prayer and righteous living. Please contact me by snail mail or phone: 609 E. Main Street, Clinton, IL 61727; (217) 935-4846. (2)

### Rev. Michael Cremer Stillwater, MN

"It takes one to know one" is the theme of my ministry. I've been in prison four times and I have lived a sinful life. God has expressed His amazing grace in me that He might offer hope to many who think life is hopeless. I'm available to teach/train individuals for prison ministry. I am affiliated and involved with Prison Fellowship and Network For Life. For more information, please write to: P.O. Box 894, Stillwater, MN 55082 or call (612) 430-1440. (4)

### Rev. Gerry Mestek Elmhurst, IL

Gerry is an ordained minister (1995) with IMF and has been a member in good standing since 1993. Prior to joining IMF, he held ministry credentials with the Assembly of God, Illinois District. He has ministered as an evangelist to the motorcyclist community since 1984, under New Covenant Ministries, a tent ministry, which he founded. He is now seeking a position as pastor, assistant pastor or youth pastor in a local congregation. For more information, please write or call: 601 W. Comstock Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126, or call (630) 941-3709. (4)

### Rev. Christoph Lameter Los Angeles, CA

I am one year from completing my Ph.D. in Theology from Fuller Seminary in Los Angeles. I am willing to let the Spirit lead me as I am currently able to move into new areas of ministry. I was a speaker at the recent IMF Conference, am a native German, have diverse denominational, cultural and business experience with comprehensive knowledge. For more information, please call (626) 454-2472 or e-mail to clameter@i-m-f.org. (4)

### Rev. Jack Nantais Chancellor, SD

Jack is an ordained minister with IMF (1996) and teaches a message of God's grace. He is looking for a pulpit where the congregation has the vision of reaching their community with the healing power of the Holy Spirit to the hurt and wounded believer, as well as the unsaved. For more information, please write to: 46122-268th Street, Chancellor, SD 57015 or call (605) 526-4320. (4)

### Rev. Edwin Phillips, M.Div. Kapaa, HI

I am intimately acquainted with ministry to those in pain and suffering, as I have spent thousands of hours in Christian counseling, as well as church growth and development. I also have eight years of pastoral experience, as well as five years' experience as a hospital and hospice chaplain. I have been married for fifteen years and have three children. For more information, please write to 4917 Ali Ali Road, Kapaa, HI 96746, or call (808) 822-3117 or e-mail to arkangl@aloha.net. (4)

### Rev. Bob Silling Harrisonburg, VA

I have been with IMF since 1986 and am available for church services, revivals, evangelistic outreaches outside the church, crusades, prison services and any other place where I can preach the Word. I am willing to travel anywhere in the U.S., Canada and overseas. I have been on several foreign mission trips, conducted open air preachings and have sixteen years' experience in leading outreaches. For more information, please write to: 290-B Rocco Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22801, or call (540) 433-4849 or e-mail to bob1053@juno.com. (4)

## Positions Available

### Rev. Carlis & Faye Stuber Apple Valley, MN

Seeking anointed musicians for pioneering church. This is strictly a pioneering ministry and would require outside employment. Position(s) could lead to full-time employment. Current work is in the Apple Valley/Rosemount, MN area. Please make inquiries to: NOW Ministries International, 13624 Elkwood Drive, Apple Valley, MN 55124 or call (612)423-2103. (1)

### Rev. David Njoroge Lowell, MA

Have you been called to do mass evangelism? I am taking a team to Kenya, Africa, from August

8-15, 1998. The goal is to reach people who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. For more information, contact Rev. David Njoroge, P.O. Box 251, Lowell, MN 01853, or call (978)458-4979. (1)

### Rev. Larson Mutembu Australia

Are you planning to visit Africa? If you are, then plan to visit Zambia and minister in our God First Team affiliate churches and also in other charismatic churches in different towns. For more information, please write to: P.O. Box 169, Warburton, Victoria 3799, Australia, or fax to (613)5966-5499. (4)

### Rev. Michael Pilla Minneapolis, MN

We are an inner-city ministry in the second year of a church plant in South Minneapolis. We are looking/praying for a person to come in and take over the music ministry. This person must be called to the city, be spirit-filled and able to lead contemporary praise and worship on Sunday mornings. This is a paid, part-time position. If interested, please write to 121 West Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404. (4)

## PASTORAL LETTER ISSUE 3128

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For address changes and name removals, see instructions on the mailing panel. The contents of this publication and other Fellowship bulletins, publications or announcements are subject to change without notice. If you are interested in submitting an article to be published in the Pastoral Letter, please mail or fax a copy of your article (no more than 500 words) to IMF. Every article submitted is subject to a full review by the IMF Editorial Committee.

# Department of Foreign Missions

A Look at IMF Member Missionaries—



# Welcome to the Family...

900 Members Plus!

*The IMF Board of Directors, officers, staff members and other IMF members welcome the following new members of the IMF family. All together, these new members bring with them numerous years of ministerial experience, along with a wide variety of educational backgrounds and ministry fields.*

**Margaret Page, San Diego, CA**, upgrades from a licensed member to an ordained member.

**Herb Sever, Orange City, FL**, upgrades from licensed member to an ordained member.

**Bill Stiebs, New London, WI**, upgrades from licensed member to an ordained member.

**Charles Brown III, Ft Meyers, FL**, upgrades from a licensed member to an ordained member.

**Colin Stitt**, originally from Australia and now residing in **Huntington Beach, CA**, joins IMF as an ordained member.

**Bradley Moffett, Marietta, GA**, enters IMF as an ordained member.

**Lucien Behar, Norcross, GA**, joins IMF as an ordained member. Lucien is on staff at Perimeter Church in Duluth, GA.

**Vivian Clayton, Petaluma, CA**, enters IMF as a licensed member. Vivian is currently attending Adobe Christian in California and is involved in many areas of ministry.

**Jeffrey Harshbarger, Umatilla, FL**, joins IMF as an ordained member. Jeffrey has a heart for youth ministry and will seek God's direction in this area.

**Donald Horner, St Paul, MN**, enters IMF as an ordained member. Donald concentrates on the areas of music and worship, mental health, dependency issues and military chaplaincy.

**Tab Martin, Chesterfield, MI**, joins IMF as a licensed member and is involved with praise and worship as Coordinator at Vessels Church in MI.

**Pat Metcher, Reynoldsburg, OH**, enters IMF as an ordained member. Pat travels with her husband over two hundred days each year, ministering to churches and groups.

**Laura Solberg, New Brighton, MN**, joins IMF as an ordained member. Laura has been preaching and teaching at the Salvation Army, care centers, nursing homes and women's organizations.

**Doris Morris, Turlock, CA**, enters IMF as an ordained member. Doris has a call to minister to native people, both urban and on reservations. She will be at the Overcomers Ministry to Native people in Ontario.

**Scott Tohannie, Mpls., MN**, joins IMF as an ordained member. Scott works as a Bi-Vocational Minister.

**Dennis Westover, Boys Ranch, TX**, enters IMF as an ordained member. Dennis is the Education Chaplain at the Boys Ranch in TX.

**Juan Rubi, Tacoma, WA**, joins IMF as an ordained member. Juan is currently serving as Director of Mid-singles Ministries at Life Center Church on a part-time basis.

**Albert Moloczij, Mpls., MN**, enters IMF as a commissioned to preach member. Albert has

been called to be a youth pastor and is going to finish his schooling. He is in leadership at New Commandment Church, Mpls., in the youth department.

**Thomas Hoffman, Virginia Beach, CA**, joins IMF as a licensed member. Thomas has a call on his life to do youth ministry and hopes to return to Germany.

**Steve Kuhlke, Keizer, OR**, enters IMF as a licensed member. Steve has been called to preach the Word. He and his family are attending Highland Chapel where he preaches once a month.

**Jong Han Jee, Annandale, VA**, joins IMF as an ordained member. Jong pastors a church called Shema Church in Annandale.

**Mark Goodman, Ft Meyers, FL**, enters IMF as a licensed member. Mark will be completing his BA in Christian Education next year.

**Phillip Hughes, Machesney Park, IL**, joins as a licensed member. Phillip attends an Assembly Of God Church in IL and preaches regularly during the food program his church sponsors.

**Correction: Robert Garton** was listed in the April issue as serving in Cuba. Robert and his wife are planting a church in **Toledo City, Cebu**, which is one of the 7,100+ islands of the Philippines. We apologize for the error.

## About These Wordly Things

by IMF Member, Rev. Bill Earman

What advice do you give a person about his or her legal (wordly) needs?

Are you, as a Chaplain, really qualified to give this advice?

The answer to the second question is YES.

In the state of Florida, and probably in other states also, there are several basic needs for any person who is looking to put their wordly affairs in order in preparation for death. It is a fact that a person cannot be at peace until he or she has put things in order. Look at this simple list of things to consider:

**A Living Will** — This document is very straightforward. It tells your doctor, the nursing home, the hospital, your family, your friends, your attorney, and your minister all about your wishes concerning *artificially prolonging your life*. Most attorneys have living wills in their computer in a basic form that is acceptable in your state. One tricky bit of information — a part of the Living Will concerns the "withholding of hydration (water) and food if force feeding is only to artificially prolong life." Some people feel that this is tantamount to committing suicide.

**Appointment of Health Care Surrogate** — The health care surrogate is a person appointed to make decisions concerning health matters in the event the patient cannot. This person is the enforcer of the Living Will. It should probably not be a close member of the family, but rather a trusted and responsible confidant, preferable younger than the patient. The patient's wishes concerning "quality of life" should be discussed upon appointment. This document is attached to the Living Will.

**Power of Attorney** — This gives the legal right for the designated person to sign legal documents for the patient. Usually it is NOT the patient's attorney, but may be the same as the health care surrogate. If the patient is in a nursing home, or ALF, or hospital, they should have a POA. Only an attorney can write up this document.

**Last Will and Testament** — Do not allow a patient to pass away without a Will; it is called intestate and it means that the estate of the person will certainly go into Court. No matter how simple the will may be, your advice as a Chaplain is that the patient should have one. Consult with an attorney. Forms for this are also available in office supply houses, if the matter is very simple, but follow the exact rules for signing.

All of these basic documents are in the computer of the local attorney and they can be produced very quickly. In my practice, a deal has been struck with a local attorney and all of these

matters are handled by him for a flat fee of \$50; this is way below the going price and he also does it "pro bono" sometimes. I only use him for cases of economic hardship. I do all the legwork for the attorney and prepare a letter to the attorney outlining the names and addresses and specifics of the will. The patient then signs the letter to the attorney and the documents are prepared by the attorney from the facts in the letter. This saves the attorney time and the patient money (about \$100 per hour for attorney consultations). Just ask the attorney what he needs as information. You can almost reduce it to a form.

In my estimation, the providing of good advice for wordly matters is very much a part of being a complete Chaplain. Remember that we are servants in a servant ministry, just like Jesus Christ.

*Rev. Bill Earman serves as a chaplain in nursing homes, hospitals and in-home for the elderly. As a chaplain, his pastoral duties include legal management, health management and non-denominational ministry (Christ-centered). Bill is a tireless worker for those less fortunate people whom society sometimes forgets. He seems to live by a quote from Albert Einstein, "From the point of view of daily life and without going deeper, we exist for our fellow men, particularly for those on whose smiles and well-being all our happiness depends." If you have questions, please write to or call 4550 8th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32968 (561-562-3684).*



# Church Planting: Using the Cell Church Model: Part 2

by Pastor Bruce L. Kotila

In the May /June 1998 issue of the IMF newsletter, I wrote about some of our experience of planting River Fellowship, a cell-based mission congregation located in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, MN. I also touched upon several of the reasons why we should involve ourselves in the starting of new congregations. In this second article, I would like to look briefly at some of the major elements that provide the foundation to a successful church start. Again, as you consider whether God is calling you to be involved in this model of ministry, here are several points to consider.

### **Begin by evaluating your call to church planting ministry.**

Ministry in general can be demanding work, with an assortment of daily challenges and concerns. Yet, there is probably no more demanding work than the establishment of a new congregation. Everyone who enters into this work must be absolutely convinced that God has called them and will enable them to overcome any obstacles along the way. This is essential when the hard times come — and they will come — in order that the church planter might continue with the confidence that he is fulfilling the will of God. We can take Jesus at His word when He told Peter, “I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it,” but each member must be assured of the role that God would have them play in its fulfillment.

### **Develop clear mission, vision and values statements.**

Scripture has already determined for every Christian congregation their mission, which is to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:18-20). The exact wording of each congregation’s mission statement will vary but the primary purpose of the church is making disciples of Jesus Christ. However, a vision statement will reflect the unique call that God has placed upon a pastor and congregation, making practical the broader goal of making disciples. In every case, the vision statement will reflect the unique personalities, abilities, spiritual gifts and circumstances of the people involved. Finally, there must be an identification of the values or core beliefs that will guide the congregation and its leadership. The role and emphasis placed on intercessory prayer, style of worship, world missions, family ministry, lay ministry, expository preaching etc. all need to be clarified and clearly stated. The clarification of these values provides much-

needed direction for the church and allows prospective members the opportunity to determine if your particular church is consistent with their personal values and beliefs.

### **Formulate a strategic plan including goals, methods and available resources.**

This step in the process forces the church planter to think through realistic objectives, establish a timeline, detail the basic steps required for achievement of the objectives, and also forces a pragmatic assessment of all the resources that will be required once the congregation is launched. How much will it cost? Who will plan and lead worship? Who is responsible for the children’s program, youth activities and the coordination of fellowship events? How many hours does each of these represent? Developing a strategic plan does not eliminate the role of faith and our need for prayer but rather impresses upon us the truth that unless “the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it” (Psalm 127:1). The task is so large, and our own personal resources are so limited, that unless God is involved there is no chance of success.

### **Assemble a ministry team and core group of intercessors/supporters.**

Practically, one of the first things that needs to be done is enlisting a core group of intercessors who will pray for the church planter and the revelation of God’s will in regard to this new effort. The planting of a new congregation is first and foremost a spiritual matter and the battle will be won or lost in the spiritual realm. Enlist a core group of people to pray as early as possible in the planning process.

Second, you will need to build a ministry team that is united in its support for the vision and values of the church planter. A leadership team that is divided in its vision and/or values will continually fight itself and it will be very difficult to accomplish the goals of the congregation. This is not to say that you shouldn’t seek a diversity of gifts and personalities among team members, but the leadership team must be united on core issues.

### **Establish a prototype cell for the congregation.**


Start with your leadership core and model from the beginning every aspect of ministry that you want to see reproduced in later cells. This would include leadership training for future leaders, evangelistic activities, worship, one-on-one mentoring relationships and the

experience of community outside of cell meeting times. While it is not impossible to correct early mistakes, it is much more effective to begin with a fully functional cell and then seek to maintain the integrity of the various aspects of cell life. As individuals, we cannot give away what we do not have and cells will only reproduce those values and activities that are a part of their current experience.

### **Develop a long-term mindset.**

The planting of a new congregation is a challenging and demanding task, requiring our best efforts over a long period of time. When entering into a new church start, we should plan on the process taking at least five years before having a self-sufficient core congregation of 120 adult members. Even in the best of circumstances, we will experience setbacks and not everything will go according to plan. Yet, God is faithful and if we stay the course we can expect that God will fulfill His promise to build His church (Matthew 16:18).

Church planting remains an integral part of any plan focusing on the fulfillment of the Great Commission, with every healthy and growing church considering ways that they can be a part of sponsoring new congregations. Yet, we will need to be intentional in our efforts, seeking the Lord’s guidance and blessing upon our work, if we are to experience success in fulfilling this aspect of the Great Commission. Could it be that the Lord Jesus is calling you or your congregation to become involved in planting a new congregation? If the answer is yes, you will never be involved in a more challenging or rewarding endeavor.

For more information on how you or your congregation can be involved in the starting of a new congregation, contact Pastor Bruce L. Kotila, Director, Lutherans for Evangelism, 1415 N Lilac Drive # 140, Golden Valley, MN 55422, (612) 545-5520, or Pastor Frank Masserano, General Secretary of IMF. 

*Rev. Bruce Kotila is the Associate Director of Lutherans for Evangelism in Minneapolis, MN, and is a friend of IMF. Lutherans for Evangelism is an inter-Lutheran ministry which seeks to uphold God’s call to Biblical evangelism by calling people to a personal faith in Jesus Christ and equipping local congregations for the task of evangelism. He is a graduate of Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, MN, and is one of the founders of a new cell-based congregation located in the Twin Cities. He and his family reside in Plymouth, MN.*



Dr. Ron Keller  
Coordinator of Prayer  
Ministries

# Intercessory Prayer Group

by Dr. Ron Keller

For the next few months, I will be doing a series on prayer and the Twelve Steps. These steps have many of the same principles of the original Twelve Steps that are traditionally used by Alcoholics Anonymous. They are revised so that the focus is clearly on Jesus Christ (rather than an unnamed higher power). For this month, to provide an overview of the series, I will list the steps and related biblical passages.

**Step 1:** I admit that I am powerless over certain parts of my life and I need God's help.

*Romans 5:6 — We were powerless, when at just the right time, Christ died for us.*

**Step 2:** I am coming to believe that Jesus Christ came in a human body, that he is here with me now in Spirit, and that he has the power to change my weaknesses into strengths.

*Colossians 1:15-17 — Jesus Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. All things were created by Him and for Him, and He holds all things in unity.*

**Step 3:** I turn my will and my life over to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior.

*Galations 2:20 — I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

**Step 4:** I begin honestly listing what I know and discover about myself: my strengths, weaknesses, and behavior.

*Psalms 139:14, 23 — I am wonderful and my soul knows this very well. Lord, examine me and know my heart. Probe me and know my thoughts. Make sure I do not follow harmful ways.*

**Step 5:** I am ready to honestly share with God and another person the exact nature of my strengths, weaknesses, and behavior.

*James 5:16 — Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another. In this way you will be healed.*

**Step 6:** I am entirely ready to have Jesus Christ heal all those areas of my life that need His touch.

*Mark 6:56b — All those who touched Jesus were healed.*

**Step 7:** I humbly ask Jesus Christ to change my weaknesses into strengths so that I will

become more like Him.

*I John 1:9 — If we acknowledge our sin, He is faithful and just, He will forgive us and purify us from everything that is wrong.*

**Step 8:** I make a list of the people I have hurt and become willing to go to them to mend the relationship.

*John 13:34-35 — By the love that you have for one another, the world will know that you are My disciples.*

**Step 9:** I make amends with the people I have hurt, except when to do so might bring harm to them or others.

*Matthew 5:23-24 — If you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled to your brother or sister first and then come back and present your offering.*

**Step 10:** Each day I do a review of myself and my activities. When I am wrong, I quickly admit it. When I am right, I thank God for the guidance.

*Galations 6:4 — Let each examine his own conduct.*

**Step 11:** To keep growing in my relationship with Jesus Christ, I spend time each day praying and reading the Bible. I will gather with others who do the same. I ask Jesus for guidance and the power to do what He wants me to do.

*John 15:7 — Remain in Me. If you remain in Me and My words abide in you, you may ask what you will and you will get it.*

**Step 12:** I am grateful that God is changing me through these Twelve Steps. In response, I will reach out to share Christ's love by practicing these principles in all that I do.

*Matthew 25:40 — Whatever you did to the least of My brothers or sisters, you did it to Me.*

As we walk through this series together, I pray that God will draw us closer to Himself. I pray that our prayer lives will be enriched and that we will grow as His disciples. ❖

*These steps are taken from the book "Twelve Steps To A New Day," written by Ron Keller and published in 1989 by Ron Keller & Associates.*

*Ron Keller, Ph.D., is the Coordinator of Prayer Ministries and is an ordained member of IMF. He is the author of ten published books and is a counselor, workshop leader and speaker.*

# Women as Ministers

by IMF Member,  
Susan J. Shaw, M.Div., Ph.D.



Dr. Susan Shaw

In thinking about God's incredible sovereignty, power and love in our lives, we think again about Sarah and the ways in which God dealt with her and her faith.

As we recall, Sarah "laughed" when she overheard the conversation between Abraham and "the Lord" about the prediction

that Sarah would bear a son after so many years of barrenness and bitterness (Genesis 18:12). Even though Abraham had maintained a close and personal walk with God, Sarah had become convinced that the promises made to him would not actually come to pass, and her faith had weakened as a result (Genesis 17:21).

Yet, after the departure of the prophetic messenger, Sarah and Abraham renewed their love for one another and, as had been promised, Sarah conceived the child Isaac (which means "he laughs"). Sarah delivered the future seed of Israel in her seniority, declaring, "who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?" (Genesis 21:1-7).

How greatly Sarah's faith must have been restored. Long past the time when nature permitted conception and lactation, this woman experienced the miracle of birth and regeneration because of God's faithfulness to her and her husband. If God wills anything for our lives, it will surely come to pass.

How like Sarah so many of us are. We doubt that God will ever provide what we need or fulfill promises made. We do not trust that God has the power to overcome even the most hopeless-seeming of circumstances, trusting only in what we know from the world around us.

Sarah's faith weakened and revived. Our faith also may weaken, but the glorious news is that it can also be revived if we will trust God to love us the way God wants to love us and to act as the Sovereign He is in every aspect of our lives!

*Dr. Susan J. Shaw has over thirty years' experience as a professional educator, academician, administrator and businesswoman. A Messianic Jew, baptized as a Presbyterian, Susan came to a personal knowledge of the Savior twenty years ago and has dedicated herself to theological study ever since.*

*As a professionally trained music educator, she holds an M.Div. from Alliance Theological Seminary (CMA) and an M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Theological and Religious Studies from Drew University (United Methodist).*

*A professional both in and out of the classroom, in both the public and private sectors, Susan has had wide experience as a student, a teacher, a parent of students and an academic administrator.*

*It has been her prayer and goal, for most of her years as a Completed Jew, that she have the opportunity to develop professional academic programs in theology and religious studies for women (and interested men).* ❖



Dr. Wyatt McDowell

# What Is A Housing Allowance?

by Dr. Wyatt McDowell

The housing allowance is without question the most significant tax benefit available to ministers. This particular benefit permits ministers to reduce their taxable income by the amount of the housing allowance designated by the church — to the extent the allowance is in fact used to pay for housing-related expenses. In addition, a housing allowance exclusion for ministers who rent or own their own homes may not exceed the fair rental value of their homes, including furniture and utilities.

Ministers who live in church-provided parsonages are also permitted to exclude from their income the fair rental value of the parsonage provided to them as compensation for ministerial services. The fair rental value of the parsonage is not deducted from income paid to the minister, nor is it reported as income by the church on the Form W-2 provided to the minister each year.

### Who is eligible for the housing allowance?

Those who meet the IRS criteria defining a "minister" are eligible for the housing allowance. The allowance applies only to ministerial compensation and not to income received from secular employment, such as

work performed for a commercial enterprise.

### How is the housing allowance implemented?

Written authorization from the church's board of trustees establishes the housing allowance. It may be adopted in the form of a resolution or by reference to a line item in the budget. However, the resolution method of adoption is preferred. In addition to the written board designation requirement, the housing allowance must be adopted before the date it is to go into effect. For example, it is customary for a calendar year 1998 housing allowance designation to be adopted in November or December 1997. If the housing allowance is adopted at a later date, such as March 1, 1998, the designation will only cover expenses incurred from March 1 through December 31.

### How is the amount of the housing allowance determined?

The church's board of trustees, which is typically chaired by the pastor, determines the amount of the housing allowance based on its review of the qualifying expenses submitted by the minister for the previous year(s). To provide the board with the data it needs to make an appropriate housing allowance designation, the minister typically uses a worksheet to project housing expenses for the forthcoming year.

### What expenses may be included in the housing allowance?

Ministers who own or want to purchase their own homes may take into account the following items when projecting housing expenses:

- Down payment for home purchase
- Housing loan principle and interest
- Real estate commission and escrow fees
- Real estate taxes
- Personal property taxes on contents
- Homeowner's insurance
- Umbrella liability insurance
- Utilities (electricity, gas, water, and trash collection)
- Furnishings (purchase, repair, and replacement)
- Local telephone expenses (base fee)
- Structural repairs and maintenance
- Landscaping, gardening, and pest control
- Decorating and redecoration
- Homeowners association fees and dues
- Cleaning

### How is the amount of the housing allowance exclusion determined?

If the minister owns the home, the housing allowance permitted as an exclusion from gross income is the lesser of either: The church-designated housing allowance; actual housing expenses; or the annual fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and utilities.

*Dr. McDowell will continue this topic in the next issue of the Pastoral Letter.*

*Wyatt McDowell is a graduate of Indiana University (Doctorate of Jurisprudence), Capital University, and the Harvard Business School. He is also an associate of Richard Hammer, the founder and publisher of Church Law and Tax Report. He will define major legal issues facing our churches today and address the spiritual issue of church discipline.*

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out of conference!

Privately, we must remember that every true man of God is lonely in the crowd as he moves in the ever-growing realm of eternal values and expresses eternal spiritual truths to his people. During those glowing moments, he must not fall to the satanic temptation of imagined spiritual superiority. My fellow pastor, you are not alone! The Spirit of God and God's angels are with you in multitude, so don't let your solitary spiritual ecstasy open the door for satan's temptation to imagine you have reached some peak of unusual spiritual excellence and fall into the trap of dissident criticism of those whom satan is telling you are not as spiritual as you are! Remember, "All have sinned and fallen short of the spiritual *continued on page 7...*

### Dissidence, by Dr. M.G. McLuhan

*Continued from page 1*

standards that He has put in our hearts!" In IMF our motto must be: "In essentials, unity; In non-essentials, liberty; In diversity, charity; at all times, Christ first."

I am reluctant to cite one more temptation to indulge in destructive dissidence. I recall the words of warning uttered by one of the great Presidents of Harvard University in days gone by. He remarked

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Minneapolis, MN  
55432

Please allow six weeks for records to be corrected.



*Richard Amundson  
Founder & President,  
TENTMAKERS*

## Developing Leaders in Your Church

by Richard Amundson

### *Equipping Church Leadership*

The latest buzz is that the next 1,000 years is going to be called "the millennium of the laity." There is a definite shift

taking place in church culture — that is, a proactive movement to move more ministry into the hands of the laity. The benefits of this movement are exciting! Members who are actively serving develop deeper relationships with other church members, feel a greater sense of belonging and significance, are challenged and strengthened in their faith, have opportunities to use their spiritual gifts, and become better equipped to live out their faith in their homes and workplaces.

Can you imagine what your church would be like if the majority of the laity were actively involved, equipped, and ministering to each other? Can you imagine the impact on non-believers and communities?

With these changes come shifts in pastoral roles. Now, many pastors have a key responsibility to develop systems to involve and empower members and newcomers to become more involved in service and leadership. Of course, this newly emphasized goal requires specific skills for the pastor, such as:

- Building others through motivation, affirmation, and accountability
- Effective management of individuals and

ministry teams

- Incorporating more effective styles of learning in the church, including active learning (learning by doing), and interactive learning (learning from each other)

- High organizational and planning skills

- A passion to build people, not more programs

The Nehemiah Leadership Institute was specifically designed to build and equip pastors and other church leaders in these areas. TENTMAKERS Training is about learning the ministry of multiplication. The course is especially helpful for those who are burned out on knowledge-based seminars, and are craving universal, transferable, practical tools that help them do what they've been called to do — but more effectively.

Some recent graduates of the course write:

"Nehemiah Leadership Institute was the most impacting training I have ever taken in my nearly 20 years of ministry! What impacted me most was the universal principles that are transferable to anyone at anyplace at anytime. These principles have already had a great effect on my growth spiritually, on my relationships with my family, as well as on my ministry to others. I can't wait to pass this on and teach it to others — it will be the heart of who I am in all of my life!" — *Scott Anderson, Area Director, Youth For Christ*

"I feel I have learned more in these three weeks than in any class or experience I have ever taken. It is going to reflect how I live my life personally as well as pastorally. It has set in motion a plan for me to lead people to grow in Christ and to grow the Church. I will now be aware every day of how God is working in my life and ministry and by God's grace I will be a better person, husband, father, and friend." — *Pastor Jim Stimpson, St. Paul's Lutheran Church*

"...changed my entire focus from programs to people...helped me to clearly focus on what was really important and life-changing for my ministry. An invaluable experience." — *Jennifer Larsen, Children & Middle School Director, Redeemer Lutheran Church*

The Nehemiah Leadership Institute will be offered again in November of 1998. Inquiries into the course may be directed to Sue Sjoblom at TENTMAKERS: (800) 989-TENT or locally in the Twin Cities at (612) 935-3147.

*TENTMAKERS is uniquely positioned today to be instrumental in "equipping the saints for the work of the ministry." Who are the true tentmakers in our congregations? They are men and women from all walks of life who feel a calling to serve God more effectively with the gifts they've been given. Since 1979, TENTMAKERS has trained thousands of staff and lay people in leadership and ministry skills.*

*TENTMAKERS is an associated ministry with IMF. We fully endorse and recommend their youth ministry training program and their pastoral leadership and management training services.*