



VOICE OF THE APPALACHIAN CONFERENCE OF THE IPHC

MESSENGER

Vol. 84, No. 1 January 2023



"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

-Corrie ten Boom

Appalachian Conference
INTERNATIONAL PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH

FEBRUARY RETIRED MINISTERS' BIRTHDAYS

February 6

Rev. Roger Crigger
4024 Black Lick Road
Rural Retreat, VA 24368

February 10

Rev. Ronald Burke
205 Wades Lane
Christiansburg, VA 24073

February 11

Rev. Tony Brescia
52 Underwood Lane
Forest, VA 24551

February 18

Rev. Arthur Collins
117 Austin Lane
Fall Branch, TN 37656

February 18

Rev. Bunnie Watkins
5810 Airport Road
Bluefield, WV 24701



AVAILABLE TO FILL IN

Rev. David Carter, an ordained minister in the Appalachian Conference, is available to fill in for pastors on Saturdays and Sundays. His contact information is as follows:

Email davidcarterjr2005@gmail.com
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Appalachian Conference *Messenger*

Vol. 84— January 2023— No. 1

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Deadline for all script to reach the office:

First of each month for the next month's issue
Email to Sandy Wood at woodsh12@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.appconf.org



The Bishop's Page

Preston Mathena



We are here – 2023! Happy New Year!

Out with the Old – in with the New! I always find stepping through the threshold into a new year to be an exciting time. I stride in with anticipation and enthusiasm, knowing each day will hold its own adventure. It is a season that I know God promises to guide, direct, establish and bless!

Dan Reiland, in a recent article, brings some needed perspective:

- 2020 was a year of crisis
- 2021 was a year of adaptation
- 2022 was a year of transition

2023 is the year of moving forward into the new – it is here! Innovators and early adaptors already have embraced the new, and 2023 is an opportunity for all of us to press forward.

Most of you are familiar with Thom Rainer, founder and CEO of Church Answers, an online community and resource for church leaders. Hearing from tens of thousands of churches, church leaders and church members every year, his team has their “ear to the ground” to hear what is taking place among the estimated 350,000 congregations in America. Using this data, they connect the dots to understand developments in the present that will become trends in the near future.

As a result, here are ten of the most common developments they have discerned. They will likely become trends in 2023 that you will want to be aware of.

1. **Local congregations will emphasize evangelism more than at any point in the past three decades.** Church leaders understand they can't lead a church to growth with cultural Christians (a true oxymoron) and transfer growth. If churches desire truly to make disciples, they must begin with evangelism.
2. **The increase in the growth of diversity in congregations will be its greatest ever in 2023.** Millennials see a monocultural generation as out-of-touch. Gen Z cannot imagine anything monocultural, especially a church.
3. **The year 2023 will be a record year for church adoptions.** An adopted church is a congregation that comes into the family, care, and authority of another, usually healthier, church. Of course, more churches will seek adoption because they are about to die and close.
4. **More churches will have specific global partners.** Churches in America will seek to partner with churches in other nations, particularly where the gospel is spreading the most rapidly. This trend is more than an increase in mission giving; it is an intentional and strategic partnership with a specific church or churches.
5. **The time between pastors for churches will be longer than ever.** I can remember when a long-term interim period was twelve months. Today, many churches have these interim periods for two to three years or more.

6. **The number of interim pastors will be greater than ever.** This trend is obviously a corollary of trend number five. Some of these interim pastors are preachers only. Others are considered “intentional interims” with consultive roles as well as preaching.
7. **More churches will request consultations than at any point in American church history.** For example, we get ten times more requests now at Church Answers than we did just three years ago. Congregations are more willing or more desperate to seek outside help.
8. **Church autopsies will be the fastest growing area of research in American churches.** I wrote *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* in 2014 and the demand for the book began growing again in 2022. Thousands of churches have closed, and we are trying to discover the reasons for their death.
9. **More pastors and staff will become bi-vocational and co-vocational.** The latter term usually refers to those who chose to remain in the marketplace. Bi-vocational pastors are those who have work outside the church because their church could not compensate them with full-time pay.
10. **More pastors and staff will get their theological and ministry training in the church.** This trend has been growing the past decade and will continue to grow even more in 2023.

Yes, American churches have many challenges. But I see a lot of hope in the midst of these challenges.

My prayer is for your church to become a hope-filled congregation in 2023!



PASTORS,
Help your congregation keep informed on the events of the Conference. Anyone can receive a digital copy of the monthly *Messenger* by sending their email address to Vanessa Scruggs at vanessascruggs5847@gmail.com. They will immediately begin receiving the current *Messenger*, filled with news and inspiration.



Peru Team Trip

Missions' projects and teams are difference makers! The gospel is preached and facilities are created to further God's kingdom. Those who sow by giving and those who go are both blessed in so many ways.

The Peru Church and Training Center project (#61000P) that was begun last year will be ongoing into the new year. Over \$20,000 has been raised toward the goal of \$30,000. Thank you to all who have given!

Along with the finances, a conference mission's team will be sent to Puerto Maldonado, Peru, to help get this church building up from the foundation. A spiritual foundation is already being laid through the efforts of IPHC missionary David Hodges. In May of 2022, he led a group of Awakening young missionaries into the Amazon region for two weeks of outreach. Many people came to Christ as a result of the evangelistic crusades. This new church will serve some of those new believers. This facility will also be a training center in order that these evangelistic efforts can be continued. The team has also been asked to conduct children's ministry in the area.

The trip will be August 21-28, 2023. The estimated cost is \$2,199 per person. A registration form can be found on the conference website.



Children in Peru respond to the gospel in a 2022 crusade

Church Planting Intensive



Trey Jones is directing the church planting efforts for EVUSA

We are excited as a Conference ministry to be one of the sponsors to host the EVUSA Church Planters Intensive March 29-31 at Christian Life International, Salem, Va. This FREE event is for potential church planters, active church planters and mother church pastors and leaders. This event is for you if you are even exploring what God's call means for your life.

You will hear and learn from successful church planters on topics including, *How to Effectively Cast Vision, Raise Funds for Church Planting, How to Build a Launch Team, How to Launch Strong and Healthy, How to Lead Your Teams Effectively*, and other important topics.

You will have the opportunity to build relationships with other church planters and work together during

"roundtable" discussions. You will also build relationships with the HGM Multiplication coaches, as well as have them available to answer your questions.

You will also hear from one of our "own," Pastor Tony Atkinson, of New Life Christian Ministries in Roanoke, VA! Pastor Tony is a successful church planter and mother church pastor.

Registration information will be released soon. Check the conference website for updates.

“Set the Goal High for 2023”



**Pastor Tommy and
Candi Vass**

As we enter into 2023, most people have some kind of goal they would like to reach by the end of the year - lose weight, save money, spend more time with family, travel more, read more. The list goes on and on of things we set our sights on at the beginning of the year.

Most of these goals go unfulfilled by year's end. Why? Loss of passion, took more effort than we were willing to give, something else came up in life or got our attention.

As pastors and leaders, God has given us the responsibility to cast the vision and set goals for the flock we oversee. If the pole vaulter never moved the bar higher to challenge themselves, they would never make higher jumps. At Trinity Fellowship Church (TFC), our desire is to move the bar up and challenge ourselves, but we also want to challenge you that are reading as well.

Missions should be the heart of all IPHC's but, unfortunately, many of our churches give little to nothing for missions. I've heard a lot of excuses. "We are a small church." "We didn't have extra money." "They have more than us." Those aren't reasons; they are just excuses.

TFC isn't a big church. We are a small congregation with Biblical understanding that God is faithful to bless those willing to give to The Great Commission. As a pastor or lay leader, you should set goals for missions. Cast the vision to stir excitement among God's people.

In 2020, TFC had a vision to plant a church in Estonia. We raised the funds and now people are being saved and delivered in this new church plant. Praise God!!

In 2021, we cast the vision to drill five wells in India because so many people there have no access to clean water. We shared the goal and, in one Sunday, we raised the funds to drill 14 wells. Remember, we are a small church of around 40 members. This is what happens when people get excited about missions. Now everywhere a well was drilled, a new church has been planted with people being saved. Praise God!!

Just recently, the missionaries contacted me saying they needed 20 more wells. Can we count on your help? Would you cast a vision to drill one well? Two wells? (See Larry if you would like more information.)

At the Mission meal in 2022, Pastor Larry Meadors shared his vision for Global Outreach (GO) offering and challenged churches to set a goal. He passed out cards for us to share our goal. When the TFC missions team met, our Team Leader said, "Let's do \$20,000." Only one other church had ever given that much to GO in one year. TFC set a goal. Small church with a Big God. We raised \$20,050. See what people can do when they set goals and have passion!!

Don't be a church without a mission's team or a goal for missions. Set the goal high for 2023 and let's see what God will do!

Pastor Tommy Vass
Trinity Fellowship
212 Miracle Drive
St. Albans, WV

GLOBAL OUTREACH



Harbor of Hope has long been a supporter of the Global Outreach offering. We started giving to Global Outreach many years ago when my mom, Edith Cox, was Director of Missions. After she passed away, each subsequent director has continued the promotion of this important offering. She set the standard and placed a desire in peoples' hearts to go beyond a mid-sized congregation in Southwest Virginia.

Usually, we give to the GO offering each month. One way we do this is to place specially-designed mission's envelopes in the bulletin each Missions Sunday. The envelope has several options for giving to missions, including Global Outreach.

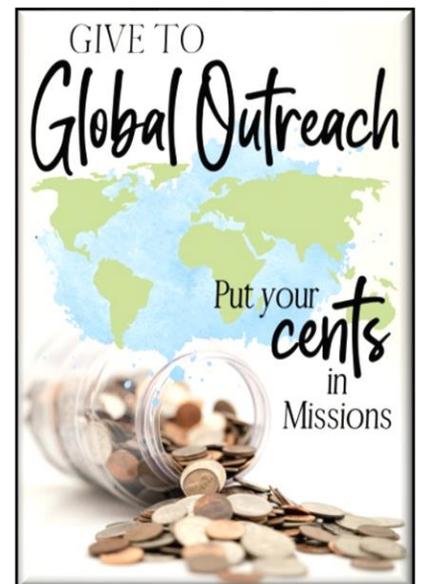
We've also done other promotions; some with other departments, such as Young at Heart. We handed out small envelopes with the caption, "Give a Penny, Save a Penny." We also use the GO coin tubes, which are quick and easy for everyone. For a couple of years, we used two three-gallon water bottles and filled them with coins, paper money, and checks. This was a great success and Pastor Craig Reed had the privilege of emptying out hundreds of coins and other gifts.

People at Harbor of Hope are givers – we present the need and let them know where their gifts go; how they are used to purchase property, construct church buildings and training centers, helping missionaries when they have emergency challenges, and other needs as they arise. In the last ten years, our church has given over \$150,000 to Global Outreach.

When people learn how far-reaching their contributions go, God takes the gift and multiplies it. He has honored our efforts and, in turn, people are blessed.

Whatever has been done – all the glory belongs to God. How could we not? Everything comes from Him. We are only stewards of what He has given us. It is our honor and privilege to be a part of what God is doing around the world.

Carolyn Kirk
Missions Director
Harbor of Hope
2720 Roanoke Street
Christiansburg, VA





Discipleship Ministries



Ron Fredericks

www.appconf.org

For years I have shared, “keep your eyes and heart on Jesus for He has His on you.” I believe that more today than ever. God has not forgotten His people nor His church. In saying that, however, it is imperative that in this day and this hour we be attentive to what God is saying and doing. God is calling us to follow Him. The call of discipleship is the call to take up our cross and follow Him, and that as we follow Him, we share Him with and lead others. Please take time to read the following article from Bishop Scott Hampton and allow God to speak to you. (Watch for continued articles on Discipleship as we move through 2023.)

Follow the Leader

Have you ever played follow the leader? I remember playing the game as a small child and following someone who went places I couldn't go. In the town I grew up in, the city park used to have a piece of playground equipment that us kids called the lookout tower. It was basically just a tall platform, but the only way up, or down, was a fire pole in the center. The lookout tower was where “followership” was tested. It separated the leaders, the followers, and those who couldn't climb its heights. When follow the leader made its way to the lookout tower, I knew that, despite my best efforts to climb that fire pole, my time as a follower was over and I was out of the game. I think about the lookout tower sometimes in relationship to the discipleship journey.

“Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

Luke 9:23 NKJV

“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” Luke 14:27 NKJV

Jesus called his disciples by saying “follow me” and “take up your cross.” I'm sure that “follow me” seemed simple enough to the disciples at the time. I'm sure “take up your cross” was more difficult to understand for them. He even went on to say that anyone who doesn't take up their cross to follow Him can't be a disciple. Somewhere along the journey the disciples must have learned. They followed Him through it all - the good and the bad. Discipleship isn't easy. The road isn't simple and there are twists and turns that lead us into uncomfortable places.

Are we following Him like that? Following Him in pulpits AND prisons? Rejoicing at the hospital with a family over new life and weeping with a family who lost someone. Laughing with people that love us and also forgiving people who have hurt us. Sometimes I accomplish this; many times I don't because I'm still on the journey.

The lookout tower isn't in the local park anymore. They took it down one day because it was "too dangerous" for a new generation of kids. I am proud to say that before it was gone, I learned to climb it. It took determination and practice. Failing and rising again but learning something about myself and how to climb the fire pole every time. I'm grateful for grace that opens the door for me to approach being a disciple the same way. It takes determination and practice to learn more about myself and what it's going to take to truly take up my cross daily. Let us never quit because it's hard or buy into a false belief that we can remove it from the discipleship journey because it's too dangerous.

Discipleship is the never-ending game of follow the leader that still goes to the difficult places. There is no arrival - only obedience. Jesus still calls daily, "Take up your cross and follow me."



Bishop Scott Hampton currently serves as the Conference Superintendent of the Great Plains Conference of the IPHC. He is also privileged to serve on the IPHC Council of Bishops, Discipleship Ministries Council, and the Southwestern Christian University Board of Trustees. Scott, his wife Heather, and their children (Shanna, Karsyn, and Paxton, along with granddaughter Kinsley) live in Amarillo, TX area.

I believe we have some of the best pastors and leaders who are doing great things for God week after week, Sunday after Sunday. In 2023, I encourage you as Pastors and Leaders to share what you are doing to Disciple your local church and community. It may be an event, a Sunday School or Small group gathering. Share with us that we may rejoice with you in what God is doing.

YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO BE PART OF ACCELERANT 2023...

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* ARTISTS & SPEAKERS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The logo for 'THE HUDDLE EAST' is centered in a white square. The words 'THE HUDDLE' are stacked on the top line, and 'EAST' is on the bottom line. All text is in a bold, sans-serif font.

THE HUDDLE EAST

"This is the most practical training I've ever attended."

"My favorite part of this whole event is seeing my ministry friends from other churches—without having to keep track of teenagers!"

"The worship time was such a blessing!"

That's just some of the feedback we're getting from our annual HUDDLE event, and we're inviting you to be a part of it this year!

Held every February, the HUDDLE has become a much-anticipated training event for Student and Children's Ministry leaders from all over the IPHC. It features a full-day of training featuring top voices in family ministry, as well as practical breakouts from leaders in our own movement.

Even better, this year, we're thrilled to offer TWO locations for our HUDDLE event; our WEST-side event will be held February 10-11 at the Heartland Retreat Center in Midwest City, OK and the EAST-side event will be held at the Westin Poinsett in Greenville, SC February 23-25. We can't wait to gather with our friends from the IPHC on BOTH sides of the Mississippi!

Early-Bird registration for both of these events will open on November 1, so reserve a spot for you and your team today and be a part of The HUDDLE in 2023!



Women's Ministries

Tammy Porter



“2023, Here We Come!”

As I reflect on 2022, I can definitely say that I am ready for a new year. 2022 was not a bad year. As a matter of fact, I had a great year, but as the old saying goes, “Hindsight is 20/20.” I can always look back and see how I could have done things differently. I could have shown a little more kindness, extended grace more often, forgiven quicker and made better decisions at times.

I don't know about you, but I am probably my biggest critic. I believe I am harder on myself than anyone. I set high standards and expect excellence from myself; therefore, I expect the same from those around me. To be honest, I have often focused more on my failures than my successes, even though my successes far outweigh my failures.

The Apostle Paul says in Philippians 3:12-14, *“Not that I have already obtained all this or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

Just think about it. Paul, the great man of God that he was, still had not arrived. He still had days when he could have made better decisions. He didn't have it all together, even though he strived to win the prize. He still had his own struggles. He said he had a thorn in his flesh that God would not remove because it kept him humble. God reminded him that His grace was sufficient; it was in those times of weakness, God's power was made perfect. Therefore, Paul began to delight in the weaknesses he had. It was then that God's power rested on him.

So, as I walk through 2023, I will not look behind at what I could have done better. I will continue to move forward for the glory of God. I will learn from my mistakes, use my weaknesses as an opportunity to show God's strength and focus on the prize that is ahead. I will not allow my failures to define me. I will continue on, pushing and pressing toward the goal that is ahead.

What about you? How are you going to transition into the new year? Are you going to focus on all the negative in your past or choose to see the positive in your future? I believe that God wants us to learn from past mistakes, not wallow in them. Use them as a testimony for others to see how His grace and mercy carried us through. God can use us just the way we are if we let Him, flaws and all.

I realized many years ago, we are all the same in many ways. We all have strengths and weaknesses and battle insecurities from time to time. We've all made mistakes at one time or another, but God has walked with us through it all! His grace is enough! He doesn't see our failures; He sees our heart.

I wouldn't want to face a new year without Him going with me. How about you? Since He will be by our side, I know there is nothing He can't carry us through. So, let's say goodbye to 2022 and hello to 2023! The best is yet to come! Believe for it!



Restoration



WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Sponsored by Appalachian Conference Women's Ministries

FREE EVENT

Friday, March 31, 2023
7:00 PM

Harbor of Hope
2720 Roanoke Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073



Keynote Speaker
Rev Veronica McGlothlin



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
WM DIRECTOR, TAMMY PORTER
pastortammy511@yahoo.com





HOW TO GET GOD'S ATTENTION IN THE YEAR 2023

New Year's resolutions reflect the desire to do better and to achieve more in the next year. Some common resolutions include weight loss, financial planning and advancing one's education. Have you ever heard the saying, "Keep the main thing, the main thing"? Honoring God should be the top priority for the year 2023.

There is a group of people who honored God and were written in the Book of Remembrance! God noticed them, and took delight in them. *"Then those who feared the Lord (with awe-filled reverence) spoke to one another: and the Lord PAID ATTENTION and HEARD IT, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who fear the Lord (with an attitude of reverence and respect) and esteem His Name"* (Malachi 3:16, Amplified Version).

Notice they honored God with their words. And God PAID ATTENTION to them! I want to be in this group of people in the year 2023!

HONOR IN WARFARE

Spiritual warfare is real. This is why we are taught to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10). Prayer, fasting and faith decrees are other methods of warfare. But in the year of 2023, we must learn to HONOR God if we want to win those spiritual battles. When we HONOR God, He pays attention. When we HONOR God, He fights our battles!

BATTLES ARE LOST BECAUSE OF LACK OF HONOR

Reflect back on the year of 2022. Think about those battles that you lost. Could the missing link be HONOR? Can you be successful if you neglect to HONOR God? Some ways we honor God are:

*With our TIME *With our TITHES *With our WORDS *With our ACTIONS

Listen to what God says about HONORING HIM in I Samuel 2:30. *"...Be it far from Me; for them that HONOR Me I will HONOR, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."*

TIME

You have probably heard the story of Martha and Mary. Jesus came to their house to visit. Martha became very busy trying to make preparations. I believe she really wanted to prepare Jesus a great meal. However, Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. She listened to Him. She gave him her undivided attention. Mary got His attention. Jesus said that she chose that good part, which shall not be taken away from her (Luke 10:42).

HONOR THOSE GOD REQUIRES

We may also struggle in spiritual warfare because of a failure to HONOR those that God commands. Some of these include:

- *Honor Pastors and Spiritual Leaders (I Thessalonians 5:12)
- *Honor Your Parents (Exodus 20:12)
- *Honor Your Spouse (I Peter 3:7)

FEBRUARY 2023 CALENDAR



- 1 – 8** **Mission Trip to Senegal**
- 4** **WIN YouTube Message**
- 20** **President’s Day – Office Closed**
- 23 – 25** **The Huddle – Greenville, SC**