

State Of The District – April 23, 2018

I. Unity awards

Last year in this address, I stated:

Read the account of Acts 2 for the first time. Something happened to unify a very diverse group. The crowd was from all points of the world. They noted we each heard in our own language. One of the enabling aspects of the Holy Spirit is to unify people.

In our district, we have diversity.

Diverse geography – Redwoods, mountains, desert, beaches and the ocean.

Different challenges

Different ethnicities

Different cultures

Different languages

Different backgrounds

Different roads that led us to Christ

Diverse ways of doing ministry.

Diverse approaches.

Diverse focuses and emphases.

Yet knowing all of that Jesus said this

I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one--as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. John 17:21 Living Bible

Our unity holds high kingdom value. Our unity is what Jesus prayed for us – so that the world would know him. Our unity and our connection to God is a precursor to evangelism – that the world will know.

Jealousy, comparison and suspicion are not the way we are going to build churches or the Kingdom of God.

Several pastors have embodied the spirit of that challenge issued last year.

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1. Willie Bowles –

Worship teams in multiple churches

2. Abe Daniel –

Open church policy

3. Greg Farrington –

Ione – roof on church, built porch, hung new doors, windows in the parsonage.

4. Angelo Austria –

Reno – partnership with AG and Non AG churches to build a community park

5. Eric Daniel –

Vacaville / Rio Vista

6. Malcolm McPhail –

Capitola / Aptos

7. Kathy Cannon –

Involved in GC task force to promote senior Female pastors

8. John Withers –

PE article – Counseling helping many ministers in our district

II. Honor.

This year I would like to discuss with you in an area as a district that if we embrace will alter the life of this district. I believe we have an obligation to excel in this area. I want to talk to you about the concept of honor.

Honor is the bedrock of relationship

Ministry moves at the pace of relationship

Therefore, our ministries are all impacted by how we handle to opportunities to honor another.

1. Honor produces faith.

If you want greater faith in God – it comes through the gateway of honor. The 10 commandments were given to a group of people who largely would never see the Promised Land. They would wander and die in the wilderness largely because they did not honor the word of the Lord.

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Hebrews 3:9 – they did not enter because of unbelief.

We know that even in the ministry of Christ that honor was credited as the preventive aspect in the ministry of Jesus.

Mark 6:1-6 – a lack of honor stopped the ministry of Christ – it caused Christ to marvel at their unbelief – all because of dishonor. They became familiar with him – But they did not honor him.

Matthew 8:8 - Romans centurion said please heal my servant – Jesus said I will come to your house. Centurion said you don't have to come to my house – Then he said I too am a man under authority – I say to this one come and to that one go – just say the word. I haven't found faith this great in Israel – why did he understand faith so well? Because he understood honor.

The reason we are one of the most faithless generations ever is because of our lack of honor. I truly believe that as our honor increases so will our faith.

2. Honor also produces blessings.

Ephesians 6:1-2 – children are told to do two things honor and obey. In dad's house it's obedience – on my own I move into honoring him. You hope they will honor you so you can give them more freedom. If you can't grow up in the area of honor you miss blessing – *that things may go well with you.*

When pastoring part of our mission statement which was derived through a staff retreat, was honor God and all people.

The statement sounded right, felt right – it lined up with scripture perfectly. Few things in my life have provided more challenge than dealing *with all people* – honorably.

Luke 2:52 – we know – but what did he do to grow in wisdom and stature?

⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Verse 51 – He was subject to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Six areas of honor

1. Honor God

This is where honor starts – honoring one another is never going to happen if we fail here

God has no relationship with anybody who does not honor him.

A break down in your honor of God leads to a breakdown in everything we hold dear.

Those who honor me I will honor.

Malachi 1:6,14 (NIV)

6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the Lord Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

14 "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the Lord Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

They are trivializing God.

Where is my honor?

Average person attends 1 out of 6 weeks

Is that what God deserves?

It is the first day of the week.

Give it to the Lord.

God blesses you as you begin week in Gods house

You honor me with your prayer life

Honor me with your giving. Pull out lamb sheep offering that is spoiled.

That is not honor.

Prov 3:9-10 (NIV) - honor the Lord.....

9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

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When it becomes duty and obligation. You are needing adjustment.

Matthew 15:8

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Honor is not just what you say – it is what you do – what you do in your heart.

2. Honor those in political offices

Romans 13:1-2

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

1 Peter 2:17 (NIV)

17 Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Roman Emperor - Nero

Honor - Look past person to position they hold.

God has invested his honor in those positions

Judge - rise for his honor....

Honor the president

Honor the governor

Honor the police

3. Honor those who lead the church

1 Timothy 5:17 (NIV)

17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Double honor

This business of disrespecting pastors is not ok.

Never go wrong honoring a man who serves in ministry.

4. Honor your spouse

1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)

7Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Ephesians 5:33

³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

The honor shown in marriage preaches a powerful message to a world that is suffering habitual failures in the arena of marriage.

5. Honor your parents

Eph 6:2-3 Exodus 20:12 (NIV)

2 "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Top 10. Incredible that God would include this in such an elite list. This principle of honor is to be established when we are young. The older we get the greater the consequences become as we neglect honoring authority in our lives. My honor toward mom and dad has to do with how long I live on this planet. Even if bad people honor the position of parent.

6. Honor all men.

12For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, Romans 12:10(NIV)

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor. 1 Peter 2:17

Application

We need to honor all the people of this district

A. Age – 26, 56, 86

B. Race / All ethnicities

It seems obvious to say – but the church should be in a leadership position in areas where society struggles. Race relations is one of the areas where our society seems to be incapable of moving forward. The hurts, disappointments, distrust, stereo types and generalized accusation have become all too common in our land. We are blessed to live in a district where diversity is not a fringe issue – it is a center post of our reality. The church is reflective of its community when it is healthy. The church is a reflection of heaven when it is achieving its mission.

Malachi 2:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?

The church must be a place where race is a secondary issue, second due to the fact that the first most significant issue is our unity in Christ. Honor goes beyond tolerance. Honor demands more of me than acceptance. Honor is couched in a purely Christian concept of love.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34 (NIV)

Honor is the act of not showing favoritism to one and leaving nothing to express respect and honor to another.

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. Acts 10:34-35 (NIV)

God is in the business of destroying barriers. Incredible how hard people seem to work at building the very barriers that God has declared in his word that he wants to destroy.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, Ephesians 2:14 (NIV)

This is an area where we are out of time and options – we simply must learn how to extend honor to one another – regardless – honor is the order of the day.

C. We must honor the women of this district

Supernatural manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit have played a distinctive role in the origin, development, and growth of the Assemblies of God. Since the earliest days of our Fellowship, spiritual gifting has been evident in the ministries of many outstanding women who pioneered and directed a wide spectrum of ministries.

It was not uncommon for a married woman to minister in partnership with her husband. Occasionally, husbands worked at secular professions to support the active ministries of their wives. Many women chose to forego marriage to better fulfill the ministries to which the Lord had called them.

Courageous women served on mission frontiers at home and abroad as missionaries, evangelists, church planters, pastors, educators, and in other roles.

We believe that the outpouring of the Spirit began in the early twentieth century is a true fulfillment of prophecy, *"Your sons and daughters will prophesy . . . Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days"* (Joel 2:28,29; cf. Acts 2:16–18).¹ That women as well as men are to prophesy is indicative of their inclusion in the ministries of the new covenant age.

Many are the notable women ministers among the early Pentecostals. But even though women had great freedom to minister in the early days of the Fellowship, the proportion of women in leadership dropped dramatically beginning in the early 1920s. More recently, the trend is again upward and the number of credentialed women is growing.

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Throughout their history, Pentecostals around the world have struggled to apply biblical truth in widely divergent cultural contexts. In some settings, female spiritual leadership is readily accepted; in others, where women have limited ministry, leadership posts are withheld from them.

While the Church must always be sensitive to cultural concerns, it must nonetheless consistently look to Scripture for principles and directions that rise above particular contextual practices.

Old Testament history includes accounts of strong female leadership in many roles. The following are striking examples:

Miriam was a prophet to Israel during the Exodus, alongside her brothers Moses and Aaron (Exodus 15:20).

Deborah, both a prophet and a judge, directed Barak to lead the army of Israel into successful combat against Israel's oppressors (Judges 4 to 5).

The New Testament also shows that women filled important ministry roles in the Early Church.

Paul singled out two women, Euodia (**Yo-dia**) and Syntyche (**sin-tik-ee**), as *"women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel"* (Philippians 4:2,3).

Priscilla was another of Paul's exemplary *"fellow workers in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 16:3,4).

Phoebe, a leader in the church was highly commended to the church at Rome by Paul (Romans 16:1,2).

These instances of women filling leadership roles in the Bible should be taken as a divinely approved pattern, not as exceptions to divine decrees.

Even a limited number of women with scripturally commended leadership roles affirm that God does indeed call women to spiritual leadership.

How much more should we be careful to honor those women who serve among us?

D. Those who are seeking restoration in our fellowship

2 Cor. 13:11-14 ESV

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

"Aim for restoration"

People are too valuable to throw away

We are to be counter cultural in this area of dealing with people

Society deals with people in a disposable manner.

We want to aim for restoration of relationships

"Kadaritzo" Greek for restoration

Means mending a net

Setting a broken bone

Too valuable to throw it away.

We have people who are seeking restoration - honor them

Honor their process

Celebrate their accomplishment when they complete restoration

Galatians 6:1

6Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

you who are spiritual

The way you treat a fallen brother seeking restoration is not a matter of his / her guilt or innocence it is a matter of our spiritually maturity.

When a brother falls and is offered restoration and he accepts the opportunity

- Do you treat him gently?
- Do you affirm with speech?
- Do you ignore them?
- Do you make it hard or easy to re-enter district life after the restoration is ended?

E. Honor the unsaved world around us.

Friends I want to share some numbers with you that cause me great concern I share these numbers in light of this address because one of the areas we must show honor is the world around us who is without the saving knowledge of Christ. After all we are churches, we are those entrusted with the great commission.

At the ministers retreat last September I reported to you that 70% of our churches are either plateaued or in decline. However, friends that single stat does not tell the story.

In 2017, 95 of our churches did not report their AMCR reports
Of the balance of those who participated in filing that form
120 reported no Holy Spirit Baptisms
76 reported no water baptisms
43 report that there was not even one conversion.

Friends could it be that we have lost sight of the great commission?
Could it be that we have become numb to the world around us?
Could it be that our passion for the lost has dwindled to indifference for their plight?
There are men, women and children in your neighborhood who deserve the honor of being told.

Honor.

What a concept.

This is an area we must deliberately seek to grow.

As individuals, because anything of value in this fellowship always starts at the grass roots.

The ground swells of revival in any aspect is more powerful than the ones created or fashioned from either the national or district levels.

Honor for God, for leadership, for parents, for women, for all brothers, for a brother seeking restoration, for the lost – it will start in you, in your city – it will impact your church – that will determine who we as a district become – I am anxious for us to become a district marked by honor.