



How Do We Meet the Crisis in the Church and the Culture?

by Dan Schaffer

In past newsletters, we have looked at the church's failure to embrace God's mission for the church as communicated in Ephesians 4:11-13. Looking at that passage in light of Mathew 28:18 we find that the church's primary role is to help men and women mature into spiritual

fathers and mothers, reproducing future spiritual fathers and mothers. The church is in crisis by not fulfilling this primary calling: it defeats itself and keeps itself from being salt and light, the preserver and corrector of the culture. As the church fails in its reproductive role, our culture is left in crisis and continues to slide into relativism, self-focus, and moral decline.

If you agree that the culture and the church are in crisis, then it is important to ask key questions so that we can begin to address this crisis.

1. Can you heal the crisis in the culture without healthy spiritual families?
2. Can you have healthy spiritual families without men who are spiritual fathers?
3. Is the church the place to build spiritual fathers?
4. Are pastors, elders and leaders, who are spiritual fathers, essential to the reproduction of spiritual fathers?
5. How do we help pastors and elders become reproducing spiritual fathers?

Healthy families are the building blocks of the culture, but how can we build healthy spiritual families without first building spiritual fathers?

In my spiritual journey in the church over the last half century, I was challenged to know the Word and fight the spiritual battle, but I was not challenged to be a reproductive spiritual father.

If we are going to address and solve the current crisis, we must start by calling our churches back to the mission of the church as laid out in Ephesians. We must also have leaders who stand ready and committed to carry out their God-given role of bringing God's people to maturity so that they can then carry out their reproductive mission to reproduce passionate followers of Christ. In order to accomplish this we must have a pathway that is a life-process to take men from immaturity to maturity—from spiritual childhood to spiritual fatherhood.

The pathway must be visible so that every man in the church can see and understand the call to the process. It must be definable so that the process is understandable and not hidden or mysterious to the men in the church. It must be joinable so that each man can be a part of the process. Even if it is visible and understandable it is useless if men cannot be a part of it. The pathway must also be normative so that every man in the church knows that this is the church's pathway to prepare each man to participate in the mission of the church. The pathway will never be considered the norm for the church if the functional leaders are not part of the process and do not call the men of the church to join them in the process.

It is clear that the male leaders of the church are the key to meeting the current crisis. The critical questions are these:

- Are we as leaders willing to become mature spiritual fathers for the men of the church?
- Are we willing to create a pathway that will invite the men of the church to journey with us into the passionate pursuit of God and to reproduce that pursuit in others?

In the next few newsletters we will address some of the main barriers that keep the leaders of the church from becoming men who are reproducing spiritual fathers. Please continue to journey with us as we grasp a deeper understanding of this imperative call upon our lives!

I Had to Be There

I did not have three days to spend at another ministry training event. Although I have worked closely with Dan and the Building Brothers staff from the beginning and I share the commitment to see men transformed rather just *informed* by another men's message, I had not attended the BB Facilitator Training.

This time the issue was different. My senior pastor was registered and was bringing our three leaders from my church. We had begun discussing the problems with men's ministry and, for me, it was all too clear. But, if my pastor could cut the time out of his schedule, I should be able to find a way to attend as well. As men we must do more than just point out the problem with men's ministry at our church. We must be willing to invest. There is a major difference between attending something and investing in it. I needed to invest.

Sitting at a table with my pastor and male leaders of my church for three days was more than just significant. Together we began to see the heart of Almighty God for men and the power of a church where the building of men is foundational.

For the past eight years our ministry has worked to help churches understand the need and how to develop strategies and resources for "intergenerational ministry." Many of the principles and foundational issues for our own ministry were developed side by side with Building Brothers.

The principles of reproduction as spiritual fathers and transformational servant leadership that are engraved on a person's heart during the Building Brothers training is absolutely essential to spiritual maturity and ministry to men and their families.

Churches and families will not experience all God desires for them until we understand how to help men engage in a passionate pursuit of the Living God. I have had the informational knowledge for some time. Building Brothers helped me understand the transformational experience.

Dr. Chuck Stecker, President/Founder of A Chosen Generation. (achosengeneration.org)

Ministry Prayer & Praise:

- The Building Brothers book targeted for pastors and leaders is in rough draft form, and we continue to move forward towards a completed manuscript. This has been a tremendous process for the team as we hone and understand our message more clearly with every chapter that's completed.
- Our website, buildingbrothers.org, is averaging nearly 2000 hits per month!
- We have moved forward on translating our materials into Spanish and providing subtitles for our four-phase videos.
- Our current videos will soon be available on DVD.
- Pray that God would reveal how we are to access the churches that He has prepared and that and that can be served by the Building Brothers process in building their leadership.

Personal Prayer & Praise:

- Rick and Gretchen praise the Savior for His patience and love in their lives as the process of healing has continued in their lives in 2005.
- Dan's father passed away March 5. Pray for Dan's mom as this leaves a huge hole in her life. Pray for strength for Dan as he recuperates from being the primary support for her through this time of grief and that he will be able to clarify and renew his ministry focus.
- Dan'l completed his pastoral commitment in Vona. While this has increased his ability to be involved in the work of Building Brothers, it has quickly brought about financial challenges. Pray for health and strength for him and Carla through this adjustment period.
- Ken and Bonnie ask prayer for the on-going need to build a financial support base for the family. A huge praise for Bonnie's opportunity to spend time with their young son, Micah, since she's been at home full-time.

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► Ministry Update

► *Germany in 2005*

The Building Brothers team had the privilege of spending time with Uve Simon who was in town for a week in April. Uve is a leader in Christ-like Man Training (CMT), our brother ministry in Germany. As he personally oversees a ministry that mentors young men in prison, his heart continues to swell for reaching men. He shared with us a few of his thoughts:

- Churches that were committed have not progressed as necessary. CMT's desire would start the year-long process in 2006.
- CMT and BB are being viewed as a "package of power" in reaching men in our countries.
- prayer was requested for eight CMT groups presently in Germany and for wisdom as they work towards building an advisory board of international pastors in order to make a greater connection with local churches throughout Europe.
- We would ask that you also pray for Dan's Germany/Hungary trip that is planned for October.

► *Eugene, Oregon*

May 21-23, Ken and Dan were at the Eugene Church of God (Seventh Day), to launch Phase I Training and present Facilitator Training to pastors and leaders from several communities. Ken Knoll, a leader in the Eugene church, who had attended our first Facilitator Training, was integral in bringing about this unique combination of trainings. We are encouraged to see God use this training in the state of Oregon, and we hope to use this combination of Phase I Training and Facilitator Training in the future with this denomination and others across the country.

► *Church of God (Seventh Day) Denomination*

July 4-9, Building Brothers has been invited to have a presence at their national conference in Denver, Colorado. We have been asked to communicate our message to the denominational leadership, which will provide us an opportunity to partner with districts and local churches for further training. Our desire is to

serve this denomination as it unfolds a nationwide plan for their leaders as they become spiritual fathers who reproduce spiritual fathers. God is also working in the Church of God (Seventh Day) church in Wister, Oklahoma. The February Facilitator Training motivated them to take home what they learned and immediately apply it with the men in this church.

► *Denver, Colorado*

June 4, Dan'l and Ken will be presenting Phase I Training at the Outside the Walls Church with 8 to 12 of their leaders attending. This includes their senior pastor and men's ministry leader. Their pastor attended the Facilitator Training in January 2004 and has had a strong desire to integrate this into his church since then.

► *Denver, Colorado*

In July, the team will be presenting Phase III Training at Epiphany Episcopal Church. About ten men have passed the half-way mark of this year-long process. We covet your prayers for these leaders as they move forward on this pathway.

► *Facilitator Training*

On August 16-18, the Building Brothers team will host an in-depth training of the four-phase process in Denver. We strongly encourage pastors and church leaders to attend this three-day, extensive interaction time in order to facilitate the process in their churches and communities. The majority of the men in attendance of the February Facilitator Training expressed interest and are moving forward to start Phase I Training in next six months. While at the training, one leader contacted his daughter to start the process of blessing her. Another pastor shared, "This was a time of engaging God in moments of deep and dynamic truth. The diagram from Phase IV, showing how men go into despair, was one of the most powerful visuals I've seen in a while. I need to connect with my son and daughter to bless them. There must be intentionality on my part to quit the 'business' of pastoring and to connect with God as a man ... His son!" It was a powerful time for all in attendance—including the four of us on the Building Brothers team.

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Summer 2005 Newsletter

Volume 6 • Issue 3

BUILDING BROTHERS™

