

▶ Building Men Who Renew the Church

By Dan Schaffer



In our last article we looked at the impact of the “seeker church” on the current generation and the essential part Spiritual Fathers play in addressing this need. In this letter we will look at what is necessary to build Spiritual Fathers who can meet the challenge.

The first question we must ask is, “What are the Biblical characteristics of a Spiritual Father?”

The answer to this question is found in John’s description of the levels of Spiritual maturity in a man’s journey (1 John 2:12-14). First, he must have come to know the saving power of Christ and thus begin to know the Father. Second, he must know the Word of God and the Word must be in him, controlling sin and allowing him to fight the evil one. Third, he must know God intimately, beginning to be in unity with God and reproducing the next generations of passionate followers of Christ. The Apostle Paul sums up the impact of becoming a Spiritual Father in Philippians 3:10 “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering becoming like Him in his death.” (NIV) Knowing Christ results in the very character of Christ being formed in me. It is men and women with the character of Christ being formed in them that will bring about the renewal of the church.

Question:

Why does the Church have so few Spiritual Fathers?

Maturity in most churches is presented as knowing the Word, having the Word in us and overcoming sin. This is John’s description of the young man, one who is spiritually alive but not yet fully spiritually mature. Few churches even challenge believers to reach this level and very few go beyond it. When we present becoming a young man as the goal, well meaning churches and men stop short of God’s goal of becoming Spiritual Fathers. This fact stifles the Church’s ability to reproduce mature followers of Christ and limits its effect on the culture and community.

Question:

Even when we see and accept the Goal of becoming Spiritual Fathers, why do so few men reach the goal? Why is it so difficult?

Spiritual Fathers are reproduced, not produced by an educational, production model. It is not so much about what you know but who you are. The crisis of the current generation is that when they come in contact with the contemporary church, they come in contact with largely unbelievers and immature, untransformed believers who are not very different than the culture at large. This convinces them that there is little transforming power available in the Church and in a relationship with Christ. In order for them to see the character of Christ shining through the church they needed to come in contact with Spiritual Mothers and Fathers. In order for this perception to be changed, there must be a

place where believers are challenged to become Spiritual Fathers and Mothers as the goal. Then these new believers can have authentic contact with mature believers while catching the DNA of being in passionate pursuit of Christ.

There are real barriers that keep us as men from close relationships with one another and with God. For most of us, we will not reach the level of relationship that allows for reproduction unless we can break down the barriers that are keeping us from God. There are many things that can keep us from God but there are four universal barriers that impact almost all of us:

1. We see God through the distorted image of our earthly father. This “Father Vacuum” keeps us from trusting and engaging God.
2. The environment of the Church is experienced as feminine. We guard and protect ourselves in an environment that we feel is unsafe. Without opening up and safely engaging our brothers in relationship with God, we remain closed to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.
3. You will follow only those whom you trust. As men, we often don’t trust our leaders and they don’t trust us. Only as we become men who can be trusted can we be used to reproduce in others. We must also understand and become Servant Leaders living a lifestyle of repentance in order to effectively lead others in the pursuit of God.
4. We are caught in a trap of obligation! We are stuck either searching for the formula to manipulate God or trying to be good enough that God should love us. One leads to bitterness when God doesn’t deliver what we thought we had earned, the other leads to isolation because we can never be good enough that God should love us. We must begin to grasp every opportunity to join with God and participate with Him in the creation of spiritual life. It is that creation of life that brings fulfillment and allows one to leave an impacting legacy.

Finally, we need a Pathway: an environment that helps ask the right questions and break down the barriers mentioned above. We must ask questions that lead us to the right answers...that can only be answered by the Spirit of God. This Pathway creates the environment where transformation and maturation can take place. Does your church have a visible, definable, joinable, and normative Pathway for men? If not, it will be difficult to bring men to spiritual maturity. Without mature men reproducing as Spiritual Fathers, the church will not be renewed.

Helping the church build Spiritual Fathers is what drives Building Brothers. We provide a process for church leaders to come together, break down the barriers that keep men from pursuing God, and in that process identify their unique Pathway to build men in their local church. Contact us at BuildingBrothers.org if we can help you in your quest to build men.



Prayer Focus

Friends in Christ:

Here are the needs we'd like you to continue to bring into the throne of His grace:

- 1) Our work with United Methodist churches--the key areas right now are KS, VA, and TN--pray that the work will continue and prosper.
- 2) We have new areas opening in VA and in TX.
- 3) We have 3 new endeavors--to outreach to men and have them penetrate the church.
- 4) New doors of opportunity to open to us--places and key men of leadership
- 5) To answer the question as a ministry--are we prophetic--speaking the word to the church and maybe see little results or are we to be used to see revival--to see the church catch fire and grow into an reproductive organism
- 6) We need finances, as most ministries, we're undergoing hard times. We'd like to see hearts open up to be hilarious givers to the Building Brothers ministry.
- 7) We need men to be certified trainers--trainers in the field. This will help us be more cost effective and reach more more men.
- 8) To have a multi-church focus in northern CO

Thanks again for your prayers--greatly needed and appreciated.

Current One Year Four-Phase Training Locations

Fort Collins, Colorado
 Alliance, Nebraska
 Littleton, Colorado
 Denver, Colorado
 Page, Arizona
 Prescott, Arizona
 Montrose, Colorado
 Colorado Springs, Colorado
 Berea, Ohio
 Sinclairville, New York

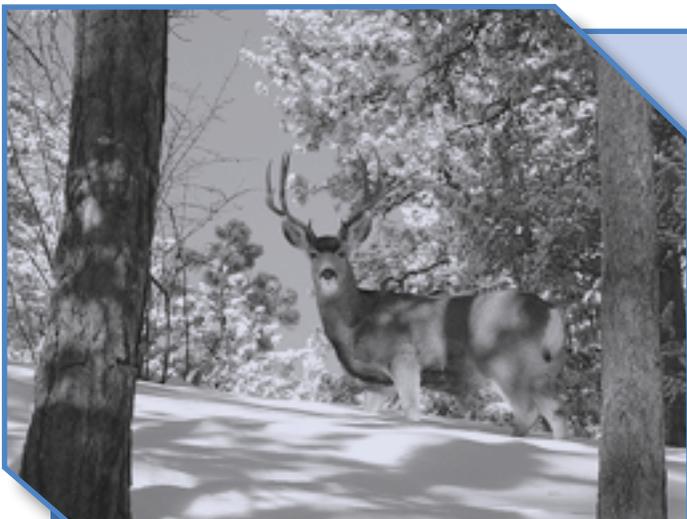
United Methodist Church
 Wichita, Kansas
 Salina, Kansas
 Jackson, Tennessee
 Collierville, Tennessee

Church of God, 7th Day
 Spokane, Washington
 Toppinsh, Washington
 Las Vegas, Nevada
 Wister, Oklahoma
 Kansas City, Missouri
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
 New York, New York

Churches in 2nd cycle
 Denver, Colorado
 Wichita, Kansas
 Eugene, Oregon
 Marian, Oregon
 Montrose, Colorado



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