Do you know someone that could be considered directionally challenged? You know what I’m talking about—those individuals who, when told to travel north or south, will usually ask, “Is that right or left?” These are the individuals who will always struggle to find their way to their final destination.

Thankfully, such individuals have a saving grace—the GPS. The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-navigation system that was developed by the Department of Defense. This system was initially used only for the military, but in the 1980s it was made available to everyone. And for some, it was a real answer to prayer.

One of the really great things about a GPS is that they can help you get almost anywhere. They work in any kind of weather, anywhere in the world, and are available for use 24/7. This actually makes it possible for people to know exactly where they are and exactly where they need to go.

Don’t you wish it was that easy in your personal life, or in the life of your church? Wouldn’t it be great if, in our efforts to accomplish God’s unique plans, He would let us know exactly where we are at all times? Like when we are in the mall looking for a particular store or trying to find our way to the Food Court. All we have to do is look on the mall map and find the red X bearing the words “You are here.” Once we have our bearings, we can easily locate our destination. Wouldn’t it be great if God would do that for us?

Several places in the Scriptures, we find writers who, in their moments of seeking direction, have looked to God for assistance. It is usually in the midst of their search that God reminds them that they have to know where they are presently before they can get to their final destination. You have to identify your location, and since there is no red X available, you have to do a little soul searching. In Ps. 139:23-24, the psalmist is giving God permission to search his heart, mind, and motives to identify the hindrances that are posed to his journey. Once God has helped him to identify where he is, he then feels free to ask God for guidance in the everlasting ways.

[continued inside]
Do you know where you stand at this moment? Are you aware of the spiritual location of the church you serve? Are you tired of wandering around lost? How can you find your way? The answer is really simple. Use your GPS—your God Positioning System. God’s guidance is available to you 24/7, no matter where you are in the world, no matter what conditions surround you.

God desires for you and your church to arrive at the spiritual location He has for you. Because of this, He will assist you in determining your present location, and then help lead you in His everlasting way.

— Jim Hill, Senior Pastor
Calvary Church of the Nazarene
Bethany, Oklahoma

For more on seeking God's direction . . .
Direction: Discernment for the Decisions of Your Life
CO ZZ978-0-8341-2335-9  $14.99

I was called into the ministry at age nineteen while sitting in a chapel service at Olivet Nazarene University. It was as though a light bulb suddenly turned on in my head as the Holy Spirit gave me the nudge I had been waiting for.

As I studied for this call, my passions were cultivated for biblical theology, spiritual formation, and social justice. I was so excited to pastor; I couldn’t wait to have opportunities to share what I was learning with others.

Now two years into my first pastoral assignment, I’ve discovered that somewhere along the way, those passions were buried under a barrage of administrative tasks, pastoral care, and community commitments. From time to time, I’ve found myself asking, Is this pastor? I can look back and see two years of trying to hold up under the expectations of others—and my own—rather than trying to fulfill the Lord’s expectations.

As frustrating as that may be, I’ve learned to let go of a few of those unnecessary expectations; otherwise, I’m not going to be able to sustain a life in professional ministry. I can’t be all things to all people; I cannot excel in all ministry areas. And I have to remember those passions I developed when I began studying for a life in pastoral ministry.

Recently, the Holy Spirit led me to a time of reflection and rekindled those first ministry passions in me. With this renewed sense of vocation, I now feel empowered to leave behind some of those unnecessary expectations so I may better fulfill God’s expectations.

Pastor, I encourage you to find and reconnect with your first ministry loves. Redirect your focus to retain a sense of meeting God’s expectations, rather than your own. Our God is so pleased when His people are set free to faithfully use the gifts He has bestowed.

For more on developing your passions . . .
The Complete Spiritual Gifts Kit
CO ZZ978-0-8341-2212-3  $89.99

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**CHURCH ON THE HILL CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**
MCMINNVILLE, OREGON
KERRIE PALMER, ASSOCIATE PASTOR

**WHAT:** iServe—a ministry focused on enabling ministries, events, and programs to find volunteers, and for helping others as they find their fit and fulfillment in serving the Kingdom.

**WHY:** iServe began as a means to help individuals personally and purposefully serve the Body of Christ. Ultimately, we try to retain iServe’s visibility to help it become a vital component of the church culture.

**HOW:** A volunteer group writes and publishes the “iServe Weekly,” an informational insert that is placed in the Sunday morning bulletin and also posted on the church web site. In the four page publication, a volunteer of the week is featured, as well as that week’s top ten volunteer needs. Each Sunday, the featured volunteer of the week stands at the iServe counter in the foyer so that others may give words of appreciation for their volunteer efforts. This presence in the foyer also allows the congregation to volunteer for any service opportunities.

Throughout the week, iServe provides classes and training to help individuals discover their spiritual gifts, define their passions, and find a powerful sense of purpose. The curriculum also includes tools for evaluating and developing a personal life mission.

**RESULTS:** While some facets of iServe have been quite successful and others have not, ultimately, we know that iServe is a conduit to helping people fulfill what they are called to do—serve.

(For more information on iServe, call 503.472.8476 or e-mail Kerrie at kpalmer@hillchurch.com.)

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**A Way with Words. . .**

Christmas services must not take the place of Christmas service.

—Paul E. Holdcraft

Above the cloud with its shadow is the star with its light.

—Victor Hugo

**Corny Pastor Joke**

**Angels... (as told by kids):**

My guardian angel helps me with math, but he’s not much good for science.

—Henry, 8

Angels talk all the way while they’re flying up to heaven. The basic message is where you went wrong before you got dead.

—Daniel, 9

All angels are girls because they gotta wear dresses and boys didn’t go for it.

—Antonio, 8

What I don’t get about angels is why, when someone is in love, they shoot arrows at them.

—Sarah, 7

When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets out his breath, somewhere there’s a tornado.

—Reagan, 6
Some of the books and articles featured in Communicator have not been reviewed for theological content and are not endorsed by Nazarene Publishing House or the Church of the Nazarene. They may have significant value, but readers should exercise theological discretion.

**TRENDS**

**Zoning Issues to Consider**

Collaboration between a city and a local church for the purposes of extending or building church property in a community can often be a sticky issue. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), signed into law by President Clinton in 2000, has proved to be a useful defense for churches who've had problems with zoning in their communities. Since 2001 there have been about 200 RLUIPA related decisions in American lower courts.


**A Greener NPH**

Along with many business and ministry organizations these days, NPH is working towards becoming more eco-friendly. We currently recycle 13,000 pounds of paper a week and 1,800 pounds of aluminum printing plates per month. We've also enrolled in our electric company's "MPower Program," and begun having "green days," which can potentially help save enough energy to light 20 homes. What is your church doing to help the environment in 2009? Write us at communicator@nph.com and tell us your green stories.

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**New! From Barefoot**

**The Pastor’s Guide to Personal Spiritual Formation**

William Willimon, Mulholland, Harper Et. Al.

COZZ978-0-8341-2209-3


In this important book, William Willimon, Steve Harper, Bill Hybels, and other experienced church leaders share their thoughts on cultivating a maturing, intimate relationship with Christ in the midst of leading a congregation. Their insights will challenge and inspire you to reach new and deeper levels of spiritual vitality and growth and in doing so profoundly influence the quality of your ministry. Topics include: spiritual direction, prayer & meditation; the Sabbath; grace; making choices; and more.

**The Story of God (Updated)**

A Narrative Theology

Michael Lodahl

COZZ978-0-8341-2393-9


Updated and expanded, this engaging text weaves together the events and themes of the Bible to tell God's remarkable story and present a complete picture of his enduring love for us.

**The Holy Life: Bible Study Series Set**

From Moore

COZZU-70

$24.99, Beacon Hill Press, 2004

This series explores how to live a holy life in today's ever-changing world. Each book includes thought-provoking questions for personal reflection or group discussion. A free online leader’s guide is also available. Includes four books: God's Road Map for Us; The Journey Within; Traveling with Friends; and Serving Others Along the Road.

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**School Lunch Spike**

It’s been estimated that almost 75% of school systems nationwide raised their cafeteria meal prices this fall. In some areas daily lunch prices jumped by 50¢ or even 70¢. Consider what your church could do to help struggling families provide children with affordable and healthy lunches.

Statistics, Soundbites, and Suggestions

The Ethics of America

In *Dismantling the Myths*, Frank Moore mentions a poll conducted by researchers James Patterson and Peter Kim in which 5,577 people from every region of the U.S. stated their personal moral positions.

- 77% stated that they did not see the point in observing the Sabbath.
- 74% said they would steal from those who really wouldn’t miss it.
- 64% said they would lie when it suits them, so long as it doesn’t cause any real damage.
- 56% said they would drink and drive because they knew their limits.


“Narrative sermons have a sequential, logical movement. It makes no sense to read the chapters of a novel in random order or to start watching a movie in the middle. If evoked experience is what the preacher is after, ordered sequence is necessary. It is appropriate to stop along the way and explain what needs to be explained, but never explain what can be evoked.”


Need a Sabbatical?

Looking for some sabbatical time in 2009? You can find sabbatical resources and insights at www.nazarenepastor.org.

Prayer Journal 2009

This year consider journaling your prayers in a unique journal called *The Pray!* offered through NPH. You could even use it along with the book *Simply Praying: 52 Weeks with God* as a way to better connect to God through prayer in 2009.

—For more, call NPH at 1-800-877-0700 and ask about *The Pray! Prayer Journal* (COZZ978-0-8341-2326-7) or *Simply Praying* (COZZ978-0-8341-2271-6).

Making the Climb

This book is John Bowling’s inspiring account of his novice attempt to climb to the top of Africa’s tallest mountain. With fortitude and perception, John tells about his exhilarating nine-day adventure up the mountain and shares the spiritual insights and leadership lessons he learned along the way. His captivating story will give you principles to help you face life’s challenges and conquer your own mountains—no matter how difficult they might seem.

COZZ978-0-8341-2326-7 $14.99
www.beaconhillbooks.com
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* Quantity discounts available

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the holy One of Israel, your Savior...and I love you.  

[Isaiah 43:1-3a, 4a]

communicator@nph.com

A Word from Matt

“Silence.” As I reflect on the past year, I notice that silence has been the one thing I have probably most longed for from week to week. Like a camp counselor trying to quiet his cabin of boys in the middle of the night, I’ve felt that angst of wanting silence—yet the noise persists.

It’s the noise of persistently high gas prices. The noise of Russian and Georgian rockets. The war in Iraq. Constant political television ads. And yes, even the noise of my own making through various good, but time-consuming, ministry endeavors.

All of these events are noisy. They keep us from the silence that allows us to reflect on the Emmanuel of Christmas. So, my hope and prayer for you this Christmas is that you pursue a season of silence and seek the mind of Jesus. The noises around us will always beckon, but in the silence of His presence, we find perfect peace and joy.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at Nazarene Publishing House!

— Matthew S. Zimmer, Editor, Church Resources Manager
Nazarene Publishing House