

The Body Builder

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Ed's Editorial:

Pastor Ed Before HPC - Part 3

by Pastor Ed Vasicek

I preached as pulpit supply and a candidate to pastor the Victory Bible Church of Chicago off and on for about a month and a half. There were usually about 12 people in attendance. Finally, the church (made up of two related families and about 10 fringe people who would attend on occasion) called me to be their pastor, officially starting June 1, 1979. I graduated from Moody Bible Institute a few days before. I was only 22 years old, but comfortable entering the ministry.

The church building was a converted storefront with two apartments upstairs. The front apartment was occupied by a deacon and his family, so I moved into the small four room apartment in the rear. I was a single man, and my salary was what a church of 12 people could pay. On \$4,000 a year, I could not afford a car (auto insurance alone for a single man in Chicago would have been well over \$1,000 a year), so I was one of the first people in the area to buy a moped! During winter, I made my hospital visits via public transportation. Fortunately, the bus stop was just across the street.

I could walk to Comiskey (White Sox) Park from where I lived. The houses were all vintage multi-story (some of them apartment buildings) built shortly after the Chicago fire. They were built from the inside, so there was only enough room for a cat to walk between buildings (and then the cat would have to back out). I was raised in an older suburb, but Cicero was much different from the concrete jungle in which I now found myself.

Marylou and I continued dating, became engaged, and married in September of 1980, so I was only a bachelor pastor for less than a year and a half. She moved in with me into an apartment troubled with roaches, willing to live at poverty level. After failing to make money selling her pottery at fairs, she took a part time job at a gift shop at a Lake Shore Drive motel.

We saw the church grow from an average of 12 to an average of about 42. The ministry, however, was so stressful (abusive families, people without sense, etc.) that I was busier there than I am at HPC!

The neighborhood was a melting pot. Some of our best members were Mexican or of Mexican descent. We had some Cambodian folks, a few Italian people, and an occasional African-American, among others. Needless to say, our potluck dinners were international feasts! Did I mention we lived five minutes from Chinatown, ten minutes from Greek town, and we had Serbian and Lithuanian restaurants in the

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neighborhood? The sad part was we couldn't afford to go out to eat!

We saw dozens of people come to know the Lord, and a few of them grew to become mature believers. I am still in touch with a few folks from that era. We were a very zealous church — we would leave with sore throats sometimes after our evening service from singing so loudly.

But we could only get so far. I had been at Victory Bible Church exactly 4 years and 6 months, longer than any previous pastor. Although we loved the people and it broke our hearts, we both knew it was time for us to move on to another place of ministry.

I put in an application for placement with an organization I belonged to, the IFCA (Independent Fundamental Churches of America). We requested placement within an hour of the Chicago area. A few months earlier, my mother had died, and we didn't feel right moving far away from my father (not that we were close). I only had one sister, and I did not want her to feel "stuck with dad."

Despite my request, the IFCA office sent my name and resume' to Highland Park Church, whose previous pastors were also in the IFCA. Eventually an elder from Highland Park Church (George Seward) called to invite me to candidate at the church. He and his wife, Imogene, were going to visit Victory Bible Church and hear me preach.

I told George that I was not interested in pastoring that far from the Chicago area. He thought I was afraid to leave the nest, I think. He never could understand that I really wanted to move away from the Chicago area, but felt constrained by a sense of responsibility. Marylu felt even more responsibility to her family than I did.

George said he understood my position, but, he argued, it couldn't hurt for him to hear me preach and for us to preach one time in Kokomo. After talking to George, I said, "Well, as long as you know that it is unlikely that we would accept a call to pastor in Kokomo, we will come and speak."

Since we were planning to visit Marylu's sister who was just beginning school at the University of Illinois (Champagne/Urbana), we thought we would make a vacation of it.

When we visited HPC, we were not very impressed. The buildings were nice (especially compared to a storefront) but run down. The congregation was

made up of about 70 mostly elderly people, and many did not join in with congregational music. The music was played twice as slow as I had ever heard, and there didn't seem to be a drop of enthusiasm anywhere.

When all was said and done, Marylu and I discussed our impression that evening. Neither of us felt this is where we wanted to be. But God had different ideas. The Holy Spirit worked within Marylu and I, and gave us both a desire to accept the call, should it be given to us.

The two of us had not discussed matters since we had left Kokomo. Several weeks after our visit, I said to Marylu, "You know, if that church in Kokomo calls us, I think I would like to go."

Marylu gave me an amazed look, and replied, "You know, Ed, I have been thinking the same exact thing!" The Lord had quietly put a seemingly unreasonable idea into both our hearts.

The elders at HPC phoned and said they had chosen another candidate, but he declined. I was the second choice — was I still interested?

Before I accepted the call, I felt I needed my sister's permission. She gave us her blessing. Our families were very understanding, but, being non-evangelicals, could not understand why we did not eventually return to the Chicago area.

We could not make weekend trips to see them; I work Sundays. My sister offered, "We'll have some place to visit on weekends." She ended up visiting us about once every other year.

We did pay a price to stay in Kokomo, but we both knew this is where God had called us. I officially became pastor of Highland Park Church on December 1, 1983. Although we have had our share of negative experiences over the years, by and large our time here has been positive, joyful, and rich with meaning and ministry. We are so glad God called us here to HPC.

Missionary Letters

Dawsons

August, 2016

Dear Pastor Ed and Friends at HPC,

We're grateful that Matt had a productive time with Decio in Puerto Rico last week, despite his headaches.

The Body Builder

Matt walked Decio, as the new Chair of the Board of Directors of the Wycliffe Global Alliance, through the Board Policy Manual. They also prepared for the fall Board meetings. After work, Decio and his wife took Matt on a tour of historic San Juan.

Yesterday, we had the privilege of having Estella over for lunch before she leaves Dallas. She's the Wycliffe mom we mentioned last week, one of a handful with whom I pray on a weekly basis. (In case you don't remember, Estella and her husband work in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Her husband and younger son are already back in PNG and attended the Urat New Testament dedication.)

Estella's 17-year-old son Micah was one of the photojournalists for the Urat NT dedication. Their family is based in Ukarumpa. To get to the Urat village where the dedication took place, Micah and his dad had to fly two hours in a small plane to a coastal town, then ride six hours in the back of an open-bed truck over pot-holed and gravel roads. Micah writes: *"I got leg cramps on the truck, and several people got sick, but God managed to show his faithfulness, like always! This trip has been amazing and I have learned to live in the simplicity of life. No computers, no fancy houses, no hot water, no constant internet access, but the mere necessities of life."*

Speaking of necessities of life, the Urat now have access in their heart language to the Bread of Life! The team there is gearing up to hold more literacy classes and Scripture engagement workshops. They also plan to adapt the NT into another dialect of Urat before tackling translation of the Old Testament.

Micah continues, *"...these Bibles don't just translate themselves. Teams of thousands of people around the world are making this a reality for the tribes in the most remote locations."*

Part of those thousands of people are administrative support workers like us; and behind all of us, language and support workers, there are thousands of partners like YOU! Together, we are fulfilling life's purpose of reflecting God's glory and growing the community of His worshippers.

Praise God for:

- His goodness in allowing us to be a part of His grand plan.
- His mercy in giving Matt a good trip to Puerto Rico; he was able to concentrate and also to have fun.

- The advancement of His Kingdom, as reflected in Micah's report from the Urat NT dedication.

Please ask God for:

- Transformation in the Urat community, for His glory.
- Younger-aged Urat believers to join the translation team. Hikka, the Finnish translator is retiring, and the other two translators are not that young, There is still much work to be done.
- More workers for the harvest in PNG in general. In this country of 7.6 million people, there are 839 living, indigenous languages. Honestly, how many of us learned about PNG in school? I didn't. Most of the remaining 300+ people groups who still need their own Bible don't even have an alphabet.
- Wisdom for the doctors of Tony, the Director of the PNG organization of the Wycliffe Global Alliance. Tony was unable to go to the Urat NT dedication due to health issues. May they figure out what is wrong and what is needed to bring Tony to a place where he can function in a healthy way. I first met Tony at InterMission Global in 2014; Matt met him the following year. We'd love to see him back at the helm of BTA, the PNG mission.
- Peace, as Valerie heads back to college. I will drive down with her and unload her belongings into her apartment Monday morning, while she is at an all-day training for Baylor Welcome Week.

Please continue to ask God for:

- His clear direction as to what local mission I should pursue. I've started in dabbling in two (a vibrant church down the road and the local crisis pregnancy center), offering my administrative skills to their staff a couple of hours a week.
- My parents to experience the joy and comfort of the Lord's presence, not anxiety nor loneliness.
- Jessica to have the desire to nurture her relationship with Jesus and use her talents for His glory; Christians to reach out to her.

May you have a wonderful week, soaking in God's goodness and reflecting it to those around you!

Love and Blessings,
Janet & Matt

Serving with the Wycliffe Global Alliance

Personal address: 7206 Blackwillow Ln, Dallas, TX 75249

Phone number: 469-212-2155

Mission address: Wycliffe Bible Translators, PO Box 628200, Orlando, FL 32862-8200, www.wycliffe.org

For financial partnership, please click [here](#) or include with your check a separate note indicating "Preference for the Wycliffe ministry of Matt and Janet Dawson"

 **Smile** 

I worked over the summer for a tour-bus company in Washington DC. While we were driving past the Washington Monument, a woman asked me, "How do they get all the flags to fly in the same direction?"

Here are some odd comments doctors wrote on their patients' charts:

- "The patient has been depressed ever since she began seeing me."
- "Patient has two teenage children but no other abnormalities."
- "Patient is numb from her town down."

Special Medicine

I overheard two older men talking about their health problems at our church. "My new doctor doesn't just treat the symptoms, he treats both the mind and the body." "Hmm," the second man grunted and thought for a moment; then he asked, "Does he give a discount if the mind is already gone?"

Promises

Several years ago when my husband and I were young enough to be confident, we stood in front of friends and family and promised things to each other. We promised to freely give our love, our time, our bodies, and our wills. We promised that to the best of our ability we would model Christ and His Church.

And it was beautiful.

Almost too beautiful, because little did we realize what we were actually promising; little did we understand that giving all those things actually meant sacrifice. And not in the poetic way we had used the word. No, it meant what it is: *broken, bloody, excruciating death*. It meant dying like Christ. It meant crucifixion.

And it meant failing because even our best promises that day were destined to be broken. Instead of loving, we have been selfish, we have been petulant, we have been angry. Instead of faithful, we have been faithless. We have suffered, not simply for each other, but *because of each other*—we have driven the nails into each other's hands.

But there was another thing that we didn't realize that day—Someone else was making promises too. Promises like,

I will never leave you or forsake you.

I am close to the brokenhearted. I rescue those whose spirits are crushed.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

I know the plans I have for you... plans for good, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

I am the resurrection and the life.

And it has been *these* promises that have brought us through the last ten years; it will be these promises that will carry us through even more. It is the promise that in the thousand deaths we have and will die, He will raise us up again; that when everything seems beyond hope, He will stretch out His hand with mercy and love; that He will be our resurrection and life.

So, today, I smile a bit to think how blissfully ignorant we were ten years ago, how utterly incapable we were of keeping our promises. But today, I'll also laugh out loud with sheer joy to think that He *wasn't* and He *isn't*.

Hannah Anderson lives in Warsaw, Indiana, and is the author of Made For More. You can find her at sometimesalight.com.

 **Quotes** 

We may not be able to prevent other people from being our enemies, but we can prevent ourselves from being enemies toward others.
Warren Wiersbe

God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfill His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Those who go to Heaven ride on a pass and enter into blessings that they never earned ... but all who go to hell pay their own way.

I have held many things in my hands, and have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

Martin Luther

Recipe of the Month

Taco Seasoning Mix for Ground Beef

Anonymous

1 ½ Tablespoons corn flour
 1 ½ Tablespoons chili powder
 ½ teaspoon onion powder
 ½ teaspoon garlic powder
 ½ teaspoon seasoned salt
 ½ teaspoon paprika
 ½ teaspoon garlic salt
 ¼ teaspoon cumin powder
 ½ teaspoon garlic salt
 ¼ teaspoon sugar
 1 teaspoon dried minced onion
 ½ teaspoon beef bouillon granules
 ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Brown 1 ½ pounds ground beef; add ¾ - 1 cup water and your taco seasoning mix. Heat thoroughly.

**When I make this, I multiply the recipe by 10 or 12 and store it in a large container.

**For a lower sodium version, leave out the garlic salt, and increase the garlic powder amount to ¾ teaspoon.

The ABC's of Wisdom: Building Character with Solomon - Tact Making a Point Without Making An Enemy

Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

Proverbs 25:15

Someone noted that tact is like a girdle. It enables you to organize the awkward truth more attractively. A Chinese proverb says it this way: Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from a friend's forehead.

Both those statements remind us that often we are called up to say "hard truth" to others. Sometimes

that means risking the love of those we hold most dear. We must tell them the truth or they will not get better. Perhaps they simply don't see it, or don't want to see it. They may have a bad habit that is holding them back, or they may have an unseen character flaw that causes them to lose the respect of others. You know it, you see it, and you care about them. Do you care enough to tell the truth? Do you also care enough to speak with tact?

Proverbs 25:15 spells out two strategies you can use. The first is patience. That means waiting till the right moment to speak your mind. Timing is everything. If you embarrass someone publicly, he isn't likely to respond favorably. Likewise, if you ambush someone the moment he walks through the door, he will regard your words as a personal attack. So before you speak, take your time. Think. Pray. Ask God to give you an open door. When it comes, then you are ready for the second strategy.

Second, use a gentle tongue. Just as a "gentle answer turns away wrath" (15:1), even so a gentle tongue can break a bone. Here is the picture of a hardened bone being softened bit by bit by the touch of a gentle tongue. It won't happen quickly, but in most cases gentleness accomplishes far more than threats or intimidation.

In making a plea for tact, I am asking for nothing more than that we "[speak] the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). Jesus did it, and is remembered today as the supreme embodiment of love. Yet no one ever spoke the truth like He did. He wasn't afraid to speak truth to power, to challenge the rulers of His day. And when necessary He didn't hesitate to take a whip and clean out the temple-which doesn't sound like a very tactful thing to do. But He did it, and since He was the Son of God it must have been the right thing to do.

So what exactly is this gentle tongue that can break a bone? It is the ability to say the right thing at the right time in the right way without saying anything you didn't want to say and that didn't need to be said. A tactful person seeks to find a private place and a fitting moment. It means you refuse to dump all your frustrations on another person. You say what needs to be said in the quickest, kindest, most direct way possible. Then you move on.

Tact is really nothing more than wisdom applied to the "girdle moments" of life. Remember, when you have to speak the awkward truth, don't use a hatchet to get rid of a fly.

Lord Jesus, I pray for Your Spirit to fill my lips so that I might speak as You did. Amen.

Do you have trouble with tact? If in doubt, ask a friend and you'll get a quick answer.

What is the difference between tact and flattery? Between boldness and brusqueness? Why do we so often confuse them?

by Dr. Ray Pritchard

My Utmost for His Highest - Are You Discouraged or Devoted?

...Jesus...said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have...and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. Luke 18:22-23

Have you ever heard the Master say something very difficult to you? If you haven't, I question whether you have ever heard Him say anything at all. Jesus says a tremendous amount to us that we listen to, but do not actually hear. And once we do hear Him, His words are harsh and unyielding.

Jesus did not show the least concern that this rich young ruler should do what He told him, nor did Jesus make any attempt to keep this man with Him. He simply said to him, "Sell all that you have...and come, follow Me." Our Lord never pleaded with him; He never tried to lure him— He simply spoke the strictest words that human ears have ever heard, and then left him alone.

Have I ever heard Jesus say something difficult and unyielding to me? Has He said something personally to me to which I have deliberately listened— not something I can explain for the sake of others, but something I have heard Him say directly to me? This man understood what Jesus said. He heard it clearly, realizing the full impact of its meaning, and it broke his heart. He did not go away as a defiant person, but as one who was sorrowful and discouraged. He had come to Jesus on fire with zeal and determination, but the words of Jesus simply froze him. Instead of producing enthusiastic devotion to Jesus, they produced heartbreaking discouragement.

And Jesus did not go after him, but let him go. Our Lord knows perfectly well that once His word is truly heard, it will bear fruit sooner or later. What is so terrible is that some of us prevent His words from bearing fruit in our present life. I wonder what we will say when we finally make up our minds to be devoted to Him on that particular point? One thing is certain— He will never throw our past failures back in our faces.

Wisdom from Oswald Chambers

The great word of Jesus to His disciples is Abandon. When God has brought us into the relationship of disciples, we have to venture on His word; trust entirely to Him and watch that when He brings us to the venture, we take it.

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

AWANA

Calling all children ... ages 3 - 6th grade ... AWANA begins Wednesday, September 7, 2016. It begins at 6:15 pm and ends at 7:45pm.

If you are already an AWANA attender, please ask your friends to join in the fun!

And ... if you are an adult, and want to plug into a ministry here at HPC, please consider joining AWANA as a listener or other helper. See our AWANA Commander, Barri Burtch, for details.

Bonfire Youth

Bonfire Youth will reignite on Wednesday nights following the AWANA schedule. All 7th through 12th graders welcome! Our plan is to be a discipleship group, not a "high intensity" approach. We will meet from 6:15 to 7:45. For the first 15 or 20 minutes we will help with AWANA. Then we'll head upstairs to the third floor for a discipleship time. We are going to learn some things all disciples should know, and then also begin discussing key proverbs from the Book of Proverbs. We will reserve the last half hour for card games, board games, dominoes, moments of absurdity, or just talk. Parents are welcome to join us.

Pastor Ed will lead the ministry (we can use another couple of adult volunteers; we have one firm volunteer so far). Keep up with us on the Bonfire Facebook page. !

September 2016

28	29	30	31	1 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	2	3
4 No Evening Services	5 Labor Day	6 Deaconess Mtg, 6:30	7 AWANA / Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	8 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	9	10
11 Bible Study 6:30	12	13 Deacons' Mtg., 7:00	14 AWANA / Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	15 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	16	17
18 Quarterly Congregational Meeting/Jesus Lodge, 6:00 pm	19	20	21 AWANA / Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	22 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	23	24
25 Food Contest 5:00 pm - meatloaf mashed potatoes- brownies	26	27 Elders' Meeting 7:00 pm	28 AWANA / Bonfire Youth 6:15-7:45 pm	29 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	30	1

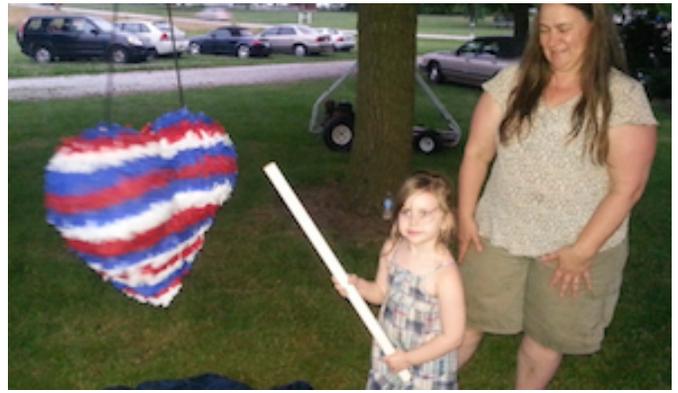
Sunday Events:

- Early Service, 8:30 am
- Sunday School, 9:30 am
- Morning Service 10:30 am
- Bonfire 6:00-7:30 pm
- Jesus Lodge, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
- Sunday Evening Bible Study, 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Important Events:

- No Evening Services - September 4, 2016
- AWANA / Bonfire Youth begin - September 7, 2016, 6:15 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.
- Bible Study - September 11, 2016, 6:30 p.m.
- Quarterly Congregational Meeting / Jesus Lodge, September 18, 2016, 6:00 p.m.
- Food Contest - September 25, 2016, 5:00 p.m. - meatloaf, mashed potatoes w/gravy, brownies
- Ladies' Bible Study - September 2016 Thursdays, 12:15 pm - 2:15 p.m.

The Body Builder



2016 Independence Day Party - Loisch Lodge

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