



The Courage to go forward

Be strong and of good courage ...for the Lord your God goes with you (Joshua 1:9)

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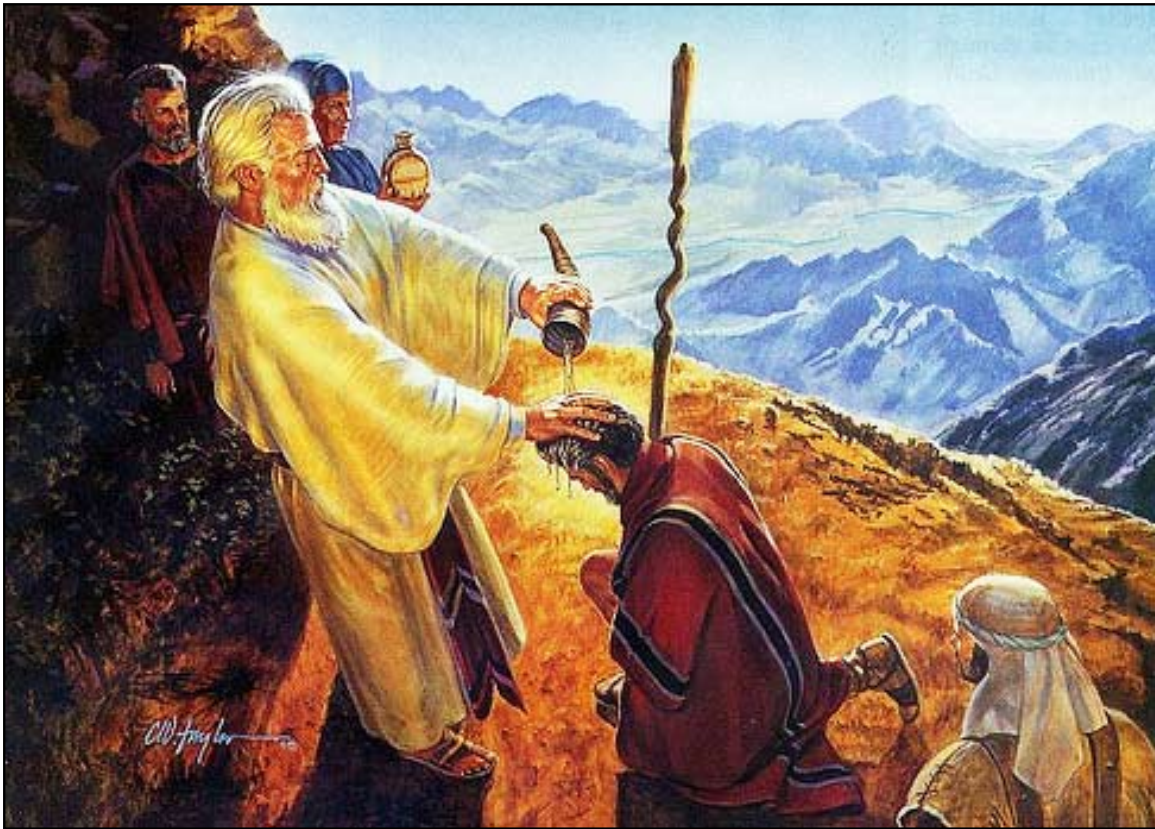
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Moses anoints Joshua "Be strong and courageous, the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9)

The Courage to Go Forward – and the Strength to Persevere

by Charles Simpson

A number of years ago, during the early days of the Jesus Movement, a young man from our church invited some of the kids from a local drive-in to come to a fellowship at the church. "Can we bring the group?" one of them said. "Sure, bring the whole group," the fellow replied.

He didn't know that "the group" was a hard rock band. The young people in our church showed up at the fellowship hall that night and found the band already there – sunglasses and all – tuning up their instruments. They had enough mikes and PA systems to give a concert in a stadium. They looked terrible, and sounded worse. Our kind and naive youth leader did allow them to play one song. One of the girls in the youth group went outside and threw up.

By the end of the evening, however, the kids in the band felt that we really loved them. The drummer was converted. They began bringing their friends to our services, and pretty soon the church was full of young people who needed Christ. One Sunday morning a guru even came down the aisle – medallion, robe, and everything - and gave his life to Jesus in front of the whole congregation.

It took courage to let those kids into our fellowship hall. It took courage to let them keep coming back with their

friends. It took courage that I, frankly, did not have. It ruptured the peaceful pattern of church life I was comfortable with.

I began to see the importance of courage in our Christian lives. God is continually shattering our notions of how he works. He is constantly asking us to step out into uncharted territory – uncharted by us, that is, not by him.

To step out, we need courage. That's one of the many qualities of character that only God can supply. Look at what the rock band incident led to.

We developed a reputation for being able to help street people. One day a physician came to me and asked me to help a family member who was on drugs.

I went to the young man's house – an old, three story structure that was sorely in need of repair. I went up the long stairs and walked down a long hall to the back of the house to his room. It was dark. You could feel the oppression in the place. In the room, I found a shriveled-up addict trembling in the bed. There were holes in the wall where he shot roaches with a .38 pistol.

I was supposed to tell this man about Jesus Christ!

I talked, he listened, and invited me back. A few days later he said, "There's someone else you need to talk to."

He took me across town to another terrible looking run-down house. A fellow drew back a little slot in the door, let us in, and quickly closed the door behind us. The lights were down, and I realized that I was in a house of prostitution on my way to witness to a hooker. I nervously sat in the parlor while the man who brought me ran up the stairs and disappeared.

Courage failed me. I started for the door. But before I could get out, the addict came downstairs with his girlfriend. She had been supplying him with money for his habit. And he said, "Tell her."

"Tell her what?" I said.

"Tell her what you've been telling me."

"Here? Let's get her out of here. Let's get her to church."

"No. You tell her right now. We don't have long."

So I told her. Nothing seemed to happen that night, but later both the addict and his girlfriend gave their hearts to the Lord.

Fifteen years later I met the woman again. "I just want you to know that I am still walking with God," she said. "I have a prison ministry, and every day girls are giving their hearts to Jesus Christ."

If I had had the time to think about all of this, I would have been so frightened about potential repercussions from church people that I would have been too prejudiced to probe the enemy lines. But a beautiful thing about Jesus is that "He will not judge by what his eyes see, nor make a decision by what his ears hear" (Isaiah 11:3). Jesus doesn't judge by appearances.



What war?

We are in a war. We've been born into it. The moment we accept Christ – evil is our enemy. We wage war against every crime, all deceitfulness, all suffering, and every human battle that has ever been fought – whether with angry voices, courtroom tricks, swords and spears, guns and tanks, or bombs and missiles. These are the earthly manifestations of a cosmic war that has been going on since Satan's rebellion.

The origins of this war are described in Revelation 12:7-9:

And there was a war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Satan, our enemy from before the beginning of time, sowed subterfuge and deception, discord and subversion. That's how the enemy works; he militates against the truth. In fact, he has convinced many people that there is no war.

A major objective in this war is to advance truth. We have to fight for it. There are places in this world where you couldn't find out the truth even if you were willing to buy it. There are places in this world where you'd be in trouble if you spoke the truth. Truth is a cause that someone has to fight for. To the degree that we are free, it is because someone fought for and paid a price for truth.

Ultimately, we have to choose which side we're on. We say either: "There is such a thing as truth," or "I don't know, and I don't care." But we are all forced into the choice; we can't be neutral. Neutrality is an alliance with evil.

This spiritual war is inherent in the Great Commission. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

The Great Commission invites active hostility. Not everyone wants to be a disciple. Jesus didn't say, "Go and disciple all those except those that don't want it." He said to go to all the nations.



Joshua leading the Israelites across the Jordan River

The challenge to be courageous

The 1828 edition of Noah Webster's dictionary says that "courage" comes from the French word for "heart." It means "to have heart." Courage is the quality that enables us to face danger and difficulty with firmness and without fear or depression.

In defining courage, Webster cites Deuteronomy, chapter 31, where Moses is laying hands on Joshua and telling him to have courage. So I went to Webster for a definition of courage and he sent me back to Joshua.

Joshua is one of the best biblical models of a courageous man. He was one of the twelve men who spied out the promised land; he and Caleb said it was possible to go into the promised land while the other ten said it was not. The majority prevailed. But Joshua stayed committed to God's purpose for forty years.

When Moses died, Joshua succeeded him. The first message Joshua gets as a new leader is, "Moses is dead." This is more than a statement of fact; this is a statement of responsibility.



The second message he gets is, "Arise, take these people across Jordan and take the land that's been promised to them." Joshua didn't have thirty days to mourn for Moses and then to go through his notes to be sure he knew what he was doing. It all came at once: "Moses is dead. You're the leader. Get them across the Jordan, and drive out the enemy." It seemed God gave Joshua an insurmountable mission.

At this point God tells Joshua to be courageous. When God says something once we should take note. But he says it three times, and then adds, "don't tremble." That's a clue.

See how Joshua responds. He doesn't look for a way to avoid confrontation. He doesn't only talk about taking the land. Rather he looks for a way to get over to the other side so he can deal with the enemy. Joshua also had the courage to inspire his people to face danger, to keep the rules, and to stay together when they want to divide. In fact, he banished discouragement among his people.

We all know what happened. Through his courageous leadership, doing exactly what the Lord commanded regardless of the pain or risk, Joshua led his people into the promised land.

We need to see the call to be courageous in the light of his mission to take the land. We cannot take the land and obtain God's promises without dealing with the issue of courage – that is, to be spiritually vigilant, alert, ready to spring into action, able to face danger (real danger, if we are talking about real promises) with firmness, and without fear of depression.



The pillar of fire and the tabernacle in the wilderness

Courage and the presence of God

Another Old Testament passage casts light on a different aspect of obtaining courage – the importance of abiding in

the presence of God.

[In Exodus 13:21 we read how God made his presence known to Israel. "The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light".]

God lifted his presence when Israel made the golden calf. Moses took the tabernacle down and pitched it a good distance from the camp. If anyone sought the Lord he had to go outside the camp (Exodus 33).

Then God spoke to Moses. "Go on up to the land I promised you," he said. "I'll send an angel and drive out your enemies. But my presence won't go with you" (see Exodus 33:1-3).

But then Moses said: "If your presence doesn't go with us, I don't want to go" (see Exodus 33:15). He wasn't after what God could give him; he was after God! So God decided to go up with him.

We can do a lot of things without God's presence. He can even do a lot of things for us. But the presence of God is our source of courage and conquest.

The presence is our point of reference. When the presence leads us into battle, our lives may be on the line, but God's purpose will prevail.

Before I was converted in 1951, I wrestled with the presence of God. I wanted to be a Christian, but I didn't believe I could be a Christian. I wrestled with the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit. Finally I decided to follow the presence. I trusted Christ to make me a Christian, and he did.

In 1955, God called me to be a preacher. I didn't want to be a preacher. But I could see where God's presence was going, and I went through the fear of losing the presence. Finally I surrendered to the call and followed the presence.

In 1963, when I was spiritually dry, I didn't want to be a Pentecostal. I didn't want to speak in tongues. Tongues seemed like nothing but trouble to me. I was looking for the presence, not tongues, but the presence moved me right into a Pentecostal experience, including tongues.

The presence took me where I didn't want to go. I wanted to move up the denominational ladder, and into certain circles that were appealing to me. But the presence seemed to move me to a new place, against all my roots, history, heritage, ambition. The presence of God led me to act courageously.

Follow the presence. God has a purpose that's different than yours. If you're following your understanding and your logic, you're missing the focal point – the presence of God.

[A point of no return](#)

Just as Israel crossed the Jordan, the presence of God will lead you past the point of no return, where your whole life becomes committed to God's purposes.

The presence will lead you to points of action, steps you must take. Discern where the presence of God is moving in your life, and follow it. You will not be disappointed.

Arc you facing a big decision in your life? Arc you wrestling with the changes you feel the Lord is leading you to

make? Follow the presence. Make it your point of reference. Don't be afraid if it leads you into deep waters. God will reveal himself to you in a new way.

A friend of mine said, "If Columbus had turned back, nobody would have blamed him. But nobody would have remembered him, either." Columbus fought the odds and even his crew to continue his voyage. You can turn back, but you'll miss the mission that God has for you. Follow the presence and press on with courage!

[This article was originally published in *New Covenant Magazine*, October 1987. [Charles Simpson](#) is senior pastor of Gulf Coast Covenant Church in Mobile, Alabama. He is author of *The Challenge to Care and Courageous Living* (Servant Books) and is Editor-in-Chief of [One-to-One Magazine](#).]

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Going Against the Tide

Lessons in faith and courage – Daniel and his friends in Babylon – Part I

Adapted from a presentation by John Keating given during the Adelante Conference

Daniel, a key Old Testament prophet, is one of my favorite young heroes. He lived in the time of Israel's greatest disaster – during the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and the Babylonian exile of many of its people.

In the Book of Daniel we read the firsthand account of Daniel being deported from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, conquered Jerusalem in 606 B.C., he decided to bring back some of the best and the brightest of the youth of Israel to become his servants, to be taught the culture and language of Babylon, and to be assimilated into what he considered to be the vastly superior Babylonian culture.

How did Daniel and his three companions react to their deportation and new life in Babylon?

They could have chosen to be resentful towards their captors, and in anger rant against them: “These are the rats who destroyed our nation,

From the Book of Daniel Chapter 1

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoi'akim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoi'akim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

3 Then the king commanded Ash'penaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 youths without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters

wrecked our city, tore down the house of God and stole the holy things, blinded our king and took us off into captivity.” Like an underground resistance movement, seeking to undermine both culture and society, they could have chosen to act as “God’s terrorists” and try to take it down.

Did they experience shame and insecurity before the apparently stronger victorious culture they were now immersed in? They could have reasoned that the safest thing to do was to simply to huddle in a corner, keep their head down, and hope that their captives would just leave them alone. But that would amount to living like a coward.

Another option they might have considered was to assimilate to the new culture with open-arms and open-heart. “If you can’t lick ‘em, join ‘em...” That would have required a readiness to forget who I really am, and just jump right into living like everyone else around me. A decision to simply accept the prevailing culture, go along with it, be shaped by its values and its customs, and look as much as possible just like everyone else. A lot of the Jews in exile probably did this. You know what happened to them? They disappeared. Their lives proved relatively meaningless for God’s greater purpose for his people and for the world.

Daniel and his three friends chose none of these options. They chose instead the course which the prophet Jeremiah gave:

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:4-7).

Jeremiah’s instruction was very simple. Know who you are in God. Love who you are in God. Be who you are wherever God places you. Live in great hope, and grow as a people of God. Live for him and with him, and love those around you with his heart.

Models for today

In a number of ways I think that Daniel and his friends are excellent models for young Christians today:

- Daniel and his friends were young.
- They found themselves living in a foreign culture, which

and language of the Chalde'ans.

5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the rich food which the king ate, and of the wine which he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

6 Among these were Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah of the tribe of Judah.

7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshaz'zar, Hanani'ah he called Shadrach, Mish'a-el he called Meshach, and Azari'ah he called Abed'nego.

8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's rich food, or with the wine which he drank; therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. 9 And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs; 10 and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear lest my lord the king, who appointed your food and your drink, should see that you were in poorer condition than the youths who are of your own age. So you would endanger my head with the king."

11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah;

12 "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's rich food be observed by you, and according to what you see deal with your servants."

14 So he hearkened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's rich food.

16 So the steward took away their rich food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

17 As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all letters and wisdom;

generally paid no attention to their faith, and when it did, was relatively hostile to it.

- Furthermore, they found themselves in circumstances in which they were being taught the wisdom of this foreign and unbelieving culture, and they had face the strength of this culture directly, on their own.
- Their own people were passing through a very bad time during the Babylonian exile. They did not enjoy a good reputation, or much honor. It wasn't a big advantage to be associated with the people of God, and the temptation for these young people to be ashamed of their own people, and to avoid being associated with them, must have been considerable.

Daniel and his friends were all naturally very bright, talented, and good-looking (you can read the description in the first chapter of the Book of Daniel). However, Daniel and his friends did not rely upon their natural benefits for their success in life. Nor did they allow the low reputation of their people to be a reason to evade identification with them, or to call into question their fidelity to God.

Faith, courage, boldness, and humility

Somehow, and for some reason known only to God, these young people were chosen by the Lord for a particular mission. God's hand was upon them; his grace was with them; and they knew it. What was their response to the challenges of this situation? They chose to stand together in the Lord and to act with faith, courage, boldness, and humility. And God was able to do a great work through these young people – far beyond what they could have expected or even hoped for.

As we can see from these verses, Daniel obviously had a lot going for him, and it would have been a strong temptation for him to do his best to look like the “winners”, the “beautiful people” of the society around him, to assimilate as much as he could, to make his background very low profile, to become practically indistinguishable from the other promising and gifted young people around him. Many of the other young Jews who were deported to Babylon probably did just that. They are not mentioned here in the book of Daniel, or anywhere else, because their lives proved meaningless. They didn't make a difference with their lives. They had no impact for the Lord of any great weight, and they have been utterly forgotten.

Standing out from the crowd

Daniel and his three friends stand out from the crowd. Not because they were more handsome, nor more naturally gifted with grace, charm, intelligence, or anything else. Rather, because they were faithful to the Lord and to their people, and to the covenant which God had established with them. They knew who they were, and they were not ashamed of it. They knew who the Lord was, and they were true to

and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king spoke with them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hanani'ah, Mish'a-el, and Azari'ah; therefore they stood before the king.

20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. 21 And Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

him.

Their fidelity was costly. It required faith, courage, and boldness on their part, and put them at various points in mortal danger. It also put them in a place to be blessed and used by the Lord in extraordinary ways that resulted in their being placed in ever higher roles of influence and of authority in the society/culture that they were called upon to live in. This in turn required of them even greater care, vigilance, and fidelity. It made them even more the target of enemies who feared their influence and authority; the accusations and attacks of enemies only increased the need to respond to their circumstances in faith, in righteousness, with boldness, courage, and humility.

Daniel's dedication

In Chapter 1 in the Book of Daniel (verses 8-16) we read how Daniel decided firmly in his own heart that he would not defile himself by partaking of a number of the pleasant and desirable things that were offered to him in his favored role. They were things that were forbidden by the Law, but hey, everyone was eating them and enjoying them, and besides, he had to eat something and this was what was available. Even from the point of view of being prudent and reasonable, you could make a good case that it could have been acceptable for Daniel to take part in what was being given to everyone.

But in his zeal for the Lord and for the covenant which his people had with the Lord, Daniel not only didn't wimp out, he decided that he wouldn't settle for normal prudence. Rather, he would boldly go out on a limb, and in faith he would give the Lord the chance to do something extraordinary for him and in him.



First Daniel went to the chief eunuch and asked for special consideration (see verse 8, Chapter 1). This was already rocking the boat, and could have been asking for trouble. He risked the possible displeasure, anger, and rejection of the chief eunuch – on the one hand, trusting that the Lord would give him favor in his eyes, but on the other hand, also being ready to face the consequences if the Lord chose not to do so. As it turned out, the Lord did give him favor and compassion in the eyes of the chief eunuch. However, the man was (reasonably enough) afraid for his own skin (because it was the king himself who had decided what the young people would eat), and was reluctant to make the kind of exception that Daniel and his friends were requesting.

Radical plunge in faith

Daniel and his friends took a deeper and more radical plunge in faith (see verses 11-13, Chapter 1). Running the risk of getting into serious trouble with the chief eunuch, they went to the eunuch's steward to propose a test that relied completely upon the sovereign intervention of God in his life. Putting themselves completely in the Lord's hands, they proposed that the results of the test would be so clear and apparent that the steward himself could make his own decision after observing those results. They also found favor in the steward's eyes, and he agreed to the test. Daniel and his friends went onto a very strict vegetarian diet that would be safely keep them within the dietary demands of the Law, hoping in the Lord for results that were totally beyond their control. The steward must have been blown away by their request: healthy young men asking to not have to eat the meat, the deserts, or to drink the wine, so that they could live on vegetables and water? This is a serious sacrifice of love in itself on the part of Daniel and his friends – a three year special fast!

Anointing for greatness

God acted in these young men of faith, courage, boldness, and humility, anointing them in a special way (see verses 14-16, Chapter 1). They had shown themselves capable of standing firm for the Lord, of going against the current around them. This opened the way for the Lord to give them extraordinary grace, and to cause them to stand out – again, not merely on the basis of their personal merits, but on the basis of an anointing for greatness that the Lord himself was giving them.

It was manifested in two different ways: First, they end up with better color, health, and physical vitality than any of the others around them, who supposedly were eating much better. The 10-day test became a three year program, and the Lord sustained and strengthened them supernaturally.

Second, they were granted by God a degree of wisdom and insight so far above that of the other youths that they became standouts even

among the established wise men and magicians of the realm (see verses 17-20, Chapter 1). God wanted them to stand out, so that he could glorify himself through them. Beyond this, Daniel was given a spiritual gift of understanding visions and dreams. It is this gift which makes him famous in the kingdom, and which makes him one of the four great prophets of the Old Testament. God also gave them favor in the eyes of king Nebuchadnezzar, who gave them a special place before him, and throughout his reign the king found their wisdom and counsel 10 times better than that of anyone else among his wise men, enchanters, and magicians.



Lessons for today

I think we should examine Daniel's example very deeply. This is not just a nice story. It is instruction from the word of God about how to live as young people in an alien culture in a way that is faithful to God, and available for the mission that he is entrusting to us. It would have been so normal, so easy, so obvious for Daniel and his friends to take the safe way, to follow the crowd, to not rock the boat, to not do something in their faithfulness to God that would make them look strange and different.

- They didn't take the easy way, nor the coward's way.
- They didn't allow themselves to be seduced by the offer of wealth, power, and pleasures.
- They also didn't take the hostile and aggressive way that would see their surrounding culture as the enemy.

They recognized that, even in a situation of many challenges and difficulties, they had a special identity, a call from the Lord. They pursued fidelity to the Lord with a humble boldness that won them the favor of those whose favor they needed. They went out on a limb in their trust that God would intervene on their behalf, that the Lord would use them where he had placed them, and that their best response in

every circumstance would be faith and faithfulness, with a blending of boldness and humility which allowed lots of room for grace to do its work.

Let's choose to follow their example and allow the Lord to strengthen us in faith, courage, boldness, and humility.

[Next month Part II: Faithfulness and Courage Under Fire
– Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego]

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Hope and Expectation for a Joshua Generation

by Paul Jordan

Around 100 people were scattered all over the room huddled in threes praying for a brother or sister. What is normally a murmur was more of a hum that night. Another 300 continued in worship, standing, singing, sitting on the floor, as we prayed and listened to prophetic word.

He was only around 10 years old, a child of a family who were helping, but he confidently took the microphone. He spoke in his own language and the translator relayed the simple yet profound message. “The Lord says: leave everything and follow me.” My ears were tingling, my eyes watering a tear.

It is normal that when God’s people gather, he speaks. There had been much prophetic action – three things remain in my mind.



Special Kairos Report on Adelante Conference – August 2011

Hear the Call of the Lord

by Jean Barbara

I returned from Adelante this summer with an even greater conviction that this time of grace, this invitation to enter through the open door has a special connotation for our young people.

The first generation has worked hard to build the foundations, live the call, and pursue the mission as God was revealing it to us.

The next generation is now called to extend our life and mission based on what their elders have done so far, but far beyond, clothed with a new grace to engage the new reality of this fast changing world and face its challenges. This is a time for them to evangelize, to build outreaches, to form other people into disciples and missionaries and help them integrate our communities.

To the leaders I say: you need to give them space to make mistakes, encourage them to take risks in the Lord that you would otherwise not necessarily take, and release the necessary financial resources to provide them with income for part-time or full-time jobs as the ministry requires.

To the young men and women I say: **Adelante**, hear the call of God and respond with generosity, courage, and zeal, equipped with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the wisdom and blessing of your elders.

[Jean Barbara is President of the Sword of the

“I am doing something new.” This word of hope came in many different ways. A Joshua Generation building on a Moses Generation. There was clearly a global flavour to it – the Lord raising up a Kairos generation for a new kind of mission and spiritual battle in these days. There was also a sense in which our European work was being directly addressed – a sense of renewed hope rippling across our continent. Our response must be to believe and persevere in hope. But also to be open for new ideas and means of fulfilling the mission given us. Adelante.



“We should expect miracles.” The fact that the Spanish government allowed us to plant a Christian youth conference in a military base was a miracle in itself. This repeated word was a call to remember that God is God – a call to move with active faith. There were many answered prayers. Broken bones were healed. Spanish doctors were in denial. May his action stir our faith. Adelante.



Paul Jordan (left) with young men at Adelante

Together in Prayer to Advance His Kingdom by Trevor Perry

This summer Linda and I had the privilege to attend the Adelante Conference.

One may ask: “Why were these aged “baby boomers” asked to attend this young people’s Kairos event?”

It certainly wasn’t our good looks or our energy they were after, it was our conviction that prayer works, as the Message Bible translation puts it in Mark 10:27: “Jesus was blunt: ‘No chance at all if you think you can pull it off by yourself. Every chance in the world if you let God do it.’”

We were asked to pray.

We arrived two days before the Conference whilst prep 10 was taking place. We walked the vast grounds of this bizarre location – a military base in the Basque region of Spain – praying for an advancement of the kingdom of God. Our surroundings helped remind us that we are in a real battle, especially a battle for the hearts and minds of our young. As we joined with others it became obvious that together in prayer everything is possible.

Now of course God could do whatever he chooses without our prayer. But for some reason he has invited all of us to be his co-laborers. God has determined that he will use the prayers of his people to accomplish his purposes on this earth.

We are convinced that his kingdom was advanced at Adelante in Spain this year. We saw our wonderful young people respond to invite after invite to lay down their lives for their Lord. We saw unlimited potential displayed before us. Faces of children and grandchildren reflecting their parents’ and grandparents’ zeal for God. These are young people we can be proud of, young people called to make a difference. A people to show the world how wide and long and high and deep is the love of

“Decide for me, don’t hold back, don’t settle for less...” A set of words that ring of an urgent invitation. Many responded in prayer on the last night offering their lives for the first time. Then there were the 30 who came forward to offer their next year of mission to the Lord, and the 30 more who came forward to offer a GAP service year sometime in the future, and the 30 who came forward to offer their sexuality, future relationships, if they should marry or live single. And then there were “the Joshuas”: the 30 who wanted to pray that their whole lives may be offered for the building of our mission. Adelante.

In Spain in 2011 the Lord was taking up an offering of our lives. May we continue to be generous, for his glory.

[Paul Jordan is the Director for [Kairos in Europe and the Middle East](#).]

Jesus Christ.

I think that something very important happened in Adelante in Spain this year. I don’t think things will be the same again for us in our communities in the Sword of the Spirit. We can be confident that Almighty God has our young people in the palm of his hand and that he has huge plans for them. And through them he aims to advance his kingdom and do more with them as part of an international community of communities than we could have asked or imagined.

Let us pray for our young people that God continue to strengthen and equip them in following his call.

[Trevor and Linda Perry are senior leaders in Antioch Community, London, UK]

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New Shoulders, New Shapes

by PM Graham

The taking of new ground. Abundance. An influx of people into our outreaches, and an outpouring of blessing in our life together. This has consistently been the Lord's promise to the Kairos generation.

In his series of talks at Adelante, John Keating drew parallels between this generation and several sets of characters from Scripture: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, young men of God living in exile, who obeyed the Lord's call to take root in a foreign land even while remaining faithful to his law, and so maintained a strong identity in him in the face of a society hungry for their assimilation; Queen Esther, who boldly refused to stand quietly by while her people are persecuted, and realised the Lord had put her in the position she is in "for such a time as this"; and Joshua, who God commissioned with the daunting task of following Moses as the leader of his people, but whose mission looked very different from Moses'.

At a glance, this seems like a confusing mishmash of disparate anecdotes. But these analogies perfectly captured the developing and diversifying of the Sword of the Spirit's mission, through Kairos, in these days. Not of this world, but called to love it stubbornly and mercifully, to be the instruments of its redemption, to change it at its very core, like Daniel and his friends in Babylon. Blessed with positions of influence but challenged to risk these, to risk credibility, popularity, worldly standards, with the spirit of martyrdom, like Esther daring to make demands of a king who fancied himself a god. Heirs to a call and to a people, but charged to lead them into battle against

Special Kairos Report on Adelante Conference
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Adelante: The Vision

1. Calling young people to deeper conversion. Inviting us to meet the Lord in prayer and surrender our lives more fully with all we have.

2. Equipping for daily discipleship.

Offering concrete and practical ways in which we can live the full Christian life to which they are called.

3. Building relationships across nations and cultures.

Providing an environment where we can deepen existing friendships and build new ones to support us in our faith.

4. Stiring vision for our life.

Seeking and sharing what we believe the Lord is calling us to and how we live this out as Kairos.

5. Sending out for mission.

Inspiring and empowering each other to do mission in our local situations and home outreaches.

Who We Are

Kairos is a Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment. In the Bible it is the time when God acts and we are invited to respond.

Kairos is founded on the Christian belief that God has a history with each of us, he has created us with gifts and talents, and he has a purpose for each of our lives. Through our programmes, trainings and environments, *Kairos* aims to form

giants in an alien environment, rather than stagnate in a spirit of nervous sustainment, a Joshua generation, advancing across the Jordan and on to something new.

At Adelante, Martin Steinbereithner, who has overseen and inspired kingdom-building in the Sword of the Spirit for years, spoke of the Kairos generation inheriting the mantle of prophetic, radical discipleship from the previous, trailblazing generation of the Sword of the Spirit; a reference to Elisha taking on Elijah's cloak in 1 Kings 19, a symbolic acceptance of the mentor's mission. It struck me that the same mantle, on new shoulders, takes on a different shape. At Adelante, 800 new shoulders were invited to take on mantles. Be prepared for new shapes.

[Paul Michael (PM) Graham is currently serving as a missionary with [Koinonia](#), the Kairos-affiliated university outreach in London, England.]

the kind of Christian character in young men and women that will help them discover that purpose and step into it with confidence. Most of the different Kairos works throughout Europe are associated with a particular university campus.

Kairos is the organisation that links and resources these works, helps train their leaders and provides programmes where students can serve together on mission trips and service projects. *Kairos* is the youth and university movement of the Sword of the Spirit: an international, ecumenical association of charismatic, covenant communities.

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What Happened at Adelante

by Betty Banks

This August, men and women from Kairos groups in 22 countries headed to Spain. Their destination was not the beach, but a military base in the Basque region where a long-awaited conference – *Adelante* – was being held. It started with *Prep10*, ten days of practical service and training to equip over 100 people for responsibilities both at Adelante and in their home outreaches.



Adelante itself was five awe-inspiring days in which 400 students and young adults came together to share what it means to be part of a growing international network of young people who share a common vision of Christ-centred, ecumenical, missional community. I was one of them.

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prayer meeting at the Soul Food Cafe

World Youth Day and the Soul Food Cafe

by Marie-Claire Flynn

The Soul Food Cafe was a series of events hosted by Kairos in a large outdoor tent during the World Youth Day (WYD) in Madrid. WYD is a worldwide gathering of over a million young Catholics which takes place in a different country every three years. The week-long fiesta led by the Pope offered pilgrims the chance to grow closer to Christ whilst celebrating their faith with many other young Christians. Over 250 Adelante participants, representing a number of different Christian traditions, helped make Kairos' input at WYD a success.

The Soul Food Cafe was an opportunity both for people from all over the world to experience Kairos and for Kairos to forge links to other groups with an interest in our kind of student outreach. We tried to build a rapport with all those that visited the tent by engaging them in conversation and inviting people over to our world map where they could mark their home country with a pin. Jamie Treadwell, who was helping lead the event, encouraged us to make people feel as though they belonged, part of our prayer, our songs and, of course, our Kairos chant (“...1, ...2, ...3, ...EN CRISTO!”).

And so, for two days Kairos welcomed individuals and groups of young people to join a program of music, discussion sessions, testimonies, art displays, a charismatic prayer meeting, line dancing... and selling some much-needed cold drinks. Split into different teams, everyone had a chance to serve one of these aspects of the Soul Food Cafe. This, I felt, was unique as it was the first time that I had experienced my brothers and sisters from many different Kairos outreaches serving as one team. This resulted in a fantastic showcase of Kairos talent: people singing and playing the guitar, people speaking a different language

We slept in barracks and ate military food. We played capture the flag and still have the scratches to prove it. We connected with friends from all over the world and built new relationships. We worshipped and praised the Lord together, and met him. We received teaching on the stories of Daniel, Joshua and Esther and attended a range of workshops – mission, bio-ethics, the single life, Christian courtship, goal setting and writing worship songs were just some of them.



“Adelante!” is Spanish for “go forward!” and the theme of the conference was doing just that – with boldness and courage. As individuals and as a people we were equipped, envisioned and emboldened to take steps for Christ in our lives and our worlds.

After Adelante, 250 people headed to Madrid for *World Youth Day* and to serve young Christians from all over the world at the *Kairos Soul Food Cafe*.

[Betty Banks is a Masters student in Russian Literature and member of [Koinonia](#), the Kairos-affiliated university outreach in London, England.]

every few minutes as they welcomed guests, as well as people that organised the logistics of keeping hundreds of coke cans ice-cold in the +40 C heat.

...An amazing worship time in a tent full of people that we had invited where we sang in English, Polish, Arabic, and Spanish ...that signified to our guests Kairos' unique international scope.

The Soul Food Cafe culminated with the prayer meeting on the Tuesday evening. Despite the fact that many of us were tired, we had an amazing worship time in a tent full of people that we had invited where we sang in English, Polish, Arabic and Spanish. And our huge flag pole carrying over ten different national flags, signified to our guests Kairos's unique international scope amongst many other groups there in Madrid. We also prayed over people for the gifts of the Spirit and for some, physical healing.

The Soul Food Cafe was a chance for us to witness to others about the Lord and Kairos' work for him.

[Marie-Claire Flynn is a member of UCO, the Kairos-affiliated university outreach in Glasgow, Scotland.]

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A Longer View of Kairos: from Die Konferenz to Adelante and beyond

Betty Banks interviews Laura McAllister

In 2005, Kairos organised a conference - “Die Konferenz”- with a similar vision to Adelante in the weeks leading up to the World Youth Day in Germany. Since then, Kairos has organised annual regional weekend events, summer Bible weeks, and mission trips, as well as continuing to support a network of student groups working with young adults on a day-to-day basis.

Big conferences like Adelante and Die Konferenz are exciting and inspiring but are not just flashes in the dark. God works with and in each person in the in-between times. Belfaster Laura McAllister attended Die Konferenz at the age of 17. Since then, she has been involved with UCO-Belfast, has attended all six Kairos weekends and was the very first person to sign up for Adelante, Prep 10 and WYD. I interviewed her to get a sense of her journey from the conference in Germany to Spain, and how her experience of Adelante differed from her time in Germany in 2005. Her words resonate strongly with others in Kairos as we seek to know and boldly live out the call God has placed on our lives, both as individuals and as his international people. Some excerpts from our interview:

I decided to come to Adelante because I really felt God calling me to come, to be equipped in my faith, to grow and to see the future direction I’m going in my life. Last time I was really young, and I had only just accepted God into my life the year before. I feel that this time I have a strong faith, I have been learning who I am, and I’ve seen that God is faithful and that he’s a part of my life. I’ve seen that [over the last six years]. I came to Adelante to strengthen that, to remember it and to see that God is with me now and he will be with me along my future walk. I want God to show me what my mission is, what service he wants from me, and where he wants

me to be in the next stage of my life.

I feel it was a blessing going to Prep10. The service times gave me an opportunity to give something back to this conference... I talked with people from different nationalities and cultures about their faith and about ways they do things in their country, including ways Kairos works in different contexts. It was great for me to see the international view of Kairos and to see where I fit into that now.

I'm really excited that we have this opportunity to serve at WYD so we can be an example of an ecumenical community working together for God. We have the chance to share our faith and to learn from other people from every nation of the world.

At Prep 10 and Adelante, God spoke to me and encouraged me in stepping out in my faith and being who I'm meant to be in Christ. [Six years after Die Konferenz] I feel God calling me to step up and share with people. He has been showing me that I can be someone who speaks up, that I do have a voice and I do have something to offer.

[Laura McAllister is a member of UCO, the Kairos-affiliated university outreach in Belfast, Northern Ireland.]

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Personal Reflections on Adelante 2011



A great time of growth
by Simeon Mead

I personally experienced a great time of growth during Adelante, both spiritually and through growth in new relationships and strengthening of old ones. I enjoyed the series of talks given by John Keating during the conference. He spoke about the characters of Daniel, Esther, and Joshua in the Bible – who all responded with faith, hope, courage, boldness, and humility to the situations they faced.

I was particularly struck by the promise of God to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:5-6).

I was also struck by another verse from Deuteronomy 31:6 which said, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

As Christians we have to be courageous, and following the example of people of faith and courage, we have to stand up for what we believe, even if it means going against the grain or risking dangerous consequences.

The prayer meeting on Saturday evening was brilliant, and I could really feel the Holy Spirit among us and experienced a wonderful time of

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Walking on water
by Ania Wojcik, Poland

The highlight for me was the Lord's Day Celebration, our time of worship that evening, and the talk by Jean Barbara. I found it inspiring, especially the part about how to recognize Jesus because we sometimes hear God's voice but we are not sure if it is him - and the only way to be sure is to step out of the boat and check if we can walk to him on the water.



Jesus is enough
by Marie-Claire Flynn, Scotland

I felt like my household at Adelante was a snap-shot of Kairos - with one woman from Costa Rica, two from Lebanon, one from Ireland, and the other from Scotland. And it was really special to pray, eat breakfast, and clean toilets together. It's powerful when all you really in common with someone is Jesus, yet somehow that is enough.



God is really great
by Mark Montelibano, Philippines

fellowship and worship with young people just like me from 22 different countries.

I also attended *World Youth Day* in Madrid, where we ran a Soul Food Café, where we met with different groups around Madrid and invited them into our huge tent for events, performances, entertainment, talks, and a hugely successful prayer meeting on Wednesday evening – we made several links with different groups who seemed interested in our way of life, and I really was strengthened in faith and enjoyed the atmosphere and meeting different people from around the world who share the same beliefs and want to follow Christ.

[Simeon Mead lives in Acton, London and is part of the [Antioch Community](#). He recently graduated from high school and will attend university in the autumn. He is currently involved in the university Christian outreach in London called [Koinonia](#).]



Call to complete surrender
by Gina Benedetto

During the Adelante Conference I felt strongly called to surrender my life to God completely so that I can discover his perfect plan for my life. I know I am called to do mission work but I need to trust God to point me exactly where he wants me to be. I felt God's presence very tangibly during all of the prayer times and I know others did as well.

The strongest message I am taking away from this week is to always be strong and have courage because no matter where God leads us he will be with us and be strengthening us.

This is the first time that I have attended a Kairos gathering. It was truly a great experience to get to know different people from 22 nations in this one event. I was awed to see before my eyes how God is really present and doing the same work in other nations. This makes me confess that God is really great. It is amazing to see how people of different races and different Christian denominations can become one in Christ. I see how Kairos and the Sword of the Spirit are a witness to the prayer in the psalms: "Amen, Amen! May all the peoples praise you."



A joyful atmosphere
by Raphael Luyts, Belgium

The highlight for me was the last night. There was dancing and a very joyful atmosphere. You're starting to know all these people a little better and you just have a wonderful evening.



A host of angels with us
by Rebecca Arguedas, Costa Rica

For me the highlight of the week was the Saturday night prayer time. That was incredible because we were all worshipping God and receiving prayer. I had an image that came to mind - a host of angels were there with us. I'm pretty sure heaven is like that, so for me we were in heaven that night.

[Gina Benedetto, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, recently completed a GAP year of service in London, UK with [Koinonia](#) and [Antioch Community](#).]



Go out and move forward
by Ellen Karagoulis

For me, the entire experience of Adelante could be summed up by Joshua 1:1-9. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

Joshua was the insufficient heir to Moses’ legacy. He had been Moses’ right-hand man, and followed the Lord with understated faithfulness. Now he was slated to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

The word adelante means “go forward” in Spanish. At this conference, we, the second generation of the Sword of the Spirit, are the insufficient heirs to the legacy of the first generation. Born into community or adopted, we have been called to pick up the baton and run with it. However, like Joshua, we are called not just to circle the same desert, but to extend the territory and move into the new land the Lord is promising us.

As I was meditating on the words given during our worship times at Adelante, I felt the Lord tell me, “Go out and move forward. Every step you take will be consecrated to me as holy. Take the land I am giving you.” I know he wasn’t just speaking to me, because many of the prophecies we heard later confirmed this.



A nation of Joshuas
by Daniel Spokoyni, Scotland

The Adelante conference impacted me greatly. I could really sense that God was very present among our generation. My guiding thought of the week was that God is moving us all forward as a new generation of Joshuas to enter together into the promised land even though we are all different – but the goal is the same.

The most amazing experience was the prayer times at Saturday night and Sunday night, when so many people responded to God knocking on their door, and the atmosphere made it possible with ease to respond to this call together as a nation of Joshuas.



So many worshipping God
by Sebastian Pourie, Germany

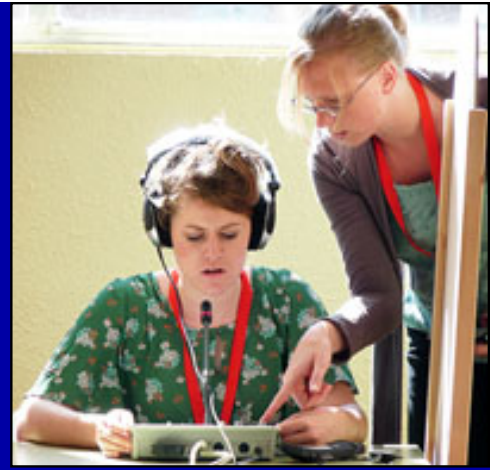
I want to meet some people and experience something with God... and maybe play football. I think that it's great when there are so many people in one place just worshipping God."

The Lord is calling the second generation of the Sword of the Spirit to move into new territory and forge out new paths for this mission. I like what Martin Steinbreithner said at his missionary training workshop: “Some of you may be thinking to yourselves, why doesn’t the Sword of the Spirit do more of _____? That’s because you haven’t started it yet.”

What is my response? For now, I know more clearly that my call is to “take the land” in [Detroit](#). I have been working as a missionary there for a year and a half, and I am beginning to see more clearly the new paths the Lord would have me carve out. For me, it’s to bring the light of Christ to a dark world plagued with violence, addiction, and the sorrow of broken homes.

However, that’s just for me. In talking with my brothers and sisters at Adelante, I was encouraged to hear all the great ideas they had for being salt and light in their respective regions. I am doing my small bit in Detroit, but there are hundreds of others like me doing the same in Belfast, Dusseldorf, Leuven, Syria, etc. The possibilities for new mission are endless.

[Ellen Karagoulis is a Women’s Mission Leader in [YouthWorks-Detroit](#), an inner-city ministry of Detroit Community Outreach.]



Overwhelmed and blessed by Marie-Sophie Vanderstuyft, Belgium

My first impression. We arrived a little late at the military base due to bus problems. The opening session was about to begin. We got dropped in the middle of 400 mostly familiar faces. I think I have never been hugged, greeted, kissed one, two, or three times (depending on the person’s custom) by so many people in such a short time. So many nationalities, so many languages, so many faces and smiles. A little overwhelmed I sat down for what would become a crazy welcome party including balloons falling from the ceiling, confetti pistols shooting around, and the soldiers at the barracks preaching. Beautifully done. It did set a tone for the rest of the conference.

How can you avoid getting lost in an impersonal crowd of 400 people at a conference? The pastoral team for the conference solved this by dividing us into households with caring household leaders and into villages with village leaders caring for the household leaders. In addition to that we had regional representatives looking after us. I thought this was genius.

As a household leader I was able to share during the week with 6 other sisters from different countries and communities. We had some rich conversations together. It was an honor to be able to watch people struggle, search and find, make big steps, and try to live a holy life.

I also had plenty of meetings and chats with my village leader, which made it possible for me, too, to fully engage with the program and to keep the right focus.

When I came home after the conference, I felt the urge to list all my blessings. They were too many to keep in my mind, so I had to write them down. Adelante was a very



blessed time for me. Even though the conference was very challenging, I felt God speaking to me clearly through teachings, workshops, meetings, prayer times, conversations. I came from a dry land. I had not heard the Lord for a long time. It was incredibly refreshing to hear his voice again!

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Working Across Generations



Paul Jordan converses with John Keating on Joshua, Moses and Adelante...

PJ – So John there’s a lot of talk these days about working across generations – Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y. It’s hot news in the business world! We have the most diverse workforce of all time... etc etc. I was born in 1974 which puts me slap bang in the middle of the Generation X world. But – forgive me - I’m guessing you’re more of a boomer?!

JK – You’re guessing well...

PJ - If you don’t mind me asking, how old were you when you got involved in the whole renewal communities movement?

JK– 18. I was a “freshman” in university. You know it’s funny but it’s pretty much exactly 40 years ago in fact when I went to University of Michigan – that was when I got involved. So you’re right, yes, that puts me right in the middle of the boomers!

PJ – 40 years is a long time. Things probably looked a bit different back then.

JK– Certainly did!

PJ – <laughter> But it’s also a biblically significant number – a generation no less. You made some reference to this fact at the Adelante conference this summer.

JK– I did. One of the main figures on the Adelante stage was Joshua. I was asked to speak about Joshua but I also had some spiritual sense that there is a word from the Lord in this – about the younger generation more clearly taking their place as Joshua took his.

PJ – It’s a strong image – and if you don’t mind me saying – not without its consequences. I wouldn’t mind drawing out some of those lessons for the Joshua Generation and the Moses Generation. As you prepared the presentations with the younger generation in mind – what were some of the key lessons the Lord impressed on your heart?

JK – Well, Joshua is a young man at the point that we first meet him, a trusted servant from his youth. He doesn't just get off the bench when his number is called. He's very active as a young man already. He's serving. He's fighting.

PJ – He's not just waiting to get elected or something like that.

JK– No, absolutely not. He's one of Moses' chosen servants from early on. In fact he's not voted in by the crowd at all. If there is any election it's God who elects him. It's interesting to chart his story and see where he was active and present.

PJ – What strikes you?

JK– A couple of things in particular. Joshua knows Moses and he knows the Lord. He is with Moses on the mountain when Moses receives the law. In fact, he is with Moses in all of his encounters with the Lord in the tent of meeting. So he knows how to serve Moses – in fact that's his title at the beginning of the book. But he is also a man who is intimately familiar with the courts of the Lord. Interestingly when Moses returns to the camp, Joshua remains in the tent of meeting.

PJ – And what's the lesson exactly?

JK– Don't hang around waiting! Get into the action and above all learn to serve the Lord. This is Joshua's apprenticeship from an early age. It's also striking that he doesn't participate in any way in the false worship of the golden calf.

PJ – Right – he stays clear. It's interesting – he's probably the only figure in the Old Testament that seems to be without any particular weakness or foible. A kind of special holiness.

JK– Well it's no accident that he has the same name as the Lord Jesus himself and there is a real way in which the mission of Joshua points directly to Jesus' mission later.

PJ – Yes, it helps us understand the Lord Jesus as a warrior himself – a truth I find lacking these days. But Joshua's commission at the beginning – what do you make of it?

JK– The most striking thing about it is Moses' exhortation to Joshua: “be strong and of good courage.” This is mentioned several times in the Book of Joshua. It's clear that what God is asking of Joshua will be something that will require him to continually be strong, to not be afraid, to not give into dismay, to hold fast to God's law.

PJ – Which he seems to do...

JK– He does... one of the more striking stories earlier on of course is the spying out of the land when the spies come back with the evil, cowardly report. It's only Joshua and Caleb who return with a faith-filled perspective about what obedience to the Lord can produce in battling the “giants of Canaan” (Numbers 14). Because of that of course, only he and Caleb are the ones who will enter the promised land. The rest don't make it.

PJ – Indeed. The Lord takes it very seriously. I hope God doesn't wipe out our Moses generation, John!

JK– Ha! Well I'm pretty sure that isn't always the Lord's preferred pattern for intergenerational transfers of leadership! There were special reasons why all of the original generation was gone by the time Joshua and Caleb led the people into the Promised Land.

PJ – I've never thought about it that much but I'm guessing Joshua's job was made more difficult by the absence of Moses.

JK– I think you're right. I don't think it was an easy task at all. Not only was Moses and his generation dead but all the leaders of Joshua's own generation were also dead, with the exception of Caleb of course. It would have been a lonely fight for Joshua. No doubt he felt a bit over his head. That's probably why the Lord told him so often to be strong and not to give in to despair!

PJ – You mentioned that from an early age he is serving and he is fighting. I noticed that it's at the end of the book that he receives the title servant of God (Joshua 24:29) – at the start of the book he's called servant of Moses. It's almost like the title of servant of God is something that has been earned or grown into. But with regard to the fighting: it's very striking that Joshua was mainly a warrior.

JK– He really was, yes. And he grew into that role too. He is a warrior before the people, and leads them to victory time and time again. The battle against Amalek is particularly interesting. Joshua has to fight as part of a team. His own leadership role is crucial, but you know Israel would likely have lost the battle were it not for Moses' role of intercession.

PJ – But that's interesting. No? – this role of intercession – do you think that is a word for the Moses generation?

JK– I think it is, yes. I think it's one of the most important things in fact.

PJ – What else would you say to the Moses generation?

JK – Well, the first thing that comes to mind is that there is no retiring from the Lord's service – that's clear. Our specific service roles may change with the years, but we should never be looking to “hand off” the life of service to which God has called us, and drop out of continuing to give all that we have to the Lord...

PJ – So, no retirement plans?

JK – <laughter> The Lord can choose to remove us from the scene, but, no, we shouldn't just retire to live a quieter life of ease! On the other hand, we do need to make room – now – for the new generation of leaders.

PJ – What do you think that looks like?

JK– Well it can't just mean getting them to enter the current ranks of the leadership and teaching them how to lead like we do. It might mean some of that. It often begins like that in fact.

PJ – A kind of apprenticeship model – I suppose that's what was going on for Joshua as he accompanied Moses around.

JK– Yes - but we also must be creative in finding the ways in which the Lord wants the newer generation to serve and to lead. They need to be given room to make mistakes, and even to repeat some of our mistakes if for some reason they aren't able to learn from our experience. And there could be good reason for that.

PJ – When I hear you speak, I'm struck that this is a significant time for us as a people. There are bound to be tensions and difficulties...

JK– Certainly. It requires humility and submission before the Lord from the Moses generation, as we may not always fully understand what he is asking of the next generation, nor fully appreciate their own way of responding to his call.

PJ – It sounds like there are a lot of unknowns

JK– Yes – but it's key to remember that the work is the Lord's, and the responsibility to guide the next generation of leaders will be primarily his. We have to trust him.

PJ – One of the questions this all raises for me is if the Lord is asking the young Joshuas to do something new then what is that exactly? What does it look like? It really was a different thing - what Joshua was asked to do compared with Moses.

JK– Well, yes and no. It's clear that Joshua was a warrior. That was his role. It's true his task was somewhat different from Moses'. And indeed I've sensed the Lord saying that the new generation will face challenges and opportunities different from those that our generation has faced. And who knows what's in the land. That's part of the challenge of this word - uncertainty. It will be up to the younger generation to respond to his grace and his guidance. But on the other hand Joshua was simply asked to serve God and hold true to his law in the same way that Moses was asked. In fact that was probably the main thing that Moses had to teach Joshua.

PJ – To be faithful until death.

JK– Exactly. As older sons and daughters of God, our own ongoing faith, hope, and love, our continued zeal until death for the Lord and for his kingdom, our lifelong love for our people and our call, mission, and way of life will be a crucial contribution of the founding generation - until the Lord calls us home.

PJ – Which is indeed how Joshua's story ends. The great rally in the last chapter of the book. It's a fantastic account. The back and forth with Joshua and the people and the famous – “as for me and my house we will serve the Lord!” (Joshua 24:15).

Thank you, John – and thank you for showing the way...

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Taking a Transgenerational Approach to Christian Community

By Bob Tedesco

In the Sword of the Spirit, we have, for many years now, taken a transgenerational approach to community life, structures and programs. That is to say, we believe that our children share in the vision and the call that we have been given; we believe we have been called as *families* into Christian community. We know that some might receive a different call from the Lord, and also that some may freely choose not to respond, but we are taking an approach that attempts to pass on our vision, our call, and our faith to our children. We want them to benefit from the gift that the Lord has given to us.

Scripture is Transgenerational

Blessings

Blessings (vision, call, faith, prosperity) are often cited as extending out to future generations.

“I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”
Genesis 22:17-18

“God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you that you might become a company of peoples. May He give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your descendants with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings which God gave to Abraham!” Genesis 28:3-4

“Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry; you shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall

be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have; and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty.'" Genesis 45:9-11

Curses and Punishments

Curses and punishments are likewise not limited to only those who have earned them. (Life, it seems, is not "fair" by our standards.)

"And I tell him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering for ever." 1 Samuel 3:13-14

"David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die." 2 Samuel 12:13-14

Covenant

Covenant is transgenerational:

"And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord; David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home." 1 Samuel 23:18

"And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, and fell on his face and did obeisance. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, your servant." And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father; and you shall eat at my table always." 2 Samuel 9:6-7

This transgenerational pattern is not just in the Old Testament:

"And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family." Acts 16:31-33

Obedience/blessing

"Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise) that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." Ephesians 6:2-3

The New Testament also takes a concern for young and old "in the Lord" and "faith generations" are addressed.

"To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." 1 Timothy 1:2

"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus..." 2 Timothy 2:1

"But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children." 1 Thessalonians 2:7

"...for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you

and charged you...” 1 Thessalonians 2:11

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you.” 2 Timothy 1:5

Four generations of Christian faith are shown in 2 Timothy 2:2.”...And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

What you have received

Even certain godly practices, such as tithing, are shown as transgenerational.

“One might say that even Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of Abraham when Melchizedek met him.” Hebrews 7:9-10

Training and influence

The Bible never presupposes that children will just grow up and make their choices in a vacuum, but that they will be trained and influenced by the parents...and grandparents.

“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on you hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.” Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Mother, grandmother

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you.” 1 Timothy 1:5

Go...make...teach...

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:19-20a

Raise them up (elevate to):

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

Accepting the Call

A Conversion

For many parents, something like a conversion is needed. Whether we are in a Christian community or not, passing on faith to the next generation is a lot of work. Accepting the Lord personally presents a challenge to our desires, our

habits, and our patterns of life. To pass on the faith to the next generation will demand more of us and even deeper values and patterns will be rattled, disturbed, and shaken.

First Step

The first step to a trans-generational community is for parents and single people to agree that this is the Lord's will. A certain process led us to conclude that the Lord has called us, and that means more than just a singular response. It was a call to become part of his people as disciples, entering a process of formation and embracing a mission. More than an altar call is needed for our children as well. For some individuals and communities, a retreat weekend might be helpful in coming to a conviction and a commitment to this course.

Transgenerational Approaches

As a Family

Some of the main influences in how we live our family life are our hopes and dreams for our children. If our hopes are mainly for academic excellence, that will direct a certain approach. If we are mainly focused on athletic accomplishments, a different approach is needed. If we want children to be active and fully engaged in the school culture, something very different is needed. I have known some parents who just wanted their children to grow up and go away... (but be "saved"). Less is needed with this approach. If we want our children to be disciples of Jesus Christ, formed into his kingdom and mainly living for him, a new approach is needed. *We will be teaching them to see things through his eyes not their own.* We will be teaching them to make personal decisions based on what is best for his people and not for the self. Self-image, self-fulfillment, self-help, etc. has become the mantra of the modern culture. I am surprised that we are not yet finding students chanting, "self, self, self..." in the high school classrooms. A trans-generational approach to family/community life will bring decisions about career, academics, sports, recreation, activities, and friendships under the influence of, "What is best for the kingdom of God?"

As a Community

Trans-generational community life will make major demands on the structures and the leadership of a Christian community. Programs, activities, events, retreats, gatherings, etc. will now have to take a growing concern for passing on the vision and life to the next generations. Leadership and ministry teams will have to work at drawing in younger folks. Time, money and prayer will have to be directed to things like summer camp, high school programs, campus outreaches, and post-college initiation groups. A smooth, coherent plan should be developed which allows a child to grow, encounter the Lord, develop as a disciple, and take a place alongside other mature Christians. In the Sword of the Spirit we are fortunate to have regional youth programs with retreats, mission trips, periods of service, and training beyond the local community. If a local community is too small to do much, at least the regional programs and connections are there to help.

Obstacles

Time Bombs and Land Mines

Life sometimes is marred by things that blow up in our faces. The "land mine" metaphor describes those things that are unexpected or seemingly impossible to predict: a serious illness, a car accident, a house fire. The "time bombs" of life are a bit different: we can almost see them coming. They may not be unexpected, but their impact can be worse than we thought: retirement, the failure of a business, the failure of a relationship.

For those raising children, the examples can be quite different. Land mines might be our son's loss of interest in school with his new awareness of girls, our daughter's decision to forego college for a naval career, or our daughter's choice of a college hundreds of miles from family and community. Time bombs might be things like the impact of elementary school on a child, the onset of puberty, or college tuition expenses.

I am of the view that many of life's unexpected explosions are actually more predictable and less surprising to those with more experience, who know the end results of certain patterns of life and decision making.

Big Obstacles

We have learned over the years that certain obstacles have a profound impact on our trans-generational vision. An early one might be our choice of school. When parents pick a school or school system, they are also unwittingly choosing a set of friends for their child. Recreational dating* is another big obstacle along with an approach to courtship that is not "faith-based" or consistent with our perceived call from the Lord.

Correspondingly, the choice of spouse that does not support our life's call is usually devastating. The choice of college or school can be another obstacle along with the choice of career. To pursue a career as a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army is unlikely to also result in being in a Christian community. (Although I do know one who made the transition!) These are all decisions that set a course for our children and to the degree that they are disconnecting them from the body of Christ, they are damaging (often fatal) to a trans-generational vision.

A Descriptive Equation

We can look at this transgenerational call as a spiritual equation. On one side, we have the next generation making decisions to enter our communities. On the other side of the equal sign are the factors contributing to or detracting them from making that choice: the parents, the children, the family, the Lord, the enemy, the world, and the community. These are not all of the factors and we won't discuss all of these. Nor will we discuss any of these in the depth needed.** Stated another way, "How do the parents, the children, and the community affect the number of children coming into the community".

Parents

As parents, our underlying attitudes toward the Lord, his kingdom, and his people will greatly affect our ability to inspire respect and admiration from our children for our way of life. Sometimes we want something at one level that is not supported by the way we talk or act. (Perhaps we tend to be sarcastic, critical, or negative). Our children are adept at sensing those contradictions. They are keenly aware if we are mainly impressed by academic excellence or worldly success. Are Christian leaders or pioneers, our heroes? Or is it Donald Trump, or Bill Gates, or the latest Nobel Prize winner?

In addition to supportive attitudes and speech, I would point to parents having a plan (and a budget) for getting each child fully engaged in the kingdom life that the Lord has given to us. This will often involve choices as well as the painful decisions to forego certain "opportunities" for our children's development. "Immediately they left their nets and followed him." Mt 4:21-22

Family

The family environment should be one that supports trans-generational community life. Our daily life patterns (meals, prayer, free time), our weekly life pattern (our gatherings for worship, celebrating the Lord's Day, etc.) and our special events (retreats, conferences, vacations), should all be ordered in a way that is supportive of our calling.

Additionally, the ways that we honor each other on a daily basis and at special events can have a huge impact over a period of time. Each family should look for ways to establish daily, weekly, and special event approaches to honoring. We can talk it through together and then we can do it. There is a toxic, sarcastic negativity to much modern speech and commentary. Honoring each other is one antidote to that poison.

Children

Children need to honor their parents and obey them. They need to be able to see that this will be the main way (early on) that they love the Lord. Obedience to parents is one expression of loving God. We should tell them this truth. Children need to know and experience that the Lord is at the center of this family and that this family's joy is in loving and serving God and accepting his order. As children, we can enjoy youth group, Lord's Day celebrations, retreat, campouts, etc.

The Community

The first and main step for a community is to have a plan inspired by the Lord: a plan with a vision, a plan that includes educating and supporting both the parents and the children in its vision. When a community knows where it is going, it can then develop action steps that involve approaches, resources, and personnel. It can also tap into regional or outside resources and programs that support its vision.

The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

Many obstacles will present themselves along the way, and children who have been raised in good, clear-thinking and clear-sighted families will have the best chances of surviving the gauntlet. Having said that, we should remember that the heaviest positive element of this equation is the grace and the mercy of God! Some children who have come from family situations that were confused or chaotic have still done well in the kingdom of God. The Lord can overcome all of our weaknesses, obstacles, and confusions as families.

Summary

- 1) Have a plan (regional, community, family).
- 2) Commit yourselves to it (mind, heart, patterns of speech, patterns of life, time and money).
- 3) Beseech the Lord constantly, expecting miracles!

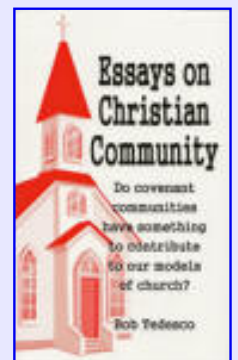
**Dating with no purpose or intention of marriage either possible or expected.*

***This subject is part of a later intended work.*



Bob Tedesco is past President of the North American Region of the Sword of the Spirit, a founder of the People of God community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, and has been one of its key leaders for the past 36 years.

He is the author of [Essays on Christian Community: Do covenant communities have something to contribute to our models of church?](#), published by Tabor House, Lansing, Michigan, 2010, 157 pages.



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