

My Word ... by Les Lofquist

Convention is almost here!

On Thursday, in just three days, the IFCA Board of Directors will begin their Annual Board meetings in Kalamazoo. For the fourteen Board members, that's when the convention begins. Then on Saturday the Church Extension Conference begins at [Oakwood Bible Church](#) in the Kalamazoo area. And on Monday, one week from today, the full convention will open up at the [Kalamazoo Radisson Plaza Hotel](#).

I will be seeing many of you at the convention and we are anticipating a great time of fellowship. It is always such a wonderful time together. But many others of you cannot make it this year to convention, so here are some prayer requests for you to remember.

First, we will be unveiling our [VISION WORLD](#) challenge during the convention. Please pray that God would bless our General Session speakers and our seminar presenters. Pray that all of them would be used to help stimulate us as we launch ourselves toward reaching the goal of 100 international church planting missionaries from IFCA churches.

Second, pray for the [Church Extension Conference](#) to encourage our church planters in their work. Pray that the [VISION AMERICA](#) goal will be reached: 100 IFCA churches involved in a church plant here in the U.S.

Third, pray for all the ladies who will be at the [Women's Conference](#). They too will have as a primary focus the theme of global evangelization.

Fourth, pray for those convention delegates who come to receive a great boost of encouragement and inspiration so that when they return home, they will have great zeal for the work.

Convention is always such a blessing. Pray for this year to be one of the best!

Ministry Spots

[Faith Community Bible Church](#), in El Cajon, has an interesting page on their website containing a variety of theological articles by the likes of Maclaren, Ryle, Morris, Tozer, Torrey and other notables. Included in that list is a article by Kenneth Kantzer that you might find helpful, entitled "[Why Join a Church](#)". Visit the website

and [browse the articles](#) and [drop a note](#) to say hi to Pastor Tom Chesko!



A Fellowship Committed to Biblical Ministry

Striking A Balance For The Future

W.W. McEad

Charles Ryrie in his book "[Balancing the Christian Life](#)" sets forth the proposition that "*genuine and wholesome spirituality is the goal of all Christian living.*" He defines the word "wholesome" as "balanced," and throughout the book he points out the importance of maintaining a life of balance instead of a life of extremes in the application and outworking of biblical truth. "*There is nothing more devastating to the practice of spiritual living than an imbalance,*" says Ryrie and he quotes one of his former teachers who repeatedly reminded his students that "*an imbalance in theology is the same as doctrinal insanity!*"



Since reading that book, many years ago, I have often reflected on the beautiful symmetry and balance of biblical truth and principle in so many areas of Christian life and ministry.

That symmetry and balance are essential to what we often refer to as the Great Commission as it is expressed in Acts 1.8 and, indeed, as that commission is worked out throughout the entire history of the book of Acts.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

This is a key verse to understanding the book of Acts in that it contains the outline of the entire book. Chapters 1-7 speak of the witness to Jerusalem; chapters 8-12 speak of the witness in Judea and Samaria; and chapters 13-28 speak of the witness of the Gospel being taken to the ends of the earth.

The disciples were instructed by the Lord to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them in Jerusalem and then, in the power of that Spirit, they were to witness to Christ's resurrection, the Gospel and the coming Kingdom to the whole world. They were to begin in Jerusalem and continue moving outward ... like concentric circles on the surface of a pond ... to even the "remotest parts of the earth." Our task, as the Church in the 21st century, is to continue in obedience to that charge, in those same concentric circles.

For us, "**Jerusalem**" represents those outreach and discipleship efforts of the individual believer and the local church which are focused within a specific and limited geographical area that would be regarded as local, or immediate. It may be a town or, in a rural area, a number of towns. In the large city it may be a neighborhood or even a housing project.

"Judea (that which is geographically close and culturally similar) and **Samaria** (that which is geographically close but culturally

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dissimilar)” would represent those mission efforts within a particular regional, national or ethnic boundary. It is an expansion of our focus from local geography to that which lies beyond our immediate area but which is still close enough for the individual believer and the local church to reach easily.

“The uttermost part of the earth” is easy to define in light of the other two. It speaks of mission efforts around the world. It really has no geographical limits. Missionaries to foreign lands and all of the staff and laborers that work behind the scenes to get servants there fall into this category of missions. They simply take up the same work involved in the local, regional and national scopes, doing outreach ministry in a world full of Jerusalems, and Judeas, and Samarias.

IFCA’s twin vision initiatives, VISION AMERICA and VISION WORLD reflect the symmetry and balance contained in the Great Commission. As they are developed and pursued in the months ahead they have the potential for being the two rails of a track that will move IFCA International and its individual members and churches into a place of greater strength and effectiveness in fulfilling the Great Commission as it was intended to be fulfilled ... at home and abroad.

I think it notable that after the Lord Jesus gave this charge to the disciples He punctuated it with His ascension into heaven. The disciples, the text tells us, stood gazing into the heavens after He had gone. They remind me of so many of us who spend our time gazing into the scriptures dreaming about what we will do for Christ!

The angels said, *“Why do you stand here gazing up into the heavens. This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched him go into heaven”*

To put it bluntly, “He hasn’t gone away forever. He’s coming back, so get busy!”

We would do well to heed the words of Will Rogers, who said, *“Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just stand there.”*

May God grant that IFCA will not merely stand on the tracks gazing at what we would like to do for Christ. Rather, may He find that we are busy in Great Commission activity at home and abroad as we await His certain return. May we be a powerful moving force for Christ in carrying on in the tradition of the early Church ... proclaiming the Gospel boldly and staying involved on the growing edge of the church planting effort to bring the Gospel to an ever-increasing number of communities throughout our Jerusalem, our Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Bob Cosby - New Director at IBM

Bob Cosby grew up the youngest of nine children in a troubled home. He came to Christ in a powerful and dramatic way at the age of 20. He and his wife Christine, who also came to Christ in her early 20s, have been married for 36 years and today have two daughters and 2 granddaughters. Following marriage at the [Lake Center Bible Church](#) in Portage Michigan, they felt called to ministry. Bob attended [Moody Bible Institute](#) summer program and the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music graduating in the Pastors Course. Bob also earned his Masters Degree in Christian Education from the [Michigan Theological Seminary](#) in Plymouth Michigan.



Pastor Cosby served in the pastorate for over thirty years, seventeen of them at [Allegan Bible Church](#). For 15 years he served with RBM as chairman and board member and three years as Ministry Relations Coordinator.

When you ask Bob about his view of church ministry he says, “Americans live in a fast-paced, immediate gratification culture, influenced by moral values that are situational rather than absolute. The culture has taken its toll. The younger generation of born-again Christians is led more by personal experience than by biblical truth. We have moved from a belief in doctrine to a quest for self fulfillment. We need churches that provide people with theologically sound doctrine as they navigate through complex issues. Biblical truth taught in an understandable way will influence our worldview. No one but the Lord can really build a church. It is the most unique institution in the whole universe. It is the only institution planned and purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18). The church is the only institution that will ultimately be successful long after the banks, automotive companies and drug companies of the country are gone. The chief executive officer of the Church is Jesus Christ and He has commissioned us to reach the world with the message of His saving grace. The Lord builds the church, but He uses people to do so. This has always been His method. We need to challenge believers in their walk with the Lord, (2 Cor. 5:7) “For we walk by faith” and evangelizing those that are lost that they might find “life unto life” (2 Cor 2:16), physical life unto eternal life. “

Bob’s passion for ministry in the independent autonomous church is to see changed lives and the individual believer and church brought to maturity. He says, “It is rewarding to see the local church become a dynamic body of believers that have godly leaders who are doctrinally sound. A church should have active church members that practice concern for one another and are devoted to their families. It should penetrate the community with the Gospel by evangelizing and making disciples. A church where the word of God is taught and preached in such a way that Jesus Christ is glorified is the focal point of the whole ministry.”

Bob is currently transitioning into his new ministry as the Director of [Independent Bible Mission of Michigan](#), an IFCA Church Extension agency. In this new ministry Bob’s passion will be directed toward the planting and development of strong biblical churches in the state of Michigan and upper Wisconsin. (*Colossians 1:18*) *And He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence.*”



Web-links

These links are given as potential resources for your use and edification. Inclusion here does not in any way imply IFCA’s endorsement of everything they may contain.

- [Setting Captives Free](#)
- [ECS Ministries](#)
- [ChristianBook.com Music](#)
- [This Day In History](#)
- [American Family Traditions](#)
- [Recipe Tips](#)
- [Discipleship Library](#)

Fellowship Financial Update

FY 2009 has brought increased support from some of our member churches. This, combined with a careful control of expenses in the Home Office, has stabilized our financial situation somewhat. With today’s economic volatility, however, continued vigilance and prayer are definitely needed. In this time when we need to be moving forward in ministry, if everyone reading this newsletter would begin giving (or increase their giving by) only 8.00/month it would bring great relief and freedom for ministry.