

My Word ... by Les Lofquist

The 2010 IFCA International Annual Convention begins in less than two weeks in Springfield, Illinois at The Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Center. Please remember to pray!

This year's convention theme is "A Passion for Ministry" and the theme will be carried through the four evening and three morning General Sessions. General Session speakers will include Charles Petitt, President of **Piedmont Baptist Bible College** in Winston Salem, NC and Alex Montoya, professor at **The Master's Seminary** / pastor at First Fundamental Bible Church and Bobby Scott, pastor of **Los Angeles Community Bible Church** and Gary Gilley, pastor of **Southern View Chapel** of Springfield and Les Lofquist, IFCA International Executive Director. There will also be twelve informative seminars and a dynamic Women's Conference with Martha Peace speaking to the ladies. Plus the IFCA Golf Outing will be held on Thursday, July 1 at 1:30 pm (\$22 for 9 holes + electric cart – call the Home Office to register at 800.347.1840).

But the convention is so much more than merely a Bible Conference and fellowship.

Please pray that God will bless as the convention delegates hear reports on ministry activities and learn about what's happening all around the IFCA. They will also review the common purpose of IFCA International and listen to the shared vision of IFCA.

The overall purpose statement of IFCA is stated this way: *"Enhancing the strength of the Church by equipping for, and encouraging toward ministry partnerships to achieve Great Commission objectives."* To this end, at this week's convention we will discuss strategic planning and decide upon IFCA International's ministry direction. That is why your prayers are so desperately needed.

This will be a great time, but only if God blesses us! So please remember to pray for this week's IFCA International Annual Convention. If you would like to learn more, visit the [IFCA International website](#).

A full convention report will be issued to every IFCA member church and each individual IFCA member within six weeks after the convention. Be watching for it to see how God answered your prayers.

Pray for godly passion to be the result of this year's convention!

Passion for Christ IS Passion for Ministry

W.W. McEad

This past Sunday I spoke with a woman in her late 60s, who has been saved only two years. With glowing face and a voice intense with passion, she shared with me her burden to reach people for Christ ... *"I tell everyone I meet about Jesus,"* she said, *"I love to tell people about Him."* This woman, is thrilled by the sheer joy of doing her part in fulfilling the Great Commission. Her passion and zeal exude from her as she talks about it. I reflected afterward upon how it is commonly lamented that this type of spontaneous and effervescent enthusiasm typically seen in the brand new believer, frequently gives way to a staid, stifling passion-less spirituality in the "mature" believer.

While this is a serious problem hindering the effective fulfillment of the Great Commission there is an even more serious problem that will not merely hinder, but will actually cripple efforts to fulfill the Great Commission. It is those in ministry who have lost their passion for ministry.

Let's be honest. One of the closely guarded dirty secrets for many in the ranks of "vocational Christian workers" is the fact that the "passion for ministry" which we once had just isn't there anymore. We go through the motions, we fulfill the appointed functions, we stand before the people of God from Sunday to Sunday while secretly knowing that the fire has faded and the hearth has grown cold; the passion has waned, the excitement has disappeared.

We can recall starting the path of ministry opportunity full of energy and enthusiasm and optimism. We were possessed of a holy zeal to turn the world upside down and every day was an exciting adventure of seeing what doors God would open and what great things He would accomplish through our eager and energetic efforts. But now, as we have "matured" in ministry, the spontaneous and effervescent enthusiasm has given way to the dry and empty husk of going through the motions while we desperately hope that no one will notice. The days are now a drudge and a chore. They are filled with private thoughts that are no longer optimistic as we look at opportunities; they are pessimistic and sometimes cynical as we scramble to survive and maintain the façade. In an ironic twist, we have become the enemy's secret agent in crippling the effectiveness of the local church or ministry to which God called us. What happened to the Passion for Ministry? What is the key to getting it back?

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It's a Heart Problem

The metaphor of "two hearts beating as one" is a powerful one for illustrating perfect compatibility and agreement between two people. It is also relevant to this present discussion. What was the heartbeat of the Architect of the Church? Certainly it is not elusive to the reader of the Scriptures. He came **"to seek and to save that which was lost."** That was why He left the glories of heaven and came unto His own. That is why He endured the contradiction of sinners. That is why He despised the shame and suffered the reproach of the cross. By His death and victorious resurrection He secured the destruction of sin's evil hold over us, opening the way for us to be justified and stand righteous before God through faith in Christ as our Savior. But that was nearly 2,000 years ago. How are those who are lost in sin today to learn of that great provision? Is it not through the ministry of the Church in the world as we await His return?

Surely that is what is conveyed in those familiar Great Commission passages of Matthew 28.19,20 and Acts 1.8. Christ's heartbeat is one of love for the multitudes of those who are lost. His desire is that none should perish but that all should come to a saving knowledge of Him. My friend, what is YOUR heartbeat? What is mine? Is it "in sync" with that of the Lord Jesus?

We would likely be quick to give lip-service to the Great Commission ministry. But how often is that belied by the fact that our pulse quickens and our blood races at the thought of anything BUT that of pursuing Great Commission objectives? Why else is it that, by some accounts, *"the people of the world have never been more ready and willing to trust Christ while at the same time local churches have never been more ineffective and inconsistent in reaching them?"*

Most of those entering ministry have a vision for the lost. They are driven by a *"this I must do, I can do no other"* type of spirit. It seems, however, that as we "mature in ministry" we "must do" other things. We "must" lead our churches to be creative, relevant and progressive in worship and teaching and fellowship. We "must" aspire to build strong families, to reach the youth in innovative and relevant ways. We "must" establish Christian schools and build large congregations. We "must" conduct marriage seminars, leadership seminars, technology seminars, even seminars on having seminars. We do a creditable job in so many things but the thing we are most lacking is a holy unquenchable passion (a must do spirit) regarding our primary purpose ... the fulfillment of the Great Commission. And so ministry, which for us was once so vibrant and full of excitement, becomes somewhat mundane and "musty".

"Great Commission ministry is not about tending a garden of fruitless and non-flowering plants that have been planted within meticulously planned and structured boundaries."

It is not my suggestion that these other facets of ministry are wrong. What is wrong is that we have allowed them to become the heartbeat of ministry. Our heart no longer beats as one with the Lord's heart. It beats in counterpoint, dare I even say in competition, to His. Is it any wonder then that ministry becomes a drudge when it has lost the rhythm of the Savior's heartbeat? It beats instead to a rhythm that may satisfy the yearnings of men and their personal whims and desires but it does not satisfy the yearnings of the Savior who gave His life for the lost. It is not His desire that the people of God sit around the family table paralyzed by self-absorption with themselves and their own edification. His heart-cry is that the family of God might be a powerful, irresistible force at work in the fields as they reach the lost and bring them to faith in Christ!

Great Commission ministry consists of people, who know that Christ died for them, taking the good news of the Gospel to other people for whom Christ died, but who do not know it yet. Great Commission ministry is not about tending a garden of fruitless and non-flowering plants that have been planted within meticulously planned and structured boundaries. Ministry is exciting when it is vitally engaged in seeing an explosion of change blossoming in the lives of real people. Ministry is thrilling when we allow God to work in amazing ways through the lives of real people as we equip them to join us in Great Commission ministry as we run roughshod over enemy territory.

Our very food, as Christian leaders ought to be, as it is for the elderly lady from Chicago, in telling others the "good news" so that they might know Christ. Our daily delight ought to be in coming alongside God's people, from every walk of life and from every age and demographic, to equip them for battle, to teach them all things that He has commanded us to the end that they themselves, following our example, might go forth bearing the Gospel to the lost thereby increasingly fulfilling the Great Commission so that enemy territory is besieged with wave upon wave of Christian soldiers and churches who are reaching, teaching and reproducing. There is nothing as invigorating and motivating as the thrill of seeing the Gospel transform lives of those from every walk and station of life as they respond in faith to the Gospel message and then, in turn, channel their passions to Great Commission ministry.

A Passion for Christ

I know many people who are very passionate about a lot of things. Some of the things about which we are passionate are questionable in terms of their eternal value. Many of the things about which we are passionate are good things ... even very good things! But it is a problem that we have too many passions in life and ministry. None of them amount to anything but "dung" when compared to the value of a passion for Jesus Christ.

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The apostle Paul is an example of a man whose passion was Jesus Christ. Paul was a man who had just One passion; Jesus Christ and Him crucified. *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined [i.e. “passionate”] not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”* (1 Corinthians 2.1-5)

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, (Philippians 3.8)

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3.13,14)

The secret of Paul’s effective ministry lay in the object of his passion. These words clearly show that he maintained a laser-like focus and an un-moveable resolve to have One passion in ministry and that passion was Christ. Paul could not have cared less about anything else but the One thing that was worthy of his passion. Anything less than preaching Christ was simply not worth being passionate about. Anything that fell short of Great Commission ministry was simply not worth the effort.

Many of us may have had that passion at one time but, quite honestly, do you still have it? Do I? That kind of passion flows from a sense of gratitude to God for what He has done. It is founded in one’s recognition of just how unworthy we are as sinners. That kind of passion is developed out of a sense of who we are because of Jesus’ passion for us.

How can we truly understand the passion that Jesus had for us, and not respond with a passion for Him? A passion for Christ is the key. Passion for Christ IS a passion for ministry. Such passion includes by default, a passion for that which is in tune with His own heartbeat ... the reaching of multitudes for whom He died, through Great Commission ministry.

Let us pray that as we consider the theme of “Passion for Ministry” at the Annual Convention this year in Springfield IL, that God will reignite the fires of passion for the person of Christ and thereby infuse us, as individuals and as a Fellowship, with a passion for Great Commission ministry.

IFCA Church Extension Conference

June 26-28 - Southern View Chapel, Springfield IL

Featuring:

- * Gary Gilley - SVC: *Is the Modern Church Reaching Out or Selling Out?*, and *Springfield Center of Biblical Studies*
- * Patrick Belvill - Tyndale Theological Seminary: *Tyndale Learning Centers*
- * Paul Williamson - RMBCM: *Qualities of Life in a Small Town Pastorate*
- * Henry Vosburgh - MCE: *Setting Up for a Replant Project*
- * Shaun Lewis - Capitol Ministries: *The Missing Mandate of Modern Missions*
- * Scott Carpenter: *Poor in Spirit - Mighty in God*
- * Pat Wulff - CSCE: *Hope and Renewing Our Minds*
- * Joe Smith - MIBCE: *Achieving Financial Transparency*
- * Curt Christiansen - SVC: *Israel - The Land of the Bible*

Pray:

- * Safety in travel
- * Refreshing encouragement for our church planters
- * God’s special blessing on the ministry of those who will be ministering to these men and their wives
- * Redoubled enthusiasm and effort on the front lines of Great Commission ministry
- * Multiplication of church plants and churches (and church leaders) that are passionate about Great Commission ministry through church planting.



2010 Convention Springfield, Illinois

June 28 - July 2, 2010

Featuring: Dr. Charles Pettit, Alex Montoya, Bobby Scott, and Gary Gilley

For complete information click on the link displayed on the [IFCA Home Page](#). Registrations are STILL being taken!

Convention Web Links

- [Convention 2010 Web Page](#)
- [Download Registration Form & Info](#)
- [Register On Line](#)

IFCA WOMEN’S CONFERENCE

June 28-July 2



Speaker: Martha Peace

Pray:

- * God’s use of Martha’s ministry to bless and encourage
- * Equipping of women with vision to serve in Great Commission ministry
- * Safety in travel
- * New friendships among the women that will be a continuing source of strength to each.

INVOLVED OR COMMITTED?

IFCA Annual Youth Convention

June 20-26

Baptist Bible College

Springfield, MO



Pray:

- * For Great Commission missionaries from among our Youth
- * Salvation of unsaved attendees
- * Safety in travel for all involved
- * God’s blessing on Eugene Bakhmutsky and Richard Stepanek as they minister from the Word
- * Strengthening of the Church as our youth are encouraged and equipped to serve in their home churches.