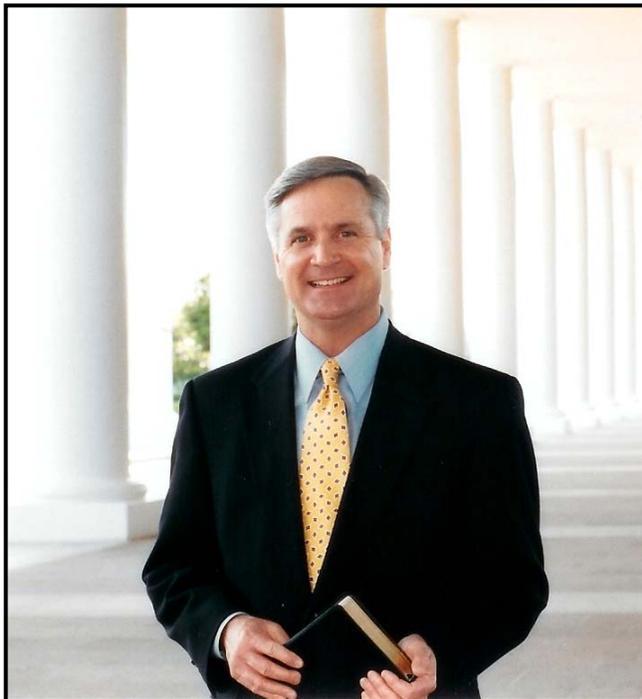


Dear Friend of *Abiding Above*,

March 2008

Pastor's Conference in Virginia: When you read this I will be on my way to Virginia to lead a Pastor's Conference. This conference is in partnership with First Baptist Church of Woodstock Georgia where Dr. Johnny Hunt is the pastor. I will be preaching on "The Spirit-Filled Life" and also doing a break out session on "Pastoral Care." We are helping pastors who have not had the opportunity for higher education. We will be training them at a very rapid pace so please pray for them and us as we seek to maximize our time together. There is an old saying that **ministry to ministers is ministry to multitudes**. As we share with these brothers in Christ they will return to their churches and share with their people. Pray that this conference and its impact will be long lasting in the lives of the pastor and his people.



The Life of the Church:

In the days in which we are living it is hard to be a pastor of a local church. There are so many needs to be met, sermons to prepare, and direction to give to the local body of Christ. Wherever you might be today, whoever your pastor might be, please pray for him. He has so much coming at him. A new church growth book comes out each month, all kinds of Bible studies to lead small groups are available, many books on many things, but when we look across the nation at our churches we all know something is desperately missing.

The Wisdom of Rev. J.H. Jowett:

I want to share with you something from Rev. J.H. Jowett. Dr. Jowett lived in the 1,800's. It is remarkable how this so fits the days in which we are living.

"Never mistake the multiplication of organization for the enlargement and enrichment of service. Do not be deceived into thinking that you are doing work when you are only preparing to do it. It is very possible to elaborate our machinery and not increase our products. We may have much mechanism but little or no life. That is one of the immense perils of our day and the ministers of the Church of Christ are peculiarly exposed to it. We organize, and organize, and organize! I suppose there was never a time when organization was so rife as it is today.

But here is the vital question: is it only clever manufacture or is it inspired creation? Is it only a lovely corpse, or does it live, I mean, with the life of God? How very much of our organization is only an articulated corpse! It does not carry a burden; it is rather a burden that has to be borne. I believe what the old world needs just now is not so much the multiplication of organization as the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We have piles of organization, but they lie prone upon the earth, incorporated death. It is not more schemes we want, more associations, more meetings; we want the breath and fire of the Holy Ghost. A small organization, with breath in it, can do the work of an army. I fear that in these days we ministers may be so keen on organizing that we rest contented when the body is articulated, even though it lies stretched and breathless on the ground. We may be so intent on committees that we have no time for the upper room. We may be so “public” that we forget “the secret place.” We may be so absorbed in devising machinery and careless about the power, which is to make it go. That is our peril. I know it; I feel it. If we only enlarge our “plant” and multiply our machinery we are apt to think we are extending the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “Be not deceived.” Keep your eyes on the essentials. “Pray without ceasing,” vigilantly watch for “the fruits of the Spirit.”

When I read this I could not help but think; that’s where we are in our churches in America. Like me, you might ask the question, “What should we do?” I think the first question we must ask ourselves, “What should I do?” The answer I believe we can glean from another quote from a spiritual man, Oswald Chambers, “**When it is time for a change, but you don’t know how, simply, turn and do the duty that lies nearest.**”

Put God First: My friend, each of us should go back to the first things and God will supernaturally make things right.

In **Revelation 2:4-5** we read the message to the church in Ephesus. “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent, and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.”

More than 30 years before, the church at Ephesus had been commended for its love. But, they left (intentional) their first love. We think of this corporately but here and now let’s think of this individually and return to our first love the Lord Jesus Christ.

How? Time alone with Him. It is that simple. Simply begin, today. You do not have to get ready. Just begin.

You may want to consider writing to us and requesting a free Bible lesson that we do with people all over America through the mail. It is free!

I love you and praise God for you every day. Pray for me as I drive to Virginia to be used by God and to be a blessing to these pastors.

Abiding above,



Rev. Chris S. Hodges
President
Abiding Above Ministries
Colossians 3:1-3