



**JOSEPH T. BEADLE**

Chaplain, Fishkill Correctional Facility; Beacon, NY

***Welcome Home: Preparing the Local Church to Effectively Minister  
To The Incarcerated as They Reenter Society***

Project Adviser: Dr. Michael Reighard

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Every year prisons across the United States release hundreds of thousands of men and women into society after they complete their sentences. Significant numbers of these individuals will face extreme challenges in finding housing, employment, and transportation as well as other vital needs as they leave prison, placing them at profoundly high risk for becoming homeless or returning to prison. As a result, the formerly incarcerated need the holistic support of the church community to successfully reenter society and become self-supporting. While local churches remain uniquely positioned to assist the formerly incarcerated transition back to society, many churches lack awareness of this existing need and have, as a result, unintentionally ignored this vulnerable population in its ministry endeavors.

This two-part project assisted both a local church and incarcerated men to understand the practical and spiritual needs associated with prisoner re-entry. The project enabled New Beginnings Assembly to understand common perceptions about prisoners, the challenges of prisoner reentry, and beliefs about the role of the church in reentry ministry. It also helped the church identify existing resources to provide meaningful, practical help to ex-prisoners. Further, the project assisted prisoners through a reentry training to begin planning their reentry process, freely discuss their concerns, ask questions, brainstorm ideas for reentry, and, most importantly, identify ways to find a church home and ongoing spiritual support as they begin life outside of prison.



**DEREK S. BOIVIN**

Network Secretary, Iowa Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God; Urbandale, IA

***All Things Decently and In Order: An Administrative Policies  
And Procedures Manual for The Iowa Ministry Network***

Project Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

The lack of an administrative policies and procedures manual can lead to operational confusion and ambiguity related to scopes of roles, responsibility, and authority within a network. It can also undermine institutional trust. Creating order out of chaos, however, is an outflow of being made in the image of God, and the use of systems, guidelines, and expectations provides an opportunity to be more creative and Spirit-led in organizational leadership. Within this context, this project developed a policies and procedures manual for the Iowa Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God to bring order to that which became disorganized.

This project developed a collaborative process to create, review, update, and improve policies, procedures, and forms, culminating in the creation of a digital administrative manual. These documents were updated, reformatted, and reviewed by a Systems Team that evaluated them based on fifteen criteria. These documents were also assembled into a digital administrative policy and procedures manual and stored in an online repository for use by the governing board, network officials, directors, and other staff. The task was accomplished through a collaborative effort among various network leaders and staff, as well as input from other districts' officials. This endeavor resulted in a workable manual that has already produced buy-in and enthusiasm about creating a systems-based organization. The process also resulted in greater motivation towards compliance and the expectation of increased unity within the network.



## **ARMIN JOE COLÓN VÁZQUEZ**

International and Christian Education Pastor, Discover Church; Oak Creek, WI  
Ethnic Presbyterian, Wisconsin Northern Michigan Ministries Network of the Assemblies of God;  
Waupaca, WI

### ***Harmonized Diversity: Embracing and Empowering Latinos as a Paradigm for Ecclesial Health***

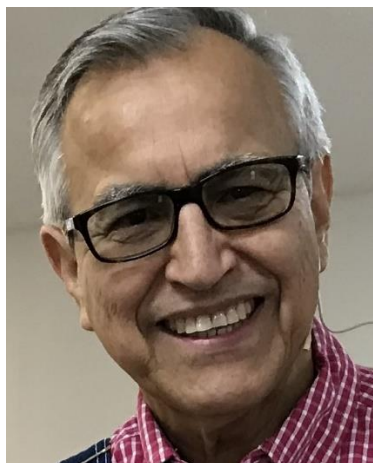
Project Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Martin Mittlestadt

The demographic landscape in the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan Ministry Network (WNMMN) is changing rapidly due to an increasing Latino population. This transformation, influenced by factors like employment, family, health, and immigration, has significant implications for local churches. Many churches are facing declining attendance as they struggle to adapt. This project creates a training program for WNMMN pastors to help them effectively engage and embrace Latinos.

This project recognizes the biblical call for the church to embrace diversity and inclusivity. It emphasizes the church's role in fostering a harmoniously diverse global community while staying true to Christ's teachings. It also explores the specific experiences of the Latino minority, emphasizing the importance of the interconnectedness of discipleship, teaching, and preaching within Latino traditions, emphasizing cultural adaptation. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of effective leadership strategies in promoting diversity within intercultural ministry.

The field project, a seminar for pastors to engage and welcome Latino communities, received positive feedback from a diverse group. Data and analysis show this approach works in addressing Latino community challenges. Pastors can use this training to make their ministries more diverse and attract Latino attendees by reaching out and empowering them.



## **JOSUÉ E. CONTRERAS**

Lead Pastor, First Assembly of God; Highlandville, MO

Director, Hispanic School of Ministry, Southern Missouri Ministry Network; Springfield, MO

Coordinator, Hispanic Fellowship, Southern Missouri Ministry Network: Springfield, MO

### ***Partnering for Enhanced Hispanic Ministry: Launching a Hispanic Fellowship Within the Assemblies of God Southern Missouri Ministry Network***

Project Adviser: Dr. Tim Cederblom

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

The U.S. Hispanic population continues to grow. The historical Hispanic districts of the Assemblies of God have been among the fastest growing ministry networks in the nation. English-speaking ministry networks are exploring ways to resource this developing mission field.

This project researches the Scriptural mandates to love and welcome “the stranger.” It examines the collaborative quality of the Godhead and how this cooperative trait anticipates participation in Christian faith communities. In addition to reviewing the ideas developed by commercial agencies to connect with Hispanic consumers, the project examines the work of missional leaders to establish Hispanic ministries and explores three Hispanic ministry models currently used effectively by English-speaking ministry networks within the Assemblies of God.

The study builds on the three-pronged Hispanic ministry strategy developed by Reginald Stone in three Assemblies of God networks. While Stone wrote a dissertation on Hispanic church planting, no research existed on forming a Hispanic Fellowship within an Assemblies of God English-speaking ministry network. This project developed a Hispanic database, interviewed thirty church leaders, and conducted surveys to measure participant attitudes on fellowship. It culminated with the launch of a Hispanic Fellowship initiated with a fellowship dinner and service attended by seventy-two participants.



## **JOSEPH H. ODEN**

National Prayer and Evangelism Director, Assemblies of God; Springfield, MO

Director, Assemblies of God World Prayer Center; Springfield, MO

Chairman, Evangelism Commission, PCCNA

### ***Prayer That Ignites Revival: The Catalyst to Every Spiritual Awakening***

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Michael Brown

With any news cycle one can observe that the West is in grave need for another Great Awakening. This is not new problem, however. People have frequently needed revival throughout the course of history, and, as history shows, remnants can make a difference. During the period of the Judges, Haggai, and Nehemiah, for example, a small remnant in Israel set their eyes toward heaven in prayer and determination, becoming a catalyst for turning an entire nation back to God. Awakenings can be seen throughout history since then, such as the great Welsh Revival, the Second Great Awakening, and the Azusa Street Revival. If God can use men and women like Hannah, Nehemiah, Charles Finney, and William J. Seymour, He can use anyone. He just needs a person of prayer to seek His face until the tides begin to turn and awakening begins to emerge.

As this project demonstrates, the stories of these individuals all share one common denominator: someone somewhere was not willing to watch from the sidelines and live with the depravity and moral decay around them. God found a praying woman or a praying man to align with His heart in heartfelt intercession until something broke. God continues to look for those willing to answer the call to pray until something shifts. Remember this and never forget it: prayer ignites revival, and it is the catalyst for every spiritual awakening.



## **JASON L. PARNELL**

Lead Pastor, New Life Assembly of God; Athens, AL

### ***Underground Fire Drill: Preparing the Church for Persecution***

Project Adviser: Dr. Ron Cannon

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Douglas Walker

The global Christian church is facing a crisis as Christians in various parts of the world are being persecuted for righteousness's sake. Unlike countries ruled by totalitarian regimes, Christian churches in America have enjoyed not only freedom of religion but also the freedom to practice their religion; however, over the past few decades, society is increasingly becoming more secular and hostile toward Christians. As intolerance toward Christians grows in the United States, it remains important for Christians, churches, and ministry leaders to prepare for the possible escalation of hostility toward them.

The purpose of this project was to create awareness concerning the persecuted church and the plight of persecuted Christians around the globe, and to conduct the Underground Fire Drill, which was used to assess an average American church's preparedness should persecution increase to the point that the church needs to operate as an underground house church. The project consisted of a seven-week sermon series along with targeted teachings to establish a theology of persecution and suffering, prayer guides to bring awareness to the plight of present-day Christians and churches experiencing persecution, and the development of an underground house church drill. The results of the project included successfully establishing five house churches that were able to operate as fully functional underground churches as well as creating, within the congregation of New Life Assembly of God, a deeper understanding and greater awareness concerning the global persecution and suffering of present-day Christians.



## **CURTIS L. PRYOR**

Associate Professor of Bible and Theology, Trinity Bible College and Graduate School;  
Ellendale, ND

### ***Soul Priority: Training Ministry Leaders on the Urgency of Soul Care***

Project Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Bill Oliverio

Despite ministry leaders' knowledge of the Bible and the availability of innumerable books, podcasts, programs, and conferences meant to foster success, there remains a recurring problem. A considerable number of leaders within the Assemblies of God and other Bible-based ministry organizations find themselves spiritually, emotionally, and physically unhealthy. This phenomenon especially applies to pastors. Consequently, when pastors lose their passion, other leaders, as well as those they lead, cannot help but experience the effect to some degree. Pastors and ministry leaders do not fall prey to this affliction because they do not desire to stay close to the Lord, far from it.

This project offers a fresh approach to leaders' spiritual formation. Although most practices and disciplines covered are well known, leaders sometimes reach crises demanding inner renewal of restful communion with God. The Healthy Soul Workshop meets this need by guiding a community of leaders to appreciate the Shema prayer (Deut 6:4-5, Lev 19:18, Mark 12:28-31, Matt 22:40), following its biblical stream, calling worshippers to respond by loving God and neighbor whole-heartedly. The workshop emphasizes the spiritual discipline of surrender as the beginning of inner renewal.

The group of Southern Idaho ministry leaders who participated in the Healthy Soul Workshop engaged fully. The resonance of common struggles along with simple focus upon surrender and matters of the heart uniquely impacted each participant toward a closer walk with God through consistently making space to hear and respond to Him.



## **ROY R. RHODES**

Assistant Superintendent, Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Illinois District  
of the Assemblies of God; Carlinville, IL

### ***Systems Analysis in Church Revitalization: Helping Assembly of God Churches of the Illinois District Find and Maintain Health Through Systems Thinking***

Project Adviser: Dr. Mark Hausfeld

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

Nearly a third of the Assemblies of God churches in the Illinois district are systemically ill to a degree that, when considering the number of conversions, water baptisms, Holy Spirit baptisms, and giving to missions, they have reported less than five in the numeric categories and less than \$100 given to missions for three consecutive years of the last five, excluding the year of the pandemic. This project suggests that a primary component of this level of unhealth is the presence of unhealthy church systems and leaders who have insufficient understanding and training for solving problems in complex systems.

This project researched the various types of systems within organizations and established the local church as a complex system. An assessment tool that measured the degree participants utilized systems thinking was administered prior to a seminar designed to educate participants in systems thinking for solving problems in complex systems. Following the seminar, the assessment was administered again to measure the degree of change in the individual participant's ability to utilize systems thinking to solve problems.

The marked improvement demonstrated in the degree of systems thinking in participants indicates that systems thinking can be learned, and through the application of systems thinking, the problems creating unhealth in churches can be properly assessed, change can be facilitated, and revitalization can occur.





## **MATTHEW A. RILEY**

Regiment Chaplain, 3D Marine Littoral Regiment; Marine Corp Base, HI

### ***Anxiety Blind Spots: Peripheral Self-Awareness Based on Family Systems***

Project Adviser: Dr. Marshal Windsor

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

Family interactions leave small impressions in the person of the leader. Like the grooves of a vinyl record, these impressions from each passing social interaction replay like songs at differing volume levels. The high-stress environment of the military makes additional grooves in the lives of servicemembers and their families while pressuring them to suppress difficult emotions, allowing problems with anxiety to pass down from one generation to the next. The opaque and illusive aspect of these grooves of anxiety are blind spots. This project, Anxiety Blind Spots, explores these impressions as they pertain to relationships in one's family and their impact on work or ministry.

Anxiety Blind Spots aims to help leaders in the military and in the ministry gain insights for God's grace to saturate their lives. It consists of two four-part seminars to enable service members and their families at Naval Base Guam Chapel and church congregants and leaders at Kailua Assembly of God to locate their anxiety blind spots typically found within their family of origin and apply family systems theory to analyze their impact. Armed with this knowledge, participants can reduce anxiety via healthy attachments and dedication to mature thinking patterns. This project resulted in greater self-awareness, a fuller understanding of behavioral patterns adopted from one's family of origin. Both results feed into a healthier church and family atmosphere.



## **STUART ROSS**

Lead Pastor (Church Ministries), Victory Church; Yorktown, VA

### ***Developing Outcome-Based Discipleship Strategies to Realize the Vision of New Life Church***

Project Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Bob Eby

Jesus called the disciples to follow Him as their life purpose and goal. As they answered His call, each disciple experienced transformation through His teaching and training as He prepared and commissioned them to go and make disciples wherever they went. Unfortunately, today's church has reduced reproducing disciples to simply another program of the church rather than its priority and purpose. It is imperative that the church restores the primary calling of the church of Christ to once again make disciples who experience life-changing transformation towards the character of Christ, as they actively engage in Christ's mission to share the gospel and so make disciples.

This project explored how church leaders can develop discipleship strategies to accomplish the church's vision for each attendee to experience life transformation through Jesus Christ. The project introduced leaders to the whole-life discipleship concept, which includes the specific biblical outcomes evaluated through the Discipleship Dynamics Assessment. Utilizing the results of the initial assessment, the project targeted several specific outcomes through a sermon series and associated small group study. The post-strategy assessment demonstrated growth of participants in the targeted outcomes. Recommended next steps include the development of a comprehensive, annual discipleship strategy that utilizes multiple discipleship formats to facilitate whole-life discipleship growth with an emphasis upon the church's disciple making mission.



**JUSTIN M. SHARP**

Campus Minister, The College of the Ozarks; Point Lookout, MO

***An Uncommon Devotion: Discovering the Benefits of Contrition Through a Spiritual Formation Retreat for College Students at The College Of The Ozarks***

Project Adviser: Dr. Stephanie Nance

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

College-aged students find themselves in a pivotal and impressionable stage of life. The years following high school, but before engaging in the “real world,” offer a transition stage in which ministry and the gospel can set lifelong trajectories. Many students do not understand the biblical truth about God as a loving Father because they live with real pain from current or past relationships. Though they can express pain, some cannot articulate the steps necessary to begin a journey toward an abiding relationship with Christ or their families and friends.

This project introduced students to living the biblical principle of contrition as they learned how to be reconciled to God and to their neighbors (Matt 22:35-40) in a six-week class called Uncommon Devotion: Reconciliation in an Age of Division. The class preceded a twenty-four-hour spiritual formation retreat and a four-to-six-page reflection essay that gave students prompts for giving careful and prayerful thought to what they had experienced. Students grew in their knowledge of definitions, biblical awareness, self-awareness, and were able to articulate how they could live out these truths. The formational experience has promising implications for numerous groups of different backgrounds.



## **MICHAEL J. SMITH**

Lead Pastor, Northwest Church; Mount Prospect, IL  
President, Professional Coach University; Plainfield, IL

### ***Equipping Disciple-Makers in the Local Church in Biblically Based Professional Coaching Competencies***

Project Adviser: Dr. John Battaglia  
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Martin Mittlestadt

Churches often approach discipleship by giving emphasis to content delivery through a tell-and-be-told model. Disciple-makers often feel ill-equipped to effectively make disciples. An opportunity exists to equip disciple-makers in the local church who will produce followers of Jesus to mature in the faith.

To address this problem, I created a seminar entitled “What is Discipleship Coaching?” to equip disciple-makers in the local church. A coaching approach to discipleship leverages a know-and-be-known model that results from the partnership of a disciple-maker. Discipleship occurs through the process of the discovery of biblical truth and aligning with that truth. The seminar presents coaching skills, that when utilized, improve disciple-maker effectiveness. As a result of the research and subsequent seminar presentations, 89.5 percent of participants committed to making disciples utilizing a coaching approach. Results of a pretest-posttest instrument evidenced that learning to listen actively and evoke awareness equips disciple-makers to support disciples to discover biblical truth and align with it. This project contributes to future ministry by providing a platform for skills development to help congregants improve their effectiveness as disciple-makers.