



Dear Fellow Pastor,

I sort of stumbled upon something that has truly become a “game-changer” for my congregation. On face value we attempted an endeavor that could have appeared to be simply some sort of marathon for the sake of doing a marathon but it turned out to be so much more. Half of our church here in Highlands, NC., attends other churches in the winter, likely your church. Because we share such precious people, I thought I would encourage you to also consider an initiative that costs next to nothing but has a huge payoff for the church.

- On a Sunday, at high noon, immediately following a worship service, we began reading the Bible aloud day and night through Revelation 22. We read simultaneously on our main campus and at our satellite location. We set up a tent/covering, podium and microphone in front of the church. People signed up for 30-minute slots to read the scripture over a microphone, day and night.
- We went online to use <http://www.signupgenius.com/> as a means to schedule the time slots. Every time slot was filled, and people of all ages participated.
- We did weather a few rainstorms, but persistently read aloud for a total of 77 hours (Romans 10:17). We set up a live online camera feed for people at home to observe and pray for the church and the nation.
- An abiding Presence of the Lord came upon the readers. Many remarked that their 30- minute time slot seemed more like 10 minutes. People are now reading the scripture aloud in their private time at home. The spiritual impact of the experience is tremendous as is the congregation’s gratitude for the pastoral challenge.
- Many who chose to read in the middle of the night drove to the church with some hesitation only to return home celebrating the privilege to participate.
- Our Sanctuary remained open throughout the reading for people to pray before their shift. Readers often laid hands on their replacements and prayed for their reading to be blessed. Captains were chosen to oversee the reading of the Word in 4- hour time slots. (Job description enclosed)
- The testimonies enclosed are only a few of the 50 + submitted. I encourage you to consider such an initiative for your church. There are some important details I have not covered in this letter. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me via cell phone 828 200-1482, or [gary@cbchighlands.com](mailto:gary@cbchighlands.com).

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gary M. Hewins', is written over the word 'Blessings'.

Gary M. Hewins, D. Min.

Dear Captains,

I am really looking forward to *Proclamation 2016*. I will be highlighting this endeavor and the need for this kind of initiative in a sermon on Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup> but in the meantime we need to solidify our leadership roles. First of all, thanks for being willing to lead.

We are in need of the following from "Captains":

1. Select a four-hour shift [(or additional shift(s)) and reply to this email with your desired 4-hour time slot(s) during the approx. 77 hours of public scripture reading]
  - a. Shift #1 begins at high noon on Sunday, immediately following the worship service and ends at 4pm.
  - b. Shifts are noon-4pm, 4pm to 8pm, 8pm to midnight, midnight to 4am, 4am to 8am and 8am to noon.
  - c. 4 Hour time slots are available to captains on a first come first served basis.
2. Captains are a leadership presence on campus.
3. Captains "talk up" the event in the weeks prior and encourage involvement from everyone in the church!
4. Captains welcome readers and have them sign in for their reading assignment.
5. Captains encourage each reader to pray for the next reader at the beginning of each 30-minute shift.
6. Captains fill slots for "no-shows" personally or by delegating to someone else.
7. Captains determine if readers should move inside during inclement weather. (readings take place in front of the church) Sanctuary remains open for prayer throughout the reading process.
8. Captains thank readers and prayer warriors for their investment in our ministry together and make the replacement captain aware of anything pertinent for their "shift".

**Psalm 68:11 *The Lord gave the word; Great was the company of those who proclaimed it...***

Thanks for your exemplary leadership!!!

Pastor Gary



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## TESTIMONIES:

Cathy wrote:

- This is the first time I have participated in a Proclamation event. I found that I absorbed so much more of His message while reading aloud than if reading to myself and once I started reading, I didn't want to stop. There was a spiritual bond with all the other readers and just a reverence around our whole place of worship. Also, it was wonderful to see so many others in the surrounding communities step forward to sign up to read The Word, not just our church, to ensure all the time slots were filled. We had many people stopping by to thank us for reading. It was an AWESOME experience and I hope we will do annually. Thank you for this opportunity to speak His word!

Paul wrote:

- Proclamation 2016. What was introduced as a pastoral encouragement to be part of an unusual challenge became so much more than that. Reading aloud from the Bible - proclaiming Holy Scripture - several hours before dawn, was not merely pitching in and following a directive from my pastor. This was not a task, but more of an encounter. How often do we have the chance to make a small effort to proclaim the good news? More importantly, how often do we *take* those chances? And *most* important, how are we changed by having done so? I can't recall how many times I have read the Psalms, but I can say I have never been as immersed in, and as saturated by, their message as I was that night. This was not a dry recitation of poems that David wrote to the Lord using strange words a long time ago. This was alive. This was me, more fully engaged and invested than I would have thought possible. I was speaking David's words into the cool mountain night air just as he might have. I felt the same intensity, longing and thankfulness and intimacy with and for the Lord as I imagine David must have felt. And I felt the presence of the Lord as I know he did. Alleluia! We believe that holy scripture is "God-breathed". Well, God breathed into me that late night as I read and prayed the Psalms. We believe we are redeemed through the blood of the Lamb, but the Holy Spirit is present and available *now*, and we can experience His intimate love *now*. Proclamation 2016 has been a chance to encounter the Holy Spirit, and the experience can be a powerful reminder for all who participated that the personal reading of Scripture is an everyday pathway to a more intimate encounter with the Lord.

Scott & Jan wrote:

- The experience felt like a historical event...something pivotal. We believe it was and will be the tipping point in many spiritual battles. One of our grandsons was with us and he will forever remember the sight of people proclaiming God's Word during the dark of night, thunder, lightening. What a wonderful vision/parable for him to carry through life. Very grateful to our Lord, and thank you, pastors for carrying this out!

Bill wrote:

- What an amazing blessing it was to be a part of proclaiming God's word! From the moment we began to read we could feel God's anointing, the half hour of reading seemed like only minutes. I know that those that took this opportunity to honor God and his Word will never forget the experience and the power of proclaiming God's Word over this nation, world and people. Thanks for having the courage to engage your congregation with what seemed to be an impossible task into a miraculous and blessed experience.

Judy wrote:

- It was a joy and the fastest half hour of my life. I was THERE with Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones. I loved saying "and THIS is what the LORD says." I can't wait until the next time.

Allen wrote:

- The word that comes back to me over and over is PROCLAIM- I could feel the mighty power of Gods living word as I read. It was a powerful and humbling experience to proclaim the ancient words from Ezekiel.

Jim wrote:

- I read twice and had the same experience both times – about 1 minute into the reading an overwhelming sense of awe came over me. It took a while to regain my sense of continuing the read and to wipe away tears.

Once through this, the words flowed and time was not very noticeable. After what seemed like a few minutes, the next reader was standing there and I began looking for a stopping place.