



SeedStories

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Everything I Need to Know About God I Learned From My Grandkids by George Johnson

Recently our grandson, Declan (4yrs), was diagnosed with aplastic anemia. Today I'm at Children's Hospital with him for his seventh transfusion. Soon he'll receive a bone marrow transplant from his sister Adelyn (10yrs). In the midst of this difficult time for our family - especially Declan's parents, Jess and Alisha - I've learned some encouraging spiritual truths from my grandchildren that I'd like to share with you:

There is power in the blood. Declan's blood, once capable of nourishing a growing young body, has been overwhelmed by a disease that, unless treated, will take his life. Though other treatment options exist, the only cure is to renew the blood. It's the same in the spiritual realm - the only cure for my terminal disease of sin is Jesus' blood shed on the cross. I could (and have) substituted other courses of treatment but the only true cure is to be renewed by His blood.

A perfect donor is required. Only a perfectly matched donor can supply the bone marrow that will cure Declan's disease. The perfect donor can't be just anyone. Regardless of my willingness or even his parents', only one person is the perfect match to supply the cure—Adelyn. Her stem cells will replace and renew his, enabling his body to manufacture healthy blood. As a result, he will share her blood type and DNA for the rest of his life. The spiritual parallel is clear—Jesus is that perfect donor who offers me hope and life through His own blood. And in the process my spiritual DNA is changed forever!

Life depends on the love of a father and the sacrifice of a child. Jess (my son-in-law) loves his son without reserve. Nevertheless he and Alisha have wrestled deeply with having one child make a painful sacrifice to save another. I am humbled by their love and grateful for their decision. They've given me a glimpse of the weighty choice my heavenly Father made when He sent His only son to be the sacrifice for me—even when I was still far from Him!

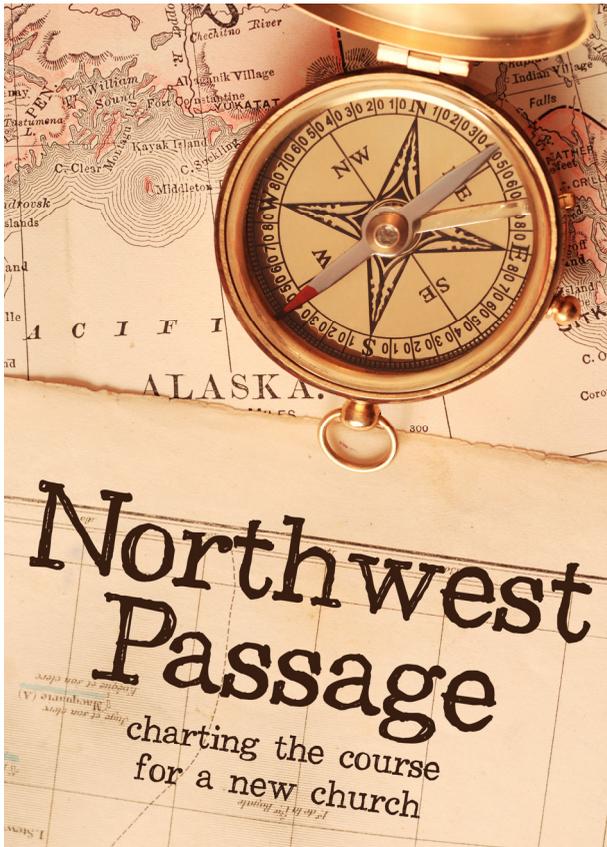
Watching my grandson battle this disease I've found a deeper understanding of this verse:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!"

II Corinthians 5:17

I am compelled to share the wonderful news with a terminally-ill world- that their Father loves them and sent His Son to heal their disease. The cure is for sure! There is power in the blood of Christ!

Northwest Passage Training Jan 23-25



The *Northwest Passage* is a narrow, ever-changing sea route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. First sought by Viking ships and countless explorers like James Cook and George Vancouver, the elusive passage remained undiscovered until 1906 when Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen finally located and navigated it.

The *Northwest Passage* is a fitting metaphor for starting a new church in the Pacific NW. Both require charting a new course through unknown waters in an unpredictable climate. The objective of this annual training event is to prepare leaders for their unique adventure.

Veteran church planter, Derek Dickinson (*Journey Church, Fairbanks, AK*) leads our training. He'll be joined by experienced Northwest planters and mentors whose insights and encouragement will help leaders navigate their unique ministry journey.

We invite church planters, ministry leaders, spouses and teams to join us for two days of training and preparation in Eugene, OR @ Westside Church (1866 Chambers St). The cost is \$100/person.

Coming Events

Church Planter Assessment

January 4 - 6

Compass Christian Church, Dallas, TX

Northwest Passage Training

January 23 (1pm) - January 25 (noon)

Westside Christian Church, Eugene, OR

CEA Board Retreat

January 26, Seattle, WA

NewChurch Network w/Ralph Moore

Feb. 2-3, Farmers Branch, TX

Alaska Journey Celebration

March 10-12, Fairbanks, AK

George & Dottie Johnson are hosting a trip to frigid Fairbanks to celebrate the dedication of Journey Christian Church's newly completed building. We're inviting all of our CEA family, planters, partners and supporters to join us for a true Alaskan adventure. Plans include a worship celebration with the Journey congregation, a guided tour of the new facility, a visit to Santa's house in North Pole, attending the International Ice Sculpture Championship and the chance to see some unique sights including moose and the elusive Northern Lights.

Contact dottie@theCEA.org for more information or reservations.

Crazy Life—the Call of a Church Planter

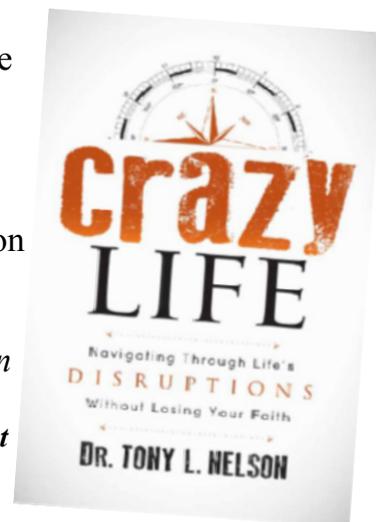
The call of a church planter is a call to a *crazy life*. I know a lot about crazy —I wrote a book on it! I learned first-hand how crazy church planting was when Disa and I planted in the Phoenix Metro area without a core group in the late 1980's.

Why is church planting so crazy? Here are seven reasons:

1. *Many people, even those closest to you, think you're crazy to plant. "Why don't you take a nice established church in a nice neighborhood with a regular pay check," they argue. How boring!*
2. *Starting a church with virtually nothing but a dream—no building, no staff, limited resources, and an increasingly hostile culture. Only the brave need apply.*
3. *Satan will notice you. He hates church planters and new churches because he ends up losing prisoners. Sharpen your sword. You're going to need it!*
4. *Other churches will be intimidated by your dream and sometimes refuse fellowship. No worries. You can make friends with other dreamers. They're more fun to hang out with anyway.*
5. *So few actually succeed. The failure rate for new churches to reach the 7-year mark is just shy of 70%. With more risk comes more reward—it is a thrill to be one of the 30% who thrive!*
6. *Church planting will undoubtedly be the hardest thing you've ever done. Period. What a badge of honor, really!*
7. *Church planters get to see a crazy God perform miracles of provision, protection and conversion. After all, new church disciple-making was His idea in the first place.*

Embrace the crazy - Tony Nelson

*Autographed copies of Tony's book, **Crazy Life: Navigating Through Life's Disruptions without Losing your Faith**, can be ordered at www.tonymnelson.com. Digital copies will be available in February. Hard copies will be in stores May 30th.*



BTW, you can make an RMD from your IRA

Seniors over the age of 70½ must make an annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from their IRA. Congress made a permanent provision that can be win-win for seniors 70½ and charities like CEA. Contributions made directly from an IRA trustee to a charity count toward the RMD requirement but are not included as income to the donor. Because the contribution is not deductible as a charitable contribution it may favor a standard deduction over itemizing. This option may also reduce the taxable portion of social security payments. Be sure to get a receipt from the charity acknowledging the contribution from the IRA. Check with your tax preparer to properly report the contribution on your tax return.

Been lucky in the stock market? A contribution to a charity of appreciated securities held for more than one year allows you to take an itemized deduction for the fair market value of the securities on the date of the contribution. The gain is not taxable. The charity can then sell the securities and receive the cash. CEA has a stock brokerage account that can receive your security contribution. For information or assistance in making a gift of this kind email treasurer@thecea.org.



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Help Start a New Church in the New Year!

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Online: Go to www.theCEA.org—and click the “Give” link. Make a one-time gift or set up a recurring gift.

Legacy Gifts: Consider making a gift in memory of a deceased loved one or friend you’d like to honor. Your grateful gift could mean eternity for the life of someone far from God.

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