

Why Pastors Need Prayer

by ANNA GREEN

Have one encounter with Jim and Anne Bevis and it won't take you long to learn why God would call them to a ministry of Encouragement. Not only is it their passion, but it also is a gift they both possess to encourage the body of Christ. Jim and Anne are the Executive Directors of Christians Seeking Renewal (CSR) Ministries, they have been married and in the ministry for over 44 years now. Vertical magazine recently sat down to speak with Jim about this new aspect of ministry God has called them to called the Ministry of Encouragement.

Actually this ministry was birthed out of a vision Jim had in December 2003 to go "door to door" to the churches of America, calling on pastors and church staff and encouraging them. They were to bless them, pray for them and leave a gift with them. Jim saw them traveling the "back roads" of America in a motor home, knocking on the doors of the churches of America. (FYI, there are approximately 300,000 churches in the United States. Approximately 300 churches are in the Shoals, tri-county area of Lauderdale, Colbert, and Franklin).

Shortly after this call, while discussing this vision with some fathers in the Gospel, one of the men said that Jim was to start calling on churches in the block where he lived. Moving from "Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

In the second week of January 2004, Jim began to dedicate one day per week to calling on churches. He began with the churches nearest his home, Woodmont Baptist, Darby Drive Church of Christ, St. Bartholomew's Episcopal, and First Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Since then, he has called on 203 churches in the Shoals area. Jim has personally visited with 108 pastors and ministers simply by making calls one day a week. Bevis' Jerusalem now includes Florence, Sheffield, Tusculumbia, Muscle Shoals, Greenhill, Central Heights, Littleville, Russellville and the surrounding counties.

"I have had some amazing visits. I have

walked in on ministers who were writing their resignation letters from ministry. I walked in on one minister who said he was having the worst day of his life. I walked in on another who said, 'You're too late.' I have spent from three minutes to two hours with each minister. I have always been received courteously. Never have

ily, Turning Point Ministries with David Jeremiah, and CBN Network – the 700 Club.

God has continued to show them other aspects of the ministry of encouragement vision along the way including:

• Mobilizing retired ministers, across the nation to function as an encouragement network.

• Recruiting and equipping the retired ministers to serve as ministers of encouragement in their areas.

• Producing a weekly encouragement mailing, which will go to Pastors they have called on as well as others who request the mailing.

• Developing a list of pastoral resources and links on its website referring pastors to ministries addressing their needs.

Some of you may be questioning the need of such a ministry, well take a look at some of the statistics we included and see that one couple can't do this alone! I personally was astounded at the statistics I read. The one that really got my attention was the fact that 70% of pastors do not have a close friend, confidant, or mentor; they are going at this all alone. This is not what God desires! This is the time to sound the alarm to the body of Christ of the great need to encourage, pray for and show appreciation for our ministers. October is Pastor or Clergy Appreciation Month and we have asked Jim to help us equip churches and individuals with ideas to show appreciation and encourage their ministers.

For more information regarding CSR Ministries or the Ministry of Encouragement, contact them at www.csrministries.org, or e-mail Jim at

jim.bevis@csrministries.org or you can call (256) 718-3775.

In honor of all Shoals area Pastors, Ministers and their spouses, CSR and the new Shoals Hotel are sponsoring "An Evening of Appreciation" Dinner held on October 18th. For more information, contact CSR ministries. ■

* Statistics provided by Shiloh Place Ministries and www.PastorsNet.org.

- **90% OF PASTORS WORK BETWEEN 55 AND 75 HOURS PER WEEK.**
- **A CHURCH THAT HAS FIRED A PASTOR HAS A 70% CHANCE OF DOING THE SAME TO THE FOLLOWING PASTOR.**
- **THE PROFESSION OF "PASTOR" IS NEAR THE BOTTOM OF A 1995 SURVEY OF MOST-RESPECTED PROFESSIONS, JUST ABOVE "CAR SALESMAN."**
- **71% OF THE PASTORS SAY THEY'RE HAVING PERSONAL FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.**
- **65% OF ALL PASTORS HAVE THOUGHT OF LEAVING THE MINISTRY IN THE PAST 30 DAYS.**
- **70% OF PASTORS SAY THEY DON'T HAVE SOMEONE THEY CONSIDER TO BE A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND.**
- **20% OF PASTORS SAY THEY VIEW PORNOGRAPHY AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH.**
- **1 OUT OF 8 PASTORS ADMIT TO HAVING AN AFFAIR WHILE IN THE MINISTRY.**
- **THE PASTORAL PROFESSION HAS SURPASSED THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AS THE NUMBER ONE "STRESS" PROFESSION.**
- **80% OF PASTORS AND 84% OF THEIR SPOUSES FEEL UNQUALIFIED AND DISCOURAGED IN THEIR ROLE AS PASTORS.**
- **95% OF PASTORS DO NOT REGULARLY PRAY WITH THEIR SPOUSE.**
- **80% OF PASTORS SURVEYED SPEND LESS THAN 15 MINUTES A DAY IN PRAYER.**
- **70% SAID THE ONLY TIME THEY SPEND STUDYING THE WORD IS WHEN THEY ARE PREPARING THEIR SERMONS.**
- **85% SAID THEIR GREATEST PROBLEM IS THEY ARE SICK AND TIRED OF DEALING WITH PROBLEM PEOPLE, SUCH AS ELDERS, DEACONS, WORSHIP LEADERS, WORSHIP TEAMS, BOARD MEMBERS, AND ASSOCIATE PASTORS.**
- **90% SAID THE MINISTRY WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEFORE THEY ENTERED MINISTRY.**

I been received unkindly," said Bevis.

On the Sunday following my weekday visits with pastors, Anne and I select one of the places I visited that week to visit on Sunday. We have visited the Sunday morning services of 45 different churches over the last 16 months.

With each visit to these ministers, Jim leaves a gift packet for the minister, which he calls a "first aid packet" for ministers. These materials have been supplied by Focus on the Fam-