



## PREACHING SPECIALISTS

### SUBJECT 1:

On hearing of a missionary dinner, the tendency for some of us is to see how far you can get from it. Missionaries do a great service and are good dedicated Christians. But how many slides of groups of missionary converts do we need to see in one lifetime.

Starting with that general attitude, a luncheon during the OC Lectureships turned out to be a missionary speaker. The speaker was Dirk Smith with EEM (Eastern European Missions). It was one of the best and most inspirational messages I have ever heard.

### SUBJECT 2:

It has seemed reasonable for a long time to consider that a local preacher needs to deliver 104 sermons during each year, with the additional potential of needing to teach another 104 Sunday a.m. and Wednesday p.m. classes.

Just looking at that objectively, it would be difficult for the best of our preachers to maintain a level of interest today. It is also reasonable to consider that in the 19th century, church was the only social engagement for a lot of members, whereas the "competition" for member's time and interest is at least an order of magnitude greater today.

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## OKC ELDER'S WORKSHOP POSTPONED!

Due to unforeseen conditions, the 11/14/15 OKC Elder's Workshop is delayed until after the first of the new year at a new venue. We apologize for the inconvenience this has caused a number of leaders and will get back to you with a new date and location as soon as practical.

For more information contact  
[info@occgthinktank.org](mailto:info@occgthinktank.org)



### OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN CHURCH GROWTH THINK TANK

A PROJECT DEDICATED TO SPURRING THE  
SCRIPTURAL GROWTH OF LOCALLY AUTONO-  
MOUS CHURCHES OF CHRIST  
AND  
THAT METHODS CAN CHANGE,  
BUT THE GOSPEL DOES NOT

#### BASIC PLAN:

DEVELOP OR LOCATE IDEAS  
REDUCE IDEAS TO STD. READABLE FORMAT  
COMMUNICATE IDEAS TO OUR 12,311 CONG.

WE NEED YOUR HELP FOR THIS:  
SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS  
PREPARE PAPERS FOR DISTRIBUTION  
REVIEW AND EDIT PAPERS  
HELP COLLECT E-MAIL ADDRESSES  
HELP SPREAD THE WORD

Contact us at: [info@occgthinktank.org](mailto:info@occgthinktank.org)  
<http://occgthinktank.org/>



## PREACHING SPECIALISTS - P. 2

If this is difficult for the best of our preachers, by definition half our preachers are below the average of all our preachers (You may have to think about that for a moment.)

For our “dyeed in the wool” older members that may be alright, but it is clearly not for a lot of our younger members who are voting with their feet. If what we are doing is the best we can do, then we need to keep doing it. If what we are doing is a custom because our great grandparents did it this way and it is not a scriptural requirement, we need to study on how to do it better.

### BACK TO SUBJECT 1:

Dirk Smith had a really great sermon which everyone should hear. In discussion with him, when he gives a lesson in a congregation of any size, he is offered the Sunday night forum as a possibility. This is so poorly attended (especially when you hear a missionary is coming) that they generally prefer to do special dinners instead.

Dirk is special because he has a story to tell. He gets to go around and tell the same story. He has really good graphics because he has only one story and he is well practiced at presenting it. If Dirk was required to give a lesson twice a week to the same group for a year, he would be forced to accept what he could prepare on a highly individualistic lesson basis. Dirk doesn't do this. He has one story and tells it over and over again.

### BACK TO SUBJECT 2:

If the local preacher could offer the pulpit to Dirk (or other Dirk like speakers) on one Sunday morning a month, it does two things:

1. It presents good speakers with their “story”

to maintain membership interest, and

2. It reduces the number of times the local preacher has to preach and gives him more time to be original and creative. Maybe your preacher has his own special story which he could deliver around the country on his week off. We need to keep in mind that the continuity provided by the local minister is critical to the success of a congregation. He is not just a Sunday morning mouthpiece.

We have referred to these “Dirks” as “Preaching Specialists”. Not a lesson you want to hear repetitively, but really interesting to hear once.

The qualifications of a presentation like this could be:

1. Something that the local preacher could not be expected to be proficient in (no one can be good on all subjects),
2. Something which has been presented multiple times in other forums and validated to be of wide interest,
3. More of a special topic than a special speaker, and
4. It would be generally behind the idea that a member has a “story”. The local minister has a “story”, but he tells it from that point of view week after week.

The “Achilles heel” of this concept is the political situation it provides. Every preacher and missionary thinks they have a special message and a special topic. How does a local congregation tell a missionary that they are going to offer the pulpit up to others, but the missionary's message is not interesting enough for this forum? The missionary's message is extremely pertinent and important to him (and to God).



## PREACHING SPECIALISTS - P. 3

That being said, this is offered for your consideration and input. We would certainly recommend that you invite Dirk to speak on Sunday morning when your members are there.

A second message of this quality is "LIFETIME IMPACT OF YOUR CHILD ATTENDING A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE" by Kent Allen of OC. In this sermon Kent compares the probability of your child remaining married if he/she attends a Christian College in comparison to a church member's child who attends a State college or does not go to college. He further compares probability of their children and grandchildren remaining faithful.

Another message is "GOD IS MORE SCIENTIFIC THAN EVOLUTION". Who would have ever put this on a Sunday morning. It might happen on a Wednesday night or possibly on a Sunday night, but never on a Sunday morning. This is one lesson your teenagers need to hear but would be of little impact on the older generation typically present on Sunday night. It would need to be presented when the younger members would hear it.

Again, this is not so much a statement regarding the capabilities of the local minister, but a statement regarding the change in the situation they are placed in. It is difficult to know what the exact situation was in the first century, but our tradition of Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night services was largely started in the 19th Century when we were primarily an agrarian society. Literally, church was the only game in town.

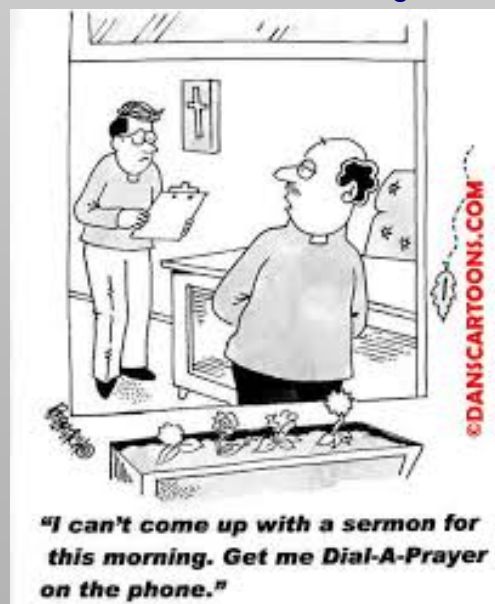
Today the local preacher must compete with 24/7 of 300 TV channels, the NFL, Rock & Roll concerts and a lot other distractions trying to

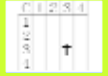
consume our member's time at a rapid pace. With this as a background, is it any wonder a local minister has difficulty in keeping an audience's attention in 104 sermons year after year. We are not talking about an elder's attention who will be coming no matter what is presented. We are talking about the young people who are saying it is basically boring and voting with their feet.

The longer we take in figuring out a realistic way of dealing with this situation, the more of our kids we will lose, the more congregations which will start down the slippery slope with instrumental music, and the more non-instrumental congregations will get older and older until they simply die.

**If this seems like a half baked idea presented with no real answer, it is because it is.** We are looking for those people who can make suggestions to revitalize churches of Christ and remain scriptural while they do it. Is that you? Does this give you a starting place?

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.





## PLANT THE SEED

Hidden somewhere in our feminine DNA is the desire to change things. We want to make things better. We want to make you better. We train our children, we teach each other and we could easily fix our men folk if they would just listen. Here's an interesting quote about that, "The only time a woman really succeeds in changing a man is when he's a baby."

As usual we need to go back to our master teacher, Jesus. He wanted to change things too – He wanted to change each of us. He did that with parables, stories, riddles and rarely ever answering all the questions. Many times, I've thought, "He knew all the answers – why didn't he just spell it out plainly?" Maybe we have to ask the right questions.

Jesus changed the world by planting seed. He planted the truth in parables, principles, character, and examples. He planted the seed generously in every kind of heart. He nurtured the seed with water and sunshine no matter what the chances were of the seed growing.

He explained that the "seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11) Jesus planted kindness and compassion by his example of mercy. He fed the hungry and healed the sick. He taught those who listened and those who were skeptical. He persevered though all the opposition so that we can persevere.

"But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." (Luke 8:15)

Jesus' seed contained the love of God, godly character, humility, compassion, wisdom, history and essentially everything Jesus taught.

Plant the seed, it is filled with the DNA of Jesus Christ! And continue to be generous in sowing the seed, nurture it and be patient as you wait for it to mature and produce a crop.

Elizabeth Brown

### MEMORIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST HOUSTON, TEXAS

Just started using Roll Checking Binders to collect member and visitor attendance information.

**The number of visitors registered  
went up from**

**7 / week to 43 / week**

If it helped this congregation of about 900 in attendance, how much will it help yours?

For more information, go to  
[occgthinktank.org](http://occgthinktank.org) / project papers /  
Roll Checking Binder



## IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #56: GHOST KNIFEFISH

We have discussed Electric Eels (Impossible #38 in issue #82) which generate electricity to shock you, but the Ghost Knifefish takes to another level. It invented a way to both send electric signals and receive them. It is their basic method of finding food. Truly an amazing design by a higher intelligence when the highest IQ on earth was zero.

“The **black ghost knifefish** (*Apteronotus albifrons*) is a [tropical fish](#) which originates in freshwater habitats in South America. They are a weakly [electric fish](#) which use an electric organ and receptors distributed over the length of their body in order to locate insect larvae.

The black ghost knifefish is a weakly electric fish as a result of the electromotor and electrosensory systems it possesses. Electrogenesis occurs when a specialized electric organ found in the tail of the fish generates electrical signals, which are thus called electric organ discharges (EODs).

Then, for these EODs to be sensed by the fish, electroreception occurs when groups of sensory cells embedded in the skin, known as electroreceptor organs, detect the electrical change. The EODs are used for two major purposes: electrolocation and communication.

By emitting its own continuous sinusoidal train of EODs, the fish can determine the presence

of nearby objects by sensing perturbations in timing and amplitude of electric fields, an ability known as active electrolocation.

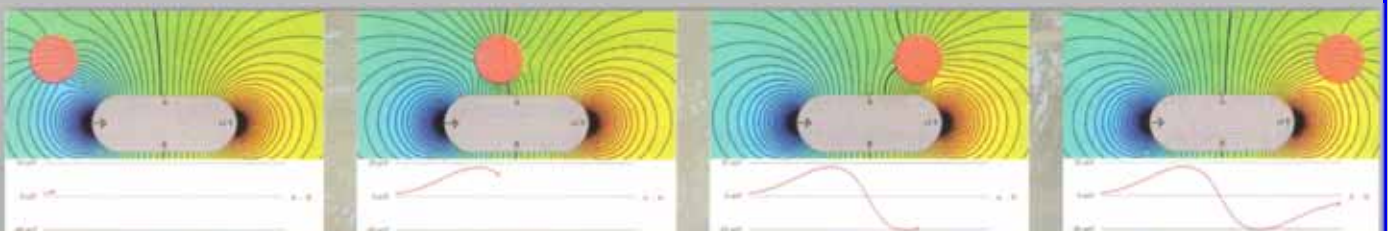
The particular organs used to sense the self-generated high-frequency EODs are tuberous electroreceptor organs. On the other hand, when low-frequency electric fields are generated by external sources instead of the fish itself, a different class of electroreceptor organs is used for this passive electrolocation, called ampullary organs.



Therefore, the black ghost knifefish uses an active and a passive electrosystem, each with its own corresponding receptor organs. The fish can also use a mechanosensory lateral line system, which detects water disturbances created by the motion of the fish's body. As nocturnal hunters, the fish can rely on all three systems to navigate through dark environments and detect their prey.

Information from Wikipedia.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.



Electric Sensations MacIver's SensorPod can identify nearby objects as they cross its electrical field.

## EEM (EASTERN EUROPEAN MISSIONS)

Can you imagine that in some former Soviet Bloc countries, the Bible is now being used as their primary text book.

Many Eastern European administrators, librarians and teachers believe giving the Bible to their children will change the future of their country. That is why they continue to ask EEM to put Bibles and biblical literature in their schools

What can you Do?  
You can supply Bibles and biblical materials:  
For \$1000 for a school!  
For \$150 for a class!  
For \$50 for ten students!  
For \$5 for a child!



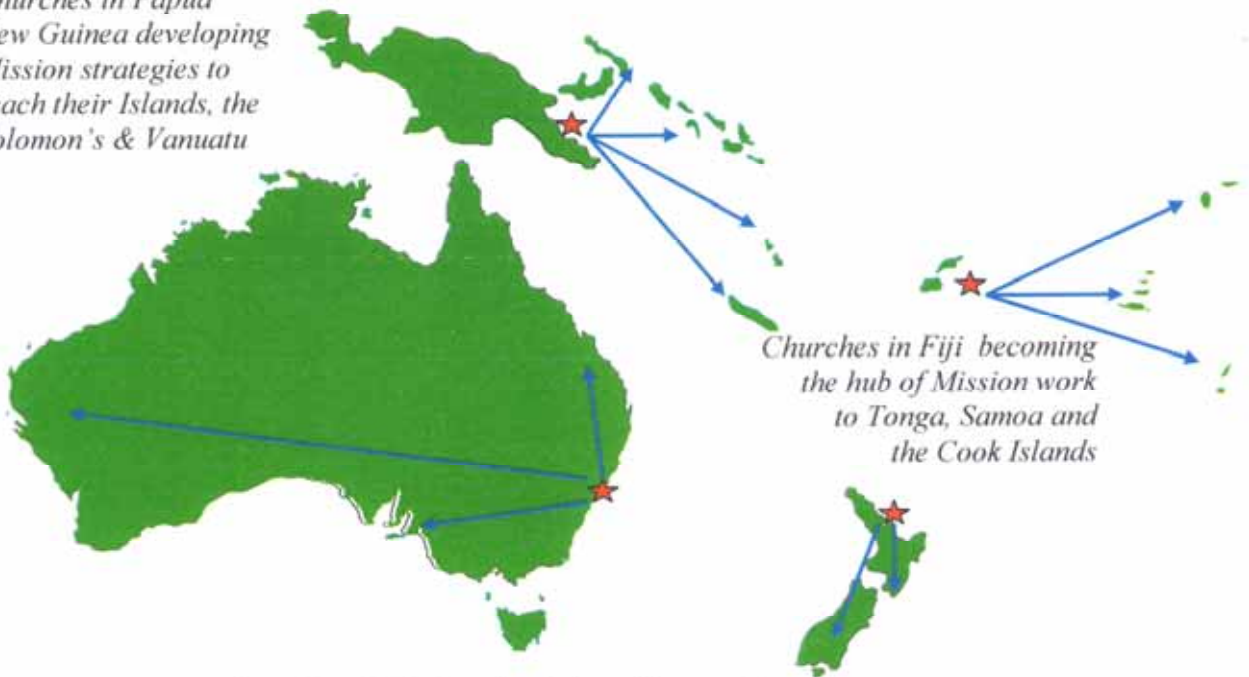
Dirk Smith 501-2789-1728 [dsmith@eem.org](mailto:dsmith@eem.org)  
Eastern European Mission 800-486-1818 [MillionDollarSunday.org](http://MillionDollarSunday.org)

## SOUTH PACIFIC BIBLE COLLEGE



Established in 1982 to equip missionaries and teachers in S.E. Asia.

*Churches in Papua New Guinea developing Mission strategies to reach their Islands, the Solomon's & Vanuatu*



*Churches in Fiji becoming the hub of Mission work to Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands*

*Churches in New Zealand, Australia spearheading church planting within their own countries*



For \$15 to \$20,000 you can support a student to be trained through a degree and he/she will take the Gospel back to their own people.

Contact Steven Raine <[sraine@spbc.org.nz](mailto:sraine@spbc.org.nz)> for how to become a partner in this important work.

<http://spbc.org.nz/>

# CHURCHES OF CHRIST DISASTER RELIEF EFFORT INC.

## HELPING VICTIMS NATIONWIDE

When disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires and floods strike, we can bring prepackaged food boxes, personal hygiene boxes, infant care boxes, buckets full of cleaning supplies, brooms, mops, shovels, rakes, laundry detergent, bleach, bottled water, new clothing, and other miscellaneous supplies to local Church of Christ congregation(s) serving that area. Items are prepacked in our large warehouse in Nashville, Tennessee, ready to hand out. We have served congregations from coast to coast in every major disaster.

**Being the first with the best disaster relief is a good reflection on the church.**

**WHEN THE DISASTER IS TOO GREAT...YOUR BRETHREN WILL HELP!**

**For information or assistance call 615-833-0888 or 1-888-541-2848**

***Our trucks are ready to roll!***



*Please consider financial support to help us in this work. You may send contributions to:*

**Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, Inc.  
P.O. Box 111180 • Nashville, TN 37222-1180**

**E-Mail:** [dsastrlf@aol.com](mailto:dsastrlf@aol.com)

**Website:** [disasterrelieffort.org](http://disasterrelieffort.org)

**You can also follow us on Facebook:** [facebook.com/disasterrelieffort](https://facebook.com/disasterrelieffort)



## Churches of Christ Disaster Relief

Separated by two Millennium the Churches of Christ Responds to Disaster, It was the mid to late 50s in the first century. A small band of believers set out for Jerusalem with precious cargo. They bore gifts from the Churches of Christ in Macedonia and Achaia to the South, a Roman Province which included most of Greece. The cargo they carried was money that had been lovingly collected among churches like Corinth and Galatia.

*“Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. <sup>2</sup> On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. <sup>3</sup> Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.”*

Likely some of Paul’s band were from those churches and had taken Paul up on his offer to accompany them on the journey. One of the benefits of Roman rule was a vast network for roads that made travel much easier. It was also safer but a far cry from safety as we would know it. Especially for a band of Christians bearing money to help victims of the terrible drought that has afflicted Jerusalem and the greater area of Judea.

The relief effort was an answer to the plea that Paul had sent out in a letter months earlier recorded in 1 Corinthians 16. You can see the emotion towards the generosity of the churches who responded to the dire need of people in the great city of Jerusalem who the drought has

brought hunger and want to the doorstep of these proud people.

*“And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup> In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup> For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, <sup>4</sup> they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. <sup>5</sup> And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.”*

Just like they did in the First Century the Churches of Christ respond to disasters wherever they happen. As a nation we have been blessed beyond belief. We sometimes think that we don’t have much but look at what we do have: Cars, TVs, Cell Phones, Appliances, Air





## Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, p. 2

Even the poorest congregation of the Lord's Church in America would be viewed as unspeakably wealthy compared to those generous and giving Christians in Macedonia and Achaia in the first century.

That being said the same praise can be given to Churches of Christ in America that Paul gave to those First Century Churches. This has been a terrible year for disasters. Late Winter brought tornados to several states from Kansas to Illinois, to Ohio, to Florida, another wave brought 14 tornados to the Dallas area in Texas. Spring and summer brought fires in Colorado and New Mexico and floods to Minnesota and other states. We also had a hurricane that hit the Gulf of Mexico and once again ravaged Louisiana. Churches of Christ across the country met the challenge with generosity and prayer, they enabled Churches of Christ Disaster Relief based in Nashville, TN to send over four and a half million dollars in relief and that was just one effort among several in the brotherhood. But the worst disaster was yet to come.

In scale Hurricane Sandy has been one of the largest disasters in history and Gods people are responding. In the first century response time was measured in Months and Years. In the Twenty First Century the response has been within days and weeks but will extend into months and probably even more than a year.

The Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort Inc. has already sent 15 truckloads of relief from Nashville, TN worth about \$1.5 Million to several congregations of the Lord's Church in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut and the end isn't even in sight. That is not to say that we collected that much, far from it. Be-

cause Disaster Relief is an ongoing effort we have agreements with food manufacturers and other suppliers and can literally turn every dollar that is donated into three. When you combine all of the organized relief efforts from Tennessee, Louisiana, Florida and Texas with money that is being sent directly to churches in the disaster area, the response among Churches of Christ will be in the Millions. It is heartwarming to see the impact these small congregations have on their community because of the generosity of Churches and individuals thousands of miles away. Those Churches on the Eastern Seaboard are not only fulfilling Matthew 25 and taking care of their neighbors physical needs they are finding doors wide open to fulfill Matthew 28, The Great Commission. Thank you so much for your prayers and generosity.

If you would like to know more here is the contact information for Churches of Christ Disaster

Relief Effort Inc.  
Disaster Relief Effort  
410 Allied Drive  
Nashville, TN 37211  
Phone: 615-833-0888  
Toll free: 1-888-541-2848  
Fax: 615-831-7133  
E-mail: [dsastrrlf@aol.com](mailto:dsastrrlf@aol.com)  
Web: [disasterrelieffort.org](http://disasterrelieffort.org)

Or Contact  
Ken Leonard  
Associate Director of Development  
[Leonardken@aol.com](mailto:Leonardken@aol.com)  
Phone (214)335-1112

Ken is an Alumni of Southwestern Christian College, a former County Commissioner in Kaufman County and a former Youth Minister.



## AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

**11/14/15 POSTPONED: OKC / OC Area Wide Elder's Workshop**  
To another location and time (after the first of the year)

**2nd Tues. Northwest Houston Preacher's Luncheon, confirm with Dale Foster at [dalefoster@gmail.com](mailto:dalefoster@gmail.com) for address.**

## YAHOO GROUP

*HoustonCofC is a Yahoo group hosted by Steve Sandifer [[steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net)] for the purpose of communicating Houston area news among the brethren. It is open to any member of the church at no cost.*

## The Christian Array E-Magazine

This e-magazine is sent to members of the church on a monthly basis as an attempt to promote scriptural teachings, area wide activities and church growth. If you do not want to receive this e-magazine, send an e-mail to [bbaugh@thearray.org](mailto:bbaugh@thearray.org) and it will be stopped.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, send their e-mail addresses to [bbaugh@thearray.org](mailto:bbaugh@thearray.org). All past copies of the newsletter can be found on the website "thearray.org".

## E-MAIL ADDRESSES

A goal of this newsletter is to develop a mailing list of as many members of the church as possible and to communicate church related information to as many members as possible. In that light, we would appreciate it if you would:

1. forward the church member e-mail addresses which you have,
2. send the directory of the congregation you attend or any other directories which you might have, and
3. give us an idea of how to collect church member e-mail addresses.

The Christian Array is dedicated to support the sustained scriptural growth of the churches of Christ. It is published by BCE Publications, a 501(c)(3) organization with Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E. as editor. BCE is solely responsible for the content. Any announcements, requests for publication, or comments should be e-mailed to [bbaugh@thearray.org](mailto:bbaugh@thearray.org).