

»»» THE NELSON CENTER

MARCH, 2025

ADVANCE

"THE WORD OF GOD GREW AND MULTIPLIED" »»»



REMEMBERING DR. ED NELSON

A LEGACY OF PREACHING AND CHURCH PLANTING

4 Remembering Dr. Ed Nelson His Life, Ministry, and Legacy



PULPITS OF THE PAST

10 The Building of the Church, *Dr. Ed Nelson*



PULPITS OF THE PRESENT

14 Needed: Heart Preaching, *Dr. Scott Pauley*



PULPITS OF THE FUTURE

16 Nelson Center Preacher Training

17 Nelson Center Calendar: Events and Opportunities

18 Advanced Preaching Certification



CHURCH PLANTING RESEARCH

20 Dr. Ed Nelson on Church Planting



CHURCH PLANTING INITIATIVES

23 The Manitowoc Project

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For a full list of Senior Presenters visit nelsonpreachingcenter.org/people/presenters

We are delighted to publish the first issue of *The Nelson Center Advance*. Though we live in a day filled with compromise and adversity, we believe that there is no greater day for young men and veteran pastors to rise up and join a national movement for preaching and church planting. Just as the "word of God grew and multiplied" in the book of Acts, the same can be accomplished in our generation (Acts 12:24).

The Nelson Center for Preaching and Church Planting brings together many effective and independent Baptist preachers in America, offering resources for all who have a heart for preaching and church planting. We trust the materials and opportunities presented in this first copy of *The Nelson Center Advance* will encourage your faith in the great work that God is doing in this day and age.

This first issue honors the memory of a dear friend and mentor of mine, Dr. Ed Nelson. The Center is named in his honor because his life exemplified the heart and purpose of its founding - faithful proclamation of the Word of God, and a dedication to church planting. Dr. Nelson began planting churches while he was still in college, and continued to do so into the days in which most preachers would have retired. He even lost count of how many he planted because it was a way of life for him. We desire to carry on his legacy and see a multiplying movement of reproducing churches that are faithfully preaching the Word.

Each copy of *The Nelson Center Advance* will contain research, writings, and sermon transcriptions from pulpits of the past and present. In this remembrance issue, we found it fitting to highlight a sermon preached by Brother Nelson on the "Building of the Church." Dr. Pauley, one of our Senior Presenters, wrote the "Pulpits of the Present" article on the need for heart preaching, and we trust it will be a blessing to you. In the "Pulpits of the Future" category, we described the training that has occurred this year at the Nelson Center, and are very excited to announce the Advanced Preaching Certification available for men in the ministry. We have many upcoming events and opportunities to inspire and develop the current and next generation of preachers.

On the topic of church planting, we included an interview with Dr. Ed Nelson, and also want to share with you the current initiatives, including the Manitowoc Project. Learn how you can partner with us! May God enable us to fulfill the Great Commission in our generation!

Dr. Wayne Van Gelderen
NELSON CENTER DIRECTOR





Dr. Ed Nelson

HIS LIFE, MINISTRY, AND LEGACY

"I was saved at First Baptist Church in Fort Collins. The church was in the Northern Baptist Convention when I got saved, and the pastor there had invited Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. to come preach a revival meeting. My mailman, E. M. Spoon, came out and delivered our mail a quarter of a mile from the house, and we had a sugar beet field going straight south from the farm house that quarter of a mile right along the road. One day, I was out there pulling sugar beets during the harvest of October 1944. Mr. Spoon got out of his car at the mailbox, climbed through the barbed wire fence, and came over, so I stopped the John Deere Model B tractor and got off because I respected him. He said, 'Ed, I've been praying for you, and I want to invite you to a revival meeting.' I didn't want to go to a revival meeting. My parents said, 'Stay away from revival meetings. That's where Holy Rollers go, and you don't want to be a Holy Roller.'" So I didn't want to go to a revival meeting, but out of respect for Mr. Spoon, I said, 'I'll come tonight.' That night, when we finished work, I ran to eat supper, cleaned up a bit, and drove to First Baptist Church, which

was about eleven miles away. I heard a message by Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. I had never heard anything like that before. I was used to hearing a 'preacherette' preacha 'sermonnette' to 'christianettes,' and everybody smoked cigars. That's what I was used to. But what I heard that night was the real gospel and the message. I got angry and I said, 'I will never be back.' But the next day while I was driving that John Deere Model B tractor, pulling sugar beets to harvest, I began to think, 'I wonder what he's going to say tonight to make me mad, and if I'm not there, I won't know what to be mad about.' So I went back, and I got mad again, and said 'I'll never come back again.' And the next night I was back. That was Wednesday night, and I went away mad again. Thursday night I went back, but I didn't get mad - I got glad, because that night I got saved. Now that was under Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. The next year they had another revival meeting in October, and they invited Dr. Bob Jones, Jr. I didn't know these men before, but I went to hear Bob Jones, Jr., and it was in that meeting that I got called to preach."

Dr. Ed Nelson's testimony of salvation and his call to preach given in the sermon he preached at his 90th birthday celebration service at Red Rocks Baptist Church.



A Legacy of Preaching and Church Planting

Dr. Ed Nelson (1923-2022) served tirelessly in full-time Christian service for over 70 years. As a young man, he was financially independent, owning a successful ranch. However, God convicted him to give all of his wealth to missions, and begin to walk by faith.

Sensitivity to God's voice, and a walk of faith marked his entire ministry. When he was challenged in college about evangelism, he took 2,000 tracts and passed them out on a trip. He preached in every venue possible and even planted a church. In college his life was marked by what he later taught: "even as a student, give of your strength to evangelism."

Dr. Nelson recounts that he was warned that if he went to Bob Jones University, he would never be able to get a good church to pastor. "I never did," he said. "I just started some!"

While in college, he started a church in Idaho Springs, CO, which is still in existence today.

After college, he married Guyla, and immediately they went out into itinerant evangelism. He held meetings in churches across the West. Soon, he felt he needed more church experience, so he started Hoffman Heights Baptist Church in Aurora, Colorado. "When I got back into evangelistic work, I found that I really enjoyed pastoring and that I was missing something. All I could think about was how I could get back into the pastorate." In 1956, the Nelsons returned to itinerant evangelism.

"During his evangelistic ministry, Dr. Nelson started at least a dozen local churches in Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. In 1960, Dr. Nelson became the pastor of South Sheridan Baptist Church in Denver. Under Dr. Nelson's

leadership, the church [grew] from a handful of members with an annual budget of \$10,000 to a large, multi-faceted ministry with 1500 members and an annual budget of more than \$1.6 million. What is his secret?

'We just started winning souls,' Dr. Nelson says.

"We try to reach every segment of society. We have ministries to the deaf, mentally retarded, single parents, senior citizens, and young people. We have a bus ministry, a printing ministry, and a radio ministry. We are praying about how we can reach various groups of displaced people in our city."

"Mile High Minister," *BJU Review*, (Fall, 1987).



At the age of 72, he was burdened to start a church in Tucson, Arizona. He tirelessly labored to plant Bethel Baptist Church, which in turn spawned several other churches in Tucson.

"His forward-thinking vision resulted in a solid, autonomous mother church and several church plants that have also become indigenous, autonomous churches in their own right. Someone asked me after I followed Dr. Nelson as the pastor of Bethel Baptist, 'What was it like following Ed Nelson as the next pastor?' I simply answered, 'It was much like following the Apostle Paul.'"

Dr. David Stertzbach



A Legacy of Uncompromising Statesmanship

"Dr. Nelson is an example of a leader at a time of crisis. He was willing to take a stand, even if it did not benefit him politically. He was willing to pay whatever price necessary to protect the cause of Christ, the people in his church, and the Baptist churches around him. Throughout the battle for Fundamentalism, he maintained a Christ-like spirit while standing his ground for truth. As a result, the Independent Fundamental Baptist movement flourished. Dr. Nelson, as a true courageous statesman, was one of the fathers of the Independent Baptists."

Wayne Van Gelderen, Jr.



When Dr. Nelson and his wife Guyla came to South Sheridan Baptist Church in Colorado, the church was a member of the Conservative Baptist Association. In 1950, the Conservative Baptists opened the Denver Seminary (called the Conservative Baptist Seminary at the time). Early on, it became clear that they could not agree with the new evangelical leanings of the Seminary. A group of pastors became concerned and began to speak out about their concerns.

He recounted the story, "Some of us decided there was only one way. We needed to say what Abraham said to Lot - You choose your way, and we'll go our way. We decided there had to be a split. And fortunately, Wayne Van Gelderen, Sr., had accepted the call to First Baptist, Durango, and shortly thereafter they voted him out because of his stand on the Word. Some of the people came over to him and said, 'We left the church also - let's just start a new independent church. And they started Calvary Baptist Church. So he was involved and the people of Calvary Baptist Church. He and I, and I hope to say this humbly, lived the fight. And there was a fight - it was a terrible fight."

There was a great divide between the "soft core" and the "hard core" in the Association. Finally it came to a vote in 1962, only two years after the Nelsons had come to South Sheridan. Of the 92 churches in the Colorado Conservative Baptist Association, 62 churches (including South Sheridan) voted to pull out of the Association and become Independent Baptists. As Dr. Nelson states,

"It was a great day!"



Another battle arose in the fall of 1962. The Billy Graham team was going to hold a crusade in Denver in 1965, and they desired to hold a banquet to plan the event with all the churches in the area.

Dr. Nelson had decided that they would not be involved in an ecumenical crusade. At the time, South Sheridan was small. They had gained some families, but they were struggling. Because of back surgery, Pastor Nelson was going to have to be out of the pulpit for nine weeks. Around four weeks after the surgery, a deacon visited him to let him know that the song leader was telling the congregation that they should be able to vote on whether they wanted to go to the Graham banquet and that it should not be up to the pastor to decide. Without telling his doctors, Pastor Nelson went to the church the following Wednesday, sat on a chair on the platform, and spoke for an hour, explaining why they would not participate in the crusade.

"I don't believe I should be a dictator," he said "I believe the church should vote. The fact is you already voted. When you asked me to become the pastor, I told you I would not participate in ecumenical evangelism. It's already been voted. If you are here tonight and don't agree, I suggest you find another church."

Dr. Nelson stated, "Ten families walked out that night. The crusade came and went. After that night, South Sheridan Baptist Church grew faster than any other church in Denver, even the ones in the crusade. We really began to take off and see people come."

"I really believe it was because we took a stand."

"Stay with Fundamentalism. Stay with being a Baptist and a Fundamental Baptist. It's not by might or by power, but by my spirit!"

Dr. Nelson stated, "People come to me all the time saying, You know, Brother Nelson, we want to thank you for standing even though you've gotten old. Well, I don't know what else to do but stand. 'Stand therefore, and having done all to stand' is in Ephesians 6. We need to stand!"

As Dr. Nelson often exclaimed "You know what? We are in the minority, but I don't care if we are in the minority because we have the Holy Spirit. We have the power of God."

He also stated, "Be willing to take a stand for others even if it means great loss for yourself."

"Die to selfish ambition. Never compromise on truth."

Dr. Ed Nelson's ability to be a world-changing leader was rooted in the principles he lived and preached. His legacy lives on through the churches he planted, the messages he preached, and the example of his faith-filled life of service to God.

PULPITS OF THE PAST

research on sermons, writings, and preachers of the past



The Building of the Church

A REFLECTION ON MATTHEW 16:13-19

"I will build my church." This is the first mention of *church* in Scripture, and it's important to note that it's found in Matthew's Gospel—the Gospel of the Kingdom and its King. In this passage, the King is about to be revealed.

In Matthew 16:13-15, Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi and asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" The disciples gave different answers: some shared how they had heard people say He was of the devil, others said He was Beelzebub, or merely a prophet. Then He asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter, speaking on behalf of the group, responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." What a glorious answer!

Peter didn't come to this conclusion through logic or study. Flesh and blood had not revealed it unto him. Instead, it was from his Father in heaven. He had a revelation, and that's the same message we have today. Jesus then says,

"Upon this rock I will build my church."

Jesus also declares that Peter is blessed because he understood who Jesus truly is and received Him. By the way, Peter made a very definite commitment with his confession, and he never backed down from it—though that doesn't mean he always did all that he should have. Peter backslid too.

This confession is the foundation of the church: "Upon this rock I will build my church."

Let's explore this foundation. **The foundation is literally his confession that Jesus is the Son of God.** The foundation of the church is also our belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God - that we are resting on Him.

Now, let's move to verse 18. Jesus says, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Notice He says, "I will build it," meaning it's something yet to come. He didn't say, "I am building it" or "I have built it." At this point, there was no church, and there had not been a church before.

He said “I will build my church.” That means he was speaking of a future event. This is one major reason why I believe the church began at Pentecost.

Now what is the word *church*? The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. It was a familiar term for the Greeks, referring to an assembly, typically one that gathered in a town for a specific purpose. It’s used this way in Acts when the assembly gathered together and was dismissed. People would leave their work or homes to come together. In the same way, the church is a called-out assembly—called out from worldly activities and pursuits to come together in fellowship. That’s what we are. The church isn’t the building.

**The Church is
the assembled
people.**

So, what is the church’s function? It’s to spread the message – specifically, the message of Peter’s confession in verse 16. Now, consider the next verse, verse 19: “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

The idea here is that through the message we preach, we

hold the keys to the kingdom. The keys were worn on a belt by a scribe, not a priest, and they symbolized the responsibility to give out the truth. The truth is the Word of God that we preach.

Finally, what is the fulfillment of the church? **The fulfillment of the church is to preach the Word of God.** Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2 to preach the Word. You preach not only the written Word, but you preach the living Word—Jesus Christ. We preach Him as the only One who can save. There is none other. We lift up the Bible as our book and Jesus Christ as our Lord.

**That’s the essence
of the church today:
to preach the Word.**

It’s important to preach the gospel, but we must go beyond just the gospel. We need to give the whole counsel of God. We need to build up the saints to go out and share the gospel with others for the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Our goal should be to allow the One who is building the church to use us. And remember, Jesus said, “I will build *my* church.”

**The church belongs to
the Lord Jesus. May we
not take credit for any
good that comes of it.**

Our ultimate aim is to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. And to properly fulfill the church’s mission, we need to carry out the Great Commission: to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

We must be soul winners here, and we must also send out missionaries to win souls around the world. But it’s not enough to just send missionaries abroad – we need to be missionaries right in our own area, reaching our local communities for the Lord Jesus Christ. Reach our community for the Lord Jesus Christ and bring souls to Him.

**That is the church
fulfilled!**

*Transcribed from a
sermon preached by
Dr. Ed Nelson on April
6, 1997 at Bethel
Baptist Church,
Tucson, AZ.*

CHURCH PLANTING FORUM

APRIL 10-11, 2025



Pastor Kevin Folger



Pastor Mark Irmeler

The Church Planting Forum, taking place on **Thursday and Friday, April 10-11, 2025** will be a great help to all with a heart for multiplying churches, and a desire to see God use them to plant vibrant churches.

Join keynote speakers, Kevin Folger and Mark Irmeler for this strategic forum on Church Planting, as they share their heart, experience, and strategies for a multiplying church planting movement in the United States. We are also pleased to hear from several other church planters, and learn their encouraging stories of churches they have planted, and how they are thriving today.

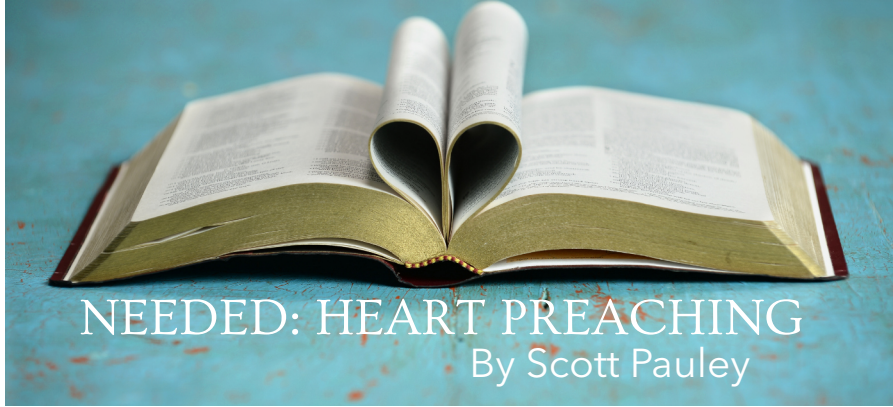
There is no cost for this module. This module is brought to you by Baptist Theological Seminary as part of the annual Monroe Parker Lecture Series.

Register today at nelsonpreachingcenter.org/church-planting-forum.

A person wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a tan blazer is holding an open book. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with warm, golden light. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

PULPITS OF THE PRESENT

sermons, writings, and research by Senior Presenters



NEEDED: HEART PREACHING

By Scott Pauley

God uses all types of messengers and a variety of means to deliver His unchanging message. Like John the Baptist, we are simply “a voice.” Voices fade but the Word remains. For years I told young men in homiletics that the priority was to become a *Bible* preacher, and I believe that with greater conviction than ever. The power is in the Word.

Yet there is a grave danger in preaching deteriorating into a purely academic or oratorical exercise. The preacher must read, study, and write, but his sermon, though homiletically sound, may still be spiritually powerless. This is the key distinction between getting a sermon and delivering a message. A man may have a head full of knowledge and a page full of notes, but is his *heart* filled with the Holy Spirit and captured by the truth of the passage?

Hearers need more than a nice outline and an articulation of Bible facts. Preaching must surely engage the intellect. Paul’s pattern was to “*reason*” and to “*persuade*” (Acts 18:4). We must logically and clearly present the truth, but it must be with a passion for God, His glory, and His purposes. Vance

Havner once observed that a preacher can be as theologically straight as a gun barrel, and as spiritually empty! Likewise, preaching may touch the emotion, but it must go deeper. Our aim is not to simply get people worked up emotionally. G. Campbell Morgan said of empty enthusiasm, “Painted fire never burns.”

In a day of shallow substitutes the deep need is for heart preaching.

Three Marks of Heart Preaching

1

Heart preaching seeks to **discover God’s heart** in each passage. In every Scripture there is a divine intent. Seek the Lord for His heart and let it become your own. To preach from the heart does not mean that the preacher simply shares *his* heart. We cannot trust our own heart (Jeremiah 17:9)! What is God’s design in the text? What is His desire for the hearers? It is His Word that reveals His heart.

2

Heart preaching allows the truth of the passage to first **affect our heart**. Do not preach a passage until it has come real to you. Pray through the passage. Meditate on it. Apply it to your own life. There can never be “overflow” until there is an inflow.

3

Heart preaching is done with the **aim of touching the hearts of the hearers**. The goal of Bible preaching is not entertainment or even education. It is faith and obedience. What should the hearers believe and how should they respond?

Only preaching from the heart accurately reveals the passion and purpose of the God of Scripture. Only preaching from the heart goes to the heart. Take it from a heart preacher named Jeremiah: when you feed your own heart on the Word you will be prepared to feed others with the same Word. “*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts*” (Jeremiah 15:16).

A prepared heart is more important than a prepared sermon.

Be a Bible preacher - and preach it from the heart.

Finding God's Message

The same all-wise God who used the unique personalities and gifts of the Bible writers continues to minister through all types of men. Over time a man learns how God speaks to him and how he best can receive and relay the Lord's message to others. Styles may vary but the substance must come from God.

Every time we stand to preach we should desire to deliver the truth the Lord wants given for that time and audience. Pastors who are preaching through the Bible can trust that God knows right where they are and will meet the needs through His all-sufficient Word. Yet God's servants must always be sensitive to know the *emphasis* that the Lord wants made. Our assignment is to do more than preach a sermon - it is to place God's emphasis.

How do You Know What God Wants You to Preach?

The Lord is teaching me much about being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. You can take a text from anywhere in the Bible with confidence that it is the very Word of God and without error. It will work. But do we not think that God would like to be involved in what we preach to His people?

1. Stay close to the Lord. God still speaks in "a still, small voice" to His preachers. He requires that we be near enough to hear. My primary task every day is not to prepare a sermon but to live in communion with God. I am a worshiper first and a messenger second. When I give attention to being

in His presence He never fails to give me something to carry to others. Personally, I get greater clarity on what I am to preach the closer I get to a meeting. We live day by day and we preach the same way. "Give us *this day our daily bread.*" Such daily dependence always brings fresh manna.

2. Begin by examining your own devotional life. Ask yourself: What is God speaking to me about? Where is He at work in my life? This must never be disconnected from our preaching. The preacher must speak out of the overflow of God's own work in his heart. Very often when the Lord is dealing with me about specific things it corresponds with something He is also doing in the lives of those to whom I am ministering. Without a doubt, preachers speak with greater passion on a subject that is burning in their soul.

3. Ask in faith...and then listen. Why do we try to find a sermon or "get an outline" when the message is God's? We are simply delivery boys! Perhaps it was the attitude of "speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9) in Samuel the prophet that caused God to "let none of his words fall to the ground" (1 Samuel 3:19). I have stopped asking the Lord what sermon He wants delivered and started asking Him what Scripture He wants us to be in. If you find the portion of Scripture He has for that hour, the message will grow and flow naturally out of the text. I have been amazed at how many times while I was praying for a certain meeting the Holy Spirit brought a truth, a text to my mind. At other times, God has given me a thought that I have made note of and then later as I began to think and pray toward a specific service He has brought that back to my heart with great force. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24).

4. When in doubt, go back to first impressions. Sometimes we can get so many Scriptures or thoughts on our minds that we are confused as to which one should be delivered. You cannot say everything in one sermon! I have

found that very often the first leading is the safe route to follow. While this is not always true and God may even change your direction later, it helps to commit to a Scripture passage and concentrate your study there.

5. If you don't know what to preach - preach Jesus! This was advice that my dad gave me as a teenage preacher and it has proven to be a great help to me through the years. For any number of reasons - nerves, unusual circumstances, physical weakness - a preacher may be totally at a loss as to what to preach. Take a simple text concerning Christ and point people to Him. You can never go wrong preaching Jesus.

In the end, we must pray that God chooses the message and finds in us prepared messengers. The story is told of a simple, village preacher who had but one sermon, and yet his message was mightily used by God to bring revival in many places. A friend asked him one day, "Where did you get that sermon?" The old preacher took him to a little room where the window overlooked the countryside. He said, "On my knees I asked God to tell me what He wanted me to preach. All night I prayed. And then as the sun came over the hills the next morning the answer came. That is where I got that sermon."

May the Lord help us all to simply be His messengers and to faithfully deliver the message that He wants preached - from the heart.

Dr. Scott Pauley, Senior Presenter, travels in full-time evangelism, running the organization Enjoying the Journey. His audio, video, and print resources can be found at enjoyingthejourney.org.

PULPITS OF THE FUTURE

Preacher training and opportunities at the Nelson Center

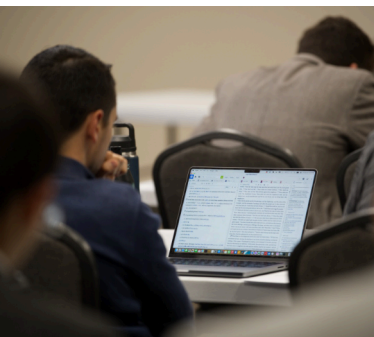
Training Preachers



This past fall, the students at Baptist College of Ministry received focused additional training through the Nelson Center, participating in over ten sessions on preaching and church planting with Senior Presenters and other guest preachers.

"I've had the privilege of learning from men whose teaching is rooted in personal experience in ministry. Whether they speak about answering God's call, launching a church, building a strong congregation, or preaching with passion, their words carry weight because they have lived what they teach. Their testimonies have strengthened my desire to serve the Lord."

Stephen, Senior from Michigan



Highlights of the fall included hearing Senior Presenter, Pastor Ken Shaver share his church planting experiences. Pastor Rhon Roberts also came and shared his burden for church planting in the state of Wisconsin. Evangelist Bobby Bosler spoke to the preacher boys about preaching to teenagers. The next week, they were able to experience it in action due to the annual Three Generation Youth Summit. The students wrote and presented on doctrinal aspects of the local church. An emphasis was placed on memorizing and giving interpretative recitations on key verses related to these topics.

"Every session has been boots-on-the-ground material that I regularly reflect on in the different ministry settings that I find myself. At times, the way the speakers have presented topics has jarred my paradigm and forced me to think through things from a different angle. This has helped me be well-informed and balanced."

George, Senior from New York



Revival Preaching Module

In October, the Nelson Center hosted its first module with two Senior Presenters. Dr. Wayne Van Gelderen spoke on Pastoral preaching for revival. Dr. Jim Van Gelderen spoke on the Evangelist's role in preaching for revival. They also held a panel on leading your church to revival.

"I was especially impacted by the emphasis on the relevancy of the evangelist and his burden and gifting for revival. The idea of preaching for revival and not just preaching about revival was a thought that brought clarity to my mind. I believe that modules like these will serve to bring understanding and awareness to what God is doing and our part in it. What a joy to join Him in His work!"

Pastor Joel Royalty
Broadview Heights Baptist Church



"I was challenged to adjust my outlook of my responsibility to shepherd the flock under my care. I was challenged to change the goal from one of simply maintaining the spiritual nature of our church to prayerfully leading our people to revival. I now try to prepare every service with an eye toward revival. A small shift in paradigm that changes everything!"

Pastor Mike Weiss
Madison Baptist Church

Access the audio recordings at nelsonpreachingcenter.org/preaching-for-revival-recordings

NELSON CENTER CALENDAR



Online Course

April 27-May 2, 2025, Dr. Jim Schettler will be teaching a course on Counseling in the Ministry.

The Nelson Center is offering this course **free of charge**. You may attend virtually or in-person.

Visit nelsonpreachingcenter.org/counseling to register and find out the class details and schedule.



Young Preachers Workshop

August 4-8, 2025, The Nelson Center is pleased to host training for aspiring preachers, 7th grade and up. Students enrolled in the Spectacular Music Festival that week may attend the daily sessions free-of-charge and will also receive additional mentorship and feedback from Senior Presenters and guest speakers.

Visit nelsonpreachingcenter.org/young-preachers for more details and to register.



Fall Module

October 9-10, 2025, The Nelson Center will host its 2nd annual Fall Module. Save the date for this module, as Senior Presenters will share pertinent topics on preaching. Participants may attend free of charge. In between sessions, they may also observe the Youth Summit, which is happening simultaneously.

Visit nelsonpreachingcenter.org

to stay updated on news and events and sign up to receive regular e-publications and communication.

ADVANCED PREACHING CERTIFICATION



The Nelson Center's Advanced Preaching Certification program is a unique opportunity for men in ministry to improve both their sermon preparation and delivery. Through personalized mentorship from our skilled Senior Presenters, interactive virtual workshops and personalized feedback, participants will refine their ability to study Scripture deeply, apply it faithfully, and proclaim it powerfully. By completing this certification program, participants will sharpen their ability to exegete Scripture with increased clarity, conviction, and effectiveness, empowering them to confidently preach the Word of God.



CERTIFICATION COURSEWORK

Each participant will receive advanced training in preaching by developing an exegetical sermon series on a Pastoral or Prison Epistle. Outlines for the entire book will be prepared and evaluated and one outline will be developed into a full sermon that will be evaluated on its substance and delivery.



ONE-ON-ONE MENTORSHIP

Each certification program participant will be paired with one Senior Presenter. They will connect virtually monthly, and interact regularly for feedback and evaluation on research, outline and sermon preparation, and sermon delivery. We believe this personalized guidance from seasoned preachers will also cultivate spiritual growth.



VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

Basics of Exegetical Research, Dr. Paul Himes
Preparing an Exegetical Series, Dr. Ben Heffernan
Crafting a Message, Pastor Stephen Zempel
Engaging the Audience, Dr. Jim Schettler



FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

In addition to the regular feedback from the assigned Senior Presenter, each participant's outlines and sermon will be evaluated. The final presentation of the sermon will be evaluated by a panel of Senior Presenters.

REGISTRATION DETAILS

By April 15, 2025, register at nelsonpreachingcenter.org/certification

The certification program will be limited to 10 men in full-time ministry

The cost of the program is normally \$1000, but is discounted to \$795 for this inaugural year

GENERAL SCHEDULE

May: Communication with mentor begins and book series chosen

June-August: Exegetical research conducted and sermon outlines developed

September-October: Message developed

November-December: Delivery and presentation

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CHURCH PLANTING RESEARCH

research of past movements, methodologies of effective leaders, and present Biblical models





DR. NELSON on Church Planting

Dr. Nelson's ministry was closely connected with church planting in every aspect - as a church planter, as a pastor supporting church planting ministries, and as a member of the board of Baptist World Mission, a mission committed to local church planting on the foreign field and at home. Having served as a church planter into his eighties, Dr. Nelson was well qualified to share his wisdom in an interview with Proclaim and Defend (a ministry of the FBFI) concerning the subject.

Proclaim & Defend: On the subject of church planting, what kind of advice would you give to somebody who was asking today how they should go about it?

Dr. Nelson: This is my conclusion that came about after I'd already started some churches. My recommendation is that the best way to start a church is to have a "mother church." Have that mother church locate a place, and the church planter be that person who goes out under that mother church. You make that new church a mission of the mother church. The mother church has to understand what its all about. The deacons of the mother

church are the deacons of the mission.

For example, when I went to Tucson, in...whatever year that was, 1996, I guess...I went to Tucson after leaving South Sheridan. I had started a couple of churches out of South Sheridan using the mother church principle. I had seen it work. You may know Jeff Musgrave. I had him come on our staff and put him out at Highland Park church. Our deacons were his deacons and I was his pastor, he was a member of our staff as the mission pastor of that church. The idea behind that is, well, I started a church in the Denver area called the Hoffman Heights

Baptist Church. That was the church I mentioned earlier when I said I was wanting to know something about being a pastor. When I started that church, I had nobody behind me, nobody sponsoring me... I didn't have support, really. But I went out and God did it, God moved to build it. But we had problems in that church. The deacons didn't agree with me sometimes. I began to realize that my deacons aren't thinking straight. Now that doesn't mean I did everything right! Eventually I decided I had to go from there, and it was through that experience I saw the value of the mother church and providing leadership for the new church where the deacons of the mother church led the mission church.

Now I started to tell you how I went to Tucson. The reason I went to Tucson after resigning South Sheridan and being in revival meetings again... well, I was in some meetings up in Michigan and they had a Baptist World Mission meeting there in Michigan and I went over to that meeting as I was on the board. Dr. Frank Bumpus was there and he asked me, "Have you ever thought about starting a new church?" Well, I told him that I thought about it quite often. He said, "There are some folks in our church that have some property in Tucson. They sent me down there quite often for some vacation. I go down about four times a year and I've not found a church

that is of our orientation. Would you be willing to consider it?" I won't go through the details of all of that, it's an interesting story all by itself, but I know our time already has gone pretty fast.

Anyway, I went down there in our motor home and preached in another church in the area. There was a family there who lived in Tucson five months of the year and in Schaumburg the rest of the year. They said to me after that service, "We want you to go out with us, we're about to buy a building." So I went out with them and sure enough, there was a church building that had been abandoned. We met with the deacons and they just bought that building that day, bought and paid for it. I think they paid \$260,000 or something like that for that building. And they said, "Now, we've got a building, how about you being the pastor?"

Well, I was scheduled in evangelistic meetings for another year, but I thought about it and decided to cancel my meetings and the group called me in March of 1996 and started that church. I told Frank Bumpus that I wouldn't do it unless [his church] would be the mother church. He didn't understand what I was talking about, but he agreed to that. I went down there as a mission, and when he came down - every four months or so - I'd say, "Our pastor's here today, I'm on his staff." I would then have

him come up and preach for us. That was our relationship. That went on for a year until I thought we were ready to start on our own. So we organized the church on April the 6th, 1997. Then we were no longer a mission but we were a local church on our own.

And it worked! If there was any problem, I'd just bring it up to the deacons [of Bethel, Schaumburg] who I knew took a right stand. Then they put in deacons that we knew would stand properly, after having had them there a year.

So I'm very much for that principle. You can raise support, but have the money go through the local church. I believe it works. That would be my recommendation.

P&D: Very interesting. Your mentioning deacons there brings this question, when you are starting a church, how do you "raise up" good deacons?

Dr. N: Well, that is quite a challenge, in any church. In Bethel Baptist Church, and even in South Sheridan Baptist Church, we put into the constitution that no man could become a deacon until he'd been a member of the church for one full year, and preferably we'd like it to be more than that. We didn't want a man to become a deacon until he'd been a member one full year no matter how qualified he was, we wanted to watch him.

[At Bethel] by the time the year

was up I had two men that I believed were...well there were three men, but one of them didn't work out, and we had to ask the one to resign because he was an evangelical. So we started with two deacons that I knew would stand right.

I'm a man that believes you should have deacons. I know of churches that say "We just didn't have anybody qualified so we don't have any deacons." Now I don't believe you should have unqualified deacons. But I've known churches, particularly in the BBF, that didn't have deacons because they caused problems. The Bible says "pastors and deacons" in the book of [Timothy] and we ought to have deacons. The deacons should be able to stand where the pastor stands. I believe in working with your deacons and having them - not rule the church - but having them as counselors. There were times at South Sheridan where, well I remember one time where we were building a building and I wanted to do something and the majority of the deacons wanted it too but one man among the deacons stood up and said, "You know, I think it's a mistake." The question was whether to put in opera chairs or pews. I said, "Well I want us to be in agreement, so maybe we need to think this over." After thinking it over, I decided that the man was probably right.

So I went back to the deacons and said, "I think our brother has it right, so let's go with pews instead." Well they all agreed and that's what we did, and we were glad we did.

I don't want the deacons to be "Yes men" but I don't want them to be cantankerous men either. We had wonderful, wonderful harmony in South Sheridan Baptist Church with our deacons. I used them, but I didn't force them to be "Yes men." I do think you need to work with them, help them, train them... I especially think that they need to be soul-winners. Deacons that aren't going to do soul-winning work, or won't come to visitation, should not be deacons. We need to win souls, we need to go out there leading souls to Christ and deacons ought to be part of that, leading the church that way.

P&D: If you met a young preacher today who asked you, "What is the most important thing I should know in entering the ministry?" what would you say?

Dr. N: I hear that question a lot. I've decided that the answer to that is,

Trust the Holy Spirit to do the work and not the flesh.

Don't endeavor to do the work in the energy of the flesh, rely on the Holy Spirit, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. We need to rely on the

Holy Spirit to see the work of the Lord done. Too often we let the flesh get in and follow the flesh rather than the power of the Spirit. It is easy to do.

Not by might...one of those words is referring to organizational might...nor by power...or fleshly energy. We can do a lot with the flesh, but it's going to end up with the flesh too. It won't be a work done for God. It's entirely relying on the Holy Spirit and resting in His power to do the ministry and we'll see it done.

This interview was first published March 20, 2015 at Proclaim & Defend, a ministry of the FBF

• The dots represent churches planted by Dr. Nelson.

This map is not comprehensive and also does not include the significant churches he pastored (but did not plant). One such example was Red Rocks Baptist Church (formerly South Sheridan) that was a mother church involved in planting other churches. Also, as an evangelist, he planted churches in several other towns. Much like the Apostle Paul, he would preach to the believers already in the town, and stay there long enough to see more saved and attending meetings. Once there was a solid group of believers established, enough to get a pastor and function independently, he would move on to another town. He estimated that the amount planted totaled between 20-30. Read the stories in his autobiography!

THE MANITOWOC PROJECT

Manitowoc, Wisconsin, is a city situated on the western shore of Lake Michigan at the mouth of the Manitowoc River. With a population of about 34,626 as of the 2020 census, Manitowoc is a mid-sized city known for its rich maritime history. It is often referred to as "Wisconsin's Maritime Capital" due to its shipbuilding legacy and the presence of the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, which features exhibits on shipbuilding and naval history, including the USS Cobia submarine. The city also boasts a historic downtown area, offering a mix of shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions. Its lakeside location provides beautiful waterfront views, and residents enjoy recreational activities such as boating, fishing, and hiking along the shoreline.

We are excited to announce that God has opened the door for a church plant in Manitowoc, and this will be the first church planting initiative that the Nelson Center will be undertaking. Falls Baptist Church, the mother church, working in conjunction with the Nelson Center and Baptist College of Ministry, will be planting this church, beginning in 2025. We are passionate about fulfilling the Great Commission in the state of Wisconsin, and are confident that God can reach Manitowoc as we follow His lead!

PARTNER IN PRAYER:

Pray for God's divine wisdom and guidance in putting together a leadership team.
Pray for receptive hearts in Manitowoc, and for God to lead to "persons of peace."
Pray for the right location to meet, and eventually the best place to purchase land.
Pray for the sale of a building which will provide funds for the church plant.

PARTNER IN ACTION:

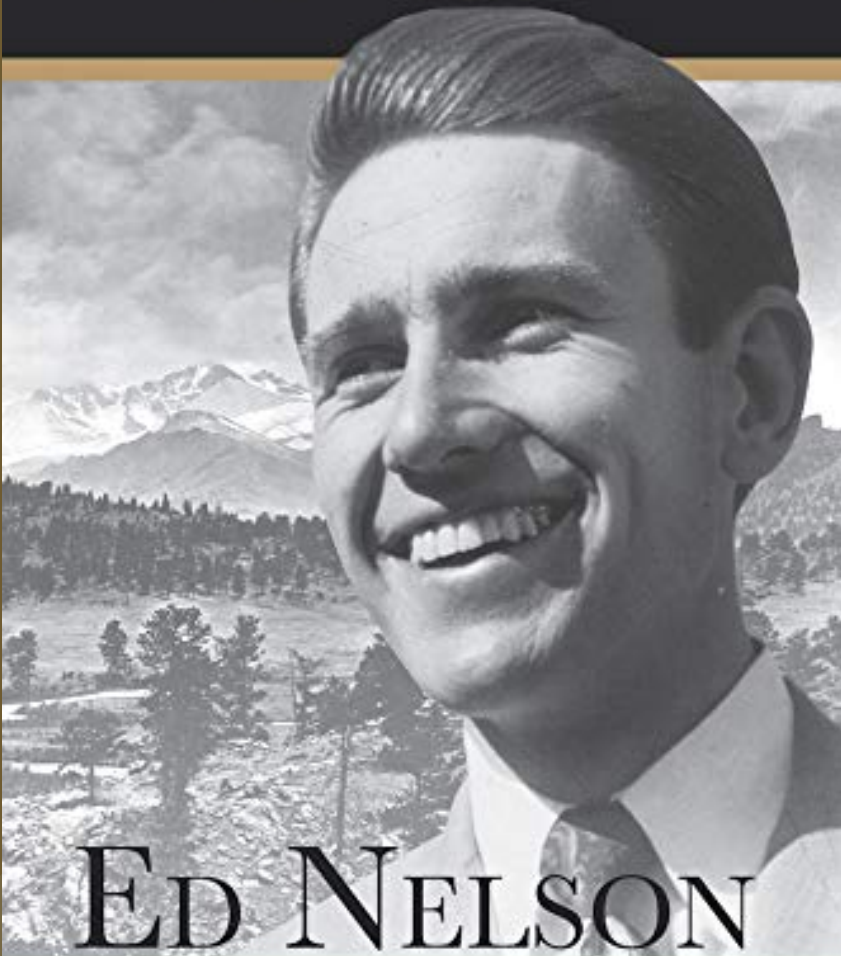
We would love to have any churches or individuals with a heart for church planting to join us in the various endeavors and events that will be part of the initial days of church planting. **Please email info@nelsonpreachingcenter.org** if you would like information on the dates and types of outreach you could join.

PARTNER IN RESOURCES:

Though we will have some funds towards a permanent church building due to the sale of a building, if God leads you to give towards this project or any future church planting initiatives, you can give online through the link on nelsonpreachingcenter.org or by mailing a check to N69W12703 Appleton Avenue, Menomonee Falls, WI, 53051. Earmark it for the Manitowoc Project or the Nelson Center Church Planting Initiatives.

PURCHASE YOUR COPY
OF HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY TODAY!

A SINNER SAVED BY GRACE



ED NELSON

WITH EMILEE NELSON

About the Book:

"A Sinner Saved by Grace is not your typical autobiography, especially about a preacher. In a most unexpected way, you will find yourself wanting to read 'just one more chapter' as you are led page by page through the exciting life of Ed Nelson. You will laugh as you read of some embarrassing moments and family stories. You will cry as you feel his heartbreak through some of the most difficult situations in his life. You will be challenged to have faith that God can and does work the miraculous. You will see determination, leadership, strength, and humility. You will see foolish mistakes, sinful actions, hurt, and regret. But you will be encouraged to simply believe God, not because of who Ed Nelson is, but because of the God he serves. Ed Nelson is simply a sinner, saved by the grace of God."

Available at milehipublishers.com

E-book and audiobook formats are available on Amazon

Also available for purchase through the Nelson Center