



December 2017

Stories of God's Intervention and Provision



Pastor John Smith with Pastor Bob Beals

Let me share a story of God's intervention and how He used a total stranger to direct me in His path.

I'm a 59-year-old youth and worship pastor. No, that's not a typo, I'm not 29...I'm 59. Anyway, I was asked by my church to attend a youth pastor's conference in Cincinnati. As you may have guessed, I was one of the more, shall we say, well-seasoned participants. Most of the pastors there were in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties.

"That's OK," I said to myself, I can make friends and have discussions with anyone...anyone that isn't on a phone anyway. That being said, no discussions were had and no friends were made because they were all on their phones. I was feeling incredibly discouraged and more than a little out of place.

My age was not the only thing distressing me. I had reached a fork in the road in my career path. Although I lead a successful youth and worship ministry, and I am well loved by my congregation, I was not being compensated enough to make ends meet. I have spent around \$10,000 of my "retirement" fund over the past 3 years to keep my family afloat. Then, in November, my son came to me with a lucrative offer to develop a sales team for his company (I have had an extensive sales background before going into full time ministry). My dilemma was profound...do I stay true to God's calling, stay in full time ministry and continue to lose what was left of my savings, or do I take the job with my son and "betray" God's call.

As a pastor, it's nearly impossible to have a pastor, especially when your pastor is your boss. I had no one to talk about the Spiritual aspect of my upcoming decision. I was praying fervently that God would send someone to mentor me and help me make these tough decisions that I was facing.

OK, let's go back to night one of the Youth Pastor Conference in Cincinnati. We all gathered in "The Big Room" (the clever name they called the auditorium where the corporate worship took place) and I sat in the bleachers as far back as I could. This is highly unusual for me because, as a worship pastor, I typically sit right down front and watch the techniques and tools of the worship team to see what I can implement in my worship services. Plus, I really like loud music!!! But tonight, I just didn't want to be around anyone and I wanted to bolt as soon as the worship session was over. So, I'm sitting with my feet on the chair in front of me when a gentleman in his late 50's to early 60's with his companion says, "You look so comfortable I hate to ask, but can we sit next to you?" I jumped up, rather embarrassed of my over relaxed posture and said, "Sure!"

I thought, "Wow! Someone my age that wasn't totally engrossed with an electronic device!" Here was my chance to have an actual conversation! Little did I know where that conversation would lead. I asked if he was a fellow youth pastor and he said no, that he was an exhibitor. Then he looked at me and asked, "Are you OK?" I had no idea why he asked that. I answered the obligatory, "Yeah, I'm fine." He said, "Are you sure?" It was then I realized God was moving and I felt the Holy Spirit saying, "Tell him." I said that I was really struggling and I felt my eyes stinging with tears. What he said next was exactly what I needed to hear, "If you'd like to talk, I'm safe and I'm confidential." He handed me his card and I nearly fell out of my bleacher seat. Dr. John W. Smith, Executive Director of PastorCare. The tag line: "Helping Pastors Soar". My prayers had been answered. Someone I could trust that could give me unbiased counsel.

The following evening John and I bypassed "The Big Room" worship time and went to dinner. To make a long story short (Oops, too late) we talked (actually, I talked and he listened) for nearly 2 hours. By John's gentle counseling and helpful advice, I was able to discern what God was trying to tell me...Go part time at the church and take the rare opportunity of working side by side with my son.

John was incredible. He took time out of his busy schedule to listen to a total stranger (although, I sincerely doubt John has ever met a stranger). He never made me feel like I was intruding in his life. In fact, quite the contrary, he made me feel totally welcome and I felt that we had known each other for years. He had the uncanny ability to listen, discern, and advise. I can't thank him enough for the time that he spent with me in a time when I was in desperate need of a listening ear, and a discerning voice.

I started with my son on February 6, 2017. The church, although disappointed, was willing to let me stay on part time. The new journey has begun!!!



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Benjamin Beals, Director of Operations



Bob Beals, Director of Sales & Marketing

Please join me in praying for God's favor and blessings upon Benjamin and Bob as they complete 2017 and journey into in 2018!



Before my friend Laura when to heaven to see Jesus face to face, she wrote these words and this poem, that her loving husband Paul shared with me.

My inspiration for writing PRAYER came when my brother-in-law brought a friend with him when he came for a visit. I was a little intimidated by her at first. She had been born into a diplomatic family and had traveled the world over. She spoke several different languages and had gone mountain climbing up to heights I could not even imagine. She had met many important and famous people. My life, in contrast, seemed rather dull. A homemaker with lots of children. I haven't done much traveling, and I've never met anyone famous. I only speak one language and have little worldly knowledge---

Yet I have had the great privilege of knowing many important people....people who are making a difference in the lives of others. And I have had the humbling experience of seeking the God of the Universe in prayer. What earthly journey could ever match that?

After spending an afternoon with this incredible lady, I realized how blessed I am to be me....and how blessed I was to have met her.

P R A Y E R

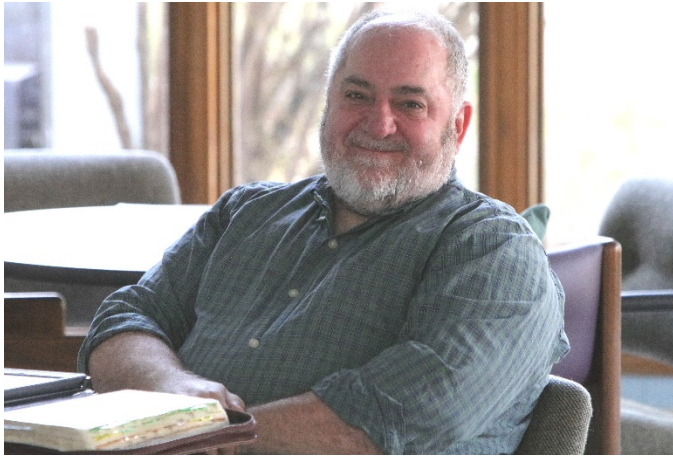
I've never met a king or queen
or even a movie star.
I've never journeyed to a distant land
or gotten very far.
Yet I have been in the presence of angels
and have heard their joyous choir.
I've traveled to the highest height,
a distance for which I will never tire.
I've addressed the King of all who live,
I've come humbly to His throne.
He promised to provide me with all I need,
and never leave me alone.
I had to leave some words behind,
Like "I," or "me," or "my."
I had to ignore distractions
that constantly came rushing by.
I didn't bring a gift to give,
no fancy words or phrase,
He only wanted my unadorned heart
lifted up in praise.
If you want to experience the inner peace
with which nothing can compare,
Then approach the throne of God above,
in a position of humble prayer.

~~~Laua DeWeerd





Where the presence of God meets with man.



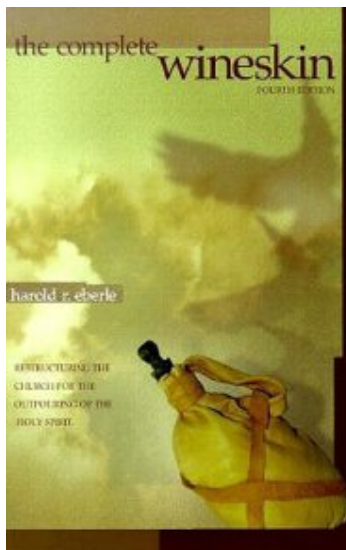
I met Harvey Hampton on Saturday, Feb. 25, 2017 while serving lunch at a DeColores Men's Weekend. I worshiped at Burning Bush Ministries on Sunday. We enjoyed an extended lunch on Monday.

Harvey asked me one of the best questions I have ever been asked in the early stages of a relationship with someone. Harvey asked, **"What hat would you like me to wear with you?"**

I thought to myself, what a great question to clarify expectations in our relationship. So I asked, "What are my options?"

Harvey said, "I can wear the 'Friend Hat,' I can wear the 'Pastor Hat,' or I can wear the 'Apostle Hat.'" I asked, "What would that look like?" We have spent the rest of 2017 exploring the answer to that question—while building a close, trusting, and transparent relationship.

Harvey told me about a book that is the closest written description he is aware of that is in alignment with what God downloaded to him for Burning Bush Ministries. I was so moved in my spirit by what Harold Eberle wrote in this book that I read it twice. It is the most influential book I read in 2017.



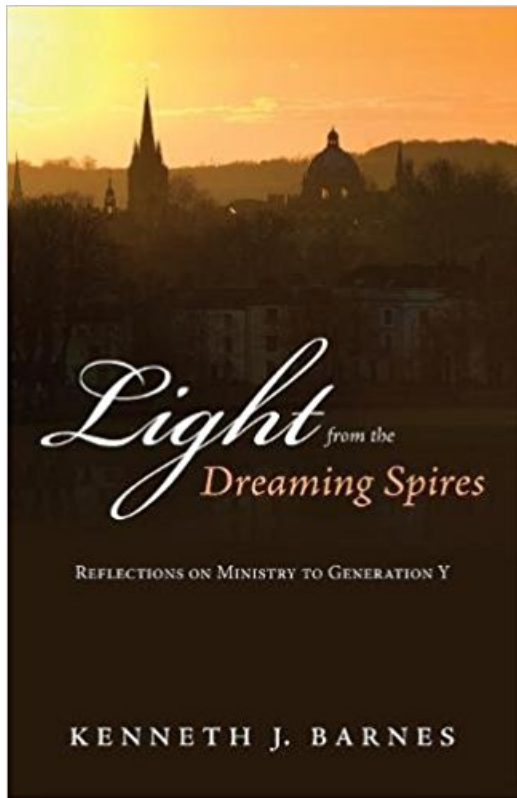
### ***The Complete Wineskin* by Harold Eberle**

*How will the present wineskin of the Church be changed? We cannot expect to know the same power of the Holy Spirit that the New Testament believers experienced unless we have wineskins similar to theirs. One of the major changes will have to do with the full operation of what we call the five ministry gifts: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher (Eph. 4:11).*

*Many Christians have thought that the apostle and prophet were only for the New Testament times, but that is wrong. Ephesians 4:11-13 tells us that all five of these gifts were given by God to the Church "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." The Church will never reach its fullness nor any form of unity until all five ministry gifts are functioning together in the Body of Christ.*

*The church has developed titles through traditions instead of by the Word of God. Many of them are natural positions, much like those in a large business or corporation. These titles may not be evil or wrong, but the church always will be in confusion until we correlate a leader's anointing with his or her title. We want our churches to be biblical, and, therefore, our titles ought to be biblical. Apostles can unashamedly give leadership and direction to many pastors when they know that God has called them as apostles. Naming an anointing is essential for understanding that anointing and for functioning in it freely with God's power. P. 35-36*

## Additional Resources to Consider for Christmas Gifts



Just as "generals are always fighting the last war" my experience as a chaplain at Oxford University has taught me that the church often "speaks to the last generation." The statistics provided by the Pew Research Center say it all. The people of Generation Y are less likely to go to church, believe in God, or identify themselves as "religious" than any previous generation, yet they still have a deep and abiding interest in "spiritual" things. If the church is going to reach this group of "seekers" with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it will have to do it on their terms, speak their language, and understand their concerns. If we try to "fight the last war" with Generation Y, we will lose it. Instead, church leaders must seriously examine how we relate (or not) to Generation Y and change our tactics accordingly. This book is a reflection on my personal experience of ministry to Generation Y, combining pastoral care, mentoring, and "postmodern apologetics" in ways that are equally applicable to parochial, academic, and/or secular settings.

I treasure Ken's handwritten note in my autographed copy:  
*Dear John, Thank you for being my pastor, my mentor, and my friend. Without your encouragement all those years ago, none of this would have happened! Peace & Love, Ken 1 Pet. 3:15*



Purchase copies for your loved ones at [www.TheWholeSexTalk.com](http://www.TheWholeSexTalk.com)



"The Whole Sex Talk is a contemporary approach to timeless truths. Today's adolescent is bombarded with conflicting messages regarding sexual expression, and parents are often left trying to piece together a haphazard message of Biblical sexuality. Using history, science, personal testimony, and Biblical morality, The Whole Sex Talk for parents strikes a balance while offering helpful tools for navigating human sexuality in today's culture."

- Doug Crawford, Associate Pastor of Outreach and Discipleship  
Calvary Baptist Church



**Matt Smith and Amanda Hieb — Destination Wedding — June 23, 2017**  
 Shove Chapel, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO  
 Photos by Rachel Evelyn Photography. [www.rachelevynphotography.com](http://www.rachelevynphotography.com)



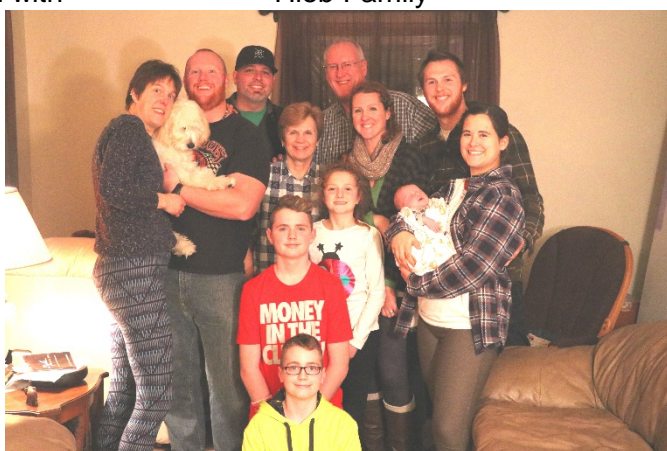
Mr. & Mrs. Matt and Amanda Smith



Smith Family

united with

Hieb Family



Liam Wesley LaPorte Smith (Born Oct. 31, 2017) Happy B-day Andrew, Elise, Sarah & Happy Thanksgiving



**As you prayerfully consider your year-end giving — kindly consider a financial contribution to PastorCare West Michigan. There are so many pastors and families in need of help. We depend on your prayers and your financial support. Thank you so much!**

**Please make checks payable to: PastorCare West Michigan  
 PO Box 2938, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.**

**PayPal secure online contributions on the website.**

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