

**Leadership Network Ritzville, WA. 4-9-2010**  
**A Living History and Its Strategies By Kelly Lineberry**

***The Pacific NW District has destiny, prophetic mandates and directives, rich historical investment and strategic current investments.***

*I am not an historian, this is simply my perspective and is not the result of journalistic type investigation. But tonight we want to try and connect the dots, talk about the why, and bring a connected perspective to who we are, where we've been and where we are going.*

Let's go back 50 years. I am not 50 yet but I have heard some things and experienced the ongoing effects of ministry perspectives and activities from those years.

**In the early 60's life was much different than it is today. The culture was not yet post-modern and anti God. People respected churches, pastors, the Bible and leaders.** In that environment, ministry philosophy was geared towards properties/buildings, "Put out a sign and people will come" type of emphasis. Attracting people and having members was more automatic, the culture was 'people had natural leanings towards God and it was normal to go to church.' *In those years and up through the 70's we planted churches by buying property/buildings and finding a pastor to go there.* Most churches had parsonages and there was a lot of pastoral rotation in those years.

**Times were changing,** the Jesus Freak movement (hippies getting saved) happened, the Charismatic movement was in full swing and the word/faith movement was gaining steam. The PCG in the northwest missed most of these moves of God, as did most classical Pentecostal organizations. It seemed we resisted them and while God was doing some new things we were still doing the old things. *There was a day in our history when we were on the cutting edge and current with what God was doing but we weren't able to continue that. There was a day when we were dubbed "The young man's organization" but that day had passed us by decades ago.* Why? We were fearful to catch the wave of the Spirit in our current times so we fell behind. ***We would get on board a decade, or more, later but by then God was doing other new things and we were still behind the times.*** This is not meant to be negative towards any of our past leaders, it was not only us, it was the PCG across the United States and included many other Pentecostal groups too. *The results of this has been slow, or no, church growth; the median age of our ministers growing to 58 years of age nation wide, losing our young people and young adults in the church (Along with the inability to attract those age groups into our churches), and being saddled with aging buildings in difficult locations which had small congregations that couldn't keep up with current expenses.*

All of this took its toll on our finances and threatened our future. *We had lost some of our best ministers who were catching the current waves of the Holy Spirit, they withdrew from PCG and went on to build fruitful ministries and churches as independents.*

**In the 80's** the trends continued but by the end of the decade it was obvious some changes had to be made as young ministers were still exiting our denomination and district.

**In the early 90's** some subtle shifts began to occur.

**By the mid 90's we were working to restore relationships, forgive debt, give deeds to congregations\ministers who had separated from us and sell properties that had become a liability rather than an asset.** These were some difficult changes and were unpopular at times but bigger and more changes were needed, and were about to occur.

***What was the purpose of the changes we were making?***

1. We had to quit losing our young people and our most fruitful ministers.
2. We had to get current so we could minister effectively to our generations.
3. We had to get financially on track and be wiser with our investments.
4. We had to get the blessing of God back into the PNW District of the PCG.
5. We realized God couldn't bless us when our relationships were splintered. He couldn't bless us when we didn't have our financial house in order. He couldn't bless us when we were resisting His current movements in our generations, when we were critical and judgmental of current moves of His Spirit and the people who were obeying Him.

*Some of the first changes were financial.* We were hungry for fruitfulness so we began eliminating things that were hindering our negative financial status, we made some steps of faith regarding debt forgiveness and blessing others. We forgave well over \$100,000 worth of monies owed the district by our churches, congregations and departments. We returned at least two deeds to congregations and pastors with whom we had strained

relationships who had separated from us. We expressed a goal to give money from our Home Missions department rather than loan money. These were good changes that opened up the door for God's blessing to us. The morale of the ministers and churches leaped forward!

*Next we began some structural changes.* As we looked at the Bible and then looked at our structure we realized our structure was based more on the political and governmental processes used by our country rather than by the Biblical teachings of our God. So we began moving the District to a more apostolic form of structure rather than an American form of structure. This would allow us to be able to follow God more quickly in our District and make more decisions with our anointed elders at regular board meetings or special called meetings rather than having to convince the entire constituency and wait for a convention to make all of our decisions. It also would allow us to appoint more of our leaders based on the call and anointing of God upon them rather than by a ballot at a convention. These were not easy changes and there was some concern about leaders having too much power or control but most have come to see the value of these changes and the Biblical accuracy of these changes. There were several layers of structural changes that were implemented, from executives being able to pastor, to the appointment of departmental leaders, to secretaries being hired to help with administrative needs and to the District Elder Board being the ones who ratify newly elected sectional presbyters. The changes in structure have aligned us to a more Biblical system and a system that is more nimble and ready to respond quicker to the will of God.

*As we changed the structure, we continued to look for things in our district that were blocking the blessing of God.* We quickly realized that one of these things was the accountability of some of our pastors to basic things such as tithing, being honest, being kind and supportive of each other, growing in knowledge and wisdom etc... A pattern of isolation and doing our own thing had prevailed to the point of good ministers living in ways that God couldn't bless. It seemed like faithfulness had become a badge of honor but the concept of fruitfulness and in some cases holiness had been lost. We started emphasizing the concepts of personal growth, church growth, integrity, tithing and some other basic concepts as well. This was not in a move to control anyone or anything. It was only a move to get the blessing of God back in our District and get us moving forward into His will. It was the basics that were emphasized, nothing extreme or unreasonable. Some were very uncomfortable with this and felt threatened. That was not the goal. The goal was simply to move us forward into the greater blessings of God. *As we moved through this stage God gave us a prophetic word that He would now start purifying and sanctifying us as a fellowship. This would be in order to open the door of blessing even wider for us.* Part of that sanctifying process has been very painful as ugly and sinful things began bubbling to the surface. Some were not able to deal with the purifying process well and ended up leaving us. Others have and are working through the sometimes painful process of making changes, repenting, growing and becoming better ministers, ministries and people. *Today we are emphasizing "Growing Healthy Ministers Who Will Grow Healthy Ministries!"* We are doing this through our leadership networks, through our School of Leaders, through books-CDs-DVDs, and through our relationships. We realize we are in a post modern world, but our God is up to the task. Our society is not church or God friendly anymore, but God is up to the task. We are positioning ourselves to be used by God in this generation and this hour. We are up to the task too!

We are still making changes and hopefully we always will be. We have done some things that are working very well. We have tried some things that worked for a little while or didn't work at all. We have gained the attention of our national leaders and leaders of other districts. Some of the changes we have made here have rippled through the nation and are blessing other ministries around our country. We have positioned ourselves for God's blessing and favor. We have positioned our fellowship in a positive light with young people and young ministers while supporting and honoring our elders. We have some huge changes still ahead of us. We are determined to never be behind the times again. We don't want to be a decade or two late ever again. We want to be current with what God is doing and maybe even be a group who He can use to begin things in our generations and in our world. We want to be in the middle of God's will and ready to move when He tells us to move. It is not easy. It is not always popular, but it is rewarding and it is Biblical. Every time in the Bible when God does some great or new things He is looking for someone to say yes to Him, someone to be courageous, someone to show Himself mighty through. We are simply saying, "God, use us for your glory."

**The current word we are hearing from God is regarding our time of entering into seasons of fruitfulness.** That is such a refreshing word! That is why we have done all this hard work. That is what we long for. The Pacific Northwest District of the Pentecostal Church of God, all of its churches, all of its ministries and all of its people entering into seasons of fruitfulness. It is a season of favor and a season of God's richest blessings! We have made ourselves ready.