

Unsung Heroes

By Melody Green



"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." —1 Peter 4:10

10 Hindrances In Serving God

Your first step is prayer . . . serious prayer. I know that some of you may be in situations that would be very difficult to change—but don't just reject this challenge for Christian service by saying, "I could never do it!" You must take this before the Lord with an open and willing heart. Check to see if you have any of the attitudes or fears mentioned below. If you do, deal with those things **first**, so your prayers will not be hindered.

1. Covetous Heart. Desiring for yourself the gifts that God has given to others. If we are jealous of others, we won't be able to develop, or be grateful for, our own unique gifts. Ask God how He wants YOU to serve Him.

2. The "Baby Attitude." This person is set on serving God in a certain way, whether they are called to or not. If they can't do it their way, they won't do it at all! This attitude is obviously immature—overflowing with selfishness, ego, and pride.

3. Blaming God. "Well, if God *wanted* me to serve Him full time, He would have given me the gifts to do it." This person is just making excuses. He is putting the blame on God for his own laziness and lack of creativity in using the gifts that Jesus *has* given him.

4. Unbelief. The enemy has told you that you are worthless, and have nothing of value to offer anyone. He's told you that you will surely fail at anything you attempt . . . and you believe it! You are being crippled by a lie. Each of us is infinitely valuable and precious to the Lord. We **all** have something to give. If you believe the "scare tactics" of the enemy, the work will never get done!

5. Fear Of Man. You care more what people think about you than what God thinks about you. If you do something "crazy" like going into full-time service, your family and friends may call you a *fanatic*—someone who loves the Lord more than they do. So you have settled for being complacent and have rendered yourself nearly useless to the Lord.

6. Unwilling To Count The Cost. For those who put their trust in people or "things," the cost may be great—personally, financially, or both. Many are just too selfish and self-centered to give up *their* plans and *their* dreams—but this is a very real part of being a Christian.

If you need money to do what God directs, then you may have to get a job, or sell some of your possessions. Many people stop here. It doesn't bother them to spend money on *themselves*, but paying tuition or air fare to go somewhere their flesh doesn't really want to go is just too much to ask. But you can't afford *not* to get the money together if God is leading. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:19-21)

7. Delayed Obedience. Delayed obedience is **DISOBEDIENCE!** Many of you **already know** what God wants. You are just putting it off. Anything not done in faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23) If you are not doing what you *know* the Lord wants you to do, skip the rest of this article and get right with God as quickly as you can.

"A Thank-You"

I want to say to the countless Unsung Heroes of the Lord, THANK YOU! You may remain nameless to most of us, but you are true champions in the sight of God. I know I am not just speaking for myself, but for every ministry worldwide, where you so freely give of yourselves. Thank you for being willing, diligent, and obedient to your call. Your reward will surely be in heaven—and in the meantime, isn't it great serving Jesus!!

8. The "Normal Life Syndrome." Deep inside, you desire to live a "normal" life. Well, I think the disciples led normal Christian lives. We should look to Jesus and the disciples as our example of "normal" Christianity. Find something you believe in and give it all you've got! That's the example the **Scriptures** give us. A "normal" life, by our standards, will not upset you, your family . . . or the devil for that matter! It's a life that won't leave its mark on the world. It just kind of comes and goes . . . unnoticed, unproductive, and uninspiring to all.

9. Unwilling Heart. With their lips, this person says, "Lord, please tell me what to do," but their heart says, "And then I'll decide if I'm going to do it." Don't expect an answer from God if you have not decided before hand to **obey** and do **whatever** He asks of you.

10. The "Spiritual Stargazers." God probably won't lay your whole future out before you as you pray about this. He may only show you one step at a time. If He tells you to "get some training," don't insist that He tell you exactly *what* you'll do *after* your training is over. He may not tell you that until you need to know. Just purpose to take one obedient step after another as God reveals it to you.

Eternal Values—Eternal Goals



In closing, I just want to say don't be earthly minded as you set goals and priorities for your life. You **MUST** be God-directed! When we stand before our Redeemer, I believe we will need to account for how we spent our gift of earthly time—as the match is held even to our *work for the Lord*.

As Christians you say you believe in Heaven—in Eternity. You say you know that "this is not all there is." But do you live like you believe it? Does your daily life prove that you have made an eternal covenant with the Living God? That's something between you and Jesus, but I implore each of you to sit down and re-evaluate what you are doing, and where you are going. I think sometimes we spend more time trying to figure out the very *least* we can "get by with"—instead of praying about how we can be giving more. Where do you spend most of your time? Are you being obedient to God's call on your life? **Is your Christianity lip-service, or life-service?** We only get one time around down here. There are **no** second chances. Once our time is up, we will reap for all of eternity according to the choices we make on earth. God help us make the right ones . . .

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Introduction

I can't believe how many Christians think that God can't use them in a mighty way. They often say to themselves, "I know Jesus can use others . . . but He could never **really** use me." Many beautiful Christians suffer from terrible feelings of inadequacy and don't even realize it. Well, believe it or not, **every** Christian has a vital part to play in reaching this generation with the love of Jesus. In this article, I am going to explore the avenue of full-time Christian service. Maybe you haven't ever even **considered** this kind of involvement before. If not, then this article is for **you!** I believe with my whole heart that God wants **EVERY CHRISTIAN** to consider it! I'm not implying that if you aren't in full-time service that you are **automatically** out of God's will—but it's obvious that the work of the Lord is being greatly hindered throughout the earth because of the reluctance of His children to roll up their sleeves and get personally involved.

"But, I'm Only A . . ."



How many times have you asked someone what they do and you are met with a momentary, but nevertheless awkward, silence—as they shrug and say something like, "Oh, I'm **only** a cook," or, "Well, I **just** fix cars." They say it in a tone of voice as if they're saying, "I'm nothing, nobody . . . I don't really do anything important." I always feel badly when someone responds like this, because they obviously don't understand how important they are to God as an individual.

When you become a Christian, you hear about all the wonderful ways you can minister. You learn that God gives some of His followers the gift of teaching, or preaching, or healing. Then someone comes to your church to sing about Jesus and leaves everyone with their mouths hanging open because of their incredible four octave range—and you are filled with awe. Meanwhile, you sit back in your pew thinking, "If I had *one of those gifts*, I would serve the Lord too!"

Somewhere along the way we begin to get the false idea that these "public ministry gifts" are the only ones God can really use. We start to feel that having a *different* calling on our life means we have *less of a calling*. **Most people have a great misunderstanding about what it means to serve the Lord.**

God Has A Job For You!



I think it goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) . . . we are supposed to be **FULL-TIME CHRISTIANS!** There aren't any "days off" when it comes to loving the Lord. But if God hasn't given you a gift of public ministry, does that mean you can't serve Him full time? Of course not! Many Christians believe that if they don't have some kind of public ministry gift, they are "doomed" to spending their life behind a desk at some obscure life insurance company somewhere. Well, *nothing* could be further from the truth. **God needs people behind HIS DESKS—and He's got the biggest "Life Insurance Company" in the Universe! It's called Life Eternal—and Jesus has the one and only franchise!**

Did you know that *you* are a valuable person to Jesus, and regardless of your skills, you should be playing a key part in reaching the world with the Gospel? Each of us is literally "one of a kind." There's not one of you that Jesus can't use if you will fully yield yourself to Him. *No one* is useless in the Kingdom of God. **No matter what you can (or can't) do—God has a job for you. THERE IS NO UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD!**

Here's an excerpt from a letter I received recently. This particular ministry is involved with international evangelism. They are not alone in their needs. Every ministry that I know of cries to the same sad tune. Listen closely . . .

"We are very much in need of your prayers, for we are greatly understaffed in the area of support ministries. This is the area of administration and support services which allows the ongoing ministry of our groups to continue without getting bogged down

with those tasks involving hours of paper work and office procedures. This is a great area of need throughout Christian organizations as a whole and not just our own—but it is not often realized widely among the body."

The Work Of The Lord



Recently I heard someone say, "THE WORK OF THE LORD IS JUST THAT—A LOT OF WORK!" In every ministry I know of, there are countless jobs that need to get done, and so few people to do them. Unfortunately, Christians with a big enough vision for this type of service are very few and far between. In fact, it's just a miracle that our little ship here at Last Days Ministries stays afloat. If it weren't for the grace of God, and some of the most wonderful, committed people I've ever met (who occasionally work until they drop), you wouldn't have this in your hands to read right now.

So, What Is An Unsung Hero?



An Unsung Hero, in this context, is someone who carries a share of the responsibility in an ongoing ministry. However, when this ministry is thought of or spoken of by others, nobody really knows who these individuals are. In other words, when the praises are sung for all to hear . . . the choir doesn't sing *their* names. In fact, usually no one outside of those closely involved even *knows* what their names are.

Unsung Heroes work behind the scenes to staff and support Christian ministries and Christian ministers, worldwide. They come in every shape, size, and color—but they all have one thing in common. **They believe that Jesus is the only answer, and have committed their lives and the fruit of their labors to totally and directly benefit the Kingdom of God.**

Qualities Of Unsung Heroes



Unsung Heroes are **not perfect**, but because they have yielded their hearts, they grow quickly, maturing gracefully in godly character and the deeper things of the Lord. Listed below are some of their qualities:

FAITH—Because they firmly believe that God sees all, and rewards accordingly.

VISION—Because they have an ability to see the whole picture, even though they may be playing only a small part in it.

HUMILITY—Because they are excited to work as a part of a team, heading towards one common goal. They can serve with no glory, fame, or promise of a big reward on the earthly horizon.

FAITHFULNESS—Because they can be depended upon to meet the needs as they arise—with their best efforts and in the most creative way possible.



WISDOM—Because they realize that the things *they* do best will free others to do the things that *they* do best—which will most efficiently advance God's Kingdom and God's glory here on earth.

COURAGE—Because they willingly put themselves into positions where they need to rely fully on Jesus. They are not afraid of a challenge!



How We Work As A Body

I don't think God randomly picked the term "body" in referring to those who love Him. Everyone knows that every part of the human body works together for the good of the whole person. As a "body of believers," if we were all "mouths," there would be no hands to feed us. If we were all "feet," we could get up and go, but we'd be unable to do anything when we got there. If we were all "heads," we'd have a lot of great ideas, but it would be impossible to carry them out.

I know from the firsthand experience of living and working in a large ministry for the past several years, that we couldn't do all that we are doing without the dedicated help of those who work together to lovingly serve in the day-in, day-out tasks of everyday life. These people are more than important, they are **INDISPENSABLE!** Without them it would literally be impossible to carry on.

Some Modern Unsung Heroes



The backbone of the Church is made up of ordinary people doing ordinary things. I'm going to give you some examples from our ministry because I am most familiar with it—but all ministries have similar needs to one degree or another, although the specifics may vary. For us, it would be impossible to do what we are doing without secretaries, bookkeepers, typists, computer programmers, printers, typesetters, graphic artists and layout people, receptionists, electricians, carpenters, mechanics, people in shipping and receiving, maintenance men, and those involved in child care. Our tract department mails thousands of tracts a week, and that takes a lot of people doing a lot of work. There are also those who read and answer the letters that come in, and those who counsel people on divorce, abortion, and other areas of personal crisis.

In addition, there are many others here who spend their days vacuuming, scrubbing, washing, filing, phoning, ordering, mowing, building, digging, running errands, fixing what's broken, and doing all the other hundreds of things that pop up on a daily basis. In fact, we'd all be up to our necks in trash every day if several people didn't take the time to empty it—and I doubt that you'd hear from us at all, if part of our staff wasn't dedicated to buying groceries, planning menus, and cooking three balanced meals a day for everyone mentioned above, plus the staff and students of our Discipleship Training School.

These people, and others like them, are continually used by the Lord to keep our ministry, as well as every other ministry I can think of, going. We have a *constant* need for people like this. You'd think it would be simple to find Christians who want to serve the Lord in this way—but unfortunately, it isn't.

Not A One Man Show



Full-time Christian workers have found a **message** and a **method** that they believe is of the Lord, and they have committed themselves to work with Christians of similar convictions to see this message reach others. It may put the worker out on the front lines himself, or it may require that he stand behind a particular minister or a particular ministry

organization, and support them in the work that they are doing.

When Joshua went to battle against Amalek—Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill to watch. "So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy . . . and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set." (Ex. 17:11-12) The Israelites won the battle. It was Moses' upheld arms that God honored, but he couldn't have held them up all day by himself. If it weren't for the "support ministry" of Aaron and Hur who lent Moses their strength, the battle would have been lost.

THERE ARE MANY BATTLES BEING LOST TODAY BECAUSE NO ONE IS WILLING TO HELP LIFT THE ARMS OF THOSE ANOINTED BY GOD.

What do you think would have happened that day if Aaron and Hur had said, "We're not going to help Moses hold up his arms. If God wanted Israel to win this battle, He should have anointed us instead!" Selfish? Yes! But many Christians today have a similar response when God asks them to lend their support to someone else. As Christians, our response to God must always be, "Yes, Lord . . . whatever You say! I am willing to serve wherever You need me—just point me in the right direction!" I love to see Christians who understand their gifts, serving God freely and joyfully within their special anointing.

By the way, Aaron and Hur were anointed that day . . . they were anointed to **SUPPORT MOSES!** Many of you have that same anointing on your life . . . have you been walking in it?



All It Takes Is A Willing Heart

God has *already* given each believer *every* tool needed to serve Him. He has given us Himself, His Son, and His Holy Spirit. What more could we ask for? But ask any mechanic—if you won't pick up your tools and use them, it doesn't matter how much you know, or how advanced your tools are—the car doesn't get fixed. The tools themselves bear no fruit unless someone with a willing heart picks them up and uses them. So many Christians do the same thing. They sit around saying, "Isn't God good! Look at all He has given us. Aren't we blessed to have so much!" Their mouths have no problem running at a mile a minute, but getting their hands and feet into gear is another story. How this must hurt God. God has not given us these wonderful gifts to keep to ourselves—He wants us to **use** them. But without a **willing heart**, we are useless—and no matter how much we have . . . we bear no fruit. "With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men." (Eph. 6:7)

Ministering To Jesus



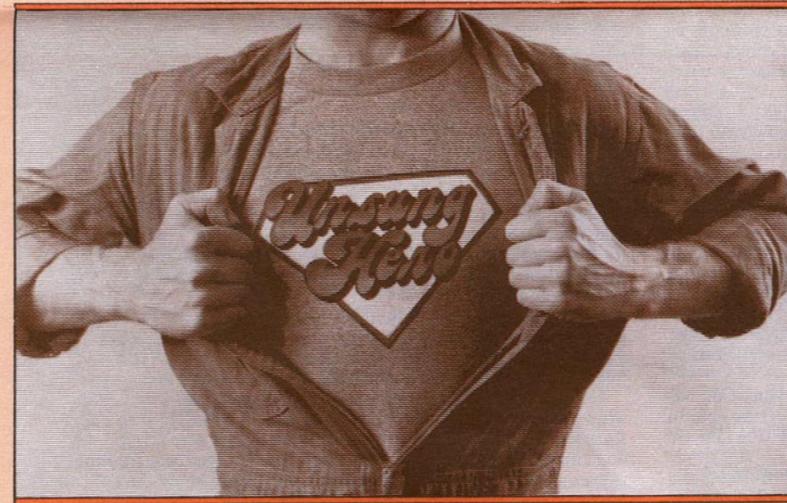
Do you remember reading about the women who were present at Jesus' crucifixion "who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him"? (Matt. 27:55) The Bible mentions three women who were "ministering to Jesus." What do you think that means? I doubt very much that they were counseling Him, healing Him, or preaching to Him. This was God in the flesh—He not only had the answers, He knew all the questions as well! I have to assume that these women were doing common, simple, everyday things. Just helping where help was needed most. Nevertheless, *whatever* they did, **God called it ministry to Jesus**—and it got those three women written up in the Bible! The fervent love that was in their hearts just overflowed into what were probably very practical avenues of service to their King. I'm sure there were many who wanted to "hang out with Jesus" so that *they* could get blessed—but these women wanted to *do* the blessing. Their devotion, joy, and personal sacrifice brought them a wonderful fringe benefit—an extremely close relationship with Jesus. I don't know about you, but I sure would like to know what they talked about on some of those long, hot, dusty walks . . .



Waiting On Tables

In the early Church, a small problem arose. Some of the widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. So the apostles called a meeting and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the Word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them." (Acts 6:2-3,6)

Very interesting! When was the last time you saw someone have hands laid on them just to serve food? They picked some of the very best men they had—and Stephen was one of them. The Bible tells us, "And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people." (Acts 6:8) We all know about his unjust stoning and his wonderfully anointed last minute speech—an incredible summary from Old Testament prophets, right through to Jesus' crucifixion. He boldly proclaimed the Messiahship of Jesus, and just as



boldly placed the blame for His death. No, Stephen was no faint-hearted noodle of a guy. This was a man of power and anointing, so what was *he* doing waiting tables?

It's simple—Stephen was waiting tables because God asked him to! He was called to a job "behind the scenes," and he humbly embraced it because, to him, obedience was a higher priority than any personal preferences he might have had. Stephen was *called* to serve those widows—which in turn released the apostles to do the things God was calling them to do. He saw God's anointing on the apostles, and probably felt privileged to assist them however he could. I don't think he grumbled or thought, "When am I going to get done serving food, so I can get on with the 'more important' stuff?" Serving the widows was important!

God looks at the heart, and there's *nothing* He can't do with one that is joyfully submitted to Him! Because of Stephen's attitude, God saw He could trust him with more. It's a scriptural principle. "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much." (Luke 16:10) Stephen was highly trusted by the Lord—after all, God entrusted him with martyrdom! You may say, "Hey, I don't care if God ever trusts me that much!" But there's a martyr's crown in heaven, and Stephen will be wearing one. I think we would have quite a different story (or no story at all) if Stephen would have said, "Sorry guys, but God has more important things for me to do than wait on tables!"



God's Timing

Unfortunately, we are usually looking for our "big ministry opportunity" before we have allowed God to shape our character enough to handle the pressure and responsibility of such a ministry. That's why we see so many ministers and ministries fall by the wayside. Many times they have taken their visions and goals, and in their own strength, put themselves into ministry. We all need vision for our lives, but it's a tragic mistake to grab up our dreams (or even God's dreams for us) and run ahead with them—without the timing and anointing of God.

In the Bible, we sometimes find that someone from behind the scenes moves into a more prominent position, such as Elisha or Timothy. However, you must remember that this happened after years of faithful ministry and apprenticeship under men like Elijah and Paul. When God *does* choose to raise someone up, it is not because they have "earned it." **God raises people up when He sees they are ready . . . and not before.** Don't enter full-time service expecting a certain time schedule of advancement from the Lord. If God sees that you are interested in "position," He will not give your leaders the release to raise you up. **When God appoints, He also anoints—and when He anoints, it's obvious to everyone.** It's at this time that you may be released into different, not better ministry responsibilities. "Whatever you do, do

your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve." (Col. 3:23-24) I believe all great men and women of God have had their days of serving others in humble circumstances. Don't forget . . . Jesus was a carpenter!

Why Burn Out For The World? (When You Can Burn Out For The Lord!)



That's a big question: **Why burn out for the world, when you can burn out for the Lord?** So many Christians are literally wearing themselves out to promote and support a worldly system of belief that is totally contrary to the Gospel. Most jobs are not "evil" in themselves, but you do need to be careful. If you work in printing or advertising, for instance, what things are your labors helping to promote? Do you work in music? What are the songs saying? I once spoke to a lighting technician who worked in the lounges of Las Vegas. She never stopped to think that by shining the lights on sinful actions every night, she was actually condoning it. You can't shrug and say, "It's just a job." We are accountable. But what a privilege it is to see the fruit of our labors go to **directly benefit** the Kingdom of God.

In my travels I am constantly talking to people who spend up to 40 hours a week or more doing normal, everyday jobs. They are tired, bored, and discouraged because they feel they are giving their prime time and energy to work that is not fulfilling the deepest desires of their hearts. It pays the rent and puts food on their tables (which is nothing to sneeze at these days), but aside from an occasional opportunity to tell someone about Jesus, they feel like they are literally wasting their lives away in the face of the spiritual needs in the world. I love to talk to people like this, because I have good news for them! God not only **can** use them, He is **waiting** to use them if they'll only let Him.

Your Greatest Gift



What do you think your biggest asset is? Well, for every Christian, it's the same—it's Jesus! And your most important skill is how well you know Him. It's our relationship with Jesus that gives us something to offer. Without the Lord, we have **nothing**. " . . . for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

I've talked a lot about skills, but your particular talent isn't what makes you valuable. You as a person are valuable because you are made in the image and likeness of God. If we depended on our talents for value, then the most talented would be the "most valuable," which is not true. Surprisingly, God doesn't *always* want to use you in the areas where you are most skilled. You may think you're "wasting your talents" if you don't use them. For some of you, that's true, but some of you are too self-confident, and God wants you to do something else for awhile so you have to depend fully on Him. His first concern is seeing your **CHARACTER** developed. Are you willing to do **anything** God asks—or is your identity tied to what you do? God is not as interested in the "things you do" as He is in **WHO YOU ARE IN HIM**. Everything else is secondary to that.

Be Realistic



We can't base our present decisions on something that may or may not happen in the future. We must be obedient to what God shows us now. I spoke with a fellow recently who knew God was calling him to the mission field, but he was worried that his wife wouldn't have a desire to go. I told him that this could present a problem. But after talking with him for awhile, I came to find out that he wasn't married, and he didn't even have a girlfriend! He said, "Well, God promised me a wife, and when I find her, she might not want to go." Brothers and sisters, we must live in reality. We can't manipulate God's will. If God did have a wife for this fellow, he would find *God's choice* by remaining in *God's will*.

You may laugh at this guy's reasoning—but I bet many of you have said similar things. Does this statement sound familiar? "God has shown me I'm going to be a teacher, but there's no opportunity for me to teach where He seems to be calling me. I guess that means God doesn't really want me to go there." You can exchange the word teacher for preacher, singer, counselor, or whatever the case may be. Did you ever stop to think that God may have a few things to build into your life before He can release you any further? "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil." (James 4:14-16)

COMMON SENSE CHECKPOINTS

Before you commit yourself to any ministry, there are many things you should check. Listed below are a few of them:

Their Message: Is it something you can stand behind? Do you want it to be your message too?

Their Doctrine: Ask for a written statement of faith. Most ministries have these on hand. Be sure they are living, teaching, and preaching **sound biblical doctrines**. You cannot be too careful in this, for many unsuspecting Christians end up involved unwittingly in pseudo-Christian cults.

Their Visions and Goals: If you don't know where they are going, how do you know you want to go there?

Their Lives: Look at the LIVES of the people within the ministry. Do you respect the qualities you see expressed? This doesn't mean they will be perfect, but they should be good examples of Jesus and possess qualities you desire in your own life.

Their Fruit: Make sure their fruit is good! You should be able to see overwhelming evidence that God is with them and that He is using them. You can probably find some "bad reports" for just about every ministry around—but

too many bad reports *could* add up to trouble. If this is the case, honestly discuss these areas with the ministry *before* making a commitment.

Their Finances: Most of the larger Christian ministries are non-profit corporations. This means that no one individual or individuals can own any of the assets that come into the ministry. If at some time a non-profit corporation were to dissolve, the assets would legally have to be turned over to another non-profit corporation. No monies or acquired goods could go to anyone personally, ever. Small, grassroots ministries may not have a non-profit status, but if they grow, it will probably become necessary. Be sure you are building God's Kingdom, and not somebody else's.

You should be wise in all of this, but not overly paranoid. I haven't found a perfect ministry yet, including ours! Ministries are not buildings and machines, they are made up of people who are all at different stages of growth and maturity in the Lord. Just take it before Jesus.

I heard a joke about a fellow who was going from church to church looking for the "perfect" one. He finally ran excitedly to his friend shouting, "I found it! I found it! I just started going to THE PERFECT CHURCH!" His friend smiled and said, "Well, it's not perfect anymore . . ."