



For the "Little Pastors"

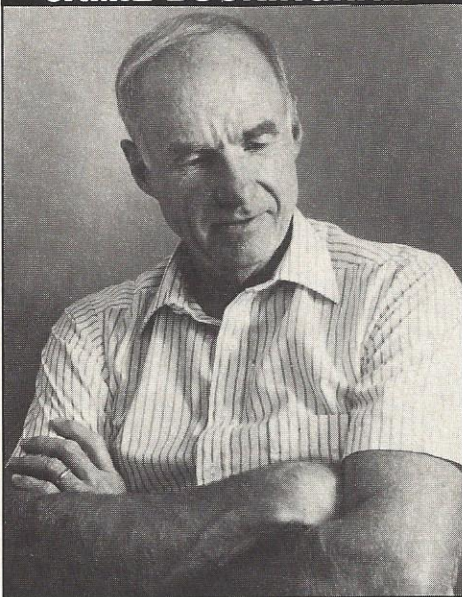
Bob Hellmann is the pastor of a small church in Huntsville, Alabama. His letter to me was handwritten on lined yellow paper:

"I am writing not only for myself but for all the 'little pastors' around the country.

"Let me explain what I mean by 'little pastors.' We are pastors of small churches. We are not kooks, flakes or thieves. We love our churches and are honest, hard working, moral, God-called men. We go to conferences to learn and we hear those who are shepherds to thousands. But we leave feeling inferior, insignificant and unsuccessful. We pastor churches of 25 to 500 members.

"Nobody really tells us what to do when:

JAMIE BUCKINGHAM



- We have only six people show up at church on time Sunday morning.
- We pray, confess the Word, preach truth, love people—only to lose ground and have our flocks diminish in size. People we love divorce us over fluff, and new people don't run into our churches to take their place.
- We wonder from Sunday to Sunday whether there will be enough (or any) money to sustain us—and meet church obligations.
- We reach out to our communities with little response.
- We invite well-known ministers to our cities and churches only to be told they are too busy. In the meantime we see them on TV preaching in the big churches. The little flocks are in need of gifted men and women. We

would love to have them. They could be used of God to change our towns and churches, but we can't get them to come. We cannot promise a big crowd or a big offering.

"The little pastors are hurting. It would help us to know if any of those who are esteemed successful have bled along these lines. Are there any 'successful' pastors who have been faithful to God and lost people—or does everything they touch turn to gold? Who can speak to our struggles?"

These are honest questions—and honest evaluations.

I sat recently listening to Oral Roberts talk about his early days when he was hitchhiking from his little apartment to his weekend pastorate. His wife would fix him a sack lunch to eat as he stood alongside the highway. He voiced the same yearnings Bob Hellmann has expressed. "If I could have just talked to some 'successful' pastor, it would have made all the difference in the world."

Ministries Today does not equate size or fame with success. The "successful" pastor is the one doing God's will. Our way of helping the "little pastor" is to let him hear, in print, from those who have been down the road, and have now come back to help others.

Jamie Buckingham
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Ministries Today (ISSN #0891-5725) is published bi-monthly by Strang Communications Co., 190 North Westmonte Drive, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Second class postage paid at Altamonte Springs, FL 32714 and at additional entry offices. Subscription rate is \$30.00 for 6 issues, \$50.00 for 12 issues and \$60.00 for 18 issues. Canadian subscriptions add \$7 per year, other countries add \$10 per year. Foreign subscriptions payable in advance in U.S. currency or equivalent. Subscription questions? Call 1-800-227-7585. *Ministries Today* is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Ministries Today*, P.O. Box 881, Farmingdale, NY 11737-0001. Copyright ©1989 by Strang Communications Company.

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