

RR CROSSING

RAMESH RICHARD EVANGELISM AND CHURCH HEALTH

A GLOBAL PROCLAMATION MINISTRY

Q3 2019

2019 Dallas Global Proclamation Academy pastors enjoying an outdoor session at Dallas Theological Seminary. GPA article on page 4.



REACH

Ramesh Richard Evangelism and Church Health

*RREACH envisions changing the way
One Billion Individuals think and hear about the
Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of the Father,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit.*



Searching for worship music and sneakers on the internet, a young man started noticing a strange occurrence. Several Christian pastors wore rather expensive sneakers in the

pictures on their church websites. The shoes ranged from \$600 to \$3,000. This trend alarmed him, and he asked a question, “What is OK as far as optics ... as far as pastors wearing hype or designer clothing?” His Instagram post started a blaze of comment from the Wall Street Journal to the New York Times and several other media outlets.

Public criticism is an occupational hazard of Christian leadership. It’s nearly as old as the poverty-modeling founder of the Christian faith, the one who had “no place to lay his head” (Matt. 8:20, NIV) but who also did not prohibit the “wasteful” spending of expensive perfume by a doting follower (Matt. 26:7-13) as justifiable preparation for his upcoming burial.

So where should we land on our evaluation of pastors and possessions? Since the matter is more than mere optics, concerned colleagues sent me the relevant links and suggested I provide applicable instruction.

Years ago, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) distributed an article I wrote on the matters of money and ministry. Current events prompt me to add to that guidance. I am an itinerant proclaimer of God’s who regularly must navigate between geographies of deprivation and opulence, and balance the optics for poor and well-endowed audiences across the world. I am sending off this article after lift off from Rwanda having just addressed well-to-do opinion leaders and economically deprived pastoral leaders. Whether I should even write on this somewhat superficial matter of “sneakers and preachers” after visiting the Kigali Genocide Museum this morning causes a heaviness of heart. How lightweight can insensitive leaders and heavy-handed their critics be?

And yet this newsy matter is noisy enough to share a few principles for level-of-lifestyle decisions among Christian leaders who receive their compensation from donors?

Your Audience’s Sensitivity

God is not a respecter of persons,” a friend mentioned in passing, “but people are.” Therefore, I avoid judging by external appearance but recognize that the external does matter to most. I try not to embarrass my primary audiences, either by over or underdressing, or by indulging or rejecting luxury as intrinsically good or evil. Last Sunday, my Rwandese hosts preferred I wear a suit, white shirt and cravat to address a pre-Christ audience of government, military, and business professionals. I pay attention to what matters to them, so “by all means I may save some” (1 Cor. 9:22, NET). The rest of the week, while speaking to pastors, I left off the jacket in the mornings, and took off my tie in the afternoons.

Only those who serve a specific audience best know the sensitivities of that audience—no journalist or outsider does. Only we and God can truthfully answer if we use externals to initially impress others in order to reach them. So we must ask what God thinks of what we are doing. He knows if we are sincerely reaching out to people with our behavioral choices or stage-managing their public responses. He knows if we are serving psychological deficiencies in our self-view or social efficiencies for better communication.

Know your audience then. As you bear fruit in evangelizing and discipling them, be aware of their sensitivities, and adjust your lifestyle as you are able. Do not worry about self-authorizing faultfinders. Turn their projectiles into a spiritual advantage, as veteran missionary E. Stanley Jones remarked, “My critics are the

unpaid guardians of my soul.” Only as you carry the cross of criticism daily, are you, like your Lord Jesus, being prepared for your burial and worthy of the extravagance any few might pour out. So consider what only you know with honest rigor: are critics pointing out the expense of the occasional alabaster perfume or the wretchedness of your hidden but constant mentality of entitlement?

Your Sense of Identity

Pay strong attention when those critics who normally disagree with each other agree on a matter against you. That agreement should tell you something is amiss in your assessment of external relevance. Perhaps you have developed a mistaken sense of the Self from a wrongly identified source of self-identity.

If you need luxury to feel better about yourself, then you are ignoring God’s unconditioned acceptance. And if you feel free to ignore everyone else’s opinion about your chosen lifestyle, then you have disregarded how to love your neighbor well.

*When it comes to money,
possessions and lifestyle,
always evaluate your
levels of contentment and
gratitude.*

Temper the truth of having nothing to prove to God with the reality that you do have to prove something to people. Don't be overly concerned about your image; you are already accepted among the beloved. Do be concerned about your reputation; it reflects inner strength and affects God's glory through you.

When it comes to money, possessions and lifestyle, always evaluate your levels of contentment and gratitude. The former is not passive. The latter is the strongest of all emotions. They will help you make better spending choices and deprecate any ownership claims over your belongings. Follow your Master's sacrificial approach to ministry as you seek to discern (by all means with your spouse) your standard of living under God.

Not long ago, I visited the pastor of the world's fastest growing, mega-church—100,000 people in five services in just a dozen years. He lives in a modest two-bedroom apartment attached to the stage of a massive arena. "God has cured me of desire for luxury," he said, "I am missionary at heart and by practice." Although high-living by a mega-church pastor could be tolerated or even reasonable, his choices show godly contentment. Do yours?

The apostle Paul notes that our hard work is worthy of double material honor (1 Tim. 5:17) from those who receive God's Word from us (Gal. 6:6), but we shall never demand that deference. Why? Because we live off the voluntary generosity of others. This dependence on donors is both amazing and humbling. Like many of you, I have received beautiful gifts from friends. It is also humiliating at times. No other profession I know feels more the conflict of keeping motives pure than those who wish to altruistically serve the very people on whose gifts they depend.

Spiritual maturity requires regular affection-management, of setting "your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2, ESV). Just because your income goes up, your lifestyle does not have to keep rising. Instead, your giving can.

Your Ministry Sensibility

Importantly, though often missed, these level-of-lifestyle decisions call for a ministry sensibility, a mixture of love, humility, wisdom and courage. They fall into the larger and deeper issue of "questionable" issues. God's Word is clear on matters such as Gospel content and sexual immorality. Those issues may be questioned (what is not questioned these days?) but are not questionable. The Bible leaves other matters, such as styles of church buildings, worship music, and preaching shoes without clear prescription.

The latter fall into the class of questionable issues.

While personally nauseous and culturally hideous, no biblical absolute governs preacher fondness for \$600 sneakers. Rather the Bible expects that maturing believers will disagree about preferences in behavior with openness and without bitterness. Our tendencies toward legalism (behavior to gain favor with God) or license (the freedom of grace without denying ungodliness, Titus 2:13) factor into these penchants too. The only clear direction about any questionable matter, personal and public, is that we live by biblical values and faith-filled conviction toward our preferences.

Biblical values framing "questionable" issues exhort us to avoid becoming a stumbling block to a weaker believer (Rom. 14:21), or letting anything gain control of us (1 Cor. 6:12). God's Word also requires a faith-filled conviction about our choices, since "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23, RSV).

Although you might manage to rationalize anything you want, the more you find yourself defensive with God, Scripture and loved ones about a level-of-lifestyle choice, the more likely you are rationalizing your love of lavishness. I can convince myself to deserve anything I really want, yet the only thing I deserve is eternal damnation.

Shall we empty ourselves to follow Jesus' unentitled, servant model, voluntarily releasing use of our rights so that we might seek and save the lost? In these ways, we will build rather than weaken the faith of others; we shall attract unbelievers (1 Pet. 2:12) rather than repel them.

Oh, one more matter of audience sensitivity to consider: if freed in your self-identity to tie on those sneakers, ministry sensibility in some cultures obliges you to remove all footwear as you approach the podium to honor the greatness of the God you worship and represent. Indeed I submitted my free right to wear shoes for the joy of preaching at that fastest-growing, mega-church. Hearers were not distracted, new converts did not stumble, and mature believers all embraced God's Word.

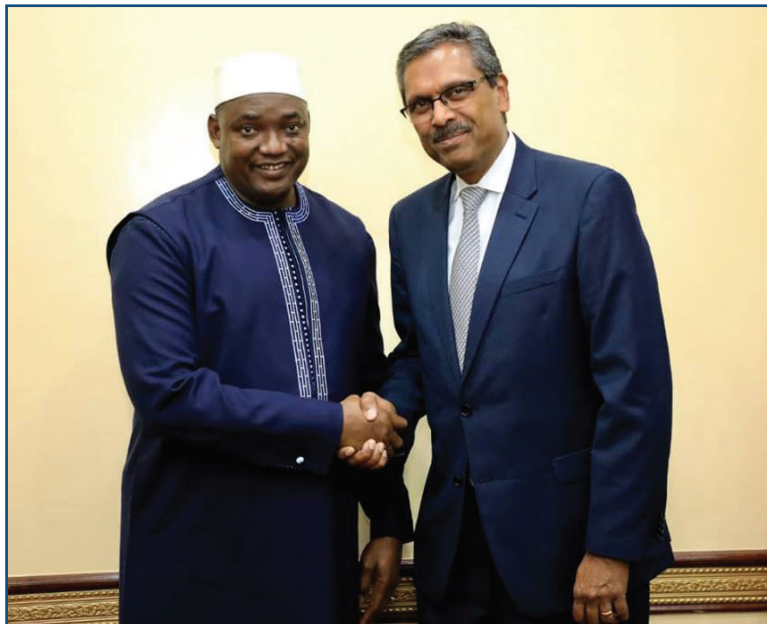
Visit rreach.org/articles to read "Who Giveth the Increase?" to find more of Dr. Richard's thoughts on developing a biblical mindset on money, growth and ministry. 📖



*If you need luxury to feel
better about yourself, then
you are ignoring God's
unconditioned acceptance.*

Through Ramesh Richard's itinerant ministry addressing private gatherings or packed stadiums, God's Word reaches pre-Christians in personal conversations, is taught in seminary classrooms, and is proclaimed to large numbers of individuals worldwide.

Vagabondslave: Personal Proclamation



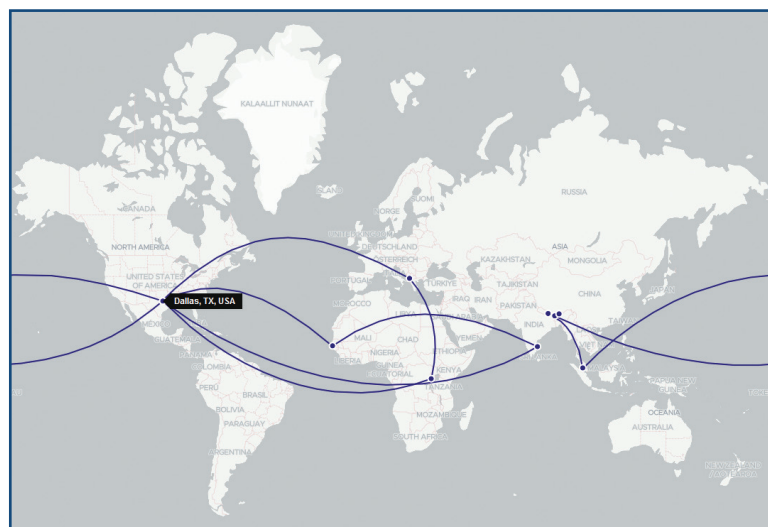
Dr. Richard meeting the president of Gambia

- A most memorable event was hosted by the president of the nation, who generously welcomed Dr. Richard into his home. With permission, Dr. Richard was able to pray with the president in the name of Lord Jesus Christ.
- On the return leg of his trip, he stopped at his high school reunion in Southern India. He also presented the Gospel to 800 upper-class students of his former school. Reconnecting with classmates was a source of sadness and energy to intensify his efforts to reach into large numbers of desperate souls everywhere.

Praise God for giving Ramesh Richard these opportunities to proclaim God's Word. Pray that he will continue to be used as an effective and efficient instrument to draw many individuals to the Lord Jesus. 🙏



- Earlier this year Dr. Richard set off on a nine-day, four-region international trip. After 24 hours of air travel, he arrived in the tiny, beautiful land of The Gambia, located on the African west coast.
- Despite only four percent of the population claiming to be Christian, RREACH has already held a national Global Proclamation Academy (nGProAcademy) there. Pastor S, 2018 Dallas GProAcademy grad from The Gambia, arranged several speaking events for Dr. Richard's visit.
- After a warm welcome from a host of nGProAcademy grads and continuous police escort (thanks to Pastor S's national security connections), Dr. Richard spoke both at gatherings of pastoral leaders and business leaders. Each presented an opportunity for him to proclaim God's Word as an encouragement to brothers and sisters in Christ and as the Good News to pre-Christians in attendance.



Ramesh's 2019 January to June travels

Personal Proclamation Responses

January 1 - June 30, 2019

4,793 individuals addressed

222 public professions in the Lord Jesus

Through books, articles, events and electronic media, Dr. Richard's thought-provoking content is amplified around the globe. **LIFEROCKS** (short format video) evangelizes opinion leaders, and **PastorReach**, a media digest, strengthens pastoral leaders to preach, live and think biblically.

LifeRocks: Media Outreach

"I'm gay and tired of being gay as I know being gay is not acceptable in Christian religion. But I cannot get over being gay..."

TZ, South Asia

TZ is one of millions around the globe who are struggling with identity, sin and lostness and not sure where to turn for help. They are exactly the kind of person Ramesh wants to reach through RREACH's online media outreach ministry.

LifeRocks.org features short video messages about life themes. The 2019 series talks about peace. Titles such as "Why do you feel insecure?," "Get out of a jammed life" and "Unshakable peace" are geared to pre-Christian, educated young adults. They are publicized on social media channels such as Facebook and invite viewers to dialogue online to learn more. Each video ends with "You think about it. Let's talk about it."



To watch LifeRocks messages visit LifeRocks.org or subscribe to the YouTube channel

Media Outreach Responses

January 1 - June 30, 2019

6,422 new website visitors

2,332 people who indicated a "Yes" decision

1,294,808 "Likes" on LifeRocks Facebook page

TZ is one of many who write in with questions, challenges and cries for help. RREACH partners with **Global Media Outreach** to provide skilled online counselors who engage with TZ and others. While the nature of this outreach prevents us from knowing qualitative results, strong response to video promotions and a growing viewer base across many nations indicate that God is using LifeRocks to reach into lives perhaps otherwise unreachable and untouched by Gospel-work.

For example, RM from Pakistan wrote, "Why have you [God] created a loser like me?" RM and TZ are two of the millions of potential believers for whom Dr. Richard prepares and records LifeRocks talks, and why RREACH staff works hard on production and distribution. We wish one day to meet many of them around the throne of our Lord Jesus.

Feel free to watch these videos on LifeRocks.org, forward them to friends, and subscribe to the LifeRocks YouTube channel here: <http://bit.ly/liferockssubscribe>. (When our YouTube subscription count reaches 1,000, YouTube will begin to automatically recommend our videos, helping us expose more people to LifeRocks!)

Pray for God's hand to be on Ramesh, the RREACH Media Outreach staff, and LifeRocks viewers across the globe. Pray that many will begin to think differently about the Lord Jesus Christ. 🙏

MULTIPLY

Through training young pastors at intensive Global Proclamation Academies in Dallas and where Christ's Church is growing, Dr. Richard multiplies local proclaimers of God's Word. He catalyzes global church health by connecting large numbers of trainers of pastors for scalability, speed, spread and sustainability of impact.



2019 Dallas GPA graduates came from the following countries: Albania, Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, undisclosed Asian country, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Estonia, Eswatini, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kosovo, Latvia, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Namibia, Senegal, South Sudan, Suriname, undisclosed Middle Eastern country, The Gambia, Turkey and Ukraine

2019 Dallas Global Proclamation Academy

As part of our vision to connect, unite and strengthen 100,000 young pastoral leaders by 2020, RREACH aims to bring 25 pastors from 25 countries to Dallas annually for three weeks of intensive training. This year, God provided 28! They are among the finest young (under 39) pastors serving around the world today. But many have not been previously trained even for pastoral ministry, let alone to deliver a sound biblical sermon.

So who are these men and what do they face while shepherding Christ's Church? Here's a glimpse.

- Pastor T, Southeast Asia: Pastor T hasn't seen his parents in 10 years. They fled the country, and he remained to serve the Lord in difficult circumstances. During the GPA, he would set aside his daily snack bar. Someone noticed his growing stash and encouraged him to eat them, indicating that he could have more if he wanted. He replied that he was saving them to take home for needy kids.
- Pastor E, Liberia: Pastor E would get up at 3:00 a.m. during the GPA to sing and pray. Persevering in ministry despite a hearing impairment, he had had no training and eagerly asked questions. He learned "so many new things" and intends to pass them on. "Young people are always looking for more to learn, and I can give it to them," he said.
- Pastor T, Estonia: Pastor T can preach in Estonian, Russian and English and sometimes switches in the midst of a sermon if the majority language of the audience changes. Only days before coming to the GPA, he and his wife were evicted from their home and church meeting place. He nearly did not come. When the needs of his church weighed heavily on him during the GPA, his fellow pastors came around with care and encouragement.



Connecting...through host family weekends



Uniting...through prayer

strengthened to preach, live and think biblically, and with the vision and tools to pass what they have learned to others.

Praise God for this year's 28 Dallas GPA graduates. Pray that He will continue to connect, unite and strengthen them in the days to come. 🙏

• Pastor W, Suriname: Suriname, in case you didn't know, is located along the northern coast of South America. Pastor W declares it has the "best food in the world!" The country enjoys open acceptance of religious differences—you might see a mosque next to a Jewish temple and churches on "every" corner. Challenges mainly come from within the church, with people dividing politically and pastors lacking respect for each other. In fact, several of his peers at this year's GPA voiced similar lack of unity among pastors. The GPA experience opened them to begin to trust and relate with other pastors again.

This is just a glimpse into the lives of the young pastors God brings to each Dallas GPA. They go forward



Strengthening...preaching skills learned from the *Scripture Sculpture method*—a majority of Dallas GPA grads tell us that *Scripture Sculpture* was the most impactful lesson from the GPA

Global Prayer Commission (GPrayCommission)

During this year's Dallas Global Proclamation Academy, graduates from prior years sent us messages of encouragement and assurance of prayer. As grateful recipients of prayer during their own Dallas GProAcademy, they expressed how much they valued their experience and "prayed it forward" for the 2019 cohort. We wish to share a couple of their messages as examples of how God continues to answer prayer.

- God is good and faithful. Glory to the name of the Lord. Praying for you all and the work God is doing there. I already love this team of pastors of DGPA 2019. I am praying for them, their families and their churches.

Pastor J, Russia

- I am so thankful to the Lord for His faithfulness. I am thankful to hear what the Lord has been doing this 2019 Dallas GPA, for I have experienced it.

First, the Lord gave me the opportunity to meet brethren and coworkers in His Kingdom. I have seen how my family is very wide. Today, we share with each other prayer requests and great moments we have where we are.

Two, I was privileged to sit with and learn from experienced servants of the Lord, those who have walked and are still walking with the Lord.

Third, I was helped to see one of the greatest tools I have to serve the Lord: the Word of God. I have learned that I have to be faithful to His Word and how from the Word I can see the heart of God to me and to His children. I have learned how I can allow the Bible to open my mind and heart instead of making it say what I want people to hear.

I am so thankful to the Lord for what He is doing though every single person in RREACH and its partners.

Pastor C, Burundi

Thank you for praying! 🙏



RREACH

Ramesh Richard Evangelism and Church Health

17110 Dallas Parkway | Suite 230 | Dallas, TX 75248

+1-972-528-6100 or +1-800-RREACH-World

info@rreach.org

www.rreach.org

www.LifeRocks.org

www.PastorReach.org

www.prayer4rameshrichard.com



Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Plano, TX
Permit No. 266

DESIGNER SHOES\$\$\$

A Pastoral Comment

A Comment from Ramesh Richard

VISION

RREACH envisions changing the way
One Billion Individuals think and hear about the
Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of the Father, and by the
power of the Holy Spirit.

MISSION

A Global Proclamation Ministry, RREACH
implements God's calling and gifting on Ramesh Richard
to promote the Lord Jesus Christ worldwide.

STRATEGY

We accelerate our global impact by the wise use and mix
of personal proclamation, media outreach, and ministry
training to evangelize opinion leaders, strengthen pastoral
leaders, and reach large numbers of individuals,
especially of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

THEME VERSE

"And many will come from east and west and from north
and south, and will recline at the table
in the kingdom of God." — Luke 13:29

Thank you for helping us to *RREACH* into large
numbers of desperate souls around our
broken world with lasting solutions.

Personal Proclamation Announcement

We are honored to inform you of a
new training resource featuring
Dr. Ramesh Richard's time-tested
seven-step process for expository
preaching available through
RightNow Media "the Netflix of
Christian Bible study." RightNow
Media is offering this highly-regarded
method taught and used by pastors
around the world as an eight-video workshop.

Each video provides practical steps, tips and illustrations to aid
preachers of all training levels and backgrounds in sermon preparation. It
is available for RightNow Media members and subscribers.

To read more about RightNow Media and other resources, visit
www.rightnowmedia.org/get-access.

