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## Introduction JASCG Winter 2000

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## Introduction

Gary L. McIntosh, Editor

Y2K was the predominant theme during the last half of 1999. Books, magazine stories, and television programs all focused on how to survive the potential disasters that might or might not come.

In the midst of all the Y2K hype I received an interesting email that suggested Y2K should be read—Yes to the King! Now that is a theme we can all support. Perhaps the theme of all of our churches should be Y2K – Yes to the King— during 2000.

Christ's command to ". . . make disciples of all the nations . . ." is still his charge to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. People continue to search for meaning in life. From all appearances people are open to spiritual concepts and are in a frantic search for meaningful spirituality.

Unfortunately, many lost souls seem to be finding spiritual meaning outside of Christ. We must ask "Why?" Why are lost people, who are obviously seeking faith, not finding it in Christ? There are numerous points we could all suggest in answering that question. However, perhaps one answer is that we have not said, "Y2K – Yes to the King" in response to his great commission.

As usual, this issue of the *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* challenges us to say "Yes to the King" in all of the articles. For example, in "Prayer and Church Growth" Marlin Mull presents research that prayer is a major ingredient in a growing church. His study compares the commitment to prayer in growing and non-growing churches in The Wesleyan Church. His results confirm our belief that prayer will be a core aspect of

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growing churches in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Jim Egli's article, "A Second Reformation?: A History of the Cell Church Movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," overviews the Cell Church Movement from its beginning until now. The fact that nine of the ten largest churches in the world use a cell ministry approach makes it important that we understand this creative approach to church life.

The wide influence of television, media, and computer technology has created a story-telling culture in the United States. Dr. Tom Steffen suggests that denominational leaders and church consultants must begin using a story telling model of analysis to be effective in this new millennium. His insightful ideas are fully discussed in "Congregational Character: From Stories to Story."

Members of the American Society for Church Growth, who were at the annual meeting in November 1999, will remember the lecture of C. Peter Wagner on apostles and prophets. A portion of that lecture is being presented in the *JASCG* in a two-part article. "Part One: The Church's One Foundation" will be found in this issue, with "Part Two: What Apostles Have" coming in the spring 2000 issue. Dr. Wagner's articles will also be published in his newest book, *Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church*, to be released in summer 2000 by Regal Books.

Most of our readers are familiar with John Wimber and his influence on the Church Growth Movement through the Vineyard Church. Since his homegoing, many have been wondering about the current state and future of the Vineyard Church movement. An extremely interesting article, "Distinctively Vineyard: An Identity In The Making" is included in this issue by Christine Eubanks. Christine has completed extensive research on the Vineyard Church as part of her studies in Intercultural Studies and summarizes much of her findings in this fascinating article.

I believe there is enormous opportunity to reach people for Christ this year, but we must be willing to say, "Y2K – Yes to the King!" This issue of the *JASCG* will challenge you to do just that . . . say Yes to the King! Remember: God wants your church to grow!

– Editor