

# What Was I Thinking? Let's Talk About It

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE DESK OF THE  
GENERAL OVERSEER



**Dr. Tim Hill**

General Overseer  
Church of God



# A CHURCH ON FIRE

I did it again! I told myself last time I would never do it again....

But on a long flight back to the United States, I put my earbuds into my iPad and began listening to what was probably one of the very best services I was ever in as a pastor. The choir was full – and they were knocking it out of the park. They had never sounded better. I had a "dream team" staff and we were hitting on all cylinders – with music, youth, children, counseling, small groups, you name it!

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Our church volunteers gave oversight to more than 100 various ministries. We had paid off all the church's debt and had just built a new Family Ministry Center. Our television, radio and multi-media ministries had just expanded to include a wide regional market. Of course, live streaming and Facebook Live were still just a dream back in those days.

Our congregation had built 3 churches during that year in Jamaica. We had also sponsored mission trips to China, Russia, Ukraine, Israel and Korea and helped to support more than 30 missionaries.

On the very day of the service I was listening to, the church had flown in a young pastor from Kansas to celebrate the new church we had helped plant. More than 50 people from our church in Virginia had personally been involved in that church plant several states away in Kansas.

It was also on that very day that our church broke through a significant growth and membership ceiling – and we never looked back.

Sitting on the pews, I saw my 3 daughters who had spiritually matured in that church. It was there they had been baptized by their pastor – who also happened to be their dad. I could also see my wife, Paula, there. She was involved in women's discipleship

throughout the city and was extremely happy to be raising a family, loving her church and enjoying life in a small community.

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## LIFE CHANGING TRANSITION

And then....

I left it.

I left it to be a State Overseer.

In one week, I went from preaching to over 800 in my church to preaching to 35 in a church that hadn't had a pastor in 4 months. And I can assure you, those 35 people had no desire to see me riding up on my white horse declaring "I'm from the State Office and I'm here to help." I had left my church to be a crisis relief administrator, knowing that almost every phone call and every appointment was going to bring a new round of trouble at another church within my state.

Some would say that I left that church to be a denominational leader in what more and more seems to be a non-denominational world. (I'll save my opinion about that last part for another time.)

I left that church a little over 20 years ago – and seldom does a Sunday go by that I don't think about the church and the memories of the good times that my family and I had there. Granted, I am well aware that as time passes, I tend to only remember the good times. However, the fact remains, after all these years, I still have moments when I ask myself, "What was I thinking?"

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## **WHAT WAS I THINKING?**

Considering today's cultural nuances, the various demographic issues, and leadership complexities, you may ask "what were you thinking to leave the pastorate and get into this thing called denominational leadership?"

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Let me tell you what I was thinking....

I was thinking - *"I truly trust God with my future."*

I was thinking - *"God opened this door, I didn't, so I must walk through it."*

I was thinking - *"Maybe what I've learned as a pastor may help someone else in ministry."*

I was thinking - *"Maybe I can be a leader that leads from a 'revival posture.'"*

I was thinking – *"Maybe it's time for a 'thirty-something' to get involved in speaking into this movement from a leadership level."*

I was thinking – *"Maybe I can inspire other young men and women and infuse new life, new ideas, and a fresh anointing into a movement that's over 100 years old."*

I was thinking – *"The heritage of the Church of God's past, and the hope of the Church of God's future, deserve the investment of the strongest and best years of my life."*

I was thinking – *"I love Pentecostal worship – and just maybe my small participation in leadership can lend itself to the preservation and promotion of the Spirit-filled life in pastors, their families, and believers around the globe."*

I was thinking – *"I really believe I can help make a difference."*

Do not get me wrong, I knew the church wasn't perfect and had its' share of problems. However, I believed then – and still believe today – that I could make a valid contribution in fulfilling the Great Commission.

## **WHAT I AM THINKING NOW**

But back to now....

Here I am at 35,000 feet, being knocked around in this airplane by turbulence. My ear buds are plugged back into my iPad as I listen to myself give an altar call two decades ago. From what I just heard myself say, over 20 people were saved that Sunday morning.

So, what was I thinking?

The same thing I'm thinking now!!

Nothing has changed except the fact that I'm not a "thirty-something" any more. I'm a fifty-eight-year-old man doing my best to not only keep up with, but also to know the hearts and minds of – and help drive the dreams of – "thirty-somethings," and "twenty-somethings," and "teen-age somethings." Strangely enough, I'm a little energized by it all.

It is exhilarating to hear the heartbeat of God in the words and writings of younger generations. I often read the posts and occasionally contribute to sites like the "Excellent Ministry of the Church of God" Facebook page. The posts and comments are meaningful, helpful, and at times very sobering in their content. When I see topics like "growing larger churches in or outside the denomination," you better believe it gets my attention.

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I am also captured by those topics relative to doctrine, worship and preaching styles – and even social issues with which our culture is wrestling with? You can count on it that I am reading and often I am learning from the comments. Sometimes the topics or comments make me uncomfortable, but at all times, I'm challenged. And then occasionally, it leaves me asking....

"What was I thinking?"

I was thinking then what I'm thinking now.

We have someone to believe in – our Savior and Lord.

We have something to do – fulfill the Great Commission.

We have a movement to help us deliver the message of a soon-coming Savior – the Church of God and its more than 40,000 congregations around the world.

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And, we have ongoing opportunities to become better at all we do.

So, let's **FINISH** this thing for Christ's sake and go home.

That's what I was thinking then ..... and it's what I'm thinking now.

**Tim Hill**

General Overseer



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