

# southernconnect



**John H. Cress,**  
*Executive Secretary*

## Spiritual Leadership

In the early 1960s, former Chrysler executive Lee Iacocca popularized the saying, “Lead, follow, or get out of the way.” While there is debate on who coined these words, there’s no question they highlight Iacocca’s leadership approach.

It is easy for leaders to gravitate toward this phrase. But one must ask, does this reflect the attitude of Jesus as a leader? Jesus told His disciples, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you” (Matthew 20:25-26, NIV). This is a striking statement of the contrast between spiritual and worldly leadership.

The apostle Paul focuses on three characteristics of spiritual leadership in Galatians 6:1-5. In this passage, he calls individuals “spiritual,” or *neumatikoi* in Greek, meaning “ones who are spiritual.” These are the spiritual leaders of the church—and the first thing to set them apart is their ability to “restore” people who are found in a fault.

This word translated “restore” is *katartizete*, used in common Greek as a reference to resetting broken bones and in the New Testament for mending fishing nets. It means to repair something so it is functional again. People, because of sin, are broken off from the body of Christ. Spiritual leaders have the creativity to restore those who are “broken.” Too often, religious people are known for judgmentalism, criticism, and condemnation. But a distinguishing characteristic of spiritual leadership is to gently and creatively “restore”

people back into the body of Christ.

The second thing Paul notes is spiritual leaders are humble. They don’t think too highly of themselves. If leaders act as if they are above sin, they can develop pride that allows them to look down on people. Author Tevor Wax suggests, “As long as you keep looking up to God for salvation, you cannot look down on anyone else.” Spiritual leaders don’t look down on anyone, because they know that if it was not for the grace of God, they themselves would fall.

Finally, Paul says, spiritual leaders don’t compare themselves to others. In John 21, Jesus discloses to Peter his future, stating, “Peter, you’re going to love me, lead for me, and then you’re going to die for me.” Peter immediately looks back at the apostle John and says, “What about him?” Then Jesus says, “What is that to you? You follow me.”

Spiritual leaders understand that they are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14)—that God has given them a unique call and distinct spiritual gifts. They don’t need to compare. Olympic runners never run looking back to see where

they are in comparison with others. Rather, they stay in their lane and keep their eye on the finish line. Spiritual leaders realize God has given them a lane in which to run, so they focus on Jesus, knowing that is the way to finish the race.

The church needs spiritual leaders who have the ability to creatively restore people who have been broken because of sin; who do not think too highly of themselves because they understand they, too, could fail, but for God’s grace; and who refuse to compare themselves to others because they know God has designed, gifted, and empowered them to not only celebrate their own gifts but the gifts of others as well. ●

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### INSIDE



#### Valley Crossroads Vaccinates 1,000+

*A mission of service to provide vaccinations to their community*



#### Ira Barksdale Ordained

*Barksdale’s ordination service illustrates his heart for ministry*

#### IN EVERY ISSUE

2 In Transition

# Valley Crossroads on the Front Line

BY REGINALD BOLDEN

This March, local community organizations, the Mayor's office tasking the LAFD, and Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez and her staff all descended upon the Valley Crossroads church parking lot to provide Pfizer vaccinations for the residents of the 7th district (free of charge). March 2 marked the beginning of three weeks of vaccines made available to our 7th district, beginning with the City of Pacoima. Our church was the first of three vaccine locations, each operating for a duration of four to five days. A second dose of the vaccine would follow in three weeks' time.

In five days, the Valley Crossroads location administered an average of

*(L to R) Elder Reggie Bolden, liaison of church and local government for Valley Crossroads church, Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez of Los Angeles' 7th council district, and Pastor John Trusty of Valley Crossroads church.*

200 vaccinations per day. Praise God!

A prayerful and deliberate effort was again realized in helping to organize public events for building relationships and focusing on important issues that impact our community. And what important issue could be more needful (save the gospel) than public health?



"We have learned at Valley Crossroads that community is, first of all, a quality of heart," noted John Trusty, pastor at Valley Crossroads church. "It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another." ●

## in transition

### TRANSFERS WITHIN SCC

Voted March 25 & April 8, 2021

**Kathleen V. Diaz** | From Associate Treasurer to Treasurer/CFO, SCC Treasury, as of March 17, 2021.

**Emmanuel Olguin** | From Associate Pastor, Kaleo, to Associate Pastor, Central Spanish church, as of June 19, 2021.

**John Strehle** | From Pastor, Norwalk church, to Pastor, Camarillo church, as of July 1, 2021.

### LEAVING SCC

Voted April 22, 2021

**Javier Casas** | From Pastor, Lancaster Spanish church, as of April 30, 2021.

**Rogelio Paquini** | From Pastor, West Covina Hills church, as of May 29, 2021.

**Warren Tetz** | From Director, SCC Asset Management, as of April 29, 2021.

### NEW HIRES

Voted April 8, 2021

**Fred Warfield** | Director, SCC HR, as of April 15, 2021.

### RETIREMENTS

Voted March 25 & April 8, 2021

**Saul Aispuro** | From Pastor, South Gate Spanish church, as of April 1, 2021.

**James Ayars** | From Pastor, Ventura church, as of April 1, 2021.

**Vasco Brown** | From Pastor, Norwalk church, as of April 1, 2021.

**Adolphus Garnett** | From Pastor, Fifty-Fourth Street church, as of April 1, 2021.

**Javier Huerta** | From Pastor, San Fernando Spanish church, as of April 1, 2021.

**Donald McPhaul** | From Pastor, Ephesus church, as of April 1, 2021.

**Iris Chuah** | From Director, SCC HR, as of April 15, 2021.

# Ira Barksdale Ordination Spotlights His Calling

BY LAUREN LACSON

There's no question that Ira Barksdale has a heart for ministry. He's spent the past 37 years serving in ministry in various capacities: former assistant business

The ordination service included participation from various colleagues and members who have walked alongside Barksdale in his ministry.

Elder Royal Harrison, Greater Los

Harrison also presented and explained a unique—and intentional—gift of not one, but two Bibles. “Though we are ordaining you, pastor, the Greater Los Angeles Region believes in team ministry, and Sonia, you have been a big part of the team of the Barksdale family.”

In his response, Barksdale thanked people in his local churches who have partnered with him in ministry. He shared his mission to help the voiceless and marginalized; those who can't stand up for themselves. “I want to serve as an example of righteousness,” he said, “being the same man serving behind closed doors as if I were in the pulpit's eye.”

“I got discouraged those first few years, but God in His mercy decided to tell me, ‘Get up, Ira Barksdale! You may have fallen down, but get up, I still have something for you to do,’” he recalled.

“God has given me my best life,” he continued. “I didn't know it was going to be possible; I had no idea.”



Conference leadership and pastors in attendance bow as Royal Harrison, SCC Greater Los Angeles Region director, prays the ordination prayer over Barksdale and his wife, Sonia.

manager of Los Angeles Union school (now L.A. Adventist Academy), SCC associate treasurer, lay associate pastor and youth pastor at Los Angeles Central church (now Los Angeles Central City church), and youth and young adult pastor at Rolling Hills church. Barksdale currently serves as senior pastor of the Miramonte and Maranatha churches.

This April, Barksdale's ordination spotlighted his calling to and passion for ministry. SCC President Velino A. Salazar and Executive Vice President James G. Lee shared words of encouragement, and Executive Secretary John H. Cress presented Barksdale with his credential. Cress prayed for the Spirit to join in the occasion, stating, “This is a moment, even out of all the busyness of life, even in the church life, in which all of heaven takes notice, as we set somebody aside into the gospel ministry.”

Anges Region director, introduced Barksdale as the candidate for ordination and read his biography aloud to give a sense of Barksdale's amazing journey. Through his personal



Cress (front left) presents Barksdale with his credential.

story, listeners “can see how God has touched this man in a mighty, mighty way,” Harrison stated.

In May, Barksdale graduated with his Master of Arts degree in Pastoral Ministry from Andrews University. ●



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