HERE’S THE SCENARIO. A successful pastor spends nearly three decades at a prominent Fort Worth Bible church. The church grows significantly. Ministries flourish. The community is impacted positively. The pastor has a solid relationship with church elders, staff, and congregation. Yet years before retirement, the pastor approaches his elders with an exit strategy. He loves the church, loves being a pastor…but he does not plan to end his career at the church. He suggests the following. He can keep pastoring till he’s ready to move on and the elders can then do a traditional search for the new guy…or the elders and church can begin a more intentional transition, finding the pastor’s replacement and bringing him on staff earlier. When the time is right, the pastor will step down in favor of his replacement. Life will go on for the church. Life will change exponentially for the pastor.

The preceding is just what has happened at McKinney Memorial Bible Church of Fort Worth, as senior pastor Ken Horton has recently stepped down in favor of the new man, Chris Freeland, who has served on McKinney’s staff for the past four years. So far, the transition has been not only intentional, but seamless and smooth—all too rare in any church nowadays. Thanks to our many friends and connections at McKinney, Bible Teaching Resources has long enjoyed a positive relationship with the church. Indeed, Don Anderson has held many Bible classes at the church, and current board members Pat and Cindy Hawkins, Brian and Karen Mills, Tom and Joan Cochran, and Barry and Julia Watts are members of McKinney. Don and Fran Saddoris and Clyde and Kathy Womack, current BTR board members, are past members of McKinney. We are grateful for McKinney and we are excited for its continued impact on the Fort Worth community and beyond. And we are also excited about Ken Horton’s new ministry. We chatted with Ken recently over the phone and wanted to share his vision for what he calls his “next season”—a new organization, Ministry Catalysts—with our readers.

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Ken Horton does not shy away from change, as witnessed by the manner in which he has stepped down from the pulpit at McKinney and stepped away from involvement in the church, even though that has meant somewhat distancing himself from a congregation he and his wife, Kathy, deeply love. “We enjoy an ongoing collaboration with McKinney; the elders have invested in our [new] ministry and made it possible for me to retain insurance as a retired pastor... but we won’t go to church there. The former pastor can’t hang around and watch what happens. That makes it more challenging for the old and the new pastor,” Ken explains.

Alabama native Ken came to McKinney 27 years ago, following a somewhat atypical route. After graduating from Auburn University in 1973, he spent three years as a space surveillance officer in the U.S. Air Force... an experience which, Ken says, “stretched my faith as I learned about loneliness, especially during my year in eastern Turkey.” During this time, God confirmed to Ken that he should become a pastor. The Lord provided the perfect ministry partner in Ken’s wife, Kathy. Ken received his Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1981 and earned a Ph.D. in church history in 1999. He counts among his major honors and significant involvements his current role as a member of the DTS Board of Regents. Ken also serves as co-chaplain of the Texas Christian University football team... more on his Horned Frogs involvement later. Ken and Kathy have two adult children.

Ken is not the only Horton involved in Ministry Catalysts. Ken’s brother, Ron, also an Auburn alum and DTS graduate, has transitioned from a 23-year pastorate in Saginaw, near Fort Worth, in recent years. Ken calls the fact that both he and Ron were drawn to the Fort Worth area to minister and raise their families “the providence of God.” Ron and his wife, Terri, attend McKinney. Ken credits Ron with challenging him in the area of one-on-one discipleship, a discipline Ken, as McKinney pastor, had pursued less than group discipleship. Ken recalls, “When I became senior pastor at McKinney, I did more group discipling. I’d spend two years teaching a group of 20 to 30 guys, covering theological issues. The guys themselves grew spiritually, but when we were finished, they still weren’t sure how to disciple others.” Ken came to understand the importance of working one-on-one with men so that they could become confident in discipling others. Ken reflects that, when his son, a DTS student who works with youth in Plano, Texas, asked him what he’d do differently as a pastor, Ken replied, “I’d never stop focusing on one-on-one discipleship.” Not surprisingly, promoting just this is a cornerstone of Ministry Catalysts, which was recently incorporated as a 501(C)3 organization.

The mission of Ministry Catalysts is threefold, Ken explains, involving individual discipleship, the mentoring of pastors, and ministry overseas. Ken and Ron work individually with businessmen and professionals in Fort Worth, each discipling eight to 10 men at a time. Ken spent at McKinney; Ron prefers to work with Campus Crusade materials. The curriculums may differ, but their methods are similar. Ken spends 15-18 hours a week meeting with men to go over some 15 lessons involving Bible study, memory verse work, and life application. The process takes about 20-30 weeks, even up to eight months. “I am working right now with eight guys,” Ken explains. “I’ll meet with one at 7:00 a.m., another at 8:30, another at 3:30 in the afternoon. Some guys own their own businesses and can be flexible regarding meeting times; others cannot be.”

On the advantages of one-on-one discipleship over the group dynamic, Ken reflects, “In a group, one guy will be fully prepared; one guy will be uncertain and will just watch; another guy will have a question he’d like to ask but is too hesitant.” One-on-one discipleship precludes such reticence and encourages transparency. While Ken and his guys generally stick to the material, sometimes questions arise regarding job and family situations; discussion continues as they work through the biblical issues. Ken remembers the wife of a man he had discipling commented that her husband had become a better husband since going through the material with Ken. “If you learn how to grow in Christ, it ought to make you a better husband,” Ken muses. The primary purpose of one-on-one discipleship is, for Ken and Ron, to make disciples, however.

Ken approaches men who express an interest in working with him with a few questions. First, he asks, “If I brought somebody to you who does not know Christ, could you share the gospel?” Most men reply in the affirmative. Then Ken asks, “Could you take a new Christian to a place where he is mature enough to help others grow spiritually? Do you want to learn to do that?” Ken says it becomes readily apparent who is interested and who is not. Many times, the man will exclaim, “That sounds exciting. This is what I’ve been praying for.” These are the guys Ken works with. He recalls one man, who had been a Christian for about three years. As Ken and he were working through the material, the subject of whom the man would later disciple arose. He surprised Ken by saying, “I am already working with someone, my son.” The man’s son was in prison. Every time Ken and he would finish a session, this man would handwrite ideas and questions from the lesson and mail these to his son (prisons require that letters be handwritten, not typed). When father and son got to speak by telephone or in person, they would talk about the lessons. In this man’s case, the multiplication of ministry had already started.

Ken’s one-on-one discipleship process comes with a “lifetime warranty.” He encourages men to call whenever they have a question. He tries to meet with former students every few months for coffee just to see how they are doing in their own discipleship ministries. Ken’s and Ron’s wives even get in the act—discipling older and younger women, including pastors’ wives. “It’s fun to watch them work,” Ken says proudly of Kathy and Terri. “They are extraordinary disciplers who love each other. They stay as busy as they want to be.”

A second component of Ministry Catalysts involves working with pastors. In this, Ken continues the type of work he has long enjoyed as a ministry coach working with the Leadership Evaluation and Development (LEAD) initiative at the Howard G. Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary. Ron, with more than 30 years pastoral experience, is also well qualified for the task of helping pastors. Ken describes his mission as a ministry coach thus: “I ask questions and try to give pastors insights to help their ministries become more fruitful. Actually, sometimes I’ll ask questions till they discover the insights.” Many pastors appreciate such help, Ken says. “If you are not trying to sell a guy something, if you only want to help him be fruitful where he is, lots of pastors want this.” Indeed, Ken just likes being a good friend and an encourager to pastors. He hopes that Ministry Catalysts will be able to make some homes in Colorado available to pastors and their families for a week at a time with no formal programs and healthy doses of encouragement.

The third component of Ministry Catalysts involves overseas ministry. Both Ken and Ron have significant contacts in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Ron has taught at pastors conferences and provided training in discipleship methodology across the globe— including in Singapore, Honduras, and Dubai. Ken has traveled overseas for a week or two at a time for years. With his Ph.D. in church history, Ken is invited to teach at seminaries and pastors conferences. In the immediate future are commitments to teaching courses at the Israel College of the Bible and Seminary in Tel Aviv in June and at Bible colleges in the Canary Islands and India. As part of his work with Ministry Catalysts, he hopes to spend eight to ten weeks per year in overseas ministry…and even time in America’s own backyard with outreaches in Cuba. Ken describes a recent conference in Cuba which more than 400 pastors attended. “Incredible things are happening in Cuba right now,” he says enthusiastically. “As a church pastor, I could only devote two or three weeks a year [to ministry abroad]. Now we have the flexibility to be more involved.”

“In a group, one guy will be fully prepared; one guy will be uncertain and will just watch; another guy will have a question he’d like to ask but is too hesitant.”

“Could you take a new Christian to a place where he is mature enough to help others grow spiritually? Do you want to learn to do that?” continued on page 10
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Speaking of additional involvements, we would be remiss were we not to report on Ken’s work as a chaplain of the TCU Horned Frog football team. Ken, who played football in high school, has always loved the sport. In 1994, the chaplain of the TCU team asked if Ken could “do home games.” This started the connection, and when the original chaplain moved on, Ken assumed that post. Pat Sullivan was then the TCU head coach. Today, Ken shares the chaplaincy with Chauncey Franks, of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In fact, Ken calls himself Franks’s “helper.” It’s but another transition, and in typical Ken Horton form, one graciously accomplished.

Ken sums up his role as TCU chaplain thus. “In the off season, I go to practice some. During the season, I go to practice one or two days a week and hang around and visit. On Friday nights, I lead a chapel. There are 65 players on a travel squad. The chapel is totally voluntary, but we’ll have 40-50 at a chapel, including coaches. It’s fun to see how God has worked in a lot of guys’ lives.”

Not surprisingly, Ken says that what he has enjoyed most about his affiliation with TCU has been the opportunity to “build relationships with guys.” He sees and hears from former players even years after their college days. Just the other day, two former TCU players, now in the NFL, saw Ken at a local restaurant and came over to his table for a visit. Another former player, who had not been spiritually motivated in college, approached Ken recently asking for help in starting a Bible study. Ken replies, “I won’t teach it, but I will help you and you or three or four other guys learn how to teach it.” Ken has performed weddings of former TCU players; he and Kathy have presented parenting classes for players and their friends. Again, it all boils down to an emphasis on relationships. And relationships—stateside and abroad—form the core of Ken Horton’s ministry.

Last year was a big one for Ken and Kathy Horton. Auburn won the national championship. TCU football went undefeated, winning the Rose Bowl. And the Horton boys from Andalusia, Alabama, Ken and Ron, launched Ministry Catalysts with a little help from their friends and a whole lot of help from their heavenly Father. We are excited about the work and pray for its continued fruitfulness.

For more information about Ministry Catalysts, visit www.ministrycatalysts.com or e-mail Ken Horton at ken@ministrycatalysts.com.

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To deny is to act in a holy, selfless way. It is to disregard oneself: to deny, to repudiate, to disdain. It means to say no. Denial is essential to finishing strong and involves four components: passion, purpose, perseverance, and paying the price.

1. Passion

The commitment to finishing the race well must be fervent, fiery, and forever.

Isaiah 50:7: “Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame” (NIV).

Isaiah 42:3: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice” (NIV).

Esther 4:15-16: “Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ‘Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish’” (NIV).

Ruth 1:16-17: “But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me’” (NIV).

Fueling our passion must be preceded by a cleansing of those things in our lives that could potentially grieve or quench the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 7:1: “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (NASB).

The commitment to finishing the race well must be fervent, fiery, and forever.

2. Purpose

Philippians 3:10-14: “that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (NASB).

2 Timothy 2:3-6: “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops” (NASB).

Our ultimate purpose in doing these things is so that we can hear “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys I have prepared for you.”

3. Perseverance

Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us” (DAV).

Romans 15:5: “Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus” (NASB).

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