



WHY SOME CHURCHES ARE

# BLESSED

PUTTING FAITH AND OBEDIENCE INTO ACTION

DAN BETZER

FOREWORD BY SCOTT TEMPLE, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF ETHNIC  
RELATIONS FOR THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

## What people are saying about *Why Some Churches Are Blessed . . .*

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“*Let the reader beware!* Dan Betzer reveals the Great Commission as the Great Commandment and catalogues the blessings found in obeying it, both for individuals and congregations. If you fear either conviction or inspiration, read something else!”

—**John Ashcroft, former Missouri governor, former Missouri senator,  
former attorney general of the United States**

“Dan Betzer is one of the greatest teachers and orators of our time. This book will open your heart to the true blessings of a thriving church through missions. And through missions the gospel will be sent to the ends of the earth!”

—**Dwight Evans, Boston Red Sox right-fielder 1972–1990**

“Every pastor should read this book. Period. Of course, I hope that all believers read it; but I’m especially concerned that pastors understand how this book will set their hearts on fire to reach the world for Jesus. No one I know has a greater passion for fulfilling the Great Commission than Dan Betzer. As a pastor and denominational leader, he has led his own church and multiplied others to increase their vision, passion, and support for the greatest cause ever—to do the greatest evangelism the world has ever seen.”

—**Dr. George O. Wood, general superintendent,  
The General Council of the Assemblies of God**

“This book should be required reading for all pastors. With great clarity and personal insight, Dan Betzer simultaneously encourages and challenges us to boldly follow the Great Commission and become ‘missions-minded.’ This book will change your church forever.”

—**Gail Ross, author and producer/host of *Testimonies of Triumph***

“In 1998, we started our church. The same year someone gave us an old cassette tape of a sermon by a man named Dan Betzer entitled, “*Why Some Churches Are Blessed.*” We already had a heart for missions and believed in the power of faith and giving, but this message revolutionized our thinking on giving to missions. It changed our church forever! Sharing Dan’s message has become

an annual service that our congregation loves. Over the last sixteen years, our church has had the privilege of giving millions to missions. We attribute that largely to the message in this book. Read it for your sake, and for the sake of your church.”

—**Mark and Janet Brazee, pastors of World Outreach Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma**

“I know of no one who embodies the message of global missions more than Dan Betzer. He is personal, passionate, and persuasive. The kingdom of God would be greatly expanded if *Why Some Churches Are Blessed* could become required reading in every church.”

—**Alton Garrison, assistant general superintendent,  
The General Council of the Assemblies of God**

“In my twenty-five years at First Assembly of God in Fort Myers, Florida, I have seen the principles laid out in this book become the driving force of our amazing congregation. Dan Betzer has challenged us to believe that we *can* and *must* reach the world with the Great Commission. It isn’t an option. Because of our uncompromising commitment to these principles, we have seen the impossible become reality. If you want to see your church go beyond the ordinary, read this book!”

—**David Thomas, associate pastor, First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida**

“I came to know Dan Betzer in the early 1970’s. My life has never been the same. I was a young youth pastor with a limited Pentecostal Assemblies of God background. I saw demonstrated in Dan’s life a passion for the lost people of this world that ignited fire in my soul. He has modeled this passion for the lost throughout his ministry. When I think of missions and a symbiotic relationship between word and deed my mind defaults to Dan. Without question, he reflects and mirrors the heart of God for missions.”

—**Gregory M. Mundis, DMin, executive director,  
The Assemblies of God World Missions**

“Why some churches seem to be blessed more than others may be a question you have asked and are still wondering about. Dan Betzer believes the answer is *giving to missions!* And he has convincing evidence to back it up. While giving over thirty-five million dollars to missions at home and abroad, the church he

pastors has grown exponentially in every area of ministry, including about 7,000 regular attendees. This book tells an amazing story that every follower of Jesus Christ should read!”

—**Dave Weston, former senior adult ministries director for  
The General Council of the Assemblies of God**

“Dan Betzer gets it. He gets what so many don’t—that you can’t build a great church without missions. Some pastors think they need to build buildings, polish presentations, and ‘grow’ their church before missions can matter to them. Missions matters to God . . . so missions has to matter to us. Pastors who have ignored the Great Commission will find conviction and challenge in Betzer’s words. Pastors who have obeyed Christ’s clarion call to reach the lost around the world will find encouragement and blessing. Either way, every pastor—and every layperson—should read this book!”

—**David M. Wigington, lead pastor, Cornerstone Christian Fellowship,  
Bloomington, Indiana**

“Dan Betzer lives and breathes missions. It consumes him . . . and as a result, hundreds of missionaries are able to fulfill their calls; thousands have been born again; and the church of First Assembly is incredibly blessed! The principles that have propelled First Assembly to be an extraordinary missions-engaged church are transferable, and they are clearly articulated in this book! I dare you to implement some of these missional concepts!”

—**Doug Clay, general treasurer, The General Council of the Assemblies of God**

“There are few people who have had a more profound impact on my understanding of how to mobilize the church to reach the nations than Dan Betzer. In his book *Why Some Churches Are Blessed*, he shares some valuable insights from decades of effective ministry.”

—**John Lindell, lead pastor, James River Assembly, Ozark, Missouri**

“This is a story that needs telling. Dan Betzer is not only one of the finest communicators of our time, but his passion for the global reach of Christ’s church is both inspiring and strategic. The very heart of God comes through loud and clear.”

—**James Bradford, general secretary, The General  
Council of the Assemblies of God**

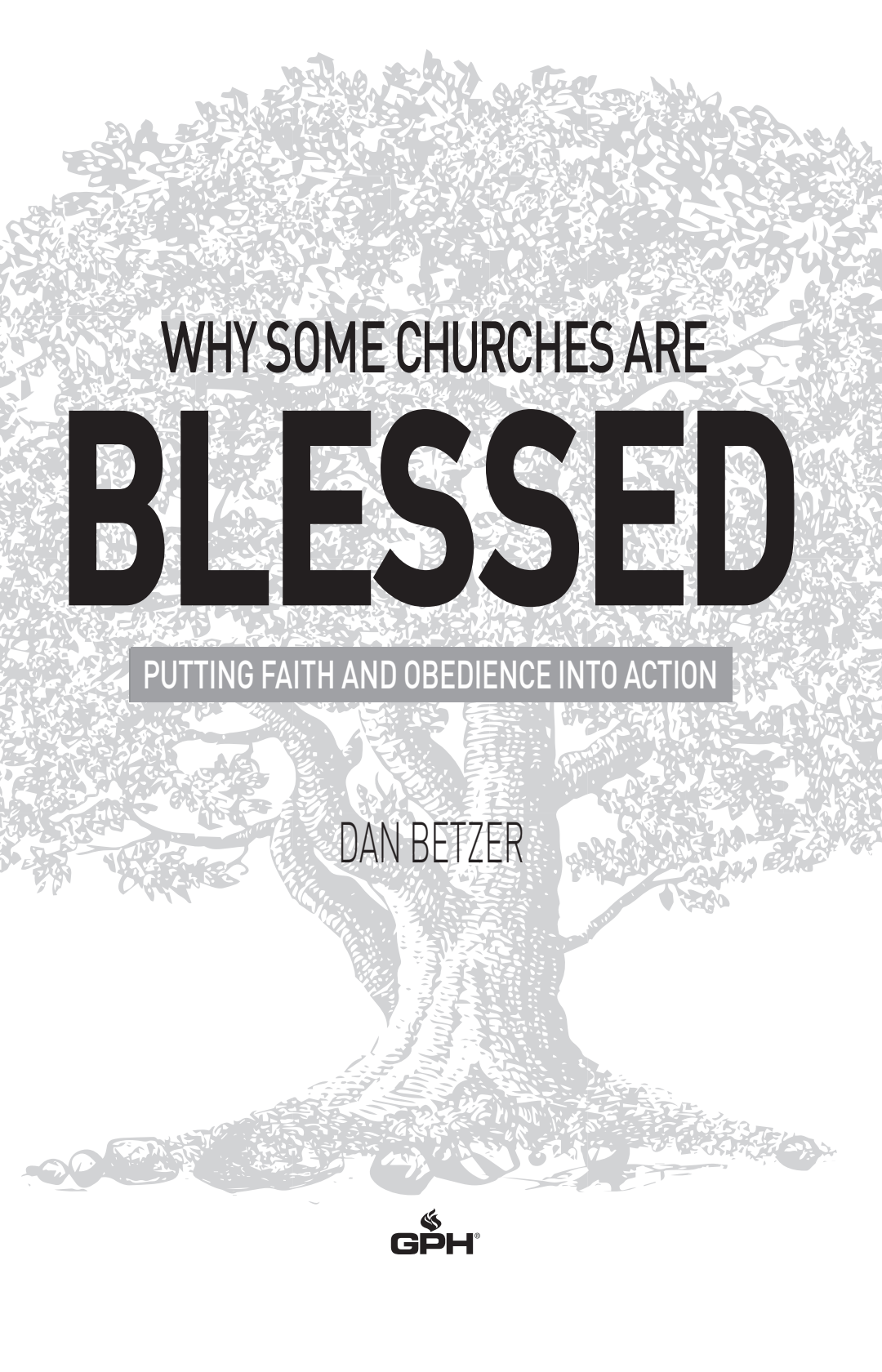
Why Some Churches Are Blessed

“Dan Betzer emphasizes that when you put missions as a priority, it positively impacts every area of church ministry and finance. This book must be a priority for every pastor.”

—**Clarence W. St. John, superintendent, Minnesota District Council,  
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

“Dan Betzer takes the Word of God literally when it says “all” and “everyone.” He has a contagious passion to see people introduced to Jesus and to give them the opportunity to become effective disciples. He was *missional* before it was trendy! His passion to see the church function as *the church* is nothing short of awe-inspiring. His congregation, staff, community, and friends have caught his vision. If you’re in the boat with Dan Betzer, you’ll want to get out of the boat and walk on the water with him!”

—**George Westlake III, lead pastor, Sheffield Family Life Center;  
assistant superintendent, Southern Missouri District of  
The Assemblies of God, Kansas City, Missouri**



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This book is dedicated  
to the memory of the late  
Dr. Oswald J. Smith,  
legendary pastor of the  
People's Church in Toronto, Canada.

He changed my life.



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## FOREWORD

I RECENTLY ATTENDED SERVICES AT JAMES RIVER CHURCH IN SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI. It was Faith Promise Sunday and Dan Betzer was guest speaker. Dan is often the Faith Promise Sunday speaker at James River. Pastor John Lindell introduced Dan as a man who has greatly impacted his life. Consider the dynamics: Dan impacts John . . . John impacts James River Church. . . James River Church impacts the world by giving \$2.8 million to missions.

As I listened to Dan speak, I recognized many statements, illustrations, and testimonies found in this book. However, in the time allotted, Dan could only share about 10 percent of what he covers in his book. I thought to myself, “You folks don’t know what you’re missing!”

As the busy pastor of First Assembly of God in Fort Meyers, Florida, Dan can only visit a few churches annually. Yet he can still impact your life and church by sharing his thoughts and experiences through his book. He wrote this book for all the ministers, churches, and laity who want to be blessed. This book can be transforming if you will read it and implement its truths into your life and church.

The book Dan has written is a unique book on missions that is both inspirational and instructional. As a mission-minded minister, I was not only amazed by the testimonies but reminded of my own testimonies and why I, too, love missions. Allow me to share just three of those testimonies as they illustrate principles that Dan’s book further develops.

1. It was Faith Promise Sunday at First Assembly of God in Des Moines in 1977. I had never heard of the Assemblies of God until my next-door neighbor invited me to go to church with him. The preaching of the Word hooked me. At that time I was a sales executive for Revlon cosmetics. The pastor announced that the next Sunday would be Faith Promise Sunday. I didn’t have

a clue what that meant but I wanted to find out! The next Sunday, at the end of the service they read aloud how much each person had promised to give: \$360, \$1200, \$700, \$5,000, \$12,000. Wow! This was more exciting than selling lipstick! I was in a place where people had found a cause in which to invest their time, their money, and their lives. I was compelled to make my first faith promise: \$500! Last Sunday my wife and I promised to do more—inspired by Dan.

2. In 1985 at the New Testament Assembly of God in Millville, Pennsylvania, I was the pastor of a church that had never had a missions convention. I organized the first one. Dale Preiser, the late great missionary to Haiti, was our speaker. At the beginning of the service he asked me what our goal was. “We didn’t set a goal, Dale.” “You have to set a goal, Scott.” Imagine it’s your first missions convention and you have to set a goal . . . now! “Okay, well, the Devil’s number is 666 so God’s number must be 777. Dale, our mission-giving goal is \$777 per month.”

Dale preached an inspired message, and we handed out faith promise cards. The church secretary set up an adding machine on the platform. I put a mic near it so everyone could hear it. The cards started coming in. “\$120 a year, \$300, \$1,000, \$60 . . .” Finally, the secretary entered the last card. I asked him to divide the total by twelve. He handed me the total: exactly \$777 per month! Dale and I jumped and yelled and whooped it up like crazy men. Joy filled the house, and a church that had struggled for years became a blessed church.

3. In 1998, when I became the pastor of Park Crest Assembly of God in Springfield, Missouri, the church was over \$600,000 in debt. It was a financial challenge to make the required payment each month. We deter-

## Foreword

mined to focus on missions like never before. In the next four years we tripled our giving to missions. Can you guess what else happened? We liquidated that loan . . . in four years! We had a mortgage shredding! As Dan writes often, God will be indebted to no one.

A blessed church makes missions their primary focus. A blessed church expects the Spirit to be at work in the details of their church life. I encourage you to read Dan's book with great expectation to hear the insights, wisdom, and creativity that the Spirit will whisper in your ear. Put Dan Betzer's principles to work and watch God bless your life and your church.

—**Scott Temple, director, Office of Ethnic Relations,  
The General Council of the Assemblies of God**



## INTRODUCTION

A YOUNG, VISITING PASTOR BURST INTO MY OFFICE RECENTLY, BURDENED DOWN WITH A TAPE RECORDER, IPAD, PEN AND PENCILS, AND WHAT LOOKED LIKE A REAM OF PAPER. He was so excited! He had driven hundreds of miles to ply me with questions about the seeming mystery: “Pastor Betzer, how come First Assembly of God in Fort Myers is so blessed?” His eyes lit up with eagerness as he awaited what he thought would be a deeply profound response. He sank into his chair in dismay when I answered simply, “Missions.”

“No, no, Pastor. I don’t want to hear that. I didn’t drive hundreds of miles to hear about missions. Come on now, what’s the ‘Open, Sesame’? How come thousands of people attend this church? How come you’re not in debt? How did you build a multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art children’s center debt-free? How can you be on local television every day and national television each week . . . and not be begging for money on the air? What’s the secret, Pastor? Please, tell me!”

I looked at him for a moment, smiled, and again responded, “Missions.” Well, I had to tell him the truth! I only know what God has revealed to my spirit and what I have experienced through the decades.

“But . . . but, Pastor Betzer, the miracles that have taken place are known in a lot of places! Please, I know there has to be a great secret that only a handful of you guys know about. Won’t you share it with me?”

“Son, I’ve told you. Let me tell you again: ‘Missions.’”

In a few minutes I watched the young fellow climb into his car and drive away, truly deflated by what he had heard. I knew he figured he had wasted his time, but had he allowed the Holy Spirit to birth in his heart what He birthed in mine a long time ago, and continues to reinforce even now, that young pastor could have entered into the greatest opportunity he ever dreamed possible.