



A publication of Evangelism Ministries - Church of the Nazarene

The Power of One

Many significant characters in history escape ever being noticed. Some are the victims of more colorful personalities, who made their way to the front of every passing parade. Others just seem to fade from public attention, distracted by the clamor of the next impending crisis. Yet, without many of these unsung heroes and heroines, world events and church history might have taken a dramatic turn. One person in the right place, at the right time, really can make a huge difference.

Consider Stephen Pleasonton, for example. Most American history books never mention his name. No monuments stand in our nation's capital in his memory. For nearly 200 years, no one even knew his name. But he has the distinction of being the only American who singlehandedly saved the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and scores of other priceless legal documents from our nation's archives and history. Author Michael Farquhar writes "What is certain is that honor and fame eluded him, and that he was forced in his later years to beg to keep his government post in order to avoid an impoverished old age."

According to research historian Anthony Pitch, when the British invaded and ransacked Washington D.C. in the fall of 1814, Stephen Pleasonton was one of the clerks who was working in the State Department. As British soldiers set fires to our new nation's landmarks like the Capitol building, the original White House, the Library of Congress and the Supreme Court, this little known clerk named Stephen Pleasonton secretly slipped out of town, with these vital documents carefully hidden from enemy troops. In preparation for this impending danger, Pleasonton had tailor-made some canvas bags that looked like regular saddles, to secretly store these documents and transport them out of Washington D.C. for safe keeping.

While the British burned the War Department and the State Department buildings, where these important documents had been

stored, Pleasonton had already smuggled these national treasures to Leesburg, Virginia for safekeeping. Author Michael Farquhar summarizes it best as a closing line in his personal tribute to Pleasonton: "It remains unknown if Pleasonton got to keep his job, or if anyone even bothered to say thanks."

Once in a while, we catch a fleeting glimpse of unsung heroes and heroines in Christ's Kingdom. Some have their name and photo published in a magazine, others are mentioned somewhere in the storyline of their church. But most of these difference makers are not – only because space cannot adequately accommodate all that could be said. The majority of these unknowns are never mentioned, all the while still celebrating their church's moment of affirmation without them, with the missional successes they helped to create going completely unnoticed.

Thousands of these unsung heroes and heroines labor behind the scenes everyday with little fanfare or public notice throughout the Church of the Nazarene. Most would say that's not why they serve. They are modern-day role models of our faith, like those anonymous difference makers described in Hebrews 11, "of whom the world was not worthy."

After a lengthy description of many nameless heroes and heroines of the faith in Hebrews 11, these verses in the Contemporary English Version say "they were given strength and power ... all of them pleased God because of their faith." The far reaching influence of these spiritual leaders exceeds human comprehension – as faithful servants who quietly caused an eternal difference in the lives of generations around them.

And, they are still serving all around us today; sharing their faith with family and friends, serving in launch teams for new churches, laboring as faithful prayer partners, diligent Sunday school teachers, energetic work team volunteers, visionary church board members and tireless youth ministry volunteers. These

and scores of others, lovingly labor to extend the Kingdom and fulfill our Lord's Great Commission by sharing the Good News.

For now, many of these remain unrecognized, but they are not unknown. And none too soon, all of these making a difference behind the scenes will eventually be rewarded. God has something better in store for them. One day, in our Savior's presence, we will adequately and appropriately celebrate how God's grace worked through each one of them.

Think about the transforming power of the gospel working in your life today, because a key person intersected your life somewhere in the past. Whose path could you cross in the coming days and leave another powerful legacy of faith?

Register for General Assembly Events:

New Church Sponsor Pastors Reception

June 27th, 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.

This reception following the evening service invites Sponsoring Pastors and their spouses for desserts and a time of fellowship. Due to limited space, please register for this event.

New Church Pastors' Reception

June 28th, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

This reception following the evening service invites New Church Pastors and their spouses for desserts and a time of fellowship. Due to limited space, please register for this event.

NewStart District Coordinators Luncheon

June 29, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

This luncheon is for NewStart District Coordinators and their spouses for a luncheon and a time of updates for new church evangelism. All District Coordinators are asked to please register for this event.

Register at
<http://web.nazarene.org/newchurchevents>