



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## Jump Start # 2858

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***Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."***

Beginnings—they are important and they often are milestone events in our lives. Many young people who have spent the last four years in high school are now graduating and are beginning the next big step in their lives. For many of them it will be going to college. That’s a big step and so different than high school. Some college students have finally finished that degree and now comes entering into the work force. Beginnings. For some, this summer is when they get married. A new beginning. For others, this year has brought a new baby into their home. How something so little and precious can change their world so much.

Beginnings. That’s how God started the Bible. He didn’t tell us the backstory. For instance, God didn’t say, “for about ten thousand years I was thinking about this.” Or, “Originally, I was thinking of making all the animals talk, but I changed my mind.” None of that. Simply, “In the beginning God created...”

Recently, I saw a congregation appoint men into the role of shepherds. For those men it was a new step and a new beginning for them. Spring time is about beginnings. We see flowers coming out of the ground. We see some limbs that need to be cut because they no longer have life in them.

Here are some thoughts about beginnings:

First, life is full of beginnings. All around us there are new beginnings. With new beginnings often comes new challenges and new adventures. That teenager gets a driving permit and a whole new world of scary opens up for the parents. A young man preaches his first lesson and really does a fine job. This could be the first step in a lifelong journey of serving and teaching the people of God.

**(OVER)**

Adjustments have to be made with beginnings. Another car bought for a new driver in the family. Lots and lots of baby stuff for that new child that has come into the home. God has a way of preparing us for the next steps in life. And, when we surround ourselves with others it truly helps.

Second, new beginnings are like doorways to new opportunities. Often one thing leads to another. In service to the Lord, this is good. The first invitation, the first sermon, can lead to hundreds and hundreds of more lessons in coming years. Being new parents has a way of making a young couple become more serious about the Lord. Serving in the capacity of deacon or shepherd has a way of seeing after the little details that before were not given much thought.

Third, new beginnings has a powerful way helping us to count our blessings and to be thankful to the Lord. Looking back, who would have thought that the teenager who was baptized would someday be preaching or serving as one of the leaders in the congregation. Like in nature, mighty trees began as little saplings. Where I live there is a large woods behind my house. Tall, tall trees reaching upward high into the sky. I expect some of those trees have been there fifty to eighty years. But they didn't start that way. They were small, struggling for sunlight, hoping deer and rabbits wouldn't eat them, and that they would survive winters harshness and the hot dry summers. But they did. They grew and grew and grew. Today, they are majestic, large, beautiful trees. They are full of leaves, which fall into my yard and I have to deal with every fall. But like those mighty trees that started out so small, so do we in faith. So many questions. So many things we didn't understand. So young in faith. Satan tries to grab us. The world tries to pull us back. Some never survive, but those that do and continue to grow and grow, one day they are mighty pillars in God's kingdom. When a young man is baptized, I love to plant that idea in his head and dreams. "Maybe someday, you'll serve as a shepherd." There is a lot of winters and summers to go through and a lot of growing that must take place, but it starts with the beginnings.

Fourth, beginnings also introduce changes. More shepherds. A new preacher. A new church building. A new time of meeting. A new set of classes. It's like a new school year. The hope and expectations are there. Some like things the way they are. Some don't like change. But, life changes. Those little trees become big trees. Those little babies grow up and graduate and drive and move out. Faces we love, pass through that doorway of death. Friends move. People retire. Stores close. Menus change. Life is constantly changing. And, those that try to fight it sometimes hold things back. You can go back to the neighborhood you grew up in, but it's not the same. The house has changed. The neighbors aren't the same. Life has moved on. New beginnings.

And, someday, hopefully soon, you and I will experience a new home in Heaven. That will be so different than here. No sun. No pain. No tears. No death. What a new beginning that will be. And, unlike anything we have ever known, that will never change. Never. God won't have to update Heaven after a few years. We won't grow tired of it and start to look for another place. Heaven will be our home—forever. A new beginning.

In the beginning God...

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)

