WOW: Word Of the Week

Effect

October 21, 2026

As I mentioned last week, in October I am sharing three WOWs that look back over my 60 years of ministry, 1966-2026. Our word this week is "effect." Effect, not affect.

I share a personal story. I presented the final draft of my doctoral project-thesis to my committee, ready for the designated readers. The paper identified effective methods for creating leadership cohesion in local churches, methods that could effect change. That is what effect means as a verb – to create a result, to create change.

The readers, faculty members at the university, found only three mistakes in the document I submitted, each "mistake" relating to my use of "effect" rather than "affect." One language professor commented that effect is a noun, affect is the verb. I beg to differ!

To influence an outcome is to affect change. To create an outcome or result is to effect change. You can look it up. And by the way, the grammar/vocabulary lesson is gratis!

Our word is effect—a powerful verb, creating results, creating change.

Thinking back over 60 years of ministry (and life), we wonder, "Did I make a difference?" Did the things I did make any difference? When I posed that question, one brother answered, "It made a difference to me!"

Many talk about making a difference in our world, but looking back I see that it is more important to make a difference in eternity than it is to make a difference in our world. Eternity can be changed through our efforts. I am not responsible – for blame or for credit – for what happened after I left a church, ministry, or mission. I wanted to leave the churches I worked with in a healthy, functional state, capable of continuing to advance. Sometimes they continued to advance, others times they eventually faltered. Here's what I learned!

Where: I can only make a difference where I am; When: while I am there. Who: I can only make a difference with the people at that moment in my life. No regrets. Time marches on.

People change. Our place in this world changes. Who we are changes. Opportunities come and go. Doors open and shut. The adverb questions are constantly in flux, changing – who, what, where, when, why, how.

God, help us create results that glorify you. Help us effect, create, make a difference—where we are, while we are there, as you mold and make us. Help us make a difference.

Most of all, help all of us make a difference for eternity.