

1993

# PREACHERS' STUDY

notes

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## **Evangelism: At Home and Abroad**

1993 Preachers' Study  
held at the Green Oaks Boulevard congregation  
of the church of Christ,  
Arlington, Texas  
December 22 through 25, 1993

*Moderators:*

Joe Norton

James Orten

The views expressed in the Preachers' Study Notes are the views of the particular and individual authors, and are not necessarily the views of the editors of the Notes, moderators, host congregation, other participants of the Study, or other authors in this volume. Each article has the address of the author appended if you desire to respond. The editors of the Notes encourage every reader to test all things by the Word of God (1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11). Examine all that this volume contains in that unerring Light and you cannot go wrong.

*—The editors of the Preachers' Study Notes*

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## *Foreword*

The 1993 volume of the **Preachers' Study Notes** marks the twelfth in a series to be published. The published Notes of the last eleven years contain a wealth of information on a wide range of scriptural subjects. I believe that the 1993 volume continues and enlarges that tradition.

The Preachers' Study is a valuable means of studying the Scriptures, and the written Notes, by preserving the fruit of brethren's research and knowledge, is a valuable tool for Bible study. Like any Bible study tool, the timeless admonition of 1 Thessalonians 5:21 applies: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

There are few things more needed in the church at this time than a re-awakening of a vital and zealous evangelistic spirit. In many places brethren are just "holding church." The vision of the church as an evangelistic society has been lost by many. For this reason, I believe that this volume will be especially useful to the brotherhood. To the extent that those who read this volume take its scriptural admonitions and counsels to heart, the Cause of Jesus Christ will be greatly advanced. Let us never forget that Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). That must be the mission of His church, the individual congregations of His church, and the individual disciples of Jesus Christ. Any congregation that does not hold the mission of seeking and saving the lost forfeits its right to be called a church of Christ. Any person who claims to be a Christian, and who does not hold this mission dear, forfeits their claim to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The format of the 1993 Study was somewhat different from the usual format. First of all, there were several more participants. Second, the participants were drawn not just from the ranks of the preaching brethren, but from the leadership of several congregations, including some men who are elders in the Lord's church.

The quantity and variety of material that was presented made for a wonderful study, but the work of putting it all together in a publishable form was much more of a task than usual. Computer hardware and software problems delayed the work on this volume. Other things conspired to delay the publication of this

volume. A very busy schedule on my part in 1994 also proved to hinder expeditious progress on the volume. Nonetheless, the task is finished, and I believe it was worth all the hard work and delay involved.

For their help in transcribing, keyboarding, and editing, I want to thank: Dawn Barnes, Natalie Bibens, Jim Crouch, David Griffen, and Alex & Tracy Hernandez. Also, thanks to all the authors and participants—your hard work and study is certainly appreciated and will be a great blessing to the brotherhood, I believe. Since we set the goal of 100% publication for the study, we ended up transcribing several articles. Since there is usually quite a difference between the spoken word and the written word, a great deal of editing had to be done on these parts of the volume. In the editing process we took great care to make the presentations that were transcribed readable, and yet we went to great pains not to alter the meaning of the speakers. Only what was redundant was omitted. I believe we have faithfully reproduced those presentations that were transcribed. Those speakers were given an opportunity to see the finished result, and all were apparently satisfied.

We originally intended to publish the question and discussion sessions of the Study in this volume. There was a great deal of helpful questioning and answering, along with some insightful discussions, in these sessions. Tracy Hernandez undertook the gargantuan task of transcribing the nine sessions. It became clear, however, that we could not publish these sessions in this volume. It would have added over ninety pages to the size of the volume, and as it stands (with over 350 pages), the volume is over budget. However, the sessions are transcribed and edited for publication. For \$8 (postpaid) we can send you a photocopy of the question and discussion sections. Simply write the address of the **Christian's Expositor** (on back of title page).

*Smith Bibens*

# **Introduction to 1993 Preachers' Study Evangelism: At Home and Abroad**

*Joe L. Norton*

Solomon said, "There is a time and a season . . ." This is the season to study the subject of evangelism, especially evangelism or mission work on foreign soil. Never before have we had such excitement about mission work as we have seen because of the doors of opportunities that have been opened up to us in Eastern Europe. This is a providential time, and we have the responsibility to take advantage of this time. This study was born out of a belief that there are scriptural patterns to follow in doing mission work and that we can find those patterns and benefit from them.

The principles of evangelism have not changed—they have always been the same. Thus it is our responsibility to ferret them out—to learn the scriptural patterns that were laid down for us in early New Testament times and to employ them in our work in foreign fields as well as in domestic fields.

Planning for this study began in excitement

—excitement over the prospect of what we can learn collectively as we study and share the research that all have done in preparation.

—excitement over the prospects that await us in lands beyond where souls yet untouched lie in wait for salvation.

—excitement over the spiritual success that awaits the body of Christ if we can only dream dreams big enough to allow it to happen and have faith strong enough to cause God to bless our efforts.

We have not come here to condemn the mistakes and failures of the past nor to wallow in the mire of personal problems or self-serving judgments. Rather we are here to address issues scripturally—to address the problems of the future, positively and aggressively, as the Lord would have us to do. This study is designed to lead us toward being able to solve our problems of what to do and how to do it in evangelism in a positive way.

The Scriptures are the basis of this study—they must be our guide as we become involved in evangelism just as they must be when we determine what the Lord wants in any other part of our Christian lives.

We should be committed to the view that evangelism, foreign and domestic, is vital to our spiritual success—the Lord expects us to spread the gospel. We should also be committed to the view that evangelism should be done so as to strengthen churches at home as well as strengthening those being established overseas. Some congregations that have become involved in evangelism have seen a re-kindling of the fires of spirituality as members pick up on the excitement and success of a foreign work.

James and I, as well as the Green Oaks congregation, appreciate so much the hard work and research that many of you have put forth for your presentation at this study. And both of us are committed to providing an atmosphere that will allow you to present your research in such a way that we all can have a positive learning experience. We certainly are not opposed to preachers or church leaders differing with each other so long as they can differ positively and productively. We want to study and discuss in such a way so as to leave our relationships intact even when we do not see eye to eye on every detail. And when there may be differences of opinion, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the scriptures are constant—they are steadfast—thus, the differences lie within us and not within the Word of God.

On this note, let the 1993 Preachers' Study begin. And may the spirit of Christ—the spirit of love, peace, and unity—reign in every heart as we learn together.

## **The Failure of Our System**

*by Raymond Fox*

The topic of this section is "Local Evangelism: Reaching Out." The questions assigned for this topic include the following:

What is our real purpose as Christians?

Are we just "holding church" or are we reaching out to our communities?

Why are we afraid to reach out to others?

Why are we afraid to try something new and different in our appeals to a community?

Why are we so hesitant to spend money for evangelizing when we are willing to spend money for buildings and gospel meetings?

Why are we not accomplishing more?

These questions have made me personally examine myself and consider why I am not as effective as I could be as an evangelist. What follows is a critique, but it is humbly offered in the spirit of my own personal examination.

### **Introduction**

Jesus stated His mission in simple and clear language, "The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which is lost." Everything that Jesus did, everywhere that he went was somehow directly related to this purpose. Whether feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish or stopping to ask a lone woman for a drink of water, Jesus actively pursued the salvation of souls. Every conversation that he shared with someone, whether they were rich and powerful or poor and miserable, led to the subject of forgiveness, the common need of every human being.

The first followers of Jesus, who lived for the same purpose of proclaiming the message of salvation, formed the Church. The Church in the first century grew as an incredibly powerful group of messengers empowered by the authenticity of their message. They were so convinced that God had given them new life through Jesus, they could not help but announce this good news everywhere. They were truly imitators of Jesus, because His driv-

ing purpose had become their singular purpose, and they pursued it with His same energy and enthusiasm. The message of Jesus filled them with so much joy that it burst forth from their lips even in the midst of their most dangerous critics.

The church is certainly different today. Christians can go to work day after day, and though they live a good life, many of their companions will never suspect that they are devout Christians. And though their friends may discover that they are Christians, their friends need not worry about having to listen to persuasive talk about sin and salvation. The Christian will not speak unless he is spoken to.

One modern critic of Christianity once compared Christians to non-Christians. He said that the Christian arrives at work on time, does his work without complaining, speaks in a friendly manner with his companions, tells the truth, does not cheat the boss, finishes his work and goes home to spend time with his family. Whereas, he said, the non-Christian arrives at work on time, does his work without complaining, speaks in a friendly manner with his companions, tells the truth, does not cheat the boss, finishes his work and goes home to spend time with his family. The point of this comparison is devastating—there is no difference in the life of a Christian and a non-Christian. One could be mistaken for the other. The message about salvation which is the distinct possession of the Christian and which could make the difference, is not spoken.

For some reason, the message that burned on the lips of the first Christians is now hidden so deep in the hearts of modern Christians, it rarely surfaces unless it is provoked by some challenging confrontation. Perhaps the boss at work tells the Christian that he must work on Sunday. Now the Christian protests saying, "No, you see I cannot work because I have to go to church on Sunday." Oh no, the word is out now! Yet Christians do not suddenly become evangelistic when they are forced to explain their actions by stating that they follow Jesus.

### **What is Evangelism?**

What is evangelism? Evangelism is declaring the good news that Jesus came to save sinners. If Christians explain why they cannot work on Sunday, they have not automatically compelled others to follow Jesus. They have only explained the motive of their actions. They may say, "Yes, I am evangelistic. I talk a lot



about the church with the people I work with." But defending one's own actions with reference to the teachings of Jesus is not necessarily evangelism. Evangelism will have something to say not only about the life of the speaker, but also about the life of the listener. Evangelism is not just saying, "This is how I live." Evangelism says, "This is how *you* should live."

Evangelism today will have to be person to person. The world is flooded with religions, churches, books, leaflets, flyers, and invitations. The common person files one invitation he receives in the mail with all the other invitations. The gospel of Jesus will need a sincere face, and behind that face a life that is devoted to Jesus. The gospel of Jesus today will need a person to communicate it directly to another person. Members of one religious group mistakenly believe that evangelism is standing on the sidewalk, holding a stack of magazines, looking straight ahead, waiting for someone to stop and ask them for one of their magazines. But evangelism is a message spoken person to person. Jesus and His followers made personal contact with people and spoke directly and persuasively to the need people have for new life.

Why is the church so different today? Why are Christians so hesitant to speak personally with sinners about salvation? The frequent answer has been that society today is different and people are less responsive to the gospel. But an honest look at the New Testament record reveals that Christians were different. They had quite a different spirit. They really did live to proclaim the gospel. Why do Christians today find living without preaching to be so easy?

The future of the church depends on answering this question. The present truth is that in too many congregations local evangelism is either not successful or not existent. Congregations are dying. But one cannot say that congregations are dying because "society" is closed to the gospel. Only after society has been evangelized can one conclude that society is closed to the gospel. At the present time much evangelistic energy is being spent on foreign soil. However foreign evangelism is funded by congregations in the United States. If local evangelism in the United States is not revitalized soon, foreign evangelism will lose what momentum it presently has because of the lack of resources.

Why are Christians generally not evangelistic? The answer does not simply lie with an attitude but with an entire mentality. The problem is not the lack of a sufficient method but the failure of a whole system of evangelism.

### **A Non-Evangelistic Mentality**

By dropping money in the contribution basket every Sunday and then sending offerings to missionaries in some other part of the country or the world. Christians believe they are evangelistic. On one level one could say that funding evangelists is evangelistic. There is, however, a clear difference between a Christian who speaks and a Christian who pays someone else to speak in his place. Christians who think that their responsibility to evangelize can be fulfilled by someone else, see evangelism as a duty that can be obeyed by proxy. But evangelism is a spirit that flows from the very purpose of one's existence. Christians must live to declare the gospel just as Jesus lived to preach the good news. At times in history, the rich could pay someone to take their place on the battle front during war. But a soldier whose life is dedicated to the fight, would never dream of allowing someone to take his place. To be a soldier is to fight. To be a Christian is to speak. The New Testament record is full of examples of men and women who spoke on a personal level to people about salvation in Christ. Certainly, some individuals had special responsibilities as "evangelists." But every Christian was a messenger by virtue of the fact that they were disciples of Jesus, the Messenger sent by the Father.

Today, the life of a Christian is very different. Christians have invented for themselves a way of looking at the world that does not require them to personally share the message of Christ, a mentality that frees them from evangelistic guilt. They live in two worlds: one world that is secular with friends, neighbors, and family members who are not believers, and another world that is spiritual, with believers who share their common faith. That they live in two worlds does not imply that they are hypocrites. On the contrary, they live by Christian principles in both worlds. But by perceiving their life as divided among two worlds, they relate and communicate with people in these two worlds in different ways. They talk to people in the secular world about work, school issues, social questions, family matters, neighborhood problems. They communicate with fellow Christians about church work, relationships with people in the local congregation, biblical questions, spiritual strengths and weaknesses.

Christians unfortunately find that maintaining the separation of these two worlds is useful. If they do not talk in their secular world about their Christian faith, they protect themselves against possible embarrassment. They will not be embarrassed if they do

not live a perfect Christian life in their secular circle. They will not have to answer such questions as, "Why is the church you attend so small?" or "Why don't you have a regular, seminary-educated minister?" More importantly, by maintaining this duality in life, Christians never feel compelled to talk to anyone in their secular world about salvation and sin. They never feel guilty about not being evangelistic. Language about sin and forgiveness is reserved for the company of fellow Christians. Christians have trained themselves to relate to people in different ways in these two different worlds.

The irony of this way of viewing the world is that it makes evangelism absolutely ineffective. In fact, Christians have produced methods of evangelism that will allow them to be "evangelistic" without actively entering into personal contact with the secular world. For instance, congregations hold "gospel meetings," which by virtue of their name should be evangelistic endeavors. But if all the members of the congregation attend along with members of surrounding congregations, filling the meeting place with people, the "gospel meeting" is considered by some to be a huge success. Evangelists who come to preach the gospel during these meetings will also report the success of such "wonderful cooperation" in their field reports. So a gospel meeting can be successful without ever inviting anyone from the world of the lost to attend. The brethren from the local congregation can be satisfied that they have fulfilled their responsibility to evangelize. Imagine, successful evangelism without ever talking to anyone who is lost! Such a picture reminds one of a group of army generals sequestered in some lonely bunker beneath the ground anxiously talking about how to save the world from impending nuclear attack. They talk and talk and talk. But they never issue a command, never leave the bunker, never order any troops. They just keep talking and the world outside is destroyed.

Some forms of advertisement permit Christians to be "evangelistic" without saying a word and without attempting personal contact. Newspaper ads, door hangers, or flyers left in a conspicuous place do not require Christians to actually enter into communication with the lost. Such methods may be necessary at times to achieve mass coverage, but when Christians rely on these means to fulfill their evangelistic responsibilities, they protect themselves from possible personal rejection by the lost. It is evangelism without risk. But evangelizing without speaking is evangelism at its barest minimum.

By communicating differently in the secular and spiritual worlds, Christians have developed a mentality in which it is safe to not speak about Jesus in the secular world. After all, Christians do speak about Jesus, albeit, with their Christian friends. Speaking about Jesus in one world satisfies the mandate to speak and relieves one of the need to speak of Jesus in the other world. Paradoxically, this other world, the world of sinners, is precisely where Christians ought to be speaking.

Furthermore, Christians have developed certain viewpoints to reinforce this mentality in which it is safe, with respect to one's conscience, to not be successful evangelistically. For instance, failure to convert sinners sometimes creates self-doubts. Frustrated Christians ask themselves, "Am I really fulfilling the purpose of my existence? Am I worth something as a Christian?" But then Christians may resort to another justification for their existence besides evangelism and that is the restoration of New Testament Christianity. The restoration movement in fact has become a crutch for the lack of evangelistic fruits. If a congregation is not growing in number, at least the members can comfort themselves by thinking that they are worshipping correctly. If they are not sharing the gospel with their neighbors, they still have self-confidence because they stand for the purity of the New Testament pattern. Thus, it is safe to not be evangelistic. But this crutch would immediately vanish if one were to simply realize that the restoration of New Testament Christianity will never be complete until Christians become genuinely evangelistic. We may zealously guard the worship against instrumental music, but if the very purpose of the church's existence is ignored, then there is much that is left to be restored.

In the church it is also safe to be an evangelist without being evangelistically successful. Preachers can file field reports of their work without providing any information about the actual success or failure of evangelistic efforts. They can submit a report that lists the location of their gospel meetings, thanks the brethren for their hospitality, and acknowledges the cooperation of neighboring congregations and visiting preachers. The acceptance of this style of reporting leaves the impression that an evangelist is successful if he preaches in many places throughout the year. But can an evangelist be evangelistic if the majority of his audience is Christian? In fact, the popular determination of the faithfulness of an evangelist is based solely on doctrinal purity. Of course, an evangelist must preach sound doctrine. But as an evangelist he

must be on the front lines making personal contact with sinners instead of just standing behind a pulpit before a congregation of believers.

Large meetings attended by Christians from many parts of the United States also provide a protective atmosphere to guard against guilt or despair from the lack of evangelism. These large meetings fulfill a very useful purpose by encouraging Christians. At the same time, however, they actually hinder evangelism in a subtle way. Christians who regularly attend worship at a small non-evangelistic congregation can attend the meetings to assure themselves that everything is alright with the church and that the country is full of strong Christians. But this image is deceptive. What should we conclude if the majority of these Christians attending the large meetings are from non-evangelistic congregations? The activity and presence of so many people and the persuasive, evangelistic sermons presented at the meetings would actually deceive Christians into thinking that everything is okay, despite the truth that local evangelism is non-existent. The effect of such meetings would be entirely different if the teaching had the purpose of instructing and encouraging Christians to do personal evangelism at home.

Why do Christians in generally avoid personal evangelism? Christians have created a way of viewing their life that absolves them from responsibility, a non-evangelistic mentality that protects them from the threat of personal contact with the lost and from the despair of evangelistic failure. This mentality in turn supports a non-evangelistic system of evangelism.

### **A Non-Evangelistic System**

A bright spot in local evangelism in the United States today is the establishment of new congregations by four or five families who join together to begin a new work. Such a group of families moves to a new area for the sole purpose of evangelism. They find new jobs and new homes. Then, with the help of an evangelist, they learn how to reach out to the community to make contact with people who would be interested in studying the Bible. These congregations are successful because all the members understand evangelism as a personal responsibility. If they did not see evangelism as the center of their life, they would not make such sacrifices for the gospel.

However, the general method of evangelism in the church for many decades revolves around "gospel meetings." Although these meetings are advertised through newspapers and flyers as "gospel meetings," the targets of such advertisement, the people who read the newspapers and pick the flyers off their porch, have little idea what a gospel meeting is. One hundred and fifty years ago when revivals were common among different religious groups, people understood that gospel meetings were worship services conducted every evening over a period of several days or even weeks. These days the denominations seldom hold revivals, and instead they conduct social programs or special entertainment activities to attract people to the church. It is not surprising that someone who reads an announcement for a gospel meeting does not attend because they really do not know what to expect. This fact makes a *personal* invitation all the more necessary.

The reality of most gospel meetings today is that they are not evangelistic in preparation, execution or follow-up. Before the gospel meeting there is rarely any communication between the preacher and the members of the congregation about how to prepare for the meeting. The preacher may try to inform himself about the spiritual needs of the congregation so he can preach to these needs. But remember, these services are supposed to be evangelistic by virtue of their label. The congregation that considers itself energetic will run an advertisement in the paper, print some flyers and pass them out around town on car windshields or doors of homes in the neighborhood, and send an invitation to surrounding congregations. But most important preparation for an evangelistic effort, personal face to face contact with the lost, is commonly absent. Usually more attention is paid to caring for the preacher than for the lost. A common sight on the bulletin board of a congregation conducting a gospel meeting is a list for lunch and dinner appointments for the preacher. Where is the list of people whom the preacher can personally invite to the services or study with?

During the progress of the meeting the members will do very well if they themselves attend each night. Yet they could do much to insure the presence of sinners at the services to hear the gospel. They could make follow-up visits to people who seemed interested in attending but did not come during the first part of the meeting. The members could offer to pick people up to bring them to the services. And of course door knocking and personal invitations to friends can continue through the course

of the meeting. The preacher may decide on the topic he plans to speak about based on the type of audience that is present. If no sinners are present then he may chose to deliver a sermon with the purpose of encouraging Christians.

Later after the meeting is finished and the preacher is gone, the local Christians have the responsibility of following-up on any visitors who may have attended the services. However unless the members of the congregation are enthusiastic about evangelism and have the ability to communicate the gospel to sinners, there will be no follow-up.

A congregation may hold two week-long gospel meetings a year and perhaps one or two meetings that last only through a weekend, Friday to Sunday. In the meantime no evangelistic work is usually conducted in the congregation. The membership simply lives according to their dual view of life, two worlds, one secular and one spiritual, without any evangelistic effort that might link the spiritual with the secular and force them to communicate with the lost about the gospel.

The greatest tragedy that signals the failure of our system of evangelism is the evolution of gospel meetings. Unfortunately, because of the lack of evangelistic preparation on the part of the congregation and the preacher, gospel meetings have become occasions for teaching Christians. Preachers now come to gospel meetings prepared to teach Christians, and if they have a building full of Christians then they are very pleased. The tragedy of this phenomenon resides in the self-deception under which Christians labor. While they continue to call these meetings, "gospel meetings," they convince themselves that they are practicing evangelism. They have fulfilled their responsibilities. But genuine evangelism rarely happens in such meetings. Their non-evangelistic system of evangelism satisfies the conscience but does not win the lost. The result is a congregation of Christians dwindling in number and at the same time convinced they are doing what they can to preach the gospel.

### **Non-Evangelistic Training**

Two very serious weaknesses in the evangelistic work of the church has led to a crisis in the present system of evangelism: inadequate training of evangelists and little or non-existent training of evangelistic Christians. These two faults have contributed to a system that is not producing disciples who can reproduce

themselves. Evangelism is largely an attitude, a spirit that is absolutely alive with energy to seek and save the lost. But evangelism also includes a message and the wisdom necessary to deliver that message. The spirit of evangelism comes from the heart. The message and wisdom of evangelism comes from training.

In the last two generations the work of an evangelist has undergone a gradual change from traveling and conducting gospel meetings to working locally with a single congregation over a period of time. This change has had a undeniable impact on the training of evangelists. In the 1930's and 1940's traveling evangelists were much more common. They would live in one place for many years but spend most of their time traveling back and forth across the country. Some would spend an average of twenty-five weeks a year away from home conducting gospel meetings. They defended the faith, fought for the truth, and preached to sinners. Non-Christians still attended gospel meetings at that time because these meetings were similar to the revivals many denominations used for converting people. Christians too were more aggressive about personally inviting people to attend the meetings.

By the 1950's evangelists began to spend more time in one single area doing evangelistic work. Churches were established in places where there were few surrounding congregations to support a new mission work. The evangelist felt compelled to spend several months or even a year or two to build up the new work. Soon other congregations that had existed for some years but had shrunk in size due to a lack of evangelism called in evangelists to help them for a short period. Of course, because of the requirements of raising a stable family, evangelists preferred to stay in one area for a longer period of time. Congregations were not too adverse to the evangelist staying for longer periods because he provided good, regular teaching and possibly helped the congregation grow in number. And now with the passage of time, many congregations do not permit evangelists to spend very much time away from their congregation preaching in gospel meetings.

Evangelists located in a certain area for a period of time could provide necessary training to help members of a congregation become evangelistic and develop as a powerful beacon for the gospel. However the training most evangelists received had prepared them more for conducting gospel meetings rather than training Christians for one on one evangelism. Most evangelists



in the last two generations have been trained by traveling evangelists whose experience and expertise consisted of knowledge of doctrinal issues and sermon preparation and delivery. Defending the truth and preaching sermons are very necessary elements of an evangelist's ability. However when young evangelists found themselves working in a specific area for an extended time, they did not really know what to do. The system of training preachers had produced homileticists and polemicists, but not evangelists who could do the daily footwork of building contacts. Their role models were traveling evangelists. So in many cases (but not all) they had received insufficient training in building contacts for personal evangelism, organizing Bible studies, stimulating the congregation to do personal evangelism, and training members to conduct personal evangelism.

The pattern of the local work of evangelists that emerged from the 1960's on was not really evangelistic, if evangelism consists of more than pulpit preaching. Through the years there were always exceptions to the rule, but more often than not the congregation depended on the evangelist to do most of the local teaching. He actually was not doing anything more than a well equipped congregational leader ought to do. Usually the congregation grew to some extent because most preachers could convert some people by virtue of their general abilities in explaining the gospel. But when the members of a congregation considered inviting an evangelist to do local work, one of the primary qualifications was first availability, then doctrinal soundness, and preaching ability. Evangelistic success in previous works was often not an important factor in the decision. Because of the lack of evangelists and the multiplicity of congregations that wanted evangelists, the first question was always, "Who can come?"

The other weakness of our present system is the lack of properly trained evangelistic Christians. According to the example of the early church, every Christian ought to be evangelistic. Once Christians possess the spirit of evangelism, who will train them? Who will teach them how to channel their evangelistic energy in the right direction? If a congregation does not have an evangelist working directly with the members, the only role model will be the visiting preacher who holds the gospel meetings. Following that role model, congregational leaders may come to understand their function to be pulpit teaching. Knocking doors, pursuing contacts, and conducting Bible studies may not even enter the imagination of a congregational teacher because he has never seen an evangelist perform these sorts of activities.

Furthermore, preachers that pass through may not view their work as encompassing congregational training in evangelism. In fact since they were trained under the pattern of traveling evangelism they may not have the skills to train people. Here lies an important problem: evangelists who were trained by traveling evangelists may not have been trained in personal evangelism. Then when these evangelists must train Christians for evangelism in local congregations they may not have the resources for training. Training requires a scriptural plan, organization, a curriculum, practical experience, and patience.

The reality is that at some point in time someone will have to train Christians to make contact with sinners and communicate with them about salvation. Evangelists will not be able to solve the lack of personal evangelism among Christians by simply mounting the pulpit and condemning Christians for not sharing the gospel of Christ. Christians may have the desire but they need to know *how*. Training involves providing wisdom and knowledge.

Knowledge is an essential commodity in Christianity today. In our modern culture there exists so much suspicion of people who claim to be ministers of the gospel, that if a local congregational teacher stands before his audience, ill equipped in terms of knowledge or ability to communicate the teachings of Christ, he will not receive the respect of unbelievers. People in the community are accustomed to listening to civic leaders, teachers, and social activists who know what they are talking about. Preparation for evangelism requires knowledge. Of course, even new Christians can speak to unbelievers about the joy of salvation and the peace of the Christian life. But someone in the congregation will need to answer questions that inevitably rise during studies with non-Christians. The necessary systematic knowledge is not gained through periodic contact with evangelists during gospel meetings.

Wisdom is also essential to personal evangelism. Understanding how to establish a regular study with a sinner, what subjects to teach the sinner, how to create interest, how to motivate change, how to communicate with love and patience, can all be learned by trial and error over a long period of time. In fact, under present methods, trial and error is the usual teacher. Unfortunately, long before wisdom is won, Christians become too frustrated and surrender. What other successful institution or business in existence today expects employees to learn their trade completely on their own by experimentation? That Chris-

tians create two worlds to avoid personal contact with sinners is of no surprise: Christians have not received the training to give them confidence with sinners.

The present system of evangelism in the church is failing because most Christians cannot and do not reproduce themselves.

### **Rebuilding Evangelism**

The present state of personal evangelism among Christians is the result of gradual tendencies working over a period of at least forty or fifty years that replaced evangelistic energy with an avoidance mentality. Change will need to be dramatic and systemic. The system of evangelism must change to conform to biblical principles and allow for success.

First, evangelists must seriously reconsider their purpose and work. Much talk and study has been done over the last several years concerning Paul's teaching in Ephesians 4:11-12 in regards to the work of an evangelist. Unfortunately the passage has not been taken seriously. A fundamental part of an evangelist's work is to equip Christians for works of service and for increasing the body of Christ. This instruction clearly implies that besides preaching the gospel, evangelists must prepare the saints for the work of evangelism to build up the body of Christ. Adequate preparation provides the knowledge and wisdom necessary to carry out personal evangelism.

Training, if it is efficient and productive, will involve some sort of scriptural organization. Unfortunately in past years when individuals have thoughtfully tried to organize a system of training evangelists, training Christians to do evangelistic work, or training congregational teachers, critics have cried, "What will the progressives say?" But if a method is scriptural, we cannot worry about what some digressive might say in a debate. This fear has seriously hindered scriptural work. Christians need to worry more about the dying evangelistic spirit than some fallacious argument in a debate. If our enemies were smart they would keep us in constant debates so that we would never accomplish any profitable work for fear of not being able to answer an argument. While there may not be any congregations that are on the verge of accepting multiple cups or women teaching in public, there are indeed many congregations that are in danger of "losing their candlestick" from the lack of evangelism.

Why is it not possible for evangelists and students of the Bible to sit down together and discuss in an open forum what methods of training can be used and what methods cannot be used? When critics condemn a certain method of training without offering a possible positive alternative, the motives of their criticism are really suspect.

In regards to methods of personal evangelism, there is not just one way of approaching people with the gospel. Personal contact with sinners must be made; but the question of whether this contact is through door knocking, personal acquaintances, setting up a table in a public place, or simply walking up to people on the street, depends on the culture and the neighborhood. Christians should not be so dogmatic as to say only one method is valuable. The goal is successful personal contact. If one scriptural method does not produce results then another one should be tried.

Once evangelists energetically pursue personal evangelism they can be proper role models for Christians. The proverb is usually true that students never rise above their teachers. If Christians are not evangelistic, then evangelists should examine themselves first to discover if they are truly evangelistic. Evangelists must especially be examples of perseverance. They should never surrender to frustration or disappointment.

Another systemic change is necessary to alter the mind-set of Christians. Christians must see that the Christian life only has meaning and purpose through speaking to sinners about salvation. If evangelists are first role models then they can with integrity deliver a drastically different message to Christians. That message will be: Christians are not okay if they are not sharing the gospel. Congregations are not okay if they are not making personal contact with the lost. New Testament Christianity has not been restored, simply because multitudes of Christians and even evangelists are apathetic or slothful about reaching the lost. This message needs to be proclaimed in every public meeting and private conversation among Christians.

There are in the church several sources of influence that have the power to motivate Christians to participate in personal evangelism. One manner of influencing Christians is by means of brotherhood periodicals. A sampling of issues of the **Old Paths Advocate** from the last forty years reveals that approximately just three percent of the articles during these years even remotely touched the subject of local evangelism. The evident conclusion is that writers and publishers did not give personal evangelism a

priority. Another expression of current thought is the annual Preacher's Study. But over the last ten years, on the average, less than one topic a year has been devoted to personal evangelism. If the leadership of the church is serious about church growth, personal evangelism must occupy a place of priority in the writing and research of Christian thinkers.

Some practical but drastic changes in the manner in which the work of the church is conducted would greatly contribute to evangelistic results. What would happen if evangelists worked with the members of a congregation for one or two weeks before a gospel meeting to prepare them to do personal evangelism? What would happen if evangelists refused to conduct gospel meetings for congregations that will not participate in personal evangelism? What would happen if the large brotherhood meetings shifted emphasis and served as mission meetings in new communities to begin new congregations? What would happen if every year the Preacher's Study devoted several discussions to methods and means of motivating personal evangelism among Christians? What would happen if evangelists traveled across the country to present week-long training sessions in personal evangelism and then returned to the congregations for regular follow-up training? What would happen if more materials were produced to assist Christians in presenting the gospel at someone's door or on the street? The answer to these questions can only be positive. The real question is, "Just how willing is the leadership of the church to make sacrifices, both evangelists and local leaders, for the goal of church growth?"

### **Conclusion**

In the first century the disciples of Jesus had a system of evangelism: they "preached the word wherever they went" (Acts 8:4). The real threat to the church today is not innovations as much as the possibility of the death of local evangelism. Christians are not preaching wherever they go.

Some foreign fields have experienced great evangelistic success mainly because the Christians in those countries do not follow the pattern of evangelism here in the United States. One wonders what a native evangelist from a foreign country would really think if he made a visit to the United States and followed around behind an American gospel preacher for a few weeks. Some foreign works have actually been hindered because preach-

ers from the United States have taken the American mentality to foreign soil. The success of foreign works is the result of Christians who evangelize wherever they go.

Convincing Christians to live a life of evangelism will require some profound and sacrificial changes. Such changes will only happen if people see the problem as it really is: despite all the motions and words, evangelism in the United States is dying! 753 Saucito Ave., Salinas, CA 93906.

## **"Go Ye"**

*by Bill Harmon*

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19). "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:20).

The message that our God is trying to get across is this: We are to teach others about the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). We have got a whole world to teach, you and I, and it seems to me that we are getting behind every day. We must reach out to the souls, not just of our area, and begin doing what is commanded for us to do, locally, as well as in other places.

May I cite an incident found in God's Word? There was a man who was cleansed by the Lord. After he was cleansed he wanted to go with the Lord. He said, "I want to go with you." But what was he told? Do you know what Jesus said to him? "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mk. 5:19). The message to him was clear. This man knew who Jesus was, he knew what He had done for him personally, he knew what the Lord could do for all men, and it would be a tragic situation if we did not share the gospel.

May I share some practical things to make our faith public—it is not private. It cannot be private.

Take two or three tracts with you every where you go. You might say, "I couldn't give someone a tract." O.K., if you can't give it, leave it. Leave it in the restaurant where you dine, in the service station where you trade, or leave it in the laundromat, or leave it in the grocery store, wherever. Start that way. But then the next time you go to the grocery store or laundromat, hand it to somebody. All they can say is, "I don't want it." Put it back in you pocket, you're not hurt. That's all they can say—"I don't want it." Then you might work up, after having those tracts with you for a while, to give to a co-worker or a friend.

Another idea: when someone in your neighborhood speaks to you and they are having a problem, you might tell them how the Lord helped you. You might ask them, "Would you like to go with me? I've received some help in this particular place."

Another idea is that if there is a friend, or someone else who says, "I'm just unhappy where I'm going;" invite them to attend the worship, and say, "After the service is over, I'd like to take you to lunch, it's my treat." They won't turn down an invitation like that, I'll assure you.

All of these things are things we need to do. Another thing that is very important, and I think that we have a problem with this in some places (in other places we do not), but if a visitor comes into the congregation, seek out that visitor. Rather than going and seeing your friend that sits up in the front, and talking to them, find out who that visitor is, what their name is, whether they are a member of the church or not. If they are not a member of the church, get their address, and that very week go see them. You would be surprised how much could be accomplished. That individual is one that you can reach that way.

Another idea is, suppose there is a member who is not attending the worship. They are not coming. If they are wilfully neglecting the assembly, they are just as lost as that person who has never obeyed the gospel. Go visit them.

Someone has made this statement, and I think we have not realized it yet—"We will never take the gospel to the lost until we believe they are lost without it, and we will never take the gospel to them, until we really believe we are lost if we don't." There is our problem. This is a serious matter.

Churches that grow *want* to grow. Their leaders want it. Their members want it. Their hearts long for it. They plan for it. They work for it. They talk about it all the time; not just occasionally, but all the time.

Our speaker mentioned that gospel meetings were not successful. I like the fact that both of them mentioned revival. May I share with you how to have a successful revival?

A gospel meeting or revival is not an end to itself. There are several things that should come out of it. Everyone should participate in this great work, and we could have successful gospel meetings today, if we would follow these ABC's:



*Advertise* the gospel meeting or revival. What I mean is this: Not long ago I read where a man went to a city in the east, and he asked this question (this was of denominational people): "How many of you came by the newspaper advertising that you saw that was written?" Eleven people stood up. "How many of you came through the radio and television?" There were eighteen people that stood up. Then he asked a key question. "How many of you people came because someone asked you?" Three hundred and forty-eight people stood up.

You need to . . .

advertise.

always pray for success.

abandon all sin.

absorb all the good lessons.

abound in enthusiasm.

Then the B's:

be one hundred percent in your attendance.

bring every friend you can.

bear your share of the work.

be zealous in your efforts.

be on time.

be thankful.

The C's:

call and invite your friends.

center your thoughts on God.

come to every service.

consume spiritual food.

capitalize on your own talents and influence.

cultivate a genuine love for lost souls.

Read 2 Timothy 2:24-25!

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

This is the way you are to approach lost souls!

Do you know that one of the most effective personal workers I ever worked with never led a public prayer or delivered a lesson in a pulpit? We started in a store-front with nine members, and within a year we had increased sixty percent. This man would take me with him to the bank, the grocery store, to the feed store, to the farm implement company, and to everyone in the country that he ever thought attended the worship service. Yet, he never led a prayer, never spoke from the pulpit. We had to borrow the baptistry of a church in that town, and after a few weeks and months they said, "What's going on?" It was because that man was sharing the gospel, helping me to meet people I didn't know.

Growing churches follow this motto: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." What is the main thing? It is evangelism! That is what we are talking about this morning. An evangelism that is done everywhere, all the time, by all the people, and then God will give the increase!

If we study New Testament conversions, and we will, you will find that nine of the fifteen incidents were initiated by individuals, Christians, going and personally reaching and seeking the lost. If you had a method where you stood on your head on the street corner, and it reached souls, I wouldn't argue with it. There are all kinds of methods, the problem is this: we do not use them or practice them. There are all kinds of ways that we can reach people, but we need to implement them and begin now! *411 Willow Dr., Wichita Falls, Texas 76305.*

## **Problems in Local Evangelism**

*by Jack Cutter*

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Since my personal experience in evangelism has been in America, this will be where the thrust of my remarks will be centered.

Specifically today, my remarks will be directed toward problems, as I perceive them, that prevail in local evangelism. By "local evangelism" I mean "located work" and "gospel meetings." However, if I were to consider the broader scope of evangelism in America, the field I believe "ripest for harvest" would be in the black communities.

In an attempt to expedite making the points that I desire to emphasize in this study, I have prepared two charts for your consideration.

### **Chart One: Defining the Process of Congregational Growth**

On this chart, you will notice that after introduction to a ministering church five categories are given. They are: (1) Foundation Instruction, (2) Preparation in Ministry, (3) Involvement in Ministry, (4) Appointed to Ministry, and, (5) Direction of Ministry. Every new convert to Christ should be introduced to the church as a ministering body. It would stifle his/her growth to see only a partial view of the church. Momentarily, I will briefly review these five categories. At this time, however, I will introduce the second chart.

### **Chart Two: The Growth Cycle**

Every growth cycle remains constant. The process remains the same in animal, plant, or any other growth pattern. Hence, a similar condition operates in spiritual growth (1 Pet. 2:2).

### **Problem One**

The first problem of evangelism occurs when congregations "send" or "call" individuals to a work, without that person or these churches having the knowledge, training, or ability to per-

form the work. While a preacher may be outstanding in the pulpit, while he may also be excellent in converting sinners, if that individual lacks the expertise to develop disciples into a ministering body of believers, he does not qualify to do evangelistic work. The Great Commission involves "preaching" and "teaching" (Mt. 28:19-20).

Thus, it becomes imperative that each of us understand the process of developing congregations in whatever phase of development we may find them. Therefore, an understanding of the growth cycle of a congregation becomes imperative. Using the first chart, a brief review of the process will be given.

Once an individual has been converted to Christ, the growth process should be immediately initiated. First, the evangelist or someone trained to do it, must involve this person (the new convert) in a systematic plan of teaching until he/she is grounded in apostolic teaching. This would be the formative phase.

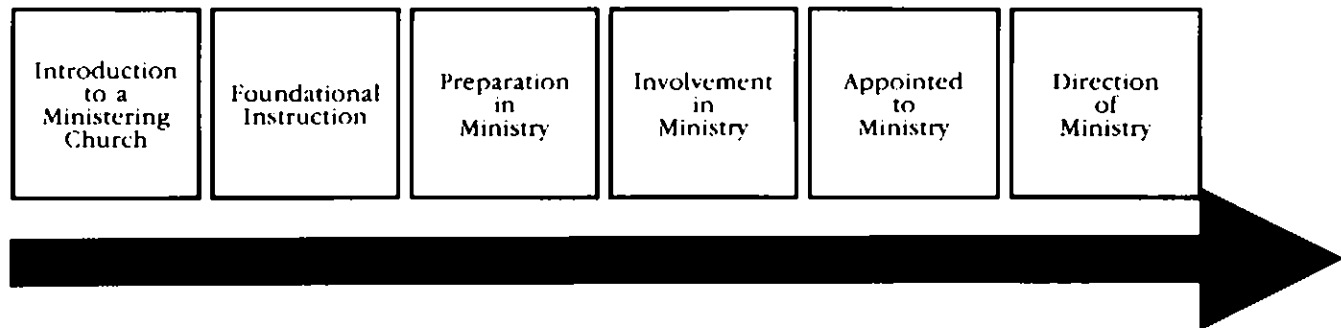
The second step involves assisting this person to discover their talents and helping him/her develop their capabilities with a view to ministering. While the second step involves preparation, the third step entails training. There is no place in the ministering church for unfruitful servants. This phase of development encompasses the childhood cycle of growth.

The fourth and fifth steps in the process comprehend the development into the mature phase of the growth cycle. In these last two steps in the growth process, from the on-going developing ministering body of believers, there must be chosen and identified by the congregation an expanded leadership to keep pace with its growth. These leaders are chosen because of the leadership skills and ethical qualities. These appointed members are called deacons. As the natural growth cycle continues others will be chosen that have grown through all growth stages of a ministering church. If all stages of the growth cycle have performed properly, the natural outcome of it will be elderships.

In summary, if any of the forgoing stages are ignored, or becomes deficient, the church will be hindered in becoming or maintaining its divinely assigned function. It would be interesting and beneficial to know how many congregations and preachers understand and practice the growth cycle. Of interest also, how many congregations would welcome and permit an evangelist to implement the growth cycle in their group—if it required changes in the infrastructure?

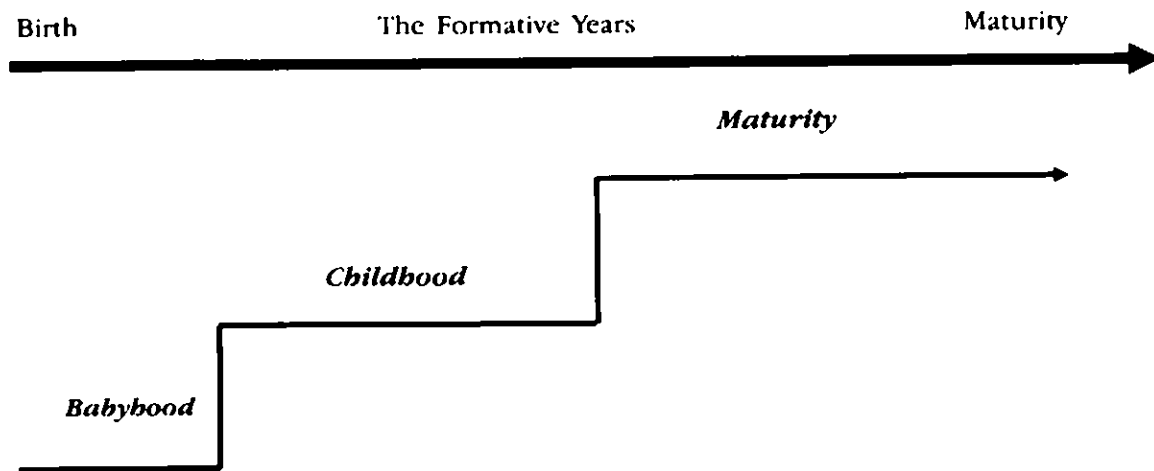
## The Nature of the Church Defines Leadership

The following scheme illustrates the process of growing ministering leaders.



Every convert, having been attracted to Christ for salvation, should be introduced to the church as a ministering body. It would stifle his/her growth to see only a partial view of the church.

## The Growth Cycle



Every growth cycle remains constant. The process remains the same in animal, plant, or any other growth pattern. Hence, the same is true in spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:2).

## **Second Problem**

This problem occurs in what we classify as "located work." In America, most congregations have existed for years. Also, since these churches are considered to be independent entities functioning autonomously, this creates a gigantic problem for an evangelist who understands his work.

This problem has many facets. I will mention a few. First, a congregation and a preacher may agree upon a work that would clearly identify him as sustaining a "hired pastor" relationship with them. This practice cannot be defended by a scriptural precedent. Yet, it does occur.

Second, problems occur when the evangelist understands his work differently than the congregation does. For example, an evangelist may determine his role with a church to be basically "corrective" in nature. He arrives at this conclusion after a careful evaluation of the church. In his evaluation, the group has passed through the formative and childhood stages and has reached maturity without being scripturally structured. Also, he determines that the congregation has existed for twenty-five years or longer, basically in limbo. In addition, he concludes that the system of governing the congregation conforms to a humanly devised scheme and is permanently entrenched. From this assessment, he determines the parameters of his work obligations with this group. While at the same time, the congregation considers him to be an employee hired to do their work.

Taking this situation as an example, consider that even if before agreeing to work with them, he advises them of his evaluation and intentions, the chances for a successful work with this church will be slim, if not impossible. In this type of work situation, most likely, he will be "fired." Therefore, to overcome similar situations from occurring, congregations and preachers need to be taught and trained in a clearly defined system of evangelism. Without this awareness, this situation will be repeated.

## **Third Problem**

The third major problem in evangelism involves preacher support. More specifically, the way they are paid. Although seldom practiced, my firm and steadfast contention, based on New Testament examples, is that all preachers holding meetings, involved in located work, or mission work, should be supported in the same way. Since the apostles, every functionary that operates

within the church or upon society is the result of the growth process that I mentioned earlier. Therefore, since all offices are a creation of some ministering church, they are, thus, answerable to the church directly or indirectly.

More specifically, I believe scripturally mature congregations should oversee and send evangelists into the field (Acts 11:22). A part of the churches' responsibility in "sending" evangelists into the field entails that they be responsible for his financial needs (1 Jn. 6; Tit. 3:13). The church requesting and receiving assistance should never be the group who are the major contributors to his support. Also, they should not directly oversee his work. As long as the current system of support continues, the practice of "hiring" and "firing" will continue.

### **A Crisis Exists In The Church**

Recently, I heard someone define insanity as: "To continue to do the same thing hoping for different results." I think we all recognize, if we continue to practice the same infrastructure growth practices exemplified in most churches today, we can expect the same results as in the past. Also, I would be inclined to believe that most will agree that a sensible system of training and supporting evangelists does not exist, at least in America.

While at the same time, I trust and pray that major concern and attention will be shown relative to churches in America and abroad that have reached maturity and function with a system of governing fashioned after a human system. It is frightening to me that almost every church in this country operates in this condition. In the first century, the apostles developed churches to maturity within ten years. While in this century, it is common for churches to have been alive for twenty-five to seventy-five years, yet in many of these churches, they function with a humanly devised system of governing. It seems to me, brethren, that somewhere along the line, we either have not functioned on the right track or we have digressed from it. *12321 E. 145th St., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74128.*



## **Advice for Successful Gospel Meetings**

*by Allen Bailey*

I am happy to serve as a respondent during the 1993 Preachers' Study. The following options are granted to me:

1. Disagree
2. Reinforce
3. Expand
4. Produce another angle

In the interest of space, let me briefly say that I have no major disagreement with the preceding speech from Brother Raymond Fox. He provided a great speech. He has years of experience and his thoughts should be carefully considered.

I do want to reinforce what he said regarding the interest we should have in reaching the lost. The formula for numerical growth is clearly defined in 1 Corinthians 3:6—"I have planted, Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase."

I would like to expand on a point that is controversial at times. Some have expressed concern at referring to a gospel meeting as a "revival." Is it appropriate to call a meeting a "revival meeting" or a "gospel meeting"? These terms are not mutually exclusive. I do not oppose either, and in fact, I sanction both phrases. Remember, we are to encourage congregations during meetings; we are involved in a meeting that will revive the people. We are having a revival where the gospel is being preached. There is no problem whatsoever with referring to a meeting by either of these popular phrases.

Please allow me to use the remainder of my time to produce an optional angle on reaching the lost in evangelistic meetings.

Face the facts, brethren, meetings are not what they used to be and there is a reason. Is it a lack of effort, ambition, quality of preaching, or of zeal and determination? Let us cut right to the heart of the issue.

First, if visitors attend gospel meetings it is going to be the result of a working membership. Advertising brings in scattered numbers, but generally very few come as a direct result of only advertising. The members of the congregation should be involved in bringing their friends, neighbors, and associates to the meeting. This should be done while laying the foundation for growth by having a church that worships and works according to the New Testament pattern.

Second, successful gospel meetings are expensive, but unsuccessful ones are even more expensive: a lot of time, money, effort, etc., goes down the drain. Here is a point: in scheduling a meeting, consult the members of a local congregation about dates and times. Do not just randomly select a time and shove it down everyone's throat. Be kind, considerate, and give some thought to peoples' work situations, schooling, trips, etc. This will enhance the atmosphere for a successful gospel meeting.

Third, the preacher conducting the meeting will have a major effect on the success of the meeting. It is my strong conviction that preachers conducting revivals should be out working and working hard. This principle was taught to me by my father, Alton Bailey, and by my grandfather, E. H. Miller, and we should stand for the same today. Welcome the visitors and try to schedule a home study with them during the week. Help resolve conflicts within congregations. Be a servant and do not feel or act like your responsibility is only between 7:30-9:00 p.m. during worship services. I have known preachers who have indicated that their daytime was their time. Their attitude was, "I am not here to study, visit, etc.; I am here to preach and I do that at night time." This approach to gospel meetings is most disturbing. A congregation has a right to discuss with a preacher his work with them during a revival. The leadership of the congregation should also advise the preacher of specific needs, visitation needs, and so forth, and these suggestions should be listened to and carefully considered. A preacher does need some spare time during a meeting. He will need study time, rest time, etc. However, he needs to really *work* while in a meeting or not go at all.

Fourth, including the personal touch of the members enhances a meeting. Members should send out personal letters, call people on the phone to invite them, send a fax even—use a va-

riety of methods to get people invited. Plan ahead and let people know the meetings are coming up. Please do not wait until the revival is half over to invite for the first time.

Fifth, among several important components of a meeting, the content of the lessons is important. It should be heavily based on the Bible and stress the importance of the church, one's soul, worship, doctrine, salvation, and like themes. As preachers, we need to re-evaluate our material from time to time. The subject that is interesting to you may not be the best for a gospel meeting. Please think of others more than yourself. What does the audience need? What would Jesus preach if He were here? These are thought-provoking questions.

From time to time we hear people question the importance of gospel meetings. Most congregations do not have an evangelist working with them, nor do most congregations have elders and deacons. So evangelists who travel and hold gospel meetings are doing a great work. They have the opportunity to "set things in order" and address what is lacking within the congregation. Never underestimate the importance of their work. They should be supported well financially, because some preachers travel year round holding meetings and it is their major source of income. These men work hard and make many personal sacrifices that a lot of Christians would not consider making. They need our respect, encouragement, and prayers for their continued success, safety, and good health.

The Lord has blessed the congregations in America with excellent brethren who serve the congregations as leaders, elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, and working members. Be thankful to Almighty God for these rich blessings and always strive to give God your very best in whatever capacity you serve Him. *1633 Trinity View, Irving, Texas 75060.*

**Regions Beyond and  
Regions Between  
(2 Corinthians 10:16;  
Acts 1:8, 14:6, 7; Romans 15:19-23)**  
*by Ron Courter*

The purpose of this lesson is to develop a simple construct or model to help us conceptualize the role of each congregation and the function of each Christian in the absolutely essential and vital work of heralding the gospel throughout the world. Models are arbitrary and the scriptures are absolute in pattern, so why even attempt to present a model to provoke thinking about our individual role or the congregation's role in preaching the gospel to all the world? We will answer with six reasons, hoping they do not distract from the real object of this lesson. The first three will be objective and the last three will be subjective.

**Objective Reasons**

1. God's inherent nature demands going to the world (Jn. 3:16; Lk. 19:10; 1 Tim. 2:4-6).
2. The world contains two categories of accountable mankind according to the Scriptures.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 1:18—Those that perish and those that are saved.
  - b. 2 Corinthians 2:15—Those that are saved and those that perish.
  - c. Matthew 25:46—The righteous go into life eternal.
  - d. 1 Corinthians 6:9—The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

God's interest in the lost is absolutely overwhelming. Luke 15 declares this in parable, and the death of Jesus upon the cross declares it in reality (Heb. 9:27-10:18). There are few areas that better reveal the great chasm between God and us, than comparing His interest with our deeds for the lost.

It must be realized that the lost are unsaved because men are not judged by the light they do not have, but due to the fact that men fail to walk by the light they do have (Rom. 2:12). Human experience and the Word of God bears testimony to the universal truth that all have sinned (Rom. 2:15; 3:9). Surely, in the mouth of two such formal witnesses the truth is established that all are lost. Furthermore, all remain lost without the hearing and the believing of the gospel (Rom. 1:16; 10:15).

3. The apostles chosen by Christ to be prepared and involved in the foundational work of the church (Eph. 2:20) planted churches that were to be heralding bodies. Their coming into existence was due to the preaching of the gospel. How then would other congregations come into existence if not by the preaching of the gospel? The building must lean the way the foundation is set to be true to the foundation. The church will never be free from the thrust of the commission given to the apostles (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16; Lk. 24:46-49), only the nature of the fulfillment would vary, due to the church moving from the period of direct revelation into the period of indirect revelation; from inspired men to the inspired written Word. But both periods required preaching and teaching (Acts 8:30,31; 2 Tim. 2:2)

One would not expect anything other than the church that the apostles labored to establish would be a heralding body. The church is presently Christ's body on earth (Eph. 1:22-23), and Jesus had previously taken an earthly body, so He could seek and save the lost (Mt. 11:1; Lk. 19:10). It is a sobering and humbling to realize that we (the church) are the Lord's body on earth (Eph. 5:30), and we should be doing in word and deed exactly what Jesus would be doing if He were here in the flesh. In fact, that is exactly what Jesus is attempting to do through our flesh. His earthly body is now our flesh.

### **Subjective Reasons**

1. There appears to be a tremendous lack of discussion within the local church that indicates a worthy degree of time has been or is being spent considering evangelizing from an overview of the Bible. Local discussions seem long on human generalizations and short on a Bible-oriented approach.

2. The typical lesson on evangelism seems to tell the audience to evangelize you must 'pack your bags' and go, but realistically most of them are not going anywhere or should even consider going anywhere in the regions beyond. Hence, many seem basically left with a sense of guilt, because they did not pack their bags and feel frustrated they cannot evangelize. The instilling of a sense of responsibility to see the gospel is preached in the regions beyond is always commendable, but simply making people feel guilty for not moving to "wherever" is neither fulfilling nor maturing.

3. The arbitrary model of the "regions beyond and the regions between" will hopefully help us to conceptualize the overall picture of evangelism from a biblical base. The idea is to give us functionally Bible-oriented categories to help us, congregationally and individually, to evaluate how we are fulfilling our responsibilities in proclaiming the gospel unto men, whether they are near or far.

### **The Prophet's Question**

The prophet Isaiah asked, "...who shall declare his generation?" The answer is found in the New Testament (Isaiah 53:8; Acts 8:33).

1. The immediate answer—the apostles of Christ (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lu. 24:47-49).

2. The ultimate answer—the church that Christ promised to build (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:20-22; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:15).

3. The personal answer—Christians, as individuals and as congregations (Acts 8:4; 11:19-20; 13:2-3; 14:26-27; 1 Thess. 1:8).

### **A Parenthesis**

Let us consider four essential pillars in the foundation of the church. These pillars must be built upon to assure a vital, living community or local body of believers. It would seem expedient to at least glance at these before continuing to answer how to more fully fulfill our responsibility to declare the name of Christ. Hopefully, the reason will be apparent. We may have a church, but without at least having these four variables attended to, the health and vitality of that body will be suspect, and probably incomplete.

Let me point out just here that we dare not ever forget that the church Christ promised to build will come into existence by preaching the gospel unto the world and the only church Christ will ever build will come into existence by the preaching of the gospel.

The four pillars of the mature body:

1. The Edification Factor: "... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ..." There must be the teaching of the Word, the knowledge of his will (1 Cor. 14:26).

2. The Fellowship Factor: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn. 13:35). The church is a community within communities, but there is no distinctive, attracting community without relational interaction, "one another" concern, and actual ministering of His will (Rom. 12:6-10; 1 Cor. 13:13).

3. The Shepherding Factor: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account ..." The Lord's body, although without legislative authority still demands appropriate delegated guidance, so decisions are founded upon "an experienced faith" (Heb. 13:7, 17).

4. The Heralding Factor: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). How can you stop what started you, unless you do not want to continue? There must be the preaching and proclaiming of the gospel to the world to call men to the glory in Christ (2 Thess. 2:14) and to permit escape from indignation and wrath (Rom. 2:8).

These four factors, properly attended to, bring each child of God into experiential Christianity, so that they move beyond a mere head-knowledge level of Christianity. To break beyond a mere intellectual faith; a body of Christians must worship truthfully, minister daily to one another, be highly considerate of others (as they have opportunity), cultivate a submissive attitude toward the guidance of "the experienced faith," and see to it that others have the opportunity to be saved by the sharing of Christ in word and deed

The evangelistic endeavor of the church is highly dependent on the level of maturity attained by sound Bible teaching, deeply satisfying relationships among its members beyond the physical family that has accepted the faith and unity of spirit to accept seasoned decisions. At this point, the heralding factor is not only essential to growth from without to within, but an index of how much growth the church has had within, so it is effectively reaching without. This parenthesis has occupied enough of our time, so let us return to our model of interest, and the evaluation of reaching all the world with the gospel.

### **The Gospel for The World**

1. John 3:16—"For God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2. Matthew 28:19-20—"Go ye therefore, and *teach all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

3. Mark 16:15-16—" . . . Go ye *into all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

4. Luke 24:47-49—"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name *among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

5. Acts 1:8—"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

6. The gospel was first to Israel (Mt. 15:24; 10:5-6; Acts 2:5-21; 13:46).

7. Afterward, God "did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Thess. 2:11-13).



**Is the gospel for everywhere? Yes!**  
**Is the gospel for anywhere? No!**

1. The gospel forbidden—Acts 16:6-12
  - a. Forbidden
  - b. Beckoned
2. The synagogue—Acts 13:15-16. The opportunity extended to:
  - a. Men of Israel
  - b. Ye that fear God
3. Gospel not forbidden by others and not hindered by my own lack of wisdom or courage (Col. 4:2-6; Eph. 6: 19-20).
  - a. 2 Cor. 2:12—"...door was opened unto me of the Lord...but taking my leave of them..." Paul left due to other priorities.
  - b. 1 Cor 16: 8-9—"...For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."
  - c. Rev. 3:8—The church at Philadelphia has set before them an open door.

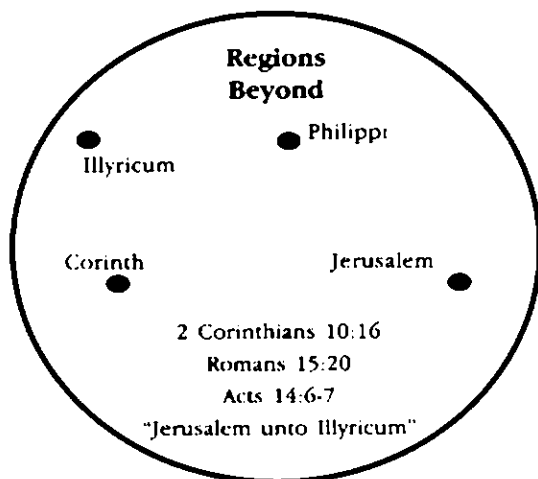
Jesus handed to the apostles the foundational duty to go into all the world with the gospel. They faithfully fulfilled their stewardship by establishing the Lord's church wherever men would hearken to the gospel invitation. The apostles handed the perpetual duty to preach the gospel of the church demands she heralds the gospel wherever opportunity stirs. The world is to be visited with the gospel at this very hour and every congregation and each Christian has a duty to fulfill in the proclaiming of the gospel. Let us consider our responsibility of taking the gospel to the world by arbitrarily dividing the world into two categories: "the regions beyond" and "the regions between."

While the church is always responsible for the "regions beyond," her membership lives primarily in the "regions between." Both of these areas need evangelizing, but the duties of the church in evangelizing these different regions calls forth different aspects of the congregation's and individual Christian's duty. (See charts on following pages.)

## **The Regions Beyond**

Where Christ is not named (Rom. 15:20)

Where the foundation of the church is not laid (1 Cor. 3:10)



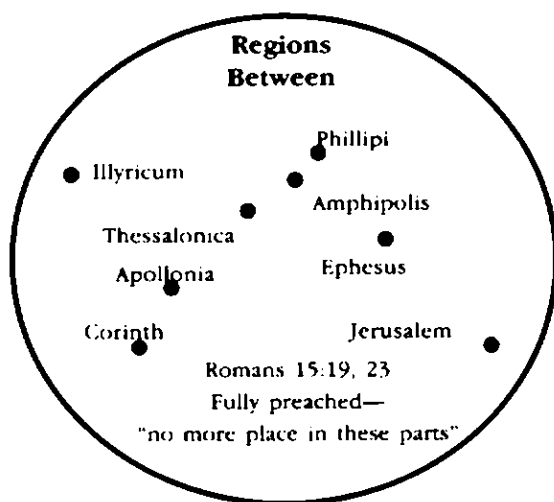
**The Book of Acts focuses on the "Regions Beyond"**

1. All do not need to go, but there is a need to financially support those that do go (1 Cor. 9:6-14; Phil. 4:10, 14-18). The reason: so that fruit may abound to your account (Phil. 2:25-30). On the part of the supporters, there needs to be awareness of the needs of those who go to the regions beyond and those needs must be ministered to.
2. Prayers for the work and workers offered (Col. 2:2-4; Eph. 6:19-20).
3. Do not cast doubts by passing on hearsay, which creates doubts and questions upon a work for no legitimate reason (Phil. 2:14).

All cannot go, nor should all go, but all can be aware of the work. There should be consideration shown the workers, including financial support and much prayer. We need to learn to not be a party to, or create unnecessary stumblingblocks to the difficult work of establishing the church and preaching the gospel in the regions beyond by careless conversation.

## **The Regions Between**

Where Christ has been named and the foundation of the church has been laid (Acts 16, 17, 18, 19).



### **The Epistles focus on the "Regions Between"**

1. The church gathered and ungathered (Acts 20:20; 1 Cor. 14:23; 1:2).
  - a. The church gathered (1 Cor. 14:26, 33, 40)
  - b. The church ungathered (That part of the world placed directly into your hands to declare Christ).
2. Family (Husband-wife; parent-child) (Eph. 5:22-32; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)
3. Work and the impressions and associations that grow out of that relationship (Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-23; 1 Pet. 2:18-20; 1 Pet. 2:11-12; Mt. 5:16)
4. Community (school, recreation)—opportunity for good (1 Pet. 2:11-12; 3:15; Mt. 5:16; Gal. 6:9-10)
5. General approach to life, growth, responsibility (1 Tim. 2:2; 1 Thess. 4:11-12)

The church ungathered lives scattered through the areas between the places of gathering. This is your personal world of evangelism. It is in this way that the regions between are largely evangelized and drawn to the gathered body and community of the saints

The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. she is Christ's body on earth in the written word of God (objectively) and she is Christ's body on the earth in our flesh (subjectively). We are divinely obligated and should be personally motivate to sound out the message of salvation found only in Christ. Two great stumblingblocks in proclaiming the gospel is the failure to cultivate compassion (Mt. 9:36) and the failure to control fear (Lev. 26:36; Num. 13:33; Mt. 10:28). Let us learn to overcome through him who overcame.

Hopefully, the simple model of "the regions beyond" and "the regions between" may help you evaluate your role in the visiting of the world with the gospel. Why not set down with yourself, with family or with brethren and put the Scriptures into the circles of the regions beyond and the regions between. Consider what you can do to see those Scriptures do not go begging for fulfillment.

*Remember . . .*

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? (Rom. 10:13-15a).

*Remember . . .*

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain neither labored in vain (Phil. 2:14-16).

*Remember . . .*

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which was against the soul: having your

conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, that they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Pet. 2:9-12).

We cannot live without being involved in the things that are passing, but how we use the things (Lk. 16:8-9, 13) that are passing will determine how well we shall fare with the things that are not passing.

*Remember . . . the spirit is forever*

For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

Let us unite in the common faith to meet the common goal of heralding the gospel of Jesus Christ to every soul we touch in the regions between and to support the heralding of the gospel of Jesus Christ to every soul we can touch through someone else in the regions beyond. 7120 Banks St., Waterford, Michigan 48327.

# **Introduction: Patterns for Evangelism from the Book of Acts**

*James Orten*

This morning's speakers did an excellent job of establishing the need for, and our responsibility for, evangelism at home and abroad. We are charged to preach the gospel to the world at our feet, to the other side of the globe, and everywhere in between.

The Book of Acts is a record of the apostles and early disciples carrying out the Great Commission under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The apostles did not seem to doubt where they should go or what they were to do. We do not have the same direct guidance by the Spirit that they had, but that does not mean our guidance is inferior. Yet, we often seem confused about what our responsibilities are and how to accomplish the tasks they involve.

Because the church now possesses the means to edify itself, we have the obligation of digging guidance out of the inspired Word. For a long time I have believed that there is more information about evangelism in the Bible than we have gotten out of it. I was convinced that if we studied the Book of Acts, specifically with evangelism in mind, we would learn much that would help us save souls. That is what the following three speakers will do.

I know that we have many preachers who could lead such a study, but I am also certain that we have chosen three who are eminently qualified. Together these brothers have approximately one hundred twenty years of experience in preaching the gospel. In addition, they are men who deeply respect the authority of the Scriptures and who study them intently.

Our instructions to them were to study the Book of Acts looking for principles and patterns that apply to evangelism—not a word or verse by verse study, but a general overview of how to save souls. We made the assignments in a simple manner, by dividing the book into thirds and assigning each a part.

## **Patterns for Evangelism: Acts 1-9**

*Edwin Morris*

On the day of Pentecost the apostles were filled with the Spirit and they were able to speak in tongues, perform miracles, and by these things draw the people together so they could teach them. In the early days of the church, others were able to use the gifts given to proclaim the Word of God to the lost. Today, we do not have the use of these gifts, but we believe there are examples and patterns that we can follow that will enable us to be effective in evangelizing the world. We would like to consider a few of these.

The church was established to save the world: to redeem the world through Jesus Christ its Savior. One of the things that really stands out about God in relation to the human race is His love, interest, concern, and earnest care for His making us in His image and providing every need we have for our physical body. In Genesis 1:26, 28, we find,

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth . . . And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Then in verses 29-30, he points out that all these things were given to man to sustain him.

After man had sinned against God, God made plans for man's redemption and when the time was come He sent His Son Jesus into the world to die for the sins of man. God cared when His Son was dying and looked up to Him and said, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me."

The intense interest and concern that God has for lost souls must be shared by His family, the church. It is only through the church and its teachings that the sinner can be converted and turn his life from darkness to light. The church would cease to

exist if it were not for the preaching of the gospel. The saved are added to the church after their past sins are forgiven by having been baptized for the remission of sins: Acts 2:38-47.

It seems that oft times members think that the church is only for the purpose of coming together on the first day of the week to worship. This is certainly the duty of every Christian, but it is also the duty of every Christian to be engaged in working to save lost souls. Some seem to be satisfied if they come together on the first day of the week and sing songs, pray, have the teaching, eat the Lord's Supper, and give of their means. This is absolutely essential, but it is just as essential that we realize that God expects us to help save lost mankind. Should the members be asked why we have schools, doctors, hospitals, policemen, fire departments, etc., they could tell us immediately the purpose. If we ask them why the church exists, will they tell us it was to save souls? We must realize that the duty and responsibility of the church in the first century was to evangelize the world. The same is true in the twentieth century. Those that nailed Jesus to the cross later made him the center of their lives and went everywhere preaching the gospel.

#### **I. Great preparation was made for evangelizing the world.**

- A. Luke 24:47—"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
- B. Acts 1:4—"And being assembled with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me."
- C. Acts 1:8—"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

From the fall of man until Jesus died on the cross, preparations were being made for the salvation of man. Today, we should plan for evangelism and be prepared when the opportunity affords itself. We should consider several questions:

1. What do we need to do for this effort?
2. How are we going to do it?
3. Who is willing to do this work?



4. When is the proper time to start?
5. Are we going to follow through with the work?
6. What will the cost be; can we finance it?

Then with faith in God and depending upon Him and His Word to help us we should never look back.

## **II. Prayer is very essential in evangelism**

- A. Luke 6:12-16—Before Jesus chose His apostles for their great work he continued in prayer all night. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he call unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve whom also he named apostles" (vv. 12-13).
- B. Acts 1:12-14—The apostles in waiting for the power from on high continued in prayer. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, an with his brethren" (v. 14).
- C. Acts 1:24—Judas had betrayed the Lord and hanged himself. There was a need for a replacement for him. They chose two men who met the qualifications of an apostle, but they felt the need for the help of the Lord in choosing which one was the right choice. They asked the Lord's help verse 24: "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen."
- D. Acts 2:42—Three thousand had been baptized and the Scripture says, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
- E. Acts 4:23-31—After Peter and John had healed the man that lay lame at the gate, the rulers charged them not to teach or speak in the name of Jesus. They told the rulers they could only speak the things they had seen and heard. They let them go and when they came to their brethren and told them what had happened they raised their voices to God in prayer and asked Him to behold their threatenings and grant His servants boldness to preach the Word. The church should, as a group, pray more for the success of the gospel.

**III. It would help in evangelism to know the language of the people where we are laboring.**

Acts 2:4-8—"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." We do not have this gift today so if the language could be learned it would be a great help. Speaking in tongues is speaking in a language. Notice these two verses: "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own *language* . . . And how hear we every man in our own *tongue*, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:6, 8). It would be a tremendous help to evangelism to be able to communicate with the people without an interpreter.

**IV. Evangelism would be more effective if there were no murmuring or dissension.**

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration . . . " (Acts 6:1-7). The apostles had them choose seven men whom they could appoint over this matter. This pleased the multitude and they chose the seven. In verse 6 it says, "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." Notice in verse 7 how this helped: (1) The Word of God increased; (2) the number of the disciples increased; (3) a great company of priests were obedient to the faith. May we learn how valuable a soul is and how precious in God's sight and put aside personal feelings, pride, jealousy, murmurings, and other things that will hurt a work. Let us not have power struggles but work together by planting and watering and God will give the increase. Let us have the attitude of the Apostle Paul of those that would oppose us. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:15-18).

## **V. Work to convert influential people**

We learned in Acts 6:7 that a great company of priests were obedient to the gospel. The conversion of the priests was proof of the power of the gospel. We want to convert anyone, but for the work to progress the members must have influence. There must be members that are able to lead and to build the church up.

God saw in Saul of Tarsus an influential person as recorded in Acts 9:1-18. In Acts 22:3, "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day." Saul, who later is referred to as Paul, was a zealous person and was familiar with the Jewish religion and customs. This was a tremendous aid in teaching the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Apollos was an influential man. His conversion is recorded in Acts 18:24-28. He was a Jew and eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, was instructed in the way of the Lord; was fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord knowing only the baptism of John. When Aquilla and Priscilla heard him, they expounded to him the way of the Lord more perfectly. The result is stated in Acts 18:28—"For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."

The primary concern of the early Christians was to get the gospel out to as many as possible, as quickly as possible. The growth of the church was recognized by those who opposed its growth, for when they arrested the apostles they said in Acts 5:28—"Saying, did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Christian friend, in the area of your congregation do the people even know you are there? Has the gospel been offered to them in meetings, tracts, radio, television, personal contacts, etc.? Does your light shine brightly?

## **VI. Qualified men should be in charge and stay with new work**

"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1). No doubt, at this time the apostles were needed in Jerusalem and

others went everywhere preaching the word. No doubt, they had prepared themselves and were ready to teach others also. After this, when new areas received the gospel, capable men stayed with the work.

Too many times mission meetings have been conducted in an area where there is not a church and no one is there that can teach or lead. Often times some brother goes in on Sunday and conducts the service and often times someone different goes in on each Sunday during the month. As a result, the church usually does not grow and does not spread the gospel as they are required to do by the scriptures. Paul always sent someone who was capable in the work to do a task. Paul was interested in the affairs of the church in Thessalonica so he sent Timothy. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2 says: "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith." Notice, Paul did not send Timothy because he would not miss him; not because he had no regard for him; but because he knew Timothy could help them with his preaching and teaching and his daily work.

#### **VII. It is a duty of all Christians to be involved in evangelism.**

In Acts 2:44, all that believed were together, and in verse 46, "they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." In Acts 4:32, the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. As a result of their being together and working together, we read in Acts 5:14, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Evangelism is a natural outgrowth of one's love for the Lord and for those who are lost.

A combination of motives usually causes a person to do what he should do. We should all be moved by a sense of duty. We should feel a sense of self-satisfaction. Some may feel prestige. But the real key is the motive of love for lost souls.

Most members want evangelism, but many are not willing to actively engage in the work. They are not willing to make the sacrifices necessary in the work. Some will say we are "active and alive," but do they really understand what it means to be active and alive? The question is: "Are the activities accomplishing the

work of Christ and evangelizing?" It is not just action that we need, but action controlled by God's Word. Often times a church's activities are centered around social events. Too much of the activity amounts to nothing as far as souls being saved. Only the Word of God will save people. Anything else that draws people to God is not God's plan. In John 6:44-45, Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hat heard, and hat learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Let us remember that the devil is active, but he is far from pleasing God.

Are we willing to face the truth of the matter and admit that we have not evangelized at home or abroad as we should have? Are we willing to admit that we could have plenty of preachers if we would support them and stand behind them? Many have had to take on jobs. May we awake and see that they are taken care of. Are we willing to admit that we could have the finances to support them and the work if we really had our hearts set to evangelize? Are we willing to sacrifice time, money, and even ourselves, so that lost souls may hear the gospel?

Many in our brotherhood will not attend gospel meetings or other services besides Lord's day morning. I am afraid they only attend Lord's day service because they are afraid not to. May we realize that the only way people will ever receive the truth is for those who have it to go to them and teach them.

We should not be ashamed of the gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16 ). The early teachers and preachers pointed out to the people where they were wrong. We, in a spirit of love and concern, should point out their error. Let us notice some Scriptures:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have by wicked hands have crucified and slain (Acts 2:22-23).

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath may that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses (Acts 3:13-15).

Be it known unto you all, and to the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ if Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole (Acts 4:10)

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree (Acts 5:30)

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just one; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it (Acts 7:51-53).

May the Lord help us to arise and spread his gospel to lost souls everywhere. 10520 N. McKinley, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73114

## **Patterns for Evangelism: Acts 10-18**

*by Johnny Elmore*

At the close of the second century, Tertullian addressed the heathen defiantly: "We are but of yesterday, and yet we already fill your cities, islands, camps, your palace, senate and forum; we have left to you only your temples."<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated that there were over 300,000 Christians in the Roman Empire by the year A.D. 100, an eight-fold increase in thirty years, and that some 80,000 of these were in Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup> Schaff estimates that there were ten million Christians by the end of the third century.<sup>3</sup>

The growth seems phenomenal in the light of the opposition the disciples faced. They were commissioned to go into all the world. They journeyed in primitive conveyances on rough trails across mountains, deserts, and plains and over rough, dangerous seas. They faced the fury of their benighted Jewish brethren, the rage of pagan authorities, and the wanton behavior of the Gentiles who lived in a decadent society. Satan also directed his wrath toward the disciples when he failed to destroy the Son of God, but they overcame all obstacles "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11).

I want to study with you their methods to see if we can discover some of the reasons for their tremendous success. I have difficulty distinguishing a pattern from a guideline. My dictionary defines "guideline" as: "A statement of policy by a person or group having authority over an activity."<sup>4</sup> There are patterns and guidelines in the book of Acts that must be followed when they are shown to be established by the well-known rules of establishing biblical authority, but not every incident and not every account of action is a precedent for us to follow. Foy E. Wallace, who was notorious for long sermons, remarked one time that all that was lacking to make his meetings completely scriptural was for someone to fall out the window. In other words, he was already preaching until midnight and some were sleeping, as in Acts 20:9. An old preacher once advised that we can't go wrong when we note the things the apostles and early disciples did and follow that as closely as possible. Those are my sentiments as we study these chapters. Let us see what we can learn.

## **How Did They Choose the Place?**

The apostles and early disciples operated according to a divine plan given them in the last words of the Saviour in Acts 1:8: "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." According to Alford's chronology, the activity in Acts was centered in Jerusalem for about seven years. Then came the persecution which effectively scattered the disciples. Soon the disciples were preaching in Samaria, Azotus, Caesarea, Lydda, Joppa, Cyprus, Cyrene, and Antioch in Syria. The great city of Antioch soon became the new center of evangelism and was the gateway to the West—Asia Minor and Europe.

Surely, one of Paul's guiding principles in choosing a place may have been expressed in Romans 1:16: "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Another might be found in Romans 15:20: "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." Paul was a "ten-talent man" and disdained easy fields of labor, choosing a place where there would be no duplication of effort. Toward the end of his life he was still reaching out, promising the Romans, "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you" (Rom. 15:23-24). Paul was still looking for new areas ("having no more place in these parts") that had not been previously evangelized. How successful were the early disciples in carrying out the grand design of evangelism? Paul said in about A.D. 63/64 that the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23). Now, I want to make some specific observations.

1. *They had a plan of evangelism.* Do we have a plan? It seems to me that many congregations are not approaching evangelism in a systematic way. They may send \$100 here and \$100 there each month with no idea in the world what these dribs and dabs of support are accomplishing. Do we demand results or are we satisfied with housekeeping efforts? I think each congregation should have a long-range plan, as the early disciples did, and a short-term plan, as it seems that Jerusalem did in sending Barnabas to Antioch in Syria.

2. *They chose a field where it was reasonable to expect a favorable reception.* For example, Paul and Barnabas went to Antioch in Pisidia and found the synagogue on the sabbath, as his



custom was. There was a colony of Jews there and also "God-fearers," as many commentators call the Gentile proselytes. They had every reason to expect the Jewish brethren to accept the gospel but when they did not, Paul turned to the Gentiles, probably the God-fearers, and they believed. But Paul and Barnabas "shook off the dust of their feet against them," that is, the Jews, and went to another place. Some will not receive the truth and even Jesus taught that some are to be let alone. Shaking the dust off was not some childish act, but a profound testimony against their opponents and something commanded by the Saviour.

In considering this matter of receptivity, we would think a farmer foolish who spent his time grubbing out a living on a rocky hillside when he could expend the same amount of effort in some rich, bottom land and have a bumper crop. But we have done the same thing in the past, using time, talent, and large sums of money where response to the gospel is poor, when we could expend the same efforts and harvest many more. Some research has been done on what makes a place receptive to the gospel, and the findings indicate that receptivity, almost without exception, develops out of a period or condition of change in a society. Some major political, economic or social upheaval is found to cause a new adjustment of human relationships and living conditions. That is undoubtedly the reason for the good response in Russia, and it is also the reason that we should be evangelizing more Latin Americans who have migrated to the United States.

*3. They experienced God's immediate guidance in choosing a place.* God deliberately laid plans for the conversion of the Ethiopian by sending Philip to the Gaza Road, and the conversion of Cornelius by sending Peter to Caesarea. The Holy Spirit selected Paul to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2). He was "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6), and was not permitted to go into Bithynia (Acts 16:7), but he was encouraged to go into Macedonia by a vision, or as he said, "Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:10). Paul stayed in Corinth a year and six months longer, because the Lord gave him this assurance in a vision: "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10).

There are mysteries connected with this matter of divine intervention. If I had been in Philip's place, and had not had divine direction, I never would have thought it the thing to do to leave

the big city of Samaria and go out into a lonely road southwest out of Jerusalem. My judgment would not have told me to avoid Asia and the big city of Ephesus and to stay out of Bithynia and then to go to Macedonia. Just here I think it would do us good to listen to the mature comments of Brother J. W. McGarvey on this point:

This overruling of Paul's purpose, coupled with the absence of it at other times, indicates something of the method by which the journeyings of inspired men were directed. While their own judgment led to a judicious choice, it was permitted to guide them; but when it failed, as was likely to be the case, through their ignorance of the comparative accessibility of different communities, or the circumstances of individuals, they were overruled by some controlling providence, like Paul in Galatia; directed by angels, like Philip in Samaria; or by the Spirit, like Peter in Joppa; restrained from some purpose, like Paul and Silas when attempting to enter Asia and Bythynia; or called away across the sea, as he was now, by a vision at night. We will yet see that, as in the cases of Philip and of Peter, the prayers of individuals ready to hear the gospel were connected with the divine interference by which Paul and Silas were now being directed.

Preachers of the present day have no authoritative visions by night to guide them, and the supposition indulged by some, that they are at times prompted by the Spirit, as Paul was, is nothing more than the conceit of an enthusiast, while it is nothing less than a claim to inspiration. But Paul was often guided merely by the indications of Providence, and so may it be with us. If we are attentive to these indications, we shall be under the guidance of that same All-seeing Eye which chose the steps of Paul. If the way of our choosing is entirely blocked up, at times, or some stern necessity turns us aside from a settled purpose, we may regard it as but the firmer pressure of that hand which leads us, for the most part, unseen and unfelt.<sup>5</sup>

Along this line, I wonder if the reason Paul was not allowed to preach in Asia or to enter Bithynia was because his vision of his mission was too small? Was it because Paul was thinking of a province, and God was thinking of a continent? It is rather striking to me that churches were established later in both places. In fact, the home of the first person Paul converted in Europe, Lydia, was from Thyatira, a city across the Adriatic in Asia. He later

met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, and they accompanied him to Ephesus, where he left them. Was this God's way of preparing the province of Asia for the preaching of the gospel? Did God make haste slowly by going in the back door, so to speak?

4. *They chose places which afforded maximum exposure to the gospel.* Look at Paul's targets: Antioch in Syria, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome—the heavy population centers of the Roman world. He began with the ones with whom he had the most in common—his Jewish brethren, and turned away when they rejected the gospel. Why, for example, did he leave Philippi and simply pass through Amphipolis and Apollonia? I think we have a clue in the next phrase: "They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews" (Acts 17:1). To Paul, a Jewish synagogue was an invitation to preach Christ. The order of the synagogue allowed expression by any deemed worthy to speak. I wonder if we have overlooked opportunities along this line? I think sometimes that we have become so introverted that we scarcely have any contact with people who don't see things as we do.

### **Whom Did They Consider Prospects?**

Many people seem to feel that the best prospects for conversion are other people who live as they do—white collar, middle class people who live in the suburbs. But it could be that someone living near the poverty level in the inner city would be a better prospect for conversion. In New Testament times, the gospel cut across all social, racial, and economic barriers. Ask yourself truthfully, do you think the following would be good prospects for conversion?

1. A commissioned officer in the army, a career soldier? But Cornelius, a Gentile in the Roman army was offered the gospel and he accepted it (Acts 10-11).
2. A con man who dabbled in black magic? But Simon the Sorcerer "believed also . . . and . . . was baptized" (Acts 8:13).
3. A high government official? This Ethiopian, the Queen's treasurer, obeyed the gospel and went home rejoicing (Acts 8:26-39).

A provincial governor of consular rank? This proconsul ("deputy," KJV) of Cyprus wanted to hear the Word of God, and "believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" (Acts 13:12).

5. A man who worked at the jail? Paul kept this man from suicide, and the Philippian jailor was baptized the same hour of the night (Acts 16:25-34).
6. An intellectual member of the supreme court? Dionysius, the Areopagite of Athens believed and "clave" unto Paul (Acts 17:34).
7. The leader of a group who thought Jesus was an imposter? Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, became a believer along with his whole family (Acts 18:8).

I am seeing increasing evidence today that men do not believe in the power of the gospel. Many who have obeyed the gospel do not believe in the power of the gospel. Some leaders and preachers do not believe in the power of the gospel. Bro. McGarvey said in the introduction to his original **Commentary On Acts** that the design of the Book of Acts is "to show the adaptation of the one gospel scheme to the conversion of all classes of men."<sup>6</sup> Do we really believe the gospel will convert drunkards, drug addicts, infidels, the rich and famous, the grossly wicked, the religionist in error, i.e., all classes of people? The reliance today upon religious gimmicks, emotionalism, sensationalism, theatrics, and such things as gymnasiums, youth rallies, fun and frolic, banquets, promotions and so forth is evidence to me that men do not believe the gospel alone can convert the lost. If it takes McDonalds and Six Flags to convert people, what will it take to keep them converted? You and I must have more faith in the power of the gospel as those preachers of the first century did.

### **How Were the Men Chosen?**

Two cases come to mind of men being sent by the local congregation. The first is the instance of Barnabas being sent to Antioch in Syria by the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:22). The second is the case of Barnabas and Saul being sent out to do evangelistic work (Acts 13:1-4). In the case of Barnabas and Saul, they were separated, or set apart, by prayer, fasting, and laying

on of hands, but we are not here to talk about the method of separation. Actually, the selection of the men was made by the Holy Spirit, but the Bible does say that "they sent them away." The point is simply that the sending began with the elders and the leaders of the local congregation. The initiative for sending out evangelists should begin with the elders and churches rather than with the ones being sent.

And have you noticed that Barnabas and Saul are mentioned as being prophets and teachers at Antioch? Four are mentioned. Do you suppose they had one for each Sunday in the month? They sent two of their best. I think our best should be sent. This attitude of sending incompetents and ne'er do wells and keeping the best preachers at home, will not advance our efforts in evangelist work. If a preacher has no credibility at home, will he have credibility in a foreign field? If a preacher has no influence at home, will he have more in a foreign field? Not likely.

Does this rule out individual initiative? On the contrary, I think we need to see more individual initiative. Evidently, those who were scattered abroad (Acts 8:4) exercised a good bit of it. That was the reason for the apostles to go to Samaria and for Barnabas to go to Antioch. There is no corner on preaching and teaching. We have yielded to the idea that preaching and personal work are for the "professionals." We travel all over the world for business and pleasure, but we have waited for someone to send a preacher to the people who live in those places. We have done little on those journeys to take the gospel with us. We have waited to be "sent out to preach," and some have felt that they could not go without a church behind them.

Perhaps we have not yet really approached the kind of love that motivated Christ. Although He knew that we were totally unworthy and undeserving, He came to us anyway. He showed compassion for the hungry, the bereaved, the sick and the suffering; but that was not His main concern. No, His main concern was "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). He gave Himself up for us. In asking us to go out to minister to the lost and leave our comfortable homes and jeopardize our lives, He is asking nothing of us that He was not willing to do and did do!

One man said that we fall somewhere in between Jesus and Jonah in our attitude toward the lost. We are like Jesus in that we do not want to see people lost, but we are also somewhat like Jonah in that we have more pity on a gourd than we do on peo-

ple. Jonah was "very angry" when God did not bring destruction on Ninevah. He sat down in his booth under the gourd that God prepared to shield him from the sun, and he waited to see what would happen to Ninevah. Then God prepared a worm to destroy the gourd, and the sun beat down on Jonah, and Jonah was ready to give up again. God said to Jonah: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Ninevah?" (Jonah 4:10-11). Jonah was comfortable under the gourd vine, and we are comfortable with our fine homes, air conditioners, microwaves, television sets, and fine automobiles. Do we care more about these things which are so fleeting and passing than we do the eternal souls of men? What would we be willing to give up to win the lost?

### **How Were They Supported?**

We do have a divine pattern for the way that the church supports the preaching of the gospel. We must keep in mind that each local congregation is autonomous and independent. As shown by 1 Peter 5:2 and Acts 20:28, the authority of the elders of a local congregation extends only to "the flock of God which is among you." That includes authority over that congregation's resources, personnel, and functions. Let us notice briefly the New Testament pattern in evangelism:

1. The preacher is selected by a local congregation (Acts 11:32; 13:1-3).
2. The area of labor is defined by a local congregation (Acts 11:22).
3. The preacher is sent by a local congregation (Acts 13:1-3).
4. The preacher is supported by local congregations (Phil. 4:15; 2 Cor. 11:8).
5. The preacher is supported by funds sent directly to him (Phil. 4:15-16).
6. The preacher reports to the local congregation(s) supporting him (Acts 14:6-7).

In the 1800's, some brethren conceived the idea of a missionary society to do foreign evangelism. The idea of preaching the gospel in all the world was a good one, and probably the sugges-

tion of a society to collect funds from churches and hire preachers was well-intentioned, but many brethren saw in it a departure from the New Testament pattern, and eventually it caused a rupture in the fellowship. Having seen the biblical pattern for evangelism, let us notice the missionary society pattern:

1. The preacher is selected by the missionary society.
2. The area of labor is defined by the missionary society.
3. The preacher is sent by the missionary society.
4. The missionary society is paid by the local congregations.
5. Out of its funds from the local congregations, the missionary society sends pay to the preacher.
6. The preacher sends a report to the missionary society and it sends reports to the local congregations.

I think we can see that on every point, the autonomy and independence of the local congregation is violated. For a time in the 1940's, we had a "mission plan" that approximated the missionary society. But now let us notice the sponsoring church arrangement which is so prevalent among the institutional churches today:

1. The preacher is selected by the sponsoring church.
2. The area of labor is defined by the sponsoring church.
3. The preacher is sent by the sponsoring church.
4. The sponsoring church collects funds from the local congregations and deposits it in its treasury.
5. Out of its funds from the local congregations, the sponsoring church sends pay to the preacher.
6. The preacher sends a report to the sponsoring church and it sends reports to the local congregations.

I am sure that it does not take a Solomon to see the parallels between the sponsoring church arrangement and the missionary society. "When the elders of a local church send their funds to be overseen and spent by the elders of another local church without directing the receiving church how to spend it, the sending church loses its autonomy and independence; it surrenders control of its funds to the oversight of the receiving church. But, if the sending church directs how the receiving church spends

the money it sends, the receiving church loses its autonomy and independence; it has money in its treasury which is controlled by someone other than its local elders."<sup>7</sup>

### **Other Matters**

Some of us remember a time when a preacher had to be on the move all the time or risk the opprobrium of being a "pastor." I do not think the pastor system is any more scriptural than it ever was, but I think we have come to realize that simply living in one place does not make a pastor. It has been pointed out that Paul stayed at Corinth for a year and a half (Acts 18:11), and at Ephesus for about three years (Acts 20:31). Although other churches were established in neighboring cities, Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea, there is an indication that they had never met Paul; indicating, perhaps, that his main work was in Ephesus.

It is also interesting to note that the only man who is called an evangelist, Philip, went to Caesarea after his preaching to the eunuch (Acts 8:40) in about A.D. 37. Twenty-one years later, about A.D. 58, he is still at Caesarea (Acts 21:8), and he had four daughters old enough to prophesy.

No congregation should let a preacher control it by threats, power moves, or in other ways. Preachers should not be allowed to violate the autonomy of a congregation by telling the congregation every move to make, what preachers to have, etc. And what is true in the local congregation is true in whatever area he is sent.

Every congregation should have world vision when it comes to carrying out the Great Commission. If we do what God intended, we are going to have to return to every-creature, all-nations, world evangelism, and make that our number one priority. A father once asked his son: "Do you know how to load a shotgun so it will shoot hard and not scatter?" The boy replied that he did not. The father said: "Put in one shot." If we expect to impact the world with the gospel, we are going to have to have one vision—evangelism. There are probably many preachers and their families who are willing to go, provided the place they go will have all the comforts of home. Not many are willing to risk imprisonment, death, or even discomfort, to get the gospel to the world; but it was that boldness that accomplished the evangelism of the whole world in the first century. 419 K S.W., *Ardmore*, OK 73401.



### Endnotes

1. Philip Schaff, **History of the Christian Church**, (Grand Rapids, 1985), II, 22.
2. "The Spread Of Christianity," **Reader's Digest Atlas of the Bible**, (Pleasantville, 1971), p. 205.
3. Schaff, p. 22.
4. **The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language**, 1969, p. 585.
5. J. W. McGarvey, **A Commentary on Acts of Apostles**, Nashville, 1958, pp. 199-200.
6. Ibid., p. 4.
7. James P. Needham, "Supporting the Work," **God's Work in God's Way**, ed. Melvin Curry, Temple Terrace, 1971, p. 113.

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## **Patterns for Evangelism: Acts 18-28**

*by Jerry Cutter*

The brethren have been very explicit concerning what they expected from this part of the study. So let me go over that very briefly, so we have some guidelines to go by.

1. What the book of Acts says about choosing sights for foreign work and choosing evangelists to do the work. I think this has been touched on.
  - We are asked to tell what signs tell us to shake the dust off our feet.
  - We have been asked for information concerning how much success is enough to continue.
  - Guidelines are requested concerning the length of time an evangelist stays in a place, either at home or abroad.
  - It is asked whether long years of involvement by an evangelist violates autonomy, perhaps even hindering growth and leadership development.
  - We have been asked concerning evangelists' support both here and abroad.
2. How much danger is too much?
  - The matter of how evangelists make decisions is to be considered.
3. Are the guidelines we learn from Acts binding, or may they may be viewed as guidelines only? Is it a sin to violate such guidelines or patterns?

Neither Edwin, Johnny, nor I, with the chapters we have been assigned, can give answers to all of these questions. But hopefully we will touch upon all of them, and some of them two or three times.

I want to say a little bit to begin with about the book of Acts. Acts was written by the only Gentile writer in the New Testament, as far as we can determine, and that was Luke. It was written sometime between 60-63 A.D. The theme verse of the book of

One of the things that the Great Commission also said, was that they were to go teach and baptize, and then they were to teach " . . . them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20). There are commands in the book of Acts, if I am correct in saying that it shows how the Great Commission was to be fulfilled. Remember that Jesus said "You go, teach, baptize, and they are to keep everything I have commanded you." So that answers some of the things that we were asked concerning our study in the book of Acts.

I might remind you that every sentence does not contain a command in the book of Acts. Every sentence contributes to the whole. Something is not a command simply because it is recorded. What we have to do is rightly divide the word of truth. We all understand that point. One thing—I can't dwell on this—we don't need to—but I just point it out: There is always a consistency in the teaching of the apostles and prophets in the book of Acts. There is a consistency all the way through. They did not teach one thing in one city and another thing in another. Paul did not contradict Peter, and vice versa. The Apostle Paul, when he wrote the Corinthians, said that what he was teaching them he taught everywhere in every church (1 Cor. 4:17).

### **Acts 18**

Coming to patterns for evangelism, what I want to do is begin a little bit in the eighteenth chapter and carry over into the nineteenth. What I want to say involves Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos. I believe that we have in these four a display of discipleship. I believe that this is scripturally stated in 2 Timothy 2:2, which in a sense is the last part of the Great Commission—"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." It is me, you, faithful men, and others. That is what discipleship is all about. Until that circle is completed, we do not have discipleship.

You remember that when Paul went to Corinth he was destitute. He went over there from Athens and found work with these two Jews, the man and his wife, Aquila and Priscilla. What did Paul do? Well, he disciplined them. Now we know that he formed a friendship and that friendship developed into a relationship. Whether or not they were members of the church, we are not certain, they probably were not. Anyhow, he lived with them, he

Acts has been touched on: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8)

The book of Acts can be divided into sections, but the thing I want to notice here just briefly, is how Luke gave what I would call progress reports. You will read over there in Acts 6 where the Grecian question arose. Then the Bible says, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). So that was one of those progress reports.

We go a little further over into Acts 9, and you will find that the disciples were scattered after the death of Stephen and the persecution of the church. Then Luke says, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts 9:31). It's not just Jerusalem now, the Jews and the Grecian Jews, it is "all Judaea, and Galilee and Samaria."

I could read several more of these progress reports. I was a little bit intrigued by these reports, and how the gospel kept moving on, despite all the obstacles they came in contact with. But what was (this is an important question)—what was Luke's purpose or intent in shaping the material of the book of Acts like he did? What is the reason it was designed like it was? It was not to describe the lives of the apostles—it was not "Acts of the Apostles," because most of the lives of the apostles are not described in any detail in the book of Acts. We know that it was not a history of the day, because Paul preached in some places that are not even mentioned in the book of Acts. What is the purpose of the book of Acts? I believe that the purpose of the book of Acts was to show how the Great Commission was fulfilled. When Luke wrote his friend Theophilus in the book of Luke, he concluded by mentioning the words of Jesus, where He says "... that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:47). And we know that that is the way it developed. By the time the book of Acts was concluded, it had been preached all the way to the great city of Rome. So Acts was written to show how the Great Commission was to be fulfilled.

taught them, and since they were Jews, they surely heard him in the synagogue. He trained them in spiritual matters, publicly and privately, but what I think we need to remember is that his teaching was clothed in real life. When Jesus chose the twelve from the disciples in Mark 3, you remember that they accompanied Him all the time that He was in His earthly ministry. We have learned something about discipleship. Here's the reason that I want to remember this: after eighteen months Paul left Corinth. He wanted to get back to Jerusalem in time for the Passover. He went over to Ephesus and taught in the synagogue. When he did, the Jews wanted him to stay longer. However, the Apostle Paul said (I am paraphrasing, and I am sure he was saying this in effect): "I can't stay any longer, but don't worry, you have Priscilla and Aquila." Then the Apostle Paul went on his way. Priscilla and Aquila found a Jew, lately come from Alexandria, and that was Apollos. He was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, knowing only the baptism of John the Baptist (Acts 18:24-26). Priscilla and Aquila (Paul was gone now), through the doctrinal grid that Paul had given them, taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly. They taught him the truth. And then what happened? Well, Apollos immediately determined that he would go over to Corinth. Now you have the complete circle. First it was Paul, then you have Priscilla and Aquila, and then they taught Apollos, and he ended up right over there where they all came from. Now here is what we need to remember—it is me, you, faithful men, then others. I do not believe that we can scripturally leave a work until this discipling process is complete. What I am saying is, in a new work, if it is unable to reproduce itself before we leave, or if we do not leave someone in charge that can teach and train these people, then it will die. You want to know where to start and where to end? Well, you do not end until it is able to reproduce itself. Then we can go on to another work.

### **Acts 19**

Now going a little further into the book of Acts, into chapter 19, we learn that the Apostle Paul returned to Ephesus. He found certain disciples and asked them "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" To say it another way, he was simply saying, "Did you know the church had been established?" They said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (19:2). Now they knew that there was a Holy Spirit, but they did not know that the Holy Spirit had been given on the day

of Pentecost. So Paul asked them then, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" They said, "Unto the baptism of John." This may seem a minor point in the passage (we are looking for patterns), but what I believe is, it is scriptural and proper to ask people what they believe and where they stand. I will tell you one thing, if you go into a work, and you do not get that clear, you're going to find a problem somewhere along the line. You will save heart-ache and confusion.

Notice something else here in Acts 19:8. It says that Paul went into the synagogue. Paul always started with those with whom he was the closest to religiously. He went into the synagogue, and in every new work that I have ever been in, we go to those that we are the closest to religiously. That is what Paul did. Now, why did Paul go into the synagogue when he was supposed to be an apostle to the Gentiles? Well, this was the right place to begin. We must remember that the Christian religion was not a contradiction of the old, but rather, complimented and fulfilled it. This was the right place to begin. The problem was that the Jews did not believe their own law. If they had believed their own law, of course they would have readily accepted Jesus. The Jews wanted the Romans to believe that Christianity was a new religion, and was contrary to God and the Old Law. In short, in rejecting Christ they were rejecting God and their own law. But why was Paul in the Jews' synagogue? Remember that there were both Jews and Greeks, who were not idolatrous Gentiles, in that synagogue. They were Gentile proselytes. This shows that Paul went to those that he was the closest to religiously. If he were living today, he wouldn't shoot off over to the Moslem world, or among the Hindus, or somewhere way off in Timbuktoo. The Apostle Paul began his work this way. I know it works. I did it in the work that I will talk about tomorrow. I did it in work that I did in the world beginning from ground zero—no members there at all, no one with whom to work. What are we going to do? Well, this is one of the things to remember. Remember the conversion of Cornelius—he was a believer in God (Acts 10).

There is something else I want to notice in Acts 19:8-9:

And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that

way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

We need to re-emphasize that it is both scriptural and right, under some circumstances, to pull out. The Apostle Paul knew that it would be counter-productive for him to remain in that situation. To say it another way, there is a time to leave. I met a man in Australia who was a Disciples of Christ preacher who attended the services where we were. He was one of these we would call tongue in cheek "Love everybody." He did not like the idea that we would not accept all those denominational people around Boulder or Kalgoorlie where we lived. But you know one of the things that he could not gainsay was this verse right here. When these people opposed themselves, and opposed Paul and the truth, then Paul separated himself and took the disciples with him, and went into the school of one called "a tyrant" and began to preach the gospel. I repeat, it is right and it is scriptural, under some circumstances, to divide off, take the disciples with us, in order for the work to be saved. I think that that would say some things to the unity in diversity people also.

Now one thing, this is just a minor point in the passage, but he did go into the school of Tyrannus, and we know that over in Acts 28, he met in a rented facility there, his own hired house. We also know that in the first century church, when there was all that tremendous growth—I might be meddling here, but I don't think so—when there was all that tremendous growth, they did not have any church buildings, as far as the history of the church is concerned. I want to say something about this. It is sort of like the subject of recreation, and other things that we talked about—church buildings do not save people. They are necessary sometimes. They are a necessary convenience. But let us not ever get the idea that it is going to save someone. Now here is one of the hazards in a church building—we are locked in. You are locked into this community. You are not going to be able to easily get out of this community if you need to. But if we are in rented facilities, or some other kind of environment, and we see it is not the best place, we can easily move. One of the things that I have done in the work abroad, is generally we are not bothered with church buildings. We are not locked in. We can easily move to a new location and try there if we are not doing well in the first place. But whenever we then decide that we are going to build a building, then we are set for the duration, you

might say. I am not saying that I am opposed to them, because I am not, and would have one myself, if it were possible. We do have to keep this in mind.

We also notice in Acts 19:21, it seems that Paul, after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit that after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, and had gone to Jerusalem, he would "... also see Rome." It has been emphasized that Paul has been working out of Antioch, and it has been emphasized that they sent him, and we know all of that is true. But notice, the Apostle Paul did not wait for word from home before he decided to go to Macedonia, Achaia, and Jerusalem, and even to Rome. I want to say something here that I think is very important today. I do not want you to jump ahead of me, because if you do I will be in trouble and I may be anyway. But when the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians 4:1, he said, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." These were his critics he was writing to; brethren in the church. One of the things that we preachers had better learn, and learn well, is that we are primarily ministers of Jesus Christ. The word "minister" here is not the same root word from which we get "deacon," but the root word had to do with an "under-rower." It can mean "a servant." By an "under-rower," it had to do with the men that rowed the huge Roman galleys. They were not the masters of the ship, but they were the servants of the master. But later the word came to mean "a helper" or "an assistant," to the king, or judge, or someone like that. The Apostle Paul told these brethren, and we all have to be reminded, that preachers are ministers of Jesus Christ. We are brethren. You have the responsibility of doing something. I have the responsibility of doing something. But we are still ministers of Christ.

Paul was not in some way saying, "I am above being examined; I am above the law." When he went into the next chapter, 1 Corinthians 5, there was a man in the church that he commanded them to pass judgment on. (We have a point here that we are going to have to stress a little bit.) We do not judge people's motives, though; we judge people's conduct. That is what he was talking about in 1 Corinthians 5. Jesus talked about motives in Matthew 7. But what are we trying to say? Here's the point—if you read the sixth verse, he said:



And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes: that ye might learn in us [by us or through us or by our example—jc] not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another (1 Cor. 4:6).

We are not to think of men beyond that which is written. The Apostle Paul said, "You are not going to be able to judge me by your biases and prejudices." He said, "If you are going to judge me, judge me by what is written." We are ministers of Christ. The only way we can examine the preacher, and the only way the preacher can examine a wayward member, is by *what is written*. My first responsibility, I am telling you, is to Jesus Christ. And even though the church says, "But we don't want you to preach Christ," I am not responsible to the church when that is asked—I am a minister of Christ! I have got to preach in season and out of season, or as someone has said, that is when they like it and when they do not like it. In his preaching, the Apostle Paul did not even wait for orders from Antioch in Syria before he said, "I am going to Macedonia and I am going to Rome." Later, he said he was going to some other places, and indeed he did. So we are obligated to the church, but the first of all our obligations is to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are His ministers.

Something else here in 19:34-37:

But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

You remember there was a riot there at Ephesus, and they carried on and acted like beasts. Finally, things settled down, and the town clerk got up and said, "Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess." This is an outsider talking to outsiders. What about it? So what?

There is a lot there! This outsider, this town clerk said, "You people know two things. Number one, they did not rob our temples. They did not gain financially from what they preached." I believe, to the everlasting credit of the preachers in the Lord's church, it can be said that we do not gain from those to whom we preach to around the world. You brethren have made that possible. We do not gain materially. And even if you did not, we still would not. But it is the second part that I am interested in. He said, "And they were not blasphemers of our goddess Diana." Do you think that Paul spent all of that time over at Ephesus where he was centered, and not say anything about idolatry? We know that he preached against idolatry to such a degree that this riot actually took place. But the town clerk said, "I'm going to tell you something and it cannot be gainsaid—these men did not blaspheme our goddess." What we sometimes view as hard preaching is nothing but rude preaching. If a number of our religious enemies could comment concerning our preaching, could they say that we did not blaspheme them? Could they say, if a Catholic were to hear us, could he honestly say to his friend, "Well, they preached against Catholicism, but they did not blaspheme Catholicism." If one were to hear us that was a Baptist or a Methodist, could they honestly say, "Those people did not blaspheme our religion"? We are going to tell them they are wrong, but I wonder if we are following this pattern. The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 10, said "I was with you in meekness and gentleness." Can we say that when we teach we are meek and gentle—what those words mean in that particular instance? Paul was perceived as being reasonable, logical, and kind in refuting error and in preaching Christ. That looks like just a little simple point there, but it was not put in there just to fill up a little space. They were able to preach Jesus Christ in such a way that not even the outsiders could say that they gained financially by what they preached, and they did not preach it in such a way that they could be accused of blasphemy. I think we had better be careful how we present ourselves.

## **Acts 20**

A little further over in Acts 20, we find that Paul and a number of the brethren were taking the contribution to Jerusalem. I am just going to say this in passing—though this does not prove it—it shows that Paul never worked alone. Whenever he went out on these missions, he sometimes would lay the foundation, preach

Christ, and go on his way, but he never worked alone. I'll pick up on this perhaps in "Setting Up and Operating A Foreign Work."

In Acts 20:1-3, we read:

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

We are looking for some patterns here. Paul "came into Greece." In other words, he came to Corinth. We know that he had already told them in his letter that he wanted to winter with them (1 Cor. 16:6). So he did; he stayed there three months (Acts 20:3). But what is the point in this? Well, it was during those three months that scholars believe, and I agree, that Paul wrote the great book of Romans. Now brethren, there is a little lesson here too. There may have been those who may have said, "Don't you think Paul should be out doing a little more around town?" In reality, when this is said, it is usually said by brethren who should have been out doing the very thing they thought the preacher ought to have been doing. But Paul spent that time, a great part of it, in writing the book of Romans. We do not need to think that we need to be out spinning our wheels and knocking on every door in town to be doing something for the Lord. It looks to me like the Lord had to absolutely incarcerate Paul to get Paul to settle down and do most of his writing. Anyway, there is more to this preaching than zipping around the country and the world. But I would like to say this on the other hand: we preachers have to be careful that we do not get so tied down with the world that we no longer do the Lord's work. We have a great amount of talent in the brotherhood. Have you ever wondered where the church would be, the church of Christ, if all of the talent in our brotherhood had been utilized one hundred percent in the last forty years? You would not know the world! So we preachers had better be very, very careful.

Well, what did Paul expect of the Romans? He asked for and expected the Roman brethren, whom he had never visited, to assist him in his work. It is right and scriptural for preachers to write and ask for help, and expect to be helped, in their work.

They may not get it, but it is not unscriptural. I'll tell you what he said in Romans 15:24: "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company." The NIV says, "I hope to visit you while passing through, and have you assist me on my journey there." It is scriptural and right for preachers to ask for support and expect it, whether they get it or not. You know, as Paul would have told the Corinthians, he planted, but others, in a sense, furnished the seed. Whenever brethren support the preaching of the gospel they are helping the preacher plant that seed. We are all working for Jesus Christ. We all have a responsibility—some to go and some to help the going. I would like to say also that there is no correlation in the Scripture between preaching and money. We have already mentioned that. Paul fully expected, whether they helped him or not, to go to Spain.

I do not know when the right time to say this is, but you know, if we had waited for the brethren to ask us to go, most of the work in the world would never have been done. Now I say that very kindly, my friends. Most of the great works in the world would have never been done, if we preachers had stood back and waited for the church to send us. But, you say, "I don't know about that." Well, I do! Just ask James Orten or me. When we went in 1964 to Nyasaland, there was not a church in the brotherhood that wanted us to go. In fact, we nearly caused a revolution in the brotherhood. People were going to start new papers. Brethren were very excited. If we had waited and said "We'll go if some church says, 'You brethren go to Nyasaland'," one of the greatest works among churches of Christ in all of the world would have never transpired, and there would be no work in Zimbabwe or Zambia, as it developed.

A preacher was complaining to me about someone not sending him. He said, "The brethren won't send me." I said, "Well, if you wait for them to send you, you may wait a long time." I did not mean any harm to him or the brethren. But you know when an opportunity arises, we have got to preach the gospel. We are ministers of Christ. The brethren will, if we show we are sincere and really mean it, help us. They have every time. Sometimes not enough, but they will help us. But I am edging over into something that comes up a little later.

The Apostle Paul did not preach for money (Acts 20:33). He said, "I have covered no man's silver and gold." But incidentally, he expected the Corinthians to help him, though he would not take support from them. He certainly did. In 1 Corinthians 16:6—"Perhaps I will stay with you awhile [He did for three months—jc], or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go." That was to the Corinthians that he refused to take financial support from to preach.

### **Acts 21**

Johnny Elmore covered Acts 21 a little bit for me. How long can an evangelist stay in one place? Philip the evangelist was found in Caesarea back in Acts 8, where he was last heard from, and then eighteen to twenty-one years later, he is found still there in Acts 21:8. I mention this to drive it home a little more. No length of time is assigned as to how long an evangelist may stay in a place. You know, we are members of some church, whether one realizes it or not. No length of time is assigned as to how long one may stay in a place, and no conditions are placed upon one, other than what would apply to any other member, of course. Moreover, Paul sent Timothy the evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5) to Philippi, where the interesting thing is that the church at Philippi had both elders and deacons. Just read Philip-pians 1:1-2. That is where Paul sent the evangelist! You remember in 1 Timothy 1:3, he had Timothy stay at Ephesus, and we all know that Ephesus had elders. You know the doctrine went around several years ago—once there are elders and deacons the evangelist has to move on. I do not know where in the world that ever came from in the Scriptures. Of course, they should not inhibit the growth of the church. Hopefully, that never happens.

### **Acts 23**

In Acts 23, Paul respected the position of civil rulers. The high priest was there, and the servant of the high priest slapped Paul on the mouth and said, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" Paul did not know he was the high priest. Perhaps he could not see well enough to know it. What I am telling you is that Paul did not necessarily respect the man, but he respected the office. These offices that are in the world are God ordained too. So, we need to remember that.

Just another little thing, as we're talking about patterns and divine examples. In this same case, in Acts 23:6-10, when Paul looked at that audience, he discovered that there was a division in the audience. Part of them were Pharisees and part of them were Sadducees; when Paul perceived that, he pitted them one against the other. Then they got into a big squabble, and he got out, you might say. We are to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

### **Acts 24-26**

In Acts 24-26, we learn that we need to tell those not members of the church about their sins. You may say, "I don't know what to preach to these people." In Acts 24 we have the case of Felix. In Acts 25, we have the case of Festus. In Acts 26, we have the case of King Agrippa. When Paul taught Felix, he gave you a sermon outline. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. So if you cannot figure out what to tell the fellow, you might study that for your outline. When he got around to King Agrippa, he asked King Agrippa almost in exasperation: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" He would not even let Agrippa answer. He said, "I know you believe!" It was obvious that if one believed in the Law at all, one had to believe what Paul was teaching. Then Agrippa, almost in exasperation also, said, "Paul, Almost persuadest thou me to become a Christian?" I think it is a question, incidentally, and not a statement—"Do you think that you are going to persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul said, "I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day . . ." There were a lot of people there. Paul taught those present—not only Agrippa, but all who heard him that day—to be not almost, but altogether such as he was, except for his bonds (Acts 26:29). That is, a Christian, except for the chains.

### **Acts 27-28**

There is an interesting part on Paul's sea voyage in Acts 27 and 28. The Apostle Paul was quite a fellow. He was one of 276 people on the boat. He was a prisoner under chains and there were soldiers guarding other prisoners on their way to Rome. And that prisoner, before that journey was over, was running the whole show. He was advising the centurion, telling the owner of the ship what he should have done, he telling the soldiers, "If you don't do something about those sailors getting off, we're all going to be lost." He took over everything! Paul was a remarkable man. He was not the kind of fellow strutting around saying, "I'm

some big important fellow," but he was one that demanded respect. It did not take them long to figure out that he was a fellow who knew what he was talking about, and the respect went with his knowledge. He said, "We haven't eaten in these fourteen days." They were pretty well fasting. He said, "Everybody needs to take some food." So they all took food. He was ordering every situation. When the ship finally ran aground, the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, because they were afraid they would escape. Did you ever notice why they were not killed? The centurion wanted to spare Paul. You say, "Well, that's an interesting story." It's a lot more than an interesting story to me. I will tell you something. Though they never realize it, many people outside of the church have been spared physical destruction because of a faithful servant of God. A ship load of people was spared because of one righteous man. How many families, communities, cities and nations have been spared because of the faithful found in them. Remember that even ten faithful souls would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18 and 19. Here's the point: Faithful Christians, you may be doing more for the world than you ever realized. Because if there were no more faithful Christians in the world, there would be no reason for the world to go on.

In Acts 28:14-15, there is something here that I want to pass along. They got off of the island—onto the mainland—they went up through the country and finally arrived at Puteoli, and here's what is said:

Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

I can not hardly read this without being deeply moved. Brethren can either encourage you or discourage you. Paul was greatly encouraged. We need to be encouraged. Paul knew his fate might be sealed when he got up to Rome. In 2 Corinthians 7:6, Paul said he was "comforted . . . by the coming of Titus." Now either we are comforting one another, or we are discouraging one another. Paul was so thankful to see the brethren, and they were so thankful to see him, that he thanked God and he took courage. *Rt. 1 Box 139, Crescent, Oklahoma 73028.*

## **Paul's Evangelism to the Gentiles: What Does it Tell Us About Evangelism Today?**

*Benny Cryer*

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. In Isaiah 62:2, it says, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name." I believe that "mouth" ("or mouth-piece") of the Lord refers to the Apostle Paul. In Acts 9:15, in His instructions to Ananias in reference to Saul, Jesus told him, "He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings." In Galatians 2:7, when Paul was recounting the gathering in Jerusalem in Acts 15, Paul wrote, "They saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me." In Acts 28:28, Paul was in his own hired house, and he had been speaking to some important Jews at that time, but he told them, "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." As a result of these prophetic verses and observations, Paul made at least three evangelistic journeys to Gentile nations, and wrote thirteen of his fourteen epistles to the same. From these epistles I am expected to glean information that will assist and encourage evangelism today among other cultures.

Culture—that is a part of my talk tonight also. I was especially interested in one of the assignments: What principles can be drawn about evangelizing other cultures? The first time I went overseas, as a part of the work program there, my eyes were shining with delight so far as the prospects were concerned. "Other cultures" meant that Benny was going to have to eat their food and live as they lived. So the first Sunday that I went out into the bush, I was determined to eat with them and eat their food, because I believed that is what going to other cultures involved. Joanne had packed me some sandwiches just in case. I was glad that she did. When I requested them to bring me some food—they asked me if I wanted some and I said "Yes"—and they uncovered that food, there was a catfish about fifteen inches long. Now you know, I am a fisheater. I especially like catfish. There was a catfish about fifteen inches long. The problem was, it looked like it was still staring up at me. It had not been skinned



or fileted, like I was used to, and I turned it over and it had not even been cleaned! I asked the people to take it back and let someone have it that needed it more than I did. That was when I learned what that verse meant where it says "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but love, joy and peace." So that was my first experience, and I carefully avoided food like that after that. I have seen Don King over in the Philippines laying prostrate for hours, afraid to move, knowing what would happen if he did, because he had simply taken a bite of food or drank some of the water that was there. In one place where we were working, another evangelist had preceded me, and in this house where we were, the brother there brought out one of the biggest Pepto-Bismol bottles that I have ever seen. I did not even know they made one that big. And he says, "Brother, do you want this?" And I said, "No, where did you get that?" I knew that preacher and knew that he delighted in eating food from other cultures, but he did not realize that eating their food and getting sick was an insult to them as well.

Now, we are going to study about some things like that, but I want to notice some things we can learn from the epistles about Paul's working among the Gentile people.

First of all, and this is not something that is startling, and I was so happy to see a number of brethren bring this up today—we learn that the participants in such endeavors depended upon God through prayer. I know that is not an exciting statement, but brothers and sisters, it's one that is filled with meaning. It meant something to the Apostle Paul. I do not know how many of you have been overseas, where hardly anyone knew where you were, and maybe you did not speak their language, difficult things would come up, and you understand what prayer is all about then. In Romans 1:8-10, Paul recorded his prayer and thanksgiving for those in Rome and his journey to them. First he said:

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

Now you note here his thankfulness for their faith—the faith of those among whom he desired to work. He was not suspicious of them. He did not question them. He prayed for them and thanked God for them. He said he mentioned them in his prayers without ceasing. He prayed for a prosperous journey to them. All of this was to be by “the will of God.” These are things, when we are contemplating a work, which we need to have in our prayer life. God still hears and answers prayers. But Paul did not stop with just *his* prayers. In Romans 15:30-33, you notice his request for their prayers:

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Notice, he asked for their prayers. He said, “I want you to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” That word “strive” meant “to wrestle earnestly.” Paul wanted a striving prayer. He wanted a wrestling prayer. That indicates that there was a struggle or conflict going on. The prefix in the original word indicates that this striving in prayer would join them together with him in this conflict. So I would suggest that when we are contemplating a work, we not only pray for that work ourselves, but we enlist the prayers of those in the area where we are going.

I think I would be remiss if I did not show how those prayers were answered. In Acts 21, Paul began his journey to Rome in a strange way. Not at all in a way he has contemplated; not at all in a way he had planned. Acts 21:27 says, “. . . the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him.” They tried to kill him. All of this was heard by the captain of the guards there. He brought some soldiers and rescued Paul from this mob of people. Perhaps their prayers brought those soldiers; I do not know, but Paul was delivered from the Jews at that time. He then went to Rome, not on a luxury liner, not on a Boeing 747, but he went as a prisoner. A lot of you young men who have begun preaching the gospel in recent years, and some of these older preachers also, you want to go to foreign work, and live there, and perform to the best of your ability. Well, you want to begin praying for that, but you want to watch out because sometimes your prayers are an-

swered. Brother Edwin Morris was telling me today about some eight or ten that had told him that they wanted to go, but when it came down to it, they did not want to. Now brethren, this is something that is serious, it is something we have to pray for, it is something that we have to request prayers for, it is something that we have to live for.

Paul's prayers were answered, but not in the way that he expected them to be. He got to go to Rome, but not with freedom, not able to go about from place to place as he loved to do, but as a prisoner. In 2 Corinthians 1:11, their prayers had helped in his deliverance while preaching in Asia: "Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf." So prayers were answered about his work. He desired " . . . that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:19). Let us not forget this important aspect of prayer. It solves problems and God answers those prayers, maybe in different ways than we expect, but He hears us and we need His aid in these things.

Second, we learn that adjustments must be made for each culture.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

What does all this mean? What does this passage teach us today? There are three things I want to notice about this passage.

Notice in verse 19—"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." Now fellow preachers, who are you working for when you go out into the field? That question has been brought up today a number of times. I want to address it at this time. Are you working for the Lord? Absolutely! Are you working for a congregation? Absolutely! And if you are not, you better start it right away. I

want to tell you something. The Lord has chosen the congregations to be His body. Jesus took a fleshly body so He could travel about from place to place and do His work. Then He chose His church and called it His body so that the same thing could be done. You understand very well that the Lord has chosen to support you through the congregation, don't you? When you want help, when you want money, you don't write the Lord, you write the congregation which is His body. It is the same way when doing evangelistic work! The *church* is still the pillar and ground of the truth; the evangelist is not. We have to have the proper and correct relationship with the evangelist in this.

Are you working for the people in the area where you are? Absolutely! We go to foreign fields, and it was mentioned that we do not receive money from those folks over there, and that is right, but we are still working for them. That is what Paul meant here in verse 19. I want to tell you something as a fellow gospel preacher—you are not working for yourself. You are working for the Lord, you are working for a congregation, and you are working for those people among whom you labor, and all three have to be together in this.

Also, this adjustment to each culture for the gospel's sake is a hard and difficult task. How many of you have used 1 Corinthians 9:27 and have applied it to our keeping control of our morals, of our fleshly lusts, and things of that nature? Do you realize that it is in the context of adjusting to other cultures, and shows the difficulty of adjusting to those needs of others? "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). In other words, if he did not adjust himself in a proper way, then he would be a castaway as far as the faith was concerned. That makes it important for everyone going to another culture to make that adjustment.

Further, in adjusting to other cultures, the servant must always consider himself as being "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21). What that means is, that to the Jew Paul would become a Jew, but he would not violate the law of Jesus Christ. To those that were without law, the Gentiles, he could become that, but not to the point where he would violate a law of Christ. He just would not do that. In Galatians 2:14, Peter and others had violated this principle: "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I

said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Peter had been to the homes of Gentiles and had eaten with them, but then when the circumstances warranted it, he would not do it. Yet, he would compell the Gentiles to live as the Jews lived. Now, I have seen this principle violated, not by our brethren especially, but by people we call "digressive brethren."

For example, in Zambia, some of the digressive brethren allowed the men to have more than one wife. In fact, one of these was a leader among those who tried to get my wife and I expelled from Zambia when we first arrived over there. That church that he worked for had appointed him as an elder, yet he had two wives that he was living with at the same time. I might say that in 1989 when I went back, Brother Greg DeGough told me that we were going to a study, and he named the brother that I have just mentioned. I said, "Wait a minute! That man tried to run me out of Zambia. He went to the government and tried to get me expelled!" "Well he's changed now." When we went over to the man's house, I talked to him about it. I said, "Listen, you tried to get me expelled from this country. What's this all about?" He said, "That's before I knew better." He had disposed of one wife, now he only had one wife, he had come into our work program, and had actually started a number of congregations. So, although we have to adjust ourselves to cultures, we cannot violate the law of Jesus Christ in this area or in any other area as well.

Paul said in verse 20: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law." In Acts 16:3, Paul had Timothy circumcised because Timothy's father was a Greek, and Timothy was going to be laboring among Jewish people. In Acts 21:20-30, we have Paul assisting others in a vow that was taken there in the temple, and going along with them and actually providing materially for those vows to be completed. Some say that Paul sinned when he did that. I don't think he sinned. I think he was fulfilling just exactly what was stated here in verse 20. Paul was a Jew, nationally speaking, and could properly and scripturally participate in their customs.

Let me explain this just a little bit. The Old Testament contained shadows for the law. Hebrews 10:1—"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the

things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." This passage is speaking about those shadows back there. Paul knew, and we know today, that we have the substance. There was a time there when the shadow and the substance. Back yonder, seven hundred years before Christ, the shadow was a long way off from the substance. As time went by, the shadow got closer to the real thing. So there for a while they were there together. Those Jewish people could have the shadow and the substance there together. They could have those sacrifices—the temple services and things of that nature—and they might explain to their children: "This has been a shadow all along, but now we do this because we are Jews. Jesus Christ and his cause, they are the substances, and we have them today—the real thing." So they could have the shadow and substance together in that particular fashion.

This principle cannot be applied to any other religion or to Jews other than those who were practicing at that time. In Hebrews 9:9, the word "figure" is used—this is where we get lessons about "types" and "anti-types," and things like that. So there had to be proper understanding of the type and of the shadow, after the substances appeared. Now if the proper understanding was not there, according to Romans 14:1, those folks were considered weak. However, Paul did not prohibit them from participating in those days of things of that nature. They were Jews, and they lived as the Jews—they did not understand it correctly, they were considered weak. Romans 14:14 reveals the knowledge that Paul had obtained in order to be considered strong: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Paul got his knowledge about these things from the Lord. Romans 14:5-6 indicates that so long as they observed these things unto the Lord, and as individuals, they were to be accepted. Now Paul did this in reference to the vows that he shared in, therefore, I do not believe that he sinned in doing that. It was a matter of his being a Jew, with the type and anti-type, the shadow and substance together.

In verse 21: "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law" (1 Cor. 9:21). In Acts 17:23, 28, Paul used "the unknown God" and one of their own poets to teach a lesson. He was familiar with their culture. I think

that is one of the things that we need to do. I know personally that I have violated customs that people had in the countries where I was working. I would be reminded of that, and they would forgive my ignorance, but they did not expect me to do that the next time.

One of the things we have learned in doing overseas work is the proper use of indigenous preachers. This goes along with this particular part of that context. Our work has been so successful in Malawi and other places simply because of our willingness to do that. Our digressive brethren would learn the language—and that's fine. (I agree with what was said about that today, about learning the language and converse with them and teach in that. It is not altogether necessary because the Bible gives us interpreters and the rules to govern and regulate them.) Our digressive brethren have gone in there and tried to start churches themselves—they have gone into villages and preached themselves. They have failed. Especially a certain group of them there in Malawi. In the New Testament, in Act 6:1-2, where the Grecian widows were being neglected, they felt bad about this and the problem was solved. Did you ever notice the names of those who were to minister to the Grecian widows? They had Grecian names. I do not know if they were all Greeks, but they had that kind of name. In Acts 16:1-2, Timothy was especially valuable because his father was a Greek and his mother was a Jew. He had the best of both worlds. Paul typically used Gentile helpers to work among the Gentiles.

Brother Bayani in the state of Hawaii told me in Hawaii not too many weeks ago, "In order for this work to be successful over here, we are going to have to use Filipino preachers." He understood the necessity of using preachers of that particular race in order to accomplish the work. This is a principle that we need understand wherever we go. Use the preachers that are there if you possibly can. Now I want to tell you, sometimes they are pretty weak, and sometimes they do not have much training because of the time element that is involved, but you would be surprised at what the Lord can accomplish through such vessels as that. When I went to Zambia, the church at Edmond, Oklahoma sent me over there, and the brethren chose men to be preachers. I let them do that. I could not believe some of the choices they made, but, Oh!, what work the Lord did through those preachers, as weak as they were.

Thirdly, we learn that the places we may choose to go and the preachers chosen to do the work, may be chosen in conjunction with a congregation, a preacher, or a call from a locality.

A congregation has a right to chose a work. They are the pillar and ground of the truth! In Acts 11:22, the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch on the basis of hearing about the work there. In Acts 16:9-10, you have a call from a foreign locality. The vision of the Macedonian man appeared and asked them to come over. Let me tell you how the work began in Malawi. It is very interesting. Two of the largest groups of churches over there, among the churches of Christ, have to do with our work program and the work program of the churches of Christ that use individual cups/no Sunday school. Brother E. C. Severe and a Brother Lamani got hold—I believe it was Brother Severe—got hold of the **Old Paths Advocate** and the paper that church publishes (I do not remember the name of that paper that the Shelburn group publishes). Brother Severe went to Brother Lamani and held out those two papers and he said, "You take one and I'll take the other." And that's how we got in contact with Brother E. C. Severe. He chose the **Old Paths Advocate**. He wrote over here and got in contact with the brethren and that work began in that particular manner. Not the best of situations, but it opened a door for us that you brethren, you congregations, and you preachers have been so faithful to walk through and support.

Now, a preacher also can choose to do a particular work. In Acts 15:36—"And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." Let me tell you about we preachers choosing to do a certain work. Every once in a while the brethren get a letter from a preacher who has gotten the idea that he wants to do a work in a certain locality. He might write letters to raise money for that. Well, so long as that preacher is working in relationship with a congregation, I think that is fine. The evangelist is the arm of a congregation. Congregations might find out about a work without that evangelist, but more than likely it is through an evangelist that they are going to find out about a particular work. But this (an evangelist planning his own work independently) does not always work at all times. The congregations have to be careful along this line and preachers have to be careful along that line as well.



I would like to say something about all of these trips being taken overseas. I think they are fine. I resent any brother or any other preacher saying that they are going over there just for a vacation. I want to tell you preachers something if you have been guilty of that. You are a detriment to missionary work when you make such statements as that in front of congregations. Let me add this, the Mediterranean area is still a great vacation spot, and that is where Paul did most of his work, isn't it? Let's not make slurry statements like that! That is what Jesus meant when he said, "Judge not that ye be not judged." He was talking about things of that particular nature. (I just got back from Hawaii not too long ago, but brother it wasn't a vacation. I don't like to sit out in the sun, I don't like to swim, there is not much that I even like over there in that place.) I just do not think that we are looking at things right when we make statements of that nature.

Sometimes, I think, preachers themselves do not act right toward work like that, in that they resent congregations that choose not to support a work. It was brought up today about Paul wanting to go to certain places and the Holy Spirit would not let him (Acts 16:7)—"After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (Rom. 1:13). Notice, he said "oftentimes I purposed to come unto you." That word "oftentimes" means "many" or "much." "Purpose" means "to set before, or to set forth." He wanted to go to Spain and he wanted to visit Rome on the way. He went to God in prayer about it. He must have talked to brethren about it. He wrote to the Romans about it all, and he was ready and willing and eager to go. He was a debtor. A debtor is one who owes anything to another. Listen, Paul was the debtor, not the congregation. It is the evangelist that is the debtor.

In Romans 15:22, Paul says, "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you." Notice, "For which cause . . ." He always remembered to put the cause first. He kept working until the hindrances were removed. He did not get what he wanted—he did not get to go to Rome in the way that he wanted to go. But he remembered the cause and he put it first. So fellow preachers, congregations: whatever work we plan, whatever we want to participate in, let us always remember the Cause. Let us always remember to put it first.

In 1 Corinthians 9:18, Paul says, "What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel." What is he saying here? He is saying that as an apostle, as an evangelist, he had a lot of rights. That word "abuse" meant that he did not make full use of his rights, because he remembered the cause, and he wanted to put the cause first. In other words, a preacher today might say, "I've got a right to have this! I've got a right to go there! I've got a right to do that particular work!" What you must ask is, "What is my responsibility? What is going to be the best for the cause?" If we keep that in mind we will always be all right.

Fourthly, we learned how Paul expected his support to be taken care of. We have covered that very much today. We learned that we have the responsibility of supporting the work.

Now, we also learn that we must conduct ourselves in such fashion, so as to never make people feel inferior to us. The Jews were good at this. They would snipe at the Gentiles, and I imagine that there were some Gentiles that would snipe right back at the Jews. In Ephesians 2:14, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Galatians 3:28—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Prejudice was a special problem and it remains so today. I am anxiously looking forward to talks by our gospel preachers along that particular line.

### **Conclusion**

So we have learned tonight that the preacher and the people where he is going must depend upon God and express this through prayer.

We must make adjustments for each culture and not exploit them or make them feel inferior in any way. Incidentally, this is one of the reasons Paul would not take money from the church at Corinth and other places where he went.

The places to go, and the preachers to do the work, may be chosen by a congregation, a preacher, or a call from a locality, all working together. The congregation, however, must always remain the foundation of all such work.

The support of such preachers must be taken care of. Sometimes Paul "robbed" other churches, showing that there was a cooperative effort of the churches in supporting such work.

Prejudice must never be manifested by the supporting congregation(s) or the preacher in the field. Brethren, that is in America and in foreign fields as well. 2340 Sanguinetti #93, Stockton, California 95205.

## **Maintaining New Congregations**

*Mark Bailey*

As members of the church of Christ, we often stress the necessity of allowing the Scriptures to be our "rule book." In other words, we stress the importance of pleasing God by going to the Scriptures to determine how to do things correctly. We believe this to the extent that we often title sermons and newspaper articles, and designate radio and television programs as, "Back to the Bible" (or something similar). We, without hesitation, in studying with others concerning subjects such as the communion, music in worship, and other doctrinal subjects, encourage them to "go to the Bible" for their instruction. Likewise, today, we must return to the Bible to search for our pattern concerning how to have effective evangelism.

There are several examples found in the Scriptures that we can use as a pattern for effective evangelism. I would like to bring to your remembrance the fact that the Apostle Paul was very effective in his working for the Lord. With this fact in mind, notice what Paul did to maintain new congregations after he would leave an area.

Paul's general practice was to leave the congregation in the hands of competent teachers such as Titus, Apollos, Timothy and others. Examples of this can be read in 1 Corinthians 16:12, where Paul desired Apollos to go to Corinth. In 2 Corinthians 12:18, Titus (and another brother) was also sent to Corinth. (This is a biblical precedent of sending more than one preacher to an area to work together.) Again, Titus 1:5 records that Titus was later left in Crete to carry on Paul's work. The evangelist, Timothy, was often used by Paul to assist congregations after he left the area. In 1 Corinthians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 16:10, Timothy was sent to Corinth. In 1 Thessalonians 3:2, he was sent to Thessalonica. In 1 Timothy 1:3, he was called to Ephesus. Most likely there are other examples of one or more preachers being sent to an area to work for a period of time after a congregation was established.

The success of Paul's evangelistic efforts was brought about, not by arranging for the congregation to have a "hired preacher," but by arranging for someone to be there to do the work of an evangelist—to lead the congregation to maturity. The evangelist's work in these areas includes, but yet involves much more than, "pulpit teaching."

By studying these examples we can clearly see that the evangelist sent to or instructed to remain in an area vacated by Paul had great responsibilities resting upon him. I believe, today, that if we would allow Paul and Timothy's work to be our pattern, we would be much more effective in evangelism. As a result, congregations would grow to maturity at a more rapid pace.

I would like to share with you what Paul expected of Timothy when he was instructed to go and work with a congregation. Paul gave Timothy instructions concerning: (1) personal responsibilities as a teacher, (2) responsibilities to the congregation and, (3) personal responsibilities as a Christian. These responsibilities are given by the Lord in order to insure a successful and effective evangelistic work.

### **Responsibilities as a Teacher**

1. Give attendance: (1 Tim. 4:13)
  - a. to reading
  - b. to exhortation
  - c. to doctrine
2. Avoid unnecessary things causing strife (2 Tim. 2:23).
3. Be gentle unto all men (2 Tim. 2:24).
4. Be meek in giving instructions (2 Tim. 2:25).
5. Be longsuffering when reproofing, rebuking and exhorting others (2 Tim. 4:2).

### **Responsibilities to the Congregation**

1. That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3).
2. Godly edification. To charge that they not "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith (1 Tim. 1:4).
3. Encourage others to strive for a "quiet and peaceable life." (1 Tim. 2:1-3). Do things that bring about peace.
4. To train, help qualify, ordain and honor Elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-16 & 1 Tim. 5:17, 21-22).
5. Warn of approaching evils such as people "departing from the faith" (1 Tim. 4:1-6).

6. Teach Christians, of different backgrounds, how to act. (examples: slaves (1 Timothy 6:1-2); the rich (1 Tim. 6:17))
7. Teach "faithful men" to teach (2 Tim. 2:2)

### **Responsibilities as a Christian**

1. "Holding faith" (1 Tim. 1:19). Be steadfast and allow your faith to be your shield.
2. Holding fast the form of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13-14)
3. "Holding a good conscience" (1 Tim. 1:19). Do only what you know to be right.
4. "Exercise thyself unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7). Use your energy in godly things instead of associating with worldly type of activities such as "old wives' fables."
5. Be an example of the believers (1 Tim. 4:12):
  - a. in word
  - b. in conversations
  - c. in charity
  - d. In Spirit
  - e. in faith
  - f. in purity
6. Show respect (1 Tim. 5:1-2)
  - a. to old and young men
  - b. to old and young women
7. Follow after (1 Tim. 6:11)
  - a. righteousness
  - b. godliness
  - c. faith
  - d. love
  - e. patience
  - f. meekness
8. Flee (youthful) lusts (2 Tim. 2:22)
9. Be patient (2 Tim. 2:24).

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## **The Philippines**

*Don L. King*

Preaching the gospel in a foreign land is among the most rewarding experiences I can recall. The people are usually more attentive and teachable than the audiences one encounters in the United States. Because of this greater numbers are baptized as a general rule. This one factor alone will endear preaching abroad to most of us. We love to see results; and in most foreign places I have preached, results are forthcoming after nearly every sermon. However, foreign preaching carries with it a number of problems also. I would like to mention a few and relate the solutions discovered as a result. Allow me to preface these brief remarks with the following statement: When I first went to the Philippine Islands in March 1981, I traveled with Jerry Cutter. I knew very little about foreign work and consequently drew heavily from the many years of experience Jerry already had. We made several trips together to the Philippines as well as Malaysia and Africa. Later, I made a number of trips with Bennie Cryer who also had years of experience in foreign work. I have no doubt that because of association with these capable brethren we have been able to make fewer mistakes and wiser decisions regarding the work done in the years since. We are soon to make the fourteenth trip to the Philippines and travel among the approximately seventy congregations. We sincerely believe the work has been successful as it has, at least in part, due to the efficient and logical beginning it had. I have always appreciated Jerry and Bennie allowing me to lean on them so heavily in those early years. Their advice allowed us to get the work started right the first time. It has grown rapidly and still is. So, my sincere thanks, Jerry and Bennie, for all you have done for me and with me. May God bless you both.

In the very beginning of the Philippine work, there was the problem of whether or not to support preachers. Originally there were three or four men who had been supported by the Christian Church preachers. These brethren made the change and took their stand for the truth. It needs to be understood that those men never had any promises of support before they left digression. We had sent quite a lot of printed materials to Brother Danao back in 1976 dealing with the Lord's Supper, etc., and he had read in the **Old Paths Advocate** about the one

cup, etc., and wrote us and asked for more information. We had no idea the paper was even going to the Philippines since we were not sending it ourselves. Later, Brother Danao told me he believed Carl Ketcherside had personally sent him old copies of the **Old Paths Advocate** to make fun of us for being ignorant. However, he did not count on the honesty of Filipinos. When they read it and considered the Bible teaching, they accepted it after a time. In fact, they left the Christian Church before meeting any of our brethren. They had no way of knowing whether or not they would ever receive another penny for their preaching. The truth is that before we ever met Brother Danao, he had been teaching the one cup doctrine for nearly a year on his radio program, which was being paid for by the Christian Church! That proves that none of the Christian Church missionaries in the Philippines were listening to him, I suppose.

At any rate, Jerry and I decided after talking with these preachers that they were indeed sincere. We promised we would ask the brethren at home for some support so they could continue their work. We felt convinced they were sincere since they had already left the only promised means of support they had. The amount was low by American standards. Except for Brother Danao who had been receiving more because of his radio work, the amount decided on was \$100 each per month.

The reason for relating this bit of personal experience was to illustrate what we feel is a very important aspect of choosing native preachers. If a preacher is aware that he will be supported before he makes a change from digression, he may well be tempted to do so for improper reasons. As tempting as it might be, in our opinion, no one should ever be offered support in exchange for a change of doctrinal position. This very thing has happened in the Philippines by the no-exception brethren who offered a substantially higher amount to several faithful preachers if they would make the change and a few did. Perhaps in the United States such tactics would not be so powerful. However, in any country where the poverty level includes the vast majority of the population they are frighteningly persuasive. Likely, a group could go in to many such countries and, with enough money, buy themselves a brotherhood for a time.

So, a real difficulty must be faced in supporting native preachers. Notice 1 Timothy 5:18—"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his re-



ward." This passage applies in third world countries just as in our own land. Paul said, "that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). Paul said this to Filipinos, Malaysians, and Africans, as well as to us. Yet, if we foolishly try to support them so as to enable them to live in an American style among their brethren, brethren who can never hope to live so well, we have already corrupted our own work.

It is certainly a problem! It is difficult, to say the very least, to ever cultivate a thriving work in a foreign land unless the work is being done by natives. The older the work, the more such people are required. So we must have native preachers and they will likely have to be supported by American brethren until their own brethren have grown both spiritually and financially to the point of becoming self supportive. How to handle the problem? It is imperative to support such men to the level of prosperity (or poverty) in which their brethren live. It is so tempting to American brethren to pay them more so that their standard of living can be improved. However, as soon as this is done they are crippled and rendered virtually useless among their own people.

The choosing of men to be supported presents still more difficulties. It has been our experience that in any third world country such as the Philippines there are always men who will be preachers. That is, if Americans will support them. If a man is working on a rice plantation for less than two dollars per day, he is impressed with the possibility of preaching for \$100 per month! It should be pointed out that the same rationale is present in America. If a man is working as a farm laborer for minimum wage (or less) he is impressed by a church of Christ preacher who may be making two or three thousand dollars a month. So the temptation to become a hypocrite is certainly there. As a result, careful consideration must be used in selecting native men to preach the gospel for support.

There are probably several ways of selecting such men. However, we have gradually adopted a general rule that no man will be supported until he has been with us for at least one year (with no promise of support ever). During such time we watch him carefully. Does he have the qualifications to preach which are outlined by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 and 2 Timothy 2? Does he have the respect of brethren? Do they like him? Is he a trouble maker? Does he have good study habits, and can he carry on an intelligent Bible conversation about various top-

ics? All of these items are taken into consideration before any man is recommended for support. To be perfectly candid and honest, we have made mistakes and supported men who later proved to be unworthy. As soon as we realized that was the case, however, steps were taken to terminate the support.

In the Philippines we have tried very hard to support men according to the areas in which they live. Those who live in rural areas and need to travel very little are paid much less than a preacher we have asked to move into a city such as Manila where his expenses are obviously much higher. One case is recalled in which the supporting American congregation decided against supporting a preacher because he would be receiving either more or less than another man they were sending to. They didn't understand the situation though we tried very hard to explain it.

Hopefully, these brief remarks will have some positive impact. Foreign work is both rewarding and frustrating. Simple problems become complex oftentimes because of cultural differences and the distance from us at home who are trying to cope. However, the reward far outweighs the frustration and I have no regrets for the efforts I have made. *41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, California 94539.*

## **The Fellowship of the Mystery (Ephesians 3:10)**

*Ron Alexander*

We have considered some subjects today of extreme importance to us in the present and in our future as the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Benny requested that I spend a few minutes tonight with Ephesians 3:10. As I listened to all the presentations during the day, I thought that maybe this is one of the best verses that we could use to bring today to a conclusion:

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

In order that we might understand and appreciate the teaching of verse 10, I think it imperative to go back to the beginning of the sentence which starts in verse 8, and consider the context of this particular thought. The Apostle Paul writes:

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

I think the primary thought that is involved in the verses we are going to talk about tonight, and in reality the primary thought that has been involved with everything we have talked about today, has been the preaching of the unsearchable riches of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul was always so very thankful that he had received the grace and mercy of God; that he had been privileged to preach the unsearchable riches unto the Gentile world.

I believe that in verse 9, if we continue, the Apostle Paul states the purpose for which this preaching is done:

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ . . .

The ultimate purpose of preaching the unsearchable riches that are found in Jesus Christ, is so that all men might see; that mankind might be brought to salvation; that they might have the opportunity of one day living again in the realm of eternity. If we

were to pause and just think about the thoughts that are found in verses 8 and 9, we find the Apostle Paul preaching the unsearchable riches that are found in Christ Jesus for a purpose: that is that all men might see.

He goes on and makes some statements in the middle of verse 9 that are interesting and important. He says, "... what is the fellowship (or the dispensation) of the mystery ..." You and I have to stop for just a moment and reflect and contemplate some things. From the very moment that Adam and Eve had committed sin in the Garden of Eden, it had been in the divine mind of the Almighty God to provide a way that they might be forgiven of their sins; that mankind might have access to something different than sin and death and condemnation to an eternity in hell. And if you stop and think about it, everything that is written in the Old Testament points forward to the coming of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ and His crucifixion upon the cross of Calvary. You see, this mystery was fulfilled when Jesus died, paying the price and offering His body as the atonement for sins, purchasing us with His precious blood. By virtue of that mystery being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul in this place and many other places, continuously made reference to the fact that he was privileged to reveal a part of the mystery of God.

A mystery to us in our day and time is something that is maybe beyond our ability to understand. However, when we think about the way the word "mystery" is used in the Word of God, it always is a mystery only because God has not yet revealed it unto mankind. I think that gives us a little insight into some of the things that we encounter in the latter part of verse 9, where it says, they had "been hid in God." These mysteries had been kept secret! Even the great men of the Old Testament, the great prophets, were never privileged to understand and appreciate what they were really doing. As they wrote and as they considered the things they received from God and were moved by the Holy Spirit to preach or to write, they never comprehended those things. We will see that in just a moment.

I want you to notice first, however, the first part of verse 10: "to the intent" (or "for the purpose"—*ra*) that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Now whatever it is that is being talked about in verse 10 is to be accomplished by virtue of the church, the pillar and ground of the truth, that

which we have been dealing with and talking about and studying on all day long. Before we get into the essence of the meaning there, however, we must ask ourselves, "What is Paul writing about when he says 'principalities' and 'powers in heavenly places'?"

I guess I am a little more cautious in my old age than I used to be in my youth. Anytime I encounter a verse like this anymore, I back up and begin to approach it a little differently than I used to. I thought I understood that, but as I approached it, I thought I would see if maybe I had approached in incorrectly all these years. So all the word studies, all the commentaries, all the statements that I could find were made about "principalities and powers in heavenly places" always led back to one place: to the angelic host of heaven. I wanted it, I think, to say something different, but I could never get anything else out of it. And when you stop and think about the teaching of the Word of God in other places, is this not a very beautiful concept that is presented here by Paul?

I want to share with you from 1 Peter 1:10—"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently" (1 Pet. 1:10a). We are given a brief glimpse of how those prophets of old must have felt as they received the vision, as they received the message, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they began to pen the things that they wrote. They searched diligently. They sought some understanding as to how these things were going to be fulfilled. They only were scratching the surface and they wanted more. But Peter goes on to talk about that—

... who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things . . . (1 Pet. 1:10b-12a).

I want you to notice that! As they wrote, Peter says that they did not minister unto themselves, but they ministered unto us who live in this dispensation when the mystery of God has been revealed and unfolded, so that you and I might appreciate what has really taken place, when man was reconciled to God. He goes on:

... which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into (1 Pet. 1:12b).

If you just pause for a moment and think about that, is that not a glorious and beautiful picture that is penned by Peter on this occasion? He takes us back to those Old Testament prophets who yearned and longed and diligently searched and sought the real meaning of what they were writing. I guess there is one thing that I've never really come to grips with in this Scripture: that a lot of things are simply "hid in God." Even about the second coming of Christ, Jesus told the apostles, "I know not the time nor the season." God has some control over some things, and so it is with this mystery that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world down through the annals of time. And suddenly, when these things began to be revealed upon the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and for the very first time the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached unto a lost and dying world, it was a wonderful day in heaven. The angels that had ministered and had delivered these messages and had been a vital part of all this great scheme of redemption, now were longing to see the fulfillment of those very things.

Brethren and friends, I am afraid that sometimes you and I do not appreciate who we are and what we are. You and I are recipients of the most beautiful story and the greatest mystery that has been revealed unto us through the precious blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As I was reading some things about these verses, I encountered some things in Lenski that are some beautiful thoughts, and I just wanted to share some of them with you if I may:

God's whole plan, hidden so long, now has the veil withdrawn, as Christ's redemption reaches it's consummation in the New Testament ecclesia (or church—ra).

You see, this is to be made known by the church! That is what we have been talking about. That is what we have been studying about all day. From the day of Pentecost, as the gospel began to be preached to a lost world, and later when the Apostle Paul would be the chosen vessel unto the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit was in the process of revealing the greatest story ever told as a

part of the body of Christ, as a part of the church. I thought that the wording of Lenski was so beautiful when he said, "... redemption reaches its consummation in the New Testament ecclesia (church—ra)."

He goes on:

God's wisdom shines forth wondrously. What God's wisdom had in mind from creation onward, is made plain to the angelic world only as the church now finally rises in its spiritual splendor and is actually realized through Christ and His universal gospel.

Think about that! Is that not right? The realization of all this—that the church would present and preach the Word of God to a lost and dying world. It raised itself in splendor. Some three thousand souls were added that very first day. As has been said already today, one of the things that separates that time from ours is that there was kindled something within their bosom; there was something ignited within them that they just could not keep from sharing the greatest story ever told with everyone they met. If you and I ever reach the point where we fulfill our responsibilities, it will be as a result of that same spark and that same burning desire—to share it with everyone that would lend an ear.

There is a thought in the latter part of verse 10 that I had never given much consideration to. It says that all these things were to be accomplished "by the church." By the church is to be made known to the world and the angelic host the "manifold wisdom of God." The "many-sided" or the "multi-colored," as some render the meaning of this passage of Scripture. Lenski, I thought, had some beautiful words to say about this manifold wisdom of God:

God's wisdom is one, yet it can be termed multifarious, because it weaves a thousand apparently tangled threads into one glorious pattern. So out of the most diverse elements, where the strongest opposites clashed, where men saw only impossibilities, God, coming with means which looked hopelessly inadequate to men, worked out results which no man would have dreamed, or no angel could have foreseen; by thus telling the Ephesians how God makes this wisdom of His appear to the angels in heaven, Paul magnifies the church to its highest degree.

Barnes had some things similar to say:

In the redemption of the church, there is not merely one form or phase of wisdom, it is a wisdom ever-varying, multifaceted, ever beautiful. There was wisdom manifested when the plan was formed in the foundation of the world. There was wisdom manifested in the selection of the Redeemer. There was wisdom in the incarnation. There was wisdom in the atonement. There were wisdoms in the means of renewing the heart and sanctifying the soul. Wisdom in the various dispensations by which the church is sanctified, guided, and brought to glory.

I do not know how you feel when you look into passages like this and in some small way begin to come to grips with the reality of what is being taught. But I think all of us tonight, as a part of the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, need to feel so very keenly that responsibility that is ours to make known the manifold wisdom of God to a lost and dying world. The early church did a tremendous job, and we can too, if we simply do that which God ordains. *117 E. Hillsboro Dr., Marshfield, Missouri 65706.*



## Evangelism To The Poor

*Wayne Fussell*

The church in America today is made up mostly of the middle class. We have very few who are rich or poor. There was a time when the church was mainly made up of poorer people. God has richly blessed us. Our standard of living is quite good. Do we emphasize evangelism to the poor or just to our own class?

"Poor" is a relative term. In comparison to the poor of the world, the poor in America are rich. For example, Randy Tidmore says that he is considered rich in Honduras.

According to **The Statistical Abstract In The United States**, 13.5% of Americans lived below the poverty level (income of less than \$13,359 per year) in 1990. That's 33.6 million people. The breakdown by race: 31.9% black, 10.7% white

In 1959, 22.4% of Americans lived below the poverty level (income of less than \$2,973).

Because it is a relative term, we ask, "What poor?" One Greek word for "poor" in the Scriptures is **penes**, and refers to those who have to work for a living. Kittel says, "This word, related to **ponos** ('hard work'), denotes a person who must work for a living" (**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Abridged, p. 824) This word is used only once in the New Testament (2 Cor. 9:9).

If these are the poor we are talking about, we have a multitude of them. Most of us would qualify.

Another word, **penichros**, means "very poor," "needy," "wretched," according to Kittel. It is used in Luke 21:3. The parallel passage (Mt. 12:42) uses **ptoches**. The adjective, **ptochos**, means "poor, destitute." The noun, **ptochia**, means "poverty, destitution." The verb, **ptochuo**, means "to become extremely poor." Jesus became "extremely poor" that we might be rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

**Ptochos** or one of its derivatives is the word used in the gospels, especially by Jesus. It is used in Matthew 11:5 in assuring John that Jesus is the Christ: "... the *poor* have the gospel preached to them."

Lenski wants to make this the "poor" of Mt. 5:3—poor in spirit. Won't work. One mark of Jesus' ministry that made it superior to all others is that the poor have the gospel preached to them. False teachers generally avoided the poor. The Gentile teachers despised the poor and ignorant and so did the Jewish rabbis. John 7:47-49 shows this attitude. The Living Bible gives the true sense: "Is there a single one of us Jewish rulers or pharisees who believes he is the Messiah? These stupid crowds do, yes; but what do they know about it? A curse upon them anyway."

In Luke 4:18, Jesus applies Isaiah 61:1 to Himself: "... he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ..."

One outstanding feature of Jesus' ministry was His outreach to the poverty stricken. Other teachers showed little or no interest in them. Throughout the Scriptures we see God's concern for the poor, the unfortunate, the downcast, the depressed and oppressed. Mathew Henry says that Jesus was to be the "king of the poor." This passage (Mt. 11:5) certainly proves that an outstanding mark of His ministry was that it was a ministry to the poor.

If it was uppermost in the mind of the Christ that the poor have the gospel preached to them, then followers of Christ should emphasize its necessity. He is our example for evangelism. We should emphasize what He emphasized.

We can see from the words translated "poor" that there were degrees of poverty considered. The poor were those anywhere from the beggar to the poor working man.

We have varying classes of poor folks today. We have those who have been reduced to begging through no fault of their own as well as those who choose to do so. Then we have the varying degrees of poor according the standards of men.

I am going to take the word "poor" in our title to refer to the full range of poor, from the poor fellow who has to work for a living to the beggar on the street.

How do we evangelize these folks?

## **How To Evangelize The Poor**

It may sound simplistic, but you evangelize the poor just like you evangelize the rich and the middle-class. You "preach the gospel" to them. It is the power to save for both rich and poor alike (Rom. 1:16). Jesus said, "Go preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). He did not say to preach one kind of gospel to the poor and another to the rich.

Naturally, you approach a man on his own level of understanding, education, ability, etc. You begin where he is, but it all comes out the same: you preach the gospel.

There is another question that must be answered. It has to do with:

## **Your Attitude Toward The Poor**

Herein lies the crux of the matter. It is not so much how you evangelize the poor as it is whether you are willing to do so or not. What is your attitude toward the poor?

James discussed this matter in James 2:2-9.

There is a tendency for one to want to associate with those on his own social and financial plane or those just above him. It is easy to want to win the "good quality" folks—the ones who can add to the social prestige of the church, increase the contribution, and make the church look more attractive to the world. The poor man does not qualify.

When we seek the lost, we must not see class or color or be concerned about one's Dun and Bradstreet rating. We must see people in need of salvation. "Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all" (Prov. 22:2, NIV).

When our Sunday school brethren began their bus ministries, they brought in a lot of poor children. Some of the older folks complained that they were disturbing the assembly. This brought about the "children's church." They really preferred to have it like it was before, without all this poor rabble.

When you really fulfill the commission of Jesus, you are going to bring in people of every kind and social standing, some beneath you socially, some above.

The real question: Do we really want these folks? How do we treat them when they attend our assemblies? Do we treat them in such a fashion that they never return? Do we want them enough to go out into the "highways and hedges" and bring them into the kingdom of Christ?

### **God Is Concerned About The Poor**

Over and over in His Word He speaks His concern for poor folks: Proverbs 14:31; 14:21; 19:17; 21:13.

Pay particular attention to Ezekiel 16:49: "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy" (NIV).

Notice the Old Testament passages where God made sure that provisions were made for the poor: Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:12-21.

Consider these New Testament passages: Luke 14:12-14; Galatians 2:10; Luke 3:11; 12:33; Matthew 19:21; Acts 20:35; Ephesians 4:28; James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17-19.

### **Conclusion**

We have a definite mission to the poor, whether they be in dire poverty or just underprivileged. We cannot fulfill our purpose without carrying out that mission. The example of Jesus is sufficient evidence to prove it, the commands of the Bible enforce it, and the basic principles of the Bible confirm it.

So, "Let's do it!"

*6126 Land O' Trees, Shreveport, Louisiana 71119.*

## **Evangelism Among Hispanic-Americans**

*by Murl R. Helwig*

First, I assume we are referring to Americans, meaning North Americans, working toward the conversions of the Hispanics. The reason I am clarifying this point is because I believe there is a difference between Americans working with Hispanics and Hispanics working with Hispanics. I think this will become apparent from what I have to say concerning my experiences working among the Hispanics in San Antonio, Texas.

I question the use of the word "minority" when referring to a certain class of people when we speak of the evangelism of the New Testament. Everyone should have the right to hear the gospel. Christ commissioned His disciples to make disciples of all nations and to preach the good news to all creation (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16). The New Testament does not say that the apostles on the day of Pentecost preached the gospel to the minorities, but that they preached to "God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). The Scriptures do not call the man to whom Philip taught the gospel of Christ a minority (Acts 8:27). We are to view all men alike, for Peter said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34-35). It does not matter what language they speak, the color of their skin, or their social and ethnic background. However, language, social, and ethnic background sometimes poses some difficult problems in trying to reach them with the gospel.

### **The Language Barrier**

There is one absolute necessity in reaching the Hispanics with the gospel of Christ. Faith and obedience to the gospel are essentials for the salvation of every individual. Paul said, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). It becomes apparent from this verse that communication is an absolute necessity in one's conversion. One cannot be saved without understanding the gospel and then responding to it with obedience. Therefore, one must be able to read the Scriptures for oneself or

be able to hear the gospel preached in either his/her own language or a language s/he understands. Without this essential ability to comprehend the gospel, it would be impossible for the person to be saved.

The problem that confronts most Americans in teaching Hispanics is their inability to speak Spanish. We must change our thinking that everyone must learn English if they wish to communicate with us. This one obstacle, language, would be eliminated if all Hispanics spoke English, or if all Americans spoke Spanish. However, this solution would be unrealistic. Many Hispanics speak only Spanish, and many of those who speak both Spanish and English prefer to discuss spiritual matters in the language they feel most comfortable. This, of course, is their native language—Spanish. The only way around this obstacle, that I can see, is for the Americans to learn Spanish, or for the Hispanics to learn English (if they do not know it). Even if Hispanics do understand English, they must be convinced to use that language to comprehend the divine truths of the gospel (if the Americans do not speak and understand Spanish). I might add that I know of no easy way to overcome the language barrier. It, very simply, requires time and hard work to learn a language well enough to be able to convert the sinner from the error of his ways.

While trying to overcome the language problem, these questions are sometimes asked: How well can we communicate with them in their language? How well can they communicate with us in our language? When are we prepared enough to begin a work among the Hispanics? These may seem to be needless questions, but some tried to discourage me from going to Honduras to begin the work there, because I was not proficient enough, according to them, in the Spanish language. However, even being less than perfect, one can accomplish many things. If one could be perfect in all things, then even more could be accomplished. I do not believe there will come a time when we will not be able to find some excuse for not beginning a work. There will always be some area where we need more improvement or development. Please do not go away with the idea that I am advocating that we do not have to try to improve our inadequate skills, or that we do not have to strive to acquire the skills we lack.

Any work that we choose to do, whether among the Hispanics or other peoples, must be approached realistically. We must begin by counting the cost of what it will take to do the work and

bring it to a successful conclusion. But when we have laid the best foundation, plans, and preparation that we can, it is then time to act. If we act prematurely, the results of the work may not be what we expected. On the other hand, if we to continue to wait or procrastinate, nothing will be accomplished. All I am saying is that we should use what we have to the very best of our ability. I do not believe the Lord expects any less or any more from us.

We should realize that most Americans will never be able to communicate perfectly with the Hispanics and that most Hispanics will never be able to communicate perfectly with Americans. Communication is more than a simple exchange of words. It means understanding culture or manner of life, as well as language. In order to communicate, we must not only understand the words of their language, but we should have some knowledge of their culture as well. I believe that most Hispanics feel that Americans do not understand them or their problems; and most Americans feel that Hispanics do not try to understand them, either.

What then are we to do? If we wait until these skills are attained and fully developed, we will probably still be waiting when the Lord returns. We must start now doing the best we can with what we have. Some may criticize because everything is not perfect. However, I am of the opinion that the Lord expects us to use what we have to the best of our ability.

### **My Experiences Among Hispanics in San Antonio**

Let me tell you of some of my experiences while endeavoring to work with the Hispanics in San Antonio, Texas. The majority of the people that I have dealt with are Catholics, and they, for the most part, claim to be strong in their faith. This finding should not be surprising because most of the Hispanic world is Catholic, at least in name. However, most of the ones I have dealt with are not strong Catholics, but they use this as a ploy in order to turn you away. Indeed, the majority I have encountered have little interest in spiritual matters.

Those who have been converted by the gospel of Christ and have remained faithful in San Antonio are those who have been sincerely searching for what they had not been able to find elsewhere: truth. There are many people not satisfied with what they have found in denominationalism. They are seeking for the pure

and simple truth. They have not come to our services because they were looking for a grand or convenient place to assemble nor for a large congregation. They have come looking for the simplicity that Christ ordained in the New Testament. The problem is: How do we find those who are sincerely looking for the Truth in the midst of those who are content to live as they choose or those only looking for a handout? There are very few who are really seeking the Truth. I do not have the answer or solution to this problem aside from the fact that we must continue to search for them by whatever means we have available to us.

The people who have shown the most interest in San Antonio are the very poor. However, many come not because they are poor, but they often come to the church because of ulterior motives. Some come looking for money, jobs, clothes, food, letters of introduction, etc. They believe that by being a member of the church or simply attending the church that it will provide them with food, shelter, clothes, job, etc. Once many of them have realized that this is not the primary function of the church, they have usually taken flight in search of their utopia elsewhere.

Another difficulty that I have experienced in San Antonio is that there are many illegal aliens living there. San Antonio is located near the border with Mexico. It is the first stop for many illegal aliens as they make their way north, oftentimes in search of jobs and a better way of life. I do not believe that anyone finds a problem with a person looking for a better way of life. However, one must keep in mind that they are illegal aliens, and, therefore, that very fact alone poses some problems. I have found they are usually very suspicious of many Americans, thus refusing to allow the Americans to develop a close relationship with them, something necessary in order to be effective in showing them the way of salvation. Some have the fear you may turn them over to the INS or that you yourself may be an INS official. I have also found that many of those who are not illegal aliens actually condone the inflow of illegals. They are sometimes reluctant to open up to an American because they fear that they themselves may get into trouble. Therefore, I have found many doors of opportunity closed because of this problem.

Another complication that I have found is that many come to the United States in order to find work. Thus, if their main objective is work, then all other matters are relegated to second place in their lives. Many are very worldly minded so the material



takes precedent over the spiritual. Drinking and partying occupies a good part of their time when they are not working. Therefore, many of those who have responded to the gospel do not take seriously their commitment to Christ. Many will choose to miss the assembly of the church because of their jobs.

The majority of the Hispanics that I have found in the San Antonio area are from Mexico. Since San Antonio is located close to the Mexican border, it is easy for them to go back and forth to Mexico if their papers are in order. It is difficult to try to keep up with so much transition among them. They normally do not consider the United States their home anymore than we would consider any other country our home. Their first responsibility is to their homeland. The Hispanics, as a whole, are very family oriented. The family and family reunions are sometimes more important to them than the church. They constantly make trips back and forth to Mexico in order to visit relatives or take care of some family matter. It is difficult to keep up with those who are members of the church in order to know if they are attending services while in Mexico. It is difficult just to keep in contact, and often next to impossible to conduct studies with those who are not members of the church.

### **Reaching Out to Hispanics**

How can we make our congregations more welcoming to those who show interest the church? First of all, if we have prejudice against certain individuals or particular groups of people, these prejudices must be put aside. Everyone should be greeted and welcomed equally. The individual should be made to feel that s/he is genuinely welcome. One of the easiest and simplest things we can do for those who come and speak only Spanish is to give them some literature or tracts in Spanish. I believe that every congregation should have literature on hand in Spanish. (The reason that I am mentioning Spanish is because it pertains to my topic, but it should not be limited only to Spanish.) We never know when someone who only speaks Spanish will come to one of our services. Even though in many congregations no one would be able to speak to them in Spanish, they could give them some literature about the church in their own language. Also, get their name and complete address so they could continue to receive more material in Spanish, for instance the Spanish paper that we publish, **El Pregonero Latino**. I would like to say a little more about this paper.

I feel that one of the most successful endeavors that I have had a part of is the publishing of a paper in Spanish. One of the problems that we have faced for years is the lack of printed material in Spanish for members of the church, as well as for those who are interested in the church who speak only Spanish. The Spanish paper, **El Pregonero Latino**, has taken some of the writings of our brethren and made them accessible to others who speak Spanish. The success of this work cannot be attributed to one individual, but it has only been made possible through the work and cooperation of many, several of whom are here at this study. The benefit of this work is not confined to one geographical area, but it includes almost all of the Spanish-speaking areas of the world.

The paper has also been the means for advertising and distributing tracts. Thousands of tracts have been sent to those interested in hearing and studying the gospel of Christ. More than 2,000 tracts have been sent out just during the month of December. There have been requests for tracts and correspondence courses from South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Mexico, Spain, and the United States.

The results of this work have been tremendous. Not only has it helped fill a gap in the lack of printed material in Spanish, but two preachers and a congregation in Mexico were convinced to leave the innovations that have invaded the church over the years and take their stand on the Truth and return to the Bible pattern of worship. We have also received several invitations to come and study with people. We praise God for these wonderful results.

### **Conclusion**

I have spoken about some of the findings that I have encountered in the San Antonio area while endeavoring to work among the Hispanics. Also, I have mentioned some of the negatives or problems in the work. I feel sure that my findings will not prove to be true in all other areas. I have found the work at times to be very difficult and very discouraging. However, there is a bright spot in it all. Those who have been converted and are faithful to the Lord tend to make the work easier, encouraging, and worthwhile. 7446 Saddlewood St., San Antonio, TX 78238-2151

## **Evangelism Among African-Americans**

*Bobby Cunningham*

I appreciate the invitation to share some views on this topic, although I feel that I am not the best man for the job. There are brethren with more experience in this area. Some that come to mind are: Brother Art Lynch of Glendale, Arizona, Brother Richard Reed of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Brother Keith Brown from Kansas City, Missouri; Brother Cleo Gaston from Farmerville, Louisiana; Brother Booker T. Price from Hazelhurst, Mississippi; Brother Doug Young of Houston, Texas; and Brother Russell Hall of Los Angeles, California. These brethren, and others that I am familiar with, have spent a large portion of their lives working in the black community as I have, and we welcome the opportunity to share some of their experiences with you.

First, let me say that I am not an evangelist, therefore I cannot do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5). I am simply a local teacher that works with a local congregation that happens to be black. I do not hold myself out to be some expert in evangelizing black people or any other people. Just because I am black does not mean that I am an expert in understanding black people or the best ways to teach them. Therefore, all of my remarks must be understood from this perspective.

At this point some clarifications and definitions are in order. First, briefly, the word "evangelism." There are only three passages of Scripture that contain the word "evangelist" that I am aware of, from which we get the noun "evangelism":

1. Acts 21:8 refers to Philip as being an evangelist.
2. Ephesians 4:11 says that God had appointed some for perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry, and the building up of the body.
3. In 2 Timothy 4:5, Timothy was reminded to do the work of an evangelist.

However, there are over 130 Scriptures that contain phrases such as "glad tidings," "preach the gospel," "the gospel," that come from Greek words that are variants of the same Greek root word, **euangeloo**, which means "to bring glad tidings." This is the root word from which "evangelist" is derived. From examining these verses I came up with a working definition of "evangelism"—"The process of preaching and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature" (Mk. 16:15; Col. 1:23).

At the outset of this discussion let me say that as I understand the use of the word "evangelist" and the Bible pattern of evangelism, I see no distinction, separations, special arrangements, or accommodations for any group, racial or otherwise, except what falls in the category of "all creatures."

Next, the term "African-American." In being totally honest with you from a personal point of view, I find the term very inaccurate. I understand the intent of those who coined the term—keeping in touch with one's heritage and roots and so forth. However, I am not as concerned about my roots as I am about my soul. Paul was concerned with his future as a soul in Philippians 3:13—"forgetting those things which are behind." Certainly, I try to do that. There are many, many bad experiences that black people have suffered, not only at the hands of white Americans, but at the hands of many peoples. So I try to prevent remembrance of those things at all cost. "African-American" is simply the politically correct label that is in vogue at the moment. I was not born in nor have I ever been to Africa. I prefer to simply be identified as an American.

In my opinion, herein lies some of the symptoms of the problem that we face today on this issue. We have a strong tendency in society to identify, to separate, to distinguish, to make a difference in people; both blacks and whites. We strive to be different, unique, one-of-a-kind. This seems strange to me that in the face of all the Scriptures that teach oneness in Christ (Rom. 12:5—"So we being many are one body in Christ"). The Scriptures teach the unity of all believers in Christ and that is what He prayed for in John 17:21 ("that they all may be one"). The Scriptures admonition against partiality and respect of persons and doing anything by partiality (1 Tim. 5:21; Acts 10:34ff). There is a very pointed Scripture that declares the ultimate equality of man beyond race, gender, and status (Gal. 3:28). This Scripture says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free,

there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." In the face of all these Scriptures, we still continue to make differences in people by the most convenient means, and that is by race.

What makes this topic so difficult for me is that when I read it is struck me that there was an inherent assumption present. Evangelism among African-Americans—the statement itself assumes a position that I am not convinced is true—that spreading the gospel to black people is different from spreading it among whites, or Hispanics, or Asians, or even the Russians. There is a very popular belief among many people that the best way to be most effective in evangelism is to send people of their own race to work with them. That seems like a very reasonable premise at first thought. It certainly has a lot of intuitive appeal to it. The only problem is that we cannot fully support that with the Scripture. For example, consider one passage of Scripture. When Peter went to the Gentiles in Acts 10, it certainly could have been argued that Peter was not the best man for the job, because of his race. Had he come to them strictly as a Jew, promoting and advancing Jewish causes and positions, he would not have been the right man for the job. But he came as a messenger of God only, with good news concerning the opportunities that awaited them in fellowship with Jesus Christ.

You know, I applaud the brethren that had the courage to put this topic on the agenda. However, for it to even be on the program at all is evidence that something is dreadfully wrong. Somebody realizes that the brotherhood has dropped the ball of evangelism to the black community. And that is good. What I am saying here is that if we feel that we have dropped the ball of evangelism among black people, *then we have dropped the ball of evangelism*. No one can feel good about what is being accomplished in this area, or any part of the world where we are working at present, until it is being carried out in a non-partisan fashion. I do not care how many congregations we have established in Africa, Australia, or wherever—those works are good—but we need to understand that there is much evangelism that needs to be done Stateside. It will keep us all busy from now until the Lord comes back if He waits another two thousand years. We cannot offset the lack of effort in the American black community by concentrating on Russia, Mexico, or even Africa itself. Do we really believe that Paul on any of his journeys made his visits to places based on how many Jews or Gentiles were in

the area? Or to be more specific, how many of his own kind was there? Paul's kind was the upper crust, the rulers, the chief priests. Those were the kind of people he grew up around and learned from.

Fellows, if we know anything about Paul or any of the apostles, we know that they were not concerned about cultural differences, family background, or race, when it came to evangelizing. We need to stop kidding ourselves. On the contrary, he was incensed at such hypocrisy, especially among his fellow laborers. You will recall his encounter with Peter in Galatians 2:11. He withstood Peter to the face when Peter's true prejudices were forced into the open, when he refused to eat with the Gentiles when the Jews came to call. These were non-issues with Paul and he showed great courage in letting his feelings be known publicly. He did not spend his time looking for excuses not to go, and do what he knew deep down needed to be done. He was concerned with one thing: gaining more people to Christ. He did not care who they were, what they were, or where they were, he wanted them in Christ. Until *we* focus on the goal and not these insignificant stumbling blocks, there will still be a need to put this subject on programs such as this.

There is one passage of Scripture that I want to talk about. I think this passage shows Paul's attitude and vision, and it should be ours:

And unto the Jews I became as Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

You see, brothers and sisters, it is about gaining people. It is not about highlighting differences. To paraphrase: Paul would say, "And unto the blacks, I became as a black, that I might gain the blacks." That is what it is all about. It is about saving people. It is not about who and what they are. It is about gaining people. Is this not what we should spend our time thinking about? Peter evidently reasoned that some came shorter of the glory of God than others. That is the reason he acted that way. But did God

not give Paul the best approach—to evangelize every creature on earth? Did He not say in Isaiah 55:11, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it”? It is the Word that does it, brothers and sisters! It is not us! We keep leaning upon our own understanding and thinking that there is some better approach to these things. *There is no better approach than the Word!* After all, it is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16).

Those of you who know anything about the efforts in America to support the spreading of the gospel to black people by the brotherhood at large, know that it has almost been non-existent Stateside. This is not a put-down, it is just the truth as I understand it. A few scattered congregations have supported black preachers, however, the number is few. Why? I think we do know the reason why—we tend to stereotype people. You know the stereotype: we tend to think that all blacks are lazy and shiftless, they are on drugs or dope dealers. This is largely not of our own doing; it is the media that portrays that it is dangerous to be a black male in this country because the murder rate among black males is the highest in the country. I think that the ultimate stereotypical example that I could use to show you that it is very, very wrong to stereotype anybody, is our Lord and Saviour and Jesus Christ. You know what they said Jesus in John 1:46, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth? He can’t be anything good—He came from Nazareth!” This is the ultimate humiliation that they inflicted upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, to stereotype anybody for any reason is very wrong.

The Sunday school brethren have made tremendous strides in establishing congregations in black communities in the United States. Many of you already know that. When it was not wise for white preachers to work in black neighborhoods in the early 1940s and 1950s, they supported black preachers, and this is why they have strongholds in many major U.S. cities today. You are not going to go into any major city today without finding a Sunday school congregation somewhere there. This is not to say that only black preachers could have accomplished this. In the midst of segregation in the 1940s and 1950s, it would have been difficult for them to accomplish this in any other way, so they were wise in using that approach. Today, that approach is suspect in my opinion. For many years my family and I attended a pre-

dominantly white congregation. We invited all our many friends to come there and worship—black friends. They informed us that they did not feel comfortable. "Blatant shades of racism," they would say. So what could we do to remedy that? Well, we started a congregation in a predominantly black neighborhood, thinking that this would be more "effective." How wrong could we be?! It was not the people at all—those people we invited have not showed up yet. It was the truth that made them uncomfortable, not the people in the white congregation.

There is just not enough time to talk about this subject fully. It could be the theme of an entire study. However, in closing, I want to notice something that Jesus said. The Lord said many things that are so simple and yet so profound and full of truth. We may totally ignore them because they are so simple. In Mark 12:33, Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Think about that for a minute. What makes this so easy or so difficult to do? Among other things, one of the things that He might be saying with this statement is this: "Love your neighbor like yourself, because your neighbor is just like you." He loves his children. He wants to be happy. He wants to live in a decent neighborhood. He wants his children to go to a good school. He wants to be able to worship as he pleases. Take me for instance. I am just like you. My name may be different maybe. My name is Bob—there may be some other Bobs out there. I am from a little small town in Louisiana, but I want the same things that most people want; I just happen to be black. I love my wife just like you love yours. I hate going to work sometimes, just like you do. I even love the Lord and the church, just like you do. When we get to know people we realize, "These guys are just like I am. They want the same things that I do!"

I do not go through any special preparation to talk to a white person about the gospel, and I make a point that they feel that I have not, because I have not. I just talk to them in the same manner that I would talk to anyone. My personal philosophy of evangelism is one patterned after Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:22—"I have become all things to all men."

Not long after you begin association with anybody, you are going to learn their interest—sports, family, gardening, exercise, and even the Bible and religion. More times than not, when I talk to these people I find we have similar interests. I simply build on this common ground to take the relationship to the



level where I want it to go. People are the same everywhere. They all have similar interests. I believe that whites can understand blacks better by simply realizing that we want the same things that you do—pure and simple.

I believe that anybody can evangelize anybody if they realize that it is God that does the increase, we only do the planting.

### **Conclusion**

There is evangelism going on in the black community. It is being done on a part-time basis by many black and white preachers, such as the men that I named at the beginning. They hold down full-time and part-time jobs. Many of them need support but they have not been able to get it. This lack of support has not diminished their commitment to evangelize the black community. In some ways it has increased their efforts. They know and feel that if they do not do it, it will not get done, with or without the help of the brotherhood. Lip service is constantly paid to the need for it, but no real tangible support results. In the black community we evangelize anybody and everybody who will listen. We support each other when we can, but time, funds, and resources are limited. From a brotherhood perspective, I do know that there are few congregations that support black preachers or even consider it a priority. Many times the black churches do not even feel a part of the brotherhood, because they are not even included in occasions such as this on a regular basis. What message is this sending to our young people or to the world that we are trying to evangelize? Today, in 1993, many of us know first-hand of congregations that do not accept black people in their fellowship. Before we can live up to the call for evangelizing the world, we have some internal evangelizing that is long overdue. Peter had to be convinced through a vision that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). He said, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Do we perceive that too? Or better yet, do we want to perceive it? I would not serve a God who was a respecter of persons. I am embarrassed to say that I do not know of a single black preacher who is totally supported by congregations in our brotherhood. Brother Richard Reed and Brother Doug Young have been fully supported at various times in the past, but at present the support is just not there. Sad, but true.

So what is the solution? It does not lie at this Study. We can kick the issue around, but solutions come from people not Studies. We need individual commitments: to not be carried along with every wind of doctrine and belief, and to not conform to the world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:1-2). The real challenge before us today is to give in to loving the Lord. We can talk about this until the cows come home, but the real challenge is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. If we give in to that, that leaves no room for partiality, for prejudice toward anyone, whether in evangelizing or socializing.

Looking back thirteen years ago, I was a Methodist preacher. When I obeyed the gospel I had been in the Methodist organization a long time. One of the greatest disappointments I had when I became a Christian—it hit me like a ton of bricks—was the prejudice I encountered as I began to go around and teach and preach. Even the Methodist people, as wrong as they were (I would not even begin to support the things that they teach), did try to bridge this racial gap by going into black communities. They just spread their false doctrine, but I have to give them credit for going into black communities. Prejudice was really a big disappointment to me. But it explained the lack of effort to concentrate in the black community. Prejudice has such a stifling effect on evangelism! It was so amazing to me then. Today, thirteen years later, little has changed. *8618 New Mexico Circle, Shreveport, Louisiana 71109.*

## **Preparing the Sponsoring Church for Foreign Evangelism**

*Dan Wissinger*

Preparation is the very heart of the Christian life. The Lord warned in Amos 4:12, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." As we look forward to the great task of evangelism, preparation is vital to successful accomplishment. Foundations need to be laid, questions need to be answered, and minds need to be changed. Preparation is a getting ready or making ready.

Paul told Timothy, "The church is the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is viewed in at least two ways: (1) the universal sense, i.e., the church in general, and (2) the local congregation, in which the church functions and we are a part. It is in this latter area that we want to consider the sponsoring church as it relates to evangelism.

The church is generally a product of its teaching. One of its two primary purposes is scriptural worship, i.e., in spirit and in truth. It is because of good strong teaching that the church is strong in this respect. The other purpose of the church is to evangelize the world, which was an awesome task for the apostles and, of course, is still so today.

Evangelism is, without a doubt, the greatest need of the church today. The church is to be like a flowing river, rather than a Dead Sea. Not a reservoir of knowledge, but a conduit of truth. The church is not the truth's inspiration or its authenticity, but the support of the truth in its proclamation. God did not ask for help in the creation, but we are laborers together with him in spreading the gospel (1 Cor. 3:9).

The sponsoring church is one who is responsible for the welfare of the evangelist they are sending. This congregation oversees the work and provides necessary support and direction, which includes the necessary funds.

In World War II, soldiers were called to go overseas and fight. But not everyone went or could go. Housewives collected oil and metals, people grew victory gardens, and women worked in defense plants. It seemed all were involved in the effort. Years later, when these United States were involved in the Viet Nam

conflict, public opinion was much different. People at home were less supportive; almost to the point of indifference. This indifference seriously affected the fighting men. Foreign evangelism needs the full support of the church. Abraham Lincoln said over a hundred years ago, "We are involved in a great civil war." Today, we can truthfully say that we are engaged in a great spiritual war. Someone once said, "God's plan depends on man."

Evangelism, of course, assumes the evangelist. Paul explains in Romans 10:14-15: ". . . How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" This passage refers to the original proclamation of the gospel. Paul shows that the one who is sent to preach must be sent of God. However, I believe we can see the application today, regarding the church and the preacher. No one functions separate and apart from the church. We are all accountable to someone. A willingness on both parts must exist. The church must be willing to support and assist and the preacher must possess the attitude of the preacher in Isaiah who said, "Here am I, send me."

Inspiration did not intend the bearer of good news to support himself and his family while carrying out this great task, but explains in 1 Corinthians 9:7, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?" The NIV renders it, "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?" Hence, the dependency upon the church. An additional advantage of effective evangelism is that it will also solve some leadership problems in the church. It will provide direction and compel men to develop and fill positions in the church.

### **Preparing the Church for Evangelism**

Since the weight of the Great Commission lies heavily on the church today, let us consider preparing the church for evangelism. Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." (Mt. 28:19-20). Mark records His words thus: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every

creature" (Mk. 16:15). I doubt that very many congregations are adequately prepared for the sending and support of foreign work. Some churches are carrying on in ruts well worn by long use, with little consciousness of the lost souls of the world.

### **Some Things the Congregation Needs to Know**

1. **They need to know of the need.** Congregations need to be vividly aware that God is not going to save people separate and apart from the gospel. The Apostle Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth . . ." (Rom. 1:16). But someone may ask about the heathen who never had an opportunity to hear. As Bro. Marion Frank said several years ago, "If God will save them separate and apart from the gospel, we do them a great injustice to preach to them." Ralph Winters, author of **Perspectives on the World Christian Movement**, said that one-fourth of the population of the world is nominally Christian and one-fourth of the world is being effectively evangelized, at least to some degree. This leaves about half of the population of the world with no opportunity to hear. If we are approaching a world population of six billion people, we can see the vast number who at least need to hear and have the opportunity to accept or reject the will of God.

We might ask how the success of the local church can be determined. Is it by the number in attendance or by the money collected? Surely, it is by the accomplishment of its purpose of taking the gospel to mankind. A distinguishing feature of the early church was a separation from the world, a high concept of Christian discipleship, and a clear conviction of truth.

H. A. Dixon said, "We have never really convinced ourselves that we are lost if we don't take the gospel to the world." The local congregation needs to know that the responsibility of evangelism is placed on the church, at home and on foreign soil. Phillip preached the gospel in Samaria. Refugees from Jerusalem planted the church at Antioch.

"Foreign missions" is a man-made term. The Bible makes little distinction between the good news at home and away. The question is not "Will we evangelize at home or in foreign countries," but "Will we evangelize?" To ignore either is to neglect God's command. Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision the people perish." The vision here is divine revelation. Although we

do not have a part in the revelation, as the apostles did, we have a part in preaching that which has been revealed. Hence, we see the truth of the Scripture: where there is no vision, or revelation, the people surely will perish.

The church at Antioch was a good example of a sponsoring church. It was made up of Jews and Gentiles. They were not prejudiced against other races of people. We see prejudice several places in the Bible. I think one of the reasons Jonah did not go to Ninevah as commanded was his prejudice. I also think the reason it took about ten years for the gospel to reach the Gentiles was prejudice.

The church at Antioch sent Barnabus and Saul, the best they had. Evangelism is a great task to which we need to send the best we have. They apparently converted or attracted quality men who could carry on at home. One of the duties of an evangelist is to do what he can to help men in the local congregation develop and mature so they can carry on. This will, in turn, allow the evangelist to go and preach. They were generous. They even sent funds to the church at Jerusalem, which was primarily made up of Jews.

**2. They need to know it takes money.** Are we considering the cost and not the lost? In 2 Corinthians 10 and 11, we see the inspiration of the Bible deals with the collection and distribution of church funds. In 1 Corinthians 16:2, the Apostle Paul exhorts, "... let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him ..." The Bible teaches primarily two things about the church treasury: (1) contribution, and (2) distribution. Money to support foreign evangelism can come from either additional contribution or from re-allocation of existing funds. The church treasury should be viewed as an income-expense statement rather than a balance sheet which emphasizes assets.

Congregations can, by wise decisions direct and increase evangelism by the way they spend church funds. Support should be given to those evangelists who are truly doing scriptural evangelistic work.

Foreign evangelism must not be viewed as being in competition with local work or work in the United States. George Soris, a New York stock investor who makes around two million dollars a day, said recently that it is more difficult to determine where to give the money than it is to make it. The

responsibility on the congregations is awesome. Although no one can tell another congregation how much of their funds should go to foreign work, the amount is likely indicative of how conscious the congregation is of the need for foreign evangelism.

**3. The congregation needs to know it is not easy.** Supporting foreign evangelism is very frustrating. Sometimes decisions must be made without enough or correct information. It takes long-range endeavor and commitment. It takes involvement and sacrifice. The more people there are who are deeply involved, the better.

### **Some Things the Sponsoring Church Needs to Have**

**1. The church needs to have interest.** I read a book written by a denominational preacher and he made the statement, "Most church people couldn't care less about missions." I hope this is not the case with us, but one thing we know: it takes the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.

If there is silence in the pulpit about foreign work, there will be no interest in the pews. One hears some objections, such as "charity begins at home" or "there are just as many heathen here at home." Brother J. M. McCaleb said,

Say not the heathen are at home,  
beyond we have no call;  
Where sin has gone must go his grace,  
The Gospel is for all.

Years ago a digressive preacher figured some ratios. In the United States, there was one preacher for every 48,000 people. In the world, there is one preacher for every 1.6 million people. If we waited to convert everyone here we would never move. Many think converting the heathen to Christianity is a hopeless task. The world has reached the moon, we need to reach the world. Jesus told His disciples to "Lift up your eyes."

Compared with twenty years ago the world is a much smaller place today. The world is shrinking because of improved communication, faster transportation, and general sharing of technology between developing and less developed countries. The recent passage of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) indi-

cates the trade market is spreading . . . the world is becoming more accessible. Our young men are better educated. There is more money available now to preach the gospel than there ever has been.

**2. The sponsoring church needs information.** We live in the information age. This is the reason for the increased use of telephones, fax machines, and computers. In Acts 14:27, we find about the church at Antioch: "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Notice, the church "came together." Paul did not go see a few or just call the leaders out, but the church came together and they "rehearsed," that is, they brought word back. I think Paul explained in detail what had happened. They were provided with information. This is important. The sponsoring church can be kept informed by visits, reports, letters, etc.

**3. The church needs firm, informed leadership.** People do not generally rise above their leaders in knowledge, zeal, or sacrifice. However, most will follow a leader. Decisions must be made by more than one of those who are knowledgeable about the task at hand. We do not need one-man shows in church leadership or preaching. In supporting an evangelist and his family thousands of miles from home, the leadership must maintain strong, dependable support over a long period of time. Dr. John R. Mott wrote in his book on missions, "The secret of enabling the church at home to see, undertake, and carry out its worldwide mission is one of proper leadership." People crave strong, intelligent leadership.

**4. The church needs to have love.** It should go without saying that the sponsoring church must have love. They must have love for God, for Jesus Christ, our Savior, for the church, and for lost humanity. Love is the greatest motivator there is. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son . . ." Also, we learn that we love God because He first loved us.

**5. The church needs role models.** Our young people need to see a church that is doing all it can to convert people, locally and abroad. They need to see leaders who are concerned and doing all they can to carry out the mission of the church. We need to be producing evangelists who have the attitude that Paul



taught Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the some commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). We need young men who have the commitment and courage to "go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things I commanded you . . ." (Mt. 28:19-20). It has been said, "Like preacher, like people."

**6. The church needs a general attitude of evangelism.** Paul said in Romans 1:14, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians." We must learn how to convincingly tell the gospel story on a one-to-one basis, as well as support others to do this.

### **Observations to the Sponsoring Congregation**

The congregation must first determine where to focus their efforts, and then, who will be sent. To determine the site, general research is vital. The more information that can be gathered, the better. Whenever possible, befriend people from other countries and interview others who have lived there. Sometimes a survey trip is necessary after sufficient information is gathered. Learn as much as possible about their religion, culture, language, and government.

The congregation must next decide who they are going to sponsor. A profile of the evangelist might look like this:

1. He must be grounded in the faith, with a good Bible knowledge.
2. He must have an adaptable personality. He is going to encounter some situations for which he has not planned or prepared.
3. He must possess a willingness to work with the congregation and to provide adequate information on a regular basis.
4. He must be straightforward. That is, he must be able to tell it as it is, both the good and the bad. It is only in this way that the sponsoring congregation can have a picture of the situation and be able to assist.

Finally, it needs to be determined how long the preacher plans to stay in that country or at that place of labor. It may be two weeks, two years, or longer. Also it should be determined as soon as possible how long he should stay. We know there are times the work does not move as fast as we would like. However, we also know it takes time for seed-sowing and foundation-laying for the others who will follow him.

### **Who Will Do the Preparing?**

The obligation of preparing for evangelism rests heavily upon the leaders of the congregation, on the teachers, and on the elders. From a practical standpoint, the evangelists, the preachers, must make every effort to teach and train the congregations across the country to be aware of this great need and begin this sponsoring effort.

If the evangelist opposes or scoffs at scriptural evangelism or personal work, he undermines the efforts of local leaders. If the evangelist is silent in his speech and actions about evangelism or personal work, he frustrates the teaching and work of the local leaders. Local leaders need their teaching and direction reinforced. Also, local teaching needs to follow up and reinforce the scriptural preaching of the evangelist.

### **Conclusion**

We do not know how much time we have before the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not know how long we have for world evangelism or how long we have to prepare. We must not fall into the common rationalization that the time is so short that nothing can be done or the task is so great that it is hopeless. We can make a difference. Evangelism is not optional for the church or for individual Christians. If your preaching, leading, training, thinking, and practice does not include foreign evangelism, you cannot say as the Apostle Paul said, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) *1309 S. Berkshire, Springfield, Missouri 65804.*

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## **The Setup and Operation of a Foreign Work**

*by Jerry Cutter*

We have been specifically asked concerning setting up and operating a foreign work:

1. How do we organize and operate a work in a foreign country? We are talking about starting from ground zero. We are not talking about someone who goes and starts a work, and then some church asks you to go and be a part of that work. We are talking about beginning from the beginning. What steps do we take first?
2. In a third world country, do we set up our families in the bush, or do we live in a city and operate from there?
3. Are centralized places of operation, which the world terms "compounds" necessary? Do such places of operation violate any Scripture? We are going to address all of these requests—three in number.

First, how do we organize and operate a foreign work? Who do we get to help? Let me say that there are no magic formulas, there is no master plan, but this is not to say that there are not guidelines.

It seems foolish to me that when we go into these works, some brethren want to reinvent the wheel. Rather than consult someone who can give them this information, they would rather sort it out on their own so they could call it their work. This mentality will only hurt you and the work. Now you can get help. Let me say this again, success is never guaranteed. Also, a church does not have to do a foreign work in order to be doing the work of the Lord. Do something, but you do not have to go abroad or into some foreign country to do evangelism. A church is to be commended when it wishes to, and there are great rewards.

A church must first find a work that fits its ability and personality. This may sound a little strange, but it is just obvious. For instance, many churches may not have the leadership and ability to do a large work, like in Malawi, though many churches have the ability, possibly, to do a work in some city, say in Russia.

Probably just as important, a church that does not have the finances or leadership to do a work, can certainly assist other churches that do. We do not have to be the ringleader. If you are looking for glory and praise you had better get out of the business to start with. You can assist others that do have the where-withal. So everyone can be a part of a foreign work. Every church should determine what it is capable of doing. And I want to tell you, there is no church so small that it cannot do something. I will not buy that—I have been in this business too long—I know that you can do something.

What about the reason for doing a foreign work? The reason for doing a particular work may be no greater than simply going to a new country and trying. It is better to try. I had rather try and fail than not try at all. You are looking at a man who is not afraid of failure. But you are also looking at a man who is afraid not to try. I know what it is to fail. So, it is better to try and fail than to not try at all. Incidentally, the Apostle Paul was not always successful, and I know that he was sometimes rejected. He was forbidden to enter certain places. We have been apprised of that already. They were not ready for the gospel apparently. Later, of course, he did go back into some of those places and had a great work.

Usually, the reason we do a foreign work, as was the case in Malawi, and was the case in Malaysia to a degree, and the Philippines or Australia, was because of a lead. There was some reason; some Macedonian call, and to the best of our ability we answered those calls. Sometimes, finding a foreign work can be as frustrating as doing the work. I speak this from experience. You may say, "Well, I didn't know anyone wanted to do it." You will not believe the hours or the times that we prayed for the Lord to give us guidance. I will just tell you a little bit later about praying to the Lord and asking Him to give you guidance, and He does, and you turn it down. There is no use in that. But that will come up a little bit later.

A good example is Paul in his second missionary journey. He desired to visit the churches he had first established. There is a great lesson here. I have been criticized for going back to these places and visiting. But do not neglect what you begin. To do so is a sure formula for failure. You can just put that in your book and remember it. Now, Paul, after he visited these churches, then decided to go into new areas. He was forbidden of the Holy

Spirit to go into Asia. That was to the left. He could not go to the right—into Bithynia. He went straight ahead to Troas, and of course he ended up at the Aegean Sea. Well, do you think Paul was frustrated? I know that he was. When he got to Troas, the only thing left was across the sea—Europe. He received the great Macedonian call.

What do we do in the absence of direct Holy Spirit guidance? We wait! Lot of times we try to force the issue. We must wait for these opportunities as Paul did. Do not forget, as has been mentioned several times, there is such a thing as providence. God answers prayers! The interesting thing to me is that He always does it in a greater way than we can ever imagine.

Who would have believed that the work in Malawi would become the largest work among churches of Christ? Not just us, but churches of the Christ in the world outside America. If there is a bigger work in the world, the only place I would know of (and I have my doubts about this), would be Nigeria. There have been over two thousand baptisms this year alone in Malawi, and thirty-eight churches were established. Who would have believed that in a few short years, from 1973 to now, that the work in Zimbabwe would have surpassed in size the work of the so-called digressives. Who would have believed that the Iron Curtain would have fallen without virtually a shot being fired, and that we would freely preach the gospel in the country whose leader, a few short years ago, vowed that they would hang every preacher from a light post. I have had the privilege several times now of walking right past a giant statue of Lenin, and huge portraits of him speaking to the people, right into the Hall of Officers and preaching the gospel in Russia. Who would have believed that! We can see God providentially working in the conversion of Philip and the Eunuch, Peter and the Gentiles, Paul at Troas, or in any number of foreign places, including every foreign work we are engaged in, I believe.

So to begin with, you decide upon a work you are going to be able to handle. Do not make the mistake of beginning to build and not being able to finish. I can really get excited, and hopefully not harsh, on this point that I am on.

Once you decide upon a work you can do, then what do you? Usually, you must act quickly. I do not know about all this planning and waiting around. You act quickly. Paul went immediately to Macedonia (Acts 16:10). Apollos, he determined to immediately to go to Corinth (Acts 18:27). I do not see this standing

around and planning for weeks, and months, and years; you had better get with it. So when you receive the call just be sure that you are waiting and not malingering. It is critical that one act quickly. Windows of opportunity are not open long, as can be attested to in Australia, in some places in Africa, and as almost has already happened in Russia.

There is a lesson here for preachers. No matter how capable you may be, if you are not immediately available, you are useless. You cannot work foreign work around selling the farm, holding meetings, burying the dead, or whatever your excuse may be. You can wait half a lifetime waiting for your relatives to die and then sometimes they are not all dead. You cannot wait. You have got to go. Whatever your excuse, it is not going to work.

Brethren, get a preacher who is willing to put the foreign work first. "But what about my meetings?" Well, what about them? You are in the foreign work now. You cancel all those meetings. "What if the brethren won't re-book me?" Well, speaking as an experienced voice, for the most part they will not, but you are in the foreign work.

Brethren, church leaders, and preachers; you cannot dabble with foreign work and succeed! This is where I am going to get a little temperamental maybe. If you are not in it for the duration, do not start. This is my second big frustration. The first is finding the place. The second is finding brethren who will stick it out. Who does the work when brethren pull out? Who does the supporting and looking after it?

You are so interested in foreign work this morning—I hope that is not tongue in cheek—but when is the last time anyone honestly asked, "How is the work in Zimbabwe?" When is the last time one honestly asked, "How is the work in Australia?" When did anyone ask about the work in any of these foreign places? Occasionally, but very occasionally. Did you know there is a work in Zimbabwe? Who is looking after that work? Most of you in this audience could not tell me to save your life. There is a work in Malaysia. Of course, most would not know where that place is. Who is looking after that? There is a work in Australia. Who looks after these works when the brethren walk off? One of my greatest fears is that brethren will treat the work in Russia as it is now being treated in some of these other countries and works. If you are not in it for the duration—that means maybe several lifetimes—just forget it. It only frustrates us who are trying to keep

the thing going. Somebody has to. We get the call. "Well, they have dropped another preacher. Can you help us get the support?" We are trying to get the support and keep the work going in two or three other places.

It has already been mentioned, that to begin a new work, send an experienced preacher. It is very good when possible to send an inexperienced preacher with the experienced worker. In the first century it was always "hands on training," beginning with the Lord and the apostles and on into the book of Acts with Paul and those who traveled with him.

We have noticed briefly finding the appropriate place for your congregation and choosing the preacher. Now some advice on organizing the foreign work. In most of the work now going on around the world, you can get almost all of the advice you need from those actively engaged in it, if you can trust them. There is a note of distrust in some of these speeches, and of course that reflects on me, but you can get all of the advice that you want.

Now if you choose Russia, ask the Moore, Oklahoma congregation and some of the preachers who have been there. They will tell you something. If you want to go to Tula, where I have been a couple of times, we can do everything in the world for you. We can buy you a ticket, and get you on the way pretty quick too. We can get you a visa. We can get you someone to meet you at the train, or the airport, put you on the train, ride with you on the train down to Tula, get you off, put you in the apartment. When you get there, the brethren will have done all the advertising—radio, T.V. put your name all over town. You won't be able to read it, but it will be there. Everything will be done for you—the translator, the auditorium, everything except preach your sermons, and we can give you some advice on that. Then we can reverse it and get you home.

Now there is not a lot of difference between what I just said there and sending you down to Houston, Texas to hold a meeting next week. That is not doing foreign mission work! Moore never intended to do it like that and is not doing it like that. If you are going to do mission work, you find a place and you get in there and you stay in there. You say, "I didn't know you could stay." How long do you want to stay? I can put you in there and you can stay. Now, if you just want to run back and forth to Russia and hold a meeting and then brag that you have been to Russia, you are more or less just wasting your time. If you are



interested in foreign work, then do foreign work! We have a worker over there. Jimmy [Cutter] is over there. He is over there right this minute. He is learning the language. He speaks it some already. He teaches English in one of the universities to English speaking Russians. His children can speak Russian. His wife is learning Russian. They are learning it from a Russian that speaks no English. My grandchildren can count and speak somewhat in Russian. It has been done and you can do it. The water is fine. Do you want to do it? It will not be any harder for you than it is for Jimmy, or for the Butler family that wants to go to Tula.

Even my two year old grandchild can speak Russian more than most people. (You know, every crow thinks his is blackest.) I have to tell this. Recently, they had visitors, brethren and their families in their home in Penza, and this youngster was playing with some of Colin's toys. That just doesn't work with two year olds. The Russian word for "no" is "nyet." Colin told this child in plain English "No!" But he might have just been shouting into the air. Again, "No!" Still no response. But the next one got it. He said, "Nyet!" And that child threw the toy down and went on his way. Well, they learn. They are in the environment.

You want to do work in Russia? Then plan it out and be willing to stick it out. You can easily get the advice you need for doing work in Russia and many other places around the world. But again, what is now being done in Russia, is for the most part, not the solution for mission work in Russia; except for Penza, and Tula is heading that direction.

Also, the church that decides to take the lead in a foreign work must commit itself to that work, for all practical purposes, forever. You will have no trouble finding a preacher who is willing to go to and visit Russia for two or three weeks. This is not what you are looking for ultimately. What you must look for is a preacher who is willing to commit his life to that work, if necessary, forever.

Now a word to the preacher, or about him. As with the church, so with the preacher. Do not go out of here feeling guilty—"Well, I can't go." Every preacher is not equipped for foreign work. Abilities differ. This is taught repeatedly in the Scriptures. Paul planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase. In describing spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, the church is likened to a human body with its various functions. The most important thing to remember is that every member is needed and every member

is different. So if you cannot go, we understand that. But if you are going to be a foreign worker, then be a foreign worker. Thus, we should strive to the best of our ability to do what we are equipped to do. Philip the evangelist seemed best equipped to work locally. Paul traveled widely. Paul said he was an expert at laying foundations and he planted seed. Apollos built upon Paul's foundation, watered, and edified. But we need to consider how important the foundations are. The foundation determines the size, the shape, and the strength of the building. The foundation that Paul laid was more than a footer or a stem wall. It was the first major layout of the building. There was a foundation stone with an inscription on it. I wonder if you remember what inscription is on the foundation? Well, the Bible says that Paul said to Timothy that the inscription is: "The Lord knows those that are His." Those that build on that foundation every day, if they work out there every day, have to read that inscription. Remember, the Lord knows those that are His.

Paul laid foundations. Brethren, you may not be looking for an Apollos if you are entering a true mission work. You may need a Silas, or a Paul, or someone like that. You need a preacher who has a solid spiritual background. He must have a solid marriage, if he is married. He must have the ability to withstand a lot of things. From my experience, the greatest is loneliness. We preachers are a bunch of social animals. We love to visit. We love to be with one another. We love to be with the brethren. But you are not with anyone over there sometimes. I have been 11,000 miles from home, and the only member that was meeting with me was my wife. This went on for week after week after week in Australia, until we finally got the work going in Perth. I have been in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia at the time) when there was not a single family there that believed in worship as we did. There was none. This went on for weeks. If you cannot stand loneliness, do not go into the work.

You must be able to adjust quickly. You must allow for growth. This is a big point. If you cannot allow for growth in babes in Christ you had better not go. You know, we work among older, more mature Christians, generally, and we are not very tolerant toward those who are progressing spiritually. If you cannot allow for growth in babes in Christ, do not go!

Also, the preacher should probably be at least thirty years old. Jesus was about thirty when He began His earthly ministry.

Also, in reality, in a new work, no preacher and his family should ever have to work alone, even though many of us do. After a few years this might not be a problem when the work begins to mature.

In the field, the preacher must find someone to help him locally, and very quickly. He will need help in finding everything there is—housing, schools, banks, and so forth. In every successful work I ever did, the first thing I looked for was someone to help me, and they were not always members of the church. When we landed in Salisbury, Rhodesia back in 1971, we did not have anyone meet us at the airport, we did not have a house to stay in, we did not have a car, we did not know a single brother in Christ in the town—there was none. We might as well have landed on the back side of the moon. Anyway, in Africa in the genesis of the work in the early 1950s, they had a helper. It was Severe. Then it was Danao in the Philippines, the Burts in Australia, Anatoly in Tula, Russia. You are going to need that. It is indispensable. That is first.

Now with all of that said, where do we begin the actual work? In the absence of a single Christian, what do you do? Well, we mentioned this yesterday. We begin with those that we are the closest to religiously. Paul went to the synagogue. But, Paul did not stay long in the synagogue. He only stayed sometimes a few days, or two or three weeks, but he had to start somewhere. In these experiences where I have gone, there have been converts from these places. Obviously, I do not have time to go through this, but there indeed have been—whole churches sometimes.

Then you are going to have to make yourself known. You have got to let people know you are around. You cannot hide out over there in the office. You are going to have to make yourself known through the media; especially the newspapers, through ads, articles and other means of advertisement. We have gotten members that way and brethren pointed out other ways yesterday.

We have now addressed the first request; namely, how to organize and operate a work in a foreign country. The main thing is, as Brother Wissinger and others have said, do it! Do something! And then of course if you can not do it, help someone who is willing to do it. And if you do not, we are going to do it anyway. This is not a boast. It is a statement of fact. You brethren may not be interested, but some of us are going to do it to the best of our ability anyway. Preachers, we have to have that deter-

mination! If we stand around and wait for someone to say, "Go and start a new work in a foreign country," we will wait the rest of our lives.

My second question is, "In a third world country, do we set up our families in the bush, or do we live in a city and operate from there?" We begin by saying that at different times we change approaches, and what is best in one country might not necessarily be in another. When Paul and Gayland, for instance, went to Nyasaland in the 1950s, they lived first in the bush. For that particular time this was, no doubt, the best place to live, as far as conducting the work. Later, they lived in a city. Even before Paul and Gayland, though, due to modes of travel and other things, the only way to do a viable work in Africa was to live in the bush. Gradually, with an ever expanding work and improved transportation, this was not the best place to live. Schooling for children, medical facilities, and other factors enter into the reason for living in a city. Common sense enters in here somewhere. Nobody cares if you want to live in the bush, but as things stand today, there is not one logical or sensible reason for anyone living in the bush. Again, appealing to the Apostle Paul, he never lived in the country. He operated out of cities: Antioch of Syria, Corinth, then Ephesus and other places. This is another lesson for us.

Third, "Are centralized places of operation, what the world terms compounds, necessary? Do centralized places of operation violate any Scripture?" We have never in my work had a centralized location in the sense of a mission. When James and I went to Nyasaland, now Malawi, in 1964, that was one thing we worked on right off. No more missions. I have a few things to say about this. This is associated with this living in the bush and living in a city. To begin with, no matter where we live, whether in the bush or in a city, that place will become a focal point. It was that way in the Bible: the apostles in Jerusalem, the Apostle Paul at Corinth, or the Apostle Paul at Ephesus. To give a direct answer to whether a centralized place is necessary as far as living, the answer would be "Yes," if you are going to do a viable work. Just think of the opposite and you will have your answer. Why do centralized places in Africa become more necessary than in Russia? (Well, they are necessary there too.) It is because of the very nature of the work in a third world country. Nothing beyond what it takes to survive can be found in the bush. It is just not out there. You can find food and mud houses with

thatched roofs, and that is about it. What about money, clothing, transportation, and every staple of life imaginable? Not in the bush. They are all found in a centralized location.

As for the church, what about the Bibles, study helps, and grape juice? These come from where the preacher lives. Whether you like it or not, that is where it is going to come from. You will live a long time in the bush before you will find grape juice, as a rule.

There are a lot of other things here. What can we do that they cannot do for themselves? We talked about that in our question and answer yesterday. They do not have these translations from Greek. They do not have commentaries, study helps, dictionaries, educations, and so on. Now if we are not there to help supply their spiritual needs, as I indicated in the question and answer section, they will get it somewhere else.

There is just one thing I want say here at the end. Many of our preachers living abroad nowadays live in compounds. That is just a secured area to secure your life and property. Some of them would do justice to some of our prison systems. But let me just make this statement—this will suffice to close it off. I have never referred to the place I lived in Africa as a "mission." I do not like the term and I do not use it. But I will tell you something else I do not like is the term "missionary." You may say "I'm a missionary," and then you wonder why they call the place where you live "the mission." If you want to use it, its o.k., we know what you mean, but we do not use it here in America. I do not use it.

### **Summary**

What we have done is discuss organizing and operating a foreign work. We have considered where to live in a foreign country, whether in the bush or a city. Finally, we have noticed concerning centralizing, and have determined that no matter where one may live it will always become a focal point. Thank you. *Rt. 1 Box 139, Crescent, OK 73028.*

## **Choosing Mission Sites**

*Bruce Word*

It has fallen my lot to address this gathering on the subject of choosing mission sites with a focus on foreign mission sites. I do not know that I will be dealing with all the sample questions given to me, but I will try to at least touch on them for the purpose of giving some food for thought.

The aim of mission work is to make Jesus Christ known to all men as the only Savior from sin. This is a spiritual aim and nothing is more apparent in Christ's and His apostles' ministry than this, but it still needs strong emphasis today. Our work, like theirs, is neither commercial, political, nor philanthropic. Our aim is not the reconstruction of the state or society, but to hold faithfully to our distinctive aim of preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Our field is the world and Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world," "to all nations," "to every creature," "unto the uttermost part of the earth." Christ's personal example was very emphatic when we read about His constant movements from place to place, His journeys from one part of Palestine to the other, His three clear circuits throughout Galilee, His visits to Samaria and the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. When a Sabbath's strenuous work in Capernaum had created for Him a unique opportunity, His deliberate words to His disciples are, "Let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth." So, Christ set the example. The questions for us today is "Where" and "How?"

First of all, an outstanding feature in the phenomenal development and advance of modern industry has been its careful analysis of three factors of any prospective new enterprise: (1) its immediate need, (2) the tools to be used to meet the need, and (3) the most effective method of obtaining the results desired.

The same basic and thorough analysis should be applied to the planning for Christian work, so that waste effort, inexcusable bungling, and many trial-and-error forms of activity will be avoided. It is incumbent upon the church at home to examine their efforts closely to see if their efforts are the most efficient. This is especially true with mission work, wherein the precedents set by pioneer workers have been followed more or less blindly by those who have come after them without evaluating their usefulness for today's conditions or locations. Many times, our

methods and means are not good for our modern times. What worked twenty, thirty, forty, or a hundred years ago may not work today. When the history of our mission efforts is judged these days from the viewpoint of well-planned, efficient activity, we sometimes fall very much short of where we need to be. It is a fact, brethren, that in some mission fields, after many years of work, the churches are still far from strong and there has been disappointingly little to show for the hard, painstaking efforts of the missionaries. Some of this is due, I believe, to a failure to analyze thoroughly enough the area we are to evangelize. Unfortunately, we are not led by the Holy Spirit in the same way the apostles were, and so when we set out to do a mission work, more homework needs to be done before we go!

There are basically two ways that mission work (foreign or domestic) is started: (1) we follow up on leads that we deem to be worthwhile from areas that we have not been, or (2) we decide we want to do mission work and actively plan for that work in a domestic city or foreign land where we have never been.

Most of the time our planning falls far short of what it needs to be, and our plans are really nothing more than knee-jerk reactions to our desire to be involved in a mission field. Many times, the long, thoughtful planning process comes forth in our domestic mission work, but not in our foreign mission work, and we find ourselves wasting time and money and sometimes spinning our wheels in fruitless endeavors. Seriously, brethren, many times more consideration is given to going to the next town and starting mission work than going to a foreign country. My question is "Why is that?" We seem to be ready at a moment's notice to go to foreign lands: just the opposite of what used to be. For instance, today, all that seems to be needed is some vague mention of potential work overseas and fact-finding trips are planned before anything else is even considered. We do not necessarily have to take several "fact-finding" trips when a lot of the information we need can be easily obtained from other sources. Much fact finding can be done before we ever go to an area to look it over personally, and as a matter of fact, should be done before we go personally. Every opportunity should be seized to spread the gospel. If it is a genuine opportunity then we need to respond to it. If, however, it is only a vague possibility, then we need to do some homework before spending time and money to "check things out." For example, one of the brethren in the congregation in Kuala Lumpur is employed by the federal govern-

ment and is going to be transferred to the American Consulate in China within the next two years. We may have an opportunity to go there and do mission work, but the planning and fact finding needs to begin now and not wait until two years from now to start. Since we do not have a national board of missions to find congregations to support mission work, then we need to use the means that we do have at our disposal to let this opportunity be known, so that those congregations contemplating mission work can have an opportunity to see if China is where they want to be.

As we have seen through the course of this study, the book of Acts is a text book for missionary methods. Christ, of course, was the initiator of mission work when He first sent out the twelve in Matthew 10. Later, the seventy were sent out two by two. The least discussed area of mission work is site selection, but there still are some factors that seems to be prominent, especially in the mission work of the Apostle Paul.

Looking at the history of missions in the early church, there are some things that stand out for us to see. In the early days of the church, the work of spreading the gospel was pretty much confined to the city of Jerusalem and its immediate environs. Then in Acts 8:5, Phillip went to Samaria and preached the gospel and established a church there. In Acts 9, Saul began his preaching in the city of his conversion, Damascus. Also in Acts 9, Peter preached in Joppa, establishing a work there. In Acts 11, Saul and Barnabas worked at Antioch where a church grew up and flourished. It would be from here that Paul would begin his first missionary journey. In Acts 13, while Saul and Barnabas were in Antioch, the Holy Spirit led them to leave and do mission work and under the direction of the church, The two missionaries chose as their principal fields of labor the larger cities in the more populated provinces. They visited Salamis and Paphos in the island of Cyprus, Antioch and Iconium in Pisidia, Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia. This whole tour took about three years. Wherever it was possible, they began their work by preaching in the synagogue, for therein every Jew had a right to speak. The Apostle Paul planted churches in cities which were strategic centers. He did this in order to influence a large area of surrounding country. A study of the book of Acts will show that these cities were centers of industry and commerce, usually places where the greatest number of people were.



One of the lessons that we can learn from Paul and the others is that in planning a new work (and I emphasize *planning* a new work) our plans need to be centered where the most people are. When we are following up on leads, they may not always come from large cities or major populated areas. As an example, we were following up on a reference given to us from a small rural area of bush country in Australia and had to begin the work there. We felt from the beginning that the greatest success was going to come from the major cities in the state we were in and that proved to be true. Paul selected the larger more populated cities within the provinces he traveled to begin his mission efforts. These methods of work were used in all the later journeys of the Apostle: his second journey recorded in Acts 15-18:22; his third journey in Acts 18-21:17; his final trip recorded in Acts 27 and 28, during which time he was under arrest. The main thing that I am suggesting here is that we initially pick larger populated areas to begin our work, then move out from there.

### **Criteria for Selecting New Sites for Foreign Evangelism:**

This is not an exhaustive list, but in my opinion, here are some of the criteria: (this all takes place after the decision to do a foreign work and the foreign country has been selected.) Just as in the location of any new enterprise, in mission work we need to evaluate the immediate need of the area we choose; decide on the best tools to meet that need; and determine the most effective method to meet the need. The following criteria helps us to make these decisions.

**1. Do your homework.** There is a multitude of information on just about any place we would want to go, and so much of the guesswork can be taken out of our plans if we do some homework. Many times we are so anxious to go somewhere we really do not stop to count the cost. There are many places to turn for this information.

There are several variables that need to be considered.

*Economic conditions.* That may sound strange, but we are talking about planning ahead, and this type of information can be highly valuable when we begin to work in an area. Find out something about the major cities and their economies; this is not to keep you from going, but to give you knowledge as to what you will have to contend with when you get there. This includes the modes of transportation and all forms of logistical movement

within the country. To a certain extent, you can be prepared for what you are to face in some areas and at least will not be taken completely by surprise. When I went to Australia, I was completely unprepared for many of the situations that arose as a result of the economic conditions of the area. That was my fault for not doing more homework!

*Social Customs.* This too may sound strange, but some knowledge of social customs can keep you out of trouble. Sometimes we have to learn about these things the hard way when we could have avoided these problems by doing some homework.

*Indigenous and national religion(s).* Certain religions have for centuries exerted an overwhelming influence on those who practice it, and unless we know something about this, we might find ourselves in situations we need not be in.

All of these variables are to be considered as we are doing our homework for selecting mission sites.

**2. Advance Advertising.** Through my investigations I have discovered that this can be an effective tool, but there has to be some deliberate planning. We need to advertise where possible in the newspapers of the areas we have chosen. At least, we need to check out the possibility of doing so. This information can be obtained during our homework phase of site selection.

**3. Choose populated areas as sites for evangelism.** We do not have the resources to go everywhere. Therefore, when the foreign country has been selected, then we need to concentrate on the most people. As we have already said, this is what Paul did and smaller areas, although not neglected, were more incidental. There was an urgency to get the message to the most people which called for going to where the people were. When we really examine Paul's work, we find that initially he was sent out by a local church, he went to larger cities, and taught in the most public places possible—wherever he was granted the freedom to teach.

**4. Consider the safety factor of the site.** This should not be an all consuming consideration, but one to view with an open mind.

**5. Check government restrictions.** Missionary activity may be subject to restrictions unknown to churches in the homeland. Considerable time is required sometimes in getting permits for holding meetings, erecting buildings, or buying property, etc. A new mission effort usually needs permission before establishing work in a new territory. One group in Africa reported that it made an application every year for thirty years before permission was granted to enter a certain area. This should also be done in the homework stage of a new work.

### **Conclusion**

These are some of the suggested criteria for selecting foreign mission sites. Not by any means is this an exhaustive list and maybe there will be other suggestions. 5875 *Urban St., Arvada, Colorado 80004.*

## **Choosing Preachers for Foreign Work**

*by Doug Edwards*

I am happy to share some thoughts on choosing preachers for foreign work. I come as no expert in this field, but only with a little bit of experience, some thoughts of my own, and some thoughts of others who are more qualified in this area than I am.

The story is told of the time Jesus ascended back into heaven after His resurrection. The angels greeted Him and asked how He was able to bring about the redemption of man. After hearing this story of good news, one of the angels asked, "What are your plans for getting this good news to all of mankind." Jesus replied, "I have left this job of preaching the gospel in the hands of some good friends of mine, the apostles. They will tell other people who in turn will tell others." The angel then asked, "But what will happen if these men do not do their job? What happens if the people they tell don't in turn tell others? What will happen then?" Jesus paused and then replied, "I have no other plan."

This story, of course, is imaginary, yet it illustrates the tremendous responsibility placed upon us in fulfilling the Great Commission. If we fail to accomplish the work given us, then the salvation of our generation fails. The part we play in the scheme of redemption takes on an added sense of importance.

There is a sense in which the Lord sends preachers: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Mt. 9:37-38).

Yet, we as a church also play an important role in this process of selecting men and sending them out to preach.

And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Rom. 10:14-15).

It is our role as a church in sending men out that we want to discuss. Just as an individual must respond to and accept God's offer of pardon, there is also a human element in choosing preachers for foreign work.

We will limit our study to three areas:

1. Who chooses the preacher to go overseas?
2. What kind of disposition or qualities should the preacher have?
3. Some miscellaneous questions dealing with such issues as family size and the marital status of the preacher.

### **Choosing the Preacher**

Our first area of study involves the selection of the preacher for foreign work. Since Acts contains a limited historical account of the early church, we would expect it to contain some information on how early preachers were sent out. This fact brings up some questions. Does Acts provide the pattern for all churches everywhere to follow in selecting preachers? Or does the book present principles that are foundational, while allowing some difference in the approach, depending upon the culture and circumstances of the new work? The best way to understand Acts, I believe, is to see that it contains principles for foreign work that can be used in any time in any country while also taking into account the individual needs of each country.

For instance, when considering Acts, one finds some different methods used in selecting men for the foreign work:

*1. Occupation.* In Acts 18:1-4, when Paul left Athens and came to Corinth, he found Aquila and Priscilla, who had recently come from Rome, working there as tentmakers. In Romans 16:3-5, this same couple is back in Rome with a church meeting in their home. I may be guilty of reading more into the text than is here, but it seems their occupation as tentmakers helped them in going to different places to spread the gospel. Jews were able to take advantage of their business skills and set up shop in many places throughout the Roman Empire. The same can be true today: dedicated brethren with special jobs can take advantage of their work opportunities and begin works in new places.

2. *Persecution.* After the death of Stephen a great persecution came upon the church at Jerusalem. Acts 8:4 says, "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went." The travels of Philip to Samaria (vv. 5-12) and the desert place (vv. 26-40) are then recorded. It does not appear that he waited to be sent by the church to Samaria, but rather, because of the scattering by the persecution, chose to go there. In Acts 11:19, Luke tells of others who went to foreign works because of this persecution: "Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews."

Sometimes the question is asked, "Can a man select himself to do foreign work?" The answer to this question can be "Yes." Philip and the others did not wait for the church to select them and then send them on their way. I realize these are a little bit different circumstances (persecution in this case), but the result is the same. The individual felt an obligation, based on the Great Commission, to share the gospel. If a preacher here in the States can say, "I would like to start a new work here somewhere," why can not he do it in foreign places if he has legitimate opportunities?

3. *Selection by church.* The churches at Jerusalem and Antioch best illustrate the process of the church purposely selecting and sending men to foreign works. The example of the church in Jerusalem selecting men is found in Acts 11:19-25:

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas

and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

There are several good principles to be gleaned from the example of the Jerusalem church. First, they were careful in making their selection. They did not pick just anyone. They sent Barnabas, in whom they had confidence that he could do the job. Verse 24 mentions that he was "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith." Obviously, he possessed these qualities before his selection, so the church looked for a man with certain qualities. Luke introduces us to Barnabas with these words, "Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement)" (Acts 4:36). His nickname indicates his talent: he was a reconciler, one who brought others together through encouragement. He was a bicultural man with the gift of consolation. He was a Levite who spoke Hebrew, born in Cyprus; but he also understood the Greek language and the Greek culture. He was the right man to send to Antioch, a multi-cultural center.

A second principle learned from this story involves Barnabas's selection of Saul of Tarsus as a partner in the work. The church at Jerusalem used wisdom in allowing Barnabas to select a partner rather than just arbitrarily selecting and sending someone without Barnabas's input. It is important when sending two men into a foreign work to select men who are compatible and will work together effectively. It is a fact that not all preachers are compatible.

The example of the Antioch church selecting men to send out is found in Acts 13:1-3:

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Antioch was one of the large, important cities within the Roman Empire. It was a center of trade and diplomatic relations for many groups and nationalities. Almost every form of religion within the Empire could be found here. Antioch was also home

to a large number of Jews. This melting pot of cultures gave rise to a church that would prove very successful in spreading the gospel to the Roman world. In Acts 13, when Luke begins speaking about Antioch, he begins by identifying the leaders of the church and their differing backgrounds. Simeon is believed to be an African, Lucius a Greek, and Manaean Jewish. Each leader came from a different geographical region and probably each one spoke a different language. This multi-cultural church became interested at an early time in foreign work and sent Paul out on three missionary journeys. This church becomes significant to foreign work because of their deliberate decision to send men to these works. Before this time Peter had preached to a multi-cultural group at Pentecost, but that was because of the providence of God (Acts 2). Philip preached to the Samaritans, but that was because persecution forced him out of Jerusalem (Acts 8). The church at Antioch, however, is the illustration of a church that purposely determined to send men to foreign works. This church remains an important model for us today.

The most logical method of selecting men for foreign work seems to be that of the church purposely selecting and sending men. This method not only has the approval of the Holy Spirit, but by involving a congregation, more Christians can be involved in the work.

### **Disposition and Qualities**

We have seen from the examples of Jerusalem and Antioch that in selecting preachers for foreign works, certain dispositions and personal qualities should be sought out. I am not sure we can make a distinction between "disposition" and "personal qualities," but we will try, first of all, to point out the type of disposition needed for foreign work.

An obvious characteristic this preacher must have is patience. In foreign cultures he will be bombarded with all kinds of problems, hardships, and headaches that he never imagined possible. Good, hard logic and what we think is just good common sense does not always work in foreign countries. People living in other cultures often think differently than we do. The adage that "anything that can go wrong, will go wrong" is usually true. The convenience and ease of life that we are so used to here is the exception and not the rule. So it is vital for the man selected to be one who possesses patience. Patience is important not only for the emotional welfare



of the worker, but also for maintaining good relationships with the people he is working with. These folks watch us like hawks and they can see our impatience.

Another part of the preacher's disposition should be maturity. Immaturity in the mission field creates problems that may take years to overcome. The worker must know not to be overly aggressive and rigid. He must many times make decisions that will affect the future of the work, so he must be mature and sensible in thinking. He must also not possess a feeling of superiority. In many foreign countries, Americans are not popular because of their perceived attitudes of arrogance and superiority. A worker may find himself trying to tell others how much better everything works in America. That usually does not go over very well.

In the **Journal of Psychology and Theology** (Fall 1980), an article entitled "Candidate Selection Criteria: A Survey" describes a survey conducted among seventy-eight different missionary-sending agencies about their candidate selection process. I fully recognize these are denominational bodies, and caution must be exercised. Yet the qualities these agencies look for appear to be valid for our brethren in looking for foreign workers. The most important factors selected were:

1. Depth of Christian commitment.
2. Knowledge of the Bible.
3. Past performance in church work.
4. Overall emotional stability.
5. Ability to relate to persons in other cultures.
6. Flexibility and adaptability.

I am sure that most everyone will agree that Paul was the most effective missionary the church has ever had. Because of his talents, training, and background he was uniquely qualified for the task of world evangelism. It will now be seen that Paul possessed all six of the above mentioned qualities.

Paul was deeply committed to the cause of Christ. After pointing out all that he could have enjoyed under Judaism he said,

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Phil. 3:7-8).

Only a person with a deep commitment would make the continual sacrifices that Paul did.

Paul possessed a great knowledge of the Scriptures. Even a casual reading of Paul's sermons that are recorded in Acts and his epistles show the great depth of his Bible knowledge. Festus points to this great knowledge when he interrupted Paul's message to Agrippa by saying, "Your great learning is driving you insane" (Acts 26:24). When we go to foreign grounds, we are not there for social reasons, we do not go to change their government, or build them hospitals or schools. We bring the good news of Jesus Christ to them. Paul told the Corinthians, "When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1-2). In order to accomplish this mission the preacher must possess a good working knowledge of the Bible.

Before the church at Antioch sent Paul out on his first preaching trip, he had already proven his service to the church. Immediately after his conversion Paul began preaching in the synagogues about Jesus (Acts 9:20). His preaching was so successful that the Jews wanted to kill him. He also preached in Jerusalem until, again, his life was threatened. As we have already seen, Paul helped Barnabas in strengthening the church in Antioch when it was first started. So Paul's past performance in the work was a good indicator as to the future work he would do.

This principle is true today as well. W. Gordon Britt writes,

The history of one's behavior, past responses, and experience tends to be the best predictor of the future. God's call and motivation are important, but in the ambiguity and stress of another culture, past experience and events tend to shape how the individual will respond (*Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Fall 1983).

If a brother has had a good work with churches in the past, this success is a good indication that he will do the same in a foreign work. If a brother has created problems in previous works, this lack of success is also an indication that he may have problems in a foreign work.

Paul also portrayed the proper overall emotional stability in doing his work. There is no indication that Paul was selfish or hateful with the brethren. He did not seem to be one who might throw a temper tantrum if he did not get his way. In fact, Paul's relationship with the churches and individuals that he worked among seems to be that of a loving father. Likewise, churches today should look for men who are stable emotionally in order to work successfully in foreign lands. Jealousy, anger, and prejudice are out of place in the lives of those who want to do mission work.

Paul possessed the ability to relate to persons in other cultures as he did his preaching. As he travelled throughout Asia and Europe, he did not attempt to make the inhabitants become like the Jews. In fact, he said:

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

We should remember that when we go to a foreign country to work, we should try to identify with the people in their culture rather than try to make them become Americans.

Finally, Paul possessed flexibility and adaptability. He was able to cope with whatever situation was thrust upon him. He displayed flexibility when having to deal with a sorcerer on Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12), pagan gods at Lystra (Acts 14:8-18), Greek philosophers at Athens (Acts 17:16-34), and the Jews in their synagogues. There was also the time when he had the Jew Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:1-3), while he refused to have the Gentile Titus circumcised (Gal. 2:1-3). There are times when the preacher doing foreign work must be flexible

and adaptable. When one goes into a foreign work with his mind already made up on how everything should work, and is then unyielding in the practice of his beliefs, he is courting disaster.

Have you ever wondered why Paul and Peter (or any of the other apostles) did not go on missionary journeys together? Why is it that Paul and Barnabas went on the first, and Paul and Silas went on the second and third? They may have been involved in separate works because they did not live in the same vicinity, or it may simply have been inconvenient for them to be together. And yet, there is a principle that can be learned from the fact that Paul and Peter did not work together on these journeys. The principle is that not all men are qualified to do the same job. Paul seemed to grasp the universality of the gospel and had no problem going to the Gentiles. Peter, on the other hand, seemed content to take the gospel to the Jews. His preaching to Cornelius came about through God's providence and not his own initiative (Acts 10). Later, Peter felt pressure in associating with Gentile Christians (Gal. 2:11-14).

The backgrounds of these men help us to understand their different reactions to the Gentiles. While we often talk about the differences between Jews and Gentiles, there were also differences among the Jews. There were Palestinian Jews, who lived in Judea and Galilee, and were sometimes very narrow-minded and considered themselves superior to other Jews because they lived closer to Jerusalem. There were also Hellenistic Jews, who because of the Dispersion, lived in different places throughout the Roman Empire. These Jews tended to be bilingual and bicultural. They tended to be more open-minded and tolerant of Gentiles. The difference between these Jews is seen in the problem that arose between the care of widows of the Hellenistic Jews and the Palestinian Jews (Acts 6:1-7). Paul was a Hellenistic Jew and well-qualified for a work among the Gentiles. He was bicultural and bilingual, he was a citizen of the Roman Empire, he was highly educated in two cultures and religious systems, and he was not married. Peter was a Palestinian Jew, and because of his background, he was not the best choice to go among the Gentiles.

Paul would prove to be more successful among the Gentiles, while Peter, no doubt, would prove his value in his work among the Jews (Gal. 2:9). The point is that all men do not have the same talents, and wisdom must be used to place men in the work where they can be most effective.

The teaming together of Paul and Barnabas also presents some important principles to be considered. While they possessed many similar qualities, such as being bilingual and bicultural, they also possessed some different qualities. These different qualities did not cause friction between them, but actually helped them become a better team. They complimented one another. Barnabas initially was the worker who was already tried and found faithful. His gravity, authority, and benevolence seem to point to him as the early leader. Saul of Tarsus was a man of vast knowledge, fiery zeal, great courage and perseverance, and yet he was not really tried in the beginning. With their differing talents, they were able to work together in successfully spreading the gospel. As we consider sending men together into a foreign work, perhaps we can learn from the example of Paul and Barnabas to look for men who, while possessing different talents, may be able to harmonize their abilities and work together effectively.

### **Miscellaneous Questions**

There are a few miscellaneous questions that I want to deal with at this time. Should family size be considered a factor when considering a foreign evangelist? I believe it should be a factor, but I do not think it is the most important factor. Preachers should not be penalized because they might have a larger family than some of the other brethren. Rather than family size being the issue, family stability should first be considered. The real question here is, "Can a man's family cope with the loneliness, stress, and problems that go with living in foreign lands?" I have trouble understanding the reasoning behind brethren who might frown on spending a little extra to support a preacher with a larger family in living overseas, when we can so easily support preachers for local works here, conduct gospel meetings, build new buildings, obtain new carpet and pews, pave the parking lots, and so on.

Still, there are considerations about family size that must be taken into account. Perhaps the most important factor is education. In some of the Third World countries, education for children is becoming more difficult for the preacher. In some of these cases it becomes necessary for the parents to home school their children. In some places there are private schools, but all too often these schools are becoming too expensive for us to send our children to them. In Lusaka, Zambia there is a private American embassy school, which is quite good; but it only goes through the eighth grade and it costs about \$5,000 per year per child for tuition. At that rate, it does not take long to bust the family budget. Consequently, churches must use wisdom in harmonizing the selection of a man based upon his ability and the size of his family.

Are there places where only married preachers should go? A close companion of this question is the one that asks, Are there places where only single preachers should go? I am certainly not going to say that single preachers cannot do foreign work. Paul was single when he did his work (1 Cor. 7:8) and he was certainly successful. He also pointed out there were certain advantages in being single, because the single person can completely give himself to the work, while the married individual must devote some time to family (1 Cor. 7:32-34). It could be that under difficult, primitive, and even dangerous conditions, it might be necessary to send a single man into a location. A single man can do the work as well as a married man can. The ability of a single man to work under lonely conditions would have to be taken into account.

I can see many advantages in sending families into foreign works. The wife and children contribute in their own way to the work. Their mere presence helps in establishing a good relationship with the local brethren. The preacher also receives support and comfort from his family, which helps with the loneliness of the isolation.

### **Conclusion**

Let me say this in closing: The church of our Lord is all sufficient in what she does. The church, not some human organization, is God's missionary society upon this earth. We have been given a great responsibility to see that the gospel is taken to the four corners of the world. We need leaders with vision, wisdom,

and courage to see that we fulfill our obligation to the Great Commission for our generation. One of the great responsibilities placed upon the broad shoulders of these men is that of selecting men to go to the foreign fields. May God give us the wisdom to fulfill our role in in the Great Commission. 7328 Milltown-Frenchtown Road N.W., Depauw, Indiana 47115

# **Preparing Families For Mission Work**

*Glen Osburn*

When asked if I was serious about my desire to preach in Australia, little did I know that within a few months I would be in Perth, Western Australia. I would like to have had something to read that would have given me an introduction into what to expect in foreign evangelism. To this end, I submit this work.

First of all, let me say that it is impossible to formulate a plan that will fully prepare a family for overseas or foreign mission work within a few weeks or months, if they do not already possess certain basic character traits, and a degree of spiritual maturity. However, we hope to give some helpful ideas and things to consider for those planning for overseas evangelism.

We are going to divide our discussion into five basic areas: Preparing a family Spiritually, Emotionally, Educationally, Financially, and Physically. We also have a small generic category.

## **Preparing Your Family**

### **I. Spiritually**

*1. First, ask yourself if you are the right person for the job.* Does your personality mesh with the culture in the country to which you are considering, or would your talents fit better somewhere else? If you hate the outdoors and snow, it would probably be unwise for you to go to Alaska. How adaptable are you? Are you self-motivated? Why do you have a desire to do this? If you have not prepared yourself for the responsibilities of being a spiritual example to another culture, then it is best to say "no" to the present opportunity, and prepare yourself for future ones.

Before you go, make sure your mission and purpose are personally clear. You are going to make them Christians, not Americans or American Christians. Constantly check your preferences for scriptural rather than cultural biases. Read the notes for Greg DeGough's talk in the **1991 Preacher's Study Notes**, "Preparation for the Mission Field." (Also read Bill Davis's article on "Americanizing Foreign Churches" in this volume.).



2. *Does the family share your mission?* You must be a team. While there are personal advantages to be gained by spending time in a foreign country, the overwhelming motivation of the entire family must be to serve the Lord by bringing lost souls to Christ. Take a good, hard, objective look at your family. Or better yet, ask friends whose spiritual judgment you trust what they think about your family's ability to be strong and effective in a foreign environment. And be prepared to listen to the answers.

In my opinion, it is very important that your children be spiritually strong and personally independent enough that they are apt to be leaders, not followers. This is most crucial if they are in, or approaching, the teenage years. Do not become involved in a foreign work hoping that it will strengthen your children if they are already struggling spiritually. Set aside a special time to talk with your children about the universal need of the gospel and ask them if they think, as a family, you can help. Share with them your plans for the family. Make them a part of your plans and work.

3. *Are you and your family selfless?* Selfishness is opposed to Christianity and particularly detrimental in a foreign work. You may experience feelings of being taken advantage of, taken for granted, etc. It is important that a foreign missionary family be extremely hospitable, whether it seems to be appreciated or not. A missionary family must be ready to "spend and be expended for . . . souls" (2 Cor. 12:15).

4. *Research the religions of the place you are going, and prepare your family.* There may be different male and female roles or expectations, and different social obligations and customs. (Arabian women think western women are outrageous and rude). There may be words or phrases that you use, or illustrations that you make, that will not fit in that country (i.e. "pid-dling around" and "bloody nose").

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the

weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

## **II. Emotionally**

1. *What to expect.* Prepare and plan for feelings of alienation and loneliness. Your support system (positive peer reinforcement) at first will be nonexistent. You must possess a strong personal faith and be self motivated, or fear and feelings of isolation may overwhelm you. You may feel that you have made a huge mistake, and feel crushed by feelings of weakness and foolishness. Most unsettling are the feelings of possibly possessing an "environmental" faith, due to feelings of weakness combined with isolation (i.e. you felt strong when others were around). Do not doubt your faith but recognize these feelings and grow in your commitment to Christ.

You may feel what seems to be undue stress, simply because you are the only missionary, so far as you know, preaching the truth in a particular country. You may feel overwhelmed by the responsibility and doubt you have what it takes to conquer the country for Christ. Instead of feeling the support of those who have sent you, you may feel inadequate to meet their expectations. Do not allow feelings of alienation to distance you from those who support you. Solicit feedback and input from those supporting you as they may not understand your emotional need for encouragement in this area. Some overseeing congregations understand the stresses of being a foreigner in a foreign land for an extended period of time and are willing to plan for a returning break every two years. If feelings of alienation become overwhelming, call a spiritually strong, supportive brother in Christ who you fully trust, without hesitation (Jas. 5:16; Gal. 6:1). Many concerns in this area could be alleviated by sending two preachers, together, into a new area (Eccl. 4:9-12, 1k. 10:1, etc.)

Also, remember, it is God who gives the increase.

What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth (1 Cor. 3:5-7).

2. *Get your address and phone list updated.* Arrange committed pen pals for the family. Proverbs 25:25 states, "Like cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a distant land." If possible purchase a fax machine, as this also saves money on phone time. If possible, arrange a family reunion before you go. Clue in your friends as to the nature of supportive gifts, i.e. things unique to the States which would give you a sense of being connected and familiar. (For us this was Crisco for Reba, Big Red gum for our kids, and a video of the Super Bowl for me!)

3. *Consider the strength of your family unit, your relationship to each other.* Being in a foreign environment necessitates being more dependent on each other than ever before. You've got to be "best friends" with your mate. The experience can bond and strengthen already strong family units, but can be potentially destructive for families already struggling. Communication skills are a premium.

4. *Take some familiar things with you to make you feel at home.* One preacher's wife shared that after six months, homesickness kicked in, and she wished that someone had told her to take some things that were sentimental; things from home. Take your pictures—not all of them, but important ones. Maintain familiar family customs or traditions, such as singing in the New Year and birthdays. Be cautious about practicing religious holidays that you cannot defend biblically.

Be prepared for emotional attachments that you will develop with the brothers and sisters in the country that you are going to work in. When you leave, be prepared to leave a part of your heart. This has caught many off-guard.

### **III. Educationally**

1. *Study the place you are going.* Get information from the nation's embassy, get information from the library, travel agency, etc. Have your children give a report on the country. This will give them information on the area and give them a sense of familiarity when there.

2. *Check for educational availability, public and private.* Ask about their educational standards and compare them to the standards in your community. Private schooling can be expensive. Be prepared for home schooling, to keep children on American standards. Research Correspondence schools.

3. *Consider learning the language of the country.* This is highly recommended and will obviously help in writing tracts and general communication. Some foreign words and phrases carry more meaning than our words (i.e. Elder, or old man). Even in an English speaking country, seemingly understandable words have different meanings (i.e. a "torch" is a flashlight).

#### **IV. Financially**

1. *Be informed as to the "cost of living" in the country you are moving to (i.e. Japan contrasted to Mexico).* Note that fuel and phone expenses are almost always higher. You may need to inform your supporting congregations if the "cost of living" is way out of line in relationship to your financial support.

2. *What to take with you.* Find out what is available. Overseas, the cost of shoes, electronics, car parts, books, clothing (jeans, in particular), etc., are almost always higher or not available. Be aware of tariffs for new merchandise (i.e. use it before you take it). In Africa, it is better to ship your car over than to purchase a new car there, because of tariff and import duties. Be aware of import duties when receiving book orders and packages.

3. *Tell your loved ones not to send money, checks, or expensive gifts through the mail.* The best way to receive funds while overseas is to have someone who will deposit funds (or support) on your behalf into an American bank account. You, having checks to this account, will then write and cash checks with an overseas bank. In order for this system to work, you must be a diligent bookkeeper, you must have a dependable and trustworthy American representative, and you must have a bank who will work with you overseas. Another alternative to using checks overseas is using a credit card, with your American representative receiving, paying, and maintaining your credit card account. This representative must take upon themselves the responsibility of making sure that your financial support is deposited and your bills paid in a timely fashion. (This is where a fax machine can come in handy). Some credit card companies will bill you overseas, but still expect payment in American dollars, so you still need a U.S. checking account.

## **V. Physically**

1. *Consider the health of your family, in relationship to the country.* Consider the general health of the country to which you are going, and some of its inherent health problems. Possibly the need for a water purifier (India, etc.). Possibly the need for Vitamins like "C," or the availability of Insulin for the diabetic. Consult with the American consulate for the country to which you are going for health needs, and specific medical or drug availability or restrictions.

Get a physical check-up before you go. Not only for your own peace of mind but many countries require it before they will grant a "temporary resident" visa. (Australia required chest X-rays in addition to medical report). Get immunization shots if you have not got them. Other countries have problems with diseases that we do not usually get exposed to.

2. *Passports.* To apply for a passport, you go to your local post office where you will find the forms to apply for a passport. You will need original birth certificates, for they will not accept copies. If you cannot produce the original, they will accept certified copies from the county in which you were born. If you do not know where you were born, you have problems. You will also have to produce an original marriage certificate.

There is still an option available for getting a family or personal passport for each member of the family. The family passport is cheaper to get, but I highly recommend that you get personal passports. The reason is that if one person leaves the country without the others (due to a death or illness in the family) the person who remains is left without a passport, and cannot leave the country until he has it in his (or her) possession. Please also note, that as of this writing, passports for adults are good for ten years, while passports for children are good for five years. You need to get passports as soon as possible, because you will have to send or take your passports to the embassy of the country to which you are going for visas.

3. *Visas.* A visa is a stamp or sticker put in your passport from the government of the country to which you are going, giving you permission to come there. Most countries give you a visitors visa (which is usually good for three months) at the airport. But for "temporary residents" or immigration visas (i.e. longer than three months), you have to apply with that country's embassy in

the U.S. to get permission. Often, they will not allow you to apply for this after you get to the country. There are "visa services" in Washington D.C. that can help you in obtaining your visa, but often, you can do it yourself with a little research.

Also, be aware that the country to which you are going may request a police report, which will be sent directly to the embassy. (They have been known to reject applications for visas based on numerous or serious traffic violations).

*4. Getting your stuff there.* You can mail it, but that is expensive. You can take it with you on the plane, but that is expensive. (They usually allow two pieces of luggage (plus "carry ons") per person on the plane. You can ship it through another company, or become your own "freight forwarder," from port to port. Tell them you are a missionary. They often consider this when billing. Ship your things as "used personal effects" or you may be subject to tariff laws. What ever way you do it, make a list of what you are putting into each box, not only for your own records, and insurance, but for customs or tariff officials. Note, if you are taking a library, list the books on tape and then store the tape for insurance purposes. Also, ask from the consulate where you applied for your visa, for a list of banned items (like wood and milk products, etc.).

## **VI. General observations:**

Generally, other countries have a slower pace than America. This can be a great source of irritation, considering our expectations. Use the slower pace to your advantage. A slower pace can allow for more consistent family time for yourself, as well as more opportunities for studies with others. Be aware that our pace can be considered aggressive, pushy, and rude. Be patient.

Mail is usually not as dependable as in U.S. in the areas of theft and time to deliver.

Caution your children on American pride (i.e. always talking about America). Inspire your children's interest in foreign cultures and in others in general.

Consult with others who have recently been to the country you are planning to move to, Christian or not, and ask many questions. The Bible says this is wise in Proverbs 15:22—"Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed."

### Conclusion

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With **all prayer** and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Eph. 6:10-18).

All the physical preparation we may make cannot overcome the folly of failing to pack this spiritual equipment. 4225 Toyon Dr., Diamond Springs, California 95619.

## **Cultural Adaptation**

*Greg DeGough*

This is the hardest thing I have ever done. Absolutely nothing is familiar and I often feel totally alone . . . You cannot imagine the gulf between East and West, and it makes me laugh now to think that I expected to bridge it with a smile and a handshake.

These words, written by a young Peace Corps volunteer, express the deep emotional effect that experiencing a different culture has upon most Westerners. It is called *culture shock*.

Cultural adaptation is a serious obstacle facing every foreign worker. Most groups that send workers to foreign cultures without adequate training lose more than fifty percent of their workers during the first tour of duty abroad. On the other hand, groups that adequately train and prepare their workers for their foreign experiences lose about three percent.

Our work in evangelizing the world is important and urgent. We invest much time and money in placing workers in foreign fields. If they are unprepared for what they will face, and return discouraged and defeated because they were unable to respond to the pressures of cultural adaptation, then the Lord's cause has lost valuable resources. Both the financial investment, and possibly the worker, are unavailable for His important work.

During this presentation we will discuss definitions, explanations, and general guidelines regarding cultural adaptation. However, these should be considered an introduction to cultural adaptation.

### **What is Culture?**

Culture is the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another. It is a society's "knowledge stored up for future use." Culture takes into account language, politics, economy, social relationships, psychology, religion, and national and racial differences. Culture is a society's way of thinking, feeling, and believing.



If a person wants to participate in more than his own native culture, he must understand the basic aspects of cultures. He can then use this knowledge to interpret his own culture as well as any culture to which he wants to adapt. Let's consider some basic aspects of cultures.

*Culture is layered.* The core of a culture is its world view, its view of existence and reality. The inner layer of a culture, surrounding the core, is the values that arise out of its world view. The outer layer of a culture, the one that we see, is behavior. Behavior reflects a culture's values and world view. If we want to understand cultural behavior, we must try to get deeper than the observable level of culture to its world view and values.

*Culture is learned.* Infants are not born with a culture, they are born into a culture and are trained, in time, to observe that culture's values and practices. From birth they learn to respond to situations in culturally acceptable ways. As those responses become habitual (common values, ways of speaking, ways of eating, proper greeting, handshakes, etc.), the child is enculturated.

Culture is more important than race, nationality or gender in determining how a person will think, feel, and act. If an American infant is orphaned in Africa and adopted and raised by Africans, he will be an African in culture, though he looks like an American. This is important for the missionary because, since culture is learned, anyone who desires to do so can adapt to any cultural environment.

*Culture is shared.* Each member of a society shares, in some way, its cultural knowledge and traits. When members of a society reject its beliefs, values, or behavioral patterns they are immediately suspect. They do not respond to common situations in predictable ways so they are shunned as "bad guys." This is how a society protects itself from change and from behavior that is harmful to the society in general. Missionaries should keep this in mind. If they resist adapting to new cultural behavior, they will be suspect in the eyes of the natives whose culture they have rejected.

*All the parts of a culture affect all the other parts.* Changing one part of a culture will affect all other parts in some way. Just the change to Western style housing would destroy the traditional culture of many foreign peoples by disrupting their common interactions with family members and neighbors. When

seeking to change cultural behavior that is contrary to Biblical principle, missionaries should look for Biblical replacement values, or behaviors, so that converts can continue to participate in culture without violating God's universal plan for man.

*Culture constantly changes.* Each generation receives culture from the passing generation, adds its changes, and passes them on to the succeeding generation. Culture is not static, therefore, our responses to cultural change must take into account two factors: the universal principles of God's Word, and the present state of culture.

### **Understanding Our Culture**

Before we can understand other cultures we must understand our own culture. However, questions about our native culture are not easily answered. We do not stop to analyze our culture when we are being trained. We do not ask questions such as: Why do I speak the way I do? Why do I use eating utensils instead of my hands? Why do I use particular eating utensils (i.e., forks and spoons instead of chopsticks)? Why are individual rights so important to me? Why is it so important to me to be competitive? Why do I want to be the best?

We usually question cultural behavior when another culture confronts us. Such an experience forces us to think about the differences between our native culture and the foreign culture we are experiencing. We ask: Why are they so different? Why do they think and act like that? When asking these questions we often forget that in a foreign culture they are not different, we are.

Though we question cultural behavior, we still firmly believe that our cultural behavior is best for all men. Most men think that their way of acting, feeling, and thinking is the way to act, feel, and think. If you put a poorly educated farm worker and a university scholar in the same situation, each will ridicule the other to his friends. This is the root of ethnocentrism, the belief that one's own ethnic group or culture is inherently superior to others.

Ethnocentrism causes us to take the responses of our native culture into another culture and try to use those responses in various situations. This is called "cultural overhang." Our first impression of a new culture is, "Look at all these foreigners!" We attempt to alter, or interpret, the foreigners' behavior to match what we know from our native culture. However, in a foreign

culture most of our native cultural responses are wrong for the situations we face. The foreign culture voids a lifetime of habitual response. We are the foreigners, and we are few, while the natives are many. Therefore, we must learn new responses, and make them habitual, if we want to effectively communicate in a foreign culture.

### **Cultural Relativity**

The first century Christians encountered the problem of the universal gospel. The question then was: "To what extent must the Gentiles become like the Jews to be saved?" (Acts 15:1-29; Galatians 2:11-21). The answer was that they must submit to Christ, not to Judaism.

Paul altered his actions according to different cultural standards to win those from other cultures (1 Corinthians 9:20-22). There is evidence of Paul's practice in his preaching. When preaching to the Jews, he concentrated on God's historical relations with Israel as revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. His messages were based on God's plan for Israel. When he preached to the Greeks at the Areopagus, he used Greek rhetoric to tell them about God's plan for all men. He did not quote the Jewish Scriptures, but used Greek sources to support his claims.

We must acknowledge that our native culture does not perfectly express God's standards. God does not favor any one culture (Acts 10:34-35; Colossians 3:11). Our culture is not necessarily right or wrong simply because it is our culture. Many cultural demands are not matters of right and wrong, but simply matters of taste, preference and convenience, or expediency. The missionary must learn to recognize his beliefs, values, and behaviors that are part of his native culture, but not part of God's standards. This will help him to function more freely in another culture.

We must remember our status before the Father and how we obtained it (Exodus 22:21; Titus 3:3-7). We obtained sonship through the grace of God that has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11), not through our participation in a particular culture. Therefore, we should reserve judgment of cultural beliefs and practices until we sufficiently understand the new culture. Many times, what at first appears to be ridiculous or unacceptable will become reasonable, even necessary, when we see it in the light of a society's efforts to cope with its environment and provide for the basic needs of its members.

## **Adapting**

Before we discuss the mechanics of cultural adaptation, let's notice two preliminary responsibilities. Each missionary should adhere to these principles if he wishes his efforts to be effective, both for God and for those who hear his message.

*We must always act according to Scriptural standards and the demands of our consciences.* Paul strove to do this so that he could obey God and, while winning as many as possible, still receive the prize himself (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Peter failed to do this (Galatians 2:14). He compromised God's principles so that he would not rock the boat.

Many cultural situations demand that we weigh our decisions carefully by Scripture and conscience. What should a missionary do in a country where bribery and corruption are cultural norms, accepted ways of doing business? What should a missionary do when his limited financial means could be aided by unreported monetary exchanges, an accepted practice in many Third World countries? What should a missionary do when he is asked to eat or drink something that will probably disable him through illness? How will refusal to participate affect his hosts? How will participating affect the health of his body, which belongs to God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)? In every case, the missionary must honestly evaluate the situation, trust Christ, and be guided by Christ's Word, not expediency. People must see Christ living in us before our message will be believable. Christ's influence over our lives speaks louder than any formal training (Acts 4:13).

*We must adapt to correct and proper behavioral patterns within the adopted culture.* What is correct and proper behavior? The missionary knows what is proper and polite behavior in his native culture. He has internalized these rules of proper and correct behavior so that in most situations he acts correctly. The natives of other cultures have learned what is correct and proper according to their cultures, also. The difficulty is that most cultural ideas of what is correct and proper do not correspond.

Problems arise when no thought is given to these differences. The missionary may adapt to certain unusual customs in the new culture, but in his mind he is convinced that the people of his adopted country are really lazy, inefficient, unreasonable liars, so he refuses to truly identify with them. The native people notice the missionary violating their standards and label him as another

ignorant foreigner from whom they cannot expect proper behavior. It is imperative, then, that the missionary learn to behave in culturally acceptable ways if he wishes to effectively communicate with natives of his new culture.

### **Levels of Cultural Experience**

Everyone enters a culture at the *birth* level of cultural experience. This is the level a missionary and his family are at when they step off the plane or boat in the new country. They are like newborn babies, in a fresh new world. Everything is fascinating, exciting, different, new, a romantic adventure. This, of course, is temporary.

The first emotions a missionary has upon arriving in a country are based on expectations he formed before leaving his home country. These expectations usually come from filtering second-hand information through his own cultural experience. Therefore, they are sadly inadequate. The missionary's cultural experience is infantile at this level. He will be like a child to the natives of the new culture.

Now the missionary is prepared to enter the "*first steps*" level of cultural experience. He launches out on his own and experiences the new and strange ways of his adopted country. This is when he realizes how little he knows about survival in this new environment. He is like a baby who has taken a few uncertain steps trying to negotiate stairs. All the familiar hints and signals he recognized at home are gone. His attempts to interact with the nationals seem to fail. He feels like everyone is trying to cheat him. No one does what he expects, so they must be liars and thieves. In his personal and business relationships none of his old habits bring the same results they brought at home.

At this point, the new has worn off his foreign experience and what once appeared exciting, romantic, and picturesque, is becoming frustrating, unbearable, and drab. A person in these circumstances is experiencing the jolt of encountering a new culture. This is often called *culture shock*. Here are some facts about culture shock.

## **Culture Shock**

Culture shock occurs when we are not prepared to meet, and adjust to, new behaviors. It is our response to the changes in cues and symbols to which we are accustomed in our native culture. Culture shock occurs with any movement between cultures. When an American goes to Africa he experiences culture shock. When an African goes to America he experiences culture shock.

Some specific causes of culture shock are: different language, different methods of greeting, different gestures, different courtesies and manners, different humor, different government and laws, different moral standards, different living accommodations, different food, unsanitary eating establishments, inadequate medical care, and recognizing yourself as part of a minority group.

Some symptoms of culture shock are: excessive reaction to sanitation and health problems, feelings of helplessness and a desire to depend on expatriates who are long term residents of the foreign country, fits of anger over delays and frustrations, refusal to learn the local language, excessive fear of being cheated, robbed, or injured, a consuming desire to be back home, and constant complaining about everything in general.

Culture shock is worse going down the social scale than coming up. After the 1929 stock market crash, many millionaires committed suicide because they lost all their money. However, you do not hear of paupers committing suicide when they inherit a million dollars. This is one reason why culture shock is such a problem for missionaries. Most missionaries are Westerners who have left a culture of affluence to live and work in countries of poverty.

Culture shock is harder on wives than husbands. The husband usually has his work to keep his mind and body busy, so he has more diversions. The wife, on the other hand, must endure the everyday inconveniences of living without her customary time savers: like vacuum cleaners, dishwashers, shopping centers, modern well-stocked supermarkets, and corner convenience stores.

Culture shock often brings setbacks because a person does not want to relinquish his time and pride to learn how to respond to his new culture. He spent many years learning how to be an accepted, adult member of his native culture. Learning proper cultural behavior again is time consuming. The missionary's native

culture recognizes him as an adult. In the new culture his body is that of an adult, but his behavior is that of a child. It is very humbling to become like a child again in order to learn a new culture. But, learning and adjusting is greatly to our advantage.

Hatem At-Taei was an Arab nomad who owned the fastest, most beautiful stallion in Arabia. One day, an unknown visitor arrived at his tent unexpectedly. Arabian custom demanded that Hatem provide a meal for his visitor, so he laid out a sumptuous feast. After eating, the visitor and Hatem discussed the visitor's mission. He was a messenger from the king. The king wanted to know if there was any way he could purchase, or otherwise obtain, Hatem's stallion. Hatem At-Taei became very disconcerted at this request. Because Arabian custom demanded that he provide a meal for his visitor, and because he had nothing else to feed the king's messenger, he had slaughtered his prize stallion and served it for the meal. If the messenger had known, or inquired about, Arabian customs, he might have sent someone to prepare Hatem for his visit and his mission might have succeeded.

To prevent a setback from culture shock, the missionary and his family must be prepared to listen, watch, question and practice the customs of their adopted culture. They will have to adjust; the culture will not adjust for them.

### **To Adapt, Or Not To Adapt**

Now the missionary has reached the *adolescent* level of cultural experience. Once a person reaches this level, his future is pretty much in his hands. He is like a teenager on the threshold of adulthood. However he chooses to adjust will probably determine the success, or failure, of his remaining time in the new culture. There are several ways to adjust: some are beneficial, some destructive.

*Return to one's native culture.* Some find it easier to go home than to adapt. At home, they are once again in familiar surroundings. They know what is expected of them and they know what to expect of others. However, this response reinforces the person's feelings that his native culture is superior to the culture of the country he left. It also leaves the missionary with a distinct sense of failure.

*Renounce one's native culture and become like a native of the host culture.* Often, a person responds to culture shock this way because he feels severely rejected by his fellow expatriates, or his native culture in general. The problem is that the missionary is still a foreigner. He has not yet developed the necessary patterns of thinking and behavior that identify him as a member of the new culture. Therefore, he is resented by the natives because he neither understands, nor truly respects, their culture.

*Create an environment in the adopted culture that is identical to one's native culture.* This is a colonial attitude of superiority. It assumes that there is nothing good in the new culture that is worth learning or adopting. This missionary seeks his friends mainly from his native culture. He continually reminisces about his home country to the natives of the new culture. He lives on a pipeline of imported "care packages" from home. This response to culture shock isolates the missionary from the people he is trying to reach and serve.

*Identify with natives of foreign culture.* This is the process of adjusting mentally and physically to the culture of a foreign country, so that effective communication is possible between oneself and the natives of that country. Identifying is learning to appreciate a different way of life and recognize that it is valid, though different.

### Identifying

Jesus showed the power of His love when He identified with those He came to save (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15; Philippians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 8:9). Identifying is a conscious effort made because of commitment. It does not happen automatically, we must work at it.

Successful cultural adaptation is the result of a sincere commitment to be happy and make one's home in a foreign culture. If I could use only one phrase as the key to cultural adaptation, it would be a phrase that every successful missionary has said at some time in his work, "We can, and will, be happy in this new culture." That commitment has carried many missionaries through many hardships (Philippians 4:12-13).



Once one decides to be happy in the new culture and identify with its natives, the country begins to "improve." Dirty places do not seem as dirty. Inadequate facilities and services begin to be more adequate. But it was not the country that changed. We changed and our perspective is changing. Now we must decide whether identifying mentally, physically, or both, is best for our work with the natives of our new culture.

### **Mental, Physical, Or Both?**

Mental identification is learning to understand, empathize with, appreciate, and respect a people and their values. It does not mean to totally accept those values, but to seriously consider them in interaction with natives of that culture. This is the ultimate goal of attempting to identify.

Physical identification means practicing the behavior of another culture in such areas as: living environment, clothing, food, transportation, and income. We must consider this area carefully before we adopt a practice or principle of adaptation.

Living at the physical level of the natives of a culture is sometimes detrimental. Families are often damaged when subjected to radical and immediate changes in physical culture. Often, a country's living standards are poor and unacceptable, by any standard, due to political or economic injustice. Injustice is wrong and should be condemned in all forms. Our objective is not to reduce ourselves, or others, to the lowest common denominator in living conditions, but to elevate all men to equal status in Christ. The Lord condemned injustice and exploitation of the poor and so should we. In such cases, the desired course is not to become like the nationals, but to live simply and identify with their condition by being sympathetic to their circumstances.

Living at the physical level of the natives of a culture does not guarantee mental identification. One can easily use physical adaptation as an outward display of identifying, while in the heart there has been no change. However, it is impossible to reach mental identification without a measure of physical identification to help one understand varied cultural behaviors.

While we were visiting the States in Winter 1991-92, our only vehicle was used without authorization and wrecked in Zambia. It took almost one year to get the vehicle repaired. Being without a vehicle for a year taught us many things about Zambian cul-

ture. It taught us why Zambians are late for appointments. It taught us why they always want the missionary to give them transportation. It taught us why Zambians do not visit different congregations more often. And it taught us why they have strong legs and backs. By forcing us to identify with the Zambians, the accident helped us to understand them and their peculiar cultural environment.

Here are some practical suggestions that will help you to identify with the natives of the culture targeted for your work.

*Simplify your lifestyle before leaving the States.* Especially in Third World countries, this means simplifying your daily requirements. This should be done for a lifetime, not just for a mission effort (Matthew 6:19-34; 1 Timothy 6:6-8).

*Recognize the new country as your home.* The sooner you do this, the sooner adaptation will be successful. Forget about your home country; do not always compare your adopted country to your permanent home country. This breeds discontent and defeats your commitment to be happy in your new home.

Learn something about the history of your new home. Every country has an interesting heritage, if you are willing to look for it. Learn to appreciate the good points of your new home country and practice emphasizing those points in your conversations with others.

*Determine to obey the laws of your adopted country.* It is difficult to identify with the natives of any culture until you are subject to the same punishments by law that they must suffer if they disobey.

*Support local industry by buying local products.* Depending on imported items will encourage you to reject the local culture. Do not be discouraged by your first shopping attempts. From your first experiences, you may form false opinions about the availability and quality of goods, or services, in your new country.

At home, you know where to go for a particular item or service. In your new country you may choose second rate establishments at first because you do not know any better. You may even continue to return to these because of a tendency to stick with the familiar, when you would probably find better places to do business if you ventured out. A good rule to follow is: do not draw hasty conclusions.

What should you do when essential items are unavailable locally? First, essential can become a relative idea. What is essential to one is a luxury to another. I suggest that you use the "buy local" principle as the rule and make your purchase of imported items exceptions.

The missionary should weigh each opportunity for physical identification according to its relative merits. Each missionary should decide based on his particular situation. At the same time, let us not use this freedom as an excuse to continue in a colonial attitude of superiority, disguising it as necessity.

Most natives of foreign countries recognize that foreigners have different life styles. This is not a condemning recognition, but an understanding one. There need be no conflict between a higher and lower standard of living if the hearts of both are properly trained by Jesus Christ (James 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

### **Cultural Behavior and Identification**

With regard to behavioral issues, the cardinal rule is that we should always consider the expectation of the natives of our new culture. Many times missionaries make unnecessary changes because they do not consider the expectations of the people of the targeted culture. We should carefully consider the practices and principles of each culture and try to adapt in every reasonable way to expected norms of behavior. The following are some examples and suggestions in the areas of physical characteristics, body motion, touching, space, time, and objects and surroundings.

#### **Physical Characteristics**

Missionaries have often mistakenly thought that they must dress like the inhabitants of their adopted country to reach them. Most natives do not expect this, and often frown upon it because of the missionary's relative cultural immaturity. We should adopt the styles of the new culture only as the natives of that culture encourage us to do so.

We cannot depend on our clothes, skin color, or tallness to convince our audience. At the same time, we should not let these factors inhibit us in our presentation of the gospel. In short, personal physical characteristics are most often a minor part of our cultural adaptation.

## Body Motion

Though there are many body movements that are instinctive and universal, most body movements that communicate meaning are learned and differ according to culture. To be effective in adapting to a new culture we must be sensitive to, and recognize, variations in gestures, eye movements, etc.

*Eye position.* An American youth who stares at the floor while being reprimanded will probably be suspected of guilt. In Latin America the same action would be a sign of respect. In traditional China there were rigid rules about the focus of a young person's eyes when listening to an elder. If the elder was standing, the youth was to look at his feet. If the elder was sitting, the youth was to look at his knees. Two Arab men in business dealings will stare straight into their associate's eyes. Two Hausa men in the same situation will avoid one another's gaze slightly. Americans will look in various directions and only occasionally look straight in the eyes of the other party. An Arab gaze between two Americans might even be interpreted as a threat.

*Head movements.* James F. Downs gives a good illustration of the communicative content in head movements:

I . . . cringe to think of all the rupees I wasted because I always forgot in the early part of a trip to India, that agreement is often indicated by a short shake of the head to the right that very closely approximates our own sign of disagreement. When it came to tipping coolies for some personal service, I was uncomfortable like most Americans unaccustomed to dealing with persons in menial positions. Uncertain about exact rates, I would offer what seemed to be a reasonable amount. The coolie would invariably shake his head in agreement. I would invariably interpret it as disagreement and press more money on him. Such an exchange usually left me feeling vaguely exploited and angry because I suspected I had paid too much. It probably left the coolie feeling totally baffled by a crazy man who kept giving him money after he had said he had enough.

*Mouth.* In America, one sticks out his tongue to show anger or disrespect. In Tibet, one sticks out his tongue as a sign of friendly greeting.

*Hand motions.* An American calls someone to come to him with his palm up, wagging his index finger. A Japanese calls a dog with the same gesture, but never a human. An American who points at someone shows disrespect and poor upbringing. A Hausa who points at someone may be putting a curse on him. An American primarily shows his gratitude for a gift with facial expressions and words. The way he receives the gift with his hands is usually irrelevant. A Zambian shows thankfulness and respect for a gift by receiving it with both hands and kneeling. If he received a gift in another way it would be disrespectful. In America, many men rest their hands by putting them in their trouser pockets. In Zimbabwe, putting one's hands in his pockets was once a sign of boasting—that he had pockets—and disrespect to one's elders.

### **Touching**

In Western cultures, all but the most intimate physical contact between the sexes is allowable. Hand, arm, or even waist contact in the case of married people and lovers is anticipated. In most non-Western countries, public, casual physical contact between the sexes (i.e., hand holding, arms around one another) is frowned upon. It is seen as a prelude to further intimacies.

In the U. S., sustained physical contact between men in a public place is often interpreted as homosexuality. In many other countries it is common to see two men walking arm in arm, with their arms around one another, or holding hands. It is a sign of friendship and a method of maintaining contact during conversation. It is often very hard for a missionary to adjust to this. It is often his gut reaction to jerk his hand away from a man who tries to hold it in public. It is the other man's gut reaction that the missionary does not like him as a friend and would rather not be with him.

### **Space**

People's attitudes toward private and public space vary from culture to culture. Many Western missionaries have difficulty adjusting to ideas of privacy in other parts of the world. They need windows, walls, and doors, at the very least, in their homes. They also need space between themselves and all but their most intimate friends. Members of other cultures, especially Eastern cultures, seem to be able to build mental walls between themselves

and the outside world and thus gain privacy. Therefore, their living environment and habits are much different from Western concepts of privacy. For example, in many of these cultures, public urination is such a problem that signs are erected in public places telling people where they may not urinate.

A missionary should try to accustom himself and his family to their adopted culture's ideas of privacy for the sake of their relationship with local Christians and prospects. But for their sanity, they will want to strike a medium between local customs and their native cultural concepts of privacy. This is one of the most difficult areas of adaptation for Western missionaries.

People's ideas of personal distance in face to face situations vary from culture to culture. During the course of one conversation, a Latin American and a North American traversed a forty foot hall. The Latino would close to a conversational distance with which he was comfortable and the North American would begin feeling uncomfortable and back away one or two steps. The conversation continued this way until they ran out of space.

### **Time**

Different cultures view time in different ways. People from Western cultures tend to view time as something to be spent or invested. Time is passing. The past cannot be retrieved and, once past, it can never be relived. Our Christian philosophy of history and time is that they have a beginning, they will have an end, and there is much to be accomplished in between.

Asian Indians, however, believe that history is cyclical; it moves slowly in circles. Events and situations will be repeated, so there is not much significance in any particular historical situation. Everything that happens has happened before. Anything that has not happened will never happen. Existence is also cyclical; one existence is followed by another. Time is to be endured, rather than used.

Classical China placed great emphasis on the past. Modern Communist China reflects Communism's Western origin. The future is full of one year plans, five year plans, etc.

Africans generally have a long past and a very short future. Perhaps this is because poverty and death are always so near in their lives. This is why many Africans find it difficult to plan for their future.

A Western missionary working in a Third World country asked the members of a new congregation what time their services should begin on Sunday. They all agreed that 11:00 a.m. would be the most convenient time, if he could make it then. He arrived at the meeting place shortly before 11:00 a.m. only to find that the members began arriving in small groups after 11:00 a.m., until finally they were ready to begin about a half hour late. This behavior continued for several weeks until the missionary talked to the group about their habit of being late. They discussed the matter and decided that 10:30 a.m. would be a much more suitable time to meet. However, the pattern of half hour lateness continued. The service did not begin until 11:00 a.m.

Let us notice a few conclusions from this example. Many inhabitants of Third World countries interpret time in different ways. Business responsibilities are interpreted by more rigid time values (clock times), whereas time values used in religious and ceremonial events are usually more traditional (midmorning, late afternoon). This means that in many Third World countries there are two standards of time.

The church members in this example changed the time in the opposite direction of convenience, from 11:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. This was probably a response to the missionary's disappointment with their lateness. They were certain that by changing the time to 10:30 a.m. they would then meet the original time of 11:00 a.m. and the missionary would be happy.

The reactions to the resulting change differed greatly. The nationals were satisfied that now they were actually meeting at 11:00 a.m., as the missionary wanted originally. The missionary, on the other hand, was constantly disappointed that the nationals could not show the same punctuality in religious matters that they showed in business matters. The nationals were more concerned with what happened after the meeting finally began than what time it began, or ended.

The missionary will not necessarily agree with other cultural concepts of time, but he must try to understand and interpret them in the light of cultural values. The missionary who measures his dedication to his work by the tightness of his schedule may need to change his behavior. People are more important

than schedules. The quality of an event is more important than what time it begins and what time it ends. We can learn these valuable lessons from our brothers and sisters in other nations, if we are willing.

### **Objects and Surroundings**

What do the nationals think when they see a missionary with his truckload of baggage? What do they think when they enter our finely furnished homes filled with the latest in electronic gadgetry? What do our homes say to visitors? "Come in, you're welcome," or "Fragile: Handle with care," or "Stay away; you're bothering me."

We could respond to these questions in two ways. We could say, "We will do as we like in these matters. They are not important in relation to our mission of preaching the gospel." Or we could say, "We must live exactly as the natives live. We must share their style of clothing, live in similar housing, and eat the food they eat." Both of these responses are extremes and ignore the heart of the matter. The question is not whether these objects are right or wrong, but how they are interpreted by those with whom we work in foreign countries. An example might help to illustrate.

Most Africans take one small bag with them when they travel. They carry a blanket to sleep on and the few clothes they will wear on their journey. At their destination, their hosts will provide food, shelter, and all their other needs.

On the other hand, in the past we missionaries have carried almost a houseful of items with us on our journeys to meetings: tent, cots, chairs, sleeping bags, food, cooking utensils, water for bathing, water for drinking, etc. It is not that we act differently here than we act in our native culture. When we camp in America we outfit ourselves in the same way. The problem was that we did not consider how the nationals interpreted our behavior.

Africans are traditionally hospitable people. They expect to entertain visitors, keeping them in their homes, feeding them their food and supplying all their needs, and even all their wants. Our decision to be self-sufficient in our travels, though well conceived (primarily from health factors), was a rejection of that hospitality. It formed a barrier.



Lately, I take only those items I consider essential: clothes, sleeping bag, a small cot, and drinking water. I stay in the homes of my African brothers and, at meetings, in the grass enclosure (they call it a bedroom) that is specially prepared by the hosts of the meeting for the visitors. I have discovered something interesting. I am more at ease during the meeting. I am usually more comfortable. (The reason Africans do not use tents is because their huts are much cooler.) I eat well and I share fellowship with my brothers in Christ. In other words, I depend on them for my welfare, which is the point of hospitality.

This change has positively effected my, and my fellow workers', outlook on the work. When we were returning from a recent meeting, one of the preachers who is my steady traveling companion said, "I really feel like you are my brother now." That one comment made the change worthwhile. The only drawback to this change was a bad case of malaria. Since then I have added one more item to my list of essentials, a mosquito net.

Once again, we must consider how the natives of our adopted culture will interpret what we have, say, and do, in all of these aspects of cultural behavior. When we combine this consideration with our concern to obey God and our conscience, we will make informed decisions that will please God and allow us to reach the lost with the gospel.

### **Final Suggestions**

There is no easy formula for proper identification with a foreign culture. There are only bits of wisdom from experience. Here are some suggestions:

*Be humble.* Be prepared to experience very humbling circumstances and events by practicing true humility (Titus 3:2). You are a foreigner and your behavior will be culturally immature at first. Remember that you are like a child and you need to learn from those who are culturally mature. You must be willing to blunder and be laughed at. This laughter, rather than ridicule, is a constructive signal that you need to change your behavior in order to be culturally acceptable.

*Learn the local language.* Language learning has many advantages. You will have a closer bond with the citizens of your new country. Part of understanding people and their behavior is knowing their language. You will have a greater understanding

of local culture. An invaluable aid to language learning is immersion in local culture through social contacts. Constant use of language in every day situations will help you learn the culture and the language. Everyday situations are not confusing and threatening when you know the local language. You know you can manage to communicate. Also, you can communicate the gospel with greater effectiveness and freedom.

*Get to know the people and let the people know you.* Expatriates have a natural tendency to limit friendships to people from their own cultural background, when they are available. If a missionary does this, he will isolate himself from the very people he is trying to reach. do not shun people from your own cultural background, but do not make them your only friends.

Establish friendships with native residents of your new country. Making friends with nationals allows you to understand their needs and aspirations. This will help you know what areas to address in your work. Also, this will allow you to do good deeds for your friends in the foreign culture, just as you do good deeds for your friends in your native culture.

Learn the problems your new friends face. They have economic problems, transportation problems, and family problems, just as every native in their culture. You will understand more of the cultural environment and the special areas the gospel can address if you take time to learn these aspects of your friends' lives.

Eat with people in their homes. Eating is one of the most basic forms of fellowship (1 Corinthians 5:11), and something all men, rich or poor share alike. It is good to take health precautions, but do not be overly cautious.

Invite people into your home for visiting and friendship. To do this you will need to maintain a standard of living that is relative to local circumstances. As Americans and Christians, we must not flaunt our great riches, or appear to be at poverty level. We must maintain a simple life that is conducive to working in whatever circumstance we find ourselves.

*Truly love the people you serve (Romans 12:9-16).* This means you will have to adjust your list of priorities so that people are near the top; at least higher than time schedules. You will find that the adjustment brings dividends that will help you in all your relationships, even in your native culture.

## Conclusion

There is no other experience like living in a foreign country in the midst of a different culture. It broadens the mind and opens the thinking to new possibilities and understanding like nothing else can.

If the experience of adapting to a new culture is approached knowledgeably and with true commitment, it is rewarded with a new outlook on the universal truth of the gospel. Though we must change to adapt to other cultural practices and traditions, the Lord's Word has proved its universal applicability for thousands of years in hundreds of different cultures.

May the Lord give us strength and patience so that, like Paul, His faithful apostle, we can "become all things to all men so that by all possible means [we] might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22). *P.O. Box 37073, Lusaka, Zambia, Africa.*

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## Adapting to Another Culture

Randy Tidmore

I appreciate very much the opportunity to participate in the discussion of this important subject. Since my experience is limited to the cultures of Honduras and the United States, I do not know how well my thoughts and opinions will fit other situations and cultures. I do not claim to know Honduran or Latin culture completely, nor to have completely adapted to it.

A different culture is more than just a group of people who do things differently than we do. Webster says that "culture" is defined as:

5. a. the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts and depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations b. the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group . . ." (**Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary**, 1981).

Their thoughts, or reasoning, is included in their culture. We should not be so presumptuous as to think that they need to be taught the right way to do things. They probably have their reasons for doing what they do.

Adapting to another culture is more than *learning* or *knowing some about* it. It is more than merely *tolerating* it patiently.

Adaptation to another culture is a slow process that begins when we leave the States and does not end until we leave the foreign country. It is conforming to a new way of life and set of values. It is making it *our* culture.

I want to notice some questions that I received, and then, turn my attention to some suggestions.

### Questions

#### *1. To what extent should a preacher become a native?*

We will never become a "native" or national. The longer we are there, the more we will get to know and understand each other. This will increase the effectiveness of our work.

This does not mean that we must live as they do in the "bush" or "campo." Each country has a variety of cultures: "bush" or "campo" culture and "city" culture. In Honduras, there were cultural differences between some cities. We would have to choose which culture we should imitate. While maintaining our own culture at home, we and our family will be adapting to a general culture.

***2. How far into the culture should a preacher go to be accepted by natives?***

We must have a clear and specific definition of how we want to be accepted. Accepted as what? A big shot from the "mother church"? A "know-it-all" from the U.S.? Their supervisor or boss? If we want them to accept us as a fellow servant of the Lord, and brother in Christ, then we must avoid acting like their superiors.

We must demonstrate ourselves as being what we want others to accept us as. In our eyes, we may be a brother in Christ who has come to preach the gospel, while in their eyes we may be a "know-it-all" from the U.S. Someone has said that we have four appearances: how we see ourselves; how we think others see us; how others see us; and how God sees us. We can expect a lower level of acceptance from others until they have had time to get to know us.

If the roles were reversed, how far would a foreign preacher need to get into our culture to be accepted by us? The farther we get into their *general* culture, the better.

***3. Should the preacher feel obligated to eat native food where danger of disease exists?***

What is the purpose or nature of our being there? Are we there to live, or are we just on a visit?

A common illusion is that something dangerous to us is not dangerous to the nationals. Cholera will kill a national just as quickly as it will us. They are just as susceptible to amoebas, parasites, hepatitis, etc., as we are. There are differences of bacteria right here in the U.S. Since our resistance is limited to the bacteria that are common to our area, changing areas (and bacteria) can cause some temporary intestinal disorders that vary in severity. These periodic disorders will decrease as our resistance increases. These disorders are inevitable. However, there are good medicines for treating them when they do occur. Paranoia

*will only handicap our work and limit our effectiveness.* After a couple of months, our resistance will be higher, and we will learn not to worry about this as much. Sometimes, our stomach disorders are the result of "nervous stomach." We do not want to "tempt God" (Matt. 4:7), nor to be a "slave to fear" (Rom. 8:15). With time, these fears subside. "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus!"

Where *real* danger exists, we should ask others (including the nationals) about effective precautions. Remember, not all nationals live in the "bush" or "campo." The preventive measures that the city nationals take when visiting the "bush" can be very beneficial in helping us avoid offensive and unnecessary safeguards.

If we decide against eating or drinking something, we can reduce the likelihood of offending the people by paying strict attention to our tone of voice, physical gestures, and facial expressions. These sometimes speak much more harshly than a simple "I do not want any." By observing what the nationals do when they choose not to eat or drink something offered to them, we can learn acceptable ways to refuse something, without offending our host.

### **How to Survive During the Adaptation Process: Some Suggestions**

Since all changes come slow, including adaptation, how can we cope or manage ourselves in the meantime? The following suggestions can help.

*1. We should learn all that we can about the people and their customs.* Studying their language and history, and visiting with them as much as possible, are excellent ways to do this. (Check with the American embassy for advice and literature. Ask some bilingual schools for a copy of the orientation material that they give to their new teachers from the states.)

*2. We can be patient.* Be patient with ourselves during the learning and adapting stage of our work there. We will offend some and make many mistakes, but we learn from our mistakes. Let us try to be overly patient with others.

3. *We need to be more tolerant with others.* This is especially true when we are dealing with a foreign government. We can make ourselves mentally accept that there is probably a *logical* reason (at least from their viewpoint) for the way they do things. Trying to see the humorous side of things sometimes helps, too.

4. *We must practice self-control.* While working through a maze of foreign government officials, a phony smile will get us much further than the sincerest expression of disgust or anger! By observing most of the nationals around us, we will know an acceptable way to react. (This will help our patience level grow!)

5. *We can try to understand the why.* Once we have developed an intimate relationship with some nationals, we can talk with them in private. But remember, we are seeking help to understand, not complaining about how "silly" everything is.

6. *We should show respect to our foreign brethren.* Practice the "golden rule." Let us not appear to "look down" on them, nor act as though we must try to get down to "their level."

7. *Above all, let us demonstrate brotherly love.* If practiced by both sides, like "spiritual putty," it will fill the gaps, and "cover a multitude of sins"—both theirs and ours.

These suggestions, if practiced, will help us to protect ourselves (from ourselves), while the adaptation process slowly molds us into a multi-cultured people.

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings (1 Cor. 9:19-23, NIV).

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## **Americanizing Foreign Churches**

*Bill Davis*

A current criticism of missionaries is that they not only export their religion but their culture as well. American missionaries are sometimes accused of "Americanizing" both the church and society in foreign lands. **Webster's Unabridged Dictionary** says the word "Americanize" means "to make or become American in character, manners, methods, ideals, etc." To Americanize a foreign church would be to make it like an American church in character, manners, and methods. More precisely, it would be to make foreign church members like American church members in every sense.

The only Bible parallel to Americanizing would perhaps be Judaizing. The Judaizing teachers of the first century were guilty of trying to impose their religious customs, manners, methods, and so forth upon the Gentiles in Acts 15. Although the two are not entirely the same, Americanizing and Judaizing are probably close enough to be categorized together.

### **Americanizing—Good or Bad?**

When an American goes abroad to do mission work it is extremely difficult not to Americanize. Most missionaries do not intend to, but most are guilty of Americanizing to some extent. This is simply because it is virtually impossible to get away from the culture in which one has been raised. An American missionary's values, behavior, and general outlook on life is conditioned by his American culture. This cannot be eliminated or changed easily. Consequently, any influence that is exerted will be predominantly American. I do not see how this can be prevented, nor do I think it necessarily should be prevented in every situation.

It is generally agreed by people who study missions that Americanizing is not the best way to do foreign mission work. In fact, many authorities believe it is wrong to change anything culturally in a foreign country. According to this view, a work must be left in its native or indigenous condition, and interference in cultural matters must be kept to a bare minimum. Some churches do not even interfere with cultural practices that are pagan or non-Christian. The Catholics are experts at this. They simply incorporate pagan practices into the Catholic religion.



To illustrate, I recently heard of a Catholic church in Guatemala that moved a large mound of dirt into their building. The reason? So the natives of that area could worship their ancestral spirits. They would first bow down to God at the Catholic altar in the front of the building and then move to the mound of dirt in another part of the building to worship their ancestral spirits. This was all done under the banner of maintaining an indigenous religion by non-interference with local customs. This is an extreme example of something that must be avoided.

However, we must also recognize there are numerous problems associated with trying to Americanize foreign cultures. Many foreign countries have cultural practices that are detrimental to a Christian and need to be changed for the welfare of the church.

It must be remembered that Christianity is not indigenous to any country. It came from heaven to Judea and spread from there to the rest of the world. In the process of expanding, Christianity has often met objectionable elements in the various cultures of the world. How these elements are dealt with will depend, to a large extent, upon the judgment of the individual involved. There may not be scriptural precedent to follow, and in that case it becomes a judgement call.

The Apostle Paul was always sensitive to cultural differences and tried not to be offensive to either Jew or Gentile (2 Cor. 6:3; 1 Cor. 9:20-22). The same principle applies today. In any foreign work the first lesson a missionary should learn is that he is not superior to the people with whom he labors. This is particularly applicable in the Third World. People in underdeveloped countries are not inferior to people in industrialized countries. In underdeveloped nations, the people may be poor and live in mud huts with thatched roofs, but they are not inferior. They have adapted to a hostile environment to which we could probably never adapt.

Halting the tendency towards superiority is difficult for most. The Pharisee was not in the minority when he thanked God that he was "not as other men are" (Lk. 18:11). Believing one is better than his neighbor is based upon a false assumption. It must be purged from our hearts if we are to take the gospel to the world.

### **Facing Different Circumstances**

There are three different circumstances a missionary is likely to encounter in foreign cultures. First, he will face social customs

that need to be changed or even, perhaps, Americanized. Second, there will be customs that do not need to be altered. Third, situations will arise that have neither a local nor American solution, and perhaps not even a biblical application. I wish to give examples of each of these based upon my work in Africa.

*1. Needed Changes.* Some practices observed by foreign cultures border on being unscriptural, or contribute to undermining cultural and emotional maturity. These customs may need to be amended or altogether stopped. From the standpoint of those who would leave the work indigenous, any such changes would be considered Americanizing. The following are two of many possible examples which demonstrate the need for change.

One of the first customs I encountered in a foreign country, that I thought needed changed, was African circumcision and puberty rites. This is a ceremony which is widely practiced in one form or another throughout Africa. It usually consists of taking young teenage boys and girls separately to a secluded place in the bush for several weeks to initiate them into adulthood. The boys are circumcised (and in some cultures the girls also) at the beginning of the initiation. Then for the next few weeks they are taught the facts of life from an African perspective. This custom is very prevalent in village life and many Africans place great importance on it.

I was asked by church leaders, not long after arriving in Africa, if I would give my approval to the practice as a part of church life. I delayed making a decision on it until I could get more information. The information I obtained revealed that it was a practice based largely upon superstition and witchcraft. From my American viewpoint, it was dangerous, cruel, and barbaric. I made a decision to oppose it. I taught against it and discouraged it everywhere I went. Although many African brethren did not agree with me, to this day (twenty years later) I believe it was the right thing to do. It may have been a type of Americanizing, but it needed to be done.

The next encounter I had with local customs that I felt needed changed was the practice of drinking "sweet beer." "Sweet beer" is a "home brew" that is ordinarily made from millet or some other grain. The grain is heated or cooked in water and then allowed to ferment. Sugar is sometimes added to speed the fermentation process which usually takes a few days. During this period, before it reaches full fermentation, it is called "sweet beer." It is not intoxicating during this initial stage though it becomes so a few days later. "Sweet beer" is served at many church gatherings. It

may be innocent enough at first, but there is a fine line between the time it is considered unfermented and the time it becomes fermented. To my American mind it had the appearance of evil and I requested that it not be used in our church gatherings. I received a lot of opposition from some brethren, but to my knowledge, they did not use it during my years in Africa. It was not a popular decision and it may have been based upon my American background, but again, I still think it was a custom that needed changed. Strangely, the missionary who replaced me some fifteen years after the above incident gave full approval to drinking "sweet beer" at church gatherings. The Africans naturally loved that decision. The reason for mentioning this is to point out that even though we may Americanize a culture, it probably will not change the basic philosophy of the native people.

*2. Changes Not Needed.* Next, I would like to consider some customs and traditions that do not need Americanizing, either because they do not break scriptural laws, or they do not contribute to cultural or spiritual immaturity.

Not long after arriving in Africa, I was preaching at a large village church. In the middle of my sermon, when I was making an important point, a man stood up and started singing and the entire congregation joined in. This irritated me; after all, I was preaching the gospel. I stopped the singing and let them know I did not appreciate the interruption. Little did I realize that through their singing they were showing their approval of what I was preaching. It was their way of showing their happiness with my sermon. Later I noticed that even when the president of the country was giving a speech he would be interrupted countless times by singing. It is a cultural practice that has been handed down for generations. I stayed in that area of Africa for twelve years, but I was never again interrupted by singing. I had Americanized them, but I was always sorry for it.

In my early days, I thought one of the most pressing problems in Africa was the tyrannical rule of church leaders. They seemed to have absolute power and I perceived that they administered it with a haughty attitude. Immediately, I began preaching against their abuses of power. I went so far as to state that most of the leaders needed to be removed from their positions. Needless to say, it was not long until I had every leader in the country mad at me.

They soon let me know that I was going about missionary work in the wrong way. I was also made to realize that if I did not quit preaching against the leadership I was going to have a mass rebellion on my hands. I did quit that type of preaching and came to understand later that I had been wrong about the leaders in the first place. They were not really the haughty tyrants I had thought they were. In fact, most African leadership is centered in one man. It is all a part of their history and cultural make-up.

This idea of one-man rule does not fit our majority rule concept of church government. However, in the absence of scriptural elders, it may be just as effective, especially in Africa. One of the first things that Americans usually try to do (in Africa) is to change the leadership set-up. In reality, it is a rank attempt at Americanizing a foreign work, and it normally leads to trouble.

I have only given two examples of cultural practices that do not need to be changed or "Americanized." There are many more, but these will suffice.

*3. No Precedent to Follow.* The final area I would like to discuss concerns situations that arise which have no preceding examples, either in foreign or American society, or even in Scripture. This may well be one of the most difficult aspects of mission work. Yet the missionary has to take decisive action.

For example, when I went to Africa in 1973 there was no grape juice available for communion. The only available source was in a neighboring country hundreds of miles away. At that time there were about 200 congregations without grape juice. Most of them were meeting but not observing the Lord's Supper. I decided to order enough grape juice from the neighboring country to supply all the churches for a year.

The grape juice was stored at my house and the various church leaders would pick it up as they needed it. I allowed them to take it on credit with the understanding that they would pay for it before taking more. The idea was to teach them responsibility for supplying their churches with grape juice as well as being responsible for their debts.

In order to purchase a large supply of grape juice, I asked churches in America to help pay for it. I would use the money from the American churches to make the purchase in the neighboring country. It was then shipped to me and in turn the church leaders would take the grape juice and pay for it at some point. I would then

take that money and apply it to the purchase of more grape juice. The amount that the church leaders paid me was only one third of the cost in the neighboring country. For this reason, I always ran a deficit and was continually appealing for more money from American churches to purchase more grape juice. The system always worked well and I thought it was a good plan. It was certainly the best I could do under the circumstances.

However, when one brother in America heard about it, he was very upset and condemned it as a centralized system that was worse than the "Herald of Truth." My reply to that is, if the above described system of obtaining grape juice for communion is unscriptural (which it is not), then please show me how it can be done. Although missionaries should remain open to new options, it is not wise to condemn a system without a workable alternative. The point is, there are situations which arise in foreign mission work to which American responses are not always appropriate. Under such conditions one must simply do the best he can within scriptural bounds.

### **What Can Be Done?**

When a missionary goes to a foreign country, there are four possible things he can do in relation to the conflicts of a new culture:

1. *He can go home.* Many have done this; it is the quickest way to get relief, but it solves nothing.

2. *He can go the indigenous route and adapt native ways and values in such things as housing, food, dress, and customs.* This usually does not work very well because the natives themselves can see that it is superficial and condescending to them.

3. *He can colonize or Americanize everything and everyone.* This approach portrays the missionary as a superior being who always knows what is best. The native people most likely will resent this and it will end up doing more harm than good.

4. *He can identify with the local people and culture.* He can then learn to appreciate the people and their way of life to the point that he can communicate with them effectively. He must be interested in them, concerned about them, and love them. When they sense these, all the barriers of culture, economics, and life-style will disappear. 17 S.E. 23rd, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73129.

# **Introduction: Bringing Foreign Churches to Autonomy**

*James Orten*

Most churches go into mission work with a burst of enthusiasm. To their credit, they see opportunities to save souls and they go. If they have planned the work at all, their vision generally extends no farther than getting evangelists there, converting people, and establishing churches. The enthusiasm and willingness to go are commendable, but something is lacking.

We have never, so far as I know, planned on the front end of a work for bringing mission field churches to maturity and autonomy. In fact, when we discuss this issue, sometimes we are criticized for even considering it. To some, wanting out of a work seems like just being too slothful to want to continue.

But I am convinced we have overlooked something. The Scriptures read the same to foreign churches as to American churches. If the Scriptures require us to send preachers to convert people and establish churches, then they also require us to promote the growth of those Christians and set in order the churches. If Christians and churches here must send the gospel there, then those churches and Christians must send it on.

Paul said, you have had "time that ye ought to be teachers" (Heb. 5:12), and he reproached them because they still needed someone to teach them. Does that lesson apply only to the Hebrews, to whom it was written, or to Americans as well. If these questions imply what I think they do, then we must be as concerned about bringing churches to maturity as we are about establishing them. That is what this presentation by Billy Orten from Marion, Louisiana is about.

## **Promoting Autonomy in Mission-Field Churches**

*James D. Orten & Billy H. Orten*

American churches have been continuously involved in foreign mission work since the mid-1960's. During that period of almost thirty years, some wonderfully successful works have been established. Malawi has hundreds of churches. Zimbabwe, Zambia, and the Philippines each have a hundred (more or less) and there are successful programs in Mexico, Ghana, Honduras and other places. New fields continue to open up, particularly in Russia, and churches here are beginning to take advantage of those opportunities. There are now more churches outside the U.S. than inside.

While all true Christians rejoice at the souls that have been saved, one worrisome question is asked even by interested and supportive brethren: When do these churches become independent? Or in other words, when will these brotherhoods be mature enough to stand on their own so that we can leave them and go on to other works? The question is legitimate. Brethren are right to be concerned about thirty-year-old churches that still are not self-sufficient. There are many places in which the cause of Christ, as we know it, is not yet established. The number of new works that American churches can establish is limited if all old ones must have continued support.

What has been lacking in all of our foreign works is a plan by which we can guide mission-field churches toward autonomy. By and large, our preachers have worked hard in foreign fields. In the process of taking advantage of opportunities, however, we have unintentionally, but effectively, trained our brethren in these developing countries to look to us, rather than to each other, for fulfillment of their needs. There were reasons for this, including the fact that these brethren generally are poor by our standards, and it often seemed faster and easier for us to do a job (build a church building, for example) than to wait for them to do it. But the main reason is that we have not developed plans by which we could work toward the goal of autonomy. We have often told them they should grow in this direction, but our practices have undermined our words. While we urged them to be autonomous we behaved in ways that fostered dependency.

We recently gave considerable thought to, and ultimately developed a plan for, bringing to self-sufficiency the mission work in the country of Ghana, Africa. We discussed the plan with some of the leaders while we were in Ghana in 1992, with interested preachers in the U.S. upon our return, and subsequently proposed it to the sponsoring church at Fairview, Louisiana. They made some modifications, which was certainly their right, and adopted it. We present it here for consideration of churches and preachers who are, or may become, engaged in foreign mission work. We do not consider it a plan to be adopted exactly "as is" by all churches for all missions efforts—each work is different to some extent and plans should reflect the needs of the work. But we are absolutely convinced that some plan to bring mission-field churches to autonomy is scriptural and needed.

Paul told the Hebrew Christians (Heb. 5:12), "When for the time ye ought to be teachers . . ." It is clear that there was "a time" by which growth and a degree of maturity should have taken place. To the Romans (Rom. 1:14), the same apostle said "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians . . ." Paul did not owe money. Rather his own salvation had made him "in debt" to see that the gospel was preached to others. This is the reason we send the gospel to Africa and other places and also the reason they, in turn, must help send it on.

We proposed a plan that is designed to achieve autonomy for the churches in Ghana within six years. It involves heavier investments in earlier years that gradually decrease over the period, and it is designed to meet the main needs of the Ghanaian churches. Those needs are: (1) support for qualified evangelists to preach and establish churches, and (2) help in building church buildings. At the present, only one of twenty churches meets in its own building. Several churches have started buildings; a few have made considerable progress, one is "up to the roof level." The need for adequate buildings is great, as there is a real shortage of appropriate places to rent in this part of Africa.

The church at Fairview agreed, upon taking sponsorship of the work, to assume the support of the Ghanaian preachers who were being supported at the time. During the first three-year phase of the work we propose the following:



### **First Three Years**

1. Preachers be supported as planned with judicious additions and subtractions from the list as good judgment dictates. Subtractions can and should be made appropriately as some preachers become self-supporting, as local teachers become more capable, or if a preacher becomes irresponsible to the work.

2. That two churches a year be assisted to complete their buildings, with the agreement of those churches that the money given to them will be viewed as a "loan" which they begin to "repay" immediately upon completion of their buildings by using an agreed-upon percentage of their Lord's Day contribution to help other Ghanaian churches to complete their buildings. We develop a letter of understanding to be exchanged between "helper" and "helpee" churches that sets forth expectations. This is not meant to be a legal document, but rather a means of avoiding misunderstandings.

By the end of the third year there will be at least six Ghanaian churches to complete their buildings. These churches will be asked to make the same agreement with churches they help and so on. The church buildings will be of great benefit, but the most valuable thing will be that the Ghanaian brethren will develop the habit of helping each other and looking to each other for help. The initial American investment will continue to multiply throughout the Ghanaian brotherhood. We believe this plan is scriptural and we practice it in America, although in a less formal way. We certainly expect congregations that are helped to be willing, in turn, to help others. However, in all our foreign works, I know of no church that has helped a sister church with money to build a building. Such help may have occurred, but it certainly is not the rule.

### **Second Three Years**

By the beginning of the second phase, several Ghanaian churches will have completed their commitment regarding their buildings and will have become accustomed to helping their sister congregations. At this point, the churches that have completed their building commitment will be asked to begin assuming preachers' support. By the end of the sixth year, Fairview should be able to be out of, or largely out of, supporting the current Ghanaian evangelists.

We discussed the plan with some intelligent and influential Ghanaian leaders and they agree that it will work. Of course, no plan is infallible and this one will need to be evaluated and adjusted as needed. Regular visits by Fairview's representatives will be important in making the plan work by monitoring, encouraging, and supporting the brethren in it. At the conclusion of a plan such as this one, a new agreement with a less extensive/expensive role for American churches could be made.

### Summary

The heart of this approach is that it offers an incentive for Ghanaian churches to help other churches, and an incentive for them to look to each other, rather than to America, for help. Previously we have seemed to believe that churches in poor countries were unable to assist each other. That assumption can be evaluated by recalling that ours was a "third world" nation during the restoration period, when the U.S. made its greatest spiritual growth. Although Ghanaian churches do not have the financial resources of the average U.S. congregation, we believe it is an underestimation of their potential to think they cannot help each other. For example, the church in Accra has a weekly contribution of about \$35.00. If they dedicated one third of that to helping their brethren, which they could do, that would be approximately \$50.00 a month, enough to be of significant help to smaller churches.

We believe there will be other benefits to the congregational maturity that this plan seeks to develop. It should discourage fights in the U.S. for control of foreign mission fields, and it should prepare us better for taking advantage of new opportunities. The most populous nation on earth, China, will likely open to the gospel in our lifetimes. We should be preparing to accept that great challenge. But such preparation means that we must mature in our understanding and conduct of mission work. *Rt. 3, Box 127, Marion, Louisiana 71260.*

## **In the Absence of Grape Juice, What Then?**

*by Jimmie Smith*

The proper keeping of the elements of the communion is one of the characteristics peculiar to the New Testament church, and one of the marks by which it can be identified. Perhaps no ordinance of Divine service was more hotly debated in my early youth than the communion. My home congregation having split over the wine question shortly before I was born, and witnessing the resultant wounds still evident among kinfolk in my youth, caused me to take note, and afforded me the opportunity to hear much teaching against innovations.

I am cognizant of my responsibility to contend earnestly for "the faith," and also the need to be charitable toward my brethren.

### **I. The Fruit of the Vine**

A. Jesus makes it very plain what the drink element is in the communion.

1. "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine" (Mt. 26:29).

2. "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine" (Mk. 14:25).

B. We must find out what kind of a drink element the vine produces. Is there a liquid, a drink, that is produced by the vine? Yes, it is what Pharoah drank from his cup after his butler pressed the grapes in it according to the dream Joseph interpreted (Gen. 40:50f). There is not a man living who will deny that grape-juice is the fruit of the vine. It is proven easily by reason or demonstration.

C. To further establish the kind of vine that produced this drink, we notice the connection between 1 Corinthians 10:16 and Isaiah 65:8. Paul said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" In Isaiah we read, "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it . . ."

From this we learn that the new wine wherein the blessing is found, is that which is found in the cluster. It is the same substance as was in the cup at Corinth, and which Jesus drank at the institution of His supper: the juice of the grape. Fermented wine is not found in the cluster, neither is there a drink element in a cluster of dried raisins.

- D. The Twentieth Century translation renders Matthew 26:29, "I will drink no more of the juice of the grape." Moffatt translates it, "I will not drink anymore of the produce of the vine."
- E. As Brother Gay said in his little tract **The Inside of the Cup** (p. 31), "The drink on the Lord's table should be what the vine produces—not what man manufactures."

William Patton, in his book **Bible Wines**, lists numerous ways the ancients preserved the juice of the grape. Drying raisins was not once mentioned as a way of "preserving the juice." A raisin is "a sun-dried grape." It no longer contains a "liquid" that can be drunk. It no longer has any "juice."

The World Book Dictionary defines "juice" as: "n. 1. the liquid in fruits, vegetables, and meats . . ." The word "juiceless" is defined: "adj. lacking juice; dry."

There is no evidence that "soaking raisins in water," or even boiling them in water, will turn a raisin back into a grape or restore the juice state.

## II. It Is A Matter of Authority

- A. When Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me," He commanded His disciples to do what he did. When Paul said, ". . . keep the ordinances as I have delivered them to you," and went on to tell us that he received them from the Lord (1 Cor. 11:2, 23), he was dogmatic that the followers of Christ not change a thing.
- B. Raisins are not a modern discovery, the product of modern technology, or something unavailable in our Lord's time.

When Abigail sought to pacify David, we read in 1 Samuel 25:18, "Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses."

In 1 Samuel 30:11-12, "And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; and they gave a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights."

2 Samuel 16:1 reads, "And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Zibba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine."

1 Chronicles 12:40: "Moreover they that were with them, even unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for there was joy in Israel."

Thus, we know that Israel had raisins long before the days of Christ.

- C. The *scripturalness* of a practice is not determined by its availability or scarcity. God did not require the use of one drink element where available; but in the event it was too hard to obtain, allow man to substitute a second or third or fourth choice.
- D. Christianity is a religion of *authority*! This is what separates the Lord's church from the churches of men. "And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." "In the name of" means "by the authority of," as is easily proven by Acts 4:7-10.

- E. I believe the purity of the Lord's church and the distinctiveness of our brotherhood is based upon the premise that there are three, and *only* three ways, of establishing Bible authority for a practice:

1. By command or precept
2. By approved example
3. By necessary inference

If we do not have Bible authority by one of these three ways to establish it, and we practice a thing without its meeting this test, then we do that thing without Bible authority, and it then becomes "will worship" whether it be in America, Italy, Ghana, Africa, Russia, France or England.

We must "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), and that by which we must walk come by hearing the "word of God" (Rom. 10:17). If I cannot find an item in the Word of God, then I cannot do it by faith, and it takes that to be "well-pleasing" unto God (Heb. 11:6).

### III. Raisin Water in the Communion?

- A. I am under no obligation today to prove "raisin water" *wrong* in the communion. Those who believe the practice are obligated to prove it *right* in order to practice such in "faith." So I pose some questions for him:

1. Did Jesus institute the supper with raisin water?
2. Is raisin wine the fruit of the vine? Where is the passage in the Old or New Testament where raisin water is called "fruit of the vine"?
3. Where is the Bible formula for producing fruit of the vine?
4. When does this become fruit of the vine?
5. What does history prove on any subject? It is one thing to use history to corroborate a Bible precept or practice; but an altogether different thing to use history to establish a practice, because someone used it in the sixteenth century.

- B. You see, I believe those who believe in raisin water have the obligation to *prove* that raisin water is the fruit of the vine by command, example, or necessary inference. Or have they the chemical analysis to prove raisin water equal and the same as grape juice?

- C. In this department I tried to help them out. I asked Brother Roger Cosby (a fine brother of Ada, Oklahoma), who is a chemist and supervisor at the Robert S. Kerr laboratory, a research laboratory connected with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, for a comparative analysis. He has connections with some important people with some very expensive high-tech equipment, and he was unable with his present work load to get it completed before this study. Hopefully, we will be able to submit the results of a comparative analysis to the **Old Paths Advocate** and **Christian's Expositor** for publication within the very near future.
- D. Brother Ellis Lindsey made a statement in 1967 in his debate with John Staley with which I whole-heartedly concur: "I do not need Bible commentaries to prove my arguments. Weakness is present in any man who must rely upon them."

Brother Ronny Wade dealt with this issue in the "Querist Column" in the **Old Paths Advocate** (February 1989). The questioner raised the question because of the difficulty in obtaining grape juice in certain countries, and because some missionaries had advised brethren in these situations to boil raisins and use the liquid that results as the fruit of the vine in the communion.

Ronny pointed out, quite rightly, that the fact the **Temperance Bible Commentary** (1894) documented raisin water's use in the communion in the seventeenth century, or even the fifteenth century, and by modern Jews for sacred purposes, does not, in and of itself, prove the practice scriptural. It also mentioned that fermented wine, milk, and water were used.

- E. Brother Ronny Wade submitted three questions to several chemistry departments of some state universities, which he published along with their answers.
1. The questions were:
    - (1) Would grape juice (fresh or processed) and the liquid from boiling raisins be essentially the same?
    - (2) Would the drying process change the grape to the extent that such liquid would be vastly different?
    - (3) Could this liquid be called grape juice or fruit of the vine in any sense of the word?

2. The responses were:

- a. Dr. J. H. Thomas of the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville, Arkansas): (1) "No"; (2) "Yes"; (3) "You can call it anything you want, why not raisin juice?"
- b. Dr. Harley Mortensen of Southwest Missouri State University (Springfield, Missouri) answered: "There would be many differences in grape juice and raisin juice chemically. These differences in bio-chemical elements would be divided into two categories: (1) differences in composition and (2) differences in concentration (i.e. the make-up of each element would vary)."
- c. Dr. S. R. Koirtzohann, Chairman, Chemistry Department, University of Missouri (Columbia, Missouri) answered: (1) "No"; (2) "Yes. Both the drying process and the heating involved in extracting the raisins would introduce changes."
- d. Dr. Frank Haggard, Southwest Missouri State University (Springfield, Missouri) adds this: "Grapes are 90-94% water and 3-6% sugar. Of this sugar 60% is fructose and 40% grape sugar. In the drying process fructose and grape sugar begin to break down into simpler sugars, ketones, and deoxysimple sugars." On boiling raisins to get raisin water: "Probably all vitamin A and B would be lost. Vitamin C decomposes above 50° C and 122° F. Practically all vitamin C would be lost."

IV. Shall We Take the Temperance Commentary as Authority for a Practice?

- A. First of all, what is the recipe for turning raisin water into the fruit of the vine? Do you soak it or boil it? The **Temperance Commentary** (pp. 282-3) said of the American Jews (1844) that they took some "raisins (dried grapes) steeped in water for a few days previous to the passover, the vessel being placed near the fire. The liquor is bottled off, and used at the feast of unleavened bread as 'the fruit of the vine.' Sometimes, when time does not permit of steeping, the raisins are boiled on the same day on which the feast is to be celebrated at night . . . What is now chiefly used by the Jews at the passover for wine is a drink made of an infusion of



raisins in water, which is either boiled at once or simmered during several days." The writer adds "But a Mr. Jonas informed me that he believed the proper kind of wine is that expressed from the red grape at the time."

- B. In an asterisk at the bottom of page 286, the writer gives a recipe for raisin water as follows: "Take a quantity of the best bloom or muscatel raisins; cut them into small pieces; pour on them boiling water in the proportion of a pint to every pound; let the infusion stand overnight; then press out the liquor from the fruit, adding tea-spoonfuls of burnt sugar for colouring. After the whole has settled for a few hours, decant the clear wine by pouring slowly into the vessel to be used, leaving any sediment behind. A sufficient quantity of unfermented grape-juice can thus be produced at a very economical rate. Where a wine more scientifically prepared, and of a clear and beautiful appearance is preferred, the 'passover wine' of Mr. Frank Wright, of Kensington can be recommended. It is undoubtedly, grape juice pure and wholesome."
- C. If those who believe in raisin water will graciously choose from among these or another recipe, I will have it scientifically compared with grape juice. The pharmaceutical analysis of the juice of the grape and fermented wine was one of the reasons Brother Homer Gay and Brother Ervin Waters, in their treatises, rejected the notion that churches could use either one that they felt disposed to use in the communion. I believe their arguments to be sound.
- D. If it is scriptural, we do not have to be bashful about using it. So where is the Scripture? Would the brotherhood support a preacher to establish churches in Arkansas using raisin water? How many of you would come to my home congregation if I put raisin water on the Lord's table and made no effort to change it? Would you worship with me or try to get the brotherhood to support my work? Would you not even whisper to anyone else as to what we were doing? To argue that we have a choice and can use either, I believe, is to argue that Christ used both. We must do what he did!

E. God has never allowed substitutes.

- In the absence of a male teacher on Sunday morning, what then?
- In the absence of unleavened flour, what then?
- In the absence of sufficient water to immerse, what then?
- In the absence of a scriptural church with which to assemble, what then?
- In the absence of grape juice, what then?

As Ronny answered the questioner in the **Old Paths Advocate** article: "If there is a problem getting grape juice to some mission field, I suggest we go to work on that problem, rather than selecting alternatives that lack scriptural precedent." *Rt. 6 Box 199A, Harrison, Arkansas 72601.*

## **In the Absence of Grape Juice, What Then?**

### **A Response**

*by P. Duane Permenter*

#### **Is Juice Made from Dried Grapes Fruit of the Vine?**

I appreciate the fact that Brother Jimmy Smith pointed out that the question under consideration is unfair—"In the Absence of Grape Juice, What Then?" It seems that even before we study the issue our decision is already made. I do not agree entirely with the wording of the question under consideration. I candidly appeal to everybody reading this material to consider carefully these words in light of the Bible. It is not my desire for anyone to accept what I have said, or written; unless it is supported by the truth. Jesus said; "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (Jn. 17:17)

Since the grape industry is a vital part of the economy in California, the University of California, Davis, California, has a special department referred to as the Department of Viticulture and Enology. All facets of grape farming, from vineyard care to the composition of the different varieties of grapes, has been studied by professors of this university.

To begin our investigation, I am going to quote from the **Old Paths Advocate**, February 1989, "The Querist Column," by Ronny Wade; "The scripturalness of a practice is not determined by its availability or lack thereof. God did not require the use of one drink element but in the event we could not get it, then allow the use of something else as a substitute or second choice, anymore than he required unleavened bread but allows something else in its place when it is difficult to obtain . . ."

I go on record as being in total agreement with this statement. There is no substitute for that which Jesus specified—"the fruit of the vine." The issue is, can juice made from dried grapes be fruit of the vine, and therefore, scripturally be used in the communion?

There was no drink element introduced by Moses in the passover in Exodus 12. In fact, a drink is not mentioned in relation to the passover in the Bible until the New Testament, as far as I know. Jesus, in Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25, and Luke 22:18, refers to whatever was in the cup as fruit of the vine.

Some have expressed the idea that the use of juice made from reconstituted dried grapes was first introduced to our brotherhood in March of 1981 by American preachers, Don King and Jerry Cutter in the Philippines. The Filipino brethren were already using this method for the communion service prior to any advice from America.

The brethren in the Philippines would take some raisins and soak them for several days in water and sometimes boil them Lord's day morning before the service. After the dried grapes had reconstituted they then would pour off the excess water and squeeze the grapes into a drinking vessel to attain juice for the communion.

It is noteworthy right here to point out that a few years after the work in the Philippines had been started, that during a preachers' study conducted by Don King and Bennie Cryer, this very issue was discussed from the Philippine point of view and some of the preachers questioned our practice of using bottled grape juice.

The truth of the matter is that this is not a new issue, even in America. In the June 1949 issue of the **Old Paths Advocate**, an article by W. H. Cummins appeared entitled, "Wine for the Lord's Table," and I quote, "... Water driven from the grapes, produces raisins. By replacing water, we obtain wine (*oinos*), the fruit of the vine." As far as I can tell no one contested this statement in the paper.

Jesus took a cup containing the fruit of the vine. We know that; no doubt about it. We are in complete agreement on this. The Greek is **gennema ampelos** and the lexicographers agree that the words mean, "the product or produce of the vine."

In **Joseph Thayer's Lexicon** (p. 113), under the word **gennema** it is defined as, "that which has been begotten or born; . . . the offspring, progeny, . . . the fruits of the earth, products of agriculture . . ."

This authority suggests to us that it is the fruit "born of" the vine. Brethren, what fruit is "born of" or "begotten" of the grape-vine?

The Lord understood this principle when he said in John 15:1, 4—"I am the vine, ye are the branches . . . Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Jesus lays down here a spiritual principle. He says the fruit can not be produced outside of the vine; consequently, we know it was produced on the vine. No vine in the world can produce alcoholic wine! Alcoholic wine is excluded from the communion service.

Furthermore, it cannot be fermented wine, because it was introduced during the feast of unleavened bread and no leavening could be found in the house according to Exodus 12:15-17. The word translated "unleavened" in reference to a solid is the same as the word translated "unfermented" in reference to a liquid. Any fermentation was forbidden during the passover. Whatever the fruit of the vine was, it was unfermented.

According to **Bible Wines** by William Patton, and **The Bible and Social Drinking** by W. D. Jeffcoat, Jesus had many slightly different liquids to choose from, but we are going to limit our study to three of these for the sake of space. Our Lord had a choice of at least three liquids; we are going to consider the three. He could have taken (1) juice made from fresh squeezed grapes; or (2) the juice might have been previously boiled down to a syrup with water added back to it; or (3) the juice could have been prepared from dried grapes that had been reconstituted and squeezed out of the fruit. Most everybody will agree that the first two choices would scripturally be called fruit of the vine.

Since the passover was in the spring and harvest was in the fall, we must assume that Jesus did not have a cluster of grapes to squeeze the juice from. This narrows the choice down one more. Jesus probably used either a juice that had been boiled down to a syrup with water added back, or a juice made from dried grapes.

Let us look for a moment at the juice made from grape concentrate. The idea of boiling the water out of the juice and storing it in wine skins was to preserve an unfermented grape juice. Even with modern technology the reason for boiling the juice down for preservation is evident.

In a book entitled **General Viticulture** (p. 147), it is pointed out that the composition of grapes is made up from 70 to 80% water. According to **Bible Wines** (p. 23) grape juice will boil at 212 degrees. When the water is evaporated to a point that the sugar content is 25%, it is very difficult to start the fermentation process. If the sugar consistency is increased to 70%, most wine yeasts will not ferment at all. This is according to **Technology of Wine Making** (p. 195). This method was certainly one way the ancients could preserve an unfermented juice of the vine. In fact, according to **The Bible and Social Drinking** (pp. 33-34), "Varro, Columella, and Pliny, describe the boiled wines of the Romans . . ."

It is very important that we realize the boiling process causes chemical changes to take place in the juice. According to the previously quoted article in the **Old Paths Advocate**, February 1989, vitamins A and B, along with a great portion of vitamin C, would be lost. Chemical changes did occur.

Today, we use a method that is somewhat similar to preserve our juice in an unfermented state. In **General Viticulture** (p. 27): "Sweet juice grapes . . . In the United States, only pasteurization has been used to preserve grape juice." Again, chemical changes would occur. This juice is still unfermented wine and can scripturally be used in the communion.

Brethren, is there really a difference in boiling the water out of the juice after crush, or taking the same grapes prior to crush and drying them in the sun? Whether we have fresh or dried grapes they are still fruit from the grapevine. Briefly, look with me at juice made from dried grapes.

First, in a book from College Press, **Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus** (p. 319), a quotation from **The Bible and Wine** by Ferrar Fenton:

Although the customs of the Jews are no certain guide to Christians in this matter, yet it is an undeniable fact that vast numbers of pious Jewish families have used unfermented wine at the Passover all down the ages, and are

using such wine now year by year. It is simply "the fruit of the vine." They cut up a quantity of raisins and place them in an earthen vessel, and add water to them, and allow them to simmer in the oven for a time, then separate the juice from the skins and pips, then put it in the Passover vessel, and they use the wine (juice) for the Passover Service.

Again, in Horne's **Introduction to the Scriptures** it is said (Volume III, p. 337, foot-note, Edition of 1877), "... The modern Jews, being forbidden to drink any fermented liquor at the passover, drink either pure water, or wine prepared by themselves from raisins."

Further, Jeffcoat says in **The Bible and Social Drinking** (p. 33), "Columella and Varro each describe this type of wine, which was the Roman **passum**, so called because the grapes were spread out in order to dry." Juice made from dried grapes is thus dated back to the *time of the New Testament*.

What happens when grapes are placed out in the sun? The water is evaporated. What happens when the grapes are crushed and the juice is boiled? Brethren, the water is evaporated. Suppose for a moment that the grapes are left on the vine and not harvested. What is going to happen to the grapes?

According to Professor Vernon Singleton of the University of California, "Sun dried grapes make raisins and the raisining can and does occur in the vineyard."

Have you ever brought home a cluster of grapes from the store and found that there were a few raisins mixed in with the grapes? Probably many individuals have experienced this very thing. One person told me that they were not raisins, but shriveled up grapes. My friends, what exactly is a raisin if it is not a shriveled grape?

Listen further to **General Viticulture** (p. 635)

On the vine drying . . . The clusters of Black Corinth are small which makes hand harvesting expensive. Christensen et al. (1970) showed the way to overcome this by drying the fruit on the vines and then harvesting the currants by machines . . . Unlike the larger berried Thompson Seedless, the small Black Corinth berries dry perfectly on the vine without pretreatment.

Can anybody deny that dried grapes are fruit of the vine; the product of the vine? They are produced on the vine. They come from the vine. Therefore, dried grapes are the produce or product of the vine.

In the December 1993 issue of the **Old Paths Advocate**, in "The Querist Column" by Ronny Wade, a question is asked in relation to the preparation of the loaf for the communion, and I believe the principle is the same for the fruit of the vine, and I quote:

... There is, however, no detailed description of the kind of bread or the ingredients used to make it, included in these scriptures. For this information we are forced to rely upon what we may deduce from them and the teaching of the Old Testament. We know that the Lord's Supper was instituted during Passover ... The overriding principle that must be considered when preparing the loaf for the communion is to use nothing as an ingredient that will cause the bread to become leavened ... we are not restricted to a certain kind or type of flour in preparing the loaf for the communion service ... In the absence of exclusive instruction, in either the Old or New Testament, as to the exact ingredients used in making unleavened bread, I cannot presume to speak for the Lord in this matter, and bind a particular recipe ...

The drink element was the fruit of the vine! Jesus had possibly several choices at His disposal. We have only considered two of the possible liquids available: (1) juice boiled down to a syrup with water added back to it for consumption, and (2) juice from grapes dried in the sun and reconstituted. I must conclude, since the chemical analysis is different in both of these, either we must use fresh squeezed juice; or both the processed, as well as juice made from reconstituted dried grapes, can be scripturally used in the Lord's Supper. Therefore, juice made from dried grapes is fruit of the vine. 3848 Stanislaus St., Riverbank, CA 95367.



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## **Foreign Evangelism from the Church Leader's Point of View**

*John Pruitt*

I am deeply humbled at being asked to speak at this great study on foreign evangelism from a church leader's point of view. I assure you that I have no illusions that I am speaking for the congregations across our great brotherhood or any other national brotherhood. While there are others more capable and more eloquent than I, I appreciate this opportunity to share this time with such noted and honorable leaders from other congregations. It is not going to be possible for me to include in the time allotted all of the considerations that I have had in preparation for my part of the study, but I appreciate being asked to share my thoughts with you.

We have been asked to address such things as:

1. What are the problems that church leaders have encountered in directing foreign work from this country?
2. What can foreign evangelists do to keep brethren more fully informed about the foreign work, so that they can make more appropriate decisions with the information they have?
3. What can church leaders do to be of more assistance to foreign evangelists?

First of all, we need to set a basis for our work in foreign countries. Since our Lord issued the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, evangelism has been the great task of the Lord's church. We are under direct orders to preach the gospel to every creature and make disciples of all nations (Mk. 16:15-16). The command to "go" is the marching order for the Lord's church today. God loves all mankind, not just those in the United States, or the state in which you live, or the city in which you dwell. Jesus tasted death for every man and not just for Americans (Heb. 2:9). It concerns me greatly when I hear brethren have no interest in a work unless the work is in their particular area. People of all nationalities, languages, and races, regardless of their

class or socio-economic status, are to be sought. The gospel is for all who will hear and obey it in its truth and simplicity. There is no mistake: there is no way you and I can take the "go" out of the gospel.

It was the duty of the apostles to carry the news of salvation everywhere they went. It is our duty to take up that work where they, and others who have gone before, have left it; to proclaim it and make it known, without any addition, subtraction, or amendment to it. Jesus told His disciples in Acts 1:8, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." As with the disciples, Jesus has charged us to be witnesses. This charge is not just to the evangelist, at home or abroad, but it is given to every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. In one respect I think this is wonderfully liberating, in that it is not necessary to assault people with the gospel plan of salvation, either in this country or in any other. However, it is also intensely demanding, because it involves every aspect of what we do and what we are: as individuals, as congregations, and as a brotherhood. We need to preach the gospel all the time, and if necessary, use words. What I am saying is that we need to live the gospel, not just to preach it.

Church leaders and elders have the awesome responsibility of directing and leading and guiding a group of the Lord's people in the various congregations. Therefore, they must be concerned and involved with the work and the worship of the church. Generally, this is the case in our great brotherhood. While church leaders and elders are concerned about many things, we have to give heed, individually and collectively, to the fact that foreign evangelism is part and parcel to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The church leader or elder who is only concerned about what is going on in his own congregation or locale, is short-sighted and robs God's people of what the Lord intended for us to do as disciples. We know about the Great Commission, but we have failed to give it the priority that it is due in our lives. That is why the cause is not advancing at home or abroad in a very great way. Again, this is not given just to evangelists, but it is given to every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some years ago there was a lot of talk about what was most important: the Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Plan that He gave and wanted us to follow. Some have advocated the Man with little regard to the Plan. Others emphasize the Plan and

minimize the Man. Recently, we began a new work outside of Kansas City at Harrisonville, Missouri. One of the things that was asked me by one of the brethren was, "What plans do you have, or what plans have you developed, in order to establish the congregation?" Well, the concern was more for the plan, rather than for the going and the doing and the being and the establishing of another congregation. There have been others who have emphasized one thing more than the other. I will assure you today, however, that when the Lord Jesus Christ gave the Great Commission, He had a plan for us. He said in John 12:32, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Jesus was speaking of His crucifixion of course, and the preaching of the cross, although foolishness to some and a stumblingblock to others, is still the drawing power of the gospel. Paul was determined to not know anything among those to whom he preached the gospel except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). He insisted that preaching by using the wisdom of words could make the cross of Christ of no effect (1 Cor. 1:17). Incidentally, let me just add this: unfaithful lives on the part of those who profess to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ can make the cross of no effect also.

Paul's reference to preaching with wisdom of words is well illustrated in 1 Timothy 1:5-7. Using the Phillip's translation, he says:

The ultimate aim of the Christian ministry, after all, is to produce the love which springs from a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith.

Some seem to have forgotten this and have lost themselves with endless words. People want to be noted, and sometimes I fear that our evangelists want to be noted, as teachers of the law, and yet fail to realize the meaning of the words and still less about the subject. Yet, those who preached the cross and heard the preaching of the cross from the Apostle Paul, somehow learned the necessity of obedience to the gospel and received encouragement to heed the Great Commission, because they also went everywhere preaching the Word.

We might raise the question, "Why should we engage in foreign mission work?" Most of our evangelistic efforts over the last forty years have been directed toward third-world countries: Africa, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Honduras, Mexico, Central America. Most of these are very poor countries with the majority

of the population uneducated by today's standards. In light of that there have been some honest but ill-advised brethren who have shied away from being involved in such efforts. Perhaps you and I have failed to understand the importance that God has placed upon His people showing love and concern for the poor. Remember that when John the Baptist was in prison, he sent his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who should come or should we expect someone else?" John knew that his life might end at any time, so he asked Jesus for a sign that would prove His Messiahship, so that John could die in confidence that he had announced the Messiah in keeping with the Old Testament prophecies. You will remember that Jesus' reply to John's disciples was, "You go and tell John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and *the poor have the gospel preached unto them*" (Mt. 11:3-5). To answer John's questions, Jesus backed up His Messianic claims by His actions among the poor. The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:9-10, "James, Peter, and John gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, and they agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should *remember the poor*; the very thing that I was eager to do." You see, brethren, it is not only for the benefit of the poor that we need to become involved with them. It is also for our own spiritual development. It is only when you and I reach out to the poor in a Christlike compassion, when we love our neighbors and those in other countries as we do ourselves, that we authenticate our faith. How is an unbelieving world to know who the real Christians are? It is by our actions and our concerns for the poor and oppressed of society. We need to demonstrate. I think, as Jesus did and as the Apostle Paul was instructed to do, that we are the people of God. Without this proof of our faith our proclamation rings hollow.

I would like to spend the rest of my time on some problems that we have encountered in evangelistic efforts in foreign fields. We are just going to be able to touch the hem of the garment, but there are some things that need to be said in all love and candor.

One of the biggest problems that we have faced in recent years has to do with the determination of whose work it is. Is it the congregation's work or is it the evangelist's work? Up until the last twenty years most foreign efforts have been brotherhood wide. Thus, the decisions have been pretty much left up to the

evangelist in the field. However, in more recent years local brethren have taken a more vital role in carrying out the Great Commission. From Acts 13 it is obvious to me that the church in Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas to a work that the Holy Spirit had called them to do. In Acts 15:36, Paul decided to go again and visit the churches that had been established, and this appears to be a more individual decision than the first one was. It was on this occasion that Paul and Barnabas had such conflict over whether they should take John Mark, that they split up; Barnabas taking John Mark to Cyprus and Paul taking Silas into Syria and Cilicia. Either arrangement is scriptural, but I think it is necessary to have congregations and missionaries working together. One is not exclusive of the other.

What I am saying is this: it is not really the congregation's work or the evangelist's work—it is the Lord's work. David said in Psalms 127:1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." This does not mean that there will not be problems that arise and decisions will have to be made. There has to be, there must be, a close cooperation between the congregation and the one who is working in the field. Paul noted this in 1 Corinthians 3:6, where he said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Some decisions have to be made in the field. Sometimes, though, those in the field are too close to the scene to effectively evaluate the long-range implications of the decisions that they make. There must be a mutual love and trust and respect between those in the field and those in the overseeing congregation.

Perhaps we have generated some of our own problems, by getting away from the Bible pattern—that is, the congregation sending someone from within the congregation to do the work. Instead, what usually happens is that the congregation wanting to do a work selects some brother way across the country to do the work, because he has expressed the desire to do it. There is not that mutual love, respect, and knowledge of one another that exists before the work is commenced. It seems to me that a better scenario would be that the congregation that is doing the sending, send someone from within the congregation that wants to do the work.

Another problem that church leaders have encountered in directing foreign work from this country, is a lack of understanding of the different cultures where the work is planned. We discussed that some yesterday and I will not take my time going through that again. We have a problem in making decisions in this country, be-

cause we have only our own frame of reference or the advice that we can obtain from someone who is more experienced. Often, we must rely on our own best judgment in these matters and pray for the Lord's guidance and direction, while understanding that sometimes errors will be made in these judgments. In spite of the fact that errors are going to be made, we cannot keep from trying because of our fear of making mistakes.

What I have to say next, I say with all the love and respect I have in my heart to my preaching brethren. There is a dearth of preachers who are willing to go into foreign fields. This is a problem, brethren, and we need to address it. Up until the last year or two, when Russia became open to us, there had been very few who were willing to go into foreign work. I ran across something I would like to share with you. This was from the pen of one of the pioneer preachers, Barton W. Stone. It was written in the **Christian Messenger** in December of 1835. He penned these words with regard to evangelistic efforts and mission work:

Our Lord well knew that there must be one design and one labor or joint cooperation among these, His apostles. This one design or purpose was to save souls, and therefore they cooperated zealously to effectuate this purpose by preaching the gospel in all the world to every creature. For this cause they denied themselves of all worldly good: their ease, their good name, wealth, honor, and everything estimable by sensual men. They took up their cross daily, suffered shame, reproach, want, persecution, and death. They must have the same mind, the same spirit, and this, the mind and spirit of Jesus. Look at Him! How cheerfully He left the abodes of bliss, stripped Himself of glory, descended into our world, was made flesh, suffered the common ills of man with reproach, poverty, shame, hatred, persecution, and the death of the cross; all this He did and suffered for the love He bore to man in order to save them. This was the mind and spirit of the apostles and the primitive saints. Until this mind is again revived and restored, in vain we look for the conversion of the world. Is this the spirit of the present race of preachers? Like Jesus do they weep over a ruined, lost world? Like Him do they make strong cries and supplications to Him that is able to save? Like Him and like His apostles do they disregard the honor, the glory, the pleasures, the wealth of the world, and go forth in love to save mankind, bearing reproach, hatred, poverty, persecution, and death



itself, if called to die for the truth? How common among the present generation of preachers to say, "If you give me such a sum of money annually, I will preach for you. If not, I will engage another business, for the shame of poverty I cannot and will not endure. I cannot deny myself of ease and abundance; of the toil and labor of preaching I cannot bear contempt and persecution for the love of sinners." This is the spirit and the mind of thousands of present generations of preachers.

Does this not even speak to our generation today? Let me speak to the preachers. If you are a preacher of the gospel, you have not been called to be a carpenter, or a mechanic, or a school teacher, or a landlord, or a shopkeeper, or even an outdoorsmen. A fisherman, no. A fisher of men, yes. The Apostle Paul was a preacher first and a tentmaker second. Not the other way around. Now, let me say this. If you do that in order to preach the gospel, then the Lord bless your heart. But we need to make sure, preacher friend, that we do not have it the other way around, that we do that in order to keep up with the Joneses.

Larry McElroy is going to speak a little bit about communication. Let me say something about this too, preachers and brethren. Brethren in sponsoring congregations want honest and open communications about the work that is going on. We know that all news is not going to be good news, and we must be discreet about that which would hinder the work. Especially, however, in working with the overseeing congregation, brethren in the fields need to share with them their problems, concerns, fears, and recommendations about what direction the work should be taking. We do not want all flowers and roses. We want to know what is going on. We want to know what the needs are.

Let me say something to those of you who are leaders in congregations. Brethren, we have a responsibility to communicate with those people who are in the field. We have the responsibility to advise and assist wherever we can. That means we need to do it with rapidity, we need to do it quickly. Brethren in the field need patience, both in the field and with us, but we at home also have a responsibility in the Great Commission.

Let me conclude. The church today has a tremendous task before her, because she has been entrusted with the truth in an age that knows not truth. We have been entrusted with a message of hope in an age that puts its hope in temporal toys and transient

things. When Christians of the first century were told to stop proclaiming the gospel message by the authorities of the day, their response was, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." In the same way today, modern evangelism must exuberantly flow from within our character, individually and collectively, and it must be articulated in a language that men and women can understand today. Those of us in the church have this way of saying things and doing things, and we know what we are saying and what we mean, but those who have not previously been exposed to the gospel do not understand. So we need to clearly articulate the gospel in a language that they can understand. We may not always be able to proclaim the gospel, but nothing can stop us from being the gospel. I think that is what Jesus intended for us to do: to be witnesses and not just to witness. In fact, I think we must first be seen before we can be heard. As Jesus directed, we must be lights shining out in the darkness like candles that illuminate and warm and draw others toward the one true Light. *P. O. Box 356, Harrisonville, Missouri 64701.*

## **Financial Problems Facing Foreign Evangelism**

*Clifford Arney*

One of the largest problems church leaders encounter today in directing foreign work from this country is the financing.

I am thankful that I have been associated with a congregation that has been and still is interested in foreign work. We need to understand that the number one responsibility of the church is to see that the gospel is not only taught locally, but also to all the world.

I, personally, have been involved in raising support for foreign work for approximately forty years. During this time, I have sent out dozens of different appeal letters to congregations across the nation. One of our preachers told me this spring when we were out in California, that they hated to get a letter with my name on it, for they knew it was a letter asking for help. Of course, he was joking, but the good thing about it was, he and others that received the letters know we are interested in mission work.

Brethren, things have changed. It is no longer like it used to be. Eight or ten years ago a congregation could send out an appeal letter to a number of other congregations and some times receive support from fifteen or twenty of them. This is not the way it is today. The last time we sent a letter out for help in a foreign work, one congregation agreed to help \$200.00 per month. Another leader in a congregation told me they sent out appeal letters (five months ago) for help in a mission work and received one, one time support of \$200.00. Another congregation that is overseeing a great foreign work is going to have to discontinue the work or turn it over to another congregation because they are unable to continue because of lack of financial help. Brethren, this should not be happening.

Brethren, we have the greatest opportunity to spread the gospel in foreign lands in this century. Yet, we do not have the financial support to help those few evangelists who are willing to go.

I realize that a number of congregations are supporting local works and there is nothing wrong with this. Sometimes a congregation has to bring in a preacher to keep the home fires burning.

Occasionally a congregation has an opportunity to start a new congregation and that is great. I believe that mission work in the U.S. is just as important as mission work in foreign lands. Both are important and we have the opportunity and capability of doing both.

One problem confronting the financing of foreign work is the attitude problem. Some brethren believe if the work is not done by their home congregation, where they can personally witness the work done, they are not interested in helping finance it. Even though this is the wrong attitude, much of this problem may be laid on the shoulders of many church leaders. It may be we need a lot more teaching on this subject. How long has it been, in your home congregation, since you have taught on our heard a lesson on the contribution or the use of the contribution?

Brethren, I believe this morning, that the finances are available. It is our responsibility to teach and encourage our brethren to give freely of that in which they have been prospered. I believe they will, if taught and informed in a proper manner.

One thing that hinders our support is that many of our brethren across the nation are not informed of what works are going on and the great results that are taking place in many of the foreign fields. Surely, any sincere member of the church, when informed that in Malawi alone, in the first ten months of this year, there were 1996 baptisms. During the same period thirty-eight congregations were established. A few of our brethren, when they read or hear this information, say, "I don't believe they understand what they are doing." I disagree. I believe the vast majority of them understand why they are accepting. For example: When Paul Nichols and Gayland Osburn went to Malawi in the early 1950s there were Africans who had obeyed the gospel and had been influenced by our English brethren that had done mission work in Malawi in about 1908. That is approximately fifty years. Then some brethren ask the question: "As long as this work has been established, why are we still sending preachers and supporting the work financially?" Let me ask each of you this question: "How many congregations do you know of here in the States that are twenty to fifty years old and still have teachers come in every Lord's day?" All of you know of several. Why do we expect more of our foreign brethren than we expect of our brethren here in the U.S.?

Another thought worth pondering: Brethren, when you have 1996 baptisms and thirty-eight new congregations in a ten month period of time, this is a new work as far as these new converts are concerned. We could send two or three preachers a year for the next several years and each of them could spend their entire time working with new converts. Now, this great work that is being done in Malawi is just one example of the many works in progress in foreign lands.

Another suggestion I believe that will help in encouraging brethren to help financially in foreign work: I think it would be helpful if the evangelists would keep the congregations fully informed on the work. When members are kept informed, not once a year, not every six months, but at least once a month, I believe they will become interested and want to be involved in the work.

It is amazing what a congregation can do when they not only contribute financially, but contribute of their time and their talents as well.

Members of the church today are earning more money, on the average, than ever before. It behooves us as leaders of congregations to teach our brethren what "to prosper" and "to purpose" mean. Many members think "prosper" means that when they have paid their monthly payments on their car, house, T.V., boat, etc., the small amount left is what they think they have been prospered. Then they give the Lord part of this. This is not what they prospered; this is the leftover. The original amount of the monthly check received is the amount prospered. Our God is a jealous God. He expects the *first fruits* and not the leftovers. When we as church leaders, preachers, and evangelists can instill in the members of our home congregations the importance of giving as they have prospered and purposed, then we will have no more problems with support for the foreign work. 3045 S. W. 42nd St., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73119.

## **In Foreign Mission Work**

*Virgil Hogland*

Over a period of some twenty-five years of active involvement in foreign mission work from a leadership standpoint, I have developed some thoughts on leadership responsibility that I believe are important to the success of such mission efforts. Time constraints upon this talk will only permit mentioning a few salient points.

Leadership responsibility in foreign mission work can be grouped into two general areas of decision making. (1) "What to do" and, (2) "Methodology to be Implemented." A brief discussion of these two areas will show, hopefully, that leadership responsibility is much broader in scope than merely accepting fiscal responsibility for the mission effort, and then turning over all remaining responsibility to the evangelist.

### **I. What to do**

A general guideline for leadership to follow in determining what to do in foreign mission work is given in the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:15-16, Lk. 24:47). These Scriptures specify to go, preach the gospel, baptize, and teach the observance of all commandments of the Scriptures. In this age, however, what to do in a specific mission effort is much more complex than simply stating the Great Commission. Some of the more obvious things that leadership should be concerned with in order to carry out a mission work follow:

1. Select the place.
2. Select the right preacher to send.
3. Accept the responsibility for providing or securing the finances required.
4. Provide proper leadership supervision throughout the entire mission effort.

This paper shall be directed primarily toward leadership supervision.

A requirement of leadership that may be less obvious but which I believe is of great importance, is the defining and estab-

lishing of specific goals of the mission effort. There are several philosophies that guide specific foreign mission efforts by religious bodies today.

- A. Make the physical, social, and educational welfare of the people the primary concern of the mission effort, with the preaching of Christ being secondary.
- B. Prepare the soil for future evangelism by distributing Bibles, tracts, etc. This philosophy may be the only alternative available for a time in countries where American missionaries are banned.
- C. Teach about Christ with little or no emphasis on establishing congregations of believers. Billy Graham campaigns are a well known form of this approach with their so called personal salvation theme.
- D. Convert people by the gospel, and bring them together into a visible congregation which is self-governing and which accepts responsibility for edification, evangelism, and benevolence as directed by the Scriptures. This concept does justice to the great commission and to the apostolic examples of the early church. This concept should be the one adopted.

It is very important that both the leadership and the selected preacher understand and agree on the goals of the mission effort about to be undertaken.

## **II. Methodology**

Some general criteria for determining the methods to be adopted can be summarized as follows:

- A. General guidelines from the Scriptures based on methods used by first century churches and by the Apostle Paul should be adopted. These guidelines teach us the following:
  - 1. Paul with an assistant was sent out by a congregation such as Antioch.
  - 2. They established a congregation and stayed for a period of time to edify the members and to train leaders.
  - 3. When necessary, Paul left behind his assistant to further edify and train the membership as he went on to establish another congregation.

4. Paul continued to communicate by letter and through other men with the churches he established in order to further edify, to exhort, and to rebuke the wrongs committed.
  5. At the appropriate time, evangelists ordained elders in each congregation established.
  6. Each congregation was brought to autonomy as soon as possible, so that they could in turn accept responsibility for evangelizing others.
  7. Paul's evangelism always proceeded on a congregation by congregation basis. Never did he establish any system in a country or area that would act either as a central control over evangelism in that area, or that would act as an aid to evangelism.
- B. After seeking the general guidelines for methodology from the Scriptures, then both the preacher and leadership should agree that the goals set should dictate the methodology. Unless methods adopted contribute to the goal they are faulty, even though the methods, of themselves, may seem desirable from the standpoint of efficiency and expediency.
- C. The preacher should be given necessary latitude to develop methods to be used in a specific mission effort based on situations encountered in the field. It is leadership's responsibility, however, to monitor the methods adopted for conformance to goals and to scriptural principles. This monitoring should be continuous throughout the mission effort, and can be done in at least three ways.
1. Visits to the field by leadership. We have seldom utilized this tool.
  2. Proper communications with the evangelist.
  3. Direct communications with the foreign converts, even if interpreters are required.

Our preachers sometimes have discouraged this direct communications approach, with the idea of protecting leadership from being bothered by frivolous matters in the field. However, I believe that the more open that communications are between all parties involved, the fewer serious problems there will be in the long run. Also, leadership will obtain a better understanding of what the converts are actually believing as a result of our methods.



D. It is critically important for the evangelist and the leadership to learn quickly whether the foreign converts are developing a wrong understanding regarding the scriptural work, worship, or organization of the church as a result of our methods of operation. Since foreign converts will imitate our methods when they become self-sufficient and self-governing, the methods we adopt as temporary measures for better efficiency or for maintaining control can cause serious doctrinal problems later. As examples, I list the following false concepts that have been held by some foreign converts that are not hypothetical, but gleaned from actual communication with converts over the years in different countries.

1. The church may have central headquarters in their country from which all evangelism is directed. The preachers and congregations should look to headquarters for direction and for approval of their own efforts. This false concept can stem from the method of centralized control (even with man's belief in its inherent potential efficiency of operation), it is of all methods the most dangerous. The great Roman apostasy trod this path. Have we not learned this from church history?
2. Another false concept is that every congregation must have its own preacher. This is nothing but a pastor system. This belief stems from a much greater emphasis on training preachers than on training church leaders in foreign mission efforts. The Apostle Paul's method was to first train church leaders, then see that elders and deacons were ordained as soon as possible, and then admonish the congregation to accept their responsibility for evangelism—"the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).
3. A third unscriptural concept, actually held by some converts, was that the American church sponsoring the foreign mission effort has control over the preachers and congregations in that nation. Several times converts have written and stated that they belong to a particular congregation in America. It is only natural that the foreign converts would believe this if they are told that unless they work with and obey men appointed by the missionaries, they can have no fellowship with Americans. Brethren, this method comes so close to Catholicism that it is frightening.

It is time that we all wake up and properly scrutinize our methods. Our purpose is not to control but to guide.

4. A fourth and final false concept which I have found some foreign converts to believe, is that one preacher among them can be appointed to rule over several preachers. One actual documented cases in point was a native preacher, who said he had been appointed as District preacher (District being somewhat analogous to a state in America), and who learned that a new congregation had been established in his district. He went to the preacher who established the new congregation consisting of about fifty people and demanded that the congregation be disbanded because that preacher had not received his permission to establish it. I have every confidence that whoever appointed the district preacher would not condone this action, but the point is that wrong methods create a greater opportunity for such things to happen. Leadership needs to know when such things happen so as to re-evaluate the method being used.
- E. Learning from the experiences of our digressive brethren can be helpful in developing some of our methods employed in foreign mission work. The following quotations from their writings are given for your consideration.
1. **With The Bishops and Deacons** by James D. Cox, published in 1976.

They (elders) need to be able to comprehend and know some of the ear marks of a bad situation in connection with methods and procedures that have proven to impede the progress of most fields of endeavor . . . .

It should also be remembered in the teaching of secular things as well as aiding them in conducting their own worship services, that showing them how is much more preferred than doing it for them. Give a boy a fish and he will eat it today; teach him to fish and he will eat forever. Teaching them how to think is better than telling them what to think. To teach that the Word of God is absolute, can be understood, and that we are not to add to or detract from its teachings is not teaching them what to think, but how to think. Let the scriptures tell them what to think along with how to think . . . .

If the missionary understands that he is to teach his converts that the church is a place where you give something, that it is not a place to get something, then the long range success will be enhanced. [Our well intended acts of benevolence can cause the wrong understanding in this regard if we are not careful - VH].

Nationals will always be very slow to take hold and do for themselves if foreign missionaries keep doing all these things for them. If they can do it at all, we should let them do it. Elders should make sure that the missionary is going into the field with this philosophy.

If the foreign congregation can muster funds above operating expenses they should be expended toward the native preachers support rather than helping with the missionaries' expenses. Some elderships would reason in the reverse of this—hoping to control the native preacher. But it is still important for the missionary to simply be assisting the nationals and let the evangelization of their own people be in their hands and not the work of foreigners."

**2. The Eldership and The Missionary** by Howard W. Norton, published in 1971.

It is not uncommon in mission work for the methods to be adopted for their own sake rather than for the sake of the goal. Methodology on the mission field must always agree with the stated aim . . . .

Perhaps it will be useful to briefly point out some of the basic policies which undergird a large segment of the mission work of non-Catholic missionaries. First, there is a feeling that direct evangelism is more effective than the indirect teaching carried on through hospitals or schools. Second, there is a growing sentiment that healthy churches should grow rather than stagnate. Missionary experts, asking why some churches grow and some do not, are becoming increasingly aware that some churches either are programed not to grow at all or else to grow at a snail's pace. Third, there are strong indications that money from the home church can sometimes smother evangelistic work abroad rather than help it. Money

from the home church can be helpful on the mission field when used wisely, but it can have a malevolent effect when used improperly. Missionaries today are sensibly advised to do for the nationals only what they cannot do for themselves. Fourth, there is an increasing emphasis on national churches being self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating from the beginning and on the missionary continuously attempting to work himself out of a job.

### III. Conclusions

There is general agreement in our brotherhood, I believe, regarding scriptural goals for foreign mission efforts. Leadership is responsible for setting the proper goals and for obtaining agreement from the evangelist regarding these goals before he is sent into the field.

There is less unity among us on proper methods to be adopted in the field. Our methods must be determined by the scriptural goals set and must not be a hindrance to fulfillment of these goals. However good our intentions, faulty methods will create problems and unscriptural results in the long run.

It is leadership's responsibility to monitor the missionary's methodology so as to be aware of current results. Proper communications with the missionary and with the converts are needed as a check on correctness of methodology.

We as church leaders must realize our accountability to God for the goals set and methodology implemented in mission efforts under our supervision.

I sincerely believe that every person involved in foreign mission work in the past proceeded with the best intentions. We all have made mistakes. It is high time that we cease trying to justify our mistakes by pointing fingers and selecting a scapegoat upon which to place all the blame and banishing it to the wilderness. Let's make a truly sincere effort to bring our methods of evangelism into conformance to apostolic example.

Our purpose is not to control but to guide. Mission work is not "our" work (as sponsoring congregation) or "my" work (as a preacher)—it is the Lord's work. We are all workers together with Him. To God be all the glory, honor, and praise forevermore. Amen. 5471 S. Stonegate, Springfield, Missouri 65810.

## **Foreign Evangelism**

*by Larry MacElroy*

As has been said by the brethren preceding me, I feel very humbled to stand before this group of men, brethren, and preachers of the gospel. I know that what has been said before will certainly add to the few statements that I am going to make. In fact, I probably will not use all the time that I have been allotted.

One of the first things we need to examine, as leaders of the congregations that are involved in sending the gospel to the world, are the words spoken by Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:5—  
“ . . . examine yourselves, prove all things . . . ” Until we thoroughly do an examination of ourselves from the stand-point of what we are, and of how we are going to be committed to whatever work we have come in contact with, we will never be that useful tool in the Lord's hand in order to see that the work is done.

I think that in America we have been blessed with some of the greatest blessings that any nation has ever been blessed with. We are so abundantly blessed that we do not even begin to recognize it. I was approached recently by a brother in the church who made a statement which I believe, if he had it to do again, after discussing it with him, he would have withdrawn. He said, “Why should we continue supporting these preachers in foreign fields, when they should be able to support themselves?” Our brother who spoke last evening pointed out that there comes a time when men in certain areas may be able to support the work in their areas (cf. Billy Orten, “Bringing Foreign Churches to Autonomy,” p. 201). But I believe that we fail to understand how poor some of these foreign countries really are. The poverty they have is very similar to the Macedonian poverty, and we need to be ready to examine ourselves to see what more we can do. That is, we may need to re-evaluate and ask ourselves, “Am I doing all that I can do and must do as a member of the body of Christ to see that the Word of God goes throughout the world to every creature?” This is my job. This is your job. It is our profession.

When it comes to laying blame, we cannot lay blame except upon ourselves when we fail to do the self examination that is needed.

I will base most of what I have to say upon the problems that I have encountered while working with the Philippine work.

From time to time we have brethren who will call or write me and say, "We have not heard anything from the preacher we are supporting in the Philippines." Or a brother in the Philippines contacts us to say that he has not received any support for nine months. How could we get by if our support were not received in nine months? Yet this last year a brother wrote such a letter. He did not want to write the supporting congregation, but rather he wrote the sponsoring congregation to get someone else to help. Brethren, we are not only running into this problem in the foreign work, but we are running into the same problem with evangelists that we are supporting stateside.

We absolutely do not realize how very important this communication flow is to the work both here and abroad. Communication represents a constant flow from one place to another. The congregation that is writing to the preacher and supporting the effort desires to know how the work is going. There needs to be feedback to fulfill the need to know how the work is progressing in that corner of the field.

Over the past year most of the problems that have been encountered have involved communication. We can solve this problem so easily. We need congregations that are willing to support for the long term, and should something come up during that long term, we need that problem communicated back to the sponsoring congregation that there is a need to drop their support for a time. I have also been blessed to have small and young congregations who really did not have that much to use as support, but who were willing to say to me, "We are willing to take this preacher and support him for a period of time, and we will re-evaluate at the end of a year or two years to see if we can continue." I thank God for such congregations as that.

You know, it is hard enough to be someone who is looked to, to keep track of who the men are that we have in the field, and how their support is going, unless I have received some communication.

The work in the Philippines goes well, because of the visitations that we have by such men as Brothers Don King, Jerry Cutter, Bennie Cryer, Duane Permenter, and others that have been involved with this work. Don is, at the present time, preparing

to go to the Philippines, again. Brother Duane Permenter will be accompanying him. They will bring back information of any problem that may have surfaced, so that solutions can be attained, and the work there continue to grow in this far corner of the world. All of us, whether we are actively participating in the work of supporting some brother or not, need to become involved. Whether we can go or not, and go is the command of the Lord (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15); if all we can do is send someone else, then send them! See that the preaching of the gospel is continued in that area, and support that work so that the one laboring over there will never has to wonder where his next meal is coming from. I believe that there was a gross oversight in the case of our brother who went without his support that for so long. It is our responsibility to see that such oversight never happens again.

Our desire to understand the work better is answered by the travel of our Brother Don King. When Don returns, a report is given to the congregation, and then it goes out to the brotherhood in the **Old Paths Advocate**. Yet, today, we have many men who go unsupported, except by the sponsoring congregation, because we cannot find those willing to expend themselves. For those who actively support the sending of the gospel, we thank you. Do not stop! Let us spend and be spent for the cause of the spread of the gospel of salvation.

It has been said that some 20% of the congregations across the United States do 80% to 90% of the work in supporting the men abroad. I do not know how true that statement is, but I do know about the job of calling congregations in California to find some place who will pick up a portion of the support for a preacher. Time after time I hear: "We just do not have the ability to help." How deeply have we examined ourselves when we give into the Lord's treasury? How willing are we going to use the Lord's treasury to see that the gospel is sent? You know, we are the Lord's hands; we are His eyes; we are the Lord's feet. We are the only way that the gospel of Jesus Christ can be sent. We need to realize that it is our responsibility, even if we are those who sit back and listen to the message delivered each Lord's day.

I only became a part of the work some three years ago. I learned very quickly that there is more work that will be poured upon you, once you become a part of the work, than you ever dreamed of. To those sitting on the outside, it may appear that

nothing is being done; that no one is really expending any effort. Now that I am a part of the Philippine work I realize there is so much work that goes on behind the scenes. I never imagined! The work behind the scenes includes letter writing and phone calls to secure assistance or to check on support, adding or deleting materials from the computer, and generally trying to keep everything up to date. It was through the computer that I got involved. I had to clean up the preachers' list, the supporting congregations list, etc.—just get it all down so that we could see at a glance who was being supported and who was not. That's when I really realized the work involved.

Recently, men were picked up by a visiting preacher that were going to be supported by his home congregation. There was no knowledge of these men by the sponsoring congregation. Then these men were dropped upon the sponsoring congregation, because they could no longer continue the support. Brethren, we need to be aware that together we work, and the people working for the Lord's body must understand the necessity for communication. There is a triad of communication that must ever be open and flowing.

1. Communication between the supporting and the sponsoring congregations must always be open. If support is to be altered in any way both parties must be kept abreast of such change.
2. Communication between the supporting congregation and the preacher being supported. This channel must flow both ways, assuring the supporting congregation that their support has been received and filling them in on how the work is going. Likewise, the supporting congregation needs to let the preacher know that his support has been sent and that his work is so greatly appreciated.
3. Communication by the sponsoring congregation with the preacher and/or the supporting congregation concerning any problem that may be perceived.

We do not have American preachers residing in the Philippines. Thanks be to God that we have Brother Danao and other capable leaders who are there to handle the work that needs to be done, but we do need to hear the reports coming back. Brother Don King will fill this need upon his return. I pray that the work, not only in the Philippines, but in every other corner



of the world where the evangelistic effort is being sent, has the support needed; that the congregations will make themselves involved; and that they will use their time, their effort, their money to see that God's Word is always sent to the lost.

A brother made a comment just a few weeks ago that I believe should be our attitude. He said, "I would rather, when the Lord comes again, that our treasury be at zero rather than that the congregation here has thousands of dollars unused in the Lord's work. We would be handing back to God that bulging treasury, that one talent which has not been used. God does not want that. His desire is that the lost might be saved. He wants to use the treasury for the spread of the gospel and for the work of the congregation. This is a need that we must meet, brethren, lest we fail in our purpose. 1700 N. Tully Rd. E-128, Turlock, California 95380.

## **Reporting on the Work**

*by Gary McBride, Edmond, OK*

It is not always easy to say how a report should be written because the contents can be so varied. I do not want to appear negative or adversely distance anyone; however, it is sometimes easier to explain what is not needed. This is also from the perspective of a sponsoring congregation that has informational requirements to coordinate and manage a foreign work.

An columnist's editor once boasted that he could condense the entire New Testament to a single paragraph. When challenged to do so, he said, "Jesus was born. He lived. He died. He is coming back and He is not going to be happy." What the editor gave us was the essence but it leaves us wanting. It is tempting to eliminate what we as writers consider mundane or commonplace. Those same details to the reader become important and meaningful. Luke, the consummate historian, writes in Acts 27 and 28 of the Apostle Paul's journey to Rome. For example, he relates the facts of the great storm and ultimate shipwreck. He explains the soundings that were taken and the number of anchors from the stern of the ship. Luke tells of the battering the ship took and its final breakup. Rather than just saying that it was a difficult and arduous journey, he graphically relates just how trying it became. This gives us a clear understanding of a time, place, and culture that we cannot experience. In the same way, detailed reports are required from the fields because we cannot experience a foreign work firsthand. It is also important to note that Luke did not attempt to relate to Theophilus every incident that occurred in the spreading of the Gospel. He did choose (through the guidance of the Holy Spirit) those that would best illustrate the sense of life in the first century Roman Empire. Foreign lands and cultures can be as different (possibly more so) than first century Rome is from twentieth century America. It is simply not possible to assess the needs and goals, as well as provide the proper support of a mission work, without an understanding of everyday life.

Goals and objectives should be reported on regularly. Objectives should be agreed on by the congregation and the evangelist prior and during the term of the work. It is the responsibility of the evangelist to inform us as to the status of these agreed upon goals. Which are completed? Which are incomplete or in process? Are

some on hold or simply cannot be accomplished? Some objectives may have to be reconsidered and some may just be too ambitious. However, the sponsoring congregation must be kept informed. It is also important that the evangelist have his own short-term goals of how to best accomplish the overall objectives. These should also be made known and progress recorded as well.

No press releases, please. A press release contains only the positive side of a story. Even negative news is portrayed in a positive light. It is not always pleasant to be the bearer of bad news but you can be assured the messenger will not be shot. To effectively understand the work, a congregation must see the failures as well as the accomplishments. Paul had his defeats. For example, his attempt to evangelize Athens failed miserably. One of the tenets of Christian apologetics against biblical criticism is that the New Testament reveals both the positive and negative of its subjects. In other words, one of the reasons why the New Testament is not just a piece of fiction written to support Christianity is the portrayal of the weaknesses and failures of its characters. It is inarguable that things do not always go as planned. Situations arise (weather, vehicle, government, culture, people problems) and if a congregation is effectively apprised, then I believe you will find a much more supportive congregation. We are well aware that goals, once enunciated, will not always be accomplished. A congregation can then help support, assess, and re-evaluate. There may be a need to re-prioritize the objectives. There may be another way to achieve it. It may in fact prove to be unrealistic. These are decisions that must be made, but not without proper information, whether good or bad.

A congregation's decision-making ability depends on regular and timely reports from the field. This cannot be stressed enough. All that has been said concerning reporting is useless if the reports are rare. A monthly report may not seem like an important function, yet in most cases it is the primary, detailed informational link between the evangelist and the congregation. A lot can happen in a month and it is not asking too much for a report every thirty days. It should also be noted that many congregations support a foreign work and it is, at the very least, only right that they be advised (possibly in a more general report) on a regular basis of that work; work that would not exist without their contributions. 1828 N.W. 177th, Edmond, Oklahoma 73034.

# **Introduction: Russia and Eastern Europe**

*James Orten*

Probably more people have looked forward to the following presentations than to any single part of the study. The brotherhood's excitement about open doors in Russia and Eastern Europe was previously matched only once in my memory.

Some of us are old enough to remember when the brotherhood sent its first missionary couple to foreign soil. That was Paul and Wilma Nichols who went to Nyasaland (now Malawi), Africa in 1955. In reflecting on that time, I recall the atmosphere of awe and prayerfulness that pervaded the brotherhood. The mission was spoken about in pulpit and in print, and prayers for its success were continuously offered. No doubt that attitude contained a healthy dose of fear for their safety. Our ignorance of other countries, and Africa in particular, supplied that.

The experience we have gained in thirty-nine years has allayed our fears, and that is good, but I wonder if it had not jaded our hearts in ways that are not so beneficial. The excitement about mission work is back, and I am pleased about that. Elation about a good thing is appropriate and beneficial. But instead of gravity and prayerfulness, several brethren have suspected a competitiveness, a sort of claiming of territories, that may not be helpful. One is tempted to think of it as a spiritual version of the Oklahoma Land Rush.

These concerns do not suggest that the work should be abandoned. Far from it; the souls in Russia still need salvation. But they do suggest that an open and forthright assessment is needed of where we are and where we are going. That is what this series of presentations is designed to promote.

We will begin with a series of short reports about what has been accomplished to date in the five Russian cities in which brethren have preached. After that Alan Bonifay will discuss special "Opportunities and Problems in Evangelizing Russia." Following the break, Richard Bunner will talk about "Where Do We Go From Here?"

We are under no illusions that we make decisions here that are binding on local congregations in the U.S. or in Russia. The final decisions about any work rest with the congregation that does it. But it is our responsibility to edify, instruct, and enlighten one another. That process should be done openly and in love. We expect that to be the case this afternoon.

## **An Open Door: Russia**

*Saransk, Russia*

*Terry Baze*

I thank you for this wonderful opportunity to be a part of this study this afternoon, and apprising you of the current situation with some of the works in Russia. It is very exciting and it is probably the most significant thing that has touched my life. I have learned a lot of things about myself as a person and a preacher. For the first time in my life, and this probably says something about my lack of faith or spiritual maturity, I was in situations where I was one hundred percent completely dependent on the Lord. That is a feeling that every Christian should experience. I know that brothers who have gone before me into foreign lands have experienced that.

I regret that to some extent, based upon things that have been written, things that have been said, phone calls that I have received, and even things that have been said at this meeting; that instead of a time of rejoicing and sharing the joys of the gospel and the great things that God has done, we are almost compelled to defend what we have done. I just want to say this: I really believe that it is the Lord who will judge our work, and that work will stand or fall before Him. I think all of us need to be aware that we are different people, we have different families, we have different situations, but we preach the same gospel, we have the same purpose and we have the same goal. Some of the methods, opinions and attitudes may be different, and that is o.k., and I am satisfied with that. But I was told before I went that I must go through the proper channels. I attempted to do that. I was told that I was not qualified to go—that I should not go. I started receiving phone calls as soon as I got home from missionaries and from preachers. I was interrogated and told that I had done things wrong. Most of what I've said was probably true to an extent. However, if we do not lift up one another, encourage one another, and pray for each other, instead of criticizing each other and putting others on the defensive by belittling their work, we are not going to accomplish much of anything for the Lord's cause, both here and abroad.

We need to draw together with our limited resources and take advantage of the opportunities that are set before us. We need to diligently pray for each other and help each other in this work.

There is no set way of doing mission work in the U. S. or anywhere else. Whatever works for me in my situation, in my environment with the people I work with, may or may not be a success in your situation. It is good to share things and to help each other in what is successful and what has worked, but it is not good to tear down people.

During the past ten months in Saransk, Russia, a city of about 350,000 people located about 300 miles east of Moscow, four gospel preachers have spent a combined total of about four months. I spoke with a sister at Saransk by telephone on Tuesday. She told me that the last several Sundays, ever since Miles [King] and Gene [Grant] had returned in the first part of November, they have had twenty to twenty-two people attend every Lord's day. There have been a total of thirty-seven baptisms during the ten months. Most appreciated by me, is the fact that five of those baptized were baptized by two Russian brothers when there were no Americans in their city. This fills me with confidence that they are men, even though they are limited by our standards, who are very sincere, of strong faith, are devoted to the Lord, and who want to learn. It is a tremendous joy to me to be given the privilege by God to go to Russia and to be with those people. If you ever go, you will go back. I do not see how you could go and preach the gospel in that place and not go back. People can question your sincerity, your determination, your integrity, and motives for going; and people will always do that in any situation you are in. It is real easy to sit half-way around the world and talk about a preacher that you have never worked with, even though you are acquainted with him. You do not know his determination! You do not know his work! And then to talk about a people or place where you have never been! It is really easy to criticize situations so long as you are not in that situation.

What we need to do is realize that a tremendous door of opportunity has been opened to us and we have been caught totally unprepared. I appreciate everything Bruce Word said in his talk about preparation, but the fact is that when this opportunity presented itself, we were not prepared. We could have stayed here for a year or two learning the culture and learning the language.

and when we got ready to go, the door would be closed and nobody could go there. I personally believe, and I hope I am wrong—I pray that I am wrong, that that country will be in civil war somewhere in the next couple of years. I think that we all need to join together and pray very fervently that that door will be kept open and that more brothers will be sent into that harvest field. We need to pray that the work will be done to the extent that we can have churches established in that place that can withstand whatever happens in the days ahead. I believe that we can do that. I pray for every church there, for every preacher who has been there or is going there, for every work, and I will do any and everything I can do to assist and encourage in every way.

The work at the church at Saransk is presently being overseen by the elders and brethren of the Mission Hills congregation of Springfield, Missouri. I have complete confidence in those brethren, with their experience and their love for the cause of Christ and the interests of the church in Russia, that they will do everything in their power to do whatever it takes for those brethren to receive the gospel, for them to be edified and strengthened, and for the work in that part of Russia to be carried on. I am willing to do whatever I can to assist in that work, in whatever ways they choose to use me, I hope to be of service if at all possible.

Any of us could stand up here for hours and hours and hours and tell you of our experiences and tell you about the people and the country, and I only wish that we could do that, but I believe the things I have said are more appropriate, and I will leave some of the other things to some of the other brethren.  
*16852 Timberidge, Tyler, Texas, 75703.*

## *Tula, Russia*

### *Don Pruitt*

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and to give this report on the work in Tula, Russia. The congregation that meets in Tula, Russia and the work that takes place in that area has been under the direction of the congregation at Moore, Oklahoma. It began in May of 1993. From May 17 through June 8, Jerry Cutter and I went over to do a work and start a congrega-



tion at the city of Kasamov, a city very near Ryazan. As most of you know there were some problems and we were not able to go there. We tried for eight days to rescue that opportunity. We were persuaded that an auditorium had been rented for us, advertising had been done, the city was ready for us to come and preach, and we wanted to go where people were ready, but it was not possible. The door was closed to us due to problems that were beyond our control. The congregation at Moore had no control over that, and Jerry and I had no control over it. It was more or less a political situation involving the school system, that had shut us out.

I left on June 8, and Alan Bonifay and Frank Harris came in as an extension of that same trip and they stayed through mid-July. So I view that as one extended trip covering eight weeks, six of which were spent in Tula. Before I left there we were able to get an auditorium, advertising had been done, and we were able to preach for four nights before I left. Jerry stayed for an additional week and continued to work, acquainting Alan and Frank with the work. Following that, in the first half of September [1993], Jerry Cutter and Buddy Brumley went back over to Tula. October 25 through November 18, Greg Gay and I returned to Tula. Those are the three trips that have been made.

At the end of the extended trip, when Alan and Frank left, there was a congregation that was established there. Several people were converted and Alan and Frank had conducted several studies through the days to prepare the men to conduct the worship and the work of the church. When Buddy Brumley and Jerry Cutter returned in September after a six week absence of any American workers, they found a congregation meeting scripturally and faithfully. In addition to preaching the gospel in that place, these brethren were asked to use a considerable amount of their time in fact-finding, and answering some questions that had arisen concerning the work by the sponsoring church. During this time one man, an engineer, was converted. So the church continued to grow.

When Greg and I returned at the end of October, we found a congregation that was meeting faithfully and scripturally. In fact, the first Sunday we were there, I asked Greg to preach, and the brethren conducted the rest of the service entirely. They did a very good job; in fact, they probably did as well as some places I have been in this country, and they were certainly more rever-

ent than many of the places that I have been in this country. Although there were only eight Christians, there were about twenty to twenty-two people who were meeting there regularly every Sunday. Greg and I were able to preach twenty consecutive nights, and during this trip that ended November 18, there were ten more that were baptized and added to the church. Presently we have in the congregation in Tula eighteen Christians, seven of which are men. These men show some leadership potential. The congregation in Tula is blessed in this regard, perhaps more so than in some of the other areas that we are working in. These brethren conduct the worship themselves and are also beginning to make efforts to teach others in their community. Another of the things that Greg and I did before we left was to teach two of the brethren how to immerse someone. So they are very excited about that.

As far as the prospects are concerned, there are several things I would like to say. The city of Tula has a population of about 600,000. It is a military city. Because of the nature of the city, this is the city where all the guns are made for the war machine in Russia, and because of that it was not opened up to Westerners when Russia was opened. In fact, it had just been opened up a short time before we had the door shut on us at Kasamov. When we found out that we had the opportunity to go to Tula, we chose this place for two reasons: (1) its geographical location, and (2) because I had had conversations with some of the brethren in Moore concerning this very city as a target city down the road. We were looking for a place that was geographically close to the city of Moscow, where missionaries going into that country could lay over, where we could ship Bibles, where we could store Bibles and tracts, so that we do not have to ask every man that goes in there to be a virtual pack mule, carrying hundreds of pounds of tracts and Bibles with him as he goes. So we were looking for a place close to Moscow (where we all fly in), where a preacher could get off the plane, have a night's rest (which he is going to need), stop in Tula (150 miles south with good train connections), pick up his Bibles and tracts or grape juice or whatever he is going to need, and then head on to their work. This work is also significant geographically because all our work so far is south and east of Moscow. There are millions of people that live in this area. We could use every preacher in the brotherhood and every congregation in the brotherhood and never leave the area, from now until the Lord comes. There literally is

that many people. As we begin to work out of these areas, more and more work can be done, and can be done by the Russian brethren. So the brethren in Moore felt like the city of Tula was a key city as far as the overall work was concerned.

I personally believe that we have a wonderful opportunity to build a great church there. As I said, we have several men who are converted, and some of them are very capable men and very eager to learn. There is so much more that I could say about this work that I wish I had time to do so.

Immediate plans for the work include continuing to go in there and preach. We do not have to go into Tula as school teachers. That work was not set up through any schools. It was the first work that we did ourselves. It was not associated with any of the class brethren or any off-shoots of that nature. We put on our visas and on our entrance place that we came there to deliver sermons and lectures on first century Christianity. That is what we do. We visit and preach in schools, but that is secondary and it is not our connection in this particular place. Alan Bonifay and George Battey are going to go in the middle of January, so the work is going to continue in that area. We are presently looking at a new community about forty miles away. The brethren there are very anxious about this place, because there are no denominational churches there. A Pentecostal group came into the area and baptized about 50-100 people and left the following week, so they disbanded and there are no denominations that meet in that city, at least from the information that we have. So the brethren are very anxious to go into that area. However, our primary function at the present time is to establish the work in Tula so it can grow outward. I mention this just to show that the brethren in Russia, though new in the faith and babes in Christ, have great vision and are intelligent people. We people in America sometimes think we are the only intelligent people around. But these people are very intelligent and very capable.

Lastly, I want to make some personal observations. First, brethren, I never stood so close to first century Christianity as when I landed in that country. (Somebody told me that when you get off the plane you go back about forty or fifty years, and they nailed it. That is exactly what happens.) There will be problems in a young work, and there are problems in this young work, because we are working with babes in Christ. Brethren, there are prob-

lems in America! And we are not dealing with babes in Christ here! We are dealing with the leadership of congregations that have existed for years and years, and we have more problems in this country than we do in that country. So I would appreciate it if brethren would just be a little patient and understanding, as Terry was saying a while ago.

Second, I have never stood so close to the providence of God as I stood in that country. I have been a member of the Lord's church for over thirty-five years. We talk about God working, but man! To be able to stand there and watch it is something beautiful to behold.

Third, we need congregations in this country to be involved in the work. We need men in this country, preachers and church leaders, who are willing to go. I think that those preachers need to go under the oversight of a sponsoring church. There seems to be a spirit of free-lance evangelism here that concerns me.

Lastly, brethren, contrary to what you have read, the work in Russia is not a vacationland. It is not anybody's plaything and I strongly resent the fact that that was published. That flies in the face of every good man that has gone over there and it flies in the face of every faithful church that has sent anybody over there. I have never worked so hard, been at such risk or danger, as when I am in that country, and to come back to this country and have somebody talk about vacationlands and playthings, and have one of our papers put that out is absolutely appalling! 617 *Phelps St., Houston, Missouri 65483-1735.*

## *Penza, Russia*

### *David Gilley*

My name is David Gilley and I am from the Moore congregation. At present we are sponsoring the works at Tula and Penza. I expected Jimmy Cutter to be here to speak about the work at Penza, but Jimmy is having a little problem getting his passport to get out of the country. So he was not able to be here. The university was trying to get him a multi-entry visa, and so far he does not have one, so his return is going to be a little bit later than what we had anticipated. So I agreed to speak on the work in Penza.

The first trip into Penza was conceived in the summer of 1992. At that time Jimmy was back with his son [Colin] who was born with Spina bifida. They were running tests and doing surgeries on him. Duane and Mary Cutter mentioned to Jimmy about some of the successes they had heard of over in Russia, a place we never thought we would be able to go into. We thought that the Iron Curtain was there, and that at least in our lifetimes, we would never see it come down and go into those countries openly and speak. But that is exactly what happened and we can thank Duane and Mary Cutter for bringing this to the attention of the people in this brotherhood.

There was much effort that summer in writing letters, making phone calls, and filling out forms so that a trip could be arranged. Finally, a trip was arranged through Clifford Yelldell of Montgomery, Alabama, a member of the Sunday school church. I might add that without his help and his contacts this trip would not have been possible at that time.

It is kind of ironic how the Moore congregation became involved in this. Jimmy was back from Africa at the time and he was working temporarily with the Moore congregation. It was at a going away party that we had for Jimmy and Dana and the kids, that all this began to come up. He and I talked about going to Russia and establishing a congregation that summer. I knew that he had been looking into it and been working on it on this end, and he had basically made these arrangements, but all this started coming out at this going away party that we had, and at that time the Moore congregation agreed that they would be willing to become involved with this particular work. It has certainly been a blessing for our congregation. If you want a congregation to grow and if you want a congregation to just catch on fire, get involved in some kind of evangelistic work. I am convinced of that with all my heart at this time.

Finally, all the arrangements were made and it was agreed that Jimmy and Doug Edwards would go over at the end of October. I have to tell you that I do not have a lot of hair, but worrying about getting Doug Edwards' visa on time took a few more hairs out of my head at that time. Doug literally got his visa at the airport as he was getting on the plane to go over. So there were arrangements that we did not understand at the time, and things have happened that we have a better understanding of now than we did then.

Doug and Jimmy went over and established the congregation in the city of Penza, Russia. Penza is a city southeast of Moscow, about 250-300 miles, of about 600,000 people. It is not spread out a great deal. It is a very intense area of population. As with most cities are over there, there is a great deal of military activity. This city was opened right before Jimmy and Doug went in. There was a congregation established there.

They were invited readily into the school system. The schools gave them access to classrooms where they were able to speak about the Christ and able to speak about religion. There were literally thousands of people that heard about this, that in other cases would never have been able to hear about it.

There have been many trips made since Jimmy and Doug went in. Jimmy Cutter and Bobby Loudernilk went in January. After that Raymond Fox and Jimmy Cutter went in together. In July of 1993, Jimmy made a trip in by himself to arrange things for him to move over there in September. Jimmy and Dana Cutter moved to Penza in September of 1993. I have to tell you that the first several weeks there for them were not very pleasant. Jimmy thought that he had made arrangements for an apartment and possibly a driver to drive them around, but they got over there and all these arrangements they had made did not pan out. They spent the first three weeks moving from place to place and trying to find a place to live. I might mention that they found a place to live and things have kind of settled down for them. At this moment, however, he does not have a telephone in his apartment. Raymond made his second trip into Penza the last part of October and the first part November. He studied with the Christians there, he held lectures, and he was able to speak at the university as well. My wife Shirley and I made a trip in on November 25 and we came back out and made it back to the United States on December 7 with Dana and the children. I have to say, that I do not think anyone who goes over there and sees the way that those people live, and who receives their hospitality, can ever come back to this country and be the same individual. I do not think you can do it.

To date there have been ninety-five baptized in Penza. There are about thirty to thirty-five Christians who attend faithfully every service. There are probably another fifteen who attend in an irregular fashion but consider themselves to be Christians. We have a very faithful core of Christians over there. There are visi-

tors from the community every service, and many of these visitors are not just half-hearted visitors, but these are people that anytime the church is meeting, anytime there is a study going on, these individuals are there. There are several individuals from the university that come and there are several individuals from the community at large that come.

I could not talk about the work at Penza without talking about an individual that does much of the translation for us. He is an individual named Vitaly. Vitaly is a very good person—he is not a Christian at this point—but he has been Jimmy's right arm as far as getting them food, helping them find a place to live, and doing things like this. He has been a tremendous help.

There is tremendous potential in Penza. However, it is not without its problems either. We have been inundated by the Seventh-day Adventists who have continually attacked us and have made it their goal to get us out of Penza. However, I do not think that this is going to happen, because we have taught effectively against their teaching. In fact, I think that now the shoe is on the other foot, and we have begun to rebound from the attacks that they have made against us. We have made plans for Raymond Fox to go back, and we would like to have a well planned, well organized lecture series to reaffirm our position in the community. Also, there is another city just south of Penza that is literally just waiting for us to come down and preach the gospel to them. So there are many areas over there that have not even been touched; areas in which people are just waiting for someone to come and speak to them. *P. O. Box 7145, Moore, Oklahoma 73153.*

### *Ryazan, Russia* *Richard Bunner*

In April of 1993, Ron Courter and I made a trip to the city of Ryazan. We really started off with a lot of difficulties, or so it seemed to me. When we arrived in Moscow, the person who was supposed to meet us was not there. There was a man that came and said that we would have to spend a couple of days in Moscow and then someone would come and get us and take us to Ryazan. Those of you who are familiar with Ron and I know we are impatient people—well, we did our best to get to Ryazan

before those two days. Try as hard as we did, we ended up waiting until the people came from Ryazan and picked us up and drove us down to Ryazan. Ryazan is about 120 miles southeast of Moscow.

When we arrived in Ryazan we were made to feel very welcome. The people were friendly. It, too, is a military city. There are five military institutes in the city. It is the home to a very strong Communist party and the people that are there are not pro-Yeltsin.

We had difficulty from the beginning finding a place that we could invite people to come to for a meeting so we could study the Bible and preach. We had difficulty finding a translator. The city has a population of about 500,000; but the institutes that were there just simply did not have people who were qualified to help us in the way we needed help. We eventually worked some things out to what we thought was going to be a working situation. We held a meeting and we had as many as 180-190 people attending our lectures. During that time we had some folks who wanted to be baptized, and then we could not find a place to baptize them. We could not get cooperation from anyone because it was insulting to the people in that area—the Orthodox church was very strong. The people felt that it was one thing to teach the Bible, it was quite a different thing when we wanted to baptize people, because they felt that the Orthodox church had baptized them. So we were not able to beg, borrow, or rent a facility for a number of days. Finally, we were able to use a swimming pool at a school, after repeatedly asking. Also, there was a sauna that we were able to rent one morning.

Some of the people that we were teaching grew suspicious because they were put off about being baptized. In fact, there was one night when we had about twenty-five to thirty people who wanted to be baptized, and because it took me a week to find a place to baptize these folks, we ended up baptizing seven. The others that had come forward and wanted to be baptized were afraid. I spoke with some of the folks that spoke English that were there and asked, "What's the problem?" They said, "Well, you know they are afraid of the KGB and that they are going to get into some sort of trouble, so they are starting to lose some confidence." I do not think we really regained the confidence of everybody on that particular trip. We had trouble finding grape



juice, but we had taken enough grape juice with us that we were able to leave grape juice and we told the brethren that we would be back with grape juice. We were there for five and one-half weeks.

We returned to Ryazan in July, and we were disappointed in that there were only a couple of people that were meeting out of the seven that we had baptized. This was a man and a woman (they were not related), but they were trying to hold on to that which we taught them to do. We held a meeting during that time and had some Bible studies, but of course it was during the summer and people were working in their gardens. We only had about sixty or seventy people attending our lectures. We had taken a baptistery with us that had been furnished by some brethren from San Antonio. It is really a neat thing and I would recommend it to anyone who is going into a foreign country and you are not sure what the facilities might be. It carries just like a little tote bag, and you put it together and fill it up with water and it is satisfactory to baptize someone in. Well, we had taken a baptistery with us, but we did not get to use it, for no one obeyed the gospel.

We returned a third time in the fall (October 1st through 28th). Again, we were disappointed. We went to church on Sunday morning, and the only person that was there was Victor. He explained that half the time he was the only person that would be there. He said that he was there every Sunday. He always made the loaf and always had the grape juice, and he would come with a lesson that he was prepared to teach, and he would have everything ready—song books and what have you. He was a little discouraged, but he said that he would not give up, and he assured us that as often as someone would come to Ryazan, they would find that he would be prepared to worship on Sunday morning. We tried to find the people that we had baptized, but some of them we could not find at all. On our third trip, while we were in Ryazan, the Orthodox church did a very effective job at shutting us down. We went to the theater that we had rented in previous times for office space and lecture hall and they would not rent to us. I went to a school where we had held a meeting and they said we could not use the facility. In both these instances they said "We have a law that says you cannot do this." Ron and I were under the impression that the government had made a law that was inhibiting us from doing our work there. So we sent out telegrams to about ninety people that we

knew there in the city, telling them that we were there and would like to visit with them and study with them. There were some folks who came and we had some private studies. We were really disappointed because it had taken until this third trip to find a capable and competent translator. We had found him in Tula.

Now, we did not know what was going on now about why we were being shut down. We had checked at a hotel about our being able to stay there. They told us what the rate was. I said, "Can we see a room?" They said, "We do not have a room for you." There were five hotels in the city and none of them had a room for us. Well, when our translator arrived in town (I had decided that because we were Americans they were not going to let us stay there), we went down with our translator. He had called on the phone and asked how much a room was (considerably cheaper than what it was going to be for Ron and I), and if they had a room (yes, they had a room). We made the mistake of going down with him, and when we walked in (we were going to pay), they said, "We don't have a room for him." So we had to find a flat for him to stay in. I stayed at Victor's house. And it seemed that we were running short of funds—the people that we had stayed with previously had raised the rent on us—fourfold in fact.

We feel that we have not had real good success, like brethren have had in other cities in Russia. I think this is probably to be expected. Not every city that you go into will you be able to establish a thriving congregation. I do know that there is a man who is living in Ryazan, whose name is Victor, and every Sunday he bakes a loaf of unleavened bread and opens a little six ounce can of grape juice that has been left with him, and he has his Bible and his songbook, and he is there and he is ready to worship. That is what we have in that city. *Rt. 6, Box 313 B, Fairmont, West Virginia 26554.*

## *Tambov, Russia*

*Mike Whitworth*

I wish I could have brought my journal, but it takes about two and a half or three hours to get through it, and I do not have that much time. The congregation in Wichita sends greetings. The congregation in Wichita is approximately nineteen years old; fairly young when measured by many other congregations in this country, but we have always been excited and interested in spreading the word. We have been interested in evangelism both at home and abroad. We have supported native preachers overseas as individuals and we have supported preachers as a congregation. So we have always been interested in foreign work. We did not know exactly when or at what time we would be able to get involved ourselves, but when Bobby Loudermilk came back from helping Jimmy Cutter in Penza, his compassion for the work, coupled with the success of the work, really got us fired up. The congregation has been growing spiritually and scripturally for many, many years, and I think that this was just the time for us to get involved in the challenge of foreign work.

Through the help of the Moore, Oklahoma congregation, and primarily David Gilley, we were able to discover ways that we could prepare ourselves for this involvement. The city of Tambov was selected because of its location in reference to Penza and Moscow. It is south of Moscow and has a population of about 300,000. It is a military city and not pro-Yeltsin; it is still strong with Communist beliefs. We had a little bit of difficulty there on our second trip. On the first trip, with six brethren, we met with very little resistance. It was on the return trip that we met some resistance. So I have broken my talk down into three stages: the initial trip, the follow-up trip, and then future trips.

After several months of preparation, we sent a party of six people to Tambov on July 8, 1993. It is a little bit younger work than some of the other works in Russia. Jimmy and Diane Vannoy from Corsicana went on their own; they provided their own means and expense, and we really appreciate them for that. We were able to get the funds to send Gary and Teresa Barrett and Bob and Denise Loudermilk. They got there around July 9. The arrangements had already been made: the lecture halls were

rented, the advertisements had been made, the places they were to stay—all these things were already secured when they got there. After their arrival they also advertised that they would like to start teaching English at the Institute. They had about two hundred responses. Out of those two hundred responses, the six of them, twice a day (two or three hours in the morning and two or three hours in the afternoon), would teach from twelve to fifteen people the English language. Some would use the Bible and some would use prepared materials that they had acquired. Out of the sixty or so people who faithfully came for seventeen straight days (excepting Sunday), they made some good acquaintances and contacts, and out of this there were some who were baptized.

Lectures were held nightly with the three men taking turns preaching to crowds of about fifty to sixty people. Approximately the same numbers came to services on Lord's day. Would it not be wonderful if we could, just by advertising, get fifty to sixty people who were non-Christians to attend a service where they could hear the gospel in one of our cities in the U.S.A?

On one occasion they visited a nursing home. They preached the gospel there and four women were baptized there that afternoon: two employees and two patients. This initial trip turned out to be a very fruitful one. Fourteen people were baptized, including four men and ten women. Of this number six have remained faithful. They meet faithfully on Lord's day.

### **We Follow Up**

We were following up for quite a while by calling every Sunday. Two of the members speak English very well. So we called and checked that they were meeting, and they have been meeting faithfully.

They are so appreciative of their salvation. That was one of the things that really impressed me when I went back over there. They truly appreciated being saved, being forgiven of their sins. We appreciate so much the sacrifice of time, effort, and money made by those who went on that first trip. Also, we appreciate so much the congregations we called to ask if they would be interested in helping with this work. Brother Cliff Arney mentioned this morning about sending out letters and only getting one response. We decided we would address it in a different way. We called leaders of congregations that we thought might be in-

terested. We raised a good sum of money to help with this initial trip. Without this the trip would probably not have been made. So let us all rejoice together in what our unity in Christ can accomplish. I praise God for that and I am happy to be able to say that today.

The return trip was on September 17. I met Gary Barrett there. I was able to go over there on some business for four or five days prior to meeting Gary in Moscow. We felt it was important to follow up with a trip quickly (the initial group returned August 11—they were there for five weeks). I would like to say right here that this trip was probably the most faith building thing that I have ever done. And talk about the providence of God and seeing Him work! From time to time in the things that were going on, we would say, "Well, now what do we do?" We would just say, "Well, we'll put our faith in God and keep on going." That is what we did and we continued to find ways to open the doors that were shutting.

I just also would like to say that if you call no heat, no hot water, and one meal a day for ten days, and almost getting kicked out of the city because they said that you were there illegally, a vacation, then I beg to differ. It was not easy work. We were working about twelve hours a day, walking about eight to ten miles a day, trying to get ourselves registered in the city legally. We worked on that for about four or five days. Well, there were no baptisms on our second trip, but we felt like we had made some progress. We were able to give public lectures the last nine days we were there, and each of those nine days the interest seemed to increase more and more. We trust that the groundwork has been laid and the seed has been planted and we will let God give the increase.

Future trips: Gary and Teresa Barrett are planning to go there the last of February 1994 through the first of April. Brother Randy Blankenship of the Wichita congregation will be with them for about the first two weeks. In July, through the last three Sundays in July, Jimmy and Diane Vannoy plan to go back. My wife, my son and myself are planning to go back in August.

I want to close by reading a letter from a member of the church. I think this is so very appropriate for this meeting. He doesn't speak English very well, but he spoke this to someone who translated and transcribed this into English. He would like for this letter to be read to all the members of the church in the United States. Overlook the grammatical errors, if you will, and listen to what he has to say:

Sergei, the disciple of Jesus Christ.

To brothers and sisters in America according to the will of our Lord, whose blood saved us from sin, and in whom we get resurrection and eternal life.

Thank God for having an opportunity to write to you in this way, proving again the Lord's love to you. May peace, love, and goodness live in your hearts. Brothers and sisters, remember about the price our Savior paid for our sins. Remember that he was not afraid to give his life for us and be risen and to raise all of us through Himself. So let us not be afraid to serve with our lives our Lord of life, whose creative word we take gladly into our hearts and brains, for belief, and give to other people. Let there be no place for any sin in us, as there is no such place in Him whose righteousness we were baptized in. Saint is He who makes us saints. Let the Holy Spirit not leave you in the moments of temptation nor in the moments of misfortune. Hard as it could be in your life, don't give up. Have joy in Christ who knows everything and gives everybody according to their faith. Brothers and sisters, pray for us as we pray for you. Let us pray together for those who is not following the right way yet, who is blind in his sinning self, and needs one who can see and take him away from the edge and put him on the right way. Wish to help everybody in the Lord's Word, and not only with this; help them who pass by, them who ask you and them who say against you, as all of them are neighbors, and all of them need the holy Word, and as our Lord wants to help them because He loves everybody and we His hands, His lips, must do it. What would happen if we, the Christians, shall keep silence? In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray for this letter being read, if possible, to

all Christians and to those who are willing to listen to the Lord's word, that all of you know that my house is your house, and I am ready to help everybody according to the Lord's will in spite of distance and language.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you. Amen.

Sergei.

*1454 Hornecker Dr., Wichita, Kansas 67235.*

## **Special Opportunities; Special Problems**

*by Alan Bonifay*

The year 1989 marked one of the great turning points in the history of the world. The collapse of Communism, first in Eastern Europe and then in the granite citadel of Stalin, was so sudden and complete that most of us were stunned. Think of it: one of the great holiday gifts of 1989 was a piece of concrete from the Berlin Wall, complete with verifiable documentation. A whole new world of opportunities and problems opened to the West. It was all so exciting and unexpected. In his introduction to **The New Russians**, Hedrick Smith said:

When I left Russia and the Russians in December 1974, after three years as Moscow bureau chief for **The New York Times**, I thought that vast country and its people would never really change. As a people they were so Russian, so different from people in the West . . . I had come to see authoritarian rule as something firmly embedded in Russian society and ingrained in the Russian psyche . . . Five long centuries of absolutism—from Ivan the Terrible to the Soviet seventies—had left the Russian masses submissive . . . The decline and stagnation that sank into place for the next decade, into the mid-eighties seemed to confirm this judgment. Soviet politics seemed as frozen as the Siberian tundra.

As it turned out, of course, I was wrong. Never had I imagined that the Soviet Union would undergo the kind of seismic transformation that became apparent a couple of years after Michail Gorbachev came to power in March 1985 (xvii, xviii).

Not unlike Hedrick Smith, I reckon that eighteen months ago most of us would have discredited any prophecy that in 1993 our fellowship would be able to establish four or five churches in the heart of Russia. The few times in my life that brethren have alluded to Doug Phillips' article in **The Harvest Field** on "Churches of Christ in Russia" published in 1947 (189), the tone has been quizzical with raised eyebrows—if not one of incredulity. Yet, by the grace and blessing of God, together with the hard



labor of many brethren and the large-hearted openhandedness of the brotherhood, new territory in Russia has been claimed for the Kingdom of God. Albeit our entrance is somewhat shaky and unsteady at this point, great opportunities await our careful and prudent stewardship.

Amazingly, however, not everyone views the work in Russia approvingly. Some question the number of trips needed, the length of our forays, and, of course, the cost. Some have become disenchanted because of some of the problems we have encountered. Some even seem to question the need for any foreign work at all. Hopefully we can look at these issues objectively and arrive at a balanced and steady course of progress that is consonant with the teaching of God's Word.

Actually, when the number of trips that have been made are considered aggregately it is not surprising that brows have been lifted. Consider how quickly the work has developed:

November 1992	Jimmy Cutter Doug Edwards	Penza
January 1993	Jimmy Cutter Bobby Loudermilk	Penza
April 1993	Jimmy Cutter Raymond Fox	Penza
April 1993	Richard Bunner Ron Courter	Ryazan
April 1993	Terry Baze Rod Watson	Saransk
May 1993	Miles King Gene Grant	Saransk
May/June 1993	Don Pruitt Jerry Cutter	Tula
June/July 1993	Alan Bonifay Frank Harris	Tula
July 1993	Ron Courter Richard Bunner	Ryazan
July 1993	Terry Baze and Family Rod Watson	Saransk
July 1993	Jimmy Cutter	Penza

July 1993	Bob Loudermilk and wife Gary Barret and wife Jimmy Vannoy and wife	Tambov
August/ September 1993	Ron Courter Richard Bunner	Ryazan
September 1993	Jerry Cutter Buddy Brumley	Tula
September 1993	Jimmy Cutter & Family	Penza
October 1993	Raymond Fox	Penza
October 1993	Miles King Gene Grant	Saransk
October 1993	Mike Whitworth Gary Barrett	Tambov
October 1993	Richard Bunner Ron Courter	Ryazan
November 1993	Don Pruitt Greg Gay	Tula
November 1993	David Gilley	Penza

One can hardly accuse the brethren of miserliness in view of this list. If I mistake not, at least fifty trips to Russia by our brethren have been completed. I would guess that we have invested almost all of \$100,000 in this work. All of this gives rise to several questions in the consideration of our special opportunities in Russia.

### **Why Has There Been So Much Interest in Russia?**

A. Some of the answers are obvious:

1. Our preachers and our brethren are keenly interested in winning souls to Christ.
2. There is a great yearning to preach to men who are interested in and amenable to the gospel.
3. Many of our preachers are willing to hazard the difficulties of foreign work.

B. However, other answers are less tangible:

1. There is the mystique Russia has always held for Americans.
2. There was the evidence that the Cold War was over and America has won it.
3. The early results of the work were dramatic.
4. Apparently the time investment required to achieve such results was negligible.
5. Fares to Russia were inexpensive.
6. Finally, there was this brother in the digressive church who was willing to share with us his leads and connections.

Some of these reasons are noble and commendable. Some are less so and some are a bit naive.

### **What Have Been the Results to Date?**

- A. In Penza, ninety-four have been baptized and about fifty are meeting regularly.
- B. In Saransk about thirty have been baptized and probably fifteen are meeting regularly.
- C. In Tambov fourteen obeyed the gospel and five or six of these continue to worship.
- D. In Tula eighteen were baptized and about twelve or so assemble on the Lord's Day.
- E. In Ryazan, seven were immersed, but there is only one faithful at this time.

I believe that these results warrant our continued interest in this work. I seriously doubt that we could have invested a similar amount of money and manpower in any five new cities in the United States and achieved equal results. All told some 160 people have been immersed into Christ and about half of them remain faithful. Four or five new congregations assemble on each Lord's Day, and several hundreds (if not thousands) of people have heard the gospel in a country where the name of Christ has been virtually unheard of for seventy years.

### **Why Are So Many Trips Necessary?**

- A. To begin with, the work in Russia is different from any other country we have ever preached in.
  - 1. There is no English speaking population base to assist us socially or spiritually.
  - 2. Russia is very much a third world country and consequently a very difficult place to live.
  - 3. Medical facilities are virtually non-existent and what does exist is fraught with grave danger.
  - 4. Russia's almost complete isolation from almost all generally accepted moral Christian values makes an extended stay difficult.
- B. Consequently, it seems evident that we are going to find it necessary to develop our congregations through a series of temporary visits.
- C. An added benefit of this approach may be that we can avoid making these churches dependent upon our assistance for decades.
- D. The reason so many trips are necessary is that travel in Russia is difficult and somewhat restricted.
- E. At this point, we have five unconnected works. It is somewhat like working in five different countries. This situation will probably prevail for some time to come.

### **What Lessons Have We Learned?**

I doubt that I can speak comprehensively for all the brethren on these issues and especially this one. We have all learned many things in the last year. I suspect we are all wiser by experience than we were a year ago.

- A. In retrospect it seems a just criticism to me that from some standpoints we "went off half-cocked."
- B. Rushing in pell-mell may not have been the wisest approach.
- C. Hopefully, when new opportunities arise we will approach them more circumspectly.
- D. Obviously, we did not ask enough questions or even the right ones.

- F. Clearly, we must learn to view with more skepticism digressives who come bearing gifts. If we do not we may not realize what we are getting into until it is too late.
- G. On the positive side, we have learned many things about how to function in Russia.
  - 1. The problem of obtaining our own visas has been solved. There is no longer any reason to be connected to Bro. Yelldell and the digressives.
  - 2. Gradually we are learning how to accomplish the Lord's work in Russia.

With all of our problems and difficulties and failures the Lord has blessed us abundantly. We do have several faithful churches in Russia and have opportunity to continue preaching to those desiring the salvation of Christ. We have learned that Jimmy Cutter's early spectacular results are not normal but that there are people who will obey the gospel. All of these considerations, in view of God's Holy Word, place us under great obligation to continue to forge our way ahead, ever dependent on the grace of God. We must be faithful "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10).

### **How Should We Manage the Works We Have Begun?**

- A. The autonomous nature of each of the sending congregations should be scrupulously observed both in practice and in word.
- B. The congregations sending men to the work should carefully seek men who are qualified to go.
  - 1. We need to send men who are doctrinally sound; who are thoroughly conversant with the Bible; who are able to teach others to edify themselves.
  - 2. We need to send men who are financially sound and have a good business mind.
  - 3. We need to send men who are able to analyze the needs of others correctly and who are able to say, "No."
  - 4. We must send men who are morally sound and above reproach in their dealings with others; men whose marriages are strong and sound.

5. Above all we need to send men who are spiritually sound; men who are dependent on God; men who will labor "through thick and thin"; men who will keep their heads when all seems to be going awry.
- C. Both, the congregations sending and the men going should pursue (as much as possible) a program balanced between consolidation and gain.
- D. Gradually, we need to explore avenues by which to tie our congregations together in a brotherhood.
  - a. We need to expand from our local centers as opportunity permits.
  - b. We need to train our Russian brethren as leaders and teachers.
  - c. We need to train men to preach the gospel and bring the churches together into a brotherhood.

### **How Should We Criticize the Work?**

- A. Criticisms should be aimed at positively building the work—not at tearing it down.
- B. Solutions to problems should be offered.
- C. Some criticisms are unjust:
  1. "These trips are only a church-paid vacation." Nothing further from the truth could be stated. The men who go make great sacrifices and hazard their lives in order to preach. The work is difficult and the stress is heavy. Interestingly, many of the same people who make this criticism also criticize preachers over here who are sitting around doing nothing.
  2. Another objection heard not infrequently is that we should spend our money in America. "Don't you realize that we have states in our own country that have no churches?" To that I would respond on two points:
    - a. It is unusual for brethren who make this complaint to actually agree to send a preacher to Maine.
    - b. The preachers need to be sent to fields "white unto harvest."

3. "But do you really believe that these Russians are converted?" Some are and some are not. As time goes by our retention rate will probably develop just as it has in Africa, Mexico, the Philippines, Honduras and America. The parable of the sower applies as well to Russians as any one else.

These comments, both opinions and advice, lead me to one of the questions originally assigned to me:

### **What Opportunities Present Themselves to Us in Russia That Are Not Present Elsewhere?**

1. I seriously doubt if we have any more opportunities for success in Russia than we do in any other third world country, given the same investment of time and money.
2. In fact, in terms of conversion rates, I would not be surprised if several other foreign works we are involved in compared very favorably with those in Russia.
3. Unquestionably, the work in Malawi, specifically, and in Africa, generally, is still our most successful venture.
4. But let not these observations cloud the issue. The obvious fact is that great opportunity awaits us in Russia just as it does in other places.
5. Not only so, but great opportunity translates into great responsibility to engage ourselves wisely and prudently in carrying the gospel to this vast land.

### **Special Problems**

However, great opportunities are often fraught with great problems and things have been no different in Russia. In general, we have all faced and continue to face all kinds of problems. We have experienced about every kind of practical problem you can imagine: from how to get around when no one can understand you, to how to deal with recalcitrant city officials who are intent on protecting their fiefdoms as their world crumbles around them. Equally, we have been plagued with all of the difficulties new Christians ordinarily have in adapting to life in Christ. Compounded by Russia's almost amoral climate, which is one of the legacies of atheistic communism, these problems will take much time and labor to resolve. In addition, the overwhelming influence of the Russian Orthodox Church is difficult to combat.

Teaching the doctrine of Christ will be an arduous task for years to come. I suspect that we shall discover the aptness of Winston Churchill's 1938 statement that "Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" (Hill, Kent R. **The Soviet Union On the Brink**; Multnomah Press, 1991; p. 18.).

Specifically, however, we have been taken broadside by a very thorny doctrinal problem which demands our careful consideration. Hopefully, we can examine this problem from the standpoint of God's Word without unjust condemnations or concerns. Most of our brethren were taken by surprise on this matter and to make a mistake by surprise is not the same thing as to make a mistake by design. Our young preachers need to hear the truth on this matter just as it is presented in the Scriptures, and those of us who are older need to review our stance so that we can stand together as one man.

The problem we must address concerns the use of women translators in public assemblies and in assemblies of the church. The problem originated because of two facts:

1. Many of the Russians available to translate for us are women.
2. Our original invitations were received from brethren in the digressive church who have no scruples against using women in the public work of the church.

However, these observations issue from hindsight rather than foresight. Some of our brethren arrived in Russia only to be confronted with this problem with no advance warning. I am sure it went something like this: "Hello, Mr. Jones. This woman is Ludmilla Vashchenko. She will be serving as your translator."

From there it was all uphill. It is easy to judge here in the heart of Texas, but in the midst of Russia, in isolation and with the brethren back home counting on you, it is somewhat more difficult. Before we make any judgments let us examine the doctrine of God's Word and some of the comments that have been made relative to this problem. Perhaps then we can draw some conclusions.



## **May A Woman Scripturally Translate for Us in Either A Public Assembly or A Worship Assembly?**

Essentially, two passages of Scripture principally bear on this issue. Additionally, other passages deal with related questions.

### **I. 1 Timothy 2:11-12**

#### **A. What does the passage preclude?**

1. Women are prohibited from teaching the Word of God.
2. Women are also prohibited from usurping authority over a man.

#### **B. What does this passage teach the woman to do positively?**

1. It teaches her to learn in silence.
2. Silence (ἡσυχία) can mean "rest, quiet, tranquility; a quiet tranquil life as it does in 2 Thess. 3:12 or it can mean silence as it does here and in Acts 22:2" (AGL 189).
3. It also teaches that women are to learn "with all subjection."
4. Subjection (ὑποταγή) comes from ὑποτάσσω which means "to place or arrange under; to subordinate, 1 Cor. 15:27; to bring under influence, Rom 8:20 passively, to be subordinated, 1 Cor. 14:32; to be brought under a state or influence, Rom 8:20; in the middle voice it means to submit one's self, to render obedience, be submissive, Luke 2:51; 10:17" (AGL 419). Here it conveys the idea of submissiveness as in 2 Corinthians 9:13 or Galatians 2:5.

#### **C. Does this passage refer only to the assembly of the church for worship?**

1. Many, if not most, commentaries say that it does.
2. Many study Bibles and Bibles which are arranged in paragraph form with sub-headings added say so.
3. Notwithstanding such authority, we say that the answer is, "No" for at least three reasons.
  - a. There is absolutely nothing in the text, the context or even the remote context which indicates that the assembling of the congregation for worship is in view—not one shred of evidence exists for such a notion.

- b. Verse 8 instructs men to "pray every where." Obviously, Paul's command is not limited to church assemblies.
  - c. In verse 9, if the assembly were in view, then outside of the assembly women would not be prohibited from wearing immodest apparel. Such a contrived position approaches the absurd.
4. Why, then, do so many commentaries take the view that Paul references worship assemblies of the church in this passage?
- a. Roman Catholic and Protestant churches are so rife with error that this position is more convenient.
  - b. Likewise, digressive churches of Christ have their own agendas to sustain.
- D. Then, does this passage teach that women are forbidden to teach God's Word at all?
- 1. If this were all the New Testament said about women teaching the Scriptures, the answer would be yes.
  - 2. However, it is not all that is said.
    - a. In 2 Timothy 1:5 and 3:14-17, Timothy's mother and grandmother are commended for teaching Timothy the Scriptures from his infancy.
    - b. In Titus 2:3-5, older Christian women are commanded to be "teachers of good things" (καλοδιδασκαλος) in order that they might equip or train (σωφρονιζω) the younger women concerning their Christian obligations as wives and mothers.
      - (1) καλοδιδασκαλος—"teaching what is good, a teacher of good" (AGL 211).
      - (2) σωφρονιζω—"properly to render any one σωφρον, to restore to a right mind; to make sober-minded, to steady by exhortation and guidance" (AGL 396).
    - c. Acts 21:9—Philip had four daughters who possessed the gift of prophecy.

- d. 1 Corinthians 11:5—This passage gives regulation to women concerning praying and prophesying.
- e. In Acts 18:26, Priscilla assisted her husband in correcting the doctrinal understanding of Apollas.
- 3. In view of all of these passages instructing women to teach, what then does 1 Timothy 2:11, 12 mean?
  - a. In the light of verses 8 and 9, the scope of the passage is broader than the worship assembly.
  - b. It is not, however, so broad in scope as to be without limit, for women are instructed to teach God's Word in certain circumstances.
  - c. Acts 20:20 provides a clue, for Paul separates public teaching from that conducted on the intimate basis of "house to house" teaching.
    - (1) "Publicly" here includes the teaching in the worship assembly as well as other public occasions.
    - (2) "House to house" teaching is that which occurs on the privacy level of someone's home.
  - d. Conclusively, then, what is forbidden to women in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is any form of public teaching of God's Word.
- E. Are the assemblies we have called in Russia public assemblies?
  - 1. Of course they are.
  - 2. The public is invited by advertisement.
  - 3. The purpose is to preach to all who will come.
  - 4. At a minimum, these assemblies are public assemblies and on the basis of 1 Timothy 2:11-12 women are prohibited from teaching God's Word in such a situation.
- F. When a woman translates from one language to another does she act as a teacher?
  - 1. Yes, she stands on the same footing as the teacher.
  - 2. In practicality, both the teacher and his translator function together as the teacher of the assembly.

3. To substantiate this fact it is only necessary to inquire as to when the edification of the assembly begins.
  - a. Obviously, the congregation cannot be edified until the message is translated into their language.
  - b. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 clearly reveals that translation is essential to edification when the speaker knows only a foreign tongue.
4. This fact, together with 1 Tim. 2:11, 12 precludes a woman from serving as a translator in any public assembly.

## II. 1 Corinthians 14:35, 35

### A. The Passage Explained

1. "Your women" refers to the women belonging to the prophets—that is, the prophets' wives.
2. These women are commanded to "keep silence."
  - a. To keep silence means "to say nothing or to keep silent" (BAG 757).
  - b. This word (σιγᾶω) is from σιγή and is variously translated in the KJV as:
    - (1) "Kept close" (Lk. 9:36)
    - (2) "Held their peace" (Lk. 20:26)
    - (3) "Was kept secret" (Rom. 16:25)
  - c. The same word appears in verse 28:
    - (1) If there is no interpreter the tongue speaker (i.e., foreign language speaker) must keep silent.
    - (2) He is not allowed to speak at all.
3. These women were not to speak "in the churches."
  - a. Literally they could not speak "in the assemblies" or in "a Christian congregation" (AGL 125).
  - b. Contextually, worship assemblies of the local church are under consideration (14:23-40).

4. Lest anyone misunderstand, Paul states the matter from the other side as well: "it is not permitted for them to speak."
  - a. "To speak" (λαλεῖν) means "to make vocal utterance, to babble, to talk; in the N.T. absolutely to exercise the faculty of speech" (BAG 245).
  - b. A form of the same word is used in verse 28 which says that if there is no translator the tongue speaker is to speak to himself and God—that is, he is to "keep silence in the church."
5. The Scriptures elsewhere place women in subjection to men as does even the Law of Moses.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 11:13; Ephesians 5:22-24, 33
  - b. Genesis 3:16
6. If these prophets' wives wish to question their husbands further in order to learn they should do it at home.
7. Finally, Paul gives the chief reason why those prophets' wives were given such strict and limiting commands: "for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."
  - a. It is a shame (αἰσχρὸν) which means "ugly, shameful or base." (BAG 24).
  - b. Paul means "it is disgraceful" (BAG 24) for women to speak (to exercise the faculty of speech) in the church (the church assembled for worship).
  - c. Whether a prophet's wife or not, it is disgraceful for any woman to speak in a worship assembly.
  - d. We know what the words "speak" and "silent" mean in verse 28. There should be no problem ascertaining their meaning in verses 34, 35.
- B. Does "speak" refer only or purely to teaching here?
  1. In other words, may a woman speak in the assembly as long as she does not teach?
  2. The answer is, "No."
  3. She may not teach; she may not ask a question; she may not speak out as an individual.

4. When a woman functions as a translator in a public assembly of the church she violates this passage.
  - a. For one thing, she speaks.
  - b. For another, she edifies the church and, therefore, is involved in teaching.
- C. Do the assemblies we arrange in Russia constitute assemblies of the church or merely public assemblies? Do they come under the rules of 1 Corinthians 14?
  1. The answer to both questions is, "Yes."
  2. When a congregation sends two men to establish a church and those men advertise a public assembly to preach the gospel, they are acting under auspices of the church.
    - a. These assemblies are not different from Sunday or Wednesday evening assemblies.
    - b. They are no different from our assemblies for a gospel meeting.
    - c. If we sent two men to establish a mission point in America, we would reckon their assemblies to be under the rules of 1 Corinthians 14.
    - d. What if these men baptized a person on the first night of their meeting? Would their assembly the second night be a church assembly because now there are three Christians present instead of only two?
- III. Conclusively, women may not be used as translators in either public assemblies or worship assemblies of the church.
  - A. At a minimum, such a practice violates 1 Timothy 2:11-12.
  - B. In fact, we believe it violates the rules of Christian assembly in 1 Corinthians 14.
  - C. We must insist on men as translators.

### **Meanwhile, Back In Russia . . .**

This problem is not as simple to solve as it is to sit here and judge what has been done. As I mentioned earlier, in most of the cases where our brethren have used women to translate in the

assembly, they were taken completely by surprise and the answer was not easy to see. However, several statements have been made in defense which we need to consider carefully.

I. "I Will Have Mercy and Not Sacrifice."

A. Matthew 12:1-8 (Mark 2:23-26; Luke 6:1-5)

1. 1 Samuel 21:1-7

2. What is being suggested by this reference?

- a. Are we ready to say that if we get in a bad enough jam we can change the worship to get out of it?
- b. Could we use fermented wine on the Lord's table for communion because we could not find anything else?
- c. Of course not.

3. It is worthy of note that the bread David and his men ate was not the bread on the table of shewbread which was before the Lord.

- a. It was the bread which had been replaced on the table.
- b. It was the bread the priests were to eat.
- c. The point is that David did not change the worship of the tabernacle on this occasion.
- d. Neither can we make changes equivalent to changing the worship.

4. It is also worthy of note that even if this passage could be used to justify changing the worship in an emergency it cannot possibly be used to change the worship repeatedly.

- a. David and his men could not have eaten that bread for a month or two on every Sabbath.
- b. Lynwood Smith has said: "If I had an ox that got in the ditch every Sabbath, I'd either fill up the ditch or sell the ox."

B. The Principle of the Spirit and Letter of a Law

1. The idea here is that under certain extreme circumstances, it is acceptable to break the letter of a law as long as you keep the spirit of that law.

2. The problem is that there is no such New Testament principle.
  - a. It is based on a misapplication of 2 Corinthians 3:6-7.
  - b. The "letter" refers to the law of Moses, that which was "written and engraven in stones," that is, "the ministration of death."
  - c. The "Spirit" refers to the New Testament which gives life.
4. A command of God must be obeyed in the exact detail demanded and with the proper attitude.
5. No one can claim to be obeying God when he breaks the law of Christ.

C. The Problem With These Defenses

1. Such justifications as these, and others like "we did the best we could," have been devised after the fact.
2. No one sat down and studied this issue and said, "Here is where the Bible enjoins the use of women translators."
3. Instead they are justifications arrived at after the error.
4. What is needed is to admit the error; correct the problem; and get on with the work of preaching the gospel.

D. What about using translators who are unbelieving men?

1. As far as I have been able to determine, this is the first work we have been involved in where we had no translators who had obeyed the gospel.
2. Obviously, it is important for numerous reasons for us to convert our translators as soon as possible.
3. However, I believe that here we are in an area of judgment rather than clear proscription as in the case of women as translators.
  - a. Who to call on in our assemblies is a rather indefinite decision about which much is vague.
  - b. We do not know what the early church did about this problem after the cessation of gifts.
  - c. The early church had at least three advantages over us:
    - (1) They had a worldwide language in Greek;



- (2) They had the gift of tongues;
- (3) They had the gift of interpretation.
- 4. But we are not totally without guidelines on this matter.
  - a. Acts 19:8-10
  - b. The word disputing (διαλεγόμενος) means "to discourse, argue, reason . . . address, speak to, contend, dispute (AGL 93).
  - c. W. E. Vine says it "primarily signifies to think different things with oneself, to ponder; then with other persons, to converse, argue, dispute" (Vol. 1 p. 323).
  - d. BAG says it means "to discuss, conduct a discussion . . . of lectures which were likely to end in disputations" (184)
  - e. The same word is used in these passages:
    - (1) Mk 9:34
    - (2) Acts 17:2, 17
    - (3) Acts 18:4, 19
    - (4) Acts 19:8, 9
    - (5) Acts 20:7, 9
    - (6) Acts 24:12, 25
    - (7) Heb. 12:5
    - (8) Jude 9
  - f. In Acts 19:9-10, Paul separates the disciples from the synagogue and begins daily public meetings similar to a gospel meeting in which unbelievers, Jews, and Greeks spoke, argued, reasoned, and discussed the Scriptures with Paul.
  - g. It seems logical that if an unbeliever could present counterpoint to Paul in a public assembly then one could be scripturally used to translate for us:
  - h. Admittedly there is somewhat of a leap here, but I believe it is defensible.

- i. We do the same thing Paul did when we have a debate.
- j. Surely, if a man can present false doctrine in a debate in our assemblies we can use a male translator who is not yet converted.
- k. I doubt if any of us would debate a woman in a public format because it would violate 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

### **What Should Be Our Outcome?**

First, we should recognize that any of us could have made this mistake. The problem is not so much the mistake as our reaction to it. Continuing the mistake and refusing to admit our error is a big problem. We need to correct this in our works in Russia and over here where people have been led astray—publicly if necessary. We need to develop tight convictions against using a woman translator under any public circumstances. If necessary, we should just come home rather than corrupt the worship. We need to just do things according to the New Testament pattern. There is no other way to serve God faithfully.

Second, we need to recognize and capitalize upon our great opportunities in Russia. The Lord has blessed us abundantly there, in spite of our problems, and we are obligated to fulfill our responsibilities in a Biblical manner. We have a strong foothold after one year by constant prayer, hard labor and diligent concentration. We can achieve great things for the cause of Christ by the blessing of God. *1349 Ferrari Ct., Manteca, California 95336.*

## **Where Do We Go From Here?**

*Richard Bunner*

It has been fourteen months since Jimmy Cutter and Doug Edwards visited a city called Penza in the nation of Russia. Their success in sowing the seeds of the kingdom spurred numerous others to sojourn to various cities in that great nation that had once been closed to gospel preachers. As of this writing we now have congregations planted in cities whose names most of us have never heard before—places like Tula, Saransk, Tambov, Ryazan and Penza. While the initial success of brothers Cutter and Edwards has not been matched elsewhere, the interest and enthusiasm of doing mission work in Russia remains healthy. This vast country, that many know so little about, provides a whole new harvest field where the Word of God may be taught to some people for the first time in their lives. The urgency of getting the gospel within the borders of this land that once refused it has been felt by brethren throughout the United States. Who knows how long the people will remain receptive to the Message that can change men's lives?

Now that we have established a foothold (perhaps it would be more accurate to say "toehold") within Russia we need to pause and evaluate our situation. Answering such questions as, "What do we have?", "Where are we?", "Where do we go from here?", and "How do we get there?"; will help us to labor more effectively in the Master's vineyard, if we search out the answers now. Obviously, there may be varying opinions concerning the answers to these questions. That is good. The questions are designed to have latitude. Our purpose should always be to examine all possibilities and then to go with the best plan; one that is suited to our abilities, aims, and resources.

Presently, we have five congregations that need a lot of help. I must point out that the same would be true if we had started five new congregations anyplace else in the world, including the United States. These congregations are new, the Christians are young, and they have much to learn. It is important that these brethren become well established in the faith. We have an obligation to those people in whose hearts we have sown the gospel.

These cities have populations from 250,000 to 1,000,000. We would say that any city this size in the United States could be worked for decades. The same is true in Russia. Some of these cities are relatively close. Ryazan, for example, is about 120 from Tula. None are more than 500 miles apart. However, because of the current economic problems and the poor communication network in Russia, these brethren have very little contact among themselves. They certainly need to be encouraged to make what contacts they can. A sense of brotherhood needs to be developed among them.

It is urgent that we try to take the gospel into other regions of Russia. All of the work we have done is in the western portion of Russia or that part of the country that is in Eastern Europe. This portion of Russia, along with the Ukraine, has many towns that have not yet been visited by any religious organizations. Some cities and towns do not even have an Orthodox Church. The gospel needs to be taken to these areas. Looking at a map you will notice that the larger portion of Russia is on the continent of Asia. While the western portion of Russia is more densely populated, the eastern section has a large belt that is well inhabited, stretching across the southern portion of the country. There are some significantly large metropolitan areas such as Novosibirsk (pop. 1,446,000), Krasnoyarsk (pop. 924,000), Barnaul (pop. 606,000), Khabarovsk (pop. 615,000), as well as hundreds of other mid-sized cities to visit. If you look at a map, you will realize how close this would put us to China. Working this area would put us on the borders of Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China. The two former countries can be entered now. The door of opportunity will someday soon be opened to China—the most populated country in the world. We would have a much greater advantage to enter China if we were already at her doorstep, waiting to get in her borders when that day comes.

Someone might say, "This sounds all well and good, but how do we accomplish it?" The task is large and formidable. We certainly do not have an excessive number of preachers nor a vast amount of wealth with which to work. In order to use our resources to their fullest potential, we need to have closer cooperation among the preachers and the congregations that are interested in doing this work. We need to concentrate also on the power of the written word. Literature, tracts, and Bible correspondence courses can be used very efficiently in reaching

large areas of people. This map below indicates that Russia has a very high literacy rate. Our personal experience is that Russian people probably read more than American people. What literature we took when we lectured was consumed quickly.

On one trip that Ron Courter and I took, we left a small ad in a newspaper offering literature to help one understand the Bible. The ad ran once a week for thirteen weeks. The people had to write to me in the United States for the literature. We have received two hundred pieces of mail so far. One could easily set up an office in one of the cities where we have planted a church. Two men could travel across the country stopping at various cities and towns to place an ad in the newspaper that would offer a Bible correspondence course with all mail going to our Russian office. This would enable us to know where to go to preach without just taking a shot in the dark on some new work. We have the ability to start such a work as this almost immediately. The **Douglas Jones Bible Correspondence Course** has been translated into Russian and is now in the process of being printed. Various tracts have also been translated which will help to spread the Message. As we go along we can continue to have more literature made available in the Russian language.

It seems to me that it is essential to develop national preachers if we want to see a lasting work in this part of the world. The value of having a native Russian teaching the gospel in his own country cannot be overstated. Perhaps there are brethren now among our congregations who would be willing and able to learn to do the work of an evangelist. My opinion is that this should be encouraged and support should be arranged for such men. American preachers will be needed in the beginning to work closely with these brethren in much the same way as older preachers work with younger preachers today in developing their talents and Bible understanding.

This may sound like something that is too long term, but I feel that we need to encourage our children to learn foreign languages such as Russian and Chinese, or some of the other major languages of the world. There are more than *twice* as many people in the world who speak Chinese as there are English speaking people.

Your son who is entering high school may not become a preacher of the gospel in some foreign country, but whatever profession he enters will be enhanced many times over if he becomes fluent in another language. Your daughter may not marry a preacher who will take her into a foreign country, but her life will be much richer and more fulfilling if she has a second language. We need to start today preparing our children to meet the needs of tomorrow in the kingdom of heaven. Communication is so very important. Our opportunities to be of service to the Master are greatly increased if we can speak another man's language.

Every year it seems like the world is becoming more like one large community of people. Every day we travel back and forth from one end to another. We communicate instantly by way of satellite to convey news and events. We are learning more about people who are different from us than we have ever known before. We have a responsibility to share our faith with those who are our neighbors. *Rt. 6 Box 313B, Fairmont, West Virginia 26554.*

## **The Relationship Between the Sponsoring Church and the Evangelist**

*Ronny Wade*

It seems to me that successful relationships of all kinds are tied directly to the responsibilities incumbent upon all parties that are involved in the relationship. The only way that we can ever say that we have a good relationship, is if for everyone who is a party to that relationship to understand what responsibility they bring to the relationship. When they understand what their responsibilities are and discharge those responsibilities, the relationship is enhanced.

Marriage, I think, is probably a good example. Marriage is a relationship between two people. The success of that relationship is tied directly to the husband understanding what his responsibilities are and discharging those responsibilities, as well as the wife understanding what her responsibilities are and discharging them. There can be no good relationship without that understanding and without the ultimate execution of those responsibilities. Before the relationship functions and flourishes as it should, the responsibility of each participant must be clearly defined.

I am convinced that one reason many relationships between churches and preachers go sour is because there is no clearly defined responsibility on the part of either or both. The church hires or sends a man to preach and says "Go preach." The preacher says, "I will go preach." Six months later the church wants to know "What have you done?" The preacher says, "I've been preaching." The church says, "That's not good enough—we want to know more about what you have done." This is clearly an indication that the preacher did not fully understand what the church expected of him, and it may well be that the church did not understand what they expected of him. As a result, the relationship goes bad.

### **The Responsibilities of the Sponsoring Church**

Tonight, I am going to talk with you from the viewpoint, first of all, of the responsibilities that the sponsoring church has to the evangelist in the field. Expectations can only be fulfilled when all parties to a relationship understand and discharge their responsibility in that relationship. If there happens to be a

church that wants to sponsor a work or a preacher in a location, here or abroad, the first obvious responsibility of the sponsoring church is the selection of the preacher. This may well be the most important step in a successful working relationship. I know it is certainly the most important step when you marry somebody, to marry somebody you can get along with. If you cannot get along with the person you marry, you have trouble from day one. If you select a preacher that you cannot get along with you have got problems to begin with. So the church needs to be very careful about the individual they select to do the work. They need the right person for that particular work. The church sponsoring the work should select, send, and oversee the preacher in the field as he carries on that work. In Acts 13:3, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and layed their hands on them, they sent them away." This refers to the sending of Saul (Paul) and Barnabas to a certain work that the church had selected them to do.

Over in Acts 14:26-28, the Bible says:

And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

The selection process is something that we need to talk about for a while. Let me say first of all, the one selected for the work by the church must be qualified to do that work. According to 2 Timothy 2:2, that person must be faithful and capable of preaching the truth to bring about the desired results. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." I believe that the church should know something about the background of the preacher they select to support. How has he done in other places? What is his track record? How has he gotten along in previous works? Did he accomplish what he set out to accomplish and was it a successful work? If a preacher has trouble everywhere he goes and has problems in every work he undertakes, sooner or later you become suspicious of the preacher. Surely, all the churches with whom he works are not bad. Surely, every work is not wrong. It may well be that there is something in his personality, or something in his make-up, or



something in his outlook, that is creating a problem. I believe a church ought to know that before they select and send a preacher to do a work.

The church should select a man who is qualified to do the job that he is being sent to do. There are some jobs that I could do, and if you sent me to do them I believe I could do a good job. There are, however, some jobs that I am not qualified to do, and it doesn't matter how much you like me or how much I like you, if you send me to do a job I can't do, I will just not be able to do it. So the preacher you select needs to be qualified to do the work that you are sending him to do. To send someone who is not qualified is only to lay the groundwork for future difficulties. I often hear brethren say, "Well, he was the very best we could get at the time." I very humbly submit to you that the "very best at the time" may not be good enough. It will come to pass in time that you will realize that. Brethren often say, "We made mistake—we sent the wrong man," because he was not equal to the job and he was not able to do it. I would suggest that we would all be better off if we waited for the right man—if we selected the right man for the right job—rather than sending the wrong man and weeping for that fact in years to come and over the mistakes that we had made.

Secondly, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring church to support the preacher. The sponsoring church is responsible for supporting and for standing behind the preacher as he carries on the work in the field. There is really no greater letter, to my mind, in the New Testament, describing a successful relationship between a preacher and a church, than the Philippian letter. If you have ever read and studied the Philippian letter you will be impressed by the feelings that existed between the Apostle Paul and the brethren at Philippi. It was a wonderful relationship. They supported him time and again. In Philippians 4:10: "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity."

Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only (Phil. 4:14-16).

Time and again Paul referred to the fact that this congregation had supported and cared for him. In Philippians 2:17-18 this same principle is reiterated. The last thing that the preacher needs to worry about in the field is whether or not he can pay

his bills, whether or not he will be able to pay off the credit card, or whether or not he will be able to buy food for his family, or whether or not he will be able to clothe his children. He doesn't need to be concerned about making ends meet. He needs to know that there is congregation behind him which is aware of the fact that he does have needs, and they committed themselves to take care of him and support him in that particular situation.

Thirdly, another responsibility of the sponsoring church is the establishment and definition of goals. This is the crucial part of this whole equation to my mind. The sending church must have a clear idea of what it is supporting and of its expectations of the preacher. By the same token, the missionary needs to know what the congregation expects of him and what he must expect of himself and how his performance is going to be measured. Often, if a preacher has no goals the road of least resistance will be traveled. Any activity will seem acceptable, and we tend to feel comfortable as long as there is motion on our part. If my employer were to come to me and ask me the question, "Ronny, how will your children do this year on the Missouri Mastery Achievement Test?", and I were to say to them, "They'll do the best they can!" I would be out of a job overnight, because they would not accept that as an acceptable goal. What my goal actually says is that eighty percent of my children will score at or above the eightieth percentile. That is a goal! I know when I have reached it and I know when I have not reached it. I know that what I do is working toward the fulfillment of that goal. I know whether or not what I am doing will help me achieve that goal or whether I am engaged in busy work. That may be good busy work but has absolutely no relationship to the goal I am committed to achieve or fulfill. It is thus imperative, brethren, that all involved in a mission effort sit down and work out in detail the goals and objectives of the proposed mission project. I believe these objectives must be measurable, they must be practical, and they must be clear. This is no time for generalization. To say that we are going to send a preacher to a certain place is no more meaningful than to say a shoe salesman is going to sell shoes. Now if a shoe salesman says he is going to sell shoes, he can sell one pair of shoes and he has done what he said he was going to do. If the salesman says, however, "I am going to average selling five pairs of shoes per day"; at the end of the day he knows whether he sold five pairs of shoes. He either achieved his goal, he exceeded his goal, or he

did not make his goal. He has something by which to measure his work. The person who may be sending him knows whether or not he is achieving the goals that have been set.

I would be honest, I think, if I told you if you were to ask many men going off on missionary trips, what they are going for, they would merely reply "To preach the gospel." I personally believe that is inadequate. We need more clearly defined objectives if we are going to be able to measure our success. To say "I am going off to preach the gospel" is noble sounding, however, how do I know whether or not I have accomplished what the church wants me to accomplish or what I want to accomplish, unless I define my goals more adequately than that. We need objectives that everyone clearly understands so that everyone knows what we are going to do. Are we going to try to establish a church in a certain place? Or are we sending a man to a mission field to strengthen a work that is already there and develop leadership in the churches? Or is he going for another reason? We need objectives because results cannot be measured without some prior expectations against which to judge them. There is just no way around that. The only way we are going to know what our results have been is if we measure them according to some expectation that we have already set up.

How do we gain our expectations in a mission field anyway? How do we know what we really want to accomplish? How do we know what we might even be able to accomplish? Well, we might ask whether there are any existing programs already in progress. How are they doing? What rate of success did they have? What denominations are here? Have they been successful in their endeavors? It would seem to me that if we go into an area where denominations have totally failed to make a dent in that culture or society, to say the least, we have an uphill battle. We know to start with that we are going into an area where people have rejected the teaching of others, even though it may not have been right, they have rejected religious teaching. We need a benchmark, somewhere to start, some goal in mind.

We must remember that there is a vast difference between performing tasks and reaching goals. You can stay busy twenty-four hours a day and never reach your goal. Unless the task contributes to the completion of the goal, what is its point? For example, a preacher might spend an entire day or week filled with activities that have no real relationship to the main objective at the mission site. He can report to the church that sent him how busy he has been, and that will be true. But the question is, "Is the preacher

doing what they sent him there to do?" He can tell how many miles he has travelled, or how many sermons he has preached, but did he establish a church, or did he develop leadership? (If those were the goals for which he was sent.)

Many times we fail in our work, brethren, because we do not have clearly defined goals. The church really does not know what they should expect of the preacher, and then they become frustrated because he does not produce more than what he does, or he does not meet expectations that they have. The preacher becomes frustrated because he does not know for sure what the church wants him to do, and he is not exactly certain what the goal is all about. Does that mean if we fail in meeting a goal that the work has failed? Not at all. It just means that we set a goal, we tried to achieve that goal, we were able to measure the amount of success that we had, but we did not completely achieve or accomplish what we wanted to. I submit to you that it is far better than going off into a place not knowing what we want to do, and then becoming embroiled in misunderstanding and arguments because of that fact.

Fourth, I believe it is the responsibility of the sponsoring church to oversee and regulate the work. Part of the goal setting process must address those areas about which the sponsoring church needs to be consulted. For the missionary to act totally on his own without consideration for the wishes of the sponsoring church is to invite disaster. By the same token, for the sponsoring church to make demands of the preacher without first hand knowledge of the conditions and problems in the field, is foolish indeed. Such oversight will require on-site observation at times, if the church is to keep abreast of the needs of the work and the changes that take place in the work. Those observations cannot be made by telephone, telegraph, fax or letter. They need to be on-site investigations. I can tell you that it is very difficult for any of us to maintain total objectivity in any endeavor. It may look good to me, but you may walk up by my side, and in a matter of minutes see things that I have never seen. When you point them out to me I will be able to see them. I may have been objective, or I might have thought I was being objective. It is kind of like getting a second opinion from a doctor. Any doctor who is worth his salt is not only willing for you to get a second opinion, but would encourage you to do that so that he is sure that he has not overlooked something or misdiagnosed it. By the same token, any preacher in the field will gladly welcome brethren into that field to look at the work first hand, to see what the problems might be and what their recommendations might be. Any church that supports a work for years without any

communication other than mail or phone, can never have a complete, accurate picture of what is going on. That is the responsibility of the sponsoring church.

Last of all, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring church to love and respect the preacher who they have sent. In Philippians 1:7-8, Paul said:

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

In Philippians 4: we read:

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

When there is a relationship between a church and a preacher like that, you are not going to have anything but success.

### **Responsibilities of the Evangelist**

Let me say a little bit about the responsibilities that the preacher brings to the relationship. What are his responsibilities and obligations?

First of all, it is the responsibility of the preacher to go preach. In 2 Timothy 4:1-2:

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

The preacher can never forsake the truth for anyone. He must remain true to his commitment to preach all the truth and nothing but the truth. That is his responsibility. The sponsoring church is aware of that and would not want a preacher who does not preach the truth.

It is the obligation and responsibility of the preacher to fulfill the goals of the sponsoring church. Armed with the gospel and the goals of the sponsoring church, the missionary approaches the task before him with humility and courage. He is there to carry out a mission: a mission that has been agreed upon, that has been dis-

cussed, with goals that have been clearly defined. He knows where he is going and he begins to lay the groundwork for how he is going to get there. He will be able to report to the sponsoring church the progress he has made in reaching those goals either by: fully accomplishing them, going beyond them, or falling short of them. His first duty, of course, is to God. Next, he sets about to accomplish what the sending church has indicated it wants him to do. That is something that needs to be pre-agreed upon. When the church sends the preacher, both should understand clearly what is under consideration. If at some point the preacher feels he can no longer remain true to what he feels is best for the work and at the same time comply with the wishes of the sending church, it is at that point that he needs to sit down with the sending church and explain his feelings and the reasons why he feels as he does, and try to work out a scriptural solution. If this cannot be done, then it is time for the preacher to leave the work in their hands, allowing them to contact someone else. It would be foolish for a headstrong preacher to say, "Whether you want me to do it or not, I am going to do it. Whether you like it or not, this is the way it is going to be." I would encourage any preacher caught up in that kind of a dilemma to quietly and humbly say, "Brethren, we have come to a parting of the ways. I wish you well." That will bless the work. That will help the work rather than hinder the work, if it is drawn out in a struggle of disagreement.

Third, it is the responsibility of the preacher to survey the needs of the mission field and communicate these to the sponsoring church. Being on the field and on site, the preacher may find out things that no one was aware of. It is his responsibility to see that the sponsoring church knows about these things. Brethren, I cannot conceive of a situation where it would be sensible, much less scriptural, for the preacher to hide things from the sponsoring church, and not allow the church to know what was going on and what the problems were, or not alert the church to problems that might be lurking in the shadows ahead. The preacher needs to communicate those feelings to the sponsoring church.

Fourth, it is the responsibility of the preacher to communicate his plans for carrying out the mutually agreed upon goals. I cannot overemphasize the importance of doing that. One of the great problems we face in any relationship is a lack of communication; a lack of talking about the obvious; a lack of talking about what needs to be discussed and needs to be shared. My wife continually reminds me of that fact—that I do not talk enough; that I do

not communicate well enough. Sometimes we take each other for granted. Sometimes we take relationships for granted. Sometimes we take for granted that churches know things that they do not know. I think it is a mistake when preachers do not give good, detailed, complete reports about a work. The more you tell a church about a work the more a church feels a part of the work. If the preacher hides (maybe not intentionally), or fails, or neglects to fully communicate what is going on, people begin to become suspicious. They become suspicious because nothing is being said and nothing is being shared. So the preacher needs to communicate his plans—"This is what I intend to do to reach the goal", "We are going to develop leadership", "We are going to develop an eldership", "We are going to establish a congregation in another province. Here's how we are going to go about it . . .", "Our goal is by the first of the year to have another congregation at a particular place. Here's what we are going to do to achieve that goal . . ."

Next, it is the responsibility of a preacher to communicate problems and any proposed plans for redirecting or changing the work. It may well be that the preacher has to make an on site decision that will redirect the work, but if he does he needs to communicate that immediately to the church sponsoring the work and explain fully why that is being done.

Communication cannot be over-emphasized. Strained relationships can survive if there is communication. However, no relationships can survive without it. the preacher must keep the church informed of his plans, of his actions, of his accomplishments, of his failures, and of any changes that he anticipates in the work.

Finally, I believe it is the responsibility of the preacher, according to 2 Timothy 2:23, to be gentle; according to Ephesians 4:32, to be kind; according to Matthew 7:12, to treat others like he would like or want to be treated; and according to Philippians 2:4, to be considerate of the feelings of others.

If I were to give you what I believe to be a successful pattern for church-preacher relationships, it would be a pattern similar to this. It would be a pattern that would define what the church gives and what the preacher gives in order to bring about a successful relationship. If the church will give the preacher love, interest, understanding, and support; and if the preacher in turn will give the church love, interest, understanding, and support, that will create a relationship that yields zeal, the fruit of right-

eousness, and glory to God. The only way that will ever come to pass is when all parties to that relationships recognize their responsibility and fulfill that responsibility, so that it may move forward in a successful fashion.

### Summary

Let me recap by pointing out to you very briefly that the responsibilities of the sponsoring church are:

1. To select the right preacher for the right job.
2. To support that preacher fully, morally, spiritually, and financially.
3. To establish and define goals.
4. To oversee and regulate the work.
5. To love and respect the man they have sent into the field.

It is the responsibility of the preacher to the church:

1. To go and preach the gospel.
2. To fulfill the goals of the sponsoring church.
3. To survey the needs of the mission field and communicate those needs to the church.
4. To communicate his plans for carrying out the mutually agreed upon goals.
5. To communicate problems and any proposed plans for changing or re-directing the work.
6. To be kind, gentle, and considerate of the feelings of others.

We will never be able to develop any kind of a successful relationship between preachers and churches until we define the responsibilities that every party in that relationship sustains to the relationships. When we know what our responsibilities are and then we go to work on fulfilling those responsibilities, the relationships will grow out of that, and the relationships will flourish, and the relationships will prosper. But if you put it in reverse it will never happen and disaster will be the result. *P. O. Box 10811, Springfield, Missouri 65804.*



# **The Relationship Between the Sponsoring Church and Foreign Churches**

*by Wayne McKamie*

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17-19).*

From the above, several things are evident. Someone has the clear and singular task of evangelizing the world. That same someone has the word of reconciliation to accomplish what is described as the ministry of reconciliation. That someone is described as being "in Christ."

Without a doubt, the church is God's missionary society. Anything more than the local church is an abnormal growth in the name of efficiency. The Lord's church is all sufficient, perfectly adequate to accomplish all that God ever intended for the church to accomplish. If that is the case, and it is, we must not only be opposed to extra-congregational organizations running the evangelism of the church, we must conclude that authority for evangelism rests with the organization called "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

There are many patterns and principles for a congregation sponsoring, supporting, and sending in many different areas of work. In evangelism, Acts 11:22 describes Paul being sent to Antioch, and Acts 13:2 tells of Paul and Barnabas being sent forth to many areas. In the work of benevolence, Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem in Acts 11:30. Congregations freely chose and sent messengers for various missions (2 Cor. 8:18-19, 23). In dealing with false teachers, the congregations sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts 15:1); Judas and Silas to Antioch (Acts 15:22); and chosen men with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:25). In the work of revisiting and confirming the churches that had been planted, the church sent various ones (Acts 14:22).

Biblical principles and patterns are not only evident in Scripture, they were epitomized in the operations of the church in Antioch of Syria (Acts 13). The church in Antioch was a true "first" church. It was in Antioch that they were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). They were among the first to send aid to other cross-cultural brethren, and from this church the first steps of the first missionary journey were taken. Antioch was the launching pad to all Asia Minor and Europe. To a committed core of leaders (Barnabas, Saul, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen) in that church, the Holy Spirit spoke. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul" was the command that set in motion the great mission thrust. It is worthy of note that even this great church did not just stumble out into a world mission. They did not just voluntarily whip up a burst of exuberance to preach to the pagans in the regions beyond. The agent was the Holy Spirit: "Separate Me . . ." The church responded with prayer, fasting, and laying on of hands.

When the church separated these men they did not elevate Paul and Barnabas to a new status, they did not bestow special graces or heretofore unpossessed skills, they did not receive life-time titles—they gave them a job! In effect, they said, "You will go in our behalf. You will not go as loners, as sole-operators, or as self-appointedes. You are not on a private tour. You represent us. The church of Christ in Antioch stands with you." In doing this the church in Antioch was the Holy Spirit's agent. They all did not go—but they all sent. Heaven chose and the local church recognized and sent. There is a cardinal thought here: Even the Holy Spirit did not bypass the local church! And those being sent were apostles, no less!

As a result of the church's response to the Holy Spirit, congregations were planted in Lystra, Iconium, Antioch of Pisidia, etc. What was the relationship between the church in Antioch of Syria and these new churches? What authority did the sending church have over them? At what point did the relationship begin?

Congregations are born when the gospel is preached and accepted (obeyed) (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). "When they believed Philip preaching . . . Samaria . . . received the word of God" (Acts 8:12-14). As soon as the Jerusalem church heard that some in Samaria had received the Word, they manifested concern by sending Peter and John to equip them for worship and service. Peter and John then returned to Jerusalem (cf. Acts 19:1-7; 1 Cor. 4:15). It is evident from the Scriptures that the "called out" were the called in. They were considered disciples (Acts 14:22), a church (Acts 14:23), brethren (Acts 14:36), and congregations (Acts 14:41).

The sponsoring church maintained an influence in all the new churches through the men who had been separated, chosen, and recommended to the work. The preponderance of evidence is that there was congregational involvement, real or vicarious, in the total enterprise. A pattern emerges: there was one who sent, there was the one who was sent, and there were those to whom he was sent. Sending has implications of control, support, and authority. "How shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15). As we have seen in Acts 13, even the Apostle Paul was separated and sent on a specific journey; work that resulted in a distinct influence over, and in, several foreign churches. The church at Philippi had a partnership with Paul from the "first day" (Phil. 1:5). Would we not conclude that the Philippian church had an influence in the Thessalonian work through the support of Paul (Phil. 4:15-16)?

I am attempting to answer the question of the supporting church's influence over the newly planted church. Perhaps a step backward (or upward!) might help. How did the Holy Spirit exercise authority over the birth, life, and function of Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch? His work was through the men he told the church to appoint and send. Should we do differently?

The Word does not allow us to believe that a sponsoring (sending) church can enact discipline in or among the foreign churches, withdraw fellowship from the foreign church, supply elders or deacons for them, or control the funds of the foreign churches. But, the sponsoring church can send an evangelist that can preach, through whom a church can be born, who can teach, sustain, warn, charge, confirm, care for, command, exhort, reject, set in order, develop, and ordain. The sponsoring church does not have authority over, or control of, an autonomous foreign church, but it certainly has an influence through its money and/or its preacher sent. They may, for example, choose to no longer support the person sent, they may no longer endorse him, they may move him, or they may leave him there too long. In any case, there is an influence.

The sponsoring church can and should communicate certain expectations to the foreign church. Acts 15 is our window on the matter. The brethren in Jerusalem made a distinction between a few basic principles and traditional Jewish practice. Acts 15:19 states that "we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to

God." It is evident that they could have made it difficult (indeed, some were doing so) for the new ones. The conclusion demanded that established churches were not to insist on anything more than the Word demanded. There were absolute, divine principles that would not bend to any accommodation. There were relatives, ways and methods that were culturally flexible and adaptable. The new (foreign) church must know that the Bible pattern is the sole base of operation, the authority base, and that the Scriptures are valid for all times and in all places. It must be understood that principles are principles: basic, unchanging elements that are integral to the process. They must know that neither we nor they can supply solutions that alter the intent of the command or replace the practice commanded (Mk. 7:1-13). The church must bring forth after her kind. Both the sponsoring church and the foreign church should recognize that judgment calls will be made by the one(s) sent to them, but that even these calls are being made with a view to the authority base. The newly planted church should see that no course of action is to be taken that would violate the pattern. They should see courses of action taken that are absolutely necessary to the command to which they are attached. To do otherwise is to court confusion, even division, in both the sponsoring church and the foreign church.

It is evident that a sponsor who wishes to have any real influence in the foreign work must do a great amount of advance planning, work, and preparation. Among other things, the congregation must determine what it wants to accomplish, develop a definite plan, select a missionary, send him, and constantly monitor and evaluate the work. The goals and expectations must be communicated and monitored by someone or ones.

One of the questions to be addressed in this study was, "Should church leaders be encouraged to visit foreign work sites?" Absolutely, if at all possible. Although this is the day of air mail letters, telephones, tapes, etc., the elders, or those chosen by them, should see the fruits. There are many advantages such as getting a feel for what is happening (or not happening), resolution of some problems before they happen, and the opportunity for unpaid leaders to discuss goals and expectations with the foreign church. Greater awareness, greater accountability, and greater work will surely result. *Rt. 1, Box 114, McGregor, TX 76657.*

## **Reclaiming the Wayward**

*by Carl M. Johnson*

Have you ever lost something that was really valuable? A diamond ring? Your briefcase? A billfold full of money and credit cards? A pair of glasses? What were your feelings about that which was lost? How did you feel when you found it? The parables of the lost sheep, coin, and son (Mt. 18:11-14; Lk. 15) are about lost souls.

The primary lesson in the first two parables is the seeking love of God; while the main purpose of the parable of the Prodigal Son is to show the cycle of falling away and complete restoration. Other lessons that we can learn from these parables include: the true meaning of "wayward;" the causes of waywardness among Christians; methods of reclaiming the wayward; and the difference between true repentance and just "coming back to the church."

### **Sheep Gone Astray**

In the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus talks about a sheep that has gone "astray," (Mt. 18:11-14; Lk. 15:4-7). The word "astray" (*planao*) is also translated "wander, to roam about" (Thayer 514). Today, we refer to such people as wayward, delinquent, or unfaithful. Usually the "lost" are identified as alien sinners or nonmembers, but the lost sheep that went astray was part of the flock. Paul refers to the church as "the flock" (Acts 20:28). Thus, we want to think about winning the wayward member of the church who was once called a faithful brother or sister and was recognized as a faithful member of the church.

### **Two Categories Of Wayward**

This does not refer to those who are just weak in the faith, as may be true of many new converts. These we are taught to receive, strengthen, and not discourage by arguing about their unlearned opinions (Rom. 14:1). Nor do we mean a disciple who momentarily stumbles, but regains his spiritual balance and continues to grow.

First of all, when we refer to the wayward, we are referring to those who have "quit the church" (Heb. 10:25). These are Christians who no longer attend the assemblies of the church and have dissassociated themselves from the church.

The other type of wayward disciple, while not forsaking the assembly, is one whose life is characterized by deliberate and persistent sin. In John's first Epistle, he makes a distinction between a Christian who sins infrequently through weakness or ignorance, and the Christian who sins deliberately and habitually, as a way of life. The former is admonished to confess his sin and is promised that God is faithful to forgive (1 Jn.1:9), while the latter cannot be considered a faithful child of God (1 Jn.3:9). The fornicator in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 5) is an example of this type. That brother did not want to leave the church or stop his sins. He and those who sided with him were arrogant, apparently justifying the fornication by arguing that they had greater knowledge of God. Paul ordered the man disciplined in order to humble him, sober him, and give him incentive to clean up his life. Fortunately, the discipline worked and the man was restored (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

### **Causes Of Wayward Christians**

The parables of the lost seem to teach that there are three major causes of wayward Christians. Our method of reclaiming them depends upon the category into which they fall.

#### **The Lost Sheep**

*For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish (Mt. 18:11-14).*

The lost sheep went "astray." The word "astray" implies that the sheep are deceived and led astray by another agent. This happens to some members of the church. We are repeatedly warned about false teachers who will attempt to lead Christians astray from the fold:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction (2 Pet. 2:1).

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:30).

The apostles warned that there would be false teachers that would arise from without and from within the church who would lead some members astray. History has demonstrated the accuracy of the apostles' predictions. The false teachers from without would include the proponents of atheism, the age-old enemy of God's people. In recent times it has reared its ugly head and worn different names, such as modernism or secular humanism, but it is still the same old denial of God that has plagued God's people from the beginning. This category of false teachers would also include those who propagate various forms of immorality. We are virtually inundated with enticements toward immoral behavior in our society today.

The false teachers from within would include the Judaizers in the days of the apostles, who attempted to bind Jewish traditions, such as circumcision, on Gentile Christians. It would also include the original falling-away in the Lord's church, which gave rise to the papal form of world religion. It would include the many forms of digression that have ravaged the Lord's church. Paul said these false teachers were wolves in sheep's clothing. Some had no limit to which they would go to tear down and destroy. Dividing churches and alienating brethren would mark their trail.

In addition to being deceived and led astray, sheep can wander astray by becoming absorbed in other matters. A lamb often at the rear of the flock may see a little stretch of green grass, and becoming absorbed with that delicious morsel, he loses consciousness of the fact that the shepherd and the flock move on and he will soon be lost.

Likewise, there are so many who are carelessly absorbed in the treasures and pleasures of this life (cf. Lk. 8:14; 12:16:21). They become so absorbed in these things that they lose their focus on the Lord and the church, and unconsciously wander away from the fold.

When someone has been deceived, and led astray, we must make every effort to reclaim them. Our attitude must be one of love and concern. Having found his sheep, the shepherd does not punish it, nor even harshly drive it back into the fold, but he lays it upon his own shoulders and carefully carries it home.

If one has been deceived and truly does not know that he has sinned, as is frequently the case with new converts, what is needed is instruction in love. Fifty percent of the time the wayward needs to be reconverted or reminded of basic teachings that brought them into a covenant relationship with Christ. Rebuke, before conviction of sin, is discouraging. Instruction is more than just telling one his behavior is wrong. One must be "fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5), a process that usually takes some time.

### **The Lost Coin (Lk. 15:8-10)**

*Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

The coin symbolizes the wayward Christian, while the woman represents the church. The coin was lost through the carelessness of the woman, which implies that souls can be lost through the carelessness of the church. Our ultimate goal is not to get people into the baptistry, but into heaven. Failure on the part of the church to provide the proper support for members can result in their dropping out. We are repeatedly admonished to establish one another, ground one another, bear one another's burdens, support the weak, etc. Paul gave these responsibilities to the Thessalonian church:

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men (1 Thess. 5:14)



When Paul said, "warn them that are unruly," he bound on the church the responsibility of discipline. Discipline is a tool that is to be used to reclaim certain wayward members (1 Cor. 5). Discipline is not for the purpose of crushing nor destroying the wayward, but it is designed to sober and humble them; to cause them to change their mind about their sinful behavior and straighten up their lives. Discipline is also for the assurance the faithful members, that blatant sinful behavior is not going to be allowed to continue unchecked. A failure on the part of the church to practice scriptural discipline can cause members to become discouraged and drop out.

It is amazing how much the Bible, and especially the New Testament, deals with discipline. Some fear it because it will "run people off." It is interesting how brethren know this since they have not seen it practiced much. It is more probable that the "absence of discipline" is what "runs people off." Many areas report there are more wayward members than faithful members in a congregation. Is this evidence that it pays to not practice church discipline? Does it pay to practice church discipline? Congregations do not know because they have seen so little practiced or they have done it incorrectly.

God has never prospered his people or let His face smile upon them while sin was allowed to remain in the camp. If Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:11 be true, then God's people of today need to learn valuable lessons in Israel's defeat at Ai (Josh. 7).

- Although the presence of sin within the camp was unknown to the leaders of Israel, 36 innocent men lay dead in battle because of it. Sin touches the lives of the innocent as well as the guilty. Ignorance of its presence does not immunize the innocent.
- When the presence of sin is discovered, it is time to quit talking and begin disciplining in the spirit of God's Word.
- Proof of the sin of Achan was established in the presence of all the people before they were asked to execute God's discipline upon him. This same principle was admonished in 1 Timothy 5:20—"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

- If we wish to bring the wayward back into the fold to cover a multitude of sins, then we need to correct that person so he may once again enjoy the blessing of the Lord as well as not hinder other Christians.

It is true that we cannot correct in the lives of others those sins which are found in our lives. Nor can the church correct the things in the world if they can also be found in the church. We must always keep in mind that people come into Christ and His church to get away from the sinful things of the world. Consequently, if they find the very same sinful things tolerated in the church, it is discouraging to them. There is no greater way to restore the fear of God than to exercise His discipline, and there is no surer way to foster disrespect for His authority than to allow disobedience to go unchastened. So, discipline is a tool to be implemented to restore certain kinds of wayward Christians, and to encourage the faithful, by showing them that sinful behavior is not going to be allowed to remain in the camp unchallenged.

Next, Paul said, "comfort the feebleminded." The word "feeble-minded" refers to the "faint-hearted or timid." These were not intellectually feeble, but they were discouraged and dispirited. They were to be comforted, not rebuked or admonished for their sins, but exhorted lovingly in the truth. It is the Lord's way "to raise them that are bowed down" and to "comfort them which be in any trouble" (2 Cor. 1:4).

The trials of life can have a devastating effect on our faith. For example, it is important to all people to be identified with certain primary groups, such as family and friends. Major changes in a person's life situation: the death of a spouse, a divorce, the loss of a job, a relocation of residence; all tend to break down previous patterns of identification with family and friends. The more change a person has recently experienced in his life situation, the more he is likely to look for some new group with which to identify. This is a very critical time. It can be a propitious time for a non-Christian, because it is during this time that he is most receptive to being converted (disassociating himself with past groups and re-identifying himself with a new group). But, if a person is already a Christian, it is during this time that he is most susceptible to dropping out.

Allen Bailey and Brian Burns conducted a project in the Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex area which involved visiting wayward Christians. They found that there was a high incidence of dropouts among church members that had relocated to the Metroplex from other parts of the state of Texas or from other states. The reasons for their relocation to the Dallas-Ft. Worth area included changes in jobs, schools, marital status, or some combination of all the above. The findings of the Bailey/Burns project corroborate the earlier statement that the more upheaval, or change that a person experiences in his life situation, the more likely he is to change the groups with which he identifies. Which means that if he is already a member of the church, it is during that time that he is most susceptible to dropping out.

We need to be aware of these facts, and when members of the church are assaulted by great upheavals and trials of life, we need to fulfill our responsibility to care for them.

Next, Paul instructed us to "support the weak." The word "support" is from *antechesthe* and means "to exercise a zealous care for" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon* 32). Paul quotes Jesus in Acts 20:35:

I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The more types of influence used to support the weak, the less likely they are to drop out.

Form friendships, especially with new members. If a person becomes a member of the church, but all of his friends and family are nonmembers, it is unlikely that he will remain faithful. So, it is imperative that we make them our friends and include them in our social activities.

Get the members actively involved. Find a role each member can fulfill, a job they can do, and then encourage them to actively do it. A number of studies have been done which show that the more actively involved a person is, the less likely that person is to drop out. Expose members to as many kinds of positive influence as possible:

- Sermons in regular services
- Gospel meetings
- Informal Bible study
- Religious radio programs
- Religious TV
- Bible correspondence courses
- Religious books, tracts, and other printed material

Again, the more types of influence used to support the weak, the less likely they are to drop out of the church.

In the parable of the lost coin, the coin was lost through the carelessness of the woman. In view of the responsibilities incumbent on the church to "warn the unruly, care for the feeble-minded, and support the weak," we can be responsible for some of the wayward, if we are careless toward these responsibilities.

The ideal time to keep animals in the barnyard is before they get out. Too often, the barnyard gate is closed when cattle have left the barnyard. The same is true of the church. The ideal time to keep Christians from going astray is before they go astray. It is a well-known fact that Christians reveal their need for attention long before they go astray. While attendance at worship seems to receive the most attention relating to the wayward Christian, other signals of impending wandering should also be heard and dealt with immediately. In addition to missing services, not participating in activities previously involved in (such as leading prayers, waiting on the table, attending business meetings), expressing feelings of spiritual pain, and questions indicating displeasure, where these were not heard before, are signals to which one should be alert.

When Christians go astray, it is wise to seek them before they are very far from the fold. The longer a sheep/Christian is away from the fold, the more difficult it is to find him and to bring him back. When a Christian begins to show signs of becoming wayward, it is time for action. The action should not come one day later.

### **The Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-24)**

The wayward son represents those who deliberately leave the church. They understand what the church has to offer, but decide against it. With their eyes "opened-wide," they turn their back on God and leave the church.

It is significant that in this parable the father did not go after this son. In the previous two parables, the lost sheep and the lost coin, the lost were immediately sought after. The sheep was lost because it was deceived and led astray. The implication is that when Christians are deceived and led astray, we are to strive to reclaim them immediately. With a spirit of love and concern for their souls, we are to reconvert them, or remind them of the basic truths that initially put them into a covenant relationship with God. The teaching of the second parable, the lost coin, is that when we have contributed to the lost through our own carelessness, we again, immediately put forth a diligent effort to reclaim them. But in the parable of the wayward son, the father did not go out in pursuit of his son, because the son willfully left his father's house. If the father had followed him into the far country, the son may have viewed his father's efforts as badgering or nagging, which could have driven him even farther away. The reason for the father's action is explained in Hebrews 6:4-6:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

I have visited with wayward Christians that had been members of the church for twenty or thirty years before dropping out. They knew as much about the Lord's church and understood the gospel as well as I. Consequently, there was nothing I could say to "renew them to repentance." They already knew it all. There were no new truths with which I could enlighten them. Their repentance would have to come from within their own heart. In cases like that, about all you can do is what the father of the prodigal son did. You never quit loving, hoping, watching, and praying that circumstances will be brought to bear upon them that will cause them to have a change of mind. But, you do not badger nor nag them, which could very well drive them further away.

### **Promoting True Repentance**

The goal of our work with wayward Christians should be to promote sincere repentance, a lasting change of mind and behavior. While that may seem obvious, I do not think it always is. Sometimes we are so eager to have the lost back into the church that we may slight the process of restoration. This process should begin with a clear understanding of repentance. Summarizing Thayer's definition it means: (1) A change of mind about sin, (2) sorrow for sins, and (3) hearty amendment of one's ways (405-406).

The preceding definition shows that repentance is intellectual. The Greek word for "repentance" is *metenoeo*, which means "a change of mind;" a change of convictions about what it is—sin.

Repentance is also emotional (sorrow for one's sins). The kind of sorrow involved in repentance is "Godly sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10). If the prodigal son had only felt sorry for himself because he was down and out financially, he would not have been ready to return home. It was only when he realized the hurt that he had caused his good father that he was ready to return. Similarly, if a drunken driver kills an innocent child in a car accident, he is not ready to progress if he is worried only about himself and the charges that will be brought against him. It is only when he is able to understand something of the pain that his actions have caused the grieving mother and father of the child that he is ready to make genuine changes. "Godly sorrow" then, is not just feeling sorry for ourselves because we are suffering consequences for our sins, but it is sorrow for the pain and disappointment our sins have caused God (cf. *Psa.* 95:10; *Heb.* 3:10, 17).

Finally, repentance is also behavioral (a change in the way one lives his life). Thus, repentance is a turn around of the total person. Of the three ingredients of repentance, behavioral change is the most difficult. After all, to know right is not always to do right. Those who deal with alcoholics know that an addict's conviction that drinking is harmful will not necessarily keep his hand from reaching for a bottle. It is time we begin thinking about sin as an addiction, which it is (cf. *John* 8:34). I have had people make confessions of sinful behavior during the early part of a gospel meeting, only to learn that they were engaged in that same sinful activity again before the meeting was over. I am convinced that at the time of their confession, they were sincerely sorry over their sin and resolved not to do it again. In view of this, when someone makes a confession for some sinful behavior with which they have

a real problem, instead of just sending them right back out into the same environment that they could not control previously, we should sit down with them and discuss what kind of support they are going to need in order to remain faithful.

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps Matthew 18:11-14 will be more poignant to adapt as follows:

For the task of elders (and other mature Christians) is to save that which is lost. How think ye? If a congregation has one hundred members and one individual goes astray, do the elders leave the ninety and nine Christians and go to his home to seek his soul which has gone astray? And when the elders find him, verily I say unto you, the congregation rejoices more over the returned wayward member than over the ninety and nine members who are faithful. Even so, it is not the will of the elders that one individual Christian should perish.

Is this the picture of concern and action in your congregation? Is the individual wayward Christian a top priority? If so, rejoice. If not, weep and plead for repentance. How obvious is the task to seek and save the lost, which includes lost members! *1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820.*

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## **Local Personal Evangelism**

*by Alton B. Bailey*

I count it an honor to be asked to take part in this study. I would like to thank the brethren of this congregation for selecting this subject to be studied, and those in charge, for asking me to participate. It is one of the most important themes that could be discussed, for the salvation of both the lost sinner and our own salvation is at stake. It would be easy for men and women to feel no sense of personal obligation or responsibility toward the lost, and be at ease in spiritual Zion, while the lost go on their way to condemnation. Yet we are told by Ezekiel the prophet that the Lord said:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand (Ezek. 3:17-18).

I read somewhere that brethren fail more in personal evangelism than in any other phase of our plea. We have restored the New Testament name, organization, plan of salvation, scheme of redemption, and manner of worship, but we often fail when it comes to personal evangelism.

### **"Local Personal Evangelism" Defined**

The word "evangelism" has been defined both by explanation and by the dictionary. In order to better understand our subject, we must keep the meaning of the term before us.

**Webster's Unabridged Dictionary** defines "evangelism" in simple terms: "1. a preaching of, or zealous effort to spread the gospel, as in revival meetings. 2. the work of an evangelist." The **New International Dictionary** defines "evangelize" as "to instruct in the gospel; to preach the gospel, to convert to Christianity." One who brings the "gospel or system of Christianity" is an evangelist. "Evangelism" is defined as "the preaching or promulgation of the gospel."

In a sense, local evangelism could have been described somewhat as the limited commission of the Lord in Matthew 10:5-6:

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The term "personal" suggests the idea of individual involvement. God intended that every member of the church should be active agents in carrying His purpose into the world. It seems that all activities of the church, as such, may be included under three headings: converting sinners, edifying itself, and helping the needy saints.

When talking about converting sinners through evangelism, it is necessary to make a distinction between home and foreign mission work. With the Lord, "The field is the world" (Mt. 13:38). Every unsaved soul is a portion of the field. When the harvest is ready, evangelism is the reaper. For this reason, Jesus said in Matthew 9:37b-38:

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

While I am absolutely behind our foreign mission efforts wherever they are, we must not neglect the local work in our own country, states, and cities. I am absolutely convinced that there are good, honest souls in every city that would obey the gospel if they only knew the truth.

Whether it be individuals in foreign lands or in local surroundings, the truth is the same as that described by Paul when he said,

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? (Rom. 10:14-15a).

The work of evangelism requires a united effort between the church as a body and the preacher. One is dependent upon the other in getting the work done.

In local evangelism I have labored with a number of our gospel preachers in personal work and so-called mission meetings. Such brethren as Bobby Pepper, Richard Nichols, Bob O'Rear, Miles King, J. W. Kornegay, Don Snow, Vance Ayers, and others. We used the term "mission meetings" to imply that it was not an established church or work. We sometimes go into a town, city, or area where there is no faithful church of Christ and hold a gospel meeting. Since no one sent us there or no one called us, we often found ourselves on our own as far as advertising and places for meeting in were concerned. I can assure you there is much more involved in this kind of meeting than there is in a meeting in an established church where the work has already been done when the evangelist arrives. For far too long we have been content with letting meetings and the work done by traveling evangelists be the answer. With such a view we can see why there are so few involved and little being done. This work should be shared by all Christians. Gospel meetings anymore are more of a "revival" meeting than a gospel meeting and there is a difference.

### **Methods of Advertisement**

A number of years ago I began publishing a little paper called **The Informer**, and kept it going for ten or twelve years. This gave us an opportunity to inform churches in the South about the mission type meetings and the needs that were required for advertisements, and places to meet, and other related expenses. When brethren joined in the work with both their finances and personal help, the work began to be more profitable.

We went into the work with the intent for it to be a success. We wanted at least some of the work to be done before the meeting. This, to me, was very important. If we were going to use a tent, we would try to set it up several days in advance. The tent alone was a good advertisement. We passed out flyers from house to house in the vicinity where the meeting was to be held. We went to every extreme that we knew. We would buy the local newspapers and go to yard sales and pass out flyers to those who were there, and leave some to be picked up by other shoppers. At times, we ran large ads in the local newspapers with pictures of the preachers. We bought a number of thirty second announcements to be broadcast over the radio several times daily. There were times that we were interviewed by the radio management. At times we bought T.V. announcements over local T.V. sta-

tions. We would often use the school house or rent an old store building that was out of business to hold the meetings in and have studies in with the people who would come. We walked the streets talking to whomever we might meet and invited them to the services.

Brother Bobby Pepper and I worked for years together in these endeavors. As a result, there were a number of people that obeyed the gospel. New churches were established. Some came out of digression and others were restored to the faith. We often had confrontation with the liberal or digressive brethren who resented our presence in their town and the way we advertised, calling our work "a mission effort." Once, in Fort Meyers, Florida, they grouped a number of their preachers together and came to confront us in the home of some of the members. We were thankful that after the episode, the lady of the house took a stand with us and her husband was baptized. This was our first break in that area and the result was another congregation established. We went back several times after that and held a number of meetings and continued to do personal work as we could.

### **How We Choose Places For Mission Meetings**

In the **Informer** we asked for any leads that might be profitable. We had determined that no lead would be ignored. Some of the leads were fruitful and some were not. If we found enough interest, we would go there and hold meetings. We decided if there were any converts in such meetings, we would suggest they attend the nearest congregation to them, and leave it up to the individuals as to where they would make their home church.

When there were enough members, we helped start new congregations. We usually went back several times with other meetings to follow up the work. Brethren from other congregations would come and help with the services until they could carry on themselves.

Because of honesty and love for the truth, there were some churches in this area that changed their manner of worship to become scriptural, renouncing all forms of digression.

## **Scriptural Methods of Evangelism**

I do not believe the Scriptures bind "mission meetings" as such. Each work is unique within itself and must be approached with due consideration of the local circumstances. It would be very easy for an experienced evangelist to become loyal to methods they have used in the past, without feeling the need to do differently in other places that might be profitable. People differ in different places due to their background, education, customs, etc. I think Paul would say it better than any:

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

There are three groups involved in local evangelism:

1. The local church
  - a. Jerusalem sent out Stephen and Philip (Acts 6-8).
  - b. Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13).
  - c. Timothy was sent from the church in Lystra (Acts 16:1-3).
  - d. From Corinth went Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18ff).
2. The Evangelist. The evangelists that were sent out were men of good character, conviction, and consecrated to the cause. They were men like Stephen, Barnabas, Philip and others. Men like Demas soon faded out of the picture. We still experience such today.
3. The whole world is to be evangelized.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mk. 16:15-16).

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

### **The Kind of Message Needed in Evangelism**

The Lord said "Preach the gospel," and further, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). In doing so we should use wisdom and tact and present biblical facts in our teaching, whether public or private, concerning Diety, the doctrine of Christ, and how to obtain salvation. Preaching should be done in a positive manner about what is right, one's duties to the church, about the Second Coming, the judgment of God, and so forth. Avoid being negative as much as possible.

Every preacher, young or old, should take by memory and apply Paul's instruction to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-5:

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

We should study to show ourselves approved (2 Tim. 2:15), then preach with all authority (Tit. 2:15). We should preach from the pulpit, teach from door to door, by radio, T.V., by the printed page, by whatever means that is right, and to as many people as possible. One of the greatest rewards we could have in this life is to bring one to salvation (Jas. 5:20). We have a great message to offer to the world. We need to do it with enthusiasm and work at it with all our might. Let us do it with the thought in mind that these people are lost, and the only hope they have is what we have to offer—the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-9). 909 *Truitt Ave., La Grange, Georgia 30340.*

## **Paying Foreign Church Leaders**

*Bill Davis*

One of the most complex problems facing any foreign mission work is paying the salaries of local leaders. When an American first goes into a third world country he is immediately struck by the poverty level of those with whom he must work. Naturally, he feels distressed by the need he sees all around him, but unless he is very careful he will start a system of paying local people which may ultimately be detrimental to the work.

I know of nothing more injurious to mission work than going into a foreign country and promptly putting a host of workers on the American payroll. Nevertheless, it is a common mistake among mission workers.

### **Why It Is Tempting To Pay Foreign Leaders?**

*1. The local people are often in desperate need.* It is tempting because it seems so inexpensive and helps so many. Americans have been conditioned to think that money will solve any problem. How many of us have a desire to be rich? Most, I imagine. Why? Because we think it will cure all of our problems. It usually does not, but we think it will.

When I went into the mission field I was not rich in my own estimation, but to the Africans among whom I was then living I was very wealthy. They saw me as an American missionary with unlimited financial resources. We Americans may protest that we are not rich, but our new cars, fine clothes, and big houses are not very convincing to those who have nothing.

Someone once asked J. D. Rockefeller, "How much money is enough?", to which he replied, "A little more." How true that is in mission work. I have never known a missionary who did not need a little more money. He lives in a world where abject poverty abounds and needs cry out constantly. Guilt feelings about having money and possessions that others around him do not have may influence his thinking. The Scriptures he used in the past to apply to rich people now apply to him. He is now the one who can "fall into a temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts" (1 Tim. 6:9). He is now the camel that must get through the eye of the needle (Mt. 19:24). The need

around him may prompt him to spend more than he has available. Putting a dozen people on his payroll will not end world poverty, but he may find himself responsible for the wages and welfare of countless people. If this happens, he will find that he has more problems being "rich" than he had when he was "poor."

I do not mean to imply that a missionary must be a stingy miser who is not interested in the legitimate needs of poor people. A miser will never be successful in mission work. What I mean to say is that a missionary must be able to accept his position as a rich foreigner without guilt, and use what he has in a reasonable way. If the missionary shows proper love and concern the foreign nationals will not resent "his riches."

*2. It creates rapid church growth.* It is tempting to pay nationals because the initial growth is much more rapid. Obviously, a work will grow faster if one is paying a lot of people to do the work. Normally, a work based on money will produce quicker and have greater early results, while a work based on self-support will be slower and have fewer results in the beginning. It is a proven fact, however, that a work based on foreign money will eventually stagnate and level off.

To illustrate the above point, consider what the Presbyterian church did in Korea many years ago. After being in Korea for several years they had 4,000 members, but growth had stopped. When they instigated a program based on self-sufficiency and self-support, membership initially dropped to 1,000 but fifteen years later reached 100,000. They experienced such growth because they no longer depended on a paid minority to do all the work; instead, all the church members were doing it.

*3. It makes the work more easily controlled.* Paying local leaders with foreign money is also tempting because it builds a work the missionary can easily control; if the native leaders do not stay in line, just cut off their pay. Obviously, this creates a situation where money determines authority. To the local people, as long as authority resides in the foreign missionary and his money, the work will remain a foreign work to them. The problem in this respect may be with the missionary himself and his temptation to create a personal empire which he protects and controls with money.



4. *The system already exists.* Local leaders are generally familiar with a system of previously established support. Consequently, it is tempting to continue with tradition.

In most countries, the denominational churches have been there for many years and have instituted what is known as a paternal system of doing mission work. This is a method where a mission station or compound is established in a country and from it (or at it), their doctrine is preached, the poor are fed and clothed, the illiterate are educated, the sick are cared for, and native "pastors" are trained and paid. Almost everything is influenced by the missionary. He is responsible for training, benevolence, finance, and local decisions.

The above described system has been used by nearly all denominations for the past 150 years. Consequently, it is about the only religious system known in foreign lands. It offers a lot of security to the native, and is therefore revered and loved by him. I know from personal experience that it is next to impossible to remove this concept of doing church work from the minds of the local people. Accordingly, it is tempting to use something familiar rather than establishing something new.

There is a paternalistic element in the Bible (1 Cor. 4:14). The Apostle Paul brought the Corinthians to Christ and felt an obligation to them. He was their father in the faith, but he did not set up a system where they were reliant upon him for financing and benevolence.

### **Problems Caused By Paying Foreign Church Leaders**

While it may be tempting to pay foreign leaders, the problems encountered will overshadow any advantages. The following are some of the inherent problems arising from paying foreign leaders.

1. *It leads to jealousy and dissatisfaction among church members.* Those who are not paid by the American churches envy the one who is getting paid. If a native leader is separated from the people through excessive income, it will not only cause jealousy, but will destroy the effectiveness of the leader. The things that natives do to each other because of jealousy are unbelievable. I have seen houses burned down, children poisoned, property stolen and destroyed, bodies mutilated, and witchcraft

used, all because of jealousy. There are few difficulties a missionary faces that are more complex and harder to solve than envy problems. Paying leaders will cause the problem quicker than anything I know.

*2. Paying foreign leaders leads to a never-ending and ever-expanding employment system.* If it is necessary to pay someone to do a work in the first place, as the work expands new personnel will have to be paid to continue the work. It becomes a no pay, no work situation; money becomes the motive for preaching and growth. As a result, the work will never outgrow the money supply.

*3. Paying foreign leaders tends to attract mercenary leadership, and creates a hireling system wherein money becomes the motivation, not the honest love for the Lord's work.* It also causes church members to view Godliness as gain. The message is, become a church leader and get rich.

*4. The native church may think they are not responsible for paying their own preachers.* Once a preacher is paid from America it is almost impossible to get the local churches to pay him. Anytime a missionary assumes responsibility for anything he will always have that responsibility. For example, a missionary in one African country raised funds to build a new church building. The nationals did not have the resources to pay the electric bill. They felt that the missionary had built the building and it was his responsibility to pay the electric bill. Today, that building is twenty years old, and to my knowledge the bill is still being paid with American money.

*5. The leader who is getting foreign support may think he does not answer to the native church, but rather to the church in America.* American money separates the national from his people in thought and sentiment. The result is that no one has control over him.

*6. Paying foreign leaders tends to create a clergy-laity system that hinders the work of the unpaid laity.* When money becomes the motivating factor, and the unpaid receive none, they are not motivated to work.

7. *A foreign salary takes away the native leader's freedom to function in his own society.* He is paid by outsiders and if he does not please them he will lose his support. He is controlled by foreigners and cannot act as he may judge acceptable in his own culture.

8. *A leader may think more highly of himself than he should if he is paid by an American church.* Many people struggle with power, especially in underdeveloped countries. Pride may destroy the paid leader.

9. *A foreign salary places the one being paid in an income bracket impossible for the local church to attain.* Even if they were inclined to support the leader, they could never do it because his standard of living is too high. If the average month's salary in an underdeveloped country is fifty dollars, and a leader is paid three hundred dollars a month from America, it would take years for the local wage scale to reach his American salary. The economy would probably never develop to that point. The local church could never assume its responsibility.

I have given nine problems that arise from paying foreign leaders. These problems convince me that it is risky to indiscriminately pay leaders in a foreign country. Let me add, however, that I am not opposed to paying leaders in every instance.

### **Some Foreign Leaders Should Be Paid**

It seems to me that a safe position is to pay only those who are essential to carrying on the work effectively. In other words, pay no more than you have to.

It may become necessary to pay a translator, or perhaps someone to do office work. It may also become necessary to pay preachers to go into new areas, especially if they have to relocate. This, however, must be kept at a minimum.

Let me illustrate what I mean by minimum. In Malawi there are hundreds of churches and perhaps 40,000 church members. The work has spread from one end of the country to the other. There are approximately one hundred fifty preachers in the country, yet only five of these are supported full time from America. During my stay in Malawi there were an additional fifty preachers who

received \$25 per year to pay their taxes and repair their bicycles. The entire amount of support from America was, and still is, about \$9,000 per year. This is what I mean by keeping the support at a minimum.

There were over twelve hundred people baptized and twenty-five new congregations started in Malawi last year. The amazing thing is that the work has grown this way for years and years. By contrast, there are other countries in which we have labored nearly as long as in Malawi, but with far less success. In one particular country, the annual American support is over \$100,000 per year; the growth rate has virtually come to a standstill. The most obvious difference is that the work in Malawi is not based upon the support of preachers, while the other is based almost entirely upon it.

I do not see how we can avoid paying those who work directly with a missionary or who are required to relocate, but there is no reason to pay most of the leaders or preachers in a foreign country.

### **Can A Poor System Be Changed?**

What can be done to change a system in a country where many nationals are on the American payroll? I do not think the answer is to stop it suddenly. After all it is probably not their fault that the system was started in the first place. At best, a system based upon paying leaders, should be changed slowly. *Never* should we abandon a work because it is expensive or slow to mature.

Although it may be difficult to change a poor monetary system in mission work, there are some things that can be done. First, greater effort should be put forth to teach foreign churches and leaders their responsibility in regard to self-support, self-propagation, and self-government. This will take longer in some places than in others. Second, we should plan more concrete methods to help foreign churches become self-supporting. Most of our foreign work just happens, it is rarely planned. At least, it is not planned on any kind of long term basis. Third, the wage scales in foreign countries should be investigated to see that the support is not excessive. We must not pay foreign leaders on a scale that indigenous churches can never reach. Last, more money should be directed towards encouraging maturity and self-sufficiency in foreign work rather than just maintaining the status quo.

In America there are churches that have been in existence longer than any of our foreign churches. Yet these American churches still need paid preachers to assist them. Perhaps we need to set our own house in order before we become too strict with our foreign brethren.

### **What About Office Assistants?**

One of the suggestions originally made concerning this topic was to discuss paying office assistants in foreign countries. I would like to address that briefly and clear up some misinformation and misunderstanding about the offices in some African countries.

Those offices were started for the sole purpose of doing office work. They have never had authority over anyone, and certainly not over any churches. They are not a centralized headquarters which have control of all preachers and churches in Africa. Those offices are places where vast amounts of office work is done. Correspondence courses, church bulletins, study lessons, tracts, preacher's certificates, church registrations, and a lot of other things are written, translated, printed and sent out of those offices. They were never meant to have, nor do they have, any kind of official authority.

Now what about those who work in the type of office described above? Is it scriptural for the church to pay someone to do that kind of work? I believe it is. (To my knowledge, none of the churches in Africa have ever hired anyone to work as an "office assistant." The office work has always been done by preachers who are paid as preachers.)

If the church is authorized to do mission (evangelistic) work at all, then it is authorized to spend money to accomplish that end. This is the same principle we have used to justify a congregation buying and maintaining a church building, buying grape juice, song books, Bibles, and countless other things.

The command to worship carries with it everything necessary to fulfill the command. This requires a place to worship. A church may borrow, rent, or buy such a place. It may also pay money for up-keep on it. This might include paying someone to repair the roof or mow the lawn, but all of it comes under the general command to worship. By the same reasoning, the command to preach the gospel could include paying someone to do

office work in connection with preaching. I realize this principle can easily be abused, but it is one we often employ and have done so for years. 17 S.E. 23rd, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73129.

## **Extra Funds: Why and What for?**

*by Gayland L. Osburn*

The title of my subject is "Extra Funds: Why and What for?" I appreciate the opportunity of speaking here on this occasion. I am thankful to have this opportunity. I hope that by our study and examination of the Scriptures on this subject, that we can all be edified.

First, I want to give a definition of the word "fund." We need to understand what we are talking about. Its definition is: "A sum of money, especially one the principal or interest of which is appropriated or devoted to a specific object, as the carrying on of some commercial undertaking; stock or capital; as, the fund of a bank or ecclesiastical society; a pension fund . . ." etc. If you will notice the definition, it says "a sum of money," and then it says "especially." We could determine that even the church treasury is a fund. I think we refer to it sometimes as such. But what we are talking about today is a fund, let's say, a working fund or an expense account that the churches give to a preacher. That is mainly what we are talking about. What we want to show today is that we have something to learn from the Bible about a fund. That is, when money is taken out of the church treasury and used in a fund for a special or a specific purpose.

There is no Scripture for funds belonging to the church to be invested in secular businesses or to be used to draw interest in a secular, profiteering manner. What the church has in its treasury should be only money which has been donated to the church. Christians donate this money to the church upon the first day of every week as God has prospered them (1 Cor. 16:1-2). There has been money of the church lost through investment. When this happens, brethren then realize that they did something they should not have done. Loosing the money is not what made it wrong. It was wrong to invest the Lord's money like that in the first place. We are not to take the Lord's money and use it in private or public secular business. That is not what it is for.

Laying a foundation for our study, we understand that money given to a preacher by the church for his support is not considered as a fund of the church. When he receives that money, it becomes his personal income.

Most all preachers will use a sizable amount of that in church work, but how he spends it is for him to decide. It belongs to him. So we want separate the idea of a fund from that money paid out to a preacher for what we commonly call his support, which is for his living. Although he might use this and does use it in church work, it is still his to decide how he uses it and where he uses it.

What about taking money out of the local church treasury and using that money as a fund for a special purpose? To begin with, I want to give us some examples so that we can understand how our churches have been practicing the use of such funds for years.

Many times in our brotherhood, a church has asked for help in building a church house. Other churches will take out of their treasury and send money to that church. Of course, it is specified for a certain purpose. It is handled in the manner of a fund. I will give you an example of this. Up in Oregon, the Forest Grove church, when they had the opportunity to buy a place to use as a church building, sent letters out to the brotherhood asking for help. Money was sent, and there was so much money received that they were able to pay cash for that building which reduced its cost, and they had money left over. The brethren consulted with me about the excess money, and what they did was send that excess money back to the churches. They did not keep it because it was in the form of a fund. It was sent for a specific purpose and so it was sent back because it was no longer needed for that purpose. I thought I would mention that to show how that was a fund. It really did not become the regular treasury of the church that received it.

Also, we have used church money in this manner to help a brother who had a certain catastrophe, and I know of one case where money was sent to a certain brother who had cancer. His wife spoke to me and told me, "You tell the brotherhood that after these expenses are paid, this money will be returned." You see, she was keeping it separated. She was not treating it as her personal money, and she was using it strictly for his medical expenses. Again, we see how we use the church money as a fund.

We now come to the question: Are there Scriptures which teach that we may take money out of the local church treasury and then use that money as a fund for a specified purpose? We must go to the Bible to answer this question.



I want to take us through the third missionary journey of the Apostle Paul. He was in Asia, and there he came to Macedonia, and then down to Achaia, where he came to Corinth. I also want to notice how that the money was taken from this area to Jerusalem.

When the Apostle Paul first mentioned a plan to the church at Corinth concerning their sending money to the poor saints at Jerusalem, he said in 1 Corinthians 16:3-5,

And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia . . .

Things we notice in this passage are: Paul wrote this letter when he was in Asia, and he writes this letter to Corinth which is located in Achaia. You notice here in verse 5, he says, "Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia." This is exactly what he did. What do we learn from the passage above?

1. At this time, Paul did not know whether he would even go to Jerusalem, when this money would be taken there, and therefor had not made certain plans to go (vv. 3, 4).
2. Paul did plan to go to Corinth by way of Macedonia (v. 5).
3. The church at Corinth was to choose ("approve by your letters") men to bring their liberality to Jerusalem (v. 3). Let us carefully read verses 3 and 4 again: The plural pronouns "them" and "they" indicate that they were to choose more than one man to bring their gift to Jerusalem. The Scriptures do not specify that these men had to be members of the congregation at Corinth. The only requirement given was that they be approved ("approve") by the church there. According to this plan, those brethren would be the carriers of the gift.
4. When Paul would come to Corinth, and he did not go from there on to Jerusalem, he would send those chosen by the church at Corinth to Jerusalem with the gift (v. 3).
5. Paul said in verse 4, "And if it be meet (In other words, this is a possibility. It was not absolutely in the plans yet.—go) that I go also, they shall go with me."

So, it was one of two things. He says, "When I get there to Corinth, these brothers whom ye choose, I will send them to Jerusalem with the gift, that is, if I don't go;" (No. 4 above) or, if Paul did go to Jerusalem, his plans were that the carriers of the money would go with him (No. 5 above).

At this time, we are not told about any plans having been made which involved the churches of Macedonia having a part to play in this ministration. But, after Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, he entered Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5). It was while there the Apostle Paul writes, telling the Corinthians how plans were made involving the churches of Macedonia with this ministration. Now we have the Apostle Paul writing his second epistle, 2 Corinthians, to the church at Corinth:

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift (Now, notice that: "that we would receive the gift"—g. o.) and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God (2 Cor. 8:1-5)

Things we notice in this passage are:

1. In 2 Corinthians 8, in referring to the brethren in Macedonia, to the decisions they made and to the actions which they took, the Holy Spirit chose to refer to them as "churches" (in the plural). Throughout that eighth chapter, the word "church" is used in the plural. He refers to those things that happened in Macedonia as what the "churches" did. He did not indicate that only one church was involved in the making of those plans or in the actions taken.
2. The churches of Macedonia asked Paul and his company to "receive the gift" (v. 4). Now folks, that means just one thing. That means they were offering the money to Paul and were asking him to receive it, "receive the gift." The "gift" here referred to is the money that the churches of Macedonia had collected to be sent to Jerusalem. These churches wanted to give this money to Paul and his company, so they asked them

to take it: "Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." In this way, Paul and those with him would become carriers of the money.

3. Paul had not planned this to happen and said, "And this they did (Who did this? Paul said "they did."—g. o.), not as we hoped," in other words, "not as we had planned" (v. 5). The plans were now changed. We know this to be true when we read and compare 1 Corinthians 16:3, 4. There he indicated that he did not know whether he was going to go to Jerusalem or not. He said that he would send those approved by the church there to Jerusalem with the money. He further said that if he went, they would go with him. Now then, when they came to ask him to take the money, it was not as he had hoped. That was not his plan. It was their idea.
4. Paul, accepting the gift to take to Jerusalem, would now go to Jerusalem as a carrier. He referred to this in his words of inspiration when he said in verse 4: "... and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the aints." He says in 2 Corinthians 8:19-20: "... this abundance which is administered by us." He is now a carrier of this money; he and his company are the carriers. So he said, "This is now being administered by us."

Again, in consideration of number 1 above, concerning the use of the word "churches"; I invite you to carefully study with me 2 Cor. 8:18-19. The Apostle Paul there writes:

And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; and not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches (plural—g. o.) to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind . . .

Let us consider the truths we learn from this passage:

1. A certain "brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches . . . was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace" (vv. 18-19). Who chose this man? Was it his home congregation, or maybe one of the other congregations? No, it was not. Who was it then? A Bible

question deserves a Bible answer. I am not going to give you my opinion. The answer is in verse 19. It says, "The churches" (plural: more than one church—g. o.) chose him.

2. Does Scripture tell us how the churches chose him? Yes it does, and the answer is found right there in verse 19 in the meaning of the Greek word translated "chosen". The Greek word found there is **cheirotoneo**. The definition is:

a. "... primarily used of voting in the Athenian legislative assembly and meaning 'to stretch forth the hands' (cheir, 'the hand,' teino, 'to stretch') . . . " (**Vine's Expository Dictionary**, p.34).

b. "... a. prop. to vote by stretching out the hand . . . " Now, I want us to stop right here brethren. Is it scriptural to vote? There is a Greek word that says that they voted, and I am not going to say it is unscriptural when it is in the Scriptures. I am not going to do that. Now, back to the definition: "a. prop. to vote by stretching out the hand . . . b. to create or appoint by vote . . . " (**Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon**, p. 668).

c. Benjamin Wilson's Version from the "Emphatic Diaglott" reads: "19. and not only so, but also he has been voted by the congregations our Fellow-traveler with this gift,"

Now listen, many Greek words or many English words have got dozens of meanings, and figurative meanings, and literal meanings. This word is used literally here and it literally means "to vote." That is what it means.

3. Why was this brother chosen by the churches to travel with Paul and his companions on their way to Jerusalem with this money? I believe the answer to this question is in the next two verses, verses 20 and 21: "Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." What could have happened if Paul would have asked all of these churches to give him the money, and then he would have taken it to Jerusalem by himself? He could have done that and by so doing provided things honest only in the sight of the Lord. The Lord would have known that everything he did was honest and upright, but that does not mean that all of the brethren would have been satisfied as to his honesty and accountability. In the first place, he did not ask them to give him

the money. He did not do that. He waited until they asked him to take it. He also saw to it that other brethren were involved so that there could be no blame as to his integrity. Several of us, probably, have taken care of church treasuries. Not now, but in the past, I did it for years, and I always got other brethren involved. Whenever I counted the money after church was over, I always had someone else there counting it with me. I don't say that they did not think I was honest or anything. But the thing is, by having somebody else involved, there was not any question about it. There can be no blame as to one's integrity. Paul was doing this, as he said in the verses 20 and 21 above, "... that no man should blame us in this abundance ..." and also, "... providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

After writing his second epistle to the church at Corinth, Paul left Macedonia and went to Corinth. There are a number of things written in his epistle to the church at Rome which suggest that the book of Romans was written while he was at Corinth. In this letter to the Romans, he mentions his planned trip to Jerusalem with this gift. He said in Romans 15:25-26:

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Let us take note of the teaching here:

1. In verse 26 above, Paul makes reference about the churches of Macedonia and Achaia. There were at least three churches in Macedonia: at Philippi, at Thessalonica, and at Berea. There were at least two in Achaia: at Corinth and at Cenchrea. As Paul gets ready to go to Jerusalem, there are at least five congregations involved in sending money with him to the poor saints there.
2. The money from these five congregations, together, is now referred to as "a certain contribution." To me, that is referring to it as a fund of these five churches. The wording "a certain contribution" is in the singular. He did not say, "I am going to take five contributions (plural) to Jerusalem." He did not

say that. He said, "a certain contribution." In this, the individual gifts from the individual participating congregations, together, became "a certain contribution."

3. Now, let us introduce verse 28 and compare it with verse 25, to notice how Paul refers to his position as carrier of this contribution using the personal pronoun "I." Notice verse 25—"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints." Also notice verse 28—"When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit . . ." That does not mean that others were not involved, but it does mean that he was responsible, since he uses the term "I".

All of the things mentioned here are in the Word of God. Are these things scriptural for us to practice? Certainly they are. The Apostle Paul said that what took place as recorded in 2 Corinthians 8, was done "by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:5).

When these men arrived in Jerusalem, what did they do with the money? There is no record in the book of Acts concerning the transfer of this money when they arrived in Jerusalem. Yes, he did make contact with the church there. We know that the money was given to the church there because that was the purpose for taking it there in the first place. There were other times when the saints in Judea were in dire need of assistance. And, one of these times is recorded in Act. 11:27-30. Let us read verses 29 and 30: (Now, this is another account and another time.) "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

This money was sent as a fund to Jerusalem.

Now, one thing we do want to notice: Distribution of this fund to the poor saints, took place after it was received in Jerusalem. The churches of Macedonia and Achaia did not send the money directly to the families who benefited from it. They didn't do that. It was distributed to the families after it got to Jerusalem. The fund was then distributed to the "poor saints," that is, to the people who received it or benefited from it (the individuals, families, or preachers). I believe that if there were poor preachers there at Jerusalem, that they were recipients of that money as well as the other brethren there.

The money went from one country to another. There is about a thousand miles distance between Achaia and Jerusalem.

### **The Church and A Preacher Working Together**

I think it is a manifestation of love and concern when churches sending a preacher into a mission field or into a foreign land consider giving to him a working fund beside his regular support. Many preachers spend a noticeable percentage of their support (income) on the expenses they incur in doing the Lord's work. A church or churches who take this situation into account, are being thoughtful concerning the work of the Lord and also the needs of the preacher.

As a preacher, we can abuse the use of a work fund. There should be an understanding between the church and the preacher as to any restrictions (if any), or any specified amounts (if any), to be spent on certain things. A preacher should realize that he is not only answerable to God for what he does with an expense fund, but he is also answerable to the brethren. The Apostle Paul said, "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 8:21). To be honest in the sight of men would be the reason for giving a financial report to the church which provides the expense account or fund. This would be comparable to the treasurer in a congregation giving a financial report to the church every month. The preacher should be sure that he uses the money in a way that the sending church approves of. I believe he has that responsibility.

### **Different Kinds and Uses of Funds**

Under this title, we have listed different things for which some churches have furnished extra funds to preachers and also some other funds. Now, I am going to run through this list quickly. I could comment on these, but I had better not because my time is running out. I have two minutes.

1. *Parsonage.* Here in the United States we use this. Some churches here give the preacher a parsonage account. This helps us with our income tax.
2. *Expense account.* Some countries levy a very high income tax on missionaries. Any money given the preacher is considered as income unless it is in the form of an expense account.

3. Some congregations would let a preacher give to the needy (poor saints) from a fund.
4. Transportation
5. Car expenses
6. I know of one case where the church paid for a car a preacher bought. The church paid for the car and the preacher was to use it in the Lord's work. Now, here we show how the money for the car was used as a fund. When the preacher left that work, he sold the car and returned that money to the church. Sometimes, there is a difference in expenses here in this country as compared to expenses in some other countries. A car might last a preacher eight, nine, or ten years in this country. But, I tell you what, you get over there in that bush country in Malawi and some other places, if you get a car to last two or three years, you are doing good. It is different.
7. Advertising
8. Printing
9. Church houses
10. Catastrophes
11. Medical expenses

I think I am just about through. I would read 2 Corinthians 9:8-15 if I had time. I will read that last verse, because I think we need the sentiment about this being spiritual and something to be thankful for. After this reading, we will bring our lesson to a close. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:15, talking about the money which was to be sent to Jerusalem, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." We should be thankful to God for his care and keeping, and financial responsibilities, and things which have to do with funds. Thank you. 78469 Sears Rd., Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424



## **Summary: What Have We Learned?**

*James Orten*

A great deal of effort by many Christians has gone into the planning and presentation of the study. Has it been worth it? And if so, what have we learned? My answer to the first question is "Yes!" To the second question, I will speak more at length.

I. First, scripturally and forcefully, we have had impressed upon us the God-given challenge of evangelism, a challenge that awaits every Christian and every church. For some of us, it may not be that we have learned so many new facts about this great responsibility, but rather that we have moved the information from our heads to our hearts.

The places that we will meet the challenge and carry out the responsibilities are many and, in themselves, unimportant. The places are determined by our opportunities. They may be as close to home as the house next door or as far abroad as China. The distance does not matter. A soul is the same color and the same value in Texas or in Russia. So strong is this commission, that a failure to carry it out is a failure of Christianity. A church that does not respond is digressing (a word we fear) from the clear biblical pattern of early discipleship. When a lost soul beckons within our vision (Acts 16:9) or when providence points, we must say with Paul, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you . . . also" (Rom. 1:15).

II. We have learned that God will provide power and protection, and that the Scriptures provide patterns to guide our efforts in evangelism. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We do not receive the power of the Spirit in the same way as did the apostles, but the power we receive is not inferior. So many speakers humbly and sincerely have acknowledged feeling the providential guidance and protection of God when they were at their wit's end. The pattern of mission work in this verse forcefully was captured by the phrase "concentric circles of evangelism," meaning one begins where he is, and a church begins where it is, and evangelizes ever widening circles until our world

is covered, as it was in Paul's day. He said, "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world . . ." (Col. 1:6). This is a job that is continually required, because we face a new world every generation.

III. We learned that problems in mission work do not make the work void or relieve us of our responsibilities to do it. Problems are a part of life—we have them whether or not we fulfill our obligations. But, also, we heard real experiences that demonstrate that consistent, prayerful efforts solve problems, even difficult and dangerous ones.

Problems do place additional requirements on those at home and those in the field. For those in the field the responsibilities are to report quickly, openly, in detail, and to ask for guidance. They must be willing to accept, without petulance or pouting, the guidance of the church whose God-given responsibility it is to oversee the work. The requirements of those at home are: to respond to problems in the field with guidance, encouragement, support, and pressure (if really needed), but without murmuring and rejection.

I believe, as a church and as a group of evangelists, we are learning how to react to our own mistakes, i.e. to acknowledge them openly, make reparation for them, and then go onward, feeling O.K. as persons and Christians. In this way, we can learn from our mistakes and not compromise the work. Paul had no intention of throwing away Peter as an apostle when he told him to correct his behavior toward the Gentiles at Antioch (Gal. 2:11).

My definition of a successful person is one who can fail at tasks without feeling a failure. Everyone fails at tasks. Most of us do so often. But if we feel personal failure when we do, we are apt to get surly and stubborn. Then, we are moving toward real failure. If on the other hand, we can acknowledge our mistakes and go on, we will surely be successful in life's main goals.

These facts allow me to tell one of my favorite stories—now a proverb in our home. It is about baseball's most famous and beloved player, "Babe" Ruth. The nickname signifies the affection in which he was held. His other title was "Home Run King," because he established a record of home runs for a season that was broken only recently. But did you know that Babe Ruth could just as accurately be called the "Strike Out King?" He also struck

out more times than anyone in his league. No one remembers the strike outs, because of his successes. I am certain that Mr. Ruth, when he struck out several times in a row, checked his stance, his grip, and his swing. And I believe he tried out new equipment and new approaches. But one thing he did not do, and that is make the only really fatal mistake. He never ceased stepping up to the plate at every opportunity, and swinging with all his might.

IV. One of the strongest themes expressed throughout the study was the need for planning. Several speakers rightfully pointed out that planning should include goals, not be the goal. The process should not be so long as to thwart the work, and sometimes opportunities are so urgent that a missionary must be sent before the process is completed. But urgent conditions do not obviate the need for planning. They only mean that sometimes it must be done while we do the work, as well as before.

Planning requires clear, measurable, and achievable goals that are agreed upon by the sponsoring church and the evangelists. "If we don't know where we are going, we will probably never get there," is an adage that applies here. Short range and long range goals are needed. Plans need to be broad and inclusive, like goals and objectives, and they must be down-to-earth and nitty-gritty: i.e. How can the sponsoring congregation prepare itself? What stresses will be on the preacher in the field and the church at home? And even, how will the preacher's children adjust to living, learning, and playing with native children?

Some churches worry that a commitment to mission work in a specific place will never end. They worry that they may not always be able to keep that commitment, and they appropriately are concerned about the need for mission-field churches to grow to autonomy. But good planning includes plans for constructively being able to leave, to bring those churches to the point of full partnership in sending the gospel to others.

Planning and goals must always be within the confines of scriptural authority. But it must also sometimes be creative. Jack Cutter's doggerel summed that point very well: "If we always do, what we have always done; we will always get, what we always got."

V. And culture, Ah! What can I say about culture that so many speakers have not already said? For one thing, I can tell you how surprised Joe Norton and I were that so many speakers talked about it. We thought the need to understand culture might be one of the most difficult points to get across. Instead, almost everyone touched upon it, in full agreement as to its importance.

The preacher must understand how the people he works with think in order to effectively teach them. This knowledge will influence the illustrations in every sermon and it will often dictate the need for specific sermons. Paul clearly understood Cretan character, and he spoke with authority about their need to change some cultural habits (Tit. 1:12-13). But the preacher also needs to know what necessary changes should be required, and to lay no unnecessary burdens (Acts 15:28) on Christians in other lands. They need only to become Christians, not Americans. Equally important, he must know the culture in order to be able to identify with and empathize with the people. This real, but not easily defined, quality is of great value in teaching and influencing people for the better.

The sponsoring church needs to understand the culture in order to empathize with and better support and guide the preacher.

On a personal note, when I am surprised by human behavior, I am often temporarily obsessed with wanting to know why it happened. By the end of the study I was asking myself, "Why did so many preachers talk about culture?" Especially so, when we thought it would largely be ignored by everyone except Greg DeGough, to whom we specifically assigned the topic. Now I believe I have the answer. These men were not talking about culture from books, nor because currently it is a nice, politically correct topic, but because they have "been there." They have experienced the loneliness of the darkest night on the dark continent. On them personally, Montezuma has taken his revenge. They know the fear and alienation of trying to negotiate a large, eastern city in which no one, at least no one they can find, speaks their language or cares what happens to them. These gut-wrenching experiences are burned into their psyche. They have made them different and better persons. Such walks in the dusty way cannot help but come out when they speak.

Related to culture, but somewhat different, we were reminded of our obligation to reach out to the poor and oppressed. Our introspection has shown us that we are largely alike in racial, social, and economic characteristics. Mostly, we are a white, middle-class church. But the peoples of our country and the world are not alike on these characteristics, so the church as we know it does not reflect these persons appropriately. Thus, what we see when we assemble suggests that we have not made proper efforts in this regard. We Gentiles, of all people, should understand these facts. Surely it is no more difficult for us to reach out to the poor and oppressed than it was for Peter to go to the Gentiles when the Holy Spirit ordered him to do so (Acts 10).

VI. I believe we proved the value of preachers and congregational leaders being real partners. We were clearly shown that mission work does not belong to the preacher or the congregation, but to the Lord. We are all partners in the Lord's work. I think we found, too, that it is artificial and detrimental not to include church leaders in the study itself. We saw what they can contribute from the podium. We do not believe in a clergy and laity, but holding a "Preachers' Study" in which knowledgeable church leaders can be spectators but not participants, indicates we do. I suggest we change the name to "Year End Study," or some other appropriate title, and tap into the talent among our many qualified church leaders.

VII. Finally, and this could be the most important point of all, we demonstrated that we can discuss differences in good friendship. We can discuss them in a reconciling, rather than a divisive manner, and sometimes even in good humor. We must keep in mind Moses' question, "Ye be brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?" (Acts 7:26).

We have a poor tradition in this country of open, respectful, discussion of differences. Our British brethren, who have their own weaknesses, could show us the way on this score.

Some folks have been so discouraged by hostile attacks that they are reluctant to allow open discussion. But such restrictions only drive our disagreements underground, putting them beyond the reach of reconciliation, and from which they are likely to manifest themselves in other untoward ways.

I hope the churches that conduct the year-end study in the future will make it clear to speakers that they expect them to carry on and strengthen this tradition. We do not have a choice. As Christians, we are charged to be gentle to all men (Tit. 3:2), and as preachers and church leaders we are called upon to be an "example of the believers." *P. O. Box 73037, Lusaka 10101 Zambia.*