

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

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Cover theme: *UPON THIS ROCK* (Northern Karoo, South Africa - R.E.D.)

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

Learning to be a good leader is a lifetime project. When Jesus stated, “*Among you it shall not be so,*” He was comparing the leadership style of the world with the servanthood leadership that was to be characteristic of His disciples. Therefore, it must be the desire of every leader to open the pages of the Bible in order to discover those leadership characteristics that were practiced by biblical characters who allowed God to direct their lives. We must walk with Peter and Paul, James and John in an effort to discover how they implemented the principles of Jesus’ leadership in their lives. As they followed Jesus, they have called on generations after them to do the same. As they trained leaders and worked as leaders, they expect us to see in their example key leadership skills that, if implemented in our lives, will accomplish great things to God’s glory. Therefore, we must study the leadership characteristics of New Testament leaders in order to determine how God would have us behave as leaders among His sheep. If we follow their example, we will have the same success as they did in the first century when they led the church to victory.

Chapter 1

Evangelists Who Evangelize

The work of an evangelist is to proclaim the good news of the gospel to the world of lost people. The nature of the job description assumes that the evangelist is to lead in preaching the gospel to the lost. Those who seek the responsibility of taking the gospel to the world must have self-initiative that motivates them to move out to preach, regardless of the support or encouragement of the rest of the church. Philip was called an evangelist because he took the initiative to move beyond his friends and relatives to preach the gospel in other regions. Barsabbas and Silas did the same. They were considered “**leading** men among the brethren” because they led (At 15:22). The nature of these men is that they led

out. They took the initiative to fulfill in their lives the great commission of Jesus to preach the gospel to the world of lost people.

We must correctly assume, therefore, that anyone in the work of God who would be considered a leader must have the characteristic of being one who takes the initiative. Knowing one’s mission is essential to assuming leadership. Though many unfortunately consider leadership from a standpoint of control, true New Testament leadership deals with taking initiative to reach out as a servant to help others. Christian leadership is not assuming the throne from which to hand down dictates to submissive subjects. It is standing up to take initiative to reach out

to others through humble service. The nature of true Christian leadership, therefore, places a great deal of emphasis on the spiritual motivation of the one who leads forth to serve.

The spiritual leadership that is characteristic of godly men and women in the New Testament must be assumed in order to carry out the work of God today. We should follow the spiritual example of those in the Bible who committed their lives to Jesus as shepherds, deacons and evangelists. This principle is seen in the words of Paul. *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ”* (1 Co 11:1). *“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do ...”* (Ph 4:9). To Timothy he wrote, *“... be an example to the believers ...”* (1 Tm 4:12). These words of Paul lay the foundation for leadership among God’s people. The principle is by example, not command. God’s leaders lead by the example of their lives.

The work of an evangelist is a God-appointed ministry to which mature men must strive. It is a necessary work, not only because of what the evangelist does in preaching the gospel to the lost, but also in the example he sets for the rest of the church. The work of an evangelist is a **God-ordained work** (Ep 4:11). It is a **work** (2 Tm 4:5) and one that carries with it the heavy responsibility of preaching, convincing, rebuking and exhorting by the skillful use of God’s word (2 Tm 4:2). It is a work that demands leadership on the part of the one who would assume this responsibility.

The Greek word *euangelistes* means,

“to announce news.” It is translated “evangelist” in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; Ep 4:11; 2 Tm 4:5). Another form of the word is *euangelizo* which means “to announce good news.” This word is commonly translated “preach.” The word *kerusso*, which is also translated “preach”, means “to cry” or “proclaim as a herald.” Now here is a very interesting point. These words are used only in reference to Christians announcing or proclaiming the good news of the gospel to **the lost**. For instance, in the following passages the Greek word *euangelizo* is used to refer to the preaching of the gospel: *“Therefore, those who were scattered abroad went everywhere **preaching** the word of God”* (At 8:4). God revealed His grace to Paul that he might *“**preach** Him among the Gentiles”* (Gl 1:16). Paul *“**preached** to them Jesus and the resurrection”* (At 17:18). *“For Christ did not send me to immerse, but to **preach** the gospel ...”* (1 Co 1:17). *“For woe is me if I do not **preach** the gospel”* (1 Co 9:16). The preaching of the good news is proclaimed to unbelievers. Believers already know it. On occasions the gospel is reviewed to Christians. However, the work of the preacher and evangelist is to proclaim the gospel to the lost, not the saved.

A New Testament evangelist, or preacher, is one who announces the great news of Jesus’ salvation to the lost. A work of an evangelist is to the lost, not to the saved. The saved have already heard good news. It is the lost who are yet to hear. If one would be an evangelist (preacher), therefore, he must go out

to the lost of the world and preach the gospel. Both Timothy and Philip were evangelists (2 Tm 4:5; At 21:8). At the time of Paul's writing of 2 Timothy, Timothy was an evangelist who was working in the area of Ephesus (1 Tm 1:3). Philip was an evangelist in proclaiming the gospel in unevangelized areas (See At 8:4,12,35,40). New Testament evangelists worked in taking the gospel to the lost. We would assume, therefore, that when the lost of a particular region had been evangelized, it would be time for the evangelist to move on to other areas. Elders stay with evangelized people who have obeyed the gospel. Evangelists go out to the unevangelized. Shepherds (pastors), or elders, feed the flock (Act 20:28). Preachers increase the flock by announcing the good news to the lost. When evangelists turn in their ministry to working with the flock, then they are no longer evangelists. They are not doing the work of preaching the gospel to the lost. They have assumed the work of elders. They have become shepherds, or pastors. And all this time other religious groups have been right in calling their preachers "pastors" when speaking only of the work of the pastors, though they have been wrong in not applying the qualifications of a pastor (shepherd) to their preachers. However, we have been wrong in calling our preachers "evangelists" when they have ceased preaching the gospel to the lost.

Churches are usually started by the work of evangelists whose work it is to proclaim the gospel to the lost in unevangelized areas. This was the primary work

of evangelists in the first century. A casual reading of the book of Acts defines the work of traveling evangelists who went forth preaching, and thus, establishing churches throughout the first century world. They did so by organizing into functioning groups those who believed and obeyed the gospel. Evangelists, therefore, must be good leaders. The example of their lives will be copied by the first generation of a newly established church. The first converts in any region will establish the example for those who follow. It is vitally important, therefore, that God's evangelists establish an example of Christian conduct that is patterned after the word of God.

Throughout the years I have observed that the examples that are established in the first year of a new church establishment are carried on for many decades after the establishment of any particular church. The new converts follow the example of the evangelist. The second generation of converts will follow the example of the first generation converts. The children of the new converts follow the example of their parents who were the first converts. The grandchildren live from the stories and examples of the parents and grandparents. And thus, the legacy of the initial establishment of the church carries on for many generations. It is important, therefore, that the pioneers of any newly established work establish a pattern of evangelism.

What usually transpires after the establishment of a new work is a negative growth factor within the membership. This negative growth factor is established

when the evangelist begins the work by leading in evangelism, but later changes to the work of a “pastor.” After the initial evangelistic work of establishing a church, the problems that come with new converts overwhelm him, and subsequently, his evangelistic leadership changes. It changes to nurturing a family of house churches with a combined membership of 50 to 125. He thus changes from evangelistic work to nurturing work because of the demands of the needs of new converts. The new converts and children of the first converts then see the evangelist as a “pastor” among the flock, and not an evangelist to the lost. The pattern is then set for the generations to come. There is no example of evangelism in the church. The attention of the evangelist and members has turned inward for their own survival. The very nature of the self-survival of the body becomes its signal for death. Members lose their evangelistic outreach, and thus, are active as “church”, but only among themselves. The lost go unsaved because they go unevangelized.

It is essential that men maintain their calling as evangelists. They must not be detoured from their ministry. It is for this reason that we must understand that when one is “called” to be an evangelist that he is not called by some “mystical nudge.” If one were so called, there would be those who would call themselves evangelists but who would not have the heart-felt motivation either to dedicate their lives to sacrificial service or to behavioral correction that is so necessary for evangelists. If men were called

by self-inflicted “mystical nudges”, then being “called” would lead to a great deal of confusion. If the “mystical nudge” is assigned to a supposed direct work of the Holy Spirit, it would mean that the Holy Spirit has called many false evangelists who claim to be personally called by Him but preach confusion in the religious world. The Holy Spirit does not personally call evangelists to preach confusion. We have an assortment of “called” evangelists in the world today who are preaching nonsense. They neither know their Bibles, nor the nature of spiritual leadership that must be characteristic of godly men.

One is “called” to be an evangelist by reading his Bible, being moved by the power of the gospel message, and then leading out to preach the gospel of good news to the lost. Preachers need to forget calling themselves to a position of power. They must humble themselves under the mighty hand of God as servants to preach the power of the gospel to the world. Through prayer and fasting, men come to understand the Spirit’s call through the word of God to go into all the world. There is nothing mystical about this. It is a matter of spiritual growth and commitment to do God’s will in taking God’s message to a world of lost people. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out what Matthew 28:19,20 and Mark 16:15,16 mean.

One decides to be an evangelist or preacher because of a deep conviction to proclaim to others the message of the gospel that he has learned in the word of God. This is the only motivation that we

read about in the New Testament for one to become an evangelist. This is certainly contrary to the modern religious world that contends that evangelists must be “ordained” by some ecclesiastical organization or receive a diploma from some accepted school in order to preach. God’s evangelists are Bible-motivated, not man-ordained. They are God-called through His word, not man called. Their “calling” does not rest on some official endorsement by schools or the documentation of diplomas. It rests in the power of the gospel of grace that has changed their lives. If men seek to be “called” by the official ordination of some group or school, then they see the evangelist as a position of authority and power. But such is erroneous and contrary to the work of the evangelist.

The evangelist is simply a minister of the message of good news to the lost. He has no office. He has no delegated power and authority. He is simply a slave to his Lord who died on a cross for the salvation of mankind. If a man does not see the redemptive message he is to preach and the servanthood by which he is to minister this message to the lost, then his calling is false. It is false because his motive is false.

One is not qualified to be an evangelist because he has graduated from some school or received a diploma for completing a series of studies. **The only qualification in the New Testament for one to be an evangelist is that he be able to stand humbly and meekly before people and preach gospel to the lost** (See 2 Tm 2:24; 4:1,2). It has been a

false teaching for years that one had to be “ordained” or set forth with a “preaching diploma” before he could preach. This belief is not from the Bible. It is an invention of men to perpetuate the authority or power concept that supposedly surrounds the “priest” or “pastor” of a particular religious group. This unbiblical concept should be shunned and condemned by those who love and know the truth. The reason it should is because of the ungodly model it establishes within the church. By those who see being a preacher as a place of position, church is viewed as some type of governmental organization with power figures who maintain control over the lives of the subjects. In reference to such nonsense, Jesus said, *“It will not be so among you”* (Mk 10:43). Therefore, an evangelist who leads should be very cautious about setting up a power structure that is focused on himself. When you are identified as “the” preacher of a particular church, then you are on your way to being what denominational groups refer to as the single “pastor” of a congregation.

We must also keep in mind that a requirement for preaching is not that one have a perfect life. This is true simply because no man can live perfectly. Nevertheless, as a preacher one must sincerely strive to correct his own life through prayer and fasting in order to bring his life under the subjection of God’s word. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, *“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified”* (1 Co 9:27).

It is the purpose of the following thoughts to deal not only with the means by which we must preach, but also the message by which we must live as spokesmen for God. I want to set before you biblical instructions that you must strive to engraft into your life as an evangelist. By engrafting these biblical principles into your life, you can lead others to do the same.

The letters of **1 & 2 Timothy** and **Titus** were written specifically to evangelists. The leadership of the evangelist is vital to the health of the church. It is essential, therefore, to listen to the Holy Spirit's directions for evangelists concerning how they should lead in preaching the gospel to the lost and in edifying the church.

A. Lead with a life of fasting and prayer.

Paul instructed Timothy, "... *I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty*" (1 Tm 2:1). By maintaining a personal prayer life, evangelists must lead and instruct others to continue in prayer. They must pray at all times for all men.

Paul specifically mentions that evangelists pray for those who are in civil authority. This prayer request directly affects the work of an evangelist. Jesus commanded that evangelists go into all the world in order to preach the gospel

(Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). In order to accomplish this mandate without being hindered by the rulers of the world, we must live in a peaceful world. When the world is not at peace, then evangelists cannot easily go into all the world. Both evangelists and the church as a whole, therefore, must pray for peace on earth and good will among all men in order that the preaching of the gospel be carried out according to the command of Jesus. The life-style of the evangelist should be that he pray continually for a peaceful environment in which he can carry out his work of evangelism.

Coupled with a life of prayer should be a life of fasting. What the leaders of the church did in the Antioch church would be a good example for all leaders. In Acts 13:2 Luke explains that the leaders ministered and fasted. During their ministry and fasting, the Holy Spirit stated, "*Separate for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them*" (At 13:2). After the church separated Paul and Barnabas, they fasted for a specific purpose (At 13:3). In other words, the leaders fasted as a general practice during their ministry. After a specific mission was determined by the Holy Spirit for two of the leaders, the church focused their fasting for the mission of the two evangelists they were going to send out.

B. Lead through wise discussions.

To both Timothy and Titus, Paul gave instructions that they caution themselves about wasting time on useless discussions

that would divert their attention from the preaching of the gospel. In 1 Timothy 4:7 Paul instructed, “*But refuse profane and old wives’ fables. Exercise yourself rather to godliness.*” He continued, “*O Timothy, guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge*” (1 Tm 6:20). “*Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord that they do not strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers*” (2 Tm 2:14). “*But avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they generate strife*” (2 Tm 2:23). “*But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and contentions and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man after the first and second admonition*” (Ti 3:9,10).

It takes little interpretation of the preceding commands to understand that the Holy Spirit does not want the evangelist to get himself involved in meetings wherein discussions are conducted that generate tension and division. Paul’s advice is that one not even show up for such meetings. Much division in the past could have been avoided if evangelists would have made their statement against division by not showing up for those meetings over nonsense discussions that do not add to the edification of the church. I believe many evangelists do not take these mandates of Paul seriously enough. There will always be those who are bent on conducting meetings that generate more hard feelings than heart bonding. Such meetings need never be con-

ducted. Meetings that do not add to the edification of the body should be highly questioned.

In contrast to involving oneself in useless discussions about nonsense stories, whether fictitious or superstitious, evangelists should practice living after the directions of God’s word. Specifically, God’s evangelists are not to believe or perpetuate the community gossip about so-called “miraculous workings” here and there in the community. Evangelists must discipline their lives in godliness in order to stay focused on their calling (1 Co 9:27). A good evangelist will concentrate on disciplining his spiritual life in order to lead others to a more fulfilling relationship with God. By refusing to get involved in discussions that cause tension and division, he will focus his life on those things that edify others. Evangelists must remember that Satan exercises great wisdom in diverting their ministry to the lost. He would generate useless discussions and meetings by which to distract evangelists from their prime directive.

C. Lead with spiritual maturity.

Paul exhorted Timothy, “*Let no man despise your youth. But you be an example to the believers, in word, in behavior, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity*” (1 Tm 4:12). “*In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works, in teaching show integrity, seriousness, sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that he who is an opponent may be ashamed, having no evil*

thing to say of us” (Ti 2:7,8).

The godly leadership of an evangelist cannot be rejected on the grounds of his age. Paul is here telling young evangelists not to let their youth make them timid about showing an example of Christian living. They must conduct themselves in a godly manner among Christians and non-Christians by focusing on spiritual maturity. Their lives should be an example to all ages in the following areas:

1. Word: Evangelists must lead by their purity of speech that must be controlled and directed by the word of God (See Js 3:1-12). They must do as Paul instructed Timothy, *“Hold fast the pattern of sound words that you have heard from me, in faith and love that is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Tm 1:13). The best advice that can be given to an evangelist is what Peter stated in 1 Peter 4:11: *“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.”* Evangelists must know the word of God so well that their entire speech must be characteristic of the word. When they speak, the word of God flows from their mouths. It is for this reason that evangelists must memorize great portions of the word of God. Through memorization one’s mind is controlled by the Scriptures. One’s focus is on the Scriptures. And subsequently, one’s life is directed by the Scriptures.

2. Conduct: Philippians 1:27 states, *“Only let your behavior be worthy of the gospel of Christ.”* Though this statement is directed to all Christians, the behavior of the evangelist must manifest a rever-

ential manner of life that grows out of one’s submission to the lordship of Jesus. When one’s mind is filled with the word of God, then his speech and conduct will manifest his reverential respect of the word of God. Our behavior, therefore, must manifest our respect for the gospel of Christ. The evangelist must show in his life the effect that the gospel has had in changing his life and in directing every step of his walk.

3. Love: An evangelist’s life must be the manifestation of a deep concern for people and obedient dedication to God’s will. The central behavioral pattern of Christianity is seated in relationships. One cannot have a relationship with God unless he has a relationship with his or her brothers and sisters in Christ. We would take this thought one step further. One cannot have a relationship with God if he does not have a relationship with his neighbor. Loving relationships with our fellow brother and fellow man are necessary for having a relationship with God. This is certainly the reason why Paul exhorted the newly converted Thessalonians to continue in brotherly love, which thing they had done since their conversion. *“But concerning brotherly love, you have no need that I write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. And indeed you practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more”* (1 Th 4:9,10; see Cl 3:12-14).

4. Faith: An evangelist must lead by showing others an unmovable faith in

God, even in times of trial and persecution (See 2 Tm 1:5). John wrote to Christians who were headed for great persecution by the Roman State. He encouraged them by saying, *“Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life”* (Rv 2:10).

By the time Paul wrote 2 Timothy, Timothy had become discouraged. He evidently stopped preaching. For this reason Paul urged him to *“stir up the gift of God that is in you”* (2 Tm 1:6). Timothy was encouraged to get busy. The church needed an example of active faith that would endure persecution. Later in the letter of 2 Timothy, Paul reminded Timothy that if any would seek to lead a godly life, they would suffer. He wrote, *“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (2 Tm 3:12).

Paul was not only giving Timothy instruction in word, he was also giving him the example of his own life. He reminded Timothy of what happened in his own life in Asia. *“This you know, that all those who are in Asia turned away from me ...”* (2 Tm 1:15). Paul’s “life argument” to Timothy was that he must stop feeling sorry for himself. He asked the young preacher if he could, as he, continue in preaching even if “all Asia” would turn against him. Every evangelist must ask himself the same question.

5. Purity: In cultures where immorality is accepted as normal “moral behavior,” God’s evangelists must lead others by strictly following God’s moral standards that are recorded in His word. The evangelist must keep himself pure

(1 Tm 5:22). He must keep himself pure lest he lose his example and his opportunity for preaching the gospel. One who has lost his purity has lost his audience. The open door for saving the lost is shut to the immoral evangelist. It is for this reason that immoral behavior will not only lead to the loss of the evangelist’s soul, but also the loss of souls of the many who would have listened to him if he had not sinned against God.

D. Lead by focusing on the word of God.

Paul instructed, *“Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching”* (1 Tm 4:13). Evangelists must lead by private and public reading and teaching of the Scriptures (See At 20:20). Upon the foundation of the Scriptures, they must build up the church and tear down false ideas by giving strict attention to Bible teaching (See Ti 2:1). Leaders who are ignorant of the word of God are blind leaders. There are always those who desire *“to be teachers of the law”* (1 Tm 1:7). However, if they are ignorant of the word of God, they do not understand the significance of what they affirm and say concerning the Bible. Anyone who would presume to be a leader of the flock of God must himself feed on the word of God. He must give himself totally to the study of the Bible. Those leaders who are ignorant of God’s word are leading people to follow themselves, not God. One cannot lead people any closer to God than he is himself. And one cannot come closer to God if He is

not daily listening to God speak to him through His word.

E. Lead by teaching the word of God.

It is the responsibility of the evangelist to lead as a teacher by teaching the word of God. Paul wrote to Timothy, “*If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of faith and of good teaching that you have followed*” (1 Tm 4:6). To Titus he wrote, “... *these things I want you to affirm confidently so that those who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works*” (Ti 3:8). Every Bible truth must be taught. The word of God must be continually studied and taught to those who seek to know the will of God. The evangelist must not be timid to declare to the church all Bible teachings (See At 20:27). An evangelist is under God’s mandate to “command and teach” the word of God to the church. In this he manifests leadership. His study of the word and instruction in the word is an example to all who seek to be the sons of God.

Though the evangelist’s primary objective is to the lost, he has the responsibility of assuming the work of a teacher when newly established churches are to be edified. This was illustrated in the evangelistic work of Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. Luke wrote of their work, “*And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them*

to continue in the faith, and teaching that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (At 14:21,22).

Paul and Barnabas first **preached** the gospel to the unbelievers. After many became believers through obedience to the gospel, Paul and Barnabas then returned to assume the work of being **teachers** of the church. Their primary work as evangelists was to preach the gospel to the lost. Their secondary work as evangelists was to be teachers for the church.

<p>EVANGELISTS preach to the LOST. TEACHERS instruct the SAVED.</p>

F. Lead by diligent labor.

After Paul had given instructions to Timothy concerning his work as an evangelist, he wrote, “*Meditate on these things. Give yourself wholly to them so that your progress may appear to all*” (1 Tm 4:15). Evangelists must completely dedicate themselves to the purpose of proclaiming the word of God to every man. They must not be lazy in this task. The diligence of a good evangelist demands great spiritual and physical endurance. By such dedication and spiritual progress, others will be led to do the same.

A lazy evangelist is unmotivated and a shame to the work of God. Slothful evangelists have no right to receive financial support from the church. The laborer is worthy of his hire when his labor has worth. But if there is no labor, then the church is not obligated to sup-

port the unworthy. We lead by our example of diligent work. When we diligently work, therefore, the church will seek to help us work more in direct evangelism by their support (See 1 Co 9:14). Good leadership in evangelism launches out in order to draw others to follow.

G. Lead by self-examination and confession.

Paul wrote, *“Take heed to yourself and to the teaching. Continue in these things, for in doing this you will both save yourself and those who hear you”* (1 Tm 4:16). A good evangelist will constantly reflect on his own behavior. He will not be ashamed to confess his own faults. James wrote, *“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed”* (Js 5:16). The evangelist should be the first one to give heed to this command. He must not be too proud to confess his sins to others. In order to lead the church into confessing their sins, an evangelist must confess his own sins.

Some evangelists presume that they can maintain a “position” before the people by not following James’ instructions to confess their own sins to one another. However, the church knows the sins of the evangelist. By his lack of confession, he loses respect in the minds of the church because he is not being honest with the church. By not leading through his own confession of sins, he presents an appearance of hypocrisy to the church, for they all know that he is not a perfect man. His presumption to

not confess his sin, therefore, works to his detriment. When one does confess before others, others see that that person to be honest and sincere, and thus, they have greater respect for the one who confesses.

H. Lead by showing respect to elders.

Paul instructed Timothy to appeal to the elder as a father and to older women as mothers (1 Tm 5:1). He called on Timothy to honor widows (1 Tm 5:3). The evangelist must be careful to show respect to those who are older than he is. He must show an example of giving honor to aged people as opposed to being arrogant and proud. If he shows respect in his life to elders, the younger generation will follow his example. Respect for elders, therefore, is necessary to pass on to following generations the wisdom of the past generation. Submission is thus taught in the church by the submissive example of evangelists to older people.

I. Lead by a spirit of submission.

The evangelist must have a character of submission. Through this submissive character he leads others to submit to the direction of God’s word. He leads women to learn in subjection (1 Tm 2:11). He leads children to be in subjection to their parents (1 Tm 3:4). He leads the church to be obedient to civil authority (Ti 3:1), servants to be subject to their masters (Ti 2:9), and wives to be submissive to their husbands (Ti 2:5). With-

out a spirit of submission, Christians cannot grow spiritually in the word of God. Their subjective relationship with one another prepares them to have an attitude of learning. It is for this reason that every member must be submissive to one another (Ep 5:21). Those who lead the church must be the first to set an example of submission.

J. Lead by standing against sin.

Paul wrote, *“Those who continue in sin, rebuke before all so that others also may fear”* (1 Tm 5:20). This is sometimes very hard to do. When a good friend and brother or sister sins, it is difficult to rebuke this one before all. However, the evangelist must be brave, not arrogant, to publicly rebuke before the church those who continue to practice sin in a public manner. If there is no public rebuke, then the church will become indifferent to the sin of the sinner. This was certainly the case with the brother in Corinth who was living in incest. Because the Corinthian brethren had not rebuked the sinning brother, they were arrogant when they should have mourned (1 Co 5:1-3). It was a case where Paul had to take action for them. He wrote, *“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are assembled, and with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ ... deliver such a one to Satan ...”* (1 Co 5:4,5). The evangelist must remember that *“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind”* (2 Tm 1:7). The evangelist must lead by being the one

who steps forward when sin is in the camp of God’s people.

K. Lead by not showing partiality.

The evangelist is under a God-given charge not to show respect of persons. His preaching of the word must go to all, regardless of his personal inhibitions not to preach the word to those who are sinning. Paul instructed Timothy, *“I charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, that you observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality”* (1 Tm 5:21).

Showing partiality generates a divisive spirit within the church. When an evangelist manifests a spirit of partiality, he has planted the seeds for division. On the other hand, if the evangelist honors an impartial application of the word of God to all, the church will respect him for not taking sides in times of dispute. If the evangelist does not show favoritism, but seeks to consider all equally, he will gain great respect from all. In this way he will develop friendships that are not based on selfish ambition or the desire to manipulate others for his own gain. He will develop friendships that are true and honest that are based on a sincere heart of loving concern for others. This is the nature of a true disciple of Jesus, one that characterizes the nature of Jesus Himself.

L. Lead with caution.

Paul cautioned Timothy, *“Lay hands hastily on no man ...”* (1 Tm 5:22). The

evangelist must be cautious not to quickly entrust responsibility to anyone. The evangelist must be cautious about giving public responsibility to those who are new to his acquaintance or new in the faith. It is wise to allow one first to prove himself. It takes time to learn the spirit of servanthood leadership. Those who are converted out of the lordship leadership of the world often find it difficult to adjust to the servanthood that must be characteristic of the children of God. Once one sees and learns that being a servant must be the nature of God's children, then he has qualified himself for leadership.

Paul also instructed Timothy, "*But you watch in all things*" (2 Tm 4:5). This note of caution refers to the evangelist looking to himself, ensuring that he continues in the faith. The evangelist must caution himself about falling from his calling in times of persecution and trials. He must caution himself about losing his calling, and thus, forgetting that his destiny is to preach the gospel to the lost.

M. Lead by godly living.

In 1 Timothy 6:11-14 and 2 Timothy 2:22-24 Paul listed godly characteristics that must identify the nature of the evangelist. In the context of these exhortations, he contrasted the life-style of the world with that which should identify the nature of godly men. Young evangelists should flee the youthful pride that moves those of the world to selfish ambition. In contrast to the behavior of the self-seeking world, Paul urges evangelists to

lead by exemplifying in their lives the following spiritual qualities:

1. Righteousness: A good leader always seeks to do that which is right, regardless of the consequences. Leadership is manifested in the life of the one who knows how to stand for that which is right. A man of principles will always make decisions that are based on doing that which is right in the eyes of God.

2. Godliness: A good leader seeks to live a life of "Godlikeness." In order to do this, one must know Jesus. And in order to know Jesus, one must know the record of Jesus' life and teachings. We can know Jesus only by knowing how He walked and what He said we must do in our lives. When we have a greater relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ, we have a greater relationship with Jesus. In fact, our relationship with Jesus will improve only when we improve our relationship with the community of God.

3. Faith: A good leader always seeks to be moved by his faith in God. Leadership through faith is by manifesting to others that in hard times one does not waver from his beliefs. Those who do waver must seek stability in faith. The evangelist who does not waver in his faith manifests true leadership to others. Timothy had a genuine faith that moved him to do God's will (2 Tm 1:5).

4. Love: A good leader is always moved into action by love of God and others. Because of love, one seeks to be with and work with people. One who does not enjoy the company of people

cannot influence people to come to Jesus. Our relationship with Jesus is based on our ability to relate with our fellow man in a loving manner.

5. *Patience:* A good leader is always patient with others as they struggle to bring their lives into harmony with the word of God. Patience grows out of an understanding that spiritual growth takes time. Patience will occur in the one who is not arrogant. Arrogant people are impatient with others because they see themselves as the standard by which others should be measured. The patient person will see himself in a common fellowship with others who are striving to be as Jesus.

6. *Gentleness:* A good leader is tender toward others, always dealing gently with God's family. A patient person is gentle with the faults of others. In our relationships with others, gentleness, as opposed to harshness, will draw others to our company. People are driven away from us when we deal with them in a harsh and unloving manner. On the other hand, when we manifest a spirit of patience and gentleness, people will be drawn to our fellowship.

7. *Fight the good fight of the faith:* A good leader does not turn back from the task of preaching the truth. He knows that truth will always prevail over slander and lies. Knowing this gives one strength to stand up for that which is right. Knowing that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord gives one courage to stand fast for what he believes.

8. *Without spot:* A good leader will

always strive to be submissive to the word of God which he preaches to others. He will guard his behavior lest Satan finds a weakness in his life by which to make him stumble. Being without spot does not mean that one must presume to live without sin. It means that one must not soil his character by a life-style of immoral or impure living (See 1 Co 9:27).

9. *Peace:* A good leader will always pursue peace with all men. However, an ungodly man may not seek to be at peace with the peacemaker. Nevertheless, the peacemaker will not be a quarrelsome person (See Ti 3:2). He will avoid useless disputes (Ti 3:9). The evangelist who is known for being a peaceful man will draw to himself those who seek peace.

N. Lead by enduring persecution.

Paul wrote to Timothy to share with him "... *in the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God*" (2 Tm 1:8). As an evangelist a good leader will not be intimidated by persecution from those who refuse to submit to the word of God. One must assume that if he preaches that which attacks the kingdom of Satan, then he must be prepared to receive the attacks of Satan. Satan will not remain silent while his kingdom of darkness is attacked by the light of the gospel.

The attacks of Satan can sometimes be a signal that we are on the right road. Those who will live a godly life will receive persecution. When we seek to do a project for God, we must expect that Satan will try to stop the work. There-

fore, when persecution and opposition come, we can know that Satan is trying to detour our work. But in recognizing Satan's opposition to our work, we can know that we are doing the right thing. Christians must never allow obstacles to detour them from their work to serve the Lord.

O. Lead by enduring hardships.

Paul wrote, "*You therefore endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No man engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, so that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And if a man competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes lawfully*" (2 Tm 2:3-5). Add to this the fact that if one seeks to serve God he will suffer persecution. "*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*" (2 Tm 3:12). The point is that the evangelist is doing the work of God. He therefore must expect that Satan will work against him to stop his work.

Evangelists must be willing to accept the hardships of their work. They must expect the opposition of Satan. They must be willing to accept no pay for their preaching though the church is commanded to support them (1 Co 9:14). They must be willing to accept the difficulties of not being understood for who they are and what they do. They must learn the secret of being content in both poverty and abundance (See Ph 4:11-13).

But herein is the power of the person who preaches. He does not preach for

money. He preaches because God's working in his heart. He cannot help but speak the word of God because it has worked powerfully on his heart. Many do not understand why an evangelist continues to go on when all others have turned aside. They do not understand because they do not understand the commitment that is necessary in order to stay in the battle. Those who are not strong in the faith will not understand why others continue on when they fall aside. There is power in the word of God, not only to convert the sinner, but also to give power to the one who carries the message of the gospel to the sinner.

P. Lead by living a godly example.

"But you continue in the things that you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures that are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tm 3:14,15). *"Be an example to the believers"* (1 Tm 4:12).

An evangelist must continue to practice the principles of God's word (See Ph 4:9). This would not only include looking to the examples of Paul, but also the examples of great Old Testament leaders about whom Timothy had learned through the teaching of his mother and grandmother (2 Tm 3:15). Others need a demonstration of the godly living that is taught in the Bible. It is this demonstration that gives others an example that the principles of the Bible are real and

beneficial to the development of one's character. We follow the example of great leaders, therefore, insofar as their lives exemplify the life of Jesus (1 Co 11:1).

Q. Lead by speaking the word of God.

Paul exhorted Timothy, "*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season*" (2 Tm 4:2). An evangelist leads by always being prepared to speak the word of God to the lost. He must not be shy when called upon to deliver God's word to people. With great longsuffering (patience) he must deliver the word of God to others. As a farmer is patient for the growing of his crops, the faithful evangelist must wait on the germination of the seed of the kingdom in the hearts of men. When one leads by boldly assuming the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the lost, then others will follow this behavior. Evangelists who are active in preaching the gospel to the lost will develop churches that do the same.

R. Lead by setting things in order.

When Paul left the island of Crete, he left the new converts in the hands of Titus, an inspired prophet of God. Since he had just been released from his first imprisonment of A.D. 61-62, Paul had to hurry on to another destination. He later wrote back to Titus with instructions to set things in order with the newly established churches in the cities of Crete. "*For this reason I left you in Crete, so that you should set in order the things*

that are lacking and designate elders in every city, as I had charged you" (Ti 1:5).

The evangelist has the responsibility of setting things in order in infant churches by directing the church through the teaching of the word of God. It is his responsibility to make known before the church those men who fulfill the qualities of those who desire to be shepherds of the flock (See 1 Tm 3:1-7; Ti 1:6-9). Since our situation today is somewhat different from what was experienced by Titus in Crete when Paul wrote to him, we must assume that the evangelist must still direct the church to the word of God in order that the same end be accomplished. When Paul wrote, the church did not have the written New Testament as a guide by which to be led into designating elders. Without copies of the New Testament, the revelation of the qualities of elders rested in the teaching of Titus. Today, it would be the responsibility of the evangelist to lead by leading the church to the word of God. The evangelist must motivate men to grow spiritually in order to fulfill the qualifications for being elders. It is also his task to motivate the church to assume her responsibility of designating those who are qualified to be elders. Evangelists who are Christ-centered in their lives lead others to be likewise. They lead the church to follow those who exemplify Jesus as the center of reference in their living.

S. Lead through exhortation and rebuking.

Paul instructed Titus, "*These things*

speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you" (Ti 2:15; see 1 Th 5:19,20). An evangelist must lead in exhortation and rebuking by the authority of God's word. He will do his work well if he reminds the church of their responsibility to be obedient to civil authority (Ti 3:1). Regardless of the age of the evangelist who correctly speaks the word of God, men must not reject the message of the messenger. Those who despise the teacher for teaching the truth are actually despising God, for it is through the teacher that the word of God is communicated.

T. Lead by fellowship with other evangelists.

In Titus 3:13 Paul made an interesting statement in reference to the fellowship of evangelists in the common goal of world evangelism. He wrote, "*Diligently support Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey so that nothing is lacking for them.*" A good evangelist will see that his fellow evangelists are also cared for on their journeys to preach and teach the gospel to the lost. Evangelists are in a common struggle to get the gospel preached to the world. It is imperative that they work together in this mission. What Paul was instructing Titus in Titus 3:13 was that he must financially make it possible for Zenas and Apollos be set forth on their journey. It is the responsibility of fellow evangelists to make sure that they all work together in order that their common mission be accomplished. This is what Paul did in ref-

erence to his tentmaking business while in Ephesus. He later reminded the elders there, "*You yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me*" (At 20:34).

God needs evangelists who will lead in taking the challenge of evangelizing the lost. He needs men who will get excited about sowing the seed of the kingdom because they are excited about seeing the need for world evangelism. He needs men who have faith in the mission before them because of their faith in the Master behind them.

When churches are not raising up evangelists to go forth into all the world, they are suffering from a lack of vision. They are suffering from a lack of identifying with the mission of the Master. As a member of the Lord's church you must motivate men to accept the challenge of being evangelists for God. Paul exhorted, "*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?*" (Rm 10:14). We must raise up those men who will leave family and friends and go forth to preach the gospel to the world. Evangelistic leadership in the church will make sure that men are motivated to evangelize the lost. Existing evangelists will also make sure that the church is producing qualified young men to go forth into all the world.

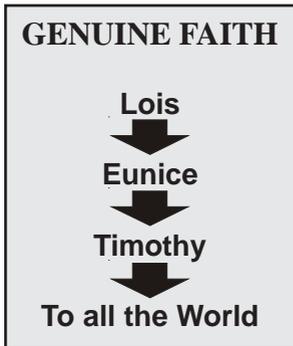
We know little about the youth of the evangelists who are mentioned in the New Testament. However, there are

some details that are given concerning the early years of Timothy that help us understand how parents and the church can raise up evangelists. Acts 16:1-3 and 2 Timothy 1:5 reveal a great deal about the early years of Timothy when he grew up under the spiritual nurturing of his mother and grandmother. In Acts 16:1-3 Luke recorded,

*Then he [Paul] came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, **the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was a Greek.** He was well spoken of by **the brethren** who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go with him. So he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those regions, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.*

In the text of 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul added to the information that was given by Luke by stating, “*When I call to remembrance*

the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that it is in you also.” This genuine faith came to Timothy through the teaching of Lois and Eunice, Timothy’s grandmother and mother (2 Tm 3:5).



Paul had established the churches in Derbe, Lystra and Iconium about three years before he arrived in these cities on his second missionary journey that is discussed by Luke in Acts 16:1-3. Between the establishment of the church and Paul’s request for Timothy to go with him on the second journey, there had been much growth in the spiritual life of Timothy. Timothy was probably converted as a teenager, or at least in his early twenties. After he was converted, he went to work for the Lord.

Timothy’s mother was a believer, but no credit is given to his father for being a believer. We could thus assume that Timothy lived in a situation where faith was promoted by the mother Eunice, which faith came to Eunice and Timothy through the grandmother Lois. Timothy was a third generation believer. His faith had come through his mother’s side, which faith was born out of her Jewish beliefs. He grew up in a family wherein one mate was not a believer. Eunice did a good job as a mother of faith in raising Timothy to have faith in God.

Timothy was also the product of a cross-cultural marriage. The mother was Jewish. The father was Gentile. Though we are given no information on how this Jewish woman married a Gentile, we do know that Eunice did not give up her faith when she married.

Timothy was probably converted on the first missionary journey of Paul to the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (At 13,14). That was about three years previous to Paul’s encounter with him on the second journey in Acts 16. Timothy spiri-

tually grew into a great young man in the three years from the time of his conversion to the time Paul arrived in Derbe and Lystra on the second journey. He was well spoken of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. As a young man he must have travelled the forty to fifty kilometers (30-35 miles) between the two cities of Lystra and Iconium on a regular basis. In order to be well spoken of by the church in these two cities, Timothy must have been a diligent worker, one who carried his faith into action soon after conversion.

It is interesting to note that though

his father was probably not a believer, Eunice was able to raise up an evangelist by passing her faith on to Timothy. It is also interesting to note that soon after the establishment of the churches in Lystra and Derbe, they were also able to encourage and raise up a world evangelist. The church needs more mothers as Eunice and more churches as Lystra and Derbe. We must have churches that are focused on training world evangelists. We must have mothers and fathers who will give their children to the preaching of the gospel to the world.

Chapter 2

Shepherds Who Lead

It is the biblical goal of the church in every locality to eventually designate those who would serve in teaching and counseling the flock of God. Paul gave instructions in 1 Timothy and Titus concerning the qualities of these men. These are qualities that must be characteristic of these men **before** they are designated as shepherds. In studying these qualities it is evident that God is manifesting **spiritual leadership principles** that should be followed by all Christians. He has thus given to us in the New Testament spiritual qualities in which we all must excel in spiritual growth.

The spiritual qualities of 1 Timothy and Titus focus on the example leadership of the shepherd. They do not center around a checklist abilities as much as a life-style of godly living. Since the work

of the shepherd is to teach both in word and example, it is imperative that shepherds conduct their lives according to that which they teach. It is for this reason that we must view the “qualifications” for being a shepherd from the standpoint that God is seeking those who can demonstrate the word of God in behavior.

Another important preliminary point to understand in studying the designation of shepherds is the fact that the word “shepherd” focuses more on what one **does** instead of some title. The word “elder” focuses on what one is, that is, one who is older in age. The New Testament commonly uses the word “elder” when referring to these men in different contexts. However, it is assumed that the ones to whom the inspired writer originally directed his epistle understood what

the elder did. For us today, it is somewhat difficult. Since we have focused so much on the “position” of the elder, it is difficult for us to think about work rather than position. I would suggest that we use the word “shepherd” until we restore the correct concept of who these men are. They are men who are teachers and liverers of the word of God on behalf of the flock of God.

Throughout the world I have discovered that churches often have a difficult time designating elders. Some churches have been in existence for decades, and still, there are no shepherds. This is a common problem, and one that must be faced when discussing the function and work of elders. When a church has been in existence for several years and there are still no elders, then there is something wrong with the church or there is something wrong with the church’s idea or concept of elders. Whatever the case, the fact that churches have existed for decades without producing individual spiritual growth that qualifies men to be shepherds, is a problem with which churches must deal.

I want to challenge your thinking concerning the designation of elders. Please keep in mind the principle that Jesus said that those who would be great among His disciples would be those who were the slaves of all (Mk 10:42-45). God’s leaders lead by service and teaching, not by position and authority. This is the foundation principle upon which all discussion concerning elders must be based. If we understand that leadership in the church is through loving servant-

hood, rather than position and authority, then we will have a biblical understanding of those scriptures that deal with those who are servants of the body.

Keep in mind also that in the New Testament there are three different Greek words that refer to elders. These words describe what these men do and who they are. These words are not titles or names that establish these men in some office separate and apart from the members of the church. These are simply words that define the nature and work of these men in their relationship with the church. The three Greek words are translated in different ways, depending on your particular translation. These words are, *presbuteros* (translated “elder” or “presbyter”), *episkopos* (translated “overseer” or “bishop”), and *poimen* (translated “shepherd” or “pastor”).

1. Elder: The word “elder” (*presbuteros*) simply defines the age of the one who functions in this work. A young man cannot be an elder because of age. With experience comes wisdom and perception. For this reason, older men are to function in the capacity of being elders. How old an elder should be is not defined by the use of the word *presbuteros*. It is simply a word that is used in reference to elders in the culture in which the word was applied to older men.

The English word “elder” is the most commonly used word in the New Testament in reference to shepherds. This is because the Holy Spirit wanted us, the readers, to understand who was being

discussed in the historical context of a particular passage. The other words that are used to refer to elders explains what they do.

2. *Shepherd:* The shepherd (*poimen*) had the responsibility of seeing after the flock. The emphasis of *poimen* is on what one does, not a title of the position one may think he has. Shepherds have the responsibility of carrying for the needs of the flock in order that they are protected and fed. Through the conduct of their lives, shepherds are viewed to be in front of the flock and going in the direction the sheep should be going.

3. *Overseer:* As an overseer (*episkopos*) the elder is one who “sees over.” We must be careful not to read into the word “overseer” authoritarian definitions that would be assumed in the definition of the English word, “overseer”. An elder is one who looks over the flock in order to perceive the needs of the flock. He is one who is looking for a place to serve. As a shepherd looks after the flock of sheep in order to watch for areas where service is needed, so an elder “sees over” the flock of God in order to find opportunities for service.

The word *episkopos* (see over) is used in reference to what the *poimen* (shepherd) does. As a shepherd, the elder is caring for the flock. He not only looks over, but he also works among. Elders smell like sheep because they are among the sheep, servicing the needs of the flock. An elder, therefore, is an older man who sees over the sheep in order to shepherd the flock through teaching and serving.

In order to function in a positive manner in doing this, it is obvious that there must be some life qualifications for those who serve as shepherds. When studying through Paul’s qualities for shepherds, we must keep in mind that these are qualities for designation, not qualifications for disqualification. What Paul mentions is generic in some areas, since there is no way we can measure spirituality. And since we cannot measure spirituality, then these points must first be viewed as spiritual qualities.

A. Qualities and qualifications for shepherds:

The qualities and qualifications of shepherds can be divided into two areas, spiritual and physical. There are **spiritual qualities** that members must subjectively determine that the proposed elder have before he is designated as an elder. There are also **physical qualifications** which the church can objectively see that an individual has. The spiritual qualities deal with one’s spirituality, whereas the physical qualifications deal with aspects of one’s life that guarantee the age and ability of a candidate to function as an elder. The physical qualifications are not necessary examples for Christians to follow as would be the spiritual qualities. The spiritual qualities are life qualities that prepare one to deal with others in relationships and spiritual counseling.

Before one can be considered to function in the leadership service of a shepherd, he must first **desire** the work (1 Tm

3:1). Without this desire, one disqualifies himself from being designated as one to whom others would go for teaching and counseling. The lesson is that one will not serve well as a servant in the work of a shepherd – or any leadership work – if he does not desire to serve people. Since the work of a shepherd is to serve the needs of the flock, one must have a desire to be a servant. God needs men who are slaves, not lords, to be the shepherds of the needs of His flock. If one does not want to be the slave of all, then certainly he cannot be designated for such a work.

In studying the following qualities and qualifications, we must understand that the spiritual qualities for elders are spiritual standards for which all Christians must strive. We must not establish a double standard between the elders and the members. We must not establish one standard of spirituality for elders and another for the members of the church. When we study the spiritual qualities of shepherds, therefore, we must look at ourselves in an effort to understand what God expects of us as faithful members in the body.

Another important point to remember when looking through the following qualities is that Paul did not mean these qualities to be a legal checklist. A comparison of the two accounts of qualities in 1 Timothy and Titus reveals that there is a difference between the two accounts. Keep in mind that it is probable that Timothy did not initially have Titus' list, neither did Titus have Timothy's list. If we are to use a combined application of

both lists in order to come up with a legal checklist of qualifications, then we would put both Timothy and Titus in a difficult situation. Neither had the other's list by which to be directed in teaching the "complete legal qualifications" for elders. For example, to Titus Paul said nothing about one managing well his own household. To Timothy Paul said nothing about having faithful children. It is for this reason that we must assume that Paul was not writing a legal checklist of qualifications for elders to either Timothy or Titus. His emphasis was on spiritual, intellectual and skillful personalities who should be designated as shepherds. What he states is a general description of what these men should be in their spiritual character and abilities.

It is for the preceding reason that we must separate the spiritual qualities and the physical qualifications. The physical qualifications can be a checklist to identify those who can be considered as shepherds if they have the character of the spiritual qualities. Though one may have the physical qualifications, he cannot serve as a designated shepherd unless he has the spiritual qualities. In other words, one can be an older married man, but still not have the spiritual qualities that would qualify him to be an elder. Though one may have the spiritual qualities—which all Christians must have—he cannot serve as a designated shepherd if he does not have the physical qualifications. The spiritual qualities are the foundation upon which men who have the physical qualifications can be designated as shepherds.

The first century church did not have the written instructions of Paul for at least the first twenty years of existence of the church. The church did not because the letters to both 1 Timothy and Titus were not written until the sixties. 1 Timothy was written in the early sixties. Titus was probably written somewhere between A.D. 63 and 67. How did the church exist during these many years without the written records of 1 Timothy and Titus in reference to elders? The answer lies in the fact that the elders of the first century church primarily came into the church on the background of the elders of the Old Testament. The early Jewish Christians knew the spiritual qualities of elders before Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus.

We must also assume that through inspiration, the Holy Spirit directly revealed the spiritual qualities and physical qualifications of shepherds through the inspired prophets of the early church. Regardless of the source of the information, the early church designated elders from its very beginning. They did not wait for twenty to thirty years before men were qualified to be elders. This is true because of the fact that the Jerusalem church had elders long before the letters of 1 Timothy and Titus were written. The church in the cities of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch had elders only a few months after they were established (At 14:21-23). When the gospel was preached in the synagogues, we must assume that men were converted who previously had been elders of Israel before coming into the church. Since this is probably what happened—and I think it did—then we would

do well to study the qualifications and work of elders in the Old Testament. This would give us a foundation upon which to study the elders of the early church.

The following is a quote from the New Testament records of Paul's description of those who are to be designated as shepherds of the flock of God. Keep in mind as you study through these texts, the spiritual qualities of an elder are manifested to those around whom he lives. These are behavioral principles a prospective elder maintains in his community. Reference is not so much to his relationship with the church, **but his relationship with his unbelieving neighbors**. Therefore, the spiritual qualities of an elder are determined by how the unbelieving neighbors view him, not how the church views him. We must always keep in mind that in the first century setting, elders functioned in house churches in their neighborhoods. It is for this reason that their spiritual behavior with their neighbors was very important in order for them to have an impact on their communities. First century elders could not drive across town out of their neighborhoods in order to manifest superficial qualities to a church of people with whom they only occasionally meet. It is for this reason that the church must know what the neighbors of the proposed elder think of the man the church would set forth as a shepherd.

One of the best ways to determine if one is qualified to lead as a shepherd is if he has a good reputation from those around whom he lives every day. One's neighbors and business associates, there-

fore, can be a good testimony as to whether one has the ability to live and work with those in his community he is supposed to influence for the Lord, and among whom he is to lead the flock of God.

Keep in mind that different translations may use different words to translate the specific Greek words that are used by Paul to explain the qualities and qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy and Titus. The English words may have different shades of meaning as they are used in different cultures of the world. However, it is our task to understand the Greek words in the historical context in which they were first used. The following is a combined list of the subjective and objective characteristics of those who should be considered to be shepherds.

1. Blameless: An elder must be without reproach. In the community in which he lives, there must not be a **valid accusation** against him for wrongdoing. Evildoers in the community will certainly bring false accusations against the righteous. However, when designating shepherds of the flock, the flock must be careful about listening to the slanderous accusations that may come against men who are living righteously in the community. What Paul wants us to understand is the fact that those who would aspire to be elders must not have a valid accusation against them. That is, there must be no **proven accusation** against the one who is considered for designation as a shepherd.

2. Husband of one wife: An elder is to be a married man, not a polygamist.

QUALITIES OF ELDERS

1 Timothy 3:1-7

- 1 This *is* a true saying: If a man aspires to oversee, he desires a good work.
- 2 The overseer, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach;
- 3 not an excessive drinker, not violent; but forbearing, not contentious, not covetous;
- 4 one who manages well his own household, having his children in subjection with all dignity.
- 5 (If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)
- 6 *He must not be* a new convert, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
- 7 Moreover, he must have a good report from those outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5-9

- 5 For this reason I left you in Crete, so that you should set in order the things that are lacking and designate elders in every city, as I had charged you.
- 6 *An elder must be* blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of being wild or rebellious.
- 7 For an overseer must be blameless as the steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not violent, not greedy of dishonest gain,
- 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, sensible, just, holy, self-controlled,
- 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, so that he may be able by sound teaching both to exhort and refute those who contradict.

He must have one wife at the time of his designation. We must not assume that this is a justification for polygamy among the sheep by those who are not considered to serve as shepherds. The point Paul is giving is that a one-wifed man knows how to focus his attention on only one woman. A polygamist can never relate to all his wives in a way that God requires of a man to relate to one woman. Though the church may be established in the midst of a polygamist society, the shepherds must give an illustration of how a man is to function in his relationship with one wife.

3. *Temperate (self controlled):* An elder must be in control of his passions. He cannot be hot-tempered. Any man who cannot control his passions should not be allowed to function in situations where discussions can be controversial. Those who are not in control of their passions will inevitably say or do those things that cause harm to the flock. Uncontrolled individuals will lose control of themselves, and do and say those things for which they will later be sorry. When an uncontrolled action or statement is made, damage is done; individuals of the flock are wounded. Shepherds must be a glowing illustration to others concerning how one brings his passions under control.

4. *Prudent (dignified):* An elder must be of a sound and sane mind. He must be self-restrained concerning his emotions. He must be sober in mind and action. Silly minded men are not leaders. Their frivolous behavior manifests instability and a lack of wisdom. The

sheep are confused by one who does not take the work of a shepherd in a serious manner. It is imperative, therefore, that those who would be designated as shepherds of the flock be men of dignity.

5. *Respectable:* An elder must have integrity and a well-ordered conduct of life. He must conduct himself with good behavior, manifesting in his life that which is right and honest in the community in which he lives. In being such, he has gained the respect of the people around whom he lives in his community.

6. *Hospitable:* An elder must be ready to entertain guests with great unselfishness. A hospitable person is one who is considerate of others. He is a people-oriented person who has others' needs at heart. Inhospitable people are introverted. They think only of themselves and how others may inconvenience their lives. Hospitality is the indication to the church that the proposed shepherd is one who enjoys being with people. He is one who does not feel inconvenienced when others infringe on his time. He likes being with the sheep.

Hospitality had a very practical application in the first century. It was necessary for traveling evangelists to stay in the homes of the members. Paul wrote to Philemon, "*But at the same time prepare for me also a guest room for I trust that through your prayers I will be restored to you*" (Pl 22; see also 3 John). What Philemon was to do for Paul was indicative of the first century culture. In this way the evangelists could easily travel from one place to another, preaching the gospel to the lost. The hospital-

ity of the elders, therefore, aided greatly in the evangelization of the world in the first century.

7. Able to teach: An elder must have a teachable disposition and be able to effectively teach the word of God both to the lost and to the church. Elders must lead by being ahead of the church in their knowledge of the Scriptures. They must be able to convict with the word those who contradict themselves in doctrine. This very essential quality of an elder must never be overlooked. One who does not have the ability or desire to teach the word of God cannot feed the flock. If one has no food, he cannot feed. Therefore, shepherds must be thorough students of the word of God. When Paul commanded the Ephesian elders to feed the flock (At 20:28), he did not mean to do this by proxy. They were not to find someone else to do their job. He meant that it is the specific work of elders to teach the members of the church the word of God. If a man cannot do this, he disqualifies himself to be considered an elder.

The preceding is brought out in Ephesians 4:11 in the listing of ministries in reference to the edification of the church. *“And He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers.”* The English translation does not bring out the fact that “shepherds and teachers” are not two different ministries in this context. The Greek meaning is that there are “shepherd/teachers” who function in the edification of the church. It is assumed that shepherds are teaching, and thus,

when Paul wrote of the ministry of the shepherds, they were identified in the context of Ephesians 4 as shepherd/teachers.

8. Not an excessive drinker: The literal Greek meaning of the word that is used here is that one not sit long beside wine so as to become drunk. The assumption is that if one sits too long, he will become drunk. Recent translations have produced better renderings of this Greek word than the original *King James Version* which stated, *“Not given to wine.”* The *Revised King James Version* reads, *“Not an excessive drinker.”* The *New International Version* reads, *“Not given to drunkenness.”*

The character of the elder must be manifested as one who is temperate, sober, and thus he is no drunkard so as to lose his dignified demeanor of life. One who has no control over wine certainly disqualifies himself from the designation as an elder. It is for this reason that some take the position that an elder should not drink at all. As an evangelist, Timothy refrained from drinking alcoholic drink, for in 1 Timothy 5:23 Paul had to instruct him to take some wine for the sake of his stomach. Abstinence from wine would certainly guarantee that one not sit too long with wine, and thus become intoxicated.

Wine is not evil in and of itself. It is drunkenness that is condemned throughout the Bible. It is certainly worth the sacrifice to abstain from wine if one believes that his example is compromised. There are some things in life that are not evil within themselves but are worth sac-

rificing for the sake of guarding one's influence with others. If wine would harm the reputation of the Christian with his neighbors, then certainly it is worth forsaking the drinking of such in order to influence one's neighbors for good.

9. *Not violent:* An elder must not be a quarrelsome person who lashes out at people with whom he may disagree. He must not be one who reacts violently in times of emotional stress. As stated before, the one who is working with the stresses of people must not be one who cannot control his own stress. The very nature of the work of an elder demands that one have great control over himself. He will be in situations wherein great control must be exercised. If he cannot control himself, then he will lose control. An uncontrolled person is no use to those who are out of control.

10. *Not covetous (not greedy):* An elder should not be one who loves money. One loses his influence with his neighbors if he is known for being a greedy person. Greed affects all our business dealings with the community. Therefore, if one is greedy, he will usually have a trail of bad relationships behind him that have destroyed his relationships with his neighbors.

The reason for this qualification is the fact that shepherds are called on a regular basis to help with the physical needs of others. Elders must be known for being giving people. The church is to give elders double pay in order that they have the financial resources to help those who are in need (1 Tm 5:17). If one is greedy, he would take advantage

of Paul's instructions of double pay for full-time elders, and thus consume the extra salary upon himself. A covetous man thinks about himself. A generous man always has the needs of others at heart.

11. *Forbearing:* Paul wrote to the Philippians, "*Let your forbearance be known to all men*" (Ph 4:5). An elder must be known in the community for being a forbearing person. He must be able to bear with the faults and misfortunes of other people. He must be a patient man. Shepherds work with the troubles of others. An impatient man would not last long as an elder. Or, he would generate more problems than he would solve. A forbearing man understands how forbearing God has been with us through His grace. In the same manner, a patient person deals with others in a manner that is characteristic of the love and mercy that God manifested toward us through the cross.

12. *Manages well his own:* An elder must be one who can spiritually lead his own family, having his children in obedience. He must have administrative ability. He must think organizationally. If he can manage his own home, then he has qualified himself to manage the larger family of God. One's experience with his own family trains him for the extended family of God. If one cannot organize his own life, then certainly he cannot easily function with the responsibility of caring for many others in the flock of God.

13. *Children in subjection:* An elder must be one who has submissive and

respectful children. By having such children, the elder manifests his relationship with his children, and the behavior of fathers that Paul pointed out in Ephesians 6:4. *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.”* If an elder has not provoked his children, then he will not provoke the children of God. Keep in mind also that the children of shepherds have the responsibility of encouraging their father to be an elder by their own submission to his leadership.

This qualification also assumes that a shepherd at least has one child who would qualify him as “having children.” This child must be of the age to behave in a submissive manner. His children must also be of the age where they can be faithful to the Lord.

14. *Not be a new convert:* An elder cannot be a new Christian. The reasons for this are obvious. Men who are new-born Christians would bring into their service concepts of the world, specifically the lordship leadership that prevails in the world. New converts often do not understand the servanthood leadership by which leaders in the church are to work as humble servants (Mk 10:42-45). New Christians also do not know the word of God in a manner that is necessary to feed the flock of God.

One who does not know the word of God should not be placed in a work of responsibility wherein he must teach those who have studied the word for several years. If a new Christian is designated an elder, he may feel that his des-

ignation is on the basis of position and not service. As a result, he can be puffed up to believe that his designation indicates some position of authority. The church must keep in mind that being an elder is not an office for which one must politically run. If it is, then the sheep can be deceived into allowing a very charismatic person to gain control of the church, which was possibly the case with Diotrephes in 3 John. The work of a shepherd is in teaching and counseling. This is the work for those who know the sheep and the word of God.

15. *A good report from those outside:* This point clearly takes outside the church the qualification of a man who would be a shepherd. As previously stated, the spiritual qualities of those who would be shepherds must be manifested to the unbelievers in the community in which they live. Elders must have a good reputation among non-Christians. They must be respected by the community.

Keep in mind that the evildoers of the community will often bring slanderous accusations against the righteous. Therefore, the qualification that Paul here mentions must be taken generally, not specifically. Accusations must be individually examined. If there is substance to any specific accusation, then the one who would serve as a shepherd is disqualified. If the accusation has no substance, then it is slander and must be ignored by the church. Slander against a man does not disqualify him from being an elder.

16. *Not self-willed:* In matters of opinion, an elder must not be a person

who persists in always wanting his own way in matters. A self-willed person does not have the ability to listen to the needs of others. He cannot gather information from others in order to make an objective decision. He is more interested in promoting his own agenda. Because of this, he is not concerned about the desires and ideas of others. A self-willed person, therefore, will often become a dictator or lord of the flock. As such, he will steal the sheep from God by binding his will on the flock.

Self-willed people are not team people. Acts 14:23 teaches that a plurality of shepherds were designated in each church. The fact that there is to be a plurality of elders indicates that those who are part of the group must be team oriented. They cannot be self-willed and still be team oriented. If a self-willed person is designated an elder, it will not be long until he becomes “the elder” of the elders.

17. *Not quick-tempered:* An elder cannot have a hot temper. The nature of his work necessitates that he be able to maintain a cool head in times of confrontation. Since it is the primary work of shepherds to deal with personalities, it is necessary that they maintain control of their passions when seeking to be peacemakers among men. A hot tempered individual will make a bad situation worse. Quick-tempered men who cannot control their emotions have no place as leaders in the church. They will continually cause conflict within the church. Mild-mannered and amiable people are those who bring peace among men by devel-

oping an atmosphere of peace.

18. *A lover of good:* An elder must be a person who loves to associate with good people. He must seek that which is truth in the midst of accusations and lies. Those who look for dirt and slander cannot function as elders. The purity of the heart of a good shepherd is manifested in his desire to see the good in people. Though shepherds have to deal with situations wherein many falsehoods are often proclaimed, they must maintain a focus on seeking and identifying that which is good and true. Those who focus on good will not seek to slander others. They will not search for weaknesses in others in order to discredit them. A lover of good will be optimistic about every situation and will always speak of the good that others do.

19. *Just:* An elder must be a fair person. He must not show partiality. One who shows partiality encourages division. Fair-minded people draw others to themselves because they know that they will receive a fair hearing. In the work of reconciling opposing parties, elders must manifest a spirit of impartiality in order to be viewed as neutral negotiators.

This qualification does not mean that an elder should not convict with the word of God those who sin. When one party sins against another, the sin must be approached. Shepherds must be able to approach the sinner in order to bring reconciliation.

20. *Holding fast the faithful word:* An elder must be one who is knowledgeable of the word of God in order that he remain faithful to its teachings. He can-

not hold fast the faithful word if he does not have a knowledge of the word. Link this statement with being able to teach, and we must conclude that Paul places much emphasis on the fact that shepherds be men of the word of God. Since they are the shepherds of God among His flock, we must assume that this is a very important qualification. How can one shepherd the flock of God if he does not know God's directions for the flock? An elder who is not a student of the Bible is a dangerous leader. He is dangerous because he will resort to leading by his supposed position rather than serving the word of God to the flock through teaching.

Those who are ignorant of the word of God will lead the flock by drawing others to themselves rather than the word of God (At 20:29,30). Those who are ignorant of the word of God will be blind guides to the flock. It is imperative, therefore, that shepherds be students of their Bibles. If they are not, then they do not have a right to shepherd the flock. There are some who want to be "*teachers of the law*", Paul said, but they do not understand "*what they say, nor whereof they affirm*" (1 Tm 1:7). There are some who seek to be shepherds of the flock, but they do not know the word of God.

We must keep in mind that the sheep will follow those who know the Chief Shepherd. The only way one can know the Chief Shepherd is through a knowledge of the life and teachings of the Chief Shepherd and the application of that knowledge to one's behavior. Sincere sheep, therefore, will follow Jesus when

shepherds teach and manifest in their lives their knowledge of Jesus.

Any spiritual quality that is identified with shepherds should be typical of the flock as a whole. In fact, the better the flock understands the spiritual qualities of those God seeks to be designated leaders of the sheep, the better they will follow the example of the shepherds. When the sheep see hypocrisy in the lives of those who are to be the shepherds, they will not follow. It is for this reason that Peter said that the shepherds should "*shepherd the flock of God*", not "*as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock*" (1 Pt 5:3). When shepherds lead by example, they draw others to follow their example.

Lordship leaders command others to follow. But such is not the nature of the leadership that God wants to exist in the church. He seeks for those who are humble servants to the needs of others. He seeks for those men who follow Jesus, and by doing such, draw people to the cross and not to themselves. When the church identifies these men in their midst, then it is time for these men to be designated shepherds of the flock.

B. The work of the shepherds:

We live in a world wherein there are many conflicting ideas concerning leadership. This is especially true in those nations where dictatorial leadership is accepted as the norm in government. On the other hand, in a modern world of corporations and businesses, the leadership

style in businesses is often brought into the fellowship of believers. When discussing the work and leadership of the shepherds of the church, we must be careful concerning the importation of practices of the world. We must always remember that when we consider the ruling style of leadership that is characteristic of the industrial/business world, Jesus said, *“It shall not be so among you.”*

The church is not a business. It should not be run as a business is run in the world. The church is a fellowship of relationships between people. Members cannot be fired if they do not perform. They cannot be commanded into service. There are certainly business principles that can be used to effectively organize Christians to work as a united body. However, we must be careful about stepping out of the corporate board room of the business world and into the business of the brethren.

The key word that describes the church is **relationships**. The key word that describes church leadership is **service**. When discussing the nature of leadership in the church, we are discussing how leaders lead in their relationship of serving others. It is for this reason that when we discuss the subject of shepherds in the context of the church, we are discussing servicing through personal relationships, not authority, commands and dictates.

When one is a shepherd, he is not an executive with authority who gives orders. He is a servant who relates with people in an effort to give them an ex-

ample of a closer relationship with God. In order to protect this principle in the church, Peter gave instructions to guard against the practice of lordship among elders (1 Pt 5:1-4).

Being an elder is a **work** (1 Tm 3:1; see 1 Th 5:12). It is a work of service in aiding others in their relationships with one another and God. The following words that are used in the New Testament will give us instructions concerning the work of shepherds among the sheep:

1. Lead: The Hebrew writer wrote, *“Obey those who lead you and be submissive, for they watch for your souls as those who must give account”* (Hb 13:17, RKJV). In the context of this statement there is no discussion concerning elders. We must not assume, therefore, that the passage is talking specifically about the work of shepherds in the church. However, this is certainly what shepherds do. The whole context of the passage deals with leadership in the church. Under this broad context would be the work of the shepherds.

The Greek word that is translated in this text “lead” (*hegoumenois*) is the same word that is used in Acts 15:22 in reference to the evangelists, Judas and Silas, who were *“leading men among the brethren.”* They were not ruling men. It is unfortunate that some translations have used the English word “rule” to translate *hegoumenois* in Hebrew 13:17. This inconsistency in translation in some versions manifests the denominational concept of control and authority that some would read into the context in order to

establish a system of authoritarian leadership in the church.

We must always understand that elders do not have any “authority” that is beyond the consensus of the church as a whole. If they did, then they would have the authority to bind where God has not bound and to loose where God has not loosed. Their authority is only in the word of God, not in themselves as an executive body of legislators over the church. There is only one head of the church, one King and one Chief Shepherd.

The shepherds as a group in the local body lead among the flock by their godly example and willingness to service the needs of the sheep. Sheep follow those who feed them. And thus, when shepherds are feeding the flock, then they are leading those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. In this way, elders are guarded from being dictators of the flock. The flock is spared from having other lords than the Lord Jesus Christ (See 1 Pt 5:2,3). And the focus of the flock remains on Jesus and not on men on earth.

The lordship view that many have of elders is part of the reason why there are thousands of churches that do not have elders. I once heard a brother say in a congregation that was working to designate elders, “I do not want that man to be an elder because I do not want him over me.” This statement manifests an erroneous view that many have of elders. But if one had the right view of shepherds who serve, can you imagine one saying, “I don’t want that man to be a shepherd

because I do not want him to serve my needs”? Who would not want someone to serve their needs?

Our problem is that we have brought into Christianity a worldly view of a supposed “position of authority” of our leaders. They are not lords and dictators who have the authority to hand down dictates to the sheep. Jesus said that such would not be so in the church (Mk 10:35-45). If we think that the shepherds rule with authority, then we have an erroneous, and thus worldly view of and work of shepherds. The church of which you are a member may not have elders because everyone has a difficult time appointing what they believe is a “board of directors” of the church. The church must repent of this thinking. When discussing the designation of elders, we must think of slaves, not lords. We must think service, not denominational bishops who control the church.

Shepherds may sometimes be the victims of those who want a leader over them as they are lorded over in the world. Members who view the shepherds as bosses of a business may push shepherds into being that which they know they should not be, that is, lords of the flock. Since it is often the desire of people to “have a king over them,” then elders should be on guard not to allow themselves to be pushed into making decisions they know they should not without the consent of the church. In areas of opinion, elders submit to the wishes of the majority.

The authoritarian view of elders usually prevails during times of relational

conflict within the membership. It is believed that the easy way to solve conflicts in relationships is for men in power to hand down authoritative decisions. The problem is supposedly solved, and we move on. However, this is not what the Lord had in mind when He desired that servant shepherds work among the sheep. He sought for the members to be submissive to the spiritual example and teaching of those who seek to watch out for the souls of everyone. This is what the Hebrew writer had in mind in Hebrews 13:17.

2. See over: Elders see over the spiritual needs of the flock by teaching the word of God (At 20:28; 1 Pt 5:2). As shepherds, they are perceptive to the needs of the flock, and thus, when they see over the flock they are ready to service the needs of the flock they see. In order for shepherds to see to the needs of the flock, they must be perceptive to spiritual and physical needs of the flock and willing and eager to service those needs.

Paul wrote, *“Let the elders who direct well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching”* (1 Tm 5:17). Through their knowledge of the word of God, elders who “direct well” lead the sheep in the right direction. Through their study and example, they are leading those who follow their godly living.

Shepherds must be men of vision. If they do not know where the church is to be going, they will not know how to get there. Leaders without vision hinder growth. If they do not know the spiritual

goals to which all must aspire, then they cannot themselves give examples in their own lives for the sheep to follow. Elders lead the sheep to grow to greater spiritual levels by taking the flock there themselves. When a flock that seeks a greater level of spiritual growth sees their shepherds seeking to grow, there is great desire among the flock to follow the leaders. Elders who have reached a plateau in their spiritual growth establish a spiritual ceiling above which the church cannot grow. The result is that the elders become a hindrance to the spiritual growth of the church. It is imperative, therefore, that shepherds labor from a spiritual nature that draws the sheep to greater spiritual growth.

3. Feed the flock: When it comes to the function and work of shepherds, this is the primary point that must be understood. Pastors (shepherds) must spiritually and intellectually feed and shepherd the flock of God. Paul wrote, *“Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that He has purchased with His own blood* (At 20:28). Paul mentioned to Timothy that there were those elders who ministered primarily in preaching to the lost and teaching the saints (1 Tm 5:17). Elders teach the saved and preach to the lost by the example of their lives (1 Pt 5:2,3). They teach and preach by instruction from the word of God. It is for this reason that one of the qualifications of a shepherd is that he must be able to teach. It is imperative, therefore, that the shepherd

know God's word in order to instruct, encourage and protect the family of God against false teachings.

In the general context of the work of evangelists and elders, it is the primary work of the elders to feed the flock. It is the primary work of the evangelists to work among the lost. What I have witnessed on different occasions is a breakdown in job descriptions. Our evangelists are often held up by the church to do the work of feeding the flock. At the same time, our elders are relegated to a board room in order to make decisions. What churches have done is rob the lost of the evangelist by allowing elders to neglect their job of teaching the church. Churches will grow when the evangelist is given back to the lost and elders are given to the sheep as shepherds to lead through teaching and example.

This does not mean that evangelists do not have some responsibility of establishing the flock. Paul and Silas strengthened the churches when they were on their way on the second missionary journey (See At 16:5). However, they were on their way to accomplish their primary duty as evangelists, that is, preaching to the lost and establishing churches. Strengthening the churches was secondary to their work. Our problem in so many churches today is the fact that our evangelists are held up for years with a single congregation. Elders are not designated because the evangelists (pastor among denominational folks) feels threatened. He does not want to move on because he wants to stay home. As a result, elders are not designated because

the preacher has assumed their job. The answer to this problem is to give the preachers back to the lost and get elders before the church in order that they do their job of feeding the sheep.

4. Watch out for the sheep: It is the natural duty of the shepherd to watch out for the flock. Shepherds of God's flock must know the word of God in order to guard the church against false teachers. Shepherds must first take heed to themselves, but then understand that grievous wolves will enter in among them and not spare the flock (At 20:28-32). It is for this reason that the elder must hold fast the faithful word "*so that he may be able by sound teaching both to exhort and refute those who contradict*" (Ti 1:9).

The environment in which the sheep live demands leaders who are able through the word of God to guard the church. Paul wrote concerning this environment in the context of giving Titus instructions about elders. "*For there are many rebellious and idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped. They subvert whole households, teaching things that they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain*" (Ti 1:10,11). Imagine an elder in this environment who does not know his Bible. Such would be disastrous in reference to the preservation of the church. It is for this reason that elders must be students of the Bible and able teachers of what they learn.

Though Hebrews 13:17 does not necessarily apply only to the work of elders, it does at least describe what they are to be doing in reference to the sheep. "*Obe*

those who lead you and be submissive, for they watch for your souls as those who must give account.” Elders watch out for the souls of the members of the church who willingly submit to their service. Because of their knowledge of the word of God, they are able to judge all teaching by the word. Because of their leading by example, they are able to see those who are not submissive to the word of God in their lives. Rebellious sheep will not follow a spiritual example. Shepherds must watch out for those who would go astray with a rebellious attitude toward the teachings of Jesus. They watch for the sheep through their knowledge and application of the word of God. A shepherd who does not know the word of God does not know what to watch out for in order to protect the sheep.

5. *Be examples to the sheep:* Elders must lead by spiritual example. Peter wrote that they must be examples to the flock as opposed to being lords (1 Pt 5:3). Being an example demands that the shepherd take heed to his spiritual growth. He must focus on developing his own life and ministry. However, being a lord is easy. All one has to do is sit back and command things to be done. It is easy, therefore, for an elder to digress into being a lord. If an elder does not want to work, then he will seek to be a lord. But the elder must lead by the spiritual example of his life, and this means he must be doing something in order to give an example. He must lead by giving others an illustration of how Jesus is to affect one’s life. Those who are seeking to follow Jesus, therefore, will fol-

low those who have made Jesus their only Lord. It is in this way that shepherds lead.

6. *Labor and admonish:* The church in Thessalonica had been in existence a little more than six months when Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians. In the context of 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13, Paul does not speak of elders, though we could assume that there were evangelists as Timothy and Titus who were still in Thessalonica working with the church. We might also assume that the Thessalonians had designated elders by the time the first letter was written to the them. In this letter Paul wrote, *“And we urge you, brethren, to know those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake”* (1 Th 5:12,13).

It is the work of the shepherds to labor and admonish the flock, though the context of 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13 has a broader context than simply the work of elders. Nevertheless, **the shepherds must be among the flock.** They must smell like sheep by being among the sheep in their work of encouraging the flock through the feeding of the word of God. Their work would be described by what James wrote. *“Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord”* (Js 5:14,15). It is the work of elders to be among the flock for prayer and ministry.

It is important to see that the work of elders is simply that, a work of teaching and service. It is not a political office or

position of authority. It is a work, a ministry among the flock of God. If the church can be taught to view elders as a ministry of teaching and service to the flock, then it is easy for the church to designate elders. But if we view the “elder-ship” as an authoritarian board of church directors, then there will always be difficulty in the designation of elders. And when the process of designation takes place, we will treat such like a political campaign to select “officers” of the church.

Christianity deals with relationships between people who are members of the body of Christ. Since relationships are the fiber that holds the church together, then leadership in the midst of relationships must be through loving service, not dictatorial authority.

Jesus is the only head of His body. The members must work in their relationships with one another in order to establish a greater relationship with the Head. In order for them to grow in their relationship with Jesus, the Head, they must learn to relate to one another. The greater their relationships are with one another, the greater their relationship will be with Jesus. In this context of relationships, shepherds lead through their own relationships with Jesus. What the members need are examples of how people can better relate to Jesus and one another. When they see this in the leadership of the church, then they are motivated to do the same.

C. Designating elders:

You have already noticed that I am using the word “designate” in reference to the identification of those among the flock who are to be shepherds. I have chosen to use this word for a simple reason. Words as “appoint,” “elect,” and “put in” are very political words. They are words in almost every culture that are used in reference to politicians or government officials being appointed to offices of authority and power. When these words are used in reference to servants in the church who are to lead by the example of their lives and ministry of teaching, there is a great deal of political baggage that comes into the designation process. It is almost impossible for us to use these words without thinking about the political baggage that comes with the words.

Many churches go through great ceremony in the “appointing” of the elders. However, the more ceremony that is conducted to identify those who are to be the shepherds, the greater the problem that often comes with the “appointment.” Beginning with the great ceremony, everyone starts viewing these men as a delegation of judges and lawgivers who are now in office in order to rule over the church. But remember, Jesus said that such should not be so among us (Mk 10:42-45).

The manner by which shepherds are designated is subject to the desires of the local church. There are no instructions in the New Testament concerning how we should designate elders. Churches have a choice, therefore, to carry out the

designation of the servant leaders as they so choose. We assume this from what took place in Acts 6. In this context, the apostles told the church to “*seek out from among you seven men ...*” (At 6:3). From these instructions, we would infer that **it is the responsibility of the church itself to designate its own elders.**

Paul instructed the evangelist Titus to designate elders in every city. “*For this reason I left you in Crete, so that you should set in order the things that are lacking and designate elders in every city, as I charged you*” (Ti 1:5). In this unique situation, it was the responsibility of the evangelist to initiate the designation of elders.

The preceding statement to Titus must be understood in the context in which it was first made. The newly established church in Crete had no New Testaments by which to be directed in designating elders. They were a church of new Christians who needed leadership in the area designating elders. As an inspired prophet, and with the inspired letter of Paul, the responsibility of making sure that qualified men were designated as elders fell on the shoulders of Titus. But it is different today. We have the inspired New Testament as our guide. Every member can read for himself who elders should be and what they should do. The evangelist may take the lead in motivating the church to designate elders, but when it comes to determining who the elders should be, every member must consult the word of God.

The responsibility of teaching the members the New Testament teachings

concerning the life and work of elders can fall on the shoulders of the evangelist. However, it is still the responsibility of the members of the church to look out among themselves. A biblically educated church can determine who the shepherds should be according to the qualities and qualifications of shepherds that are presented in the Scriptures. However, the evangelist or existing shepherds must thoroughly teach the church in order that the correct selections be made by the church.

When the church came to the apostles in Acts 6, the apostles threw the responsibility of selecting the men on the shoulders of the church. They told the church to “look out from among yourselves.” The apostles gave some fundamental guidelines by which to identify those they must find. However, it was the responsibility of the church to do the looking. This brings us to the point of how to identify those who would be designated as shepherds. In the Acts 6 situation, the church had to be able to identify the men according to the apostles’ directions. The apostles thus gave general spiritual qualities as guidelines for making the correct choice. The same is true in reference to designating elders. If a shepherd is doing the work of a shepherd in ministering to the educational and spiritual needs of the flock as defined in the New Testament, then he can be identified. If he manifests the spiritual qualities in his life that are given by Paul in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, then the church can find him. In other words, **the prospective shepherd must first have the spiritual nature of**

a shepherd, and also be doing the work of a shepherd, before he can be found among the sheep as a shepherd.

Once the church has identified those who are living and working as shepherds, then it is simply a matter of identifying them before the church as those to whom everyone must go for spiritual strength and teaching. At the same time, those who are designated are asked by the church to turn their attention primarily to the flock in order to serve the sheep. There is nothing ceremonial about the process of designation. The designation of elders is simply calling on the church to focus on those they have chosen to service their needs. It is calling on those who are designated to focus on the sheep who have asked them to serve them. There is nothing political about this. There is no delegation of authority, nor change in the nature of the work of these men. Since they are already doing the work that elders do—this is how they were found by the church—then the announcement for them to be the center of focus for service of the church as shepherds is for the sake of the church.

Those who would be shepherds must first **desire** the work. Their desire is manifested in the fact that they are doing the work of shepherds in their lives **before** they are considered for designation as elders (1 Tm 3:1). **The only way the church knows that they desire the work is that they are doing the work. And the only way one can know that he desires the work of a shepherd is that he is doing the work in his life before he is designated.** Therefore,

when one is designated a shepherd, he is not “appointed” to an office in the church. One is identified as a shepherd because his heart’s desire is to serve in a greater and focused capacity in service of the church. Those who seek to be shepherds because they think they are being put into some political office are desiring to be elders for the wrong reasons. They see being an elder as an office of authority and control, not service. It is for this reason that much wisdom must be exercised when a church decides to designate elders.

Elders should be designated **in full cooperation with the majority of the church.** There are some good principles the apostles followed with the appointing of the seven in Acts 6. First of all, **the existing leadership allowed the church to make the decision as to whom should be designated.** This was done on the basis that the apostles **established basic qualifications as to whom should be designated.** This would be good advice for us today.

Each of those who desire to be designated shepherds should manifest in their lives the godly character that is taught with the spiritual qualities that are stated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. This assumes that much study should be accomplished by the entire congregation in order that everyone is taught concerning the spiritual qualities and work of elders. The designation of elders is the maturing of a church as God would have it. Every newly established church **must have this goal.** If a church does not make it a goal to bring up men as shepherds, it

will never reach the spiritual maturity that God desires of its leaders. It is for this reason that much study should be made of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 in order to set the goals for the church to eventually designate shepherds.

When the church in an area does not have designated shepherds, this does not mean that the work of shepherd is not going on among the members. Though one might not have the physical qualifications of a shepherd, he can still work among the members in solving relationship problems and living a godly example for others to follow. Designation of shepherds is for the purpose of focusing the work of godly men on the sheep and the church to focus on them for teaching and counseling.

Again, I would like to repeat the fact that we often make too much out of the actual process of designating men to be elders. We go through great ceremonies and pomp, when actually all that is taking place is a public announcement that the church recognize those the church has decided must focus on the needs of the church. Designated elders must change their focus from working primarily with unbelievers to focusing on the believers.

The church must guard itself from taking problems to the world rather than finding answers for problems among the shepherds.

If we keep in mind the spiritual work of shepherds, then it is not difficult to designate those who have fulfilled the spiritual qualities and physical qualifications for being shepherds. Those who are to be shepherds make themselves known by their spiritual behavior. They are already working with the sheep because of their gifts. When the church recognizes that they have the gifts that are necessary for working as shepherds, then the church simply makes it known to everyone that these are the men to whom the church must take their needs, as well as those from whom they must seek advice. There is nothing ceremonial about this. There is nothing “churchy” in the sense of establishing “bishops” after the manner of the institutional denominational world. Shepherds are our leading slaves, not our autocratic taskmasters. We must, therefore, view them as men who seek to serve the needs of others, not as men who seek to rule over others.

Chapter 3

Servants Who Serve

Paul addressed the “*bishops* [elders] and *deacons* [menservants]” of the Philippian church (Ph 1:1). When God fore-ordained the church, He knew that there would be many things that would demand

physical coordination. For this reason He commissioned the work of menservants as a functioning part of the church life. Deacons, or menservants, are not elders. They are not designated as men

in preparation for elders. Being a deacon of the church is not the first step to becoming an elder. Elders are designated to function according to specific responsibilities because of their spiritual and physical qualifications. Deacons are not required to have the same qualities in their capacity of service. Their work and qualifications are different from those of elders. The work of deacons is centered around service to specific needs of the church. Because of their desire to serve, the church designates them to fulfill needs that must be served. Deacons, therefore, are not elected to an office. They are designated to a service.

A. Qualities of menservants:

Since Paul stated that deacons be the “husbands of one wife”, we must assume that being a deacon is a special function or work of the church for men. Though all Christians serve in the church, there is a special work for male servants as the seven men who were chosen in the context of Acts 6. There are women in the church who function in the capacity of servants, but when considering the servanthood of the male servants, there is something special about this work of responsibility that makes their work different from the female servants of the church. When studying the following qualifications, we must understand that Paul is speaking directly to males in the church who should be designated to the special work of being deacons.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

8 Likewise, the deacons must be dignified, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of dishonest gain,

9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 But let these also first be tested, then let them serve, being found blameless.

11 Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own houses well.

13 For those who have served well as deacons gain for themselves a good standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

1. Dignified: Deacons must be grave or serious minded men. They must be honorable men who have a reverent attitude. They are not silly minded men who do not have their passions under control. The man who conducts himself with dignity gains the respect of the community. He is able to minister to the needs of others because others will come to him for service.

2. Not double-tongued: Deacons must be men of truth. They must not be untrustworthy men. They should not be speaking one opinion on one occasion and another opinion on another occasion. Those who are known for saying different things on different occasions will lose

the trust of others. Since the work of a servant necessitates his being among different people at different times, then it is necessary that he be consistent in whatever he says. If he is consistent, then others know that he is not a respecter of people. He is fair, not saying what others want to hear, but what others need to hear.

3. *Not given to much wine:* Deacons should be careful not to become intoxicated by the drinking of wine. A drunken man does not have his will under control. Drunkenness is the manifestation of a personality that is out of control, and thus, the indication that one is not a good example to others.

4. *Not greedy of dishonest gain:* In the same manner as elders, deacons should not be lovers of money. The reason for this is obvious. Judas who betrayed Jesus was a thief because he was a lover of money. Deacons who are lovers of money will do as Judas, for he took from the money bag of the disciples. Deacons must handle the money of the brethren that has been entrusted to them. If they work in the business world in a dishonest manner, then they will often work in such a manner with the money of the brethren. Deacons must be men who can be trusted with the money that has been entrusted to them to be distributed to special needs.

5. *Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience:* Deacons should be men who walk by faith and do not do those things that work against their conscience. They are conscientious about their behavior because of their desire to

do that which is right in the eyes of God. Those who have no conscience will not be careful to live by their faith. Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience indicates that the deacon will seek to do all things with dignity and honesty.

6. *First be tested:* Deacons must first be proved to be servants with a cooperative spirit and be eager to work for the needs of the church. This qualification assumes that they must be experienced and capable men who have both social and administrative skills in serving the church. This qualification also assumes that one must be doing the work of service before he can be designated to a specific work of service. Those who do not have a spirit of service will assume that being designated a deacon is an appointment to an office. What happens when one is designated to be a deacon is that his work is simply redirected to fulfill a designated work of the church.

7. *Blameless:* As the elders, the deacons must not have a just accusation against them by those who are not Christians. This does not mean that slanderous unbelievers will not speak against the righteous. Being blameless means that there must not be a proven outstanding accusation against the one who would be designated a deacon. Deacons must be known in the community for those who will represent the church before the community. If one is designated a deacon who has a just accusation against him, then he will be a bad representative of the church before the community.

8. *Husband of one wife:* The dea-

con must be married to only one woman. The logic behind this physical qualification is that a deacon has proved himself to be able to dwell with another person in a husband/wife relationship. Another reason for this qualification is the fact deacons will be among Christians and non-Christians in a house to house ministry. A single man would often be in a compromising situation with other women, especially in the distribution of goods to widows. The qualification that a deacon be married assures us that God wants those who are of a mature age to be married to serve as deacons.

The designated ministry of a deacon is not for young men. It is for those who through their ministry will be in situations where they will be called upon for advice. They will be in situations where they will be tempted. It is for this reason that I believe Paul mentions in the midst of the qualifications for deacons, qualifications for their wives in verse 11. Their wives must be respectful, not slanderers, but worthy of respect and faithful in all things.

9. *Managing their children:* A deacon must be a good father and husband, having those necessary administrative skills to direct a household. Thus deacons must be married men who have at least one child in order to qualify as having submissive children. In the historical context, “house” or “household” would refer also to the maids and servants that one might have under his administration. This would mean that a deacon not only be able to manage his immediate family, he must also be able to work

well with his family maids and servants. Since it is the work of deacons to work among people, this qualification lets the church know that the prospective deacon is able to work with people.

B. The work of menservants:

The Greek word *diakonos* is transliterated in three passages in the New Testament with the word “deacon” (See Ph 1:1; 1 Tm 3:8,12). This transliteration was first made with the *King James Version*. However, the word *diakonos* in the masculine gender literally means “menservant.” However, it is a generic word in the New Testament that refers to anyone who functions in the capacity of a servant to the needs of others. Throughout the New Testament the word is normally translated with the word “servant” (See Mt 22:13; 23:11; Mk 9:35; Jn 2:5,9, 12:26; Rm 16:1). In Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8,12, however, the context is in reference to male servants who are to function in a specific capacity of leadership in the affairs of the church.

If we could use the case of Acts 6 as a model for the work of male servants it could be noted that the seven men in the context were appointed for a specific work. They were designated with the responsibility of taking care of the widows of the church. Therefore, they were men who were given the responsibility to make decisions in reference to the ministry of serving the widows.

It is not stated in the Scriptures how long one was to serve as a deacon. The assumption is that a servant served as

long as the need existed. We must never view the work of a servant as an “office of the church” with unending duration. Servants serve in areas where service is necessary. For example, Philip first served widows as one of the seven in Acts 6. However, by Acts 21:8 he was working as an evangelist in the area of Caesarea. He thus terminated his work as a special servant in the church in Jerusalem in order to become an evangelist in the area of Caesarea.

In some churches, deacons serve for a year and then are reappointed to serve in other areas. This gives the individual deacon the opportunity of terminating his work with a specific ministry. It also gives the church the opportunity of assigning to the servants other works. If deacons serve for a specific period of time, then he can cease his work at the end of that time in order to do something else. When deacons serve in order to fulfill specific works, they find personal fulfillment in accomplishing goals. After accomplishing a specific goal, they can then go on to other works. Therefore, it is best to view deacons as servants to specific needs for specific periods of time. The practice that one is a lifetime designated servant in some kind of office for which the church must continually find work to do, is not suggested in the New Testament.

The work of servants is subject to the decisions of the church they serve. A need first arises in the church, and then the servants are appointed to fulfill that particular need. When the work is accomplished, the servant ceases to serve

in that area of work.

In the New Testament there were also women who functioned as servants of the church. The Greek word *diakonos* is used in reference to a woman servant in Romans 16:1. Paul wrote, “*I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a diakonos [servant] of the church that is at Cenchrea.*” Phoebe was a servant **of** the church, not a servant **in** the church. She did not function in any office. She simply functioned in the capacity of serving the church. Any woman who so functions in ministering to the needs of the church is a *diakonos*. However, we would not conclude that these servants are the same as those servants for which Paul gave specific qualifications in 1 Timothy 3. Those servants to which Paul made special reference had to be the husbands of one wife, a qualification that affirms that Paul had a special function in mind for male servants (1 Tm 3:12). These servants also had to manage their houses well, thus indicating that there is a difference between the specific male *diakonos* about which Paul referred in 1 Timothy 3 and the generic *diakonos* about whom he referred in Romans 16:1.

Much of the discussion over who should be a “deacon” would subside if we understood the fact that deacons are not appointed to an office in the church. They are simply servants who minister to the needs of the church. Those servants who are designated for leadership work in the church are men who fulfill the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3. However, women also function as servants,

but in a general sense. In view of the example of service that Jesus established for us, we would conclude that every

Christian must be involved in ministry. Every Christian must use his or her gifts to minister to the needs of others.

Chapter 4

Characteristics Of A Great Leader

God sees the future. He is working all things according to His future plan. And because He is working all things according to His plan, He must raise up great men to bring about movements to accomplish His eternal purpose. These great leaders He raises up must be men of faith and obedience. They must be willing to sojourn for God. For example, around 2,000 B.C. God wanted to preserve a seed from which to bring forth the Redeemer. He foresaw the captivity of the human race in sin, and then foreplanned the suffering Savior. In order to accomplish this plan, He called a man by the name of Abraham (Gn 12:1-3; Hb 11:8). Abraham was a leader with great faith (Hb 11:8). He was a leader of obedience for he “went out” from his homeland in obedience to God’s call. He became a sojourner for God because of his obedient faith. Great leaders, therefore, must be submissive to their faith.

In the same way, God saw a land and a people in captivity. He saw the place where the Redeemer would be born. He thus called Moses to initiate the release of Israel from Egyptian captivity (Ex 3:4,10; Ps 106:23). Moses was also a leader of faith (Hb 11:24,27). He was an obedient leader who acted on His faith (Hb 11:24,25). Because of his obedient

faith, he forsook the treasures of Egypt. He also became a sojourner for God to lead the people of Israel out of Egyptian captivity and into the promised land of Canaan (Hb 11:25,27). When God chooses great men to begin movements, His great leaders must make great sacrifices. In fact, these leaders are great because they are willing to make great sacrifices for God. Because of their great faith, they obediently submit to God’s calling to sojourn for Him.

After the beginning of the church, God saw the Gentiles in the captivity of sin. The establishment of Christianity had to break out of the Jewish nation in order for the gospel to go to the Gentiles. Therefore, God saw a “faithful” individual who could lead the way. That individual was named Saul. In order to accomplish the special purpose of taking the gospel to the Gentiles, Jesus called Paul in a special way (See At 9:1-19; 22:1-21; 26:12-18).

There is something significant about the calling of Saul (Paul) and his life that is very important concerning how God views opportunity in people. Before Saul encountered the vision on the Damascus road, he was a “faithful” worker for that which he thought was right. In 1 Timothy 1:12 Paul related concerning his early

life, “*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful putting me into service.*” The Greek word translated “faithful” in 1 Timothy 1:12 is from the word *pistos*. The *King James Version* translates the word “trustworthy.” According to verse 13 of the above scripture, therefore, Paul was a “faithful” blasphemer and persecutor of Christianity **before** his conversion. The point is that God saw in Paul a personality of commitment to his religious beliefs. He saw faithfulness in the personality of Paul. He saw a true leader who would commit himself to a work with all his energies. Because of this characteristic of Paul, Jesus put this trustworthy leader into the ministry (1 Tm 1:12).

Paul said that he was “*separated to the gospel of God*” (Rm 1:1). He even went back before his adulthood to manifest the foreknowledge of God in seeing his leadership ability. He wrote that “... *it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, ...*” (Gl 1:15,16). Here was a leader who would be willing to be a “*prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles*” (Ep 3:1). He realized that “*the just shall live by faith*” (Rm 1:17). Therefore, Paul did what he told King Agrippa, “*I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision*” (At 26:19). Good leaders must be faithful. They must be trustworthy personalities into whose hands God can commit the opportunity to start movements for Jesus.

The following points discuss the character of Paul. Since so much of the

early history of the New Testament church rose out of Paul’s labors, we must identify the character of this individual. As a leader, who was this man? What type of personality did he have before his conversion? Since God used Paul for a very special ministry, as well as to use his hand to write much of the New Testament, there are several questions we must answer concerning this unique personality. Once we identify some of the personality characteristics of the apostle Paul, then we will understand why Jesus called him for a special ministry. We will also understand what personality characteristics God wants in those who would lead to do great things to His glory.

When Paul’s life as a leader is unveiled in the New Testament, we can truly see the character of a superb leader. God saw this in the man **before** he was converted. There is an important lesson here. As we look out in our communities we must look for individuals as Paul who have the characteristics of being great leaders for Jesus. Once these individuals see the truth, they will serve the Lord with total commitment to His will. The reasons why God went after Saul are the same reasons why we should seek to convert great men who are of his character.

A. God chose Paul because of who he was.

God chose Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles. He did so because of the tremendous task it was for Jewish Christians to break out of Jewish culture and venture into the culture of the Gentiles.

The man who was to communicate the gospel across these two great cultural barriers had to be a great leader. He had to be a man who knew how to identify with different cultures. Therefore, God called Paul because of his cultural background and his position in life at the time of his calling.

1. Paul was a man of cultural training. He was a Jew who was born with the advantage of having Roman citizenship. He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, a region outside the Jewish culture of Jerusalem and Judea. He was a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin. He had studied at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most famous religious teachers of the day. His education was in the “*strictness of our Fathers’ [Jews’] law*” (At 22:3). Paul was “*a Hebrew of Hebrews, and concerning the law, a Pharisee*” (Ph 3:5). Paul was a man of culture. He understood the culture of the Gentiles. He understood the culture of the Jews. He knew how to become all things to all men in order to accomplish his destiny (1 Co 9:22). He was the right man for the movement God wanted to start among the Gentiles.

Good leaders are sensitive to culture. They know how to travel across cultures for the sake of preaching the gospel. Those who have never left home, or who have never traveled, often have a difficult time understanding other cultures. If anyone seeks to be an evangelist, he must learn the culture of others in order to relate with others. The fact that it is the responsibility of the evangelist to go into

all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, necessitates a person who has the ability to adapt to other cultures.

2. Paul was a man of responsible position. He was a **known personality** among the inner Jewish hierarchy or Jewish leaders. He was not a beach bum dripping wet from the beaches of the Sea of Galilee. He was not an idle beggar off the streets of Jerusalem. He was one who was of the inner circle of Jewish leadership. He said, “*My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, ... that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee*” (At 26:4,5). The Jewish leadership knew who Paul was because of his past life as a person of position among the Jewish hierarchy.

Paul was also a **military leader**. As a leader in persecuting the church, he had the backing of the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem. Paul wrote, “*I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished*” (At 22:4,5). Before Agrippa he recalled, “*This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priest ...*” (At 26:10). Paul was the authority who had the keys to the prisons. He advanced to this position in the secular world because of his leadership

ability. Because of his leadership ability, the Jews gave him the authority to lead the suppression of what they considered to be an apostasy.

Paul was a man of position among the Jews. When God called him on the Damascus road, the Jewish hierarchy lost one of its greatest leaders. It was because he was a great leader that God called him. God wants great leaders to use their leadership abilities for His kingdom business. As evangelists, we should be looking for such great leaders in every community we evangelize. Those with leadership ability should be approached with the gospel in order that they be converted. God did not allow Paul's leadership abilities to be wasted on worldly ambitions.

B. God chose Paul because of what he was.

Paul was a true leader in every sense of the term. He was a man with the ability of leading people to do that which He believed must be done. In the following points, notice carefully the **personality characteristics** of this great leader. It is my opinion that great leaders for God must have most of these personality characteristics in order to lead great movements of Christianity in circumstances as those in which Paul worked.

1. Paul was a conscientious personality. Before he became a Christian, he fervently persecuted the church, though he did it "*ignorantly in unbelief*" (1 Tm 1:13). He worked according to what his conscience dictated was the will of God

at the time. He was at all times in all good conscience before God (At 23:1). Good leaders as Paul, therefore, against all obstacles, do that which they believe is right. They are conscientious about what they must do in order to fulfill their destiny.

2. Paul was a pioneering personality. He wanted to venture out where he felt he must go for Jesus. He wrote, "*And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named ...*" (Rm 15:20). Paul was not afraid to venture into Jerusalem, the center of Jewish persecution, where He knew by the prophecy of Agabus that persecutions awaited him (At 21:10-14). He was not afraid to journey into the center of the Roman persecution, the city of Rome (Rm 1:11). He had dreams of "*reaching forward to those things which are ahead*" (Ph 3:13). He wanted to go on to Spain after Rome (Rm 15:24). Paul was not afraid to venture into the unknown for Jesus. Good leaders as Paul are driven to propagate in every place that which they believe is right to those who do not know it.

An evangelist must not be afraid of the unknown. He must be willing to make the sacrifices that are necessary in order to get the job done. World evangelism demands that men and women leave fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, lands and houses for the sake of the kingdom of God. Those who would be world evangelists, therefore, must be willing to leave all for Jesus.

3. Paul was an educated personality. He wrote, "*And I advanced in Juda-*

ism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gl 1:14). He wrote that he was educated "... at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law ..." (At 22:3). God cannot use many potential leaders because they keep themselves uneducated. Good leaders as Paul continually educate themselves (See 2 Tm 4:13). When one is educated, opportunities open up. One's abilities present the opportunity to present the gospel. Good leaders never reach a plateau in their education.

4. Paul was a humble personality. He wrote, "*For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*" (1 Co 15:9). To the Ephesians he wrote, "*To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles ...*" (Ep 3:8). Paul never forgot that he had persecuted the church, for he referred to himself as the "chief of sinners" (1 Tm 1:15). His realization of his past sinful life in relation to God's grace made him humble himself before God and all men. His thanksgiving for his salvation moved him to live in gratitude for the grace of God. Good leaders as Paul know how to admit their mistakes. They mourn over their past sins, but thank God for His grace (See Mt 5:4). Humility leads one to be submissive. Without a spirit of submission, one will not place himself in a position of serving others. As a result, many opportunities are lost.

5. Paul was an honest personality. He was honest to others about his life. He confessed, "*I was ... a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man ...*" (1 Tm 1:13). He confessed his own personal struggles to the Roman Christians. "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find*" (Rm 7:18; see vs 19-21). To the Corinthians he wrote, "*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified*" (1 Co 9:27). Good leaders as Paul always recognize their own humanity. They do not keep a mask on, and thus, they seek to be transparent before others. By confessing his faults before others he gains the respect of others. The opposite is true of those who refuse to admit their faults to others. That which they seek to maintain – a good image before others – is actually lost by their inability to confess their sins.

6. Paul was an obedient personality. He told Agrippa, "*King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision*" (At 26:19). He cautioned Timothy, "*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you*" (1 Tm 4:16). Good leaders as Paul are obedient to the will of God. One cannot learn how to lead unless he learns how to follow. It is for this reason that leaders must learn submission. The road to great leadership is through obedient submission. Leaders who do not know how to submit become

autocratic dictators. They are insensitive to the needs of others. Insubmissive leaders are often threatened by the aspirations of others who seek to lead. They thus seek to suppress the aspirations of those who are future leaders of the church. On the other hand, Paul's obedient attitude made him a suitable candidate to be one of the greatest leaders the church has known. His obedient attitude made it possible for him to learn, and thus aspire to doing the will of God in his life.

7. Paul was a bold personality. He was the type of personality who would boldly enter into an assembly where fanatics had been shouting for two hours to a pagan god (At 19:30). Immediately after his conversion, "*he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists*" (At 9:29). Because of his boldness in preaching in prison, other brethren also became bold (Ph 1:12-14). Good leaders as Paul know how to take a stand for the truth before the world of pagan beliefs. They are good leaders because they **do** take a stand. No one can be a leader of others unless he is able to stand up and boldly speak that which must be said. Shy people do not lead others to be confident leaders.

8. Paul was a zealous personality. Before his conversion, Paul was "*zealous toward God*" (At 22:3). He explained to the Philippians, "*... concerning zeal, persecuting the church ...*" (Ph 3:6). Notice carefully what he wrote to the Galatians. "*For you have heard of my former **conduct** in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God **beyond measure** and tried to destroy it. And I*

*advanced in Judaism **beyond many of my contemporaries** in my own nation, **being more exceedingly zealous** for the traditions of my fathers"* (Gl 1:13,14).

Good leaders as Paul are very diligent and industrious people. They know how to get out of bed in the morning and get busy. There is no room for lazy evangelists in the work of the kingdom. A lazy evangelist is a signal of one who has lost his passion for the Lord. Those who have no passion, and yet maintain a supposed position of leadership, actually harm the Lord's work because of their bad example. If one loses his zeal for doing God's work, then he has fallen from doing what his duty is to do.

9. Paul was a determined personality. He had been warned by prophecy not to journey to Jerusalem at the end of His third missionary journey. Nevertheless, he was determined to go on, saying to the brethren in Caesarea, "*What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*" (At 21:13). It is significant to note the reaction of the Caesarean brethren to this determined personality on this occasion. "*So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done'.*" (At 21:14). This same determination can be seen in Paul's will to go Rome. "*I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. **So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also***" (Rm 1:14,15). This same determination is seen in his desire to preach to the Jews

who persecuted him in every city (At 13:45; 17:5). Nevertheless, he said of the Jews, *“I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren [the Jews] ...”* (Rm 9:1-3). *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved”* (Rm 10:1). Good leaders as Paul accomplish great works for God because they will not be dissuaded from their objectives. Once a leader discovers his destiny, then many decisions of life have been answered. Discovering one’s destiny is discovering what one feels he or she should do with the rest of one’s life. When we know our destiny for God, then we can with confidence get on with what we believe God intends for us to do with the rest of our lives.

10. Paul was a brave personality. On one occasion he was stoned and presumed dead (At 14:19). However, he got up and walked for several kilometers the next day to another city in order to preach (At 14:20). Others recognized this characteristic in both Paul and Barnabas, for it was said of them that they were men who *“risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (At 15:26). Good leaders as Paul will not let risky environments deter them from what must be done to get the message of the gospel to the lost (See Rm 16:4). Perfect love casts fear out of the determined leader. Fear is not an option when souls are in danger of eternal damnation. If fear is an option to one evangelist, then it is an option to all evangelists. One can be afraid. However, our fear must be overcome by our

sense of destiny. Our faith must cancel out our fear. The world cannot be allowed to be condemned to hell because evangelists are too afraid to leave home and venture into precarious environments of the world.

11. Paul was a righteous personality. He said of his previous life as a Jewish religious leader, *“... concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”* (Ph 3:6). Good leaders as Paul will always be men of faith who ground themselves in the word of God. They will seek to do right according to what they believe is right. When one allows his life to be directed by the word of God, he will always seek to do that which is right. Good leaders will always stand for that which is right.

Paul was commissioned by God in Acts 9:15 to preach to the Gentiles, kings and the house of Israel. He was specifically sent to the Gentiles (At 22:21; Rm 11:13; Gl 2:7). When God calls one to such works, sacrifice is demanded. God knew that Paul’s former commitment to the work of what he thought was the will of God, would have to be carried over into his Christian life to accomplish his new commission. He was a committed person before his conversion. Because of God’s grace that was manifested in his life through Jesus, he would be a greater person of commitment after his conversion. The fact of this is seen in what Paul wrote from a Roman prison in his latter years, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* (Ph 4:13).

The motivation that is generated by a keen sense of appreciation for the grace

of God must not be ignored in the life of Paul. We have just surveyed several thoughts concerning Paul's life before his conversion. He was a dynamic and committed person for the traditions of the Jews. However, when he discovered God's grace for this misled life, he worked even harder. In 1 Corinthians 15:10 he wrote, "***But by the grace of God I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.***" When one recognizes all that God has done and will do in reference to eternal salvation, he or she is driven by grace. It was God's grace that drove Paul to a life of thanksgiving. Through his labors he thanked God by giving his life to the preaching of the gospel. When men and women fully recognize what God has and will do through grace, they will give their lives in thanksgiving.

We must always use the New Testament as our guide for leadership principles in the church. Those who would

serve as leaders must mold their lives after the God-ordained ministries of leadership in the church. This is accomplished by studying the Scriptures in order to determine what characteristics God wants us to have as leaders. Our task as a leader must first be to know the Scriptures in order to conduct our lives according to God's requirements for leadership.

Good Christian leaders always allow room for God to work in their lives. A good leader in the secular world can be a conqueror in business or government. However, in Christ "*we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us*" (Rm 8:37). A government may conquer the lives of men by force. We can conquer the hearts of men by love. And once the heart of a man is conquered by the love of Jesus, God "*is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us*" (Ep 3:20). Good leaders always know that God is working in their lives to do even greater things than our minds can imagine or dream.

Chapter 5

Leadership Identity

Leaders are not born. They are developed. Almost anyone can develop into a great church leader by learning and practicing good leadership principles. In this chapter I would like to present some ideas that will help you to develop into being a better leader. These are successful leadership skills that have been practiced by others in their efforts to be great

leaders for God.

Keep in mind that the suggestions for leadership skills in this chapter are not meant to be the end of the study on leadership skills. They are meant to be foundations principles on which you can build in order to develop yourself into becoming a good leader. Learning to be the best leader one can be demands a lifetime fo-

cus on leadership skills. This means that one must be a continual student of leadership principles.

When studying any leadership skill, it is necessary to adapt the suggestions of leadership in one culture to the particular culture in which you live. The principles that are suggested in this chapter are general principles. As you work in your area of the Lord's vineyard, it is my prayer that these suggestions will be adapted by you in your environment of leadership in order to bring forth fruit to the glory of God. The church leader must always feel that God is working through him in order to accomplish His purpose. When we allow God to work in our lives we can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can think or imagine because it is God who works in us.

The first basic principle of leadership is to take the initiative to be a better leader. One must take the initiative to learn better skills for better leadership. God's people need leaders. Unless men rise up and accept the challenge of leadership, the family of God will be scattered as sheep without a shepherd. Therefore, I want to challenge you to be the best leader you can be for Jesus. Give yourself to this task. Stand up and accept the challenge of leading God's people to be the best they can be.

In the secular business world and the world of everyday behavior, there are generally five basic styles or personalities of leadership. I would call these basic leadership personalities because they deal with the nature of the leader and how he relates to others. Every individual

generally practices one of these five leadership styles or has a personality that can be identified with one principal style. Your general character or temperament will manifest itself to others after one of these five personalities of leadership.

We must keep in mind that **we do lead people**. Everyone is a leader to someone. Others are always looking for examples and leadership. Our children, our friends, our employees are all following someone in some way. We may not be conscious of our leadership role. Others may not be conscious of our influence on their lives. Nevertheless, our lives do have a leadership impact on others. What we must do is to "fine tune", or make more precise, our leadership behavior in order to be a spiritually dynamic force for the glory of God.

How we influence people depends on us as individuals. Our leadership can be positive. It can lead others to a more productive life or a life of greater spiritual quality. On the other hand, our leadership can be negative. We can lead people to discouragement and despair. We can be a hindrance to the spiritual and emotional growth of others because we manifest a personality that is negative. How we influence people, therefore, is usually manifested to them in one or more of the five behavioral personalities of this chapter.

Keep in mind that at any one time in our work week we may practice one or more of these styles or personalities of leadership in order to influence people. This does not mean that we have an inconsistent personality. It simply means

that circumstances often demand that skillful leaders approach the challenge with an applicable style of leadership. Good leaders are able to assess a situation in order to deal with it in an appropriate manner.

Flexibility in leadership is not a manifestation of inconsistency in our relationships with others. Neither is it hypocrisy. Flexibility in leadership is simply the ability of one to adapt himself to different situations. We must keep in mind that leadership is dealing with relationships. When our relationships vary from one person to another, it is a wise leader who will adapt his leadership style to deal with the personality at hand.

Our leadership and organization as a leader must never be a rigid structure and personality that cannot adapt to the needs of people and situations. Those who are not adaptable usually frustrate both themselves and others. In fact, their presence as a leader is limited only to those situations that match their style of leadership. The fact that everyone is different, necessitates that our relationships with each individual we encounter in life must also be different. We must be flexible to the needs of others. We must not expect others to accept a rigid leadership personality from ourselves. As leaders, we are responsible for learning good leadership in order to lead the flock of God.

A. The coach style of leadership:

This behavioral practice and personality of leadership is illustrated best by a sports coach. Almost everyone has had

experience with a good coach. Here are some of the things a good coach will practice in leading a team to victory.



1. A coach is team-minded. Those who lead with this style of leadership are generally **not individualistic**. They see themselves as accomplishing something with the aid of others. They have a cooperative spirit to organize others into a group effort in order to accomplish a common and accepted goal. The behavior of this leader, therefore, encourages him to be with people and work with people. He is generally a lover of people in the sense that he enjoys being with those who have a common goal.

2. A coach motivates others to participate. A coach will be one of the primary **sources for motivation** for the team. His enthusiasm will be caught and taught. His primary method of motivation will be to **involve** everyone in a team effort. His work is seen primarily in his ability to involve everyone in some way in the common goal of the team. When it comes to accomplishing a particular task, the coach leader does not see himself standing alone. He sees the accomplishment of a task through the efforts of several people who have joined together in a team effort.

3. A coach stimulates mental participation. The coach leader does a great deal of teaching in order to encourage the mental and emotional participation of the team. He is able to stimulate others with

creative ideas. He asks questions in order to develop the mental alertness of the team. He motivates participation by educating others concerning the task that must be accomplished. Once everyone understands the goals and how to accomplish the goals, then the coach leader encourages cooperative action on the part of the team.

4. A coach stimulates physical participation. It is the work of a coach to see that everyone is involved in the accomplishment of the determined goal. By mental and motivational preparation of team members, he organizes the team into a dynamic group. Everyone is made to feel that he or she is a very important part of the group. Everyone is given responsibility and encouraged to participate in order to accomplish the common goal of the group.

5. A coach accepts feedback. A good coach always accepts “constructive criticism.” He is always listening for new ideas, even corrective criticism of his personality and approach to leadership. He is sensitive to the work of the players. He desires their feedback in order to re-adjust or reorganize the effectiveness of the team effort. If one is too sensitive to corrective criticism, then he or she will not be a coach leader. Those who are over sensitive tend to isolate themselves from others in order that their feelings not be hurt. Coach leaders, therefore, understand that they too have faults. They too must follow the advice of the group. Coaches should not be dictators. They are open for correction and redirection.

6. A coach gives encouragement. A good coach will always give honor to whom honor is due. A successful player on the team is encouraged when his or her performance is recognized and praised. Reinforcement is made by recognition. The coach teaches the team to support and approve of one another’s successes. He works to suppress competition within the group in order to divert the group from factions. Though team members will seek to do the best they can, they are encouraged to work as a team in order to bring their talents together into a dynamic force.

7. A coach celebrates team victories: When the team accomplishes a goal, the coach leads them in celebrating their victory. He rejoices with those who rejoice. Team celebration encourages the team to set more goals and look forward to greater victories by working together as a team. It also encourages each team member to become more excited about the work of God in the lives of men. Celebration brings the team together. Victory without celebration leaves the team void of emotional strength to continue to work together.

Of the five basic leadership styles, the coach principle is the primary one that should be practiced by preachers, elders or deacons. Paul practiced this style in Acts 15:36 when he encouraged Barnabas, “*Let us go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached*” In this request he encouraged Barnabas to join with him in a team effort to revisit churches. We can also see this style of leadership in Paul’s not wanting

to take John Mark on this trip, for Paul knew they were traveling into dangerous territory. He knew that Mark was still not prepared for this peril because he had turned back from such on a previous journey. Though Barnabas and Paul disagreed over the taking of Mark, they still worked as a team. Barnabas visited the churches that were established on the first part of the first missionary journey. Paul visited the churches that were established on the second part of the first journey.

Throughout Paul's work in missionary journeys, it appears that he worked as a team leader (See At 20:4). The evidence of this style of leadership in his life is evidenced by the fact that he seems to always have someone with him. The church is a fellowship of people who want to work for the Lord. In Acts 6 a problem developed in the distribution of food to the widows of the Jerusalem church. A team was chosen and given the challenge of solving the problem. Not only are local churches teams that must be organized into action, within large congregations or numerous house churches in a region, there is the need of organizing small teams to deal with different tasks. All these team efforts demand leaders who are coach-oriented in their personalities. These are those who should be given the task of organizing members for action.

It would be safe to say that the principal leadership style or personality that is necessary for effective church growth in the local church is the coach style leadership. Since a local congregation is a group of team members, then it is neces-

sary that church leaders on the local level be skilled in organizing people into action.

There are some things that we would not want to bring into the church from the background of a coach. Depending on your view of a coach, we must be careful not to believe that a particular church is under the control of a dictatorial coach as some coaches might control football teams. Coaches can own teams, but not the church. Coaches can control the team players, but such is not so with the church. We must remember that the team players of the church volunteer their services, and subsequently submit to one who leads them to do great things for God.

B. The dictatorial style of leadership:

Almost everyone understands the nature of a dictator. They do because almost everyone has experienced the nature



of this behavioral style of leadership at one time or another in life. It is rare that a dictator is good to the people over which he rules. Most are self-centered, and thus, totalitarian in their rule. Nevertheless, this is a style of leadership that is practiced by many leaders in the secular world. Here are the characteristics that are associated with this style of leadership.

1. *A dictator motivates by power.*

Because of his position, a dictator exercises authority over people by use of power. When he commands, he expects followers to obey. Because he knows he has the power to command action, the dictator often abuses his power. In the abuse of his power, he loses touch with the people. The people become pawns in his chess game of politics, pomp and pride. One often adopts this style of leadership because he feels insecure. His lack of a sense of security leads him to assume power over those he believes will threaten his position.

2. *A dictator controls by detailed instructions.* The dictator does not delegate control or authority to others. Because of his sense of insecurity, he expects all instructions for the group to come directly from him. The group, therefore, is usually regimented or controlled by his explicit instructions. In this way he maintains control. If other leaders start to emerge from the group, the dictator feels threatened. He sees the emergence of another personality as a threat to his position.

3. *A dictator corrects by threat.* When the dictator feels threatened, he reacts. However, his action is often negative. In order to maintain discipline and allegiance in the group, the dictator is strict in the area of punishment. Order is maintained in the group by threats of punishment. In this way, the dictator maintains his control though he has lost the allegiance of those over whom he exercises control. He controls by fear. When the people are fearful of the dictator, they

are under his control. Dictators usually do not have many friends.

4. *A dictator centers judgment around himself.* The center of judgment of group behavior is in the dictator himself. He pronounces the status of the group. He determines the performance of the group. The group must progress according to his standard. All these practices are guarantees to the dictator that he will maintain his position. The dictatorial style or personality of leadership is often determined, not so much by what the dictator says, but how he behaves in reference to those he believes are threatening his position or control over the people. Since he seeks to be the center of reference for all judgment, he is not open to suggestions from others. He feels that if he accepts the suggestions of others, he weakens his control over the group.

This is not a good leadership style to be practiced in the church. Unfortunately, many preachers and church leaders commonly manifest this leadership style or personality in their leadership with the members of the church. Diotrephes was a dictator for he loved “to have the preeminence among” the church (3 Jn 9,10). Because he loved to be first, he intimidated the church into conforming to his wishes.

The inspired apostle Paul incorporated a dictatorial leadership style with the Corinthian church in the matter of a brother living in incest (See 1 Co 5:3-5; also 4:20,21). However, this must be understood in the context of what was commanded. The church was sinning by

not dismissing from their fellowship one who was bringing his sinful life-style into the church. Though Paul commanded them to put this brother out of their fellowship, this was not his common manner of leadership. In this case, as well as in others, he was exercising his **God-appointed authority** that was given to him as a Christ-sent apostle (See Mt 16:18,19). The authority for his pronouncement, therefore, did not originate from him, but from God. This case does not indicate that Paul was a dictator. He simply proclaimed the will of God to a church that was disobedient. In this situation, as well as in cases of doctrine, Paul and the other apostles had the authority to dictate divine laws for the church, for the laws were not from them, but from the Holy Spirit (See Mt 16:18,19). However, the church was left with the responsibility of obeying the divine commandments that were given.

Even though the Holy Spirit “dictated” divine law through the inspiration of the apostles and prophets, no one **was forced to obey these laws**. God did not violate individual free-moral agency by imposing obedience against the will of the individual. In Christianity one voluntarily submits to the will of God. If one is intimidated or forced to obey God by the will of others, then it is not Christianity. Forced obedience to unbiblical religious law is cultism. It is in this area of religiosity that dictators are formed in the religious world. Those who find no authority in the Bible for their practices often resort to dictatorial practices in order to discipline the saints into submis-

sion to their own wills.

If an individual leads a church in a dictatorial manner, he will often destroy that church. The self-initiative of members will be crushed. Members will always be in fear of doing something wrong, and if they do act and make a mistake, they will fear the chastisement of the leader. Young leaders who would arise in the church will be intimidated and discouraged. Members who are in fear of doing something will do nothing. Potential leaders who are intimidated to remain in control of the dictator will not lead.

A common, but unfortunate practice among some church leaders has been the general practice of a dictatorial style of leadership. This is too often the common practice of some preachers in churches that have no elders. In fact, this style or personality of leadership by some discourages the appointing of elders in local churches. Many churches have been in existence for years, and yet, there are no elders appointed or there are no leaders encouraged to arise among the members because of a dictatorial preacher or leader in the church. These churches were often started by one man. They are maintained by this one man who usually out of necessity had to struggle alone to keep the congregation in existence. All church decisions were and are thrown upon his shoulders. It was very easy in these cases, therefore, for such church leaders to develop a dictatorial style of leadership.

Once the above happens, either consciously or unconsciously, the church

group has set up a non-growth pattern. This pattern of non-growth will keep the church from growing for as long as the leader maintains this style of leadership. It is in cases as this that the leader must take heed to himself by examining his own life in relation to the doctrine he preaches (See 1 Tm 4:16).

A dictatorial style of leadership often arises out of a church that has become very legalistic in its nature. The Pharisees were religious dictators. Their encounters with Jesus proved that they were interested more in maintaining their positions with the people than over the healing of a blind man, a cripple, or manifesting compassion of the needs of others.

When church leaders feel threatened with change in the area of opinion, they often become dictatorial. Legalists become dictatorial when they know that their positions cannot be defended by Scripture. The only way they can maintain their legalistic practices, therefore, is to dictate them to the group.

Legalistic dictatorship often comes into one's behavior in a very subtle way. One might be sincere in maintaining what he believes to be "the truth", when at the time what he seeks to defend is actually the traditions of the fathers. If the legalistic dictator is sincere, he will be able to separate tradition from the Bible, and then defend the Bible over tradition. If he does not, then he will often resort to dictatorial practices in order to maintain his traditional religion.

In view of the above problem that has plagued many churches, the preacher, in

the midst of unlearned brethren who do not clearly understand the word of God or how a church should function, will often resort to dictatorial behavior. Many of the members of the church who are in this situation are often new converts who have come out of a secular world or false denominational practices. Because of this, God commissioned the evangelist the right to "*set in order the things that are lacking ...*" by the preaching and teaching of the word of God (Ti 1:5; 2 Tm 4:1-5). Churches that persist in ignorance and disobedience of the word of God must be directed by bold and courageous evangelists who are not afraid to proclaim God's directions.

In infant or newly established churches the evangelist must be trained to apply the authority of God's word in the lives of men. This is necessary in order to keep out of churches the "doctrines of demons" and the unscriptural traditions of denominational religions that are so often brought in by new converts who are not yet knowledgeable of the Scriptures. Unfortunately, in carrying out the responsibilities of an evangelist, some evangelists often resort to dictatorial practices in order to accomplish the establishment of the church.

I would encourage evangelists to boldly preach the word of God. Preach the Bible truth concerning the nature of the true church. True Christianity must never be diluted with the false ideas of misguided religions. However, in doing this one must always resort to the word of God. The evangelist must hold forth the word of God as the final authority,

not himself. When evangelists stand behind the cross of Jesus, they will lead with the authority of the word of God. They will thus lead others as they follow God's will.

C. The party-spirited style of leadership:

This is the personality of leadership that emphasizes the interacting of a group by focusing on the entertainment side of the individual. This leader is usually light hearted. He or she is a "people person" and enjoys having people around at all times. Here are some characteristics that are generally associated with this style or personality of leadership behavior.



1. *The party-spirited leader motivates by pleasurable inter-activity.* The party-spirited leader will move the group to interact with one another in an environment of recreational or party activities. He seeks a party or sporting atmosphere in which to encourage members of the group to maintain their commitment and interactivity to and with the group. Once individuals feel at home with one another in this type of atmosphere, then they are more likely to work together as a group.

2. *The party-spirited leader makes entertainment the central glue for group bonding.* The party-spirited leader will

try to maintain harmony in the group by the common desire of group members to be involved with one another on a social level. He desires to entertain the group members in order to maintain their fellowship. When the members are bonded together on a social level, then they can be motivated to stay together to accomplish goals. Instead of focusing first on the organizational aspect of group leadership, the party-spirited leader first organizes people to be able to interact with one another.

The party-spirited leader looks beyond organization in order to focus on the culture of the group. He seeks to influence the culture of the group through interactivity. Once culture is in harmony by all group participants, then the group moves in a natural and united direction. In this way, the cohesion of the group is maintained by its culture, not by an organizational plan on paper to which everyone must ascribe in order to be a part of the group.

3. *The party-spirited leader seeks the approval of all the group.* His fear is that a disgruntled member will dis-fellowship himself from the group for some small matter. He is willing to readjust the cultural atmosphere of the group in order to accommodate every member. Since his focus is first on the social level of group activity, he will go to great lengths to make sure that everyone comes into the flow of the culture of the group. He does not want anyone to be excluded. His challenge is to make those who are individualistic feel that they are a member of the general group of activity. He

does this by making them feel that they are a vital part in developing the cultural environment of the group.

4. *The party-spirited leader avoids judgments.* Party-spirited leaders usually avoid making individual judgments in the group. This is especially true in making critical decisions that affect the entire group. He does not like to make such judgments because he fears making a wrong decision that might destroy the positive cultural flow of the group. Individual decision-making focuses the group around one individual. The party-spirited leader does not want the group focused on him. It is for this reason that he naturally refuses to make a decision for the group. He encourages the group to rise up and make its own decision. He empowers the group to determine its vision, culture and ethics. When the group is allowed to make these decisions, it becomes a tremendous force.

We must not confuse the New Testament injunction to “*think soberly*” (Rm 12:3) and to “*live soberly*” (Ti 2:12) to mean that Christians should not have fun together. Christianity is not a belief that robs people of their sense of humor or desire to socialize together in a party environment. On the other hand, we should not think that Christianity is simply a party-spirited group of light-headed people. We are dealing with sin in the lives of people and this is serious business. Fellowship among Christians, however, is a very central teaching of the New Testament. Fellowship among Christians means more than pies, bread and ball games. Because of our fellowship in

Christ, we enjoy being with one another. We enjoy having fun together and we enjoy having sports together.

A common practice of the early church was the “love feast” (Jd 12). In fact, the coming together for a meal seemed to be a regular practice of the early church on Sunday (See 1 Co 11:17ff). Some in the Corinthian church abused this practice. However, their abuse of the love feast did not say that their coming together for a common meal was wrong. The abuses that went on during the feast were condemned, not the interactivity of the church over a common meal. (More on this in Book 6).

There are those in the church who have a unique talent to organize games and meals for the church. Their leadership style should be activated in order to allow the church to have fun together. It is not an uncommon false belief that Christianity is simply an assembly-oriented religion of listening to the preaching of sermons and singing of songs. Church is a way of life, not just something that takes place on Sunday or in a home Bible study with a non-Christian. Good leaders will lead the church to eat together and play games together. If football had existed during the times of Jesus, I can see Jesus playing a good game of football (soccer) with the disciples. We are also not so stuffy that we cannot knock the stuffings out of the brethren in the northern region in a good game of soccer.

The fact that churches have become so traditional in their behavior is an indication that they have lost the ability to

socialize with one another. This is especially true in reference to young people. Many young people leave the church simply because “church” is only an assembly-oriented meeting of traditionalists who cannot understand that Jesus must be applied to the totality of the human spirit. This would include games, and dinners, and fellowships, and whatever we might come up with to promote membership interactivity. Leaders who do not lead the members into fulfilling all the basic activities of the individual will hold up the church in an assembly hall. We must keep in mind that “church” does not just take place in an assembly with the performance of a few habitual acts that are signed off with a “closing prayer.” Church means communal interactivity between individuals, whether it is in an assembly or on the playing field. Those who are oriented toward a party-spirited leadership style should be encouraged to use their gift to lead God’s people to enjoy one another.

It is imperative that the party-spirited leader have a greater focus in mind than the event he leads. There must be a greater purpose for the football game than the game itself. If there is not, then after the game is over, everyone still individually goes on their way to their own homes. The purpose of the event that is planned and conducted by the party-spirited leader must be foremost in his mind at all times. Building unity, molding characters, establishing focus and other purposes must be the reason for the game, the fellowship, and the hike on a country road. The party-spirited leader can be

very successful if he conducts events on the basis of developing the hidden or unseen spiritual qualities or goals that are more important than the physical event.

D. The sacrificial-saint style of leadership:

This is the leader who martyrs himself for those he serves. He seeks to lead people by the contagious



nature of his total commitment to those he leads. By the sacrifices he makes for his work, and the people he serves, people are motivated into action. Here are some characteristics of this leadership behavior.

1. *The sacrificial saint seeks response by sympathy.* When those who follow realize the sacrificial commitment of the leader, they are moved into action. This leadership behavior must be communicated to the group with sincerity, lest the group not follow because they see the hypocrisy of the leader. However, once the group realizes that the leader is sincere, they usually respond in sympathy to what the leader is trying to do.

2. *The sacrificial saint’s commitment usually leads to his being overworked.* A common characteristic of this type of leader is his or her tendency to be overworked. This leader sees that the job must be done. When no one else is

around to help, he will carry on with the responsibilities that are necessary in order to accomplish the goal. Even when others do not follow, he will do that which must be done in order to accomplish the task.

3. *The sacrificial saint maintains a high standard of conduct.* The sacrificial saint usually sets a high standard of behavior for himself. In maintaining a high standard of performance, he usually demands the same from those he leads. However, he must be careful not to enforce a standard on others that is unreasonable and unbiblical for others to bear. If he does not keep this in mind, he will frustrate those who follow. One must understand that not everyone can maintain the pace of life that some who lead in this way are able to do. This is especially true concerning married Christians who have families that need attention. Single people can put more time into certain areas of the work than married couples. However, the work of a devoted mother with her children is just as important as a personal worker with non-Christians. Both works are the function of Christianity.

It is evident that Paul used the sacrificial-saint style of leadership at times in his writings. Such is seen in his writings to the Galatians and Corinthians. He possibly tried to seek the repentance of the apostatizing Galatians by calling their attention to the sacrifices that he had made for them. *“I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain”* (Gl 4:11). *“You know that **because of physical infirmity** I preached the gospel to you*

at the first” (Gl 4:13). This is undoubtedly his tactic with the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11. In fear of their being led astray by some arrogant people who were denying his apostleship, he asked them to bear with a “little folly” in his reminding them of his sacrifices for them (2 Co 11:1ff). Paul was reluctant to use this method of leadership (See 2 Co 11:16-19). Nevertheless, he reminded the Corinthians of the great sufferings he went through in order to preach the gospel, especially to them (2 Co 11:22-33). He challenged those who were challenging him that his sacrificial life bore witness to the fact that he was sincere.

In reference to his work, Paul simply worked hard. He worked *“day and night”* (2 Th 3:7,8) in order to support himself so that he could preach the gospel (See At 20:33-35). By such commitment he intended to lead the church to diligent behavior. People always follow **behind** their leaders. Therefore, the faster you lead the faster others will follow. On the other hand, the slower you lead the slower others will follow. We must work and lead with “day and night” commitment in order to make a church grow. We must lead in such a way while at the same time understanding the personal situation of each member. Every Christian cannot work at the same pace as others. Nevertheless, every Christian must work.

It is evident that Paul did not maintain a sacrificial-saint attitude among believers. He did not seek to lead people by moving them to feel sorry for him. Nevertheless, apostate and arrogant

brethren who were attacking his motives for preaching needed to be reminded that one would not go through such sacrifices as he did if he were either insincere or seeking to have a personal following. His commitment to sacrifice was because of his dedication to Jesus. The sacrifice of his life was expressed in the words of Galatians 2:20. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Because of this commitment, he was able to say, *“I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ”* (Ph 3:8).

E. The abdicating style of leadership:

This style of leadership is illustrated by an aging king who gives over the rule of the kingdom to his son before he dies. He abdicates the throne in order to give the son an opportunity to reign in his presence. Those who practice this style of leadership maintain the following characteristics.



1. The abdicating leader delegates responsibility to others. Those who generally follow this type of leadership behavior often avoid responsibility. To do such, they easily delegate responsibility

to others. The delegation of responsibility to others is not a negative characteristic of leadership. It is, however, if one is trying to avoid the responsibility of leadership. On the other hand, those leaders who have overcommitted themselves should learn to delegate responsibility to others.

2. The abdicating leader often withdraws from the responsibility of the leadership role. Those who generally lead by this style of leadership often have the personality characteristic of withdrawing from the responsibility demanded of leaders. If this is done simply because one is neglecting responsibility, then it is a negative leadership characteristic. A leader must realize that others will not work unless he is working. We do not lead from behind. We lead from the front. And to be in front, we must be actively involved in the work of the church. Leaders are in front simply because they get started before others start.

3. The abdicating leader is motivated by the demands of pressing needs. It is not wrong to abdicate if there are other pressing needs that must be accomplished by the leader. In fact, if one cannot abdicate in such situations he will hinder the growth of the work. Abdicating is necessary for those leaders who have trained up others to assume the responsibilities of the work.

On occasions Paul abdicated responsibility simply because he did not have the time to accomplish the work. He told Timothy, *“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia – remain in Ephesus that*

you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine” (1 Tm 1:3). He did the same in Crete. He wrote to Titus, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you” (Ti 1:5).

The opposite side of this is the abdicating leader who will not do anything unless he absolutely has to because of a demanding need. This is the negative side of this leadership style and was certainly not practiced by Paul.

The delegation of responsibility is essential to good church leadership. It is good as long as one is diligently involved in the work as a leader. If one is overly involved, he will slow the growth of the church if he does not learn to delegate responsibility to others. The burden of leadership of a growing group will laden a leader if he does not give responsibility to others. This was Moses’ problem when he first led Israel to Mount Sinai. Jethro said to Moses, *“What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and allow the people to stand before you from morning until evening?”* (Ex 18:14). In his wisdom, Jethro saw that this practice was not good. *“The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself”* (Ex 18:17,18). Jethro’s advice was that Moses abdicate the responsibility of making judgments among the people. *“Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel You shall select from all the people*

able men, such as fear God, men of truth, ... and let them judge the people at all times” (Ex 18:19-22).

It is a general rule of good church growth to diversify leadership responsibility in the church body as much as possible. In this way more men lead. More feel a responsibility for the work. More work is accomplished because of the involvement of more members.

Delegation when one is doing nothing is laziness. The abdicating leader can fall into this unfortunate state. He sometimes finds it easier to get someone else to do the job than to do it himself, even though he has the time and skills. We must stay busy. We then delegate responsibility to others only when a task is outside our time and skill ability.

The more centralized the leadership responsibility the slower the church grows and the slower new leadership is developed within the body. When church leadership is decentralized, more individuals are in a position to exercise self-initiative. This is one reason why there is to be a plurality of elders in every church (At 14:23; Ph 1:1). If a church does not have elders, a leadership base of several individuals should be established within the congregation. However, one should not place leadership responsibility in the hands of young Christians who do not know their Bibles. Such will cause many problems. We must always follow Paul’s advice, *“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily ...”* (1 Tm 5:22). Elders cannot be novices or new Christians (1 Tm 3:6) and deacons must first be proved (1 Tm 3:10). This principle

should be practiced in placing leadership responsibility on any Christian.

Regardless of one's principal style of leadership, he or she will incorporate all styles of leadership at one time or another in his relationships with others. Everyone seeks to be the coach style of leader. However, even coaches must make pronouncements of what must be done. Leadership involves knowing the indi-

viduals of the group, and then applying the style of leadership that motivates the group to respond and accomplish the task. It involves knowing the circumstances in which the group is, and then, knowing the means by which one will influence the group to go in the correct direction. Good leaders are in touch with the feelings and thoughts of those they seek to lead.

Chapter 6

Goal-Minded Leadership

A goal is a defined point to which one desires to go. It is a point of accomplishment for which one seeks to strive for personal fulfillment or to accomplish a general task of work. Everyone has goals they would like to accomplish. The problem comes in actually accomplishing our goals. Problems also develop concerning how we seek to accomplish our goals. Because we often regiment ourselves to outlines and graphs, we sometimes create more problems by our proposed solutions or plans to accomplish goals than the goal itself presents. In this chapter I would like to suggest some points that will help to formulate creative goals that bring a sense of fulfillment to life.

We often set goals we cannot accomplish because they are unrealistic. Every year individuals state resolutions to accomplish during the new year. After a few weeks, those resolutions (goals) are often forgotten, and one moves on with

his or her regular behavior of life. The problem is that the more goals we fail to accomplish, the greater our lack of confidence we have in ourselves. Our self-esteem plunges with every failed goal. But goals should be building blocks to confidence. Fulfilled goals should give us a sense of achievement. Every leader must be a goal-oriented person. Others follow the vision of those who set and accomplish goals. If we set goals that we accomplish, then others will follow our example.

In order to be successful in accomplishing a goal, the goal must be **defined**. We must put in writing exactly what we want to accomplish. If it is an entire congregation who is establishing the goal, the agreement on the goal or goals must be made in writing. We must set realistic goals, that is, goals that can be accomplished with the added factor of faith. A goal can have a **time** at which it should be accomplished, though one cannot

place a date on God's work. We can, however, make goals as to how many visits or Bible studies we wish to conduct in a certain period of time.

A goal can be **redefined**. If a goal is not reached, it may have been too hard or too high for the abilities of those who were trying to reach it. If so, we must reestablish a more realistic goal that is within reach of the church but still allows for God to do His work in our lives. It is better to establish goals that can be easily reached than to establish goals that everyone knows cannot be reached.

Leaders that lead are goal-oriented. This was the nature of the apostle Paul. His final goal was heaven. "*I press toward the goal,*" he wrote from prison, "*for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*" (Ph 3:14). Because of this ultimate goal, he was a man of purpose. He was an individual who made his plans for God (See At 15:36). At times, he was not permitted to carry out some of his goals (See At 16:6,7). Nevertheless, he pressed forward in order to accomplish his destiny. Good leaders do not wait for a door to open. They see the doors that are already open and then proceed with prayer, fasting and plans to the glory of God.

A. Goals release individual gifts.

When goals are established, individuals reach within themselves in order to discover their talents (gifts) that are necessary in order to accomplish the goal. When an entire congregation works together to establish goals, and then, seeks

to accomplish those goals, a whole membership goes gift seeking in order to make the goal happen. Healthy churches are goal setting churches.

The following are things that goals will do for you as an individual. If you can work goals as an individual, then you can make them work for a church. A goal-minded church will accomplish great things because the individual gifts of each member are put to work. All members are challenged to use their gifts to accomplish a single purpose for the church.

1. Goals give us direction and purpose. They establish where we are going and why we are going there. If we do not know where we are going, we will never know when we get there. Goals are like a compass. They point us in the direction we must be going. We will know when we get to where we want to go if we establish a measuring rule by which to judge our progress. When the entire group works together to accomplish the goal, then each member finds purpose in the group.

2. Goals make us plan for the future. If we fail to plan, we are planning to fail. Goals force us to make plans to take us into the future. Churches who cannot think beyond the present will have difficulty in setting goals. They will always be stuck in the present because they cannot look beyond their present needs. It is often a problem in Third World social environments that individuals find it difficult to think into the future. They are often fatalistic about the future because of so many failures in the past.

Because the present environmental and social conditions have been the same with the residents for many decades, individuals find it difficult to have hope for the future. Those churches who are in Third World environments, therefore, must work especially hard to establish goals because doing such is generally not a practice in their culture. However, if the church will sit down and draw up some specific goals, hope and excitement will be generated in the membership.

3. *Goals make us organize.* They become the center around which we can organize our lives and the life activity of the church. Disorganized groups never establish goals because they cannot organize the goal. A valid goal is not simply a statement of what one wants to do. It is a planned draft on paper of what is desired, and how that which is desired is to be accomplished. If a church will establish goals, doing such will force the church to organize itself into action.

4. *Goals make us work effectively and efficiently.* They force us to evaluate our progress of work. We can know if we are accomplishing that for which we strive if we set individual goals to be accomplished along the way. If our work is not according to our established goals, then readjustments can be made in order to keep ourselves on track. Goals force us to focus. And when we focus, we are able to set aside much nonsense that is only clutter in our lives.

5. *Goals make us evaluate our progress.* They establish a measuring rule or timetable for work. Goals establish a step-by-step evaluation of our

progress for the Lord. And when we evaluate our progress and discover that we have reached a certain predetermined measure of work, everyone is encouraged to work harder. Everyone becomes confident that the goal can be reached with the participation of everyone in the group.

6. *Goals make us communicate.* In organizing the goals we want to accomplish, we are forced to communicate with one another as a church. As we work toward accomplishing a goal on which all of us agree, we are forced to communicate with one another on our progress. If a member is not doing his or her part, exhortation is needed. When one fails in his or her part, he or she can be encouraged. If a church works together to accomplish established goals, the entire church begins to communicate with one another as they work together.

7. *Goals clarify expectations.* In making goals, our expectations of one another's performance are clearly defined. We identify and apply our gifts in order to accomplish the common goals. We can expect of one another what we can do. One-talent individuals are not expected to perform the work of ten-talent workers. However, everyone is expected to assume his or her responsibility in accomplishing the common goals of the group.

8. *Goals encourage accountability.* When a church establishes goals and assigns responsibility to individuals for accomplishing the goals, individuals are then held accountable for their assigned work. If one is discovered not to be fulfilling his or her responsibilities, then ex-

hortations can be made to encourage participation. This is one of the reasons for the assembly of Christians, for they are to assemble in order to stir up love and good works (Hb 10:24,25). Stirring up love involves encouraging members to reach out to others. Stirring up good works involves meeting together in order to identify good works, and then, assigning work to individuals or groups within the church. If the church does not meet in order to formulate goals for love and good works, it will become a complacent church, a church of dead faith.

9. Goals emphasize performance. They force us not to be satisfied with just church activity. Emphasis is placed on actually accomplishing something. In order to accomplish something, there must be performance on the part of everyone involved. Christians must be known for being zealous for good works (Ep 2:10). They must always work that which is good (Gl 6:10). By establishing goals of work, every member can be recruited in order to accomplish the common goals of the church. In doing this, members begin to perform. They discover purpose in their lives, and thus perform according to the expectations of the group.

10. Goals promote church harmony. Goals that are agreed upon and written down reduce conflict between members and duplication of efforts. When everyone is organized to accomplish goals, individual members work together. In doing this, personalities are forced to make contact with one another. If there are personality differences, these

can be worked out. The point is that we are forced into contact with one another when we work together to accomplish common goals.

11. Goals promote excitement in the present. They provide present occasions to celebrate victories. As individual goals are accomplished, members feel self-achievement. Such gives power to live daily active lives. Though the goals keep us focused on the future, we work in the present in order to accomplish the goal. Goals generate inter-congregational activity, and thus excitement is generated in the lives of those who are busy at accomplishing the goal.

12. Goals produce enthusiastic churches. As goals are accomplished, enthusiasm in the church is promoted. Churches become lively, active and productive. When establishing long-range goals, establish short-range goals within each long-range goal. When each short-range goal is accomplished, enthusiasm is generated in order to accomplish the long-range goal. The group must celebrate as they work together to accomplish each short-range goal that leads to the accomplishment of the long-range goal.

13. Goals allow us to see God working in our lives. After goals are accomplished, we can look back on our lives and see how much God has done in our work to bring about the accomplishment of the goal. We can see that God has worked exceedingly abundantly above what we first established as a goal. The accomplishment of every goal is an opportunity to give glory to God. Individu-

als and churches that do not set and accomplish goals have few occasions to give glory to God for His work in our lives.

The establishment and accomplishment of goals in a church is one of the single most important things a church can do to grow. Goal establishment and accomplishment is a vital element that will build self-esteem within a congregation. Good leaders will learn how to make good goals for God and then lead churches to accomplish those goals. Once goals begin to be realized, the congregation is on its way to great growth.

B. Characteristics of goals that work.

It is essential to set goals that work. Goals must not only take the church to points of accomplishment, they must also be an encouragement to the church as members strive to accomplish goals for God. Therefore, in establishing goals for the work of the church, here are some things you must remember.

1. Goals originate out of our perception of where the people are moving. This point may introduce an entire chapter on how good leaders must be very perceptive to the general emotional and spiritual culture of a congregation of people. But in as brief a statement as possible, goals should be built around the culture of the group that exists at the time the goal is established. If the goal matches the desires of the group, then great things will happen. If a goal con-

forms to the general direction of movement of the people, then the group will move to higher levels of accomplishment. Good leaders will be very perceptive to the general trends of the church, and thus, make goals that conform to the direction of the church.

This point could be illustrated by placing a magnet in the midst of iron filings. Once the magnet is placed in the iron filings, all filings arrange themselves in line with the negative and positive poles of the magnet. The same happens when a goal is made that matches the desires of those who will carry it to fulfillment. It becomes a drawing magnet that places everyone in harmony in order to bring about its accomplishment. However, in order to do this, leaders must know where the church is and what the church wants to do. Goals that match what God wants for the church will carry the church to tremendous heights.

2. Goals should be both short-ranged and long-ranged. It is good to set goals that are to be accomplished in the distant future. We must know where we are going to progress into the future. However, it is good to establish short-ranged goals that can be accomplished quickly, but ultimately lead to greater long-ranged goals.



Goals 1-3 in the above illustration

would be stepping stones to the accomplishment of the final long-range goal. For example, suppose you want the church to make **one hundred personal invitations** to Bible studies in a period of one month. Divide the number of desired visits by four weeks, and thus, establish the number of visits that must be made each week for four weeks. In this way the group can determine where they are every week in accomplishing the final long-range goal of one hundred visits.

3. Goals must relate to your central purpose. One of the central purposes of the church is the fellowship of members in order to encourage one another to remain faithful. Goals to support this purpose, therefore, would be the establishment of Bible studies, prayer sessions or evangelistic outreaches. All these short-range goals will help to accomplish the final goal of eternal life.

When we establish our goals, therefore, we must understand the purpose of the church. If our concept of the church is erroneous, we will establish goals that will sometimes conform to an unbiblical understanding of the church. It is imperative, therefore, that all goals must be established on the foundation of biblical knowledge.

Goals must promote the purpose of the church. Each ministry of the church should be specifically defined, such as, evangelism, benevolence and edification. Under each of the principal general ministries will come several individual ministries that are directed to the accomplishment of the work of the

church. In reference to the ministry of evangelism, goals would be prayers for specific lost souls, times and number of visits to be made, home studies to be conducted, and a number of visits to be made during the week. All such goals would support the purpose of evangelism.

The purpose of the church and its work should be defined by Scripture. Our goals that will lead us to accomplish scripturally defined purposes can be matters of opinion in methods. Our methods must never be made “doctrine.” If our methods do become doctrine, then we will often digress to arguments over methods. In our arguments we will be detoured from our primary goals of accomplishing the work of the church.

4. Goals must be scheduled. Each goal must have a date when it is to be accomplished. This is important in order to give a sense of accomplishment to those involved in the work. It is also necessary in order to make sure that people are working on the project in order to accomplish each goal. If a time is not set for the accomplishment of a goal, it will often not be fulfilled. Therefore, one must schedule the fulfillment of short-range goals in order to bring about the accomplishment of the long-range goals.

5. Goals must be measurable. When making goals for work groups in the church, make sure enough detail is given in the establishment of the goal that will allow you to determine if the goal is being accomplished. You must be able to measure the progress of the work being done in order to know that you are making progress. Goals without measure-

ments often become blurred. If people do not know what they are accomplishing, they will soon lose interest.

6. Goals must have a plan. When you make a goal for yourself or the church, you must make a plan in order to accomplish the goal. Remember, if you do not plan where you are going you will not know when you get there. Write your plan down on paper. Plan your work and then work your plan. A plan gives direction and a sense of accomplishment when specifics of the plan are fulfilled. When the plan is written down, then there is little room for confusion as time progresses. Misunderstandings are avoided if everyone has the plan as a source of information, for it is upon the foundation of information that the group works together to accomplish a goal.

In the writing of the plan, it is good to define each specific work and those who are to be responsible for the work. This necessitates that much discussion must first be made concerning what the plan will say and who will assume specific duties. However, if a careful plan is made and recorded, everyone will work in harmony with one another. If disputes arise, the original plan is to be first consulted to see if individuals have diverted from the original plan of operation.

Writing down a plan does not mean that we cannot be flexible. Inflexible plans can be a burden when we discover, through new information or circumstances, that we cannot accomplish what we first planned. If new information or experience demands that plans be changed, then we must change the plan.

The changing of the plan does not mean that the goal will not be reached. In fact, if the plan is not changed to adjust to new information, the goal will sometimes not be reached.

7. Goals must be realistic. In other words, you must make your goals as realistic as possible according to the information at hand when the goal is made. Everyone must believe that the goal can be accomplished. If people do not think they can reach the goal, they may become discouraged about reaching for it.

Making goals realistic does not take the place of faith. Plan the goal that you know is within your own ability. After this, plan beyond the goal for God's work in your life. We must give God space to work in our plans. By doing this we will be able to give God praise for working in our lives. He will work if we will give Him a chance.

8. Goals must be supported by people. If we make a goal for ourselves, then we must take responsibility to carry it out. If a specific goal relates to the work of the church, then an individual must be found who will accept the responsibility of making sure that the goal is accomplished. A goal will not go unless a good man makes it his work to make sure the job is accomplished.

Accomplishing a goal goes beyond one man. Someone may claim the work, but if there are no workers, the work will not be done. It is important, therefore, that everyone accept the challenge of the goals that are made in order that everyone participate in the accomplishment of the goals.

9. Goals must be supported by necessary resources. Though our goals for churches usually demand the resources of membership involvement, there may also be the need for physical resources. If it is a goal to preach in a public place for evangelistic purposes, there will possibly be the need to have physical supports as benches and loud speakers in order to accomplish what you want to do. If you do not have these resources, you will have to include this in your plan. You would not necessarily want to have public preaching at night if you have no lights. In other words, plan your goals with the resources you have. However, if you do not have the resources for a specific work, make other plans to accomplish the work with the resources you have. Never allow your lack of physical resources to stop you from doing the work of evangelism. Never believe that the work of the church depends on physical resources.

Goal-minded leaders make things happen. They make churches grow.

They evangelize the lost and edify the church. They are followed because they give people a sense of direction and a feeling of accomplishment.

Goal-minded leaders prevent churches from becoming stagnant and dead. They inspire people to give to the best of their ability. They awaken the sleeping talents of individuals and lead churches to accomplish their God-ordained purpose. Those who would lead local churches to be great churches must learn the skills of establishing and accomplishing goals for God.

Goal-minded leaders direct their lives by the word of God. They meditate on God's word until their direction of life is controlled by biblical principles. When they determine the direction in which they want to go, they base their direction on God's will. When they set goals, their goals are established to fulfill God's will in their lives and the lives of others. God's goal-minded leaders are directed by God's word. And being directed by His word keeps them going in the right direction.

Chapter 7

God's Public Servant

This chapter is about things one must do in order to lead the church more effectively in a public manner. Specifically, these are some practical suggestions that I feel will help one to better present both himself and his message before large assemblies of the church. We must remember that good leaders will always seek to

learn practical leadership skills that will enable them to better communicate their message to others. They activate these skills in their personal lives in order to lead others to a more fulfilled life that is conformed to the nature of Jesus.

Most of the suggestions of this chapter center around the public assemblies

of the saints either in large numbers or in small house settings. By conducting effective assemblies of the saints, a regular spiritual renewal will be offered to the saints. Dynamic assemblies inspire people to live encouraged lives. Dynamic assemblies inspire people to attend regularly. As a church leader, we must encourage those who lead in the meetings of the church to conduct the assembly in a manner that encourages celebration for the church. The assembly must be the expression of our dedication to God and to one another. When worshipful saints come together, an exciting meeting should occur that is encouraging to all who attend. Those who lead the assemblies must be conscious of the great responsibility they have in directing the minds of the members.

Please keep in mind that the church is not centered around assemblies. The church is centered around relationships. However, the assemblies of the saints in some manner must be carried out in order to accomplish the purpose for which Hebrews 10:24,25 was written. Though this passage does not mention when the assemblies should take place, or how many of the members should assemble on any particular occasion, there is an exhortation in Hebrews 10:24 that Christians assemble in order to stir up one another to love and good works. (More on this in Book 6, chapter 22).

When an assembly of the saints does occur, it is the responsibility of the leaders to conduct such assemblies so that they are edifying experiences for those who attend. Assemblies that do not en-

courage and build faith are detrimental to the church. It is important, therefore, to always focus on developing assemblies that encourage. Those who conduct edifying worshipful assemblies follow some important principles.

A. Skills of an effective group leader:

In order to lead the church, one must learn how to lead groups. Leading small groups is definitely easier than leading a large group. One of the first principles in leading groups is to personally concentrate on one's own life. The art of leading a group is first started by changing our personality into one that is desirable to be followed. The fruit of the Spirit must be manifested in our lives in order to draw others to meet with us. This is especially true if one is meeting in a small house church or evangelistic group of a larger church.

Effective group leadership happens when leaders learn and practice group leadership skills. Here are some points that will aid in establishing and conducting edifying groups.

1. Establish flexible goals. In order to lead a group of people, one must be able to encourage a group to establish goals. Once the goals are established, we must be able to lead the group in revising those goals as progress is made toward the fulfillment of the goals. It is necessary, therefore, that one be flexible in making and revising goals. When we establish goals, we are not establishing something that cannot be changed. One

who is resistant to change will often have difficulty if a goal must be revised in order to reach the desired end. However, the advantage of being flexible is that flexibility allows the group the opportunity of incorporating new information in the goals and using new personal skills as the group as a whole works toward the fulfillment of the goal.

2. Adapt each group member's ideas to the group goal. In order to be an effective group leader, one must be able to **listen** to group members in order to bring their ideas into the whole of the group goals. We must be able to **organize** these ideas into the common goals of the entire group. When this is done, every member of the group feels a sense of being a part of the group. Everyone is thus encouraged to work together in order to accomplish the goals of the group.

When new members come into the group, the group must be flexible enough to incorporate the new talent. A group that resists the incorporation of new members will run members away. However, when the ideas of new members are considered and added to the process of group decision making, then the new members will feel a part of the whole.

3. Direct group problem solving. When dealing with people, there will always be conflicts. We are all human, and thus, need to work together in order to work out our differences. A good group leader must be able to direct a group in **evaluating** the progress of the group's work toward a goal. He first must be able to help the group to **identify problems that are encountered**, then lead the

group to **find solutions for those problems**. It is best that one lead the group in solving problems rather than in telling the group what to do. If the leader tells the group everything to do, the group will not learn to make decisions for itself. Leadership will not develop. In order to develop fellowship and partnership in a church, leaders must be able to allow the members to work together as a group in order to accomplish common goals.



Because God never appointed any one person or group of people to rule over the flock of God, we must assume that God wants all the church to make decisions as a group. Even when serious problems develop, as in the Acts 15 case when doctrinal problems were discussed, the entire church must have a part in making decisions as to how problems are to be solved. There must be transparency when dealing with those problems that affect the entire church. This point was illustrated by the Acts 6 case where the apostles refused to make a decision for the church. They placed the decision-making responsibility on the church as a whole to select the men who were to deal directly with the problem of administration to widows. Though the church as a whole did not deal directly with the daily administration of problem solving, they had an indirect part in dealing with solving the problem. Therefore, when it comes to dealing with matters that affect

the entire church, the entire church must have some part in making the decisions.

4. *Lead group discussions.* As a group leader, one must see himself or herself directing individuals in groups to carry out discussions as a group. One must make sure everyone participates in the group discussions. At the same time, the group leader must be careful not to dominate the decisions of the group. It is best to lead by asking questions and reviewing individual ideas. It is the task of the group facilitator to keep the discussion on the topic being discussed. In leading a group discussion, one must be able to **summarize the discussion** by bringing together all major ideas that the group has presented. The facilitator must then be able to **stop the discussion** at a set time. All discussions must come to an end in order that conclusions be made. It is the responsibility of the group leader to bring the discussion to a close and summarize on contributions to the discussion in order that the group make a decision on what was discussed.

5. *Share the responsibility of leadership.* As a church leader, it is your responsibility to encourage others to lead in the congregation. One must not be intimidated by others who have leadership abilities, especially younger leaders who are emerging in the congregation as leaders. Wise leadership will always share their leadership with others. They do not seek to become the dominant leader of the group. Good leaders always know how to delegate responsibility to others and then encourage everyone in the group to work. If one feels that his supposed

position is threatened, then he needs to examine his own attitude in reference to the group. Leaders must always remind themselves that the sheep belong to God.

6. *Be patient for progress and final results.* Leaders must remember that long-lasting change takes place slowly in a church. One dynamic sermon rarely turns a church around in order to proceed to an established spiritual goal. Leaders must exercise patience with people as they strive to accomplish group goals.

We must keep in mind also that sheep follow in a staggered manner. Some will come along quickly. Others will come later. And finally, there are those who will take nine months to a year to finally decide to follow. It is easy to be patient with those who change quickly. However, one's patience is challenged by those who will first argue against any change, but then, will come along later as they see the logic and advantage for the change. Some people are more resistant to change than others. However, those who are very resistant to change must learn that change is necessary for growth. Making changes, therefore, gives them the opportunity to confront their own fear of change. It also gives everyone an opportunity to be patient with one another while each one makes changes for growth.

Changing the way something is done is necessary when old methods and practices have failed to produce growth. It takes a courageous leader to stand up and say that change must be made in order to get God's church growing again. But this is the type of leader God needs. Revela-

tion 21:8 mentions that the “*cowardly ... will have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone*” These are fearful words for the church leader who is not brave enough to lead the church to do that which is right in the eyes of God. Cowardly leaders leave non-growing churches exactly where Satan wants them.

7. Learn to handle conflict. No one really likes problems. Paul had to exhort his companion at Philippi to help two sisters to settle a conflict because his companion—whoever this was—did not want to confront the two sisters (Ph 4:3). Timothy evidently became discouraged and stopped preaching because of those who opposed the truth (2 Tm 1:6,7). Regardless of the difficulties one must face in dealing with people, positions for truth and godly behavior must be affirmed.

As a group leader one must develop skills that will help people settle personal disputes. One of the first skills in handling conflict is to remember that we must first look to ourselves as leaders (Gl 6:1). Leaders must remember that they also have problems, and thus, sometimes create problems for others. Since the church is people, and people are fallible, then we must assume that there will be conflict when people seek to work together to accomplish a common goal.

In dealing with conflict, everyone must remember that working together as a church is God's way of fine-tuning our personalities for eternal dwelling. If we cannot work together here on earth, then we must not presume that we can be together in heaven. It is important to re-

member, therefore, that conflict offers an opportunity for growth in our own personalities.

8. Learn to ask and listen. If one is obsessed with talking, then he or she will have problems in leading groups. In order to lead a group, we must learn to be “*slow to speak*” (Js 1:19). **Ask questions** in order to draw information and participation out of others. Asking questions shows our interest in others. It makes others feel important and accepted. Leaders must learn to be comfortable in listening to others speak. Good group leaders learn how to direct discussions by asking those questions that help keep the discussion on the right subject. They know how to ask questions and listen for answers in order to encourage others to participate in the group. A leader who talks too much will drive people out of the discussion, and thus make people feel that they have no part in the decision-making process of the group. Remember, the one who speaks the most is not necessarily the best leader. It is the one who listens, gains knowledge from the words of others, and then acts on the knowledge of others.

9. Be with the group. One cannot be a good group leader if he always wants to be alone. As Jesus interacted with the people, we must interact with the group in order to gain their confidence and leadership. Effective group leadership never takes place from a distance. Leaders who are effective are among those they lead in order to understand the needs of those they lead.

In order to lead God's people, it is

necessary to understand that the church is a relationship of people on earth who have commonly accepted Jesus as their Lord through their obedience to the gospel. If a supposed leader separates himself from the sheep, he is not a leader after the relational principle of the church. He has simply established a religion after his own desires to be set as a ruler over a group of people. True leaders in the church are among the people because they seek to have a relationship with the people of God.

This principle also applies to the church. If we develop a behavior of the church that distances members from one another, and especially their leaders, then we are not the church of Christ on earth. In the religious world, large single-assembly churches often distance their leaders from the members. This takes place when churches make their large assemblies the central focus of their church function. Leaders in these churches are seen only from a distance, and often seated in the "chief seats" that are in the front of the auditorium. I do not believe Jesus would feel comfortable in some of the large single-assembly churches that exist today throughout the world.

10. Give yourself to others. If we sacrifice and give our time to the church group, members will respond to our love. The church will follow our example. The members can learn commitment by seeing it in the leaders. This is how Paul led others to victory. He said, "*The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do ...*" (Ph 4:9). When we give ourselves to others,

others will follow because they see that we care. It is imperative, therefore, that the leaders in the church establish a close relationship with the members.

B. Focusing on the business meeting:

As we study through the concepts of this point we must keep in mind that there are no scriptural mandates for the "men's business meeting." However, this does not mean that it is wrong to have a men's business meeting. The lack of a biblical example only means that God has allowed us the liberty to make many choices in reference to the work of the church. This is pointed out in the context of what happened when there was a need in the Jerusalem church for the equal distribution of food to the widows (At 6:1-7). The apostles requested that the church make the decision concerning who was to carry out this administration. We do not know how the church made the decision concerning the selection of the seven men who were chosen. They had freedom in how to make their choice. When the men were chosen, the Scriptures do not tell us how they went about carrying out their duties of distributing goods among the widows. They surely had business meetings in order to conduct this work. Since there are no directions in the Bible concerning how to carry out such meetings, the church has the liberty to come up with ideas concerning how to conduct such works of the church. Regardless of whether a church has elders, this does not affect the necessity of conducting "business"

whereby the church is to carry on with its work. The church must meet in order to make plans and assign responsibilities to make sure the general work of the church is accomplished.

The context of Hebrews 10:24,25 is a mandate for the church to have assemblies wherein we stir one another up to love and good works. The church must conduct meetings that deal with stirring up love. The church must conduct meetings that identify good works and stir members up to accomplish these works. (More on this in Book 6.)

Unfortunately, the men's business meeting has often become a forum for contention and argument. It has been the time when we come together for the worse and not the better. But this does not have to be. If some general rules are agreed on by all who are involved, the business meeting can be a time of great encouragement for everyone.

There are some principles of the church business meeting that must be considered in order to make such a meeting beneficial for everyone. These are principles that I suggest in order that this event not be an occasion for abuse and argument, but an occasion for conducting business in an atmosphere of order and good will.

1. Identify wrong concepts and practices concerning business meetings.

The normal practice of the men's business meeting often lends itself to confusion. It is supposed that all baptized males of the church are expected to attend the meeting. In this meeting, we

often allow the **new Christians** to have a vote in all decisions. Some of these Christians are still struggling with unchristian attitudes, and yet, we allow them the opportunity to have an equal vote in the work of the church about which they know little. We also allow **young Christians** in their teens to vote in the business meetings. Add to this the practice of allowing weak brothers or apostate brothers into such meetings. I often wonder what God thinks about all this confusion we create for ourselves.

In order to conduct a beneficial business meeting, the church must first use some wisdom. We do not have to set ourselves up for catastrophe. Understanding who should be present is very important. If there are present those who are cantankerous or argumentative in their attitudes, then there will be trouble in times of disagreement. If there are there those who do not have self-control, then the situation may develop into an occasion that is out of control. Simply because one is a male Christian does not mean that he has a right to make judgments concerning sensitive issues that develop in the church. There can be meetings conducted where novice and immature Christians can be present. However, when the meetings deal with sin problems and sensitive matters of the church, it is not the time for the presence of the unwise and immature.

Again, an example of the preceding would be the Acts 6 case when a problem developed in the church. The church as a whole was allowed to make the initial decision as to who would be pre-

sented to be on the committee. However, once this decision was made, the seven who were designated made the critical decisions that dealt specifically with the problems at hand. I assume that all males of the church did not have a part in the sensitive meetings of the seven as they met to organize and distribute to the widows. There is wisdom in this example, wisdom that is often ignored in order to bring every male member into meetings in which some are not emotionally or spiritually prepared to be.

It is certainly not wise leadership to think that simply because someone is a baptized believer that he has a right to make decisions concerning the work and future of the local congregation. We need to exercise some wisdom here by not laying hands hastily on any man. We must have meetings wherein the work of the church is discussed. Decisions for the practical work of a local congregation must be made. However, we can make these decisions in well-developed meetings that do not discourage those who participate in them.

2. Identify right concepts and practices concerning business meetings. With every congregation, there are decisions that must be made in order to go on with the work of the church. Issues and situations are to be discussed. However, we must assume that wisdom and maturity must be the primary focus of concern for those who make these decisions. Here are some suggestions on who should make the decisions concerning the direction of the local church.

a. Evangelists and the mature saints should lead in newly established churches. In a newly established church I believe that the evangelist, or mature members, are the ones who know the Bible best and better understand the nature of the church. At least, the evangelist should know who is emotionally and spiritually equipped to lead in decision-making in the church. Therefore, he would be best qualified to lead in helping the church to make critical decisions that affect the future of a local church. It seems that Paul gave this challenge to Titus in Titus 1:5. *“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking”* This charge certainly meant more than preaching and teaching the word. It at least meant teaching on subjects that were necessary for the new Christians. Titus was even given the responsibility to designate *“elders in every city”* of Crete where the church had been established.

We must not assume that the evangelist is given dictatorial rights in the church. No one person or group of people has this right over the church of God. Nevertheless, we must assume that in newly established churches the evangelist must lead the church into making correct and scriptural decisions. Leading leaders to make correct decisions is a part of establishing a church. Therefore, a preacher who assumes total control over the decision making process of a newly established church does not really know how to establish a church. He must remember that when he leaves, if he has not trained men to make decisions, the

business meetings of the church will digress into chaos.

Now the question arises concerning how a newly established church is to go about making decisions that affect the church. Our answer to this question is subjective since we have little information in the New Testament to direct our answer. The Holy Spirit has left this area of discussion open in order to challenge us to exercise our love factor. We have freedom, therefore, to come up with a plan for decision-making in the local congregation that is based on our love of one another.

I am assuming that a newly established church is only a few months old. Though Paul left Timothy and Silas in Berea and Thessalonica when he went to Athens, the first letter that he wrote back to the Thessalonians came only a few months after his initial visit there. Paul stayed in Philippi only a few days, possibly two or three weeks (At 16:12). Though he left Luke in order to nurture this newly established work, he, Timothy and Silas went on to Thessalonica. Both of the churches in Thessalonica and Philippi grew and maintained themselves as newly established churches.

God expects new converts to get on with their growth, both in spirit and in the word. It is for this reason that immaturity and ungodly attitudes should not be allowed in those who have been Christians for years. If an ungodly attitude is manifested in a business meeting by a brother who is many years old as a Christian, he must be rebuked. He must be dealt with because of his lack of spiri-

tual growth to control himself in the midst of others with whom he may disagree. He is not manifesting a spirit of love in the bond of peace. The instructions of Colossians 3:12-14 should be the motto for conducting and conduct of every business meeting of the church:

Therefore, put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also should you. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfect unity.

b. Select a group of spiritual men. In order to deal with very sensitive matters in the church, the church has a right to select a group of spiritual men. The church has a right to keep immature Christians out of sensitive meetings wherein sensitive subjects are discussed concerning the affairs of the church. In Acts 6:3 the apostles who were the existing leadership of the church in Jerusalem, directed **the church to choose** out from among themselves a **plurality** of men with the following qualities:

- (1) Men who had a good reputation.
- (2) Men who were full of the Holy Spirit.
- (3) Men who were full of wisdom.

After the selection of these men by the church, the church set them before the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them (At 6:6). The qualifications that

were given by the apostles would be the qualifications which should guide the evangelist with the church in selecting men to make decisions concerning the sensitive matters of the church's function. Keep in mind that the church has a part in making the initial decision concerning who would be chosen. After this decision-making process was completed, the seven who were chosen were then allowed to make sensitive decisions concerning the distribution of food to the widows.

The Acts 6 context is one of the few texts in the New Testament wherein we assume regular business meetings took place. There were seven men who were chosen to deal with the problem of distributing food to the widows. In view of what was done, the apostles were actually stating that the church has a right to select a specific group of men to deal with specific problems that arise in the church. The seven men who were chosen on this occasion had a right to assemble together in order to make decisions concerning the distribution of food to the widows. No one else was allowed in these meetings. This is true simply because the seven men were chosen as a special task force to deal with the problem of the widows.

c. Submit to designated leaders. In reference to the preceding selection of the seven men, it is assumed that the church delegated to them the right to make decisions concerning the distribution of food to the widows. They could conduct their own business meetings, and then carry out what they decided in the meetings. This was in view of the fact

that immature or new Christians were not allowed to be present in these meetings.

Paul instructed the Corinthian church to **submit** to the household of Stephanas who had "*devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints*" (1 Co 16:15,16). The household of Stephanas was composed of experienced Christians for they were the first converts of the church when Paul established it in Corinth. They had also worked and labored with Paul, who was an experienced church leader. As with the seven chosen men of Jerusalem in Acts 6, the church was to submit to those who ministered to its needs. Both the household of Stephanas and the seven had dedicated themselves to serve. When the New Testament speaks of submission, the meaning is that the rest of the church must submit to the service of those it has chosen to minister to its spiritual and physical needs. When there is no submission, service cannot be carried out by those who want to serve.

From the above scriptures (At 6:1-6; 1 Co 16:15,16; Ti 1:5), we could make the following summary concerning the qualifications of those who would make up the decision-making group of men. These are those who would seek to come together in order to deal with decisions that must be made concerning the work of the church.

(1) When a church is **newly established**, the experienced evangelist should lead the men of the church who are biblically and spiritually trained to join him in making decisions for the direction of the church. This should take

place as soon as possible, lest the evangelist become the center of reference for decision-making in the church.

(2) Those who are chosen should have a **good reputation** in the community. They should have a good reputation in order that the outreach of the church to the community not be rejected by those who know the past record of one who may have a bad reputation. If the community knows that ungodly men are making decisions for the church, then the name of Jesus is blasphemed in the community.

(3) Those who are chosen should be men who have **submitted to the direction of the Spirit-inspired word of God**. They must be Bible-centered men who direct their lives according to what is right in the Scriptures. Those who do not know the word of God have no right to make decisions that affect the church as a whole.

(4) Those who are chosen should be **men of wisdom**. They should be men who are known for praying for wisdom. Since many decisions are to be made in the business meetings of the church, then certainly great wisdom is needed by those who make the decisions.

(5) Those who are chosen should **not be novice Christians**. Those who have recently come into the body of Christ usually have little knowledge of what the body is. It is necessary that they begin a thorough study of the word of God on the subject of the nature and work of the body of Christ. This is necessary in order to make scriptural decisions concerning the function of the body.

(6) Those who are chosen should be **devoted to the ministry of the saints and work of the church**. New converts will often view leadership in the church as they view it in the world. They will thus have the tendency to bring into the church leadership practices by which they lived in the world. One should be a Christian long enough to understand that leadership in the church is by servanthood, not by making and handing down mandates to the church. It took the disciples over three years to learn this lesson from Jesus. It will take new converts some time to learn that they must devote themselves to being slaves, not lords.

(7) Those who are chosen must **recognize that they are not chosen to function as elders**. The work of elders in counseling and praying will always be carried out by godly men, though they have not been designated as elders. However, we must understand that one is not an elder if the church has not so designated him. Keep in mind also, that being an elder is not a position of power. It is a work of service to the needs of the flock of God. When one becomes a part of a group to make decisions, he and those with him, must not assume that they are elders of the church. They must not assume that they are now in some position of authority whereby they can hand down dictates to the church. Elders do not have this authority, and certainly, no other group of men in the church has this authority. If they think they do, then the group must be immediately disbanded by the church.

(8) Those who are chosen must **recognize that they are a temporary group**. They are temporary until the problem is solved. This is a very important point. I have seen churches who have designated men to take care of decisions in the church over specific ministries. However, as time progressed these men began to conduct themselves as authorities of the church. They became a self-perpetuating group who added others to their membership, and thus, began functioning parallel to the church. This is heresy. It is for this reason that groups of men who are designated to take care of special needs of the church should view themselves as only temporary. They should serve for a designated period of time, after which, they need to “resign” lest they become puffed up in their supposed “position.”

Even the choosing of the seven in Acts 6 was temporary. The church had been in existence for at least three or four years by the time of the events of Acts 6. During this time there was no “committee” who came together to make decisions concerning the distribution of food to the widows. In other words, **the committee was not formed until a problem developed**. Now think about this for a moment. The normal responsibility of the church to care for the widows was going on just fine until a problem developed. It was only when the problem developed that a committee was designated to take care of the problem. The point is that the committee disbanded when the problem was solved. Philip went on to Caesarea as an evangelist.

Steven was stoned. The problem of food distribution to the widows was solved. The committee was terminated. Committees that have no end usually evolve into becoming a problem.

When the church is functioning as it should, there should be no need for special committees and programs. The early church in Jerusalem seemed to function well without all the programs we muster up today to organize masses of people into action. The Jerusalem church met in the homes of the members in small groups. Everyone's needs in the group were addressed. In the Acts 6 situation, there was a problem because of some discrimination against the Grecian Jewish widows wherein the Jews of Judea ignored their needs. Because the church was meeting in the homes of the members, it was easy for a group of house churches to ignore the Grecian Jews who lived on the other side of town. In order to solve the problem, the apostles gave some wise advice.

The designating of the committee of seven was only advice. It was good advice for the occasion. However, I am not concluding that the appointing of committees is a necessity for the church. Just keep in mind that the church functioned for several years without the committee of seven.

Regardless of what is done, it is always best to have more than one man of the church making decisions for the church. The church as a whole should even be allowed to make the decision as to who should be chosen to serve in the

business meeting. Those who are selected should then be brought before any existing leadership for prayer and confirmation. I would also suggest that these men be assigned to this committee for a definite period of time, that is, for six months or a year. At the end of this time, a new committee can be chosen to serve for another period of time or for the continued solution of a problem that has arisen.

C. Conducting church business meetings:

Anyone who has participated in a normal business meeting of the church realizes that rules must first be established in order to conduct an orderly meeting. The following are a few brief suggestions on how to conduct effective group meetings in order to make the meeting flow as harmoniously as possible:

1. Prepare the meeting place. The place where you meet often affects the attitudes of those who meet. Therefore, be conscious of the following physical arrangements of your meeting place if you have a choice of where and how to meet:

a. Choose the right day. Select an agreeable day of the week, preferably a day when group members have little work. This will guarantee that members will not be exhausted before the meeting even begins. The right day, therefore, would possibly be on a Satur-

day or Sunday. If the meeting is conducted after a hard working day, those who will attend will be tired before they arrive.

b. Choose the right time. Select a time of the day that is favored to all. I have found that a Sunday afternoon or a Saturday morning is the best time. If the meeting is conducted in the morning, those who attend will be fresh and ready. If the meeting is Sunday afternoon, everyone will be rested from the week of work, and thus, can focus on the business at hand.

c. Choose the right length of time for the meeting. This is especially critical if the meeting is on a weekday after everyone has had a hard day's work before they arrive at the meeting. If the meeting goes too long, quick decisions will be made at the last of the meeting just to get the meeting over so everyone can go home. If a specific length of time for the meeting is determined before the meeting, then everyone will have to agree together if the meeting is to go beyond the limit of the agreed time.

Setting a specific limit of time for the meeting will also help encourage everyone to be specific in their discussions. Some groups use a clock in order to limit the time for discussion on each topic of the agenda. In this way, frivolous discussion that adds nothing to the discussion of the topic will be kept to a minimum. Disciplined leaders conduct meetings with a specific time limit for discussions over each topic of the agenda. If the time goes beyond this limit, then two-thirds of the group must agree on an

extension of time, or the discussion of the topic is tabled until the next meeting. The time limit for each topic is recommended by the one who has added the subject to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. Once everyone has recommended the time needed for their topic, then a vote is made by everyone in order to gain consensus for the established times.

d. Choose the right seating.

Arrange **comfortable** seating, if possible, **where all men can see one another's face**. This will greatly aid the group's communication with one another. It will also help group members communicate their feelings to one another in a more effective manner. It is important that everyone is seated where faces can be seen by everyone. Looking at the back of someone's head is not a good arrangement for seating. Facing one another makes the meeting more personal. It also helps to avoid arguments or contentious objections on minor points of discussion.

It is important to remember that when communication takes place, body language is very important. If members are looking at the back of one another's heads, the opportunity to view body language is greatly reduced. When sensitive matters are discussed, especially between two or three who are in the meeting, they must be seated where they can address one another face to face.

e. Choose the right agenda.

Organize the meeting with an **agenda**. An agenda is a list of things that are to be discussed during the meeting. As previously stated, establish a **definite**

amount of time to be allotted for the discussion of each item on the agenda. Designate a **chairman** to guide the group through the agenda. Select a **secretary** to make notes of everything that is discussed during the meeting. **Be sure to write down all decisions that are made during the meeting.** You will need this written record for future reference, especially when someone forgets what decisions were made. If goals are being established in the meeting, these goals must be recorded for future reference.

The agenda will greatly help you to have an organized meeting. It will help you to keep on the subject of discussion. It will help keep members from becoming frustrated with the business meetings. And when members are not frustrated, a much better atmosphere can be maintained to make serious and mature decisions for the future of the church. Recording the discussion and decisions of a meeting adds seriousness to our work of the church. After all, we are dealing with God's kingdom business, and thus, we must with seriousness discuss His business.

2. Prepare the emotions of those who meet. Here are some things that leaders need to do to train the men to think about in order for them to effectively participate in a business meeting. Group meetings will be positive if everyone who is involved in the meetings has the following mental attitudes and preparation for any meeting:

a. Team spirit: Members must develop a team spirit in order to work

together in a team meeting. Individualists often have a difficult time agreeing on subjects on which they disagree with others. On the other hand, team planners will seek to make decisions together in a team meeting. Everyone must come to the meeting with a determination to work together with others.

This does not mean that church politics takes place before the meeting. If a member starts calling around on others before the meeting in order to recruit people to his side, then he must be approached on this matter at the meeting. When we start the process of recruiting, we are turning the work of the church into a forum for politics within the family of God. We must always keep our discussions on matters that affect everyone to a time when everyone is present.

b. Cooperative spirit: Members must make a mental decision to cooperate with one another. Uncooperative people have no business in the business meeting of the church. They must first repent of their obstinate attitude before they can work harmoniously in a business meeting. If one comes to a group meeting with an uncooperative spirit, his part in the meeting will inevitably lead to tension within the meeting. This does not mean that everyone who disagrees must keep silent in the meeting. It is not the disagreement, but the attitude by which one disagrees. Those who have an uncooperative spirit will not agree with anyone. They are not concerned with the opinions of anyone. It is for this reason that their lack of cooperation brings division into the meeting. In

matters of opinion, about which almost all business meetings are conducted, there is room for compromise. One who has an uncooperative spirit will not compromise in areas of opinion. And for this reason, he or she has a difficult time in working as a team in a meeting with others.

c. Expect to compromise: Members must expect to compromise (not in doctrine) in order to make group decisions. In the making of any decisions in a group, there must always be some compromise. Therefore, in order to prepare for an effective group meeting everyone must come to the meeting with the knowledge that compromises will often have to be made. Uncompromising people in matters of opinion will hinder decisions being made.

d. Assume responsibility: Members must assume the responsibility of church leadership. When preparing for the business meeting, everyone must determine that decisions will be made. This is assuming responsibility for the work of the church. If no decisions are made, then the leaders are not assuming responsibility. When decisions are made, people have assumed responsibility, and thus, the church can move on.

e. Make sacrifices: Members must be willing to sacrifice time and self in order to meet regularly and consistently. If one does not meet consistently with the group, then he or she has manifested a lack of commitment to the group, as well as to each member in the group. Therefore, if a successful business meeting is to be conducted on a regular basis,

it is imperative that everyone agree to be present. When everyone knows that sacrifices have been made in order to conduct the meeting, then everyone will take the business at hand in a serious manner.

f. Make decisions: Members must determine to make decisions. An agenda of important subjects for which no decisions are made will eventually frustrate everyone involved in the meeting. Attendance will fall when the group fails to make decisions and act on those decisions. This does not mean that some subjects should not be tabled for a following meeting. There are some decisions that must be delayed until everyone has had an opportunity to think about the matter at hand. Once all the information and ideas of everyone involved have been given, then a motion can be made to table the subject for discussion at a following meeting. However, a decision must eventually be made. Leaders who lead make decisions, and then move on with their decisions.

g. Grow in love: Members must grow in love for one another in order to function as a group. If there is no love present in the meeting, then things will be said out of harshness. Feelings will be hurt, and members will refuse to show up for the next meeting. It is love that draws everyone together for a healthy meeting. It is the lack of love that will destroy a good meeting. It is imperative that every meeting of the church flow with love. Remember, if a meeting does not edify, it will hinder the spiritual growth of the church.

h. Be optimistic: Members

must be optimistic about the results of their decisions. If one comes to a meeting in hope of great things being decided, then enthusiasm will be generated in the hearts of everyone. When decisions are made, everyone will be positive about the decisions, and thus, will be motivated to work together in order to bring into action the decisions.

i. Believe that God is working: Members must believe that God will bless their plans with results. God knows that we have limited knowledge. We do not know the future. Decisions are made on the basis of what we desire will happen in the future because of our experiences of the past. Everyone must understand that God is working in our lives in order to bring about that which is exceedingly abundantly above what we think or decide.

j. Be patient: Members must be patient with one another and the church in its spiritual growth. When decisions are made, it may take some time before the results are realized. When decisions are made concerning the edification ministry for the church, then everyone must realize that it will take some time before goals are accomplished.

k. Pray and fast: Members of any group must be people of prayer and fasting. I would suggest that some business meetings simply be an hour or two of prayer. Work out the agenda. Bring everyone together. Lay the agenda before everyone with explanations, and then, everyone pray together for the subjects of the agenda. After an hour or two of prayer for the agenda, there is often

little necessity for discussion over minor points. Members simply need to get to work and do what must be done. For example, if there is on the agenda unfaithful members who must be visited, an hour or two of prayer for these people will move everyone into action.

Prayer and fasting are necessary to ask God to bless our feeble plans. We make decisions with fallible minds. Therefore, we need God to work in our lives to bless our efforts to do His will. Prayer keeps God in our plans. In fasting we discipline our commitment to the work. We sometimes try to run ahead of God with some decisions. If we are constantly on our knees in prayer, we keep ourselves aware of the fact that we are dependent on God for His work in our lives.

3. *Maintain the psychological and emotional environment of the business meeting.* It is imperative to maintain a positive atmosphere during a business meeting. This is something for which everyone must strive. It takes only one argumentative personality to spoil a good meeting. If this happens, then the argumentative member must be approached. If everyone works to have an edifying meeting, then everyone will enjoy being together to discuss the work of the church. Here are some suggestions on what can be done in order to maintain a positive atmosphere during group meetings.

a. Everyone must speak: Make sure everyone speaks or gives an

opinion. If people go away from the meeting with things on their minds that they feel they should have said, then they will not have a satisfying feeling about the meeting. It is the responsibility of the moderator/facilitator of the meeting to make sure that everyone who wants to speak has an opportunity to speak.

b. Suppress criticism: Everyone must work together in order to make every member feel that he or she can freely express opinions without being personally criticized or intimidated. When there is a spirit of love present, then there will develop an atmosphere in the meeting wherein everyone can speak his piece without fear of retribution. Those members who are quick to disagree should remember the exhortation of James to be "slow to speak." If our comments about someone's work are constantly critical, then we will intimidate others not to do their work.

c. Promote acceptance: In order to have great participation in a group, everyone must feel that he or she is accepted by the group. If there are those who feel shy or are somewhat introverted, then special attention must be given to these people. They must feel that their presence is necessary. They must be encouraged to contribute to the general discussion of the group.

d. Suppress domination: There are those who either consciously or unconsciously dominate the group discussion by their much speaking. If this occurs, the group may have to establish a system by which participants must be recognized before they can speak. Or, it

may be best to establish some rules whereby everyone will be able to give an opinion without being left out of the discussion. Those who are vocal with their opinions must be exhorted to be cautious about their outspoken nature. They must be conscious about such in order not to dominate the discussion of the group.

e. Define the purpose of the meeting: Make sure everyone understands that the meeting is for the purpose of making decisions concerning the work of the church. If this is not done, then spontaneous discussion will occur about matters that should not be discussed in the group. This is a very important point because open discussions in groups often cause the group to stray from its purpose. As a result a great deal of time is wasted in discussions about things that do not pertain to the purpose of the group meeting. If spontaneous discussions continue to dominate the group meeting, frustration with the meeting will occur. It is for this reason that an agenda must be established and everyone encouraged to focus strictly on the points of the agenda.

f. Allow freedom of expression: Allow freedom for those who need to express their emotions and deep concerns for the church and lost souls. We must be passionate about the business of saving the lost and edifying the church. Allowances must be made for members to be passionate with one another concerning the work of the church. Bondage destroys passion.

g. Encourage discussion:

Make sure everyone's feelings are expressed and that no one goes away with opinions that should have been expressed during the meeting. Those who go away without expressing their opinions will express them to others outside the meeting. If this happens, then you know that the meeting is not encouraging everyone to speak. It is for this reason that special care must be taken in order to encourage everyone in the meeting to speak.

h. Develop a relaxing atmosphere: It is important that a relaxing atmosphere be developed when discussing those things that naturally cause tension. Business meetings are occasions wherein differences of opinion will be expressed. If the atmosphere is tense, then the discussion can digress to argument. When argument occurs within the meeting, the edifying nature of the meeting is lost. There will be those who will not return to the meeting if they perceive it will be an occasion for argument. It is for this reason that those who lead business meetings must develop skills by which they can make everyone feel at ease in an atmosphere of discussion about serious subjects.

i. Pray during the meeting: Business meetings often begin and close with prayer. However, successful meetings will contain prayer. Always take time for prayer during the meeting for those special cases that need prayer. In order to begin this, list a time of prayer on the agenda. A specific time can be allotted for prayer for things that are currently under discussion. If one participant becomes agitated during the meet-

ing, it is sometimes good to ask that person to pray for the discussion that is taking place.

j. Maintain order: A meeting that is out of order will quickly turn into chaos. It is the responsibility of the facilitator of the meeting to make sure that order is maintained. Everyone expects an orderly meeting. If the facilitator does not deliver an orderly meeting, everyone will be frustrated with him.

k. Express love: Love should be freely expressed during the business meeting. This will set the tone for the meeting. An expression of love will greatly relieve tension that may build up during serious discussion.

The effectiveness of the church in reaching out to the community depends

on good group leaders. The effectiveness of the leaders to build relationships within a congregation of people will depend on their ability to organize members to have edifying meetings. The spiritual growth of the church group depends on the ability of gifted people to lead group meetings. No leader should seek to be a dictator or “lord over the flock.” As group leaders it is our responsibility to draw out the individual gifts of each member in order to lead the church to victory in Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that great business meetings will result in great communication among the members. If this communication is conducted in a loving manner, everyone will be encouraged to work harder for Jesus to the glory of God.

Chapter 8

Church Disciplined Churches

I include here a lengthy study of what I believe is an essential element for successful church establishment and church growth that was practiced by the first century church. Disciplined churches grow. They grow because the members understand the seriousness of the church and the work in which the church is involved. Undisciplined Christians become indifferent and lazy. They do not take seriously the salvation of the souls of the lost, and especially, the salvation of the souls who are saved. A loving father does not leave his children without discipline. Neither do brethren who love one another leave themselves without discipline.

Discipline has always been in God’s plan to preserve, protect and grow His people. This vital action in the early church stimulated seriousness on the part of the church. This seriousness stimulated growth. Undisciplined churches are uncommitted about their faith and work. Undisciplined churches become social clubs of people who show up at a club house on Sunday morning in order to renew their membership at the club. The group is afraid to exercise discipline of the group lest the membership of the club decrease by the running away of members. The group thus digresses into stalemate, and eventually, death.

Churches that are afraid to carry out their God-ordained duty to discipline wayward members because they are afraid of running members away, actually decrease in growth because members drift away. A disciplined group retains the commitment of the members of the group because each member understands the seriousness of the group. On the other hand, groups that allow the members to remain undisciplined have lost the respect of the members. Churches that do not carry out discipline of members who are in sin, therefore, lose the respect of the members, and thus members simply drift away without any loving correction by the group as a whole.

Any society loses its identity without discipline. So it is with the church community. Societies, as well as the church, are bound together by law and common origin and goal. Without such, anarchy will prevail. In order for the group to maintain its identity, each member must exercise personal self-discipline to maintain the governing laws of the group. Without this personal self-discipline, the group will lose its “fellowship” together and disintegrate into nonexistence. When any individual of a society violates the binding law of the society, the group is obligated to discipline that individual in order to maintain the identity of the group as well as the common support base of the group, that is, the governing law. The personal self-discipline of each group member gives the group as a whole effectiveness in disciplining individual members. When God instituted the church, He knew that group

discipline was necessary, and thus, incorporated within the conduct of the New Testament church the command of church discipline.

At the beginning of the nation of Israel, God disciplined His people. He did so for at least three reasons: (1) He desired to solidify the society of Israel, and thus, prevent anarchy. (2) He desired to manifest His disdain for violation of His law that He gave to direct the society of Israel. (3) He desired to illustrate the extent or extreme to which He would go in final judgment upon sin against His law. When Israel understood these three reasons for God’s discipline of them as a nation, then they were serious about maintaining their identity as a nation.

The preceding three purposes for God’s discipline of Israel as a nation in its infant beginnings were manifested in several examples. When Israel arrived at Mount Sinai after the exodus from Egypt, Dathan led an insurrection against God’s appointed authority (Nm 16). His rebellion led to the death of 250 men as God rained down judgment to discipline those who were disobedient to His will. Secondly, when Israel entered the promised land, Achan committed a supposed minor theft after the destruction of Jericho (Ja 7:10-26). As a result, God commanded that he and all his family be stoned to death by the Israelite community. From these and many other examples of discipline in the very beginnings of the establishment of Israel as a nation, the people were disciplined in order to manifest God’s seriousness about what He was trying to accomplish.

The same strictness of judgment and discipline was carried out at the beginning of the church in the first century. Ananias and Sapphira told what some would consider a small lie (At 5:1-11). Nevertheless, to illustrate God's seriousness about sin and church discipline, they both fell dead at Peter's feet. As a result, *"great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things"* (At 5:11). God's direct discipline accomplished its purpose. The people feared. The result of the fear was church growth. Luke recorded, *"And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women"* (At 5:14). Such cases of divine discipline at the beginning of God's development of His church family illustrates the seriousness with which He considers sin. It also illustrates the extent to which He will ultimately go in punishing the sin of those who blatantly neglect and violate His commands that have been given to the church.

The apostles maintained strict church discipline in the early development of the church. God delegated to the apostles the power of the **rod** (1 Co 4:21; see 2 Co 10:2; 13:1-4). The "rod" was certainly more than a powerfully preached sermon or written letter. Timothy was sent to preach powerful sermons in order to bring about repentance in the Corinthian church (1 Co 4:17-21). The rod of the Christ-sent apostles was not a hard letter, for 1 & 2 Corinthians were straightforward letters. **The authority of the rod was the authority of Christ-sent apostles to exercise discipline by physical punishment.** This truth was il-

lustrated when Bar-jesus defiantly rebelled against the authority of the word of God in Acts 13. **Paul personally struck this man blind** (At 13:6-12). Paul also delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander unto Satan that they might **be taught** not to blaspheme (1 Tm 1:20). This deliverance unto Satan was certainly more than a pronouncement that Paul had personally disfellowshipped these two brothers. In the case of the sinful brother in Corinth, his deliverance unto Satan was for the *"destruction of the flesh"* (1 Co 5:5). Something physical happened when one was delivered unto Satan.

Such physical punishment was inflicted in order that the sinner be "taught" (1 Tm 1:20). It was with this warning that Paul urged the Corinthians to repent of some sinful practices that were taking place in God's community in Corinth. If they did not straighten out the matter before he arrived, he would have to exercise the apostolic rod of discipline. John also comforted Gaius and warned Diotrephes that he would remember the unrighteous deeds of Diotrephes when he personally came (3 Jn 10). Such authority that was invested in the hands of Christ-sent apostles was evidently one of the *"signs of an apostle"* that Paul personally worked among the Corinthians (2 Co 12:12). This delegated power to the apostles was given for **the purpose of establishing a disciplined nature in the early church.** This discipline established the precedent for how serious God considers sin in the church. Though He does not at this time unleash direct and immediate physical punishment on those

in the church who sin, we must not forget that wrath is being stored up for the judgment of the great day of the Lord in the end.

Christ-sent apostles do not exist today to inflict physical punishment upon defiant and immoral members of the church. Nevertheless, the apostles' first century action reveals to us what God will do to those who persist in sin. We can be assured that He will at the final judgment severely deal with sin which has been willfully practiced by brothers and sisters in the church (See Rv 21:8). Therefore, in the absence of the discipline of the Christ-sent apostles, God has delegated to the church family the right to exercise discipline upon those who willfully and defiantly persist in practicing those things that are contrary to the commandments of God.

In an effort to direct the behavior of the church after the commandments of God, every member must obey **the law of exclusion** that is taught in the New Testament. The law of inclusion (immersion for remission of sins) is necessary in order to bring people into a covenant relationship with God. The responsibility for obedience to the law of inclusion is on the shoulders of the alien sinner. He must make a decision to obey the law of God concerning obedience to the gospel in order to be saved. He must obey because obedience to the gospel is a law of God. It is thus not an optional thing to do. It is not a matter of opinion.

With the same seriousness we must approach the law of exclusion from the community of God. In reference to the

law of exclusion, the same principles must be obeyed because the law is from God. God has commanded the church to withdraw from the wayward sinner. The responsibility for obedience to the law of exclusion, however, falls on the shoulders of the faithful. If they do not obey this law, they sin against God. Therefore, the faithful do not have the option of carrying out obedience to the law of exclusion. They must obey God. The church, therefore, is obligated to obey this law in order not to be in sin against God.

In the contexts of Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 and Hebrews 10:19-31,39 the Holy Spirit gives directions concerning the discipline of the church in obedience to the law of exclusion. The following points are an explanation of the nature of the above scriptures in relation to church discipline:

A. The nature of church fellowship:

In order to understand the nature of church discipline one must first understand the nature of church fellowship. The following points illustrate the nature of the Christian's relationship with his brothers and sisters in Christ. This nature of fellowship is manifested in the personal responsibility Christians have toward one another and the communal responsibilities each member has as a part of the body.

1. Christians are self-disciplined.

The individual member's responsibility in reference to discipline of fellow mem-

bers of the church is grounded in one's own self-discipline. This is clearly portrayed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:27. *"But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."* The effectiveness of church discipline is based on the obedience that individual members are *"temperate [self-controlled] in all things"* (1 Co 9:25). This is one reason why so much emphasis is placed on the subject of self-control in the New Testament (See At 24:25; Gl 5:23; 2 Pt 1:6; Ti 1:8; 2:2). Because it is the nature of Christians to be self-disciplined in their fellowship with God, they must be disciplined in their relationships with one another. Therefore, church discipline grows out of the individual discipline that God calls on Christians to maintain in their personal lives. The church as a group must discipline those who do not submit to the discipline God calls on individual Christians to maintain in their lives.

An illustration of the above is in the matter of members working to support their own needs. In the Thessalonian situation, there were some members who had quit their jobs, and thus, were begging off other members. They were thus walking disorderly in that they were not working with their hands in order to supply their own needs. Paul wrote, *"But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us"* (2 Th 3:6). The tradition that they had received from

Paul, Timothy and Silas was to work with their hands. Paul continued, *"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you"* (2 Th 3:7,8). Paul's instructions to the Thessalonian brethren were, *"If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat"* (2 Th 3:10). Herein is the action of discipline. Members must discipline themselves to work in order to supply their own needs. Those members who are lazy, must be denied food in order that they be motivated to work. The church must discipline the lazy members in order to help them learn how to work for their own food. If a member will not work when there is work, and he can work, then he must be disfellowshipped from the saints.

2. Christians are communal in helping one another. Before one can understand the nature of "disfellowship," he must first understand the biblical definition of fellowship in the Christian community. Christians are obligated as members of the church of Christ to interact with one another. James stated, *"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him ..."* (Js 5:14). Those who lead in the church *"watch out for your souls"* (Hb 13:17). This is another benefit of the fellowship of the church. Paul exhorted those who are faithful to restore the weak (Gl 6:1). Christians are also *"exhort one another daily"* (Hb 3:13) and *"consider one another in order to*

stir up love and good works" (Hb 10:24). Christians bear one another's burdens (Gl 6:1,2). Christians are to take care of one another's physical and spiritual needs (See At 2:44,45; 4:32-37; Ph 2:1-4). They are to take care of their widows and orphans (See At 6:1ff; 1 Tm 5:3-16; Js 1:27). They are to work in order to give to the poor (At 20:35; 1 Jn 3:16-20).

When one is in the fellowship of the Christian community, he or she is in an interacting group that takes care of the members of the group in both spiritual and physical matters. One not only has the opportunity to give help but also to partake of that help in times of need. When one is in fellowship with the church, therefore, he or she is a partaker of the greatest community on earth. The church is a divinely instituted community that meets the needs of the individual in order that each member of the community reach the ultimate goal of heaven. Therefore, when considering the subject of disfellowship from the fellowship of the community of God, it is essential to understand the close fellowship that must be maintained among members of the church.

B. The nature and extent of church disfellowship:

There are several words and statements used in the New Testament that explain the nature of church discipline or disfellowship from God's community. In particular, these concepts explain both **what is done** in the action of church discipline as well as the **relationship the**

faithful are to have with those who are disciplined.

In reference to carrying out the action of discipline, churches must keep in mind that church discipline is a whole church work. It is not the work of a few men behind closed doors who make judgments, and then hand down such judgments to the church. Jesus said that the problem of the offending brother must eventually be taken before the members (Mt 18:15-18). When the problem of legalistic teachers arose in the church in the first century, the apostles, elders and whole church were involved in making the decision concerning what must be done (See At 15). When the immoral brother was to be disfellowshipped from the church of Corinth, the matter was to be carried out before the entire assembly of the church (1 Co 5:4,5). One of the purposes for the action of discipline is to bring the entire church into fear. If the decision for discipline is determined by one person or a group of leaders in the church, without the consent of the church, then divisive feelings are generated. It is important, therefore, that the entire church deal with problems that affect the entire church.

It is important to understand also that there are extents or levels of church discipline that are administered by the church toward those who are not walking according to the standard of God's word. There are those who are to be marked, not disfellowshipped, because they cause division by binding where God has not bound. There are those who are in the fellowship of the church, but

are walking disorderly by not providing for themselves, and thus, must be disfellowshipped. There are those who must be barred from the assembly of the saints because they are immoral. There are those who have denied fundamental teachings. Such people must be identified as disfellowshipped from fellowship of the church. It is important, therefore, to understand the following texts in the context of what is being discussed by the inspired writers:

1. Deliver unto Satan: The problem of immorality in the Corinthian church was a family matter. A man was living in immorality with his father's wife, who may have been his stepmother (1 Co 5:1). Concerning the one living in immorality, Paul said to "*deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*" (1 Co 5:5). The same concept is stated by Paul in 1 Timothy 1:20 in his **personal action as a Christ-sent apostle** to deliver Hymenaeus and Alexander unto Satan. This action seems to be in the context of a Christ-sent apostle exercising divine power that had been delegated specifically to the Christ-sent apostles in order to set a standard of discipline for the church (See 2 Co 13:2-4). The deliverance of one to Satan was for the purpose of physical punishment and was enacted only by the Christ-commissioned apostles. In Corinth, Paul carried out this apostolic responsibility **by the proxy of the assembled church of Corinth**. He said, "*For I indeed, as absent in the body but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present*

...'" (1 Co 5:3). In the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander, however, Paul personally carried out the deliverance unto Satan.

In both of the above cases the result of the deliverance was physical punishment. They were delivered to "*the destruction of the flesh*" (1 Co 5:5). Such punishment was intended **to teach or promote repentance on the part of the sinner**. It was assumed in both cases that the sinners would learn and return to the flock after mourning over their sin so as to be saved in the day of Christ.

Today, however, we do not have Christ-sent apostles in the church. **Direct** destruction of the flesh by being delivered to Satan, therefore, **does not exist**. When one is disciplined by the church today, he does not suffer the direct physical punishment from God. However, the consequences of his or her personal sin may result in **indirect** physical suffering according to the principle of reaping what one sows (See Gl 6:7,8). The emotional strain of one being disfellowshipped may lead to physical sickness, and subsequently, repentance on the part of the sinner.

When church discipline is exercised today, **the support system of church fellowship is taken away from the sinning individual**. In a metaphorical sense, therefore, he or she is "delivered unto Satan." The sinning individual no longer has the protection and help of the Christian community. He or she is once again delivered to the devices of Satan from which he or she was subject before conversion (1 Pt 5:8).

2. Withdrawal of fellowship: In the

situation of the Thessalonians, Paul exhorted, “*But we **command** you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **withdraw from** every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us*” (2 Th 3:6). The word “withdraw” is translated from a Greek word *stellomai* which means “to abstain from familiar intercourse with; to avoid; to beware of.” Therefore, when a Christian is withdrawn from by the church, **members of the church are not to place themselves in close relationship with this person.** The person is to be avoided by faithful Christians in order to cause the sinner to be ashamed. The erring member is also to be avoided in order that the faithful not be influenced by his or her sinful speech and behavior.

In the context of the Thessalonian problem there were some brethren who had quit their jobs, and thus were not providing for their families. Paul wrote, “*For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies*” (2 Th 3:11). Paul’s message to these idle brethren was that “*they work in quietness and eat their own bread*” (2 Th 3:12). If a brother refused to work, the church was to “***note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed***” (2 Th 3:14). The person was to be identified and the church was not to fellowship with the identified person.

In the 2 Thessalonian situation, Paul says the relationship of the faithful to the idle brother is different than their rela-

tionship with the unbelievers. He instructed the faithful, “*Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*” (2 Th 3:15). Therefore, somewhere between having no company with the brother and admonishing the brother, there must be situations where the faithful can lovingly challenge the idle brother’s life. The faithful do not have company with him as if nothing is wrong. His association with the idle brother is for the purpose of admonition.

It may be in the situation of 2 Thessalonians 3 that the faithful brethren were not to keep company with the lazy brother in a manner that would give the lazy brother the opportunity to beg off the faithful. Whatever the situation, the faithful brethren were to keep the lazy brother at a distance in order to let him know that his laziness is a life-style that cannot be tolerated in the fellowship of the church. In fact, a lazy life-style will destroy the fellowship of the church.

3. Do not keep company with the sinner: Concerning the brother who committed the sin that is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:11, Paul commands that the faithful “***not to keep company with***” such a person. This same command is emphasized in 2 Thessalonians 3:14 in instructions that the faithful brethren of the church “*not keep company with [the lazy brother]*” Therefore, the responsibility of the faithful is to disassociate themselves from the lazy or immoral individual. The faithful are not to bring themselves into normal company with the disciplined sinner. Again, the purpose for this is twofold: (1) The sinner must real-

ize the seriousness of his or her disobedience, and hopefully, be moved to mourn over the sin and repent. (2) The faithful must be guarded against the evil influence of the sinner. If a normal fellowship is continued by the faithful, the influence of the one who is sinning will permeate the church as a whole. The church will increasingly become indifferent to sin, and thus move into apostasy.

4. Do not eat with the sinner: The extent of the disfellowship from the immoral person is emphasized by Paul's command that the faithful "*not even eat with such a person*" (1 Co 5:11). The eating with such a person would manifest one's approval of the disobedience of a rebellious life. This command, therefore, re-enforces the group action in relation to the disfellowshipped individual. Such action on the part of the church as a whole should move the sinning member to repentance, and thus promote his or her restoration to the family.

5. Put away the sinner: In disciplining the immoral person of the Corinthian church, the church is to put the individual out of the fellowship of the congregation. Paul instructed, "*Put away from yourselves that wicked person*" (1 Co 5:13; see Dt 13:5; 17:7,12). In putting away the immoral person, the evil influence of the person is **taken away** from the rest of the members (1 Co 5:2). The primary purpose of this action, therefore, is to **extract the sinful influence of immorality from the midst of the church family.**

When churches condone the immoral

practices of members, they are set on a course to digression. This happened in the church of Thyatira. One named Jezebel was allowed by the church to beguile the rest of the church to commit sexual immorality (Rv 2:20). Jesus' message to this church was a warning that He would remove their candlestick. In other words, He would remove their influence from the community as the church of God. They would still remain as an assembly of religious people. However, they would cease being the representatives for Christ in the community. Such is the case with every church that condones sexual immorality in the church.

6. Purge out the old leaven: Paul commanded the brethren in the Corinthian situation, "*Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump ...*" (1 Co 5:7). He reminded them that "*... a little leaven leavens the whole lump*" (1 Co 5:6; Gl 5:9). In other words, **a little evil influence in the church will spread to the rest of the body. The undisciplined practice of one who immorally lives contrary to God's will, for example, will spread to the rest of the members as an accepted norm of Christian behavior.** Any church that allows blatant defiance of God's will to continue in the Christian community is allowing the biblical nature of the church to be deluded into a strange religion that is foreign to the New Testament. Therefore, in the action of "purging", the church is kept pure from the evil influence of immoral behavior. Church discipline is carried out not only to promote

repentance on the part of the disobedient, but also to maintain the purity of the fellowship of Christians.

7. Admonish the sinner as a brother: As stated previously, the Christian's relationship with the sinning brother is different than his relationship with the alien sinner. One's relationship with the alien sinner is established for physical existence and an opportunity for evangelism. However, one's relationship with the disobedient brother is **to promote his restoration to obedience**. In relation to the disorderly who were to be disfellowshipped in Thessalonica, Paul wrote, "*Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*" (2 Th 3:15).

In admonition, the faithful are to use love and the word of God to convict and instruct the disobedient after the disfellowship has taken place (See 2 Tm 3:16,17; Hb 4:12). Casual encounters with the disobedient are not sufficient to accomplish this command. Definite and direct admonition must be given to the disfellowshipped individual in order to promote repentance on his or her part.

8. Mark the divisive brother: Paul mentions in Romans 16:17,18 the action that is to be taken toward those who are causing division by preaching and teaching those things that God has not commanded. This is the legalistic brother who is binding where God has not bound. Paul wrote,

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned,

and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

In Romans 16:17,18 Paul is not talking about disfellowship, but the marking of those who would cause division in the church by promoting their opinions as doctrine. He refers to the one who willfully causes factions in the body of Christ because of selfish ambition in binding his opinions on the church as law (See Ti 3:10).

The translation of the word "offenses" is from the Greek word *skandalon*. It refers to one who willfully causes an occasion of stumbling to other Christians (See Rm 14; 1 Co 8). This could include those who justify an unlawful practice of religion which is contrary to the New Testament, and thus, cause others to fall away.

Romans 16:17,18 is one of the most twisted and misunderstood scriptures of the New Testament because interpreters fail to understand who the divisive brother is about whom Paul speaks. The context of Paul's argument in Romans is a defense against those who were destroying the grace of God by bringing into Christianity a legal system, specifically the legalistic system of Judaism. They were thus endangering the freedom we have in Christ. They were seeking to bring the church again into the bondage of meritorious justification by law and works (Gl 5:1,2). By binding where God had not bound, or condemning where

God had not condemned, they were guilty of producing an occasion for division. Therefore, **in Romans 16:17,18, Paul is NOT saying that the brother who is causing the division is the one who is standing for his freedom in Christ. The one who is causing the division is the one who is making law in the area of freedom. He is restricting the freedom we have in Christ by condemning that which is a matter of opinion. He is confining the saints by binding that which is not bound.**

If something is a matter of opinion, then it is an area of freedom. Christians have the freedom to act in the area of opinion. They are not causing division by doing that which they have the freedom to do. If a brother makes a “law” by saying that something is or is supposedly not according to law, **he is the one who is causing the division. He is the one who is binding where God has not bound.** When one either restricts the saints in the area of opinion, or binds practices that are not mentioned in Scripture, he is behaving contrary to the doctrine of Christ. This is the brother Paul says must be marked.

The marking of a brother is not a disfellowship of the brother from the fellowship of the church. It is an action of “marking” (noting) those who bind teachings or traditions that are “*contrary to the doctrine*” which had already been taught to the church. In other words, these are those teachers who are binding as law teachings that are in the area of Christian freedom. They are binding those things that God has not bound (See

At 15:10,24). Those who do this are to be identified before the church, and thus, the church is informed to be cautious about their teaching.

The motive of these teachers is often selfish ambition. Paul said that they serve “their own bellies.” When these brethren have been marked, Paul says that **they are to be avoided.** In other words, the church is not to give them an occasion to preach or teach those things by which they restrict the freedom of the saints. They must not be allowed to divide the church by binding on the church their opinions. If one persists in dividing the church by binding where God has not bound, then he is to be rejected by the church. Paul wrote, “*Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned*” (Ti 3:10).

The marking, instead of disfellowship, teaches some important points in reference to the fellowship of the church. Since the marked brother can remain in the fellowship of the church, but is restricted from teaching that which he thinks is supposedly fundamental, but not necessary, the church must manifest a spirit of tolerance. The church must be tolerant, and yet strict in reference to those who would cause division over nonessential matters. If something is not a fundamental teaching, then that teaching must not become a test of fellowship. We are allowed, therefore, to maintain strong differences of opinion, and yet not divide over such opinions. If one is allowed to bind his opinion on the church

as a whole, he is the one who is causing division. The instructions of Romans 16:17,18 come into force when one has taken his opinions to the point of binding his opinions as a test of fellowship. If one says his opinion is the only way, then Paul says in Romans 16:17,18 there is no way he can teach his opinions among the brethren.

It is important that all members of the church honor the marking (noting) of the one who is binding where God has not bound. If this marking is not honored by all, then division is caused in the church. Such division becomes the occasion for added action on the part of the church to deal with those who cause the division. Therefore, every member of the congregation must understand the purpose of either marking, or more serious, the withdrawal of one from the fellowship of the church. The entire church must act as a unit in order to promote repentance on the part of the sinner and to maintain the purity of the church.

It is good that the church as a whole carry out the action of discipline against a sinning member. However, the unanimity of the church is not necessary. In the Corinthian situation it was the majority that carried out Paul's instructions. He wrote after the action was taken, "*This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man*" (2 Co 2:6). Therefore, when action is to be taken, what is right and the law of God must be our first concern lest the church sin by not carrying out God's will. There may be some in the congregation, however, who are untaught or arrogant. But

they must not be allowed to hinder the action of the church to carry out the word of God.

Disfellowship of the sinning brother or sister is also the action of withdrawing Christian duties toward the member from whom fellowship is withdrawn. In the Christian community Christians are obligated to interact with one another according to the New Testament definition of fellowship as expressed in point A. When the church "withdraws fellowship," therefore, the church is not to perform its God-ordained obligations toward the sinner as it does toward the faithful. The shepherds of the church are no longer responsible for the one who is disfellowshipped. No member of the congregation is under any divine command to administer to the sinner any physical need. The only thing the faithful are to do is to admonish the sinful person with the word of God in order to restore him or her to the family of God.

C. The purpose of disfellowship:

There are several reasons for the church action of discipline. The following are New Testament instructions for the purpose of disfellowship that surround the obedience of the church in disciplining those who walk contrary to the word of God:

1. The church learns obedience. Paul exhorted, "*We command you ... that you withdraw ...*" (2 Th 3:6). After he had instructed the Corinthian church to

withdraw from an immoral member, he said in the second letter to the church, *“For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things”* (2 Co 2:9). Churches that desire to obey God in all things must obey this command also. Rebellious sinners should not be allowed to hinder faithful brethren from obeying the command of God to withdraw fellowship from sinning members. Therefore, the church should not cause sin to exist in the church by disobedience to the law of exclusion from the church. In reality, therefore, a church will lose its identity as a true church of Christ if it is not obedient to the command of church discipline.

2. Provoke repentance on the part of the sinner. The apostles delivered sinning members unto Satan in order that they might “learn” (1 Tm 1:20), and thus, repent in order that they *“be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”* (1 Co 5:5). In reference to the lazy brethren in Thessalonica, the faithful were not to keep company with the sinning member in order that *“he may be ashamed”* (2 Th 3:14). If the sinner is made ashamed of his or her sin, then it is hoped that repentance will follow. Therefore, the purpose of the disfellowship is a last effort to promote repentance on the part of the sinning member.

3. Purge the church of evil influences. In view of the principle that *“evil company corrupts good habits”* (1 Co 15:33), the leaven of evil influences must be purged from the church. Paul exhorted the Corinthians, *“Therefore purge out the*

old leaven, that you may be a new lump ...” (1 Co 5:7). Sin that is allowed to exist in the fellowship of the church will have a negative impact on the church. **The church body will not take its Christian behavior seriously if members do not take seriously the influence of the continued sin of rebellious members.** A twisted and distorted “Christianity” will be developed if the principles of New Testament behavior are deluded by the indifferent religious behavior of lukewarm Christians (See Rv 3:15,16). In church disfellowship, therefore, the body is purged of those who would destroy the body of Christ by their immoral influences or irresponsible behavior.

4. Provoke fear in the hearts of the faithful. Paul wrote, *“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ...”* (2 Co 5:11). God is a God who must be feared because He is a just God. And in being a just God, He must punish the disobedient in order to be fair to the obedient. He will not allow sin to go unpunished. When Paul instructed the Corinthian church to withdraw fellowship from a sinning brother, therefore, the church obeyed his command in every detail because of their fear of the Lord. Because of their disfellowship action with the immoral brother of 1 Corinthians 5, Paul wrote to the church, *“For observe this very thing that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter”* (2 Co

7:11). This is certainly a tremendous commendation to a church concerning their obedience to the commands of God in the area of church discipline. If an apostle of Christ were alive today, he should be able to write a similar commendation to every church in reference to their discipline of one another.

Paul told the evangelist Timothy to rebuke sinners **before the church**. *“Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear”* (1 Tm 5:20). Sinning brethren, therefore, must be rebuked. If they do not repent, they must be marked if they are binding where God has not bound. Immoral members must be disfellowshipped if they are not repentant of their immoral practices. Such is to be done in order to provoke fear in the hearts of the church concerning the seriousness of sin. After God’s direct discipline of Ananias and Sapphira, *“great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things”* (At 5:5,11). It is right for a church to be brought into fear because of the necessary action to disfellowship those who persist in sin.

5. Promote a good reputation of the church. Peter wrote concerning the responsibility of the church to maintain a good reputation in the community, *“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation”* (1 Pt 2:11,12).

The unbelieving community must see the church as a disciplined body of people that struggles to live in harmony with that which it teaches. A church that does not live up to the standard of the gospel loses its influence in the community. For this reason, Paul exhorted the Philippian church, *“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ ...”* (Ph 1:27). He likewise exhorted the Ephesus church, *“I, therefore, ... beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”* (Ep 4:1; see Cl 1:10; 1 Th 2:12).

6. Relieve the church of Christian responsibility toward the erring member. In fellowship, Christians are obligated to interact with one another according to those responsibilities that are directed in the New Testament. When one disassociates himself from the body of fellowship, faithful Christians must seek to restore the unfaithful in order to save the individual, but also for the purpose of carrying out their fellowship responsibilities toward that individual (See Gl 6:1). When one remains in fellowship with the body, and yet, persists in sin, fellowship is to be withdrawn from this member. This member is to be **put out of the fellowship of the body**. **When one is disfellowshipped, God relieves the church of its Christian obligation toward the sinning brother or sister.** Therefore, if one blatantly persists in sinning willfully after having *“received the knowledge of the truth,”* and counts the blood of Jesus an unworthy thing by trampling it underfoot, then the church must take action to remove such a one

from its fellowship (See Hb 10:24-30).

When one forsakes his fellowship of the body by withdrawing his fellowship in attendance and refusal to fulfill one's Christian responsibility to Christian fellowship, then the church must act in order to encourage this person to return to the fellowship of the saints. I question whether this one is to be disfellowshipped. He has already disfellowshipped himself from the saints. His influence must be marked, but our loving fellowship should draw him back into the fellowship of the saints. When one disfellowships himself from the fellowship, what good would be disfellowship? Disfellowship is only valid when one remains in fellowship with the church so as to be unrighteous leaven by the evil influence of immorality or the legalistic binding of opinions.

Those who have disfellowshipped themselves from the church must be exhorted to return. However, if they refuse to return, nothing more can be done.

John speaks of those who persist in sin to the point that they will not repent. After the church has fulfilled her responsibility to restore such a person to righteous living, he said concerning the faithful's responsibility to the persistent sinner, "*I do not say that he [the faithful] should pray about that [the sinful situation of the unfaithful sinner]*" (1 Jn 5:16). Therefore, the faithful can "shake off the dust from their feet" concerning their responsibility toward unrepentant members who have disfellowshipped themselves from the church because of

sin. It is only the responsibility the church to continue to **admonish the sinner to repent** in an effort to restore him to the body (2 Th 3:15).

D. Those from whom fellowship is withdrawn:

In 1 Corinthians 5:11 Paul wrote, "*But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person.*" This is a list of those from whom the obligation of Christian fellowship responsibilities are to be withdrawn. These are those who must be put away from the fellowship of the church family in order to maintain the purity of the family.

1. Those committing fornication.

The translation here is from the Greek word *porneia*. The word refers to the practice of all unlawful sexual intercourse, including adultery, homosexuality and lesbianism. (See 1 Co 6:13; Gl 5:19; Ep 5:3). Those who are involved in fornication are refusing to recognize the law of God in reference to moral purity. Their immorality indicates that they have no respect for others because of their desire to satisfy the lust of the flesh. These cannot be in fellowship with the saints simply because of their inability to maintain sexual control among those with whom they dwell in a close relationship.

2. Those committing covetousness.

The translation here is from the Greek word *pleonektes* and refers to the practice of an individual's greed for financial gain or a desire to have what others possess (See 1 Co 6:10; Ep 5:5). These disqualify themselves for fellowship with the saints because of their desire to take advantage of others. The covetous person would take advantage of the Christian generosity that is to be characteristic of the saints of God. Because of their spirit of covetousness, therefore, they cannot live in close community with God's people.

3. *Those committing idolatry.* The translation here is from the Greek word *eidololatrias* which originates from two Greek words, *eidolon*, meaning "idol," and *latris*, meaning "hireling." The combined meaning of the two words refers to those who have submitted themselves to the worship of man-made gods (See 1 Co 6:9; 10:7; Ep 5:5; Rv 21:8; 22:15). When one creates a god after his own image, he seeks to construct a religious belief that conforms to what he believes his god desires. The spirit of idolatry is the desire to live religiously as one desires, not as God desires. Therefore, the idolatrous person is not seeking to submit to the one true and living God. He is seeking to live as he or she pleases in conformity with a life-style that has been created after one's own desires.

4. *Those who are revilers.* The translation here is from the Greek word *loidoros* which refers to one who practices injurious speech or slander (See 1 Co 6:10; 1 Tm 5:14). A slanderous person seeks to manipulate others to conform to his own desires. Such people

cause great chaos in the fellowship of the church. Their behavior destroys fellowship. It is for this reason that a reviler must never be allowed to continue in fellowship with the saints.

5. *Those who are drunkards.* The translation here is from the Greek word *methusos*. The word refers to one who has been softened with intoxicating or alcoholic drink (See 1 Co 6:10; Gl 5:21). A drunkard is one who is not in control of his behavior. He has given himself over to the influence of a drug whereby he loses his senses and control of his behavior. A Christian who has turned to intoxicating drink in order to become drunk is not allowing Jesus to control his or her life. It is for this reason that drunkards cannot be in fellowship with those who are disciples of Jesus.

6. *Those who are extortionists.* The translation here is from the Greek word *harpax* which refers to pillage, plundering and robbery. An extortionist is one who would by either social, religious or political pressure intimidate others to acquire financial gain from others or to receive position among those with whom he associates. For obvious reasons, such people cannot long maintain a close fellowship with others before they start using others for their own gain. These are those who would take advantage of the sheep of God.

7. *Those who are not financially responsible because of laziness.* Add to the preceding list those Paul mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 3 who were walking disorderly by not assuming financial responsibility in their own lives. Concern-

ing such, Paul commanded “*that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us*” (2 Th 3:6).

“Disorderly” is translated from the Greek word *ataktos* which refers to one who has deviated from the prescribed order of march. In general, reference is to those who do not follow the inspired “tradition” given by Paul. In the context of 2 Thessalonians, this has specific reference to those who had quit their jobs and were begging off the rest of the membership in order to receive food. These idle members were walking disorderly and not according to the tradition of work that Paul had taught the Thessalonians.

8. *Those who deny fundamental doctrine.* Fundamental doctrine refers to those teachings that are the foundation upon which the Christian faith is based. One cannot be a Christian unless he believes that there is one God, one Son of God, one Holy Spirit, one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism for remissions of sin, and one hope (Ep 4:4-6). One cannot claim to be a Christian if he denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The bodily resurrection is so central to the heart of Christian faith that Paul said if one even said it had already happened, he is to be disfellowshipped from the body of believers (2 Tm 2:17,18). There are those who denied that Jesus was incarnate in the flesh, which belief was an indirect denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus (2 Jn 7-10). These were not to be given the fellowship of the saints. These are fundamental or nec-

essary doctrines for the existence of the church. A denial of fundamental teachings is reason for disfellowship simply because one cannot be a Christian if he or she denies that upon which Christianity is founded.

There will always be those who confuse fundamental truths with their own opinions. Some want to force their opinions into the realm of fundamental teaching, and thus contend that fundamental truth is being violated, causing a division in the church. The reality is that those who make their opinions tests of fellowship are the ones from whom fellowship is to be withdrawn (Rm 16:17,18). These are actually the ones who have denied the fundamental truth of the unity of the church by binding their opinions in the area of freedom. From these fellowship must be withdrawn in order to guard the church from becoming a religion that is constructed after the traditions and opinions of men. When men bind where God has not bound, apostasy is guaranteed. It is for this reason that those who would bind their opinions or traditions on the church must be marked, and if they are persistent in binding their teachings, must be disfellowshipped in order to preserve freedom in Christ (Gl 5:1,2). Whenever our freedom is endangered through the binding of the opinions and traditions of men, then the fundamental truths that produce unity are ignored. And when fundamental truths are ignored, or combined with opinions and traditions as the foundation of belief, the church is headed for apostasy.

The general reasons for disfellowship are immoral sins and denials of fundamental doctrine. The terms “false teacher” or “false prophet” are used in the New Testament to describe one who is either practicing or teaching immoral behavior or denying fundamental or essential doctrine. We often draw up disfellowship papers for a host of nonsense for the disfellowship of brethren. Such practices are often contrary to the principle of patience and tolerance, if not a denial of the longsuffering we should exercise with one another in order to preserve the fundamental teaching of unity. Having a strong disagreement with a brother in Christ is not grounds for disfellowship. Accusations over “dividing the church” when no moral teaching is involved or fundamental doctrine is denied, have often been loosely thrown around in order to draw up disfellowship papers. Such unrighteous behavior and accusations should not exist in the church.

Before the process of disfellowship takes place, a great deal of study must be done in order to guarantee that the disfellowship is based on New Testament reasons for disfellowship, not some personal opinion or tradition, which are not grounds for disfellowship. If some disfellowship a person from the fellowship of the church for reasons that are not authorized by the New Testament, then it is those who carry out the disfellowship who have sinned. Some innocent brother or sister may be greatly harmed because of the unrighteous or ignorant behavior of some church leaders who do not know

what scriptural reasons are set forth in God’s word for disfellowship. As a word of caution, therefore, before a church acts on disfellowship, they need to make sure that an immoral problem is involved or a fundamental doctrine is being denied or endangered. Disfellowship for other reasons is highly questionable, if not sinful if carried out without the authority of God’s word.

A word of warning must also be placed here concerning the disfellowship of one church of another church. This is certainly a practice that has no scriptural foundation. Nowhere in the New Testament do we see this practice carried out. If fact, it is a sinful practice because of the nature of the church. For example, Jesus pronounced judgment on the seven city churches of Asia. He warned them about removing their lampstand of influence from the cities in which the members lived. However, in the warning of each individual city church, He commended some who remained faithful (See Rv 2:24,25). The point is that if we disfellowship an entire city church, then the faithful within the church are also hurt. How can one disfellowship an entire church without also disfellowshipping the faithful members within that church? Those who practice whole church disfellowship have no scriptural foundation for doing such. They are acting outside the realm of scriptural authority and working against the fundamental teaching of the one universal church of God.

It is only when we develop a concept of denominational autonomy that the practice of whole church disfellowship

comes into practice. When we view each “local” church of Christ as a denominating group from other “local” churches, some feel that the church can deal with sister churches as they deal with the denominations of man-made churches. But the practice of whole church disfellowship is based on a misunderstanding of the universality of the one body of Christ. **Disfellowship in the New Testament is directed toward individuals, not whole churches.** Once this concept is understood, then the practice of whole church disfellowship is found to be contrary to New Testament teaching.

E. The process of disfellowship:

In carrying out the command of church discipline, Satan severely tries the resolve of the faithful who are struggling to be obedient to God to carry out the command of disfellowship. The faithful, therefore, must be motivated with an attitude as that expressed by Paul in Colossians 3:12-14.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Christians must manifest a “*spirit of gentleness*” (Gl 6:1). There is absolutely no place for a sinful attitude of vindic-

tiveness to be manifested by the church toward the one being disfellowshipped. There must be the sincere love of brethren who seek to preserve the purity of the church and promote repentance in the life of the sinner.

The following are New Testament statements concerning the principles that should be considered in solving personal disputes among brethren and situations that deal with sin in the lives of those from whom fellowship should be withdrawn. Though solving personal disputes among brethren are to be handled differently than when handling the one who commits sin which calls for disfellowship, there are overlapping procedures that are expedient to follow when handling either situation.

1. Seek to settle the dispute. In matters of **personal offenses and disputes**, the two parties who are involved should first try to settle the dispute. Jesus said, “*But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more ... and if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector*” (See Mt 18:16-17). The context of Matthew 18 is in the area of solving personal disputes. If one denies a fundamental teaching or falls into immoral behavior, such is not a personal dispute. It is a matter of a whole church problem with which the church must deal as a whole.

In the Matthew 18 situation Jesus said that the offended party is obligated to go to the offending party (Mt 18:15).

In the context of Matthew 5:23,24 the offending party is also obligated to go to the offended party if he or she becomes aware of a situation where offense was made. If a mediator is needed, then someone should function as such according to what Paul stated in Philippians 4:2,3. *“I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel”*

With a whole church problem when violation of a fundamental truth or immoral situation exists, one individual going first to the sinful brother alone would not apply. What would apply is the whole church standing up as in the 1 Corinthians 5 situation and taking action as **a group**.

2. Resort to witnesses. Again, keep in mind that the instructions of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18 are made in reference to solving **personal disputes** among brethren. However, in reference to one who has committed sin that makes one subject to disfellowship, the procedure Jesus stated is advisable to follow, though the church must act as a group, not as individuals. In matters of personal disagreement, if there are those who will not agree to resolve personal differences between themselves and other members of the church, then they are members who are to be considered as the “heathen and tax collector” (Mt 18:17).

In matters of **personal offenses**, and the offending party is not willing to listen to the offended party in order to solve the problem, then the one who has been sinned against should take with him one

or two witnesses in order to solve the problem (Mt 18:16). When emotions are high, statements can often be taken out of context. Witnesses provide an opportunity for everyone involved to be careful about what is said and done.

3. Go before the church. In matters of **personal offenses**, if the one who has sinned against his brother refuses to hear the pleas for reconciliation by the offended party and the witnesses, then the matter must be made public before the church (Mt 18:17). As members of the community of God, the entire church should be involved when any one member of the body is affected.

4. Seek to restore. In matters of sin that deal with fundamental teaching or immoral living, the faithful should take action as a group. The first thing to do as a group is to pray for the sinner (1 Jn 5:16). The faithful should seek to restore the unfaithful (Gl 6:1). The primary purpose for church discipline is to restore the sinning brother to the fellowship of the church. Therefore, every effort should be made to encourage, teach and admonish the sinning brother in order that he or she be restored to the fellowship of the church.

5. Warn of sin. Those who sin, must be warned (1 Th 5:14). It is the responsibility of Christians to look out for one another and to exhort one another daily lest we fall into sin (Hb 3:13). Looking out for one another involves warning one another when sin comes into our lives.

6. Reject divisive members. Divisive Christians are to be first marked (Rm 16:17), and then rejected after they re-

ceive two admonitions (Ti 3:10). A divisive brother is one who binds where God has not bound. Therefore, study with the brother is necessary when it is noticed that he is binding that which God has not bound on the church.

7. Rebuke before the church. In 1 Timothy 5:20 Paul wrote, *“Those who continue in sin, rebuke before all so that others also may fear.”* Those who continue in sin must be lovingly rebuked “before all” in order that all may be in fear. The “all” in this text would in the historical context of the passage refer to all who are in house churches in a particular region. I find it difficult to believe that Paul was referring to the public name calling of sinners before mass gatherings of the church. The ethical thing to do in such cases is that the rebuke would take place from house to house, not in a public assembly wherein would also be gathered unbelievers. What also seems to be called on here by Paul is that all who are affected by the sin or all who would be influenced by the sinner must know who the sinner is and what the sin is.

8. Withdraw before the assembled church. Paul instructs concerning the immoral brother in Corinth, *“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are assembled, and with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh ...”* (1 Co 5:4,5). Both the marking of a divisive brother and the withdrawal of fellowship from the immoral brother should be made before the assembled church in order that all know

the one who is marked and the one from whom fellowship is being withdrawn. However this is done, it is important that everyone involved knows that the immoral brother is not to be held in fellowship with the church.

The withdrawal of fellowship from those who persist in not submitting to the will of the Lord should be taken after every effort has been made to restore the sinner. Such should be carried out in fearful obedience to God’s command to cast out the old leaven of sin. This law of exclusion from the fellowship of the church is often a test as to whether a church is submissive to the will of God (2 Co 2:9). Leaders of the church who do not lead the church in the direction of both knowing and doing God’s word, are leaders who are misleading the church. If they do not lead in the discipline of the family of God, they are unworthy leaders of the flock. Therefore, church leaders and faithful members are under obligation to be obedient in this matter to the will of God.

Each member must be submissive to the action lest individuals become church dividers by not honoring the action of the entire group’s submission to the will of God. Those who do not submit to the scriptural disfellowship of a sinner, are themselves subject to the same action because of their violation of the commands of God to not keep company with the disfellowshipped sinner.

We must be cautioned concerning the action of church discipline. This command must be obeyed out of a sincere

desire to obey the word of God. Correct attitudes must be maintained. This is not a time for vindictiveness. The church should be careful to carry out with love the action of marking and disfellowship according to what is instructed in the New Testament. Much prayer should be offered on behalf of the unfaithful member, as well as the church that must take the action. The seriousness of the matter, however, should not detour the church from taking action. The church must not relinquish its obedience to the

objection of the ignorant and unlearned who would hinder the growth of God's family. The majority of the church must obediently act to do God's will. Those who claim to be the church of God must behave and act according to the will of God. It is God's will that His people be free of sin. And in order to guard against sin that would destroy the flock, God says that sin must be purged out of the flock. It must be purged out in order to keep the flock pure.

Chapter 9

God's Public Speaker

Great leaders are usually good speakers. Good speakers have communication abilities that give them the ability to command the attention of the people they lead. Good leaders will develop an effective style of public speaking that will effectively communicate their thoughts to the minds and hearts of others. Good speakers exercise powerful leadership by skillful delivery of God's will to those they lead. If one wants to lead others, he or she must concentrate on developing skills in private and public communication. It is the purpose of this chapter to present some thoughts that will help you to be a better speaker and communicator of your thoughts.

We must keep in mind that one learns to be a better speaker, not for himself, but for the Lord. Great speakers have a great gift to lead others to the Lord. Therefore, in concentrating on improv-

ing our ability to speak, we are developing skills to the glory of God and for the sake of saving the lost.

A. Developing speaking skills as God's representative:

Everyone must grow in speaking ability. One is not born a good speaker. Good speakers learn speaking skills. They practice those skills. They take advantage of every opportunity to speak in order to perfect their ability to communicate information to others. The following are some general suggestions you can use as guidelines to develop as a good speaker:

1. ***Develop correct attitudes about speaking.*** Be interested in people. Be enthusiastic, kind and sincere. Seek to fulfill the spiritual needs of people by

correct application of God's word to your life and their lives. A good speaker does not learn to speak well for his own benefit. He learns to speak in order to help others by effectively communicating information that will enhance the lives of others. The Christian leader seeks to communicate the will and nature of God to those who are seeking to know God.

2. Develop the right to speak. You must conduct your life in a way that people will want to listen to what you have to say (See Ph 1:27). Your Christian conduct and studies give you the right to be heard (See 1 Tm 4:12). If people first know who you are and what you represent, they will give you an audience. **Good speakers command the attention of the audience by the godly conduct of their lives.** The audience, therefore, gives them the right to speak because they know that the speaker knows what he is talking about. His life proves that he knows what his message is supposed to do in our lives as God's children.

3. Develop insight into the needs of people. Jesus' teachings were a response to the needs or situation of people at the moment He encountered them. He gave teachings that met the needs of the situation. We must not only be able to deliver the Scriptures in a knowledgeable manner, but we must also be able to apply truth to the lives of people. Much of the preaching and teaching that is heard today is the result of preachers and teachers developing lessons they want to deliver. They give sermons and classes over material in which they are interested. As

a result they miss the needs of the people. I would suggest that we reconsider the situation in which we present most of our sermons and classes today. Jesus, Paul and the other New Testament personalities presented lessons that not only met the needs of the people at the moment, but their lessons were also delivered to people they encountered at the moment.

4. Develop the thoughts of your lessons. Now this may seem to be somewhat contradictory to the preceding point. It is not. Jesus presented lessons at the moment to people who were in need at the time. The difference between Him and us is that He knew what He was going to say. He and Paul were inspired. We are not. If you are a novice speaker, you will need to know what you are going to say. In order to do this, you will have to study. You will have to learn how to outline your thoughts in order to present them in an orderly manner. Outlined lessons make sense. People are better able to remember what you say if you present your material in an order that is easy to understand. It is not that a lesson must be outlined. The point is that you will learn to speak in an orderly manner if you first outline your lessons. As you develop your skills, you will eventually discover that the best outline is the biblical text. Expository preaching and teaching is the best there is when it comes to bringing the word of God alive in the minds and hearts of the people.

It is my suggestion that every preacher must focus on expository preaching to the lost and expository teaching of the saved. In this way, speak-

ers for God will keep their thoughts on the word of God. Those who hear will be directed to the word of God. The preaching and teaching, therefore, will be directed by the Bible.

5. *Develop something to say.* In order to speak to be heard you must have something to say. We must not speak simply because we are to give a lesson. We must be interested in our subjects and deliver them with deep commitment. People will listen when they know we have something to say. We will keep their attention when they know that we know what we are talking about.

6. *Develop goal-centered lessons.* Make sure that all the points of your lesson center around one goal which is usually expressed in the title. I call one a "rabbit preacher" who starts with a particular verse and then runs here and there in the word of God. He is like a rabbit jumping from one text to another. At the end of the lesson, the people may have been impressed with the delivery and message. However, a few days later they will not know what was said. They will have forgotten the lesson because there were no definite points emphasized.

7. *Develop clear points.* State your main points or point in a definite and concise manner. If you do this, the audience will easily understand and remember your message. My suggestion again is to speak expository lessons. If you take the audience through a text of Scripture, they will go home with the outline. Days later they will be able again to read the outline in their Bibles and rethink what you said concerning the text.

8. *Develop Bible-centered lessons.* Speakers for God must always be sure to take their lessons from the Bible text. Our purpose as spokesmen for God is to expound and explain the word of God in a clear manner. It is for this reason that expository preaching and teaching is one of the best ways to communicate the word of God. Expository preaching and teaching will keep you in the text. Study for expository messages will force you to deal with what the Bible actually says. It will help you bring the text alive to the audience.

Teachers in the church need to remember that people come together to hear and understand the word of God. They do not come for the teacher, or at least they should not. When teachers do not deliver the word of God, then those who come will be frustrated. It is the responsibility of the biblical speaker, therefore, to bring the word of God alive to those who are hungering and thirsting after what God says, not what man says.

9. *Develop attention.* A speaker commands the attention of the audience by his or her posture and eye contact with the audience. As a spokesman for God, the very nature of our teaching of God's word demands that people listen. We begin our command for the attention of the audience at the very beginning of our lesson. When one presents a lesson to a group of people, he or she must always look into the eyes of the people. Establish eye contact with the audience first, and then, adjust your Bible and notes for speaking.

10. *Develop a mental clock.* Now

this is hard for most preachers and teachers. However, you must know when to stop speaking. If you speak too long you will frustrate people. You will lose their attention. And, you will often develop a negative reaction from the people that offsets the positive elements of your lesson. If you want people to come back and listen to you again, then respect their time. Keep in mind that when you have spoken too long, the audience has stopped listening and what you continue to say are simply empty words spoken in the air.

11. *Develop a motivating conclusion.* Conclude your lessons by **reviewing** and **applying** all the main thoughts of your lesson. Apply these thoughts to the needs of your audience. When the word of God is applied to the needs of the people, the people are motivated into action. Speakers must always remember that the power of the word is in the word, not in the preacher or teacher. When we exalt the application of the word to the lives of those who listen, it is the word that generates a response.

12. *Develop a positive attitude.* Effective speakers are always positive. Even if they have to deal with a negative subject, they know how to deal with the subject in a positive manner. In this way, people will listen though the message speaks to the sin in their lives. Therefore, in order to command a listening audience, one must learn to be positive in the presentation of lessons. We can teach occasional lessons that are negative. However, a continual practice of teaching negative lessons will develop negative churches. Every leader of the church

must realize that the assemblies of the church must be positive. If assemblies develop a negative response, then the group will soon give up on attendance.

13. *Develop a humble attitude.* People will not listen to arrogant speakers. Those who speak from a humble and meek heart will be heard and appreciated because they are not arrogant. It is for this reason that the speaker must be sincere in his presentation of his message. Speakers do well to be honest about the struggles in their own lives. A teacher who is not willing to confess his own faults is less received than one who does.

14. *Develop a living sermon.* Speakers must live what they teach. A lesson seen is always better than a lesson taught. People usually do not care for what you say until they see how much you care. Our lives teach more powerful lessons than our prepared outlines.

15. *Develop a pleasing voice and personality.* A harsh voice and attitude will turn people away. One can be forceful without being harsh and arrogant. One can get his point across without screaming and yelling. If the content of one's lesson is great, people will listen regardless of any eloquent presentation. In order to be a good speaker, therefore, focus on the content of the lesson.

B. Developing confidence as a public speaker:

Some people fail to lead people through public speaking simply because they have a fear of standing before people. Anyone can overcome this fear

and become more confident as a public speaker. The key is to know and implement in your life skills that will enable you to better communicate to others in a public manner. Here are some suggestions.

1. *Be committed to the task of public speaking.* You must first commit yourself to be a public speaker for God in leading His people to victory. This will demand much prayer and fasting. Our commitment to be a spokesman for God is a serious matter. We must have the desire, because if we desire to speak for God, we will do all that is necessary to develop our skills in public speaking. God needs those who can stand up before others and preach the gospel to the lost. If you have the desire to do this, God will work in your life to give you the opportunity.

2. *Be committed to God's need for us to be His spokesman.* One must feel that God needs him to lead His people. We must feel committed to lead others in service to God. Once a leader believes that God needs him for leading the people of God, then confidence is developed. Without a truly sincere feeling that God needs you for His work, you will not have the motivation that is needed to do the best you can. If one preaches or teaches for selfish reasons, his commitment to the task of speaking for God will usually terminate once there is opposition by Satan against what he is doing. On the other hand, if one feels truly committed to preaching the gospel to the lost, he will overcome all opposition.

3. *Be interesting to others in what you say.* Good speakers develop a personality that excites others to listen to what they have to say. This point is centered around dedicating ourselves to the study of God's word. Speakers must always remember that godly people show up to listen to God's word. If they show up for any other reason, then their commitment is not sincere. If they are seeking to listen to the speaker, and not to the word of God, then the audience will be led astray by the eloquence of the speaker. However, when people seek to listen to the word of God, we must be committed to preaching the word of God. If you preach the word of God, those who show up to hear the word of God will be thoroughly interested in what you say.

4. *Be prepared in the delivery of the word of God.* A good speaker must fully understand that about which he speaks and the people to whom he speaks. Good speakers for God know their Bibles very well. When they step up before people to speak the word of God, they must have their lessons ready and grounded in the word of God. You will be confident in speaking when you know exactly what you are going to say and how you are going to say it. You will gain confidence when you know that you are delivering the word of God to those who have come to listen to what God says. The better you know your Bible, the more confident you will be in preaching and teaching it to others.

5. *Be refined in your communication skills.* Good speakers practice their speech delivery in order to develop pre-

cision in speaking. Practice will help you to learn how to think while you speak. In order to develop rhythm in speaking, practice preaching to yourself out on a mountain or secluded place. Young preachers should practice their lessons aloud to themselves before they deliver them before others. Your mind must learn how to think about the lesson while you are speaking with your mouth. The only way you can learn how to do this skillfully, is to practice, practice, practice.

6. *Be people minded.* In order to be an effective speaker, you must feel a deep concern that those to whom you speak need the message you are delivering. If a man of God does not love the people of God to whom he ministers the word of God, then his insincerity will be evident to all. If you are sincerely interested in people, the people will be very patient with what and how you deliver your messages. Keep in mind that people are watching your life more than they are listening to your message. If you have a good reputation in the community as one who truly loves God and people, then people will listen to what you have to say.

7. *Be animated in your presentation.* When you speak publicly, use "body language" in order to communicate yourself to others. Body language is the use of hands and expressions that communicate feelings. When one has a truly dynamic lesson, his body language will communicate the fact that he is excited within himself. When a solemn lesson is to be presented, a quiet manner is appropriate, and subsequently communicates to the audience a sober demeanor.

Our body language is usually natural. Those who fake their body language to an audience usually have a negative reaction from the audience. Therefore, a good speaker seeks to be natural when speaking in order to communicate the sincerity of his heart to those of the audience.

8. *Be alert in speaking.* Good speakers realize that some tension must exist in the speaker before and during his speaking. A little tension will make you more alert while you speak. Tension will get your blood flowing and mind thinking. However, you will have to learn how to control your tension. Too much tension will cause you to lose focus. Shaky knees and a dry mouth are usually the result of too much anxiety. If you are too nervous when speaking, learn to control your nervousness by forcing yourself to speak more often. Good speakers overcome their nervousness by becoming accustomed to audiences. Just keep in mind that nervousness should never be used as an excuse not to speak. Think of how nervous Jesus was when He went to the cross for you. Sweat drops as blood came from his forehead. We can at least go before people to speak for Him. Never allow anxiety to be the reason why you will not be a speaker for Jesus.

9. *Be a frequent speaker.* This is how to overcome nervousness. This is how to develop your speaking skills. You must speak as often as you can. The more you speak, the easier it becomes and the less nervousness you will have. Therefore, take every opportunity to speak. You will feel your development as a

speaker as you speak on a daily or weekly basis.

10. *Be presentable when speaking.*

People usually dress the way they feel about themselves. When you stand before an assembly of people, dress appropriately. Express yourself through appropriate dress. Do not “under dress” or dress below the occasion. Do not over dress. The culture in which we live will determine appropriate dress. In order to be confident, speakers must dress for the occasion of standing before people. If as a young speaker you have any doubts, ask some of the older brothers and sisters about what appropriate dress would be for a speaker.

11. *Be studious of God's word.* The most important point on gaining confidence as a speaker is that you must focus your energies on explaining the word of God to your audience. Good speakers thoroughly study the Bible in order that their lessons are a fountain of spiritual food for those who hear. Remember, a preacher is a speaker for God's will to the lost. If you do not allow His word to be the center of your lesson, you cease being His representative. One of the greatest confidence builders one can have is a **thorough knowledge of the word of God which he preaches and teaches.**

Public speaking is necessary for the

proclamation of the word of God to the lost. The term “preaching” is used in the New Testament in reference to the delivery of the gospel to the lost. It is not a term that is used in reference to our ministry of the word of God to the saved. Preaching deals with the good news (the gospel). The gospel is to be preached to the lost. Therefore, if we fail to preach the gospel because of our lack of confidence, then the lost do not have an opportunity to hear the gospel. It is imperative, therefore, that men be motivated to speak the gospel with confidence. In this sense Paul wrote, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*” (Rm 1:16). It is a time when men need not be ashamed of the gospel. We must have boldness to speak. We must never allow fear to detour us from preaching the gospel to the lost. Perfect love casts out fear, and thus it is the task of every disciple to overcome fear in order to speak out for the sake of the gospel and the glory of God. When we do not speak out, God receives no glory. Consider what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:15.

For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace that is reaching many people may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Chapter 10

The Ministry Of Reading

Prolific public reading of the Bible is a most exhorting exercise that can be done when God's people assemble either in small groups or all members in a region together. Paul commanded Timothy to "**give attention to reading**" (1 Tm 4:13). When Ezra began to lead Israel from captivity, he "*brought the Law before the congregation ... then he read from it ... before the men and women and those who could understand ...*" (Ne 8:1-3). "**So they [the Levites] read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand**" (Ne 8:8). Joshua stood before Israel and "**read all the words of the law ... according to all that is written in the Book of the Law**" (Ja 8:34,35). On the Sabbath Jesus "*stood up to read*" from the book of Isaiah (See Lk 4:16-30).

Public reading of the word of God was a common practice among the Jews on the Sabbath (At 13:15,27). Because there were no Bibles for individual possession as we have today, the public reading of the Scriptures was a common practice in the Jewish synagogues. This practice seems also to have been carried over into the assemblies of the early church (See Cl 4:16; 1 Th 5:27). The apostle John exhorted the churches to read what the Spirit was sending to the churches. "*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep*

those things which are written in it; for the time is near" (Rv 1:3).

The early Christians were in the same situation as the Jews. There were not many copies of the Scriptures among the churches. In view of the house church logistics of the early church, it is easy to understand that when a copy of one of the inspired letters came to the church in a particular region, someone went from house to house reading the inspired letter to the church. Paul's exhortation to Timothy to give heed to reading, therefore, must be understood in the context of Timothy going from house to house reading those epistles he had in hand that had come from Paul, and possibly, from another inspired writer.

The reading of the Scriptures to small groups of believers who are scattered throughout a city or region can be a vital ministry for someone who has a gift of reading. The ministry of this reader can enhance and encourage small house churches. In Third World situations where there may be many who cannot read, the necessity of a "reader" is vital. Many may not be able to read. However, the greater problem is that there are often very few copies of the Scriptures in many regions of the world. And if copies are available, they are often too expensive for individual members to afford. This is a great necessity, therefore, for readers of the Scriptures to go among the

churches reading the word of God. The reader can have a ministry of simply reading the word of God in order that the audience have direct access to the word. If the audience has only the message of one who has a prepared lesson, then the word of God is interpreted through the speaker. However, when a reader goes about from house to house, the audience has direct access to the word of God.

Effective reading of the Scriptures is a gift that must be fine tuned for the benefit of the church. In order to be an effective reader of the Bible before the church, one must develop his or her reading skills. In the following points are some very important thoughts concerning the public reading of the Scriptures. I give these suggestions in order to encourage the ministry of public Scripture reading as a ministry among the churches. It is a ministry that has been neglected, and thus, one that we must restore in order to bring honor to the word of God.

A. Identify the biblical text.

The Bible was written with different **styles of writing** and **types of literature**. The Holy Spirit allowed the biblical writers to use their style of writing and vocabulary in order to write different types of literature. When you read the word of God before others, it is good to identify the particular type of literature that is being read, as well as the author of the text. This will prepare the audience to better understand what is being read.

1. *Narrative texts:* A narrative is

simply a text that is the recording of historical events and facts. The writer states historical facts and events as true events that happened in the lives of people. An example of narrative texts would be the historical events that are recorded about Philip and the eunuch in Acts 8:26-40. Verse 27 and verses 38-40 would be narrative texts because Luke records historical events that took place at the time Philip encountered the Ethiopian eunuch.

2. *Didactic texts:* Didactic is an English word that was derived from a Greek word which means “teaching.” Therefore, a didactic reading is a text of biblical teaching. Through didactic texts the writer seeks to instruct and educate the reader. Acts 8:32,33 would be didactic teaching concerning the prophetic crucifixion of Jesus. Almost all the content of the epistles of the New Testament is didactic. These are texts that seek to teach the church Christian behavior.

3. *Oratory texts:* This is a text that is the recording of an actual speech or statement that is made by a biblical character. Acts 8:34 and similar verses contain statements by a speaker (See Mt 5-7; At 2:14-39). When reading these texts, be sure to identify who is making the statements. This is particularly necessary when reading the prophets, and in particular, the book of Job.

4. *Parables:* These are texts that record the parables (See Mt 13). Parables are metaphorical stories. They are used for teaching a concept or truth. When reading these texts, be sure to identify the material as a parable that was given by Jesus.

5. Dialogue texts: These are texts that record the conversations between different Bible characters. In the context of Acts 8:26-40 there is conversation between the eunuch and Philip (See vs 30-37). The letters of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John contain a great deal of dialogue texts that reveal conversations between Jesus and those He encountered during His ministry. When reading dialogue contexts, be sure to emphasize the break between the statements of different people in the text. You can do this by reading with a different tone of voice or by raising or lowering your voice. Dialogue texts are exciting texts to be read to churches because they generate a great deal of interest.

6. Poetry texts: This is the recording of poetry with the use of many metaphors. The Psalms are the most obvious example of poetry texts in the Bible. It is important to understand that in text of poetry metaphors are used. It is sometimes good to explain difficult metaphors before reading the text. When reading poetry, it is imperative that the reader read the material slowly. In this way, the audience can think on the metaphors, and thus can better interpret the text as it is read.

In choosing a text to read before a group, be sure you identify what type of literature it is. After you identify the text, you can then read it according to its style of writing. In other words, you would not read a poetry text as a didactic reading or a narrative text as a dialogue text. Each type of literature demands a different reading style. Your skill as a reader should develop to read different texts in

a different manner. The important thing to remember is to be animated in your reading. Make the text come alive by an enthusiastic reading of what is written. The ministry of a reader is enhanced as he or she develops skills in reading.

B. Develop an effective reading style.

Good readers **learn** to be effective readers. Bible reading can be very exhorting to the church if you will develop reading skills that will bring the text alive. The following are some suggestions that will aid you in developing your skills in reading biblical texts:

1. Be sincere. When you read, **be sincere** about reading, and especially about what you are reading. Your sincerity will excite others to listen to what you are reading. If you are serious about what is read, your audience will be serious about listening. They will also be encouraged to privately read the Scriptures for themselves if they have a copy of the Bible. One's sincerity communicates a love of the word of God, and thus, admonishes the audience to have the same respect for the Bible.

2. Practice reading the text. Readers must read the selected scripture over **many times before they read before a group.** If you do this, you will become familiar with the wording of the text. You will learn the punctuation and the flow of thought of the text. Knowing the text enhances the flow of reading, as well as your dynamic in presenting the reading to the audience.

3. *Open your Bible.* In some situations one may have the opportunity to stand before a greater audience than a small house group. Before one walks before a large audience to read, he should have his Bible open to the passage he is going to read. This allows you the opportunity to immediately establish eye contact with the audience before you begin to read. Never go before the audience, and then start searching for the passage to be read. If you do this, you are communicating to the audience that you are unprepared.

4. *Establish immediate eye contact.* When you walk before a large assembly, immediately **look at the people** in order to establish eye contact, and thus, command their attention. Look into the eyes of some of the people before you look down to the text to be read. This simple action will command the attention of everyone, and thus quiet the audience before you begin reading.

5. *Stand erect.* In most situations it is best to stand when reading the word of God. The audience can sit. Your standing, however, will command attention. During your reading in these situations, **stand erect** or straight. Do not slouch or lean on a stand or table. Straighten your back and read with the authority of the word of God. How you stand will command respect for the word of God. It will encourage the audience to listen.

6. *Hold up the Bible.* Hold the Bible up in one hand, but not where it will hide your mouth from the eyes of anyone in the assembly. Hold the Bible high enough so you can occasionally glance

up in order to maintain eye contact with the assembly. It is best not to lay the Bible on a stand. Keep it in your hand in order to keep it before the people. What you are trying to emphasize is the fact that it is the word of God being read, and thus, attention and great respect must be given to the reading.

7. *Follow the reading with your finger.* With your free hand that is not holding the Bible, follow your reading with your finger in order that you not lose your place when glancing up to maintain eye contact with the audience.

8. *Announce the text of reading.* It is my suggestion that you announce the location of the Scripture **after you read**, and not before. In this way, you command people to listen to you while you read. If everyone has the **same** version, then you could announce the text before you read. However, if everyone has a different version, it is difficult for them to follow you while you read. Their attempt to follow you in a different version distracts from the dynamic you are trying to establish with the reading. It is for this reason that I would suggest that the location of the reading be announced **after** the reading.

9. *Read to be heard.* Read loud enough so that the person who is the greatest distance from you in the audience can clearly hear you. If he can hear, then you know everyone can hear. It is important to speak up. If you do not, you will frustrate people. People who cannot speak up should never be allowed to publicly read the Bible. Bible reading before a congregation is a very impor-

tant ministry. If one cannot be heard by everyone in the audience, then he needs to practice speaking up until he can be heard. It is then that he is qualified to read the word of God to an audience.

10. *Emphasize and practice saying key words.* During the reading, emphasize the key words of the text. Underline them in your Bible in order that you not miss them when you read. If there are difficult words that must be learned, practice their pronunciation before the time of reading. This is why an assignment for reading must be given some time before the reading takes place. It is not fair to give someone a difficult passage to read at the last minute.

11. *Honor the punctuation.* You must learn deflection and inflection in your voice according to what is called for by the punctuation marks of the text. A **period(.)** means a full stop and deflection in your voice. A **colon(:)** is a half stop or deflection in your voice. A **comma(,)** is a quarter deflection. A **semi-colon(;)** is a full stop or deflection as a period. A **question mark(?)** will be an inflection in your voice at the end of the sentence. You will have to practice this in order to develop an effective style of reading.

12. *Read clearly.* Practice lip exercises in order to better your pronunciation of difficult words. For example, to practice your “s” sounds, say over and over again the following: “She sells sea shells down by the sea shore.” If there are difficult words to be read, practice them many times before the time of reading.

13. *Read slowly.* Reading before a group of people is no place to prove that you can read fast. The slower you read, the better people can understand and meditate on what you read. If you read slowly with accurate pronunciation of the words, people will listen. Slow reading gives authority to the text. Fast reading gives the impression that what is read is not very important. One must always keep in mind when reading the Scriptures before a group that he or she is seeking to exalt the word of God as it communicates to the hearts of men and women.

14. *Conclude the reading.* Conclude the reading and quietly sit down. It is sometimes good to have a prayer immediately following the reading. In this prayer briefly mention what has been read. In this way you are reemphasizing for the audience the text of the reading.

You may think of other things that will enhance your reading style. Reading the text of the Bible before an audience can be very exciting for everyone. However, if your skills in reading are lacking, the reading can be very boring. Special gifted readers need to be trained to read the Bible. Readers can also be assigned to read to widows or those who are sick at home. This is a ministry that will be very edifying to many people if you will develop your reading skills.

C. Introduce the text of reading.

Before reading a specific text, here are some suggestions that will help the audience better understand your reading.

You do not necessarily need to do all of the following. I only make these suggestions to help you to introduce the text to the audience. The more you inform the audience concerning the historical setting of the text, the more interesting the reading will be to them. The more the audience understands the background of the text, the more everyone will understand the events and thoughts of the text.

1. Identify the first audience. Identify the original audience to whom the passage was originally written. Since we are secondary readers, what might be said in the text might not apply to us. The text was first written to a specific church, group or individual. Briefly explain the specific church, group or individual to whom the text was first written.

2. Identify the writer. Identify the writer of the passage. This often helps place the letter or book in its historical context. Those who are familiar with the historical setting of the Bible books and their authors will appreciate your identifying the author of what you are about to read.

3. Identify the date of writing. The date of writing of a New Testament letter in reference to the time when the first readers were converted, will help the audience understand why some things are said in the text. For example, 1 Thessalonians was written to people who had not been Christians for more than a year. If your audience knows this, then they will understand what Paul was writing to these new Christians is what God ex-

pects of those who are new Christians. When reading books that were written to those who had been Christians for some time, then we can understand what God expects of us in reference to our spiritual growth.

4. Mention the historical background. Sometimes it is good to explain briefly the historical background of the passage. You might date the writing in conjunction with another major biblical event. This is specifically good when reading Old Testament passages. It is also good when reading Old Testament prophecies and the Psalms. If people know what is going on in the background of the writing, the audience will appreciate what is being written.

5. Explain the purpose. Explain the purpose of the passage or explain why the writer wrote the passage. It is sometimes good to explain the general theme of the book from which the reading is taken. This prepares the people to understand the passage in its theological background. If you explain the problem that is being dealt with by the writer, then the audience can place the reading in this theological context.

6. Identify the literature. As stated in a previous point, identify the type of text or literature. This will help people to prepare their minds for understanding what is about to be read.

7. Define words. Sometimes it is good to define any difficult words in the text before you read. You do not have to apologize for the pronunciation of difficult words, especially names and places of biblical characters and cities. We do

not know their original pronunciation. Your pronunciation will be as good as the next person's. Do the best you can with the names of Old Testament names and places.

8. Pray. Pray privately for wisdom before you stand up to read the text. Prayer about the text will help you to trust in God. When reading God's word, we are communicating His message to others. The Bible was written in order to be read to all.

D. Things not to do when reading:

Here are some things you should not do during your reading. These things will distract from the text that you are trying to emphasize before the people. Remember, our purpose in the public reading of the Scriptures is to exalt the Scriptures, not ourselves. In our reading, therefore, we must be sure that our style of reading exalts the Scriptures. We must keep in mind that we are trying to better our skills for being a public reader of the word of God. This includes things we should do, as mentioned in the preceding point, but also things that we must not do. The following are the things we should not do in order to excel in this ministry:

1. Don't wander. Do not move around while you stand and read before the assembly. This makes people nervous. Even speakers who move around too much make the audience nervous. Stand flat-footed, erect and face the people. This will command the attention of everyone.

2. Don't shout. Do not shout while you read. You can read loudly without shouting. If you are perceived to be shouting, this will distract from your reading.

3. Don't be emotionally inconsistent with the text. Do not allow your reading style or emotion to be uncharacteristic of the passage you are reading. If a passage is exhorting, read it with exhortation. If a passage is reverential, read it with reverence. Be sure to know the tenor of the passage in order that you read according to the nature of what is stated in the reading.

4. Don't lean. Do not lean on the pulpit or speaker's stand while you stand. Stand up, speak up.

5. Don't stand crooked. Do not stand on one leg. If you do not stand straight, the audience will not become enthusiastic about what you are reading. Your body language is very important. You will be reading with your mouth, but your body will be communicating what you feel about the reading.

6. Don't hide. Do not hide your face from the audience. Look at everyone immediately when you get up to read and periodically during the reading. Do not lose eye contact.

7. Don't be disrespectful. Do not be disrespectful to the reading of the Bible. Make sure the audience is settled and ready to listen. It is sometimes good to have the audience to stand in order to show respect for the reading of the word of God.

E. Things to do when reading:

The following are only suggestions that will enhance or emphasize the reading of the Scriptures. I list them in order to encourage group reading of the Scriptures and to make the reading more effective. We must work to make group scripture reading interesting and spiritually uplifting. This is a gift that some members have. But it must be refined in order to make this a profitable ministry for the church.

1. Stand during the reading. You can have the audience stand during the reading. This manifests a spirit of respect for the reading. It will also encourage others to listen. However, if the reading is a long reading, you might not want to have the congregation stand for a long time. If you have an audience stand for more than five minutes you will frustrate them.

2. Close eyes during reading. If there is a short reading, it is sometimes good to have everyone close their eyes and think about what is going to be read. Immediately after the reading, offer a short prayer about the reading.

3. Read the text of the lesson. The passage that is read can be the text of the lesson that is to be taught following the reading. This will prepare the minds of the people before the lesson. It will also help the one who is giving the lesson. The teacher will not have to read the passage himself. Reading the entire passage before the lesson introduces the entire text of the lesson before it is presented.

4. Read an entire book. Some churches choose a book of the Bible and read one chapter from this book each time the group comes together. In this way, an entire book can be introduced one time at the beginning of the series of readings, with only reviews of the introductory material with each reading.

5. Use only one reader for each setting. It is best to have the same reader for any particular reading. Using a different reader to read a verse or two breaks up the continuity of the reading. Even in informal settings as a Bible class it is best to have only one reader when several verses are to be read. The exercise of giving everyone a chance to read serves only to give everyone an opportunity to speak. But such does not add to the rhythm that you are trying to establish with the reading of a text.

6. Use different readers with dialogue texts. When reading dialogue text, have different individuals read the statements of the different characters of the text. For example, you could do this with the text of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 42-45. This reading could be conducted as a dramatic reading before the group. This is something good for the young people to do in order to develop their gifts of reading.

7. Read scriptures during a presented lesson. When the teacher is giving a lesson, the scriptures he uses throughout his lesson can be read by different individuals in the audience when called on by the teacher. He can give them the scriptures before the sermon and call on the readers to read during his

teaching. This is very effective, especially if the readers are good. Greater emphasis is placed on the Scriptures of the lesson if someone other than the speaker reads the scriptures.

8. Read from different versions. If you have different versions in the same language, have the same scripture read from the different versions. This is called “comparative reading.” In order to do this, first read the text in one version, and then have this reading followed by a second or third reading in other versions. This is particularly effective if there are different language groups represented in the audience. It gives everyone a chance to hear the Scriptures read in their native language.

9. Conduct repetitive congregational reading. Have the group read with you. Read a phrase, then have the audience repeat that phrase. Proceed through

the text with the group repeating the phrases that you read.

Public reading of the Scriptures to different groups is a ministry. Effective reading is a gift. Therefore, using this ministry for the exhortation and encouragement of others is a vital part of the work of the church. As readers of the Scriptures, we will have to concentrate on learning new skills and practice those skills in our Bible reading. If we develop the skills of a good public reader, we will make Bible reading a very interesting part of the assembly of the church. We will encourage people to focus on the word of God as the source from which we can gain great encouragement. We will restore the Bible to our center of reference as the only guide we must have in spiritual guidance and authority.

Chapter 11

The Ministry Of Prayer

Luke 2:37 says of Anna, “*She did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.*” Combined with fasting, prayer is a service that one gives to God. It is a ministry on behalf of those who do the work. We need people, especially older sisters as Anna, who will give themselves to the ministry of fasting and prayer.

Prayer and fasting are ministries that must be learned, or directed by the word of God. The disciples of Jesus were religious Jews. They prayed as men of faith

before they met Jesus. Because prayer and fasting were a part of the Jewish religious life, it is undoubtedly true that Matthew, John, Thomas and the other apostles were men of prayer **before** they sat at the feet of Jesus. However, after being with Jesus for some time, they asked Him, “*Lord, teach us to pray ...*” (Lk 11:1).

This is an interesting statement in view of the religious nature of the apostles before they met Jesus. This statement points out at least two things.

First, the disciples had come to realize that their prayers needed to be according to Jesus' instructions. Secondly, they evidently were not satisfied with their prayers. For some reason they asked Jesus to teach them to pray according to His model or method of prayer or both.

Dedicated Christians are usually not satisfied with the amount of time they spend in prayer and the content of their prayers. This is only a natural feeling as one strives to have more meaningful communication with the Father in prayer. Those who have become Christians need instruction on how to properly pray, for most have come out of religious backgrounds where the teaching and practice of prayer was not according to the will of God. Men have often been taught to ask for the wrong things in the wrong way. These and many other ideas must be corrected in the prayer lives of new Christians. Our only source for correction and guidance in the area of prayer is to go by the guidance of God's communication to us, the Bible.

In this chapter I do not attempt to present a complete study on the subject of prayer. The purpose here is to help in some ways for us to have a more effective prayer life as a church leader. I also want to give some suggestions on how we can more effectively lead the church in public prayer. We must first consider the biblical instructions concerning prayer. In order to communicate with the Father, it is necessary to understand how the Father desires for us to communicate with Him.

A. Praying acceptable prayers:

Prayer is the communication of man with God. We live in a world wherein there is much confusion concerning the nature and work of God. If one has created a god after his own understanding, then certainly he will not be able to call upon the one true and living God according to His will. If one believes that God does things in these times that He has not promised He will do, then one's prayer will be futile in reference to calling upon God to act in his life in ways that God has not promised He will act. In other words, asking God to raise the dead and heal blind people are not things that God has promised He will do. It is necessary to understand God's communication to us concerning how He wants us to approach Him. The following points are biblical teachings concerning prayer:

1. Prayers are addressed to the Father. This is what Jesus taught when He gave a model prayer (Mt 6:9). This is the example He gave in His prayers as they are recorded in the New Testament (Lk 22:41,42; Jn 14:16). This was the model that Jesus established while He was on earth. If one prays to God today, then this prayer would certainly include the Godhead. We must believe that all that God is—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—are at work on behalf of the Christian. Therefore, anything that we would address to "God" will be answered by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who work as one.

2. Prayers are addressed to the Fa-

ther through the privilege of Jesus' name. In other words, prayer is in the **name** of Jesus which means that we have access to the power of the Father through the authority of Jesus (See Jn 16:23-26). The phrase "in the name of Jesus" is not a phrase that is to be made in order to make prayer scriptural in words. It is simply a recognition in our prayers that we are acknowledging the One through whom we **have the right to approach the Father.** There are no scriptures that state we must conclude a prayer with the words, "in the name of Jesus, Amen." This statement is the choice of the one who prays. In making this statement one is simply affirming to the audience that the prayer is being addressed to the Father through Jesus who is our intercessor with the Father. It is not a formula for correct prayer, or a condition upon which prayer is to be answered.

3. Prayer should express praise of God. Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (Mt 6:9). Again, these are not the precise words that are to be stated in our prayers. In these words Jesus is teaching that one must give praise to the Father. Since in prayer we are calling on God to act in our lives, we must recognize that He is one who can act. He is not an impotent God who cannot work all things together for good to those who love Him.

4. Prayer should express thanksgiving to God. Paul said, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God" (Ph

4:6). It is only natural that we thank God for all that has come from Him. In Him we live, move and have our very being. He is the source of all that exists. When one approaches God, therefore, it is natural to express gratitude to God for life and all that comes from Him.

5. Prayer should express confession of sin. John wrote, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9). God is the one against whom we sin. Therefore, when we communicate with Him, it is natural that we recognize our transgressions against His will.

6. Prayer should be a supplication to the Father. A supplication is a humble request of God (Ph 4:6). With great humility we should ask God for the things we need. With a spirit of supplication, the one who prays is affirming his dependence on God for all things.

7. Prayer should express personal and public needs. Paul said that we should make our requests known to God (Ph 4:6). Jesus taught the disciples to pray for daily bread (Mt 6:11). In prayer one allows his dependence on God for the physical necessities of life to be made known. However, one must be cautioned by the words of James. "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, **that you may spend it on your pleasures**" (Js 4:3). It is not wrong to pray for that which we need. God will provide for our needs, though it is questionable whether He will provide for the things we want out of selfish desires.

8. Prayer can be conducted in

places of solitude. Jesus said that one should enter into his inner chamber and pray (Mt 6:6). It was a common practice of Jesus to withdraw by Himself in order to pray to the Father (See Mk 6:46). In a place of solitude and quietness one has the opportunity to pray for many hours without disturbances. In solitude one can express the most inner personal feelings that should be expressed in prayer. We must remember that prayer is a time of confession. It is not a confession of our sins to one another. There are appropriate times to confess to one another. What Jesus instructs us to do is to be alone in our prayers in order to empty ourselves before God.

9. Prayers should be made at all times. Paul said to pray without ceasing, or to be in an attitude of mind at all times wherein one can approach God through prayer (1 Th 5:17). Paul and Silas prayed in prison, regardless of the circumstances of the environment (At 16:25). It is good to establish specific times of personal prayer. However, it is also good to pray when one has an undisturbed moment during the day.

10. Prayers are to be offered in public. Acts 4:24-31 is an example of a public prayer by the church. Paul desired that Christian men pray in every place (1 Tm 2:8). In public prayer an entire group has the opportunity to be led by one individual. Such public prayers should be conducted in an orderly manner. When people pray publicly at the same time, only confusion results. No one can understand what others are saying. When Paul said that he and the Corinthians

should pray with understanding, he meant more than just understanding what we pray (See 1 Co 14:15). He meant that the public prayers of the Corinthian church should not be conducted in a confusing manner. Public prayers must express the desires of the group, and thus bring edification to the group.

11. Prayers must be according to the word of God. John said, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 Jn 5:14). In order to know what the will of God is, one must be knowledgeable of the word of God. Vain prayers come about when we pray for things God never promised He would give. They result from praying in an unbiblical manner after the traditions of men and not after the directions of God’s word.

Prayer is a very important part of the Christian life. Christians should always direct their prayers to the Father through the authority of Jesus’ name. We should praise the Father and thank Him for the many blessings He has given to us. We must confess our sins and petition Him for forgiveness. God will hear our requests. Therefore, we should pray on all occasions, both privately and publicly.

B. Maintaining an effective prayer life:

I have discovered that the prayer life of most Christians varies from time to time. Our prayers are often not consistent. We go through dry spells, times

when we struggle to establish communication with God as we know we should. We must keep in mind that Christians are usually not satisfied with their prayer life and evangelistic work. This means that we can always improve in these areas. And we know we should. In order to enhance your prayer life, consider the following:

1. Be a Christian in behavior. God hears those who are seeking His will (Jn 15:7; 9:31). The fervent prayers of a **righteous man** will be heard. James wrote, “*Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much*” (Js 5:16). When one is asked to offer public prayer for the church, the one being asked to pray must be a righteous person. He must be one who is considered in faithful fellowship with the church and committed to serving others.

2. Be spiritually minded and humble in heart (Cl 3:1ff). Arrogant people cannot stand before God. One must humble himself before God in order to manifest a dependence on God (1 Pt 5:5,6). Jesus spoke on this in the parable of the Pharisee and the humble tax collector. The proud Pharisee prayed that he was not like other men (Lk 18:11). On the other hand, the humble tax collector beat his breast and would not lift his eyes toward heaven (Lk 18:13). Jesus concluded, “*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be abased. And he who humbles him-*

self will be exalted” (Lk 18:14). The prayer of a humble heart manifests total dependence on God. Pride destroys our faith, and thus, a prayer that does not express faith in God to work in our lives is a vain prayer. If we pray while thinking that we have our own lives under control, then our prayer will not be an expression of having God work in our lives. Those who depend on God, pray in a passionate manner that expresses their total dependence on God.

3. Be a believer in prayer. James wrote concerning the one who prays, “*But let him ask in faith without doubting. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind* (Js 1:6). Jesus said, “*And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive* (Mt 21:22). Epaphras was such a believer in prayer. He agonized for the Colossian church in prayer. “*Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers ...*” (Cl 4:12). A prayer without faith will be only words without results. One must be confident that God will answer our prayers. We must be confident that He is working all things together for our good and for the completion of His purposes (Rm 8:28).

4. Be hungering and thirsting after God’s will. Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled*” (Mt 5:6). One who is not a good student of God’s word is not desirous of God’s will. When we feel that we can make it on our own, we will not seek God’s word or work in our lives. One who is not searching will

not be discovering the treasures of the word of God. If one presumes to be a leader of God's people, then he must be in a two-way communication relationship with God. He must be communicating with God in prayer. He must also be allowing God to communicate with him through his personal study of God's word.

5. Be knowledgeable of God's word. Our prayers must be according to the will of God. The disciples realized this when they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Lk 11:1). John also wrote, "*And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us*" (1 Jn 5:14). Therefore, in order to pray according to God's will we must know God's word. Those who are not students of God's word will invariably pray those things that are not according to God's will.

6. Be knowledgeable of the needs of the church. You must know the special needs of the church as a whole and individuals in particular in order to pray for the needs of the church. When making public prayers for a large group of people, ask for prayer requests. Ask for those for whom prayer is to be made. When one is visiting among the sheep, he or she always has a list of needs to be made in prayer. It is for this reason that one should make a **prayer list**. By listing things for which prayer must be made on a continual basis, we remind ourselves to pray for those who are on our personal list.

7. Be a spokesman for the church. In public prayer we must remember that

we are speaking in prayer for an entire group of people. Therefore, we must express our prayers in a manner that includes the entire group. This is the time to use the pronouns "we" and "us" when wording our prayer before a group of people.

8. Be a visionary in prayer. It is true that we must pray for the physical things of life. James wrote, "*Is anyone among you afflicted? Let him pray*" (Js 5:13). However, keep in mind what Jesus also stated, "*The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest so that He will send laborers into His harvest*" (Mt 9:37,38). We need prayers for evangelists. We need prayers for the coming of the kingdom reign of Jesus in unevangelized areas of the world. We need prayers for the worldwide protection and work of the church. Through our prayers we must open up the minds of the brethren to have a greater vision of things than what is only in our village, town or city.

We live in a world of great physical suffering. As a result, most of our prayers are directed toward the physical side of our lives. However, we must keep in mind that we are in a great spiritual warfare with the forces of darkness. This is beyond the physical. Therefore, we must focus on things in our prayers that deal with our struggle against the wiles of the devil. If one is thoroughly engaging the enemy in his or her life, his or her prayers will reflect what is most important. If we are not engaged in the struggle against

Satan, we will not be praying for victory in the battles. If our focus is more on the physical side of things, then we will be praying mostly concerning that which is physical.

It is my belief that the context of our prayers should be primarily in reference to the spiritual battle in which we are engaged. We need to pray for the recovery of body parts, but this is not the primary focus of our earthly warfare. We need prayers for strength to overcome the wiles of Satan. We need prayers for soldiers of the faith to go forth to all the world. We need prayers for churches to come out of themselves and focus on world evangelism. We need preachers to leave fathers and mothers, homes and lands in order to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the lost. We need prayers for men to turn from their primary focus on the saved in order to go to the unsaved. We need prayers for kings and rulers in order that our ministry may be in an environment of peace. We need prayers that God take down evil men who have set themselves against Him. We need prayers for wisdom to preach the gospel to the lost. We need prayers for open doors for evangelism. We need prayers that our neighbor's heart be opened for the reception of Jesus. We need prayers that lazy members of the church arise to the occasion to evangelize the lost. We need prayers that the church will become a praying church.

If one is not struggling to live the Christian life, his or her prayers will often feel empty. A spiritually minded person will offer a spiritually worded prayer.

He or she will believe that God answers prayer, though He may not answer prayer **when** we want our prayers answered or **how** we want them answered. We must know God's word in order to pray according to His will. One who offers prayers for the church must know the needs of the church and address those needs before the church and to God. If you have the opportunity of offering prayer for a group of people, keep your focus on the spiritual warfare in which everyone of the church is struggling.

C. Suggestions for better public prayers:

We must strive to train ourselves and others to offer effective public prayers before an assembly of brothers and sisters. The following are some suggestions that will help develop a better presentation of prayer before the church. Remember that these are only suggestions. These are not scriptural commands concerning how men should lead a group in public prayer.

1. *You can face the audience.* This is best done by walking in front of the assembly, and then directing your prayer toward the people. If you stand or sit in the assembly of a house church, turn in a direction where you face the majority of the people. In this way more people will be able to hear you.

2. *You can read your prayer.* If you are offering your first prayers before the church, you may want to write out your prayers and then read what you have writ-

ten in a prayer. By writing out your thoughts, you will be able to express exactly what you want to say. However, I would not suggest that this be a continued practice in developing your prayers. One must learn to be spontaneous and comfortable before others in prayer. In this way, your sincerity comes across in your prayers.

3. *You can quote the Scriptures.* The Psalms have many excellent passages that can be quoted to begin a prayer or used in the content of a prayer. This was done in the prayer of Acts 4:25 with a quotation of Psalm 2:1,2. Many of David's Psalms were expressions of thought that were directed toward God. In order to learn how to pray, I would suggest that you consider what David said in his prayers to God in the Psalms.

4. *You can bow to your knees in prayer.* Some churches practice group bowing during at least one of the prayers of their assemblies. This is a good practice, though I would suggest that these prayers be short for the benefit of the knees of the aged. We must keep in mind that there is no biblical posture for prayer. Therefore, we must be careful not to bind on the audience a particular posture in prayer that is not authorized by the word of God.

5. *You can lift up your hands to heaven.* This was a common practice of the Jews and in the context of Paul's suggestion in 1 Timothy 2:8. Paul wrote, "Therefore, I want the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Tm 2:8). It is a natural expression of human suppli-

cation toward God to lift up hands to God. Though it may not be a culturally accepted practice in some areas, it cannot be condemned as wrong by those who do not desire to do such. As any posture cannot be made a command for correct prayer, so any posture cannot be condemned if it is the natural expression of one's adoration of God. Those who would make condemning judgments about posture are going beyond the word of God and binding where God has not bound in His word.

6. *You can conduct prayer meetings.* One of the most spiritually uplifting practices is to have meetings of the church specifically for the purpose of prayer. You might divide the assembly into groups and assign a particular prayer request for each group. I know of many churches where the men get together for weekly prayer for the work of the church. Their business meeting is a prayer meeting.

It is good to have prayer meetings for both men and women. One of the greatest spiritual development efforts that some have done is to establish weekly prayer groups. When participants of a prayer group continue in the group for several months, they will bond together as a group. In prayer groups, members learn to confess their faults to one another. James wrote, "*Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another ...*" (Js 5:16). This is what Christians are to be doing. The leadership of the church must encourage the members to be in a relationship and situation with one another wherein they can confess their sins

to one another and pray for one another. When this dynamic takes place within a group, there is great bonding. Praying churches grow strong in their relationships with one another and the members bond together in prayer with one another.

7. *You can find someone with whom you can regularly pray.* It is rewarding to find someone with whom you can have regular prayers. This is an encouragement for both parties. It is encouraging to have someone pray for you in your presence and for you to pray for them. Prayer together strengthens your relationship with the one with whom you pray. If you establish a regular hour of prayer with another individual, you will establish a lifelong relationship with this person.

8. *You can conduct a 24-hour church prayer.* This is accomplished by dividing a 24-hour day into fifteen-minute segments. Have the members of the church select at least one of the fifteen-minute segments in which to offer prayer. The prayer can be for a specific need for which everyone has agreed to pray. Suppose you want to establish the church in another village or part of town. Make this the need about which the entire church will pray for a 24-hour period.

9. *You can conduct a chain prayer in a group.* You might select one of the men to begin the prayer chain by offering a brief prayer. Select someone to end the session. In between the beginning and closing prayers, other men can take the opportunity to offer prayers. Some have made requests in such sessions to

have only sentence prayers. These are prayers that can be made with only one breath. Everyone would make a short prayer, but a person who has more to say can make another short prayer later in the session.

10. *Make a list of prayer requests.* Carry this list with you and when you have an opportunity to pray, pray for those on the list. Let people know that they are on your prayer list. Encourage the congregation to make a prayer list each week. During the assemblies of the church, everyone can be given needs for which to pray.

11. *Establish a specific time for prayer.* In order to enhance regular prayer life, it is best to establish a specific time every day when you can pray. If we do not have a specific time of prayer, we will often become erratic in offering prayers. “*Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer...*” (At 3:1). In Jerusalem there was an established hour of prayer to which anyone could freely come. If a specific time and place are established for the offering of prayers, then anyone can come when they have the opportunity.

12. *Establish a special place to pray.* Luke recorded, “*Now on the Sabbath we went out of the city to a riverside where prayer was customarily made*” (At 16:13). Lydia and others regularly went to a specific place of prayer. This is a good practice. In fact, some groups establish in their communities special places of prayer to which people can come regularly for prayer. If you estab-

lish a place of prayer for yourself, you know that you can be alone when you pray. If you establish a common place for group prayer, others who want to pray can feel free to come to this place for prayer. From this group a fellowship is started, and possibly, the establishment of a church.

D. Things about which to caution ourselves in public prayer:

The following are things I would suggest that one caution himself about when offering prayers before a group. These are things that will distract from the purpose of public prayers.

1. *Do not pray long prayers.* An effective prayer does not have to be a long prayer. Keep your prayer short and to the point. If you lose the audience because of a long prayer, then you are no longer leading a public prayer. You are praying for yourself and not for those of the audience who have stopped listening to what you are praying.

How long a public prayer should be depends on the culture of worship where you live. The length of a public prayer depends on how long you can pray publicly without taking advantage of the audience. In other words, once one has the attention of the audience to lead the prayer, he should not take advantage of the audience to keep them in prayer longer than they want. Long prayers with redundant phrases are not necessary in order for God to hear what we are saying. We must remember that our prayers

are a supplication to God, not to the audience.

2. *Do not pray to be seen.* Jesus warned about praying in order to be seen of men (Mt 6:5-8). Public prayer should not be a public display of ourselves. Since the very nature of our attitude in prayer is to humble ourselves before God, then certainly this attitude must be portrayed in our prayers.

3. *Do not intentionally use beautiful words.* In prayer we must learn how to speak normally. We must speak as we would to another person. If an effort is made in public prayer to use poetic words, then the prayer becomes unreal to those who hear. It becomes a prayer that is meant to impress the audience.

4. *Do not use a "prayer language."* In prayer we should use words and phrases as we would in talking to someone on the street. God is not listening to our beautiful language. He is listening to our requests. If one is not speaking in the prayer as he would normally speak to others, then the speaking becomes artificial. Those who listen will know that the individual who is praying is not using his normal tone and language of prayer.

5. *Do not use a "prayer tone."* Do not pray in a tone that is different from your everyday conversation with people. If you do, it can be both distracting and fake to those who are listening. Praying in either a different language style or tone distracts from the sincerity of public prayer. God is spirit and is not dependent on the use of human language. He has no ears to which we must appeal.

Therefore, language or tones of language that are not natural to the one who prays are often used for the listeners or the one praying. In praying in a different language or tone, we are actually appealing to ourselves and not God.

6. Do not use vain repetitions. One must not say something over and over again. God can hear our requests the first time. We must keep in mind that the prayer is addressed to God, and thus repetitions that may often be directed to the audience are not necessary for God. Saying something over and over again does not mean that what is stated has more impact or force. God can hear and respond to a silent whisper.

James recorded that Elijah “*prayed earnestly that it might not rain. And it did not rain ...*” (Js 5:17). The word “prayed” is an aorist tense verb. The meaning is that he prayed **one time** that it not rain. And it stopped raining. James also recorded of this historical event, “*And he prayed again and the heavens gave rain ...*” (Js 5:18). Again, the word “prayed” is aorist tense. In other words, Elijah prayed one prayer and the rains stopped. He prayed again and the rains started. One powerful prayer is all that it takes to get action from God.

7. Do not preach in prayer. God does not need a sermon. The public prayer is not an opportunity to preach to the church. Therefore, be careful about preaching to the audience when we should be praying to God. We are talking to God, not man.

8. Do not ramble. A prayer should address specific things. Making a list of

things for which prayer must be made will keep you from endless speaking. If you are leading a public prayer, and you ramble, you will lose the attention of the audience for which you are praying.

9. Do not shout. Speak loud enough for the last person from you to hear. But one must not shout in order to draw attention to one’s self. Remember, God can hear the quietest prayer. Even when we think out our prayers, God can hear.

10. Do not mumble. Be sure to speak distinctly and in a volume that can be heard. We must remember that in public prayer we are leading a prayer for the entire congregation. We must speak loud enough for everyone in the audience to hear.

In our spiritual growth, we grow in our prayer life. Christians are often frustrated with their prayer lives. This is not necessarily a negative aspect of our Christian life. It reveals that we are perceptive to wanting to have a better prayer life. When the disciples came to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray, they were frustrated with their prayers. Their request meant that they were willing to learn how to pray according to the instructions of Jesus. The same should be true in our own lives.

We must assume that one should never reach a level of being satisfied with his or her prayer life. This is one area of the Christian life in which we must continually grow. If one becomes satisfied with his or her prayer life, he or she is in danger of becoming complacent with the ordinary. Christians should be extra or-

dinary in their relationship with and communication to God. The closer we come to God, the more natural and frequent our prayers will be.

Chapter 12

God's Newsman

When the church assembles, this is a great time for it to interact by the making of announcements and listing of prayer requests. This is especially true in those areas where there are many groups of a regional church that are meeting in different houses. Every group of the church should make every effort to keep everyone informed concerning the activities and needs of the family as a whole. In order to accomplish this, we must make every effort to inform and be informed concerning the activities of the family of God. It is the responsibility of every member to give and receive information concerning the work of the church.

A. The purpose of church communication:

The church must understand the purpose for the making of announcements concerning the activities of the church. Announcements are the members of the church in communication with one another. In order to enhance the mutual communication of the church, therefore, every effort should be made to encourage effective communication of the news of the church. The following are reasons announcements should be made when the saints assemble:

1. *Announcements keep the church informed concerning the needs of the members.* Most churches throughout the world do not have what is commonly referred to as church bulletins, or newspapers. Though a congregation may not have these means of communication, the family of God must keep itself informed concerning what is happening in the lives of all family members. A church that is concerned with the needs of one another will find ways of letting needs be known. Paul referred to this when he wrote, "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*" (Gl 6:2). As Christians, we have a responsibility to fulfill one another's needs. John warned, "*But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*" (1 Jn 3:17). In order to know the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ, we must have knowledge of such needs. One way to convey this knowledge is through an effective means by which news can be gathered and announced to the members of the church.

2. *Announcements develop a mutual concern among the members.* Paul highly complemented the Thessalonian church for being a church that had a mutual concern for one another. Notice what he said concerning their love of one an-

other. *"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other"* (2 Th 1:3). One can only imagine what the announcements were like at the assemblies of the Thessalonian church? We must understand that the purpose of making announcements about the activities and needs of other members is an expression of our concern for one another. Love cannot be expressed if it does not know where to be expressed.

3. *Announcements promote interaction among members.* In order for members to become involved in the lives of members, we must know what is going on in one another's lives. As a member of the body of Christ, each one of us must be interested in the interests of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul wrote, *"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others"* (Ph 2:4). Through announcements we can be informed concerning one another's interests. We can interact with one another when we know of one another's needs.

4. *Announcements give encouragement to members.* Acts 14:27 is probably one of the greatest announcements in the New Testament. When Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey, they assembled the church together and announced to them what God had done among the Gentiles. *"And when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had*

opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." Announcements of God's work in the lives of the members of the church encourage everyone. It is for this reason that announcements should be positive and edifying.

B. An appropriate time for announcements:

When and how to make announcements can be a challenging task. If a church in an area meets together at the same place on a weekly basis, then it is easy to communicate news to the members. However, if the church is a multiple-assembly church, and thus, meets at different locations, then making announcements to everyone can be somewhat difficult.

1. *Announcements of single-assembly churches:* There are three principal options that are usually practiced by single-assembly churches.

a. *Announcements at the beginning of the assembly:* One advantage of having the announcements before the assembly is that members are more likely to give attention to what is said. Informality is promoted at the beginning of the assembly and the church can thus move easily into praises and the Lord's Supper. Announcements at the beginning of the assembly also give the people an opportunity to settle down for the assembly.

b. *Announcements during the assembly:* Some churches have announcements after a few songs are sung.

The singing settles the assembly down and brings them to a more attentive mood to listen to what is announced.

c. Announcements at the end of the assembly: Most single-assembly churches have their announcements at the end of the assembly. This is done because the assembly is at its most settled point. There is usually greater awareness of the announcements when the assembly is concluded. If the announcements are made at the end of the assembly, there is time for discussion concerning the particular announcements immediately after the assembly.

2. Announcements of multiple-assembly churches: Keeping everyone informed when they are scattered over a great distance can be difficult at times. It is for this reason that churches which meet at different places on Sunday in a particular region have to use some ingenuity in order to keep everyone informed concerning the work of the church. Here are some suggestions.

a. Make announcements a ministry: This would be a great ministry for the young people. Someone can be assigned the task of going to every house assembly in order to gather information about the work of a particular group. Once the information is collected, an individual can be assigned to go to every group on Sunday. This can be the "announcement ministry." It can be a ministry of the young people who can make sure information is delivered to every group.

b. Make announcements during celebration assemblies: Multiple-assembly churches often conduct assemblies every month or quarter when all the members come together. It is during this assembly that the announcement suggestions of the preceding point number 1 can be carried out.

c. Make announcements during group meetings: One of the advantages of multiple-assembly churches is that each group is usually well-informed concerning the activities of every member. A good practice is to have an announcement/prayer session every time the group meets. This is a session of about thirty minutes. During these sessions, time is taken for everyone to express things for which they need prayers. Discussion is conducted about activities in the lives of every member. This is a natural time for communication on the part of every member. It is a time for focusing on the needs of others and approaching the throne of God on behalf of those who need special prayers. The prayer requests of these sessions are actually the announcements being made to the group. As everyone listens to the prayers of others in the group, then they discover what is on the heart of each group member.

C. Making effective announcements:

The making of announcements before a group is not difficult. There are, however, a few things one must remember when preparing to give the announcements for an assembly of the church.

1. Know the facts. Generally speaking, one must bring together all the facts of each announcement. In order to do this, ask **when, where, how, what, and who** concerning the announcement. For example, when announcing the birth of a baby be sure to say **who** (Name the baby and parents), **when** (When was the baby born), **where** (Where was the baby born), **how** (Are the mother and baby in good health. Also in this case, how much does the baby weigh), and **what** (Is there anything that needs to be done for the mother or baby).

2. Know the purpose of the announcement. We must understand the purpose for each announcement and emphasize this purpose. In the announcement of a wedding, the main purpose is the joining of two Christians for life's Christian walk together. One might make a statement in the announcement that encourages the two who are getting married.

3. Know the correct pronunciation of all words and names. If the names of individuals are made in the announcements, be sure to pronounce their names properly. If you are in doubt, ask someone concerning the correct pronunciation before the announcements are to be made.

4. Pause between announcements. Do not run the announcements together. A brief silence between each individual announcement will add importance to the announcement. It will also give the audience a moment to rehearse in their minds the content of the announcement which has been made. If the announcement is about something for which there

needs to be prayer, it is sometimes good to stop immediately and have a prayer for the specific need.

5. Speak clearly. Be sure to concentrate on pronouncing words clearly in order that all may understand. Do not mumble. In order to speak clearly, it is good to speak slowly.

6. Speak to be heard. Again, as in public prayer and preaching, speak in a manner to be heard by the person who is furthest from you.

7. Speak briefly. Try to make the announcement as brief as possible. In order to do this, condense each announcement to the most important facts. People can better remember what was said during the announcements if we give the most important information of the events. If more information is needed concerning a particular event that is announced, identify someone in the audience to whom people can go after the assembly in order to receive detailed information. Ask others in the assembly to volunteer information if they know more about any particular news report that you have given.

8. Speak enthusiastically. Be excited about what you are doing. It is important. When we speak during the time of announcements, we must give life to what we are saying. By doing such we will command the attention of the congregation. Everyone will listen to what is being said. However, when making announcements concerning death and tragedy in the lives of others, be sure to speak with reverence. We must rejoice with those who rejoice, but mourn with those who mourn.

9. Repeat important facts. When all the announcements have been concluded, it is best to repeat the most important facts of each announcement. This will help people remember what was said. Remember, it is the purpose of the announcements to educate the church family concerning the activities of everyone in the church. It is for this reason that we must make the announcements an exciting moment in the week of every member.

If the announcements are made in a proper and enthusiastic manner, every member will be excited about the work of the church. Announcements should not be made by those who have no ex-

citement in their manner of speaking. If there is no excitement in making announcements, then the members will not be excited about what is said.

Keep in mind that the ministry of making announcements is the church communicating concerning events that affect everyone either directly or indirectly. Members who stay in communication with one another are members who stay involved in one another's lives. They are members who pray for one another. It is necessary, therefore, that the church communicate through regular news reports in order that members learn one another's lives.

Chapter 13

God's Song Leader

Because of His own joyful nature, God created a being that loved singing. He thus placed in the nature of man a yearning for song. God not only gave us the ability to sing, He created us with a desire to express our innermost joy and praise through verses of song.

It is logical that God would make singing a central expression of Christian living and communication. James wrote, "*Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms*" (Js 5:13). What is more natural to come from a joyful Christian heart than singing? You cannot stop Christians from being cheerful. Therefore, you cannot stop them from singing. Even in prison, "*Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God*" (At 16:25). Paul pro-

claimed, "*I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding*" (1 Co 14:15). "*In the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to You*" (Hb 2:12).

To lead the church in congregational singing is a ministry to which many should strive to improve. Singing is a very important part of Christian fellowship and exhortation. Whenever Christians are together, singing should be characteristic of their meetings. The singing of spiritual songs should not be confined to the Sunday assemblies of the saints. The nature of the commands in the New Testament in relation to singing emphasizes that on all occasions and in every place Christians should sing spiritual

songs. Understanding New Testament commands in reference to singing should challenge many to be song leaders. One can be a song leader in his or her own house. We can lead singing in small groups of the church. In other words, there are many opportunities where one can be a song leader. The following points are suggestions to keep in mind when leading Christians in their communication with one another through singing as a group of assembled disciples:

A. Characteristics of a good song leader:

Good song leaders learn skills that help them to bring out of the Christian's heart the joy of Christian living. They see their ministry in leading people to praise God through song in the sense that they want people to express themselves through song. They lead in encouraging their fellow Christians to admonish one another through the medium of song. The following are some characteristics of a good song leader:

1. **Have a cheerful heart.** James stated that singing will proceed out of a cheerful heart (J's 5:13). As a song leader, one must have a cheerful nature in order to bring out of people the joy of singing. You cannot stimulate joy in the hearts of those you lead in singing if you do not have such in your own heart. The cheerful manner by which one leads singing encourages others to sing with a cheerful heart.

2. **Have a leading spirit.** When lead-

ing singing before a group, **one must lead the group.** I have seen many men who could sing well, but they could not lead well. In the leading of congregational singing, it is better to have one who can lead well than one who can actually sing well but cannot lead. Those who can sing well, but not lead well, usually conduct assemblies that are not as inspiring as they should be. It is ideal to have someone who can both sing well and lead the church well. This is not always possible. One must keep in mind that if he is going to lead singing for the assembly of the church, then he must do just that. **Lead** the singing. If one does not know how to lead an assembly, then he must make every effort to learn. Through prayer and fasting God will raise up within us boldness to lead forth in a public manner before an assembly. God will give strength and courage.

3. **Have an understanding of the purpose of Christian singing.** Paul explained the purpose for singing in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. "... *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*" (Ep 5:19). "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*" (Cl 3:16).

The preceding two passages state the purpose why Christians sing spiritual songs on all occasions, not just the assemblies. Keep in mind that the context of these passages does not state anything

about the singing of spiritual songs being confined to the assemblies of the saints. Christians should be singing every day of their lives. Singing is a natural manner by which we give God praise. It is natural for Christians to give God praise seven days a week. It is natural for them to express the joy of their hearts to others through the medium of singing.

According to Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, Christians are to accomplish two things in their singing.

a. Speaking to one another in song: Christians are to **speak to one another**. Singing is a medium of communication between Christians. In speaking to one another in song Christians are to **teach** and **admonish**. Paul does not explain methods of how to accomplish teaching and admonishing by song. We are given freedom to use our imagination. The command to teach and admonish is **specific**. How to accomplish such is **generic**, that is, as long as we are teaching and admonishing with **spiritual songs** that are biblically correct, we can determine the manner by which to accomplish the specific command to sing. Several churches use choruses to teach and admonish the church with spiritual songs. Some preachers have preached sermons by song. In small groups in houses some have taught new songs to new Christians. Some have written new songs and taught these songs to the church. Individuals who have been gifted with a talent to sing have admonished the entire congregation through their singing.

In 1 Corinthians 14:26 Paul stated in

reference to the inspired ministries of the Corinthian church, "*When you come together, every one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a language, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*" In this passage, and in the context of what was taking place in the Corinthian assemblies, individuals were inspired with a song, or a teaching, or the speaking in a foreign language. When they were thus inspired, they could use as individuals before the church, that which had been given to them individually to minister to the church. Leading the church to teach and admonish itself with spiritual songs is a great ministry. If an individual has a song to teach the church, then the church should allow this individual to sing solo in order to teach the new song.

Singing is a ministry that is broader than the assembly of the church on Sunday. Those who have the gift of singing must be encouraged to use their gift on all occasions. By teaching through song, many can be taught the gospel. Many truths of the Bible can be communicated to unbelievers through the gift of singing.

We must remember that in singing we are teaching. Therefore, we must make sure that our songs are in harmony with the word of God. Several songs have been written by people who do not know the truth. We should be careful to select those songs that correctly express spiritual truths in a biblical manner.

b. Speak to the Lord in song: In the passages of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 Paul also said that we

should sing “*with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*” He said that you should make “*melody in your heart to the Lord.*” I would interpret this to mean that we must know that the purpose of singing is also to praise the Lord. In Colossians 3:16, the word “Lord” could refer to either our King and Savior Jesus, who is reigning over all things, or it could refer to the Father. However, in Ephesians 5:18-20 the reference to the “Lord” in verse 19 seems to refer to Jesus. In verse 18 we are to be filled with the **Holy Spirit**. In verse 19 we are to make melody in our hearts to the **Lord** (Jesus). And in verse 20 we are to give thanks to the **Father**. Our songs should express praises both to the Father and Son for the grace and sacrifice that has been given for our salvation.

4. Have good posture. If you are leading songs before a large assembly of the church, and you have to stand, be sure to stand erect. Do not slump or lean on the podium. Standing erect communicates confidence to the audience. It will inspire the church to give attention to your leadership. If you are leading singing in a house church, sit erect, or even stand. Our body language must communicate enthusiasm.

5. Properly announce songs. If you are leading singing before a large assembly, it is best to announce songs twice. Speak loud enough for those in the back of the audience to hear. Give the congregation enough time to turn to the announced song before beginning the song. If you do not use songbooks, then the

spontaneous beginning of a song will preclude the announcement of a song. Simply begin a song everyone knows and others will join in.

6. Lead energetically. A good song leader will be enthusiastic about leading the singing. This enthusiasm will be caught by the congregation. As a result, the entire church will sing more enthusiastically as they copy the attitude of the song leader.

7. Compliment the church. When leading songs, one can inspire the church to sing better by complementing everyone on their singing. Criticizing the singing usually discourages the spirit of the singers. If you compliment the church in their singing, they will sing better in order to please.

8. Sing selected verses. If you use a songbook **you do not have to sing all the verses of each song.** Sometimes it is best to sing fewer verses of each song, and thus have time to sing more songs during the assembly. You can also choose those verses that better suit the occasion. If there is more than one verse to a song that most people know, sing only those verses you know everyone knows. If you do not have songbooks, it is a good idea to sing only the first verse of a song that has many verses.

9. Center songs on the sermon. If you know the subject of the lesson that will be presented to the group, lead those songs and verses that will focus everyone's mind on the subject of the lesson. This will prepare the minds of the people to listen to what will be taught.

10. Sing the appropriate song. For

the Lord's Supper, it is good to sing a song that centers the attention of the church on the subject of the Lord's Supper. For an invitation song to a lesson, be sure to sing a song that encourages the audience to respond to the message of the lesson. The invitation song should always be a familiar song. This is not the time to sing a song people do not know.

11. *Organize your songs.* If you are leading the songs for a large assembly of the church, be sure to plan beforehand exactly what songs you are going to sing. This is especially true for campaigns and crusades. If you are leading singing for an assembly of the saints, plan when there will be prayers and the Lord's Supper. Organize with the teacher of the house when the lesson will be delivered. Be sure you do not have more songs than the time you have been allotted to sing.

12. *Sing an appropriate number of songs.* The song leader must keep in mind that people generally come together in assembly to listen to the teaching of the word of God. It is not good, therefore, to dominate the assembly by singing. Song leaders who have a gift for leading singing must conduct the singing in a manner that focuses the people on the word. The singing prepares the minds and hearts of the people. Therefore, if the assembly is to be focused on the word of God, the song leader should not dominate the assembly by too many songs.

Remember that good song leading will make an assembly of the church very encouraging. You can have good song

leading and a boring lesson and still have a rewarding assembly. However, it is difficult to have a rewarding assembly when the lesson is great and the singing is not inspiring. It is the responsibility of the song leader to make the assembly encouraging and exciting by the enthusiastic leading of the singing.

B. Leading songs without songbooks:

Those churches that do not have songbooks have an advantage. Their singing is usually more meaningful because they are not distracted by the reading of words in a book. Songs are usually sung more enthusiastically because the song is sung from memory, not reading. We must remember that the first century church had no songbooks. The churches for several centuries after the establishment of the church had no songbooks. Therefore, good singing in church assemblies is not dependent on songbooks. The commands of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 can be accomplished without the aid of songbooks.

Do not misunderstand what I am saying in reference to the absence of songbooks. One of the greatest blessings a church can have is the possession of songbooks that have notes for four-part harmony. If your singing has advanced to four-part harmony, you are blessed if you have songbooks that give the music for each part. However, most churches do not have this blessing. Songbooks are expensive and few churches throughout the world have the blessing of possessing such books.

Here are some suggestions on how a group of Christians can improve their singing without songbooks. The following points are my suggestions on how to accomplish the goal of having meaningful singing in assemblies without songbooks:

1. Set a goal of memorizing songs.

This is done by first setting a goal as a congregation concerning how many songs the church wants to memorize. I would suggest between twenty to forty songs. Once this goal has been established, then go to work. Even if churches have songbooks, they rarely know or sing in their assemblies during a year more than fifty different songs. If the congregation where you attend does not have songbooks, you are not at a disadvantage if you simply determine to memorize all songs that are used during the assemblies of the saints.

In order to find new songs, ask other churches for songs. You can even write your own songs. There are many good scriptures that can be and have been written into song. It should not be much of a problem to find good songs if you are blessed in the church with those who are gifted in singing.

2. Learn a song once a week. Use one of the assemblies, preferably Sunday evening or a weekday meeting, to learn a new song. Use an entire assembly to learn the words and meaning of a new song. If a song has different parts, learn those parts individually and then sing them together. It is easy for a church to learn one new song a week.

If the local church is divided into house churches, assign a new song to each house church. The task of the individual house churches would be to bring to the celebration assembly the song that they have learned with the challenge of teaching it to all the church.

3. Each member must write out each new song. During any song-learning session, the song should be written out in some way for each member to copy down. If there is no paper available, you will simply have to spend more time in memorizing the words. However, if each member can write down the new song on paper, he or she can take it home and continue to work with it.

4. Teach all songs to new converts.

When one obeys the gospel, assign a member who knows all the songs of the church to the new convert. This member should then spend a great deal of time with the new convert in order to help the new member learn the songs of the church. Once songs are memorized, they are on our hearts.

5. Regularly sing all songs. If the church knows twenty-five songs by memory, it will be difficult to keep some of the songs in memory if you do not sing them on a regular basis. Therefore, make a list of all songs that are sung during the assemblies in order not to forget to sing any one particular song over a period of time. Song leaders should make sure that all songs are sung on a regular basis in order for the people to keep them in memory.

We must keep in mind that singing lifts the human spirit. The more empha-

sis we place on our singing, the more the members will be encouraged. Those who have the gift of singing must be encouraged to use their gift to exhort and encourage the church.

God made us in a way that we re-

ceive encouragement through singing. If those who have the gift of leading singing can understand this, then they will be motivated to minister to the church by developing the singing of the church.

Chapter 14

Gospel Meetings And Tent Crusades

The success of gospel meetings, and specifically tent meetings, has increased the growth rate of the church in many areas. This is especially true of tent meetings. When the prospective visitor thinks of a tent meeting, he or she feels that there are no “strings attached” if one goes to the meeting. To the prospective visitor, the tent is here today and gone tomorrow. Therefore, the visitor is more likely to attend the meeting without feeling that he or she will be tied into a particular religious group.

There is also an excitement that is generated by a tent meeting that cannot be produced in a public building. In the Third World context, the tent stimulates a sense of revival that is vacant in a building environment. The tent meeting is not a drawing attraction in First World cultures because it is believed that there is something archaic about this system of public preaching. However, this is not necessarily the case in Latin America, the West Indies, Africa and other places of the world where the drawing power of the tent is strong, particularly in the rural areas of the aforementioned areas. Because of the attraction of the tent as-

sembly, there is an atmosphere developed in the meeting that is very conducive to the spiritual revival that the meeting can generate.

In order to enhance evangelistic gospel meetings, and specifically tent meetings, the following are a few suggestions that are given for the purpose of organization and conducting an evangelistic meeting. Keep in mind that some of these suggestions might not apply to your region or culture. Judicial application is thus encouraged as you consider these suggestions. This is an accumulation of suggestions that have been used in many places in the world, and thus, my purpose here is to share what has been successful in other areas.

A. The preparation for the meeting:

Successful meetings do not just happen. They are carefully planned in order to bring about the greatest response from those who attend. Poorly planned meetings will result in poor attendance, and subsequently, poor response. It is the responsibility of the leadership of the church to make sure that public evange-

listic efforts of the church be conducted in a manner that presents to the public the fact that the church is organized and concerned about helping the community.

1. *Advertise the meeting.* Every medium of advertisement should be used. If you have access to radio, TV, newspaper, printing of brochures and pamphlets, use them. Weeks before the time of the meeting, use any medium that is possible in order to get the message to the general public concerning the meeting that is coming. The more you advertise, the more people will think that the coming event is a place to be when it happens.

Advertisement is not just for the general public. It is also for the church. When members are at work advertising a coming meeting, their excitement concerning the meeting is stimulated. Planning and advertising for a meeting encourages the local membership to participate in the meeting itself. Good meetings are never the work of the leaders of the church. They are the result of a cooperative effort on the part of all members who are working together in order to reach their local community.

2. *Pray and fast for the meeting.* While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch before being called by the Holy Spirit to be sent out on the first missionary journey, they and the other leaders of the church fasted and prayed (At 13:1-3). After they had fasted and prayed, the Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas for a mission to the Gentiles of Galatia. The church then focused their fasting and praying on the specific work of their go-

ing forth to preach.

Churches that successfully conduct evangelistic meetings, fast and pray for the meetings. In doing this, the focus of the entire membership is directed toward the outreach of the meeting. Through fasting and prayer, members will do everything that is within their power to advertise and make physical preparations for a meeting.

Keep in mind that when we do kingdom business, it is imperative that we call on the One for whom we are doing the business. God's power must be brought to focus on what we are trying to do for His glory. As in the case with the Antioch church and the first mission journey of Paul, the leadership of the church should be involved in the ministry of fasting and prayer for the success of such meetings. The entire church should be involved in the ministry of fasting and praying for the meeting.

3. *Produce materials for the meeting.* This again is a suggestion that must be within the financial ability of those who are conducting the meeting. The printing of special brochures, pamphlets and advertisements for the meeting must begin several weeks before the actual meeting. In order to advertise the meeting in the community, handbills or billboard advertisements with the date, time and location of the meeting should be distributed or posted in public places throughout the community. This small effort in advertisement communicates to the community that the meeting is serious. It communicates that those who are organizing the meeting know what they

are doing, and thus, want everyone to be present.

Writing and printing a special pamphlet to be handed out during the meeting is very effective. This effort communicates that the organizers of the meeting are serious about the meeting.

If other materials can be printed that deal with fundamental teachings and spiritual needs of those who attend, then the teaching opportunity of the meeting will extend beyond the meeting itself. The power of literature is in the fact that people can study through the material when they are in the quietness of their homes. For this reason, organizers should make every effort to produce something that can be placed in the hands of those who attend.

4. *Emphasize the event.* When conducting a successful meeting within a community, it is best to emphasize the event of the meeting, not necessarily the speaker. The speaker can draw people. However, if the community understands that the meeting will be a community event, they will be more likely to participate. When organizing the meeting, emphasize what will take place during the meeting. There will be preaching. But there will also be prayers for special community needs. There may be classes for the children. If literature is produced, it will be distributed to those who attend. With every meeting, free Bible correspondence courses and tracts can be offered. By emphasizing the event, the speaker becomes only a part of the event, not the event itself.

B. The meeting:

Most of the following suggestions are in reference to conducting a tent meeting. In general, however, the suggestions will also be applicable in many ways to conducting successful meetings that are held in schools, civic centers or church buildings. As you study through these suggestions, keep in mind that in any meeting it is our goal to encourage the community to come together for a positive meeting that deals with the spiritual needs of everyone in the community. Therefore, we must make every effort to make the environment of the meeting friendly. People must be encouraged to return a second time.

One of the primary purposes in conducting any meeting is to encourage the visitors to come again. If a meeting can be conducted in a manner that encourages, and succeeds in having visitors return the following nights of the meeting, then you have developed an inviting atmosphere for the meeting. The meeting will be a success.

1. *Light up the outside environment of the meeting place.* When people come to an unfamiliar place, light makes the environment feel friendly and safe. If a tent has been set up on a field or obscure place in the community, be sure to light up the outside of the tent area as much as possible. People naturally do not like to come to dark areas. Sometimes, the location of the tent is not in a safe area. Therefore, make sure there is sufficient

light to give the impression that something great is happening. The environment is safe. If there are few lights, the message is sent to prospective visitors that the meeting is insignificant. Lights communicate excitement and friendliness. The more lights that are outside the meeting place, the better the attendance will be. Try it.

2. Conduct meetings at an early hour of the evening. The time when the meeting is conducted will depend on the location of the meeting. If the meeting is conducted in an urban center, then meetings are usually started around 7:30^{PM}. In urban centers, many men arrive home from work around 6:00^{PM}. If the meeting is at 7:30^{PM}, then they have time to go home, eat and prepare for the meeting. In rural settings, however, meetings are generally earlier. This may depend on the time of year, whether it is summer or winter, rainy or dry season. However, a general rule is not to have any meeting that begins later than 7:30^{PM}. If the meeting is an hour and half, this allows people to return home by 9:30 or 10:00 at night. If they know the meeting will end at an early hour, they will be encouraged to return the following night.

3. Maintain a reasonable time period for the meeting. The preceding point brings up the subject as to how long a meeting should be. This will vary with cultures. It will vary as to whether the meeting is conducted in an urban area or rural area. However, I have experienced in most cultures that the evening events should not go over one and a half hours. Keep the preaching from thirty to forty-

five minutes.

Preachers must remember that tent meetings are events that are arranged around several events, not just the preacher and preaching. A good meeting has good fellowship, community communication, singing, praying and preaching. Short meetings encourage visitors to return for the following evening. In order to carry out all things that are necessary to have a good meeting, limit the preaching, enhance the singing, and be sure to individually communicate with everyone who is present. If the meeting is kept to an hour and a half, attendees can remain as long as they want after the official closing of the meeting in order to visit with one another. Because the meeting is “officially” closed, it is the choice of individuals to remain longer. Therefore, do not hold the people captive by long meetings to which they will not want to return.

4. All members must be present. If a meeting is conducted in a village or area where the members of the church are known in the community, the best advertisement for the meeting is the presence of all members. If the meeting is poorly attended by the local membership, then the prospective visitors who know the members will feel that the meeting and message are not important.

5. All members must come early. If the members come early, then those who come as visitors will perceive that the meeting is important. But there is a practical reason for the members coming early. They must be there in order to give the appearance of a friendly environment.

If there are people standing around the place of meeting, then others will be encouraged when they come. This also gives the members the opportunity to personally greet visitors. Training members how to properly greet people will enhance the welcome of the visitors. Training in greetings will also encourage the members to let the light of the gospel shine forth from them.

When training those who will greet the visitors, make sure everyone understands that those who greet must come early. They must try to greet everyone who comes. Those who greet the visitors must stand in obvious places where visitors will enter the place of meeting. It is good to have the greeters identified by a tag or label on their clothing in order to identify them as individuals to whom anyone can go for special needs. Enthusiastic greeters greatly enhance the friendly atmosphere of the meeting itself.

6. Establish an entrance from the back. The entrance of all meeting environments should be from the back. **Do not set up a tent where people have to enter from the front.** This is not only disturbing to the audience, it is also intimidating and embarrassing for visitors who come late. If you have control over where the entrance to the meeting will be, it must be from the back of the audience. Good leaders are perceptive to the needs of the people. Leaders who force visitors to parade into the meeting from the front are not thinking about the visitors.

When the members are seated, make sure the front seats of the tent or audito-

rium are first filled. Do not allow any members to fill the back seats of the meeting place. If the entrance is from the back, then make sure no members are seated on the back seats. These should be saved for those who come late. This should be made clear to every member who participates in the meeting. These are things that must be discussed with the members before the meeting takes place.

7. First seat all the adults. Good meetings usually do not have adequate seating. This is true simply because more people come than there are seats. Therefore, make sure that there are plenty of seats reserved for the adults. If children are seated in seats when adults arrive, kindly ask the children to move in order to allow the adults room to be seated. If there are visitors present who have to stand, children should be the first to give their seats. After all the children are moved, then members of the church should stand in order to give their seats to the visitors. A good policy to follow is to **first seat adults, not children ... seat women, not men ... seat visitors, not members.**

8. Maintain order among the children. No child should be allowed to disrupt the meeting. This is especially true of the members' children. This is something that must be discussed before the meeting in reference to the children of the members. During the meeting, every effort must be made to help parents with their children. This may necessitate the young people conducting a separate meeting in another classroom specifically for the children. If a special class is con-

ducted for the children, this will allow the parents the opportunity to give their undivided attention to the lesson. It will also give the young people a ministry for the conducting of the meeting.

9. Pray for individuals and community needs. Either before or after the meeting, take time to allow those who attend to request prayers for specific needs. This is especially true in reference to the needs of the visitors. Someone should ask for prayer requests. Write down the requests either on paper or a board. Keep this list and pray every night of the meeting for those requests that are very important. If a visitor asks for prayer for a special need, be sure to announce that the following night prayers will continue to be made for the request. This will encourage the visitors to return. It will also communicate to everyone that the meeting is not just for preaching. It is for manifesting care for the needs of the community. It is sometimes good to announce that a special time of prayer will be made available every night during the time of meeting for the purpose of prayer for the needs that are mentioned by those who attend. If a community comes together for prayer, people will be thinking of one another.

C. The singing:

Good singing will make a great meeting. Even good singing and not-so-good preaching will make a great meeting. However, if the singing is not good, the meeting will not reach the potential it should in exhorting those who come.

It is in singing that everyone can participate. Therefore, in order to make everyone feel a part of the meeting, special efforts should be taken to bring everyone together in singing. The following are some suggestions as to how the entire group of the meeting can be brought together in singing:

1. Conduct dynamic singing. A gospel meeting or tent meeting is the time to sing those songs that bring an audience alive. There are two things that must be done to do this. First, you must have a dynamic song leader. This is not the time to allow potential song leaders to lead the singing. Give them a part with the brethren on Sunday, not when you are trying to develop an atmosphere of enthusiasm during a public meeting. Second, you must sing those songs that encourage everyone to be enthusiastic about singing. This will take some planning. If you plan well, you will discover songs that are exhorting even to those who are not members of the church. It is the ministry of a good song leader to bring the audience together through singing in order to stimulate thinking, meditation and response to the preaching of the gospel.

2. Lead songs that everyone knows. Again, this will take some planning. Lead only those songs that you know almost everyone who attends will know. Most meetings are conducted without songbooks or songsheets. Therefore, it is imperative that everyone is familiar with the songs that are sung in order to make everyone feel a part of the meeting. Never lead a song that only you know.

3. Teach everyone a theme song. If you want to teach everyone a new song, then sing the song in a teaching manner the first night of the meeting. Announce the song as the theme song, and then work on the song the rest of the meeting in order that everyone learn it. It is not good to lead several new songs in a public meeting. However, if one song is learned well during the meeting, everyone will associate the new song that they learned with the event of the meeting. They will always remember the meeting because of the theme song.

4. Use the same song leader. Throughout the meeting, it is best to use the same song leader. When visitors attend any meeting, they must find a personality with whom to gain immediate association. This would be the preacher and the song leader for the meeting. Changing song leaders every night of the meeting defuses the efforts of the visitors to establish a relationship with a particular personality. If you use the same song leader, this song leader can plan the songs of the entire meeting. There will be continuity during the meeting. Again, it must be emphasized that gospel meetings and tent meetings are not the time to break in new song leaders, or just give a mediocre song leader an opportunity to participate in the meeting. When the church is conducting meetings that give a presentation to the public, use the best talent possible.

5. Use a songsheet or songbook. As stated previously, most gospel meetings in Third World environments do not have this privilege. However, if you do have

the opportunity to print a songsheet, make sure you use only those songs that are on the songsheet. If you use other songs, make sure everyone knows the songs. If you are using a songbook, sing only those songs everyone knows. When you sing those songs that everyone knows, then everyone, including visitors, will feel a part of the meeting. When you sing songs that visitors do not know, then you make them feel like visitors.

6. Stand for songs at the beginning of the meeting. This point must be carefully considered. After everyone has been seated, it is sometimes good to let them be seated until they are rested from walking to the meeting. However, after one or two songs, it is good to have everyone stand for one or two songs. This brings unity to the audience and puts the song leader in command of the audience. It also brings enthusiasm to the singing, for people sing better when they are standing. However, it is not good to have people continually standing and singing and singing, song after song. Song leaders sometimes wear people out by having them stand through three or four songs. This is generally not a good practice. If the meeting is taking place in a rural area, many people probably walked a great distance to be present. When they arrive at the meeting, they are tired and not ready to stand through several songs.

The last song before the preaching is a good time to have everyone stand for a song. This wakes everyone up and makes them alert for the preaching. While they are being seated after this song, this gives the speaker time to get before the group

and prepare to address the audience.

Another good time to have the audience to stand is for the invitation. If everyone is standing for a song after the lesson, then those who would respond to the message will feel better about making their needs known before the assembly.

D. The preaching:

This is certainly a very important part of the gospel meeting or tent meeting. It is during this session of the meeting that the word of God is communicated to the audience. It is at the end of this session that an invitation is often made in order to encourage a response to the gospel. Here are some suggestions that will enhance preaching during a gospel meeting and tent meeting:

1. Use only one speaker for the meeting. We must keep in mind that during a public meeting a dynamic is happening that must be perceived and developed. The dynamic is that the audience is growing together as a fellowship group. Individuals are becoming more familiar with one another during the meeting. This is especially true of the visitors. They have come to the meeting and are seeking to establish an identity with everyone. The first one with whom they establish an identity is the preacher. In order to bond the visitor with the speaker, keep the same speaker for each night of the meeting. After three or four nights of the meeting, the visitor has come to know the speaker, and thus, will be more

likely to respond to the invitation of the speaker. Having a different speaker every night is not a good idea. We must keep in mind that public meetings of the church are for the sake of the visitors, not the preachers in the area. We are not interested in inflating the ego of preachers by giving them a slot of preaching during a public meeting of the church.

The second person with whom the visitor establishes an identity during a meeting is the song leader. If you maintain the same preacher and song leader during a public meeting, you will greatly enhance the dynamic of the fellowship the visitor is seeking to establish with others. If a preacher and song leader can work together as a team in conducting the meeting, great things will happen. Visitors will quickly bond to the group, and subsequently, be willing to commit to the group by obedience to the gospel.

We must always keep in mind that Christianity is relationships. It is relationships with God and with our fellow man. When we conduct public meetings, therefore, the meetings themselves must reflect the relational environment of the church. Visitors must perceive that the church is seeking a relationship with them.

2. Introduce the speaker. The purpose for introducing the speaker of the meeting is to familiarize everyone with the speaker as soon as possible. The introduction should not be a flattering oratory of the speaker and his accomplishments. Emphasis must be placed on the preaching of the word of God and the speaker as a representative of God's

word. Regardless of the motives for the presence of the audience, everyone who is leading the meeting must continually emphasize that the purpose of the meeting is to exalt God and His word. However, in order to aid the visitor to know the speaker, give in the introduction information about the speaker's family, where he lives, what he does for work, his education and places he has visited. Personal information will help visitors to quickly identify with the speaker, and thus, begin the bonding between speaker and visitor that is necessary in order to make the visitor familiar with the speaker. The more the speaker is presented to the visitor as a real person, the more likely the visitor will respond to an invitation to obey the gospel the preacher announces.

3. *Speak from a friendly position.*

Where the speaker stands during his presentation is very important. If the speaker is placed in a high position, too much emphasis is placed on the supposed authority the speaker has. If he is placed high and at a distance from the people, then he is considered unfriendly. If he is placed behind a great and obscuring pulpit, his body language is concealed, and again, he is considered to be in an unfriendly position.

Speakers must be "among the people." Any position the speaker takes in reference to the audience must communicate the desire that he wants to be among the people. He does not want to be exalted, which he would be if standing high over the people. He does not want to be at a distance from the people,

which he would be if standing at a great distance from the people. Determining where the speaker stands will communicate a great deal to the audience. However, where he stands may also depend on the circumstances of the place of meeting. What is important to remember is that the audience must warm up to the speaker as quickly as possible. Therefore, he must be presented in a manner that communicates that he is a person who is approachable.

4. *Preach from the Bible.* We have too many preachers who are good speakers, but weak on keeping the Bible before the people. The preacher must remember that the people came to the meeting to hear the word of God spoken to them. Preachers must be careful not to stand in the way between the people and the word of God. Good preaching, therefore, is Bible-oriented. Good sermons are expository, that is, the text of the Bible is used as the outline of an applicable lesson. The people can go home and reread the text of the lesson if the sermon is taken from the text of the Bible. It is my opinion that sermons which are preached during public gospel meetings that are not thoroughly grounded in the word of God are a waste of words and a waste of time for everyone. If the preacher does not keep his lessons deep into the word of God, he must be approached and reminded that everyone has come to listen to the preaching of the word of God. Preachers will not be heard for their much speaking, but for the speaking as the oracles of God.

5. *Keep the preaching positive and*

dynamic. Positive preaching will encourage people to come back. Dynamic speaking will keep their attention. Negative preaching makes everyone tense. If the preaching is directed specifically toward a particular denomination, then those of that particular religious group will not return. Negative preaching only builds a wall between ourselves and those with whom we seek to open a door for discussion on biblical matters. Therefore, never attack a specific religious group during the preaching in a public gospel meeting. Only preach the word of God without mentioning names. Deal with teachings, not with personalities or specific religious groups. We must remember that Christianity is positive. It is a positive way of getting through this life into eternal life. Our initial messages to the lost world, therefore, must be the positive message of the gospel (See 1 Co 15:1-4).

Dynamic preaching will encourage people to listen. As with the song leader, this is not the time to introduce one to preaching. Use the best talent you have. If one does not have the gift of speaking, then certainly a public presentation of the church is not the place to train. Practice in preaching must take place with the brethren, not with the unbelievers. If you use those who are gifted in presenting the word of God, others will be more likely to respond to what is said. Great speakers lead people.

6. Keep the lesson “short and sweet”. By “short and sweet” I mean that a lesson for a special occasion as a gospel meeting should be no more than forty-

five minutes. Other than the time for the sermon, there are too many other things that must take place during a successful gospel meeting. The preaching is only a part of the event. The singing, praying and mutual communication of those who attend are also very important parts of a successful meeting. If the preaching consumes the meeting, then the other events of the meeting will not be emphasized as they should.

A good speaker will read the body language of the audience in order to determine if he continues to have the attention of the audience. If he loses their attention by speaking too long, then what he says is useless to the audience. They have long since turned him off. When he concludes, they will not wake up in order to respond to an invitation. When the meeting is over, they will not linger around and meet others. Preachers who compliment their egos by keeping captive an audience that has tuned them out are not good speakers for gospel meetings.

Determining exactly how long one should speak is sometimes challenging. The length of a lesson will depend on the occasion and the audience to whom one speaks. One principle to follow in determining how long your lesson should be is to listen after the lesson for any comments that your lesson was too short. If you hear one or two statements as, “Your lesson was too short,” or “I didn’t realize the time had gone by so fast,” then you are about right on time. If you do not hear such comments made, then one of two things is wrong. Either you

preached too long, or your lesson was not worth listening to. Be perceptive to the people.

7. Do not allow unexpected events to disrupt the meeting. If you are preaching and something unexpected occurs, take care of the matter and move on. If the unexpected event happens during the preaching, other brethren than the preacher should deal with the matter. In fact, if any unexpected event occurs during the entire meeting, it is best that the preacher not have to deal with the matter. Other brethren should come forward immediately and deal with the problem.

When dealing with unexpected events, work in a calm manner. Depending on the event, the audience will be somewhat tense. Therefore, those who are dealing with the matter should sort out the problem with calmness and maturity. We must remember that life is full of unexpected events that interrupt our normal processes of living. We must learn to deal with all things in a calm and sober manner in order to lead those who are present to be calm. When the religious leaders during Jesus' ministry came and threw a woman caught in adultery before Jesus, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. He defused the situation by not reacting to the unexpected event. Calmness turns calamity into a state of quietness.

E. The invitation:

In reference to the invitation at the close of a dynamic lesson, there can be all sorts of events and opinions. This is

a time when the meeting has come to a climax. It is a time of opportunity because the word of God has opened the hearts of many. In order to take advantage of this moment, here are some suggestions that will encourage visitors to respond:

1. Do not force the invitation. We must keep in mind that the invitation does not have a biblical precedent. It is only a matter of opinion, and thus, should not be demanded by the speaker. In the West Indian culture, the invitation is usually not an acceptable means by which to have people respond to a sermon. Invitations are usually not used because people do not culturally respond to speakers in this manner. In similar cultures throughout the world, it is best to simply announce that if anyone would like to talk further about what has been preached, then they can approach the preacher or other representatives who are identified in the audience. The meeting can then be closed in order for those who seek to respond to make their way to those who were identified to speak personally to them about their matters.

2. Use prayer groups. One of the best means by which people can make their needs known after the lesson, is to establish prayer groups in different parts of the tent or building to which people can go. This is done by assigning two to three members of the church to go immediately to an assigned location after the meeting. The one who closes the meeting can announce that two or three prayer groups will be conducting prayers.

He can then point out the location of the prayer sessions. In this way those who respond to the invitation can make their way to these groups where needs can be made known and prayers given for those needs.

3. Deal privately with those who respond. If several people respond after a dynamic biblical lesson, it is not necessary that the entire audience remain to hear the responses of every individual. Qualified members can be chosen to deal with the responses of each individual. I believe this is far better than having one person, usually the preacher, going from person to person in front of the group and writing down a "confession list" in order to present to the audience. There is something that is totally "Catholic" about this that I believe we need to dispel from our meetings of the church.

After the invitation song is completed and the responses made, the audience can be dismissed as individual members sit with each one who has responded. Or, those who have responded can be directed to a prayer group in order to listen to the needs of those who have responded and make specific prayers for their needs. In this way, personal attention is given to each one who has responded. If there is a physical need that needs to be dealt with at the time, then those who lead the prayer group can deal with the matter. If one needs more teaching concerning obedience to the gospel, then more teaching can immediately be carried out. I am always cautious about immersing someone who has responded to only one presentation of the gospel in a public manner as

in a gospel meeting. It is best to sit down with this person and discuss the matter more in detail at the time one responds.

4. The leaders should deal with responses. When people respond to a lesson, it is always best that leaders other than the speaker deal with those who respond. This is especially critical when the speaker is a guest speaker in the area. Local leaders must never put the guest speaker on the spot by having him deal with people who respond to his preaching in their area. The guest speaker does not know the people or the culture. Only those members who live in the community should be dealing with the responses of those in the community. We must keep in mind that religious people are coming out of a religious environment where the preacher is often considered to be a person who is in charge. If during a public gospel meeting we force the preacher into this unbiblical position, then we are continuing an erroneous practice that we have preached against for years. There is no clergy in the church, and thus, we should not promote such before the public. In order to begin breaking down this system, we must make sure someone other than the preacher deals with those who respond to the invitation.

5. Never give the microphone to those who respond. If this is done, you will lose control of the moment. If someone who has responded reaches for the microphone, do not allow him or her to take it from your hand. This is not the time for a grieving or emotionally out-of-control person to be addressing the audience. You should never allow those

who respond during a public gospel meeting an opportunity to address the assembly. It is different during an assembly of the saints. Repentant members need a time to address other members concerning sins they have committed that affect the church. But during a public assembly of unbelievers as a gospel meeting, this should never occur.

After the invitation and responses, it is sometimes good to allow those who need to go home to go. Keep in mind that when the church begins to deal with the responses, this is the church's business, not the business of the community of those who have attended. It is a time when the church needs to kneel down in prayer with those who have responded and allow the others to return home. If we seek to keep the rest of the audience captive until we deal with all the responses, we will often frustrate the rest of the audience by dealing with the responses for thirty minutes or longer. Or, we will try to hurry through the responses to the point that we do not deal with the needs of those who have responded. We must keep in mind that when the last person who would respond comes forward, it is time for the church to move into action. The gospel meeting is over and the saints are now to go to work with those who have been touched by the message. This is a time to deal with the touched hearts of those who have responded and to send home those who have not.

F. The closing:

After the events of the lesson, invitation and response, the meeting should be closed in a manner that will encourage communication among those who attended. This is a very special time of the meeting. It is a time when everyone can be brought together in mutual fellowship in order to promote solidarity for the next time of meeting. Here are some suggestions that will help develop a good closing that will encourage a greater commitment by all to promote the series of meetings.

1. *Recruit the audience:* Everyone must be encouraged to go to work for the success of the meeting. This is a time when the focus of attention should be on everyone, not just the church. You will encourage visitors to return the following sessions of the meeting if you will make them feel a part of the entire program, especially the program to get others to the meeting. Therefore, deal with the group as a whole. Do not separate the church from the group by talking to them before the entire group. If you can keep everyone thinking together in order to promote the series of meetings, then they will go to work for you to bring their neighbors. If the meeting can be accepted as a community project, then the attendance will grow as the meeting progresses.

2. *Distribute materials:* If at all possible, this is the time to have ready a brochure or pamphlet that advertises the meeting. Many copies should be distributed to everyone. This brochure adver-

tises the meeting. It will help the visitors to work for you to advertise the meeting to their friends. If you give them something to take to their neighbors, they will be working for you. This is why I believe the first night of the meeting is very important. It is the time to recruit help from everyone for the rest of the meeting. This is why the lesson of the first night should be centered around subjects as, "Going to Work for God," "Getting Involved in God's Work," "Being a worker for Jesus," "Going into all the World." The lesson should be generic in the sense of encouraging everyone who is present to go to work in getting others to come. If the speaker can focus his lesson on encouraging everyone to go to work, then the closing session will be great. Everyone will be encouraged to go out and recruit their neighbors to be present the second night.

Consider the point that a public meeting, whether in a building or tent, should be focused on generating contacts. If you can get people to the meeting to enjoy positive lessons, you will have many contacts you can follow-up on after the meeting. This is why it is sometimes good to focus the meeting on getting the community out to the meeting.

Also keep in mind that the church is a community of people who have established a relationship with one another in Christ. If the church focuses on establishing relationships during the meeting, then these relationships will continue. People will respond when they know that a relationship with others is on both sides of baptism.

3. *Keep the announcements positive.* Announcements should be made that deal with the group as a whole. This is not the time to make "church announcements." If you do, you will make the visitors feel that they are outsiders. Keep in mind that the purpose of the meeting is to develop a spirit of unity among those who attend. Once this is accomplished, you can then go to work on the visitors on an individual basis in order to bring them into a covenant relationship with God. It is imperative, therefore, that all announcements be made in a positive way in order to encourage, and not alienate.

4. *Direct other responses to selected people.* There will possibly be others who want to study. Or there may be others in the audience who simply want to ask questions about the Bible. During the closing announcements, designated men should be pointed out to whom questions can be directed in a private manner. Have these men stand in order that others know who they are. It would be good that these men should also have a name tag in order that they might be identified after the meeting.

5. *Make a list of all visitors every night.* Someone should be assigned the task of making a list of all visitors who are present each night of the meeting. This will take some coordination on the part of several people. If the members can all work together on this, then a list of people who need to be visited after the meeting can be made for follow-up. This will be the work list after the meeting. If this list is not made, a great op-

portunity for evangelism will have slipped by with the passing of the meeting. Therefore, make the list and use it to get to work after the meeting.

6. *Be prepared to study immediately.*

Once the meeting is concluded, members must be ready to study immediately with anyone who has questions. In preparation for the meeting, the members of the church should be encouraged to communicate with the visitors after each meeting. Members should not congregate together with one another in a manner that excludes others. This is the time to go immediately to the visitors. A concerted effort should be made to make visitors feel welcome. It is natural for members to want to congregate together in small groups. However, this is detrimental to the success of the meeting. Members should look out for visitors, and as soon as the meeting is over, they should go straight to the visitors. If every member does this, the visitors will feel very welcome. If the members can communicate a spirit of love, then this love will draw the visitors back to the meeting, for people seek to be loved.

G. The follow-up:

The success of a gospel meeting is the follow-up. It is not the preaching or the meeting itself. It is the follow-up on those who attend. What usually happens is that members become tired because of the preparation and conducting of the meeting. After the meeting is over with the final prayer on the last night, everyone goes home to rest. And thus, many

meetings have failed because members have failed to get to work after the meeting. One reason why this happens is that members believe that the meeting in and of itself is all there is to the meeting. All focus is on the actual meeting, not knowing that the meeting is intended only to bring visitors, develop a list of visitors, and then, activate follow-up of visitors after the meeting. However, this emphasis must change if you are going to conduct a successful meeting in your community. Here are some things to do in order to make the meeting successful through dynamic follow-up:

1. *Prepare the members' minds.* Before the meeting begins, the leaders must change the thinking of the church. Not only is preparation to be made for the meeting itself, but preparation must also be made for organizing the follow-up after the meeting. This is not something to be left for organizing after the meeting itself. If you wait until after the meeting to organize your follow-up, it will be too late. By the time you get your follow-up organization activated, the opportunity to visit the visitors will already have passed. Therefore, when preparing for a gospel meeting, prepare the minds of the members by informing everyone that the purpose of the meeting is to follow-up afterwards.

2. *Take advantage of the one-week window.* The window of receptivity in the hearts of the visitors of the meeting will close after a week or so from the closing of the meeting. This happens because visitors feel that you have little concern

for them if you wait over a week to visit them. The love that was expressed during the meeting will be seen as insincere. It is imperative, therefore, to be at their house within the first week after the meeting. Once the public meeting concludes, the private meetings begin by the work of the members in the homes of the visitors. It is imperative that the list of visitors that was made during the meeting be the guide to organize the members' follow-up on the meeting. Everyone should take a name or two and get to work. A goal should be made that every visitor has been visited within the first week after the meeting.

3. *Begin study groups.* When visiting the visitors, it should be a goal to start a Bible study group within the home of the visitor. Offer your services to come on a weekly basis to study with the visitor and his or her household. Friends and family of the visitor can be invited to this group on a weekly basis. In this way, a secondary meeting is established that can develop into a house church in the weeks to come. If the visitor feels comfortable with meeting in his house, then stay there. His or her relatives and friends will feel better about meeting in their friend's house than with a large group of strangers in a large assembly.

4. *Begin prayer groups.* Another thing to offer the visitor is the opportunity to begin a prayer group in his or her house. If there is first no desire to begin a study group, then offer the opportunity to come to their house on a weekly basis for a session of prayer. Recruit the visitor to invite friends and family to this

prayer session. A prayer group will almost always develop into a study group. And successful study groups develop into house churches.

5. *Begin a new converts' class.* If several people have been converted during the public meeting, it is good to begin a class that is directed specifically toward their needs. Their needs include a host of questions that must be answered. Their needs include studies in first principles and their responsibility to get to work for Jesus.

There are several ways to deal with the new converts. Having a new converts' class is simple and easy. However, it is sometimes not that effective simply because everyone in the class needs to develop a bond with the church. There is usually only one teacher dealing with everyone, and thus, the members of the class are not bonding with the congregation as a whole. Therefore, in conjunction with a new converts' class, it is best that each convert be linked with a family of the congregation. In this way, the Christian family who adopts the new convert can develop a strong bond with the new convert. **We must always remember that new converts who return to their former way of life almost always do so in the first six months after they are converted.** This is a critical time in their life. If they do not quickly develop social bonds with the church within the first six months after conversion, they will be drawn away from the church by their former friends. What the church does to keep the new converts is critical in the first six months after conversion.

If the church is what it should be – a community that is known by its love – then there will be no difficulty in keeping the converts.

6. *Keep the flame burning.* After a gospel meeting there is always an emotional letdown. This is specifically true among the members. They have worked hard to prepare for the meeting. They have worked hard during the meeting. After the final session, everyone wants to go home and rest. There is thus an emotional letdown. This not only affects the members, it affects those visitors who were present during the meeting for many of the sessions.

In order to guard against the emotional letdown blues that occur after an extended public meeting, get started in

working with the visitors. This will help the members, as well as the visitors. The intensity of the meeting may have subsided, but the normal activity of the Christian's work should not. Remember, successful meetings are determined by the follow-up, not the preaching or the event of the meeting itself. A meeting of one week should be viewed as a two to three week event. There is the one week of meeting, and then one to two weeks of hard work in follow-up. If the members' emotional letdown takes over after the conclusion of the first week, the meeting will not be as successful as it should. Therefore, do not allow Satan to attack you the day after the public meetings conclude by not following up on the visitors.

Chapter 15

Leaders Training Leaders

The success of the establishment of the church in any area depends on the training of faithful men who will lead the church into the future. How this can be accomplished varies from one country to another, from one culture to another. Since there are no New Testament mandates on how leaders are to be trained, then we assume that the Holy Spirit wants us to use varieties of methods and means. We assume that He wants us to use reason in adapting that which works to the cultures to which we go as evangelists.

What the Holy Spirit has done is give us mandates through Paul to train and equip leaders. ***“And the things that you***

have heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tm 2:2). ***“And He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ...”*** (Ep 4:11,12). In order to accomplish these mandates of the Spirit, we are left with our imagination to develop strategies for leadership training. One system of leadership training that was used extensively in the first century is in the concept of what we call “Short Term Bible Schools” (STBS).

A STBS is defined as a school that seeks to carry out the responsibility of the church to introduce leaders to fundamental teachings and leadership skills in as brief a time as possible. All leadership training must focus on the impartation of biblical principles and teachings. Leadership training is never complete. A leader is never completely equipped. Short Term Bible Schools simply begin the process. How long it takes to impart initial principles lies in the work of the leaders who conduct the STBS and in the students who attend. How much is to be imparted at any given time also lies within the opinion of the local leaders. A STBS is an effort of leaders to impart conceptual fundamental truths to faithful men in as short a time as possible in order to get leaders started into the work of ministry.

There is no established system of preacher and leadership training that is the best for all situations and cultures. The fact that some have assumed that there is has led to inefficient and slow means of evangelism in some areas of the world where the church is rapidly growing. Some systems have been exported from industrial/business cultures throughout the world that are costly and financially impossible for continuation in developing world environments. This has left the poorer churches in the world—those who are the majority—without models of how they can indigenously train leaders in their own economic situations without asking for funds from foreign churches. If the continuation of any system depends on the sup-

port that comes from outside the local region, then the existence of the school depends on foreign support. When the support ceases, the school ceases. We would question the long-term effectiveness of any method or system of leadership training that would terminate when the funds from abroad terminate. Foreign seed funds are often needed to begin and sustain many training methods. But when it is all said and done, decades after establishment and maintenance of the program, there must be an end to foreign support. We must ask ourselves the question, Will the work of preacher and leadership training terminate in a local region if the outside financial support of the system terminates? If the answer to this question is “yes,” then we must consider those systems or methods of preacher and leadership training that can be indigenous to the economics in which they are established. Also, we must ask ourselves the question, If foreign support terminates, does the leadership training of the local church also terminate? Answering this question provides the reason for the rise of STBSs throughout the world. Many local leaders have made a decision to get on with their responsibilities of training local preachers and leaders regardless of any support outside the local church.

This does not mean that STBSs are without the sustenance of outside support. Many are not. However, their support by foreign sources is often brief. The STBS is meant to exist until leadership training of qualified leaders is accomplished. If it is within the goals of the

local church to continue the school because new prospective leaders have come to the forefront in the church, then they can continue the STBSs as they so choose. Sister churches from abroad may help in beginning a STBS. However, funds from outside are not necessary for either beginning or continuing a STBS. **Any local church throughout the world can conduct a STBS, regardless of help from any outside funds.**

It is our purpose in the following material to develop a greater awareness of the purpose and function of STBSs. It is often easy to transplant in other cultures systems of preacher and leadership training that we have experienced in our own training. However, we must be cautious about transplanting means and methods into other cultures and communities that are outside the cultural norms and economic abilities of societies to which we go. Short Term Bible Schools are an effort to develop programs of preacher and leadership training that can be indigenously carried on within any culture or community of developing world countries. Those who are involved in these schools are not saying that this is the only way to train leaders. They are simply saying that STBSs are only one way. The concept of a STBS is a means to accomplish successful preacher and leadership training that can be carried on by local churches that exist in areas where finances are limited.

When something works, then we believe it must be used. Short Term Bible Schools have been around for many decades in mission areas throughout the

world. It was a first century method that was somehow lost in our efforts to train church leaders after the norm of the professionalism that is characteristic with the leadership of many churches. The seminary system of education has become the accepted system for the impartation of information in societies throughout the religious world. However, when it comes to the church accomplishing her duty of training preachers and leaders, we must not limit ourselves to systems of education that are maintained by governments to train their citizens. The church must focus on its purpose and mission to the world. In doing this, systems of imparting information and life skills become variable. And thus, as the church, we seek to use the most effective method possible in order to evangelize the lost and edify the church. Those of us who have worked for many years with STBSs seek to encourage you to consider something that works. And STBSs work.

A. First century Short Term Bible Schools:

When Luke recorded the events of Acts 15, the apostles were still in Jerusalem. The Acts 15 event took place around A.D. 50. Our question is, therefore, Why did the apostles remain in Jerusalem and Judea for about twenty years after the establishment of the church in A.D. 30? The fact that the apostles remained in Jerusalem for about twenty years after Pentecost poses some questions. Did they forget the great commission of Jesus to go into all the world and preach the

gospel? Certainly not! Were they so attached to the fellowship of the church in Jerusalem that they refused to go? At one time we believed that this was the reason why they stayed in Jerusalem. But we were wrong. Did the apostles just become so content in Jerusalem with the sweet fellowship of the church that they decided to remain at home? We do not believe that we could answer any of these questions in the affirmative.

The apostles did not forget for one moment their call to go into all the world to preach the gospel. Neither did they feel content just to stay in the warm fellowship of the Jerusalem church. There was something going on in Jerusalem that biblical interpreters have often failed to recognize. How the apostles accomplished the great commission is what we must investigate. Once we understand what was happening every year in Jerusalem around Passover and Pentecost, then we will understand the wisdom and method of the apostles to accomplish the commission of Jesus to preach the gospel to all the world.

Under the Old Testament law, Jewish males were to present themselves before the Lord every year for the Passover Feast (the Feast of Firstfruits or Feast of Weeks) and Tabernacles (Booths) (Ex 23:14-19). When the center of Jewish religion was eventually focused in Jerusalem, then it was to Jerusalem that the Jewish males made their annual pilgrimage. However, when the Jews were scattered throughout the world with the captivities of Assyria and Babylonia, this was not possible. We would assume,

therefore, that Jews came to Jerusalem for the annual feast of Passover/Pentecost only occasionally. Before the coming of Jesus, they may have made this trip once or twice every decade.

In the specific year of A.D. 30, God had a surprise waiting for those Jews who ventured to the sacred city for Passover and Pentecost. They came from the seventeen regions that are mentioned in Acts 2:9-11. It was during that Passover that our Lord was crucified, and it was during that Pentecost that God unleashed power from heaven through the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles (At 2:1-4). Over three thousand responded to Peter's announcement of the gospel (At 2:41). Those who responded **continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching** (At 2:42).

These sojourners to Jerusalem in A.D. 30 had intended to stay in Jerusalem only for the fifty days between the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. However, after hearing and obeying the gospel, they continued to remain in the presence of the apostles in order to receive more teaching. After this first "Short Term Bible School" with the apostles, they returned to the regions from which they came in order to preach the gospel they had heard and obeyed in Jerusalem.

We often think that the story of beginnings of the church stopped in A.D. 30. It did in reference to her initial establishment. However, the church did not cease to be established throughout the world from Jerusalem. We assume that there was only one massive conversion on the Passover/Pentecost of A.D. 30.

However, we must remember that in A.D. 31 there was another Passover and Pentecost. There was also another group of different Jews who came to Jerusalem who heard the gospel from the mouth of the apostles. These Jews also believed and obeyed and “continued in the apostles’ teaching.” They also returned to the regions from which they came and preached the gospel.

Then again, in A.D. 32 there was another Passover and Pentecost. There was another group of conversions, and another sending out of those who were converted. As a result of these continued Passover and Pentecost conversions, men and women continued at the apostles’ feet in Jerusalem, and then were sent to all the world with the message of the gospel. The apostles remained in Jerusalem for about twenty years after the establishment of the church in order to take advantage of this unique historical opportunity. They did so because a new group of potential “enrollees” (converts) came to Jerusalem, searching for the Messiah. They came and found Him in the preaching and teaching of the apostles, for every day the apostles and Jerusalem Christians preached Jesus as the Messiah in the temple and from house to house (At 5:42).

The Pentecost events of A.D. 30, and the years that followed, were the fulfillment, not only of prophecy in reference to the preaching of the gospel, but also the method of how the gospel was to go into all the world from Jerusalem. This story is based on the principle that God always uses Satan’s work against himself.

Satan had deceived Israel into following after false gods. Subsequently, the northern kingdom of Israel went into Assyrian captivity in 721/22 B.C. (2 Kg 17:16-18). The southern kingdom was likewise scattered among the nations in the Babylonian captivity of 586 B.C. (2 Kg 23:24). Both captivities distributed Jews throughout the ancient world. God was working through this Jewish *diaspora*. He was setting the stage for world evangelism from Jerusalem that would happen many centuries later.

Isaiah 2:1-4 is the great commission in prophecy. In verse 3 Isaiah prophesied, “*And many people will go and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion will go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*”

Through the captivities of Israel, God scattered Jews throughout the world who were hoping for the Messiah. Though a remnant returned to Palestine after the Babylonian captivity, the majority of Israel remained scattered throughout the world. Representatives of these scattered Jews of the *diaspora* came to Jerusalem every Passover and Pentecost. Beginning with the A.D. 30 Passover and Pentecost, they returned from Jerusalem after being at the apostles’ feet for a “short term.” They said to the other Jews in the synagogues to which they returned, “*‘Come, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord’* next Passover and Pentecost and you will see what the apostles are teaching and doing.” You can imagine the rest

of the story. This going and coming to Jerusalem for Passover and Pentecost went on for many years after the establishment of the church in A.D. 30. Every year the apostles were in Jerusalem to receive and teach those who came for Passover and Pentecost. They prepared the sojourners for their return home in order to announce the fact that the Messiah had come.

The effect of the above method of world evangelism was so effective that in A.D. 61,62 Paul could write in Colossians 1:23 that the gospel had been “preached to every creature under heaven.” In less than thirty years, the apostles, by remaining and preaching in Jerusalem, converted and taught Jewish sojourners all things they had been taught (Mt 28:20). By this method of world evangelism, they sent the message of the gospel through devout Jews to every nation of the ancient world. The success of their work, therefore, was in their method. They had not forgotten their responsibility of taking the gospel into all the world. They simply used the method Jesus had taught in Matthew 28:19,20 and was reemphasized by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2.

The method of world evangelism used by the apostles was not in their initial going into all the world by themselves. It was in making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things that Jesus had taught them ... **in Jerusalem** (Mt 28:19,20). In 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul instructed other “faithful men” through Timothy who would be able to teach others also. The principle

of imparting teaching to those who would be able to teach others also is a central method of world evangelism taught by Jesus and practiced by the apostles.

The method of world evangelism used by the apostles opens doors to the concept of the STBS. The same method was used by the Holy Spirit through Paul in Acts 19 to evangelize all Asia. In Acts 16:6,7 Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia and Bithynia. We do not understand this at the time of Paul’s journey in Acts 16. He wanted to go to all Asia from Troas. But the Spirit would not permit him (At 16:6,7). At the time of the events of Acts 16 it was the wrong time and wrong method to evangelize either Bithynia or Asia. We do not understand this until we find Paul on his third missionary journey in Ephesus in Acts 19. He remained in Ephesus for two years on this occasion, teaching in the school of Tyrannus (At 19:8-10). Though we do not understand the nature of this school, we do know that all Asia heard the word as a result of Paul’s work in Ephesus during this two year period (At 19:10). It was not the Holy Spirit’s plan in Acts 16 to have Paul personally go into all Asia. Paul did not know this until his two-year stay in Ephesus as recorded in Acts 19. The time was right and the method presented itself in Ephesus.

Acts reveals, therefore, that Paul would go into all Asia as the apostles went into all the world by staying in Jerusalem. The method was in training faithful men who would be able to teach others also (2 Tm 2:2). Paul’s method of

evangelism in Ephesus was seated in the method the apostles used in Jerusalem, which method was seated in what Jesus stated in the great commission to “teach all things that they had been taught” (Mt 28:20).

Consider again what is actually stated in Acts 19:8-10. “All Asia” heard the word during the two year period that Paul spent in Ephesus. Would we assume that Paul took **only one group** of potential preachers through a training program for two years? I do not believe this was the case. Luke records that “all Asia” heard the word during the two year period. In other words, we would assume that men were continually sent out during the two year period. There was not one great class of students and one mass graduation service at the end of the two years. There were graduations and sendings going on throughout the entire two year period. Subsequently, Luke could record that at the end of the two year period, all Asia had heard the word. We would conclude, therefore, that preacher and leadership training does not take two years to complete. Short periods of training are sufficient to equip preachers to go forth to preach. If preacher training goes beyond short periods, then we run into the danger of training “full-time” professionals and holding up the evangelism of “all Asia.”

We sometimes think that we must have extensive curriculums of biblical studies that our prospective preachers must have in formal training before they can be considered preachers of the gospel. We often believe that a student can-

not be sent forth until he studies through our extensive curriculum of numerous courses that cover every detail of doctrine and history in the Bible. Only when the student has completed the prescribed curriculum is he then “qualified” to preach. And before he can complete our curriculum, he must spend at least two years in full-time study. Some religious groups require that their “ordained” preachers go through eight years of seminary study before they can be considered preachers. We question this thinking, especially since we do not see this system of extensive formalized training in the early church of the New Testament.

Maybe we should reconsider our curriculums and our requirements for preachers. Could we have established our own qualifications for one to be a preacher that are not required in the New Testament? Have we moved into the realm of training professionals who are to assume “posts” in churches? To a great extent our system of preacher training is a reflection of the professionalism that has moved into the church.

Shorter curriculums would mean shorter periods of time for training men and getting them into the harvest. Shorter curriculums would allow us to get men to work and not be held up in a classroom. Shorter curriculums would not emphasize professionalism among preachers. We must keep in mind that there are no New Testament qualifications for one to preach the gospel. One needs no diploma or certificate to preach. One needs no course in “the work of the preacher” to preach the gospel to the lost

world. Therefore, the completion of curriculums of courses must not become a qualification for one to preach the gospel. Diplomas and degrees must never become a “caste system” that separates preachers from one another, nor gives one an advantage over another.

Rapid growth necessitates rapid training techniques. Movements are often held up because we burdened ourselves with methods of leadership training that were developed by church leaders in areas where there is slow growth of the church. The birth of the two to three year “school of preaching” in the Western scenario of church growth was born out of a movement seeking preachers for existing churches. It was not born out of a necessity to meet the demands of a rapidly growing church. In the birthplace of the “school of preaching,” churches already existed. The church simply sought a way by which preachers could be trained to “fill pulpits.” “Filling pulpits” was only another way of expressing the professionalism that had crept into the church through the backdoor of institutional thinking.

During our time of study with such a residential school, we students were frequently reminded in the 1960s that there were more preachers leaving the pulpits by either death or departure from the ministry, than were being trained by our residential preacher training schools. As a result of this need, schools of preaching sprung up throughout America. The need for the schools, therefore, was not because of the rapid growth of the church, but because of the dying away of those

who would preach to the church. The primary emphasis was not on sending preachers out to establish churches, but to preach to established churches.

When graduates of these schools did go throughout the world, they took with them the only method of leadership training they knew. They came out of “schools of preaching,” and thus, they established the same models throughout the world.

A secondary purpose of every school of preaching in America was world evangelism by the sending forth of graduates. Some graduates, therefore, went forth to unevangelized nations of the world in order to establish churches. However, the vast majority of the graduates went to existing established churches. The primary purpose and present practice of the “school of preaching” movement in the West was not to train world evangelists. It is to train local preachers for established churches.

This is not to say that two to three year residential schools of preaching are not a good option in leadership training. They are. But they must not be the primary means by which to train leaders since their ability to train a great number of leaders is very limited. There are also other options that must not be ignored. There are options that must be put into action in order to harvest the tremendous hot spots of receptivity of certain parts of the world.

Too often when one presents something as an option, he is immediately thought to be speaking against all other options. We assure you that this is not

the case in reference to the growing number of STBSs throughout the world. The point is that we need every option available in order to get the job accomplished of training preachers and leaders. Every option must be considered, researched and used.

The purpose of the STBS is not to “fill pulpits.” A STBS is focused on generating and sustaining church growth in receptive regions where there is rapid church growth. Paul said in Romans 15:20, *“And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation.”* Paul was not in these words voicing some personal preference in reference to his method of work. His statement was seated in his call to evangelism. The totality of his work was centered around training faithful men who would be able to teach others also (2 Tm 2:2). His statement of Romans 15:20 was based on the prophecy of Isaiah 52:15. *“To whom He was not announced, they will see; and those who have not heard will understand”* (Rm 15:21). The foundation principle upon which Paul based his life was evangelism. We would assume, therefore, that all references that he made concerning preacher and leadership training in his writings must be interpreted to apply to an evangelistic outreach to fulfill the great commission of preaching the gospel to the lost.

Consider Paul’s evangelistic work in reference to his training of preachers. He enrolled Timothy of Derbe and Lystra on his second missionary journey (At 16:1). In a few weeks after He left the Lystra/

Derbe region, He, Silas and Timothy were in Troas. He then enrolled Luke in Troas (At 16:9,10 – note the “we” pronoun which indicates that the author of Acts, Luke, joined the mission team). In a few more weeks, Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke were in Philippi (At 16:12). Paul stayed in Philippi only a few days, possibly two to three weeks (At 16:12). He, Silas and Timothy then left for Thessalonica. Luke was graduated, and thus left in Philippi (At 17:1 – note the change in pronoun from “we” to “they”). Paul then went to Thessalonica, Berea and eventually to Athens. However, Timothy and Silas were graduated in Thessalonica or Berea after only two or three months in Paul’s training. Though Mark first flunked out at Perga, he was later enrolled by Barnabas for continued training (At 13:13; 15:39). It is clear that enrollees remained in the company of the experienced evangelists for only brief periods of time. By brief, we mean weeks or a few months. After their training, they were left with newly established churches to carry on with the work of local evangelism.

The concept of long term theological education of two to four years is foreign to the New Testament context of how evangelists were trained in the first century. This does not mean that such a system is wrong. However, the lack of mention of such does mean that it is simply a method of training leaders. It also means that as a method of theological education such should never be allowed to have a monopoly on how we feel preachers are to be equipped unto the

work of the ministry.

Since the concept of the two to three year long term resident school of preaching proved to be a solid method by which preachers could be trained in some economic environments, this method was exported throughout the world, primarily from America. Many of these schools have now been in existence in developing world environments for thirty to forty years in areas where there is great receptivity. In the initial stages of growth, they were able to keep up with the training of preachers. However, the situation has changed in many areas. For example, consider the situation of one nation in Africa that had over 1,000 churches in 2001. There was one long term school of preaching in the nation that could handle only twenty-five students. There was thus a waiting list of students to go to the school for training. Since graduation from the school became an unspoken qualification for preaching in the country, it became very difficult for men to feel qualified unless they went through the three year program of the school.

The movement of 1,000 plus churches certainly needed more leaders to be trained than one long term school with a capacity of twenty-five students could handle. Add to this the fact that the potential leaders could not leave their family responsibilities in order to attend a full-time school. This is the case with most leaders in the developing world. The option of distance training has filled the gap in training many leaders. However, there is still the need to bring leaders together into a relational program in

order to energize them with the word of God and one another. This is where the concept of the Short Term Bible School can fill in the gap in leadership training.

In the rapid growth of developing world receptivity, the Western church has supported a system of preacher and leadership training that has not always met the needs of a fast growing church. Holding up leaders for two to three years in a classroom has often held up the growth of the church rather than accelerating it by meeting the need of training great numbers of leaders. We state this, not to be critical of such efforts, but to present the fact that in the need for leaders in areas where the church is growing rapidly, we cannot train enough men in two to three year school programs to meet the needs of evangelism.

Western systems of theological education are not always applicable to developing world conditions. They are not effective because they are often established on the foundation of the western economic system, specifically the theology of the full-time preacher who is fully supported by a single local church. In developing world economic environments, this situation usually does not exist. In order for one to be full-time, he has to be supported from outside the economic environment of the local church. And history has proven that “robbing” churches over extended periods of time in order to support the preacher of a local church does not produce long-term church growth.

In the developing world, STBSs or distance training schools have been ef-

fectively used to meet the needs of rapidly growing churches who are situated in developing world economic settings. An example of this has been the phenomenal growth of the church in Malawi. The church was over 5,000 strong in congregations in 2004. Both in the southern and northern parts of the country, STBSs have been used to train leaders on a continuing basis. For many years, the Namikango and Lubagha Missions have brought men in for brief periods of study, energized them with enthusiasm and the word of God, and then, sent them back to the villages from which they came. As a result, there are more Christians per capita in Malawi today than in any country of the world.

Other areas are also realizing the tremendous benefits of STBSs. The restoration and success of this method of preacher and leadership training has proven itself. It is thus suggested that churches implement such schools in their areas in order to either generate church growth or keep it going. We would thus like to ask for your patience as we set forth some innovative ideas that different leaders are using in order to establish and conduct STBSs. These schools are being established because local church leaders are realizing that traditional long-term schools of preaching are not training enough men in areas of great receptivity and growth. We also want to share some concepts concerning STBSs that may enhance the conducting of these schools. The fact is that this movement in theological education is growing. It is time, therefore, that we emphasize a very

successful method of work that the apostles and early church used every Passover and Pentecost for at least twenty years after the establishment of the church in the first century.

Here are some suggestions or guidelines on establishing and conducting a STBS:

B. Time structures of Short Term Bible Schools:

Depending on the cultural/economic environment, the seasonal timing during which a residential STBS is established is important. The daily schedule of “classes” is important in order to facilitate a student through his studies. The time during the year the sessions are conducted will often determine who will be able to attend. Here are some considerations that are being used by different residential STBS administrators in order to set up and conduct the daily operation of a STBS:

- 1. *Duration of the school:*** The duration or length of a STBS varies. Schools have been conducted anywhere from four to sixteen weeks. One to two week schools have been set up to facilitate great numbers of students. However, the short length of these schedules has not brought to the fullest the potential of the STBS dynamic in fellowship. It usually takes more than one week to generate interaction among the students in order to make life changes in their behavior. Where there has been a tremendous need for training great numbers of lead-

ers, the one to two week schools have been established out of necessity. The rapid growth of the church demanded the training of a great number of men on an ongoing basis. There is, therefore, a need for one to two week school sessions. However, in the context of a STBS that seeks to accomplish all the benefits of a STBS program, it is generally best to have sessions from seven to ten weeks if the school is residential. Or, weekend nonresidential sessions can be conducted over a period of five to six months to complete a ten-course curriculum.

Though there is no standard time for which a STBS should be conducted, it is best to work around a period of eight to ten weeks if the school is a fulltime school. Anything less than eight weeks does not allow time to accomplish two of the primary goals of the school. These goals are to develop lasting relationships among those who attend, and second, allow enough time to cover essential courses of study. Therefore, the length of the resident, full-time school should be measured in weeks. But keep in mind that the length of school sessions will depend on local resources to conduct the school and what brethren seek to accomplish in the school. There is no rule by which the administrators can determine the length of school sessions. This will depend on the desires of the local administration.

Residential schools over twelve weeks run the risk of cooling the evangelistic spirit of the student, as well as, developing a “full-time,” or professional spirit in the student. One disadvantage

of the two to three year programs of a long term theological school is that students become accustomed to being “full-time,” and thus, after graduation they expect to continue full-time with their support as they were in the school. “Full-time” may be a reality in a First World industrial/business environment where one can be supported by a single group upon graduation. However, “full-time” is not a reality in a developing world economic environment where churches usually do not have the means by which to fully support evangelists. It can be a reality only when other churches are “robbed” in order that the graduate preach for a local church while he is at the same time supported by the church in another area (2 Co 11:8; 12:13).

The length of sessions of the school may depend on the rural planting seasons of the region in which the school is based. A mission group in southern Malawi ran schools for seven week periods. This time was measured by the dry season of the southern Malawi area. During the dry seasons in the farming regions of different nations, therefore, the schools are not usually conducted simply because the farmers who are preachers cannot attend. Short Term Bible Schools that are directed toward younger people can run longer since the students are often in between schooling. They can run for longer periods of time in developing world environments simply because people are sometimes out of a job. Schools that are conducted in urban centers do not depend on seasonal changes. Urban STBSs, therefore, can be much more flexible than

those schools that exist in rural areas where crops must be planted and harvested. The length of sessions of STBSs, therefore, must be determined by the environment in which the school is established.

In order to accommodate those who live in urban centers, another option is to have Serial Weekend Schools (SWS). In urban areas people do have jobs. They cannot take off work in order to attend a school for several weeks. In order to accomplish the educational program for training leaders, therefore, a SWS offers something that fits the time schedule of the city worker. Serial Weekend Schools are conducted on a series of weekends from late Friday afternoon to late Sunday evening. Students check in on Friday evening around 7:00^{pm} for the first session. They have classes all day Saturday and Sunday, with worship on Sunday. Around 6:00^{pm} Sunday evening they return home. One or two courses can be studied during this time, especially if students have been given their assigned reading before the weekend session. If the administration wants to conduct these schools over several consecutive weekends or one weekend a month for several months, the option is theirs for consideration. The advantage of the SWS is that church leaders who have secular employment in an urban life can have advanced Bible training in a resident program.

2. "Classroom" study time: A brief definition of terms is necessary here in order to clarify the nature of STBSs. "Classroom" in a STBS is somewhat different than a long term resident school.

In the general use of the word, it refers to a system of lecturing wherein the student sits and listens to a teacher giving information. The student takes notes in this environment in order to pass the final exam. However, most of the time during personal study time or group discussions over materials that have been studied. There is a great deal of student participation in an interactive environment wherein students are learning by doing. If printed material is available, the student spends much of his personal time in study of this material. "Classroom" time and group discussions are directed by a teacher/facilitator who leads the class in review of studied material. The teacher/facilitator works to reinforce that which has been studied by the student in his personal study time. If the student has been sent out for practical application of studies, teacher/facilitator and student time centers on the outcome of the practical event.

Classroom time in a STBS, therefore, would refer to the time a student spends in a facilitated/conference environment wherein he receives instructions from the teacher, as well as reviews the self-study material he has covered in personal studies and practical application. Study time refers to that time wherein the student works his way through self-study materials. The teacher/facilitator controls the environment of the school, though he is not lecturing to the students throughout the day.

Classroom time is often used to re-evaluate studied material. The teacher/facilitator uses this time to discuss diffi-

cult areas of the courses that are being studied by the students. It is during this time that students interact with one another in a learning environment that is facilitated by the teacher/facilitator.

Individual study time is dedicated to the completion of self-study material. Students in the STBS focus on study through the requirements of each course that is assigned. Classroom time is used to emphasize and explain material in the courses. The teacher/facilitator, therefore, facilitates the student through the textbook materials in order to bring each student to the final tests of each course.

How the teacher/facilitator arranges a flexible schedule that accommodates the needs of the students who are enrolled in the program depends on the progress of each student. Younger students may need more time for tutoring. Older, more experienced men need less time for tutoring, but more for personal study. And then there are those sessions wherein interaction must be encouraged between students. The point here is that the schedule can be flexible to meet the needs of those who are enrolled.

One of the key assets of the STBS is flexibility. There can be flexibility in every area of operation of the school. Curriculums can be designed to fit the needs of the region. Teaching during the daily schedule, study time, practical mission trips, and systems of study are all flexible. All things must be adapted to the needs that present themselves by the needs of the region in which the school is located.

C. Course materials for Short Term Bible Schools:

One advantage of the STBS is that it is conducted in a language into which some materials have possibly been translated. However, there may be no materials in the language of the students. Nevertheless, since few materials are needed for the school, few materials need to be translated. Since a school term is usually eight to twelve weeks, then only the amount of material for this period of time is needed. The materials that are translated can simply be reproduced for the next session of the school. In other words, a great deal of material is not needed in order to conduct sessions for STBSs.

In many places of the world, English is a second language. Students may have a study ability in English, and thus, they can study with English materials. The “classroom,” or discussion sessions can be conducted in the local vernacular. In this way, study materials can be clarified for students who are not proficient in English. This gives the school the opportunity to use English materials even though English may not be the spoken language of the region.

D. Teacher/facilitator for Short Term Bible Schools:

A STBS needs only one teacher/facilitator. There is no need for a staff, and thus, the cost of conducting a STBS is substantially less than a full-time long

term residential school. Since the teacher/facilitator is needed for only one or two sessions throughout the year, he can return to local evangelism, and thus remain in contact with the local community in which he lives. He does not become a full-time teacher, and thus, become separated from the community in which he lives and works. The same applies to the students.

Since the school session is only a short period of time, students are not extracted from their environment of work. They are brought into contact with others who are highly evangelistic, and thus, enthusiasm spreads among the students. They are graduated from the school on a high note of evangelistic fervor. As a result, the enthusiasm for evangelism is enhanced during school sessions, whether for a weekend or a week or two.

The work of the teacher/facilitator is carried out in three areas.

1. *Teacher:* The teacher/facilitator of a STBS should not be viewed in the traditional function as a lecturer in a classroom. Depending on how the STBS sessions are set up, he does some work through lectures on subjects for which the students have no printed materials. And depending on the availability of study materials, his time will be governed as to how much material he will give in classroom lectures. If few materials are available, then it would be assumed that much of the daily work of the teacher/facilitator will be in lectures to students. However, if a curriculum of self-study material is made available to the students,

then the teacher/facilitator works in the capacity of facilitating the student through his studies. He facilitates both classroom sessions and the personal study time of the students. He may also seek to make practical applications of the materials that are studied.

If the materials for the school are in English, the teacher/facilitator can explain the material in the local vernacular. In this way the teacher/facilitator functions in the capacity of reviewing, explaining and reemphasizing what students personally study in their textbooks that are written in English.

2. *Facilitator:* A facilitator in a STBS is one who directs the studies, stimulates interaction of the student body, and great practical training through local evangelistic efforts. If an established curriculum of self-study materials is available, then the teacher/facilitator will function during much of his daily schedule in the capacity of a facilitator to guide students through their studies. He will assign and maintain the study schedules of the students throughout the day. He will determine and coordinate evangelistic trips, daily activities, and practical application of the studies of each student.

We would view the facilitator in the context of how Paul worked with Titus, Timothy, Luke and others as they traveled from one village or town to another. We are sure Paul gave many illustrations and applications as they walked along Roman roads from one town to another. He certainly instilled confidence and boldness within those who were enrolled with him as fellow workers. He did only

what Jesus did with His disciples.

3. Administration: Though many of the practical duties of the teacher/facilitator can be delegated to the students, he must function as an administrator of the school. The teacher/facilitator must be a gifted person who knows not only the word of God, but also has the ability to work with people. He must be able to teach (2 Tm 2:2). He must be a teacher, a facilitator, an administrator, a counselor, and an evangelist. The one who works in this capacity in a STBS will determine the success of the school.

What is important is that this man must be a spiritually oriented person. His teaching by his godly living and attitude is paramount to the success of the STBS. He is to be an example to the students *“in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity”* (1 Tm 4:12). The success or failure of a STBS depends on the teacher/facilitator.

It takes only one spiritually motivated leader to initiate and conduct a STBS. We have seen motivated men take under their wing two to three young men and go to work with them for a brief period of time on a full-time basis. The work of the mature evangelist is extended far beyond his physical presence through brief periods of training men who are sent forth. In his mission journeys, Paul initially worked with young men as Timothy on a personal contact relationship (See At 16:1-3). These young leaders were then sent out on their own. However, throughout the remainder of his life, Paul maintained contact with those he trained. He expected them to train oth-

ers as he trained them in order to send out workers (2 Tm 2:2).

It is for the above reason that we use the term “administration” with great caution. We can become so organized that we fail to accomplish the training of faithful men to teach others also. We stumble over our complex organization just to do the simple work that experienced men should do in training younger inexperienced men to do the work of evangelism. Therefore, we must be cautious about making the administration of a STBS a complex structure. We would as Paul charge godly men to find those who are able to teach others, and then, go to work.

E. Advantages of Short Term Bible Schools:

There are several advantages for establishing STBSs in any region where the church has been established, or where the church is in the initial stages of establishment. The need for the rapid training of leaders to seize the opportunity of receptivity is especially true in those areas where there is rapid growth of the church. The combined impact of the advantages of STBSs is a tremendous factor in fostering the growth of the church.

We believe that the STBS is one of the most important functions of church establishment and growth that can be used to ignite the fire of growth. If the apostles’ remaining in Jerusalem or the ministry of Paul in training young men are good examples, then STBSs are a very effective ministry for church planting situations anywhere in the world to-

day. In regions where one seeks to establish the church, the evangelist can multiply himself many times over in the ministry of a STBS. As contacts are made in the initial stages of church planting, the advantages of the STBS reinforce the newly established churches through the rapid training of many leaders. Leaders can be trained and sent back to newly planted churches. The evangelist's teaching and influence can be continually infused into newly planted churches through those who sit at his feet in a STBS environment. As you contemplate the following advantages, keep in mind the tremendous potential and advantage one has in planting churches through STBS leadership training.

1. *Short Term Bible Schools present an environment for enthusiasm.*

Applicants for enrollment in a STBS are naturally those leaders of the region who are highly evangelistic and serious Bible students. They are often the firstfruits of a church planting work who are on fire for the Lord. They are the motivated men who make growth happen by the sacrificial service of their lives. When these individuals are brought together into a common environment, a dynamic atmosphere is created in which leaders are greatly encouraged. Enthusiasm is contagious. When younger, less experienced leaders are brought together into an environment where they are encouraged by others who are also motivated, great things happen. The social dynamic of the STBS is one of the greatest assets of the program.

It is essential that the length of the STBS session does not cool the vibrant spirit of evangelism that is characteristic with incoming students. Students must not be held up from the heat of the battle until their fire for evangelism flickers out. They must remain excited about sowing the seed by remaining in contact with the needs of a lost world. If we make monks out of preacher students, their enthusiasm will get bogged down in the muck of academia.

2. *Short Term Bible Schools present an opportunity for character checks.* In regions where receptivity is high and the rate of conversion is constantly expanding, young and inexperienced men are often thrown into the leadership of small churches. These young men need an encounter with older experienced men in the environment that is provided by a STBS. Through the process of the group dynamic of the environment of STBSs, students have the advantage of working with mature leaders. Through the fellowship of school activities, personality characteristics that are not conducive to servanthood leadership can be checked and counseled. Personality characteristics that are necessary for influencing others for Jesus are conveyed to others. A good STBS teacher/facilitator will be a people-oriented person who is highly evangelistic, and thus, able to equip others unto the work of the ministry (Ep 4:11-16).

When a lone leader arises out of a newly established church, dictatorial characteristics are often developed in the behavior of the leader. The type of personality that it takes to start a church is

often the type of personality that becomes the sole personality around which the church continues to exist. In order to mold this personality into one that can develop leadership within the church, the STBS environment produces an opportunity for leaders to develop. In a STBS leaders have the opportunity to fine-tune their personality skills in an environment wherein they have peers with whom they can interact. Those who have attended a STBS will be the first to confess that their behavior was transformed during just one session of a STBS. Any leader needs to be spiritually recycled through the environment of a STBS or similar spiritual encounter with peers. If a leader is not willing to be challenged by fellow workers, then I would question the leadership of that leader (See 2 Jn 9,10).

3. *Short Term Bible Schools only briefly extract leaders from local churches.* This point is in the context that the session of the STBS is located away from the regional churches from which students come. Newly established churches often depend on the personality of a single leader. In a residential STBS, the leader's absence from his local leadership responsibility is minimized. He is away from his family only for a short period of time. The advantage of the STBS, therefore, is that the leadership that establishes and sustains the cycle of growth in any region is not extracted from the local scene for long periods of time.

Since the leader is only briefly away from his home environment, then his chances of returning to his home are

much higher than if he left his region for a long period of time. When leaders "go off to school," they usually do not return to their home region. This is a general principle that is usually the case with the leader going away to a long term school. An advantage of the STBS is that the church leader maintains his ties with home since he knows he will be returning in a few weeks. The "home strings" are not severed, and thus, upon graduation the student is more likely to return to the region from which he came.

When a STBS is established in a region in which an evangelist seeks to plant many churches, no student of the STBS is taken far from his original home. He remains in the region, and thus, his talents are not extracted from the area where church planting is intended. This is one of the greatest advantages of the STBS system of leadership training. Leaders are encouraged to remain within the region of church planting. As the regional church grows, leaders will eventually move into other regions in order to plant new churches. But in the initial phases of the church planting within a region where church planting is intended, leaders are trained in the STBS on a regular basis.

4. *Short Term Bible Schools keep students within their own regions.* Preachers and church leaders who have been trained in long term schools away from their home will be the first to admit that they did not go back home after graduation. Most graduates of long term schools do not go back to the regions from which they came. There is nothing

wrong with this. If the local brethren expect them to return home after studies over a period of two to three years, they are probably asking too much.

One of the advantages of a nonresidential STBS that is conducted within a local church region is the fact that students do not leave their local areas. Regional STBSs keep students within the regional church wherein they can study and evangelize as they go through the STBS sessions.

Local STBSs also have the advantage of training young men for a few weeks who graduate from secondary schools. These young men can be given preparatory studies before continuing studies in universities or going on to jobs in other areas. The students of this type of STBS are usually young. However, the advantage is that the students are local, and thus, can be supported by parents and churches in order to prepare them for growth in church responsibilities.

5. Short Term Bible Schools keep the evangelistic fire burning. Those who are truly candidates for enrollment in a STBS are those who are the heart of the evangelistic outreach in any region. If these leaders are sustained in a long term study program away from their work environment for two to three years, their evangelistic spirit is often cooled. At least, they lose contact with home, and thus have little interest in returning to their regional church. They have submitted themselves to a full-time study program over a long period of time away from their regional church. The result is that they often lose contact with the needs

of the field, and thus, they have a hard time regenerating their evangelistic spirit for the region from which they came.

On the other hand, the residential STBS is simply a brief retreat from the battlefield in order to regenerate oneself for a quick reentry into the battle. The STBS environment can be a brief furlough for weary soldiers of the cross. The student does not learn “full-time” attitudes and professional behavior in a few weeks. He realizes that his brief time of study and association with fellow workers is only an opportunity to refresh himself for reentry into the field of labor.

Attendance at a residential STBS does not guarantee that the worker will return to his home environment. If he returns, however, home will not have changed extensively as it would have if he had been away for two to three years. When he returns, his fire will have been greatly kindled, and thus, his effectiveness will have been enhanced.

Candidates for residential STBSs usually attend such a school in order to better equip themselves through a greater knowledge of the Scriptures. The brief, but in-depth studies, enhance the worker’s knowledge of the Bible without extracting him from the challenges of the field. He retains his evangelistic fervor while growing in a knowledge of the Scriptures.

6. Short Term Bible Schools present a system by which many can be trained. In areas of great receptivity, the challenge of quickly training leaders is necessary in order to capitalize on the period of receptivity. Short Term Bible Schools of-

fer the advantage of training a great number of leaders in any region in a short period of time.

If the duration of the STBS is a few weeks, then three to four sessions of the STBS can be conducted in one year, depending on the need for leadership training in the region. One of the great advantages of the STBS in areas of church growth is flexibility. The arrangement of the school sessions and day-to-day operation can be molded around the needs of leadership training in the particular region in which the STBS is established. If there is rapid growth in a region, more school sessions can be conducted. If the growth of the church slows, fewer sessions can be conducted. The operation of the STBS can be easily adjusted to deal with the needs of the church in any particular region.

7. *Short Term Bible Schools do not tie up leadership in a classroom for great lengths of time.* As mentioned before, one of the great advantages of a STBS is that it does not hold up leadership in a classroom. In areas where the church is rapidly growing, the presence of leadership in the life and function of the local churches is paramount to the continuation of the growth of the church. Since church growth is dependent on leadership, extraction of leadership for long periods of time slows the growth of the church. The STBS offers the advantage that the leaders are absent from their responsibilities for only brief periods of time. It is even better if the school is nonresidential and classes are conducted according to the working schedule of the

local leaders.

It is crucial in church planting situations that two things happen in reference to church leadership. First, leaders must be quickly trained. Second, leaders must remain in contact with both the field and the newly established churches. Short Term Bible Schools provide an opportunity for both needs. Churches are planted because a local leader or leaders take the initiative to evangelize their community. The planting of the church in the community, therefore, depends on the presence and work of the local leader. The work will often die if he is extracted from the community for a long period of time. However, if he is trained within his normal work environment, he can continue to minister to those within his environment while he studies.

There is a great advantage to nonresidential STBS. The great advantage is that students retain their support in keeping their jobs while they take formalized studies under the leadership of a teacher. Though they take classes over a longer period of time in reference to the number of courses taken, they remain in their work environment. For this reason, the nonresidential STBS is the best choice for formalized Bible education. Leaders grow as they study and work.

8. *Short Term Bible Schools focus on the work, not the academics of study.* Though a certificate is often given by some STBSs to students who complete a session of study, the emphasis of the school is not on academics. The emphasis is on establishing a conceptual knowledge of the first principles of the Bible

in order to give the student a solid foundation for evangelistic work and future study. The student's enrollment in the STBS is focused on the evangelistic application of what he learns. It is not focused on receiving a certificate or diploma. The nature of the school, therefore, draws those who are sincerely interested in evangelistic work.

One does not have to have a great deal of biblical knowledge in order to be effective in evangelistic work. What is important is knowing Jesus and how to communicate the person and teachings of Jesus to others. One knows Jesus by first understanding what Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have reported to us. Secondly, one grows in his knowledge of Jesus by applying to his life Jesus' principles of life in his own life. Learning to know Jesus includes our learning how to behave with one another. Our relationship with Jesus depends on our relationship with one another. It is hard to apply the teachings of Jesus by sitting in a classroom.

Theological education has often gone astray by emphasizing academics over relationships. One can be a straight "A" student in academics, but flunk the course on his or her relationships with others. An evangelist who is a straight "A" student in academics, but a "D" student in academics will always be more effective than the academically straight "A" student who gets a "D" in relationships. The Thessalonian Christians, who were only a few months old in the faith, had evangelized throughout Macedonia and Achaia when Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians

(1 Th 1:8). However, we are sure the new Christians knew little about biblical languages, church history, and Far East literature. It is great to study all that one can be in reference to the Bible. But we must never think that our academics are necessary to be successful in being an effective disciple.

9. Short Term Bible Schools focus on leadership needs. A STBS does not focus exclusively on training preachers. The focus is usually on equipping any disciple who needs a spiritual and intellectual injection for a brief period of time in order to be better equipped for the work of ministering to the needs of others. Long term resident schools are generally founded for the purpose of training preachers. This is not the case with STBSs. Focus in a STBS can be on training the church worker to do a better work at what Christians in general are to do, that is, ministering the word of God to their local communities. The result of the studies in the school environment generally encourages and ignites the average member to excel above the average. Eight to twelve weeks of study in the word of God in the presence of fellow workers is a tremendous injection for all students. The result of the program is the explosion of evangelism that follows the sessions. When men who are highly encouraged go to the battle for the Lord, great things happen. The church is greatly blessed because the members have been greatly blessed by those with whom they have associated throughout the duration of the STBS session.

10. Short Term Bible Schools pro-

vide screening of students. In developing world economic environments, those who are jobless often seek any means by which they might find physical sustenance. The prospect of two to three years of provided meals and shelter is often a temptation to the person who does not have a true calling for evangelism. Short Term Bible Schools are set up to focus on the evangelistically active student. However, this does not mean that the uncalled jobless individual will not find his way into a STBS. It does mean that if he does, he is there only for a brief period. The intensity of the study program and the commitment of fellow students will often “wash out” the uncommitted. This is also true of long term schools. Anyone who conducts a resident school in a developing world environment is faced with the challenge of weeding out students who do not feel a true calling of God to preach the gospel. In any school environment, it is the challenge of the teachers and administrators to work with such people in order to challenge them to seek first the kingdom of God.

If the school is a nonresidential school, then there is little problem with determining unproductive disciples. They will simply not show up for class. For this reason, nonresidential STBS have an advantage over residential schools.

11. *Short Term Bible Schools provide opportunities for evangelistic outreach.* Some STBSs open their doors to everyone. Once the school is set up in a specific region, the reputation of its Bible

emphasis reaches into all religious groups. The school, therefore, becomes an opportunity for evangelistic outreach in the region when anyone is allowed to attend. When any person is allowed to attend, the word of God will do the rest of the work. One cannot study first principles in the intense study environment of a STBS for any period of time without life changes. This is especially true in reference to one’s obedience to the gospel.

Because of the evangelistic opportunity of attracting Bible students from the surrounding religious community, some STBSs have opened their doors to any interested Bible student. These enrollees almost always obey the gospel in the first week or two of the school session. If they are not, they leave. If they obey the gospel, then a tremendous opportunity for evangelism presents itself. After graduation, these new disciples for the Lord return with a message to the churches from which they came. Either the newly converted student converts the entire group from which he came, or he is cast out to go preach the gospel to others.

We must keep in mind that those who came to Jerusalem for Passover and Pentecost were received, discipled and baptized by those in Jerusalem. They continued being taught by the apostles (At 2:42). We are sure this was not a closed classroom since the Jerusalem disciples taught every day in the temple area (At 5:42). When the word of God is taught, it is only natural to let everyone in the classroom to hear the teaching of God’s word.

The opportunity for evangelism through STBSs in areas with a high concentration of Bible correspondence course students is excellent. We have seen some schools set up in areas specifically for Bible correspondence course students. All were invited to the brief school sessions, converted, and then sent out to preach the gospel. In Africa, many Bible correspondence course students are young. However, they are the ones of the community who are studying the Bible. Therefore, when an advanced Bible study program is established after the arrangement of a STBS, they will enroll. This is the ideal follow-up program for Bible correspondence course programs.

Bible correspondence course programs find in communities those who are Bible students. This is the cream of the religious crop who is searching for truth. These students are the individuals in the religious world who eventually become leaders of churches. The STBS is an opportunity for these students to come out of their religious environment in order to sit at the feet of a sound teacher/facilitator and study materials that are Bible oriented. They are in the company of others of like mind, and thus, the environment of the STBS is the ideal situation for Bible correspondence course follow-up.

12. *Short Term Bible Schools are easily set up and easily shut down.* Short Term Schools are established to meet immediate needs. Their enrollment and curriculum can be adjusted to the needs of the region. Though having facilities is

always a problem with resident oriented schools, the students of STBS can be housed by local members. Since the duration of the school is in weeks and not years, members are more favorable to the idea of housing one or two students for a brief period of time. If the school is non-residential, then the students already have their housing.

When the number of potential enrollees in a particular region decreases, the sessions throughout the year can be decreased. In other words, the greater the membership of the disciples in any given region, the greater the need to conduct more sessions to meet the needs of training. However, if the establishment of the church is in its early beginnings in a particular area, fewer STBS sessions can be conducted. The number of sessions is determined by the number of students that need to be trained. If the harvest of prospective students has been depleted in the membership of a region, then the sessions of the STBS can be terminated until a new group of possible candidates arises in the membership. One of the great advantages in STBSs is flexibility. Short Term Bible Schools are flexible to meet the needs of training those who are ready for such a study environment.

The brevity of the STBS sessions should encourage leaders to conduct a school session. Because the schedule is not complex, a single local leader can take the initiative to establish a STBS. We would encourage a leader who has a desire to establish a school to simply try one session with two to three students.

13. *Short Term Bible Schools are*

financially suitable for developing world economics. One of the great advantages of STBSs is their ability to be financially supported by the church within the financial environment of a developing world economic environment. Only one teacher/facilitator is needed to direct the affairs of the school. If the school is residential, the students who come to the school can be supplied with food by the students' families and home churches of the region. If only two or three students are involved, then little is needed to feed the group. The STBS thus fits within the economic structure of the local community.

The best scenarios for conducting the school is to have nonresidential students. When the classroom is taken to the students, then there is no need for the students to leave their jobs. There are great advantages to residential schools. However, in reference to finances, the non-residential school is always best. The key to the success of a nonresidential school is in the ability of the teacher to take himself to the students, instead of the teacher trying to bring the students to himself and a building. If a teacher can teach one course in a weekend at some point to which he can travel, students can be taken through a ten course curriculum in either five or ten months, depending on whether one or two weekend sessions are conducted each month.

If the school is residential, requirements for support of students varies from one school to another. There are those schools that have been entirely financed with resources outside the region of the

school. This may be necessary in order to initiate a STBS in an area where the church is initially being established. However, support that comes from outside a region to finance projects that should be financed by the regional church usually hinders the church growth in the long term. Therefore, it is best that the STBS be totally financed by the regional church. In this way, the continuation of the school is guaranteed. The self esteem of the regional church is encouraged. Self-support also empowers the local members to do their own training of their own leaders. When the responsibility for conducting the local STBS rests on the shoulders of the local church, then the church is also trained to take ownership for regional evangelism.

After the initial establishment of the school and the growth of the church, then the church within the region of the school should grow into accepting the responsibility of continuing the school sessions. The outcome for conducting STBSs should always be that the church in the region in which the STBS is established should accept the responsibility for conducting the school. If this principle is violated, then one of the very purposes for which the STBS is established is not accomplished. The reason it is established is to train leadership. And leadership means assuming responsibility for regional church edification and evangelism. Therefore, if a STBS is supported by churches outside the region of churches to which it produces graduates, then the regional church is not being trained to assume leadership responsibility.

ties for its own region.

Some residential schools require the regional churches to support students either financially or by supplying the food for a student during a session of the school. If the region of the STBS is economically depressed, there are usually little funds available to contribute to the school in order to buy food. Therefore, some churches simply send food out of their home gardens to the students of the school. This food is often sent by the families of the students or the local congregations from which the students have come. After all, the students eat while they are at home. The food they would have eaten at home is sent to the school in order for them to eat at school. What is important to remember is that students must not think that the STBS is a “Bible vacation” wherein no sacrifice is demanded. Without sacrifice there is no spiritual growth.

Whatever arrangement is made to provide living for the students while at school, every effort must be made to keep the support within the region of the school. In the context of student support, the instructions of Paul in Galatians 6:6 should be followed in reference to the student’s responsibility to the teacher/facilitator. *“Let him who is taught the word share [support] in all good things with him who teaches.”* Sacrifice must be assumed by everyone involved. When sacrifice is assumed, then spiritual growth will result.

The continued development and establishment of STBSs is an encouraging movement in world evangelism. The

concept seems to fill a need that neither long term residential schools nor distance training schools can fill. Every system of training of church leaders must be used simply because there are different needs for preacher and leadership training in different areas wherein the church is established. No one concept of training should exclude the use of others. Distance training schools lack the personal interaction between student and teacher. Long term resident schools are costly and often unable to train the number of leaders that are necessary to keep up with the leadership needs of receptive areas. Between distance training schools and two to three year resident schools is the STBS. Short Term Bible Schools incorporate some of the advantages of both distance training schools and long term resident schools. By filling this gap with some of the advantages of both long term resident and distance training schools, STBSs are coming to the forefront as a training method that will greatly enhance the growth of the church in any region. It is a method of leadership training that can be implemented by local leadership to train others to teach others also.

E. Establishment of a Short Term Bible School:

One of the greatest obstacles against the establishment of a STBS is the unwillingness of local leaders to launch out on faith to conduct a school session. Leaders are often hesitant to train leaders. Since a STBS can and must be established through the self-initiative of lo-

cal leadership, local leaders are often apprehensive about creating and maintaining such a school with their resources. But this should not be an obstacle. That which must be done to accomplish the work of God must be done. It is the responsibility of leadership to train leadership for the church and evangelists to preach the gospel to the lost. The first qualification of leadership in the church is the ability to train others (2 Tm 2:2). Leaders, therefore, must take the initiative to create opportunities for young leaders to emerge and be trained to carry out the work of the church.

Local leadership must not view the establishment of a STBS as a permanently established school. What they must focus on is conducting only one session with only a few students. Start small and keep it brief. We once knew of one school session that was started with two students. Any local church can handle this. From small starts can come great things. The primary thing is to get started.

The vision of starting a school must always be based on the concept that Paul revealed in 2 Timothy 2:2. When a leader takes ownership of 2 Timothy 2:2, how he implements the concept is left to his own discretion. He must himself be an able teacher. He must then find those who are able teachers to whom he can impart his knowledge of the Bible. These “enabled teachers” must then find others who are “able teachers” whom they can enable to teach others also. In order to do this, one can start small. Two or five students is sufficient for a beginning.

One or two of these students can be brought in to be residential. If the one who initiates the school understands that it is his responsibility to enable those students he has brought in to learn how to go home and enable others also, then he is on his way to starting a network of schools that spreads far beyond himself. It is for this reason, therefore, that anyone who starts a STBS must understand that it is his mission to train those who will be able to start other STBS. This is the spirit of 2 Timothy 2:2. If one does not know how to find, teach and inspire those who can start other STBSs, then he is not qualified to start a STBS.

Local leadership should not continually look to someone else to carry out their responsibilities to edify and equip the church in their region. The church in any region must assume the responsibility to carry out the instructions that Paul gave in Ephesians 4:11-16. Specifically, the local church must accomplish what Paul stated in verse 16. From the leadership, “... *the whole body, joined and knit together by which every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*”

It is the body that must edify itself. Churches are not mature churches unless the leadership of the church assumes the responsibility of equipping and motivating the church to grow. If the initiative to train the leadership of the church in any particular region must be stimulated and carried out by the church in another part of the world, then the leadership of

the local church has not yet matured into assuming the responsibilities of true leadership. True leadership is recognized when local leaders arise to the occasion of assuming their responsibility to carry on with the Lord's work.

The church must edify itself in each region of the world. Through the creation of STBS sessions, local churches can create an environment for the edification (training) of its own leaders. The best way to get started with a STBS, therefore, is to simply assume the responsibility of regional church edification and evangelism. God will bless the efforts of those who take the initiative to do His work. Even if the regional church does not assume its responsibility to equip saints unto the work of the ministry, any one leader can carry out in his life his responsibility to do so.

A STBS is not a complex organization. Any motivated evangelist can call on two or more men he would like to bring together in order to focus on study, prayer and fellowship. This is the central purpose of a STBS. Therefore, no evangelist should feel that he has to have the aid of others to do what is his responsibility to do to initiate 2 Timothy 2:2 in his own life. Paul simply told Timothy, *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."* Paul did not tell Timothy how to do what he here instructed. Timothy was simply to carry on with doing it. We would assume that Timothy would adopt the methodology of Paul in calling on others to join with him on a short term

basis to learn and teach the word of God. This is a STBS.

Conducting an initial session of a STBS should not be complicated. As stated before, one should start small. Once experience is acquired by the teacher/facilitator, then one can conduct more sessions that go for longer periods.

One of the greatest obstacles against the conducting of a STBS session is the lack of initiative by leaders who believe that they cannot do this work. However, leadership training is not an option in the work of the church. Leaders must be trained. In regional areas where young men cannot be sent to a distant school, local leaders must take the initiative to train faithful men to teach. The STBS may not be the option the local churches want to use in order to carry out leadership training. Regardless of what method of leadership training the local church desires to use, the fact is that something must be done in the area of leadership training. It is our prayer that the suggestions given here will give you some ideas of how to get started in conducting a session of a STBS.

The continued existence of the church in any area depends on the commitment and faithfulness of men who will stand up and take the initiative to train leaders. If local leaders do not take this initiative, the churches existence is terminal.

Anyone who would be a leader in the church must take on the task of training future leadership. Too many churches have ceased to exist simply because leadership was not trained to assume the re-

sponsibility of the local church. Short-sighted leaders who fail to train future leaders are making a decision to terminate the church which they lead. If leaders do not have the vision to train the leaders for the next generation of the church, then they are not assuming the responsibility of leadership. True leadership is

manifested in the fact that the leaders train faithful men who are able to teach others also (2 Tm 2:2). Only when we assume this responsibility will we guarantee the future of the preaching of the gospel in our region. Good leaders will rise to the occasion of teaching others to evangelize.