



PERCEPTIONS AND POSTULATIONS

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CONTENTS

- Introduction – 3**
- 1 – “Doctrinal Christianity” – 5**
- 2 – Ceremonial Christianity – 7**
- 3 – Cuffed-Hand Christianity – 10**
- 4 – Introverted Churches – 11**
- 5 – End Of The Building Obsession – 13**
- 6 – Training Leadership – 15**
- 7 – The Ministry Of Teaching – 24**
- 8 – A Language Bridge – 26**
- 9 – All Things To All Men – 30**
- 10 – Money And Missions – 34**
- 11 – Confident Churches – 36**
- 12 – The Rise Of Leadership – 39**
- 13 – Refugee Missions – 44**
- 14 – The Misunderstood Continent – 46**
- 15 – A Continent Of Opportunity – 49**
- Epilogue– 53**



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PERCEPTIONS AND POSTULATIONS

This book is an assortment of personal perceptions and postulations of what I feel are some general or overall characteristics of my experiences in Latin America, the West Indies and Africa. Throughout my travels to over eighty countries and living on three continents in the last six decades, here are some concepts and perceptions that I would suggest concerning the continued growth and edification of the worldwide church. I first wrote some of these perceptions in both *Africa Missionary Pilot* and *Preaching Through Africa*. They are published again here with some added revisions and additions that I feel are necessary in order to communicate the fact that church leaders must give urgent attention to the worldwide growth of the church.

On extensive cross-country trips I have made across Africa and my journeys around Latin America, basic challenges in the church become very noticeable, specifically on the continent of Africa. The origin of these challenges varied from one place to another. However, there were some common challenges with which the Africa church must deal in order to sustain church growth in the future. As evangelists who must generate church growth by the teaching and application of biblical principles, we must be concerned about matters that affect the existence of the church, that it not be diverted to a churchian existence

in the midst of a religiously misguided world.

It is not ironic that some of the basic African church challenges were also experienced in Brazil and the West Indies. The reason for this is that the beginnings of the church in all three regions have their origin in the Western missionary. And because of these origins there is some Western baggage that was initially planted in the thinking of the first generation of converts.

Because I have worked for over two decades in the African scene, I base my primary focus on the African situation with reflections on Latin America and the West Indies. There are some common challenges that face the church worldwide because Western mission efforts were the primary catalyst for the beginning of the church in many places of the world. Because most of the churches in the areas of my experience find their beginning in the mission efforts of Western missionaries, there is some leftover baggage from such efforts with which churches must now deal. As a planted church in any region develops into a truly indigenous effort, foreign baggage must be discarded as local and regional disciples apply biblical teaching to their own situations. I see this as a maturing stage for the development of the universal church. It is maturing in that national churches are taking ownership of their nations, and thus asserting their respon-

sibility to evangelize their own areas. In order to effectively do this, national churches must recognize and understand any foreign baggage that may have come with the missionaries. For this reason, therefore, I set forth these general postulations in hope that they will aid national churches to understand where they are in order to take ownership of the future of the church in their area.

Before we launch into the specifics, I should somewhat explain what I mean by baggage. First, and most obvious, baggage refers to cultural characteristics that are often attached to religious beliefs and behavior. For example, in the Western worship context the teacher is usually placed before the audience, either on a stand or pedestal. The audience looks forward in mute silence as the teacher lectures. This is not a biblical structure in every situation, but is commonly practiced in many assemblies of the church. Some cultures sit on the floor while others may sit in a circle. Another example of baggage is the use of a church building. While this religious culture dates back 1700 years to when Constantine built the first purpose-built building for Christian use in 323, buildings are not an essential part of church establishment or edification. There are a host of similar elements of the Western church that are not part of the simplicity of Christianity. What is important to remember is that everyone has some baggage. Because of the great mission efforts of the Western church throughout the years, we would suppose, therefore, that there would be more Western baggage in the

world church than baggage from any other culture.

Another part of the content of the baggage that is often brought over to mission areas deals with orders and ceremonies. These orders or ceremonies are usually associated with the assembly of the saints, particularly the serving of the Lord's Supper. For example, one brother came to Cape Town and was disturbed concerning the serving of the Supper in relation to the lesson. He had been taught by the missionary many years ago that the Supper should be served after the lesson, not before. There are numerous examples in reference to order and ceremony that are not mentioned in the Scriptures, but have become a part of our religious behavior. The problem is that if such baggage was initiated by early evangelists, new converts often took these examples very seriously, and thus bound them on the church.

A third category of baggage is in reference to biblical interpretation. I have found that many new converts in the West Indian and African context were not taught the skill of determining what is biblical, and thus binding, and what was "biblical," that is, mentioned in the Bible, and yet not binding. A very legalistic approach to Bible study was taught the first converts, and as a result subsequent generations did not have the interpretative ability to distinguish between the early missionary's baggage and what was actually binding. This has resulted in a great number of debates and divisions in the church as the churches began to grow after the departure of the

missionary. It is not my point here to go into any detail on these matters, but simply to alert all of us to the fact that “cir-

cumcision baggage” was brought to some areas, which circumcision baggage has caused some confusion with some.

Chapter 1

“Doctrinal Christianity”

Many of the churches that were established by missionaries to Africa, Latin America and the West Indies previous to the 90’s were generally churches that were based on conquest in debate over doctrine. The denominational churches had been in these regions for two centuries before the arrival of the Western missionary. Upon arrival of the Western missionary, therefore, conversions resulted from winning arguments in doctrinal matters.

Because of the religious atmosphere of doctrinal debates with churchian religions, early mission efforts subsequently placed more emphasis on doctrine than on Christ. Emphasis was thus on doctrinal correctness and not so much on ethics and holiness. Bible study focused on the epistles and not the cause of the epistles, Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Early efforts were primarily directed toward converting people from the error of denominationalism. As a result, much emphasis was placed on showing the difference between the structure of the church and the traditional ceremonialism of the denominations, the difference between truth and false doctrine. People were thus first converted to the church, not to Christ.

The emphasis of doctrine over Christ resulted in an intellectual church that

emphasized doctrinal purity and not so much Jesus as a model for holy living. This resulted in a knowledge of the church that was memorized from an outline or chart on paper and not one written on the hearts of men. The “five steps of salvation” became the gospel and preachers forgot the fact that the church is based on Jesus. Understanding that the gospel is the death of Jesus for our sins and resurrection for our hope was not the center of reference to the thinking of many Western established churches.

A ceremonial worship was thus established in contrast to the ceremonial behavior of the churchian groups to which we went as missionaries. We had an outline of scriptures placed under every “act of worship” in order to justify our system of “worship.” Our assortment of scriptures thus won the debates, but we established our own ceremonialism in worship which we justified by a legal performance of acts. We simply converted one from one ceremony to another as we “scripturally” performed the actions of what we perceived to be the fulfillment of acts of worship.

The negative result of this was that worshipers developed an “hour of worship” during which they performed a ritual of “acts of worship” between an

“opening” and “closing prayer.” Once outside this time frame, disciples were convinced that they were not in worship of God, and thus could behave like the devil, feeling confident in their performance of the “acts of worship” during the “hour of worship” on Sunday morning. To this day this legalistic view of worship plagues the church throughout Africa, most of Latin America and the West Indies.

One of our challenges in the 90’s in Africa was to first reaffirm the gospel. You would think that this would be absurd in reference to the church. But think about this for a moment. In most of our seminars in Africa in the early 90’s we made an effort to help church leaders understand that the gospel of the death of Jesus for our sins and resurrection for our hope must be understood and emphasized to unbelievers. We must preach the gospel, not church, since the church is the result of the preaching of the gospel. The epistles were directed to the building up of the body that results from the preaching of the gospel. Christ converts; doctrine fine tunes. This emphasis was highly received and one that greatly increased the results of public evangelism. When the emphasis was changed in public evangelism from condemning the denominations to proclaiming the cross, invariably more conversions resulted from the denominations.

In the early 90’s I was once in northern Malawi in a seminar before almost one hundred preachers of the church. I held up a copy of the Bible and asked, “Is this the gospel?” All their hands went

up. I said, “Wrong answer.” Of course they gasped, wondering if I had gone off the deep theological end. But I told them that in five minutes I would convince them that the Bible is not the gospel. So in five minutes I explained from 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 6:1-6 that the gospel was an **historical event**, the event of Jesus on the cross for our sins and His resurrection for our hope of being resurrected in the future if we obey His death, burial and resurrection in baptism. The Bible, specifically the New Testament, is the inspired **report** of the **event** of the gospel. What these preachers had been doing was preaching as the gospel the response of people in the first century to the preaching of the gospel (hear, believe, repent, confess, baptism). So I asked the question again after five minutes, “Is the Bible the gospel?” Not one hand went up.

The “gospel” of “hear-believe-repent-confess-baptism” was taken into all the world through Western missionaries, who themselves had their biblical vocabulary confused. Therefore, unless the world church gets her vocabulary correct on this matter, preachers will continue to produce a legalistic response in the lives of those who respond to their preaching. They will subsequently produce legalistic churches. Once one has completed the legal “five steps,” he or she must simply sit in on the “hour of worship” and legalistically perform the “five acts.” The problem with this is that we continue to preach church, not Jesus, and thus build churchian groups who eventually turn on themselves with debates over legal obe-

dience to the opinions of men. It is now happening in many churches of Africa. The turmoil is the result of a legal orientation to conversion and church.

There has been a great change in the missionary force that has come to Africa in recent years. Most of the missionaries after the 70's and 80s came to Africa holding Christ and the cross before the world. They made the cross the center of reference for church establishment. It

is my observation that there are exciting things to come in the future in the African church because of this new focus on Jesus by evangelists who are working throughout Africa. Those preachers who are now out there preaching the historical event of the gospel by emphasizing Jesus are reaping the harvest. People are now coming to the cross in hope of the resurrection. Christ is being preached.

Chapter 2

Ceremonial Christianity

Now I must take the previous point to the next level in order to help us understand why we now sit with many churches who are biting and devouring one another in senseless debates over nonessential matters. When a church sits with a spirit of strife in the present, invariably the problem finds its roots in the manner by which the members were trained to interpret Bible. Those roots often go back to the initial establishment of the church or churches in the region.

The more illiterate and traditional the culture, it seems the more legalistic it becomes in its religious behavior. When one is not trained in objective or deductive reasoning, it is easy just to be given a checklist of "doctrine" and then check off the points that we have completed. No thought is needed to check off each item. In reference to assembly, one can go home from the assembly and feel that he has accomplished his religion after performing certain rites of the religion at a place of authorized worship. This

ceremonial churchianity was presented to many African churches in past decades. As a result, some churches are set into a non-growth syndrome that is challenging to change. Some churches have simply become sectarian and denominational in thinking and practice. Division among churches is not uncommon because a spirit of legalistic interpretation was established in the early days of the churches' existence around which no compromise could be made. In reference to tradition, the traditional way of doing things became the only way it could be done, and thus churches divided over senseless ideas and issues that were simply church traditions. The present church is thus left with a religious legal behavior that lends itself to being divisive when new ideas in the area of opinion are introduced by those who have grown out of ceremonial religion.

What continually happens in such situations is that someone gives newly converted babes an outline of "the

church” when they are converted. They are instructed in the “five acts” for worship and “five steps” for evangelism in order to be doctrinally identified as the “true church.” As a result of this legal approach to Christianity, there is little understanding among some leaders concerning the concepts of grace in reference to salvation and holiness in reference to behavior. It was not uncommon to find churches that were led by thieves, polygamist and drunkards. As long as one believed the outline of the church on a piece of paper, he could behave as he so chose.

The result of a legal form of belief and behavior is that our supposed Christianity is turned into a churchianity that is often described with the word “denominationalism.” Because many infant churches have not been given the basic tools of simple biblical interpretation, they have digressed into churchian sects that behave no differently than the religious world in which they live. Because they are sectarian in thinking, they often turn on themselves, biting and devouring one another over senseless issues that God never intended should ever be bound on the disciples.

The problem with a legalistic approach to biblical interpretation among those who seek to restore New Testament Christianity is that legalism always leads one back to becoming that from which he flees. In order to teach the non-denominational nature of the church, the legalist establishes a denominational nature of the church. We then often become hypocritically denominational in our ef-

forts to discourage denominationalism. The problem with restorational denominationalists is that they can never see themselves as behaving denominationally.

An example of the preceding is illustrated in a church “business meeting” I once sat in on. During the meeting the subject was brought up as to whether a tie should be worn by those who served the Lord’s Supper. There was some discussion over the matter, then it was put to a vote. The vote was six to five in favor of the tie. The result of the vote was written in the business meeting notes, and thus the church became a sectarian denomination. There was no difference between the thinking of these brethren than the Methodist church who pride themselves in the many written methods of behavior of their church. They became the “Tie Church,” which church set the foundation for biting and devouring over some other issue in the years to come. And you guessed it, that biting and devouring came about two years later when the church exploded over another issue of nonsense.

What is very promising in Africa is the birth of a new generation of leaders who are seeking to re-establish the fundamental teaching of unity of the body that is based on freedom. These emerging leaders seek not to be sectarian in either thought or behavior. A new wave of evangelists has also come who is emphasizing the fact that Jesus set us free from the burden of legalistic religion. This new wave of evangelists know their Bibles well enough to know what is not

there, and thus what is not there is not a matter for meetings wherein we cast a vote. They refuse to bind where God has not bound. These churches have a great future as the leaders study the Bible for themselves without accepting everything that has come across the water from former Western missionaries.

During many of the seminars I have conducted I have challenged churches to enjoy the unity that we have in Christ, which unity can be enjoyed only if we give one another freedom in Christ. The problem in the past was that we never taught ourselves how to set one another free. Quite the opposite prevailed in the early days of the establishment of some churches. Instead of teaching new disciples how to set one another free, we taught them how to be watchdogs and to bind where God has not bound. The result was that the more dominant leaders enforced their opinions, or heritage, on the backs of the following generations of the church. When succeeding generations started studying the Bible, war broke out because a generation of Bible students arose who realized that some sacred practices were not biblically binding.

I remember one year in the latter 90's that I decided to teach the book of Galatians to as many churches as possible throughout southern Africa. I had written a commentary on the book, and a special section in the commentary on Religious Legalism. I thus loaded my vehicle with these commentaries and headed out across southern Africa. That year I taught

at least twenty-five seminars for church leaders on the subject of Galatians, leaving the commentary in their hands in order to continue the trickle down effect of the seminars. Because of the legacy of past legalistic teaching, and the legal principle of hermeneutics that was engrained in the thinking of many churches, I would suggest that evangelists do the same, using Romans and Galatians as the textbook for refocusing the thinking of many churches on grace and freedom in Christ.

Churches must be challenged to fulfill the prayer of Jesus for unity among His disciples (Jn 17:20,21). In order to do this we must teach ourselves the biblical teaching of grace and freedom as opposed to religious legalism. One of the very encouraging signs for future missions in Latin America, the West Indies and Africa is the arrival of second and third generation evangelists who seem to have a spirit of unity that is based on freedom in Christ. I envision great things from this generation of evangelists who are seeking to take the church out of an epic of legalistic churchianity and division over nonsense issues to an era of peace among brethren. Those churches who do not take advantage of the opportunity will continue to bite one another, and eventually devour one another in the heat of battle over some non-essential issues that have nothing to do with our salvation. I see an emerging group of evangelists who are taking the church to unity that is based on grace in the freedom of Jesus.

Chapter 3

Cuffed-Hand Christianity

This is a generally a Third World problem among nations that were formerly colonized, specifically Africa since Africa fell victim to colonialism. Four decades of foreign aid by Western governments and handouts by Western churches to churches in Africa has developed a very dependant mentality on the part of the African in general, and the African church in particular. African governments have been kept on the Western world hand-out list for so long that the people look for help from every foreigner who walks by. This thinking filters into the church because it has become an African cultural value. For example, when I once arrived one church in Africa that numbered about 500 members, the preacher initially stated that they needed a missionary, by this he meant a Western missionary. What he was really saying was that they needed a “source of support.” On another occasion this same request was made by a different church to a fellow Western missionary. The missionary responded, “What if I just send the money and clothes?” The response was, “OK, that will be just fine.”

Because the Western missionary comes from a very affluent society, he can live sumptuously in the Third World compared to local economic standards of the common class. He cannot help the fact that he appears rich, for he is rich in comparison to, but not all, locals. Because of the cultural cuffed-hand think-

ing, the hands go out to those we deem to be rich, or at least have a source somewhere where they can collect funds for local use. The Third World church member thus sees a source of financial help from anyone who comes from the Western economic world.

This thinking, however, is not entirely the result of colonial powers handing out money to African governments throughout the years. In the colonial years the colonial governments became the new chiefs from whom money was to be asked for local development. In the tribal system, the local chief was the owner of all, and thus requests had to be made directly to him. In the tribal arrangement of African groups, the chief was the one from whom one sourced help. When something needed to be done, requests had to be made to the chief. There was no democratic system of making a decision in order for a group to democratically perform a task. If a road needed to be built in Africa, no tribe came to a democratic decision to build the road, and then as a group go about building the road. The decision was made at the top, and the task was completed. In such a society, cuffed-hand thinking naturally develops. The people simply developed the thinking that we must ask the chief who owns everything.

When the Western missionary arrived on the scene, a new chief and source of finances came to the village. Now you

know the rest of this story that has been repeated a thousand times over in Third World cultures. In order to overcome this national thinking toward the Western evangelist, some Western evangelists have sought to live as a Third World resident. However, the African looks down on the Western evangelists who would seek to live according to the economic situation of his Third World plight. The Westerner is thus caught in a no-win situation. The fact is that there will always be an economic barrier between First World evangelists and Third World residents. No Western missionary really wants to say as Peter, "Silver and gold have I none." On the other hand, it would be rather unwise for the Western missionary to subjugate himself and his family to the diseases and conditions of those who live in urban shanties and huts. Not only would it be unsafe in many situations, but local brethren would not have respect for such fake identification, since the locals know that one from the West does not have to live in such situations.

Third World residents must understand that it is not what the Western missionary has, but what he is. The Western missionary is a very complex individual in comparison to the normal Third World resident. He is highly educated, motivated, trained, experienced and equipped.

Place this individual in a cultural situation of individuals who are uneducated, unmotivated, untrained, unexperienced and unequipped and you can understand the Western evangelist's dilemma. He can never really identify with residents of a Third World environment. And the question is, Should he? Should he somehow escape from himself and struggle to be that which he cannot be? Cultural identification of the Western missionary in the Third World environment is an illusive dream. It can never be fully accomplished. My only advice to the Western evangelist is do the best you can and live with the frustration of not being able to fully identify with your Third World brother. My advice to Third World brethren is not to view the Western evangelist with cuffed-hand thinking. If you do, you can never fully understand his heart that brought him to your village in the first place. There will always be that barrier between you and him. You must learn how to live with the rich, without coveting the possessions of the rich. In the New Testament, Philemon was a slave owner. Onesimus was one of his slaves. However, they met in the same house church (Pl 1,2). Only in Christ can an environment of fellowship be established where poor brethren do not covet the riches of rich brethren.

Chapter 4

Introverted Churches

It is true that the church in Africa is growing exceedingly. People are coming to the Lord every day. Church groups

are usually started by self-supported individuals who seek to preach the gospel in their areas. At the same time, how-

ever, many African churches, especially urban churches, have not captured the vision of supporting evangelists to go out and start churches. There are areas where individual African preachers have accomplished a tremendous work of establishing churches on their own, unsupported by the African church. They have gone out on their own and often worked alone. All the time they have not been supported by their African brethren. If they have been supported, the support has too often come from the Western church. The concept of African churches supporting their own evangelists has really not yet come to Africa. When I was in the West Indies in the 80's, I knew of no West Indian church who was contributing to evangelists on the islands. Of course, there are those cases where national churches are doing a great job in this area. But generally, this idea is still in the future for most African, West Indian, and many Latin American churches.

Part of the problem for this lies in the fact that foreign churches have been doing this work for so long in Latin America, the West Indies and Africa that the churches in these areas believe that the West should be doing this work. If new areas are to be opened, it is the tendency of Third World churches to sit back and let the West do the work by either sending missionaries or supporting local evangelists.

Before we are too hard on Third World local churches, we must also consider the American churches' foreign outreach of the restoration movement, which church was basically Third World

then according to your economic standards of Third World countries today. It took the church of the Restoration Movement in America over one hundred years to get into any significant foreign missions. And when it did, the efforts were puny until after World War II. I suppose, therefore, that we should be more patient with the church in developing countries.

Nevertheless, I would encourage Western churches to be very responsible in these areas. The old American/business principle of throwing money at something in order to make it grow does not necessarily happen in a Third World context. One can prime the pump, but if the pump continually needs to be primed, it is broke. And there are a lot of broken churches in developing countries that will continue to be broken in world evangelism because someone from outside the local scene continues to prime the broken pump.

Churches in developing countries must stop seeing themselves as mission points. Newly established churches should be taught the responsibility of "freely giving as they were freely given to" if they were established through the efforts of an evangelist who robbed other churches in order to preach the gospel in their area. Instead of seeing themselves as only recipients of God's blessings, they should be taught to take ownership of their nation and reach out with the gospel. Unless this is taught and learned, we have not yet completely understood the true nature of Christianity.

An illustration of priming broken pumps can be clearly seen in the "church

building culture” of churches in developing countries. Numerous church buildings have been constructed in developing countries because of the sacrifices of foreign supporters. However, those churches for which buildings were built rarely reach out to help other churches in their own nation to build a building. They freely receive the funds for building their own building, but they are not giving one cent to help others build a building in a neighboring city.

Churches that have had their buildings built for them by someone outside

their locality need to think again about the selfish religiosity they are teaching their children. If some other church or churches helped in the construction of your building, then you as a church are obligated to help someone else. “Freely you receive, freely give.” When this principle is violated in Christianity, then we have constructed a religion after our own selfish desires. Because churches have violated this principle that is at the core of Christianity, they have ceased to grow once they have been seated comfortably in their own church building.

Chapter 5

End Of The Building Obsession

In the two decades before the writing of this book, I have heard of no church buildings being built in large urban centers of developing countries in Africa. I know that some have, but not as it was in the forty years after World War II. The reasons for this are simple. First, the supporting churches, primarily Western American churches, have long since learned that building a church building does not help a church to grow. In fact, they have had enough experience now in this matter to know that in the long term churches often die in their buildings. The building craze in Germany after World War II was the first evidence of this fact. Twenty-five years after buildings were built in Germany for the German church, many of the buildings were left sitting empty. The church in America has now learned that brick

and mortar do not convert people. It is people taking the gospel message to people that converts.

Second, the leadership that now leads the church in America is a postmodern generation who have learned that a building is not the evidence of our presence and discipleship. Neither does it help in establishing relationships between disciples. The focus of this generation of disciples is on relationships. I see this as a profitable paradigm shift in the religious culture of the postmodern generation. It has been a turn away from physical structures being the evidence of our presence and proof of our stickability. Our message is the gospel, and it is the gospel that establishes relationships, not buildings. This generation of postmodern leaders are no longer interested in sending thousands of dollars to

build church buildings throughout the world.

Third, the cost of construction in Third World urban centers is prohibitive. The first indications that the church building craze was going out first started in the late 80's and early 90's. The construction costs in urban centers around the world at this time, regardless of whether these centers were in Third World or First World economies, started to skyrocket from tens of thousands of dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars. And then in the late 90's and into the 21st century, the costs went from hundreds of thousands of dollars to millions of dollars. This increase in the amount of funds that are needed to build a church building in urban centers marked the death of the church building phenomenon in missions.

So now we are left with our relics of past methodologies, but have not yet awoken to the revelation that the building of church buildings in urban centers throughout the world is over. I suppose it will take another decade or two to wake up to this fact. In the meantime, while you are seeking to disagree with my thinking, keep in mind that we as the church will always be small in a world of Christendom that has gone wrong in reference to what is necessary to obey the gospel. We firmly believe that there is one baptism (immersion), and that one immersion is for remission of sins when one is crucified with Jesus and buried in the waters of baptism. This one teaching will keep us small in a world of religions that focus on miracles and what-

not in order to attract a generation of misguided religionists. Now then, think about building a one million dollar church building for a small group of fifty disciples who live in Santiago, Chile or Nairobi, Kenya.

But what should we be doing now? First, we must recognize that the church will build few urban church buildings in the future. Even in the American scenario where the church has stalemated in growth, there will be few buildings constructed. So keep in mind that those who previously built the buildings are themselves not building. Now if we continue to believe that these supporters will fork out millions of dollars to build buildings for a few disciples in Nairobi, Sao Paulo or San Juan, then your light has not yet flicked on.

What we have done in Cape Town, South Africa is change. We have changed our thinking and our methodology. No church building has been built in Cape Town since 1991. But the church has far outgrown accessibility to the existing physical structures. Poor people have no cars. They cannot afford taxis and buses for families of five or six, or even less to be transported to a large assembly on the other side of town. Therefore, many disciples have taken Jesus back home to their communities and started meeting in their houses.

I see this as the future of successful urban missions throughout the world. If our "theology" (not biblical teaching) and methodology do not adapt, then we have doomed the church to death in large urban centers. Christianity is spreading

rapidly throughout China. But it is not being evidenced to the public by the construction of church buildings on major street corners. In fact, I once read a *Time Magazine* article where the government went in and bulldozed a church building of a group who tried to do this. Christianity is growing in the millions across China from house to house. Any Western missionary who would go to China with the methodology of church buildings will not get past the bulldozers. If we cannot change our thinking from a building-oriented theology, then we will not be successful in evangelism in large urban centers throughout the world.

This is one reason why I believe the American church will not be able to adequately carry on with world evangelism. We must thank them for priming the pump. But now, the methodology for

world evangelism must be accomplished by those who are trained in the real world of the Third World. And training evangelists for urban evangelism in the developing world will have to come from those who are house church trained. This is not an American culture. The religiosity of the American church is so steeped in church buildings that they will not be able to train missionaries in the culture of meeting from house to house. It takes a paradigm shift in thinking to be successful in house church evangelism, and that paradigm shift will not come out of the West. If I would be a prophet, I would speculate that world evangelism will next come out of China because the thinking concerning the assembly and edification of the disciples is in small groups from house to house.

Chapter 6

Training Leadership

This is one area that is of vital importance to me, for I have been working with leadership training in mission areas since 1974. The reason I have is because the success of mission efforts depends on leadership training. In Third World environments, this is especially true because some of these environments do not stimulate the type of leadership qualities that are necessary to lead aggressively God's people into evangelizing an area, region or nation. Add to this the fact that new converts are often of the poor or the untrained workers in the economic structure. Trying to build lead-

ership in any culture can be a challenge. Nevertheless, any long-term and successful mission outreach will concentrate on the adequate training of those who will lead the disciples, and thus, bring about stability and perpetual growth once the evangelist leaves.

In view of the preceding, however, there is an axiomatic truth about leadership. Every culture of the world has its own leaders. There is no such thing as a leaderless culture. The leadership that exists may not be what God would have for His flock. Nevertheless, the leadership is there. It only needs to be fine

tuned according to the word of God.

The challenge of training leaders must be considered in the context of the phenomenal growth of the church in certain areas of the world, specifically on the African continent. The number of sub-Saharan Christians is growing significantly. The rate of growth is increasing every year. This presents a phenomenal challenge for new leadership. Practically speaking, new leaders must be trained for these new disciples in order that they survive. Many of the new churches that are started every year in mission areas do not live past infancy. Those that die, die because of a lack of leadership. In other words, the problem is not so much in the area of baptizing disciples, but in the fact that there are no leaders to nourish the infant believers on to maturity. They die before they get out of the cradle.

It is my opinion that a great deal of our efforts in leadership training must be directed to meet the need of a rapidly expanding global body. In meeting this need, we must also recognize that we are still emphasizing some traditional systems of leadership training that cannot meet the needs of a rapidly expanding church in rural settings as Africa where most of the disciples are located. And by traditional, I mean full-time residential systems of leadership training that cater more to the young and single. We must understand that the traditional system of resident leadership training will in no way meet the needs of a rapidly expanding church in a Third World environment. It has not met the need for

mass leadership training in the past, and there is no indication that it will in the future.

Resident training is only one link in fulfilling the need of leadership training. It fills a need for training the young man who is ready and able to go through two to three years of training in a classroom, and then, get on with the work. There will always be a need for residential training programs. However this system of preacher training does not meet all needs of leadership training in a Third World context where finances are very limited. Some men do not feel called by God to preach the word until they are married and with children. With traditional systems of education these men have largely been ignored simply because they cannot quit their jobs in order to attend a resident program.

Whether or not we need to push for accredited residential schools is a matter of opinion. I do know that our graduates are in intellectual competition with denominational schools on an academic level. However, I have never been one to allow the denominational world to dictate to the church what she should or should not do. If we do, then we are often diverted from what the Scriptures consider to be our priorities. Keep in mind also that regardless of one's amount of diplomas and degrees, it is still a matter of how much one knows and teaches the Bible. Degrees do not convert people. The Bible does. And when it comes to growing the church, it is the Bible that produces faith and spiritual growth.

I would defend the concept of offering challenges to Bible students. Bible study is a lifetime adventure. If there is some honor given along the way, then we would give honor to whom honor is deserved. For this reason, we would give diplomas and degrees to students, knowing that when the highest degree has been earned, one continues to study. I believe one discredits his diploma in Bible study if he ceases his study after receiving an award. Nevertheless, if diplomas and degrees simply award one's level of study and application of the word of God, then they have their place in accomplishing the work of world evangelism. This is especially true if a degree in Bible will help a preacher secure a secular job for his support. There are still those government schools in Africa who will hire one who has a degree in Bible.

In 1997 I counted eighteen different resident schools of the church that were training full-time students in Africa. These were schools that were actually training men on a full-time basis, specifically for the purpose of preaching the gospel upon completion of their average two years of study. When all the enrollments of these schools were added together, I came up with a little over four hundred enrollees. One could only estimate the number of these who would actually graduate, and go on to play a leadership role in church establishment and edification. Several of those who were enrolled would not graduate, so there would be less than the four hundred who would actually make it past the requirements of the school and into the

field of work.

You can see the problem of training through traditional residential schools. They are not meeting the need for training enough leadership for the church in an area where Christianity is geographical centered on expanding at an accelerated growth every year. The problem is that too many leaders need to be trained for the work. The need for leadership training is much larger than residential schools can handle. In the last few decades there has been a great change in leadership training in Africa. There are numerous systems of education that are now being implemented for training leaders. Our focus in the past was primarily on residential schools. But this has greatly changed in the last several years.

I do believe that if we focus only on resident systems of leadership training in a movement where churches are starved of leadership in rural settings, we will hinder the work, instead of spurring it on to greater growth. The reason for this takes no great reasoning. Resident schools in Third World environments simply cannot produce enough graduates. They take great financial resources to maintain, and the Western church can only support so many throughout the world. I believe the number of resident preacher training schools the Western church is going to support has reached the maximum. This is just an opinion, but I do know of many resident schools where the Western church is pulling out, not pushing forward.

The directors and staff of many

present resident schools have realized that we are not meeting the need of training enough church leaders for the African church. As a result, they have added “mobile resident” programs to their present resident curriculum. What has happened is that through these extension programs they have taken the teachers out of a particular location where they traditionally called in the students for the classroom, and sent them to a classroom closer to the students. This is still a resident type program, but such is better meeting the needs of the rural leader. Because such programs have greatly enhanced the enrollments in these schools, we have learned that there are more students out there who want to study than can be supported to study in a full-time school at one specific location.

Then there is what I call **full distance training** schools. An example of this type of program was the International Bible Institute in Cape Town. These programs have no residential student body. At the end of 1997 there was an active student body in this school of well over 1,700 students. About ninety percent of these students were in Africa. These students went through a thirty-five course curriculum that took the average student about five years to complete. Students were sent courses through the mail and required to complete certain requirements and final tests over each course. When students completed the entire curriculum, they had studied through over four thousand pages of materials. Most of those who graduate every year simply continued on with other courses be-

cause they were actively ministering to local churches for which they needed materials to preach and teach.

There are several advantages of full extension schools. One of the greatest advantages of this type of school is that students receive a tremendous amount of materials. The schools are also economical to operate. Money is channeled into materials instead of brick and mortar or housing for residential students. No large staff is needed to carry out the operation of the school. The credibility of distance training schools is in the material, not in the teachers. Once the material is written, the school can be sent anywhere in the world.

One of the primary advantages of full distance training schools is that they force the school to produce written material for the students. In training preachers in a classroom setting, handwritten classroom notes have limited value out in the actual field of labor. In residential schools in Africa and Latin American, I have found that many of these schools do not have the capability to produce classroom outlines and textbooks, nor are they financially able to buy and use textbooks for courses in the schools. As a result, the student is often limited to his own note keeping in a classroom situation where the only one who has prepared notes is the teacher. When the student graduates, he leaves the school only with his handwritten notes. A person can preach and teach through edited and printed materials. However, if he has to work through his own notes when on the field, he will struggle.

Another advantage of the full distance training programs is that they are feeding material continually to a church leader who is continually working in local ministry. We have found through the Institute that students are actively preaching and teaching the materials they are sent from the Institute. Several thousand people are being taught every week through the active student body. Through distance training, therefore, the Institute is not only training an enrollee, it is training the membership of many local churches. The longer the student is enrolled, the longer the direct impact the Institute has on the local disciples for which the student ministers.

So what do Third World churches need in reference to leadership training schools? The answer lies in the economics and the logistical situation of the student. Economically, the Third World church will not in the foreseeable future be able to fully support Western style full-time residential schools. At least this is true in the church, for none of our schools to my knowledge have done so to this date. Most of the present residential schools have been on foreign support for many years. They are still not financially liquid, and it does not look like they will be in the near future. The foreign supporting church has decreased their support of those schools that have been on the financial strings of foreign support for twenty to forty years. As a result, some of these schools are in financial straights. But we must be reassured that local disciples will eventually sort through these struggles as they

faithfully seek to train their own leaders.

The fact is that Third World economic environments cannot fully support full-time residential schools. The facts speak this truth regardless of what our opinion might be. Totally indigenous resident Bible schools have a challenging future. Maybe there will continue be such in the future, but the reality of having local schools that are fully supported locally is going to be a continued challenge in Developing World economies.

I do not believe that the answer to leadership training is in the Western system of residential training. I believe Americans would do well to learn from the British on this point. Because of a British Empire that was spread throughout the world in times of old, the concept of distance training became a common practice in all educational levels of the Empire. The South Africans capitalized on this point when they realized that taking students to the school would not reach the needs of most of the people, and thus, was born the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria. Today, this institution has over 125,000 students throughout the world who can go to the Doctor of Philosophy level through distance studies. I believe they have established a system that is a viable answer to the problem we are facing in leadership training in mission areas. They have proved a system that would greatly enhance our understanding of leadership training.

The UNISA system is not complex.

Students can take five or six courses a year which is about all one can handle throughout a school year. The textbooks with study manuals are sent to the students wherever they are in the world. The students pay for the courses. For the number of students, the course tuition completely pays for the school. At the end of the year, students must go to a specified testing center within the country where the student lives. UNISA has designated testing centers in most countries. The students are then given a test that is monitored. They are tested over the courses that they have studied on their own for the entire year. These tests are returned to the school for grading. If a final test is failed, the student can re-take the test the first of the next year.

It is a marvelous system. And it works. It is one that allows the student to remain in his or her area where he or she lives. One can keep his job while studying through the courses. There are other aspects to the system of minor detail. The point is that UNISA has developed a system that is meeting the needs of tens of thousands of students throughout the world.

The strength of the system of UNISA is in the textbooks and study manuals of the curriculum. Much time has been put into writing these materials. Because of the quality of the studies and materials, thousands of people throughout the world are taking courses through UNISA. Once the student goes through these materials, he or she has a tremendous research library for continued studies. This is the great advantage of dis-

tance training schools. The extension aspect of the system forces the school to develop quality materials for study and research. This material is the lifetime library of the student.

There is a difference between programmed distance training material and the textbook/study manual system that is used by UNISA. Programmed extension materials are a self-contained workbook or book that is written in blocks of material with the purpose of taking a student through concepts and contexts. Questions usually follow each block of material and section tests usually cover several blocks of material. A final test is then given over all the material.

The disadvantage of programmed materials is that the material concentrates more on the questions than providing a student with a great amount of material for future preaching and teaching. The questions rehearse the student over material that he has read. How the questions direct the student is the key to the writing of the material. What one ends up with at the end of the day, however, is a workbook of questions, not a research book that could be effectively used for teaching and preaching.

Programmed material is not easy material to write. Few people can produce effective programmed materials. Because of the nature of good programmed materials, there is sometimes no good organized material from which to compose a good sermon or Bible class outline. This system also makes it difficult to be diverse in adding new courses. It is difficult to rewrite programmed ma-

materials once the initial course has been produced. If a course is to be rewritten, one usually has to rewrite the entire book, instead of simply revising a study manual.

On the other hand, the textbook/study manual/final exam system offers another possibly that has greater advantages in a distance training curriculum for Bible students. The textbook can be written by anyone. Almost any good doctrinally sound book can be used by those who operate the school. And when considering the range of books that have been written, the range is vast. Some brethren have written some fantastic materials that need to be used in mission efforts throughout the world. In using the textbook/study manual/final exam system, it is the task of the teacher to write the study manual in order to adapt the material to the students of the area. Through the study manual, words and concepts of the textbook can be defined and simplified. Each mission area can culturally apply through the study manual concepts that are stated in the textbook. In this way, almost any textbook can be made applicable to almost any cultural setting. Thus educators only have to produce a good study manual without having to research and write textbooks for their region, or even write programmed courses that would be applicable only to their cultural region.

In most of its courses, the Cape Institute followed the textbook/study manual/final exam system. In this way a great library were built in the homes of many church leaders throughout the

world. Study manuals took students through a systematic study of the textbooks. The study manuals were the teachers of the school. But long after graduation, the student had a vast library in the textbooks for continual research and teaching. You might say that the purpose of such distance training schools was to familiarize a student with a vast library of materials through the use of study manuals. In this way these schools can use textbooks by a host of authors and teach them through the study manuals.

In the area of leadership training, I firmly believe that distance training is the system by which church leaders should be trained. Distance training schools can be operated at a fraction of the cost of residential schools. They can thus be indigenous, needing little partnership support from outside to print materials. In fact, if several distance training schools in different nations can work together, they can produce their own materials and share them. In 2000 the Cape Town Institute began a feasibility study of doing just this. Four locations were chosen to use the materials that were produced in Cape Town. The four schools began using the curriculum of the Cape Institute. However, the schools were totally independent, and thus, used the courses according to the system of leadership training they chose for their area. By working in partnership in this way, the courses could be produced in great quantity in Cape Town, but used by everyone in the network. In this way, every partnered institute had

access to courses which otherwise they would not have been able to produce.

In 2007 many more locally operated institutes came into the International Association of Bible Institutes (IABI). This association provided an umbrella accreditation for those who used the *Biblical Research Library Curriculum (BRLC)* in their local leadership training. The IABI produces the curriculum that can be accessed by local Bible training schools throughout the world. Thousands of leaders had access to a common curriculum through the many established local Bible institutes. The advantage of this was that all these locally operated institutes were working together in order to produce the *BRLC* which was available to everyone accredited with the IABI. It is a great system and one that is bringing quality materials and studies to local church leaders.

A note should be made here to emphasize the paradigm shift that needed to be made from traditional accreditation systems to the IABI system of accreditation. Traditional residential schools set up their own accreditation systems that were based on the concept of residential education. Requirements as buildings, libraries and qualified instructors were part of the standards by which a particular school acquired accreditation with a particular association of schools. However, when distance training entered into the educational world, traditional standards of accreditation did not apply. This was particularly true in reference to instructors and building requirements. In a distance training educational system,

the material is the instructor. Students never personally face instruction in a building. Therefore, the standard of education in a distance training school is focused on the course material, not on instructors or a building for classrooms. For this reason, the IABI, and similar accrediting associations that focus on distance training, have shifted the paradigm in the field of accreditation. The quality of IABI accredited schools is not in ivy league buildings, Ph.D qualified instructors, or libraries, but in the quality of the material the student has been guided through in his studies and left with upon graduation. It is this material that will take the student through his ministry throughout his life. When training evangelists for the work of the ministry, this is the goal in theological education.

My point is that if we are going to train the vast number of leaders that need to be trained in a tremendously expanding church in the world, we must change some thinking. Systems of distance training are a major option to train the vast number of leaders who are out there and seeking training. They cannot leave their jobs. They do not have the money to pay tuition that is needed to make a resident school indigenous. Their only option is to receive courses in the mail or to be trained by distance training in regionally operated schools, or through the Internet.

My experience with present leadership training in missions is that change from residential to distance training, or even the addition of distance training

programs to present residential structures, will be difficult in coming. Most Bible educators who make the decisions concerning educational institutions have been brought up in a culture that sees residential training as the only means of education. For this reason if these leaders will continue to bring their cultural heritage into mission areas where such a system has limited impact. Add to this the fact that there are a number of resident schools now in operation that are the dependent medium for the support of many people. Changing a system that has been in practice for several years will be difficult.

But there are some great variations to resident training happening as a result of the tremendous need of getting the schooling to the location and level of the vast majority of students who need training. I saw an interesting example of the residential arrangement in Ethiopia. In the preacher training that was taking place there, students were brought in for four-month full-time sessions of training in intensive studies. Two four-month study blocks were offered each year. Students could take any four-month block of studies they wanted. The churches in the area where the four-month sessions took place, sponsored the students who attended. In this way, the school could be somewhat indigenous. The system was working when I visited Ethiopia in '97 and it looked like it would continue to be successful in the future.

A similar system as the Ethiopian model was carried out for several years in southern Malawi. During the dry season, which is several months out of the

year in southern Malawi, church leaders would attend six-week sessions of training at the Namikango Mission because there was nothing to do on the farms. The students could bring in their food, and thus study full-time for several weeks before returning to the farm. In this way also, students were not taken away from their families for great periods of time. The schools could also be self-supported within the Third World economic structure of the country.

One thing is certain from what I experienced on my '97 teaching trip. Everyone was struggling with the problem of leadership training. Every conceivable system was being tried. Those systems that catered to the real needs of the local environment were the most successful. They were reaching more leaders. The leaders that were involved in these programs were being fed materials they could put to use immediately in their active work with local churches. All of these programs centered around some type of system of taking the opportunity for education directly to the working leader who could not uproot and go to some school.

I believe the true need for leadership training in Third World situations does not find its solution in the metropolitan classroom, but in the village of the bush. This is where the majority of the disciples are located. This is where our training should be taking place. The rural church is not an urban church. It is by far still rural and our leadership training should take this into account if we are going to meet the leadership training needs of the church for the future.

Chapter 7

The Ministry Of Teaching

I think one of the best pieces of advice that was given to me by an African leader was that in areas where the church is established, missionaries need to be teachers, not supervisors. I believe this is good advice for any prospective missionary, especially those who are older in age and have a great deal of experience. We need evangelists who are skilled in the work of strengthening the churches through the teaching of God's word. When one tries to stay in the area of supervision, the local Christian often feels intimidated by the missionary's presence, especially if the missionary is older in age. Local leaders often do not grow into their full potential in the presence of those who take dominant roles of leadership in the local work.

American missionaries are often forward, vocal and opinionated. Their cultural characteristics make it difficult for them to work in decision-making processes with Third World leadership where the culture is less aggressive. This is not to say that it cannot be done. There are some great examples of where it is being done. It just takes a little more precision than what one would need in his own culture.

I believe the above advice should encourage missions in the area of Bible teaching among established disciples. Such would include producing a wide range of materials in the local vernacular. Special seminars and meetings could

be taught throughout a region. In this way, the missionary can be a tremendous asset to the growth of the church in any particular region. By working in order to hold up the hands of others, one can fulfill a great ministry in church edification and evangelism.

In this context, I would like to add another point of advice that several brethren of the world church have related to me throughout the years. They appreciate brethren who come over from the States to teach seminars, however, they feel that their teaching does not always meet the needs of the local disciples. What I believe they are indirectly saying is that they want teachers who know their situation to teach them seminars in applying the word of God to their situation. Brethren who come from a Western religious environment have a hard time understanding the Third World mind, and thus, have difficulty communicating practical applications of Scripture to real life situations in a Third World context. Teaching is thus often a system of doctrinal studies that are already known.

What leaders need is the application of the word of God to one's personal spiritual life in a culture that places different demands on them than the Western culture places on the Western Christian. For this reason, I would encourage more long-term missionaries to teach more seminars. I appreciate the young

missionaries who come into the field, but we need “lifers” who have been in a particular culture for twenty to thirty years doing the teaching of seminars. I would also urge that some of our local brethren who live in the culture to also stand up and teach the seminars. There are some great brethren who live in Third World environments who can do a better job in teaching seminars than any visiting teacher could do. They can teach and apply in a way that the foreigner will never be able to teach and apply.

I would also suggest that the body does not need the importation of divisive issues from one area to another. What may be an issue in opinions in one country does not need to be made an issue in Antigua, Zambia or Brazil. There are too many “two week” missionaries from one region floating about the world church teaching issues that have divided the church. It takes no little reasoning to understand that this is not good and a practice about which I would urge brethren to be very cautious.

In reference to seminars, we should not underestimate the power of the seminar. I have found that the most effective seminars are at least three full days in length. If this seminar can be in an isolated location where there are no distractions from the local environment, great things can be accomplished. The advantage of such seminars is that the student is saturated with a specific teaching day after day. He has time to talk at night with fellow attendees about the subject of the day. The impact of the subject is thus drilled into the thinking processes

of the student. This impact changes thinking and lives. When the student leaves the seminar, for the next several months the local church is impacted by what he learned in the seminar. I believe this is one of the best ways of changing the thinking and work of the church in any given area. I would thus encourage more experience evangelists to conduct seminars. Those who know the culture of any particular location should be the ones who are teaching the seminars.

And while we are on suggestions for seminars, I would also encourage visiting teachers to teach expository lessons. This is the system of teaching by using the Bible text as the outline of the lessons that are presented. Everyone who attends the seminar has a Bible. If one’s Bible is the permanent outline that is taught in the seminar, then the attendee has a permanent outline to take home and preach. Any subject that should be taught to a group of evangelists must come from the Bible in the first place. If teachers can help men with expository learning, then they will teach expository lessons when they go out to preach. In this way, everyone keeps their thinking in the word of God.

Before concluding this chapter, here is a thought concerning those who teach seminars, specifically those who come out of a Western culture. I have found that Western culture is a dominant culture, if not sometimes a little arrogant. It is competitive, individualistic and analytical. Now take one out of this culture on a two-week mission trip into a Third World context and you can imagine the

relationship challenges between this Western resident and the typical humble personality that is greatly intimidated by the presence of such a personality. It is for this reason that Western visitors often come into the Third World environment with a behavior with which they are often unaware. They often view those to whom they go as “chauffeurs” to their needs and “bus boys” to carry them about here and there. This feeling is not only in their relationship with Third World residents, but also with the missionaries who work there. I have always thought it quite interesting that most American brethren view missionaries as inept theologians out of which little original thinking can originate. This prejudice sometimes leads American preachers to pay little attention to the thinking of missionaries, let alone a national resident of the Third World. Now if the American professional thinks this of the American missionary, you can only imagine their thinking concerning preachers who are not of the American religious or cultural scene. It is like a Third World resident being from

Nazareth and traveling to Jerusalem among all the theologians.

But I would like to remind our Western counterparts that there are some great thinkers who actually do not live in America. They are great Bible students and very evangelistic. For many reasons, the Western church has ceased to grow, but the Third World church is growing tremendously. I would encourage the West, therefore, to look to those leaders in Third World environments for skills on how to get the Western church growing again.

I say the preceding not to discourage our Western brethren in their world travel to teach seminars and meetings throughout the world. I mean only to alert them to the fact that there are some challenges that Western teachers have that often work against them in their sincere efforts. When the Western teacher (or campaigner) leaves the Third World church on his way back home, the local brethren should not have to take a sigh of relief in order to get back to normality.

Chapter 8

A Language Bridge

Small events often change history forever. When Spain sought to invade England in 1588, the Spanish Armada lost most its ships, and thus the small island nation of England survived and became a world empire. The English language became the world trade language. Today, the information highway, the In-

ternet, is based on the English language. It is as if God had something to do with the sinking of the Spanish Armada in order to prepare the way for the spread of the gospel throughout the world today. As was Koine Greek in the first century, so English is today. Any nation that would become a part of the global

community must teach English to its citizenship.

When Kabila took over the nation of Zaire (now, The Democratic Republic of Congo) by means of a military struggle, he committed the people to learning English. When the nation of Namibia became an independent country, the government made English the official language. English was to be the language of instruction in every school. English was to be spoken on the school grounds. When the Ethiopian government set a policy to keep the people divided by encouraging local vernaculars to be the language of regions, the people were frustrated since Amharic and English had been widely spoken in the country. When I first visited Angola in 1996, I was surprised to see so many people in the cities who were seeking to learn some English. It was a country that had been cut off from the world by a war for over thirty years. English is an official language in many of the nations of Africa. China is teaching its population English. Japan and other nations throughout the world are doing the same. It is as if we have gone back 2300 years to the days of Alexander the Great who initiated the learning of the Greek language throughout the ancient world.

At least in the southern part of the continent, English is gaining predominance as the first language of many countries. It is already the trade language of the world. It is the language spoken in government, trade and by African travelers throughout the continent. It is by far the most international language that

is spoken throughout the world. It is taught in almost every school system on the continent of Africa and in most countries throughout the world. English no longer belongs to America and England. It is the language of the world.

Regardless of all the efforts to make other languages international, English will prevail because the technological leaders of the world use English as their medium of communication. CNN is in English. *Time Magazine* is in English. International journals and books are in English. The Internet is English. The computer world is based on English. Machine manuals and travel documents are in English. The world knows this, and in order to maintain contact with the world, English must be taught and known by the world citizenship.

So here we are, standing with a tremendous opportunity before us. There are millions of people in the world who are in active programs to learn English. I would predict that those countries who never teach their population to know English will always be hindered in their economic growth. Or at least, the ones in the Third World who succeed will know English in order to deal with the developed world. It is at the point in many countries that a young lady cannot get a job as a secretary if she does not know English. The business with which she works is connected in business with an English speaking world.

So what does this mean for world evangelism. At least for leadership training in the church, it is significant. Knowing English is a tremendous advantage

for leaders of the church. Knowing English is by no means a requirement or necessity in order to lead a church. But the church leader who knows English has a tremendous advantage in accumulating English materials and teaching such to local disciples. There is a whole library in English that will never be translated and printed into local languages. Knowing English opens up an entire world to the local leader, not only for personal reading and study, but also for education.

Almost everywhere I go in seminars throughout the world, brethren have asked if I could have a particular book translated into their local language. I have come to the point of saying that such will never happen. It is difficult to get funds to print even the English edition of books let alone translations into various other languages. But even if there were funds for translation, few people have the time and language skills to produce a good book. In one region in Africa where the church has existed for forty years, two books have been translated into the local vernacular. I am sure this is true of most areas of Africa, for Africa is a continent of thousands of languages and dialects. We will never be able to translate and print any significant number of books into the local languages of cultures throughout the world.

We have always worked to produce materials in English since this is the world language. There are similar international press operations throughout the world who do the same. I have often been amused by some brethren who

speak a particular local language other than English why we do not produce something in their own language. My simple answer for this is why does the brother who asks the question not organize the local churches to produce the material in the local language? International operations cannot fill the tremendous demand for millions in English when the local church in a specific area only wants thousands in a local language. Instead of depending on someone else to write or translate material, and then print it, local brethren must work together in order to produce literature in their own language.

It is not that a great deal of material must be produced in a particular local language. Only selected material on fundamental teachings and a few evangelistic tract titles need to be produced. But this responsibility has been so often left to the visiting evangelist that the local brethren have little vision concerning the production of literature in their world language.

If there is not the demand for the material in a particular local language, which demand should be determined by local brethren, then it is not financially expedient to produce such small amounts of literature to reach only a small population? When it comes to producing international publications, these works must focus on international needs. When producing materials for local needs, local brethren must learn to work together in order to produce the materials they need for their local outreach.

So what must we do? Church lead-

ers who know English can study in English and preach in Tonga, or Twi, or Chichewa. The answer is that church leaders learn English. This opens the door for them to research in English, and then teach the church in the local vernacular.

My perception of the present African church is that a great leadership is arising. And interestingly enough, those leaders who are becoming great leaders among their own people know English. Even in those areas where English is not the spoken language, leaders who speak English are emerging. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the preachers in Africa actually know English. I would guess that the vast majority do, and thus, have a tremendous opportunity of receiving and using English materials in their leading of the local churches for which they teach in local vernaculars.

The rise of the English language also presents a tremendous opportunity for Bible correspondence course programs. I believe we have not yet touched the surface of the effectiveness of correspondence course programs throughout the world. There are thousands of individuals who are looking for study materials in English to supplement their school studies in English. What an opportunity for any church that is interested in conducting a Bible correspondence course program. I have even had schools ask

for doctrinal Bible correspondence course materials to use in their Bible classes in public schools. It would be a key ministry of a church or churches to contact and supply public schools with Bible correspondence courses.

It has been difficult for developing world cultures to produce writers. There are reasons for this, but at the end of our complaints to have materials in our own language, local writers will have to come to the writer's table. Translating material from another language is fine. But where are the local students of the Bible who can inscribe their thoughts in their native language. I have always found it interesting that there are many who are eager to translate someone else's material, but they are not eager to study and write their own. Where are the literary students of the Bible in India or Africa? Must we always translate materials from the West?

It is my challenge to the Bible students of the developing world to arise to the occasion. Study the Bible. Write your own material, and then, find those who will help you print it. If you cannot find people to print several hundred copies, then print only ten copies. Have ten people read those copies, and then pass them on to another ten people. If someone wants a copy, then they can pay for the copy to be made. In this way you will accomplish your goal of writing and have others read your studies.

Chapter 9

All Things To All Men

I write this chapter on behalf of my Third World brethren who often have a difficult time understanding the Western missionary. In order to understand this enigma of the First World, I would encourage my Third World brethren to be patient with those who come from the West into their economic environment. The one who comes must be commended for seeking to do that which is very challenging, that is identify with a Third World context. It is very challenging for Western evangelists to walk in the shoes of those who are in a truly Third World economic environment. We cannot, therefore, accuse the First World missionary of not being sincere. On the contrary, his sincerity is exemplified in the fact that every effort is being made to identify with the Third World culture. And once we better understand the environment from which a First World disciple comes, we can better appreciate his sacrifices for leaving his environment. It is not, therefore, that we would be envious of what he may possess in our presence. We must appreciate who he is because of what our First World missionary gave up in order to be in our presence.

Western missionaries who have been in Third World environments for many years clearly understand what I will say in this chapter. Those missionaries who originated from and were born out a First World environment have a difficult prob-

lem with their identity with the Third World. In fact, you would have to say that they cannot fully identify with the Third World if they have been born out of a First World context. The two worlds are so far apart that it is difficult for First World residents to fully understand a Third World context.

As an example of the preceding, the homes of the two cultures are vastly different. The Western missionary wife works in an appliance store, the husband in an electronic office outlet, and the children sleep in a “Toys R Us” bedroom. When they go as missionaries into all the world, they load these environments into shipping containers and transport them off to the Third World where the same arrangement is installed in a mansion in the rich part of the big cities. They hire guards and buy the most fierce dogs, build a barricade around their environment, install bugler alarms, and a host of other precautions to guard their imported life-style. We then sit back in the cool atmosphere of air conditioning and read books on identification with foreign cultures. I suppose the residents of the host Third World country should be reading those books that will help them understand the enigma that has just moved in next door.

The dilemma of identification the Third World missionary was exemplified by the young African a particular missionary was encouraging to be a mission-

ary himself to another African country. The young African brother responded, "But how can I ever afford a 4X4 Pajero to do the work?" The reply says a lot concerning the model we have established in missions in Third World contexts.

So here we are. The foreign evangelist has come out of a culture that is so distant from the Third World that there is no possible way for him to identify closely with his Third World brethren. His true identification with his Third World brethren who live in a completely different environment is only theoretical. It is usually something that is taught in a textbook in a First World classroom. Those textbooks were often written by men who went to Africa in the 1800's or early half of the 20th century. Those missionaries often came out of a Third World rural environment of America to a Third World environment of Africa. In those years there was not much of a change in living conditions. Their identification was easier. They simply moved from a wood hut in America to a grass hut in Africa. But the American economic and cultural environment of the present prospective missionary presents challenges that are vastly different. There is a great deal of difference between even small town America and the village of Africa.

Today, the Western missionary comes with his expensive equipment that is indicative of the culture out of which he was produced. He not only has an automobile, it is a 4X4. He has a computer, a dishwasher, an iron, a microwave, a refrigerator, and the list goes on.

He has come with a host of gadgets into a non-gadget culture that has been caught in an economic time machine that ran down somewhere around the turn of the 19th century.

The Western missionary comes from a culture of models on how to do almost anything. He has grown up in an environment of opportunity, enterprise, schooling and degrees. He comes to a culture of illiteracy and no opportunity. He comes to a culture that has been trapped in pre-1900 economic and life-style, a culture of fatalism and no hope for any development in the future.

So the missionary is now in the new culture of the Third World. He seeks to identify with the local culture. He has memorized Paul's statement, "I have become all things to all men." However, in the new culture everyone knows that if the missionary needs something, he can go on a fund-raising trip to a land that seems to provide everything that he requests. When he becomes real sick, he can buy a plane ticket to a better hospital. When he gets tired, he can escape to a far away land. When something breaks, he can afford to buy a replacement. When he wants a book, he can buy it. You get my point. I would say that there can never be the real textbook identification of the Western missionary that is the product of the present American culture with the culture of the typical rural Third World dweller. I really doubt that he can ever say in a Third World context, "I have become all things to all men."

African missionaries know this. This

is no new revelation. How to deal with the problem is another matter, and one with which many African missionaries struggle, knowing that there is no real solution. The missionary is stuck in a situation for which little mission training is given in the States to prepare the prospective Western missionary for Third World living. Much discussion is carried on in the area of cultural identification, but little deals specifically with recognizing the impossibility of the Western resident to identify with rural Third World environments. Western evangelists often go to the field assuming that they are Western and Africans are Africans, and there will always be a vast difference in economics, education and culture between the two. This assumption is right.

Now comes the challenge. How can the Western evangelist ever give a lifestyle example of Christian behavior to those in the Third World to which he has come? This is a challenge when it comes to commitment and sacrifice. One could set an example of commitment, but it is easy to be committed when you have so much material security behind you. One would set a model of faith, but it is easy to have faith in God when there is a financial solution to most problems? One would set a model of trusting God, but it is easy to trust in God when helping brethren are available by the touch of an icon on a computer screen and an E-mail away. One could set an example of leaning on the counsel of your African brethren, but it is easier to telephone America.

The Third World resident knows he

can never be as the Western missionary. He knows he will never have all the gadgets, or books, or plane tickets, or Pajero. The missionary has set a standard to which he can never rise. So what does the Western missionary do in such situations? Does he sell his 4X4, his computer, his library of books, move into a hut, deny the plane tickets, books, big house, forego the hospital, the medication, etc.? The African knows the American would never do this, nor does he believe he should do this. In fact, the African is so well-acquainted with the American that he would think there is something seriously wrong with the American if he tried to be as the African. So both the American and African know the dilemma. This does help the matter to some extent. However, it does not make the problem go away.

So where do we go from here? This situation will not change. I would suggest that there be more preparation for those who are moving into Third World environments in order that they be better equipped to deal with this dilemma. It is good to study the culture into which one goes. But we must also study why and how we deal with our First World culture in a Third World environment. I have observed that missionaries are going to maintain their First World standard of living. I have not seen any missionaries living in any huts. Therefore, how can the First World missionary maintain a First World standard of living in Third World mission efforts without making their world the model to which the national should aspire? How

can the Western missionary work in a non-identifiable situation in which all Western missionaries are in when they live in Third World environments? How can the mission be more effective while maintaining a standard of living in a world where conditions are certainly substandard by Western measurements? This is the challenge of the Western missionary as he or she moves to the typical Third World country.

Unless the Western evangelist is aloof, this challenge will always be with him as he lives with brethren with whom he seeks to be on a common fellowship basis in a local Third World setting. He will never be on a man-to-man relationship, brother-to-brother relationship that would exist in his own First World culture. This does not happen between First World and Third World Christians. There are a great deal of gaps between the two cultures. This does not mean that the Western culture is better. It simply means the residents in both Third and First World cultures are on two different pages when it comes to standards of living.

So what is a Western missionary to do? He must first recognize the problem. Recognizing the problem is admitting that it is there. Dealing with the problem is something else. One must seek to be sensitive to those of a Third World culture, knowing that one's brother in the Third World will never have the privileges one has in the First World. Flaunting one's wealth or possessions is pride. Coveting one's things is just that, covetousness. Being insen-

sitive to the poverty in which one lives is not Christian. I have found that every Western evangelist deals with this challenge in slightly different ways. Those evangelists who have been on the field for many years, do recognize the problem and try to deal with it in some way. However, most see this as just a challenge with which we must live, and then carry on. But in carrying on, there is that frustration one has because he is so far away from his Third World brother when it comes to economics.

In our world evangelism efforts it seems that Western missionaries often have some economic boundaries. The boundaries are established by the economic fringe that extends out from the business/industrial center of any particular country. There is some "First World" in every country of the world. This First World economic is usually in the major metropolitan cities of the countries. The Western evangelist finds himself comfortable in this environment, while making mission trips into what he calls the "interior." The interior is actually the Third World of the nation in which he is living. The boundary of his living is the city limits of the First World economy of the city in which he lives. I would assume that by far the majority of the Western evangelists of the church are living within the economic boundaries of the metropolitan areas of the nations in which they live. I know that I have lived in both. But to be fair to many mission outreaches, this is often necessary if the missionary is working in a supportive role with the church in the country. This

is especially true if he is working in the area of radio broadcasting, literature production, or any other mass media effort to evangelize the nation.

Courageous are those First World evangelists who go beyond the economic boundaries and are living in the Third

World environments of the countries in which they reside. If you are a local Third World resident and there is such an evangelist who is truly living in your situation, then you have a real jewel in your presence.

Chapter 10

Money And Missions

A common “problem” that we often feel hinders Third World churches is the lack of finances to support evangelistic efforts that are necessary to grow. However, I personally believe there are some unfortunate assumptions in reference to this business/industrial concept of church growth. When discussing spiritual matters we must not assume that it takes money to cause church growth. If Africa and India are any evidence of growth without money, then we could say that the less the money, the more the growth. The church in both Africa and India are very poor. But at the same time, the greatest growth of the church that is going on in the world today is in Africa and India. The least amount of growth going on at this time is in the West where there is a lot of money. Now go figure. The point is that it does not take money to make the church grow. One may think it does, but our thinking may be that we want that Pajero.

Nevertheless, there is usually a great void in Third World church giving to support preachers. This is especially true in those areas where there has been a long

missionary presence. As long as the missionary is present, there seems to be the feeling on the part of the local church that in some way the missionary will cover all needs for that which must be supported.

There could be many reasons for the lack of sacrifice on the part of Third World churches to support their own works. However, I say this in view of two very important facts. First, I do know that the Macedonia churches gave out of their deep poverty in order to help famine victims in Judea (2 Co 8:1-4). They went beyond measure to make this contribution. In fact, they begged Paul to take their contribution in order that they might have fellowship with all the saints (2 Co 8:4). The Philippian church at the very beginning of its establishment, sent support once and again to Paul, Silas and Timothy in Thessalonica (Ph 4:16). We would do well in mission efforts in the Third World to teach these responses of the early Christians to the common needs of the work of God (See At 2:44,45; 4:34,35). Regardless of where one is financially, a true disciple of Jesus

will always seek to help others.

Secondly, I would also point out that there are numerous examples where Third World churches are supporting their own works. This occurs primarily among denominational religious groups. There are many examples where denominational religious movements in Africa have sacrificially given to promote their movements. There are numerous examples of these groups working sacrificially in order to preach the gospel to the lost. I once met an individual who constructed houses in Cape Town. He would build houses for about three months, and then he would take his savings and go preach meetings. After preaching several meetings, he would then get a contract to build more houses in order to preach more meetings. Such examples let us know that where there is the will there is a way.

I do not want to overlook those examples among us where churches are making sacrificial efforts to preach the gospel. There are some very good examples of churches in Africa and India who have arisen to the occasion to support mission works. These are indigenous churches that are supporting their own work and carrying out the work of God in their lives. I visited one such church that was sending out two missionaries the day I visited. The church was about 150 strong and very dedicated to evangelism. They had been initially started by a missionary. There are other examples where Third World churches have sent out evangelists, but generally speaking, these are exceptions to the rule.

Evangelists generally cannot be sent out with full-time support simply because in Third World churches, everyone must use what money they have to survive. But evangelists are going forth, though the distance they go is not as extensive as the Western evangelist. Where the church is established, especially in rural settings, I can confidently affirm that African brethren are busy about their evangelism of their regions.

I see a general nature among most of our churches in Africa not to financially support the sending of evangelists. Part of the problem may be that many African churches have not been given examples of how they can actually conduct a supported mission effort. Too often we have confined our brethren to the concept that contribution means money, and only with money can mission work be done. In Third World situations, money is not there to do the type of mission work that is carried out by Western churches. Other systems of supporting missions must be emphasized. The Philippians gave "things" in order to support Paul (Ph 4:18). African brethren in rural areas can feed preachers out of their gardens. They can send fruits and vegetables over to another village to feed an evangelist. Several churches are doing this. However, we must encourage Third World churches to support evangelists after their own abilities and means, not according to Western abilities and means. Missions simply cannot be carried out in the manner by which the West conducts its mission programs.

It is a matter of getting past the West-

ern example. I would encourage Third World evangelists to look past the Western evangelist in order to determine how evangelism can be carried out in a local context. We appreciate the Western church priming the pump. But after the pump is primed, we must carrying on with what we have. Complaining about having no finances does not solve the problem. We must pray about the situation, and prayer is always answered when directed to the saving of souls. God opens doors that can be entered by evangelists, regardless of their financial abilities. The kingdom of God is not measured in dollars and cents. It's expansion is determined by doers of the word.

One encouraging sign in Africa concerning evangelism is the fact that Africans are planting churches every year by the hundreds. Though African churches are slow in supporting evangelists to go out as Western churches do, African evangelists are going out. They are taking an initiative to preach the gospel.

Credit should be given to some great African evangelists, who against all odds and discouragement, have taken it upon themselves to get the job done. I believe the actions on the part of these brethren speak highly of their desire to preach the gospel.

I have observed that where the movement of the church is indigenous and without the presence of Western influence, the local church has a greater chance of rising to the occasion of supporting their own work. I suppose as long as the missionary is present, there is always the feeling that the missionary and his supporting churches will carry the load. But in those areas where there is no hope of foreign support, Third World churches usually arise to the occasion and do what is supposed to be done. At least, this is what is happening in India and Africa where the church is growing faster than in any other place of the world.

Chapter 11

Confident Churches

As stated in the previous chapter, African churches can do mission work. Their efforts are not as grandiose as Western efforts, but they can expand as leaven in their regions with works that eventually spill over into other regions, and then others. Please keep this in mind in reference to what follows in this chapter.

In 1997 I took a Seminar Safari up through East Africa where I experienced

many African churches who were doing a great work in reaching out in evangelism. I visited Ghana several times in the mid 1980's where I had the same experience. The churches of Ghana have accomplished a great deal on their own since the 80's and the explosion of growth that took place in the decades of the 80's and 90's. There have been similar indigenous efforts throughout Africa and India that have occurred separate

from the influence of the Western church. In Ethiopia, Malawi and Nigeria specifically, successful efforts are happening as different African national churches accept the challenge of evangelizing Africa. In the West Indies and Latin America, however, the growth is slow. There was growth in both areas, but nothing like the growth of the church in India and Africa.

I did discover an interesting lesson on one of my journeys through Africa that not only myself but other missionaries noticed in the African church environment. In those areas where there had been long term contact with a Western missionary, the African brethren were often too dependent on the missionary or missionaries to initiate or subsidize evangelistic efforts. This was not necessarily any fault of the missionary. It was simply the “foreign aid mind” that had been developed in the African for the last two centuries. His dependency thinking simply clicked into gear when there was some foreign source present. Though the missionary practiced strict indigenous principles, the local brethren still would often not leap into action by claiming their region for themselves, and thus initiate church planting. It was simply felt that the Western missionary should initiate most of the church establishment. When the churches were established, they would maintain the churches. But to initiate church establishment was often challenging.

When the missionary did leave those areas where his presence had been felt for several years, the churches would

generally go down in membership. Some churches would fizzle out. However, those churches that stayed, usually started to grow again. They did grow, but their growth into maturity had to be without the presence of the Western missionary. They had to do it on their own.

Most foreign missionaries have experienced the preceding pattern of growth in most Third World environments. Because Africans were “taken care of” during the colonial years, and “hand fed” during the foreign aid years, there is a dependency thinking that I call the African foreign aid mind. Add to this the policy of many denominational mission groups who pour funds into hundreds of development projects and church projects to uplift their works. When the African sees the Western missionary, therefore, he sees one who seems to have an unlimited source of funds. The national worker thus thinks that the missionary is the source of all financial help.

I would not be too critical of Africa on this point. After all, when living in an area where there are few resources, I would do the same if walking in the shoes of my Third World brethren. In the African context, however, there is an added challenge to ridding one’s culture of a “cuffed hand” thinking. Almost all of subSaharan African cultures were born out of a tribal social structure. In the tribalism system of culture, social function was based on the permission of the chief. If one wanted to build his hut in a certain location, the chief had to be consulted. If one wanted to plant his garden

in a certain location, the chief had to be consulted. The chief possessed all the land, and thus permission had to be given by him if land was involved in any function of society. Permission from the chief to accomplish most things within his territory had to be received before one could act. This practice is still very alive throughout subSaharan Africa today.

Now add to the preceding the practice of the colonials when they arrived. In the colonial system, permission and supply also came from someone on top. Previously, the chief owned all the land, and then after the arrival of the colonials, the colonial owned all the land, and thus took the place of the chief in government. So when the colonials left the governments in the hands of the Africans, they actually stayed in the sense that they were the source of supply to the continent through foreign aid. Whenever a “national” government wants anything today, a delegation is sent from the African government to the former colonial power. So why would we blame the African for a “cuffed hand” culture? You are what your history dictates.

It is the colonial mind set with the horizontal handshake that is often subconsciously looking for another handout. We must understand that it was the colonial West that produced this mentality. It was not in the African before the arrival of the colonial powers. In pre-1900 days, the African handshake was vertical with a spear in the other. The colonial changed all this. Missionaries are now faced with the challenge of straightening out this thinking with Bible teach-

ing on Christian responsibility.

In seminars I have taught much on tentmaking missions, that is, evangelists supporting themselves. I have taught much on 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, where Paul explained the principle that if a man will not work, neither let him eat. These and other concepts in the New Testament help Third World brethren understand that they must stand on their own. When this is understood, then indigenous mission efforts spring forth from churches that decide they will on their own evangelize their areas.

One of the problems with the Third World today is that the West is teaching it that Third World residents are poor. And to a great extent, this is true. But there have been so many efforts to relieve poverty that anyone who lives in the Third World now thinks he is poor if he does not possess a car, television or some other symbol of First World prosperity. The problem with a “poverty mentality,” as opposed to true poverty, is that one forgets how to help others. He sees himself as a recipient, not a giver. He will freely receive, but rarely freely gives. When one becomes a disciple it is difficult to change this thinking. In fact, in the presence of Western influences many become “Christians” for the purpose of seeing what they can get.

I have always thought that it is interesting to see the difference between what the Bible considers poverty and what the First World defines it to be. In the Bible, the poor are defined as those who have no food to eat or shelter in which to live. That definition is still true today, regard-

less of our First World definitions. We must keep in mind that if one is convinced that he is poor, he will take little initiative to reach out to help others. We must always keep in mind that the widow of Jesus' day gave her last two coins for

the temple tax. She did so in the presence of Jesus who was standing there seeing her make her contribution. Jesus did not tell anyone to give her two coins back.

Chapter 12

The Rise Of Leadership

Western culture often produces a very dynamic and aggressive personality. Westerners are on time, meticulous in accounting, perfectionist in precision, counting time by money, in a hurry here and there, productive, productive, productive. With all this hype, the Western missionary has a difficult time identifying with Third World cultures that seem to be just this side of neutral.

In the African village, there is no clock, no demand to get the job done on time, no schedule, and time does not mean money since there is a great deal of time but very little money. However, this does not mean that the African village culture is devoid of leadership. In measuring leadership by Western standards, you can see why Western missionaries often judge Third World cultures as having no leadership. If we associated aggression with leadership, then some African cultures might be judged to have no leadership. If we judge leadership to be highly organized with timetables and schedules, then I suppose there is not much leadership in many Third World cultures. But is leadership to be judged by the leadership standards of the

West? We must remember that there are other standards for leadership in other cultures. After all, the West did not exist in the first century. Nevertheless, it seems that the first century church had some pretty good leadership that took the disciples into all the world.

I have caught myself judging that there was no leadership when actually I was judging that there was no Western style of leadership. I needed to take a few steps back and down and look at the situation through Third World eyes. It is only then that one can see leadership in a non-Western context.

As in all cultures, leadership must be trained and fine tuned. Enhanced leadership makes things go better. This is true in all cultures. But to assume there is no leadership in a particular village or church because the inhabitants do not perform according to Western standards is to misjudge the situation. In my travels throughout Latin America, the West Indies and Africa I am greatly encouraged by some of the tremendous leadership that is characteristic of some very godly Christian men. Under some of the worst social and environmental condi-

tions, these men are maintaining a godly example to which others cling for survival. These men do not always have “Dale Carnegie” leadership skills, but they know how to lead their people. They simply remain there when everything else is falling apart. That is the best leadership of all. Good leaders just stay faithful to God when Satan deals his heaviest blows.

Christians follow men and women who praise God during times of famine, war and pestilence. Herein is the godly leader. It is the one who maintains his faith when church members starve, bandits kill members, war ravages the region, and members die of disease. Herein is the leadership during the trials of which Peter spoke in 1 Peter 1:6,7. *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* Great leaders in the church are not necessarily those with organizational skills. Such is a Western standard of leadership. But in Third World environments great leaders are often those men who by their example of faithfulness lead the disciples through times of war, famine and pestilence. Because of their faith that is focused on Jesus, they lead the church in suffering through times of tribulation.

Many leaders know how to lead by organizing all the members into programs and schedules. But few know how

to lead a church through famine, war, pestilence and political oppression.

I say all the preceding as a positive note for Third World leadership. As a negative, some African church leaders have a tendency of being very dominant with churches. Often, one church has one leader, and that leader functions in an often lording manner in relation to the members. In a culture of chiefs, dictators, power hungry politicians, church leaders often have a tendency to adopt the practice of their culture in order to lead the church.

This is a significant problem in a Third World context. Too often it is the dominant and educated who lead the poor and ignorant. This was the Liberian problem for a century and a half. After the American Civil War, freed slaves were given freedom to return to Africa. Liberia (“freedom”) was established for this very purpose. However, the educated American slaves returned to Liberia and oppressed the local African villagers who already lived in Liberia. The villagers were poor, backward and uneducated, and thus, became the opportunity for dominant freed slaves to find a kingdom over which to reign. They thus lived in relation to the local villagers as their slave owners in America had related to them in a master/slave relationship.

In order to train leaders who are not dominant, much has to be studied in the area of servanthood leadership. Anyone who would do mission work in a Third World context must deal with this subject in training leaders. It is a problem

that prevails in many cultural environments throughout the world. At least this has been my experience in Latin America, the West Indies and Africa.

Africa offers some challenges in training leadership that may not be in other cultures of the world. In *African Missionary Pilot* I once wrote of my perceptions concerning the environment in which the rural African often lives. In this environment he struggles to offer leadership to disciples who are struggling with him in order to serve God.

We too often take for granted the tame environments in which we live. Africa is a diverse continent. It is a land of struggle, despair and hardship. Nevertheless, such an environment often lays the foundation for a hope of better things in the afterlife to come. The African is often fatalistic about life. Nothing has worked out right for the past ten centuries. He wonders why we should hope for the future. If he had to hope concerning a better place in this physical world, he knows that he will be disappointed. If you lived in his environment, you could understand why he is so fatalistic about life. You would be, too.

A tribal conflict breaks out. Innocent mothers, fathers and children die in the endless conflicts of power struggles of what should be outdated in civilized society. It seems that civilization always hangs by a thread in some African countries. Power and money hungry dictators live in an

unreal world apart from the desperate from whom they have embezzled millions of dollars. Roads go unprepared, agricultural skills go unknown, and hospitals become halls of despair as pompous aristocrats lie at ease in palaces that have been purchased by “misdirected” foreign aid. This is Africa (TIA).

Famine administers its relentless blow as the suffering stumble around in soil of clods that has long ago given up productivity. Farmers hope at the sight of a cloud, but sigh as another day goes by without any rain. TIA.

Nevertheless, the relentless sufferings of existence of the inhabitants of the African environment have made Africans a resilient people. A humble, or maybe “humiliated” culture has been produced that is free of the self-seeking cycle of materialism. A communal life of interdependence has emerged as many rural people seek to depend on one another for survival. People lose faith in politics and politicians who have increased their subjects’ hostile dilemma and have failed to deliver them from their wretched environment. People have learned to trust in one another, or at least, search for security in other places than government. This is rural Africa. (TIA.)

Hope is heightened by the depths of despair. And in Africa hope runs high as residents search for the Hope of all hopes. As we lift the crucified Savior on a cross before the hearts of searching souls, hope is revived.

Strength to endure a hostile environment revives the souls of those who thank God for the One who came. Surely, *“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.”* TIA.

These “beautiful feet” remember that *“you sent aid once and again for my necessities”* (Ph 4:16). The hopeless are receiving hope because of those who have sent. Therefore, *“we seek the fruit that abounds to your account”* (Ph 4:17). If you are a sender, evangelists throughout Africa thank you on behalf of the destitute, on behalf of those in hopeless situations who now have hope. Praise God for your concern, for your sacrifices that are *“a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God”* (Ph 4:18).

One of the greatest blessings that has come to places like Africa is biblical literature for the education of the leaders of the church. When I lived in the West Indies I piloted an airplane with which we flew tons of literature to leaders throughout the islands. In Africa we mailed and shipped tons of literature to faithful men who were leading the church. For years we have been distributing literature that has had a tremendous impact on thousands of people. One evangelist from Livingstone, Zambia once wrote,

Allow me to comment that I am finding the courses of the In-

stitute so very interesting and spiritually building. They have personally helped me in my area of teaching materials as a religious educational teacher in secondary schools. The courses have given me further training in my profession. I want to sincerely thank you for giving me this opportunity.

One of the evangelists in Uganda once wrote,

I am writing to express my thanks to God and my gratitude to you and the staff of the Institute for properly handling some of the most controversial subjects of the Bible.

I carefully followed your explanations using the Bible to prove every point you explain. It is really very interesting and wonderful for me to learn that the Sabbath was not set aside as a day of worship because it was hallowed and that there were many other sabbaths mentioned in the Old Testament which are not observed by sabbatarians today. Course 106 has greatly expanded my understanding of Jesus' present reign. For years I have misunderstood the comprehensive authority of Jesus.

The above mentioned courses have definitely challenged some of my old thinking

and brought to light a more complete understanding of the above mentioned subjects. I hope and pray that these courses will be beneficial to many other students, especially to those who study them with an open mind and not in a spirit of controversy.

From Egypt, one of the International Bible Institute students once wrote,

I want to inform you that our heavenly Father is doing great things with us here in Cairo, Egypt concerning His wonderful word of life. I came to Cairo last year and started the work of preaching the gospel among Sudanese and Egyptians. I found that they are very responsive. I established a new congregation which has a membership of twenty-five people whom I baptized into Christ's body in this short period of time. Most of the members of this local congregation are university students.

I am looking forward to receiving other courses from you. As you know, I am preaching in the Arab's world where most people speak Arabic. Therefore, I would like permission from you to translate all the courses into the Arabic language.

It is difficult to explain the joy a lonely worker for the kingdom receives when he receives Bible material he can

study. We have found that literature distribution offers isolated workers a link to the outside world. It offers them a companion in their struggles in the kingdom. We have been asked questions on about every biblical subject of which one can think. Elders have written for advise concerning problems in churches. Preachers have written when they have felt alone and isolated in their struggles of church planting. When we offered courses through distance training, students apologized for being late on courses because of sickness and death. Their houses have been burned by terrorists. Their children die of malaria and a host of other diseases. These men suffer through thieves and sickness in an environment which reminds them that their real home is beyond this world. Literature distribution often links the resident disciple with a world outside his own. He can find confidence in the fact that others have come to the same conclusions he has in his personal Bible studies.

We are not just sending out material. We are sending out packages of hope. Every parcel is a packet of peace of mind for one who works alone. We pray for them. They pray for us. Together we are fellow workers for Christ in an environment where leaders grasp for hope and peace of mind in a world of struggle. We ask that you not forget them, but that you continue to join with us to crush Satan at the foot of the cross. They stay in the battle because God has given them the victory. They have faith in the mission before them because of their faith in the Master behind them. They seek to bring

all the world into Christ because they struggle to take Him into all the world. We must stand behind world evangelists who seek to take the gospel into all the world.

The success of our efforts to evangelize the world will depend on our skill to impart to faithful men that which we have learned. Leadership training is a generational task. Every generation of leaders must be taught. And every generation of leaders has the responsibility of training the next generation of leaders. This was the mandate that Paul passed on to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2. The problem with dominant leaders is that they fail to accomplish the mandate of 2 Timothy 2:2. Because they feel threatened by others who might arise and take their position, they suppress rising leadership. Autocratic leaders do not train leaders. They thus lead terminal churches that are doomed to go out of existence. On the other hand, servant leaders are always looking for other ser-

vants to help in the task of serving the saints. True leaders, therefore, are identified by their efforts to train faithful men who will be able to train others also.

I have always found that the true soldier of the cross is the individual who is out there in the village life, maintaining the sacrificial and committed life of bringing good news to the hopeless. We too often give glory to the preacher in the big city who is preaching for the large assembly of disciples. But this preachers life is easy. Those who live out in the highways and hedges of society where people are grasping for something in which to find hope, are the true warriors of the faith. These are those who are growing the church through the preaching of the gospel from village to village. These are those men who struggle with their wives and children to give everyone a chance to hear the gospel. These are the ones who pray and cry with those in the community who have no medicine for their children. They simply have Jesus. Honor to them.

Chapter 13

Refugee Missions

Here is one of those areas of missions we have just begun to realize is a tremendous potential for saving the lost. For example, Mozambiqueans were in southern Malawi as refugees for many years. Lendel Wilkes, and those of the Namikango Mission, did a great deal of work in those days with these refugees. When they returned to Mozambique, many converted refugees returned to

Mozambique as Christians to firmly establish the church. The same has happened with refugees for Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola, Congo and any nation where civil war continued over many years. War is an opportunity for evangelism when we reach out to refugees.

The first refugees we read about in the New Testament were dedicated religious people who first came to Corinth,

and then went to Ephesus in order to establish the church. Aquila and Priscilla were already in Corinth when Paul arrived in that city (At 18:1-3). They had been run out of Italy when Claudius chased all the Jews out of Rome. They were working as tentmakers in Corinth when Paul arrived. They later went with Paul over to Ephesus (At 18:18-20), where they stayed, while Paul left immediately for Jerusalem. Though they were refugees, they remained dedicated to God and were vital to the establishment of the church both in Corinth, as well as in Ephesus.

There are numerous examples as the above scattered throughout Africa. In Africa there are always refugees somewhere at some time. These people are dislocated. They are thrown around in life like rubbish in society. When such people gain refugee status, they are often given rights to work in the host country, or are given monetary funds to live as refugees in designated refugee camps. They are receptive to teaching and spiritual guidance, though one usually has to gain special permission to work in refugee camps.

This is one of those areas of opportunity for the gospel in Africa. It is one of those areas of evangelism where the people are usually cared for by international relief organizations, so the need is not so much in the area of physical needs, but in the area of spiritual needs. How-

ever, because the refugee is often on the move, there are challenges in this area to make the contact and settle the refugee into some type of function as a disciple in a specific area. Much depends on the type of refugee camp to which refugees are assigned. Some camps are agricultural camps, that is, refugees must grow their own food. Some camps are human trauma centers to which hordes of people have fled almost overnight to escape war. In these camps there are many physical needs that must be met immediately. It seems that every refugee situation in Africa is different. The type of situation or camp will demand a different approach.

Much of the opportunity of working among refugees is with the established African church in the host nation. However, there is much room here for evangelists who have a high sense of spirituality and humanitarianism and feel a special ministry for these situations. Doctors and nurses can be called into such camps to work with relief organizations. Churches can be started in tents. The Ethiopian, Malawian and Zambian brethren have done a great work in these areas. Here is where missionary training should be fine tuned to a speciality in order to encourage the national church to evangelize Africa by converting and training those who will eventually return to their homelands.

Chapter 14

The Misunderstood Continent

I have found that most Western residents are both geographically and politically challenged in reference to Africa. If something tragic happens in Cairo, Egypt, they will cancel their trip to Johannesburg, South Africa. Americans often view Africa as a country, not realizing that it is a continent of fifty-four nations. I have had Bible correspondence course teachers in America write and ask that I follow up on their BCC student in Nigeria, thinking I could drive over to Nigeria from Cape Town on the weekend. When we were in the process of moving to Brazil, one American preacher said to me, "That's great. On the weekends you can drive over to the Bible lands." What can I say?

I must say something special about South Africa since I live in the land. Throughout my travels in Africa, there was one perception that everyone had about South Africa that was common of all people, local or Western. That perception was that they had a wrong perception of South Africa. Here is South Africa on a continent where all Africans think everybody in Africa is as they are. In my travels throughout Africa, I found few people who really understood the cultural and economic makeup of South Africa. I believe people understand America and Europe better than they understand South Africa. It is not only Western residents who are challenged in

understanding Africa as a whole, but most Africans do not understand South Africa on their own continent.

There are several areas of misunderstanding. One is in the area of politics. The rest of Africa is Third World. In such socio/economic environments, politics and politicians often control the countries with the African style of democracy, everything is controlled from the top. At least the economics of these countries follow the politicians and their particular and often peculiar policies. However, South Africa is a Second World country with a strong and growing industrial base. The industrial base, as in Europe and America, controls the politicians and politics. The politicians must follow the industry. The rest of Africa, therefore, thinks South Africa is led by the politicians. But this is not the case.

Another misconception is in the area of a colonial past. Most subSaharan African countries have had a long and strong colonial past. South Africa had little. Colonialism is not a common word used in reference to the past in South Africa. Colonial language is not used in reference to politics. If the word "colonial" is mentioned, one can be sure that the one who used the word in reference to South Africa does not know what he is saying. South Africa was a colonial possession for only a brief period of time in history, but that was over a century ago.

Another major difference is in the area of tribalism. One African brother asked me what tribe I worked with in South Africa. I could not answer the question. South Africans are South Africans first. This has been a strong reaction against their apartheid past. They are moving fast into the future in paying little attention to any tribal differences. They look at one another as Asians, Indians, coloureds and whites, with other groups also represented. Even these designations are passing out of use. But they do not see themselves as tribal. I found this difficult to explain to up Africa residents who understand what I say through a mind set of tribalism and colonialism.

To a great extent, South Africa is a small piece of Europe that unfortunately dangles at the bottom of a continent that does not understand it. It has been one of the most free countries of Africa. Even during the days of apartheid, there was more freedom among black South Africans than many of the communist/dictatorial countries to the north. But particularly today, freedom of press, freedom of expression, commercial radio broadcasting, and television are established cultural and legal rights that go unhindered. South Africa even has talk shows that blast this and that or whatever, including government. There are some excellent investigative reporters and media programs that dig up corruption wherever. Such a thing would be almost unheard of in many African countries. But when it comes to freedom, South African is years ahead of many of those countries who for years blasted it for its apart-

heid polices and sanctioned its economy. But now it is far ahead of those who blasted it for its apartheid practices in the past.

But all these freedoms make it difficult for Africans to understand South Africa. The strength and wealth of the economy make it impossible for the typical African to understand. South Africa has never been like any other African country. It never will be because no South African, black, white, brown, etc., ever wants South Africa to be like the typical African country to its north. All South Africa is working together hard in order that the country not be a nation with its hand held out for foreign aid. Both cultural reaction to apartheid and rejection of the course of many African countries has instilled within the typical South African citizen a desire never to go back and never to become like what they see in some countries to the north. At least for the foreseeable future, South Africa is on the right road. Ask again in fifty years if it has all worked out. I think it will.

Another interesting thing I have experienced in my African travels is that everyone wants to go to South Africa. There is enough knowledge up Africa about South Africa that people are curious about this country about which they have heard so many distorted stories. On any trip I make up Africa, people will ask how they can immigrate or get a job in South Africa. They want to go to school in South Africa. They want a job in South Africa. After a while, one feels a little guilty about living where every-

one else wants to go. At least one thing is apparent from all the desires to go to South Africa, people throughout the continent have a high regard for the misunderstood nation at the bottom of the continent. South Africans have a lot for which to be proud. They are the envy of the continent.

When it comes to the subject of African politics, Western thinkers will never understand what seems to be a hopeless conglomeration of political inconsistencies. And thus, to the Western mind, African politics is frustrating. Inconsistent. Hypocritical. Corrupt. It is just African. TIA. It can often be funny, but also brutal. If one is not cautious, he or she can become despondent about the African political theater if he views it through Western standards. It is good to remember the words of Elspeth Huxley, who stated the following in reference to African politics:

Politics, that is, in the narrow sense of polemics revolving round the issues of the day; in the wider sense, all the major events of history are, I suppose, rooted in political decisions made by conquerors and kings, by priests and parliaments, even by philosophers and scribes. But chronicles of dead and decided issues, however compelling in their day, are, save to professional historians, as stale as old cabbage leaves twenty, thirty, forty, years on (*Nine Face of Kenya*).

So Africa goes. TIA. Any evangelist who would work in Africa must develop an immunity to the nonsense of African politics. If you do not, you will develop the same despondency as so many Africans who are caught up in this field. Our concern as people of God is with principles, not politics.

We must remember that we serve a King of kings who is working all things together for good. We must stumble around and over the foes of Third World political decisions and capers in order to function in unstable countries that seem to be bent on self destruction. Sometimes things go well and up. Sometimes they go bad and down. Whichever way they go should make no difference to our mental attitude, for we serve a King who is Lord of lords and above every name on this earth. Our attitude is not controlled by the environment in which we dwell.

I have been asked on many occasions if a Christian can be a politician in Africa. My truthful answer to this question must be no. The political environment of Africa is a strong negative power against the moral principles of the Bible. African politics is full of corruption. I was once listening to a radio interview in reference to African politics several years ago. One of the South African politicians was being interviewed. The politician was trying to do his best as a new politician to serve the people. But he said, "People do not understand. Almost every day I am asked to do special favors for people." Add some financial

favors to the special requests and you can understand why it is difficult for politicians in Third World countries to remain honest. I suppose it is the same everywhere in the world. But in Africa, politicians cannot survive in a system that survives on corruption. One of our preachers in Ethiopia, who was the son

of a very influential judge, was asked by the political establishment to become involved in politics. He was told, "You can make a lot of money as a politician." So can a Christian survive in an African political environment? Only those brethren who have not been there would think they could.

Chapter 15

A Continent Of Opportunity

When discussions center around the receptivity of Africa and India, there are a host of stories. Some good, some not so good. One cannot say that all of Africa and India are receptive to the gospel. Africa is a diverse continent and India is a diverse nation. Africa is almost three times the size of America and India is over one billion people in population. The people of both Africa and India range in religion from one spectrum of hostility to Christianity to animistic people who have never heard of Christianity. Therefore, when one discusses the subject of the receptivity of the population, he or she must do some research. Nevertheless, when discussing the receptivity of central Africa in rural settings and rural India, there is usually a very receptive population for the harvest. There are some reasons for this.

Much of Africa, especially those past colonial countries, have developed a dependency attitude that is leftover from the colonial days which has been nurtured by the foreign aid days that con-

tinue. When a missionary comes to Africa, therefore, he or she becomes an immediate center of influence for resources, depending on whose side of the fence you are standing. Though this influence could be misused if the missionary had a desire to rule over people, the influence adds to the impact of the Western missionary in Africa. The influence is there, and can be directed toward right things. But it can also be a curse.

An American elder once asked me, "Does not the national church worker in Africa have greater influence than the Western missionary?" The answer to this question would probably be that the Western worker does have a greater influence in some areas because of who he is. My reason for saying this would be based on the fact that the typical Western missionary is foreign, educated, zealous, respected, aggressive, and back up with a host of resources. Because he is such, the Western evangelist can be very productive in mission outreach throughout the world. This has nothing to do with intellect. It is that the Western mis-

sionary has usually been trained for many years if he has been on the field for many years. Because of his education and experience, he is a great asset to the work. His effect on any given point of evangelism, therefore, is of great value to the growth of the church.

But I say the preceding in view of the fact that in the long run, the local evangelist is a very powerful worker for the Lord because he knows the territory. He knows the language, the people and their culture. I would add to this that fact that the average Third World evangelist, because of the nature of the hostile environment in which he lives, is far tougher than his counterpart from the West. He does not have to live in the nice urban centers in order to survive. He is out there on the front lines, fighting the battles for the Lord where the action is. Though the Western evangelist may have the high powered education and resources, the local Third World evangelist makes up for his lack of education and resources with pure dedication to work in the trenches where people need help.

Africa is a continent of people who are often as sheep without a shepherd. Every decade or two, many African countries go through a radical change, even to revolution and new constitutions. There is little stability in many regions of Africa. Or, we might say that stability is a static thing in Africa. Depending on how you look at it, this is one of the dynamics of the continent. But such makes the Africans' acceptance of the missionary very acute. In those areas

where the church is being initially established, the missionary adds a great stabilizing factor for new converts. There is someone upon whom local disciples can have security. Governments come and go. Evangelists come and go, but they bring and leave a Shepherd who is the same today, yesterday and tomorrow. In this sense, the foreign evangelist brings an example of depending on the Good Shepherd.

However, once the foreign evangelist leaves, it is the local church leader who brings the stability. The saying is in reference to African women, "When you marry an African woman, you join yourself to a rock." I think that could be said about most African church leaders. They are rocks of stability upon whom young disciples can depend in times of great struggle. Because of the often hostile environment in which some African leaders are born and reared, they are a unique rock of stability for the church.

Some of the dependency of the African on the foreign evangelist can be explained in the fact that the foreign evangelists represents some stability in all aspects of life. In the hostile environments in which Africans often live, their is at least one source of stability. This is the Western missionary. In many rural mission efforts this dependence on the missionary can be a tremendous burden. The missionary too often becomes the center of reference for counseling, for ambulance services, for resources, for all those things for which the African seeks to deliver himself from in his hostile environment. If you truly love to serve

tables, then set yourself up in a rural environment somewhere in rural Africa. Be sure to bring a large table.

There are a number of things I could carry on about that emphasizes the receptivity of Africa. Rural Africans are generally poor in comparison to Western standards, and the poor seem to always be more receptive than the self-sufficient. Africans are generally rural, and the rural generally have more time to think and talk about God than the activity oriented urbanite. Since Africa is greatly poor and rural, then it is very receptive. And it will be receptive for many years to come.

On the other hand, I would say something about urban Africa. It is my opinion that the typical African still cannot handle the multimillion populated urban city. His culture breaks down, and the tribal value system is not strong enough to cope with the stress and competition for survival that is necessary in city life. The African city, therefore, is often a scene of ghettos and crime, and thus, not as receptive as the rural setting. I experienced the same in the typical Latin American setting. Receptivity in large Latin and African cities is usually not what it is in the small rural towns and rural areas.

The rural areas of Africa are usually more traditional. Nevertheless, they are often very receptive in comparison to the one million plus urban centers. The rural areas of Africa will continue to be very receptive for years to come. It has been my experience throughout the world that the rural cultures are gener-

ally more receptive than large urban centers.

So what can one say about those big "Third World" cities with a million plus in population? Not much. It is hard to be positive about the metrovillage of Latin America and Africa. In Africa, they are so unAfrican. They are impersonal, but Africans by nature are relational. They are non-communal, but Africans were born out of a village community. They are competitive, but the African has always had things in common. They are centers that attack tradition, but Africans are very traditional. They do not promote cultural identification, but Africans know their tribal heritage. So it goes. It is the metrovillage in contrast to the village, two Africas on one continent. More than half of all Africans now dwell in the metrovillage. So here we are on a divided continent, a continent of people in which over half the population now dwells in urban centers that are difficult to evangelize.

It takes no serious study to understand the lack of receptivity in the metrovillage in comparison to the rural village. I visited about twenty major city centers on my 22,000 mile Seminar Safari in 1997 up through East Africa. Each of these cities had a population of 250,000 or more. I visited nine centers of one million or more. Without exception, the church was relatively small and struggling in these cities, though much work had been done in them for many years. Some churches had been in the cities for two or three decades, and yet, growth had long reach a plateau. Many

of the churches were sterile and small, holding their own in a city that was difficult to reach. There was little church planting going on in any of these cities at the end of the 1990's. After the missionaries left with their resources, church planting came to a halt. The building of church buildings ceased.

There were often large denominational single-celled churches in these cities. By "single-celled churches" I mean those churches that sprung up around a single personality. They were usually M & M churches, that is, churches that focused on "money" for the preacher and "miracles" for the adherents. However, these were often only single churches that were the result of a dynamic personality or colorful assembly centered around an entertainment session rather than worship. These churches were also sterile when it came to establishing other similar churches of their fellowship throughout the city. A church may have a thousand members, but this does not mean it is multiplying itself in planting other similar churches in the city. The problem with the single-celled churches was that they were unable to duplicate themselves beyond the single personality around whom they were centered.

I am not down on urban evangelism in Latin America or Africa or anywhere. I do believe that our failure to evangelize urban centers is the result of our Western concept of assembly. Unless Western missionaries change their methodology from large single assembly churches (all members assembling in the same place on Sunday morning) to mul-

ti-ple assembly churches (house churches throughout a city that composes the one city church), there will be no major change in church establishment in Third World urban centers. In order to do this, the Western missionary will have to sacrifice the traditional doctrine of church autonomy, which doctrine is strictly Western in origin and practice with no biblical foundation.

But there is another factor here. Many large urban centers have become very corrupt. Materialism works against spiritual dependency on God. People move to the city in order to advance the material side of life, not to become closer to God. Urban centers often break down cultural morals to the point that the cities become centers of crime. And God did call Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrah, for He had "given the cities over."

At least one principle is true. We will not evangelize most nations of the world by concentrating on the metroville. What I have found that is working in a phenomenal way in my travels through rural settings in the world are movements in church establish in villages and small towns. Towns of a few thousand that are population centers for rural areas are receptive. These towns have not yet lost their heart and they are in communion with the rural community they serve. Church planting in rural villages is going great. Evangelists are doing a phenomenal work in establishing masses of small groups from twenty-five to fifty throughout rural settings. There is no comparison between the receptivity of the rural village of Africa and the

metrovillage. The church establishment that is now going on in Africa and India is a movement that has no end. This growth is in a rural setting, and seems to have no end in making these areas of the world the centers of Christianity.

Should we write off or neglect the metrovillage? Certainly not! There are truth seekers in these centers who are searching. Though discouraged, God did tell Paul to stay in Corinth (At 18:9,10). Since these centers are so large and we are so few, it is difficult to find those who are receptive among the masses of population. I do believe, however, that we need to change our methods of assembly. If we do not, we will not evangelize the metrovillage. One thing is true about

how we have worked in the past in these centers and that is we have not worked too well. Unless we can change some things, as previously suggested, we will continue to have little results in the large urban centers of the world. We need a biblical definition of "church". In 2005 I published a book entitled *Authentic Church* that dealt specifically with this subject. The point of the book was that we cannot use Western methodologies to evangelize Third World urban centers. And, we cannot use Western exegetics of Scriptures to restore Christianity throughout the world. In order to evangelize the metrovillage, we must study the early beginnings of the church in Jerusalem. The answer is there.

Epilogue

The better I understand the overall nature of churches in Africa, the more certain characteristics concerning the regional character of church movements become apparent. Most missions have had over seventy-five years of mission experience in Africa. Churches have been established in different areas by different colors of religious orientation within the church. Almost every doctrinal shade of the Western church has had influence somewhere in missions in Africa. Instead of going into the issues of those who have established churches in Africa, I believe there are some apparent results from what has been established.

One characteristic concerning the nature of the growth of those churches that were established with a very legal

position on the part of the missionary is that those churches have stopped growing. When the inherent judgmental nature of the legalism of those who started these movements was implanted with a spirit of doctrinal suspicion, the movement itself was given a terminal disease. When brethren in the churches became suspicious of one another over petty issues, a self-destruct switch was thrown and the movements went into stalemate, and subsequently, death. In one situation the church had been started in the early sixties. But today there are only about fifty assemblies of this movement, and those fifty assemblies have not grown for some time. In another example I encountered, over two hundred assemblies were started in an area, but this number of assemblies has been the same

for the last decade and a half. The movement has stalemated. Those assemblies that were initially started with a legal oriented view of biblical interpretation, are assemblies that have long since stopped growing. Many are less in attendance than they were a decade ago.

When a legal oriented doctrinal system became the legacy of the church in any area, invariably the result was that the assemblies moved into a time of biting and devouring one another. The arguments in one area become so intense that a brother jumped up in a meeting and said to his opponents, "If I had a gun I would shoot you." Before we condemn this brother who behaved after the manner of the Pharisees who murdered Jesus on the cross, we must find the source of his religious behavior. I believe the source is in the legalistic religiosity that was implanted in the early establishment of the church in his area. An axiomatic truth in church establishment is that when legalistic behavior is established in the early converts, that legalism will eventually bear its fruit in the church biting and devouring itself in the years to come.

However, in those regions where the gospel of God's grace was thoroughly taught and freedom in Christ preached and practiced, there seems to be no end to the growth. Contrary to a spirit of legalism, these movements of the church seem to be vibrant and ongoing in evangelism. The fundamentals of the New Testament were initially and clearly taught, so the spirit of legalism was not bred into these movements from the very

beginning. Brethren were taught to accept one another instead of being suspicious of one another. One thing that helped in these movements was the behavior of the missionaries. They proclaimed in their lives a spirit of love and freedom in Christ. That spirit was adopted by the early converts, and thus handed down to the children.

Someone could probably do a lot of research on this point and give you a more scholarly approach. I am just relating to you what I have perceived in my experiences in Latin America, the West Indies and Africa. I say this because I was a good Pharisee in my younger days who planted my seeds of legalism, of which I have since repented. When I started witnessing the fruits of legalistic theologies, I began to question my approach to what God intended should be taken into all the world. He intended that the gospel of grace and truth go forth to every nation, not a legal outline of church doctrine. If you do not know what I mean, you are probably part of the problem. My observation has been that those movements that were given the spirit of saving the lost instead of saving the saved, are now growing. The others are dying. Any perspective missionary, therefore, should judge whether he will sow the needs of legalism or the spirit of freedom in Christ.

One reason why the spirit of freedom in Christ is so appealing to the African is that he has lived for centuries under the bondage of superstition and fear. He grew up in a culture of looking over his shoulder for some curse or violation of

tradition. Denominationalism just brought a new set of traditions and religious codes. When the grace of God was presented, there was an appeal for deliverance from fear and intimidation. There was an appeal from the confines of denominational traditions and religious codes. The grace of God brought freedom to the captives. And the captives have been freed from the past in order to come into the perfect law of liberty in Christ.

There is another overwhelming opportunity that is playing itself out in the religious scene on the African continent. When the colonial governments began releasing African nations to their own constitutional democracies, something also changed in the religious environment of Africa. The colonial missionary societies were also rejected by the Africans as governing authorities. Subsequently, an African independent church movement began in the 1950's and 1960's. Africans wanted to do their own thing without asking permission from the missionaries. What started over half a century ago has now grown into a tremendous movement across Africa with the establishment of thousands upon thousands of African independent churches.

There are advantages and disadvantages to this ongoing movement. Though Bible teaching had been on the continent for two centuries before the beginning of the movement, there was a great deal of syncretism that took place with the African independent church movement in its initial birth and throughout its

growth. Old African spirits were mixed with what was considered the work of the Spirit, and what resulted was a religion that was a mixture of spirits and the Spirit, though the Spirit had nothing to do with it. But after fifty years of this amalgamated religiosity, the adherents have become weary of all the frenzy religiosity and have started to settle down and study the Bible. Sobriety has entered the behavior of many, and thus an atmosphere for objective Bible study has now become more common.

We are continually contacted by African independent churches who want Bible study material. Many have exhausted themselves with colorful assemblies, but now realize that they must go to the word of God. And believe it or not, many of the Bible schools of these churches are using Bible-based curriculums to train their preachers. There is a great door opening as sincere men seek to study themselves to biblical maturity and authority. I see this as a new restoration that God is developing to take the gospel into all Africa. I think God is saying to the Israel of God, "Not all who are Israel are of Israel." Do you understand what I mean?

When churches that have functioned independently for so long are now looking for connectivity with others, it is not a time to remain in our own cocoon of sectarian denominationality. It is a time to reach out to those who want to be connected. And it is Jesus who will connect us, and it is His word that will weld us together.