

**THE NEW  
TESTAMENT  
MISSIONARY**

*A Biblical Study of Missions*

# THE NEW TESTAMENT MISSIONARY

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By  
Cliff Hellar

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## Table of Contents

Foreword.....	9
Introduction.....	13
Chapter 1: The Missionary Call.....	20
1. The Example of Christ.....	21
2. The Example of Paul.....	21
3. Separation of Workers.....	24
a. The Direct Call of the Spirit to the Person.....	24
b. The Indirect Call Through the Church.....	24
4. Inferences of the Call.....	29
5. The Call Is for Life and Is Irrevocable.....	30
Chapter 2: Finance.....	32
1. A Major Consideration Today But Not Emphasized by the Apostles. Reasons for This. ....	32
2. Christ's Example.....	35
3. Paul's Attitude.....	36
4. Seeking Support.....	39
5. Setting Missionary Allowances.....	41
A Missionary's Letter.....	41
6. The Influence of Money.....	43
7. Watchman Nee on Finance.....	45
Chapter 3: Language Learning.....	49
1. Its Importance.....	49
2. Disadvantages of Not Knowing the Language.....	52
a. In Preaching.....	52
b. In the Missionary's Relations With the People.....	54
c. In the Missionary's Relationship With the Believers.....	55
Chapter 4: Translation.....	57
1. The Overwhelming Task.....	57
2. Its Reward and Honor.....	57
3. The Checking and Correction of a Translation.....	59

Chapter 5: Preaching .....	61
1. Its Preeminence .....	61
2. The Command To Preach, and Examples .....	63
3. Includes Warnings, Invitations, and Exhortations ..	64
4. Are the Unsaved To Be Directed To Pray? .....	66
a. The Sin of Prayerlessness .....	66
b. The Use of Means .....	67
c. Scriptural Commands To Pray .....	67
d. Can the Unsaved Pray? .....	68
e. Why Should the Ungodly Pray? .....	68
5. The Condition of Those to Whom We Preach .....	71
6. The Content of Preaching .....	73
a. The Law .....	74
b. The Gospel .....	75
(1) Its Author .....	75
(2) Its Subject .....	76
(3) Its Tense .....	77
(4) Its Foundation .....	78
(5) Its Promise .....	81
(6) Its Necessity .....	86
c. The Basic Doctrines .....	89
d. Its Urgency .....	89
e. Saving Faith .....	92
(1) Includes the Lordship of Christ .....	92
(2) The Necessity of Discipleship .....	94
f. Easy-believism .....	96
7. The Mode of Preaching .....	98
a. With Authority .....	98
b. In Simplicity .....	100
Use of Parables .....	102
c. Timely .....	103
d. With Faith .....	105
e. In Love .....	108
8. The End of Preaching .....	110
9. Shaking Off the Dust .....	112

Chapter 6: Mission Activities and Institutional Work . . .	115
1. The One Work of the Apostles . . . . .	115
2. The Objective: Church Planting . . . . .	118
3. Cooperation Among Church Planters . . . . .	122
4. The Local Churches . . . . .	124
5. Unity of the Churches . . . . .	129
Chapter 7: The Indigenous Church . . . . .	132
The Believers Need Encouragement and Authority To:	
1. Hold Their Own Meetings . . . . .	133
2. Preach and Teach . . . . .	135
3. Baptize and Admit Into the Local Church . . . . .	138
4. Give Communion . . . . .	143
5. Collect the Offering . . . . .	145
6. Observe the Lord's Day . . . . .	146
7. Discipline . . . . .	146
8. Ordain and Appoint to Ministry . . . . .	148
9. Control Their Own Finances . . . . .	149
Chapter 8: Leadership in the Churches . . . . .	153
1. Leadership in the Churches Is To Be Given to Local Men . . . . .	153
2. The Evils of Bringing Leadership in From the Outside . . . . .	156
3. Qualifications of Elders . . . . .	158
4. Laying On of Hands . . . . .	162
5. Plurality of Elders . . . . .	163
Chapter 9: Training in the Local Church . . . . .	168
1. The Negative Effect of Institutions . . . . .	168
2. Eighteen Advantages of Training in the Local Church . . . . .	170
3. Discipleship—the Training of Church Workers . . .	179
Chapter 10: Further Ministry of the Missionary . . . . .	187
1. Literacy . . . . .	187
2. Evangelism . . . . .	188
3. Vision for New Areas . . . . .	188
4. Missionary Work: Going, Not Staying . . . . .	188

Chapter 11: Field Leadership.....	193
1. The Necessity for Field Leadership.....	193
a. To Give Order.....	193
b. To Orient and Train New Missionaries.....	193
c. To Guide to a Field of Labor.....	194
d. To Coordinate the Work.....	196
e. To Strengthen Unity.....	197
2. The New Testament Pattern.....	197
3. Authority: Official and Spiritual.....	199
Chapter 12: Causes of Our Failure.....	201
1. Pride.....	201
2. We Have Taught Them To Depend On Us.....	202
3. We Have Lacked Faith.....	205
Chapter 13: Missionary Retirement.....	207
The Missionary Can Retire By:	
1. Associating the People With Himself.....	209
2. Retiring.....	209
a. By Leaving Things in Their Hands.....	209
b. By Leaving the Work for Periods of Time.....	210
3. The Experience of a Missionary.....	210
Chapter 14: Conclusion: The Work and Its Completion .	216
1. The Work.....	216
2. Its Priority.....	217
3. Its Completion.....	219
4. The Final Result.....	220

## Foreword

Why a book on missions? In the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8), believers are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, but not all have the special calling, burden, and gifts of a missionary. It really does take a call from God to willingly give up so much and wholly devote oneself to a life of evangelism, discipleship, self-denial, faith, and love for the never-dying souls of men.

Few have the heart, faith, and patience necessary to attempt this work without the call of God. Furthermore, the task of a missionary becomes even more difficult and fruitless when it is not undertaken from a purely *Biblical* standpoint. When one considers the dropout rate of missionaries (I've heard that it is as high as 50 percent, or higher in some cases), it becomes clear that there are serious weaknesses in the way in which missionaries are called and prepared for their work. The survival rate would increase dramatically if one were to use scriptural standards in determining his call, training for the work, waiting on his ministry, nurturing his character, counting the cost, overcoming trials, and obtaining finances.

Missionaries who use mostly non-scriptural techniques in their labors invariably generate mostly chaff. To stick with a Biblical blueprint for missions for the duration of one's ministry will allow him to say as Paul to the Corinthians, "Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:3). The apostle Paul did not rely on human means and techniques in the work of church planting, but by the power of the Spirit, "living epistles" were brought forth as he applied the Bible's

axioms to his every effort. Paul established a genuine work of God that would endure the attacks of the enemy who exploited every area of weakness in seeking the church's destruction, but would not prevail because it was established by Biblical means upon Jesus Christ, the only Foundation (1 Cor. 3:11). To the end of his life Paul would not deviate from the Bible's method of ministry, and therefore could say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

Cliff and Martie Hellar have been missionaries to Papua New Guinea for over 45 years, and upon Biblical principles they launched out in obedience to the missionary call. I have known them since 1983, and, as one who has observed their ministry for many years I've often thought to myself, "Now if ever there was a model missionary, they are it." I need no missionary magazine to herald their accomplishments, no statistics to track their activities, no slide presentations to stir up interest in their work. Not that some of these things are wrong. Some of the most useful missionaries in the Lord's service have used them. But Cliff and Martie always seemed to be cut out of a different cloth.

I greatly respect the Hellars' approach to missions. It is simple: they devote themselves to the *fundamentals* of the work. They learned the language, preached, witnessed, disciplined, evangelized, studied, translated, trained, supplicated, interceded, shepherded, waited, planted, and watered, for over 45 years. The results were that many trusted in Christ as Lord and Saviour, numerous churches were established, and the Scriptures were translated into the native vernacular. They gave themselves to the very core of missionary activity: First, they walk with God; second, they concentrate on the *spiritual nature* of the work or "the fundamentals"; third, they maintain

a clear conscience; fourth, they trust only in God to produce spiritual fruit and provide financial resources. Add to this the fact that, at the beginning, they walked away from a comfortable living; raised four children; manifested a level of dedication, persistence, humility, and sacrifice rarely seen; overcame hardships, conflicts, pressures, discouragements, health problems, interruptions, and setbacks, we conclude that they have accomplished no small feat. In fact, the Hellar's missionary legacy and example are so rare that only the grace of God could have done it. Of course, they would be the first to ascribe it all to the grace and mercy of God, and give Him all the glory. In typical Hellar fashion they would disown their labors and cast them at the feet of Christ, confessing, "We are at best unprofitable servants."

Yet it is this complete losing of one's self to perform God's perfect will that provides the aspiring missionary a glimpse into the Hellars' usefulness in the Lord's service. In the face of critics, doubters, and detractors, and seemingly alone, William Carey, Adoniram Judson, David Brainerd, and Hudson Taylor, would have never achieved such amazing missionary exploits had it not been for the entire renunciation of their wills to the will of God. L. R. Shelton, Jr., a saintly pastor and friend, once said to me, "Brother Joe, the way up is down." It is the most succinct definition of dying to self that I ever heard. "For My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9).

The little volume before you is summed up in three words: Biblical, spiritual, and fundamental. Therefore, if you would benefit from its reading, (1) determine that your teaching and methods will come exclusively from the *Bible*; (2) give God no rest until *spiritual* fruit is brought forth; and (3) concentrate on the spiritual *fundamentals* of the work. If you would produce "fruit," "more fruit," and "much fruit"

(John 15:1, 2, 5), then apply the scriptural principles of New Testament missions that the author discusses in this work.

The subtitle: “A Biblical Study of New Testament Missions” does not suggest that you are reading a textbook. On the contrary, the truths contained herein must be *prayed in* more than memorized. There are some things that only the Holy Spirit can teach. Therefore, do not rely disproportionately on a principlized learning process unadorned by the Spirit’s application to your heart. Take what you learn to the throne of grace and bake it in thorough supplication in the Spirit. These truths must be integrated into your psyche and person and become part of you, as they have of the author. This book was not written by a young man, but by a journeyman missionary, now an elder statesman, who learned its truths on his knees, in the school of Christ, and through many dangers, toils, and snares.

There are comparatively few books on missions that strike the balance of the doctrinal, practical, and experiential, without embellishing the content to present a more polished product. The material in this book is by no means exhaustive. It is a distillation of the heart and soul of New Testament Missions from someone who has depended upon God to create, sustain, and increase a divine work, which is impossible for the flesh to do, and to provide for this same work.

To the missionary in the field and to the missionary candidate, with such scanty material available on missions, I’m sure you will notice the value of this book not long into its reading. To the pastor and believer, though you may not be called to the foreign mission field, there is nevertheless much material herein that will benefit you in evangelistic work. I commend it highly with the hope that a harvest of souls will be reaped in your ministry from the application of its truths in your life.

Joseph M. Jacowitz  
June, 2006

## Introduction

Many years ago I went to a weekend retreat that Inter Varsity sponsored. Most of us who attended had finished our university education and had begun work in our various professions. It was meant to be a missionary conference to bring before us at an opportune time in our young lives Christ's command to evangelize the world. On the book table was a book with an intriguing title that caught my eye. It was *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* by Roland Allen. At the time I was not seriously considering missionary service, but I bought the book. It opened up an area that I was completely ignorant of. I was fascinated. I knew nothing of missionary methods, but Roland Allen convinced me that present day missionary methods were ours and not Paul's, and so not according to the Word. I quite seriously thought, "If the Word of God was followed by missionaries rather than tradition, God would bless their work. If I were a missionary I would want to follow Paul's methods." It is now 44 years since my wife and I left the U.S. for missionary service. I no longer have that particular book since I passed it on to others. However, I still read Roland Allen's book with much profit. I often quote him, as you will discover. Roland Allen was a Church of England missionary. He was a High Churchman. Thus he uses words such as "catechist," "priest," "bishop" differently than I would since he puts a different emphasis on the ministry and sacraments. These things I bypass, but he is still most helpful, for as it says in the foreword to his book, "the essential thing that Allen was concerned about—the resubmission in each generation of the traditions of men to the Word and Spirit of God," is the essential thing that we, too,

should be concerned about. I also quote from a companion volume of his entitled, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It* and a third volume of his *The Ministry of the Spirit*.

Another writer whom I quote is Watchman Nee. He was Chinese and was used greatly, with his fellow workers, in planting numerous indigenous churches throughout China, Taiwan, and other countries in the Far East. Once again, I do not hold to all of Watchman Nee's doctrine, but his teaching on planting local churches and the various truths associated with missionary endeavor are living and vital. His experience was immense, and I believe he was taught of God. He writes in the preface of his book, *The Normal Christian Church Life*,

The book is not intended for anyone and everyone. It is for those who feel their responsibility in the Lord's service. But more than this, it is for such as honestly and truly mean business for God, for those whose hearts are open, who have no padlocked mind or prejudices. The book may test one's sincerity and honesty to no small degree, but I believe the Lord has shown something which is of importance to the whole body of Christ.

The whole matter will grow upon the reader and become clearer with relaxed contemplation after the first reading. The door must not be closed with a snap of "Impossible!" or "Ideal, but not practical!" By prayerful openness of heart, without argument or discussion, the Spirit of truth should be given a chance, and then what is of Him will cause all our natural reactions to die away, and we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. What is set forth in these pages is no mere theory or teaching, but something we have actually tested in actual practice.

One of the prayers I have offered in connection with this book is that the Lord should keep it from

those who oppose and would use it as a chart for attack, and also from those who agree and would use it as a manual for service. I dread the latter far more than the former.

A third man I quote is Alexander Hay. He was General Superintendent of the New Testament Missionary Union. His book is entitled, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*. He writes in his preface,

We do not offer this study as a textbook, but simply as a statement of the experiences and guidance which the Lord has given. The only authoritative and complete textbook on church order and missionary procedure is God's Word. Our desire is to point to that Word.

So you have me often quoting from these three men. I think I say little that is original with me. These three men were all experienced missionaries, an Englishman, a Chinaman, and a Scotsman. They have something to tell us. They all warn and caution us about wrongly applying their writings. Nee writes in his introduction,

May I stress the fact that this is not a book on missionary methods. Methods are not to be despised, but in God's service what matters most is the man, not his methods. Unless the man is right, right methods will be of no use to him or his work. Carnal methods are suited to carnal men, and spiritual methods to spiritual men. For carnal men to employ spiritual methods will only result in confusion and failure. This book is intended for those who, having learned something of the Cross, know the corruption of human nature and seek to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Its object is to help those who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in all things and are seeking to serve Him in the

way of His own appointment, not of their own choosing. May none of my readers use this book as a basis for external adjustments in their work, without letting the Cross deal drastically with their natural life.

In God's work everything depends upon the kind of worker sent out and the kind of convert produced. On the part of the convert, a real Holy Spirit new birth is essential, and a vital relationship with God. On the part of the worker, besides personal holiness and enduement for service, it is essential that he have an experimental knowledge of the meaning of committal to God and faith in His sovereign Providence; otherwise, no matter how scriptural the methods employed, the result will be emptiness and defeat."

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin writes in the foreword of *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*

Perhaps one word in the title of the present work is unfortunate—the word "Methods." If anyone thinks that he will find here a "method" which can forthwith be "applied," he is in for trouble. Allen's own understanding of what he was doing is well conveyed by the following words written in 1932 after visiting mission work in East Africa: "I never ask anyone to do anything, and consequently I do not get a 'yes' or 'no.' I say what seems to be obviously true, but they do not know what to do about it. One day someone will see what action is demanded, and perhaps screw up his courage to take it. If I were out to organize and lead, that would be different, but as you well know I long ago determined that that was not the way of the Spirit for me. . . . All I can say is 'This is the way of Christ and the Apostles.' If any man answers, 'That

is out of date,' or 'Times have changed' . . . I can only repeat 'This is the way of Christ and the Apostles,' and leave him to face that issue."

The essential thing that Allen was concerned about was the re-submission in each generation of the traditions of men to the Word and Spirit of God. On the other hand, I have heard of mission boards which decided to "apply" Allen's methods, and proceeded to issue instructions to "the field" accordingly. The result could only be disaster. There are no "methods" here which will "work" if they are "applied." There is a summons to everyone who will hear to submit inherited patterns of church life to the searching scrutiny of the Spirit.

Hay writes in the preface to his book,

Considerable attention is given in this study to the spiritual principles involved. We have found that it is imperative to do so. The New Testament method is as dead as any other method if it is applied without the guidance and power of the Spirit Who alone gives it life. It is really not a method but a spiritual order—the order in which Christ wishes to carry on His work through the Church by the power of His Spirit.

As you can see, each man emphasizes the same thing: the great need of the Spirit, for without Him we can do nothing. We need His power. If in lesser things or endeavors we cannot do without Him, how much less can we do without Him in this overwhelming task of the gospel to every creature? Even the great Paul was made to cry, "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" (2 Cor. 2:16). May no one despise any of these men because they are not of their part of the church or because of some of their views. We should be open to learn from all of God's people by testing all things and holding fast

to what is true. We all have much to learn, and who among us knows all things as he ought to know? I often feel like I am just beginning.

Much of what I have written uses Paul as an example for missionary work. The Holy Spirit has made Paul an example to the church for all ages. His life is a pattern for all Christians everywhere. This is insisted on in 1 Corinthians 4:16, "*Therefore I urge you, imitate me*"; 1 Corinthians 11:1, "*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ*"; Philippians 3:17, "*Brethren, join in following my example*"; and 1 Thessalonians 1:6, "*And you became followers of us and of the Lord*" where the Thessalonians are commended for imitating Paul and his associates and again in 2 Thessalonians 3:7, "*For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us.*" Paul is the preeminent scriptural example of a missionary doing missionary work.

I think everyone agrees that Paul is an example for us to follow, but it is often objected that because Paul was unusual and an exceptional man he cannot be an example for missionary work or methods today. My answers to this argument are:

1. Paul was not the only one who used the methods that he did for evangelism and church planting. His work followed Christ's. Those with him in the work used the same methods and principles even though they were lesser men. In fact, his principles have been followed in all ages and in many places and diverse conditions.

2. The fact that Paul was an exceptional man endowed with extraordinary power and wisdom does not nullify his example, but rather makes him the supreme example for missionaries. In all walks of life it isn't the mediocre man who is studied and followed. It is the great masters who are imitated and followed whether in the art world, music world, political world, engineering world, etc. Do we say that such masters are not to be followed because of their genius or that they are not to be imitated because they lived in another age?

3. Paul's principles and methods were of the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts is often called not only the Acts of the Apostles, but the Acts of the Holy Spirit, and so it is. It begins with Pentecost and the outpouring of the Spirit. The work of the apostles was the direct result of the Spirit working through them. I count 55 references to the Holy Spirit in Acts. After quoting many passages from Acts on the Holy Spirit, Roland Allen writes,

The many passages quoted above show that St. Luke in the Acts is speaking mostly of the spread of the gospel in the world and therefore points out how the Holy Spirit at crucial moments directed the minds and actions of the apostles to that end. He is writing of the Holy Spirit primarily as the dictator and inspirer of missionary work (*The Ministry of the Spirit*, p. 20).

I think there is no question that the missionary work was directed by the Holy Spirit. Thus, Paul's work, methods, and principles were directed and inspired by the Holy Spirit. As Roland Allen writes, "We must acknowledge that there is in his work that quality of universality" (*Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, p. 5).

4. Finally, if Paul's work, methods and principles which are gleaned from Acts and his epistles are not for present day missionaries to follow what are we to follow? We are lost!

## CHAPTER 1

### **The Missionary Call**

To do God's work, a man must be called of God. It is God's work, and He is the One who chooses His laborers. The initiative lies with God, not with man. He does not look for volunteers. No doubt He wants willing men, but the Originator of all divine work is God Himself. He conscripts His servants.

We see this principle in the calling of Moses (Exod. 3:10-12) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-19). Neither man sought the work. But once the call came, the promise was sure to Moses, "*I will certainly be with you*" (Exod. 3:12); and to Jeremiah, "*They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you to deliver you*" (Jer. 1:19). A called man has such promises to rely on.

On the other hand an unsent man has no authority and will not be useful or fruitful, "*. . . I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,' says the Lord*" (Jer. 23:32). Intrusion into the priesthood in Old Testament times brought the death penalty. "*I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death*" (Num. 18:7). King Uzziah is a terrible warning (see 2 Chron. 26:16-21).

Quesnel's comment on Ephesians 3:2 and Colossians 1:1 quoted by Bridges in *The Christian Ministry*, p. 90, is good:

The ministry is a matter of pure grace and favor; who then will dare to enter it without a divine call? There is nothing in which a king would willingly be more absolute than in the choice of his ministers. And shall we dare to contest, and take away this right from the King of kings?

## 1. The Example of Christ

Even Christ, the great Head of the church, did not appoint Himself. In Hebrews speaking of the priesthood we read, *“And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ As He also says in another place, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’”* (Heb. 5:4-6).

Another key word that is used to point to God as the controlling influence upon His servants is the word “sent.” Christ referred to Himself again and again as *“He whom God has sent.”* He often referred to God as *“the one who sent me.”* Christ did not appoint Himself or come on His own initiative. Rather He was sent. Christ emphasized this again and again to prove His credentials, *“I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me”* (John 8:42).

## 2. The Example of Paul

Paul described himself as *“called to be an apostle”* or *“a called apostle”* (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1). He doesn’t mean men called him an apostle, but rather he was appointed an apostle by God. He wrote, *“God called me”* (Gal. 1:15).

This internal call is God’s call given through the Holy Spirit. There is also what the early writers and Puritans termed the external call. The external call is a commission by the church that confirms God’s internal call. Quesnel writes on 2 Corinthians 1:1 and Galatians 1:1, *“He (Paul) is never weary of inculcating on us this truth—that the will of God is the sole rule of any man’s call, and the only gate by which he can enter the Ministry. The Mission is divine in its fountain and institution—human in its channel and way of communication”* (Quoted by Bridges in *The Christian Ministry*, p. 92).

This external call by the prophets and teachers confirmed God's direct call. Barnabas and Saul had already been called by the Holy Spirit, but He confirmed this call by speaking to the prophets and teachers at Antioch, "*Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them*" (Acts 13:2).

I give a lengthy quote from *The Normal Christian Church Life* by Watchman Nee, pp. 26-28,

It was to the divine call they responded, not to the call of human need. They had heard no reports of man-eaters or head-hunting savages. Their compassions had not been stirred by doleful tales of child-marriage, or foot-binding or opium smoking. They had heard no voice but the voice of the Spirit; they had seen no claims but the claims of Christ. No appeal had been made to their natural heroism or love of adventure. They knew only one appeal—the appeal of their Lord. It was the Lordship of Christ that claimed their service, and it was on His authority alone that they went forth. Their call was a spiritual call. No natural factor entered into it. It was the Holy Spirit who said, "*Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*" All spiritual work must begin with the Spirit's call. All divine work must be divinely initiated. The plan conceived for the work may be splendid, the reason adequate, the need urgent, and the man chosen to carry it out may be eminently suitable; but if the Holy Spirit has not said, "Separate me that man for the work to which I have called him," he can never be an apostle. He may be a prophet or a teacher, but he is no apostle. God desires the service of His children, but He makes conscripts, He wants no volunteers. The work is His, and He is its only legitimate Originator. Human intention, however good, can

never take the place of divine initiation. Earnest desires for the salvation of sinners or the edification of saints will never qualify a man for God's work. One qualification, and only one, is necessary—God must send him.

It was the Holy Spirit who said, "*Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*" Only the divine call can qualify for the apostolic office. The tragedy in Christian work today is that so many of the workers have simply gone out; they have not been sent. Personal desire, friendly persuasions, the advice of one's elders and the urge of opportunity—all these are factors on the natural plane, and they can never take the place of a spiritual call. That is something which must be registered in the human spirit by the Spirit of God. When Barnabas and Saul were sent forth, the Spirit first called them, then the brethren confirmed the call. The brethren may say you have a call, and circumstances may seem to indicate it, but the question is, have you yourself heard the call? If you are to go forth, then you are the one who must first hear the voice of the Spirit. We dare not disregard the opinion of the brethren, but their opinion is no substitute for a personal call from God.

If God desires the service of any child of His, He Himself will call him to it, and He Himself will send him forth. The first requirement in divine work is a divine call. Everything hinges on this. A divine call gives God His rightful place, for it recognizes Him as the Originator of the work. Where there is no call from God, the work undertaken is not of divine origin, and it has no spiritual value. Divine work must be divinely initiated. A worker may be called directly by the Spirit, or indirectly through the reading of the Word, through preaching, or

through circumstances; but whatever means God may use to make His will known to man, His voice must be the one heard through every other voice; He must be the One who speaks, no matter through what instrument the call may come. We must never be independent of the other members of the Body, but we must never forget that we receive all our directions from the Head.

### 3. Separation of Workers

Yes, it was the Holy Spirit who called Barnabas and Saul, but He said to the other prophets and teachers as well as to them, "*Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*" The Holy Spirit spoke directly to the apostles, but He also spoke indirectly through the prophets and teachers. What was said privately to the two was confirmed publicly through the other three. All apostles must have a personal revelation of God's will, but to make that alone the basis of their going forth is not sufficient. On the one hand the opinion of others, however spiritual and however experienced, can never be a substitute for a direct call from God. On the other hand, a personal call, however definite, requires the confirmation of the representative members of the Body of Christ in the locality from which the workers go out.

And here was the result—"*When they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away*" (Acts 13:3). The setting apart of the apostles by the prophets and teachers followed the call which came to them from the Spirit. The call was personal, the separation was corporate; and the one was not complete without the other. A direct call from God, and a confirmation of that call in the setting apart of the called ones by the

prophets and teachers, is God's provision against freelancing in His service.

The calling of an apostle is the Holy Spirit speaking directly to the one called. The separating of an apostle is the Holy Spirit speaking indirectly through the fellow-workers of the called one. It is the Holy Spirit who takes the initiative both in the calling and the separation of workers. Therefore if the representative brethren of any assembly set men apart for the service of the Lord, they must ask themselves, Are we doing this on our own initiative, or as representing the Spirit of God? They must be able to say of every worker they send forth, he was sent out by the Holy Spirit, not by man. No separation of workers should be done hastily or lightly. It was for this reason that fasting and prayer preceded the sending forth of Barnabas and Saul.

As regards all sent ones, they must pay attention to these two aspects in their separation for the service of God. On the one hand there must be a direct call from God and a personal recognition of that call. On the other hand there must be a confirmation of that call by the representative members of the Body of Christ. And as regards all who are responsible for the sending forth of others, they must on the one hand be in a position to receive the revelation of the Spirit and to discern the mind of the Lord; on the other hand they must be able to enter sympathetically into the experience of those whom they, as the representative members of the Body of Christ, send forth in the Name of the Lord. The principle that governed the sending forth of the first apostles still governs the sending forth of all workers who are truly appointed by the Spirit to the work of God.

The old writers gave two further requisites as regards the call to the work. These were a desire and a fitness for the work. Again quoting from Bridges:

The desire of the work was a prominent feature in the ministerial character and qualifications of Christ. While in the bosom of the Father, and in the anticipation of His work, "*His delights were with the sons of men.*" "*When He cometh into the world,*" for the accomplishment of His work, the same earnest desire distinguished Him. On one occasion of bodily need, He told His disciples, that "he had meat to eat that they knew not of"; bidding them to understand, that His delight in His Father's work was to Him "more than His necessary food." The Apostle strongly marks a constraining desire as a primary ministerial qualification; something far beyond the general Christian desire to promote the glory of God—a special kindling within—in character, if not in intensity, like "*the burning fire shut up*" in the prophet's bosom, and overcoming his determination to go back from the service of his God. This constraint rises above all difficulties, takes pleasure in sacrifices for the work's sake, and quickens to a readiness of mind, that (were it not restrained by conscious unfitness and unworthiness) would savor of presumption. The sense of defilement almost shuts the mouth; but the sense of mercy fills the heart, and it "cannot stay." The work is more desirable than the highest earthly honors; so that, even under the most desponding anticipations it cannot be relinquished. This desire will be most enlivening, when the mind is most spiritual, and will connect the communication of the blessing, with ardent prayers for a large reciprocal benefit" (Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, pp. 94, 95).

However, this desire is sometimes not present in the hearts of those receiving a genuine call of God. In fact, because the desire was not in some of the men receiving the call, it greatly illuminated and brought into prominence the truth that the call was of God, according to His will and not the will of the men receiving the call.

Neither Moses, Jeremiah, or Paul sought or desired the call. Moses opposed his call by saying, "*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?*" After the Lord met this objection by the promise, "*I will certainly be with you,*" Moses continued to give many objections (see Exodus chapters 3 and 4). The Lord graciously answered each objection, but Moses finally replied, "*'O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send,' so the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses*" (Exod. 4:13, 14). Moses did not have a desire for the work. Neither did Jeremiah. He, too, gave objections (Jer. 1:4-10).

Often the call begins, as it did with me, as a feeling of uneasiness. Am I in God's will? Is He leading me into a work for Him? Although I did not want to leave the profession I was in, being quite content with it and its future opportunities, the Lord brought pressure to bear and through His providence opened a new way for me to move and drew me toward His service. I preferred not to move and leave my comfortable, pleasing situation. Yet I was constrained. The call came, unsought and even undesired. Later I did cry out, "*Here am I, Lord, send me,*" but it was not so at the beginning. I am ashamed to say that I was very reluctant.

Lloyd-Jones writes in *Preaching and Preachers*, pp. 104, 105,

A call generally starts in the form of a consciousness within one's own spirit, an awareness of

a kind of pressure being brought to bear upon one's spirit, some disturbance in the realm of the spirit, then that your mind is being directed to the whole question of preaching. You have not thought of it deliberately, you have not sat down in cold blood to consider possibilities, and then, having looked at several, have decided to take this up. It is not that. This is something that happens to you; it is something you become aware of rather than what you do. It is thrust upon you, it is presented to you and almost forced upon you constantly in this way.

There should also be a sense of constraint. This is surely the most crucial test. It means that you have the feeling that you can do nothing else. It was Mr. Spurgeon, I believe, who used to say to young men—"If you can do anything else, do it. If you can stay out of the ministry, stay out of the ministry." I would certainly say that without any hesitation whatsoever. I would say that the only man who is called to preach is the man who cannot do anything else, in the sense that he is not satisfied with anything else. This call to preach is so put upon him, and such pressure comes to bear upon him that he says, "I can do nothing else, I must preach."

Or let me put it like this—and I am speaking from personal experience. You are certain of the call when you are unable to keep it back and to resist it. You try your utmost to do so. You say, "No, I shall go on with what I am doing; I am able to do it, and it is good work." You do your utmost to push back and to rid yourself of this disturbance in your spirit which comes in these various ways. But you reach the point when you cannot do so any longer. It almost becomes an obsession, and so overwhelming that in the end you say, "I can do nothing else; I cannot resist any longer."

#### 4. Inferences of the Call

If a man comes to the field without the assurance of a call it is almost certain that when the trials and difficulties of the work mount up, he will wonder if he is where he should be, and whether he is in God's will. Such a man will have nothing to hold on to. Charles Bridges writes,

To labor in the dark, without an assured commission, greatly obscures the warrant of faith in the Divine engagements; and the minister, unable to avail himself of heavenly support, feels his "*hands hang down, and his knees feeble*" in his work. On the other hand, the confidence that he is acting in obedience to the call of God—that he is in His work, and in His way—nerves him in the midst of all difficulty, and under a sense of his responsible obligations, with almighty strength (Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, p. 101).

If a man has been called of God and this call has been confirmed by the church, he will stand on firm ground. Elders, who were assured of God's call of me and of my qualifications for the work, laid their hands on me, commissioning me to the work. The assurance of these godly men has reinforced God's call to me and strengthened me in difficult times. Let a man be fully assured of God's call, and he will not be readily shaken.

Paul's last letter was written to Timothy while Paul was languishing in prison. His labors are over, and he can write triumphantly, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race*" (2 Tim. 4:7). Paul was soon to be martyred, and the great task was to be passed on to young, timid Timothy, who was often sick. No doubt the task overwhelmed Timothy and filled him with fear. Paul in the first chapter writes of a number of things to strengthen him. Not least, he reminded him of

his call to the work and the “*laying on of my hands*” (v. 6), telling him to stir up the gift of God which he received at that time. We don’t know exactly what this gift (charisma) was, but no doubt it was an empowering for the work of the ministry. Possibly it was the gift of an evangelist that Paul urged him to, “*do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry*” (4:5). A. Plummer thought it was “the authority and power to be a minister of Christ” (Plummer on 2 Timothy, p. 314).

Since God had called Timothy to a daunting task, He had endowed him with the necessary power and authority to do it. What a great encouragement this is to those who know their call. Such can justly reason from their call that God has given them power and ability to fulfill that call. Surely God equips all whom He calls to the great task.

### **5. The Call Is for Life and Is Irrevocable**

“*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*” (Num. 23:19). If God has called a man, He will never change His mind, for He is the unchangeable One with no variation or shadow of turning. “*The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable*” (Rom. 11:29).

Suppose the church that sent him forth disbands? Suppose a godly man is replaced by a young novice who causes havoc in the church the missionary is affiliated with? Suppose the church follows a man in some extreme doctrine that causes division, and many separate from the church? Suppose the church reduces their missionary giving to zero? Suppose the church joins a denomination and comes under the denomination’s hierarchy while the missionary is on the field? (All these things have occurred in the churches we have been members of.) How do these things affect the missionary’s call? They do not affect it at all. Having been called by God

and once separated by the church, his call is unchangeable and irrevocable. It does not depend on the circumstances of his home church at all. His call is for life. This is so because his call has its origin in the Holy Spirit. As the home church is led of the Spirit, it will confirm this calling. Therefore if the circumstances of the home church change, or even if the church falls, the calling of the missionary is not nullified. This gives much assurance and continuity in the work.

There are those who after putting their hand to the plow look back and abandon the work. Just as we would say that one who abandons the faith was not called, so we say of those who abandon the work that they were not called.

There is no doubt that God uses men to do short term work on the field and to assist the missionary task in various ways. However, the apostolic call to the preaching of the gospel and the planting of churches is for life. As the preacher says in regard to strife in this life, "*There is no discharge in that war*" (Eccl. 8:8), so there is no discharge from the call to preach the gospel in all the world to those who have received it. Praise the Lord!

## CHAPTER 2

### **Finance**

#### **1. A Major Consideration Today But Not Emphasized by the Apostles**

There is no doubt that finance is the major consideration of missionary work today. The Christian is bombarded with appeals for money. A great part of various missions' efforts is to raise money. The demand for money is constant and pressing, and various mission organizations vie for their part of the cake.

Roland Allen writes,

That our missionary organization is largely concerned with the collection and administration of material (money) requires little argument. Every report, every magazine issued by and of the societies, reveals it. It is impossible that their appeals should not emphasize this need and present it to supporters, as it presents itself to them, as the real pressing need of the moment. Say what they will, strive as they will, the need for material exercises a strong constraint, and thrusts itself continually into the foreground. All our mission has been bound up with the administration of property, the building and equipment of large stations, schools, hospitals, industrial institutions, and the like, all financed largely from home. As the years passed the burden grew, and irresistibly the demand for material became more and more insistent, and the collection of funds occupied more and more of our thought and care.

It is difficult to express the sense of overwhelming materialism which a prolonged and careful study of our missionary literature produces upon the mind of the reader. Careful examination reveals very few articles which do not contain, directly or indirectly expressed, an appeal for money. It is "money, money" everywhere, all the time: everything depends upon money (Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, pp. 134, 135).

Yet when we read the book of Acts we find no emphasis at all on finance. It is true that Paul does emphasize principles of giving in 2 Corinthians, but this is not in regard to financially supporting missionary work. Watchman Nee writes of this,

It is a remarkable fact that though the Book of Acts supplies many minute details regarding the work of an apostle, the one subject which from a human standpoint is of paramount importance in the carrying on of any work is not dealt with at all. No information whatever is given as to how the needs of the work, or the personal needs of the workers, were supplied. This is certainly amazing! What men consider of supreme importance, the apostles regarded of least consequence (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 97).

The fact that there is no emphasis at all on finance is striking evidence that the apostles' methods of working and their goals were quite different than today. There are at least two reasons for this lack of emphasis. One of the reasons is that the apostles' method of working and goals were quite different than today. Their great emphasis was on preaching to see churches established. They were church planters. They did not go out to establish and maintain mission stations, schools, hospitals, and church buildings. All such work requires funds,

yes, large funds and continuous funds. I will later come back to this under the heading of Institutional Work.

Another reason is that the apostles' emphasis was on the spiritual, not the material. They went out not as paid professionals, but as men constrained by the love of Christ. There was no such thing as salaried men or men with fixed allowances. The apostles' faith in God was practical, not just theoretical, so they looked to no church, no man, or no organization to supply their needs, but God alone. They believed in the faithfulness of God, and so went. They had no questions or doubts concerning the supply of all their needs.

The frequent warnings against covetousness and the many examples of its ruinous effects on men are a great warning to God's servants. Christ contrasts Himself with the hireling who shepherds the sheep for hire or reward rather than caring for the sheep. *"The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep"* (John 10:13). False teachers and shepherds are described as those who serve for gain. *"Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough. And they are shepherds who cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own territory"* (Isa. 56:11). *"Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, 'Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us'"* (Mic. 3:11). *"Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness"* (2 Pet. 2:14, 15). The qualifications of those who hold office in the local church includes, *"not covetous," "not greedy for money," "not for gain"* (1 Tim. 3:3, 8; 1 Pet. 5:2).

Covetousness is revealed when we contrive to shift off expenses to others. As Paul, we should be willing to meet the needs of others. “*We wronged no man, we took advantage of no man*” (2 Cor. 7:2). “*I will not be a burden to you*” (2 Cor. 12:14). Paul purposed to be a burden to no one. We, too, should take advantage of no one. A discerning heathen had this to say about a flaw he saw in a native teacher, “He had a degree of reluctance in parting with his money.” The excessive influence that money has on us can also be seen when we have much anticipated joy in gain or undue depression from loss.

## 2. Christ’s Example

Christ chose His condition in the world. In fact, He was the only One who ever did. And He chose poverty and a low condition. He also chose disciples from among those of the poor class. That He chose the poor was not that He preferred the poor, but that in that state they could best honor and serve the Father.

As to His finances A. R. Hay writes,

So far as finances were concerned, He did not bring gold from Heaven to pay “native workers” and build temples. Nor had He any human resources, but lived a life of faith in every sense. He and His disciples preached the Gospel without charge. They looked to God for the supply of their daily bread and shared in a common fund from which the simple needs of all were met. He did not hold the purse; Judas held it. He and His disciples owned nothing and owed nothing. When the rich young ruler would have joined them, Christ instructed him to sell all he had and give it, not to their common fund, but to the poor, and then to come with them” (Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*, p. 34).

### 3. Paul's Attitude

These same principles are carried over to the missionary bands. They went forth in faith trusting the Lord to meet all their needs. It seems that none of the churches that they went out from assumed their support. Sometimes they were sent gifts from the churches. At other times they supported themselves by working at their trades. They never at any time made their needs known in order to receive funds for the work, nor did they ever ask for money for themselves. Paul often asked for prayer, but he never asked for funds. He never even asked for prayer that their financial needs would be met. He did request aid for the needy saints in Jerusalem, but not for himself. He looked out "*for the interests of others.*" It seems quite certain that if he had requested financial help for himself and those with him, it would have been given. Yet his testimony was free from all covetousness so that he is enabled to say, "*I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities and for those who were with me*" (Acts 20:33). What a testimony! Not only did noble Paul support himself but even those who labored with him.

A. R. Hay has this to say about Paul,

When he had occasion to refer to his own financial needs in letters to the churches, he was very careful to make it clear that he was making no appeal. After reminding the Corinthians that he had received nothing from them for preaching the Gospel to them, he states that he would continue to minister to them without charge (2 Cor. 11:9-12). Then, while he gratefully acknowledges the gifts from Philippi, he makes it plain that it is in God he trusts for the supply of his needs, not in man. He testifies to God's faithfulness and explains the spiritual benefit he had derived from the times when he was per-

mitted to suffer want. Then he affirms with all the authority of personal experience that his God would also supply all their need (Phil. 4:19). His testimony was: *“I do not refer to this through fear of privation, for (for my part) I have learned, whatever be my outward experiences, to be content. I know both how to live in humble circumstances and how to live amid abundance. I am fully initiated into all the mysteries both of fulness and of hunger, of abundance and of want. I have strength for anything through Him who gives me power”* (Phil. 4:11-13, Weymouth).

It is very interesting to compare this with the advice he gave to the young missionary, Timothy: *“And godliness is gain, when associated with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, nor can we carry anything out of it; and if we have food and clothing, with these we will be satisfied. But people who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many unwise and pernicious ways which sink mankind in destruction and ruin. For from love of money all sorts of evils arise; and some have so hankered after money as to be led astray from the faith and be pierced through with countless sorrows. But you, O man of God, must flee from these things”* (1 Tim. 6:6-11, Weymouth).

These passages throw much light upon the financial principles that governed the lives of these evangelists. No doubt Paul had in mind the recent case of Judas, the treasurer of the Lord's company of disciples, whose love of money so corrupted his mind and heart that he betrayed his Lord for silver. Judas is not the only one that love of money has tempted. We can understand why the Lord called upon His disciples to leave all to follow Him and

why the evangelist is required to give a similar testimony” (Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*, pp. 85, 86).

Lloyd-Jones in one of his sermons, refers to Paul thanking the Philippians for their gift. He brings out how the great apostle finds it very difficult to do it. It takes him almost half a chapter to do so. We find him saying, “*not that I speak in regard to needs . . . not that I seek the gift*” (Phil. 4:11, 17). Why does he find it so difficult? Lloyd-Jones writes,

Paul’s trouble was something like this. He was very anxious to thank the church at Philippi for their kindness. But at the same time he was equally anxious, if not more anxious, to show them that he had not been waiting impatiently for, or expecting, this expression of their kindness, and still more that he was in no sense dependent upon their goodness and generosity. . . . Paul was always jealous for the reputation of the Lord, and he was afraid that in thanking the Philippians for their gift he might somehow give the impression that the Lord was not sufficient for him. He must keep that first (Lloyd-Jones, *The Life of Peace*, pp. 203, 204).

Thus Paul didn’t want the saints to think he was just waiting for a gift, nor did he in any way want to cast reflections on God’s faithfulness and goodness, but being courteous and kind, he did want to thank them for their gift. He has to very delicately balance these things. He says, “*I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.*” He uses a Greek word that is translated “content.” It has the basic meaning of self-sufficient (Arndt and Gingrich, Greek lexicon). Paul was self-sufficient through the power of Christ in him. He looked to no man to supply his needs. Yet after emphasizing that he didn’t speak in regard to need or want, he kindly says, “*You have*

*done well that you shared in my distress*” (Phil. 4:14). He didn’t write because of his wants or needs, for he was content. He was not covetous of any gift.

#### 4. Seeking Support

Missionaries should not actively seek support. It is dishonoring to the Lord for His ambassadors to disclose their needs to get financial aid. Many missionary newsletters are only thinly disguised pleas for money. God can move His people without us, or He may even send the ravens. He will supply without our taking it into our own hands through lack of faith. We should not act as if we are beggars. “It is a shameful thing to profess trust in God and yet play the role of a pauper, disclosing one’s needs and provoking others to pity,” says Nee. As the well-known hymn “The Child of a King” says,

My Father is rich in houses and lands,  
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!  
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,  
His coffers are full, He has riches untold.

Paul wrote at length in Second Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9, to move them to contribute to the poor saints. He also encouraged the churches to take care of their elders, widows, and all in need. Yet, it is of great significance that he makes no mention of supporting or giving to apostles. Nor does he write of their duty to support the work he and his co-laborers were doing. It was quite right to exhort the believers to give to others, but not fitting to ask for gifts for their own work.

Nee writes,

It was a great and noble statement that Paul made to the Philippians. He dared to say to those who were almost his sole supporters: “*I have all things and abound*” (Phil. 4:18). Paul gave no hint of need, but took the position of a wealthy child of a

wealthy Father, and he had no fears that by doing so further supplies would not be forthcoming. It was all very well for apostles to say to an unbeliever who himself was in distress: "*Silver and gold have I none,*" but it would never have done for a needy apostle to say that to believers who would be ready to respond to an appeal for help. It is a dishonor to the Lord if any representative of His discloses needs that would provoke pity on the part of others. If we have a living faith in God, we shall always make our boast in Him, and we shall dare to proclaim under every circumstance, "*I have all things and abound*" (Phil. 4:18).

We are representatives of God in this world, and we are here to prove His faithfulness; therefore in financial matters we must be totally independent of men and wholly dependent upon God. Our attitude, our words, and our actions must all declare that He alone is our Source of supply. If there is any weakness here, He will be robbed of the glory that is His due. We must not be afraid to appear wealthy before people. Let us keep our financial needs secret, even if our secrecy should lead men to conclude that we are well off when we have nothing at all. He who sees in secret will take note of all our needs, and He will meet them, not in stinted measure but "*according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 4:19).

From the study of God's Word we note two things concerning the attitude of His children to financial matters. On the one hand, workers should be careful to disclose their needs to none but God; on the other hand, the churches should be faithful in remembering the needs of both the workers and their work, and they should not only send gifts to those who are working in their vicinity, or to those who have been called out from their midst, but, like the Philippians and the Macedonians, they should

frequently minister to a far-off Paul. The horizon of the churches should be much wider than it is. The present method of a church supporting its own “minister” or its own missionary, was a thing unknown in apostolic days. God has no use for an unbelieving worker, nor has He any use for a loveless church (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, pp. 104, 105).

### 5. Setting Missionary Allowances

Many missionary organizations set a minimum figure for what is needed by their missionaries. This usually includes furlough costs, travel, mission administration, health insurance, retirement benefits, children’s education, etc., etc. Needless to say, this is completely foreign to New Testament principles.

Sometimes churches want a figure to help guide them in their giving. What figure should be given? One missionary wrote concerning this to a church.

All believers have been given the great gift of faith (Eph. 2:8), but this gift is not operative only as the avenue of receiving salvation by grace, but becomes the whole governing principle of this new life we have received by the regenerating work of the Spirit. As Galatians 2:20 states, “*I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*” The characteristic of living by faith is a special mark of the children of God. We should strive to live a life of faith not only in certain compartments of our lives, but in all aspects of living both spiritual and material. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God, and without faith we most certainly cannot serve Him.

Faith in material things is exercised by looking to God alone for the supply of all of our material needs. The Holy Word is full of statements and promises such as Psalm 1:1, "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*" This is a tremendous statement, is it not? "*I shall not want!*" Faith is "*being fully persuaded that, what He has promised, He is able also to perform.*" Faith is having full confidence that, the Lord being our Shepherd, we shall not want in any instance or circumstance of life.

One aspect of this is that we leave it to the Lord as to what our true material needs are. We do not determine this ourselves, i.e., our financial needs are  $x$ , our support is  $y$ , and therefore the difference of  $x$  and  $y$  determines whether we have a deficit or surplus. This or any other form of it is not leaving your needs in the hands of the Lord because the determination of  $x$  is done by man. It is not important that the Lord supply what we think to be the needs, but what He thinks to be the needs. This He most certainly will do as I stated earlier (*Lance Hellar, 1992*).

To guide us in our thinking we should think on Paul's life. He was often in poverty, "*as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things*" (2 Cor. 6:10). Was that God's purpose? Most assuredly! God, at times, purposed Paul to "*suffer need.*" There are times that God purposes that His servants should suffer need. There are many reasons for this such as to strengthen their faith, reveal His power, increase prayer, make room for comfort, break pride, discover graces, etc. Everyone can no doubt think of many more ends of God's trials.

I have known what it is to have absolutely nothing financially, i.e., no income, nothing in hand, no bank accounts. It was a precious time to learn lessons I could have learned in no

other way. The promises became significant. Prayer was more sincere. My wife and I have also been in that case. We have never forgotten how the Lord lovingly supplied all our needs. It was as if He came and looked into our cupboards and gave to us day by day as we had need. This showed His love more than if He had given us one large sum to live on. How we thank God for those days. Our faith was strengthened and our thanks multiplied. Even the two leading apostles, Peter and John, said, "*Silver and gold I do not have*" (Acts 3:6). It is an honor to be in such company. What figure should we give? Let our heavenly Father by His providence answer as He sees fit. Let Him choose for us for we often make mistakes. "*He shall choose our inheritance for us*" (Ps. 47:4).

## **6. The Influence of Money**

In the world, men of wealth are often called "influential." This is to acknowledge that money exerts great influence. Some pastors in churches are not adverse to using money to seek to control people. Some want to control missionaries and their work. Some men covet and greatly desire power. However, it is vital that missionaries do not allow money to influence them. They must not be dominated or controlled by money. If they are, they will not be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Alexander Strauch writes, "Like a powerful drug, the love of money can delude the judgment of even the best men" (*Biblical Eldership*, p. 198).

Once again Watchman Nee shows great wisdom concerning the principle of missionary work being independent of men as regards the financial side of the work. He writes,

On the strength of his gift the giver may consider himself entitled to a say in the work. It is quite in order for the offerer to specify in what direction his offering be used, but it is not in order for him to decide how the work should be done. No servant of

God must sacrifice his liberty to follow the divine leading by accepting money which puts him under human control. A giver is at perfect liberty to stipulate to what use his gift should be put, but as soon as it is given he should take hands off and not seek to utilize it as a means of exercising indirect control over the work.

In secular work the man who supplies the means exercises authority in the realm to which his means are devoted, but not so in spiritual work. All authority in the work rests with the one who has been called of God to do it. In the spiritual realm it is the worker who controls the money, not the money the worker. The one to whom the call has come, and to whom the work has been entrusted by God, is the one to whom God will reveal the way the work must be carried out, and he dare not receive money from anyone who would use his gift to interfere with the Lord's will as it is revealed to him concerning the work. If a giver is spiritual, we shall gladly seek his counsel, but his advice can be sought solely on the ground of his spirituality, not on the ground of his gift.

In all our service for God we must maintain an attitude of utter dependence on Him. Whether funds be abundant or low, let us steadfastly pursue our work, recognizing it as a trust committed to us by God and a matter for which we must answer to Him alone. *"Am I seeking to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ"* (Gal. 1:10). We must remain absolutely independent of men as regards the financial side of the work, but even in our independence we must preserve an attitude of true humility and willingness to accept advice from every member of the Body who is in close contact with the Head, and we should expect

through their confirmation of the leading we have received direct from God. But all the counsel we seek and receive from others is on account of their spirituality, not on account of their financial position. We are willing to seek advice of the richest member of the Body neither because of nor despite his money, and we are just as ready to seek the counsel of the poorest member neither because of nor despite his poverty (*The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 102).

## 7. Watchman Nee on Finance

I close this section with another quote from Watchman Nee. It is from his chapter on finance. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book. It is under the heading "The Importance of the Life of Faith."

Every worker, no matter what his ministry, must exercise faith for the meeting of all his personal needs and all the needs of his work. In God's Word we read of no worker asking for, or receiving, a salary for his services. That God's servants should look to human sources for the supply of their needs has no precedent in Scripture. We do read there of a Balaam who sought to make merchandise of his gift of prophecy, but he is denounced in no uncertain terms. We read also of a Gehazi who sought to make gain of the grace of God, but he was stricken with leprosy for his sin. No servant of God should look to any human agency, whether an individual or a society, for the meeting of his temporal needs. If they can be met by the labor of his own hands or from a private income, well and good. Otherwise he should be directly dependent on God alone for his supply, as were the early apostles. The Twelve Apostles sent out by the Lord had no fixed salary,

nor had any of the apostles sent out by the Spirit; they simply looked to the Lord to meet all their requirements.

If a man can trust God, let him go and work for Him. If not, let him stay at home, for he lacks the first qualification for the work. There is an idea prevalent that if a worker has a settled income he can be more at leisure for the work and consequently will do it better, but as a matter of fact, in spiritual work there is a need for an unsettled income, because that necessitates intimate fellowship with God, constant clear revelation of His will, and direct divine support. In worldly business all a worker needs by way of equipment is will and talent, but human zeal and natural gift are no equipment for spiritual service. Utter dependence on God is necessary if the work is to be according to His will; therefore God wishes His workers to be cast on Him alone for financial supplies, so that they cannot but walk in close communion with Him and learn to trust Him continually. The more an attitude of trustful dependence on God is cultivated, the more spiritual the work will be. So it is clear that the nature of the work and the source of its supply are closely related.

Faith is the most important factor in God's service, for without it there can be no truly spiritual work. Our faith requires training and strengthening, and material needs are a means used in God's hand toward that end. We may profess to have faith in God for a vast variety of intangible things, and we may deceive ourselves into believing we really trust Him when we have no trust at all, simply because there is nothing concrete to demonstrate our distrust. But when it comes to financial needs, the matter is so practical that the reality of our faith is put to the test at once.

Further, he who holds the purse holds authority. If we are supported by men, our work will be controlled by men. It is only to be expected that if we receive an income from a certain source, we should have to account for our doings to such a source. Whenever our trust is in men, our work cannot but be influenced by men.

In His own work God must have the sole direction. That is why He wishes us to depend on no human source for financial supplies. Many of us have experienced how again and again God has controlled us through money matters. When we have been in the center of His will, supplies have been sure, but as soon as we have been out of vital touch with Him they have been uncertain. At times we have fancied God would have us do a certain thing, but He has showed us it was not His will by withholding financial supplies. So we have been under the constant direction of the Lord, and such direction is most precious.

The first question anyone should face who believes himself truly called of God is the financial question. If he cannot look to the Lord alone for the meeting of his daily wants, then he is not qualified to be engaged in His work. If he cannot trust God for the supply of needed funds, can he trust Him in all the problems and difficulties of the work? If we are utterly dependent on God for our supplies, then we are responsible to Him alone for our work, and in that case it need not come under human direction.

If we have real faith in God, then we have to bear all the responsibility of our own needs and the needs of the work. We must not secretly hope for help from some human source. We must have faith in God alone, not in God plus man. If the brethren show their love, let us thank God, but if they do not,

let us thank Him still. It is a shameful thing for a servant of God to have one eye on Him and one eye on man or circumstance. Our living by faith must be absolutely real, and not deteriorate into a "living on charity." We dare to be utterly independent of men in financial matters, because we dare to believe utterly in God. We dare to cast away all hope in them because we have full confidence in Him.

If our hope is in men, then when their resources dry up ours will dry up too. We have no "Board" behind us, but we have a "Rock" beneath us, and no one standing on this Rock will ever be put to shame. Men and circumstances may change, but we shall carry on in a steady course if our reliance is on God. All the silver and the gold are His, and none who walk in His will can ever come to want.

The two initial steps in the work of God are first the prayer of faith for needed funds, then the actual commencement of the work. Today, alas! many of God's servants have no faith, yet they seek to serve Him. They commence the work without having the essential qualification for it; therefore what they do has no spiritual value. Faith is the first essential in any work for God, and it should be exercised in relation to material as well as other needs (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, pp. 98-100).

## CHAPTER 3

# Language Learning

### 1. Its Importance

Our Lord came to earth to identify Himself with His people. How fully He did that is a source of amazement and rejoicing to the saints. He became a man, and to live among the Jews He became a Jew and observed the Jewish customs. He did not live a cloistered life or live apart or aloof in any way. He dressed as the common man. He spoke the language of the people. We cannot even imagine Him not speaking the language of the people or through an interpreter. Hay writes, “He gave His message in the common language of the people and in a form understood by all classes and conditions of men. He did not use the language of the philosopher or of the schools. He did not address His message to the intellect, but to the heart with its universal need” (*New Testament Order*, p. 34). This is our glorious example!

Learning a people’s language is the most important way to identify with them. It is impossible to identify with a people without knowing their language. Language is the key to their culture, to their thinking and often to their hearts. Without such identification and effective communication it is almost impossible to have a truly successful ministry. There is really no substitute for using the people’s language to communicate with them.

Expert language ability helps to identify the missionary most effectively with the indigenous society, and such identification is essential to a truly successful ministry. As missionaries we must work

*in* the field and not *on* the field. It is not the geographical scope, but the degree of cultural penetration which marks truly effective missionary enterprise, and there is no substitute for proper use of the local idiom. A people's language is not only a means of entrance into their life, but it may be a defense against outside opposition and interference. One missionary working in an Indian tribe in Latin America was threatened by the local priest, and the Indians were instructed to drive him out, but they defended their missionary friend by saying, "We can't drive him away; he is one of us now. He speaks our language." This missionary had gone out and lived with an Indian family. In this way he had acquired an amazing facility in one of the most complicated Indian languages of this hemisphere. His efforts were not unrewarded in the response of the people to him and his message (Nida, *Learning a Foreign Language*, p. 12).

The most important way to learn a foreign language is to hear it, and to hear it, and to hear it. Thus, it is a distinct advantage to live with the people. Although we may not be able to live continually with an indigenous family, we should spend time, much time, with the people. We should do things with them and share their life. We should go to their gardens, help break ground, build fences, go hunting with them, eat with them, sleep in their houses, attend their feasts, and sorrow with them at their funerals. Many hours should be spent sitting around fires, visiting and listening, listening, listening. This takes much discipline to listen when the talk is not intelligible. How easy it is to turn off and think about other things.

Furthermore, this is one of the most humbling experiences. A person may have been a teacher or a preacher whom people heard gladly. He may have been a professional man or

a tradesman who was highly esteemed, one who was able to be at home in all situations. He may have gone through university with honors, but when he starts to learn a foreign language in the midst of the culture he is not even in grade one. Where before people listened to him with respect, now he has little respect and nothing to say. I often wished that I knew as much as the smallest children when I started to learn language. I was the most stupid person in the whole village. However, as time passes, the language no longer just dings on the ears, and words and then phrases become familiar. As you begin to be able to hear with more and more comprehension, your confidence grows, and the heavy weight on your spirit is lifted. New words, phrases, and constructions are found with the delight of a discoverer. Along with listening, key phrases should be memorized and used again and again, such as greetings, questions, useful terms, and expressions. Every contact with the people can be a learning time.

It is best to follow a definite program with a schedule. Many missions have found that missionaries left to themselves often do not learn language. It takes much self-discipline. Missions have found that many more missionaries learn language when they are put into a systematic program, required to put in a fixed number of hours each week, and are supervised and regularly tested and evaluated.

There is no easy way or path to sudden success. As Alan Healey writes,

The importance of acquiring automatic habits cannot be over-emphasized, and this can be achieved only by the relentless repetition of drills. It is at this point that a fundamental misunderstanding as to the nature of language learning arises. It is a common misconception to think that a knowledge of the rules of grammar, and some ability in the phonetics involved is all one needs to learn a language. We

tend to despise mechanical repetition as dull drudgery which makes no demand on our intellect. We consider that we have the intelligence to think out the mechanical features of phonology and grammar as we talk. This is where we miss the whole point of language learning. We are trying to do what the native speaker does not have time to do when he speaks. If the native speaker has to focus his whole attention on getting his message across, how much more the non-native speaker. Language learning involves acquiring a set of automatic habits that will enable us to communicate successfully. In language learning, the drills are the scales and arpeggios, the gear changing exercises. They must be mastered thoroughly before any real victory is possible. Effort and drudgery are involved, but if drills are intelligently planned they can be made more interesting and enjoyable. Tackle them with a good spirit (Healey, *The Translator's Field Guide*, p. 10).

It will be worth it all when the language learner is able to tell someone in the language the glorious gospel of grace. The very fact that he has laboriously worked to obtain the ability to communicate the message is a testimony to the people of the importance of the message and their need of it. Also, few things are felt as a stronger motive to our actions than knowing that in doing it we are doing what our Lord desires, approves of and rejoices in. May we give joy to the One who sorrowed even unto death for us. It is vital that the missionary learns the language of the people among whom he works.

## **2. Disadvantages of Not Knowing the Language**

### ***a. In Preaching***

When the language is not known, all preaching has to be done through an interpreter. What an interpreter really does is

translating. He translates the Scriptures and also the preacher's comments and application. He is at a great disadvantage because he is required to translate instantaneously. A translator will sometimes work for hours, sometimes years, to adequately translate a word or phrase. I have sometimes spent hours with informants on a text using grammar helps, Greek lexicons, commentaries, and other translations to try to do an accurate, understandable translation. If it takes us, who have many technical tools and knowledge, hours and days and finally years to do a good translation, it is unreasonable to expect an uneducated village interpreter to be able to translate immediately upon hearing a verse or discourse.

The interpreter is at a further disadvantage because he is often unfamiliar with the material, and it is often new to him. He also has to do it all from memory, which is a prodigious feat for uneducated tribal nationals. On the other hand, if the preacher has him translate after every sentence or two he does not see the connection of one thought with another and does not know what the preacher is getting at because he has no context. Since the message cannot be translated word for word, whole thoughts and concepts are misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Another reason why translation and interpreting are so difficult is because languages are very different, so that translation from one language to another requires complete restructuring. For instance, word order, and order within a sentence or discourse will be different. The language I have worked in has no passive voice, so all passives have to be changed to actives, usually with the actor required to be stated. In many places indirect discourse is changed to direct discourse. Abstract nouns have to be changed since we do not have special nouns to express many concepts such as death, salvation, forgiveness, fellowship, etc. All body parts and kinship terms are obligatorily possessed. Many other grammatical and linguistic adjustments have to be made. Village interpreters are

not qualified to do such restructuring. Translation is a highly technical and complex task.

There will be many things said that the interpreter/translator does not understand. What does he do? Rarely does he question the preacher. It is difficult for him to ask questions in front of the congregation. He doesn't want to embarrass either the preacher or himself. I have heard men interpret who had little idea of what was being said. The problem is greatly increased by the technical theological terms that are used. Words such as faith, repentance, righteousness, grace, glory, holy, godly, etc., may not be understood at all by the interpreter yet such words are crucial to the message. Such equivalent words may not exist in the language, leaving the interpreter to try and describe the meaning of words he himself is very unclear about. Thus the necessity of using an interpreter greatly reduces the effectiveness of the message. Also:

- (1) The fervency of the preacher is usually lost by the interpreter.
- (2) An interpreted or translated message is full of interruptions.
- (3) People tend to lose their train of thought due to the interruptions, and often just turn off.
- (4) It takes twice as much time to say it with an interpreter.
- (5) In a new work an unsaved man is often used as interpreter with all its attendant evils.
- (6) Understanding the language is a key to understanding the way people think and express themselves. This is needful for powerful preaching.

***b. In the Missionary's Relations With the People***

- (1) The people who do not speak English or the trade language will have almost no communication with the missionary.

- (2) The missionary cannot follow any conversations of the people in the language so he is left out. Because of this there will be much that is going on, being discussed, etc., that he will be ignorant of.
- (3) He will never be accepted by the people as he would be if he spoke their language.
- (4) If a missionary doesn't know the language but is attempting to learn it the people will try to help him. His attempt to learn their language is considered a compliment and they warm to him, but if he is not seeking to learn their language the people will often ignore him when he stays in a village.
- (5) Without learning the language he will never get to know or understand much of the culture. Language and culture go together and interpret one another. A person ignorant of the culture they are working in will not have an effective ministry. He will never understand the people.

***c. In the Missionary's Relationship With the Believers***

- (1) Some believers who do not speak the trade language will not come to the missionary to just talk, give news, seek teaching, etc. Even those who do may hesitate to go on their own if they are not really at home in the trade language.
- (2) He cannot understand the conversations that the Christians are having with others.
- (3) He is unable to understand their prayers in the language so cannot really have prayer fellowship. I have found that the Christians pray to God sincerely and very openly, not thinking about people who may be listening. They do not pray silently. When they awake they pray audibly. When they lie down to sleep they pray audibly. I often learn much more

news about what is going on and the people's spiritual condition from hearing their prayers than from their direct conversation with me. They mention even very personal things to God. I sometimes feel like an intruder listening in, but they seem oblivious of me.

## CHAPTER 4

### Translation

#### 1. The Overwhelming Task

Translation has been called a science by some and an art by others. I suppose it is both. Investigation into the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words and their grammar is required. I am completely dependent on the labors of others and must go to the commentaries, concordances, lexicons, and translations. The great labors of the godly scholars who have gone before in fields that many of us are ignorant of and deficient in is reason for much thankfulness to our God. If a translator is a Greek or Hebrew scholar, so much the better. Translation requires all we have and then much more.

The task of translation is a fearsome task. I often feel, who am I to touch the holy ark? As it is written, “*Who is sufficient for these things?*” (2 Cor. 2:16). I have cried to the Lord to show mercy to me in that great day in regards to my translation. It is a crushing task. However, I found myself amongst a people who had none of the Bible in their language. There was no one else to do it. What could I preach from? A translation had to be done. I readily admit, “*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves. . . .*” Our only hope is God, “*Our sufficiency is from Him*” (2 Cor. 3:5).

#### 2. The Reward and Honor

But yet it is a glorious honor. What a joy it is to labor in the Word. What a privilege! We have the joy of a discoverer. How few have the time to labor continually in the wonders and marvels of God’s Word and then can go out and preach it. And then, what does it mean to give the Word of the living

God to a people without it? One day I was quite discouraged. Our four wheel drive vehicle, while being driven by a friend, had gone over the side and rolled down the mountain. A Keyagana man and I had been salvaging parts from the wreck. At the end of the day, as he and I were walking along the road, he began to talk to me of what it meant to them to have God's Word. He said, "You brought us the Word." I was deeply touched. Other times the people have told me that if we hadn't come, they would all be lost and go to the place of fire. I have said no, that God would have sent someone else. But yet, He sent us. Amazing grace! We praise Him. He gave us this great task. How humbling and yet how glorious. We have given them the Word!

The Word of God makes wise unto salvation, teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, is a light to the path, a lifting up of the downcast, a strength to the weak, a joy to the sorrowful. It is nothing short of life from the dead. It reveals the righteousness of God and grants an incorruptible inheritance to all who believe its proclamation. Where the word of a king is, there is power; so this Word of the King is the power of God unto salvation. It praises the one God of heaven and earth, and blesses that One whose name is above all names.

*More to be desired than gold,  
Yea, than much gold,  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

(Ps. 19:10)

And it is also this and more, far more, to a whole culture and people, and that not for a generation, but to all generations until the Lord shall come. To give the Word of God is to give all. Yes, we are ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, and through this Word He diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. What a glorious work!

### 3. The Checking and Correction of a Translation

A group that has much experience in translation and also much knowledge and expertise is the Wycliffe Bible Translators. They have been of immense help to me by generously and willingly giving their time and help. I have gone to their workshops for new translators and their workshops on translating specific books of the Bible. Their people have freely helped with grammar, anthropology, and their translation consultants have checked, corrected, and advised me on all the translation I have done. The Bible Society also provides help to translators by giving advice and also supplying books called Translator's Guides and Translator's Handbooks on every New Testament book and most of the Old Testament. They also have a number of books on translation principles and problems.

The following is written to give you some idea of how translation is checked by Wycliffe Translators. After a book is translated, the translator translates it back to English. This is called a back translation and is done literally saying exactly what is said in the language including idioms that, of course, would be foreign to English. Words that need to be inserted to give the sense that are not in the language are underlined in the back translation. This back translation is given to a consultant who is an experienced translator. With the back translation he can check the exegesis ahead of time and also particular points that he will make note of to check. Having done translation, the consultant is aware of the various problems and most interested in how the translator has dealt with them. Then in the checking sessions a native speaker of the language needs to be always present. SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics part of Wycliffe Bible Translators) likes the translator to bring a man who has not worked on the particular book to be checked. Then the consultant, verse by verse,

phrase by phrase, checks the translation with the native speaker. He does this by asking the translator to read portions to the native speaker. Then he often asks him to have the native speaker tell you in his own words what was read. The translator converses with the native speaker and then tells the consultant what he said. The consultant will then ask questions to check certain things as linguistic weaknesses, the translator's control of grammar, vocabulary, etc. Is it natural, smooth, and understandable? He is also able to check the fluency of the translator and whether he effectively communicates with the informant and whether he uses him well. Hour after hour this is done. This looking at the translation critically and trying to find and correct errors and weaknesses is enormously helpful. I have always learned from the expertise of the S.I.L. consultants. I have had approximately 25 different consultants and 15 different national informants. Although they aren't on a formal translation committee of the Keyagana language, over 40 people have been actively involved, and their contributions have been invaluable.

After the checking sessions the translator goes back to his area and makes the needed corrections and again checks it with other informants. Men are asked to read it and make corrections. The translator preaches from it and asks questions about it. He listens attentively when it is preached from and also when it is read for hesitancy, misunderstandings, lack of comprehension, etc. Week after week, month after month revisions are made.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Preaching**

Our Lord “established no institutions to aid in the accomplishment of His purpose. He employed no human means to attract men. He built no temple to preach in and used no ceremony or ritual. For results He depended on the simple preaching and teaching of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*, p. 35).

#### **1. Its Preeminence**

Today the preaching of the Word is being displaced in many worship services and on the mission field by music, drama, the dance, and movies. That all these things appeal to most people is beyond debate. That beautiful, young women dancing gracefully appeal to the senses no one would deny, but does such dancing edify the inner man? That drama and skits are interesting we readily grant, but do they produce conviction of sin and a revelation of the Saviour in all His beauty? How easy it is for all such “attractions” to degenerate into an appeal to the flesh. We know that it pleases God through preaching to save (1 Cor. 1:21). Can we say the same for these other things that are not so ordained of God, but rather are of the world? We use the phrases “acting” and “playing the part” to denote insincerity and hypocrisy. Can such be God’s way to manifest the truth to every man’s conscience?

Religious movies are particularly dangerous on the mission field since uneducated and culturally naive nationals tend to regard the movie as fact, and the actors as the real, historical people portrayed. This misconception is magnified in rela-

tion to an actor portraying the Saviour with all its attendant evils and shortcomings. Could not such portrayals of Christ lead to idolatry? Certainly it encourages pictures of Christ and a reverence for them that is directly against the second commandment. Dr. Lloyd-Jones writes:

We are living in an age which is querying everything, and among these things it is querying the place and the value and the purpose of preaching. In increasing numbers people seem to be depreciating the value of preaching, and they are turning more and more to singing of various types and kinds, accompanied with various kinds of instruments. They are going back also to dramatic representations or recitals of the Scripture, and some are going back even to dancing and various other forms of external manifestations of the act of worship. All this is having the effect of depreciating the place and value of preaching.

Now we know that the Reformation—even before you come to the particular Puritan emphasis—swept away all such things. It swept away the medieval “mystery plays” as they are called, and dramatic performances in the church. The Reformation got rid of all that, and it is very sad to observe that people who claim an unusual degree of spirituality should be trying to lead us back to that which the Reformers saw so clearly had been concealing the gospel and the truth from the people. If you mime the Scriptures, or give a dramatic representation of them, you are distracting the attention of people from that truth that is conveyed in the Scriptures, whereas preaching, as I am going to show, is essentially concerned with bringing out the truth of the Scriptures. It is essential that we should realize the all-importance of preaching, which is at a dis-

count today, not only the reasons already given, but also because of the idea of increasing participation on the part of the people. What is becoming an increasing demand in the running of industry is found also in the realm of the Christian church.

I believe that there should be a place in the church for the exercise of any gift that any individual church member may chance to have; but I am certain that all Christians are not given the gift of expounding the Scriptures. All are not called or meant to preach. This is something peculiar and special, and we must get rid of the idea which opposes the preaching of one man who is called to the work, or two or three if you like, and would replace it by some kind of discussion or the expression of so called "beautiful thoughts."

With the Puritans we stand for preaching. Their view of preaching, with which we are going to deal, was governed by theology. One's view of preaching is ultimately not a matter of taste, but is an expression of one's theological standpoint, and ultimately, indeed, one's view of the gospel (D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, pp. 373, 374).

## 2. The Command To Preach, and Examples

Some missions present the gospel in tribal areas by means of skits. One group de-emphasizes preaching and instructs their missionaries, "It is important that we do not preach, but rather teach" (T. McIlwain, *Building on Firm Foundations*, Vol. 2, p. 72). Yet, we are commanded to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15) by our Lord Himself. Also, God the Holy Spirit instructed Paul to write to Timothy, "*Preach the Word!*" (2 Tim. 4:2). Not to preach is disobedience.

Not only do we have the command, but we also have the example of John the Baptist. "*John the Baptist came preach-*

ing” (Matt. 3:1); the example of Christ, “*From that time Jesus began to preach,*” the example of Paul, “*Woe is me if I preach not the gospel*” (1 Cor. 9:16), and all the apostles, “*And they went out and preached everywhere*” (Mark 16:20).

### **3. Preaching Includes Warning, Invitations, and Exhortations**

In 2 Timothy 4:2, “*Preach the Word! Be ready (or urgent) in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching*” this seems to say that teaching is a part of preaching, and that preaching includes convincing, rebuking, and exhortation. The whole man must be addressed. His understanding alone is not to be addressed, but also his conscience, will, and emotions. People are not only to be taught, but also convinced (or corrected, as in the NIV), rebuked, and exhorted (or appealed to, as in the NEB). We long to see people moved now with hearts stirred and consciences convicted.

Preaching also includes warning: “*Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*” (Col. 1:28). That is why it is necessary to preach. Paul’s farewell speech to the Ephesians elders where he summarized his ministry includes the statement, “*To Jews and Gentiles alike I gave solemn warning that they should turn from their sins to God and believe in our Lord Jesus*” (Acts 20:21, TEV). Christ’s teaching was full of warnings. Think of His warnings to the Pharisees and to the scribes; His warnings to watch in view of the coming; His warnings about not bearing fruit; His warnings to those who will not take up their cross; His warnings concerning the last judgment, etc.

Another aspect of good preaching is that invitations are given. (I am not speaking of invitations to go forward, give your heart, raise your hand, etc.) This is also missing from

much missionary teaching. Note, “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matt. 11:28). Think of the dramatic invitation given to the crowds on the great day of the feast, “*Jesus stood and cried out saying, ‘If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink.’*” (John 7:37). Also, “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*” (John 6:35). What a great invitation we find in Isaiah 55:1, “*Ho, Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, Come, buy and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price*”; in Proverbs 1:20-24, “*Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city. She speaks her words: How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. Turn at my reproof; surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you*”; and in Proverbs 8:4, “*To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.*”

Let us, too, be often inviting people to Christ without waiting. May we not be bound by a system. Let us lift up our voices and cry, regularly, “*Repent and turn . . . cast away from you all transgressions you have committed, get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?*” (Ezek. 18:30, 31). “*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely*” (Rev. 22:17).

Another aspect of scriptural preaching is illustrated by Barnabas and his ministry. His name means “son of exhortation” or persuasion. This agrees well with his ministry. Acts 11:23 tells us he “*encouraged (or exhorted, RSV; urged, TEV) them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.*” And again in Acts 13:43, “*Paul and Barnabas,*

*who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.*” And again in Acts 14:22, “*Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’*” Paul was the chief speaker (Acts 14:12), and Barnabas’ ministry enforced Paul’s teaching. He was the exhorter, stirring up the people to obey the teaching and continue in it regardless of the cost or obstacles. This is a necessary ingredient of Bible preaching.

#### **4. Are the Unsaved To Be Directed To Pray?**

Some missionaries do not exhort unbelievers to act. They are fearful that it could cause them to trust in their works. Some missionaries discourage the unsaved from praying since, they say, prayer may “make people feel accepted by God. . . .” However, in answer to this:

##### ***a. The Sin of Prayerlessness***

Prayerlessness in the Scriptures is counted as a great sin. In Jeremiah 2:25 we read, “*Pour out your fury on the Gentiles who do not know you and on the families who do not call on your name.*” The great sin of prayerlessness calls for great punishment, even the fury of God to be poured out upon them. Psalm 14 and Psalm 53 are quoted in Romans 3 to prove the sinfulness of all men. These two Psalms are a terrible indictment against the sinfulness of man. In these Psalms, along with other sins, a great sin mentioned is that people “*do not call on the Lord.*” Is it a sin not to pray? Surely the Word says so. The *condemnation of the hypocrite is*, “*Will he always call upon God?*” (Job 27:10). To “*cast off fear and restrain prayer before God*” (Job 15:4), is the great sin of despising God. If it is a sin not to pray, how can we justify encouraging people to this sin?

### ***b. The Use of Means***

It is true that natural man will trust in anything of his own doing rather than trust in Christ. However, the solution is not to tell the unsaved to do nothing. They must use means to be saved. The unsaved particularly trust in hearing the Word. In fact, here on the field I have never heard of a person trusting in their praying, but many trust that all is well because they hear God's Word. Should we then discourage them from hearing the Word? Assuredly not. If good means are misused, we must not relinquish God's means, but teach and warn against their misuse.

### ***c. Scriptural Commands To Pray***

Some say that it is unscriptural for the unsaved to pray. However, Peter apparently did not know that theology for he commanded Simon Magus, a hypocrite, to pray, "*Repent therefore of this your wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you*" (Acts 8:22). Likewise, Ananias commanded Paul, "*Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins (or 'be washed of your sins,' middle voice as is 'be baptized')* calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Far from discouraging the unsaved from praying, they are commanded to pray in the Scriptures. Note, "*Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near*" (Isa. 55:6). All are urged to "*cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding . . . then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God*" (Prov. 2:3, 5). And then we have the promise, "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Rom. 10:13).

A good sign that the Spirit is working in the heart of an unregenerate person is that he prays. God says of Paul seeking salvation, "*Behold (introducing something surprising or unexpected) he is praying*" (Acts 9:11).

#### ***d. Can the Unsaved Pray?***

Christ told the story of the Pharisee and tax collector who both prayed. He speaks of the tax collector's prayer with approval and tells how God heard and saved him so that he "*went down to his house justified*" (Luke 18:14). We also read of the Ninevites crying mightily to God and turning from their evil ways so that God heard and spared the city (Jonah 3). God is not obliged to answer such prayers, yet He is pleased, at times, to do so and show His sovereign mercy in pity to the wicked. The prayers of the ungodly have no goodness in them, but they often are used to prepare their hearts for mercy.

#### ***e. Why Should the Ungodly Pray?***

Because they are hopeless and helpless and can do nothing else. Prayer is an acknowledgment of this helpless, hopeless condition and of absolute dependence on God. Prayer says help must come from God. Do they need to repent? Yes, but they are unable. Do they need to believe? Yes, but they cannot. As Romans 8:8 says, they "*cannot please God.*" If they could do anything of spiritual good, such as repent and believe, it would not be true to say they cannot please God. Thus repentance is said to be a gift of God, "*if God will perhaps grant repentance*" (2 Tim. 2:25). "*Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life*" (Acts 11:18). The provision God has made to give repentance is through Christ, "*Him God has exalted . . . to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sin*" (Acts 5:31). Therefore the sinner is to go to Christ for repentance, pleading with Him in prayer. The promises of Matthew 7:7-11 are surely an encouragement to such prayer. We should encourage the sinner to go to Christ in prayer and obtain all he needs for his eternal salvation.

Faith, also, is a gift of God, Ephesians 2:8, and also Philippians 1:29, "*to you it has been given on behalf of Christ . . . to believe in Him.*" God in grace may give faith through

the hearing of the Word, or He may wait to be inquired of for it. "*For this, moreover, will I be **inquired** of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*" (Ezek. 36:37, speaking of the Gospel promises, see verses 25-27).

I have read of missionaries telling unsaved people not to pray, so they asked what God wanted them to do. The answer was, "Just listen to and take notice of God's message to you in His Word." This direction is inadequate since nowhere is it written, "Just listen." Rather the Word of God is full of exhortations to the unsaved to cry, call, pray, strive, labor, knock, ask, seek, repent, believe, etc. Yet, far worse, the direction not to pray was a great error. Multitudes have found salvation as they diligently sought it. God has saved through prayer down through the ages, for it is one of His main means of saving helpless sinners. How many have been saved as they prayed, "*God be merciful to me a sinner,*" or have prayed as the prodigal, "*I have sinned against you and am not worthy to be called your son,*" or as blind Bartimaeus, "*Jesus Thou son of David, have mercy on me*"?

Listen as a master at soul winning exhorts. He preached,

In every case, sinner, if thou wouldst be saved, thy faith must exercise itself in crying. The gate of heaven is to be opened only in one way, by the very earnest use of the knocker of prayer. My dear hearers, are you now seeking Christ in earnest prayer? Go to Christ this day, agonize and wrestle with Him; beg Him to have mercy on you, and if He hear you not, go to Him again and again and again (C. H. Spurgeon).

This is far indeed from saying, "Just listen." That is a miserable religion that teaches people to do nothing and encourages them to just listen while eternity hastens near. Christ taught people to strive to enter in. Do we?

I close this section on prayer with the earnest entreaties of J. C. Ryle,

Beseech Him to deliver you from the guilt, the power, and the consequences of sin. Beseech Him to pardon you and wash you in His own blood. Beseech Him to give you a new heart and plant the Holy Spirit in your soul. Beseech Him to give you grace, and faith, and will, and power to be His disciple and servant from this day forever. Yes, go this very day, and tell these things to the Lord Jesus Christ, if you are really in earnest about your soul. Doubt not His willingness to save you. Wait not, because you feel unworthy. Wait for nothing: wait for nobody. Waiting comes from the devil. Just as you are, go to Christ. The worse you are the more need you have to apply to Him. If He delays an answer . . . pray on.

Finally, good preaching includes application. Quoting Tozer,

Charles G. Finney believed that Bible teaching without moral application could be worse than no teaching at all and could result in positive injury to the hearers. By far the greater portion of the book (Bible) is devoted to an urgent effort to persuade people to alter their ways and bring their lives into harmony with the will of God as set forth in its pages. It is not addressed to the intellect only, but to the will also. The will must come forth and surrender its sword. It must stand at attention to receive orders, and those orders it must joyfully obey. Short of this any knowledge of Christian truth is inadequate and unavailing (Tozer, *Exposition Must Have Application*).

We still need prophets like Tozer to sound the trumpet blast lest we only educate men and they “*be hearers only, deceiving themselves*” (James 1:22).

Certainly the world needs teaching, “*that they may come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Tim. 2:4). But they also need Spirit-inspired preaching with rebuking, warning, application, exhortation, pleading, inviting, and tears. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote, “. . . the most urgent need in the Christian church today is true preaching, and as it is the greatest and the most urgent need in the church, it is obviously the greatest need of the world also” (*Preaching and Preachers*, p. 9).

It still pleases God “*through the foolishness of preaching to save.*” Oh, that our preaching might not be with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. 1:21; 2:4).

## **5. The Condition of Those to Whom We Preach**

Some groups emphasize imparting truth that will bring understanding. This is good since faith is based on truth received by the understanding. However, their teaching seems to imply that if the teaching is clear and is clearly understood, people will of necessity be saved; and that the clearer the truth becomes, the more it will be accepted by the unsaved. That is not true. Do men reject the gospel simply because they misunderstand it? I think not, for this would mean unregenerate man does not reject the truth, but only rejects error. Thus, if he were correctly taught and corrected in his false thinking, he would immediately close with the truth. This would mean that the unregenerate man does not have enmity to the truth; he only has enmity to error. But this is not depravity. We might call it ignorance, but not depravity. If such was the condition of natural man, he would be a lover of truth and would only hate error, but the Bible teaches that the opposite is the case.

It is true that men are in ignorance and have “*their understanding darkened.*” They are “*alienated from the life of*

*God, because of the ignorance that is in them*" (Eph. 4:18). But this is not the only effect of sin. Man's condition is far more desperate and hopeless than that. In the next verse the cause of their ignorance is because of the hardening of their heart, "*who being past feeling . . .*" (Eph. 4:19). Man's heart is enmity to God. So far from loving the truth, they hate it and oppose it. Man's heart is at enmity to the God of all grace, even God as revealed in the gospel. The unrenewed will is set against the gospel. "*The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*" (Rom. 8:7). The more clearly the truth and the gospel are presented to the natural man, the more will his heart arise in opposition to it. Horatius Bonar (1851) wrote, "It is God that he hates; and the more closely God approaches him, the more vividly that God is set before him, the more does his enmity awaken and augment. Surely, then, that which stirs up enmity cannot of itself remove it."

In other words, the truth alone cannot change man's condition. Not only has his understanding been darkened; the will is perverted, and the emotions are defiled. The whole of man has been affected by the fall and sin extends to the whole of the faculties. "*From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness . . .*" (Isa. 1:6). Although the understanding is darkened, light cannot effect the change, for a man is blind. Although man is ignorant, the truth alone cannot change him, for he cannot receive it. He is unteachable. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Cor. 2:14). Men are even spiritually dead so that no influence whatever short of a supernatural, omnipotent work of God the Almighty can remedy their plight. Their only hope is in God. He must put forth "*the exceeding greatness of His power*" to produce life and faith.

These truths believed would lessen our faith in our teaching, and turn us more to look to the Father's inward, effectual teaching by the Holy Spirit. *"Every man therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto Me"* (John 6:45). Note the *"every man."* God's teaching always saves. Let us cry for Him to teach, for unless He does no one will be saved regardless of the method of teaching used.

## 6. The Content of Preaching

Repentance is a vital, foundational message. Paul, in summing up his ministry to all peoples, said he was, *"testifying to Jews and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."* John's message was repentance, and Christ preached, *"Repent,"* and that *". . . repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations"* (Luke 24:47). It is true that repentance is a change of mind or attitude about a person's sin and himself. Yet, it is more than a change of mind. Unless the change of mind issues in obedience, it is not repentance. Note the parable of the two sons illustrating repentance in Matthew 21:28-32.

True repentance is a mighty work of God wrought by the Holy Spirit that brings a man to see and feel his sins and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. He is humbled and grieved that he has rebelled against the best of all beings by refusing to have Him reign over him, and rather has lived a life of self-will and self-pleasing. The person sees sin as against God and refusing to have God to govern him. As David said, *"Against You, You only have I sinned"* (Ps. 51:4). This horror of sin leads to an abhorrence of it and a desire to confess and forsake it. *"He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy"* (Prov. 28:13). The true penitent will be broken, and with mourning and often tears will acknowledge his sin, confessing it fully with purpose of heart to turn from it. *"Let the wicked forsake his*

ways” (Isa. 55:7). Such penitents are blessed of God. “*Blessed are those who mourn: for they shall be comforted*” (Matt. 5:4).

**a. *The Law***

What does the Holy Spirit use to produce repentance and conviction of sin? The great instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit is the moral law of God. Luther writes on Galatians 3:19 in his usual vigorous style,

Paul describes this spiritual purpose of the Law in the words, “Because of transgressions,” i.e., to reveal to a person his sin, blindness, misery, his ignorance, hatred, and contempt of God, his death, hell, and condemnation. This is the principal purpose of the Law and its most valuable contribution. As long as a person is not a murderer, adulterer, thief, he would swear that he is righteous. How is God going to humble such a person except by the Law? The Law is the hammer of death, the thunder of hell, and the lightning of God’s wrath to bring down the proud and shameless hypocrites. When the Law was instituted on Mount Sinai it was accompanied by lightning, by storms, by the sound of trumpets, to tear to pieces that monster called self-righteousness. As long as a person thinks he is right he is going to be incomprehensibly proud and presumptuous. He is going to hate God, despise His grace and mercy, and ignore the promises in Christ. The Gospel of the free forgiveness of sins through Christ will never appeal to the self-righteous.

This monster of self-righteousness, this stiff-necked beast, needs a big axe. And that is what the Law is, a big axe. Accordingly, the proper use and function of the Law is to threaten until the conscience is scared stiff. The Law is also a light like

the Gospel. But instead of revealing the grace of God, righteousness, and life, the Law brings sin, death, the wrath of God to light. This is the business of the Law, and here the business of the Law ends, and should go no further” (Luther on *Galatians*, pp. 130, 131).

Although the law cannot make a man righteous, it can convince of unrighteousness. “*By the law is the knowledge of sin*” (Rom. 3:20). The law does not bring life; rather, it kills. It kills all vain hopes. When the commandment comes in spiritual power to the conscience, a man dies. He no longer has carnal hope, false joy, and vain confidence. He is struck with fear and dies. “*For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died*” (Rom. 7:9). This is the work that the Puritans called “law work.” John Bunyan asks, “Wast thou ever killed stark dead by the law of works contained in the Scriptures? Killed by the law or letter, and made to see thy sins against it, and left in an helpless condition by the law? For, the proper work of the law is to slay the soul, and to leave it dead in an helpless state.”

The law must be preached to the unsaved. Following on after a knowledge of sin and a revealing of man’s helplessness, he needs to be confronted with the coming judgment and wrath of God. Paul begins his exposition of the gospel in Romans by the statement, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . .*” (Rom. 1:18). We should begin where Paul began. We still need these stern doctrines to move men to flee from the wrath to come and to the Saviour who is “*as a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest*” (Isa. 32:2).

## ***b. The Gospel***

### **(1) Its Author**

“*The gospel of God*” (Rom. 1:1).

In the epistle to the Romans Paul immediately writes in verse one that the gospel is the “*gospel of God.*” God is the Author. He is the Source of the gospel. God Himself introduces the gospel. It is good news from God, a divine message. The gospel reveals God’s plan and purpose of saving man. The first in the Trinity is the Father. Primarily the Gospel is of the Father.

This great truth is again and again emphasized in the Word. The much loved John 3:16 says, “**God** so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. . . .” Again we read, “**God** was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19); and as the preceding verse reads, “All things are of **God** who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.” It is God’s gospel. It is God who has been sinned against. He is Judge. Yet it was the Father who planned and purposed the salvation of man and declares it in the gospel. Thus God gave the first promise concerning the seed of the woman to Adam and Eve immediately after the fall.

The gospel is to be preached in the context of “*the wrath of God . . . against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*” (Rom. 1:18). It is God with whom the sinner has to do. It is the judgment of God he must keep in mind. Too often God is forgotten. Some always pray to Jesus. It is possible to push God from the center, but this is wrong. What is the purpose of Christ’s work? “*Christ also suffered once for sins, . . . that He might bring us to God*” (1 Pet. 3:18). Anything less is insufficient. We must be brought into a right relationship with God our Creator and Sovereign.

Paul, in declaring the gospel, started at this point, calling it “*the gospel of God.*” We, too, must start at this point. The gospel begins with God. It is the “*glorious gospel of the blessed God*” (1 Tim. 1:11).

## (2) Its Subject

“*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*” (Rom. 1:16).

The gospel is first called the gospel of God and then called the gospel of Christ. It is “*the gospel of God . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*” The gospel is about Jesus Christ, “*who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*” (Rom. 1:3, 4). Thus He is to be preached as man, the Son. He was “*God manifested in the flesh*” (1 Tim. 3:16). So He is also to be preached as God, the Son.

When Paul condensed the gospel he wrote, “*Christ died for our sins . . . He was buried . . . He rose again . . . He was seen*” (1 Cor. 15:3, 4). Christianity is all about Christ. He is All. He is the Center, for the gospel is about Him: Who He is and what He’s done is the gospel. The gospel is “*the preaching of Jesus Christ*” (see Rom. 16:25). It is the proclaiming of the truth about Jesus Christ. It is “*concerning Jesus Christ.*” “Preach Christ” is a wise admonition.

### (3) Its Tense

When I was in missionary training, the director, who was a returned missionary, told us in class one day, “I trust none of you are going out and telling people that Christ will put away sin, but rather the good news that Christ has put away sin.” I had never heard such a thing. I was stunned! I left class thinking, “It is a very different message to preach He has put away sin than He will put away sin—but is it true?” I didn’t know. I talked to the director, and he encouraged me to use Hebrews to preach Christ’s work. I then began to study Hebrews diligently and came across Hebrews 9:26, “*He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*” I thought, “If He appeared to put away sin, He must have done it. Yes, it is as I’ve heard, our message is to preach a finished work, a work that has accomplished something.” I had never seen it. It was a great and glorious revelation to me. Suddenly I saw our

message to be good news. I had previously emphasized in my witness what man was to do so that then God would work. I fear I was more a salesman than a proclaimer of good news. My message was little more than good advice rather than a proclamation of good news. I rejoiced with great joy in such a glorious gospel. I couldn't wait to preach the "good news." That very day I borrowed a car to go into town to tell someone this good news of Christ having put away sin and so I did. I picked up a hitchhiker and preached Christ, "*wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, chastised for our peace and by His stripes we are healed*" (Isa. 53:5). What a message! Yet it wasn't believed. What greater thing can we tell a poor sinner who has turned to his own way than, "*the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*"? (Isa. 53:6).

How important it is that the tense of our message is in the past tense (see 1 Cor. 15:1-4). He died. He was buried. He rose again. Or as Peter writes, "*Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust*" (1 Pet. 3:18). "*When He **had** by Himself **purged** our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (Heb. 1:3); "*Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life*" (Rom. 5:18). Yes, "*through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins*" (Acts 13:38). Let us preach good news! *He has obtained* eternal redemption (see Heb. 9:12). "*By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*" (Heb. 10:14). Let us preach Christ and His finished work, for this is the gospel of good news; "*good tidings of great joy*" (Luke 2:10).

#### 4. Its Foundation

The gospel is founded on historical facts. Without the historical facts there is no Christian religion. This is true of no other religion. A preacher of the gospel is foremost a herald, a

proclaimer, of these historical facts; and secondly, a teacher of the meaning of those facts.

That Satan has realized this is shown by the fact that the enemies of the gospel mainly assault the facts of the gospel concerning Christ as written in the gospels. David Brown in the introduction to his commentary on the gospels wrote,

The Fourfold Gospel is the central portion of Divine Revelation. Into it, as a reservoir, all the foregoing revelations pour their full tide, and out of it, as a Fountain, flow all the subsequent revelations. In other parts of Scripture we hear Christ by the hearing of the ear; but here our eye seeth Him. Elsewhere we see Him through a glass darkly; but here, face to face. The orthodox fathers of the church well understood this peculiar feature of the Gospels. Nor did the heretical sects differ from them in this; the best proof of which is, that nearly all the heresies of the first four or five centuries turned upon the Person of Christ as represented in the Gospels. As to the heathen enemies of Christianity, their determined opposition was directed against the facts regarding Christ recorded in the Gospels. And it is the same still. The battle of Christianity, and with it of all Revealed Religion, must be fought on the field of the Fourfold Gospel. If its credibility and *Divine Authority* cannot be made good—if we must give way to some who would despoil us of its miracles, or to others who, under the insidious name of “the higher criticism,” would weaken its historical claims—all Christianity is undermined, and will sooner or later dissolve in our hands. But so long as the Gospels maintain their place in the enlightened convictions of the church, as the Divine record of God manifest in the flesh,

believers, reassured, will put to flight the armies of the aliens (Brown, *The Four Gospels*, p. iv).

The teaching of a highly regarded theologian, Bultmann of Germany, was that only the teaching of Christ matters and that the facts of Christ's life are unimportant. He wrote,

the kerygma is incredible to modern man, for he is convinced that the mythical view of the world is obsolete. We are therefore bound to ask whether, when we preach the Gospel today, we expect our converts to accept not only the Gospel message, but also the mythical view of the world in which it is set. If not, does the New Testament embody a truth which is independent of its mythical setting? If it does, theology must undertake the task of stripping the kerygma from its mythical framework, of "demythologizing" it (Bultmann, *Kerygma and the Myth*, p. 3).

This is, of course, nothing but a frontal attack on the glorious gospel. Bultmann struck at the very roots to destroy the gospel. What he calls "myth" is the miraculous. He happily would throw out the virgin birth and the resurrection. Dr. Bultmann wants to conform the gospel to modern man's thinking. He sets himself up as judge of the Word of the living God rather than humbly allowing the Word to judge him. No, we are not to conform our message to what is acceptable to modern man. The Bible's judgment on modern man is that "*they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools*" (Rom. 1:21, 22). Let us let the Word of God speak for itself and give counsel to such critics, "*If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise*" (1 Cor. 3:18). Man's faith "*should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God*" (1 Cor. 2:5).

In a court, evidence that is factual is called hard evidence. It is firm and cannot be overthrown by argument. Facts are stubborn things. As we often say, "Say what you will: the fact remains. . . ." The critics will only destroy themselves as they are shattered on the Rock. Such critics call themselves Christians, but this will not do. If the historical facts are denied or overlooked, the gospel dissolves in our hands.

The Christian faith is not a philosophy, it is not merely a teaching. It is based on a series of historical events. The teaching derives from and is grounded in the historical events. That can never be too much emphasized because this is the point at which our faith differs from every so-called religion. All religions are teachings; this is event and historical happening before it is a teaching; it is an announcement of events, of actions, and of facts" (Lloyd-Jones, *Romans* 3:20—4:25, pp. 40, 41).

Therefore, the gospels should have the primary place in our proclaiming the gospel to the unsaved. The epistles were written to believers in local churches, but the gospel accounts are written "*that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name*" (John 20:31). This emphasis on the gospel accounts is particularly needed when preaching on the mission field to those who have little knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **(5) Its Promise**

Shortly after the gospel was a great revelation to me and I became assured that our message was one of certainty and of a glorious work accomplished by Christ; "*that is God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them*" (2 Cor. 5:19), I was taken up short by the thought: how can I say to a man Christ has put away his sin since for all I know the man may die in his sins? I became

very afraid. What if I tell men a wrong message? What if I lead men astray? I knew it was a message of a finished work, Christ's accomplished task. Yet, how do I witness it to an individual? I didn't know. I thought, I'm not going to use my own words lest I speak falsely. I'll just use, and only use, Scripture language. Then when judged I'll be able to say, "I only said what God my Judge has said." About two years later I came in contact with John Owen's *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. I wrestled for a long time with his teaching that Christ's death was for a particular people, not for all. How could this be since "all" and "world" are used throughout the New Testament in regard to Christ's salvation? The words "world" and "all" made me hesitate concerning the doctrine of particular redemption. Then, one day, the Lord helped me as I meditated and considered 2 Corinthians 5:14, "*For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if one died for all, then all died.*" (All died is in the aorist tense; thus "all died" not "all were dead.") Here, I thought, were two "alls." He died for all, and thus the same all died. But I knew that all, that is, everyone in the world, had not died (with Christ). For, as Romans 6:8 says, "*If we died with Christ we believe that we shall also live with him.*" The all who died has to refer to those in Christ. Then, I thought, the all for whom Christ died are the same people: not everyone in the world. This gave peace to my heart for then all was in harmony.

As I continued studying Dr. Owen, I became convinced by Owen's reasons, which I believe are sound and Biblical. It would be too far afield from the purpose of this book to give a defense of particular redemption or, as some call it, limited atonement. It has been ably defended and taught by others.

However, I don't want to avoid this issue, but will look at it from one perspective that does have to do with our theme here, which is the gospel. Let us look at the gospel as a gospel of promise.

Since the gospel promises are to a particular people, how are we to preach it? I am thinking of such promises as the promise of eternal life, “. . . *eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began*” (Tit. 1:2); “*the promise of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:33); the promise of new hearts, “*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*” (Heb. 8:10); the promise of mercy and forgiveness, “*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more*” (Heb. 8:12), etc. Whom are we to teach these promises to?

The Scriptures are abundantly clear that the gospel and its promises are to be preached to everyone with no exceptions and to the whole world freely. We have clear commands such as, “*make disciples of all nations*” (Matt. 28:19); “*repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations*” (Luke 24:47); “*go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15). Therefore, the first reason is simply that God has commanded it. Nothing else is needed.

Another reason is that we do not know who the “children of the promise” are. We do not know who the “heirs of the promise” are, nor do we need to. We must preach to all. Also, God is glorified in the preaching of the gospel. Such preachers of a free gospel “*are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing*” (2 Cor. 2:15). Also, the gospel preached in its power restrains the ungodly and is the salt that preserves our society from worse corruption.

It has been noticed that the Greek word “*epangelia*” for promise is similar to the Greek word “*euangelion*” for gospel. This is mentioned to link the word promise with the gospel.

As in Galatians 3:8, “*And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed,’*” tells us that the preaching of the gospel to Abraham was the proclaiming of the promise to Abraham, “*In you all the nations shall be blessed*” (Gen. 18:18). This promise was looking forward to the seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made, the seed being Christ (Gal. 3:16).

The Apostle Peter, preaching the gospel on the day of Pentecost, proclaimed, “*The promise is to you and to your children . . .*” (Acts 2:39). Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, boldly preached, “*We declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers*” (Acts 13:32). The gospel, or the glad tidings, is the promise.

The validity of a promise is based on the faithfulness and ability of the promisor. Thus, Abraham believed the promise because he was “*fully convinced that what He (God) had promised He was also able to perform*” (Rom. 4:21). For this reason the “*promise is sure to all the seed*” (Rom. 4:16). The promise, not being dependent or contingent on man, is sure. If it was dependent on man and his efforts the promise would be made of no effect (Rom. 4:14).

A promise is therefore different than an offer. A promise is given to particular people. It is “*the promise . . . to all the seed.*” Or, as Peter preached it, “*the promise is to . . . as many as the Lord our God will call*” (Acts 2:39). Romans calls these to whom the promise is to, as “*children of the promise*” (9:8). Galatians says, “*We, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise*” (4:28). Hebrews calls them “*heirs of the promise*” (6:17). An offer is promiscuous, given to all yet dependent on the ones to whom the promise is made. To use the theologians’ word, it is contingent. The outcome is uncertain because it is contingent. We use the word in that way when we talk of “a contingency plan.” Since the outcome or

arising circumstances are uncertain to us, we need a contingency plan if things do not work out as we plan. With God nothing is contingent. He is sovereign and rules and reigns over all; not least the hearts and wills of all men. He rules even the most independent of men—kings. *“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes”* (Prov. 21:1).

### **Inability and Responsibility**

The Bible teaches the inability of the unregenerate to any spiritual good in verses such as Romans 8:7, 8, *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be”*; John 15:5, *“Without me you can do nothing”*; Hebrews 11:6, *“Without faith it is impossible to please Him”*; and John 6:44, *“No man can come to Me unless the Father draws him.”*

Some have then concluded that we are not to invite such to Christ since they cannot come nor to command repentance or faith because of this inability. However, the apostles were not so constrained and preached, *“God . . . now commands **all men everywhere** to repent”* (Acts 17:30). God commands it. Christ also invited sinners to Himself, *“Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden”* (Matt. 11:28). Faith is commanded so that unbelief is a sin, the great sin, the condemning sin.

Men are responsible to their Creator, their sovereign God. If this were not so, how could God judge the world? (Rom. 3:5). Men must be born again, repent, and believe in Christ. They must, but they cannot. Although natural men have an inability, they have a responsibility that demands it. Responsibility and inability are the two jaws of the vise that hold men from escaping the condemnation of the law. Both must be preached. If only responsibility is taught, men think they can be saved when they will and never view their posi-

tion as hopeless. If only inability is taught, man excuses himself and feels safe because of his weakness and inability. But, if man must but cannot, he is hopeless indeed. He needs a Saviour in every sense of the word. Such men sensible of their hopelessness “*flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them*” (Heb. 6:18).

These two powerful doctrines were greatly used in David Brainerd’s work among the Indians.

It is plain, numbers are made deeply sensible of their sin and misery, the wickedness and stubbornness of their own hearts, their utter inability to help themselves, or to come to Christ for help, without divine assistance; and so are brought to see their perishing need of Christ to do all for them, and to lie at the foot of sovereign mercy (p. 402).

She replied, “I could not help it. My heart would be wicked for all what I could do. I could not make it good” (p. 403).

. . . being in a great measure convinced of the impossibility of their helping themselves, or of mending their own hearts; and seemed to be upon the point of giving up all hope in themselves, and venturing upon Christ as naked, helpless, and undone. And yet were in distress and anguish because they saw no safety in so doing, unless they could do something towards saving themselves (*Brainerd’s Journal, Works of Edwards Vol. 2, p. 404*).

### **(6) Its Necessity**

“*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed . . .*” (Rom. 1:16, 17).

The demand of God is for righteousness; a perfect righteousness conformed to His perfect law. Nothing less is acceptable. This is God's unwavering requirement. Yet, man's righteousness, the very best of his acts, are but as filthy rags in the eyes of a holy God. Where can such a perfect righteousness be found? The above verses tell us that the gospel is the power of God. Why? *For* in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is *revealed*. Salvation is by revelation rather than decision. The righteousness God requires, God provides; thus it is called the righteousness of God. It is a perfect righteousness. Because the gospel reveals God's righteousness that He imputes to man, it, the gospel, is the power of God unto salvation. Romans 1:17 should not be divided from Romans 1:16. How God provides His righteousness to the unrighteous is revealed in the gospel. It is "*even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe*" (Rom. 3:21). It is a righteousness created by God through His Servant Jesus Christ. "*Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. I, the Lord, have created it*" (Isa. 45:8). All acceptable righteousness comes from heaven, created by God. Peter in 2 Peter 1:1 calls this righteousness "*the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" It is a twofold righteousness since Christ fulfilled both the law's precept and its penalty.

Robert Haldane writes,

It was during His incarnation that the Son of God wrought out this righteousness. Before He came into the world, He was not a member or subject of the kingdom of heaven—He was its Head. He then acted in the form of God—that is to say, as the Creator and Sovereign of the world—but afterwards in the form of a servant. Before that period

He was perfectly holy, but that holiness could not be called obedience. It might be rather said that the law was conformed to Him, than that He was conformed to the law. His holiness was exercised in making the law, and by governing the world. But in His latter condition it was that law by which He Himself was governed. His righteousness or obedience, then, was that of infinitely the most glorious Person that could be subjected to the law. It was the righteousness of Emmanuel, God with us; and this obedience of the Son of God in our nature conferred more honor on the law than the obedience of all intelligent creatures. He gave to every commandment of the law, and to every duty it enjoined, more honor than it had received of dishonor from all the transgressors that have been in the world. When others obey the law, they derive from that obedience honor to themselves; but on the occasion now referred to, it was the law that was honored by the obedience of its Sovereign. "*The Lord,*" says the Prophet, "*is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable*" (Isa. 42:21), (Haldane, *Romans*, pp. 132, 133).

The obedience of Jesus Christ unto death even the death of a cross (Phil. 2:9), brought in "*everlasting righteousness*" (Dan. 9:24). Therefore, "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes*" (Rom. 10:4), i.e., Christ by keeping the law and fulfilling God's demands for righteousness is the end of the law as far as obtaining righteousness to all who believe. Christ's obedience was for His people, and His righteousness is imputed to them as their righteousness. "*He shall be called, Jehovah, our righteousness*" (Jer. 23:6). Because "*God has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Cor. 5:21), believers are able to say, "*In the Lord have I*

*righteousness*” (Isa. 45:24). No other righteousness will avail before God. This is the only righteousness in which a man can stand before God in that great day. This is the righteousness Paul desired to be found in that great day. “*And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith*” (Phil. 3:9).

### ***c. The Basic Doctrines***

Another basic teaching is justification by faith. Martin Luther’s celebrated saying that the doctrine of justification by faith is the test of a standing or falling church is supported by the prominence we find it has in Romans and Galatians and the mighty way God has used it in history: most notably in the Reformation and in revivals.

Other vital teachings are: the work of the Spirit in salvation, redemption by blood and power, reconciliation, propitiation, the difficulties of salvation, the inability of natural man to do any spiritual good, false faith and counterfeit professions, the necessity of works as a proof of genuine faith, the judgment of God, and eternal punishment.

All of these teachings are vital and foundational. None of them are secondary. If we take Christ as our Pattern and Example, not only in His life but also in His ministry, we will preach the above doctrines since Christ taught all the above. Our Lord’s message to the unsaved should be our message. He commands us, “. . . *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*” (Matt. 28:20).

### ***d. Urgency***

I believe in language learning and the importance of it. However, the gospel should be taught as best it can in whatever way it can from the beginning of the missionary’s time with the people. Unless this is done, urgency is lost. If there is

no urgency with the missionary, the people will not see the great, urgent importance of the message. We are never to delay to preach the great danger of the lost and the way of salvation. Judgment is imminent! Any delays are directly opposite to the gospel-call which is for today, not tomorrow: "*Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts*" (Heb. 3:7, 8). It is true that God's work should not be done haphazardly. It should be done well, but it must be done urgently. We should give careful, complete teaching, but always with a sense of urgency. These two things are not necessarily exclusive of one another. A fire in the house must be put out carefully and completely, but it must also be put out urgently.

An illustration in Martyn Lloyd-Jones' book, *Preaching and Preachers*, tells of William Burns, who was greatly used in revivals in Scotland about 1840. He put his hand on the shoulder of a brother minister and said, "Brother, we must hurry." If a person knows nothing of that urgency, he is not preaching Biblically.

Paul writes to Timothy, "*Preach the Word, be urgent in season and out of season*" (2 Tim. 4:2). NEB has "press it home." Philips has "never lose your sense of urgency." The basis of this charge is in the first verse of the chapter; the coming of Christ "*who will judge the living and the dead*" (2 Tim. 4:1). As godly Richard Baxter, a mighty Puritan preacher, said, "I preached as a dying man to dying men." Surely these things are a matter of life and death, and unless we show some urgency, the lost will see no danger and continue in security and ease. Opportunities lost for preaching and teaching the good news often cannot be regained.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, writing of urgency, says,

You are not simply imparting information, you are dealing with souls, you are dealing with pil-

grims on the way to eternity, you are dealing with matters not only of life and death in this world, but with eternal destiny. You can give a lecture at any time, now, or in a year's time, it will not make much difference. But the message of the Gospel is something that should never be postponed, because you do not know whether you or the people will be alive even in a week's time or in a day's time. "In the midst of life we are in death."

The Word says, "*Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away*" (James 4:13, 14). Come now, you who say, "We will do thus and thus and then we will preach the Gospel," whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. I fear many missionaries think months and months and even years of preparation must precede the teaching of the gospel. Not only have they lost all urgency, but their hearts no longer smite them for not telling the gospel to those around them who have never heard it and are passing one by one into eternity without the gospel.

"*When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand*" (Ezek. 33:8). God forgive us! May God stir us up to lay hold of those who linger, and hurry them out of the city devoted to destruction. They "*urged Lot to hurry . . . and while he lingered the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside that he said, 'Escape for your life! Do not look*

*behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed”* (Gen. 19:15-17).

May we be given zeal and urgency to preach the gospel to the unreached. I give a verse that was given to me many years ago. I have never forgotten it. *“Awake to righteousness and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame”* (1 Cor. 15:34).

### ***e. Saving Faith***

Two vital members of saving faith are the Lordship of Christ and the discipleship of the believer. These days these two members are often amputated, making faith little more than an assent. New Tribes Mission is now propagating such a message, calling it chronological teaching. They write, “There are those who would call this type of Gospel presentation, ‘Easy-Believism.’ When they present the Gospel, they consider it is necessary to place before sinners the need to take up the cross and follow Jesus and the necessity of crowning Jesus Lord of their lives” (McIlwain, *Building on Firm Foundations* vol. 1, p. 26).

#### **(1) Includes the Lordship of Christ**

Let us look first at *the Lordship of Christ*.

The title of our beloved Saviour is Jesus Christ our Lord. This title Lord which is given Jesus Christ in the New Testament is the same title given to the Lord God Almighty in the Old Testament, which in Hebrew is Jehovah (see Isa. 45:22-25 with Rom. 14:10, 11). This means Jesus is Jehovah, the everlasting, almighty God. He is Jesus the Man. He is also Christ, the Anointed of God. But He is also the Lord Jehovah, Ruler of all.

Now an error has crept into the church and is presently taught. It is taught that you can take Christ as your Saviour but not, perhaps, take Him as your Lord until some future

time or even never. But this cannot be. The Person of Jesus Christ cannot be divided. He is not only Jesus Christ. No. He is Jesus Christ the Lord! Christians are those who have "*received Christ Jesus the Lord*" (Col. 2:6). Lloyd-Jones preaching on Romans 1:3-5 says, "The person is one and indivisible. And if you think that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ without realizing that He is your Lord, I would not hesitate to say that your belief is of no value." These are strong words indeed.

The church has held to the three offices of Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King. This is taught throughout the Word, so I will not multiply references. He is a Prophet to teach, a Priest to sacrifice and intercede, and a King to rule and protect. Just as the Person of Christ cannot be divided, neither can His offices. If He is a person's Saviour, having as a Priest offered Himself for their sins, then He is of necessity their King to rule over them.

Why has this error found its way into the church? It is because the natural man wants to be saved from hell but yet continue on his path of self-pleasing. The natural man despises authority and does not want to submit to Christ's Lordship. It is the carnal desire to be saved from punishment while still holding on to sin. Yet as Pagitt wrote, "Oh, it pleaseth nature well to have heaven and their lusts, too, but it cannot be done. None can leap from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom."

To refuse His Lordship is to deny that Jesus Christ is Lord; even the Lord Jehovah. This is to refuse to bow the knee. This is to continue as a rebel. This is a refusing to "*kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little*" (Ps. 2:12). Yes, this is to be cast out into outer darkness after hearing the fearful words, "*Bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me*" (Luke 19:27).

Lloyd-Jones pointedly preaches, “You cannot be in relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ unless He is your Lord. Our realization of this, of course, may vary from time to time, but to teach specifically that you can take Him as Saviour without taking Him as Lord is nothing but sheer heresy.” Likewise, see Tozer on this point in his article, *I Call It Heresy*.

It is quite wrong to say that teaching the Lordship of Christ is to attach strings to the gospel, as the book *Building on Firm Foundations* that I recently read says. It accuses those who teach the necessity of receiving Christ as Lord as “adding to the gospel.” Yet to take away the Lordship of Christ from faith is to empty faith of scriptural meaning and leave it empty and powerless. Such faith is the faith of hypocrites, for such faith will never save. It is a faith produced by man, not a mighty God-given faith that saves from sin. Did Christ die just to save us from hell? Why did He die? What does the Word say? “*Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works*” (Tit. 2:14). There is Lordship! I fear the faith taught in much teaching is not faith at all.

## (2) The Necessity of Discipleship

The second vital member of saving faith is *the Discipleship of the Believer*.

Some say that it is not “necessary to place before sinners the need to take up the cross and follow Jesus. . . .” At one time I believed this, too. I thought it was a message to disciples. However, I was wrong. It is a message to the unsaved, too. Note Mark 8:34-36, “*And when He had called the people to Him, with His disciples also, He said to them, ‘Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s*

*will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?'"* This was taught by Christ to the people and His disciples. Thus to say that teaching discipleship is to add to the Gospel, as some say, is to accuse Christ of teaching a false Gospel. What a fearful accusation.

It is true that discipleship is not our main message. Surely, our main message is "*Christ and Him crucified.*" Yet, the message of discipleship was often taught by Christ. It was an emphasis in His teaching. Because some teaching does not give prominence to Christ's teaching, it leaves out important teaching. In Matthew alone there are the following passages on discipleship: 8:19-22; 10:24-39; 16:21-28; 18:7-9; 19:28-30. That Christians are disciples is clearly taught by Acts 11:26, "*the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*"

Can a man be saved without being a disciple? Christ clearly denies that he can. He says, "*He will lose his life, he will lose his own soul*" (Matt. 16:26). He instructs not to fear men, but God, and warns that if a man fears men and denies Him, He also will deny him before His Father who is in heaven. He teaches that if a man is not willing to suffer loss and pain even to the cutting off of a hand or foot, he will be cast into hell fire. That is, he must willingly renounce his most loved sins and dearest earthly enjoyments and even his own life for Christ.

I quote from Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections*, p. 318. He writes,

The holy Scriptures do abundantly place sincerity and soundness in religion in making a full choice of God as our only Lord and Portion, forsaking all for Him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Christ, on counting the cost; in our heart's closing and complying with the religion of Jesus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments and even our own lives, for

Christ; giving up ourselves, with all that we have, wholly and forever, unto Christ, without keeping back anything, or making any reserve; or, in one word, in the great duty of self-denial for Christ; or in denying, i.e., as it were, disowning and renouncing ourselves for Him, making ourselves nothing that He may be all.

*f. Easy-believism*

An old error that is being resurrected is easy-believism. What is easy-believism? It is a teaching that confines faith to the mind. Faith is simply an intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel. Robert Sandeman was an exponent of this teaching in England about 200 years ago. He taught that the feelings (the heart) and obedience (the will) are excluded as works. He stressed “bare faith in a bare Christ.” No change of life was required. No evidences of faith such as fruit, works, or holiness were insisted on. To do so would be a form of works and lead converts to forget that all is objective in Christ and fix their eyes on the subjective. The converts were not exhorted to examine themselves, but simply to “look to Jesus.”

Dr. Kendall, an English pastor, writes,

I state categorically that the person who is saved—who confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead—will go to heaven when he dies, no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith. In other words, no matter what sin (or absence of Christian obedience) may accompany such faith (Kendall, *Once Saved, Always Saved*, p. 41 [1983]).

Professor Donald Macleod says of this “misguided” statement, “To the theologically aware, it immediately suggests Antinomianism. To the general public it is an invitation

to live as you please.” Derek Thomas concurs, “. . . it is a license to sin that grace may abound.” (All the above under this point I have copied or gleaned from a booklet, *No Holiness, No Heaven* by Richard Alderson, Banner of Truth Trust.)

In *Building on Firm Foundations* is the statement by T. McIlwain, “What if a person truly believes and puts his faith in Christ as his Saviour, but he does not attend church? Could he truly be saved?” Again, “But what if that person who truly trusts in Christ were to get drunk or commit adultery? Could he really be saved?” These questions are meant to show that doubt of such people’s salvation reveals that such doubters are not clear on grace. Actually, they, too, are misguided statements opening the door to sin. No one, of course, can know of another that he truly believes except by the fruit of his life. If a professing believer does not attend church, we should doubt his profession, for it evidences no love to the brethren and no desire to worship God and hear His Word. “*He who does not love his brother abides in death*” (1 John 3:14).

The other statement seems to be saying much as Dr. Kendall says, “He will go to heaven, no matter what sin may accompany such faith.” This seems to contradict verses such as, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life*” (Gal. 6:7, 8); and “*For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience*” (Eph. 5:5, 6). These are unwise statements by Mr. McIlwain and Dr. Kendall. Rather than protecting the doctrine of grace such statements cheapen grace. Grace has a mighty power to change lives, and as Titus

2:12 says, grace “*teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age.*” The grace that doesn’t do that is not the grace of the Bible, but a poor counterfeit.

My previous point was that according to much present-day teaching, discipleship is not considered necessary for salvation, nor is it necessary to submit to Christ’s Lordship. Using the definitions of cheap from the dictionary, this is making salvation “purchasable below the going price.” It is to “depreciate grace in value.” It is making it something “costing little trouble to obtain.” In one sense salvation is absolutely free. It is all of grace. The full price has been paid by Christ. It is “*without money and without price*” (Isa. 55:1). Yet, in another sense it costs our all to obtain the “*one pearl of great price*” (Matt. 13:44-46). We have to sell all that we have to obtain the “*treasure hidden in a field*” (Matt. 13:44). Christ often preached this, not only in Matthew 13, but also to the three men in Luke 9 who said they would follow Him. He also taught the multitudes to “*count the cost*” in Luke 14. Paul is our example, “*I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ*” (Phil. 3:8).

This message must be preached. It is necessary. If it is not, and all who are “clear on the gospel” are assured they are saved and safe for eternity, false professors will be multiplied who will be a scandal to the church. I fear that such unscriptural teaching will produce many hypocrites, and grace will be cheapened and despised.

## 7. The Mode of Preaching

### a. *With Authority*

We read that our Lord “*taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes*” (Mark 1:22). Likewise, we read that Paul did not preach “*with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (1 Cor. 2:4).

Lloyd-Jones writes of this power,

The same thought appears once more in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, where the Apostle writes to this effect: Some of you people are despising me, and you are claiming great things for yourselves. Since I have left, some of you have been reigning as kings. You think you are great and that you know everything, and I am nothing. Very well; I am coming to see you, and I am going to test you. And let me make it clear to you—I am not interested in your words; I am not interested in your talk. It is one thing to talk, but the kingdom of God is not in word but in power, and when I come to you I am not going to test your speech, but your power. It is the power that matters, says Paul; any fool can get up and speak. The question is, Is there power in the man's speech? What does it accomplish? What does it lead to? He is still stressing the same thing, you see. Or again, listen to him in 2 Corinthians chapter ten, verse 3: *“For though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.”* The Apostle did not hesitate to say this about himself; he claimed it for himself. He knew that he preached with power—the power of the Holy Ghost.

Need I explain why I emphasize this truth? Surely this is the thing the church needs to learn today above everything else. It is the thing we all need to learn above everything else. It is the thing I need to learn above everything else. Do you remember how our blessed Lord, just before His ascension, talked to His disciples and said, *“Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high”?* (Luke 24:49). And again: *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come*

*upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). But not without the power. They could not witness without the power. They were very ordinary men—fishermen and artisans, workmen most of them. They must have the power, and after they have received it they can witness. And we read in the Book of Acts that "*with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection . . .*" (Acts 4:33). They spoke with power, and the word, as it came through them, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah, was like a hammer "*that breaketh the rocks in pieces.*" It crushed men. It convinced men. It convicted them. It caused them to fall to the earth and to cry out, "*Men and brethren. What shall we do?*" It made them desperate. The power! That is what Paul is talking about. He was conscious of the power (Lloyd-Jones, *Romans Chapter 1*, p. 221).

In this same message he talks about Howell Harris, a Welsh Methodist, who was mightily used about two hundred years ago. Harris used the word "authority." He knew when he preached with it, but he also knew when he was without it. Indeed, it was manifest to all. We know little of this. But we know we need this authority, this power. May we cry for it for the promise is, "*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*" (Luke 11:13).

### ***b. In Simplicity***

Preaching must be understandable, or it is useless. If plain preaching is needed anywhere, it is needed on the mission field. Most of our hearers are uneducated and illiterate. Their culture is far different than ours. Their ways of thinking

are strange to us, as ours is to them. How we must seek God's wisdom and help to be able to speak plainly and understandably! Most of us take too much for granted. Because we understand what we preach, our tendency is to think our hearers understand, but it is not so.

Many questions should be asked when we preach. We should listen very carefully to the answers given and to the views and beliefs of the hearers. The people should be encouraged to reply, to think, and to give their thoughts. We must become students of the people and their beliefs and ways of expressing themselves. We must be good learners before we can become good teachers. We must allow people to disagree with us. Do we speak in humility? Pride or arrogance will silence our hearers. We, too, have much to learn and should never give them the impression that all wisdom lies with us. All messages should be interspersed with questions. Questions cause people to think. They also help the preacher to find out what is not understood and how it is misunderstood. We should also, often ask people individually, after a message, what they have heard. Many messages by missionaries are not understood.

Another principle of good teaching and preaching is review. Teaching should be repeated again and again. I preach the same message (although with variations) over and over and over again. Often the people ask me to preach something they have heard before. I very rarely preach a message only once. They prefer to hear something they have heard. They are not novelty seekers like many in western cultures and lands. They want to learn, and they learn the most by hearing truth repeated and reviewed. Our Lord is our great Example here, too. He often repeated His message. He spoke with "*plainness of speech*" that appealed to all classes. He was a simple Preacher, and they gathered to hear Him. He used many illustrations of things from common life; all well known to the peo-

ple. He often spoke in parables. It is true that He spoke in parables to veil the truth from certain of his hearers. Yet, His primary purpose was to teach and illustrate truth by the parables.

The Saviour gave no doctrine in an abstract form, no skeleton of truth, but clothed them all, as it were, with flesh and blood. He acted Himself as He declared to His apostles they must act (Matt. 13:52); He brought forth out of His treasure things new and old; by the help of the old, making intelligible the new. And thus in His own example He has given us the secret of all effectual teaching.

Had our Lord spoken naked spiritual truth, how many of His words would have entirely passed away from the hearts and memories of His hearers. But being imparted to them in this form, under some lively image, or in some brief, interesting narrative, they awakened attention, and excited inquiry; or even if, at the time, the truth did not find an entrance into the mind, His words laid up in the memory, were, to many that heard Him, like the money of another country, of which they knew not the value, but which yet was ready for use when they reached that land. When the Spirit brought all things to their remembrance, He quickened the forms of truth, which they already possessed, with the power and spirit of life. Gradually, the meanings of what they had heard, unfolded themselves. And thus must it ever be with all true knowledge, which is not the communication of information, but the planting seeds of truth, which shall take root in the new soil, and striking their roots downward, and sending their branches upward, shall grow into goodly trees” (Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, p. 11).

I never saw the great wisdom of Christ in teaching by parables until I began to appreciate the value of the parables for uneducated people on the mission field. To arrive at the

meaning of the parables, much thought and meditation is produced. And thought and meditation leads to learning. The Lord did not give the meaning of all the parables, but gave us the meaning of many to show us the correct approach to understand them.

Difficult doctrines are illustrated in the parables and made plain. In the parables the doctrines are clothed with flesh and blood. What is repentance? How beautifully and yet simply repentance is illustrated in the tax collector, and non-repentance in the Pharisee. The need for imputed righteousness is not readily explained, but how simply it is illustrated in the man without the wedding garment. How our hearts are moved as we see God portrayed as the old father who runs (does not wait) to welcome his son home. How we hear with trembling the fearful words to those on the King's left hand, "*Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*" Judgment to come, eternal punishment, forgiveness, the binding of Satan, rewards, love the fruit of faith, the cost of discipleship, repentance, death and what follows, humility, the coming of Christ, the feast in heaven, the necessity to strive, the gospel invitation, the rejection of the Son, and the resurrection, are just a few of the many teachings illustrated and revealed in the parables.

The Lord has put much honor on the parables by using them to save many people here. Many of the old, simple people have told how conviction and faith come to them by the parables. We have tried them and proved them. We have sat at the feet of Jesus and seen something of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

### *c. Timely*

We should not have a program or fixed series of messages that cannot be deviated from. Circumstances change and call for the Word of God to meet them when they

develop. For instance, in one of the areas we work, God uncovered a fetish that the people pray to and believe in. This called for teaching on idolatry and applications to the people. Other teaching had to be laid aside. In our area we had a false teacher arise with devastating effects. This teaching had to be immediately met, and when 2 Peter chapter 2 was taught it was pointed, pertinent, and timely. Just as the prophets had a message for their time from God, we, too, must have a message for the time and directed to the peculiar condition of the people among whom we work. As Tozer writes, "To be effective the preacher's message must be alive; it must alarm, arouse, challenge; it must be God's present voice to a particular people. Then, and not till then is it the prophetic word. . . ." Tozer, *Of God and Men*, p. 24. Men are still needed who "*have understanding of the times*" (1 Chron. 12:32).

A further reason why all preachers should not teach the same message as is done in some mission groups is because all do not have the same gifts or the same experience. This is illustrated by David refusing to go out in Saul's armor to fight Goliath. Saul's armor was all right for Saul, but it did not fit David. David also said, "*I have not tested them,*" so he went forth with his sling. What God the Spirit has taught us, and what we have experienced and proved, is what we should teach. God does give us confidence in portions of Scripture and the truths that we have appropriated and seen work and bring the victory, just as David had confidence in his sling that had wrought him victories by the "*living God.*"

Also, a stereotyped message cannot address all people everywhere, for the hearers are in greatly varying circumstances and trust in many different false refuges. This is illustrated for us in Christ's ministry. His message to Nicodemus was not His message to the rich young ruler. His message to the woman at the well was not the message He gave to the lawyer in Luke 10. His messages to the Pharisees found in

various places of the Scriptures were not the same as His messages to the people. Each message was suited to the people and their spiritual needs and conditions. Christ was led of the Spirit in this as in all His ministry. Once again Tozer forcefully stresses this,

A prophet is one who knows his times and what God is trying to say to the people of his times. What God says to His church (and we could add, the world, C. H.) at any given period depends altogether upon her moral and spiritual condition and upon the spiritual need of the hour. Religious leaders who continue mechanically to expound the Scriptures are no better than the scribes and lawyers of Jesus' day. They fed the same diet to all and seemed wholly unaware that there was such a thing as meat in due season. The prophets never made that mistake nor wasted their efforts in that manner. They invariably spoke to the condition of the people of their times" (Tozer, *Of God and Men*, p. 20).

If we do not give the Spirit liberty to direct us, He will not conform to our program. He will refuse and work His way. "*The wind blows where it wills*" (John 3:8), not where we will. Think how the Spirit gloriously saved the thief on the cross in such a surprising and dramatic fashion and with little truth. This gave God great glory and the Saviour much satisfaction.

#### ***d. With Faith***

The Word of God must be preached with faith. We must believe that the gospel is indeed "*the power of God unto salvation.*" If a man doesn't preach as if he believed what he preached, it is unlikely people will be moved to believe. The Word preached without conviction is more likely to harden than convince, to produce disinterest rather than concern. Do we really believe in eternity and the certainty that men will

pass into the everlasting fire if they do not turn and repent? Do we really believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration, faith, and holiness to enable sinners to see the Lord? Yet, to all our shame, how little we are moved by eternal realities. We can all agree with Richard Baxter's self-condemnation in his *Reformed Pastor*,

I know not what others think, but for my own part, I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at myself, that I deal not with my own and others' souls, as one that looks for the great day of the Lord; and that I can have room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly absorb my mind. I marvel, how I can preach of them slightly and coldly; and how I can let men alone in their sins; and that I do not go to them, and beseech them for the Lord's sake to repent, however they take it, or whatever pains or trouble it should cost me. I seldom come out of the pulpit, but my conscience smites me, that I have been no more serious and fervent in such a case. It accuses me, not so much for want of human ornaments or elegancy—but it asketh me—"How couldst thou speak of life and death with such a heart?" The God of mercy pardon me, and awaken me with the rest of His servants, that have been thus sinfully negligent! O Lord, save us from the plague of infidelity and hard-heartedness ourselves; or else how shall we be fit instruments of saving others from it?" (Quoted in *The Christian Ministry*, Charles Bridges, p. 323).

People will pay more attention to a relatively unimportant subject spoken with certainty and vehemence than to great, eternal truths spoken coldly and lifelessly. Charles Bridges in *The Christian Ministry*, p. 320, writes,

A lively impression of interest seems the natural result of a cordial belief of the Gospel; and therefore a want of expression of this interest conveys a plausible suspicion of the credibility of our message. For who could bring a *true* report of a fire, or of any extraordinary news, with a calm tone, gentle voice, or elegant expression? And can we wonder that a cold correctness in the delivery of our instructions should weaken a belief of their truth or at least of their importance?

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "*For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance*" (1 Thess. 1:5). Most commentators believe that this assurance is speaking of the assurance of Paul and his co-laborers when they preached. That is, that they had full confidence in their message and in the Holy Spirit to save through it.

Roland Allen writes of this,

St. Paul expected his hearers to be moved. He so believed in his preaching that he knew that it was "*the power of God unto salvation.*" This expectation is a very real part of the presentation of the Gospel. It is a form of faith. A mere preaching which is not accompanied by the expectation of faith, is not a true preaching of the Gospel, because faith is a part of the Gospel. Simply to scatter the seed, with a sort of vague hope that some of it may come up somewhere, is not preaching the Gospel. It is indeed a misrepresentation of the Gospel. To preach the Gospel requires that the preacher should believe that he is sent to those whom he is addressing at the moment, because God has among them those whom He is at the moment calling: it requires that the speaker should expect a response. The air of expectation pervades all the accounts of St. Paul's

preaching. Everywhere we are made to recognize, not only that St. Paul expected to make converts, but that others expected it also. This accounts for the opposition which his preaching created. People were afraid of his preaching, and fear is a form of expectation: it is a form of faith. St. Paul himself was inspired with the faith of hope: he inspired others with the faith of fear. Everywhere he was surrounded by an atmosphere of faith" (Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* p. 74).

*e. In Love*

Somewhere I read that it is one thing to love to preach, and quite another to love the ones we preach to. How true this is, and how condemning. We are to be those who are described as "*speaking the truth in love.*" Such cause "*the growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love*" (Eph. 4:15, 16). Paul, in his beautiful love chapter, says, "*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal*" (1 Cor. 13:1). Those who speak in love are sure to be heard, for it is the loving word, the affectionate appeal that God often uses to melt hard hearts.

We think of our great Exemplar who, "*When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them*" (Matt. 9:36). We think, too, of Him weeping over Jerusalem, even the city of His opposers. How like Him was Paul who ardently loved the Corinthians and wrote to them with tears. Calvin, writing on 2 Corinthians 2:4, says, "He adds, *tears*—which in a man that is brave and magnanimous are a token of intense grief. Hence we see from what emotions of mind pious and holy admonitions and reproofs must of necessity proceed. For there were many noisy reprovers. . . . It is, however, the part of a pious pastor, to weep within himself, before

he call upon others to weep.” How often the apostles speak in love and with tender appellation; “*my beloved and longed for brethren,*” “*my little children,*” “*beloved,*” “*whom I love in the truth,*” etc.

If we lay open a person’s sins, may it be in love so that they are “*the wounds of a friend*” (Prov. 27:6). Edward Payson writes of himself, “I never seemed fit to say a word to a sinner, except when I had a broken heart myself, when I was subdued and melted into penitence, and felt as though I had just received a pardon to my own soul, and when my heart was full of tenderness and pity” (Payson’s Life quoted by Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, p. 335).

Robert Murray McCheyne was “altogether one of the loveliest specimens of the Spirit’s workmanship.” A great part of that was the love he manifested. I copy out a few sentences from his biography written by his loved and loving friend, Andrew Bonar in *Life of Robert Murray McCheyne*.

If we are ever to preach with compassion for the perishing, we must ourselves be moved by those same views of sin and righteousness which moved the human soul of Jesus (p. 50).

On Sabbath, the 6th he writes, Preached with some tenderness of heart. O why should I not weep as Jesus did over Jerusalem (p. 50).

June 15th—Large meeting in the evening. Felt very happy after it, though mourning for bitter speaking of the gospel. Surely it is a gentle message, and should be spoken with angelic tenderness, especially by such a needy sinner (p. 53).

Bonar comments, “He . . . used to grieve over himself if he had spoken with anything less than solemn compassion. I remember on one occasion, when we met, he asked what my last Sabbath’s subject had been. It had been, *‘The wicked shall*

*be turned into hell.*' On hearing this awful text, he asked, 'Were you able to preach it with tenderness?' Certain it is that the tone of reproach and upbraiding is widely different from the voice of solemn warning. It is not saying hard things that pierces the conscience of our people; it is the voice of Divine love heard amid the thunder" (p. 53).

July 31, Sabbath—Afternoon, on Judas betraying Christ; much more tenderness than ever I felt before. O that I might abide in the bosom of Him who washed Judas' feet, and dipped His hand in the same dish with him, and warned him, and grieved over him—that I might catch the infection of His love, of His tenderness, so wonderful, so unfathomable" (p. 57).

Oh, if we could only learn this lesson that McCheyne would teach us.

### **8. The End of Preaching: Our One Object; To Win Souls for God's Glory and Man's Good**

Our one object should be to win souls. May we in truth purpose to do it for God's glory and the good of men. If so, we will be following the commandments of the first table, toward God, and of the second table, toward man. If our reputation, honor, or fame is our end, all is useless.

Saving souls was the one thing Paul lived and labored for. "*I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more. . . . I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some*" (1 Cor. 9:19, 22). In *Words to Winners of Souls*, pp. 9, 10, Horatius Bonar writes,

We take for granted that the object of the Christian ministry is to convert sinners and to edify the body of Christ. No faithful minister can possibly rest short of this. Applause, fame, popularity, hon-

our, wealth—all these are vain. If souls are not won, if saints are not matured, our ministry itself is vain.

The question, therefore, which each of us has to answer to his own conscience is, “Has it been the end of my ministry, has it been the desire of my heart to save the lost and guide the saved? Is this my aim in every sermon I preach, in every visit I pay? Is it under the influence of this feeling that I continually live and walk and speak? Is it for this I pray and toil and fast and weep? Is it for this I spend and am spent, counting it, next to the salvation of my own soul, my chiefest joy to be the instrument of saving others? Is it for this that I exist? To accomplish this would I gladly die? Have I seen the pleasure of the Lord prospering in my hand? Have I seen souls converted under my ministry? Have God’s people found refreshment from my lips, and gone upon their way rejoicing, or have I seen no fruit of my labors, and yet content to remain unblest? Am I satisfied to preach, and yet not know of one saving impression made, one sinner awakened?”

Nothing short of positive success can satisfy a true minister of Christ. His plans may proceed smoothly and his external machinery may work steadily, but without actual fruit in the saving of souls he counts all these things as nothing. His feeling is: “*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you*” (Gal. 4:19). And it is this feeling which makes him successful.

“Ministers,” said Owen, “are seldom honored with success unless they are continually aiming at the conversion of sinners. The resolution that in the strength and with the blessing of God he will never rest without success, will insure it. It is the man who has made up his mind to confront every difficulty, who has counted the cost and, fixing his eye upon the

prize, has determined to fight his way to it—it is such a man that conquers.”

## 9. Shaking Off the Dust

The message we preach is an authoritative message. It comes with all the authority of the God of heaven. We are His ambassadors and represent Him. It is *“as though God were pleading through us: we implore you in Christ’s behalf be reconciled to God”* (2 Cor. 5:20). To receive the messengers and their message is to receive God who sent it. *“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me”* (Matt. 10:40). To reject the messengers and their message is to dishonor Christ’s name, despise God’s authority, and reject His gracious invitation.

Do we accept this rejection without a word? Do we calmly continue to preach to those who refuse to hear? Not at all. We reject them who reject us and our message. We refuse to teach such who continue in impenitency. We must not just go away but, *“shake off the dust from our feet as a testimony against them”* (Luke 9:5). We must warn those who reject that God’s displeasure is upon them, and they will be held accountable in that great day. We must publicly announce to them, *“The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you”* (Luke 10:11). Christ declares, *“It will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.”*

Paul solemnly practiced this shaking off of dust, *“they shook off the dust from their feet”* (Acts 13:51). And again, *“But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, ‘Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.’ And he departed from there”* (Acts 18:6, 7). We must do the same. The message demands response. To just teach the intellect demeans the glorious message. When the Pharisees were offended by the Word, Christ’s command to His disciples was, *“Let them alone”* (Matt. 15:14). We must not continue to teach those who do not

want to hear, but go to others who will hear. In such a way God directs the gospel to where He would send it, closing doors and opening others. We must learn to “*shake off the dust.*”

The possibility of rejection was ever present. St. Paul did not establish himself in a place and go on preaching for years to men who refused to act on his teaching. When once he had brought them to a point where decision was clear, he demanded that they should make their choice. If they rejected him, he rejected them. The shaking of the lap, the shaking of the dust from the feet, the refusal to teach those who refused to act on the teaching, was a vital part of the Pauline presentation of the Gospel. He did not simply “go away,” he openly rejected those who showed themselves unworthy of his teaching. It was part of the Gospel that men might “*judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.*” It is a question which needs serious consideration whether the Gospel can be truly presented if this element is left out. Can there be a true teaching which does not involve the refusal to go on teaching? The teaching of the Gospel is not a mere intellectual instruction: it is a moral process, and involves a moral response. If then we go on teaching where that moral response is refused, we cease to preach the Gospel; we make the teaching a mere education of the intellect. This is why so much of our teaching of the Gospel in schools is ineffective. We teach, but we do not teach morally. We do not demand moral response. We are afraid to take the responsibility which morally rests upon us of shaking the lap. We should refuse to give intellectual teaching to a pupil if he refused to give us his attention: we might equally refuse to give religious teaching to a pupil who refused to give us religious attention.

It is a question which needs serious consideration whether we ought to plant ourselves in a town or village and continue for years teaching people who deliberately refuse to give us a moral hearing. We persevere in this in spite of the fact that near at hand are men who are eager and willing to give us that moral hearing. We are afraid to take the responsibility which morally rests upon us of shaking the lap. We have forgotten that the same Lord who gave us the command to go, gave us the command to shake off the dust from our feet. We have lost the art of shaking the lap, we have learned the art of steeling our hearts and shutting up the bowels of our compassion against those who cry to us for the Gospel" (Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* pp. 75, 76).

## CHAPTER 6

### **Mission Activities and Institutional Work**

#### **1. The One Work of the Apostles**

The apostles did not engage in educational, medical, or social work as such. They did not have many activities, but rather the one work of preaching the gospel to establish churches. This was their sole objective. It was not to improve social conditions or to advance people politically, physically, or educationally. That the gospel radically improved social conditions is doubtless true, but that was not the apostles' primary objective.

That institutional works are costly in both money and personnel, and that land and buildings are always needed is obvious to all. There is also a great danger in such works. These works are highly visible, such that the danger is that progress socially, educationally, and religiously will be ascribed to the organization or mission engaging in these activities. It is expected that well-organized activities backed by foreign expertise will accomplish much. Thus what is accomplished is attributed to natural means by the people. The Spirit is obscured. Likewise such physical manifestations of mission works such as buildings, vehicles, headquarters, airplanes, schools, hospitals, and offices are seen to be evidences of foreign influence produced by foreign people with foreign skills. The physical is exalted; the spiritual is dimly seen.

Some years back small evangelical works were ridiculed in this country as “leaf” missions compared to large missions that were like the tree. Followers of these large groups would say to the evangelicals, “We have ships, planes, stores, hospi-

tals, schools. You have nothing.” Mocking is still done by people saying they have headquarters, directors, organization, etc. To such people the physical is important and dominates. Isn't this a danger even in evangelical works if these things are prominent? Such works tend to glorify human skills and abilities. They are carried on by men with specialized training and particular skills.

On the other hand as Allen writes,

The spiritual force with which Christians have to do is a personal, active Spirit who works not only in us, as missionaries, but upon all with whom we deal and in all who will receive Him. Any success to which we may attain is His work. It is He who moves the soul, it is He who enlightens, it is He who establishes and upbuilds. We attain our end only when He is received by and revealed in another. The manifestation of the Spirit is only fulfilled in the ministration of the Spirit. That is, I suppose, the reason why Paul speaks of his work as a ministration of the Spirit. It is not enough merely to show forth the Spirit of Christ by pious and beneficent activity on our part as missionaries; it is the ministration of the Spirit which is our goal. It is not enough that those with whom we have to do should see our activities and recognize that they are inspired by a good spirit; it is not enough that they should imitate our activities; it is not enough that they should help us in them; there is no satisfaction until they are actuated by the Holy Spirit and express the Holy Spirit in their own activities.

The spiritual force, the Holy Spirit, will be manifested to the people of any country to which we go when they see that Spirit ministered by us manifested in the spontaneous activity of their own countrymen. They cannot see that so long as every

sign of progress in Christians in their country can be ascribed to the influence of foreign governors and directors, exercised, either directly or indirectly, through ministers and officers trained and appointed and controlled by them; nor can they see it in the activities of fellow-countrymen who have received a foreign education and are engaged in directing organizations of a foreign type and largely financed with foreign money, exactly as the foreigners directed the organizations until they gave place to these trained natives.

It is here that we see the importance of the establishment of little native churches which are obviously and unmistakably not under our control, but fully equipped with their own ministers and possessing full spiritual authority to direct their own life. We should spend our strength in establishing as many of these as possible. The establishment of such churches would at once strike at the root of the difficulty which is presented to us. The people would see in those churches Christians possessed by the Spirit and showing forth the Spirit by being in some way different from other people who had not received the Spirit and acting in some subtle way differently from other people.

. . . If anyone looked for the Christian movement in the country, he would find it most powerfully expressed in the life of the local churches. And that is what it ought to be. But that it may be so, the local churches must be absolutely native and obviously and unmistakably free from our control—not in our speech, but in the eyes of every native.

I venture to insist that missionaries of the gospel have only one proper activity, the ministration of the Spirit of Christ. The material, social, political, physical advancement of the nation is not

their proper, direct work. Their sole direct work is to bring to Christ those whom He has called and to establish His church; and the social, physical, material progress of the people must spring out of that, and be the direct fruit of the Spirit in them.

We must not admit for one moment the truth of a statement often made that the man who devotes himself to the establishment of the church, declining to be involved in all sorts of activities for the improvement of social conditions, is indifferent to, or heedless of, the sufferings and injustices under which men suffer. He is nothing of the kind; he is simply a man who is sure of his foundation, and is convinced that the only way to any true advancement is spiritual, and is Christ, and therefore he persists, in spite of all appearances, in clinging to Christ as the only Foundation, and in building all his hopes for the future on the acceptance of Christ. He is not content with attacks upon symptoms of evil: they seem to him superficial: he goes to the roots” (Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, pp. 111-113).

## 2. The Objective: Church Planting

A missionary is not to merely seek to see people saved. He is to plant and establish churches. According to 1 John 1:3 the purpose of the gospel proclamation is to produce fellowship among believers based on their mutual fellowship with the Father and the Son, “*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*” John Stott comments, “The proclamation was not an end in itself; its purpose, immediate and ultimate, is now defined. The immediate is *fellowship (koinonia, 3)*, and the ultimate *joy (chara, 4)*. . . . The purpose of the proclamation of the gospel is therefore not salvation but *fellowship*” (*Epistles of John*, p. 63).

The reports of modern day missionary work often tell of many converts and sometimes of large numbers of “decisions” or professions. Apparently there is much success, but many times these converts are not gathered into a congregation for worship, mutual encouragement, fellowship, teaching, and service.

What is needed is a test of the professions. The local church is admirably suited for this task. All God’s people have a love for the brethren, and this is one of the strongest evidences of a true profession. *“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death”* (1 John 3:14). Such a love will move new Christians to join themselves with God’s people. We delight to be with the people we love. How can others know that these people are Christ’s disciples? *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35). On the other hand, those who do not join themselves with God’s people, or those who withdraw from the fellowship of the saints, manifest that they are not of us and that their profession is false. *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us”* (1 John 2:19).

Along with testing profession, the local church strengthens it, and will establish new Christians. No man can *“come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”* (Eph. 4:13), apart from the body of Christ. A Christian will be stunted and never come to his full potential if he is not joined to a local church. *“Under His (Christ’s) control all the different parts of the body fit together, and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love”* (Eph. 4:16, TEV). Also,

from the above verse we see that each Christian not only receives from the body by his participation in it, but also contributes to the upbuilding of the body. We see this described by Luke as he writes of the dynamic New Testament church in Jerusalem, "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). This life is participated in and manifested in the realm of the local church.

It is reported that George Whitefield, possibly the greatest of all evangelists, said that Wesley had been wiser than he had been, in that he had penned his sheep. It is necessary that the sheep be gathered into local congregations and "penned." Sheep that are not penned will wander. They will not be fed. They will be in constant danger. Churches must be planted to "pen the sheep." The apostles were led by the Holy Spirit from place to place, but their objective in each town in which they evangelized was to plant churches. When they left they usually left a church sufficiently established to continue in the faith and also to "*sound forth the Word of the Lord in every place*" (1 Thess. 1:8). Their objective was to establish churches, not just to evangelize. Hays says,

Paul did not seek to accomplish the thorough evangelization of each region to which he went. The record makes no mention of any endeavor on his part to do so. All his energies were directed to the laying of a solid and complete foundation for the church in the city to which he had been led. When that was sufficiently accomplished he went on to another strategic center.

The evangelization of the surrounding territory was to be the work of the church that was established. Preachers and teachers from the local church spread the witness, ministering by the gifts, and through the power of the Spirit (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 396).

Watchman Nee continues,

All the various God-given ministries have one aim, the establishment of local churches. In the thought of God only one company of people exists, and all His designs of grace center in that one company—His church. The work is not a goal in itself, it is only a means to an end. If we regard our work as an end, then our purpose is at variance with God's, for His end is the church" (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 84).

Roland Allen writes,

To the heathen crowd St. Paul addressed himself as to a mass of souls from amongst which he was to gather the elect children of God. But he did not approach them as an isolated prophet: he came as an apostle of the church of God, and he did not simply seek to gather out individual souls from amongst the heathen, he gathered them into the society of which he was a member. He did not teach them that they would find salvation by themselves alone, but that they would find it in the perfecting of the Body of Christ. Souls were not invited to enter into an isolated solitary religious life of communion with Christ: they were invited to enter the society in which the Spirit manifested Himself and in which they would share in the communication of His life. It was inconceivable that a Christian taught by St. Paul could think of himself as obtaining a personal salvation by himself. He became one of the brethren. He shared in the common sacraments. The church was not an invisible body formed of unknown "believers." Men were admitted by their baptism into a very visible society, liable to be attacked by very visible foes. The apostle who preached to them was a member of it, and he preached as a member of it, and as a member of it he invited them to enter it, to share its privileges

and its burdens, its glory and its shame. Entrance into it was guarded by a very definite and unmistakable sacrament. Thus Christianity was from the beginning both individualistic and socialistic.

St. Paul's preaching ever appealed to and demanded the exercise of the two highest and deepest convictions of men, their sense of individual responsibility and their sense of social communion with their fellows. Repentance and faith are the keynotes of his preaching. He strove always to bring men to make that act of spiritual surrender by which they renounce the past and turn to Christ. In repentance they confess their past wrongdoing; in faith they find forgiveness as members of Christ's Body. In repentance they recognize their weakness; in faith they find strength by the administration of the Spirit of Christ. In repentance they confess the way in which they have walked is a way of death; in faith they find in the Kingdom of Christ the way of life. In repentance they break with a sinful world; in faith they enter the church" (Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* p. 76).

### **3. Cooperation Among Church Planters**

If church planters have the objective of founding local New Testament churches through the preaching of the glorious gospel of grace, cooperation is not only possible, but needful. However, if a church planter is ambitious for his work or his denomination or his particular doctrine or for his distinctives, cooperation becomes difficult if not impossible. Such work will produce division. If a mission is founding mission churches, or a denomination is founding denominational churches, there cannot be a common aim on the field. Nee says,

Conditions have greatly changed since the days of the early apostles. Christianity has lost its origi-

nal purity, and everything connected with it is in a false and confused state. Despite that fact, our work today is still the same as in the days of the early apostles—to found and build local churches, the local expression of the Body of Christ. So if we are in a place where there is no church, we should seek the Lord’s face that He may enable us to win souls for Himself and form them into a local church.

Here is the most important principle in the work of God—a worker must not seek to establish a branch of the church from which he goes out, but to establish a church in the locality to which he comes. Wherever he goes, he establishes a church in **that** place. He does not extend the church of his place of origin, but establishes the church in the place of his adoption. Since in Scripture all churches are local, Jerusalem and Antioch can have no branch-churches. We cannot extend one local church to another locality, we can only form a **new** church in that locality. The church which they established in other places are the churches of those different places. What is the place in which I intend to work? It is the church in **that** place I must seek to establish” (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, pp. 93, 94).

Nee continues,

If those responsible for the sending out of workers sent them out not as their own representatives or the representatives of any organizations, but only as representatives of the Body of Christ, and if those sent out stood on the ground of no particular “church” or mission but on the ground of **the** church alone, then no matter from what places the workers came or to what places they went, cooperation and unity would always be possible and much confusion would be avoided” (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 32).

Hay adds,

“Church planting is a ministry that is related to the church as a whole. In his letters to the local churches, Paul stresses the fact that he was appointed by Christ as a minister of the church. He was not the minister of a congregation. His ministry was to the church at large, the whole church. To him the congregation in Antioch or anywhere else was just a gathering of the one church—of the members who happened to reside in that locality. He never speaks of himself or of his ministry as being related in any special sense to Damascus, where he was baptized, or to Antioch or to any other church. So it was also with all his fellow-workers. They did not consider that they had a special attachment or responsibility to the congregations with which they had originally fellowshiped. The ministry to which they were appointed was to the whole church” (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 80).

#### 4. The Local Churches

The church is the body of Christ. Local, visible churches are manifestations of the body of Christ here on earth. No local church can be described as “the body of Christ” since there is but “*one body*.” But the apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, “*Now ye are body of Christ*” (there is no article), (1 Cor. 12:27). [The anarthous use (Greek article omitted) qualifies or stresses quality.] A similar construction is John 1:1, “*the Word was God*.” Not the Word was a God or the Word was the God, but in essence “*the Word was God*.” It cannot be that Paul would write, “Ye are the body of Christ,” since this would exclude all others including himself. Nor can it be read, “Ye are a body of Christ.” That would mean that the Corinthians would be one of many bodies, but this, of course, is impossible. Nowhere do we find the phrase, “bodies of Christ,” and

indeed we find the clear statement, "*There is one body*" (Eph. 4:3). Here is unity. Since all are in quality or in essence "*body of Christ*" or Christ's body, this means that every local church is united with every other local church of believers. All believers in all localities are united as members of this one body. This unity should be visibly expressed in local churches. Paul loved to identify himself with the believers in Rome even though he had never visited the church there. Thus he wrote to the Romans, "*We being many are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another*" (12:5). He, also identified himself with the believers in Corinth, "*We were all baptized into one body*" (1 Cor. 12:13), and with the Ephesians, "*We are members of His body*" (5:30). Paul rejoiced to be in the one body with the Romans, Corinthians, and Ephesians, although he was not a member of any of those local churches. He went out of his way to emphasize this. We, too, should rejoice to say to all of God's saints whoever they are, "*We are one body in Christ.*" This bond unites us all.

Since every believer is a member of this glorious body, every believer should be in a local church that is a manifestation of this body. In apostolic times every believer was joined to the visible church. There was no such thing as a believer not in fellowship with the church in his locality. We read, "*the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved*" (Acts 2:47). Every saved person was "*added to the church.*" Here on the field, when a believer publicly professes his faith by baptism, he is joined to the church in his village. He doesn't apply for membership. He is not taken in by the people in some ceremony. He is added to the church by the Lord.

Bunyan writes against the division caused by not receiving those who have not been baptized,

Some of the things of God that are excellent  
have not been approved by some of the saints: What

then? Must these for this be cast out of the church? No, these reproaches by which the wisdom of heaven is reproached hath fallen on me, says Christ. But to return; God hath received him, Christ hath received him, therefore do you receive him. There is more solidity in this argument, than if all the churches of God received him. This receiving them, because it is set as an example to the church, is such as must needs be visible to them; and is best described by that word which discovereth the visible saint. Whoso, therefore, you can by the Word judge a visible saint, one that walketh with God, you may judge by the selfsame Word that God hath received him. Now him that God receiveth and holdeth communion with, him you should receive and hold communion with. Will any say we cannot believe that God hath received any but such as are baptized (in water)? I will not suppose a brother so stupefied; and therefore to that I will not answer (Quoted by Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans, Their Origins and Successors*, p. 403).

The church universal and mystical is “*a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle*” (Eph. 5:27). Although the local churches have not yet attained to this ideal, they are nevertheless most precious being symbolized by golden lampstands. They have much honor since the Son of Man as the Head of the church is in the midst of them (Rev. 1:12, 13).

I love Thy church, O God;  
 Her walls before Thee stand,  
 Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
 And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall,  
 For her my prayers ascend,  
 To her my cares and toils be given,  
 Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy,  
 I prize her heavenly ways,  
 Her sweet communion, solemn vows  
 Her hymns of love and praise.

Timothy Dwight, 1800

Such should be our attitude to the church, a creation of the Holy Spirit and called by Christ "*my church*"; or the "*church of God which He purchased with His own blood*" (Acts 20:28). How we should honor this church and support the churches in every way.

Watchman Nee writes,

Now what is true of the universal church is also true of a local church. The universal church comprises all those who have the unity of the Spirit. The local church comprises all those who, in a given locality, have the unity of the Spirit. The church of God and the churches of God do not differ in nature, but only in extent. The former consists of all throughout the universe who are indwelt by the Spirit of God; the latter consists of all in one locality who are indwelt by the Spirit."

In nature the church is indivisible as God Himself is indivisible. Therefore the division of the church into churches is not a division in nature, life, or essence, but only in government, organization, and management. Because the earthly church is composed of a vast number of individuals, a measure of organization is indispensable. It is a physical impossibility for all the people of God, scattered throughout the world, to live and meet in one place; and it is for that reason alone that the church of God has been divided into churches."

We must realize clearly that the nature of all the local churches is the same throughout the whole earth. It is not that the constituents of one local

church are of one kind, and the constituents of another local church are of another kind. In nature there is no difference whatever. The only difference is in the localities that determine their respective boundaries.

Locality is the divinely appointed ground for the division of the church, because it is the only inevitable division. Geographical distinctions are natural, not arbitrary, and it is simply because the physical limitations of the children of God make geographical divisions inevitable, that God has ordained that His church be divided into churches on the ground of locality. Any division of the children of God other than geographical implies not merely a division of sphere, but a division of nature. Local division is the only division which does not touch the life of the church (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, pp. 63, 64).

Again Watchman Nee writes,

Spiritually the church of God is one, therefore it cannot be divided; but physically its members are scattered throughout the earth, therefore they cannot possibly live in one place. Yet it is essential that there be a physical gathering together of believers. It is not enough that they be present "in the spirit." They must also be present "in the flesh." Now a church is composed of all "the called-out ones assembled" in one place for worship, prayer, fellowship, and ministry. This assembling together is absolutely essential to the life of a church. Without it there may be believers scattered throughout the area, but there is really no church. A church is a church assembled. These believers are not separated from other believers in any respect but that of their dwelling-places. As long as they continue in the

flesh they will be limited by space, and this physical limitation which is the very nature of things makes it impossible for God's people to meet in one place is the only basis sanctioned by God for the forming of separate churches. That division is merely external. In reality the church as the Body of Christ cannot be divided; therefore even when the Word of God refers to the different assemblies of His people, the places named vary, but it is still "the church" in every one of these places, namely, "the church in Ephesus," "the church in Smyrna," "the church in Pergamos."

In the New Testament there is one method and one alone of dividing the church into churches, and that God-ordained method is division on the basis of locality.

What is a New Testament church? It is not a building, a Gospel-hall, a preaching center, a mission, a work, an organization, a system, a denomination, or a sect. It is the meeting together for worship, prayer, fellowship, and mutual edification, of all the people of God in a given locality, on the ground that they are Christians in the same locality. All the believers in a locality form the church in that locality, and in a small way they ought to show forth what the church should show forth. They are the Body of Christ in that locality, so they have to learn how to come under the Headship of the Lord and how to manifest oneness among all the members, guarding carefully against schism and division" (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 47).

## 5. Unity of the Churches

Alexander Hay writes,

There is no Scriptural justification for the existence of the present divisions of the church. They

are contrary to the explicit teaching of the Word and to the whole intention of God concerning the church. They violate every principle of the Scriptural teaching regarding the organization, testimony, and ministry of the church. This fact should be kept carefully in mind by the planter of churches. Why should he propagate man's divisions along with the Gospel among new converts?" (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 173).

Unity in the Word of God is not something to be created. It already exists. It is not something to be produced but to be kept. "*Keep the unity of the Spirit*" (Eph. 6:3).

The teaching of the body that is found in 1 Corinthians 12 is founded on unity, the one body, although "*there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all*" (1 Cor. 12:4-6). Every believer is united to every other believer by the closest and strongest of spiritual ties because each is indwelt by "*the same Spirit.*"

Roland Allen writes,

St. Paul began with unity. In his view the unity of the church was not something to be created, but something which already existed and was to be maintained. Churches were not independent unities: they were extensions of an already existing unity. There could be no such thing as two churches in the same place both holding the Head, yet not in communion one with another. There could be no such thing as two churches in different places both holding the Head, yet not in communion one with another. There could be no such thing as a Christian baptized into Christ Jesus not in communion with all the other members of the body of which Christ was

the Head. If a member was united to the Head he was united to all the other members” (Allen, p. 128).

How did Paul encourage unity? Paul taught unity as a fact. From this he reasoned that all believers are to receive all other believers “*as Christ also received us,*” and so exhorted the Romans to “*with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 15:6). He often referred to other churches and their common trials and sufferings. He traveled from church to church having fellowship with all, and encouraging travel and communication between the churches. He, also, united the churches by having in the missionary party men from many different local churches. He had close friends in all the churches. He strengthened the unity of the churches by encouraging the collection for the needy Jewish saints. He went to Jerusalem three times for the sake of unity.

We should do the same things by visiting the churches, encouraging fellowship and visiting between the churches, having conferences including all the languages we work in, taking men from various churches with us when evangelizing or visiting the churches, sending teachers and evangelists to the churches, and by exhorting the believers to give to the needy whatever church they are in.

## CHAPTER 7

### **The Indigenous Church**

Note: The definition of indigenous is “Produced, growing, or living naturally in a particular region or environment” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*). Missionaries introduce the message from outside the country so that it is not produced locally and not in that sense indigenous. However, for our purposes we mean a church is indigenous that grows and continues where it has been planted without outside support or special conditions. It has become “indigenous” to the place where it is planted.

Christ our Lord “planned for the establishment of a native church under native leadership from the beginning, entirely self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating under the direct guidance of the Spirit” (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 34).

What is the needed equipment of churches and believers for them to be truly indigenous and able to multiply themselves, and churches be established over wide areas?

#### **The Believers Need Encouragement and Authority To:**

1. Gather on their own to hold their meetings.
2. Preach and teach themselves.
3. Baptize and admit into the local church.
4. Give communion at the Lord’s table.
5. Collect the offering.
6. Observe the Lord’s Day.
7. Discipline in their churches.
8. Ordain to further ministries, i.e., evangelists, elders, deacons.
9. Control their own finances.

In short, nothing should be withheld from them that is needed in their church life and to propagate the faith.

### **1. Hold Their Own Meetings**

An important distinction in missionary work is that a missionary's ministry is itinerant and to the churches, while elders and deacons function in one local church, and their ministry is fixed or local. A failure to observe this distinction has caused many missionaries to become "pastors" of local churches, and minister as teachers and elders.

A missionary's first task is to evangelize by preaching the glorious gospel of grace. If there is a local church existing, the fruit of this evangelization should be to increase the local church by the new converts being added to the church. The missionary should not seek followers of himself or his particular denomination, but seek to help and build up the local church, not his work. If there is no church, the believers should be taught to join themselves together and meet themselves. It is their responsibility to meet in one of their homes or to build a meeting house if a home would not be suitable for various reasons. From the beginning it should be their meeting and not the missionary's. Oftentimes missionaries first get a building, set up meetings, and have people come to them, and consider those who do attend as the church. Thus we have mission "stations," mission "halls," etc. However, the church should rather be considered to be the believers who have publicly professed their faith, been baptized, and meet together of themselves. They should initiate and conduct their own meetings in their own meeting place.

Otherwise the missionary becomes the "pastor" and loses his itinerant ministry to the churches, is no longer a missionary, at least on the apostolic pattern, and settles into a local ministry. The apostles were never the local pastors and teachers and directors of any of the churches which they founded.

Those churches were never dependent in any sense upon ministers or money from some outside source. If a missionary becomes a pastor, then when he goes on furlough or leaves for some other reason, a successor (usually from his homeland) has to be found. This type of assembling under the authority of the missionary is not scriptural assembling because it is in the hands of the mission or missionary, not in the hands of the local church. Church meetings must be under the local church. Otherwise it is something imported into the local area, an exotic plant rather than an indigenous church assembling on its own. Local men are to be the elders that rule, not men from outside.

The missionary should, of course, assist the church by public and private teaching, counseling, exhorting, and prayer. Yet the church's government, support, and propagation should be in the hands of the believers from the beginning. This makes for a "hands on" situation and encourages growth and responsibility among the believers. The missionary should get out of the way to make room for them. The believers in that climate will usually seek out the missionary to ask him questions and seek teaching, guidance, and his prayers without any resentment. However, if all is in the hands of the missionary, and he governs the believers, financially supports the work, and initiates outreach, then the believers feel it is his work, and sit back and become spectators. All men naturally tend to leave the work to others, particularly if there exists in their eyes a professional class whose duty it is to do it. A far worse situation that has often developed on the field is a resentment toward the missionary because he has stifled the local church. Thus we have strong anti-white, anti-missionary feelings and movements in many places among the nationals and even among church members. Later, as various and serious problems arise in the church related to its government and finance, the missionary may try to make the church more self-govern-

ing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, but will find it almost impossible to do this, for he has trained the church to be dependent on him. Yet many missionaries are quite content to be the father figure and rule. As the experienced missionary Hay wrote,

One of the greatest temptations is to indulge in paternalism, treating the converts as children and not as brethren in Christ. He is loved as the one who has brought the Gospel to them, and finds it easy to allow himself to be regarded as a spiritual father, so far advanced in spiritual knowledge and wisdom that no convert could be equally taught and led by the Spirit—and he may come to believe this himself’ (Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*, p. 512).

But if the church planter, exercising faith in the Holy Spirit, steps aside, and the believers from the beginning see it as their responsibility to meet and regularly assemble, and indeed see it not as a duty, but a privilege, then the missionary is free, after a relatively short time, to continue itinerating in evangelism and to see further churches planted. He will not abandon this church, but will make frequent visits and will be welcomed warmly for his help and advice. This is the responsibility of the missionary, and is termed “the work” (Acts 13:2). in the book of Acts. But the believers’ meetings, breaking of bread, prayer, and discipline are primarily the responsibilities of the local church and can best be done by the local believers who are far more knowledgeable about their situation and the people than the missionary who is from a foreign land.

## **2. Preach and Teach**

It becomes obvious to most missionaries that large areas and vast populations cannot be reached by them. If the growth of the church depends upon foreign missionaries, it will be

seriously limited. It will be limited by the areas they can cover and by the number of men they can train. If they set up missionary stations and schools, or if they pay the national teachers, the expansion will be limited by the amount of money available to do these things. Roland Allen writes:

Foreigners can never successfully direct the propagation of any faith throughout a whole country. If the faith does not become naturalized and expand among the people by its own vital power, it exercises an alarming and hateful influence, and men fear and shun it as something alien. It is then obvious that no sound missionary policy can be based upon multiplication of missionaries and mission stations. A thousand would not suffice; a dozen might be too many (Allen, p. 25).

The potential for expansion is in the national church, in the converts. Since the Spirit indwelling the believers is a missionary Spirit that desires the salvation of men, the believers will long to see others saved. Although we cannot produce this zeal for the souls of men, we can encourage it, and at least we can seek not to hinder it. We can pray for it. It is the spontaneous witness that the early church had such as when we read, "*They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word*" (Acts 8:4).

One of the ways that we hinder such witness is by paying teachers. Many missionaries seem to feel this is the only way to operate. When the first Christians here would go to visit villages to witness, teach, and preach, one of the first things the villagers asked was whether they were paid. If they would have been paid, their message would have been received with a completely different attitude and with little respect. Roland Allen writes,

All knowledge, above all, religious knowledge is a divine gift and to connect it with money is a sort of

simony. A paid preacher is suspected as a preacher paid to teach what he is told to teach by those who pay him; not the inspired possessor of a divine gift (*Spontaneous Expansion*, p. 149).

He writes movingly of such an unpaid, nonprofessional teacher or witness,

What carries conviction is the manifest disinterestedness of the speaker. He speaks from his heart because he is too eager to be able to refrain from speaking. His subject has gripped him. He speaks of what he knows, and knows by experience. The truth which he imparts is his own truth. He knows its source.

To all this is added the mysterious power of a secret. Christian experience is always a secret; and the man who speaks of it to another always pays him a subtle compliment, when he entrusts him with his secret of life. But when, as is often the case in the mission field, that secret is a dangerous secret; when careless speech may lead to punishment, disgrace, or persecution when the speaker entrusts his hearer with the safety of his life, or his liberty, or his property; such confidence, such trust, compel attention.

Upon the speaker, too, the effort to express his truth exercises a profound effect. The expression of his experience intensifies it; it renews it; it repeats it; it enlightens it. In speaking of it he goes through it again; in setting it before another he sets it before himself in a new light. He gets a deeper sense of its reality and power and meaning. In speaking of it he pledges himself to the conduct and life which it involves. He proclaims himself bound by it, and every time that his speech produces an effect upon another, that effect reacts upon himself, making his hold upon his truth surer and stronger.

But this only if his speech is voluntary and spontaneous. If he is a paid agent, both speaker and hearer are affected by that fact. The speaker knows, and knows that the other knows, that he is employed by a mission to speak. He is not delivering his own message because he cannot help it. He is not speaking of Christ, because Christ alone impels him. Do men not ask our paid agents, How much are you paid for this work? And must they not answer? And does not the answer destroy the effect of which we have been thinking.

One of the great virtues of spontaneous voluntary expression is that in the effort to express to another a truth which the speaker has found he not only renews the past, but especially in the early stages, he finds out his own ignorance of many aspects of his truth, and he is generally eager to learn, and to inquire further for himself. He searches diligently for answers to difficulties which arise. He is not an authorized and licensed preacher; he has no professional omniscience to maintain; he can and will confess ignorance and seek help. He is forced to think over and over again what are the implications of his truth; he has few ready-made stereotyped answers. As he goes on, no doubt, these tend to multiply, but they cannot multiply at first without much real experience. Thus the voluntary spontaneous expression of truth experienced strengthens and advances the speaker (Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, pp. 13-15).

### **3. Baptize and Admit Into the Local Church**

Baptism is a crucial issue on the mission field. I am thinking of the difficulty of discerning false professions from true. Who is to decide who should be baptized? On what should the decision be based?

If baptism brings persecution, reproach, or ostracism, there will not be many false professions. However, if baptism is accepted by the culture as a good thing, as it is in Papua New Guinea, the problem is compounded. In Papua New Guinea baptism is often eagerly sought since it indicates acceptance by a mission, and it often is nothing more than following the rest of the village and belonging to a mission.

Once again we turn to Paul's practice for our guidance, "*I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other*" (1 Cor. 1:14-16). Since the ones mentioned were the firstfruits, it was necessary that Paul was the judge of their profession and that he was the one to take the responsibility of baptizing them.

It is clear from the baptism of the Ethiopian by Philip and the baptism of the Philippian jailer that neither had a definite time of probation nor a lengthy time of testing profession was practiced by the early church before baptizing. However, surely baptism was not given hastily nor without careful thought. Paul would not have approved the baptizing of whole villages on the basis of "people movements." Nor would he have approved of baptizing people so that their children might be instructed in the truth "with the hope that the second generation would become Christian." Nor would he have approved of baptizing all who wanted to be baptized on their parroting certain phrases or vaguely professing, "I believe."

Those who showed evidence that they had repented and believed were baptized. To some whose sincerity was in doubt John the Baptist sternly said, "*Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into*

*the fire*” (Matt. 3:8-10). Yet, that even the New Testament missionaries made mistakes in baptizing is seen in the baptizing of Simon (see Acts 8:13-23).

In 1 Corinthians 1:14-16, that is quoted above, Paul says he baptized two men, Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. Crispus was *“the ruler of the synagogue”* (Acts 18:8). No doubt the cost of professing Christ was great for him. This would have given Paul assurance that his profession was genuine. Gaius is mentioned in Romans 16:23 as one who was distinguished for Christian hospitality, *“Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church. . . .”* It may well be that such Christian character was evidenced to Paul soon after conversion so that he baptized him with confidence. The household of Stephanas is spoken of very highly by Paul, *“I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us”* (1 Cor. 16:15, 16). This seems to indicate as Roland Allen says,

The inference seems to me irresistible that St. Paul and his fellow-workers admitted first only a few people of known reputation, who showed unmistakable signs of faith, and thereafter left the duty of accepting or refusing candidates very largely to these men, who were themselves from the very nature of the case in a position to possess or to acquire sound knowledge of the character and motives of those who offered themselves for baptism. But whether he did this whilst he was present or not, it is perfectly certain that his speedy departure threw this responsibility upon the local church (Allen, p. 98).

The first baptisms are crucial. If the first ones baptized later prove to be hypocrites, the work is greatly hurt since the

first people baptized are the only examples in their society to the rest. Too, the first ones baptized are the beginning of the church. If they are without the "*root of the matter*" in them, how can the church "*be followers of God as dear children*"? (Eph. 5:1). Indeed, they will bring shame on their profession and on that glorious name they profess. Too, since the first ones baptized were to later judge who were to be baptized and admitted to the church, how important it is that they themselves have genuine faith and are in truth indwelt by the Spirit, "*full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish*" (Rom. 15:14). Allen says on this,

The admission of new converts is a matter which very intimately affects the whole church. It cannot but seriously affect the whole community if improper persons are admitted or proper persons excluded. It is of vital importance that the Christians should learn to recognize this. It is possible to teach them and to help them to feel a proper responsibility in the matter. They will recognize the truth and feel the responsibility, if the truth is taught them and the responsibility is thrown upon them. No convert should be admitted by baptism into the body without the approval of the body, as a body. If a man wishes to be baptized he must be accepted by the congregation. But someone will say, 'If we do that, men will be rejected whom the missionary is convinced are proper persons.' If that is so, then the missionary must try to educate the congregation, but he will do that not by overruling them with a high hand, but by teaching them true principles. If the convert must go to the church, so must the missionary. He must entreat, exhort, advise with all long-suffering. He may fail to obtain his end in a particular case. But the people may be right and he be wrong. Even if he is right, he may really gain more by allowing the

people to overrule him than by overruling them. They will speedily see that they are dealing with one who earnestly seeks their welfare, but will not force his own views upon them, and they will certainly be in greater danger of erring through their desire to please him than through their desire to vex him, or even to drive him away (Allen, pp. 156, 157).

Allen wrote in another place,

I cannot help thinking that here we find one of the most important elements of his (Paul's) success. By leaving the church to decide who should be admitted, he established firmly the great principle of mutual responsibility. The church was a brotherhood, and the brethren suffered if any improper person was admitted to their society. They knew the candidates intimately. They were in the best possible position to judge who were fit and proper candidates. That they might make mistakes, and that they did make great mistakes, is sufficiently obvious; but if they made mistakes, they made them at their own peril. In this matter of mutual responsibility a little practical experience is worth a great weight of verbal teaching.

In our modern missionary practice we have constantly, almost invariably, violated this principle. We have constantly thrown the whole responsibility for the administration of baptism upon a foreign teacher who, as a stranger, is in the worst possible position to judge the real motives and character of those who offer themselves for baptism, and by so doing we have done much to weaken the sense of mutual responsibility among our converts. We have taught them that the church is a brotherhood, and that they must all work together for the good of the whole, but in practice we have denied their right and their duty to exercise that responsibility, and that at the most vital point.

Many a man has been baptized who would not have been admitted if the whole body of the church had realized that the responsibility for his admission rested with them, and had had opportunity to express their opinion in their own way. I cannot see what we gain by assuming the responsibility, and acting on our own authority in these matters. We are often left to act in much doubt and perplexity. The unworthy are not always rejected or sent back for further teaching; the worthy are not always accepted. We do not avoid the dangers of mistaken judgments. We rob the people of the right and duty of expressing themselves and so exercising and realizing by exercise their mutual responsibility one for another. I should like to see it accepted as a general principle that converts should be presented by members of the church and baptized on the authority of the whole church acting as a church (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, pp. 98, 99).

#### 4. Give Communion

From the book of Acts we learn that every Christian was baptized and regularly met together with the church to remember and proclaim the Lord's death till He comes by partaking of the communion at the Lord's Table. For in 1 Corinthians 10:16 it says of this communion, "*The bread which we break,*" alluding to the original institution by the Lord when He "*took bread and having given thanks, He brake it and said, Take eat; this is My body which is broken for you*" (1 Cor. 11:24). For this reason the communion is often called the "*breaking of bread*" (Acts 2:42; 20:7).

Thus we see that this partaking was done regularly by the early church. "*They devoted themselves . . . to the breaking of bread*" (Acts 2:42). Literally the expression is "*the breaking*"

*of the bread.*” The definite article points to the Lord’s Supper. Also Acts 20:7, “*Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread . . .*” suggests that they met each Lord’s day, the first day of the week, for the purpose of breaking bread. The “*breaking of bread*” was from house to house, so it was not only observed when the whole Jerusalem church was assembled. This suggests that an ordained priest or minister was not needed to administer the sacrament. Strauch writing on the appointment of elders says,

For the Christian community, in which all members are priests, holy ones, humble ministers, and family members, the simple word appoint best expresses the placement of elders and deacons into office. In the New Testament, no exclusive class of men is admitted into ministerial office by the rite of ordination. No one needs to be ordained to preach Christ or administer the ordinances. All such concepts are foreign to the New Testament apostolic churches (Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, p. 287).

Since a church that is newly established is to have the ordinances, this means that the authority to administer them is with this church even if it would not have an appointed eldership. It is not only ordained men that can baptize or administer the Lord’s Supper. All national or native churches should have the authority to baptize and administer the Lord’s Table. The importance and meaning of the Lord’s Supper is described in the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689,

The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night wherein He was betrayed, to be observed in His churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of Himself in His death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof,

their spiritual nourishment, and growth in Him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other” (*Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, chap. 30).

## 5. Collect the Offering

According to 1 Corinthians 16:2, “*On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come,*” giving is to be done weekly, “*on the first day of the week,*” and systematically.

Hay encourages this offering to be given at the gathering of the church at the Lord’s Table,

The offering given each first day of the week should be made in such a manner that all the principles governing giving are observed. It would seem that the most satisfactory way to provide for this is by having a box placed in a not too conspicuous place near the door. This makes it possible for the giving to be secret. It should be done only at the gathering of the church at the Lord’s Table, so that only believers may contribute. It should be taught that the believer’s responsibility is toward the Lord only, not toward the church or the Elders. What he gives is given to his Lord as his Lord instructs him; if he does not give, it is to his Lord that he does not give. The believer is much less ready to fail the Lord than to fail the church. He may find reasons for not giving as he should to the church; he can find none for not fulfilling his duty towards his Lord. He may feel little incentive to give to the church; he finds a deep satisfaction in giving to his Lord (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 366).

## 6. Observe the Lord's Day

Since I have spoken about communion on the first day of the week and likewise the offering, this is a good place to speak about the Lord's Day.

The observing of the Lord's Day is a public testimony of worshipping, serving, and obeying God. It is a visible testimony of the church to the world of their reverence for the Supreme Being. On the mission field such a corporate, visible testimony is very noticeable. When a church is planted in a village sometimes a large part of the whole village drastically changes its use of the first day of the week from doing their own pleasure to gathering in His name for worshipping, praying, praising, and honoring the one true God. Such a testimony cannot be ignored by the rest of the people.

## 7. Discipline

The local church must have the authority as to whom they admit, but they also must have the authority as to whom they exclude. The church must have the authority to keep itself pure and to *"purge out the old leaven"* (1 Cor. 5:7). They must be able to *"judge those who are inside"* (1 Cor. 5:12). *"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."* Matthew 18:18 refers to the exercise of discipline. Note that verse 17 refers to excommunication from the visible church.

How Paul dealt with questions of discipline in the churches he founded is found in 1 Corinthians 5. Since the church of Corinth did not take action, Paul had to take action in regard to the matter of *"sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles"* (1 Cor. 5:1). He moved with reluctance and even then exhorted the church to act. He sought to place the responsibility for dealing with the one who had done the deed com-

pletely on them. He rebuked them, reasoned with them, and instructed them to act for the good of the brother and the cleansing of their own fellowship. Paul did not immediately go there to put the offender out, but rather stayed away to encourage the church to act. Today the foreign missionary would usually act without the church. He would use his authority, but the church would remain untaught and immature, unable to act of itself. We follow quite a different path than the apostle Paul. Roland Allen writes of this action of the foreigner,

But the church in which the offender lives feels little or no responsibility, and the man is not excommunicated by the majority. Consequently the act has little effect. It does not come home to the offender; it does not come home to the church. A man can afford to present a stubborn front to the fulminations of a foreigner, who is perhaps only an occasional visitor and is always a foreigner. He cannot so treat the excommunication of his neighbors.

We look upon the sting of excommunication as exclusion from spiritual privileges; but the man who so acts as to incur excommunication is often the last person to feel that sting. His spiritual apprehension has already been deadened before he falls into sin. What he needs is the public censure of the majority of his fellow-churchmen to awaken his conscience. If the majority of his fellow-churchmen do not avoid him and cast him out, it is little use for a formal sentence of exclusion from church privileges to be issued against him and carried out by the officials of the society alone. That does no good; it very often only does harm. It hardens the man without humbling or instructing him.

Moreover, an act of this kind is done not only for the good of the offender, but for the good of the

church. It is meant to clear the church's good name which has been sullied by the act of one of its members. It is meant to be a real clearance of the church. But if the majority feel that they have not a real share in the action of the church, if they do not heartily and sincerely realize that the act is their own act, if they consequently do not support it, then there is no real clearance of the church. Nominally the man is excommunicated, nominally the church has repudiated his act, nominally it has cleared its good name; but if, in fact, this has only been the act of a few officials, then in reality there is no clearance. Christians and heathen alike recognize that the (mission) leaders of the church have expressed their disapproval. Christians and heathen alike recognize that the body has done nothing of the kind (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, p. 122).

## 8. Ordain and Appoint to Ministry

We are told that Paul and Barnabas "*appointed elders in every church*" (Acts 14:23). If we take the appointment of the seven in Acts 6 as normative such that the whole church entered into the appointment, then it seems most likely that he did not appoint men only on his own judgment. The fact that the qualifications have to do with moral character, and the necessity that they be men of good report, lead us to believe that he would have sought out the church's testimony to attest to the presence or absence of these qualifications in the men considered.

After Paul and/or his coworkers appointed elders we never hear of them appointing again in the same churches. This means that to the ones ordained he committed the authority for appointing others. They would also have authority to send forth missionaries who were duly appointed. In turn

these missionaries would have authority to appoint elders in churches they would establish. Thus in this way the churches could be multiplied, and the gospel could sound forth to the regions beyond.

### **9. Control Their Own Finances**

Every church should administer its own funds. Paul was never responsible for administering funds of any church, nor did he ever bring funds to local churches. He did carry offerings for the poor to Jerusalem, but only as a messenger of the churches. Missions today often do it differently. As Roland Allen writes,

The responsibility for the administration of funds rests upon the shoulders not of the local church but upon the stranger. Is it possible for human ingenuity to devise a scheme better calculated to check the free flow of native liberality, to create misunderstandings, to undermine the independence of the church, and to accentuate racial distinctions?

This modern practice is based partly upon our distrust of native honesty and partly upon our fear of congregationalism. But our distrust of native honesty ought not to exist, and has nothing to do with the case. If the natives administer their own funds, it is their own funds that they administer. They will administer them in their own way, and they will be responsible for the administration to those who supplied them. That they are capable of administering public money, the existence of guilds and societies for mutual benefit is proof. They may not administer it at all to our satisfaction, but I fail to see what our satisfaction has to do with the matter. It is not our business. By making it our business we merely deprive our converts of one of the very

best educational experiences, and break down one of the most powerful agencies for creating a sense of mutual responsibility. We also load ourselves with a vast burden which we are ill able, and often ill fitted, to bear (*Missionary Methods*, pp. 59, 60).

He writes about helping the poor,

Of all local finance the administration of charity is the simplest and most instructive. The relief of distress should be entirely in the hands of the congregation. The creation of a charity committee is not so good an educational method in a small community as is the alleviation of individual cases as they arise by the whole congregation. Cases of poverty may be referred at once to the whole congregation. Everybody knows everybody else. The congregation knows exactly what is needed. They can reject the appeal or subscribe to meet it on the spot. The missionary, if he will, may subscribe with the others. Nothing is more calculated to draw the congregation together and to help the people to realize their mutual dependence, than the supply of special needs by special acts of charity one towards another. A poor fund, if it is administered by a missionary, only tends to misunderstanding and discontent (*Missionary Methods*, p. 155).

He adds,

All financial arrangements made for the ordinary life and existence of the church should be such that the people themselves can and will control and manage their own business independently of any foreign subsidies. The management of all local funds should be entirely in the hands of the local church, which should raise and use their own funds for their own purposes that they may be neither pau-

perized nor dependent on the dictation of any foreign society (*Missionary Methods*, p. 151).

Summing up then: the authority that the local church has should not be theoretical, but practical. They are to use the gifts of the Spirit that they have, to put into practice what has been outlined above. All should function, and all should be taught a sense of mutual responsibility. The missionary should encourage the new church to act. The whole church should be responsible for baptism, ordination, and discipline among themselves.

The great object of establishing churches over wide areas, Allen says,

could only be attained if the first Christians who were converted by our labors, understood clearly that they could by themselves, without any further assistance from us, not only convert their neighbors, but establish churches. That meant that the very first groups of converts must be so fully equipped with all spiritual authority that they could multiply themselves without any necessary reference to us: that, though, while we were there, they might regard us as helpful advisers, yet our removal should not at all mutilate the completeness of the church, or deprive it of anything necessary for its unlimited expansion.

Many are beginning to perceive that we cannot establish a foreign church governed and directed by foreigners, and then at some moment say, "Let us make it indigenous or native by process of devolution." If the church is to be indigenous it must spring up in the soil from the very first seeds planted. One or two little groups of Christians organized as churches, with their bishops and priests, could spread all over an empire. They would be obviously and without question native churches.

But if we establish missions rather than churches, two evil consequences, which we now see in greater or less degree everywhere, sterility and antagonism, inevitably arise.

The equipment of small native congregations of Christians with full power and authority as local churches would remove most, if not all, of the present causes of trouble. We should cease to talk of a native church as something to be attained after long years, or generations of probation. There would be native churches at once which all men would recognize as native (Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, pp. 1, 2, 4).

## CHAPTER 8

### Leadership in the Churches

#### 1. Leadership in the Churches Is To Be Given to Local Men

Missionaries who follow the apostolic pattern do not remain with new believers as their pastor to shepherd them and bear the responsibility of the local church work. How did the apostles then see that new believers were cared for and the work carried on? They did not request men from the existing churches to come “pastor” the flock. Paul, for instance, did not write to Antioch or Jerusalem for help. Even less did they think of getting men from a seminary or school as we often do today.

Although at times one of the missionary party remained behind, this was only a temporary measure. Rather, what they did is found in Acts 14:23, *“So when they had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”* Men to teach, pastor, and exercise the oversight of the believers, were chosen from among the local believers. The local church supplied its own leadership. **THIS IS A MOST IMPORTANT SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLE.** It is rarely followed today. Almost never are pastors chosen from the local believers. Thus today we have what was unknown in the New Testament church: men going into the “ministry” as a profession, men without sheep being called pastors, men seeking a pastorate by candidating from church to church, pastors changing churches, churches sending out a candidate committee to seek a pastor by listening to sermons, men leaving their home churches to go to school to become pastors, etc., etc. All this is of the world.

Allen writes,

Paul ordained as elders members of the church to which they belonged. He did not establish a provincial school to which all candidates for ordination must go, and from which they might be sent to minister to congregations in any part of the province, at the bidding of a central committee or at his own. The elders were really of the church to which they ministered. They were at home. They were known of the members of their flock. If they received any pecuniary support, they received it from men who supported them because they felt the need of their undivided and uninterrupted care. Thus the bond between the elders and the church to which they ministered was extremely close (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, p. 100).

As it was not God's plan to have men brought in from the outside, neither was it God's plan for the apostles or evangelists to assume the role of pastors. The apostles were responsible for the work within God's appointed area, as Paul wrote, "*to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you . . .*" (2 Cor. 10:13, NIV). Rather, it was the elders who were to bear responsibility in local churches. "We read of the elders of Ephesus but never the apostle of Ephesus or of any other local church. Thus the characteristic of an apostle is 'going' while the characteristic of an elder is 'staying'" (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*).

The elders' sphere of responsibility was the local church. It is true, of course, that a man who pastors may have a wider spiritual ministry, even as a private believer may have, yet he is officially responsible as an elder for one local church. Calvin wrote in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28,

The Lord created the Apostles, that they might spread the gospel throughout the whole world, and

He did not assign to each of them certain limits or parishes, but would have them, wherever they went, to discharge the office of ambassadors among all nations and languages. In this respect there is a difference between them and pastors, who are, in a manner, tied to their particular churches. For the pastor has not a commission to preach the gospel over the whole world, but to take care of the church that has been committed to his charge.

The Word of God does not speak of elders managing the affairs of several churches. This is the error of the Roman Catholic and Church of England hierarchical systems that call men who manage a diocese and who rule several churches “bishops.” This is contrary to New Testament usage where the words bishop, elder, and pastor refer to the same man in different senses. Some say the term “elder” refers to the man, the term “bishop” to his office, and the term “pastor” to his ministry. That is true according to Scripture. Peter wrote, “*The elders who are among you I exhort . . . shepherd (Greek—pastor) the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers (Greek—bishops)*” (1 Pet. 5:1, 2). Acts 20:28 is a similar verse to the Ephesian elders.

Because “an elder’s sphere of office is limited by locality, an elder in Ephesus was not an elder in Smyrna, nor was an elder in Smyrna an elder in Ephesus” (Nee). Where his sheep are is where the shepherd is. It is “*the hireling who is not the shepherd who leaves the sheep*” (John 10:12). A man without sheep is not a shepherd. If an elder moves to another church, he cannot immediately nor automatically become an elder or pastor there. The usual is that elders are elders for life by remaining in their local church with their sheep. However, if an elder moves to another church, he, having left his office, is then only one of the flock (although he may in time prove himself for office in this second church). If over a period of time a man

proves himself and exercises spiritual ministry, the elders of his local church may ordain him adding him to the existing oversight. But they can ordain him only to minister there where he has been proved, not for another church. This principle, if followed, would effectively abolish the pastorate as a profession, and restore it to its scriptural place and pristine beauty.

If, as happens on the mission field, where new churches are being planted, there is no existing oversight, the missionary appoints the elders as already shown in Acts 14:23 (see also Titus 1:5). Yet this is not to be done quickly. For as Paul tells Timothy in relation to the laying on of hands for the ordination of elders, *“Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow after. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden”* (1 Tim. 5:24, 25). Thus he commands him, *“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure”* (1 Tim. 5:22). All men before being ordained as elders to pastor the sheep should, even as deacons, *“first be proved”* in the local church and *“then let them serve”* (see 1 Tim. 3:10). No new seminary or Bible school graduate can be considered for a pastorate before the necessary experience is gained and his character is approved by his local church. Neither a seminary nor a Bible school has authority to ordain elders/pastors for local churches.

## **2. The Evils of Bringing Leadership in From the Outside**

A new man or a man from outside the local church does not have one of the major qualifications of a shepherd. He does not know the sheep. As Christ said of Himself as the Good Shepherd, *“My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me”* (John 10:27). An outsider cannot shepherd sheep he does not know. Being ignorant of the sheep’s personal needs, he is unable to give to each his portion, or

minister to each according to his need. Likewise the sheep cannot, and even should not, have confidence to follow one whose voice they do not know. Our Lord said that a sheep “*will by no means follow a stranger*” (John 10:5). How often has the man from outside come into a church to pastor and has caused havoc among the sheep. Many of us could give examples from our own personal experience.

The link between the local church and its ministers is of great importance, and the importation of a stranger to act as a minister to people whom he does not know intimately, and who do not know him and his whole family intimately, is a serious evil” (Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, p. 172).

To sum up then: elders are to be chosen only from the local believers. They have a local ministry, being responsible for one local church, while missionaries after the apostolic pattern are extra-local. The apostles founded and ministered to the churches, but had control of none. The elders were elders of one church and had oversight of that one church. Their authority as elders did not extend outside their local church. The apostles were to found churches, but after a church was established the responsibility was handed over to the local elders. Thus the two types of ministry were always separate, never merged, not one to the exclusion of the other, neither one hindering the other, but complementing each other and mutually ministering to the growth of the body. “*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*” (Eph. 4:11-13). As implied in the

word “*till*,” both types of ministry are still needed today, each in its proper sphere, both overseas and at home.

### 3. Qualifications of Elders

The qualifications for ministry that are required today are not the same as was required in the early church, particularly as given in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The main requirement today is for a man to have been to an institution of higher learning such as a college or seminary. Theological training as taught in a school is considered indispensable. The great emphasis is on the intellectual and scholastic. Yet such a qualification is not mentioned in either of the above passages. On the other hand, some of the qualifications in these passages are not considered today. As examples: would a man be disqualified for the ministry today if he was not hospitable? Is his testimony among the unsaved seriously considered? Are those newly out of seminary considered as novices since they lack experience? Are ambitious men seeking reputation usually ruled out? Will the covetous man who will not endure hardship and only wants a good living be rejected? Is due weight given to whether his children are “faithful”? Yet the qualifications found in both Timothy and Titus are these types of moral and social qualifications.

Speaking of such a qualified man, Roland Allen writes,

Anyone who has been in the mission field will instantly recognize the portrait. The man lives before our eyes. He is a man of mature age, the head of a family. He has been married long enough to have children who are old enough to believe, and be capable of riot and unruly conduct. His wife and children and household are well governed and orderly. He is a man of some position in the community. Strangers and visitors, especially Christians on their journeys, are naturally directed to his

house, and he knows how to entertain them and can do so. He is a man of a certain gravity and dignity whose words carry weight. He can teach and rebuke those who would slight the exhortations of a lesser man. He is a man of moral character: he can attend a feast without getting drunk; he can control his temper; he can rule without violence. He has no temptation to be always dealing blows, because his moral authority is sufficient to secure obedience. He is sober-minded and just: he can settle disputes with a judgment which men respect; he is not ready to take a bribe. He is a Christian of some standing. He has learned the teaching of the apostles, and he holds it fast. He can teach what he has learned, and when someone propounds a strange doctrine, or a morally doubtful course of action, he can say: "That is not in accordance with what I was taught"; and men listen to him, and pay heed to what he says.

There, in the mission field, it suits the surroundings to say that a man who is admitted to the sacred ministry should be the husband of one wife; there the danger of covetousness and grasping after gifts has a peculiar significance, when nearly all men in any official position of any kind are seriously tempted to use their authority and influence to acquire money by means which, if not exactly dishonest, certainly do not tend to improve a man's character, or to strengthen his spiritual influence. There, in the mission field, where Christians are scattered in little groups, a man like this stands out with a prominence which is not so easily marked at home. When we read the apostle's description of the man whom he directed his followers to ordain, we instinctively say: "We know that man."

Take first the one plain contradiction. The apostle demands that the candidate must be of

mature age and proved experience: we commonly ordain the young and inexperienced. I put this first because it seriously affects those points on which we seem to follow the apostle's rule. Age and experience make a great difference even where there is seeming agreement.

Let us consider the points on which we apparently follow the apostle. We demand, as he did, that the candidate must be of good moral character; or at least so far as that he can produce testimonials to his good conduct. We demand as the apostle demanded, that he must hold fast the faithful Word; at least so far as that he shall not write deliberate heresy in his examination papers, and shall profess belief in the Creed. We demand, as he demanded, that the candidate must be apt to teach; at least so far as an examination of his verbal memory can prove that he knows what he ought to teach. But there is some difference between the "without reproach" of the apostle and our testimonials; and there is a difference between the holding fast of the faith by a man tried in the furnace of life, and the soundness in the faith of a youth fresh from a theological school; and the aptness to teach of a man of experience and social authority is not quite the same thing as the aptness to teach of a young man who has just passed an examination in the subject-matter.

What are the qualifications on which we insist, and the apostle ignored? Obviously they are readiness to pass an intellectual test in which the power of a verbal memory is prominent, and readiness to resign all other means of living. The apostle said nothing whatever about any such qualifications. There is not in his list one single item which is purely intellectual. Aptness to teach is far from being a purely intellectual quality, even if we understand the word "teach," as we usually employ it, in

the sense of purely intellectual instruction.

The second qualification which we demand and the apostle omits is a readiness to resign all means of living other than that of the sacred ministry. Of this there is not a trace in the apostle's list of qualifications: there are, on the other hand, many points which suggest the opposite. The men whom he desired to see ordained were all men who were capable of maintaining themselves and their families without any assistance from the church. They had in fact been doing so, and there is nothing to suggest that they would cease to do so. They were men of a well-established position in life. They might, of course, cease to earn their living in their accustomed way when they were ordained, but it is hard to imagine that they would necessarily do so; for there is no hint that it was considered necessary or desirable by the apostle. It would have been quite simple, and to us quite natural, to have put in a clause to the effect that the bishop must abandon all worldly pursuits and give himself wholly to the care of the church, but there is not a word about it. Such silence rather suggests that the man will continue to live his life as he has been living it and providing for his family as he has been providing for it (Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, pp. 140-142).

Watchman Nee supports this:

It is not necessary that elders resign their ordinary professions and devote themselves exclusively to their duties in connection with the church. They are simply local men, following their usual pursuits and at the same time bearing special responsibility in the church. Should local affairs increase, they may devote themselves entirely to spiritual work, but the characteristic of an elder is not that he is a "full-time

Christian worker.” It is merely that as a local brother he bears responsibility in the local church (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 39).

#### **4. Laying On of Hands**

In the Old Testament the laying on of hands signified various things. When Israel blessed Joseph and his two sons, he laid his hands on Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:14). When the people or the priests laid their hands on their offerings, it denoted an identification with the sacrifice and a transfer of sin or defilement (Lev. 1:4; 16:26; 24:14). The act also was used to appoint the Levites by separating them from the people (Num. 8:10, 14). Moses laid his hands on Joshua to appoint or commission him. This also signified that Moses gave him authority (Num. 27:18-20).

It was used in the New Testament to convey blessing (Matt. 19:15; Mark 10:16); convey healing power, many verses; give the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17; 19:6); convey a spiritual gift to Timothy from the elders and from Paul (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6); and to appoint or set apart to a work (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 5:22).

All these illustrations give the meaning of the laying on of hands when appointing to the eldership, the diaconate, or the missionary task. In appointing elders, hands are laid on them publicly so that there is no confusion or doubt in the minds of the church as to who are their leaders. The church publicly acknowledges their leadership. This, also, tends to strengthen the one ordained and to encourage him to the work as he receives the public approval of the church. It also identifies the existing leadership with the new leadership, and so gives continuity in leadership so that there is no disruption in the leadership. It is a time when the church should be solemnly instructed of their duties and responsibilities to the eldership of honoring, obeying, supporting, and praying for

them. Likewise, the new elder or elders are given a solemn charge to their responsibility of shepherding the sheep. As the members of the church see a godly man from their midst appointed to such a great task, it can stir them to desire to attain to such qualifications for the good work since, *“If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work”* (1 Tim. 3:1).

## 5. Plurality of Elders

Alexander Strauch gives a warm, encouraging testimony to shared eldership,

One of the deep joys of my life has been to share with a team of dedicated pastor elders the pastoral leadership of a church. During the more than twenty years we have served together, we have experienced many problems and frustrations, but we have also experienced growth, joy, laughter, and deep friendship and love for one another. As partners in the work of shepherding God’s precious, blood-bought people, we have sharpened, balanced, comforted, protected, and strengthened one another through nearly every conceivable life situation. I do not hesitate to say that the relationship with my fellow elders has been the most important tool God has used, outside of my marriage relationship, for the spiritual development of my Christian character, leadership abilities, and teaching ministry. As a result, I believe, we have been able to provide stable, long-term, pastoral care for the people of God.

Vastly more important than my experience (or that of anyone else) as a member of an eldership team, however, is what God’s Word says about the leadership structure (or government) of the local church. The New Testament provides conclusive evidence that the pastoral oversight of the apostolic

churches was a team effort—not the sole responsibility of one person (Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, p. 35).

There is no such thing as one pastor governing a local church in the New Testament. I will not give texts or arguments for the plurality of leadership. Other works have done this. I would recommend *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch (Lewis and Roth, publishers). There seems little hope to change the existing leadership setup in many churches due to tradition, the existing pastorate, and the desire of the people for the pastor to do the work. However, missionaries have a good opportunity to start out with a plural eldership when establishing new churches.

Nee writes,

This work of ruling, teaching, and shepherding the flock, which we have seen to be the special duty of the elders, does not devolve upon one man only in any place. In Scripture we see that there was always more than one elder or bishop in a local church. If the management of the entire church rests upon one man, how easy it is for him to become conceited, esteeming himself above measure and suppressing the other brethren (3 John). God has ordained that several elders together share the work of the church, so that no one individual should be able to run things according to his own pleasure, treating the church as his own peculiar property, and leaving the impress of his personality upon all its life and work. To place the responsibility in the hands of several brethren rather than in the hands of one individual, is God's way of safeguarding His church against the evils that result from the domination of a strong personality. God has purposed that several brothers should unitedly bear responsibility in the church, so that even in controlling its affairs

they have to depend one upon the other and submit one to the other. Thus in an experimental way they will have opportunity to give practical expression to the truth of the Body of Christ. As they honor one another and trust one another to the leading of the Spirit, none taking the place of the Head, but each regarding the others as fellow-members, the element of "mutuality," which is the peculiar feature of the church, will be preserved (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 44).

John Davidson, writing in *Reformation for the Family* about the Open Brethren, gives some further advantages of plural eldership and ministry.

The Brethren application of the doctrine of eldership has several advantages. In the first place it is based upon recognition of the gifts and graces which the Head of the church has sovereignly given to the local assembly. If the Lord places certain gifted leaders in a church, He surely has work for them to do, and in order for them to do it fully these should be clearly recognized and not wasted. How many Baptist deacons are really doing the work of pastors! Secondly, a plurality of oversight eliminates the hiatus which hits the life of the local church when "vacancies" occur, as they do every three or four years in many Baptist churches. "Career" pastors are often guilty of a form of slow itinerancy due to their stock of sermons running out or their unwillingness or inability to tackle the work of discipline and reformation needed. The continuity obtained by the Brethren application of plural oversight avoids such upheavals. Moreover, existing elders recognize and call others, who are suitably gifted, to the oversight, thus avoiding bitterness and party factions when the church is called upon to

choose the next pastor. Thirdly, Brethren have traditionally been disinterested in that shortcut to the ministry—the theological college—and so their elders have been preserved from the blight of Modernism and have remained firm in their adherence to the Bible throughout what has been the churches' most dangerous period since the Reformation. In the last 100 years many Baptists and others have fallen into the disastrous errors disseminated via these colleges. It is a remarkable fact that Brethren are usually far more knowledgeable in the Scriptures than is the average Baptist (pp. 91, 92).

Elders were appointed to rule, instruct, correct, and shepherd the flock. They were particularly to be examples to the flock. "*Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock*" (1 Pet. 5:2, 3). This points out that elders are not to do the work of the church for the others. Rather, they are to get everyone working. They are "overseers." An overseer by definition is one who oversees the work of others. He supervises them; he does not work instead of others. Everyone in the body has a function. Everyone is to minister "*with the ability which God supplies*" (1 Pet. 4:11).

Nee says,

We must remember that a scriptural church does not consist of an active and a passive group of brethren, the former controlling the latter, and the latter simply submitting to their control, or the former bearing all the burden while the latter settle down in ease to enjoy the benefit of their labors. "*That the members should . . . care one for another*" is God's purpose for His church (1 Cor. 12:24). Every church after God's own heart bears

the stamp of “*one another*” on all its life and activity. Mutuality is its outstanding characteristic. If the elders lose sight of that, then their ruling the church will soon be changed to lording it over the church. They were not appointed to be “lords” of their brethren, but to be their “examples.” What is an example? It is a pattern for others to follow. For the elders to be a pattern to the brethren implied that the brethren worked, and the elders worked as well. It implied that the elders worked with special diligence and care, so that the brethren should have a good example to follow. Such is the scriptural conception of the rule of the elders (Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, p. 43).

## CHAPTER 9

### **Training in the Local Church**

#### **1. The Negative Effect of Institutions**

Some local churches have rightly complained of what is called para-church organizations; that is, organizations that are not the church but doing the work of the church. Examples of these are evangelistic societies and missionary societies. These societies are not subject to the churches, and their leadership is organizational leadership which does not follow scriptural guidelines. Indeed, there are not scriptural guidelines for such organizations that are independent of the churches. They can act as they see fit.

However, a phenomenon is that the local churches do not complain about Bible schools or seminaries doing the work of the churches. They do not call them para-church organizations. Yet these educational facilities that are independent of the churches do take the training of the churches' servants out of the hands of the churches. This is contrary to Scripture and has to be harmful to both the churches and their servants.

Lloyd-Jones writes about the negative effect theological seminaries have had on revivals:

I cannot but feel that theological seminaries have been an important factor in the change. Here is an attempt to explain how it worked. Up until, say, the 1830's the position was something like this. At first the preaching was done by clergy and ministers who had themselves been revived. Numbers of men who had been converted then began to feel a call to preach, or it was suggested to them by some of these leaders that they had a preaching gift. They

had manifested it in prayer or in taking part in a class meeting or in a discussion, and now they were encouraged to preach. These men were farmers, workers, manual workers, and so on. They had not been to a theological seminary. They were men who had a living experience of God in their hearts, who read and studied their Bibles and books about the Bible. They were men of strong natural talents and were very largely self-taught. This was the class of men who largely became the preachers after the death of the first great leaders. But then, the idea came in that as education had spread among the masses, and the congregations were now more sophisticated and more learned, the ministry of these simple ordinary men was no longer adequate. (I am not criticizing that attitude; I am trying to put the actual facts before you.) It was felt that there was a need for training and that you must have learned men in the ministry. This started with an undoubtedly good and right motive. Nor is there any *a priori* reason why spirituality and learning should be incompatible; but nevertheless it does seem to be the case in practice that as men become more and more learned, they tend to pay less and less attention to the spiritual side of things. Now this is almost inevitable, of course, for we are yet in the flesh, and are still imperfect. Whether a man wants to or not, he gradually finds himself becoming more and more interested in things in a purely intellectual manner. I have known this very thing in my own life. Unconsciously one can become so interested in the purely intellectual aspect of Christianity, and in learning and understanding and knowledge, as to forget the Spirit. I am therefore putting it simply as a possibility for consideration that perhaps the increase in theological seminaries

may have been a factor in discouraging people from thinking about revival. The more learned we become, the more respectable we tend to become. As we become “men of weight” and important, we feel that we have to be very careful as to what we do or allow to happen to us. It is extremely difficult for such men to maintain that “simplicity which is in Christ”; certainly more difficult than for the other type of man whom I have just been describing (Lloyd-Jones, *Puritans*, p. 6).

I am not writing about training done in what are often called the home churches, but in training done in newly planted churches on the mission field. However, the same principles apply everywhere. In the New Testament church the training of the churches’ servants was done in the local churches. They were not sent off to a Bible school or seminary. Whenever the churches depart from the scriptural pattern, they of necessity will suffer loss.

I do not mean to disparage schools. Some schools have been mightily used of God to uphold, defend, and propagate the faith. Some have a high spiritual standard and have sent out godly, humble servants to the churches. Some give excellent Biblical teaching of the highest standard. We thank God for them and do see His blessing on them. Still, are they after the scriptural pattern? We know God has ordained the church. He has not ordained the seminary. We know Christ walks among the churches, but we have no verse that says He walks among the Bible schools.

## **2. Eighteen Advantages of Training in the Local Church**

1. The choice and appointing of its servants is left in the local church.

God’s servants should be “*chosen men of their own company*” (Acts 15:22), men “*chosen by the churches*” (2 Cor.

8:19). Rarely does a church step in and prevent anyone from going to Bible school or other halls of learning. Then when the man graduates or receives a degree, he is accredited by the school and so accepted by the churches as qualified to be a pastor or minister. Usually little attention is given to the qualifications found in 1 Timothy and Titus.

2. Training is directed to older men along with youth.

The fact that church leadership is designated by the term “elders” is surely significant. Yet whom do we find in these schools receiving training to be the leaders of the churches? The youth, not the elders! Older men, who more nearly attain to the spiritual qualifications of Scripture, usually cannot go away to some place of higher learning due to their responsibilities. Yet these are the men who should be trained for leadership. Peter Savage writes:

There is no doubt that in Scripture we find a pattern that is established in the Old and the New Testaments. The man that is chosen for training into the ministry is, with one or two exceptions, the older and more mature man. I mean psychological maturity—that is, emotional stability: possibly a married man, with mature judgment in human affairs, a man established and experienced in daily life with all its problems, crises, and frustrations, and who proves reliable in secular employment. In the community in which he lived, he was recognized as a man of maturity. Further, the Biblical pattern required a man of spiritual maturity, with a recognized gift demonstrated in a local situation, and who had proved his stability when life was difficult (Peter Savage, *Reformation for the Family*, p. 76).

3. It does not limit the training to the few.

4. It does not abstract the student from real life or from his family.

The man who goes away to school is removed from the church's life and work and from contact with the world. He thus does not get the experience and practical knowledge he needs. Most of his knowledge is only theoretical and not put to the test. The local church was the school for the New Testament worker.

5. It does not divorce a student from his culture.

This is not necessarily true in our homelands, but it is on the mission field. The young men who leave their villages to go to Bible schools on the mission field usually are out of touch with their people. Allen adds,

The young men so educated are sometimes, by that very education, out of touch with their congregations. They return to their people with strange ideas and strange habits. They are lonely, and they have to struggle against the perils of loneliness. They are not even the best teachers of people from whose intellectual and spiritual life they have so long been absent. They do not know how to answer their difficulties or to supply their necessities. They know so much Christian doctrine and philosophy that they have forgotten the religion of their country. The congregation has not grown with them, nor they with the congregation. They come, as it were, from outside and only a few exceptional men can learn to overcome that difficulty (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, p. 106).

In a practical way this taking of the Bible school student out of his village introduces him to a higher standard of living when he lives at the Bible school. His food is better than he had in his village. His accommodation is improved. He lives under more hygienic circumstances. He probably dresses better. Many a Bible school student does not want to return to his village and lose his material advantages. He shies away from hardship and has become less useable among his own people.

6. It does not tend to foster pride.

The person who goes away for training often returns believing he is superior to those without the training he has had. Even his upgraded scale of living can contribute to pride. I have seen the Bible school student proudly return to his people, wearing new clothes, shoes, sunglasses, and a Bible under his arm. This is seen, too, in the love for degrees and titles that the schools give out. How some men glory in becoming doctors and being called "Doctor." How others put letters behind their name. Others glory in being educated at such and such a school and graduated from such and such a school.

7. It does not lead to the view that God's work is a profession.

Many men who graduate from schools of higher learning become professionals. Because they have graduated, they are able to make a living as pastors, ministers, educational men, religious teachers, etc. Why? Because they have been to school. Wherever they go, they are employable in their profession. Many seek the best position they can find. Again Allen opines,

In the early church we find local men ordained for the local church. They were ordained for that church; and they did not seek for some congenial sphere wherever they might see an opening or could obtain preferment (Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, p. 171).

Thus the men were for the church, not the church existing for the benefit and employment of the ministry. The link between the local church and its ministry should never be broken. When it is broken, the ministry becomes a profession, and the Lord's work becomes a job. Thus we have men looking for "pastorates," moving from church to church, and sometimes not without ambition.

8. It does not set apart a separate class.

That the clergy-laity distinction is not scriptural is clear. That this unscriptural distinction has done much damage to

the cause of Christ is evident. What fosters this distinction? The Bible schools and seminaries foster this distinction. How many churches do not accept men without such learning for their pulpits? Hasn't the Christian public been taught to look down upon the men who do not have such education?

9. Teaching can be done by men directly involved in the churches and in evangelism.

This has many advantages. It tends to keep the training away from just the theoretical. Elders can best train elders. Evangelists can best train evangelists. Some teaching professors have had little experience in the practical work of the churches, and some have not proved themselves by the fruit of their ministries.

Ministry alone can train ministry! The vast majority of the skills required in pastoral work can only be taught and learned from the ministry and in the ministry. While there could be a place for a trained educator to help the pastor train, the emphasis should not be on the educational specialist, but on the minister training the minister.

Once this responsibility of training for the ministry is given exclusively to academic professionals, weaknesses are introduced into the training program. First, these professionals will not bring to their teaching all the "dynamics" of the ministry, having lost in some measure contact with life and the adequate balance which only daily ministry can give. The study of truth in the abstract often degenerates into an intellectual pursuit, emphasizing the polemical and in some cases knocking theological phantom giants that do not exist in real life. Second, the curriculum can become frozen into a mold that of itself does not train a man for the ministry (Savage, *Reformation for the Family*, p. 79).

10. It tends to keep doctrinal error within local bounds.

In the history of the church, much false doctrine, heresy, higher-criticism, and liberalism has come from the schools. Whole denominations that once held to the historical faith have departed from it to embrace the soul-destroying errors that have come from the schools of higher learning. One false seminary professor can contaminate innumerable churches.

11. It does not tend to gravitate to this world's wisdom.

The original purpose of seminaries and Bible schools was, in most cases, the teaching of sound doctrine and practice. However, in the modern theological school also there has always been the tendency, seemingly irresistible to the natural mind, to bring the natural intelligence to bear upon revealed spiritual truth, interpreting it according to human standards and the fashions of thought of the day, and reducing it to what is considered reasonable: turning it, in fact, into an acceptable religious philosophical system (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, pp. 483, 484).

12. It does not take large amounts of money for salaries, administration, buildings, etc.

13. It tends not to emphasize the intellectual over the practical.

14. It gives greater opportunity for a close relationship between teacher and disciple.

This we see to be the secret of Christ's success with the disciples, and Paul's success with Timothy.

15. It enables the sheep to know the shepherd, and the shepherd the sheep.

This will greatly strengthen the church and its ministry, making it applicable to the needs of the people.

16. It encourages members of the local church to teach, and gives them opportunity.

17. It gives opportunity for the student to exercise his

gifts in the local church situation.

A Bible school graduate told me of how he abhorred the artificial preaching of a sermon in the classroom by him and other students as part of their course.

To separate those who are to be trained for ministry from normal church life and activity and from the conditions in which their ministry is to be carried on is a serious mistake. One preparing for the ministry of evangelism and church planting needs the church and the evangelistic field just as the medical student needs the hospital and the clinic. To send out a young man to practice medicine who had little more than theoretical knowledge, who had little practical experience and never even seen a major operation performed, would not be justifiable. It would be hard on both the young physician and his patients! (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 488).

18. There is no emphasis on grades, examinations, a fixed time for a course, a time to graduate, etc.

Courses cannot be tailored to the needs of the people in a school as they can be in a church situation. Cramming for tests and meeting of deadlines can be quite artificial with too much emphasis on the intellect and not on heart training. Roland Allen writes of examinations being made the test of fitness for God's work:

In other words we select by examination. That system has long been tried, and is already being seriously questioned at home, and it does not seem to appeal to oriental minds as reasonable. In an address presented to the Lieutenant-Governor by the leaders of the Muslim community of the Punjab in 1904, they said:

“We presume that you English had your reasons for imposing such tests: we do not know and cannot guess them. The system is repugnant to old traditions, and we cannot consider the results of examinations as furnishing sufficient evidence of a man’s aptitude to govern or to dispense justice. Our history has shown us that there are other criteria. To cursory examinations, in which memory plays a predominant part, we prefer the presumptions which arise on the social position of the candidate, the services rendered to the State by his family, his own character and demeanor, and his aptitude to obey and command.

“Of course in our selection of candidates for Orders, we do not rely wholly upon examinations. The candidate must bear a good moral character. But the fact remains that we have made too much of the intellectual test” (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, pp. 104, 105).

There are some disadvantages that training in local churches has in comparison to training in a place of higher learning.

1. Teachers in the local church are not as gifted as in a seminary. This could be somewhat overcome by the churches encouraging itinerant teaching by those gifted among them. However, having less gifted teachers is not necessarily bad.

2. Teaching is not as intensive.

3. Teaching could become narrow in outlook and unbalanced in content.

This, I believe, happened among the Brethren. The serious errors of Dispensational teaching have been held and propagated by the Brethren. This is partly due to their teaching coming from within their group and by men who only read “Brethren” books.

4. Such teaching is impossible in churches without a functioning plurality of elders. Such churches would need to band with others. Nevertheless, such teaching in the local churches would strengthen them and also turn out better spiritually equipped servants of the churches.

Hay writes of the training of workers,

From a practical standpoint the training given has not always produced satisfactory results. Those who have had experience in giving the usual type of training in seminaries or Bible colleges on the foreign mission field have, perhaps, been most conscious of the deficiencies of the method. That many of the students, on graduation, are not satisfactorily prepared, either in spiritual experience or in the knowledge of their task, is admitted by many. Indeed, it is one of the greatest of missionary problems. They have little knowledge of men. They have scarcely even learned to know themselves. Their knowledge of the practical problems to be faced in evangelism and in the church is far from adequate. They are not sufficiently experienced and mature spiritually. Often the graduate has become proud, considering himself superior to his own people, and ambitious, not to evangelize new fields, but to settle down in a comfortable pastorate with an assured income. In far too many cases, when sent out to the work they become discouraged and fail, or at best, render mediocre service.

Many a missionary and pastor also, when launched into his ministry, has been keenly conscious of a serious lack in his preparation. Those sent out from our modern schools are by no means fully prepared for their task. They may have studied God's Word, but both personal spiritual experience and practical knowledge are insufficient. Their out-

look on their calling may be mistaken and unscriptural. They may think of it rather as a profession, a career, than a ministry in the New Testament sense, and their hope may be to succeed in it by their ability as preachers, teachers and organizers and to win recognition and a good church and income.

All this reveals defects that are serious and that were avoided by the New Testament method. We feel that the whole problem of the training of the worker needs to be carefully reconsidered in the light of New Testament practice that we may return to the method which God purposed and reap in full the fruit He intended that our teaching ministry should bear (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, pp. 484, 485).

### **3. Discipleship—the Training of Church Workers**

Under this heading I am not thinking of the training of missionaries, although the same principles would hold, but of the training of converts on the field for work among their own people. I believe we should follow our Lord's example in training men. His teaching was not in the classroom, but in everyday situations and events. It was practical, on the job training. It was the type of training a master craftsman would give to an apprentice. Our Lord also had a close and a personal relationship with the men He trained. Roland Allen contrasts Christ's training with institutional, mission or school training,

Now we cannot but observe that there is a great gulf between the training of leaders by Christ and the training of leaders in the hands of these men. Christ trained His leaders in two or three years; these men have been training leaders for more than two or three generations. Christ trained His leaders by taking them with Him as He went

about teaching and healing, doing the work which they, as missionaries, would do; we train in institutions. He trained a very few with whom He was in the closest personal relation; we train many who simply pass through our schools with a view to an examination and an appointment. Christ trained His leaders in the midst of their own people, so that the intimacy of their relation to their own people was not marred and they could move freely among them as one of themselves; we train our leaders in a hot-house, and their intimacy with their own people is so marred that they can never thereafter live as one of them, or share their thought. I have heard of students in theological colleges so ignorant of the religion of their own people that they had to be given lectures on it by their foreign teachers (Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, p. 26).

### *Christ's training of the disciples*

Our Lord did not train just anyone. He Himself chose the students. He chose only men, and He chose only twelve. No uncalled men were trained. He chose twelve men that they would be with Him constantly to train them. "*Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach*" (Mark 3:14). To enable Him to train them and disciple them, it was necessary for them to spend much time with the Master. He disciplined them by having a close personal relationship with them, and by this close association with Him they learned not only by His teaching, but also by observing Him firsthand in all types of circumstances. They saw Him under fire, persecuted, blasphemed, rejected, despised, and finally killed. Such circumstances revealed His patience, steadfastness, meekness, and humility like no classroom situation could ever do. Did He exhort them to take up their cross? This was exemplified before their eyes.

Were they to turn their back on all wealth and worldly honor? They saw the One who became poor living only for the Father's glory. Were they to scorn ease and luxury and endure hardship for the kingdom of God? They saw their Master enduring the heat, discomfort, and fatigue of the road toiling unceasingly for the kingdom. Were they directed not to fear those who kill the body? They saw their Teacher in danger, powerful men seeking His downfall, and the leaders of the people purposing to entrap Him so they could execute Him, yet He in unwavering faith pursued His work regardless of the opposition, danger, success, or lack of success.

His relationship to them was not as a teacher to pupils who would spend much of their time separate from their teacher. Rather it was as a father to his sons, or a master craftsman to an apprentice, or a field officer with his men. Christ and His disciples lived together, worked together, traveled together, were persecuted together, and trusted God together. He took them with Him everywhere, and they were together and in all circumstances. Thus, the Lord was not only a Teacher imparting knowledge, but a Discipler. He trained them in godliness. He did not just seek to inform their minds, but to mold their character. He sought to make them like Himself. That is, He taught to disciple them, for "*it is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master . . .*" (Matt. 10:25). He was their Example for them to follow. His call was, "*Follow Me.*" Day after day He taught and showed them what that meant. Hay expands on this point,

In the preparation of the disciples our Lord evidently gave particular attention to the following points:

1. He was continually seeking their spiritual development. He made full use of all their experiences to teach eternal values. We have but to think of the occasion when the mother of James and John

came seeking the highest places for her two sons, and the manner in which He dealt with the individual difficulties of Peter, Thomas, and Philip, to realize how careful and watchful He was regarding the spiritual condition and progress of each one. It was the happenings of everyday experience, the temptations and faults and failures of the disciples, that He used as the basis for this instruction. And how wisely and lovingly He did so! Here also theory was learned in the practical school. He brought them to the place where they were willing to deny self and to take up the Cross and truly follow Him. Nothing less than that would have served His purpose.

2. He taught them to evangelize. The practical method which He used to train them to know how to meet men and deal with souls, how to preach and teach, has already been stated.

3. He taught them to know and use the Scriptures. He Himself was continually using them. All His teaching was based upon them; all His reasonings and arguments were derived from them. Here again the same method was employed: they learned to know and use the Scriptures by using them.

4. He taught them to have faith in God directly for the supply of all their material needs. He had left all to live among men and become the Saviour of the world; they left all to follow Him. He had not where to lay His head, and so it was with them. They left all and went forth with Him, possessing nothing and with no material resources, looking to God alone for the supply of all their needs, sharing together with the Master out of the common fund of God's supply, of which Judas was the treasurer. This accomplished four important things: it detached them from the world; it made them exercise faith; it obliged them to walk near to God; it caused them to

be living witnesses to God's power and faithfulness. These things were necessary to their witness.

5. He taught them to minister in the power of the Spirit alone and not to have recourse to ritual, ceremony, forms of service, programs, emotionalism, sentimentalism, or any other human means to attract or influence. He revealed to them that the power that would draw men was the power of His Cross.

6. He taught them the life and ministry of prayer in the Spirit, though they entered into it only after the Holy Spirit had come to dwell in them.

7. He taught them to live and minister in absolute obedience to the will of God, withholding nothing for self, but placing themselves entirely upon the altar.

8. He taught them to exercise unwavering faith, to doubt not, but to have absolute trust in God and confidence in His power and faithfulness.

9. He taught them absolute love to God and absolute love to their fellow men—the love that serves, seeking nothing for self and counting it all joy and all gain to give all.

10. He taught them to work together; to cooperate as a group directed by the Spirit of God, none seeking the preeminence and all serving each other (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, pp. 39, 40).

Paul used the same principles of training. He sought out faithful men and taught them personally by taking them with him, and particularly taught by example. He passed this principle on to Timothy, "*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim. 2:2). In the same letter he tells Timothy, "*You have carefully followed*" ("fully known" KJV; "followed step by step" NEB; "know all about"

NIV) *my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions*" (2 Tim. 3:10, 11). How did Timothy fully know Paul's doctrine, manner of life, etc., but by intimate acquaintance with Paul in living and working together? We know that Christ and Paul were eminently successful in training and discipling faithful men. On the other hand the failures of men trained in Bible schools and institutions are well known by those with experience on the field.

Alexander Hay writes,

The study of Christ's teaching method leads us to ask certain questions. Should His method be followed today? If it were followed, would its results be more satisfactory than those of the method at present in vogue? Would the training of the disciples have been so effective had Christ used our modern method? Would a modern seminary course have fitted them better, or as well, for their ministry as the practical training which they received?

In our modern method the teaching of theory is the basis of the instruction given. A limited amount of practical work is added; limited both in scope and in amount. No real attempt is made to give a comprehensive and thorough course of practical experience. The time available after the book study is taken care of does not permit of it. In our Lord's teaching method practical experience was the basis and theory was taught from the lessons of experience.

When our Lord left His disciples, or when Paul left Titus in Crete, these young evangelists did not have to begin to learn how to put into practice the theory they had been taught. So complete had been their experience already that no unfamiliar situation could arise. They knew exactly what their work would be, the conditions under which they would

have to do it, and how to go about doing it. And they had reached the place of personal spiritual victory.

When we send young preachers, trained by our modern method, into their fields of service, they are really not half prepared for their task. Being to a great extent inexperienced and, consequently, with undeveloped Christian character, they find themselves continually faced with new and difficult situations, with little more than theory with which to meet them (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 43).

I returned recently from a trip to a new area that we are seeking to evangelize. I was told that a previous "pastor" of a religious group had committed adultery and had to leave, and he was followed by a man from a Bible school who was more governed by a love for material things than anything else so he, too, failed. Both were thought to be qualified because of their education. However, their failures were due to spiritual weakness, not lack of formal education. Roland Allen writes discerningly of such young men who have the stress of temptation and loneliness,

The loneliness of a catechist trained by foreigners in mission schools and sent to take charge of a village congregation, and the dangers of that position, are familiar to all who have any knowledge of the mission field, and indeed to any man possessed of the smallest imagination (p. 177).

What exacerbates the problem is that the men chosen for mission schools are usually young, bright, ambitious, and inexperienced. All this brings real danger. Again quoting Roland Allen, who in turn is quoting a Mr. Kelly,

"College training constitutes a very serious danger. All professional training runs a risk of becoming too technical and abstract. Theological

education is at the present more deeply involved in this evil than any other, and in nothing is the mischief so great . . . the ignorance of the village farmer is no danger at all. The ignorance which is a danger is the pseudo-knowledge of a half-trained or still more, of a very highly trained professional.” Again quoting Kelly, “Normally, we want an experienced, a middle-aged Christian of strong character and independent position, who is not, and need not be, afraid to speak to us, a man zealous for his faith and who understands it, learned in the Scriptures. We have no college-trained men among us, but at forty a man has learned from life. We are not trying young experiments” (Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, p. 182).

Thus, missionaries should be constantly seeking out mature, faithful men to train and disciple. Most of the discipling should be done in the context of village life. We should try to always take someone with us whenever we go to villages, other areas, and on evangelistic trips.

## CHAPTER 10

### **Further Ministry of the Missionary**

#### **1. Literacy**

Hand in hand with evangelism and translation is literacy. Most of the people we work with are illiterate. We want to see them all reading God's Word. It is especially vital for the teachers of the Word in the churches to be able to read. If they cannot, they cannot feed themselves, let alone the saints. If they cannot read, they are then dependent on the missionary. Without literate leaders a strong church will not arise.

Literacy can be started the first term even when the missionary is beginning to learn language. Teaching beginning literacy will familiarize him with some of the words and help him in his language learning. Literacy often gives an entrance for the Word because many people want to learn to read. It also gives contact with the people. Interest is usually high when the missionary first moves into an area. That is the time to begin literacy. Our first term we had approximately 1,000 enrolled in the literacy program. We have never had near that many since.

Literacy can be done in each village that is visited. This is part of the ministry. Names of those doing literacy can be kept and their progress checked on each visit. This does much to encourage and incite continuing interest. Many can seemingly read well, but they do not understand what they are reading. Much practice is needed for them to learn to read with comprehension. The comprehension of readers should always be checked by having them tell in their own words what they have read.

Literacy takes much time and patience, but the rewards are great. A continuing program of literacy should be ongoing. Literates can be encouraged to teach illiterates. “Each one teach one” was the motto of a mass literacy campaign used throughout the world. Many of our early literacy students are now teaching their children how to read. The ones who have learned the first primer well and receive the second primer should be encouraged to help and teach those who have the first primer. Likewise, those who know the second primer can then teach others with the second primer and so on.

## **2. Evangelism**

Each missionary should seek to have villages where he preaches and teaches regularly. Along with these preaching places he should also seek to go to other villages to try to make contacts and preach the gospel to whoever will hear. If he cannot get the village together for a public meeting, he can often witness to the family he stays with overnight. Opportunities are also present at markets, in gardens, and on the trails to preach Christ. Gatherings for special occasions such as funerals and feasts have often provided opportunity for the unreached to hear the unsearchable riches of Christ.

## **3. Vision for New Areas**

We should always be thinking of the regions beyond. Paul’s desire was “*to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you,*” as he wrote to the Corinthians. Part of our task is to survey and visit new areas for other missionaries who may follow us. Besides our own areas we need to visit and survey and preach in “*the regions beyond.*”

## **4. Missionary Work: Going, Not Staying**

Our Lord “Having come to seek men, He went out to find them—into their streets and homes, their

cities and villages. He did not build a great temple and call men to come to hear Him. He tramped the highways and byways up and down the land, giving His message on the hillside, by the seashore, in the humble cottage or at the banquet, in the temple, or in the street, wherever He found men to listen” (Hay, p. 34).

A missionary who is seeking to follow the pattern of the book of Acts is a sent one, i.e., like an apostle. His work is not fixed in one local church as is an elder’s. He is an itinerant, called to preach everywhere “*within the limits of the sphere which God has appointed us*” (2 Cor. 10:13).

However, we have families to care for so we built fairly permanent houses. Roland Allen writes discerningly about this,

We settled permanently, we acquired land, we built houses, we established mission stations over against the people. To these stations we brought out our wives; in them we made our homes. Outwardly and inwardly these mission compounds were little bits of England transplanted into a foreign country. Within their walls was a European civilization; outside was a heathen civilization or barbarism. When a man crossed the threshold of a mission compound, he stepped from one world into another, from one age into another. Many a weary traveler has described them for us, and expressed the delight which he felt in passing for a moment into these homes of quiet, order, cleanliness, and decency, before he plunged again into the barbarism outside.

When the early missionaries built the first houses in those compounds, they were taking a step which must have seemed of the simplest and most commonplace character. They must have houses; they must have houses fit for Europeans to live in.

What could be more obvious! Yet, in building those houses they fixed the character and the limits of mission work in that country for a century, perhaps for two or three centuries. Those houses represented a spirit, they revealed the relationship which was to be between the missionary and the people. They argued the immobility of the Christian force; they prophesied that European missionaries would still be there a hundred years later, calling themselves missionaries still, ministering to the third and fourth generations of Christians (Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, p. 101).

Houses speak of immobility, a fixed ministry. So there is a tension. We must always be resisting the forces that make us immobile, and they are very real. The comforts of our homes, the joys of family life, good food, a language we are at home in are all continually exerting a force on us. On the other hand there is the work we have been called to: "*Go ye into all the world . . . the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15).

This necessitates hard, tiring hiking on mountain trails, living in smoky, dark houses, eating food not quite the same as home-cooked meals, sleeping with families in houses with various vermin, being in the midst of a people who's culture is strange and even mysterious, hearing a language that is a jumble of strange sounds (at least in the beginning), being subject to various diseases and pains, the tensions of close contact with those who are often enemies to the gospel, and being separated from our loved ones. Naturally, who wouldn't prefer staying at home? Too, when we are away from our families, there are dangers they are subjected to, and all know something of fear in the night. Our wives must cope with many difficult situations on their own. The Lord in His goodness has given us all good wives, yes, outstanding wives, and it is only due to their willingness to have us away from home

that enables us to have the ministries we have, and it is a very real sacrifice they make.

Hay writes on this,

Both he and his wife must be prepared for the sacrifice entailed by his having to be absent from home for long periods. The fact must be faced that the methods of work of the planter of churches cannot be modified to suit his domestic arrangements; on the contrary, if he is called to the work of an evangelist, his home life must be subordinated to the obligations of his ministry, though, of course, not to the extent that the fundamental responsibilities towards his home are neglected.

The sacrifice entailed need not be exaggerated. Men in other callings—sailors, soldiers, scientists, commercial travelers, and others—make a similar sacrifice to business, duty, or science, and consider themselves sufficiently rewarded.

This is not a matter in which specific rules can be laid down to cover all cases in all lands. No details are given regarding it in the New Testament record. The only rule is that the evangelist must be absolutely faithful to the principles of his ministry, arranging all his private affairs so that they conform to its demands and contribute to its accomplishment (Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*, p. 95).

It seems necessary that we have comfortable homes. This is not necessarily an evil. The evil is when our homes hinder “the work” through our inordinate love for them. Just as money is not the root of all evil, but rather the love of money is.

The type of work we’ve been called to requires regular and usually weekly time out in the villages. Survey and evan-

gelism trips often require days away from home. A friend who visited the work here in PNG loved to get out to the villages, and did go out regularly every week with someone. She gave as her reason for doing so, "That is where the action is." Quite so! It is in the villages that we meet people, make friends, hear and learn the language, see and participate in the life of the people, learn the culture, and best of all, witness and preach the glorious gospel of grace. It is in the villages that we identify ourselves with the people, and they come to know us, our manner of life, our purposes, standards, and beliefs. Too, in the villages the Christians see and learn that which cannot be seen, experienced, or learned in the classroom. They see us in weakness, sometimes persecuted, confronting false teaching, persevering when opposed, in weariness and toil, seeking not to give offense, with a concern and love for souls. A godly example will never be forgotten.

The value of a missionary's work is usually in direct ratio to the time he spends with the people in the villages. What can it mean if the missionary is reluctant to be with the people he has come to serve? We read of Christ being with the people continually even to exhaustion.

## CHAPTER 11

### Field Leadership

#### 1. The Necessity for Field Leadership

##### *a. To Give Order*

God is a God of order, and in all families, relationships, churches, missionary fellowships, etc. God has ordained order and leadership. Submission to authority is necessary for the ordering of society. “A leaderless group of missionaries is not in accordance with the New Testament pattern” (Alexander Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*). No man is to do that which is right in his own eyes. Missionary work is not to be done by one man independently of others. The functioning of the body is seen in missionary work where missionaries are interrelated and mutually dependent on one another.

##### *b. To Orient and Train New Missionaries*

Field leadership is necessary for the orientation and training of new missionaries, the coordination of the workers, the responsibility for the whole of the work, and to give direction and unity to the work and the workers. When new missionaries arrive on the field, they are inexperienced. Suddenly they are thrown into the midst of a people of a strange culture speaking an unintelligible language. Too, they are away from the help and support of their families, their home churches, and their own people. Then there are dangers, both real and imagined, to the new missionary. And they have come to “*wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of*

*wickedness in the heavenly places*” (Eph. 6:12). This sudden change from the familiar to the unknown is often traumatic and is called by the term “culture shock.” The leader of the missionary band, due to his experience, can be of great assistance with the help of the Lord at that time. He is able to introduce them to some of the mysteries of the culture and encourage them on. The field leader of New Tribes Mission was of great help to me when I first arrived on the field, both by his encouragement and spiritual example.

### ***c. To Guide to a Field of Labor***

After orientation, where do these new missionaries go to labor? The leader of the group has more of an understanding of the big picture. He has come into contact with the field situation and has much information that is of great value as to where new workers are needed and could be located. Also, he has probably done some survey work. The sending of new workers to a particular part of the field should not be arbitrary, nor without their agreement, but leadership is needed at this point. Quoting Hay,

It is stated that Paul’s fellow workers were sent by him on their various missions. That this sending was not done arbitrarily is made evident by Paul’s account of the manner in which he approached them on these occasions: “*So that I have desired Titus (to revisit you), that as he caused you to begin this work, so he might lead you to finish it. . . . But, thanks be to God, by whose gift the heart of Titus has the same zeal as my own on your behalf; for he not only has consented to my desire, but is himself very zealous in the matter, and departs to you on his own accord*” (2 Cor. 8:6, 16, 17, Conybeare).

*“As for our brother Apollos, I have repeatedly urged him to accompany the brethren who are com-*

*ing to you, but he is quite resolved not to do so at present. He will come, however, when he has a good opportunity”* (1 Cor. 16:12, Weymouth).

It was the custom for a believer, when he traveled, to carry a letter of recommendation from the congregation with which he met. Evangelists also were recommended. False missionaries were seeking to introduce wrong doctrine and practice into the churches, and the churches were responsible to reject them, so it was right that the true missionaries should go properly recommended (Rev. 2:2; 2 Cor. 11:13).

These evangelists did not go simply as individuals on their own authority; they represented and spoke for the group of evangelists. When Timothy or Titus showed to the churches the letters they carried from Paul, the leader of the company, they were placed in a strong position. The church that rejected their ministry would know that it was not simply the individual evangelist who had come to them that they rejected, but the whole company of evangelists. Paul in his recommendations always identified himself fully with them: they were his fellow-workers to be received as he himself would be received.

The evangelists worked together as a company. Each one was led individually and directly by the Holy Spirit. No one was obliged to go anywhere if he felt that it was not God's will that he should go. Paul did not insist that they go where he thought they should go. Yet no one acted independently. The journeys and ministry of all were coordinated through the leader. Thus the needs of the whole field and of all the churches were properly cared for, which would not have been the case had the ministry of the evangelists not been effectively coordinated (Hay, *The New Testament Church Order for Church and Missionary*, pp. 97, 98).

#### ***d. To Coordinate the Work***

Although the leader coordinated the work, it was the responsibility of everyone to seek the Spirit's guidance. Thus, in the above quotation of 2 Corinthians 8:6, 16, 17 and 1 Corinthians 16:12 we see that Titus and Apollos had a real voice in where they went. Quoting Hay once again,

Through the leader the Holy Spirit co-ordinated the ministry of the company. But Paul did not exercise an arbitrary leadership, nor was the will of the Spirit revealed to him alone. It is the company that is spoken of as being guided by the Spirit on the journey north through Asia Minor: "*Then Paul and his companions passed through Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Message in the Province of Asia. When they reached the frontier of Mysia, they were about to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not permit this*" (Acts 16:6, 7, Weymouth).

The account given by Luke of the vision Paul, as leader, received of "the man of Macedonia," shows the participation of all in the guidance given through the vision. After stating that Paul saw the vision, Luke changes from the singular to the plural, saying, "*And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, (we) assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel to them*" (Acts 16:10).

Confirmation regarding the will of the Spirit was received by all, although it was to Paul that He had spoken. The principle involved here is the same as when Paul's call was confirmed to the brethren in Antioch. It is one of the important principles governing the receiving of guidance from the Spirit and one of the great safeguards. The Holy Spirit may reveal His will to one, but that one waits until confirmation

of the guidance is given to his brethren. The danger of mistaken guidance, or of going ahead of God's time, is greatly lessened by this procedure. No doubt it had much to do in preserving the unity of the Spirit in the company of evangelists" (Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*, pp. 99, 100).

### *e. To Strengthen Unity*

Lastly, I would state that field leadership is also needed in regard to unity. In the book of Judges after the death of Samson we read of a time of great sin and confusion. There was no unity. Rather, "*everyone did what was right in his own eyes*" (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). The cause was, "*In those days there was no King in Israel*" (Judg. 17:6). This statement is repeated three times. Where there is no leadership, each man does what he thinks is right. All unity is destroyed. The difference between an unruly mob and a disciplined army is obedience to leadership. In time of war it is the officers who are the prime targets, since an army without leadership is much easier routed in confusion than an army with officers. Isn't this why the King of Syria commanded his thirty-two captains, "*Fight with no one small or great, but only with the King of Israel*"? (1 Kings 22:31).

Without authority there is chaos and disunity. Since God is a God of order, He has ordained authority in all relationships. Not least, this includes the working relationship of missionaries on the field who are doing the work closest to the heart of God.

## **2. The New Testament Pattern**

The Word of God is our authority here as in all things. Was the leadership of the apostles and their associates from the churches, or from the missionary groups themselves? We read of Peter leading a group of the brethren on an important

mission to bring the gospel for the first time to the Gentiles (Acts 10). Later we read of "*Paul and his Party*" (Acts 13:13). Previous to this we read of Barnabas going to Tarsus to get Saul to assist him. It seems that Barnabas was the leader at first since he is named first in Acts 11:30; 12:25. Then later it is Paul and Barnabas with Paul taking the leadership (Acts 13:43, 46; 15:22, 35). Peter's apostleship was to the circumcised while Paul's was particularly to the uncircumcised (Gal. 2:7, 8). Of course they did not go alone, but rather headed up two missionary teams or bands. There were no doubt other missionary bands under other leadership, too, although not recorded in the book of Acts. In all probability Apollos did not work alone but headed up a missionary band.

The pattern for missionary work is to be found mainly in Acts and the Epistles, but also in the Gospels. Just as there is a divine pattern for local churches, so there is a divine pattern for itinerant or missionary work. Nothing is left to man to follow his own mind. All is of God. "*Show the house and let them measure the pattern*" (Ezek. 43:10). "*As Moses was admonished of God when he was about to build the tabernacle for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount*" (Heb. 8:5).

Paul is the main example for the missionary, not only in his character, but also in his work, since missionary work is to follow his work. Without his writings to missionary-founded churches, the description of his missionary task and methods and his writings to fellow missionaries Timothy and Titus, we would be left with little direction. Granted that we are ashamed, sometimes even to tears, when we read of his life and labors, yet we thank God for such an example.

I think it is clear that Paul was the leader of his missionary associates. "*Timothy . . . would Paul have to go forth with him*" (Acts 16:1-4). "*When he (Paul) had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia concluding*

*that God had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them” (Acts 16:9, 10). “But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed” (Acts 17:15). Paul determined to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him” (Acts 20:3-5). Much more could be cited, but let these suffice.*

### **3. Authority: Official and Spiritual**

What gave Paul this authority? There are two types of authority: official authority and spiritual authority. If a man is voted into an office or given an office, he may have official authority only. If so, when he is out of the office he no longer has authority. But spiritual authority is that which is given by God and continues. Paul had this spiritual authority from God, *“our authority which the Lord gave us for edification . . .”* (2 Cor. 10:8). He used it as a humble servant to edify (build up others) and not to exalt himself. He did not use his authority to dominate people or gain prominence. Christ spoke about this in Matthew 20:25, *“. . . the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. . . .”* Our Lord’s principles of success and greatness are vastly different than the world’s.

Peter exhorts the elders likewise to not *“being lords over God’s heritage but examples to the flock”* (1 Pet. 5:1-3). Does this deny the whole principle of authority? No, but it emphasizes that Biblical leadership is in the spirit of humility, love, and servanthood. Leadership can quickly become authoritarian and self-serving. We see this in the religious leaders of Christ’s day who loved power, prestige, and a high profile ministry with special titles, clothes, the chief seats; all to exalt themselves

above the people. It is important to see the distinction between official authority which is not connected with the person, but with the office, and spiritual authority which is connected with the person. Thus a man may rule others if he holds office, whether he is spiritually qualified to do so or not. However, if he loses office, he loses his authority. But spiritual authority resides in the person and always continues while the spiritual qualifications continue regardless of outward circumstances.

People under official authority must obey if they are in that organization. This has given rise to authoritarianism and the abuse of power. Some use fear to dominate people. But as to spiritual authority, people are not compelled to obey. There is no compulsion but spiritual compulsion. Nevertheless, spiritual authority is powerful and does work in brotherly love.

Apart from the question of spiritual authority, other things that give authority to God's servants are age, experience, gifts, and ministry. When I speak of experience, gifts, and ministry I mean as these are related to the work on the field. A man without field experience could not, of course, lead missionaries on the field, nor could a man who has not had a ministry of evangelism and church planting lead evangelists and church planters. Needless to say, missionary leadership must be on the field, for missionary work cannot be directed from a distance nor by telephone or mail. As I wrote under discipleship: example is of utmost importance. Good leadership leads by example and by working together in close and intimate fellowship. Those on the field are under the field leadership, but the field leadership should be open to fellowship and at all times be willing to discuss all decisions and receive input from all the field missionaries and from the churches. The main way that guidance should be received is from the Holy Spirit through united, believing prayer.

I am indebted to Roland Allen for the next two chapters.

## CHAPTER 12

### Causes of Our Failure

#### 1. Pride

We missionaries by our actions subtly suggest we are superior to the poor and needy people we go to. That we have been lifted out of sin and degradation and made saints by God's grace is true, but, that we are in other senses superior beings to the illiterate tribes people who live in superstition and darkness is not true. It is so easy to feel and act as superior because we are wealthier, better educated, and more knowledgeable about a host of things. We often display racial pride in subtle ways, sometimes in ways not so subtle. We expect them to look to us for teaching and leadership. Even after they are saved and made new creatures in Christ we seem to have little faith in them. We do not encourage spiritual initiative. We believe our preaching and teaching is better and more effective than theirs, so we do all the preaching and teaching and expect them to be the hearers. We are unwilling to sit at their feet and are something less than teachable. We don't spend much time with them. When we do it is mainly directed toward our program. We hold on to our authority tenaciously and refuse to give the people much authority even in their own spiritual affairs. We expect submission to our decisions, but rarely submit to them. We direct them, but will not allow them to direct us. We have taught them to look to us rather than depend on Christ.

The work is ours, and the people view it as such. They view the white man or the foreigner as the director of the work. If they help us in the work, it must be done our way. We

act as if the work cannot be done without us. We do the work with thoughts of how our report of the work will be received in our home countries. We are much mindful of our reputations and seek to build them on our work. We have little sympathy with and heart concern for the people.

Roland Allen writes,

Consequently we have preached the Gospel from the point of view of the wealthy man who casts a mite into the lap of a beggar, rather than from the point of view of the husbandman who casts his seed into the earth, knowing that his own life and the lives of all connected with him depend upon the crop which will result from his labor.

Approaching them in that spirit, we have desired to help them. We have been anxious to do something for them. And we have done much. We have done everything for them. We have taught them, baptized them, shepherded them. We have managed their funds, ordered their services, built their churches, provided their teachers. We have nursed them, fed them, doctored them. We have trained them, and have even ordained some of them. We have done everything for them except acknowledge any equality. We have done everything for them, but very little with them. We have done everything for them except give place to them. We have treated them as "dear children," but not as "brethren" (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, p. 143).

## **2. We Have Taught Them To Depend On Us**

Again Allen says,

The secret of success in this work lies in beginning at the very beginning. It is the training of the first converts which sets the type for the future. If the first converts are taught to depend upon the mis-

sionary, if all work, evangelistic, educational, social is concentrated in his hands, the infant community learns to rest passively upon the man from whom they receive their first insight into the Gospel. Their faith, having no sphere for its growth and development, lies dormant. A tradition very rapidly grows up that nothing can be done without the authority and guidance of the missionary; the people wait for him to move, and, the longer they do so, the more incapable they become of any independent action. Thus the leader is confirmed in the habit of gathering all authority into his own hands, and of despising the powers of his people, until he makes their inactivity an excuse for denying their capacity. The fatal mistake has been made of teaching the converts to rely upon the wrong source of strength. Instead of seeking it in the working of the Holy Spirit in themselves, they seek it in the missionary. They put him in the place of Christ, they depend upon him.

In allowing them, or encouraging them, to do this, the missionary not only checks the spiritual growth of his converts and teaches them to rely upon a wrong source of strength; he actually robs them of the strength which they naturally possess and would naturally use. The more independent spirits amongst them can find no opportunity for exercising their gifts. All authority is concentrated in the hands of the missionary. If a native Christian feels any capacity for Christian work, he can only use his capacity under the direction, and in accordance with the wishes, of that supreme authority. He can do little in his own way; that is, in the way which is natural to him. Consequently, if he is to do any spiritual work he must either so suppress himself as to act in an unnatural way, or he must find outside the church the opportunity which is denied

him within her borders, or he must put aside the desire which God has implanted in his soul to do spiritual work for Christ, and content himself with secular employment. If he does the first, he works all his life as a cripple: if he takes either of the two other courses, the church is robbed of his help. It is almost impossible to imagine that a native "prophet" could remain within the church system as it exists in many districts. If a prophet arose he would either have all the spirit crushed out of him, or he would secede. The native Christian ministers who remain are those who fall into lifeless submission to authority, or else spend their lives in discontented misery, feeling that they have lost themselves not to God but to a foreign system. Thus the community is robbed of its strength: its own forces are weakened whilst it depends upon the most uncertain of props and the most unnatural. In the result the missionary is left to deplore the sad condition of a Christian church which seems in danger of falling away the moment he leaves it.

If there is a striking difference between St. Paul's preaching and ours, there is a still greater difference between his method of dealing with his converts and that common among us today. Indeed, I think we may say that it is in his dealing with his converts that we come to the heart of the matter and may hope to find one secret of his amazing success. With us today this is the great difficulty. We can gather in converts; we often gather in large numbers; but we cannot train them to maintain their own spiritual life. We cannot establish the church on a self-supporting basis. Our converts often display great virtues, but they remain, too often for generations, dependent upon us. Having gathered a Christian congregation, the missionary is too often tied to

it and so hindered from further evangelistic work. This difficulty unquestionably arises from our early training of our converts, and therefore it is of supreme importance that we should endeavor to discover, as far as we can, the method of St. Paul in training his. For he succeeded exactly where we fail (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, pp. 81, 82).

### 3. We Have Lacked Faith

Paul had faith in the believers, not in the believers themselves but in the Holy Spirit in them. He had confidence in them. He writes to new believers, "*We have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you*" (2 Thess. 3:4). Here is the secret. It was his confidence "*in the Lord*" that gave him confidence in the converts. He trusted them to learn and to grow. Believing that "*the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you and keep you from evil*" (2 Thess. 3:3) enabled Paul to believe in the Thessalonians. He looked at them as indwelt by the Spirit. As Roland Allen says, "We look too much at our converts as they are by nature: St. Paul looked at his converts as they were by grace" (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, p. 125).

Here is where we have failed. We have feared to give them liberty. We fear to leave them on their own. We think that without us they cannot stand fast. We don't really trust them, and they sense that we don't. Our attitude is often negative, so we put up many safeguards to control the new believers. Paul did not. He quickly left new believers to put into practice what they had been taught. Allen again says,

To do this required faith; and this faith is the spiritual power in which St. Paul won his victory. He believed in the Holy Spirit, not merely vaguely as a spiritual power, but as a person indwelling his converts. He believed therefore in his converts. He

could trust them. He did not trust them because he believed in their natural virtue or intellectual sufficiency. If he had believed in that, his faith must have been sorely shaken. But he believed in the Holy Spirit in them. He believed that Christ was able and willing to keep that which he had committed to Him. He believed that He would perfect His church, that He would stablish, strengthen, settle his converts. He believed, and acted as if he believed.

It is that faith which we need today. We need to subordinate our methods, our systems, ourselves to that faith. We often speak as if we had to do simply with weak and sinful men. We say that we cannot trust our converts to do this or that, that we cannot commit the truth to men destitute of this or that particular form of education or training. We speak as if we had to do with mere men. We have not to do with mere men; we have to do with the Holy Spirit. What systems, forms, safeguards of every kind cannot do, He can do. When we believe in the Holy Spirit, we shall teach our converts to believe in Him, and when they believe in Him they will be able to face all difficulties and dangers. They will justify our faith. The Holy Spirit will justify our faith in Him. "This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4), (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, pp. 149-150).

## CHAPTER 13

### **Missionary Retirement**

A missionary should always be seeking to work himself out of his job. He has not succeeded until the churches can exist without him. He has not fully succeeded if someone from his homeland is needed to continue his work. If the missionary leaves and the churches continue, his work is verified.

Alexander Hay writes of our Lord's ministry,

After three years of ministry, He retired from the field leaving His disciples, who had given much evidence of weakness and lack of understanding, to be founders and leaders of the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Hay, *New Testament Church Order*, p. 34).

A good missionary is like a good parent. He teaches, guides, and corrects, but is always looking to the time when the churches will be mature and able to be on their own. Every sign of growth is seen as a step toward independence. A good Christian parent is one who has seen his children through their formative years and seen them in turn go on to establish orderly Christian homes. Even so, the churches Paul established grew in both numbers and grace and were able to propagate themselves. They were centers from which spiritual light radiated out dispelling darkness all around. Allen writes,

In Galatia "*the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.*" From Thessalonica "*the word of the Lord sounded out*" in Macedonia and Achaia. From Ephesus the Gospel spread throughout all the neighboring country so that

many churches sprang up, the members of which had never seen St. Paul's face, and he himself could write to the Romans that he had "*no more place in those regions*" (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, p. 111).

Allen continues,

The missionary can keep ever before his mind the truth that he is there to prepare the way for the retirement of the foreign missionary. He can live his life amongst his people and deal with them as though he would have no successor. He should remember that he is the least permanent element in the church. He may fall sick and go home, or he may die, or he may be called elsewhere. He disappears, the church remains. The native Christians are the permanent element. The permanence of the church depends upon them. Therefore, it is of vital importance that if he is removed they should be able to carry on the work, as if he were present. He cannot rely, and he ought not to rely, upon having any successor. In many cases it must be literally true that he has none, at any rate, for some years. The supply of men from home is happily so inadequate that it is impossible to ensure a sufficient number of European recruits to man all the existing stations. It is obvious that there will not be, and ought not to be, enough to man similar stations all over any great country. In some cases it is probable that he will have no successor: in every case it is desirable that no successor should be necessary to the existence of the church. Consequently, it is of the first importance that he should keep this always before him and strive by all means to secure that the absence of a foreign superintendent should not result in that deplorable lapse from Christianity which we have only too often observed, with shame and grief, to

follow upon the withdrawal of foreign support in the past. It is his first duty to prepare the way for the safe retirement of the foreign missionary.

He can do this in two ways: (1) He can associate the people with himself in all that he does and so make them thoroughly understand the nature of the work, and (2) he can practice retirement.

### **1. He Can Associate the People With Himself in All That He Does.**

He need not do anything without their cooperation. By that I mean not merely that he can associate with himself a few individuals who seem suited to his mind, but that he can educate the whole congregation. In the past we have associated with ourselves individuals of our own selection; we have begun our education from the top. What is needful is to begin from the bottom. Leaders must be thrown up by the community, not dragged up by the missionary. It is necessary to make the whole body realize its unity and common responsibility. It is essential that he should not allow, he certainly must not encourage, the whole body to abandon all its responsibility to others, as he certainly will do if he deals only with a few people whom he has selected. He may avoid this danger by referring all business to the whole congregation in the first instance.

### **2. He Can Train Them for Retirement by Retiring.**

He can retire in two ways, physically or morally. He can retire morally by leaving things more and more in their hands, by avoiding to press his opinion, by refusing to give it lest he should, as is often the case, lead them to accept his opinion simply because it is his. He can retire by educating them to understand all the working of the mission

and by gradually delegating it. He can retire physically. He can go away on missionary tours of longer and longer duration, leaving the whole work of the station to be carried on without any foreign direction for a month or two. He can do this openly and advisedly because he trusts his people. He can prolong his tours. He can find excuses for being away more and more. He can even create such a state of affairs that he may take his furlough without their suffering any harm. At first, no doubt, he would be anxious, and he would have good cause for anxiety. Things would go wrong. But his people would know his mind, and, though they would grudge his absence, they would see that he was really helping them most by leaving them. Retirement of that kind, deliberately prepared and consciously practiced, is a very different thing from absence through stress of business unwillingly. Only by retirement can he prepare the way for real independence (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, pp. 153, 154, 158).

### 3. The Experience of a Missionary

Allen illustrates by the experience of one actual man. The story is taken almost verbatim from his diary of his work. He writes,

If anything needed to be done in any of the churches, either the congregation found out the need for itself, or the missionary suggested the need until the congregation felt it. When they recognized the need, they met as a congregation to discuss it (if the missionary was present, he was present; if he was not, he was not), and to consider what they could do to supply it. If they could supply it, they did so without any further question, and when the missionary came round they displayed their work with pride and were duly congratulated.

A local church wanted a school. The people appealed to the missionary and asked him to found one in their village. They said, "We want a school." "Then why don't you get one?" was the answer. They were astonished. "What?" they said, "how can we get one?" "How do your heathen neighbors get their children taught?" "They subscribe together and invite a teacher." "Well, why don't you do that?" "But that has never been done. The missionary has always found the teacher." "I cannot help that. I do not see why I should find your teachers. I have no teachers; you have. Is there not among you a single man who can teach a few little boys to read and write and say their catechism?" "But may we do that?" "Of course, why not?" "But how shall we pay him?" "Look here," said the missionary, "you go away and think it out and talk it over. See what you can do and then come and report to me, and perhaps I will give you a subscription out of my own pocket, if you are in difficulties." So they went away, and in due course the school was begun. It cost the missionary about one pound sterling.

He said little about the church, the body, unity; he always acted as if the church, the body, the unity was a reality. He treated the church as a church. He declined to treat individual members of the body as mere individuals. Before he reached the district there had been grievous troubles and disturbances, great persecutions, and afflictions. In fear of their lives some of the Christians had fallen away. They did not indeed, so far as I know, practice heathen rites, but they did not come to church, and they were unwilling to be openly associated with the Christian congregation. The missionary did not search out these people. He addressed himself to the church. He pointed out to the church the great dan-

ger in which these lapsed Christians were, and how serious were the evils which might result from their continued impenitence. He reminded the Christians that they formed the permanent element in the church, and that the good name of the church was of vital importance to them. He asked them what steps they proposed to take, and he left them to decide what they thought ought to be done. They appointed certain of their number to visit the lapsed Christians, in order to set before them the dangers of their state and to ask them to decide on which side they would stand: with the church for Christ, or with the heathen. They sent out their representatives with prayer. They received their report with thanksgiving. In a few days most of the lapsed were restored to the church.

One case was of a more difficult character. In the height of the persecution a prominent member of the church had driven away his son's wife, and had contracted for him a marriage with the daughter of one of the leaders of the persecuting society. This had happened more than two years before the missionary arrived in the district. For two years the offense had been passed over in silence. The offender and his son were both still Christians in name. As soon as the missionary found this out he called the church together. Again he urged upon the Christians the grievous and palpable dangers of condoning such an offense. Again he left them to consider what ought to be done. After a time the catechist, and one or two other members of the church, came to tell him that the church was agreed that the offenders ought to be excommunicated publicly. But in the meanwhile he met the offender and told him what the church was doing. The offender came to see him. He was much disturbed. "Why,"

he said, "cannot you act as your predecessors have always acted? Why do you stir up all the Christians in such matters?" The missionary answered that public notorious offenses concerned not only the priest-in-charge and the bishop, but the whole church, and that it was right that the church should act in such cases as a body. "But what can I do?" asked the man. "I cannot bear this." The missionary replied that he did not know, but that he thought that if the man was truly penitent, and made public confession in the church, and published his confession in the city, so that the name of the church was cleared, then the Christians might be satisfied and that he might remain in the church as a penitent, until the Hand of God made clear the way for his full restoration. Thereupon the man departed. Afterwards the missionary met his catechist and told him what he had said, and asked him whether he thought the Christians would be satisfied with such an act of penitence. "It is of no importance," answered the catechist, "what they think. Such a thing has never been done since the world began. Whatever he may do, he will not do that." Yet he did. It is one thing to be excommunicated by a foreign bishop; it is quite another to be excommunicated by one's neighbors. The whole church was in a ferment. Many of the Christians were connected by family ties with the offenders. They took the matter seriously to heart. Prayers went up to God night and day from individuals and from the whole church. The offender read out in church a confession couched in the simplest and most definite terms. In it he confessed that he had committed such an offense, that his action was contrary to the laws of God and the church, that he was persuaded that salvation was to be found in Christ in communion with His church, and that

thenceforward he would endeavor to conform his life to the Law of God. He went out with two or three of the leaders of the church and posted that confession on the four gates of the city.

Soon the missionary learned that the secret of success in his work lay in dealing with the church as a body. When questions arose he had but one answer, "Tell it to the church."

Very soon the church began to realize itself. Sunday after Sunday the congregation sat discussing questions of church order, or instructing one another in the faith. Most often the missionary could not himself be present, and often when he might have been present, he felt that it was wise to leave his people to thresh out their questions and difficulties in their own way, and to report to him their decisions, or to send their questions to him, if they wanted his advice. He was not afraid that they would make serious mistakes or take hasty action behind his back. The more he retired from them, the more they turned to him in case of need, the more they sought his advice, the more they told him their plans, the more they saved him from difficulties. One day, on his return from an outlying village, he was met by his catechist with the familiar question: "Do you know what we have been doing today?" "No. What have you been doing?" "We have adopted a baby." The children of a poor Christian playing in the fields had heard a cry. Seeing no one near, they searched about till they discovered a box lightly covered with soil, from which the cry came. They broke it open and found a young baby. They took it home to their father. He, poor man, was utterly unable to satisfy another mouth. So next Sunday he went to church and told his tale. Thereupon the Christians decided to give it into the care of one of their number and to pay her a weekly dole

for its maintenance. It was baptized with a name which in English means "one who has obtained love." When the missionary heard this he was glad. If he had not taught the people to "Tell it to the church," the baby might have been put down on his doorstep, and he might have been driven to begin the foundation of a costly "Foundlings' Home." But happily for him, the church had learned to manage its own business.

Sometimes it was his part to suggest the doing of charity. One day the catechist told him that the husband of a poor woman was dead, and the family was hard put to it to arrange the funeral. "Get so and so to bring the case before the church." After the meeting the missionary asked the catechist what the church had done. The church had subscribed so much. "Is that enough?" "Barely." Then the missionary, too, as a member of the church, could subscribe. He was not outside the church. He could act with the church, but not instead of, or without it.

All this may sound very trivial. But yet it led the catechist to see the hope of a native church before him as a reality more clearly than all the teaching which he had received. And he learned that lesson in three months. All the matters recorded here happened in less than six months, and he and many others had grasped the truth of the situation long before the end of that time. One day he came into the missionary's house with a question. "Do you know what you are doing, sir?" "Yes," answered the missionary, "I think that I know; but I should like to know what you think I am doing." "Well, sir, if you go on like this you will found a native church" (Allen, *Missionary Methods* pp. 168-173).

## CHAPTER 14

### **Conclusion: The Work and Its Completion**

*For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand." For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while (Rom. 15:18-24).*

#### **1. The Work**

When I was in missionary training a man from a group called Men for Missions came and spoke to us. He told us of a man who told him that he was doing a good job. His reply was, "This is not *a* job; this is *the* job." I never forgot that. The missionary task is called "the work" in Acts 13:2 and 15:38.

The Great Commission defines this task. "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the*

*name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" (Matt. 28:19, 20). "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). The two acts that are commanded are going and preaching to "all nations," "all the world," and "every creature." This defines a missionary as an itinerant; not a man with a fixed ministry.

As a missionary laboring in this task I would like to close my writing by encouraging my fellow missionary laborers in "the work." I also think how Roland Allen's writing encouraged me into missionary work. How wonderful it would be if his writings that I have quoted would again encourage someone to answer the call, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?*" with Isaiah's response, "*Here am I! Send me*" (Isa. 6:8).

During missionary training we would often sing the missionary hymn with the chorus,

Lord send me, O send me forth I pray.  
The need is great, Thy call I will obey,  
Thy love compels me, I must go.  
I'm willing, ready, longing to go.

Wilda Savage

We prayed, "Lord send me." We were willing, yes, longing to go.

## 2. Its Priority

Paul wrote to the Romans, "*Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you but was hindered until now*" (Rom. 1:13). He does not tell them what hindered him until chapter 15, verses 20-24. The RSV, NEB, TEV (Today's English Version), NIV, all translate the word translated "strived" by the KJV as "my ambition." "*It*

*has always been my ambition to preach the gospel, where Christ was not known*" (Rom. 15:20, NIV). Thus he had not gone to Rome. Paul's priority was to preach to the unreached, and since the Romans had been reached with the glorious gospel, he had continued to preach where Christ was not named rather than go to Rome. So he writes, "*For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.*" In this case it wasn't Satan that had hindered, nor God's providence, but Paul's ambition, his priority, his aim of preaching where Christ was not named. His eyes were foremost on the "*regions beyond*" (2 Cor. 10:16).

Why then is he purposing to go to Rome? He tells us he had "**fully preached** from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum" (v. 19). The NEB translates it, "**I have completed the preaching of the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem as far round as Illyricum.**" He says, "*There is **no more place** for me to work in these regions*" (NIV). He had evangelized that whole area! I have measured the distance from Jerusalem to Illyricum as somewhere around 1500 miles! He had evangelized and planted churches everywhere by the power of the Spirit of God. Think of it! Amazing! Noble man! What evidence of God's mighty power. No more place left there—so he plans to go to Rome. Has he forgotten his main aim? Not at all. His purpose is beyond Rome, it is Spain, the end of the then known world, "*I hope to visit you while passing through.*" His vision was on to Spain to preach to those in darkness. Possibly he thought that then the task of reaching the world would then be finished.

This is the same burning desire that possessed our Lord. We read in Mark 1:37 how everyone was looking for Him: surely a great opportunity. But our Lord replies, "*Let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.*" Verse 39 then says, "*He was preaching . . . throughout all Galilee.*" Onward! Forward! "Go and preach. . . ."

### 3. Its Completion

For a work or a job to have incentive it must have an end, a completion. If there is never a time it could be said of a work, "It is finished," it loses its tendency to incite to action. An unending job takes away the heart. Sometimes a job is given to a person just to keep him busy, but such jobs cause loss of interest and dull desire. The missionary task has an end. It will be completed. It will bear fruit. Thus, the Old Testament portion that Paul quotes supports his definition of his work, "*To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand*" (Rom. 15:21). Paul worked to bear fruit and complete the task, "*the gospel to every creature.*" Thus, he planned to journey to Spain, for he had finished his work from Jerusalem to Illyricum.

Acts 1:8 is not a command so much as it is a prophecy of the completion of the worldwide witness. "*You shall be witnesses to Me . . . to the end (or uttermost part) of the earth.*" The word translated end or uttermost is *eschatos*, from which we get the word eschatology, the study of last things. It is translated "last" 46 times in the New Testament (KJV). For example, we have "*the first shall be last*" and "*I am the first and the last.*" Thus, the meaning is last in time or last with nothing following. The last days mean that none follow. The last enemy means there are no more. The last trump in 1 Corinthians 15 means the seventh and last trump of Revelation. Acts 1:8 can be translated to mean that Christ said that His people would be witnesses to the last remaining parts of the earth. The job then would be finished; the church would be complete. There would be no more nations, peoples, and tongues unreached. For this reason Revelation 5:9 says, "*You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. . . .*" There is no language, no people, no nation, no ethnic group that will not hear the gospel,

be saved and present in that great day as part of the church. The church will finish its work and be gloriously triumphant by the Spirit. This has been a great missionary incentive.

The sure triumph of the Church is taught by Christ, “*I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*” (Matt. 16:18). Some commentators believe this speaks of Satan and his legions attacking the church.

“Gates of Hell” by metonymy represents Satan and his legions as it were storming out of hell’s gates in order to attack and destroy the church (Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 649).

However, gates are not an offensive weapon but a fixed defense. Gates do not march out against the enemy. Throughout the Bible gates are depicted as used for defense and security. In line with the Saviour going forth conquering and to conquer through His church, storming Satan’s citadels, and advancing into his territory, it is the church storming Satan’s gates rather than the gates storming the church. The gates of hell shall not prevail. The strong man will be overcome and his kingdom wrested from him. It is the church that is conquering and thrusting into enemy territory and occupying in the name of her Lord.

This is also taught in Matthew 24:14, “*This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*” And Mark 13:10, “*The gospel must first be preached to all nations.*” It is the church that is on the move. The end of the missionary task and the coming of Christ are joined together.

#### **4. The Final Result**

Peter exhorts the saints to hasten the coming. “*Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking*

*for and hastening the coming of the day of God . . .*” (2 Pet. 3:11, 12). Although the day is fixed in God’s counsel and cannot be altered, God uses means to accomplish His purposes. Thus, as God’s people pray and labor for the conversion of the world and the accomplishment of the missionary task, they “*hasten the coming.*”

The coming of Christ is portrayed as a harvest when “*the Son of Man will thrust in His sickle and reap when the harvest of the earth is ripe*” (Rev. 14:14, 15). Barnes commenting on verse 16, “. . . *and the earth was reaped,*” wrote, “The end had come, the church was redeemed, the work contemplated was accomplished, and the results of the work of the Saviour were like a glorious harvest.” Looking to such a harvest, we have the command, “*Son, go work today in my vineyard*” (Matt. 21:28). We are told, “*The harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest*” (Matt. 9:37, 38).

The Saviour will see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. What He died to accomplish, what He prays for must take place. The Father hears Him always. He must reign. He must have a people.

*Indeed, I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and commander for the people. Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you* (Isa. 55:4, 5).

*And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious* (Isa. 11:10).

*He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those*

*who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him (Ps. 72:8-11).*

*Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isa. 53:12).*

*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! (Rev. 11:15).*

*Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king? (2 Sam. 19:10).*

May God send us forth by His Spirit to pray and labor to **bring back the King.**

*He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son (Rev. 21:7).*

*He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).*