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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this issue of the Journal of Church Ministries. I trust that as you read the articles printed in this volume, you will be both encouraged and stimulated to pursue greater heights of service.

As you may probably know, the Journal is another effort of the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary to serve our pastors and Christian workers all throughout the country by using the printed word. The articles which you will find in the following pages are significantly relevant to the pastoral ministry.

You are encouraged to give your feedback regarding what you have read either to the contributor or to me as the editor of this issue. Your feedback may be in the form of affirmation, question, or suggestion.

I would like to express my appreciation to the contributors to this edition whose names are listed in the opposite page. In the midst of their busy schedules they have graciously consented to spare time and effort, thus making possible the printing of this volume.

Let us all join our hearts in thanking our Lord. This Journal is indeed an item of praise.

VAL GONZALES,
Editor

MINISTERING TO THE HANDICAPPED

By: Val Gonzales

To care for the handicapped is not an easy task. To speak to them about suffering and the reality of their hurt is prone to be misunderstood because the tone may sound simplistic and purely theoretical.

If this presentation may sound simplistic it is not intentional. For at the outset I would like to affirm the reality of suffering, the intensity of the feeling of loss, and the response of grief which are experienced by someone who was disabled by circumstances which he may not have complete control. This written message is an effort of one Christian minister to speak in concrete terms and in a manner which will be easily understood.

When we speak of the dynamics of what is going on in the lives of handicapped persons we will find one common element and that is: a sense of loss. Suffering is real. Every handicapped person suffers. The difference is how suffering is expressed. There is a great sense of grief as a response to the loss. Grief could be understood as an acute form of anxiety.

To simply say sentimental cliches or to give a simple message that things will turn out alright will be received by the suffering person as an outright denial of the reality of his loss.

A case of a young housewife who underwent mastectomy of the left breast offers a point of reflection. When she arrived home she asked her husband how he feels about the loss of a vital part of her body. He responded that the operation does not bother him a bit and to him it is alright. The wife was so bothered that it did not bother him. She said, "It has to bother him because it bothers me!" The point is clear: Because he is not affected by the

experience of loss as perceived by the wife then as far as she is concerned he does not really understand. Worst still, he does not make an effort to understand.

Before anything will be shared by someone who desires to help a handicapped friend, let it be emphasized that there is a real need to affirm the reality of suffering and the intensity of grief as a response to the loss.

Biblical Messages on Suffering

Having shared the need for affirmation, let me proceed to recall few passages in the Bible which speak of the value of suffering. In spite of the difficulty that one has to go through, suffering in the final analysis produces results which enhance growth in the person. These values are learned effectively only in suffering.

First, suffering refines one's faith. I Peter 1:5-7 reads, "...who are protected by the power of God through faith in salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice even now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even through tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The apostle Peter is saying that Christians do not have immunity from trials and suffering. Nowhere in the Bible could we find that if one becomes a believer in God he will be saved from suffering. Suffering is an integral part in the development of virtue. Peter here offers an analogy of the testing of character and the refining of gold. When we see gold and its glitter we are amazed by its beauty and preciousness. It is, however, noteworthy to ponder that before we see what is beautiful we have a rough,

dirty, and ugly piece of object that has undergone all the trouble of chiseling towards refinement. And the refining process was through fire. If gold which has a temporal value is worth the trouble of refining how much more the faith which is eternal in value?

The most persevering, the most faithful, and the most joyful persons I have personally observed are not those who are healthy and spared from difficulty but those who have undergone and are undergoing certain forms of hardship, even disability.

Secondly, suffering makes one mature. James wrote (Ch. 1:2-4), "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Suffering in whatever form it may come triggers an individual to reflect on his purpose in life. If one's purpose in life is to grow towards maturity then absence of suffering will be of no help. A lot of people dwell on the mistaken idea that to live a purposeful, meaningful and joyful life, one has to be spared from difficulty. This is not the concept of James. Happiness to be real does not spring from a state of ease, comfort, and material prosperity. To live a faithful life experiencing suffering does not mean to live a life without joy.

When suffering is viewed from the perspective that it serves as a stepping stone not a stumbling block towards growth and maturity then one could honestly welcome its arrival. This does not mean that a person would necessarily like to have it. It could mean, however, that when suffering is present one can peacefully face it knowing that the result of steadfastly undergoing it is a proven character and a mature personality which are far better than suffering itself.

The third value of suffering is it allows an opportunity to display the works of God. The first three verses of John 9 reads, "As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.'"

It is very interesting to look closely at the reply of Jesus. The Lord did not pursue the idea of finding the cause of the person's handicap as is so often done today. Not a few people today expend their energy in trying to find the reason for someone's suffering. The argument goes back and forth to whether the suffering is a result of sin or an outcome of one's irresponsible choice. Jesus, however, focused his answer on the fact that situations such as the blindness of this man is an opportunity to display the wondrous works of God. The point is not to put too much emphasis in searching the cause but in what God can do to lift up, strengthen, protect the person who suffers. For instance, there is nothing unusual when somebody paints a picture with his hands. Hands are for that. But if someone loses the services of his hands either due to amputation or paralysis and paints a beautiful picture using his mouth or legs, then you and I will begin to see that there is a Greater Power behind the miraculous performance.

The fourth value of suffering is it enables us to conform to the image of Christ. Paul says to the Romans, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us" (Ch. 8:18). In verses 28-29 of the same chapter (8) we read, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

A person has greater opportunity to become more and more Christlike when he undergoes suffering. Jesus suffered a great deal and yet he came out victorious. He knows the intensity of the emotional turmoil and the gravity of the mental anguish that a person experiences because he went through these himself. In the same way, when one suffers, he understands better and he can empathize more appropriately.

Paul wrote to the Colossians and shared the thought that a Christian has his own portion of suffering as he grows toward becoming more and more Christlike. Colossians 1:24 reads, "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, the church." It appears that suffering makes for real the experience of one's Christianity. Without suffering, Christianity remains an intellectual exercise.

Lastly, suffering produces in us perseverance and character. Romans 5:3-5 says, "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance produces character; character hope. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, when he has forgiven us."

A person who has not experienced suffering of any form does not have the benefit of a strong emotional backbone to withstand the rigors of life. Worst still, he is not in the position to offer help to someone who suffers due to lack of profound understanding of the pain which only experience could give.

Suggestions in Ministering to the Handicapped

We are in a generation where one's value is often gauged by what he possesses and what he can

produce. When an individual experiences a loss of a vital part of his body which causes him not to do what he used to do, the pressure becomes more intense. So many a time a shattering of one's wholeness and anxiety towards maintaining one's identity occur. A Christian worker who ministers to the handicapped individuals needs to have this understanding at the back of his mind. A profound realization that one's value is not dependent on what or how much he does but simply in his being should be lovingly communicated. This thought reinforces the handicapped's will to live. Alongside with this are helpful suggestions on how to effectively minister to the handicapped. The great bulk of the material that I will be sharing were taken from Lowell G. Colston's book "Pastoral Care With Handicapped Persons." The author speaks with authority simply because he is disabled himself and has to undergo regular dialysis for his kidney problem.

Acceptance

The first suggestion is to help the handicapped work toward acceptance. This is not easy as it may sound for the handicapped person goes through a lot of turmoil within himself that he may initially block any possible objectifying of his situation. Studies have shown that handicapped persons go through different stages comparable to what is experienced by a person who suffers a loss of a significant object of his life. From an experience of shock it moves to denial to bargaining to depression to anger and to outpouring of emotion and finally to acceptance. The sooner the handicapped moves to acceptance the better. Unless he has come to accept the reality of his disability, any help offered may not be very productive. The Christian worker who enters the inner world of the handicapped needs to understand these dynamics so that he can empathize with the aches and sufferings and he will have adequate understanding of how the other thinks and

feels. The Christian worker should not be surprised at the initial tendency of the handicapped to refuse any concern given, but the minister will learn that eventually the help for the handicapped's well-being is welcomed. It therefore takes tactful and loving persistence. "What the handicapped resent is the condescending attitude of people, who disavow the continuing potential of disabled persons. Doing things for handicapped people without first checking out whether such efforts are wanted or needed is often interpreted as condescension; it is especially irritating to persons who do not like being considered objects of pity or scorn" (Colston, p. 12).

Reinforcement

The second suggestion is to use reinforcement toward behavior-modification. This simply means giving some form of reward to the patient for a constructive behavior manifested and to deny the handicapped an opportunity to engage in a behavior that may be considered destructive not only to self but also to others.

One of the common reactions of the handicapped during the early stage of rehabilitation is to withdraw from any social relationship. This is primarily caused by fear or anxiety of being rejected. This reaction will not help the handicapped to recover thus it will be wise for the Christian minister to tactfully communicate this to the handicapped person and encourage friends who are accepting to visit with the disabled. When the patient expresses willingness to socialize, a step of growth has occurred and giving encouragement, approval or any other form of reinforcement which will cause the repetition of the behavior is fitting.

Motivating Groups

The third suggestion is to organize motivating groups. When one opens the New Testament especially

the letters of Paul, he will find out to his amazement the prevalence of what is termed as "One-another concept" of doing activities. Galatians 6 for instance talks of "bearing one another's burden." Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. And let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the 'Day' approaching." James in chapter 5 verse 11 talks about confessing sins to each other and praying for each other.

The author's intention is not to expound on these scripture passages but simply to show that the "one another" concept was an integral part of doing the activities of early Christians and can be a meaningful, rewarding, and fruitful activity today. This is especially helpful to the handicapped who needs a loving support from a group of concerned friends. Primarily the group's atmosphere should be characterized by acceptance, freedom to disclose one's self, understanding, empathy, genuineness, and unconditional respect for one's personhood. A competent moderator will be of great help to the progress of the motivating group. We have an abounding volume of literature available for those who are willing to learn how to organize and moderate small groups.

Another significant value of having a sustaining support of an accepting group is the journey of the handicapped back to establishing meaningful relationships. It will be of greater help if the other members of the group are experiencing similar or other forms of disability and have made successful adjustments.

Use of Religious Resources

Fourth, the minister could use religious resources to reinforce the handicapped's will to live. Religious resources such as prayer, scripture, and devotional readings can be improperly utilized,

however. Colston offered a warning: "If they (religious resources) are presumed to have magical efficacy in themselves apart from a pastoral relationship, their use can actually be an affront to the handicapped person instead of a call to spiritual formation. The use of religious resources within a pastoral relationship can be a tremendous source of inspiration to the handicapped person" (Colston, p. 23).

We cannot underestimate the value of prayer which voices out the real need of the handicapped. The content of the Christian worker's prayer should be properly studied based on the reality of one's situation and on the need of the person. At this point I would like to refer to the apostle Paul who recorded his celebrated thron-in-the-flesh experience. Paul wanted to have the difficulty removed but the prayer was not granted. Instead, God gave strength and to Paul this was sufficient. James seems to imply the same thought when he talked about trials in the first chapter of his letter. Immediately after talking about trials he encourages the dispersed recipients of his letter to ask for wisdom. The point seems to be clear: instant removal of difficulty tends to block the development of virtue.

Other religious resources offer inspiration to the handicapped. An appropriate scripture passage becomes meaningful especially when solicited by the handicapped. Devotional literature which could be left to the handicapped after the Christian worker's visit may be a source of strength and serenity of the spirit.

Participation in Decision-Making Process

Fifth suggestion is to include the handicapped in the decision-making process of the church. Most handicapped persons have not lost their mental ability to make sound decisions in spite of a loss of another vital part of the body. To include disabled persons

in the process of making decisions gives at least two messages.

1. The disabled is accepted by the congregation as a person. This could mean further that the congregation's respect for the individual has not diminished and that he is still of value toward the growth of the church.

2. The handicapped has still the potential to offer to the church. This realization reinforces his desire to live a meaningful and purposeful life. It also triggers the person to work toward the actualizing of his potentialities. As the handicapped focuses on his capacities and strength his attention to his inadequacies will gradually decrease. This further leads to the reorganization of his self-identity.

These suggestions should complement any rehabilitation program which the handicapped is participating. They should not be taken as substitutes for a continuing pastoral concern and a genuine acceptance of the local congregation of which the handicapped holds membership. If the handicapped is not a member of any church, this is a real opportunity to show the love of Christ by regular visits and offering help which the handicapped welcomes.

The handicapped are persons who deserve the love and concern of God through the Christian worker and the church. Giving pastoral care to them will not only lead to successful adjustments to the disability but also cause the helper to grow in his perception of the handicapped's inner world, in his understanding of the potentials of the handicapped which the Lord could miraculously actualize, and in his fulfillment of the law of Christ which love in concrete form as Paul had indicated in the sixth chapter of Galatians. In a real sense, therefore, the ministry becomes a channel of growth to everyone who is involved.



HOW A WHOLE CHURCH VANISHED

By: Dwight Baker

Introduction

We are accustomed to hearing accounts of pagan lands which have become Christian through sustained missionary efforts, but I shall reverse the story and tell you of a vast area of land that was at one time almost solidly Christian, but lost its faith to another.

Several years ago while in Seminary, I learned that there had been a great church in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia Minor, but it was obvious to one taking no more than a cursory view that no great body of Christianity existed in these lands today. This fact created a problem and called for an answer - one for which I searched for some time. Today I wish to share with you a portion of the results of that search.

Briefly stated, the problem is this: If there was a great church in North Africa, the Middle East Persia and Asia Minor, what happened to it, and how can we avoid a similar catastrophe from recurring and sweeping great areas of Christendom again out of existence? The problem is especially pressing with the threat of Communism, posed in a most menacing manner before numerous Christian lands.

First a word about the rise and strength of the Middle Eastern and North African Church to help us understand how great was its fall.

The Rise of the North American Church

According to one tradition, the first church in North Africa was founded at Cyrene (modern Tripoli) by Simon who bore Jesus' cross. His two sons Rufus and Alexander (Mark 15:21) may have been leaders in that

particular church. Then there were undoubtedly others who came, some migrating from the continent while some came fleeing the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by Titus the Roman. Christianity spread rapidly in North Africa and we know of churches in Carthage by the end of the second century.

Furthermore, the North African Church holds the distinction of producing three of the greatest churchmen of Eastern or Western Christendom for centuries. There was Tertullian, skilled apologist of the faith in the second century (ca. 200); Cyprian, dynamic churchman and administrator of the third century (ca. 250); and Augustine of Hippo, profound theologian and saint of the fourth century (ca. 400).

So strong and vigorous was the North African Church that Tertullian (A.D. 145-220) could say boldly in addressing the Senate at Carthage:

We grow up in greater numbers, as often as we are cut down by you. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. We are of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you — cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies; your very camp and companies, palace, senate, forum; we leave you your temples only.¹

Tertullian was succeeded by Cyprian (A.D. 200-258), outstanding administrator of the church. Under his leadership the Christian community greatly increased. He was banished by Emperor Valerian (A.D. 257), and beheaded a year later. Following this, paganism made its last sustained effort to save itself from extinction, and the terrible Diocletian persecutions broke out in A.D. 303, lasting ten years. The horrors of that trial, which the Church at Carthage

¹Tertullian, Apology XXXVII, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III.

quenched in its martyr blood, defies description. The church's matchless exhibition of grace under pressure was the irresistible force over which paganism broke itself to pieces. There is no question, but that some of Christianity's finest years were experienced during its first three hundred.

Augustine became the bishop of Hippo in A.D. 395. Even though the Church had already been racked by the Donatist controversy for 80 years,² it was still more vigorous and had more authority and learning than either the Church of Alexandria or the Church at Rome. Even at the time of the Vandal invasion (A.D. 429), when the church was declining as a result of the Donatist schism, the North African Church still numbered five hundred dioceses, or more than one-fourth of all Christendom.³

The Decline of the North African and Middle Eastern Church

Notwithstanding the fact of its leadership, scholarship, numerica, and superiority, this great church internally declined and collapsed like a house of cards before the sweep of Islam across North Africa, until today scarcely a trace remains. Of the more than 100,000,000⁴ persons living in the Middle East and North Africa today, there are scarcely more than ten million Christians of all faiths. When we consider the fact that this area was once largely Christian, we feel a sense of urgency in attempting to find reasons for this tragic loss in order that we may

² Jane Soames Nickerson, A Short History of North Africa (Devin-Adair), p. 48.

³ J.J. Cooksey, Land of the Vanished Church (London: World Dominion Press, n.d.), see ch. II.

⁴ S.A. Morrison, Middle East Tensions (New York: Harper and Bros., 1954), p. 190.

prevent its recurrence if at all possible. Even today it makes strange reading. Why should such a multitude of people who had found the truth in Christ, and held on to it in face of terrible persecutions during the first three centuries, desert it in favour of Islam in the seventh century? Why did the great North African Church of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine meet disaster and ignominy in this way?

There are some simple, but inaccurate assumptions for the defection of Christians to Islam. The simplest way of explaining the failure of Christianity under Islamic rule is to accuse the Muslims of forcing the Christians to change their faith. As far as history is concerned, there is no truth in this. Christians were allowed to remain Christian but were not permitted to be full citizens of the Muslim world. They were discriminated against, forced to wear a patch of distinctive color on their clothing, made to pay high taxes, obliged to walk in the gutter at all times, and forbidden to ride horseback (for it might make them higher than passing Muslims).⁵ This unequal treatment was galling to the Christian, but to a stalwart Christian it could have been a glory rather than a shame. The truth is, the Romans and Persians killed the Christians and they multiplied, while the Muslims laughed at them and they dwindled away.⁶ In reality, the Christian of that day had no deep inward relation to the Gospel. In view of this condition, Charles Malik, Christian statesman from Lebanon, felt constrained to say: "The trouble with Christians of

⁵T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam (London: Constable & Co., 1913), pp. 57-59.

⁶Laurence E. Browne, "The Failure of Christianity under Muslim Rule," History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission (Geneva: World's Student Christian Federation, n.d.), p. 64.

the seventh century was they didn't care enough about Jesus."⁷

Another false assumption that has been blamed for the falling away on the part of Christians before Islam is the Law of Apostasy within Islam. This law, which is still in effect but is scarcely, if ever enforced, provides for one-way conversion only; one might convert to Islam from Christianity or another religion, but never from Islam to Christianity, or any other religion, on penalty of death. As one writer pictured it: "If you have a bucket and are allowed to pour water out of it and never pour water into it, it will soon be empty."⁸ This is true, but it had also been true in Persia before Islam, and a similar law in that country had not prevented the expansion of Christianity in those days.

No, more of an explanation than these is needed to account for the failure of Christianity to survive under Muslim rule. We shall continue to search for the answer with the prayer that it will enable us to reverse the process and bring Muslims in larger numbers to Christ.

Since this is a unique example in the history of Christendom of such a reversal it is worthwhile to indicate both the historic and deeper religious reasons which led to the tragic downfall of this once great church.

⁷Richard Bell Charged that the ascendancy of Islam was due to the degeneracy of the Church. The Church started its decline in the fourth century. When Islam arrived in Syria in the seventh century, it found a divided church, more anxious to triumph over each other than over a common foe (The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment, London, 1926).

⁸Browne, loc.cit., p. 64.

Reasons for the Decline and Fall
of the Church in North Africa
and the Middle East

Later research has made us aware that much of the problem of Christianity in the seventh century revolves around the influence of Vandal Arianism and other heresies of that day and the depth they had penetrated the Church in exile. The fact that much of what the Prophet Muhammed knew of Christianity is strong indication of this. Many Old and New Testament references in the Qur'an are obviously from heretical and apocryphal sources rather than from canonical writings. These heresies had penetrated the church to the extent that it can be said that the distance from Arianism to Islam was less than it was from Arianism to orthodox Christianity.

It is little wonder then that Christians by the thousands defected, for with the political, social, and economic attractions offered by Islam, the religious element in their lives was too weak to hold them to Christianity.

With this word, we may now examine the steps that led an unfaithful church to almost total extinction.

1. The first reason is that the Scriptures were never translated into the language of the great Berber nation which formed the mass of people of the inland of North Africa.⁹

The people were taught by Latin scholars working through translators who explained the Latin scriptures to the Berbers of the interior and to the Punic-speaking people of the coast. There is little doubt but that had the faith of the Berber people been nourished on the Scriptures in their mother tongue, a bulwark would have been erected against Islam which

⁹Cooksey, ibid., see ch. II.

would have probably withstood its advance and rolled it back.¹⁰ What happened in Egypt where the church had to meet the full fury of Muslim armies? There the Coptic Church had given its people the Scriptures in the vernacular by A.D. 400 and today the Coptic Church is still alive and active.¹¹ The same may be said of the Church in Armenia which had its own Scriptures by A.D. 410. It survived not only the devastating Muslim invasions, but subsequent persecutions at the hands of the Turks in the early twentieth century, that are unparalleled in history. Thus, the greatest historic apologia for the American and the British and Foreign Bible Societies is furnished by the North African Church. Its one tragic lesson would be sufficient reason for immediately forming such societies if they did not already exist.

2. The second reason for the downfall of the Church in North Africa and the Middle East is that the Eastern Church lost the sense of Christ's saving grace.

Tor Andrae, Swedish biographer of the Prophet Muhammed came to this conclusion:

There is scarcely any other form of Christianity in which the evangelical thought of the forgiveness of sins and

¹⁰In the third Punic War in which Carthage fell (146 B.C.), a fact of significance to present missionary history occurred. It points up the importance of the indigenous Berber race of North Africa as shown in the part they played in this particular war. There were two incidents: the first, when the Berbers were assisting Hannibal, the Roman army was annihilated and Rome itself was saved as if by miracle. The second was in Tunisia, however this time, the Berber king was allied with Rome, which in turn, annihilated Hannibal with the Berber cavalry.

¹¹Ben J. Maris, "Cross or Crescent in Africa?" Christianity Today (May 26, 1958), p. 9.

our sonship of God is so completely quenched as in this Syrian monastic religion. The pious man has to earn his forgiveness of his own power by life-long penitence and self-torment.¹²

This simply means that those Christians of the East were gravely lacking in the most vital part of the Christian gospel, the belief that Christ was their Saviour and the friend of sinners.

Furthermore, without a sense of the saving grace of Christ, sin became rampant, not only in the lives of the laity, but in the lives of the clergy as well. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, after visiting the churches in Arabia and Palestine in A.D. 378, gave a mournful account both of the distracted state of the Church and of the prevailing corruption:

If the divine grace were more abundant about Jerusalem than elsewhere, sin would not be so much the fashion among those who live there; but as it is, there is no form of uncleanness that is not perpetrated among them; rascality, adultery, theft, idolatry, poisoning, quarrelling, murder, are rife.¹³

3. Third, without a sense of Christ's saving grace, sin will not only be everywhere prevalent and out of control, but there will also be the accompanying absence of a sense of spiritual power working through the lives of Christians.¹⁴

¹²Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum (Kyrkohistorisk Arsskrift, 1924), p. 282, as quoted by Browne, ibid., p. 65.

¹³Gregory of Nyssa, Epistle XVII, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers.

¹⁴Browne, ibid., p. 67.

The New Testament -- especially the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles -- witnesses strongly to consciousness of power in the early church. Throughout church history this awareness of power has been evident, bursting forth in great creative movements in both reformation and revival.

But it is difficult, if not impossible to find this sense of spiritual power in the Eastern churches in the period just preceding and during the Muslim conquest. By the seventh century it was a past-tense Christianity; churchmen referred to past miracles, past manifestations of the power of the Lord because they could find few conversions or other evidences of the spiritual presence in their days.

The atmosphere of spiritual powerlessness continued in the weakened church up to the time the Mongols wiped out what remained of Christianity after the conquest of Islam. So total was the absence of spiritual power that the way was opened for the use of the sword of steel rather than the sword of the Spirit as a means of conquest in the name of Christ (cf. Crusades of Western Christendom).

Furthermore, then, just as is often the case today, church leaders made the fullest possible use of civil power. The idea that there was in the Holy Spirit a power greater than any earthly power seems never to have entered their heads.

The study of the sickness that befell the Eastern churches of that day is a sad one, exposing a weakness in the spiritual dimension that was almost bound to result in disaster. It is a timely warning to Christians today, for our besetting sin is only another form of the same materialism.¹⁵

4. The fourth reason which led to the decline and fall of the church in the Middle East and North

¹⁵Browne, ibid., p. 69.

Africa is the fact that it completely lost its missionary thrust. This follows logically -- no Scriptures -- no sense of Christ's saving grace -- unawareness of spiritual power. With these great losses we may well ask, how could a mission effort possibly be sustained? And it was the one and only safeguard the Eastern Church had for its very existence.

In the East, there was a great mixture of nationalities and conflicting temperaments, which were a menace to the Church. The Carthaginian was restless and enterprising; the Berber was intense in emotion and uncontrollably independent and dogged; the Greek Byzantines were refined, surpassing the ordinary mortal in pure intellect; the Roman was strong in habits of order and obedience to authority. There was only one safeguard against a violent clash of these heterogeneous elements -- an effective missionary enterprise.¹⁶

It is only in Christ that there is neither Greek nor barbarian; neither Jew nor Gentile. We have seen this exemplified so remarkably in Israel where, surrounded by Arab states, tragic hatred prevails between the Arab and Jew. The Arab, on the one hand is highly emotional and keenly sensitive to any encroachment upon his culture or traditional way of life. The Jew, on the other hand, is confident to the point of arrogance, determined in both mind and spirit, and accustomed to suffering and even dying for causes that affect his people. Temperamentally, culturally, philosophically, two people could scarcely be farther apart. Nevertheless in Christian fellowship, we have joined with them in worship, in conferences, and in the spread of the Gospel which has shed abroad in each of their hearts, a love that overcomes the most bitter hatreds and rivalries.

¹⁶Cooksey, ibid., see ch. II.

Just as great were the differences between the Greek and the North African. We see the Greek magnified wisdom. So greatly did they revere it that Chrysostom named the great cathedral in Constantinople, Saint Sophia or "holy wisdom." On the other hand, the North African sought to express his soul in practical devotion and utter sacrifice. The divine grace in redemption, the reality of sin, and the exceeding love that cancelled it, appealed to him more than the wisdom of the divine mysteries.

A splendid opportunity and a variety of human material to take advantage of it was granted by God to the Eastern Church; but the clash of her internal strife deafened her to the whisper of the still small voice; and with her downfall, the evangelization of Africa was delayed for twelve long centuries. In truth, the church had become a clamorous debating society rather than a missionary army on the march.¹⁷

5. The fifth and final reason for the downfall of the church before the advance of Islam was -- whether in Carthage, Alexandria, or Jerusalem -- the church had ceased to be or had never fully become a truly indigenous church; a church centered in the heart of the people, native to its own culture and propagated by the sharing of the privileges and opportunities of missionary enterprise by all its members.¹⁸

It had fallen into the hands of Latin and Greek theologians hot on the quest for the precise theological definition, expressed in their respective classical tongues, not understood by the mass of the people. They had Christ on the dissecting table, trying to determine whether he had one nature or two, and in so doing lost his true nature, and the purpose of his

¹⁷Cooksey, ibid., see ch. III.

¹⁸Cooksey, op.cit., ch. III; Maris, op.cit., p. 8.

coming. There could be no growth of the local churches through person to person contact and sharing in love the truths of the gospel in a church presided over by Byzantine emperors and foreign ecclesiastical heads sitting thousands of miles away, who cared little for their souls or their bodies, but only that their own particular theological views prevail and that all opposition be crushed and destroyed. The proof of this is seen in the cold fact that this official Christianity, built on a foreign culture, bereft of freedom of spirit, was practically extinguished by the Muslim invasion.

Thus, the Muslim advance was largely the result of the failure of the Eastern Church in the seventh century -- a failure involving the spiritual welfare of approximately one-seventh of the race. The heresies, errors, and unmet missionary responsibilities of the church of the first six centuries have bequeathed us the most heart-breaking, as well as most difficult task of modern times.

Back to our original question: What explanation can be offered for the tragic collapse of the Christian church in North Africa and the Middle East? All that we have said is basic, but the last reason stands out among the others and needs restatement: the church in the areas covered never truly became a North African or a Middle Eastern Church. It was Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, but never basically an indigenous church built upon the lives of the great Berber nation of North Africa, or upon the lives of the entire native populations of the Middle East. Because the indigenous peoples of North Africa and the Middle East mistrusted Rome and Byzantium, the Roman and Byzantine controlled church failed to win their deepest loyalties.¹⁹

"Had the church become truly indigenous," maintains J.J. Cooksey, former missionary to North Africa,

¹⁹Cooksey, ibid., ch. III.

"we have no hesitation in affirming that the Muslim invasion would have found it invulnerable."²⁰

In the Middle East the extent to which the church escaped the obliteration of her North African sister, corresponded to the extent to which she developed an indigenous base, beginning with the translations of the Scripture into the language of the people. This brought Christ home to warm the hearts of the Semitic and Hamitic peoples of these lands where he remains today in many places where centuries' old Muslim rule prevails.

Lacking a solid basis in the heart and character of the indigenous people which would have assured its expansion by nationwide sacrifice and voluntary missionary efforts, the evangelizing spirit in these churches died. Had it remained alive and active, it could have witnessed to not only the continent of Africa eleven centuries ago, but the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan as well; and the Great Advance of Islam might well have never spelled the near doom of the church in those eastern lands.

²⁰Ibid.

This article was delivered by Dr. Dwight Baker to the participants of the Lide-Walker Lectures on January 20, 1986 at the chapel of the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary, Baguio City.

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THE MINISTER OF MUSIC AS MINISTER

By: James E. Castlen

Is it appropriate to call the music leader in a church a "minister"? Where does this person/role fit into the list of gifted ministers which God has given to his church in Ephesians 4:11-12?

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.

No doubt the titles "apostle," "prophet," "evangelist," and "pastor-teacher" referred to specific roles in the first century church. We believe each of these may also represent ministries in today's church, all of which can also be shared by a church music program. If God-called people use their talents in these ways, they may appropriately be called "ministers of music."

In the New Testament sense, a prophet is one who tells forth the Word of God to others. Good church music has always been full of texts from the holy scriptures. Church musicians should be musical prophets who are as concerned with the words of hymns and anthems as they are with their music. To be true to their calling, they must be concerned with bringing the whole gospel to meet a person's whole need. They should be trained enough in theology to be able to do this. They use every means possible to increase the congregation's knowledge of the Word of God presented through music. They may at times have to explain an anthem text in the choir rehearsal, the worship service, or in writing through the church paper. As worship leaders they plan so as to offer an opportunity for a "whole response" to the "whole Word."

As musical prophets, they are concerned with the effective communication of the musical languages they will use. They are aware that if people are expected to understand and respond to the Word in music, that Word must be understandable. Since music languages change with the passing of time, they will recognize the need for continuing to update musical expressions, all the while maintaining a balance with traditional expressions with which the people are most familiar. In a word, they will always strive to make both texts and musical settings speak to and for their congregation in the most effective and prophetic way.

The evangelist has a specific message--of our sin and rebellion against God, and of God's love and grace--which draws us back to him in restoration and salvation. The minister of music serves as evangelist through his own personal witness as well as through the gospel story in song. The solo or invitation hymn may be used of the Holy Spirit to bring a person to a positive response of faith in Christ that leads to obedient discipleship. Through the choir program, the enlistment of children, youth, and their parents serves to aid in the ministries of evangelism and church growth. As children learn to sing God's truths in the choirs, they may be led rather naturally and easily to personal faith in Jesus and commitment of life to him. Young people are often attracted to the church through the music that speaks to them in their own language. The role of evangelist is fulfilled by the music minister who takes care to see that the evangelistic message is enhanced by the musical setting and that each singer and instrumentalist (as well as the audience) is confronted with the message and claims of Christ as Lord.

How may a minister of music use music in a pastoring role? Pastoring is "shepherding" others by caring for their needs, by showing love and special concern for them. Music leaders must do this for

members of their music groups by giving counsel, by visiting them at home or in the hospital, by being a friend in times of joy or sorrow. Beyond this personal pastoral ministry, the music minister helps to meet spiritual and emotional needs in the congregation through hymns, anthems, solos, and instrumental music. The music selected will encourage, lift up, convict, and heal the human spirit. In this way, music will fulfill its role as a "language of the emotions."

We have mentioned above that a major role of music minister is that of teacher. These persons are involved in Christian education as well as in music education. They not only help to develop musical gifts and talents in others, but also to teach worship and churchmanship. They teach theology and Christian discipleship through selection of music with strong scriptural texts. They are examples of the biblical challenge to live and to worship creatively. One of the most important things they will teach by word and by example, is the stewardship of life and talent.

Finally, since some musical servants are called to serve Christ in foreign lands, we may also call them musical apostles ("sent ones"). These are music missionaries who leave their own land to help emerging churches around the world to develop their own musical expressions of worship and praise in the languages of their own cultures.

Thus, we see that within the scope of the ministry of music are included all the "gifts" God has placed in the New Testament evangelical church. In reality, the spiritual gifts are ministered through the trained and committed talents of the music minister.

PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL
(Phil. 1:3-6)

By: Winston Crawley

In 45 countries the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board works in cooperation with national Baptists. Southern Baptists and national Baptists are able to cooperate because we have the same faith and the same practices. Both groups are Baptists. We believe that we are saved through the death of Christ on the cross. We believe in the receiving of Christ through a definite experience of being born again. We believe that salvation is by grace and not by works. We believe in the baptism of believers only. We believe in the equality of all believers, with no distinction of rank among brothers in Christ, so that in the life of our churches, every believer has equal rights and responsibilities with every other believer. We believe that all these things are taught in the New Testament as characteristics of the New Testament church. We believe in the independence of each local church congregation, so that no outside power of any kind can coerce or compel a local church. We believe in democratic methods in our conventions and associations. We believe in the leadership of the Holy Spirit through groups of believers -- so that a broad base of responsibility, with many people taking part in decisions, is our Baptist way of doing things. All of these are beliefs which Southern Baptists and national Baptists in many countries share in common, because we are convinced that this is the teaching of the New Testament about the way Christians ought to believe and ought to act. And since we have the same beliefs we can work together.

It would be difficult for us to work together with those who are not Baptists. It would be hard for any group of nationals, with a democratic system, to work with us if we should work on a basis of autocracy and centralizing of power in only one person. And so our intention is to work together on a truly

democratic basis, having common beliefs, and common methods of work. And so we are cooperating. To cooperate means that we do certain things together, things that we have agreed on. It does not mean that there is any control of a national convention by our Foreign Mission Board or any control of our Mission Board by a national convention. We do not try to control each other. We simply agree, "Here is something we both want to do; let's do it together." And then we might say, "Here is something else we both want to do; let's do it together."

Now there may be also some things that we do not do together. That is, the churches or a convention might be doing many things that our Foreign Mission Board is not able to help with. And our Foreign Mission Board might have some things which it would do which a convention would not necessarily agree to help with. But as far as possible, we would want to do all the things we can together. And in order to do that, we have to come to an agreement not only about what we are going to do, but also about how we are going to do it. In any relationship of cooperation, the two parties who cooperate may have different ideas about what ought to be done and how it ought to be done. That is natural enough. And so the thing to do then is to talk about it, and talk about it until we reach agreement on what we are going to do and how we are going to do it.

One of the most valuable things in such a relationship will be our ability to talk together in a Christian spirit, even when we don't agree. And after a while, we will probably find that there are many things we really do agree on and we can do together without any problem. Sometimes we will probably have to compromise on the minor details of a plan. And when there is a compromise neither side is entirely satisfied, but both can agree to a certain plan. Now all of that is a natural part of cooperating. And we won't have any hard feelings about the

fact that we sometimes have different opinions and sometimes have to compromise and sometimes can't agree at all. The things we do agree on, we will simply go ahead and do together.

I am convinced that we can agree and can co-operate because we have a common objective, one purpose. That purpose is the spread of the gospel as rapidly as possible. That is the main purpose for which our Foreign Mission Board exists, to help the gospel spread rapidly. And that also is the purpose for which any Baptist convention exists, to help the gospel spread rapidly in its area. Our main purpose is to start new churches in new places as rapidly as we can, because that is the command that Jesus has given to us. We want to do what will please him and glorify him. And so in every decision we make about our work with a national body, we will decide it in the light of that main purpose, decide it so as to help accomplish that purpose. We will want to work together in ways that will help the gospel spread rapidly.

That means we want to use our resources in the way that will bring the most rapid spread of the gospel. We have two kinds of resources: one kind is men, and the other kind is money.

Some of the men are missionaries from America, and some are national evangelists and pastors. We will want to locate these men in such a way as to help the gospel spread most rapidly, moving on out into new places as rapidly as we can. As for the money, part of it is money which has been given by Christians in America for work in a specific mission field; part of it is the sacrificial giving of the people in the churches in that same mission field. We want to use all of this money, which is the Lord's money, in such a way that it will help us get out into new places and start new churches as rapidly as possible, because that is the main thing which we are trying to do together. We are trying to spread the gospel rapidly in a given area.

Of course, we agree that there are some other things we need to do in order to help the churches grow and spread. Our churches need trained leaders. We need more preachers and we need more pastors. And so we work together through a seminary to help give young men the best training possible to be leaders in the work of the Lord. Then we make plans for those new preachers to go out into new places when they finish their training. And we make plans for ordaining new pastors to share in the increasing load of more and more churches.

We agree that the churches need literature in order to help new Christians learn how to be good church members and good witnesses and useful stewards of the gospel. And so we try to provide literature for Bible teaching and for training and missionary study, that will help develop strong churches with strong church members.

We agree also on the value of Christian medical work, and so we have in some areas a hospital for the healing of men's bodies. We hope to be able to agree on the principles concerning these different types of work and on the methods to be used, so that we can do them better together.

Now in connection with all of these kinds of work, our Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has certain well established policies. Our Board works in a certain way. It is doing work now in 45* different countries. And it has the same general way of working in each one of those 45* countries. The way it works is based on over 100 years of experience in mission work. During that hundred years, it has tried many different ways of working, and the ones that did not work, it has discarded. The ones that were good and successful policies, it is now following. But that is where a problem comes in, because missionaries are human, and human beings can make mistakes. And human beings sometimes get their own feelings involved in a decision. And so when a

missionary says something, it may be hard to tell whether it is an established principle on which our Foreign Mission Board works, or just the opinion of that particular missionary.

Now our missionaries do not intend to be arbitrary or to be prejudiced. And we seek to avoid anything of that sort by planning for democratic procedures in our own Mission organization. Our hope is that the missionaries can avoid human mistakes and personal bias in dealing with their national brethren.

Perhaps it will help if I mention some of the things which come as Foreign Mission Board policies and are not simply arbitrary opinions of individual missionaries. Our policy is that our Foreign Mission Board tries to encourage increase in the number of churches--new churches in new villages, and many churches in large towns and cities. We would encourage looking toward the time when a large city might have five or ten or more Baptist churches.

Another policy that our Foreign Mission Board emphasizes is that the individual local church take responsibility as far as possible for evangelistic work in its area. And so our Board tries to encourage methods that will help to give local churches more responsibility. One method we encourage is that of having the evangelists and pastors employed by local churches. If a church is not able to support its pastor entirely, the convention or the Mission might be able to give some financial help to that church to enable it to support its pastor or evangelist. But the idea is to administer it so that it will magnify the place and the responsibility of that local congregation.

Another principle we follow is that of encouraging the release of money and workers for new work. Rather than having three or four trained workers in one church and nobody out at some new place, we would encourage having only one worker at each place, and

the others go out to new places, because our purpose is to get the gospel out to new places as rapidly as possible. And so we do not want our resources tied up in maintaining the same old work year after year. We want those resources released to go to new places.

Still another principle on which our Foreign Mission Board operates is that of having in advance specific requests for money for specific purposes. A common procedure is for a central committee of a convention to work out budget estimates and requests for help from us. They work those out in detail, in a spirit of fair treatment for all and in a desire to hasten the spread of the gospel. They have been chosen as leaders because the brethren have confidence in their judgment and in their Christian spirit in these matters. And then they bring their estimates that they have drawn up and present them to the convention for study, revision, and approval.

Then those requests as worked out by the convention would go from the convention through the Mission to our Foreign Mission Board. And the Foreign Mission Board would study those requests in the light of the amount of money the Board has that it can use. That is the method that our Board uses in 45 countries. The Board acts on the basis of definite requests in advance from the churches or convention and the mission in each country.

Our Board is never able to grant all the money requested, because the requests every year total nearly twice as much as the amount of money the Board has available. And so the Board tries to grant the requests that are the most urgent and that will make the best contribution to the rapid spread of the gospel. And those of us who have to deal with the matters always feel a sense of real sadness that we don't have the money available to grant all of the requests. So we are always preaching to our churches in America to give more for missions in order that the gospel can spread more rapidly.

Another principle on which our Foreign Mission Board operates is the principle of trusteeship in the handling of funds. Those who receive mission money are trustees to handle it in the way that the giver of the money intends. That is true everywhere in our Christian life. People give their money to the work of their church and the church has the responsibility under God of using that money according to the purpose for which it was given, the purpose of the spread of the gospel.

If a giver specifies the exact way in which his gift is to be used, then all who handle the gift abide by that original designation. Sometimes a giver in America will put money in his church offering and indicate it is for an orphanage in Korea. Our Foreign Mission Board will not dare to use that money anywhere else in the world. They send it out to Korea and say it is for an orphanage in Korea. And our Mission in Korea will not dare to use that money for any other purpose. They send it through the convention to the work of caring for orphans in Korea, the work for which the original giver designated it.

Now these are some of the principles on which we work, to get the gospel out as fast as possible. We are trying to give more place and responsibility to the local church. We are trying to release our resources of money and workers for new places by having the local churches assume more responsibility locally. Our Board depends on local Baptists to study the local needs and work out careful budgets and careful requests on which our Board can act in trying to help local Baptists with the work of spreading the gospel. And then we trust those same local Baptists to use the utmost care and the best possible methods in handling this money as trustees, using it only exactly as designated.

We are partners in the gospel. Oh, how thankful I am for this partnership in the gospel! May God help us to be better partners as the days go by.

* At present missionaries sent by the Foreign Mission Board are doing work in 105 countries.

This article by Dr. Winston Crawley was transcribed from a message he delivered at the annual meeting of the Philippine Chinese Baptist Convention in May 1961. The message is reprinted because of its relevance.

FROM CROSS TO CROWN
(A Pastor-Led Program of Visitation)

By: Todd Hamilton

Here is Timid Tamado, a nice fellow. A fairly pleasant sort of guy. He goes about his daily required activities with a rather optimistic spirit.

But just dare to call for a church visitation effort and Brother Timid shrinks into a withering fig tree diving under his church pew and playing dead. But poor Timid, he can't get under because I'm already there taking up all the space.

Churches are filled with "Timids" and lots of others just like him. Some come early to church. Others sing in the choir. A few serve the Lord's Supper with dignity as any worthy deacon should. And in all the Philippines there may even be one or two reverends who shrink from going visiting.

Going visiting is one of the most nerve-wracking adventures a Christian can get involved in! It begins with a feeling of dread. Then comes the sweat - drops of perspiration as of blood on the forehead, loss of balance, dry mouth, quivering fingers, cold, clammy hands, drooping eyes, and depressed brain matter.

Oh we have our reasons for not going visiting — the expense of jeepney fares, or nobody's home these days, or more important duties press us down, or no one to accompany us.

What can we say to answer these reasons? Here's a good answer: "Ho humm." Translated into the vernacular that means these excuses just don't work. We are more than just being lazy - we are abdicating our job!

Have you heard the joke about the two teams out visiting? They bumped into each other on the street. One team member asked the

other team, "Where are you going?

"Who's going? We are just waiting for time to return and report to church our visitation success."

"How can you be successful just standing here?"

"It's easy," said the second team leader. "My partner invites each one who passes by. And I keep count."

"How many pass by?"

"Usually ten or fifteen. Here come some now. Watch how it works."

(About that time two farmers go by, one driving a herd of six obedient carabaos; the second pulling two squealing pigs by their collars.)

The team captain counts, "One, two, three, four, five, six. Mark down six, Nonoy. And here come the two pigs. That gives us eight."

"I got 'em," says Nonoy.

"Hey, wait a minute," says the first team leader. "You can't do that. It's not truthful. Carabaos and pigs don't go to church."

"That's what you think, brother. We get a lot more of them being brought to church than we get human prospects. Come tomorrow night and you'll see what I mean. Every time we have a church fellowship the men set up the long tables and the ladies carry in lechon, asosena, fried bangus and barbecued manok. We have the best percentage of invitees coming to church than any other visitation team."

Hopefully you've laughed with me. . . now it's time to cry. You know why? In the shuffle the two teams

forgot to invite the farmers -- the man leading the carabaos and the other man dragging the pigs!

There is some good news, however, and I'm here to tell you about it. More good is done in one home visit than in any other church activity! One pastor returned to his former church where he had served many years before. No one remembered what he said in his sermons, but many said, "We will never forget how you ministered to us by coming to our home!"

More good news: the sweet fruit of joy comes to you after going visiting. You feel good that you have helped bring someone just a little richer in his spiritual life -- that life which he is coming to cherish as his greatest possession.

Your heart and mind begin to leap with sensations of well-being. You sense your partnership with the good Lord. Your Team Leader smiles down upon you and says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. As you went visiting in my Name you are now entitled to enter into the JOY of your Lord" (Matthew 25:21, 23). God approves! Is anything more valuable?

In the beginning of this article, did you feel the pain and hesitation of going visiting? Our ego shrinks as our fears rise. Now, as we go visiting and see people in their humanity, we forget our fears. And by the time we conclude the visit and head back to church, we are walking lighter than before; walking with a springy beat; standing taller; smiling more. We are confident and thankful that we have been about our Father's business.

A Pastor-Led Program of Visitation

Change roles and now be the one waiting at church to receive reports from those returning from their visits. Smile broadly as Brother Timid enters. Listen carefully as he tells about seeing real live people with names, faces, hopes, and longings. Let your eyes meet his with a twinkle of approval.

As Brother Timid pours out his story of visiting people for the Lord you love him in a new way. He now becomes Brother Stronghearted. You can imagine that the halo encircling his head is God-given and well deserved.

The Minister Strengthens His Flock

Bonds of brotherly friendship are strengthened as you give and receive reports of visiting. You come to admire people who selflessly walk along the highways and by the hedges. As they sense your understanding spirit and hear your words of appreciation, they recognize you as their minister. For the test of real ministering is praising. Anyone can sympathize but few develop the art of lifting up others.

Edification is that biblical term for the gift of adding strength to your brothers. Our problem is there may be only a few ministers who challenge members to pass through the valley of visitation. For without the cross there is no joy in wearing the crown. We cannot strengthen those whom we coddle.

Leading the Flock Among the Wolves

The test, then, of the seasoned minister is not protecting his members from the world, but of leading his lambs safely among the wolves. The flock returns slightly torn, literally chewed upon, but with stories of fright turned to courage. "But for the grace of God," they say, "we could not have come through."

As the minister now strokes his lambs, he is pleasingly surprised to recognize their change of character. It is true that after visitation his flock is still dependent upon their Lord. But they now dare to go out and mix with society, offering help, trusting in divine guidance.

Hidden Danger: Isolating the Christian Soldier from Battle

Our church buildings can have walls too high for our members to cross over. For these walls can isolate the Christian soldier from battle, thus resulting in internal conflict rather than skirmishes out among the dying and hurting.

This is what amazed the people of old when they saw what "Peter did" to a man who was unable to walk since birth. After the lame man was healed in Jesus' name, the religious leaders cornered Peter and John and asked for an explanation. They mistakenly saw Peter and John as men who lived within the "walls" of their religion. (A root study of their accusation of Peter and John as "unlearned and ignorant" was not an attack upon their intelligence but upon their experience.)

"These 'Christians' are not barangay leaders. They've had no experience in speaking at public meetings. How can they debate with persuasion? How can they be a part of a miracle, and be so fluent in defending themselves before us, the family of the High Priest?" (Acts 4:5, 13).

The real laboratory for Christian growth, then, is not the classroom but the homes of people whom God sends you to visit. A pastor-led program of visitation shocks your members from sleep to success. You are the Christian educator, the minister, the evangel, the herald who leads your flock along the narrow mountain trails and through the dark valleys . . . emerging in the light of reborn joy ... hope ... strength.

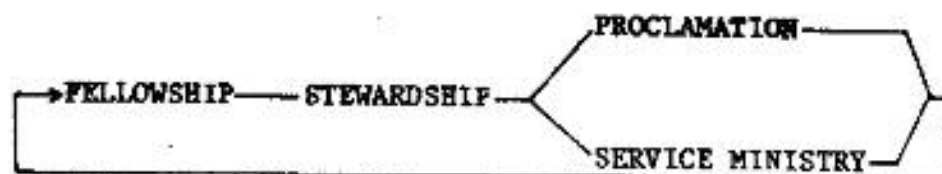
FOUNDATIONS FOR FELLOWSHIP

By: James Moorhead

During the 1970's, while I was working with the United Bible Societies, Rev. Delbert Rice, a missionary residing in Imugan, Santa Fe, Nueva Viscaya, shared with me some views about church growth. These views arose from a study of ten churches located in the mountains of Luzon. Some of the churches had experienced very rapid growth. Some of them merely maintained their membership. At least one of them had experienced very rapid growth and then experienced rapid decline in church attendance. None of the churches had any missionary help until recently, and the decline in the attendance of the one church seemed to be related to the coming of a lowland missionary sent by the conference to help to organize the church according to polity.

After the study of the committee, conclusions were reached and tested by means of a mathematical weighing of a series of significant factors. These factors were elements prominent in the record of the early church as told in the Acts of the Apostles. They included proclamation (kerugma), service ministry (diakonia), stewardship/administration (oikonomia) and fellowship (koinonia). They also looked at the pattern of church activities to see if this might be a significant factor. Some of the churches majored on a Bible study type of program and others majored on a worship (cultus) type of program.

Results of the study revealed that neither of the patterns of activities seemed to be significant or to have a direct bearing on the church growth. Rather, the key factor was discovered to be the degree of fellowship experienced in the churches. If they maintained a vibrant fellowship and a sense of belonging, then the church was effective in its functions and in its growth. Rev. Rice shared with me a model of growth that seems to be self-sustaining, as follows:



If the fellowship understood its purpose, and if their organization was determined from within, then the membership supported the church enthusiastically and adequately to its own standard of living. If they applied key teachings of the Gospel and maintained a similar life style, those supporting the church financially also participated in the evangelistic outreach of the proclamation and/or the service ministry of the fellowship. In turn, those added to the fellowship became involved in the functioning of the fellowship. The implications of this model is obvious.

One of the problems in maintaining an effective and functioning church is the fact that we tend to assume the fellowship. It is often accepted as the natural outgrowth of allegiance to Jesus, unity in program and activities and the desire of people to belong to a working group of people. Breakdowns in fellowship are often treated lightly. It is expected that time will be the great healer. We pray for the involved individuals in private. We express our concern with appropriate actions. We seem to fail to realize that the breakdown in the fellowship will negate the proclamation that we proclaim. Often we withdraw support to put pressure on the parties involved to take corrective action and hope that they will see the suffering "body of Christ," the church, and be brought to repentance. We fail to understand the purpose of the existence of the fellowship and the results is a more and more ineffective group.

Needed: Maturing Fellowships

In Ephesians 4:1-16, we have a biblical picture of the Church as a maturing fellowship. The first seven verses presents the oneness of the fellowship

and stresses that each person in the fellowship should be active in promoting this oneness. However, our concept of oneness is usually an additive one built on the mathematical model that $1 + 1 + 1 + 1^n = 1$ set or group. As people are added to the group, they are expected to conform to the group in their understanding of Jesus, their understanding of themselves as expressed in some statement of faith, and the traditional patterns that they live by. A more satisfactory model may be that of multiplication where $1 \times 1 \times 1 \times 1^n = 1$. This presents true oneness--the quality of being one. In this model there is recognition that each one of us has something to contribute to the wholeness of the group. Mutual encouragement and support for each other in the performance of our many ministries provide a more productive fellowship. The fellowship recognizes the value of each member and utilizes each person's potential to contribute to the life of the group.

Ephesians 4:7-16 then deals with the diversity within the group. Each individual has received a gift from God that should be used for the good of the entire fellowship. Each "gifted" individual becomes God's gift to the whole "body of Christ." This fact can only become a reality as we recognize our own relationship to the whole body and the relationship of each other to the whole body of Christ. Mutual relationship within the whole body is essential. "And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the height of Christ's full stature" (4:13 GNB). No longer is the focus on conforming to group standards of belief and action, but it becomes a matter of a supportive fellowship that encourages each member in relation to Christ to use his/her gift in the functioning of the whole church. The gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers are given "to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service (diakonia), in order to build up the body of Christ" (4:11-12 GNB).

The Function of the Maturing Fellowship

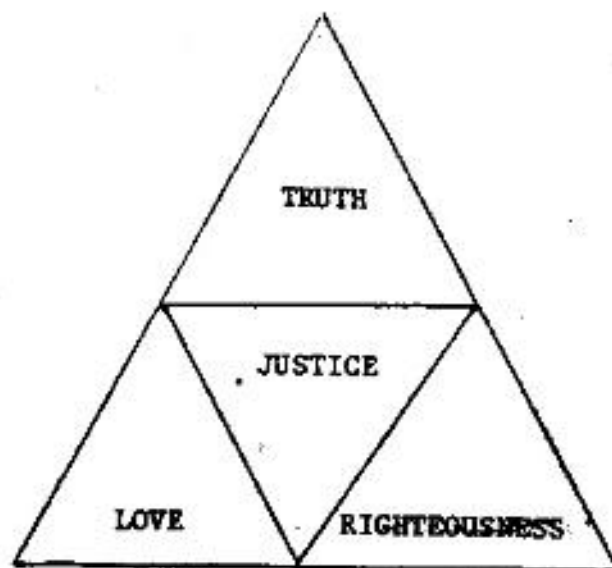
Ephesians 4:15 highlights the true function of the fellowship. "Instead, by speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, the head" (GNB). This verse uses an Old Testament Hebrew concept of the covenant to highlight the true function of the church — a function that places us in oneness with God himself in Christ Jesus. Each one in the multiplication of $1 \times 1 \times 1$ is in turn multiplied by the one God. The Hebrew concept is translated "speaking the truth," but much of the concept is lost in the translation. The Greek for this is one word which translated literally is "truthing." C.H. Dodd in THE FOURTH GOSPEL, p. 174 comments that the underlying concept of "doing truth" in the Hebrew expression is brought over into John 3:21 literally from the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament. He adds that this is "definitely strange to the natural idiom" of the Greek language. The Greek expression "doing truth" is found in the Septuagint in Gen. 32:10; 47:29; cf. Tobit 4.6 and 13.6. To translate it "speaking the truth" severely limits the concept as it functions in Hebrew. In Hebrew it is inclusive of both speaking and doing the truth. The question becomes, "How do you do the truth?"

The Hebrew term "truth" is built on a root word from which we derive our word, "amen." The noun form of the word is "emeth" and can be translated either "truth" or "faithfulness." In its verb form, it is normally translated "to practice fidelity" and in its noun form referring to God, it is usually translated, "God is faithful." It could equally be translated, "God is Truth." For example, in John 8:32, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (GNB). We could substitute the word "God" for the words "the truth" and we would not be doing violence to what John is expressing.

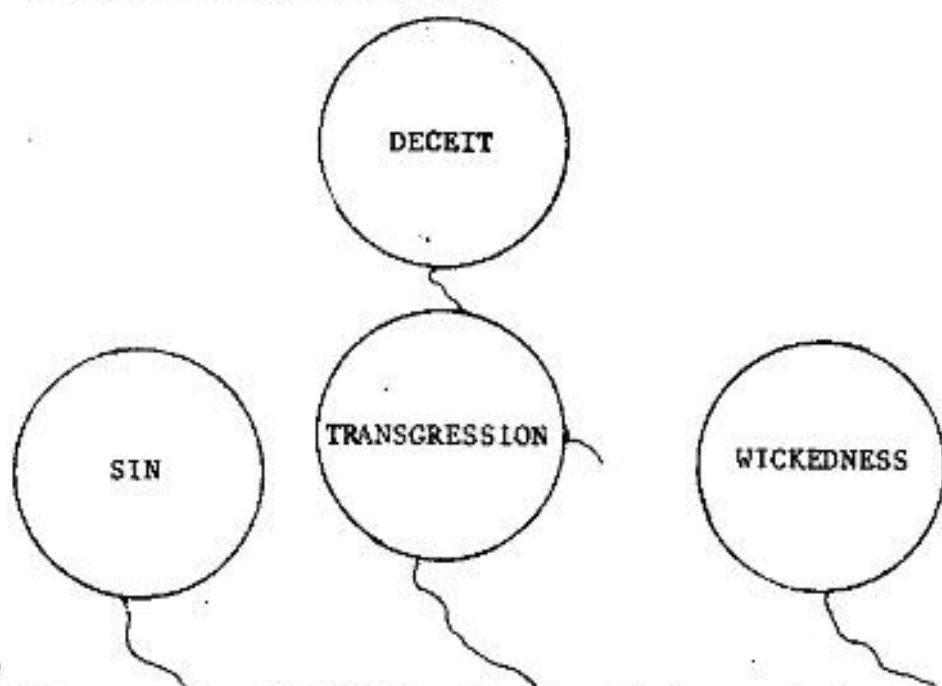
The Hebrew term "emeth" (truth/faithfulness) is a term used in the context of the covenant that God

made with his people Israel through the patriarchs (founding fathers). It is used frequently in combination with other covenant terms as in Psalm 85:10. "Love (chesed) and faithfulness (emeth) will meet; righteousness (tzedik) and peace (shalom) will embrace" (GNB). A fifth term of ten used in combination with these terms is the word judgment/justice (mishpat) which is closely related to the concept of righteousness. Each of these five terms operate in the same realm of meaning and have common components of meaning. They are terms involving covenant relationship and each includes a component of meaning "firm"/"substance"/"solid."

These five terms are also used in contrast with negative terms. These negative terms also share components of meaning, namely the lack of substance and emptiness. Corresponding to truth is the concept of lie/deceit/falseness. The negative side of judgment/justice is injustice/transgression/trespass. The opposite pole of righteousness is wickedness/iniquity. The negative side of love is found in the concept of sin. And the other side of peace is found in the concepts of confusion/chaos. The relationship of the positive terms may be pictured as follows:



The opposite side of the pyramid is PEACE which is a combination of these operating effectively in the life of the individual and of the community. The word "peace" comes from a root word meaning "whole." The above is intended to connote the element of firmness and substance. Below the relationship of the opposites is pictured as balloons to represent the lack of substance and emptiness.



The opposite of PEACE is chaos/confusion, and involves lack of order and substance.

Part of our problem in English is that our concept of TRUTH is related more closely to the Greek concept that makes an abstract of it. It thus represents the object of knowledge in terms of statements corresponding to verifiable facts. However, truth in the Hebrew sense is a relational term that comes from experiential knowledge. So the Bible can say that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, understanding, and/or wisdom. "To know" has the quality of intimacy such as that which is experienced in the intimate relationship of a husband and wife (Gen. 4:1).

So "truth" in Hebrew is the right experience of understanding, relative to God as Creator and the world as a good creation. It includes an understanding of man's relationship to the world as a delegated responsibility to care for the creation of God. It relates man to man in terms of roles and fitting together in social order. It deals with the correct understanding of the order that God created.

To follow any other "god" is to follow "The Lie." John Bright in his commentary on Jeremiah translates Jer. 2:4d in a very provocative way, "And, following 'Lord Delusion,' Deluded (they) came." Worshipping idols of any kind can be termed worshipping "The Lie." In Jer. 10:6-16, the idol and false gods are pictured as promising much, but they are impotent to deliver what they promise. The idol is made by man and is given eyes, but it cannot see; ears, but it cannot hear; legs but it cannot stand on its own but must be nailed to the floor; a mouth, but it cannot speak. Our God is not like that at all because he speaks and he acts to keep his promise. Thus DECEIT is wrong understanding based on delusion.

JUDGMENT/JUSTICE is a word that is built on the root that means 'to decide.' The judgments of God are God's decisions that are made known to man on the basis of God's understanding of the world he created. They are true in a derived sense of the word. They are based on God's perfect knowledge and understanding of the created knowledge. They are given in the first instance to enable man to stay in a right relationship with created order. In the second instance, when man strays from a right relationship with the created order, God's judgments are related to the way man can restore or be restored to a right relationship. JUSTICE in its primary sense is also speaking of right decision based on a total understanding of the situation. This contrasts sharply with the common notion of vengeance based on equity of harm. It is decision based on right understanding and since God is the only one who has complete understanding, judgment is

reserved for him alone and is never delegated to man as man. Jesus in John 5 claims to give true judgment which is part of his equality with God. To "do truth" in the first instance is to make right decisions.

TRANSGRESSION is a third level where right understanding and right decision is implemented. This third level includes twin concepts: **RIGHTEOUSNESS** which is right behavior and **LOVE** which is right relationship. There must be a balance maintained between these two. Sometimes the balance swings toward a wrong understanding of love and a prophet like Amos comes and emphasizes righteousness. Sometimes it swings the other way, and a prophet like Hosea comes and emphasizes love. Jesus and his followers recognized the close relationship between these terms. Prescribed behavior in terms of law and legal requirements were seen as inadequate. The New Testament echoes the words of the prophet Micah, "The Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is to do what is just, to show constant love and to live in humble fellowship with our God" (Micah 6:8 GNB). So righteousness in the New Testament is established on the basis of restored right relationship that equals LOVE. Love (chesed) is a term of solidarity, but it is not based on blood kinship or national identity and unity; rather, it is based on a covenant relationship initiated by God, or on membership in the family of God as his children.

SIN is primarily the breaking of the right relationships required for man to live in fellowship with God and with each other. Therefore it has an element of separation that must be abolished before man can be in fellowship again. So it is rightly understood as the polar opposite of LOVE. But the twin of sin is **WICKEDNESS** in which wrong behavior becomes a pattern of life. Confirmed wickedness in life style is pictured in the perverseness of the word "iniquity." To follow false gods is to transgress--making wrong decisions; to do wickedness--practicing wrong behavior as our life style; and to sin--living in wrong relationships that separate and destroy.

The positive concepts provide a strong foundation on which a strong fellowship will be established. They stand in sharp contrast to the negative terms represented by colorful and attractive balloons. To base a fellowship on these empty concepts will result in a foundation that will collapse and bring down to ruin the persons building on them.

Fellowship based on doing TRUTH, doing JUSTICE, doing RIGHTEOUSNESS and doing LOVE will establish PEACE, but it requires personal commitment and deliberate effort. This fellowship does not come easily. On the other hand, we can easily be less than what God intended for us to be (immature). We can easily substitute other principles that will provide synthetic fellowship rather than the real thing. We can subscribe to creeds that ultimately divide and we can require conformity to such propositional truth. We can make laws to legislate every possible situation and we can police compliance. We can follow natural principles of homogenous groupings and let nature take its course toward group solidarity. But if we intend to have the fellowship that God purposed for us, it requires a great deal of hard work in pastoral ministries to develop the supportive fellowship in which we can thrive and grow. Building a strong supportive fellowship multiplies our ministry and stimulates church growth.

If we want to demonstrate the TRUTH of God, the Spirit of Truth whom Jesus sent to us must dwell in our fellowship. "When he comes, he will prove to the people of the world that they are wrong about sin, and about what is right and about God's judgment. They are wrong about sin, because they do not believe in me; they are wrong about what is right, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no more; and they are wrong about judgment, because the ruler of this world has already been judged" (John 15:8-11 GNB).

Structuring for Maturing Fellowship

"Do your best to preserve the unity (oneness) which the Spirit gives you by means of the peace that binds you together" (Ephesians 4:3 GNB). This challenge to preserve the oneness of the fellowship which the Spirit gives must find practical expression in the way that we organize ourselves. Members of the fellowship must be related to each other in structure that reflect their own patterns of organization. Various patterns are possible and any one of them can implement the purpose of the group existence. However, familiarity with the pattern of organization and its structures is essential for it to be effective.

Dr. Eugene A. Nida, in his book, MISSION AND MESSAGE chapter 5, discusses the complexity of "Communication and Social Structure." He discusses a number of factors from urban to rural societies and from homogeneous to heterogeneous societies. In this material, there seems to be two basic principles involved in differing degrees in any society, and at various levels of organization. If we placed them on a continuum, it would be something like this:

Hierarchical



CLUSTERS



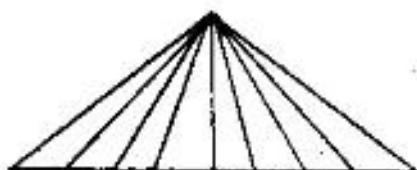
The more heterogeneous society would be closer to the hierarchical and the more homogeneous society would be closer to the cluster end, but both would have differing degrees of each.

In the New Testament we can see several patterns of organization among religious groups. In the Jewish world, we see the Synagogue system organized around the principle of ten families and an Elder system through which authority was administered. In the Greek world, we catch glimpses of the congregational system that

reflects the City-state form of democracy. In the Roman world, we see a Monarchical-Bishopric system patterned on the structure of the Roman empire. In the last of these, the hierarchical principle is more operative and in the Synagogue system, the cluster principle is more dominant. If the Filipinos followed a truly Filipino pattern of organization, what would it be? The chances are that it would follow the Barangay pattern of organization.

The hierarchical principle in the totalitarian form would operate with communication from top to bottom, and with horizontal communication at the various levels of the society, but there would be little, if any communication from the bottom to top. The cluster principle in its purest form would have a leader in the center around whom the people would be bound together. He would be both a consensus stater and an initiator of new ideas for group discussion. Within the group, there would be considerable interaction and communication. Once the group decides a matter it would find immediate implementation.

Obviously, these principles operate in various combinations of expression in differing societies. Dr. Nida points out that in the more homogenous society, there is less distance between those at the bottom of the pyramid and those at the top. It is pictured as follows:



Note that he also pictures the other observation that he makes, namely that the pyramid is segmented so that in it, in my words, the clusters have representation at all levels in the pyramid.

In the congregational type of structure that we as Baptists follow, this is suggestive of "Growth

Groups" in which the membership of the churches can establish care, encouragement and supportive fellowship. Individual expression, communication, participation and sharing of mutual concerns would be strengthened as a means of experiencing and learning. Experiential theology naturally results as the group works together in meeting their mutual needs. Needs that cannot be met within the group could readily be communicated to higher levels so that individuals can be ministered to in effective ways by the Pastor and/or Deacons. In this way the ministries of the total church family are made more effective. The New Testament principle of serving each other is realized in practical ways. The foundations of genuine fellowship are realized and experienced effectively.

In part, Sunday School classes serve this function, but in reality, this organization is more concerned with Bible study and indoctrination. "Growth groups" would enlist leaders and train them to lead groups of five to eight persons. All members of the church would be assigned to a Growth Group. As new members are brought into the fellowship, they would be assigned to a "Growth Group" that would include them in their mutual needs and service. Leaders of the Growth Groups perhaps would cluster around another level of leadership, so that the church truly becomes preparation of all of the people of God to serve each other and to build up the body of Christ. Individuals grow and church growth is stimulated.

Fellowship is thus more than socializing and eating together. It becomes an effective means for implementing Bible teachings for mutual growth in our faith and in our experiential knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL DEFINITION AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF EVANGELISM

By: Fred Saure

I. DEFINITION OF EVANGELISM

A. Biblical Terms for Evangelism

1. Evangelize

Euangelizesthai is used frequently in the New Testament, meaning to evangelize or to proclaim the gospel (Luke 4:18; Acts 16:10). In Acts 16:10, Paul interpreted the vision of the man of Macedonia as God's call to go there and preach the gospel. The word used in the Greek text is euangelizesthai. The idea conveyed by the passage is that Paul believed God was sending him to Macedonia to evangelize (to convert to Christ) the Macedonians.

2. Announce

A word commonly used in the New Testament and appearing in both noun and verb forms is kērussein (Matt. 4:17; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 8:5). The word means to announce or proclaim as a herald. In the days before radio, television, and air travel, the herald, or announcer, played an extremely important role in communicating crucial information. A herald in ancient times was a royal servant who preceded the king, going from village to village to announce that the king would pass that way. He also announced laws and decrees of the king. John the Baptist was a herald who announced the coming of the King of Kings (see Matt. 3). The essential meaning of kērussein "is the telling of news to people who had not heard it before — 'evangelization'."

3. Teach

The evangelism of Jesus is frequently described in the New Testament by the various forms of the word didaskō (teach). Matthew said that Jesus "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues" (9:35). Jesus explained and unravelled great spiritual truths in conversational fashion. He was the Master Teacher. Christians doing the work of evangelism must follow the example of Jesus and teach. Evangelistic witnessing must do more than merely announce (proclaim); it must explain the meaning of true faith as well.

4. Witness

The word martus (witness) also describes what is meant by evangelism. Jesus said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

5. Disciple

Matheteusate is the word used in Matthew 28:19 meaning to make disciples (learners). Jesus' command to His followers was to make new disciples as He had made disciples of them. The word stresses that Jesus wanted His followers actively to seek conversions, by winning people to faith in Him. (Taken from the book "A Church Programme of Evangelism" by Gayle Hogg)

B. Popular Definitions of Evangelism

1. Niles, D. T.

"Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

2. Campus Crusade for Christ

"Success in witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God."

3. Lausanne Covenant

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his church and responsible service in the world.

I Cor. 15:3-4; Acts 2:32-39; John 20:21; I Cor. 1:23; II Cor. 4:5, 5:11, 20; Luke 14:25-33; Mark 8:34; Acts 2:40, 47; Mark 10:43-45.

4. Observations:

Note that these definitions include the following:

- *Sharing or spreading of the Good News
- *The Good News of salvation
- *Salvation through faith
- *Faith in a historical person——
Jesus Christ

- *Salvation results in
 - Obedience to Christ
 - Incorporation into the Church
 - Responsible service in the world

II. THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF EVANGELISM

A. God the Father: Author of Evangelism

1. Proto-Evangelium - Genesis 3:15
 Note the woman's offspring or seed =
 Jesus Christ See Galatians 4:4
 For the snake's seeds or descendants
 See John 8:44 and Ephesians 2:2
2. The Call of Abraham - Genesis 12:1-3
 He was to be a blessing. An evangelist!
3. The Sending of Jesus Christ - John 3:16
 Slain before the foundation of the world
 Revelation 13:8

B. God the Son: Savior of Evangelism

1. As the Lamb of God - John 1:29
 Ransom - Matthew 20:28
 Substitute - 2 Corinthians 5:21
 Propitiation - I John 2:2; Romans 3:25
2. As the Risen Lord - Luke 24:6
 Mediator - I Timothy 2:5
 Above All - Philippians 2:9
 Coming King - Acts 1:9-11

Note: Christ is the Only Way - John 14:6
 Christ is the Only Name - Acts 4:12
 Christ is the Only Unchanging
 One - Hebrews 13:8

C. God the Holy Spirit: Doer of Evangelism

1. Convicting - John 16:8

2. **Converting**
 - Regenerating - John 3:5; Titus 3:5
 - Indwelling - I Corinthians 6:19;
John 14:16
 - Baptizing - I Corinthians 12:13
 3. **Controlling** - Ephesians 5:18
 - Commanded experience - imperative mood
in Greek
 - Common experience - plural in Greek
 - Continuous experience - present tense
in Greek
 4. **Conserving** - Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30
 5. **Commissioning** - Acts 13:2,4
 6. **Comforting** - John 14:16, 26
- D. **God's Word: Instrument for Evangelism**
1. **Views about the Bible**
 - Reason above the Bible = Rationalism
 - Experience above the Bible = Mysticism
 - Church above the Bible = Roman Catholicism
 - Bible plus founder's writings = Cultism
 - Bible plus nothing = Evangelicalism
 2. **Uses of the Bible**
 - In Christian WALK - 2 Timothy 3:13-16
 - In Christian WITNESS - Acts 8:26-40
 - In Christian WARFARE - Ephesians 6:10-18
 3. **Other Sacred Writings**
 - Vedas for the Hindus
 - Ko-ji-ki and Nihon-gi for the Shintos
 - Avesta for the Zoroastrians
 - Tao Te Ching for the Taoists
 - Angas for Jainists
 - Tripitaka for the Buddhists
 - Classics for the Confucianists
 - Koran for the Muslims
 - Granth Sahib for the Sikhs

E. God's Spiritual Gifts: Abilities for Evangelism

1. Definition - "enabling graces for church and community ministries"
2. Distinction of Gifts from Talents
Talents are inborn: given at conception
Gifts are reborn: given at conversion

Talents are exercised naturally
Gifts are exercised spiritually
3. Distribution of Spiritual Gifts
Given only to believers - John 14:16-17
Each one has at least one gift -
I Corinthians 12:7; I Peter 4:10
4. Discovery of Spiritual Gifts
Explore the possibilities
-Study the passages on spiritual gifts
-Read extensively
-Get to know gifted people
-Make gifts a conversation piece
Experiment with various gifts
Examine your feelings
Evaluate your effectiveness
Expect confirmation from the body
5. Development of Spiritual Gifts
Ryrie: "Abilities can and must be developed by the one to whom the gift is given. E.g., the gift of teaching needs development by study."
6. Description of Spiritual Gifts

<u>Word Gifts</u>	<u>Service Gifts</u>
1 Prophecy	8 Ministry
2 Teaching	9 Mercy
3 Knowledge	10 Giving
4 Wisdom	11 Helps
5 Exhortation	12 Ruling
6 Counselling	13 Governings
7 Discernment	14 Celibacy

Sign Gifts

15 Faith

16 Healing

17 Miracles

18 Tongues

19 Interpretation

(See Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:8-10; 12:28-30;
Eph. 4:11)

F. The Laity: Ministers of Evangelism

1. Steward of the Gospel - I Corinthians 4:1
This figure of stewardship highlights our
responsibility to evangelize.

You are responsible!

2. Herald of the Gospel - I Corinthians 1:23
The figure of the herald highlights the
authenticity of the Gospel.
3. Ambassador of God - 2 Corinthians 5:19f
The figure of ambassadorship highlights
the authority of the minister.

G. The Clergy: Trainers of Evangelism

1. Philosophy based on player-coach principle-
Ephesians 4:11-12
The clergy is to equip God's people for
service.
2. Application is seen in the ministry of
multiplication as stated in 2 Tim. 2:2.
Note that when 2 Timothy 2:2 is applied
every six months:

$\frac{1}{2}$ year - 2 believers

1 year - 4

$1\frac{1}{2}$ years - 8

5 years - 1,024

10 years - 1,048,576

$15\frac{1}{2}$ years - 2,147,483,648

3. The clergy should train by:

- Giving evangelistic EXPOSURE
- Giving evangelistic EXAMPLE
- Giving evangelistic EXPOSITION
- Giving evangelistic EXERCISE
- Giving evangelistic EXPERIENCE

B. By All Means: The Method of Evangelism

1. Scripture: I Corinthians 9:22

2. Some Means:

- Print Evangelism
- Prayer Evangelism
- Presence Evangelism
- Proclamation Evangelism
- Persuasion Evangelism

I. Responsible Disciples: The Goal of Evangelism
Note the Great Commission which involves:

- MAKING DISCIPLES by sharing the gospel
(Kingdom Membership)
- MARKING DISCIPLES by baptism (Church
Fellowship)
- MATURING DISCIPLES by teaching (Biblical
Scholarship)

PROMOTION OF STEWARDSHIP IN A LOCAL FILIPINO BAPTIST CHURCH

The importance of the subject of this paper cannot be overestimated. If there is any single phase of Southern Baptist life which has been neglected in the more than twenty years since our mission has been at work here, on the basis of present finances in most Baptist churches, it would seem to me that Stewardship teaching and promotion would gain the prize for "the most overlooked Biblical doctrine in the Baptist churches of the Philippines."

Stewardship involves what a person does after he becomes a Christian. Evangelism brings a man to know the Saviour; stewardship teaches him what is expected of him as a Christian. Stewardship is the recognition that we belong to God, that all we have come from God for us to use and that we are responsible to use all we are and have according to the will of God.

Look at almost any congregation, examine almost any association or convention and we find woeful signs of weakness. Evangelism is spasmodic, finances are almost non-existent, members are uninterested, attendance is low, buildings are eyesores, expansion projects are mostly in the talking stages only. The evidences of vibrant, healthy spiritual Christianity are sadly lacking.

Stewardship may not be the magical alchemist our churches need; but I am convinced it is. For this reason, I would suggest a total re-examination of our mission's approach toward church development. I would challenge our conventions, associations and churches to make a bold start on the road of stewardship. I do not ask any to accept any proposal I would make because I think it is good; I do ask that we believe

God has given His church a plan of operation, and in that belief, I call on missionaries, pastors, and laymen to venture on a new experience in faith.

Two words summarize this paper: Motivation and Methods.

Motivation

Where there is motivation, there is method, so let us first think of motivation. No method is of any value unless used. No promotional scheme will help without application any more than a doctor's prescription will cure a disease if the medicine is left on the shelf.

Somehow we must come to believe in Stewardship as the remedy for the spiritual condition of our churches. We must become so convicted of our past laxness that we actually ask forgiveness of God for sinning against Him by teaching an incomplete gospel.

We must re-define our task in its total role. Many times we act as if our sole task was to insure a soul against hell. Perhaps we cannot report spiritual growth as gloriously as we can baptisms but unless we effectively train the new convert to accept his total responsibility, there will never be a strong local congregation to continue what has been done. A church that does not become self-propagating will die. A church that does not move toward self-support will hardly be motivated toward self-propagation.

Evangelism has been described as incomplete until the evangelized himself has become an evangelizer. This I believe! Yet, I am constrained to believe that soon the cycle will break down if there is not the training of the evangelized in his full responsibilities as a member of the body of Christ. By the same token, I believe that when a man accepts

his full responsibilities he will be more of an evangelist. That to which a man gives his possessions he soon gives himself.

Spiritual leaders must be totally committed to the Biblical plans for church support. We have excused ourselves too long. No excuse must be allowed. Either God is able or He is not. Either He expects every believer to be a tither or He does not.

It has been a bit sad to me to hear missionary and national alike talk about the Filipino member and the Filipino church as an exception to Biblical Stewardship. We've said it so much that we've come to believe it must be true. The church member was totally honest in exclaiming, ". . . but Sir, that doesn't apply to us Filipinos, does it?" As stewards of the untold riches of our Heavenly Father, are we so lacking in faith as to believe He will not provide His own share if we are willing to give it to Him? Unbelievable!

Some adjustment must be made as to the place of stewardship among the responsibilities of the members. Too long has stewardship been placed only on a voluntary basis—for the people who can afford it, for those who have gained maturity in Christianity, for those who have climbed up their spiritual steps through church attendance, Bible study, prayer, church work, etc. We've left these babes in Christ without the spiritual strength which Christ would give them as they learn to totally depend on Him.

I gather from what Jesus says in Luke 16:11 that stewardship of money is the basic prerequisite to spiritual riches. This simply says to me that until a Christian handles his money according to God's plan God will not trust us with other responsibilities. And we then wonder why our churches remain weak. We've lost the key which Jesus gave us.

It is not the "Baptist" way to require tithing; but it ought to become the obligation of every pastor to practice it and teach it and promote it and never stop leading his people to accept it. Somehow we must find a way to make stewardship synonymous with the word "Baptist." I do not ask this but for one reason: I believe it is the Biblical way and as a Baptist I believe in the total sufficiency of God's word in doing God's work.

Recently, a pastor asked that the Stewardship Committee of the association come to his church and speak to his people about stewardship. Why would he ask this? Was he afraid the church would not believe him? Did he fear to teach God's word to his people? Was he afraid the church would not believe him? Let's look at this in another way. If he carefully and boldly taught stewardship, then he would demonstrate his own belief in the strength of Christ to support him, he would raise his esteem with the church as one who fearlessly preaches all of God's message; and show his faith in Christ to keep him provided in the position of shepherd of a local congregation.

Let me make myself perfectly clear that stewardship involves more than money. It is all of life. However, the Bible is explicit about tithing. It is the earliest prescribed method of giving to God. It preceded the Mosaic law; but was incorporated into the law. It was practiced and approved by Jesus. The Holy Spirit directed it as the basis for New Testament churches' giving. We may not find a test for how much time a man should give to his lord; we may not know how to judge if a man is properly using his talents in the Kingdom; but there is no mistaking the accuracy of judgment as far as the minimum of a person's money is concerned.

The place to begin promoting stewardship is by promoting tithing. Here we have specific guidelines. If there is any doubt about tithing being the requirement of God then let us search the Scriptures and

determine what God has required. Let us not philosophize that if we get the man we'll get his money; but let us teach the Bible as clearly as did our Lord. Let us be beyond reproach in our own practice and let us depend on the Master who gave us this plan to provide the funds to make possible our decision to tithe.

Until there is proper motivation by missionary, pastor, and all church leaders alike, no method will work. If the motive is right any method will help.

Methods

In the second place, I would ask you to think about methods for promoting stewardship in our local Filipino Baptist churches. I think these can be stated in three concise suggestions:

First, convince the church leaders of their own responsibilities. This is the motivation about which I have been talking. There must be clarity of dedication at this point.

Second, teach the people their obligations as specified in the Scriptures. Systematic studies can be provided to help. At all times, this must remain an attempt to live according to the Bible. It must never degenerate into some plan of man. The authority of the Bible must always be held in the forefront here.

Third, give some opportunity for the people to publicly express their dedication to this requirement. At this stage of our Baptist church development, I am suggesting simply that we encourage every member to pledge to tithe. Many will not, but that should not deter our making a start. Let's resurrect the theme "Every Baptist a Tither." Devise some kind of pledge card and perhaps some kind of token which the member can keep as a reminder of his decision, e.g., a book mark with his pledge inscribed on it.

I recognize that the variations of these three suggestions lead into many applications and implications. The church needs to accept some responsibility for supporting their associations and conventions. It has been suggested that the churches "tithe" to the associations and conventions. This would put the church officially on record supporting the principle of tithing. It will be a great promotional point itself. An attractive certificate could be given to each church each year when they reaffirmed such a pledge. The Mission Stewardship Committee will respond with materials and helps as they are needed.

Stewardship promotional materials will help members accept their responsibilities. Funds must be made available for tracts. Where possible, tracts should be prepared on the field; but there are many others available now which need to be bought and distributed.

The Mission Stewardship Committee has discussed promotional plans for the churches to use in elevating the giving level of the members. In two semesters of study of the topic of stewardship at the Seminary last year, each class studied many methods which could be used. Let the church be led to plan a worthy budget, let the members be led to consider which plan of promotion will help them at that particular time in their church life, and let all the help possible be given to assist the church accomplish its goal.

Stewardship cannot be relegated to a few weeks of the year. Care must be given that the church is a Stewardship Church all the time. This does not mean that the pastor must be talking about money in every sermon, but it means the church must practice good stewardship in handling money the members give. No church has the right to ask the members to be good stewards if the church is not.

For example, the Stewardship Church recognizes that giving is an act of worship and seeks to conduct that part of the service with dignity and care. Funds are handled so as not to cause suspicion and all moneys are spent as intended. Accountability of all funds is essential.

I would not oversimplify the matter at all. Yet I feel that here we have a basic, fundamental, God-given plan which needs to be part of every church and every church member. Stewardship is a grace of God, as much as is Salvation. Paul commands that the churches abound in this grace also (2 Cor. 8:7).

At the risk of being fanatical on the subject, I repeat the words of the prophet Malachi, ". . . put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing" (3:10b).

I make the following suggestions in step by step form. I believe these are the things God wants, yea, expects us to do for Him in His work through His people.

1. Let this body discuss stewardship as presented in the Scriptures, without concern for any time schedule, until we have reached unanimity in agreement concerning God's will in this matter.

2. Let us in a spiritual recommitment agree what course we should follow in this regard during the next few months of special effort and throughout our future efforts in this land.

3. Let us adopt a simple program which we can present to the churches as a Biblical plan of church support.

For example:

- (1) Let it be known that the pastor will be expected to tithe.
- (2) Let every church be required to prepare a budget which shall be reviewed annually if financial help is expected from the Mission.
- (3) Give assistance and see that Biblical Stewardship is taught to the church members.
- (4) Lead churches to have Tither's Pledge Days annually or some ample program for allowing members to make commitments of their stewardship.
- (5) Assist every church to be a full-time Stewardship Church.

We stand as God's messengers today before a people who need to know God's way into life eternal and into the practice of that life in the church . . . and when we examine our past record . . . we've not done so good. I think we've left out part of the message . . . a part so vital that we've crippled the church we sought to strengthen. I'm asking that it be put back and kept in its intended place of preeminence. Stewardship is God's plan for rearing His children. I am inclined to want to do God's way.

BOOSTER PIN

The Seminary Booster Club is a new club which has been formed for everyone who wishes to promote the support of the national faculty at Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary, Baguio City. Yearly membership pins will be issued starting with the annual meeting of the Luzon Baptist Convention each November. Members are encouraged to collect the entire set, starting with 1986.

Pastors who lead their churches in observing Seminary Day and take a special offering for Seminary endowment will automatically receive a pin. Members who contribute at least P100 will also receive a pin.

The National Faculty Endowment is a plan to provide the salaries of all national faculty of PETS/B. The money received is invested in sound financial institutions at the best available interest rate. The interest which this money earns will be used to pay salaries for individual professors as designated. The initial investment will remain untouched but additional gifts can be added to it.

With the rising cost of operations this method of school support is a positive step towards Filipinization of the school. Adding to the national faculty is a major move in this direction and this plan gives assurance of their continuing support.

The first National Faculty Endowment undertaken by the churches of the Luzon Baptist Convention has been designated in memory of an honored graduate, Rev. Deu Mahandi—a former convention president and pastor, a man who served as self-employed missionary to Borneo, a pioneer in church planting, and the only Southern Baptist pastor to be a chaplain in the Philippine Armed Forces.

A second endowment has been begun in honor of Dr. Frank P. Lide, the first president of the Seminary.

Support for this endowment has come from the Chinese Baptist Convention, some missionary graduates of Southern Seminary, and others.

Others have been expressing interest in endowment also. This is a proven way to develop long-range support for a school and we are grateful for the hope this instills in those of us who seek the best future for this institution.



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