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Equipping Disciples

Elmer L. Towns

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EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

Discipleship I — EQUIPPING YOU TO WIN SOULS

Discipleship II — EQUIPPING YOU TO GROW IN CHRIST

Discipleship III — EQUIPPING YOU TO BE A LEADER

**Discipleship IV — EQUIPPING YOU TO SERVE IN A
CHURCH**

by

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Liberty Baptist College
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**Making Disciples the command to the church
Matthew 28:19, 20 NKJV**
**Equipping Saints the task of believers
Ephesians 4:12 NKJV**

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This section gives you an orientation to the Christian life, beginning with the fundamentals. It is designed to help a person get a well-rooted foundation for his personal faith. The material for these twelve lessons is taken from *The Successful Christian Life* by Elmer Towns, Accent Books, 1981.

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INTRODUCTION

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

This volume is prepared with you in mind. I want you to be grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ, then prepared to be a leader and finally equipped to serve in your local church. With that purpose in mind, I directed that every student coming to Liberty should take this course, Christian Service 102. I trust the experience in this course will better prepare you to serve Christ, no matter what your major at Liberty.

The first section of your study is called *Discipleship I—EQUIPPING YOU TO WIN SOULS*. I want every student at Liberty to not only know the technique of winning souls, but catch the spirit of evangelism and have a burden to win people to Christ.

The second section of this course is called *Discipleship II—EQUIPPING YOU TO GROW IN CHRIST*. I realize that many of you know some of the facts in this section and a few of you have studied faithfully and know most of the material. Then take this class experience to learn how to disciple others. Prepare this material to tend to "others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

The third section of this course is called *Discipleship III—EQUIPPING YOU TO BE A LEADER*. This section contains embryonically all you will receive at Liberty. To be a Liberty graduate is to be a leader. Learn the experience in this section to become a better leader for Jesus Christ.

The fourth section of this course is called *Discipleship IV—EQUIPPING YOU TO SERVE IN A CHURCH*. As you go through Liberty, I want you to know about Thomas Road Baptist Church and its dynamic principles that have given rise to Liberty. This section is not designed to make you a preacher, but you should understand the inner-workings of a growing church. If you are not in full-time ministry, then one day you will be a deacon, Sunday School teacher or worker in your local church. This fourth section is designed to give you the insight into church ministry.

Not every student comes from a Baptist church. This course is not designed to persuade you to take our label. We want you to know the nature, goals, and principles of a New Testament church. While you are here, you will be given the opportunity to serve in one of the many areas of ministry in Lynchburg. If you know about us, you can better serve among us. Then no matter where you serve in the future, this course will have strengthened your ministry.

Rev. Dennis Fields, the Christian Service/Church Assistance Director for Liberty Baptist College and his staff coordinate the total Christian Service program. I have asked Rev. Fields and his staff, as associate pastors of Thomas Road Baptist Church, to teach the Christian Service classes. He has provided very capable leadership for the program since 1978 and is a graduate of Liberty Baptist College and Liberty Baptist Seminary.

I have also asked Dr. Elmer Towns to write this course material and to help teach it. He understands biblical Christianity, and he understands the dynamics of growing churches. He came to Thomas Road Baptist Church and wrote the best-selling book, *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow*. That book first gave us national attention and through that book, Dr. Towns and I have become intimate friends. He is the best person on our academic or pastoral staff to prepare this book.

May God bless you as you prepare to serve Him through a local church.

Sincerely yours,
JERRY FALWELL

DISCIPLESHIP IV

EQUIPPING YOU TO SERVE IN A CHURCH

by

ELMER L. TOWNS

Dean

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for

CSER 102

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CHAPTER ONE

UNDERSTANDING THE MINISTRY OF YOUR CHURCH TO YOU

When you were saved you probably made a public confession (Rom. 10:9) which should have been water baptism to show your identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:4-6). Your outward testimony is a symbol of spirit baptism (I Cor. 12:13), whereby you were placed into Christ's body and were co-crucified, co-buried, and co-raised with Him (Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 2:12-13). Since you are in Christ's body in heaven, you should be identified with His local body on earth, the church.

You should join a church, fellowship and support others in a church, serve God through a church, and give your money through a church. You should belong to a church, and it should be committed to you.

However, not every group of people that calls itself a church meets the New Testament qualifications to be a church. The Bible warns against false teachers (Acts 20:28) who will divide churches and harm young believers. Some churches are guilty of false doctrine (Rev. 2:12-17) and false living (Rev. 2:18-29). If you get into the wrong church you can lose your love for Christ (Rom. 2:5). You can backslide, and your life can be wasted. This chapter is prepared to help you understand the nature of a church and what are its aims.

Of course a church is not a building. The word church comes from the Greek term **ecclesia** which means "assembly." Therefore any church must be a gathering of those who are Christians. The term **ecclesia**, mentioned 114 times in the New Testament comes from two words, *ek* (out) and *kaleo* (to call). A church, **ecclesia**, is made up of those who are called by Christ. They are called out from sinful pursuits, and they are called to follow Christ. The following definition will be used to study the New Testament church.

A church is an assembly of professed believers, in whom Christ dwells, under the discipline of the Word of God, organized for evangelism, education, fellowship and worship; administering the ordinances and reflecting the spiritual gifts.

1. *A church is an assembly of professed believers.* The first criterion for a New Testament church is an assembly of those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost, those who were saved were immediately baptized, and they were added to the church. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Baptism became more than an initiatory rite into a local church; it is a symbol portraying the ultimate meaning of the Lord's death. The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). Individuals were identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans

6:4-6). And, as a result, when Christ died, we died with Him: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Since we were identified with Christ's body at salvation, the symbolism should be carried out when one enters the church, the body of Christ. He is placed into a pool of water as a symbol of being placed in the grave, identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. All people in a New Testament church should profess salvation and have been identified with Christ in His work on Calvary.

We cannot be absolutely sure that every church member is saved. Even Paul warned the Corinthian church that some may be professors only, without possession of eternal life (II Cor. 13:5). There will be some in the church who are not saved, as was the case in New Testament times (Acts 8:13-23). However, all should be accepted into the church upon their profession of faith. We can never be sure of another's faith. We can only know our inner reality with Christ. The church is an assembly of *believers*, and when the church is made of unbelievers, it is no longer a New Testament church.

Some might want to keep new Christians out of church membership until they prove themselves. Others might want to keep new members out of membership until they are fully instructed. Paul tells the church at Rome to receive those who are weak in the faith (Rom. 14:1). The basis of accepting all was "receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7).

2. *The unique presence of Christ dwells in a church.* The church is more than an organization; it is an organism and its life is Jesus Christ. He dwells in the midst of His people. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Christ walked through the seven churches in the book of Revelation and commended them for their good works (Rev. 2:3) and rebuked them for their sin and false doctrine (Rev. 2:1). When Christ rebuked the churches in the book of Revelation, He threatened to take away their candlestick (Rev. 2:5), which would have been removing His presence from the people. When Christ is removed from a New Testament church, it is similar to the shekinah glory cloud leaving the Old Testament Temple. If a group of people do not have Jesus Christ dwelling in their midst, they are no longer a New Testament church.

3. *A church must be under the discipline of the Word of God.* One of the first religious exercises of the New Testament church after the day of Pentecost was "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). Doctrinal purity is essential for a New Testament church. There is a unique union between Christ and the Bible, both are the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Christ pointed men to the Word of God, for it was their only way to obtain eternal life (John 6:63).

When an organizational problem came up in the early church, the apostles realized that they could not waste time waiting on tables when they should be giving themselves to the Word of God (Acts 6:4). A local church must place itself under the authority of God by placing itself under the discipline of the Word of God.

When the minister gives a positive proclamation of the Word of God, this is *positive discipline*, leading to correct life and belief. When the minister rebukes a congregation for their sin, this is *negative discipline*, just as a parent rebukes a child for going too near the fire. Sometimes a parent rebukes by the rod, at other times with a stern warning. The purpose of discipline is the positive growth and negative correction of the child. The purpose of discipline by the Word of God is the positive growth and negative correction of the New Testament church. When an assembly of people removed themselves from under the authority of the Word of God, they ceased being a New Testament church.

4. *A church must be organized to carry out the Great Commission.* The purpose of a church is more than a "back-slapping fellowship" of mutual friends. In the early church they "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Since the church believed that everyone was lost, it also believed that everyone must receive an

honest hearing of the gospel. The church in Jerusalem carried the gospel to every home so that its persecutors could say, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" (Acts 5:28). The early disciples were carrying out the Great Commission. The first obligation upon a church is evangelism. The second requirement was education; it had to indoctrinate the new Christian into the faith. The last part of the Great Commission reinforced this belief: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

Next the New Testament church both provides fellowship and becomes a place for mutual interaction. Chapters 1 and 2 of I John set fellowship as a standard for Christian behavior.

Finally, worship is required of all Christians. Jesus demanded, "The true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth . . . they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24). The entire book of Psalms gives the Christian the example of worship.

The marks of a New Testament church are evangelism, education, fellowship, and worship. When a church neglects these ministries, it abdicates its calling.

5. *A church administers the ordinances.* Two ordinances are administered through the church: baptism and the Lord's Table. These are to be celebrated by the church when it assembles together. Even though the ordinances are given for personal edification and testimony, an individual does not partake of these apart from the church.

Baptism reflects one's testimony of conversion, that a person is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This spiritual identification with Christ on the cross is reflected by one's identification with Christ's body on earth, the church.

The Lord's Table is a means of edification, fellowship, and personal introspection. A believer is to examine himself before partaking. God provided the Lord's Table to keep His church pure and separated from the world.

6. *A church reflects the spiritual gifts.* Not every group of Christians is destined to grow into a church. A group of people must be properly baptized, under the Word of God and organized for God's priorities. God then raises up leadership to bring the church into existence. These leaders must have the "spiritual gifts" (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4). God gives gifted men to a church, and when the leaders appear, it is an indication God wants the people to organize into a New Testament church. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (I Cor. 12:28). "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). When an organization ceases to have spiritual leadership, it ceases to function as a New Testament church.

HOW SHOULD A CHURCH GROW?

There is nothing wrong with a small church, as long as it is growing. Every church was small at one time. If a church stopped growing, that would be a sign of spiritual sickness or sin. A baby who stops growing physically has something wrong with him.

1. *The growing church is Biblical.* The greatest church that ever graced this earth was at Jerusalem. There have been some great churches in the past, and there are some great churches now, but there has never been a church that approximates the influence of the church of Jerusalem. When our Lord was about to ascend back to the throne, He gave a command to expand its influence. "And being assembled together with them (that is, the disciples) Jesus commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father (that was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) which saith he, ye have heard of me" Acts 1:4). Then he promised, "but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The spiritual power for growth came from God, and expansion was inevitable. "These all continued in one accord with prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren

... (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty)" (Acts 1:14, 15). The Holy Spirit included numbers when He described the church because God is interested in numbers and growth. He could have just said there was a group, but instead the Holy Spirit instructed Luke, the inspired writer, to write that there were approximately 120 in the upper room.

Peter preached a great sermon on the day of Pentecost and 3,000 souls were saved. "They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). By simple arithmetic now there are 3,120 in the first church in Jerusalem, and they're just getting started. "And they (the 3,120) continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). "Praising God, having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church (not just on Sunday) daily such as were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

The next occurrence of growth is found after Peter preached his second sermon in Acts 3 and was put in prison. "Howbeit many of them that heard the word believed, and the number of men was about 5,000" (Acts 4:4). In the Hebrew tradition, the men (the Greek word indicates male) that were numbered were the heads of households. With these 5,000 men, there were probably 5,000 women and very likely at least 10,000 or 15,000 children. So at this point the church in Jerusalem probably numbered above 25,000.

The next time the author of Acts describes the church, he now says it is growing, but the growth is so excessive that he can't give an exact number, but only that the growth is outstanding. "And the believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). The church is now a multitude, great throngs, great numbers.

Now the population of Jerusalem in that day was about 200,000 so the church was accused by the enemy of "having filled Jerusalem with their doctrine" (Acts 5:28). That is the church's aim, to have its town filled with Biblical doctrine. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, (here's how they did it) they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).

"And in those days, when the number of disciples was multiplied (now God changes His form of arithmetic from addition to multiplication) . . . And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly" (Acts 6:1, 7). At the end of the first seven years of the church, history tells us that the church in Jerusalem exceeded 100,000 in number. Fifty percent of the population of that city was saved and serving the Lord.

2. *A church should grow because of the Biblical mandate of evangelism.* Most growing churches are based on evangelism; this is one of the reasons why they are large. Their task is to reach and win as many people as possible. The marching orders for a New Testament church are found in Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore and teach (disciple) all nations." The word "disciple" means to "follow Christ". There is no success in God's work without successors or followers of Christ.

3. *Growing churches can evangelize metropolitan areas.* Jesus commands that we evangelize all, "Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), yet He realizes not all will be saved, so He expects us to disciple those who are saved (Matt. 28:19). American life in sprawling metropolitan areas seems to be expanding faster than churches can be built to minister to each new suburb. There do not seem to be enough ministers to serve these areas. Anonymity seems to plague the large city where people are lost in apartment buildings and suburbia alike. The church should evangelize the large city. How can it carry out this mandate? First, the church should have a commitment to evangelize the city in every way possible. Second, the church should use its manpower to visit every home or attempt to reach every area. Third, the church should use its finances to evangelize the lost. Finally, the church should use its services to attract and reach the lost.

The principle of a strong witness to reach an area is Biblical. Paul went to Ephesus and from that metropolitan area reached Asia Minor. "And this (ministry) continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Paul did not apparently visit every rural hamlet, and yet they heard the gospel. Many rural churches are closing their doors, yet God is not leaving Himself without a witness. The large church in the metropolitan area can minister to families thirty and fifty miles away by radio, TV, church newspapers and Sunday School.

4. *The growing church attracts the respect of the unsaved.* New shopping centers, big corporations, and big businesses have provided jobs and prosperity for our nation. The consolidation of many small public school districts has provided the public schools of America with a more efficient educational system, even though not Christian. Sports, entertainment, universities, government, and the military are active. We live in a vibrant country. What's wrong with a vibrant Sunday School? Christ is a living Savior. Our church should be a living organization. Since business can serve the needs of individuals and make them feel welcome, why can't a church overcome impersonalization and minister to individuals?

5. *The growing church can give a well-rounded ministry to the total needs of Christians.* The pastor without a staff in the small church is usually left to promote, organize, visit, counsel, preach, finance, teach, administer, and police the flock. We have always heard that the jack-of-all-trades is a master of none. The church that will ultimately have a vast impact will have a number of different ministries that will meet the various needs within many individuals.

The combined ministries of several viable agencies in a church will not only attract the masses to the gospel, but can better minister to each individual who comes. By using a variety of ministries, the multitudes will not only be reached with the message of the gospel, but give also a quality ministry to the total man for the glory of God.

The concept of multiple services in a church is a practical application of spiritual gifts. "Every man hath his proper gift of God" (I Cor. 7:7). God has given different abilities to each person. One pastor is gifted to preach (I Cor. 12:28), another to counsel (Rom. 12:8), and another to administer (I Cor. 12:28). These gifted men are then led to a church where they exercise their gifts for the glory of God. The large church allows many gifted persons to use their talents and, in the final analysis, each member can receive more, hence grow more.

6. *The growing church is more efficient.* A growing church will ultimately become large. One of the criticisms of the large church is that it is not efficient, which is not so. When many people carry the financial burden, the result is efficiency in the long run. Just as the American large business can cut prices on volume sales, so it is possible for the large church to provide better facilities, more staff members, better publicity, and quality ministry with less financial overhead per member. (A big church is not automatically a good church, but it has the resources for extensive outreach.)

A study done by students at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School revealed that the average church member was on a speaking basis (calling people by their first names) with sixty individuals, whether the church had sixty, 600 or a thousand members. Therefore, it is wrong to accuse the large church of being impersonal. The average person speaks to approximately sixty people no matter what the size of the church.

7. *Illustrations of the church imply growth.* There are illustrations of the people of God and each illustration speaks of growth. (1) The church is a body (Eph. 1:22-23) and the natural function of the body is to show life and grow. (2) The church is a flock of sheep over which Jesus is shepherd. He seeks lost sheep and the flock expands. (3) The people of God are the branches, and Christ is the vine (John 15:1-8). The fruit of the vine/branches is first, character (the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22-23) and second, soulwinning which is bringing others to Christ. (4) Christians are the temple of God, and the temple grows. One doesn't think of a house growing, but the stones

are living (I Peter 2:5). They “grow unto a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21). (5) The people of God are priests. Peter describes their growth, “are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices” (I Peter 2:5). (6) The bride is a picture of those who are loved by Christ (Eph. 5:30). He did not love those who were not worthy or those who loved Him, but He loved sinners and enemies (Rom. 5:8-10). (7) The final picture is a people of God (I Peter 2:10). As such they are called saints (I Cor. 1:2), elect (Rom. 8:33), disciples (John 8:31), believers (Acts 16:31), faithful (Col. 1:2), Christians (Acts 11:26), brethren (Eph. 6:23) and those characterized as, “in Christ” (Col. 1:22).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *When does a church drift far enough from the New Testament standards so that it ceases to be a church in God's view?*
2. *How important is the practice of discipline in a local church?*
3. *At what point in time does a group of Christians who assemble together to serve God become a church?*
4. *What are the disadvantages of larger churches and how can they be overcome?*
5. *List the reasons why God is interested in the “numerical growth” of a church.*

CHAPTER TWO

UNDERSTANDING THE AIMS OF A CHURCH

The aim of a church is found in the Great Commission "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20). This aim is divided into three sections. Note the following chart to explain the three-fold command.

CHURCH AIM FROM MATTHEW 28:19-20		
Teach Baptize Teach	Make Disciples Identification Instruction	Evangelism to Edification Churching Education

The controlling aim of the Great Commission is the word **teach** (from the Greek word **matheuteuo**) which means to make disciples out of non-believers. The word **teach** implies to instruct in a classroom, but Jesus wanted the church to do more than formal teaching. He wanted all men to be His followers, which meant that they must come to salvation (evangelism) and grow in grace (nurture). Hence, discipleship is the controlling aim of a local church. It is an imperative in the original language and controls all that follows.

THREE-FOLD STEPS OF THE AIM

I. Evangelism (Disciple) Matt. 28:19

1. *Vision.* The first step to church evangelism is vision. Before one can build a growing church, he must have a vision of what God wants done. Vision involves foresight, and this lies in the pastor. The man of God must have the ability to: (1) see first, (2) see most, and, (3) see farthest into the future. The Old Testament prophet was called a seer. Today, the man who would build a growing church must first have a vision of the lost. He must see the degradation of sin and the damnation of sin. "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people, but when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:35-36). The impetus came when **Jesus saw** the needs of the people. One does not build a large church on the basis of prestige, reputation or success in the ministry. A large church is built by a vision of the needs of lost people.

A second aspect of vision is foresight into church work – the ability to see the work of God in the lives of a congregation. A church must be large in the heart of the pastor

long before growing large in reality. The man of God will have vision to see what God desires to accomplish when he yields his life to Christ and follows His strategy.

The third aspect of vision concerns seeing God. One must have a clear and correct vision of the person and nature of God. He is the foundation of the church. One cannot have a correct vision of God without a correct understanding of Scripture, for in the Bible is found a correct doctrine of God. The first step in building a growing Sunday School is to ask God for a proper vision concerning sinners, then ask God for a vision of the work, and finally get a vision of God Himself.

2. *Compassion.* Many have attempted to build large churches based on organization or administrative techniques, but have little compassion for people. When Jesus saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion. Vision of the needs of people leads to compassion for them. Compassion is love translated into action.

3. *Reach.* One cannot say he is evangelizing a community until he is reaching a community. Reaching is defined as making contact with lost people and motivating them to give an honest hearing to the gospel. Reaching is not the same as evangelism, but is part of the process. Churches grow because they are a **reaching church**. Every available means is used to reach into the community through buses, radio, TV, newspapers, house-to-house visitation, telephone evangelism, and other media.

4. *Testimony.* Tied to evangelism is the mandate to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). A witness is one who shares his experience. Christians are to witness: (1) what they have seen of Jesus Christ, (2) what they have heard concerning Jesus Christ, and (3) what they have experienced. They are to tell how their life was changed. When Peter and John were called before the council concerning their preaching, they gave the following **verbal witness**: "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). In this same account, the healed man, who had been lame from birth, stood with Peter and John. He gave a **silent witness** as to what had happened, "And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against them" (Acts 4:14). Testimony is an effective tool of evangelism for by it we "win a hearing."

5. *Proclaim.* Christians should do more than witness (share their experience). They should present the gospel. This is called many things: soulwinning, evangelism or proclaiming the gospel. By it we give a simple, clear, and complete presentation of the content of the gospel to lost people. Yet, preaching is more than teaching. By it we give Biblical content with persuasion and compassion to convince the person to get saved. Those who are trained in soulwinning are **proclaiming** the gospel on an individual basis. This actually is preaching on a one-to-one basis or telling people the gospel.

6. *Persuade.* The last point of evangelism is persuasion. This is a conscious attempt to motivate the lost to accept Jesus Christ and repent of their sins. We must urge them to repent and believe. Soulwinners and preachers should "preach as a dying man to dying men." This persuasion was found in the ministry of Paul; "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1). In this same desire to persuade Israel, Paul states, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren" (Rom. 9:2-3).

II. Baptism (Churching) Matt. 28:19

The second major thrust of the Great Commission is to baptize the new convert immediately after salvation. Baptism is identifying with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This is an outward symbol of an inner reality. When the new Christian is placed under the water, he is identifying with Christ in His death and burial; when he is taken out of the water, he is identified with the resurrected life of Christ (Rom. 6:4-5). But baptism has a second identification. The new believer is also identifying with a local church of baptized believers. Therefore, when Christ commanded the disciples to go and "baptize", He was commanding them to go "church" people, i.e.,

get them identified with a local church.

The church, with all of her failures, is still the institution founded by Christ. The local church still has priority in God's plan of evangelization and edification. Christians need to be reaffirmed in their loyalty to the local church. A child of God does not have the option to choose whether or not he will be loyal to a church. The Great Commission expects a person to identify with a church. Christians not under the authority of a church are the easiest led off on doctrinal tangents, live unproductive lives, and are slothful in service. Christians have freedom in Jesus Christ, but this liberty is best expressed in a local church. The church is an organized group of professing believers, in whom Christ dwells, under the disciplines of the Word of God, organized to carry out the Great Commission, administer the ordinances, and reflect spiritual gifts.

1. *To get believers under the disciplines of the Word of God.* The first task of a church to the new member is to make him a disciple. This is done by getting him under the discipline of Scripture. Discipline is both positive and negative. Positive discipline is the ministry of the Word when preached (I Cor. 14:3). This ministry of the Word is to edify, exhort, and comfort. It sets doctrine straight and gives the believer a basis by which to live. Negative discipline corrects false doctrine and false living. The Word of God admonishes those straying to return and repent.

2. *To develop gifts.* The second purpose for churching people is to prepare every Christian for service. Since every believer has a gift (an ability to serve God), then every believer ought to be involved in service. Paul indicated, "Every man hath his proper gift of God" (I Cor. 7:7). Therefore, the aim of churching people is to utilize their abilities in service to God. If every believer becomes involved, first the local church grows, then the individual Christian grows.

3. *To worship God.* The purpose of a New Testament church is to worship God and help every believer worship God. Worship is not an optional choice, it is an obligation. Jesus stated, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father *seeketh* such to worship Him" (John 4:23, emphasis added). Since God wants worship from man, it is our obligation to worship Him. Worship is giving to God the worth due to Him.

God is not worshipped through formal liturgy. It comes when believers give an honest, open, heart response to God under the preaching of the Bible. Dr. Jack Hyles, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana, states, "The greatest worship a man can have is when he says Amen in his heart when seeing a sinner going to the altar and becoming converted." Therefore, true worship is centered around man's relationship to God and the spiritual reality of the Holy Spirit working in a man's heart. (See Chapter 12.)

4. *To fellowship with other Christians.* The church provides fellowship for Christians to associate with other Christians.

5. *To grow through involvement.* Since God works primarily through the local church, Christians should place their priority in the local church. It is their obligation to attend the primary services: Sunday School, morning and evening church and prayer meeting.

The average church in America has approximately 15 percent of its membership active in a serving capacity. This includes Sunday School teachers, officers, ushers, and general church workers. Some Christians get lost in the church and become inactive or they are ignorant of God's plan for their lives. Every believer should get involved in a good Biblical church so they can grow in Christ.

6. *Respond to church leadership.* Christians must recognize the leadership of the pastor. The pastor is the under-shepherd of the flock and the leader in battle. Of course, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is the source and strength of the local church, but the pastor is the under-shepherd. Just as the farmer is indispensable in plowing the land, planting and gathering the crop, just so the pastor is indispensable in leading the congregation in evangelism, baptism, and teaching.

III. Education, Matt. 28:20

The third aspect of the Great Commission is teaching or education. The church carries on the example of Jesus, the teacher. He taught as one having authority. He spent time with his twelve disciples instructing them. The Sermon on the Mount begins with this observation, "His disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them" (Matt. 5:1-2). The content of Christian Education is suggested in the Great Commission, "teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

Not all churches are balanced in their ministry. Some place educational objectives before evangelism, others de-emphasize the believer's obligation to his church. The priority of the church is evangelism, and education is a means to an end, never the goal of one effort. The following list of educational objectives will give direction to a Biblical Sunday School.

1. *Teaching Biblical content.* The main educational priority upon the church is to communicate scriptural content: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). The aim is for every pupil to know the core doctrine contained in the Bible, so that he will be protected from the contamination of sin, will be built up in the Christian life, will understand God's purpose for his life and will become a productive Christian that brings glory to God (Titus 1:9; 2:7).

The subject matter of teaching is the content Jesus gave His disciples, "Whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Therefore, education must be **transmissive** in nature and **indoctrination** in focus. A teacher must impart doctrine to the pupil, hence indoctrinate (but never ignore the needs and desires of pupils). Much of the former attitude toward indoctrination lacked compassion, experience or enjoyment. Indoctrination was thought to mean "rote learning" or simply "parroting back" facts. Indoctrination can be enjoyable as students experience God's Word and have their needs met. Indoctrination involves understanding and insight. The church must teach so its members understand the Scriptures and intelligently apply them to their life.

2. *Training in skills.* If teaching content is the first half of education, then training in skills is the other half. Training puts into operation what is taught through principle. Both teaching and training must be present for a well-balanced church ministry. "Teaching them to observe" (Matt. 28:20). The aim of the church is to train Christians to be able to adequately carry out their responsibilities of evangelism, worship, and service faithfully in and out of the church.

The aim of training is good **churchmanship**. "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (I Tim. 3:15).

3. *Transforming of attitudes.* A church's purpose should communicate values and a life style for the Christian life in accordance with the standards of Scripture.

4. *Spiritual understanding and growth.* There is only one teacher in the church, that is the Holy Spirit who takes away spiritual blindness and causes Christians to understand the Scriptures. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Christians will grow in their spiritual insight of the Scriptures when teachers allow the Holy Spirit to instruct through them. Then the teacher must pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit which takes away spiritual blindness because, "the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (II Cor. 4:4). The unsaved cannot understand spiritual things (I Cor. 2:14), and after salvation this inability to perceive remains in part. Biblical education takes away blindness and causes a person to grow.

The pupil must put into practice the lessons of the classroom or there is no Christian Education. Christ expected his church to "observe" (Matt. 28:20). Once again, the Christian teacher must get results — the correct behavior of the student.

CONCLUSION

The Great Commission expects successful evangelism (disciples). Next, the converts are baptized, which involves identifying with the local church. Finally, the student practices or obeys his lessons in the local church as well as outside the church.

A church can only justify its existence as it accomplishes these Biblical aims. People must be saved and discipled. The various opportunities available to the church must be evaluated in this light. Having a program for the sake of being able to list an additional ministry of the church is futile if it is not reaching people and reproducing mature Christians.

If the church is the focal point of the work of God in this age, it only stands to reason that a Christian eager to do the will of God will invest his life seeking to accomplish the Biblical aims of the church. This should be a primary concern whatever form of Christian service he attempts to accomplish.

CHAPTER THREE

UNDERSTANDING THE PRIORITY OF EVANGELISM THROUGH YOUR CHURCH

The controlling aim of a local church is “discipling all nations” (Matt. 28:19). This means the primary aim is to bring people to know Jesus Christ as Savior. This chapter deals with three problems facing evangelism. First, there are varying approaches to evangelism (mass evangelism, personal evangelism, saturation evangelism, etc.). Therefore, evangelism must be defined. Second, there are varying motives for reaching lost people; therefore the reasons for reaching lost people must be analyzed. Third, there are various appeals in Scripture for evangelism; therefore, the Biblical words for evangelism must be understood.

I. THE DEFINITION OF EVANGELISM

A well-known evangelist has defined evangelism. “Evangelism is to bear witness to the gospel with soul aflame, and to teach and preach with the express purpose of making disciples of those who hear.”¹ John R. Mott expanded the definition: “Evangelism is the declaration of the gospel of Christ, either privately or publicly, by a messenger of God so that men might repent of their sin, turn to God, and live abundantly.”² Therefore we have defined evangelism as “communicating the gospel in an understandable way to the total personality of man in his sinful condition and persuading him to respond to Christ.” The following explanation is given for each phrase in this definition of evangelism.

Communicating is sharing the propositional truth of the gospel (the death, burial, and the resurrection) and what has happened (see, feel or experience) to us.

The **gospel** is the message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1-3) which a person needs to know to be converted.

The **total personality** involves intellect, emotion, and will. All three aspects of man must respond to God in a conversion experience.

Sinful condition means each man must realize he can do nothing to gain merit before God because he has either broken God’s laws or not lived up to His standards.

Persuade is the human responsibility of the soulwinner to motivate the lost to respond to the gospel.

A man’s **response to Christ** is belief and repentance. Note the order of the words. Paul describes the sequence, “How ye turned to God (belief) from idols (repentance) to serve the living and true God” (I Thess. 1:9).

II. MOTIVES FOR EVANGELISM

Evangelism is an imperative command to all Christians. The child of God cannot

¹C. E. Autrey, *You Can Win Souls* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961), p. 7.

²John R. Mott, ed., *Evangelism for the World Today* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938), Introduction.

escape its responsibility. The reasons for evangelism are listed below.

1. *It is commanded by Christ.* Jesus commanded the disciples to "go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). This command includes all nations. The command is in Mark 16:15: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This verse is aimed at individuals. The emphasis is winning individuals. Every believer who is not helping to win others to Christ is not keeping Christ's command. Christians should identify with Paul: "I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians" (Rom. 1:14). He felt the burden of God's command to be a personal evangelist.

2. *The needs of people.* The lost condition of all compels Christians to evangelize. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). But, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36). If a Christian understood the reality of hell and the significance of God's wrath, he would dedicate himself to the winning of people to Jesus Christ.

3. *The love for Christ motivates.* A Christian's love for Christ compels him to evangelism. Jesus was a personal evangelist. He preached both God's love and God's wrath. We should prove our love by obedience, especially in soulwinning. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). The indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in the believer should be the source of that love to tell others of salvation. "For the love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14). Christ loves the lost, and since He indwells believers, we, too, must love the lost.

4. *A love for others.* Christians should ask God to give them a love for others. We love our family and our friends; however, this concern often is not evidenced when their spiritual condition is concerned. The greatest concern to a Christian is eternity. Immediately after a conversation with Jesus, Andrew "findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:41). The example of Andrew's love should motivate all believers to spiritual concern for loved ones and neighbors.

5. *The example of Christ and disciples as soulwinners.* The fact that Jesus won souls ought to compel us to evangelism. Jesus continually preached to the multitudes. At other times He in personal conversation evangelized Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the woman taken in adultery, the rich young ruler, and Zacchaeus.

After the ascension of Jesus, the disciples were busy with evangelism. Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul testified of Christ. There were examples of personal evangelism with the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, the Philippian jailer, and Lydia.

6. *The Christian's obligation.* God has given a stewardship of the gospel to Christians today. He has committed the message of salvation to them, and they are responsible to communicate it. In the New Testament, a steward supervised an account for another. Paul likens believers to stewards. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4:1). God has entrusted men with His good news. This responsibility can only be discharged through evangelism.

7. *God is glorified.* Christians should be compelled to glorify God through evangelism. Jesus challenged His disciples to bear fruit (John 15:1-8) because it brings glory to God. Bearing fruit can be applied to winning men to Christ. Just as an apple tree produces apples, so a Christian produces Christians. Bearing fruit can also apply to character – the fruit of the Spirit. If Christians are bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), they will attract others to Christ. Either way, the work of evangelism is being done and the Father is glorified.

8. *Not enough laborers in the harvest field.* God expects all Christians to witness for Him. However, the sinful nature of man makes many hesitant to obey. Christ said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matt. 9:37).

9. *The promise of rewards.* Christians should not have to be motivated to evangelism by the promise of rewards. But Paul reminded the Christians at Corinth that they must

all "appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10). Because of the "terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11). This persuasion was the first step in personal evangelism. Paul testifies that the people whom he had won to Christ in Thessalonica were his crowns, "For what is our . . . crown of rejoicing?" (I Thess. 2:19-20). The hymn writer has taken poetic license and expressed it thus:

*Will there be any stars,
Any stars in my crown
When at evening the sun goeth down?
When I stand with the blest
In the mansions of rest,
Will there be any stars in my crown?*

III. BIBLICAL WORDS FOR EVANGELISM

Gaines Dobbins has defined evangelism as using ". . . every possible way of teaching outside the church door to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ and membership in His Church."³

This includes front door evangelism and side door evangelism. Though the Greek New Testament contains no word translated "evangelism", the concept and the imperative of evangelism are integral and basic to its structure. Several New Testament words clarify the meaning of evangelism.

BIBLICAL WORDS FOR EVANGELISM
1. Witness
2. Preach
3. Herald
4. Teach
5. Disciple

1. *Witness.* **Martureo** means "to bear witness." Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8). A witness gives credibility to the truth. Those who witness for Jesus Christ offer their substantiation that the message of Christ is real.

The word "martyr" comes from this word and means one who gives his life for what he believes. When a soulwinner shares the gospel with an unsaved person, he counts himself dead to all claims upon his life.

When a witness appears on the witness stand in a legal court, the jury is not interested in his opinions. A witness tells what he has seen, heard or experienced. In like manner, the witness for Jesus Christ does not give his own opinion but shares what he has seen, heard, and experienced. When one witnesses, he is telling others what Jesus Christ has done for him.

2. *Preach.* The word that is often translated "preach" is **euaggelizo** which means "to announce good tidings" or "to preach the gospel." It is clear that the word "evangelize" is really a transliteration of this Greek word. It might be said that "to evangelize" is "to gospelize". The church's duty is to "gospelize" everyone.

In Acts 21:8, Philip was designated as an evangelist, which means he went about telling the gospel. The evangelist of the New Testament was one who spread good tidings of redemption (Acts 13:32; Heb. 4:2).

3. *Herald.* The word **kerusso** means "to herald" and is also translated "to preach or proclaim." "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching

³Gaines S. Dobbins, Evangelism According to Christ (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949), p. 32.

the gospel" (Matt. 4:23). The messenger of an ancient king went from village to village heralding the decrees of the king. The emphasis is on a simple setting forth of a truth; not on the response of the hearer. When one preaches in the sense of **kerusso**, he is giving out the proclamation of the gospel (Matt. 3:1; 24:14; I Tim. 3:16). Perhaps he is not giving an invitation to respond because he is basically communicating a message.

4. *Teach*. The word **didasko** is used to describe the primary ministry of Jesus. It refers to discourse in order to instruct. It means "to communicate knowledge or insight." "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues" (Matt. 9:35). Teaching means more than announcing the truth. Teaching clarifies and illustrates. The soulwinner clarifies and illustrates the plan of salvation.

5. *Disciple*. The word **mathateuo** means "to disciple." Jesus has commissioned His disciples to make disciples of others. "Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple) all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The term carries the idea of making followers, and is concerned with end results. The end result of evangelism is making a learner or student, and therefore, a disciple.

CONCLUSION

The first word **witness** implies the soulwinner must share what God has done for him. This word doesn't focus on those who listen to the gospel, but on the one who is sharing his experience. The second word, **preach**, and the third word, **herald**, also carry the responsibility of announcing the gospel whether anyone responds or not. The fourth word, **teach**, implies that the recipient understands the message. The fifth word, **disciple**, means the soulwinner must get results. Therefore, he pleads with sinners to respond to the gospel, and he motivates them to accept Christ. Evangelism is a circle that begins with an inner compulsion to share Christ and ends when the person is converted.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNDERSTANDING THE TYPES OF EVANGELISM FOR YOUR CHURCH

The chief priority of the church is to “gospelize” all persons (Mark 16:15) and disciple individuals (Matt. 28:19). Yet there is no agreement among Christians as to how this task can be accomplished. Perhaps the solution is to understand the different types of evangelism and their description.

Type of Evangelism	Description
Personal Evangelism	Presenting the gospel to one person and motivating him to respond
Crusade Evangelism	A planned evangelistic meeting to present the gospel to the lost
Mass (Media) Evangelism	Using various media to present the gospel
Saturation Evangelism	Using every available means to reach every available person at every available time
Super-aggression Evangelism	An aggressive outreach by faith to create the situation where the lost will be saved
Life-style Evangelism	Living a good testimony before the lost so that an opportunity is gained to present the gospel
Busing Evangelism	Canvassing the neighborhood to motivate people to ride a bus to Sunday School where they will hear the gospel
Front Door Evangelism	Ingathering techniques and programs that reach out of the front door and motivate people to come into the church to hear the gospel
Side Door Evangelism	Bringing people into various church activities through natural relationships with members where their felt needs are met, then presenting the gospel
Oikos (Web) Evangelism	A motivating and planning to use the various family and social relationships of church members to present the gospel to their friends and relatives

1. *Personal Evangelism.* Many Christians in Bible colleges have a course entitled "personal evangelism" wherein students are given techniques, approaches, verses, and answers to objections, so that they may win souls to Christ. Not only colleges, but many churches have a 12-week training course or orientation before individuals go out to represent the church. A high degree of motivation is included in personal evangelism classes.

There are various "plans" that are taught to students on how they can present the gospel to the unsaved. First, many churches use the "Roman Road To Salvation" which has four steps to salvation based on four verses in Romans. It establishes the person as a sinner and follows God's natural answer to man's ultimate need.

The Roman Road To Salvation	
Man's Need	Romans 3:23
Sin's Penalty	Romans 6:23
God's Provision	Romans 5:8
Man's Response	Romans 10:9

Next, many use "The Four Spiritual Laws" developed by Campus Crusades International. This approach does not begin with an emphasis on sin, but the overriding motive is the heart of God's love. The thought is that the soulwinner must have the same motive as God if he is going to reach the person for Christ.

The Four Spiritual Laws
1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. (John 3:16; 10:10)
2. Man is sinful and separated from God, thus he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life. (Romans 3:23)
3. Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him, you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life. (Romans 5:8; I Corinthians 15:3-6)
4. We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives. (I John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9)

Evangelism Explosion, developed by Dr. James Kennedy, is used in many churches. Teams are sent out in three to present the gospel. Their approach begins with an assumption that the person knows he will die and appear before God. At that time, he is asked why God should allow him to enter heaven. The lost person is then faced with the fact that he has not made preparation to enter into the presence of God.

EVANGELISM EXPLOSION

Question #1—Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today, you would go to heaven?

Question #2—Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say to you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" What would you say?

The Bible teaches personal evangelism by the example of Jesus (the woman at the well, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus) or Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Not every occasion of one person leading a person to Christ is a clear example of personal evangelism. The example of Paul winning the Philippian jailer or Sergius Paulus grew out of a situation where other circumstances brought the person to Christ. In personal evangelism, the soulwinner makes an intentional effort to bring the unsaved person to Christ. Therefore, personal evangelism is not a by-product of casual relationships, nor is it leading a person to Christ after he responds to an invitation at the end of a gospel message.

Certain congregations are characterized as "soulwinning churches" because they plan programs for the intentional evangelization of the lost. Sometimes this is done by visiting pre-determined "prospects" or visiting all homes in a neighborhood or going to public places with a view of attempting to win people to Christ. This is sometimes called "the fisherman's club" or soulwinning visitation.

2. *Crusade Evangelism.* Churches carry out this evangelistic obligation by inviting an evangelist to come and conduct a series of meetings. These have been presumptuously labeled the spring or fall revival meetings (many times there is no outpouring of the Holy Spirit so there is no indication of revival). The meetings usually include special music (choir or singer), an attempt to get the unsaved to attend, and organized prayer support. Historically, crusade evangelism in a church has attracted many non-church attenders and many times resulted in some coming to Christ.

City-wide crusades involved many churches in the area being responsible for attendance, financial and prayer support of a crusade to evangelize the entire area. The rationale for a city-wide crusade was that a larger arena could be constructed or rented, a well-known evangelist and singer could be invited, hence the enterprise could be more successful. Historically, Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday held city-wide crusades.

3. *Mass (Media) Evangelism.* With the growth of the influence of media, evangelists have used it to preach the gospel to the masses. *Radio evangelism* has included the broadcasting of church services, Bible teaching programs, and evangelistic programs, such the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour, by Charles E. Fuller. Also included are Christian radio stations that have broadcast the gospel 24 hours a day. Most believe radio evangelism among the lost is more effective outside the United States, whereas in this country Christian radio is most effective with the saved.

Television evangelism is similar to radio evangelism, except that it televises more evangelistic crusades and apparently has a greater response from non-Christians than does radio evangelism.

Literature evangelism involves printing the gospel in tracts (usually for free distribution), magazines and books (usually for sale), and Bibles (both free and for sale). Many foreign missionary agencies engage in colportage work, which is selling inexpensive Christian literature.

4. *Saturation Evangelism* is a concept developed by Ken Strachan, Director of the Latin American Mission, whereby a community is saturated with the gospel by Bible Studies, visitation evangelism, media evangelism (usually Christian movies shown in public places), and child evangelism, with all these endeavors ending in a large crusade evangelistic effort to bring as many as possible to Christ. Strachan felt the effort should not be tied to one evangelist, but rather should be the endeavor of the total church using many avenues to evangelize a community.

In 1971 Dr. Jerry Falwell, pastor of the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, coined the term to mean, "using every available means to reach every available person at every available time." Rather than applying it to city-wide crusades, Dr. Falwell said it was a 20th Century technique (using media evangelism) that one church in America could use to "capture its town" for Christ. Hence, Dr. Falwell adopted the term local church evangelism. In this context, Dr. Falwell added *telephone evangelism*, *cassette evangelism*, *printing evangelism* (every church purchasing a printing press and mailing its newspaper to its clientele). He also adopted the sociological principle of "synergism", which is using multiple agencies for maximum evangelistic outreach, such as adding to the church Christian schools, homes for unwed mothers, deaf ministries, the purchasing of camps, beginning bookstores, and other local church ministries to reach individuals by ministering to the various needs of individuals in the community.

The end product of saturation evangelism was a large growing church that had multiple ministries, located on a massive campus, which became the focus of life for its members.

5. *Super-aggressive Evangelism*. This is a term the author coined to describe the attitudes of faith and optimistic fervor in evangelistic endeavors. The Christians in Jerusalem were enthusiastic in (a) making contact with every person, (Acts 5:11), (b) presenting them with the gospel (Acts 5:28), (c) persuading them to be saved (II Cor. 5:11), (d) realizing that through faith the evangelistic can accomplish unlimited results. (See *Church Aflame*, Import Books, 1971.)

6. *Life-style Evangelism*. The Bible commands Christians to be witnesses (Acts 1:8), technically to be witnesses of the death and resurrection of Christ (Acts 5:32). Today Christians share their faith with lost people by witnessing what they have heard, seen, and experienced. Therefore, witnessing requires that a Christian have a good testimony so that he become an attractive advertisement to motivate lost people to want to have the same life. When this is done, the Christian has built a bridge to the unsaved. He has "won the right to be heard", or he has "earned the right to give the gospel."

Jim Peterson wrote the book *Evangelism As A Lifestyle* and contends that many Americans cannot identify with Christianity because of their secular pre-suppositions. If they simply accept the verbal formulas of the plan of salvation, they will not get saved. They must experience the life of Jesus Christ. To do this, a lost person must have a role-model to give meaning to the words of Christianity before he can make a meaningful decision for salvation. Hence, the testimony of a believer is foundational in evangelism.

6. *Busing Evangelism*. There was an evangelistic explosion in soulwinning activity in the early 1970's. Many churches got into the bus ministry and experienced growth in attendance, decisions, baptisms, and as a result built new buildings, added staff and multiplied ministry. Busing evangelism includes canvassing a neighborhood (usually on Saturdays) to invite people to ride a bus to church (usually children). The worker was called a "bus pastor", and he usually had a driver to assist him. It was the worker's job to care for the children who rode his bus and to try to win their family and friends to Christ. Usually a church had a bus director who organized all the workers, the route, the equipment, and provided a program to motivate workers to be effective in soulwinning.

During the late 1970's many churches that got into bus evangelism for the wrong

reason, quickly got out when inflation caused the price of gas, insurance, and equipment to spiral. Also, many churches were nurture-oriented, not evangelistically-oriented, hence couldn't handle the unruly children brought in by the buses. Finally, other churches constructed buildings to care for the children but got into financial trouble when the excess children could not pay for the excess buildings, hence they got out of the bus ministry to stabilize themselves financially. But, in spite of the problems, many churches have continued a healthy evangelistic outreach through the use of buses.

7. *Front Door Evangelism* describes all the efforts a church makes to attract people through its front door where the lost will hear the gospel, respond, and be converted. *Front Door Evangelism*, also called "ingathering evangelism", depends on the corporate church activities to reach and win people to Christ. It is not personal evangelism, media evangelism or any other phase of evangelism that attempts to win the unsaved outside the church, then get them into church as a result of their conversion. *Front Door Evangelism* attempts to personally invite the lost person to church where he will be converted. It also includes the use of advertisement to make the unsaved aware of the church or attract him to church.

Critics of *Front Door Evangelism* maintain the church is designed for worship or Bible teaching of the saints; it is not an evangelistic crusade. They maintain there is no command in Scripture to bring the lost into the house of God, nor is there an illustration of unsaved coming into a church service. Yet, the church is to preach to all people (Mark 16:15) and most preaching happens inside the front door of a church.

8. *Side Door Evangelism* describes the route that many take in coming to salvation. They do not come through a church service, rather they are reached by other agencies or ministries of the church. People will attend a group Bible study, a recreational program or other types of fellowship where they are confronted with the gospel by *life-style evangelism* or *personal evangelism* or *oikos evangelism*. Hence, they come to salvation through an agency in the church, but not a regular preaching service. *Side Door Evangelism* is usually a result of Christians bringing their friends and relatives to Christ to a church ministry.

9. *Oikos Evangelism (Web Evangelism)*. Statistics reveal that most new converts are brought to Christ by friends and relatives.

How People Are Brought Into The Church	
By Advertisement	2%
By the Pastor	6%
By Organized Evangelistic Outreach	6%
By Friends and Relatives	86%

The Greek word "oikos" is translated family, kindred, household (including servants) or own. Many in the New Testament who were brought to Christ were the "oikos" of a new convert. Hence, *Oikos Evangelism* is when a new convert reaches friends and relatives for Christ. The Greek word "oikos" is associated with the outreach of the following persons after they were saved: Lydia, the Philippian jailer, Matthew the tax collector, Zacchaeus, and Cornelius. Hence, the first evangelistic priority of a person after he is saved is reaching his relatives and friends.

Oikos Evangelism is also called *Web Evangelism*. When applied to a church, it is a program of evangelism where each member reaches those closest to him. By working through web relationships, a church can evangelize its extended congregation (those who are responsive people) and guarantee a smaller dropout percentage of new converts and/or transfer members.

CONCLUSION

This chapter is not designed to train the reader in evangelism, nor to motivate him to win souls. It is educational in nature, designed to give the reader exposure to the types of evangelism that are available to today's church. (See resource packet on Discipleship Evangelism that is designed to equip Christians to win others to Christ.) Also, this chapter does not magnify one type of evangelism over another. We believe in evangelism, no matter what approach is used (Phil. 1:14-18). However, some types of evangelism are more effective in certain circumstances, while others are more effective at other times. No matter what approach is taken, the church's mandate is to present the gospel so people will come to know Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE

UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION THROUGH A CHURCH

According to the Great Commission, the objectives of a church are twofold; first, to make disciples (evangelism), and second, to teach new converts to obey the Word of God (education), Matt. 28:19-20. The second aim of education is the outgrowth of evangelism and gives a foundation to all that your church does for you. Without Biblical education, the church has disobeyed Christ, has a weak existence, has a limited if any future at all, and has little ministry to you or others.

Education in your church is not completed until the church has taught "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" (Matt. 28:20). Therefore, Christian Education is vital to every church. The following reasons are given why Christian Education is imperative.

1. *Christian Education carries out the Great Commission.* The Great Commission is found in the risen Lord's parting words and recorded in Matthew 28:19-20. Jesus told us to reach, teach, and win the lost.

Reaching is the foundation of evangelism, but it involves teaching because a person must know, understand, and respond to the gospel. A person is not converted until he recognizes, understands, and responds to the gospel. After you become a new Christian, you must know what to believe and how to behave. Therefore, teaching becomes part of presenting the gospel.

2. *Christian Education teaches God's Word systematically.* The Sunday School is the only place in most churches that gives a systematic, comprehensive, complete coverage of the Word of God. There are many places where the Bible is taught in the average church, but none of these is as comprehensive and systematic as the Sunday School following a good curriculum plan. Sunday School lessons follow a pre-determined curriculum. These lessons are planned by specialists in Christian Education who are concerned that equal treatment be given to every subject according to the importance it has in Scripture and the influence it can make on a life. It is important that you are regular in Sunday School attendance so that you might gain a complete knowledge of Bible content and doctrine.

3. *Christian Education helps you grow toward maturity.* The aim of a church is maturity. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-15).

A Christian reaches full maturity when he is complete or whole. Every part of his life is integrated around Christ. In personality, this involves knowledge, skills, attitude, and habits. In intellect, this involves a foundational knowledge of doctrine and Scripture. In service, this involves using spiritual gifts according to the ability given by God.

The Bible has the tremendous power to: change individuals and nations, "for the word of God is quick, and powerful . . ." (Hebrews 4:12); convict of sin (Jeremiah 23:29); draw a sinner to Christ (John 6:63, 68); convert the soul (Psalm 19:7); implant faith (Romans 10:17); produce a new nature (II Peter 1:4); strengthen babes (I Peter 2:2); fortify growth (Hebrews 5:12-13); and equip Christians for battle (Ephesians 6:12).

But Christian Education has little value unless the Holy Spirit applies it to the heart. The pupil must understand and obey the precepts of the Bible. People become hardened Pharisees when the Bible is a mere academic textbook. Therefore, the Bible must be taught by spiritual teachers, using Biblical methods, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and guided by the Great Commission.

4. *Christian Education protects the church's future.* Christians will drift in their commitment to Christ if they do not anchor their faith in Scripture. Their sinful nature, the temptations of Satan, and the snare of the world can erode Bible doctrine or purity of life. A Bible-teaching church is necessary to preserve a Biblical church.

Children born into Christian homes must be equipped to carry the church on when their parents pass off the scene. First, they must be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ and second, be equipped as leaders when they come of age. Since a church will naturally die if the next generation is not prepared to serve God, therefore Christian Education is imperative to carry on the future of the church.

WHAT IS SUNDAY SCHOOL?

The verse that has historically been used to describe the ministry of the Sunday School is Deuteronomy 31:12, "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law."

Most people mistakenly think that Sunday School is a few classes for children in the basement of the church before the Sunday morning sermon. Every member of the family should be in Sunday School because every person should be growing spiritually and learning the Word of God. Notice that Deut. 31:12 includes all ages: fathers, mothers, and children.

Sunday School is not just an appendage tacked on before or after the morning church service; it is an arm of the church. Just as the arm is part of the body and a person is not complete without an arm, so no church is complete without a Sunday School.

1. *Sunday School is the reaching arm of the church.* Just as the word **assemble** means to bring people together, so the Sunday School gathers them by ages and places them in classes to better teach them. Deuteronomy 31:12 first directs that people be gathered together. The ministry of reaching people for Jesus Christ includes men, women, children, and strangers (those outside the church). Note the command did not begin with children; so Sunday Schools that have mostly children in attendance have not properly applied the Scriptures. Sunday School is a family institution first, but includes reaching out to the unsaved (the stranger).

In both the Old and the New Testaments, God commands His people to reach out to the unsaved—"Gather the people . . ." Sunday School has traditionally been a gathering arm of people, both saved and unsaved. The verse implies the church is the central point of assembly. Therefore, Sunday School is fulfilling a Biblical mandate when people are brought together for instruction.

The word **reaching** is defined as making contact with persons and motivating them to give an honest hearing to the gospel. Sunday Schools can reach all types of people at all ages through organized visitation, attendance campaigns, advertisements, mailing newsletters or simply every person sharing Jesus Christ with his friends. Reaching is evangelism in action.

2. *Sunday School is the teaching arm of the church.* When the Word of God is planted in hearts, people are born again. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed,

but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:23). The Bible is seed (Mark 4:14), and when planted in the heart, God begins the work of regeneration which is new life (II Cor. 5:17).

By teaching the Word of God, people are prepared for salvation. But Sunday School is more than just an evangelistic tool; the Word of God is taught to all Christians. They grow because the Bible nourishes them.

Teachers must faithfully communicate the Word of God. The word **communicate** means "to make common". When teaching children, the Bible must be presented at the children's level. When teaching adults, the Word of God must challenge the mentality of adults. This principle of communication has been called **reaching men where they are and, through teaching, lifting them to where they should be.**

The role of teaching is explained in Deuteronomy 31:12: "... That they may hear, and ... learn ... " The first step of teaching, then, is hearing. A person must be presented with the gospel; he must hear the gospel. Even then he may reject it, but he cannot make a decision on the gospel until he has heard it. The ultimate step in teaching is **learning**. There is no teaching until the pupils have learned the lessons. When a Sunday School is called the teaching arm of the church, it has not fulfilled its function until people have learned the Word of God.

3. *Sunday School is the winning arm of the church.* The purpose of reaching and teaching is to win people to Jesus Christ. Deuteronomy 31:12 describes the ministry of Sunday School, "... That they may fear the Lord your God ... " The phrase, "fear the Lord" is an Old Testament term of salvation. Other phrases — trust, believe, receiving Jesus Christ — have the same meaning.

Some churches have testified that the majority of those who have come into the church have come through Sunday School. There are many types of evangelism — personal, mass, saturation — but when evangelism is based on Biblical teaching on a regular and systematic basis in Sunday School, there will be the most lasting results.

4. *Sunday School is the nurturing area of the church.* The ultimate aim of all evangelism is Christian maturity (Ephesians 4:11-15). Many people are born again but never seem to go beyond that step. Others learn a great deal of Bible content but fail to make personal application. The Sunday School has not completed its task until the pupils "observe to do all the words of this law" (Deut. 31:12). Note, the ultimate aim of Sunday School is not to just know the Bible, as important as that is; but to implement the Bible in one's life.

THE RESULTS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TO A CHURCH

The value of Sunday School is immeasurable. The church that has a growing vital Sunday School has a New Testament foundation on which it can build. Many other Christian Education ministries are needed to complete the church. These will emphasize training leaders, training teachers, camping education, vacation Bible School, evangelism education, etc. The church with a broad base of education will have many strengths and be able to accomplish many tasks.

1. *Evangelistic influence on the neighborhood.* The primary objective of the church is to saturate its neighborhood with the gospel (Acts 5:28, 42). This involves organized visitation, visiting those who need Christ. Most churches set aside a weeknight for organized visitation. This involves a training class where workers are assigned responsibility for the evening. With real persistence workers go out to reach their neighbors for Christ.

It is also mandatory that every Sunday School absentee be contacted. Every lesson has aims and material that is vital, just as spokes in a wheel are necessary to give the wheel strength and keep it from collapsing. Every pupil should hear every lesson to have a complete Christian life. When a pupil is absent, he is missing something from the well-rounded Bible curriculum that has been prepared. Teachers should therefore visit him when he is absent to insure his attendance the following week.

But visitation is not just a cheerful call in the home to encourage continuing attendance. The teacher should teach or at least summarize the missed lesson and answer any questions that may arise. This helps to nip backsliding in the bud in the lives of those with little spiritual concern.

2. *Harvesting opportunity of the lost.* A church that is reaching its community will have visitors attending its classes. Some of these will have no church affiliation and usually little training in the Word of God. They represent a rich potential for harvest. If a church has a well-planned, carefully executed program of evangelism, it will win many to Jesus Christ.

3. *Doctrinal stability in the church.* Through the curriculum the Bible should be taught as the complete, authoritative, infallible revelation from God to man. It is the basis for the student's personal relationship to Jesus Christ and the means for his daily growth in grace. The student must see that the Word of God supplies consistent doctrine for faith and guidance in every experience of life.

Doctrine ultimately increases our love for Christ, causing us to grow into His image. Good doctrine protects a church from heresy and from the cooling of its first love (Revelation 2:4).

4. *In-service training for Christians.* The church must be organized for its reaching, teaching, winning program. Therefore, a well-planned and carefully executed program is necessary for its success. This necessitates training an entire staff of workers.

First, the structure must be planned; next, workers must be recruited and then trained concerning their qualifications and duties. This involves supervisors, secretaries, teachers, and those involved in evangelistic outreach. Trained workers will guarantee quality education. These workers contribute to the total maturity of the local church.

5. *Total church growth.* Since the work of education, evangelism, and worship is harmonious, contributing to a New Testament church, they are interrelated and indivisible. A strong educational program builds a strong local church. The same people attend the morning service who attend the Sunday School; therefore, those who are taught in Sunday School make better worshippers in the morning service. In this way, the total church is strengthened.

6. *Christian responsibility in the community.* The church must train and motivate pupils to witness in the community. But more than evangelism, church members must make a cooperative expression of moral righteousness in the community. Their godly influence is felt in their local areas: home, school, business, city activities, and life in general. Since Christians are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13), a church with a total ministry should make people thirsty for the gospel.

7. *Missionary influence around the world.* Since Christian Education seeks to lead their pupils into a dedicated life to obey all of God's commands, pupils cannot deny the Great Commission. Ultimately, the obligation of home and foreign missions must be felt. Pupils will respond by praying, giving, and going into all the world. Missions involves more than crossing an ocean; it involves home missions, which can mean work in Sunday School missions, rescue missions, summer missionary endeavors, and other ministries beyond the local community.

SUMMARY

There are many ways the local church educates its members, and each agency has its unique contribution. But the Sunday School still is the major educational arm of a local church with approximately 85 percent of the total membership in attendance. All other educational agencies are involved with a small percentage of the church population. Therefore, the Sunday School still carries the burden of church education.

The Sunday School is imperative as the reaching, teaching, winning arms of the church. When it fulfills these purposes through Christian Education, it enlarges the church, influences the community, and reaches the world.

CHAPTER SIX

UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL GIVING THROUGH A CHURCH★

Because Christ has given everything for you (John 3:16), you will want to return His love and give everything you have to Him. First, you will want to give Him your life (Rom. 6:11-13). Second, you will want to give Him your body (Rom. 12:1-2) and third, you will want to dedicate your service to Him (Col. 3:23). In the fourth place, you will give God your time (Eph. 5:16) and your thoughts (Phil. 2:5). In the final analysis, you will want to give your money to God. The early church gave all they had (Acts 2:44-45) out of gratitude to God, and they gave to others who had need (Acts 11:27-30).

Now that you are a Christian, you will want to give money to God. In one sense, everything you have belongs to God, and you should dedicate it to His use. But on the other hand, you have needs: rent, food, doctor bills, etc. You should not take advantage of your church if you can work and if you can find employment (II Thess. 3:10). How much should you give to God and to others? How much should you spend on your own needs? Should you give all your offering to the church and should you give your money only through the church? This chapter is designed to answer these questions.

The Bible teaches that you should give a tithe of your income to God, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (Mal. 3:10). This means that tithing is giving ten percent of your income to God for His use. The phrase "storehouse tithing" means he should give the tithe through the church where the Christian is a member. Not every Christian agrees with this position. As a matter of fact, many Baptists, both fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist, disagree. They feel that tithing was a requirement of the dispensation of the law, and in this age of grace, the believer should have the freedom, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to give his offering where he chooses. But the distinctive teaching of the local church in Scripture reveals (a) that giving is of grace (because the believer wants to show his gratitude), (b) that he should be a vital member of a church and work through his church, (c) that he should support the place that feeds him spiritually and through which he works, and (d) that God's suggestion of the tithe is still His standard because He has not countermanded the original order. The following arguments are given to show why the tithe is God's standard for the New Testament and why the tithe should be given in this dispensation.

1. *Tithing began with the Gentile.* The first mention of tithing in the Scripture is when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (a non-Jew). We live in the dispensation where God works among the Gentiles (Acts 10), but many argue that the tithe is not applicable in this dispensation. We should learn from the law of first reference that God intended tithing beyond the age of law. In the law of first reference, the primary message of truth is embryonically found in its first mention in Scripture. Since the first

★Elmer L. Towns. *Tithing is Christian* (Church Growth Institute, 1975) Used by permission.

mention of tithing involved a Gentile and was not in the dispensation of the law, we who are Gentiles are involved in tithing.

2. *Tithing originated before the age of law.* Law came by Moses (John 1:17), yet before Moses was born, Jacob promised to pay the tithe, "all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee (Gen. 28:22). This was not an idle promise, because God blessed Jacob (Abraham's grandson) with abundant physical riches. The tithe is eternal, existing before the law. Since the tithe was operative before Moses who included it in the law, we can only assume it continues after the law was fulfilled. Believers under grace would not want to give less than their counterparts gave under the law.

3. *The early church gave more than the tithe.* When Christians no longer gave to the temple, they brought their money to the church. Twice the Scripture records they gave all their possessions (Acts 2:44; 4:34). Early Christians brought their gifts to the feet of the apostles. This included more than the obligation of the tither (10 percent) in the Old Testament. Most who argue against tithing want to do less, whereas the early church gave more.

4. *The argument from silence continues the tithe.* The early church was mostly made up of saved Jews. They had been taught to tithe since childhood. This had been God's plan to support His work and God was evidently now working in Jerusalem. These Jews did not need instruction in tithing. It was their way of life; therefore they continued to give the tithe plus much more.

Jesus did not destroy the meaning of the law. He only put to death the curse of the law (Col. 2:14). The law reflected the nature of God, and God has a reason behind each law. These reasons were not destroyed, but fulfilled. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). The tithe was included in the law to support the work of God. It is only natural for God to continue this pattern to support His work in other dispensations. If tithing was to cease, there would have been a specific prohibition, but the opposite is evident. God's people should continue to give the tithe.

Some argue that the command to tithe is not repeated in the New Testament epistles. Neither is the doctrine of the virgin birth repeated in the epistles because everyone accepted the doctrine of the virgin birth. Its account in the gospels is proof enough. Therefore, the account of tithing in the gospels should be proof enough (Matt. 23:23).

5. *The principle of "God's place" for worship requires storehouse tithing.* God has always had a central place for corporate worship, even though there are illustrations of man worshipping God at many varied places and circumstances. In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle was God's place for centralized worship. Because of this, there was a caution about worshipping other than at God's designated place (Deut. 12:2-4, 8). In Deuteronomy 12:1-32, we saw three characteristics of where people were to bring the tithe.

First, the people were to assemble at the place where God would meet with them (Deut. 12:1). This place was the tabernacle; later it was the temple. Second, God's place was located where the symbols of redemption were celebrated. In the Old Testament these symbols were the blood sacrifices and the furniture of the tabernacle. Thirdly, the people were commanded to come to God's place where they would find God's man (Deut. 12:19). These three characteristics were the basis of where to worship and bring the tithe.

The church is God's place. It is the only place for assembly mentioned in the New Testament. The three principles that identified God's place in the Old Testament are present in the New Testament Church. First, the people assembled where God met with them (Matt. 18:20; Acts 4:31; Heb. 10:25). The church is a candlestick (Rev. 1:20; 2:1, 5), and the candle symbolized Jesus' presence in the midst of the church. Second today's symbols of redemption are baptism and the Lord's Table.

These are local church ordinances. Finally, the people are to gather to the place where God's man is ministering. God calls His servants (John 15:16), and gives them gifts (Rom. 12:3-8), then gives these gifted men to the church (Eph. 4:7-13).

In the Old Testament, the people were commanded to bring their tithes and gifts to God's place (Deut. 12:13-17) which is the storehouse (Mal. 4:10). In the New Testament, the people are commanded to give to keep their offerings in "store". "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in **store**, as God hath prospered him that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Cor. 16:1-2, emphasis mine). The similar word "store" is used in both Old and New Testaments, implying storehouse tithing.

Money or offerings were never given to individuals in the New Testament. Money was given to the churches. It was taken up on Sunday at the church (I Cor. 16:1). Money was sent to the elders at Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30). This was similar to laying it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:37).

Where should tithes and offerings of believers go? Logic alone would suggest that people contribute to the local church where they are fed spiritually. A local church is God's plan of evangelism and edification. It is the organization He established for this purpose.

Remember these principles regarding para-church giving. (1) Organizations, radio preachers, and interdenominational agencies which are responsible only to the man may not be a wise investment. (2) These organizations must earn our respect and prove their ministry before we give them our money. (3) Our tithes belong to the local church; we have no right to tamper with what belongs to God. (4) If we give to para-church organizations, it should be beyond our tithe. (5) We give with the assurance that it is God's will when we give to the local church.

Storehouse tithing is not a Catholic doctrine nor is it a denominational command. It is not a selfish desire on the part of the church. Storehouse tithing is God's principle for His church.

An evangelist was preaching on tithing. He paused, walked to the communion table and took a dollar bill from the plate and stuffed it in his coat pocket. He began preaching again. A small boy stared at the evangelist in unbelief.

"What's the matter?" the evangelist interrupted his message to ask the boy.

"You took that money!" the young voice replied.

"Whose money is it?" the evangelist continued his line of questioning.

"That's God's money, not yours," the bold voice from the little boy had the attention of every ear in the auditorium.

The evangelist pointed to the congregation. "Every one of you steals from God just like I did when you don't tithe." He went on to repeat, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me . . . Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (Mal. 3:3, 10).

1. *Because the tithe is God's.* If we don't tithe, we rob God. Yet every Sunday when the offering plate is passed we witness one of the most serious robberies in our cities. Our newspapers don't carry the story and no one files a complaint at the police station. Yet we rob God because, "the tithe is the Lord's" (Lev. 27:30). We give God what is His when we tithe.

2. *Because God commands us to tithe.* We are commanded to bring the tithe into the storehouse (Mal. 3:10). Those who don't are disobedient. Even though a man tries to obey God in the other parts of his life, he brings leanness to his growth if he is not faithful in all areas.

3. *Because tithing is an act of love.* We measure our love to Christ by the obedience of our tithe, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21). But our love goes beyond Christ; it extends to our church and our pastor. Paul asks for those in Corinth to prove their love to him. "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also (the grace of giving). I speak

not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love" (II Cor. 8:7-8).

4. *Because tithing recognizes God's ownership of our lives.* The tithe was described as the firstfruits, meaning, a person gave to God the first to be harvested. The book of Proverbs commands "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (3:9). If we put God first in our lives, He will honor us (Matt. 6:33). We can tell others that we belong to God, but our deceitful heart can lead us astray (Jer. 17:9). However, we demonstrate our dedication when we tithe. We give Him the firstfruits because He is first in our lives.

5. *Because tithing is good business.* When you tithe for the right reasons, you have gone into business with God. When you invest one-tenth of your income with God, He promises "to open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it (Mal. 3:10). God will not be any man's debtor; He will keep His promise. Recently, the newspaper reported a man suing a church to regain the tithe he had given. He claimed he gave the tithe but hadn't received the return he expected. The suit claimed he had not been compensated. The very fact of the suit proved the man gave the tithe with the wrong motives. No wonder he was destitute.

6. *Because tithing will keep us from the lust of money.* Those who don't tithe not only are disobedient, they demonstrate a greater love of money than of God. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:10). But those who will weekly deposit their tithe in God's bank reveal their faith in God to take care of all their needs.

7. *Because tithing helps the church carry out the Great Commission.* The church is commanded to go into all the world and preach to every person, baptizing the converts and teaching the commands of Christ. This involves money to print tracts, purchase radio time, build buildings, pay preachers and carry out the countless other expenses associated with the ministry. A tithing church will not have to beg for money and plan gimmicks to raise its budget. A church of tithers will have willing workers, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21) because a church of tithers will have the hearts of its people to carry out the Great Commission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *What guidelines should a person use to govern his giving to para-church organizations?*
2. *Discuss whether a person should tithe the following (i.e., Social Security, overtime, non-taxable income such as babysitting income, gift from parents).*
3. *If a person is not a member of a good local church, what should be his attitude toward the tithe?*

CHAPTER SEVEN

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE OF MUSIC IN YOUR CHURCH

Perhaps God used music to help bring you to salvation. Maybe it was the words of a hymn that struck conviction to your heart. To some, it was the invitation song that motivated them to respond. Now as a young Christian, you should know the role that music will play in strengthening your faith and guiding your service.

Churches use all types of music from country to quartet to Christian Rock to classical anthems to gospel choruses. What type of music should a church provide for its people? What music do people need? There is no easy answer to those questions. But in the last analysis music should fulfill the aims of the New Testament church.

The Scriptures show music and singing as prominent in the life of the early church. The apostle Paul, under divine inspiration, gives us the following admonition: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). The importance of singing is as important as prayer. Paul says in I Corinthians 14:15, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." Therefore, you should be aware of (1) the purpose of music, (2) the kinds of music, and (3) the use of music in the church and in your life.

THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH MUSIC

The ultimate purpose of all church music should be to glorify God. The primary emphasis of the book of Psalms, the songbook of the Old Testament Jew, was to glorify God. The question remains, "How can God be glorified?" The first aim is to carry out the first and great commandment of the church, the Great Commission. Since evangelism is the first aim, our music should reflect that aim. The Reverend Lindsay Terry states, "We sing to save." By that he means begin church music evangelistically. Since conversion is an experience that affects the whole man — intellect, emotion and will — then Christian music should communicate Biblical content to the mind, should provoke an emotional experience, and should get a commitment of the will. It is difficult for modern people to identify with classical anthems because they do not produce a worship experience. The contemporary rock sound does not move people to a wholesome positive response to Jesus Christ. The nature of our Christian conversion and daily walk with God should be expressed in church music. The words, melody, and rhythm of a song (hymn or chorus) are therefore very important when viewed in this light. The words, phrases, and sentences of all church music should be true to the Word of God. Do not sing that which clearly contradicts what God has revealed in His Word. Do not use Christian music that elicits the negative emotions or moves a person to make the wrong decisions. We should sing only those hymns and choruses which are doctrinally sound, move our positive emotions, and bring us to worship God.

THE PURPOSE OF GROUP OR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

People engage in group or congregational singing more than in any other type of music. They participate in group singing during Sunday School and church services, during their regular weekly meeting, and on other special occasions. The purpose of Christian music is basically fourfold:

1. *Singing is a musical outlet.* Most every individual has a desire to express himself through music. Not every person can sing well enough to be a soloist or sing in a trio or quartet, so group singing is especially appealing. But everyone can participate in group singing. Their participation will cause them to obey God, grow in grace and bring glory to God.

2. *Singing is an emotional outlet.* When a person is happy, he will probably sing a song which depicts his mood. The same is true when a person is unhappy. The songs people sing in the church will express one of these moods — joy or sadness. The Word of God has instructed the Christian to be joyful and has provided the necessary elements to make all Christians — young and old — happy. But there are times to reflect reverence, remorse, and solitude.

3. *Singing is a social experience.* Singing produces fellowship. Group participation levels barriers and gives those participating a sense of belonging because they share in a true Christian experience. If singing can produce this experience among non-Christians, it does more so among Christians who have fellowship with God the Father, God the Son, and other Christians through the Holy Spirit.

4. *Singing is a spiritual necessity.* We worship God through singing. Music will produce worship if there is; (a) a realization of the presence of God; (b) a consciousness of one's dependence upon God; (c) a contemplation of the ideal or Christian way of living, and (d) a dedication or commitment of one's life to the Christian way of living.

THE PURPOSE OF SPECIAL CHURCH MUSIC

The purpose of special music is the same as that which has already been stated — that of bringing glory to God. Special music is designed to bring the unsaved to conversion or to encourage the believer. However, it must be admitted that special music in church has a certain amount of entertainment value. The quality may depend, of course, on how well the musicians perform. We not only glorify God by what we sing or play but also by how well we do it.

THE PURPOSE OF MELODY AND RHYTHM

If the purpose is accepted as stated above, then the melody and rhythm of the music must be such as to make this possible. God has blessed most people, to a greater or lesser degree, with a sense of rhythm and melody. These should be fitted to the words of the hymn or chorus. For example, you would expect a song like "In My Heart There Rings a Melody" to have a fast and lively rhythm with a melody to match. On the other hand, a song like "The Old Rugged Cross" is sung slowly and in a more reverent manner. Some prefer hymns and choruses that will allow them to "let loose." This is fine, provided the message of the song is not buried in the rhythm. Frequently ask yourself the following questions: Do the people mean what they are singing? Is God being glorified in what the young people are singing? Are the young people applying the message of the songs to their lives?

KINDS OF CHURCH MUSIC

All church music — whether a hymn, chorus, group singing or special number — falls into three broad divisions: testimony, worship, and devotional.

TESTIMONY

The testimony song is the expression of a personal experience, either of salvation or of Christian walk after the time of conversion. This type of music is an essential

element in any Christian's life. It gives an opportunity to put into words and song what Christ has done and is doing in your life. These are usually songs which express the feeling of joy as we walk in communion with our Savior. Very often when checking how such a song was written, one will discover that the songwriter was experiencing some outstanding blessing from God. Then he wrote his feelings in poetry and music. A testimonial song is therefore a product of the heart, brought about by a deep experience with Christ. Because such songs find their basis in experience, they express varying moods or temperaments. In the song "Come Thou Fount", the writer realized God's grace and mercy toward him and this created within him a feeling of praise and dedication. A song like "It is Well with My Soul" reveals the writer's state of peace and safety amid the turmoil and conflicts of a great personal tragedy.

A word of caution is necessary. It is highly possible that songs of testimony can become merely mechanical; that is, we can drift through a song and miss its message or not even be aware that the song has a message. Think of what you are singing. If a Christian is heartily singing a song like "Jesus Is a Wonderful Savior" and yet is unhappy, he is a hypocrite. The singing of testimony songs can be a time of dedication for the one who is not yielded. The unsaved young person may be led to a saving knowledge of Christ through such songs. You must show by your general attitude and outward expressions that this type of song means much to you and comes from your heart.

WORSHIP

The worship song differs from the testimonial and devotional song in that it usually expresses one's adoration and praise to God, especially to God the Father. In this type of song, God is praised for what He is and does. Worship does not revolve so much around a person's individual experience as he walks from day to day with the Lord. Worship revolves around the person of God. One example of a worship song is "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Worship is giving back to God the "worth-ship" due unto His most Holy name. Through the worship song the young person recognizes God as Creator, Ruler, Redeemer, and personal Lord.

There is an essential difference between the worship hymn and the testimonial song or chorus. The worship hymn usually has a "heavier" style of music or is music which is on a higher plane. This is due mainly to the fact that the worship song expresses an exalted emotion which requires a more majestic form of music.

Some Christians hold the view that worship songs should be sung only on Sunday morning during what is generally called the church service. However, this is an erroneous and narrow outlook. God desires all Christians — young and old alike — to honor Him and sing praises to His matchless name. The young people can do this at their weekly meetings and indeed ought to do so. Through the singing of such hymns, the teenager becomes aware of God as a personal Being, vitally concerned with Him as an individual. They can feel exceptionally close to God when pouring out their hearts in songs of praise and adoration. Most worship songs convey in a graphic way the inner feeling of the young person in a more picturesque way than he himself could express.

DEVOTIONAL

Devotional music does not differ greatly from testimonial music. Instead of being based on experience, however, it is usually concerned with one's consecration to Christ. Naturally, this type of song, as is the case with testimonial and worship songs, is more meaningful to young Christians who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior and who are experiencing genuine fellowship with their Father and with Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The actual melody and rhythm of the devotional song is usually quite reserved and meditative. This type of music creates a solemn and reverent atmosphere. It may noticeably affect the emotions of the young person as He is drawn close to Christ his Savior and as he recognizes Him as Lord and Master of his life. This type of song

may motivate the Christian to be a better witness for Christ. Devotional hymns may also stimulate him to live a life more separated unto Christ.

THE PLACE OF ENTERTAINMENT IN CHURCH MUSIC

A certain amount of entertainment is involved in church music, especially in special numbers. But it should also be emphasized that no church music (and by this is meant songs and choruses based on the Word of God or the Christian life) should be presented solely for the purpose of entertainment. However, there are many songs which one would not classify as "Christian" which may be sung. Folk songs would fall into this classification. These songs are usually humorous and sometimes entertaining in the way they are sung and in the words employed. Entertainment songs are perfectly in order as long as they are clean and wholesome. Usually these are not sung in church services.

THE USE OF MUSIC

Choir

Church choirs offer excellent opportunities for securing interest, participation, and loyalty in the church. Church choirs can add variety and appeal to the life and worship of the church. Set forth the purpose of the choir. In this respect impress upon the members the fact that singing in the choir is a service unto the Lord.

Song Leading

Song leading is a spiritual ministry. The song service should bring praise to God, motivate the Christians to godliness and service, and prepare the hearts of the people for the ministry of the Word of God in particular. An effective song leader gets the participation of the people. To capture their attention, he must be enthusiastic, for enthusiasm is contagious.

Instrumental Music

Many church members are competent in the use of some instrument. You may have enough people playing instruments so that an orchestra can be formed which could play before the evening service or for an offering. Participation in such a group is a means of helping the person see that his life can be useful in practical Christian service.

It is very likely that you have people who are not capable of singing well, but they do play instruments. Use them in instrumental ensembles or in solos.

The pianist or organist of your church has an important role to play. She must be able to play the music as written and she should refrain from "running all over the keyboard." The choir director and pianist must work in smooth cooperation with each other.

CONCLUSION

Music is a vital part of every Christian's life. First, it has an effective ministry to the individual; next, it brings glory to God; third, it unites the congregation; and finally, it involves people in the church. The avenues of opportunity are many — in the Sunday School, in the young people's meetings, in congregational singing, in the choir, camp work, song leading, special singing, and instrumental music. Many people are talented in the area of music and such talents can and ought to be used for the glory of God. Aim to win people to Christ and exhort them to present their whole time, talents, and treasures to Him. Use them in the church in the area of music. Give them the responsibility and the satisfaction of serving their Lord in this way.

CHAPTER EIGHT

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

Most Christians center their lives on activity, programming, organization, involvement, and service. There is little place for worship of God.

Today Christians need the worship experience. Basically they are insecure and unfulfilled. In worship their needs are met in a face-to-face relationship with God. When instability meets stability there is an experience. Since Christianity embraces every area of experience, so worship should embrace every area of the Christian experience.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

True worship is an emotional, intellectual, and volitional response. Worship is a face-to-face involvement with a living God based on a regeneration experience, prompted by the Holy Spirit, and resulting in the exaltation of God's glory.

Because of this, Biblical worship is a growing thing that is a dynamic entity. Worship is personal. True worship cannot be divorced from the worshipper. Worship might be defined as an earnest effort to re-create the conditions and experiences that deepen a person's relationship to God.

Worship is not just an intellectual process, it involves more than knowledge and fact; but it is based on one's knowledge of the revelation of God. Worship must stir the emotions and result in activity. It begins with a knowledge of the Word of God. The heart moves upon Biblical facts to re-create a reciprocal experience, simply and dramatically to help the person gain a personal understanding of the Lord. The worshipper gives back to God and magnifies Him for who He is. The roots of worship are knowledge, emotions, and will. Worship is not a mystical experience; it is at best a spiritual experience. But Christians do not automatically worship because they have Christian knowledge. Worship must be learned, and some Christians never do have the stirring experience of genuine worship of God.

Psychology teaches us that emotions or inner drives control our lives. Only as we display every emotion of love in approbation to God do we truly worship. As a volitional process, worship focuses all of our ideas, actions, and feelings in effective tones on a specific center which is God Himself. When a Christian truly worships, all of his thinking and action must be wrapped up in response to God. Worship can be said to be an emotional and volitional response to an intellectual evaluation.

Too often worship has been neglected in our churches because it has not been understood. At this point we ought to distinguish between worshipping and learning to worship. Christians need to learn how to worship God as well as participate in the actual act of worship.

HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?

Learning to worship is one of the basic processes in Christian Education. Some of the following principles will help in planning a worship service or for individual worship.

1. *Preparation.* When a speaker addresses Christians, this is not worship. Worship

must include involvement. However, Christians may worship God during a message because the Lord is lifted up and magnified in the heart. When hearts are correctly prepared in five minutes, a fifty-minute message may be effective but only if the heart has been prepared. The first prayer of the worshipper is more important than the leader's first prayer. A poorly-prepared leader will make poorly-prepared worshippers. Preparation is essential to worship.

First, the act of worship should be centered around a specific aim or purpose. Second, gather materials for a worship period. Hymns, Scripture, prayers, inspirational quotations, pictures, and posters will focus attention on God.

2. *Examination.* Sincere worship begins by an examination of heart motives. Why am I attending church? What am I looking for in this service? Am I content with myself? What do I need? How can the Lord speak to me? What do I owe God?

As a Christian examines his own heart's needs before the Lord, he sees himself as he really is. The worshipper must objectify his needs, then the Lord can meet those needs.

Note several worship experiences in the Bible. In each occasion the person involved examined himself before he worshipped God.

(a) Isaiah in the temple (Isaiah 6:1-13). When Isaiah saw the holiness of God he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am a man undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). Note that the praise of the greatness of God is tied to the humility of examining the heart.

(b) Moses before the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-17). In the natural surroundings of nature, God met Moses. After a revelation of the holiness of God in the midst of the bush which burned with fire and was not consumed, Moses examined himself. He cried out, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh" (Exodus 3:11). In God's challenge to service, Moses saw his own uselessness.

(c) Worship through the communion table (Matthew 26:20-30). Christians should worship God through the communion service. Whether the service is simple or elaborate, the element of examination should be there. At the actual last supper the question rang out from the hearts of the disciples, "Master, is it I?" (Matt. 26:25).

Later the apostle Paul exhorted those who would worship through the Lord's table, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat" (I Corinthians 11:28). When the worshipper participates in the Lord's Supper, it is not a time of mystical experience. It is a time when his heart in true worship and praise can render unto God the glory and adoration that are due to him.

(d) Paul's experience on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-9). This experience contains the elements of worship, even though it is a time of intense emotion and tension. Here was a man zealously following his conviction, persecuting Christians when suddenly his whole life is threatened. Paul met God. In light of a true revelation of God, Paul fell to his face and examined himself. "Who art thou, Lord?" And, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:5-6). Paul met God and responded; so may worshippers meet God today.

3. *Expectation.* Only as the worshipper comes expecting to meet God can he have a true worship experience. The human spirit inevitably reaches out to the Lord. But many have come to a church service, and the experience has been dulling. Their needs have been ignored or denied, therefore they will not come to the next worship experience expecting to meet God.

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him" (Psalm 62:5). God needs open hearts among worshippers before they can respond and meet Him. Expectation is the vital element of faith, and faith is needed in a worship experience.

4. *Appropriation.* Worship is an expression of human activity toward God. People are active individuals and as such need activity in worship. A person doesn't participate in a hike unless he walks. A person doesn't participate in a meal unless he eats. A worshipper doesn't participate in worship unless he appropriates the presence of God.

One of the weaknesses of church worship services is that Christians do not appropriate

what is offered. They do not take what God gives. Worship is not overcoming the acquiescence of God. Worship is laying hold of his highest willingness. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23). The Father makes available all we need in worship. Christians do not worship because they have not taken what the Lord has offered.

5. *Meditation.* True worship involves quietness, meditation, and thinking. The average person's life is hustle, bustle, and activity. The Lord commands, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

Modern man often has a thin veneer of sham and self-sufficiency. But underneath they have deep and searching questions. Their frustrations and lack of ability to perform the demands of an adult society produce fears and self-distrust. They think, grope for answers, seek meanings and search for reality. They desire quietness that worship provides.

Christians receive understanding only with mental effort. Therefore, it takes work to worship. Worship is not coming to an end of activity and effort. It is not just quietness, but quietness that is filled with reflection, interpretation, and integration that can produce a spiritual dynamic in the worshipper's life.

6. *Consummation.* Just as a mountain must have a peak, so the worship experience must come to an end, but not merely a benediction or a closing prayer. Worship must end in a complete and fitting close. The peak of the worship experience is a dedicated life since the revelation of God demands a response in life. God has revealed His truth to produce an experience. Therefore worship can be the deepest experience in life. If worship does not overhaul thinking and change a life, it is meaningless and not Biblical.

7. *Transformation.* The worshipper must have more than just a dedicated life. He can be dedicated to a cause but be without strength and ability to carry out the demands of the cause. The enemy, the nature of the world, and the temptation of sin are all against living for Christ. Therefore, the worshipper needs a supernatural transformation. He needs divine enablement to help him to live his life for the glory of God.

In a true worship experience the worshipper examines himself. He meets God. He expects that God can do for him what only God can do. He appropriates the power and person of the Lord for his life. Through deep meditation he dedicates his life, the obvious result of this experience. With this dedicated life the worshipper can go out and live for God. His life is transformed.

Moses was in the presence of God on the top of Mount Sinai. From this experience he walked again among people. The people saw the presence of God in his life for his face shone. "The children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone" (Exodus 34:35). This illustrates the fact that true worship will meet needs and transform lives.

MEANS TO WORSHIP

Christians are concerned not only with the end (worship experience and transformed life) but with the means to an end (means of worship). There are scriptural patterns for both manner and the instruments of worship. Some claim they worship God, but apart from the New Testament means of worship, they have only an emotional subjective experience, and if a change in their life results, it is a self-inflicted change. But in Biblical worship, God invades the life through divinely set instruments and means.

1. *The Word of God.* The Bible is the primary resource for Christian worship. The Bible contains the revelation of God, and worship is the response of the willing heart to revelation. The Bible can be used in many ways to bring out worship. Various collections of scriptures can be read. Responsive reading is effective in church service. Repeat from memory favorite verses. Choral readings have their place.

2. *Prayer.* Prayer is the heart of communion with God. It is the expression of man's aspirations toward the Lord. Since every Christian can pray, then every Christian should worship. Public prayers as well as private intercession can be a means of

worship. Beware of printed prayers that do not come from the heart, even though they may be grammatically and theologically correct. During quiet prayer the worshipper can meditate, reflect, and examine himself.

Instruct worshippers how to pray. Give them an example of how to pray and praise God. Also give them instruction in how to pray and to ask God for specific requests. In some cases prayer can be intermeshed with meditation. All types of prayer can be of value in worship.

3. *Music.* Music is the soul of the Church and the universal language. It has an important place in worshipping God.

Some worshippers have fallen into the snare of using only the music of two or three hundred years ago. This music was great because it met needs of the heart in the past. However, it may not reach the heart need of today's worshippers.

Others have fallen into the snare of using only the light choruses and gospel "ditties" to praise God. There should be balance in music. However, music should not just reflect a matter of personal taste, but rather reflect a careful choice that brings out a person's heart in worship to God. The result will magnify God's person.

Sacred anthems and hymns can be an important part of worship. Today's Christians will respond to depth and a challenge. Teach them the great hymns of our Christian tradition. At the same time sing the choruses of praise and testimony. These are written to modern music. Use instrumental music in worship. Vocal music can also produce a worship experience.

4. *The church ordinances.* The Lord's Table and baptism can be means through which a person can worship God. Make this a time that is meaningful to Christians, not only a time when they feel that their needs are met, but a time of public testimony, and a time when God can be worshipped through testimony and obedience.

5. *Testimony.* Many Christians commonly think of testimonies only as a time of helping a weaker Christian. When Christians give a testimony, others who are afraid may be encouraged. These testimonies are a time of sharing what God has done. This encourages others that God will do the same for them.

A testimony should mean something to the heart of God. In a true worship service, the worshipper can give a testimony and encourage others. At the same time the testimony has worshipped God, magnified His person, and exalted His name.

6. *Atmosphere.* Many churches think that atmosphere is worship. They think that organ music, stained-glass windows, and liturgical settings are necessary for worship. Atmosphere is not worship, but it is a means that can stimulate it when correctly used. At a camp, some worship God in the mountains or by a lake. At other times, some can worship God in a prayer chapel. Then others worship better when stimulated by music, poetry or an appropriate atmosphere.

Since worship is an emotional and volitional response, anything that will add to this response should be used. The mechanical details of the service can hinder worship. Clumsy introductions in church service, as well as obvious blunders should be eliminated. Coordinate the people on the program and others in the service to make everything center on Jesus Christ.

7. *Visual aids, art, and interpretation.* Worship can certainly include inspirational and challenging literature, art, and visual aids. There are many excellent poems, readings, and stories that can cause the heart to respond to God. These may demand a response of the emotions or the mind.

The use of paintings, sculpture, symbols, and signs can center a person's thoughts on God. People need to be taught the appreciation of the great art of the world. The use of slides or wood cutting can tell the story of the life of Christ. Poems express order, rhythm, appreciation, and interpretation. The worshipper can join in the original experience of the author and express worship to God.

A word of warning is in order. Beware of idolatry. A symbol can blot out or be substituted for the source — God Himself. Some visuals become the purpose rather

than means to an end.

CONCLUSION

Every Christian should worship God, both privately and corporately. First, he should make it a point to worship God in private acts of praise, all the while remembering his entire life style should glorify God. Second, he should worship God with other Christians in the church. He should worship in singing, celebrating the Lord's Table, testifying, public prayers, and other corporate acts of worship. When a Christian worships God at church, it is usually called "worship service". For worship is serving God. It seems that every psalm compels that we worship God.

CHAPTER NINE

UNDERSTANDING FELLOWSHIP AMONG CHURCHES

The local church is provided to help believers grow in Christ and to help protect them from spiritual harm. The local church is so important in helping Christians, that nothing else is in its league. There are all types of Christian organizations such as Christian radio, youth clubs, business men and women's associations, and sports leagues. Para-church organizations have a special place and usually perform a special purpose, but the local church is unique. It is an organism and an organization. Christ dwells in the church, and it is called His body. When Christians dwell in a church, it is more than belonging to an organization. When a Christian is part of a New Testament church, he is in a place for growth.

WHY AUTONOMOUS CHURCHES?

1. *Christ is the source of authority.* A local church has its first and only loyalty to Jesus Christ who is its head over the body, the church (Eph. 1:23). Since Christ indwells every believer (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:28; John 14:23), then He extends His authority through each believer. If every Christian is in fellowship with Christ and growing in knowledge of His Word, then the unity of believers is an indication of the mind of Christ. The indwelling of Jesus Christ in every believer implies that a democratic rule by believers is the way to carry out the will of Christ in local churches.

2. *The Word of God is the basis of authority.* Every believer is given the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:17; 5:5) who will teach him the meaning of Scripture (John 16:13; I Cor. 2:13-14). The believer does not have to go through a human mediator, nor does he need a priest to teach him the Word of God. Every believer can interpret Scripture. That way he stands dependent upon God alone. Hence, the authority of a church is determined by believers who interpret the Bible to determine the will of God. Since the Scripture is not of private interpretation (II Peter 1:20), then believers join one another in the church to determine God's authority.

3. *Believers are responsible for correct doctrine and practice.* When the Corinthian church had problems with sin and heresy among its members, the members were held responsible to deal with the matter (I Cor. 5:2, 4, 7; 6:1; 11:17-19). The believer is to go privately to the brother that walketh disorderly, then take another brother to handle the problem. If that doesn't work, they finally bring the matter before the church (Matt. 18:15-17). The final authority is the church, not a priest or any one person inside the church, nor an individual outside the church.

4. *New Testament churches are autonomous.* The Bible teaches that the church is an indigenous body (self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating). **Self-supporting** means that the financial support for a church should come from the tithes and offerings of its members. The illustration of financial gifts to a church apart from its members (Acts 11:29-30; I Cor. 16:1-2; Phil. 4:15) were not given to prove the source of financial support, but were an expression of love and were given to prove the source of financial support, but were an expression of love and were given to

individuals. **Self-governing** means a church should determine its own affairs. The only illustration of outside control on a New Testament church was the conclusion of the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15). The results were only suggestions to other churches for a time (the Jewish restrictions were later dropped). **Self-propagation** means each church is to be responsible for evangelizing its own "parish" and winning its own converts to Christ. The New Testament is silent regarding any para-church evangelism or any city-wide evangelistic crusades. In the New Testament, when a person was won to Christ, he automatically was baptized and incorporated into the local church. There are no occurrences of "free-lance" Christians who were not loyal to their church and serve through it.

FELLOWSHIP AMONG CHURCHES

Even though each church is an autonomous body under the direction of Christ, there are several places where churches should fellowship with one another. First, churches should fellowship for growth, such as sending out foreign missionaries or pooling resources to plant new churches in this country. Second, churches should fellowship to display unity among Christians. This does not mean **union** (organizational ties), but **unity** (mutual support toward separate Biblical objectives). Third, churches should fellowship for the recognition of leaders (I Cor. 16:10, such as ordination). Fourth, in times of trials and persecution, churches should support and help those who are suffering. Also, when potential trials face churches (a proposed law that would hurt churches), they should work together for the freedom of all churches. Fifth, churches can fellowship together to increase the vision of all, such as joining together in Missions or Soulwinning Conferences. Sixth, churches should fellowship for the sake of identification. Usually, one church gives a letter to transfer a member to another church that is "like-faith" and "like-practice".

THE BASIS OF SEPARATION

The churches in the Bible all had fellowship one with another. They had not progressed sufficiently in time to degenerate so that they had to separate one church from another. However, there are certain churches that Christians cannot fellowship with in this modern world. Whereas there was no division of churches in the New Testament, there was separation among Christians.

1. *Doctrinal error the first valid reason for separation.* If a person holds false doctrine, "a man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject" (Titus 3:10). The apostate has departed from the faith and no longer has an outward profession (II Titus 3:10). The heretic claims to be a Christian, but holds false teaching. Some good Christians who are serving God have **error concerning truth** but have not denied the fundamentals of the faith.

2. *Immoral conduct the second valid reason for separation.* When a believer has fallen into sin, the church should exercise discipline (Matt. 18:15-17). If the believer does not respond, then the church separates him (I Cor. 5:7-9).

TYPES OF SEPARATION

For many years the question of separation was fairly straightforward. If a brother or a church was guilty of the sin of immorality or false doctrine and would not repent, either he or the church was separated. Now in our age of communication (we know so much more about other churches), mobility (we are more able to travel and fellowship with a larger number of churches), and growth of para-church organizations (Christians are fellowshiping outside normal church bounds), that the problem has intensified. In our age of refinement, it is called **First Degree Separation** and **Second Degree Separation**.

First Degree Separation implies that a church or individual will not fellowship with another who is guilty of violating the two valid reasons; i.e., moral and doctrinal

purity. This is a valid basis of separation. However, there are two warnings to the Christian who plans to separate himself from another. First, make sure he is separating himself from **apostasy** and **heresy** and not from **error concerning truth**. Second, make sure he is separating himself from gross sin and not questionable amusements.

Second Degree Separation implies that a church or individual will not fellowship with those Christians who have not kept themselves separate from other Christians (or unbelievers) who are morally and doctrinally impure. The offending brother may agree to the same Biblical standards and doctrine, but separation is based on the second relationship. It is not what a brother believes and practices, but what his friends or denomination practices. **Second Degree Separation** does not seem to be a Biblical requirement. First, the Bible requires a believer to be responsible for himself, not the doctrine and morality of those in his fellowship. Second, Revelation 2-3 reveals Jesus walking in the midst (Greek word for center or equal distance) of all churches. Christ is no further removed from the church with moral or doctrinal problems than He is from the church that lost its first love. Third, the purpose of separation is for the purity and testimony of the one who is separating. However, in **second degree separation**, the person from whom he is separating believes and practices the same thing, so there is no Biblical basis for separating by second degree.

The Doctrine of Blessability. Some churches hold certain doctrines that are opposites, yet it appears that God's hand of blessing is on both. A Presbyterian church that sprinkles children will win souls in the same town as the Baptist church that believes it is wrong to sprinkle children. The pentecostal church that speaks in tongues will win souls in the same town where the Bible church (that denies the existence of modern-day tongues) wins souls. How can God bless two different churches that hold doctrines that contradict each other? Obviously God cannot bless a church that denies the fundamentals of the faith, but if both churches agree on the essentials of Christianity, both can be blessed of God. The degree to which God blesses a church is the degree to which they aggressively preach the word, exercise faith, and live a godly life. God does not penalize a person or a church for a marginal error concerning truth, but He blesses a church for the truth that it believes and preaches. As long as man is a sinner (no one has his sinful nature eradicated), man will not be perfect in doctrine (without error). Therefore, for God to bless any man is to condone some degree of error. But since all sin is forgiven, and God is committed to use a person according to his usability, then God blesses a person according to what he believes and practices that is correct.

RELATING TO ALL CHRISTIANS

Christians must relate to all people, whether in the faith or not. Therefore the basis of relationship is as follows:

UNITE COOPERATE FELLOWSHIP DIALOGUE
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1. *Unite.* The Bible teaches harmony among Christians, for unity was the thrust of Jesus' high priestly prayer (John 17). However, when they **unite**, they take a step beyond **unity**. When Christians unite in a local church, they band themselves together to carry out the Great Commission based on a doctrinal statement and constitution. In obedience to Christ's command, they submit themselves to the objectives and standards of the church. By uniting, they take on the strengths and weaknesses of others. In the next level, churches **unite** in a fellowship or denomination based on "like-faith" and "like-practice". There are many Christians with whom we could not unite within one church because of doctrinal difference, but we could cooperate with them in serving Christ.

2. *Cooperate.* When Christians cooperate in a project (youth rally, Bible distribu-

tion, mutual support of a Bible college, etc.), it does not mean they have to approve of every point in the doctrinal statement of one another, but they both agree with the purpose of the common project. When two people cooperate, they do not take on the strengths and weaknesses of one another, they simply join in common objectives. Several churches may cooperate to support a Bible college, yet they differ on the Lord's Table or some point of doctrine that would not effect the Bible college. The same would hold true for cooperating in an evangelistic crusade, youth camp or Christian media. Yet, some may be recognized as Christian but their lack of doctrinal purity prohibit you from cooperating with them. But you could fellowship with them.

3. *Fellowship.* There are some believers whose doctrine or life style is so different that you could not cooperate with them nor unite with them, yet you must recognize they have experienced the grace of God. You are brothers-in-Christ. The Christian is obligated to have union (oneness) in spirit with other believers, even though no organized bond could be made with them. Fellowship is usually with one individual, on a one-to-one basis.

4. *Dialogue.* There are some brothers whose life style is so diverse or whose doctrine is so different that a Christian cannot identify nor have fellowship with them. At this point, the Christian can dialogue, which means he can communicate to them what he believes and practices. Even in dialogue, it is clear to all that the believer does not identify with them or more importantly, does not support their divergence. A Roman Catholic may be saved, but a Baptist cannot unite, cooperate or ever fellowship with him. To do so would be to recognize the apostate Roman church. But he can dialogue with the individual who is Roman Catholic, yet is saved in spite of the church.

CONCLUSION

There is no illustration or command in the New Testament of a Christian who lived apart from a church. God has provided a church to keep the believers encouraged, growing, and serving. There is great insight in the old phrase, "You can't be Christian alone." We are members one of another, and we are all joined to Jesus Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER TEN

UNDERSTANDING THE MINISTRY OF YOUR PASTOR TO YOU

God has indicated that the people of God assemble themselves into a church and that there be a pastor to lead them. The Greek word for pastor is shepherd, the human leader of God's flock to minister to them in the place of Jesus Christ, the divine shepherd (John 10:11, 14).

You are directly responsible to God, not to any human leader, just as the church is a body which is responsible to Christ as its head. Yet, Christ has a human leader who carries out His wishes (I Peter 5:1-5). When the pastor carries out the will of God, the church prospers. But some pastors become dictators (I Peter 5:3; III John 9) and hurt God's people. Other pastors are weak and will not take leadership (I Peter 5:2), or they feel they are too young (I Tim. 4:12). Usually the church board usurps the role of the pastor and the church becomes bound by regimentation as everything is reduced to the level of the lowest common denominator, which is consensus.

Dr. Lee Roberson, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, has said, "Everything rises or falls on leadership." Since the task of the church is great, great and godly leadership is demanded to organize, direct, and help the church accomplish its goal.

Initially, "the twelve" (Acts 1:26) gave leadership to establishing the church. As the church grew, the needs of the ministry demanded the appointment of seven men to serve as deacons (Acts 6:1-7). By the time the church at Jerusalem hosted the Jerusalem Conference, James had clearly risen to be chief elder or pastor of the church (Acts 15:2, 13). By the time the apostle Paul traveled to start churches in the various cities of Asia Minor and Europe, it was generally recognized that two leadership offices were to be established in the church, pastors and deacons (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1, 8). Since the growth and strength of a church reflects the stature of its leader, we should study their Biblical qualifications, first to understand their role, and next to understand the strength and directions of our own church.

Every church is led by Christ if it is a New Testament church. "He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18). Because Christ dwells in every believer and they can read and interpret Scripture for themselves, the final seat of authority in church government rests in the congregation as the people are led by the Spirit of Christ. The Philippian believers were responsible to continue in and strengthen their unity as a church (Phil. 2:1-2). The Corinthians were responsible to do everything within their power to correct and prevent divisions that existed in their church (I Cor. 1:10). Because the Holy Spirit works through believers, He is able to freely lead a church when each member is yielded to His direction.

The pastor is the human individual responsible before God for the spiritual welfare of the church (Acts 20:28). At the return of Christ, He will judge and reward pastors according to their faithfulness in leading the church to accomplish the will of God (I Peter 5:4). In one sense, everything a church is and does is an extension of the

pastor's personal ministry — so much so, that the prophet identifies the similarity between the leader and his followers, "As with the people, so with the priest" (Is. 24:2).

The office of the pastor is identified by various titles in different denominations. He is called Reverend, Pastor, Preacher, Bishop, Minister, Elder, Doctor or some other title. It is sometimes awkward for a person of another faith because of uncertainty how to address him. This problem has been complicated throughout church history where terms have been applied to the office in one culture only to remain after the culture has changed. The Roman Catholic church uses the title **bishop** to apply to a man who supervises many churches in a large area, whereas the New Testament applies it to the leader of one church.

The role of the pastor varies from denomination to denomination. In some places the pastor is characterized as an evangelist. In other places, he is seen as a counselor; still at other places the pastor is viewed as a teacher, so much so that he uses an overhead projector to preach, and people bring notebooks to outline his message. At other places he seems to be a business manager of a large corporation. Therefore we can ask, "What is the Biblical role of the pastor?" How can he best help me and how do I relate to him?

At least seven different terms are used to identify the role and function of the man that filled the office of pastor in New Testament churches. Each of these words contributes toward a fuller understanding of the nature of the pastor's office.

1. *Elder*. The first term used especially in the Jerusalem church was **elder** (Acts 11:30). The term **elder** appears over twenty additional times in the New Testament. Perhaps it was brought over from the Old Testament synagogue of those who were respected for their maturity and wisdom. While chronological age was certainly a consideration in identifying a man as an elder, the real emphasis is on spiritual maturity. It is not advisable to place a young convert, even if he is saved late in life, in a position of leadership without his first being given the opportunity to gain spiritual maturity. In listing the qualifications of a pastor, Paul warned, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6).

The term **elder** is often used in the plural (cf. Jas. 5:14; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1; Acts 20:17), supporting the idea of a plurality of elders in a single local church. Churches have senior ministers, youth pastors, ministers of music and directors of Christian Education, all considered pastors. Even in the New Testament where many elders existed in one church, there seems to be one elder who was the spokesman or messenger (Rev. 2:1). There were many elders in the church of Jerusalem, but James was recognized as spokesman. He apparently had more authority than the apostles (Acts 15:2, 13, 22). There were many elders at the Ephesian church (Acts 20:17), but Jesus addressed His comments to a single leader of that church (Rev. 2:1), presumably this leader was recognized by other pastors as the leader among leaders.

2. *Bishop*. The term **bishop** is also used to describe the office of pastor. The term is translated **overseers** in Acts 20:28 and is used four other times as **bishop** (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25). The emphasis of bishop seems to be "one who takes the oversight of a church," or the spiritual superintendent of the church. It is largely an administrative term used to identify the work of this church leader. The pastor/bishop is one who is to lead the church (Heb. 13:7, 17). As the apostles used the term **bishop** implies his ability to organize and administer the church.

3. *Pastor*. Probably the term **pastor** is the most common title used today by conservative Christians to identify their church leader. However, the term **pastor** is rarely used in the New Testament. This does not mean the title pastor is unimportant. In contrast, it is one of the chief words to reflect his ministry. This is the same word that could be translated "shepherd." As the shepherd of the flock is responsible for the care of the sheep, so the pastor is responsible for the care of his flock (Acts 20:29; 1 Peter 5:3).

First, the pastor/shepherd is to **lead** the flock. "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock" (Acts 20:28). This makes the pastor responsible to watch

over others to meet their needs. Sometimes a church member will become discouraged or backslidden. The pastor is the person best able to encourage that person so he remains faithful or comes back into fellowship with the Lord.

Second, the pastor/shepherd should **feed** the flock. Three times Jesus reminded Peter of his pastoral shepherding responsibility to feed the flock (John 21:15-17). This mainly involves the teaching ministry of the pastor. To better accomplish this task, many pastors give leadership to such programs as Sunday School, youth clubs or Bible study groups. Even when the pastor has delegated his ministry in part to others, he remains responsible before God for the feeding of the flock (Acts 20:28). In a very real sense, the Sunday School teacher is an undershepherd of that part of the flock to which they are assigned.

Third, pastors should also **protect** or **tend** their flock. The apostle Paul recognized that "grievous wolves" would come from the outside and gain control in the church if the flock was not carefully guarded (Acts 20:29). Sometimes, men in the church may become dangerous to the security of the church (Acts 20:30). In both cases, the chief responsibility of protecting the flock falls on the pastor. Many times a pastor may be misunderstood when he insists upon certain spiritual standards. Actually, he may be attempting to protect Christians who do not understand the total ministry that may be best for the church.

Most conservative churches use the term **pastor** to identify their church leader for cultural reasons. Often, the pastor who is a recent graduate is younger than his deacons, so the title "elder" seems inappropriate. The term **bishop** has come to refer to a nonbiblical ecclesiastical hierarchy, thus becoming unsuitable for popular use in a Bible-believing church.

The terms **elder** and **bishop** are used interchangeably in Titus 1:5-7; Acts 20:17-28, implying these two functions are the same office. A person spiritually grows into becoming an elder, learns how to function as a bishop, and is given the gift of pastoring (Eph. 4:11).

NAMING THE PASTOR		
	Acts 20:17-31	I Peter 5:1-4
Elder	20:17	5:1
Bishop	20:28 (overseers)	5:2 (taking oversight)
Pastor	20:28 (to feed)	5:2 (feed the flock)

4. *Preacher.* The term **preacher** implies a public proclamation of the gospel. Noah was the first to be identified as a preacher (I Peter 2:5), although Enoch's prophesying may also have involved preaching (Jude 14). Preaching is often defined as "the communication of the Word of God with persuasion through the speaker's personality." The pastor is the man God has called to proclaim His message in the church. In preaching, the pastor seeks to accomplish these things. "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (I Cor. 14:3).

5. *Teacher.* The teaching ministry is referred to some 97 times in the New Testament. The pastor was given the dual gift of "shepherding/teacher" (Eph. 4:11). There is no Greek word in Ephesians 4:11 for the connection **and**, that comes between "pastor and teacher", implying all pastors also had the gift of teaching. This gift was exercised in the church from its beginning (Acts 2:42). Note, Jesus had left His disciples with a "teaching commission" (Mt. 28:19-20). Their obedient response is seen in the Biblical record. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).

6. *Servant.* The term **doulos**, usually translated "servant" in our Bible, might better be translated "slave." Usually the term is used to refer to deacons, but it is also

used in connection with pastors (I Peter 5:3; 2:16). Pastors are to be servants of the congregation. A pastor must keep sensitive to the poor, downtrodden and underprivileged in the flock if he is to remain effective. As a slave of God, he is the servant of the church because the assembly is indwelt by Christ and is His body. Jesus used the slave-master relationship to illustrate our duty to Him. "So ye also, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

In many churches the pastor is not allowed to function as a spiritual leader of the flock. The office of elder/bishop was a ruling office. The word ruling does not mean dictatorship or control over people. It is the word used in Scripture to mean leadership. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (I Tim. 5:17). This verse makes it clear that the elder/pastor of a church is worthy of a salary. In the context of the verse, the elder is recognized for both ruling and preaching. Therefore, we are saying that the pastor who preaches should also rule, but they are to "rule well" which means according to Biblical criteria. It means to exercise leadership by example, by interpreting Biblical principles, by vision, and by spiritual service.

Also, the pastor was to rule the church, according to his job description. "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Tim. 3:4-5). The pastor must be able to take care of a wife and lead his children to obey God. If he could lead his home to follow God, the Bible says he qualifies to "take care of the church of God" (v. 5).

Peter provided several guidelines for the leaders of the churches, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (I Peter 5:1-2). Part of their leadership included "feeding the flock." No doubt Peter was thinking of his meeting with Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee when three times he was challenged to "feed the flock" (John 21:15-17). A second part of an elder's job included "taking the oversight." Peter is careful to emphasize the pastor does not have dictatorial rights: "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:3). The elders were challenged to lead the congregation for the right reasons.

The pastorate is a leading office. If the people do not follow, then the failure is with the leader. The deacons/committee must give wisdom and guidance to the pastor and to the congregation. They are a serving office while they work behind the scene. They must work together with pastors and people (I Cor. 3:9). The congregation has the final seat of authority in the church. They are not leaders; they are sheep which are known for following. Actually, the shepherd of the flock is Jesus Christ who originally gave the church authority for government and today guides the pastor, deacons, and congregation in carrying out His will.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *What happens to churches where pastors become the "dictator" of the flock? What happens when the deacons become the ruling body of the flock?*
2. *What is the best way for a pastor to help you grow in Christ?*
3. *The media and most Christians do not properly understand the Biblical role of the pastor. How can this problem be solved?*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

UNDERSTANDING THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS TO YOU

When you become a member of a church you will note there are a group of men that remain behind the scenes, yet they are imperative for a church's ministry. The Bible calls them deacons. The word deacon means a **servant**. It comes from the illustration of the slaves on a Roman sailing boat, meaning the "under rowers". These slaves were out of sight to keep the vessel going.

In some churches the deacons are called the stewards, the board of directors or simply the men of the church. Their duties vary from church to church. In some congregations, the deacons are the final seat of authority, meaning they approve the budget and spending of money. In these churches they are over the pastor, and as such, they consider that he works for them. In other churches, the deacons hold the property in trust for the denomination or the congregation. As such they are trustees. Still in other churches they take turns preaching and have usurped the role of the pastor. The above illustrations do not fit the Biblical model.

This chapter is prepared to help you understand the nature and task of deacons and how they minister to you. Some may, one day, be qualified to be a deacon. If you are qualified, you should not be reluctant to accept the office. On the other hand, those who are not qualified should not seek or accept the office.

Most people think that deacons were implied with the appointment of the first committee of men to care for an aspect of the church to free the apostles for the more important responsibility of prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-4). Note the spiritual principle: they were faithful to their spiritual gift of helps. (The word helps and **deacons** comes from the same term in the original.) Therefore a person should have the spiritual gift before he attempts to exercise the office. Also, notice the job was not an inferior job, but an interfering job. Being a deacon is not inferior to being a pastor. Someone has to do the job so pastors won't have to interfere with their ministry of preaching and praying.

Since the title "deacon" is not found in Acts 6, one should not be too dogmatic in identifying the seven men chosen by the Jerusalem church as being the first deacons. However, the arguments seem to weigh in favor of this identity. With the apostles serving as elders, this group of seven would constitute the second set of officials in the church as suggested in Phil. 1:1. The apostles serving in ministry of the Word parallel "able to teach" (I Tim. 3:3) leaving the men in Acts 6 in the position of servants, the basic meaning of the title "deacon." The table-servers of Acts 6 were definitely subordinate to the apostles in both function and position.

The deacons are a serving office. Note, the Bible does not give a job description for the deacons. There is no "job description" for a servant because he does what is commanded or what is necessary. Therefore, there is no itemized list of duties that deacons are to perform in the church. The suggestion is that deacons are to serve in whatever way best helps the church to minister. They usher, drive buses, count the offering, set up rooms for Sunday School or help individuals with problems, specifically

physical or temporal problems.

1. *Qualifications.* The nature of qualifications for deacons gives insight into their duties. The office of deacon is not without its standards. Two passages in particular identify more than a dozen standards for deacons (Acts 6:3-8; I Tim. 3:8-13). When a church selects its deacons, it should give careful consideration to each man's character. Too often churches have appointed men to this office simply because they were successful businessmen in the community. Actually, the qualifications for deacons are as high as those for the pastor. After Paul lists the standards of a pastor, he uses the phrase "likewise the deacons" (I Tim. 3:3). The term **likewise** implies that the deacon should be as qualified as the pastor. The only difference between elders and deacons is the spiritual gifts of the pastor and his calling from God to his office.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS (I Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-8)

1. Blameless	I Tim. 3:10
2. Husband of one wife of good character	I Tim. 3:11-12
3. Grave	I Tim. 3:8
4. Not double-tongued	I Tim. 3:8
5. Not given to wine	I Tim. 3:8
6. Not greedy for money	I Tim. 3:8
7. Soulwinner	I Tim. 3:9, 13
8. Pure conscience	I Tim. 3:9
9. Proven ability	I Tim. 3:10
10. Good ruler in the house	I Tim. 3:12
11. Good reputation (honest report)	Acts 6:3
12. Filled with the Holy Spirit	Acts 6:3
13. Full of wisdom	Acts 6:3
14. Full of faith	Acts 6:8
15. Full of power	Acts 6:8

2. *Function.* While there is no specific Biblical listing of the duties of deacons, there are some suggestions in the New Testament of the things deacons can do. First, deacons were engaged in routine labors in the church. By waiting on tables, they left the apostles free to engage in the ministry of prayer and preaching (Acts 6:4).

The deacons are to be spiritually mature because **any** service for God must be Spirit-guided and because deacons as chosen servants must have the respect and confidence of those to whom and for whom they serve. Thus, deacons do function as leaders of God's people in the mundane affairs of the church. However, being leaders who are spiritual in character is not the same as being leaders in spiritual matters.

A second area of ministry for deacons includes promoting harmony between various groups in the church. When the widows were arguing (Acts 6:1), the deacons did the jobs that solved the problem of contention in the church. Each of us belongs to a "special-interest group." Even as a member of a church, we may be more concerned about the ladies' fellowship, church choir or youth program than some other aspect. It is only natural that conflicts of interest should pose a threat to church unity from time to time. Often deacons may serve as a liaison group to help the pastors remain aware of changing conditions and needs in the church.

A third function of deacons is to counsel the church and pastor. One of the qualifications of deacons is that they be wise (Acts 6:3), implying that using their wisdom is one of their functions. Pastors should seek the counsel and cooperation of deacons in guiding the church in its programs of worship, education, and evangelism. This makes the deacons a type of advisory committee to assist the pastor in his ministry.

Sometimes, in the absence of a pastor, the deacons may have to serve as the spiritual leadership of the church. However, a problem arises when they take the office of the pastor, as in some churches where the deacons have dominated the congregation. There is no verse or example of deacons running a church in the New Testament. While a great church cannot be run by deacons, on the other hand a great church cannot be run without the ministry of great deacons.

A fourth function deals with actual ministry. Deacons, as chosen leaders, have a natural open door for helping to preach the gospel and help people in their spiritual needs (as with Stephen and Philip). All believers are to bear witness to Christ (Acts 1:8) and all may have a ministry of bringing divine truth to others (Heb. 5:12-14). In fact, the pastor-teachers are responsible to train all the believers so that they may have a part in service that builds up the body of Christ.

Since faithful service as a deacon may lead to higher service in proclaiming the truths, this was actually the experience of Stephen (Acts 6:8ff) and Philip (Acts 8:5ff; 21:8). Hence, Acts 6 does not contribute directly to our understanding of the office of deacon.

CONCLUSION

Philip was a layman, just as others, in the church at Jerusalem. Because he was faithful, he was chosen and elected to the office of deacon. But, his promotion did not stop there. As a deacon he continued in faithfulness. Philip became a faithful preacher of the gospel (Acts 8:5-8). Then he was a faithful soulwinner (Acts 8:20-40). In all of his service to God, Philip was a faithful father (Acts 21:8) because his four daughters served the Lord. Philip is our role model that faithfulness in a smaller job leads to a greater responsibility. He became the ideal deacon.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Why has God required that men who are put into the office of deacons be spiritual men?*
- 2. In what way is Philip a "role model" to all men in the church?*
- 3. What is the responsibility of deacons and how can they best carry out their task?*

CHAPTER TWELVE

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN A CHURCH

Whether you are male or female, the question of female leadership in a church will one day concern you. Would you or should you ever join a church where there is a woman senior pastor? Is it Biblical for a woman to preach? What is the role of women in the modern church? Especially is this question pertinent when some churches ordain women and other churches forbid it.

Some churches go to one extreme and will not allow a woman to teach any classes in Sunday School or to exercise any office in the church. Other churches have gone to the other extreme and allowed women to fill any and every office in the church, and as mentioned earlier, to ordain women. The role of women in the church is not found in pragmatism or the example of other modern churches. The role of women in the church is found in Scripture. This demands a closer look at the Word of God.

I. Women and Leadership

The pages of Scripture tell the story of women in places of leadership. Some did what men **could not do**, while others performed tasks that men **would not do**. Of the thirteen judges who delivered Israel, one was a woman, Deborah. Two books of the Old Testament are devoted entirely to tell the story of how God used two great women. Ruth trusted God. In return God rewarded her by bringing her into the messianic line. The book of Esther tells the story of how a single woman used her influence to prevent the genocide of the entire Jewish race.

Of course there were also women who failed God in the way they used their influence just as some men also did. Jezebel promoted the worship of Baal and sought to destroy the prophet of God. Bathsheba participated with David in his great sin of immorality.

In addition to those who were overt leaders, many women served God indirectly. As the wife of Abraham, Sarah had many opportunities to exert a godly influence. Lois and Eunice ministered in the life of Timothy thus reaching many for Christ. A company of women served Jesus throughout his earthly ministry allowing him to more effectively serve God: Mary and Martha, Salome, etc. The list seems endless as we identify Rebekah, Hannah, Rachael, Priscilla, etc. Though maybe never being placed in the limelight, these women practiced indirect godly leadership through the men God had given them.

While most ancient writings had a very low view of women, the Bible elevated them to a place of prominence. Sometimes conservative Christians are accused by liberals of being opposed to giving women equal rights. Just the reverse is true. Whenever the Bible has been taught and its principles practiced, the place of women has been elevated. In the Greek society of the philosophers governed by the humanistic spirit, women were considered little more than the personal property of their husband or father, slightly more valuable than slaves and cattle. What a contrast with the apparent attitude of the one who wrote the Biblical description of the woman of God (Prov. 31:10-31).

Describe Each Woman In One Word	
Esther	Dignified
Bathsheba	Temptation
Eve	Deceived
Ruth	Widow
Sarah	Mother
Mary (Mother)	Obedience
Mary Magdalene	Cleansed
Hannah	Prayed

II. A Look at the Hard Passages

In contrast to these noble examples of godly women leaders, certain verses seem to suggest the woman should not be allowed to speak. Some have interpreted these verses to suggest a woman can have no legitimate ministry in the church. Others, perhaps overreacting to the former error, respond by explaining away these verses as a personal opinion of Paul and in effect deny their inspiration, inerrancy, and authority. A better approach would be to closely examine each of the so-called "anti-woman" passages in Paul's writings.

1. *I Timothy 2:9-15*. Perhaps the best known of Paul's so-called anti-woman statements is "Let the woman learn in all silence and subjection" (I Timothy 2:11). A closer look at the context reveals Paul is applying some principles from the relationship of Adam and Eve in the garden. Paul taught the woman was deceived, but Adam had willfully sinned (I Timothy 2:14). Some teach that because the woman was more easily deceived than the man, she was not given the responsibility of teaching. They teach that Eve had confused the message of God in the garden, perhaps because of the sympathetic nature of the female. Therefore, in the local church the woman was not given the responsibility of the message. This does not mean women could never teach for they were commanded to teach (Titus 2:3-4) and were commended when they had taught effectively (II Timothy 1:5). Perhaps the answer is that Paul did not want women teaching revelatory truth, i.e., making statements that they had revelation from God. The task of receiving and communicating revelatory truth was the responsibility of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20). In this sense, the women were not permitted to "usurp authority" over man but rather stand in submission, presumably submitting to her husband and the church.

2. *I Corinthians 14:34*. Discussing the abuses of spiritual gifts in the church at Corinth, Paul again called for the silence of women in the church. Some believe he was referring to the practice of wives calling across to their husbands and disrupting the teaching of the Scriptures. (Husbands and wives sat in different sections of the church.) Others cite the problem with women whispering between themselves in the church. Still further, perhaps it was the women who were misusing the gift of tongues in the early church. Those who believe this view cite the abuse of women in modern day pentecostal churches. Whatever the reason for the statement, Paul is emphasizing the principle of subjection, not to completely keep their mouths shut. Remember they were to teach. Again Paul speaks of women to be subject to man. As man is subject to Christ, so woman is subject to man. This does not necessarily infer woman is inferior to man, only in the social order of the context they are subject to them. Men and women are equal in nature, subservient in duties.

4. *Ephesians 5:22-23*. The final apparently negative statement about women is found in Paul's discussion of marriage. The woman is described as under the authority of her husband and commanded to submit to that authority. Before considering this as a negative statement, two principles in the context should be noted. The submissive

attitude was mutual. Thus she was not submissive to an abusive male, but rather to a loving husband that wanted God's best for her. Both husband and wife were to be submissive to Christ. Secondly, her role in this relationship is portrayed as a type of the church, Christ's most cherished possession on earth.

III. Women and Ministry

Those who conclude Paul was anti-women forget Paul also wrote Titus 2:3-4. Here the apostle instructs the older women to conduct a teaching ministry to the younger women. Some might hold this as a contradiction with I Tim. 2:9-15. However, this is not the case. When writing Titus, he was not speaking of revelatory truth, but rather that which had already been revealed and accepted. This is in keeping with Paul's recognition of Philip's four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8-9). We assumed these were unmarried women who had a gift to exhort, comfort, and rebuke other women. Their gift may have given them an itinerant ministry.

On the day of Pentecost, women were included in the number that preached the gospel to the multitudes in foreign languages (Acts 1:14; 2:1; 4:13). Peter had predicted, "on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:18). Therefore, it can be concluded that women were preaching the message on the day of Pentecost to other women.

Paul also made use of women in his ministry. He named two women in his ministry as his fellow-laborers (the words imply equal in service) in establishing the church at Philippi (Philippians 4:2-3). He cited three women who served the Lord faithfully when writing the Romans (16:2-3). It would be wrong to take Paul's writings out of context to fit our theological presuppositions. Paul had a very balanced approach to women in the ministry.

A woman can do anything God leads or calls her to do. But there are conditions and guidelines clearly established in the Scriptures by which God uses women. Women could never be ordained as pastors in a church as they would fail to meet the Biblical qualifications of that job (cf. I Tim. 3:1). Neither can she preach or teach the Bible under her own authority. In the case of a woman teaching a Bible class or Sunday School class, she serves the Lord in this capacity under the authority of the church. Remember, a Sunday School teacher is the extension of pastoral authority into the life of the class. The content, aims, and authority is not set by the teacher, whether man or woman. It is set by the church. Women teachers at Christian colleges actually teach men. They are not breaking Scripture. They teach by the authority of the administration which hires them, and that authority comes from the Board of Directors and/or the church which originally was the source for the ministry.

IV. Women and Ordination

Recently several main-line denominations that are liberal in their interpretation of Scripture have ordained women into the ministry. For many years, pentecostal groups have ordained women into the ministry. But most conservative churches have not only resisted any attempt to ordain women; they are deeply convicted that women should not pastor a church nor be ordained.

1. Men are designated in the role of the pastor which is the bishop/elder.
I Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:5-7
2. A pastor must be a husband. I Tim. 3:2
3. No examples in the New Testament of female pastors.
4. Women not permitted to teach. I Tim. 2:12
5. Women not to usurp authority over the male. I Cor. 11:3
6. The example of Jesus and Paul who had male apostles and followers.

The study must be started by looking at the role of female leadership in the church. Where would the church be today if God had not used women to do what men should have done? On the other hand, where could the church be today if men had always done what they should have done? A preacher once commented, while preaching on the characteristics of the man God uses, that some of the greatest men of God in his ministry were women.

