

**A RELEVANT PRAXIS IN APPLIED ECCLESIOLOGY
FOR THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The title of this thesis serves as a summary of its major emphases. Its first concern is to help churches become relevant. Sadly, some churches have become irrelevant, because they do not reflect the church of the Bible. This thesis points out that when we take careful note of what the Scriptures teach about church life, and then diligently apply these teachings to a particular church, we will find such a church becoming relevant within its own cultural milieu.

Because this study aspires to be relevant, it is at the same time a praxis. It is an expression of the practical outworkings of the theology of church life as taught by the Bible. In other words, it is an applied ecclesiology, because it extracts from the tenets of Practical Theology those aspects of church life needed to bring about quantity and quality growth in local church situations.

This thesis focuses its attention upon the Evangelical Church in South Africa, a group of twenty-six churches, ministering mainly to the Indian people living in Natal and the Transvaal. After delineating the broad dimensions of church life taught by the Bible, it advocates and amplifies eight all-encompassing principles which the Evangelical Church in South Africa needs to apply to its local churches if it wishes to grow both numerically and spiritually. In fact, we may safely conclude that these principles are universally applicable to any church, and will lead to significant spiritual growth when they are diligently applied in various church settings.

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INTRODUCTION

Many Christians who want a more meaningful Christian experience are inclined to follow the suggestions and successes of other Christians. This spills over into church life, so we often find churches changing their style of worship and sometimes their doctrinal position to emulate other churches which appear to be more successful than theirs.

Certainly changes and improvements are needed in our church life, but should these be determined by the suggestions and successes of other Christians and churches? Would one not do much better by following the timeless principles and practices of the Bible?

The study which follows is an attempt to highlight those biblical principles which will bring about the most successful and balanced improvements needed in church life today. These improvements are practical in nature and immediately relevant to any local church or denomination. Thus this study may be rightly called an applied ecclesiology. It seeks to take the basic tenets of ecclesiology as taught by systematic theology and recast them in practical terms so that they can be readily applied in contemporary local churches.

One such group which could benefit from these principles in these times is the Evangelical Church in South Africa, commonly called the ECSA. (This acronym is used throughout this study to refer to this body.) It is a denomination of Indian churches located mainly in Natal, South

Africa. All of them have an established leadership involving a group of men who form a church council. Some of these men have been recognized as pastors and others as elders, while the majority are called councilmen. Most of these churches have their own buildings, although some rent facilities for their meetings.

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE ECSA

The beginnings of the ECSA can be traced back to Dr. Andrew Murray who had gone from South Africa to England to speak at a Keswick Convention in 1882.¹ There he met William Spencer Walton and invited him to minister in South Africa. Walton did so and spoke in various evangelistic campaigns over a period of four months. His ministry was well received and it was felt that he should remain in South Africa. After conferring with Andrew Murray and others it was agreed to form the Cape General Mission. Walton then returned to England to seek missionaries. In September 1889 he returned to the Cape with a pioneer party of five young men.

In the meantime another mission was organized in Natal under the name of the Southeast Africa Evangelistic Mission with headquarters in Durban. The work of this mission began to grow throughout Natal and Zululand. The need was felt for proper organization and yet those involved wanted to avoid the unnecessary proliferation of missions, so the Cape General

1

The information in this section was gleaned from materials prepared by W. Engles and H. R. McLewin and printed as a booklet entitled The Evangelical Church in South Africa (ECSA, 1979).

Mission was approached and an amalgamation of the two missions took place. Together they became known as the South Africa General Mission (SAGM).

In time this led Spencer Walton to take up residence in Durban. His interest in the Indian people grew and he even began to influence men like Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern India. Gandhi wrote of their happy associations in his autobiography in which he stated the following:

When I was in Durban, Mr. Walton, head of the South Africa General Mission found me out. I became almost a member of his family. Mr. Walton had a manner all his own. I do not recollect his ever having invited me to embrace Christianity, but he placed his life as an open book before me and let me watch all his movements. I liked Mr. and Mrs. Walton's humility, perseverance, and devotion to work and we met very frequently. This friendship kept alive my interest in religion.¹

Spencer Walton commenced his work amongst the Indians of South Africa in 1896. Two ladies also offered themselves for this work. They were Miss M. Day and Miss E. Hargreaves who commenced studying the Tamil language in Durban. On Sunday mornings they would hold meetings in the barracks where Indian people lived. Initially much of their sharing the gospel was done through interpretation.

In 1898 these ladies found an opening to share the gospel on a sugar estate near Phoenix. A house and a chapel were made available to them at which time they formed the Hope Mission Station. They soon commenced a school and had

¹
Ibid., p. 3.

between 50 and 60 boys in attendance. This led to many favourable contacts with the parents and others. The work progressed for eighteen months until Miss Hargreaves was called home to England in 1900 because of a bereavement and Miss Day resigned from the mission. Providentially a Miss Feake-Brown and a Miss C. Harris had moved out of Swaziland because of the Anglo-Boer War and were available to keep the work of the Hope Mission Station going.

Early in 1901 a young man of about 24 years of age walked into the office of the mission in Durban with a letter addressed to Dr. Andrew Murray. He was Nelson Tomlinson from Australia. As Spencer Walton interviewed him he discovered that he had been born in India, that he knew the Telegu language well and that he seemed to be the perfect answer to prayer for a missionary to work amongst the Indians. But Nelson Tomlinson felt called to work amongst the Africans, so for a short time he took a secular job. In the meantime Mr. J. S. Young, an SAGM missionary, who worked mainly among the soldiers and sailors in Durban, invited Nelson Tomlinson to go with him to the Telegu quarters of the Point Barracks and interpret for him. The reception which they received from the Indian people was very heartening, especially when the Indians realized that a white man could speak their language so well.

In 1902 Nelson Tomlinson and his fiancée, Miss Winter, also from Australia, were married in Durban. Also in 1902 he reestablished fellowship with John Rangiah who had come to Durban from the same town in India to work with the American Baptist Telegu Mission. This gave Tomlinson another link with

the Indian work. By 1904 he went to Spencer Walton and committed himself to work amongst the Indians full-time, which he did with great effectiveness until his retirement in 1949.

Other workers joined the Tomlinsons like Miss E. Hargreaves who returned from England to work at the Hope Mission station once again. Over the years still others joined them to share the gospel with the Indian people. A very important feature of the work which then developed was the emergence of evangelist-teachers, a group of respected men who shared the gospel effectively with their own people. Churches were established along the Natal coast and by 1921 the first church conference was held at Esperanza, near Umzinto, with delegates from various churches meeting to pray and plan for their work. In 1951 the missionaries ceased to serve as officers of the conference. Then after a long period of preparation the South Africa General Mission (today called the Africa Evangelical Fellowship) gave to the Indian church its complete autonomy in May 1966. The name which was chosen for this new denomination was the Evangelical Church in South Africa (ECSA).

Twenty-six churches make up the denomination today with preaching points and extension ministries associated with some of these churches. In recent years accurate statistics have not been kept of the number of people involved in these churches, but it is estimated that altogether the ECSA is ministering to between three and four thousand people on a continuing basis.

DOCTRINAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ECSA

As an evangelical body the ECSA stands for at least seven all-encompassing distinctives. Its constitution highlights its own particular distinctives which separate it from other groups, but the distinctives described below are the ones used in this study to earmark a Christian denomination or organization as being evangelical. From both its constitution and the preaching which is heard in its circles it is clear that the ECSA accepts these distinctives as being vital aspects of its work.

No doubt many will argue that it is far too simplistic (if not ludicrous) to describe evangelicalism by seven great distinctives, because the whole movement stands for all that the Bible teaches. Yet one of the wonderful things about the Bible is that its main tenets can be grasped by simple men, even children. This has made it possible, therefore, to identify in a simple way those key concepts which are emphasized in evangelicalism.

On the other hand a great deal of scholarly work has been done to articulate what evangelicalism stands for. One author whose writings have helped with this process is Dr. Bob E. Patterson who has served as professor of religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He points out that 'a systematic evangelical theology tries to use reason in the service of revelation to the greater glory of God...Under constant revision, its final appeal is to Jesus Christ given in Holy

Scripture.¹ In this last phrase Dr. Patterson has drawn our attention to what are probably the two most crucial aspects of evangelical theology: one's appeal to Christ and one's submission to the Scriptures. He explains himself further by stating that evangelical 'theology flowered in nineteenth century America in the systems of the Presbyterians Charles Hodge (1797-1878) and William G. T. Shedd (1820-1894), the Baptist Augustus H. Strong (1836-1921), the Lutheran Franz Pieper (1852-1931) and the Reformed Louis Berkhof (1873-1957). But those were the last of the great system builders, and by 1930 evangelical theology had lost its place as an opinion-maker.'² As we approached the 1980s and the search continued for stability, the conditions seemed ripe for a clear explanation of evangelicalism. Carl Henry provided such an explanation. Writing about Carl F. H. Henry, Dr. Patterson expressed himself as follows:

As editor of (the) series, 'Makers of the Modern Theological Mind,' I had to select an (or the) outstanding American evangelical theologian about whom to write a book. The choice was simplicity itself--Carl F. H. Henry, of course. Carl Henry is the prime interpreter of evangelical theology, one of its leading theoreticians, and ...the unofficial spokesman for the entire tradition. In 1978 Time Magazine named him Evangelicalism's 'leading theologian'...In his God, Revelation and Authority series, Henry may have given the best statement on inerrancy of the Scriptures--an accurately nuanced approach that most evangelicals can assent to. He is not militant on

¹ Bob E. Patterson, Makers of the Modern Theological Mind: Carl F. H. Henry (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), p. 9.

² Ibid., pp. 9-10.

inerrancy and he respects those who have honest reservations about it.¹

These statements remind us that the authority of the Bible is a crucial tenet of evangelicalism. Writing on this subject himself Carl Henry has declared that 'in assessing the fortunes of Christianity in our century, we (find) that authority, particularly the authority of Scripture, is the watershed of theological conviction.² Reference works also support this view as may be illustrated from Baker's Dictionary of Theology of which Carl Henry is one of its editors. Under the article entitled 'Evangelical' by Loraine Boettner we are reminded that 'the most important issue between evangelicals and others is that of biblical authority.³

A second crucial issue which distinguishes evangelicals from other groups has to do with the individual's relationship to Christ. Dr. John Poorter, a South African Baptist minister who has also served as a diplomat and as the senior editor of the now defunct magazine, To the Point, has written in the thesis which he submitted to the Faculty of Theology at the University of Durban-Westville in July 1987 that 'while evangelicals shared a number of beliefs, the most familiar to outsiders was the emphasis on having been born

¹ Ibid., p. 9 and back cover.

² Carl F. H. Henry, ed. Revelation and the Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 7.

³ Everett F. Harrison, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Carl F. H. Henry, eds. Baker's Dictionary of Theology. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), p. 200.

again, a turning point in life when a personal commitment to Christ had taken place.¹ This is supported by George Gallup, Jr., who is well known for the polls which he has taken of American perspectives on various issues. He 'defines an evangelical as one who has had a born-again conversion by accepting Jesus as his or her personal Savior (sic), believes the Scriptures are the authority for all doctrine, and feels an urgent duty to spread the faith.'² Carl Henry confirms this by stating that an evangelical is 'one who believes the evangel. The Good News is that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual life to all who repent and receive divine salvation proffered in the incarnate, crucified and risen Redeemer. The Christian message is what the inspired Scriptures teach--no more, no less--and an evangelical is a person whose life is governed by the scriptural revelation of God and His purposes.'³

Thus we see from these definitions how support is given to at least two of the seven distinctives described below. The last of the seven is amplified throughout this thesis. It should not be viewed in isolation, however, so the following brief description is given of those which precede it.

1

John Poorter. 'Post-Christian Theological Concepts and Cultural Erosions as Perceived by Francis A. Schaeffer' (unpublished D.Theol. thesis, University of Durban-Westville, 1987), p. 165.

2

Patterson, p. 14.

3 'The House Divided: An Interview with Carl Henry,' Eternity (October 1976), p. 36.

1. The Glory of God

It is still true to say that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever (cf. Rom. 1:5; 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Eph. 1:5-6, 12, 14; 3:21; 2 Thes. 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:11). What does this mean in clear-cut terms? Simply, it means to draw attention to God, to his greatness and goodness. It means to magnify him, to make him bigger in the minds of people, and to lift him higher in the lives of Christians. It is to exhibit the excellencies of God, and to ascribe honour to him (Ps. 29:1-2).

We do this by coming to know Christ and then going to make him known. More specifically we glorify God by worshipping him (Jn. 4:23-24), by thanking him (Ps. 50:23), by living a godly life (Jn. 15:8; 1 Pet. 2:9). In fact, our whole life should be an exercise in glorifying God (1 Cor. 10:31). Just as going to church is an act of worship so should all we do become a way of acknowledging his worth.

Certainly God deserves it. It is a simple fact of life that who God is and what he does completely qualifies him to be glorified. The ECSA acknowledges this by declaring that one of its objectives is 'to support the public worship of God' (cf. Article III, A, p.3). While the worship of God should be more than public, this statement at least shows that the ECSA wants to bring glory to God.

2. The Centrality of Christ

Paul revealed his secret for successful Christian living when he declared, 'For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain' (Phil. 1:21). Christ was Paul's special delight (Rom. 15:17; Phil. 3:3). His whole life revolved around him. Paul also said that all the fullness of God is found in Christ, and that we have been given this fullness (Col. 2:9-10). Because of Christ we may now live life to the full (cf. Jn. 10:10). But this only becomes a reality in our lives when we lay aside that which is bad--hindrances and sin--and when we fix our eyes on him, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

Christ is to be central in our lives because he is central in God's plan of redemption. This is clearly reflected in the Scriptures. All eyes are on Christ Jesus in the Bible. The Father has provided him and the Holy Spirit points to him. Therefore, we can never be too Christ-centered in our beliefs and behaviour. Bishop Pollock expressed it beautifully when he wrote:

The Bible is a corridor between two eternities down which walks the Christ of God; his invisible steps echo through the Old Testament, but we meet him face to face in the throne room of the New; and it is through that Christ alone, crucified for me, that I have found forgiveness for sins and life eternal. The Old Testament is summed up in the word Christ; the New Testament is summed up in the word Jesus; and the summary of the whole Bible is that Jesus is the Christ.¹

1

Quoted by Vernon McGee in Genesis, Vol. I (Pasadena, CA: Thru the Bible Books, 1975), p. 5.

When we come to our ministry we should also be Christ-centered. 'Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life' (Jn. 3:14-15). Together with John the Baptist we should say, 'He must increase, but I must decrease' (Jn. 3:30 KJV). The disciples likewise focused their ministry on Christ (2 Cor. 4:5), especially his death on the cross (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23-24; 2:2; Gal. 6:14), and his resurrection from the tomb (Acts 1:21-22; 4:33; Rom. 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:3). As we also point others to him we can be sure that we are on biblical grounds.

In the opening statements of its constitution, the ECSA recognizes the significance of Christ by 'acknowledging the Lord Jesus as supreme head' over its local churches (cf. Article I, p.1). Thus in principle the ECSA wants Christ to have the final say in all that is said and done in its activities.

3. The Indispensability of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the agent for accomplishing God's will in our lives (Jn. 14:16-17, 25; 16:7-13; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 2:10-14). One of his major ministries is to point us to Christ (Jn. 15:26; 16:14). He also brings into our lives the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) as well as the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7, 11; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). Both the graces (fruit) and gifts are needed in our lives. While all the spiritual graces should be common to each Christian, this is not the case with spiritual gifts. Through the fruit which

he gives us the Holy Spirit makes us all alike (like Christ), and through the gifts he gives us he makes us all different, in order that we may accomplish the work which God has given each one of us to do.

If we want to benefit fully from the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives we must respond in faith and obedience to his workings. Our faith is expressed most readily through prayer. As Robertson McQuilkin reminds us, 'The prayer of faith is God's great method for releasing his power in the church.'¹ This is especially true when Christian people pray earnestly together about specific matters (cf. Acts 12:5). God has promised to work in our lives when we gather together in his name, particularly when we agree about the things for which we are praying (Matt. 18:19-20). 'God the Holy Spirit works in answer to united, believing prayer by an obedient people.'²

The ECSA expresses its dependence upon the Holy Spirit in this way: 'We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, who convicts men of sin, regenerating the one who believes in Christ, indwelling the believer for a life of victory, baptizing him at the time of conversion...It is also the privilege of the Holy Spirit to distribute spiritual gifts as he purposes' (cf. Article II, D, p.1).

¹ J. Robertson McQuilkin, unpublished class notes entitled 'Biblical Principles of Christian Work,' Columbia Graduate School of Bible and Missions, 1978.

² Ibid.

4. The Authority of the Bible

Without doubt there are many difficulties associated with the Bible's reliability, but it has not been proven that any one of these difficulties is an error. Actually the Bible as originally given is no authority if it is not reliable. Which one of us wants to base our convictions upon error, especially when some of life's most important issues are at stake? The Bible needs to be reliable in its entirety if it is to be worth its salt. If it contained errors we would face the question of where they begin and where they end. We would then be called upon to choose between the scholars to discern whose views about these matters are most reliable. This would make certain scholars our authority in these things, and, frankly, how can we ever be sure that the group of scholars we choose to believe are the most trustworthy. Could they not be at fault somewhere in their claims as to which parts of the Bible are reliable and which are not? Then could I ever trust myself, with all my limitations, to choose the right group of scholars to follow? The Bible certainly would be self-defeating if its reliability and authority were dependent upon these kinds of approaches. It had to be the product of the Holy Spirit and not the product of religious thinkers if it is to have the kind of authority which we can rely upon. Certainly this is what it claims for itself and this is what has been shown to be true through careful investigation (cf. Ps. 19:7-11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

For the Bible to be authoritative in our lives it not only needs to be reliable but also relevant. This is well illustrated by road bridges. There can be great danger in crossing a bridge which is not reliable, and there is no point in crossing a bridge which is not a part of the road on which we are traveling. It is interesting to note that the Bible does not go to great lengths to prove its reliability, although it certainly claims that for itself. It is like a lion which needs to be released. It will take care of itself. Similarly with its relevance. When the Bible is released in our lives, it proves itself to be relevant. If we put it to the test we will find that it calms our fears, clears our heads, comforts our hearts, corrects our walk, and confirms our commitment. Millions of people have proven it to be relevant in their lives.

The ECSA agrees with this approach to the Scriptures for its constitution states, 'We believe in the verbal, plenary...inspiration and final authority of the Holy Scriptures as originally given' (cf. Article II, A, p. 1).

5. The Urgency of Salvation

As Christ's ambassador Paul was more than ready to exhort his readers to be reconciled to God, because, as he put it, 'Now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor. 5:20-6:2). Peter stressed the point that salvation is found in Christ alone, for he said, 'Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be

saved' (Acts 4:12). The Lord Jesus Christ confirmed this when he stated, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' (Jn. 14:6). He also stated, '...apart from me you can do nothing' (Jn. 15:5). Therefore, John tells us that when we receive Christ, God gives us the right to become his children (Jn. 1:12). Yes, the gospel is wrapped up in Christ and 'is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes' (Rom. 1:16-17). We cannot 'escape if we ignore such a great salvation' (Heb. 2:3). Our sinfulness will otherwise condemn us (Rom. 3:9-20).

All the improvements we have seen and experienced in modern times will not liberate us. Speaking along these lines in July, 1974 at the International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland, Malcolm Muggeridge, the well known British television personality said, 'It has long seemed to me clear beyond any shadow of doubt that what is still called Western Civilization is in an advanced stage of decomposition, and that another Dark Age¹ will soon be upon us, if, indeed, it has not already begun.' Then on another occasion he is reported as saying that 'G. K. Chesterton once said that it is often supposed that when people stopped believing in God, they believed in nothing. Alas, it's worse than that. When they stop believing in God² they believe in anything.'

¹ Malcolm Muggeridge, 'Living Through an Apocalypse,' in Let the Earth Hear His Voice, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), p. 449.

² Quoted by Reader's Digest, May 1976, p. 103.

The ECSA also recognizes the plight of mankind without Christ by stating in its constitution: 'We believe that man...fell through the sin of Adam and incurred the penalty of death...We believe that salvation is wholly of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...(He) alone can save' (cf. Article II, F, G, p. 2).

6. The Victory of the Believer

When thinking of victory in the Christian life, there are two key words to remember: freedom and fulfillment. We need to find freedom from that which is wrong and fulfillment through that which is right. Paul reminds the believer that 'sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace' (Rom. 6:14). He also exhorts believers to put off their old self (sometimes called their earthly nature) with all its sinful, shameful activities (Eph. 4:22, 25-31; Col. 3:5, 8-9). Believers are able to do this, because in Christ they have died to sin (Rom. 6:2, 11). They are also to put on their new self with all its wholesome, winsome qualities (Eph. 4:24, 32; Col. 3:10, 12-14). They are able to do this, because in Christ they have been made alive (Rom. 6:4, 11). Graham Scroggie brings the two ideas of freedom and fulfillment together by challenging us to live on the right side of Easter as well as Pentecost; on the right side of ¹ pardon as well as power.

¹
Quoted by Alan Redpath in Victorious Christian Living (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1955), pp. 248-249.

The answer therefore is to be clothed with Christ (Rom. 13:14). Using the words of Stephen Olford based on the teaching of Galations 2:20 the believer is to experience the extinguished life, the relinquished life and the distinguished life. And using Robert C. McQuilkin's words, 'God's way of victory is to live utterly and completely for him who died for us (2 Cor. 5:14-15), for him who is our life (Col. 3:4), for him who is to return in glory, when we shall be like him' (1 Jn. 3:2).¹ When we can say in all honesty with the apostle Paul, 'For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain' then we have found the secret of living victoriously.

Few Christians can say this and mean it. For example, the ECSA makes no mention of these things in its constitution in spite of the fact that they are a major theme in the New Testament. It is, nevertheless, a recurring theme in the preaching and teaching which is heard in ECSA circles. So, in principle, the victory of the believer is an important concern in the ECSA.

7. The Vitality of the Local Church

It is encouraging to hear of churches and Christian groups which practice the principles and carry out the instructions of Scripture. For one thing, the Bible tells Christians to love one another as Christ has loved them (Jn. 13:34-35); therefore, it is heartening to hear of care groups wherein love is shown in practical ways or of churches wherein

¹ Robert C. McQuilkin, Joy and Victory (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 68.

body life is working well and believers are truly bearing one another's burdens. The Bible also encourages us to 'let the word of Christ dwell' in us richly (Col. 3:15). So it is also heartening to hear of groups and individuals who are seriously studying God's Word and following its teachings. Then the Bible tells us that believers are to become Christ's witnesses because of the Holy Spirit's influence upon them (Lk. 24:48-49; Acts 1:8). Again it is heartening to hear of Christians who are effective witnesses for the Lord and actually are helping others to become true Christians who then begin growing in the Lord. Furthermore, the Bible instructs us to be filled with the Holy Spirit on a continuing basis (Eph. 5:18). So again it is heartening to hear of believers who meet together to pray earnestly about two things in particular: their own walk with the Lord and then the work of God in which they are involved.

Obviously the more these various activities take place in the context of one church the more vibrant such a church will become. However, many churches are in a pitiful condition. To quote Michael Griffiths, 'the Bible talks about the bride of Christ, but the church today seems like a ragged Cinderella, hideous among the ashes. She has forgotten that she is supposed to be growing up...to be a beautiful lady.'¹ In view of this, one of Griffiths' books has been entitled Cinderella With Amnesia.² More recently he has written

¹ Michael Griffiths, God's Forgetful Pilgrims (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 7.

² Published by Inter-Varsity Press, 1975.

another book on the church entitled Get Your Act Together. Cinderella.¹ This certainly is a valid call to many evangelical churches today, not the least of which are the churches which make up the ECSA.

Professor Neville A. C. Heuer of the University of Durban-Westville and promoter of this thesis asks the question, 'Is the church open once again to the Time Trap-- that pitfall of retardation--as it contemplates its place in the twenty-first century?'² Here again is a valid question for the ECSA to answer.

When one talks to the leaders in the ECSA one becomes aware that many of them will point out legitimate problems found within their denomination which prevent it from having the influence that it should have. Some also see answers to their problems. But they do not speak with a united voice, especially about their priorities. Too often their statements are nebulous. (See Appendix A which contains the questionnaire which was used when researching the thinking of ECSA leaders about their churches.)

This study is an attempt to make available to the ECSA a 'united voice' about what is most needed within the denomination to enable it to minister much more effectively than it is now doing. Many of the issues addressed by this thesis are not clearly addressed by the ECSA, so this study

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Published by Inter-Varsity Press, 1989.

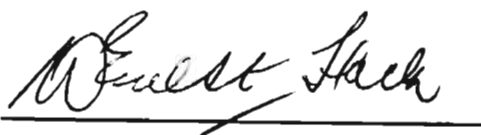
²

Neville A. C. Heuer, Let My People Go (Westville: The La Mancha Press, 1981), p. 12.

seeks to make a statement about various, crucial aspects of church life with the view to providing the ECSA with a resource tool that can be used to guide them in their praying and planning. Some of the points herein can be adopted, while others may need to be adapted, but hopefully all will be applied. Stated simply, this thesis seeks to fill the vacuum that appears to exist in many of the areas found within the ECSA.

The style which is used is simple in nature, thereby making it more useful to those who will read it. It is also cast in the first person so that a clearer identification can be made with the difficulties, responsibilities and opportunities facing the ECSA. As one who has served as a missionary within the ECSA context and who continues to have frequent contact with some of the ECSA churches it is my sincere desire to see the ECSA grow from strength to strength by reaching its God-given goals as never before.

I am happy to declare that this thesis represents my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of suitable references.



CHAPTER 1

DELINEATING THE DIMENSIONS OF CHURCH LIFE

Christians want to be a part of an alive and growing church. Many have transferred from one church to another because of their earnest desire to share in such a church--one which is moving for God. In some circles, such as in the ECSA, there have been strong moves on the part of a few churches to become 'charismatic' in their style of worship. Hand raising and clapping have become common practice together with praying for the sick during services. In these circles many feel that this is the way to go if an alive and growing church life is to be experienced. But is this right? Is this the best way for the ECSA to go?

An interesting book has been written by Prof. G. C. Oosthuizen about 'one of the most remarkable churches in Africa.'¹ Entitled Moving to the Waters this book covers the first fifty years of the growth of Bethesda, which is the name given to that branch of the Full Gospel Church of God in South Africa which focuses upon the Indian Community. As one looks at the way in which the Bethesda group of churches has grown since 1925 one is tempted to conclude that the ECSA should also take on pentecostal or charismatic principles to

¹
G. C. Oosthuizen, Moving to the Waters. (Durban: Bethesda Publications, 1975).

experience similar growth patterns. But is this really the best way to go?

Others may be tempted to improve the present infrastructures of their denomination, but is this really the way the ECSA should go? Writing on this theme Prof. Neville A. C. Heuer points out that 'replacing institutionalism with more institutionalism is side-stepping the future for the church which God has called it to in Christ.' He then adds that a rot has set in many denominations in South Africa which has led some people to form new denominational bodies. The result, however, is that the same old trappings have simply been given new names.¹

Rather the ECSA needs to go back to the original blueprint or plan as given in Scripture to redefine how it should go about establishing its churches. God is the architect of the church, so it makes sense to clarify the dimensions of church life which he has laid down on paper.

Admittedly, developing an alive and growing church involves more than defining its dimensions. Ultimately Christ is building his church (Matt. 16:18), and he does so by working through his people to bring this about. As they actually experience and practice biblical principles by the grace of God they will begin to contribute toward church life at its best.

Upon investigation we will find that these principles involve a church's **character** and **conduct**. When a

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Neville A. C. Heuer, Let My People Go (Westville: The La Mancha Press, 1981), p. 13.

church becomes **attractive** and **active** along the lines taught in Scripture it soon makes a significant and satisfying impact on those within its influence. Sadly, however, many churches fall far short of these ideals. This is aptly stated in a revised version of a favourite hymn.

Backward, Christian Soldiers, fleeing from the fight,
With the cross of Jesus nearly out of sight.
Christ our rightful master stands against the foe,
But into the battle we're dead scared to go.

Like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God,
Brothers we are treading where we've always trod.
We are much divided, many bodies we,
We have lots of doctrine without much charity.

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus hidden does remain,
The gates of hell should never 'gainst the church prevail,
We have Christ's own promise but think that it will fail.

Sit here then ye people, join our useless throng,
Blend with ours your voices in a feeble song,
Blessings, ease and comfort ask from Christ the King,
With our modern thinking we will not do a thing.¹

Certainly many churches do not make a significant impact on the world around them. Michael Griffiths, former Principal of London Bible College, agrees with this when he says 'to think of certain congregations as 'marching to war' is pure fantasy.' He goes on to comment,

We cannot win that spiritual battle by singing happily to each other and to the Lord safely inside our evangelical bunkers, deploring the lamentable state of the world outside...The biggest problem we face is how to end the 'phoney war' and get our churches to come out of our trenches and foxholes, to motivate one another to engage the enemy on his territory and take prisoners for the Lord.²

1

Source unknown.

2

Michael Griffiths, Get Your Act Together Cinderella (Bromley, Kent: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), pp. 128-129.

We agree that the modern church, including the ECSA, needs help. Writing in a similar vein Kenneth Kantzer, former Dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, reminds us that Christ's church stands in need of an ongoing evaluation of its character and its conduct. Too often we confuse the absolutes of God's Word with the securities and comforts of life which we have been able to build around ourselves. Kenneth Kantzer challenges us by adding, 'What a tragedy it would be if after a century of fighting against liberalism, orthodoxy would win the battle for orthodoxy (right doctrine) only to lose the battle of orthopraxis (right living).' So the church of Jesus Christ needs to be properly self-critical for only when it comes honestly under the scrutiny of Scripture will it find healing for its open sores.¹

As we take Kantzer's advice and allow the divine revelation to scrutinize the ECSA we are able to detect some definite principles of church life which need to be articulated and practiced in each local church.

A. SOME CRUCIAL PROPOSITIONS FOR THE ECSA

Whenever we commit ourselves to establishing alive and growing churches in the ECSA we are soon struck by two underlying problems. First, we become painfully aware that we do not have a **thorough grasp** of all that is involved, and, second, we become shamefully aware that we are not living up to what the Bible teaches us on the subject.

¹ Kenneth Kantzer, 'Has the Church Had It?' Baccalaureate Address, Trinity College and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, May 27, 1970, pp. 5-6.

The word 'confusion' perhaps summarizes best the problem which we face at this point in our study. For those of us who have been around church life for many years, we find it difficult to separate all the cries that are being made to pull the church back on track to perform its God-given role. Whose voice must we follow? For example, some say the key is prayer, others say it's evangelism, others have stressed body life, and still others have called for more meaningful worship. Then some say it is expository preaching, while others have emphasized missions. It certainly has been confusing. Many of us fumble along doing what we have always done, while some of us stumble on new ideas which we pursue with vigor hoping that they will inject new life into our churches.

The Bible, however, does give us direction in these matters by leading us into at least eight all-encompassing essentials which we must practice if we wish to develop alive and growing churches. These essentials highlight the more obvious and the most crucial biblical principles involved. Like many other denominations, the ECSA needs a clear understanding of and commitment to these essentials. We turn our attention now to each one.

- GOD'S DYNAMIC LIFE (POWER) NEEDS TO BE EXPERIENCED BY MANY MORE CHRISTIANS.**
- THE CONTINUAL PREPARATION (EQUIPPING) OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR SERVICE IS TO TAKE PLACE.**
- BASIC CHURCH PRACTICES MUST BE CARRIED OUT WHEN LOCAL CHURCHES MEET.**

- LOCAL CHURCHES ARE TO CONVEY THE GOSPEL TO NEW PEOPLES IN NEW PLACES.
- GOD'S PEOPLE (PARTNERS) ARE TO BE MOBILIZED ALONG THE LINE OF THEIR GIFTS.
- BIBLE TRUTH MUST BE PROCLAIMED EFFECTIVELY THROUGH EFFICIENT PROGRAMMES.
- NEEDY PEOPLE ARE TO BE REACHED WITH THE GOSPEL.
- BIBLICAL PRIORITIES NEED TO BE PURSUED.

Each of these essentials needs to become operative at the local church level. When God makes a church active and attractive it becomes both a powerhouse and lighthouse in its community. While drawing on the experiences of the ECSA and the teaching of Scripture, the rest of this study seeks to encourage this process, with each chapter concentrating on one essential at a time. Initially, however, we need an overview of what church life involves, so we now give our attention to some broad, biblical concepts.

B. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CHURCH LIFE

When one preaches and teaches in ECSA circles about the essentials of church life there is a ready agreement with what is said, providing it is supported by Scripture. However, when one asks the leaders of the ECSA to explain without the help of a Bible teacher what these essentials are, they are not able to do it comprehensively nor concisely. This is a serious blemish in the ECSA, for if the leaders are not able to do this, how can we expect the members to do so? Therefore, the leaders especially need to be taught the following facts.

One of Scripture's most vivid illustrations of the church is the human body. Both the church and body are meant to be and do what God first intended. Passages like Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Ephesians 4:1-16 help flesh out what this means in church life. But before we look at the details involved we need to understand something of the church's anatomy and functions in broad, general terms.

1. The Anatomy of the Church

Ephesians 4:1-16 is a classic passage describing the essentials of a good church. It is illustrated by five aspects of the human body. In verses 1-6 we see the body as a whole described, in verses 7-8 the individual members, in verses 9-10 its life, in verses 11-12 its systems, and in verses 13-16 its maturity. The following chart helps us focus on the five crucial challenges which grow out of this five-fold analysis of these verses.

Basic Components	Challenge
The Body	To demonstrate purity-unity
Its Members	To help one another minister along the lines of each one's gifts
Its Life	To live according to resurrection power
Its Systems	To find leaders who will feed members so that --they minister to others --they edify one another
Its Maturity	To demonstrate truth and love

¹ Insights here come from Ray C. Stedman, Body Life (Glenmore: Regal Books, 1972).

Each church is to be characterized first and foremost by **purity** and **unity**. These characteristics are meant to balance one another, for they are tension truths. In other words, we are not to neglect the one in favour of the other. Rather we are to stress both simultaneously and equally.

Writing on the importance of purity and unity, J. Robertson McQuilkin, Chancellor of Columbia Bible College and Seminary, argues that imbalance does not come from an over-emphasis on either purity or unity. We can never have too much love or too much faithfulness. Nevertheless, it is quite possible for unfaithfulness to masquerade as love. For example, when we compromise God's standards by not exercising church discipline we become unfaithful, although we may speak much of love. On the other hand, it is quite possible for 'unlove' to masquerade as faithfulness. For example, if we discipline the wrong person, or do so with the wrong motive or in the wrong way, then we become unloving although we may appear to be faithful. Robertson McQuilkin goes on to add, 'I do not ask the ecumenist to be less loving. I urge him to be more faithful. I do not ask the separatist to be less faithful. I urge him to be more loving.'

Psalm 34:13 expresses it in these words, 'Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it' (Ps. 34:13). This is God's balance. And Ephesians 4:15 simply tells us to speak

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J. Robertson McQuilkin, 'Biblical Principles on the Unity and Purity of the Church', unpublished class notes, Columbia Bible College and Seminary, 1978, p. 5.

the truth in love. Both truth and love, or righteousness and graciousness, are crucial to church life.

2. The Functions of the Church

The ministries which we are to carry out through our church may be categorized by two concepts: we are to 'gather' on the one hand and to 'scatter' on the other for specific, scriptural reasons.

a. Basic reasons for gathering together.--Ephesians 4:11-16 teaches us that Christians are to be edified (built up) in the things of God. This becomes possible when they have wholesome contact with one another. If they gather together regularly to be taught in the Scriptures, they will grow in their knowledge of God and his ways. This in turn should lead to their extolling his worth and singing his praises. In a nutshell, therefore, Christians gather together to carry out their 'edifying-extolling' functions.

b. Basic reasons for dispersing after gathering together.--From Ephesians 4:12 we learn that we Christians have a ministry to perform. Faithfulness in ministering to others leads us into fulfilling the mission God has given us. Ultimately this involves the planting and perfecting of propagating churches amongst the peoples of the world. The word 'missionizing' is a good one to summarize this process, and leads us to the conclusion that churches must disperse to carry out their 'ministering-missionizing' functions.

Thus Christian encounters involve an ongoing sequence of gathering and dispersing. Blessing results. As Christians

are edified in the Word of God and multiplied in the work of God, they soon find that they are satisfied by the ways of God.

C. SOME BROAD CONCLUSIONS TO HELP DEFINE OUR TERMS

When considering what the church is to be in itself and do in the world, it soon becomes clear that it comprises a **special people** who have been given **specific purposes** to fulfill. A closer look at the word 'church' and its connotations will help us appreciate this.

In English the word 'church' has been used to represent various concepts:

- A local congregation
- A building
- A denomination or its leadership
- The universal Church

Only the first and last of these are clearly taught in Scripture. This does not mean that the second and third are unscriptural, but that we are misdirected when we allow various factors associated with them to override the teachings of Scripture regarding the local or the universal Church.

The word 'church' has been translated from the Greek ekklesia. In essence it comes from two Greek ideas, kaleō meaning 'to call', and ek meaning 'out from'. So the compound verb means 'the called out ones.' The church is made up of

those who have been called out of a life of self-centeredness¹
into a life of Christ-centeredness.

From the New Testament's descriptions and doctrines we see added details of the church's call, and, therefore, some² of the great blessings which we Christians have been given.

--We have been called out of bondage (1 Pet. 2:9)

--We have been called for a relationship with God (1 Cor. 1:9)

--We have been called into a body (Eph. 4:1, 4)

--We have been called to a ministry (Rom. 1:1, 5)

--We have been called towards an inheritance (1 Tim. 6:12)

We are called out of our old life into a new kind of life. Ephesians 3:21 reminds us that the church is to glorify God. How are we to do this? The next verse (4:1) introduces the answer: As the called-out ones we are to walk worthily of the calling we have been given. More specifically we are to live a life of purity and unity--God's kind of life (cf. Eph. 4:2-3). So the Christian life involves 'a calling out of' and 'a calling into'--out of the old into the new.

Scripture also shows that the church is both local and universal in its expressions. The local assembly should be an autonomous body, but not in an absolute sense. Its

¹ George Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p. 200.

² The details which follow are gleaned from Michael Griffiths, God's Forgetful Pilgrims (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 15-16.

independence needs to be balanced by an absolute dependence¹ upon God and an **interdependence** with other churches.

The Bible's view of the church may now be defined as follows:

The Church includes all who have been regenerated by God as they have responded in repentance and faith to the Lord Jesus,	}	THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH
and involves local fellowships of believers who exemplify God, edify one another, and evangelize the world by gathering to be disciplined and by dispersing to make disciples, all with the view to glorifying God in all things		THE LOCAL CHURCH

Note the church's great goals in this definition. First, we are to **exemplify** God, or make visible the Invisible. God remains invisible to many until we reveal him by what we say and do. Second, we are to **edify** one another, or build one another up in the will and ways of God. Third, we are to **evangelize** the world, or communicate the gospel to unbelievers, so that they repent of their sin, and receive Christ as their Saviour, and, finally, we are to **exalt** or glorify the Lord. This last goal is the all-encompassing outworking of the first three goals of the church.

So the church is to be a **movement** of God's people, not a **monument** of clay bricks. As has been said, 'The church is the pilgrim people of God. It is on the move--hastening to the ends of the earth to beseech all men to be reconciled to

¹ Peters, p. 202.

God, hastening to the end of time to meet its Lord who will gather all into one.¹

Without doubt the church is a most significant body. We agree with the much-loved pastor of Peninsula Bible Church, Ray Stedman when he points out that the church has always been the most powerful force on earth for good. It has been and continues to be light in darkness and salt in society, helping to retard the spread of moral decay while adding zest and flavour to the lives of those under its influence.²

It stands to reason then that we should love Christ's church. If we love him we will certainly love what he loves. As a groom cherishes his bride, so Christ cherishes his church. He gave himself up for her. Therefore, we dare not spurn the church. To do so is to spurn Christ's most precious possession on earth. The former Director of the School of World Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, David Hesselgrave reminds us that the universal church together with its local congregations 'have no friend like their Lord! If Christians are to love what their Lord loves they must love the Church--and the churches!'³

Kenneth Kantzer adds his support to this and we should join him in saying, 'I would rather be stricken dead than found fighting the church of Jesus Christ which he purchased

¹ Lesslie Newbigin, The Household of God (SCM, 1953), p. 25.

² Stedman, p. 2.

³ David J. Hesselgrave, Planting Churches Cross-Culturally (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), p. 22.

with his own precious blood out of his infinite love...and which he has promised to preserve forever.¹

Obviously the Bible is also favourably disposed toward the church. George Peters, former professor of missions at Dallas Theological Seminary, wrote 'The Bible is for the gospel and for the church that is for the gospel.'² It is vital, therefore, that today's churches move back to the Bible to discover and to live out the perennial principles which have always led to vitality and vibrancy in local churches.

God is the ECSA's final authority and the Bible its functioning authority in all matters of faith and practice. This means that the ECSA needs to seek the mind of God and keep true to the Word of God. This calls for prayer and Bible study. Our task, therefore, when working with the ECSA is to encourage its people to pray and study God's Word, and our authority for doing so is rooted in God and his Word (cf. Mat. 28:18-20).

In a nutshell, then, the ECSA has a **position** to fill, and **functions** to perform. In the chapters which follow a study is made of many of the details involved in local church life, especially those which need to be brought to bear upon the life of the ECSA.

¹
Kantzer, p. 3.

²
Peters, p. 207.

CHAPTER II

HIGHLIGHTING PREREQUISITES FOR REVIVAL WITHIN LOCAL CHURCHES

In this chapter we come to the first of the essentials which this thesis advocates. Stated simply it reads as follows: God's dynamic life (power) needs to be experienced by many more Christians.

The lack of substantial growth in most of the churches in the ECSA leads us to the conclusion that this group, like many others, needs to experience revival in its midst. The Bethesda churches on the other hand have grown substantially, so much so that Prof. G. C. Oosthuizen has used this subtitle for his book about this movement: 'Fifty years of pentecostal revival in Bethesda.'¹ Certainly revival leads to growth both in spiritual and numerical terms. But revival does not stand alone. It comes as a result of God's power at work in our midst. So ultimately the members of the ECSA need to experience more of God's power and thereby revival in their lives.

The growth of the early church was very impressive, to say the least (cf. Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31, 35, 42; 11:21, 24; 14:1, 21; 16:5; 17:12). This growth was due largely to God's power at work in their circles (Acts 2:47). Left on their own the early disciples would have simply become

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G. C. Oosthuizen, Moving to the Waters (Durban: Bethesda Publications, 1975), p. iii.

another religious sect. The same could be said of churches in the ECSA today. Left on their own they would not amount to much, but as they experience more of God's power the more significant will be their influence on the communities in which they are found.

God gives his people power by his Spirit (Acts 1:8; Eph. 3:6). This becomes true as they experience the continual filling or control of the Spirit. When individual Christians experience his filling, their churches will experience the same thing. As its individual members go, so a local church will go.

Church leaders have stressed over the years that church life needs to be marked by God's life. Some have used the word 'revival' to summarize their appeals. In more recent times leaders have also spoken much about 'renewal' as they have endeavoured to recall 'the church to its reason for being.'¹

Both 'revival' and 'renewal' carry crucial connotations. The first speaks of God's part and the second of ours. It is true that we need God to move amongst us in mighty power by his Spirit (revival), while it is also true that we need to help local churches align themselves with their biblical designs (renewal). It is sad to see that many who have written on church renewal have tended to overlook the importance of church revival. Both are necessary. (In this

¹ Michael Griffiths, God's Forgetful Pilgrims (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 3.

second chapter our focus is on the need for revival, while the rest of this study appeals for renewal.)

What do we mean by revival? Modern-day authority on revivals, J. Edwin Orr answers by saying 'An evangelical awakening is a movement of the Holy Spirit in the church of Christ bringing about a revival of New Testament Christianity.'¹ Charles Finney, well-known evangelist of the past century, puts it well when he adds, 'Revival is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God.'² Thus revival is not to be confused with evangelism. Paul Rees, a respected preacher in recent times, writes, 'Revival is an experience in the church; evangelism is an expression of the church.'³ J. Edwin Orr also separates them. He has said, 'When the Holy Spirit is poured out the church is revived, the world is evangelized and society is reformed.'⁴ Well-known pastor, author, and radio preacher, Chuck Swindoll summarizes it as follows, 'Revival is not something for the lost... You've got to be 'vived' before you can be revived. That's only for Christians.'⁵ Revival is for Christians who have lost their

¹ Quoted by Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 164.

² Taken from a pamphlet entitled 'Pray for Revival' published by International Intercessors, Pasadena, California and based on Charles G. Finney, Lectures on Revival of Religion (Oberlin, Ohio: E. J. Goodrith, 1868).

³ Quoted by Leonard Ravenhill in Why Revival Tarries (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1959), p. 44.

⁴ Quoted by Art Glasser at a seminar on church growth conducted in Johannesburg, 1976.

⁵ Quoted by Bob Moeller in 'Are God's People Thirsty?' Trinity's Wellspring, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1988.

first love. D. M. Panton confirms this by adding, 'Revival (is) the inrush of the Spirit into the body that threatens to become a corpse.'¹

It is most significant that the Bible does not give us separate teaching on revival. Its message is a revival message. This gives hope to ECSA members for they should not look for something new when thinking about revival. Rather, they need to experience the essentials which God has already described in his Word. Such essentials fall into two major categories and are well summarized by 2 Chronicles 7:14 which may be outlined as follows:

1. The requirements for revival - our part
2. The outworkings (results) of revival - God's part.

A. GOD'S PART IN BRINGING REVIVAL

ECSA leaders agree that a true revival comes from God. One church in the ECSA believes that it has been singly blessed in recent times with God's special activities in their midst. It has placed a banner at the front of the church sanctuary which reads, 'We will not stop the revival.' It is impossible to state how much of the blessing in this church comes from God, but whatever blessing is being experienced is dependent upon the following five factors.

¹

Quoted by Ravenhill, p. 68.

1. God and His Purposes (Acts 4:19)

The things of God gripped many of the early Christians. Wherever they went they talked about the things of God (Acts 8:4), and endeavoured to live by them (Acts 5:29; 21:13-14). The same should be true of us today.

2. Christ and His Lordship (Acts 4:13)

The Lord Jesus was uppermost in the minds of the early believers. They were very conscious of his death and resurrection, and their new life in him. He was their Lord. They loved him deeply, and wanted to live for him constantly. He was the continual focus of their revival experience and message (Acts 4:2; 17:18, 31). He should be the same to us today.

3. The Holy Spirit and His Fullness (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4)

The Holy Spirit was given to make Christ real to us (Jn. 14:26; 16:14), and his life real in us (Rom. 8:10-11). Like the early Christians we should be controlled by him, and so live in a constant state of revival (Acts 4:31; 9:17-20, 31).

4. The Word of God and Its Authority (Acts 17:11)

God's Word proclaims a lifestyle of revival. Whether given orally or in written form it is powerful in its influence when we respond to its message (Is. 55:11; Acts 4:2,4; 6:7; 12:24; 19:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12).

5. The Church and Its Influence (Acts 2:42-47)

The early Christians had a realistic, but radical influence upon one another. They gave freely of themselves for one another's benefit, yet without compromising the truth of God's Word (Acts 4:32-5:11; 19:13-20). Their experience of revival constantly rubbed off onto one another; so should ours.

B. OUR PART IN BRINGING ABOUT REVIVAL

Going back to the ECSA church mentioned above, it is obvious that it has changed its worship format in recent times. In simple terms, this church has taken on the charismatic style of worship with loud music now featuring in its services. The pastor also walks up and down the aisle with a microphone in his hand and calls for the sick to come forward so that he may pray for them. These, and similar charismatic-type activities, have resulted in what the pastor feels is a revival. In light of Scripture this is a dubious view to hold.

A much more convincing example of a revival is seen in the work which was associated with Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He died in 1892, yet people to this day are still talking about the impact of his ministry. Over 50,000 people attended his funeral.¹ This leads us to ask the question: 'What was it about Spurgeon that made him so influential?' Two features

¹ Wilfred Mwenya, 'Charles Haddon Spurgeon--A Brief Biographical Sketch', Reformation Africa South, First Quarter, 1993, p. 12.

stand out: his very effective preaching and his strong emphasis on prayer. When someone asked him what was the secret to his success he replied, 'My mother and the truth of my message.'¹ Obviously his mother vividly lived out the truth of the message he so fervently proclaimed. Then in a letter which he wrote to a friend in 1854 at the age of nineteen or twenty he stated, 'Friends firm. Enemies alarmed. Devil angry. Sinners saved. Christ exalted. Self not well...prayer meeting, 500 in regular attendance.'² Later when he wrote his autobiography he added, 'When I first became a pastor in London my success appalled me...I do not forget that (God) gave me the privilege of ministering from the first to a praying people.'³ Thus right from the earliest stages of his work both the Bible and prayer were paramount in his ministry. In other words it was what God was doing in and through Spurgeon as a young man that attracted so many people to hear him, and it was this that kept them coming for forty years. People would not have flocked around him, especially when he was so young, if he was a heretic or arrogant. It is true that people can be very gullible, but they do not voluntarily gravitate in great numbers toward a Christian who is suspect or ineffective.

¹
Warren W. Wiersbe, 'Spurgeon--the Vessel is Prepared', Good News Broadcaster, September, 1985, p. 28.

²
Warren W. Wiersbe, 'Boy-Preacher in London', Good News Broadcaster, October 1985, p. 30.

³
Ibid, p. 29.

The imperative nature of the Bible and prayer in a revival situation was also demonstrated in the early church (Acts 6:4), and this should be equally true in our search for revival today.

1. We are to Give Attention to Prayer

Prayer is regarded by many as the secret to revival. However, in modern church life, prayer has faded into the background, and far less important activities have taken its place. We all suffer because of this. As a church sign once said, 'The church is dying on its feet, because it is not living on its knees.'¹

In seeking to reverse this Donald McGavran, father of the Church Growth movement, reminds us that 'revival is God's gift. Man can neither command it nor make God grant it. God sovereignly gives revival when and where he wills...But God responds to sincere continued prayer. Prayer is what God wants his people to offer'² (cf. Matt. 7:7). H. C. G. Moule adds, 'Prayer is the method that God himself has appointed for our obtaining the Holy Spirit.'³ J. Robertson McQuilkin, chancellor of Columbia Bible College and Seminary, agrees

¹
Quoted by Oliver Price in 'Who Needs Prayer Meeting?' Moody Monthly, Oct., 1988, p. 30.

²
Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 166.

³
H. C. G. Moule quoted by E. Matheson in Gathered Gems (London: Epworth Press, 1951), p. 55.

with this. He has said, 'The prayer of faith is God's great method for releasing his power in the church.'¹

When a man stood at a meeting in 1904 and asked, 'Friends, I have journeyed into Wales with the hope that I may glean the secret of the Welsh revival', Evan Roberts, a leader in the movement was on his feet and with upraised hand he replied, 'My brother, there is no secret: Ask and ye shall receive.'² E. M. Bounds adds his support to this by writing very poignantly on the importance of prayer in the Lord's work. He states:

Men are God's method. The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men...What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy (Spirit) can use--men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy (Spirit) does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men--men of prayer...³

It is significant that E. M. Bounds writes about 'men of prayer,' because men seem to struggle more than women to pray. However when they do pray they give the kind of leadership in the church which helps to pave the way for revival.

¹
J. Robertson McQuilkin, unpublished class notes on 'Biblical Principles of Christian Work', Columbia Bible College and Seminary, 1978.

²
Quoted by Robert Coleman in 'The Secret of Revival', Trinity's Wellspring Vol. 1., No. 1, 1988, p. 11.

³
E. M. Bounds, Power Through Prayer (London: Oliphants, 1958), pp. 9, 10.

2. We are to Give Attention to God's Word

Charles Finney said, 'Revival is the renewal of the first love of Christians.'¹ Such love calls for the keeping of Christ's commandments (Jn. 14:15), which in turn calls for the studying of his Word. Like the Bereans we should search the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11) not only to discover their truths, but also to obey their teachings, and so experience the life of revival. To be revived we must experience and express the truth of Scripture.

C. PATTERNS OF SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

The ECSA does not have a history of revivals taking place in its churches, so no definite pattern can be noted in its circles whereby future revivals can be encouraged. It is true that there have been improvements in the various churches from time to time, but most of this can be attributed to the way in which the missionaries and pastors have given leadership in the churches.

Church History reveals that revivals have been found in pockets of people who have taken God's Word seriously and sought his full blessing earnestly in their lives. These pockets have involved churches, camp meetings, colleges and campaigns. In a few instances these pockets increased to such an extent that they led to waves of great blessing so much so that in North America three Great Awakenings can be identified

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Taken from a pamphlet entitled 'Prayer for Revival' published by International Intercessors, Pasadena, California, based on Charles G. Finney, Lecture on Revivals of Religion (Oberlin, Ohio: E. J. Goodrich, 1868).

around these dates: 1738-1743, 1795-1840, 1857-1859. An excellent description of these revivals is given in Christian History, volume VIII, number 3, issue 23.¹ Another source which describes significant revivals in the past, especially in Europe, is Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival first compiled by John Gillies with additions added by Horatius Bonar.²

As historians have studied revivals of the past they have detected a pattern of events which characterizes most, if not all revivals. We should be guided by this pattern if we too want to experience a spiritual awakening in our circle of Christian contacts. Five dimensions of this pattern are to be noted.³

1. Spiritual awakenings are usually preceded by a period of spiritual depression. The deep things of God are neglected, and indifference toward sin prevails in the lives of many Christians, so much so that there is little difference between them and their associates in secular society. The sad result is that many churches seem to be asleep and in some cases are almost dead.

2. An individual or group of God's people renounce their sins and sincerely commit themselves to seek the fullness of God's life in their lives. They vow to forsake

¹ Christian History, Vol. VIII, No. 3, Issue 23 (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1989), pp. 20-21.

² John Gillies, Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival (Fairfield, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1981).

³ Christian History, p. 7.

all that is displeasing to God and earnestly seek his full blessing in all areas of their lives as dictated by his Word. In simple terms, they commit themselves on a continuing basis to two things: to praying earnestly about their own spiritual condition and to studying God's Word seriously to discover his will for their lives.

3. A leader or leaders emerge and begin sharing prophetic insights into the causes and remedies of the problems Christians face. A new awareness of the holy and pure character of God pervades and many of his people, who want him to act, begin seeking his holiness in their lives.

4. An awakening of Christians takes place in which many understand and pursue a higher spiritual life. Praying and preaching characterize these awakenings most of all. (See points 2 and 3 above.) While great joy prevails emotional excesses do not accompany these awakenings. They are marked by much orderliness and a profound, majestic sincerity.

5. Spiritual awakenings prepare and strengthen God's people in no uncertain terms for future challenges. Those who have gone through an awakening are profoundly influenced to live out and pass on God's Word, sometimes in very difficult situations.

D. MANIFESTO OF THE GERMAN RENEWAL MOVEMENT

Christians around the world have been wrestling with what is needed in their contexts to bring about renewal in their churches and revival in their lives. One such person is

Wolf-Eckhart Failing who has summarized what German Christians have advocated to bring about an awakening in their church life.¹ The following points which he gives us are of great value because of their pertinence and balance.

1. It is God himself who is the basis of his mission and who carries it out (missio Dei).

2. The sending of his Son, that is the cross and resurrection of Christ, cannot be improved upon, and cannot be supplemented, as the expression of God's 'once for all' and of his final and ultimate promise.

3. The church is in its essence the Body of Christ, and as such the presence in this world and the instrument of the divine mission. Mission is its fundamental, structural principle. It is the will of Jesus Christ today to work in and upon the world through the church. Thus the form the church should take is missionary, charismatic and ecumenical.

4. In order for the church to take this form in reality, God promised and bestowed upon his church the power of the Holy Spirit, which is expressed in the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit 'as the individuation of grace' (Kasemann), and so takes concrete shape.

5. Every reborn Christian is a 'charismatic': We Christians do not look for a special act of the reception of the Holy Spirit in 'sealing' or 'the baptism of the Spirit', but we know that the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian and desires to be visible in every Christian.

¹

Neville A. C. Heuer, Let My People Go (Westville: The La Mancha Press, 1981), pp. 20-22.

6. A charismatic is a person who is liberated by God's activity through his Holy Spirit for the use of his own proper gifts (proper in the sense of being willed by God) and who makes them available primarily for the building up of the church and its service in the world.

7. Anyone who exercises a charisma acts as a member of the body of Christ. All members are of equal value and have equal gifts and have equal rights. There are three ways in which charismatic activity can be distinguished and more closely defined. It takes place:

- a. In dependence upon Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:3).
- b. According to the measure of faith (Rom. 12:3).
- c. As a realization of love (1 Cor. 13).

8. In relation to the forms in which charismata are manifested, a hierarchy of values is unthinkable.

9. Every gift of God, however 'natural' it is, is a charismata if it serves to glorify the Lord of the world and the church, and to spread the kingdom of Christ.

10. Where all are charismatics, there cannot be any ministerial authority bestowed institutionally. Thus ministry depends on charisma and spiritual authority.

11. If the church order is understood as a manifestation of the Spirit, and a witness to the Lord who lives in the church, it must be apparent particularly in the worship of the church.

12. The most urgent theological question with regard to the church is the following: How can institutional churches, groups firmly settled in their ways, and traditional

movements take on a charismatic structure? How can they become dynamic and mobile, and charismatically 'permeable', that is, permeable to the will and action of God, so that the kingdom of Christ is visibly manifest in space and time?

Put in personal terms ECSA members should ask themselves if it is possible to be part of a revival situation today? Only the Lord knows the full answer to this. What we do know, however, is that each one of us must be done with all sin and pay the simple price of earnestly seeking after the Lord and his will in all things. Who knows, God in his mercy may then be willing to place ECSA members, and other like-minded Christians, in pockets of revival within their own church contexts.

Many Christians, including members of the ECSA, want the right Bible beliefs to be propagated in their circles. They may even specialize in doctrinal dialogue, but unless Bible beliefs work themselves out in our churches and lives they will mean very little. The only ones who may be impressed are those in dialogue with us. Unless we express what we need to experience of the things of God we cannot expect to experience revival. David J. Bosch, who until recently was professor and head of missiology at the University of South Africa, has put it this way:¹

Throughout most of the church's history its empirical state has been deplorable. This was already true of Jesus' first circle of disciples and has not really changed since. We may have been

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David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), p. 519.

fairly good at orthodoxy, at 'faith', but we have been very poor in respect of orthopraxis, of love.

We are challenged by these statements to pursue after God's reality in our Christian lives and not simply after good theology in our minds. This leads us to join the great preacher of recent times, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in saying, 'We are profoundly convinced that the greatest need in the world today is revival in the church of God.'¹

¹

Christian History, p. 2.

CHAPTER III

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP FOR THE EQUIPPING OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR SERVICE

In this chapter we come to the second great essential for church life which this thesis advocates. It states: The continual preparation (equipping) of God's people for service is to take place.

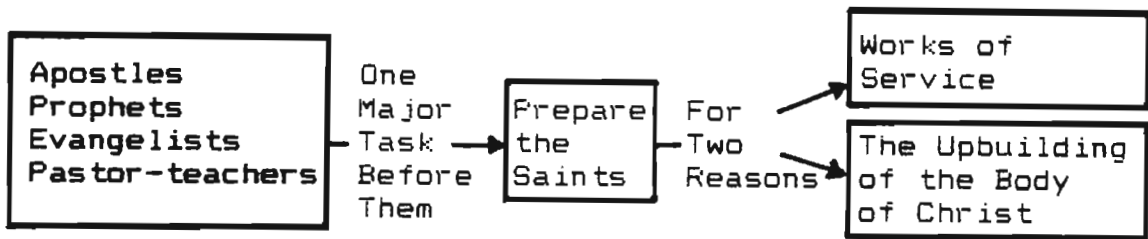
Pastor Reggie Pillay, lecturer at the Durban Bible College and one of the best trained men in the ECSA, believes that the most urgent need in the ECSA at this time is to establish good leadership at all levels. He feels that far more attention should be given to the training of leaders and far better use made of those young people who have been trained. A number of graduates of the Durban Bible College who could easily serve in ECSA contexts are overlooked in favour of financial considerations such as improving church facilities or buying a van to help transport people to church functions.

The question of preparing people for service within their own churches has received some attention in the ECSA in recent years. Their strategy has been to conduct a night school programme in a few key centres in Natal. Missionaries as well as pastors have taught in these centres and their influence has been positive upon the relatively small group of students who have studied in this programme. The rest of the members, however, remain untrained and ill-prepared for service in their churches. On Sunday mornings and evenings they may sit under the preaching of their pastors or church

leaders, but beyond that they receive little or no training for serving the Lord in their churches.

One of the great themes of Scripture is that all God's people have a vital contribution to make to his work. God is not looking for spectators who sit in pews to watch professionals who perform in pulpits, but for believers who participate in all kinds of ministries so that both non-Christians and Christians are radically influenced by the gospel.

Ephesians 4:11-13 gives us valuable insights into this matter. It may be visualized as follows:



This passage highlights one of the major tasks which apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers have been given: the equipping of God's people for works of service. When they fail in this function the local church soon suffers. For example, when a pastor-teacher is overburdened with functions which undermine his teaching ministries in public and private situations, then his influence is watered down and the body is weakened.

The Greek word for 'prepare' in Ephesians 4:12 is katartismos from which we derive the English word 'artisan.' Just as a craftsman builds things, so Christ uses various workers as his tools to build his church. In Matthew 4:22 the

same Greek word is used to describe what James and John did when they prepared their nets for fishing. This entailed both washing and mending. Likewise with Christian workers. They are to help cleanse and mend the saints so that they in turn can serve their Lord effectively.¹

Christian workers are to concentrate on equipping us with God's Word. Before all else is said and done we need to hear what the Lord has to say to us through the Scriptures, for they mould and motivate us. The Bible should both inform and transform us. When we are grounded in the Scriptures we are best prepared to serve the Lord. Besides being taught what they say we are also to obey what they teach (Matt. 28:20), and Christian workers have a major part to play in bringing this about.

A. APOSTLES SHOULD INFLUENCE US

Most ECSA people would be shocked to hear of apostles working in their midst. This is partly due to the teaching which they have received and their unfamiliarity with the term 'apostle.' Nevertheless, they are very familiar with the term 'missionary,' because of their many happy associations with the Africa Evangelical Fellowship, the mission organization that brought the ECSA into existence. They continue to welcome missionaries in their circles, although they often fail to appreciate the importance of placing these

¹ Ray C. Stedman, Body Life (Glendale: Regal, 1972), p. 81.

missionaries in church planting situations. Invariably they prefer using missionaries in their established churches.

Many have argued from passages like 1 Corinthians 3:9-11 and Ephesians 2:19-20; 3:4-5 that the functions of the apostle ceased when the early church was established. We agree that the Bible does not teach 'apostolic succession'-- the formal appointment of twelve men as the authoritative leaders in the church today. Nevertheless, it is also true that Scripture does not limit the term 'apostle' to the Twelve Apostles (cf. 1 Cor. 15:5-8). Here is a list of others who were also called apostles.

- Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:14)
- Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7)
- Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25 - in the Greek)
- Silas and Timothy (1 Tim. 2:6-7)

Certainly Titus was part of an apostolic team (2 Cor. 8:16, 23; Gal. 2:1, 3; Tit. 1:4-5). Probably Apollos was also called an apostle (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6, 9) and possibly James (Gal. 1:19). Those who try to limit the term apostle to the Twelve are forced to acknowledge that Paul was an apostle. They argue that he was included because of his personal encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6). However, Paul himself did not regard this event as the crucial reason for his apostleship. Rather he saw himself as an apostle because of his call to a mission ministry (cf. Rom. 1:15; 1 Cor. 9:2).

Some say that those apostles who are named beyond the Twelve filled a secondary apostolic role in the church. But

Scripture does not say this, nor should we. Paul and his colleagues certainly were not secondary in their influence.

The terms 'apostle' and 'missionary' come from the same root idea: one from the Greek apostolos and the other from the Latin missio, both meaning 'one sent forth.'¹ In essence, therefore, apostle is the Greek way of saying missionary, while missionary is the Latin way of saying apostle. Still to this day missionaries are called apostles in Greece.

Admittedly the term missionary has come to represent far more than apostle, so much so that some have suggested that even Paul was not a missionary. Certainly many who call themselves missionaries today are not concentrating on church planting as the early apostles did, but this is no excuse for not trying to do so. Missiological studies have become scientific, much of which is helpful, but when they lead to carrying the kind of modern missionary baggage which hinders missionaries from working toward the planting of new churches then they become a bad influence. Today's missionaries need to take their cue from their earliest colleagues, the apostles, and focus their activities as much as possible on the establishing of new churches in new places amongst new peoples.

If missionaries are not apostles then where are they described in Scripture? Furthermore, if they are not described in Scripture, then why have we allowed such a

¹ George Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p. 249.

voracious group to make such amazing demands on us? Surely they are not a new breed who fill an extra-biblical role in the church. And surely the Lord would not leave us in the dark in this matter and expect us to create our own version of what we think the missionary should be like. Some have sought to solve this problem by likening them to the evangelists of Scripture, but even this is unsatisfactory, because the missionary's role is so much broader than that of the evangelist. Nor is the missionary simply a preacher or a pastor or a teacher. His ministry incorporates all of these and there is only one role described in Scripture which adequately fits this and that is the role of the apostle--the worker who focuses his ministries on the starting and establishing of new churches.

We especially need to hear from these kinds of missionaries (apostles) in our churches today. They have been called to help prepare God's people for works of service, particularly in terms of carrying the gospel to those people who have not really heard it.

B. PROPHETS SHOULD INFLUENCE US

As with apostles most ECSA people would be shocked to hear that prophets are operating in their midst, yet they do invite visiting preachers to minister in their midst from time to time. This takes place most notably at their annual church conference and on special occasions such as at Easter time or on Mother's Day or during a special conference held in a

particular church. Seldom, if ever do they see a correlation between these preachers and prophets.

Christians debate over the question of whether or not true prophets exist today. There are two thorny issues which complicate our discussions.

1. The claim of so-called prophets today that they have received a special revelation from God to share with others.
2. Their predictions about the future.

In Old Testament times these issues were controlled by strict instructions. See Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:20-22. Whenever a prophet's word did not promote loyalty to the Lord or his predictions were not fulfilled, he was to be put to death. While the New Testament does not allow us to take the life of a false prophet, he is to be silenced. When his message does not encourage us to be loyal to the Lord in keeping with Scripture, or his message is not fulfilled in keeping with what he has predicted, then he must be stopped (1 Cor. 14:29, 32).

Having said this, can we still say that there are genuine prophets today? Some say 'no' on the basis of 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 and Ephesians 2:19-20; 3:5. Yet these passages are not watertight. Also other New Testament passages indicate that prophets and prophecy could be present today. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied (Lk. 1:67-79), Anna was called a prophetess (Lk. 2:36) and Agabus had a special prophetic ministry in the early church (Acts 11:28; 21:10-14). Leaders in the church at Antioch were

called prophets (Acts 13:1), and Philip's four daughters prophesied (Acts 21:9). Prophets are mentioned in the crucial lists of 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11. Then the gift of prophecy is shown to be a valuable part of church life in verses like 1 Corinthians 14:1, 29.

None of these passages, however, describes the modern practice of giving prophecies to believers and churches about their weaknesses or their sins. This is foreign in the New Testament so this practice must be regarded as dubious. On the other hand, when we read Acts 15:32 we are given the distinct impression that prophecy involves proclaiming truths already known. 1 Corinthians 14:29 supports this by suggesting that prophecies are to be kept in harmony with a recognized body of teaching. When these verses are linked to 1 Corinthians 14:3, 30-31 we see that prophecy is identified with giving a revelation which results in encouragement, strengthening, comfort and instruction. By far the most significant revelations which a person can share with believers are those recorded in Scripture. Like Timothy, modern-day prophets do right when they devote themselves 'to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching' (1 Tim. 4:13).

When we take the statements of both the Old and New Testaments into account we are able to recognize a number of common denominators found in all prophets which help us identify those who have a prophetic ministry today.

--They are spiritually mature believers
--who proclaim God's Word
--powerfully and
--primarily to God's people
--in various places
--regarding critical issues
--so that they are built up in their faith.

Prophecy literally means 'to speak forth' from pro, 'forth', and phēmi, 'to speak'. 'It is not necessarily, nor even primarily, foretelling...It is the forthtelling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, present or the future.'¹ Thus we can expect a prophet to foretell God's will by reading and expounding those Scriptures which foretell.² Also we can expect the prophet to expound the other Scriptures which tell forth the will of God. Both his foretelling and 'forthtelling' are to be based on God's Word.

The prophet is one who speaks to people for God so that his Word is exposed and applied. A prophet instructs and comforts. He will unsettle the comfortable, yet settle the uncomfortable. He probes into both the truth of Scripture and the life of the believer. In simple terms, he preaches the Word with power to Christians. It is from these kinds of prophets that we need to hear today.

¹
W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, (Old Tappan: Revell, 1940), Vol. III, p. 221.

²
Ralph W. Neighbour, This Gift Is Mine (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974), p. 63.

C. EVANGELISTS SHOULD INFLUENCE US

It is encouraging to see that the ECSA constitution states that one of the objectives of the denomination is 'to encourage, support and train church members as...evangelists' (Article III, E, p. 4). Sadly, however, this is not taking place. In the first half of this century a number of respected men functioned as evangelists within the ministries of the denomination, but it seems that they have become non-existent in recent times. As one looks at the ECSA leadership one is left with the impression that a hierarchy has been established with ordained pastors on the top of the list, followed by those pastors yet to be ordained, followed by elders and then councilmen. Pastors have now replaced evangelists who once were the key Indian leaders in the ECSA. The lack of functioning evangelists within the denomination is surely one of the major reasons why its churches are not growing rapidly.

An evangelist is literally a 'messenger of good' from eu, 'well', and angelos, 'a messenger'.¹ The word is given three times in Scripture. The first one to be called an evangelist was Philip (cf. Acts 21:8. He was also one of the seven listed in Acts 6:5.) His influential ministry was characterized most by proclaiming Christ to both individuals and crowds (Acts 8:5-8, 26-40). Then in Ephesians 4:11 we read of evangelists, this time in conjunction with the preparation of God's people for service, and, third, Paul

¹
Ibid., Vol. II, p. 44.

encouraged Timothy to do the work of an evangelist in 2 Timothy 4:5.

Evangelists proclaim the gospel, or good news, or the evangel, based on euangelion. They do what the men from Cyprus and Cyrene did when they told the good news, literally evangelized, the Greeks in Antioch (Acts 11:20-21). In a nutshell, they concentrate on the following activities.

1. They proclaim salvation in Christ to those who are lost.

They do so in private (one to one) or public ways, and in part-time for full-time capacities.

2. They edify the body of Christ, especially in terms of reaching the lost with the gospel.

We agree with Ray Stedman, long-time pastor of the Peninsula Bible Church, when he says that evangelists are 'not to thunder away at people' telling them how terrible they are. The evangelist is not to represent God as one who is waiting to strike them with thunderbolts of judgment. Certainly they should warn their hearers of hellfire, but should not do so by hanging them over it 'until they writhe and tremble.' Rather they are to 'tell of the overwhelming grace of God and the overpowering love of a heavenly Father' who calls people back to himself offering them a whole new life in Christ.¹

We urgently need more evangelists in our time and need to hear from them more often in our churches today. The ECSA is no exception to this.

¹
Stedman, p. 75.

D. PASTOR-TEACHERS SHOULD INFLUENCE US

Pastors feature strongly within the ECSA at this time, although less than half of the recognized churches in the denomination have actually appointed pastors in their midst. Together with missionaries these pastors are also recognized as the main Bible teachers in the churches. Then together with a few outspoken and respected elders these pastors have the greatest influence on the major decisions which are taken within the denomination.

The ECSA constitution lends support to the significant role which pastors play within the denomination by describing their role in a number of key articles (Article V, F, p. 8; Article V, H, p.13; Article XI, A and B, p. 21).

Alternatively, it is amazing how little the Scriptures say about pastors in explicit terms, especially in view of the tremendous emphasis we place upon them in our churches today. In fact, there is only one verse where they are clearly mentioned: Ephesians 4:11.

Admittedly there are a number of passages that speak about elders, but if we eliminate them, what is left to describe the role of pastors? If pastors and elders do not fill the same office then we have given a tremendous amount of power and money to a group of leaders called pastors, who are barely mentioned in Scripture.

Some argue that Timothy and Titus were pastors. We agree that they carried out a pastoral-teaching ministry in various churches, but ultimately they were members of Paul's apostolic team--they were missionaries, to put it in today's

language (1 Thes. 1:1; 2:6-7; 3:2; 2 Cor 4. 8:23). When they left a church the local elders took responsibility for the pastoral-teaching functions of that church (Tit. 1:5). They became the pastors of their churches. Timothy and Titus then rejoined Paul to continue their mission ministries.

According to Ephesians 4:11 pastors have a dual role to fill. They are to serve in both pastoring and teaching capacities in the church. Some will be set aside to concentrate on preaching and teaching activities (1 Tim. 5:17), nevertheless, an intermingling between these two functions is still to take place. Pastoring without teaching would otherwise become nebulous, and teaching without pastoring would otherwise become heartless. So the term pastor-teacher has been coined to summarize the dual role of these workers.

The word shepherd summarizes the pastor's role. In the original Greek the word which is used simply means shepherd. Now when we think of what shepherds do, three kinds of activities come to mind: feeding, guarding and caring (cf. Acts 20:28-30). The most important thing that the pastor can do for his sheep is to feed them. In this way he prepares them for service. Also, he guards and cares for them by feeding them. Many Scriptures support the primacy of feeding the flock in the church. Here are some: Hosea 4:6; Colosbians 1:28; 1 Timothy 4:6, 13; 2 Timothy 2:2; 3:16-17; 4:2; Titus 2:1, 15. Like shepherds good pastors eagerly want their sheep to be in a healthy condition (cf. Col. 4:12; 1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12; Heb. 13:20-21; James 1:4).

We agree with John MacArthur, the Senior Pastor of Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, when he says, 'My task is not to fill the building, but to equip the saints...I have no right to ask God for more people until I see some progress in those he has already given me to equip.'

Perhaps the greatest weakness found in pastors today is their failure to disciple believers on an individual basis. Engaging in a public ministry needs to be married to a private one, so that individuals can be helped to grow to maturity (cf. Acts 20:20). In this way the soil of people's hearts is prepared to receive the seed of God's Word when it is spoken publicly.

Another weakness found amongst pastors is their tendency to become deflected away from their first responsibility of teaching the Scriptures. (Good preaching will have much teaching in it.) John McArthur summarizes the problem with these words.

Instead of concentrating on feeding the flock with the Word, (the pastor) has become primarily an 'administrator-caller-counselor' and thus has little time for in-depth study from which he can exposit the Word for his people. To burden a pastor-teacher with functions other than teaching is to rob him of study time and devotion to the Word. This leads to watered down, sloppy and inaccurate teaching which, in turn, weakens the body.²

1

John MacArthur, The Church, the Body, p. 118.

2

Taken from John MacArthur's loose-leaf manual entitled, 'Leadership', published by Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, p. 13.

These words of warning are much needed, especially when pastors are unable to prepare adequately for their preaching and teaching responsibilities.

One of the most irritating problems associated with pastors is the orientation of some to lord it over their churches. While the most familiar term used to describe a pastor is shepherd, the most neglected term is servant (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Many pastors see themselves primarily as leaders of their churches. They expect support for their decisions and opinions. They concentrate on programming and administrating, rather than on training God's people for service. Many liken themselves to the managing director (MD) of a company, rather than to a playing coach on a team. Obviously training people involves giving leadership, but the kind of leadership which grows out of sympathetic service rather than out of executive decisions. Jesus stressed the importance of servanthood rather than leadership when he prepared his disciples for service (cf. Mk. 9:35; 10:42-45). Thus pastors are to command the respect of their people by the functions they perform, rather than demand their respect by the positions they hold. Pastors either become a blessing or bane to the body--a blessing when they become servants and a bane when they become lords.

For a clearer understanding of what the pastor's role involves see the Job Description which follows.

**A BIBLICAL JOB DESCRIPTION FOR
THE PASTOR (ELDER, BISHOP)**

BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. He is to be an 'elder'--a mature man of God (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Heb. 13:7; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

These verses show that the pastor is to be above reproach or blameless in all areas of his life. It is significant that the two lists given in Timothy and Titus begin with this all-encompassing fact.

What a person is determines what he does. Thus the Bible's job description of an elder focuses upon his maturity rather than his duties.

This means that the elder is to model the Christian life. He should set an example (demonstrate a life-style) which others should want to emulate.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

The practical outworkings of these factors are best determined by the elder himself; hence the following list is only suggestive of a few ways in which he should express his Christian experience.

- He should be known as one who gives God the credit for his grace and goodness.
- He should faithfully meet with God in a devotional way each day.
- He should be devoted to his wife, if married. (He is to be a 'one-woman man.' The phrase 'husband of one wife' does not necessarily require an elder to be married, nor does it necessarily refer to a previous divorce.)
- He should demonstrate what it means to be a godly and good father. (This will be reflected in the fact that his children will obey him, believe God's Word and will not be guilty of wild living.)
- He should cultivate friendly relationships with non-Christians (especially his neighbours).
- He should demonstrate a quiet and meek spirit when criticized or in a conflict situation.
- He should effectively teach the Bible. (Some will do so through preaching and others will do so in group or one-to-one situations.)
- He should often point others to Lord by what he says and does.

2. He is to be a '**pastor**'--a shepherd of God's people (cf. Acts 20:28-31; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

a. He is to help **feed** them

Ephesians 4:11-12 shows that the pastor-teacher's basic function is to 'prepare God's people for works of service.' In other words, he should give himself to helping others carry out their ministry in and through the church. This is especially achieved when he trains others in the truths of the Scripture and then entrusts to them various aspects of the church's ministry.

b. He is to help **guard** them

Acts 20:28-31 stresses the importance of guarding 'the flock' from 'savage wolves.' The pastor is to initiate this function along two lines according to verse 31:

- 1) He is to watch for evil
- 2) He is to warn against evil

c. He is to help **care** for them

When members of God's flock face crises or crucial issues they are to be cared for and built up by the pastor. He does this by serving them personally or by helping others to do so (cf. Gal. 6:10).

The practical outworkings of these requirements are best determined by the pastor himself; hence the following list is only suggestive of some of the things he should do.

--He is to participate in the teaching or preaching ministries of the church.

--He is to spend at least one-fourth of his church-time in preparation for his teaching and preaching responsibilities.

--He is to give special attention to the discipling of individuals on a personal basis, particularly those who have been assigned to his special care.

--He is to help train fellow teachers, preachers and pastors for the work of the church.

--He is to lead God's people into a deeper understanding and practice of doctrine, worship, fellowship and prayer, and into a greater involvement in outreach at home and abroad.

--He is to help determine the Bible's position on the issues confronting the church. When controversial matters arise he is to encourage the overt expression of love and the open-minded examination of all aspects involved, including opposing points of view.

--He is to help promote church discipline when church members refuse to repent of definite sinful behaviour.

--He is to visit and pray for some of the sick, help some who are hurting (especially orphans and widows), counsel some needing advice, and comfort some of the bereaved.

3. He is to be a **bishop**--an overseer of God's people (cf. Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 6, 22, 23; 1 Tim. 3:4-5; 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:3).

a. He is to help **organize** the people of the church

It is instructive to note that when the early church faced a responsibility the leaders came together to discuss and deal with the matters at hand (cf. Acts 15:6). This reminds us that church organization involves:

- 1) the bringing together of people.
- 2) who have been suitably equipped,
- 3) to attend to the issues at stake.
- 4) under workable circumstances,
- 5) so that a suitable solution is found.

In other words, the bishop is to help set up the framework in which the church's ministry is to be carried out.

b. He is to help **administer** the affairs of the church

In Acts 15:22-29 we see that the elders helped in making appropriate decisions about the issues at stake. They then carried out their decisions by delegating to the right people both the responsibility and the means to execute these decisions.

(Thus, discussions should lead to decisions which lead to delegation.) The bishop is to help carry out the functions of the church through the framework he helped establish.

Once again the practical outworkings of these requirements is something for each pastor to work out for himself, so the following list is only suggestive.

--He is not to see himself as a ruler over God's people nor come across as such. The Greek of 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and 5:17 states that he is to 'stand before them.' He does so first as a model to be imitated and then as a servant to assist them in their growth.

--He is to encourage God's people to serve him according to their gifts in at least one capacity in or through the local church.

--He is to help in the recognition of potential elders and deacons who can assist in carrying out the basic functions of the church.

--He should help determine how much he may be away from the church so that his absence is not a hindrance to his work.

--He is to help the church maintain its priorities, particularly the demonstration of purity and unity, the building up of believers and the carrying out of the mission that God has given us.

--A full-time pastor should spend an average of 50 to 55 hours a week, and a part-time pastor at least 10 to 12 hours a week in preparation for and participation in the work of the church, or in related activities.

E. TEACHERS SHOULD INFLUENCE US

The ECSA constitution acknowledges that Bible teachers are necessary to give effective Christian leadership to the denomination. It declares that one of its objectives is 'to encourage, support and train church members as...Bible teachers' (Article III, E, p. 4). In reality, however, not much is done to carry this out. For example, in recent years a few of the more gifted pastors have expressed an interest in pursuing further studies, so that they can serve in teaching capacities within the ECSA context, but the churches have done little to encourage them in these matters. They have had to chart their own course, especially when it comes to paying for the studies which they have pursued.

Pastor George Rajoo is a good illustration of this point. After returning to South Africa upon completion of his studies in the United States he has found it very difficult to find his niche in the ECSA once again. Before he left he was encouraged by many ECSA people to remember that an open door of ministry awaited him upon his return. But once he did so he found that ECSA churches are very reluctant to recognize his commitment to teaching, because they do not want to support him financially in the teaching post he has accepted at the Durban Bible College. Also churches have not wanted to appoint him as their pastor. Since he earned two advanced degrees while in the U.S.A., it is argued that he is now overqualified for a pastoral post.

It is important to recognize the significant role that effective teachers fill in church life. To appreciate this

one needs to realize that sometimes the Scriptures separate teachers from pastors (cf. Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:29). Some people are called to concentrate on a teaching ministry. For example, some are Sunday School teachers, others are Bible study leaders and still others are teachers in a Bible college, seminary or university.

The Scriptures also suggest that most Bible teachers do not function only in one capacity. The most vivid examples of teachers given in Scripture are of those, like Paul, who filled more than one role in the church. Teaching is such an important function it forms an integral part of the work done by apostles (Acts 4:2; 11:26), prophets (Acts 13:1), evangelists (Acts 18:24, 27-28), and pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11-12). The same can be said for preaching. Thus both teaching and preaching are a vital part of what each of these workers must do (cf. Acts 5:42; 15:35).

At this point we may find it helpful to summarize the Bible's teaching about church workers in this way:

- Apostles are to initiate
- Prophets are to stimulate
- Evangelists are to infiltrate
- Pastors and Teachers are to consolidate

The Bible is very flexible in the way it describes these workers. The terms it uses refer more to the functions which they perform than to the positions which they hold. In 1 Timothy 2:7 Paul described himself in three different ways. Other verses also teach us that he was an apostle in one

situation (Eph. 1:1), a prophet in another (Acts 13:1), an evangelist in another (Acts 20:21), and a pastor-teacher in still another (Acts 11:26; 13:1; 18:11; 20:20, 31). Also, Peter and John were both apostles and elders (Mk. 3:14-17; 1 Pet. 1:1; 5:1; 2 Jn. 1). Thus the Scriptures do not categorize workers in a uniform or watertight fashion, because workers serve in different capacities at different times. Yet it is still possible to distinguish between them, because of the particular orientation of each role.

Now it is crucial that we benefit from the distinctive ministry of each kind of worker (cf. Eph. 4:11-12). Pastors in particular should ensure that this takes place because of their direct influence on their churches. To make this practical here is a plan of action to consider.

- Conduct missions conferences to hear from apostles.
- Conduct 'Deeper Life' meetings to hear from prophets.
- Conduct evangelistic meetings to hear from evangelists.
- Conduct Bible conferences or seminars to hear from Bible teachers (possibly use camps for this).

F. ELDERS SHOULD INFLUENCE US

It is interesting to note that the ECSA constitution states that 'the pastor is an elder' (Article V, H, 5, p. 13). However, in the day to day operations of the denomination this is not the way the pastors are viewed. They act as though they are a distinct group separate from the elders. Even the constitution suggests this by the way it describes the procedures by which elders are to be appointed to office (cf.

Article V, H, 5, a, p. 12). These procedures are not the same as those laid down for pastors indicating that both groups are not seen to be one body.

David Foster, a Canadian missionary who works amongst the people of the ECSA, believes that a serious weakness exists in the denomination because of the failure on the part of elders to fill a pastoral role in their respective churches. He says that 'a one-man band syndrome' develops when the ministry of churches revolve around the activities and controls of the pastor. Nearly every ECSA church has gone this way when a pastor has been appointed.

For the sake of convenience, some churches use the term 'pastor' to refer to a full-time elder, while the term 'elder' is applied to those who serve in the same capacity, but on a part-time basis. Of course, the danger here is to water down the biblical role of elders. On the other hand, the Lord is surely not bogged down by our use of these different terms to describe this office, providing those who are given these titles faithfully carry out their biblical functions.

In the New Testament the words 'elder', 'bishop' and 'pastor' are used interchangeably (cf. Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1; 5:17; Tit. 1:5-7). The interplay between these three terms is well supported by 1 Peter 5:1-4. They describe one office from different angles. So when we describe an elder or a bishop we describe a pastor. The term 'elder' refers essentially to the maturity of the man involved, while the terms 'pastor' and 'bishop' refer essentially to his duties.

--Elder (or presbyter) comes from presbuteros, and refers to church leaders nearly 20 times (cf. Acts 11:29-30; 1 Tim. 5:17). Altogether, it is used about 70 times in the New Testament.¹

--Bishop (or overseer) comes from episkopos and is used seven times in the New Testament (cf. Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1).

--Pastor (or shepherd) comes from poimēn and is used one time in the New Testament (Eph. 4:11).

1. What Specific Duties Should Elders Perform?

No specific statements are given in the ECSA constitution regarding the duties which elders should perform, although it is stated that they should conduct themselves so that 'the work of the church (will) greatly prosper under (their) administration and supervision' (Article V, H, 5, p. 12).

According to Scripture elders are to perform the same functions as pastor-teachers (cf. Acts 20:17-35; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Even if one is persuaded that pastors and elders form two different groups, we should at least agree that both groups have the same responsibilities to carry out. (See the Pastor's Job Description on p. 73 for more details.)

Essentially the elder is to be marked by reaching and teaching. He is to reach out to God's people and then teach them the truth of Scripture. If he fails in this, he is not a true elder. He may do this on a personal basis, rather than

¹ John MacArthur, Shepherdology (Panorama, CA: Master's Fellowship, 1989), pp. 153-154.

in group situations, but he must at least reach and teach God's people. This means that there are three basic activities to look for in an elder.

--He prays often with God's people.

--He visits church-related homes regularly.

--He teaches God's Word systematically to individuals or groups.

2. Who Should Be Appointed to Serve As an Elder?

The ECSA constitution does give a long list of biblical qualifications to look for in a prospective elder (cf. Article V, H, 5, p. 12). He is to be suitable for this role. He is also to be available. In other words, both his maturity (who he is) and his ministry (what he does) are to be considered before he is appointed as an elder.

When the Scriptures list the qualifications for elders they appeal for present-tense evaluations of the men involved. They do not call us to 'pull out the skeletons in a man's closet.' However, there may be some sins in his life which are serious enough or recent enough to disqualify him from serving as an elder. Ultimately, an elder is not a man of the cloth, but a man of God.

The passages which refer to elders (pastors) all carry the connotation that men are to serve in this capacity. In the Jewish system of things all elders were men. None of the books of the Bible were written by women, nor was a woman ever appointed as a priest or king. Also 1 Peter 5:1 indicates that a man may be an elder, but there are no other verses

which can be applied to a woman in the same way. Moreover, all the passages which list the qualifications for elders are geared to men and not women. Even Jesus chose twelve men when he established the leadership of the church. This does not mean that the Scriptures are harsh toward women. In fact, the opposite is true. They clearly show that women may have a very strong spiritual influence in the lives of men. Nevertheless, they also indicate that God expects men rather than women to serve as elders in local churches. (For a more complete explanation about the role of women in church life see chapter six, page 264.)

2 Timothy 2:2 reminds us that we are to look for men who are faithful and able to teach others the things of God. Who they are (their spirituality) and what they do (their capabilities) are the crucial elements to look at when looking for elders.

Stated simply, we should consider the following factors in a man's life when looking for elders.

- His maturity (include here his compatability)
- His theology
- His ability
- His ministry

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-3 we have a description of the qualities we can expect to find in an elder. We need to ask questions to ascertain if a man has these qualities, and is, therefore, suitable to serve as an elder. We also need to determine if a suitable man is actually available to serve as an elder in his church.

It is most significant that more is said in the Bible about a man's qualifications than his functions. The kind of person he is, is far more important than what he does, because what he does grows out of the kind of person he is.

Appendix B provides a Qualification Questionnaire which gives additional details of what we should look for in prospective elders and provides a systematic way of applying the lists given in Timothy and Titus in local church settings.

3. How Can We Promote the Appointment of New Elders?

No definite guidelines are given in the ECSA constitution in respect of this issue. It simply states that a local church's nominating committee must initiate the appointment of an elder (Article V, H, 5, a, p. 12).

On the other hand, the Scriptures state that it is a good thing when a man sets his heart on becoming an elder (1 Tim. 3:1). Literally, he stretches himself out for it. He will demonstrate these aspirations by beginning to carry out pastoral and teaching functions in the life of his church. He will become both a servant of the flock and a student of the Scriptures. By ministering in both private and public settings, particularly in terms of Bible teaching, he will disciple others so that they too serve the Lord with greater diligence.

Just as it is better to place the contents in a bottle before adding a suitable label to it, so it is better to see a man functioning in pastoral ministries before actually calling him an elder.

The crucial word for us, therefore, is 'recognition.' As we recognize those who are actually engaged in pastoral-teaching activities, we should give them every encouragement to become elders, providing they qualify. And those who demonstrate the potential to become elders, should be invited to engage in pastoral duties, which in time should lead to their appointment as elders.

4. How Should Elders Be Appointed?

The ECSA constitution gives a rather lengthy procedure whereby elders are appointed to office. It involves passage from one church-related meeting to the next and culminates in the public appointment of a man to the position of an elder in a local church (cf. Article V, H, 5, pp. 12-13).

Conversely, the Bible is not very specific in this matter, yet it does indicate that elders are to be both **appointed** and **accepted** in a local church when it becomes clear that they are both suitable and available to serve that church through both pastoral and teaching functions.

It is vital that new elders are appointed after the Lord's will is sought in this matter. Ultimately the Holy Spirit gives elders to churches, so it is important that we seek his guidance as to who he wants appointed (cf. Acts 20:28). Usually he will begin indicating his will in this matter by prompting individuals to begin serving as elders do. Then the present leaders of a church should become aware of the emergence of potential elders within their fellowship (cf. Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5). Existing elders should help carry the

burden of identifying new leaders (cf. 1 Tim. 4:14), since they are held responsible for the spiritual oversight of their local church. Also they understand best what is involved. Then, finally, the matter should be put to the congregation wherein the new elder is willing to serve.

While the Bible does not require that elders are elected to office by a congregation, it does suggest that new elders should be acceptable to the people amongst whom they are going to work. Surely this is one of the reasons why the qualifications are given. Furthermore, we should take note of the opinions of others (cf. Phil. 2:3-4). The early church leaders set us a good example by taking into account the opinions of the people when they appointed new leaders in God's work (Acts 6:2-6; 16:1-2). So if church leaders call for the support of their people for the appointment of new elders (possibly with a vote) they are not acting out of line with the tenor of Scripture.

Thus, the appointment of elders rests in the hands of the Holy Spirit, the present leaders of the church, the man in question and the congregation which he is willing to serve.

5. How Many Elders Should a Church Appoint?

The ECSA constitution is silent on this matter, yet the Bible indicates that each church needs to work towards establishing a plurality of elders. This is illustrated by the early church (cf. Acts 14:23; 20:17) and implied by the epistles (cf. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 4:14). In fact, Paul suggested that those churches which do not have a plurality of

functioning elders are incomplete (Tit. 1:5). We too are to straighten out this matter in our churches.

Why is such a plurality needed? No specific reasons are given in the Bible, but some vital deductions may be made.

a. Jesus is the Lord of the church and not its pastors (Eph. 5:23). When a church is pastored by one man, often he is elevated into a position of headship in the church with damaging effects.

b. One man cannot adequately shepherd a church on his own (Eph. 4:16). The task is too big for him. For example, he needs to have a strong discipling influence in the church, which means he should sit down on a personal basis with many of those connected with the church and lead them, in a systematic way, into a closer walk with the Lord. This takes a great deal of time, which usually he does not have when called upon to carry out other duties such as visiting, counseling, organizing, administering, marrying, burying, preaching and teaching.

c. A church needs to be influenced by the variety of insights and gifts which God gives to a group of elders. They help round out the life of a church (1 Cor. 12:21-22). This does not mean that we should expect all the men to preach, otherwise we will find that some men have something to say, while others simply say something.¹

d. When one elder leaves or is away from the church then the other elders can carry on giving spiritual leadership

¹
Michael Griffiths, Get Your Act Together, Cinderella (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), p. 151.

to the church. The ideal for spiritual leadership in a church is not a one-man ministry. Nor is it an any-man ministry. Rather it is a team or body ministry.

The number of elders appointed in a church depends upon the number of suitable men available, and upon the needs of the church. It is inadequate, therefore, to create a fixed number of positions on a Board of Elders and then to try and fill them. The Bible's focus is upon suitable men, not upon numbers or positions or procedures.

Of course, as the needs in churches grow, the need for additional pastors will increase, but the way to do something about these needs is to keep on looking for new elders. When they emerge a specific sphere of pastoral ministry will be found for them within the activities and opportunities facing their own churches. It may take the form of Bible teaching, personal discipling, counseling, visiting, ministering to a particular age group, or ministering to those in a particular geographical area.

G. DEACONS SHOULD INFLUENCE US

A very brief article in the ECSA constitution acknowledges that deacons have a role to play in the churches they represent (cf. Article V, H, 5, b, p. 13). However, in the on-going activities of the denomination the role of deacons is not well understood. The church councils are made up of councilmen, but when they are elected to office the standards of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 are not applied to them, so

there is always the danger that they do not qualify in biblical terms for the role of the deacon in their churches.

On the other hand, there are certain members who qualify and actually serve in the capacity of deacons in their churches, yet they are not members of the church council. Then sometimes the term 'elder' is applied to some who really should be called deacons, because of the functions they perform. The term 'elder' only glorifies them.

The Greek word diakonos from which we derive the word deacon is translated most often as 'servant' or 'minister' (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; 6:4; Eph. 3:7; 6:21; Col. 1:7, 23, 25). In a general sense all Christians are to be servants and ministers in the lives of others (1 Pet. 4:10-11). However, there are a few verses which indicate that deacons are an identifiable group of spiritual people who have been set apart officially to serve in this capacity in a local church (cf. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). In this study our focus is upon these official deacons, especially in the following two areas.

1. Their Qualifications

From 1 Timothy 3:8-13 we learn that deacons are to be spiritual people. Appendix C involves a Qualification Questionnaire which provides a systematic way of applying this passage in a local church.

At least two major differences exist between the qualifications of elders and deacons. The elder must be able to teach God's Word, while this is not required of the deacon,

and, second, the elder must not be a recent convert, suggesting that the deacon may be.

The Bible indicates that women may also qualify as deacons. It is possible that a lady named Phoebe served as a deaconess at Cenchrae, near Corinth (Rom. 16:1). Moreover, the alternative translation for 'wives' in 1 Timothy 3:11 is 'women', indicating that Paul may have had 'women deacons' or deaconesses in mind. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that he would have referred to 'their' wives in the Greek (as the NIV does) if he had the deacons' wives in view, but he did not actually do so. Also, since he did not make comments about the wives of elders we should not expect him to make similar comments about the wives of deacons at this point. Furthermore, the Greek word which is translated as 'likewise' in verse 8 and as 'in the same way' in verse 11 of the NIV relates back to an office of the church, indicating that Paul could well have had the office of deaconess in mind in this passage rather than deacons' wives.

2. Their Functions

The Bible says nothing explicitly about the functions of deacons. However, since the word diakonos means servant we may conclude that deacons are to be characterized most of all by serving. Acts 6:1-6 supports this view, although it is unlikely that the seven spiritual men who were appointed to take care of neglected widows in the church at Jerusalem were in fact deacons. Nevertheless, they do illustrate the fact that churches need leaders who will become involved in a

church in such a way that those who are responsible for its spiritual development, especially by way of prayer and proclamation,¹ are not deflected from their priorities.

It is important that we understand the essential difference in function between elders and deacons. Elders are to concentrate on preparing workers. Ephesians 4:11-12 summarizes their role by saying that they are to 'prepare God's people for works of service.' Deacons, on the other hand, are to concentrate on serving.

Some misunderstand Scripture by contending that elders are responsible only for the spiritual side of the church, while the deacons are responsible only for its material matters. However, if deacons are to serve in the affairs of the church, they should be involved in both realms. Therefore, it is better to say that both elders and deacons need to become active in both spiritual and material matters, but each within their particular role of 'preparing' and 'serving.'

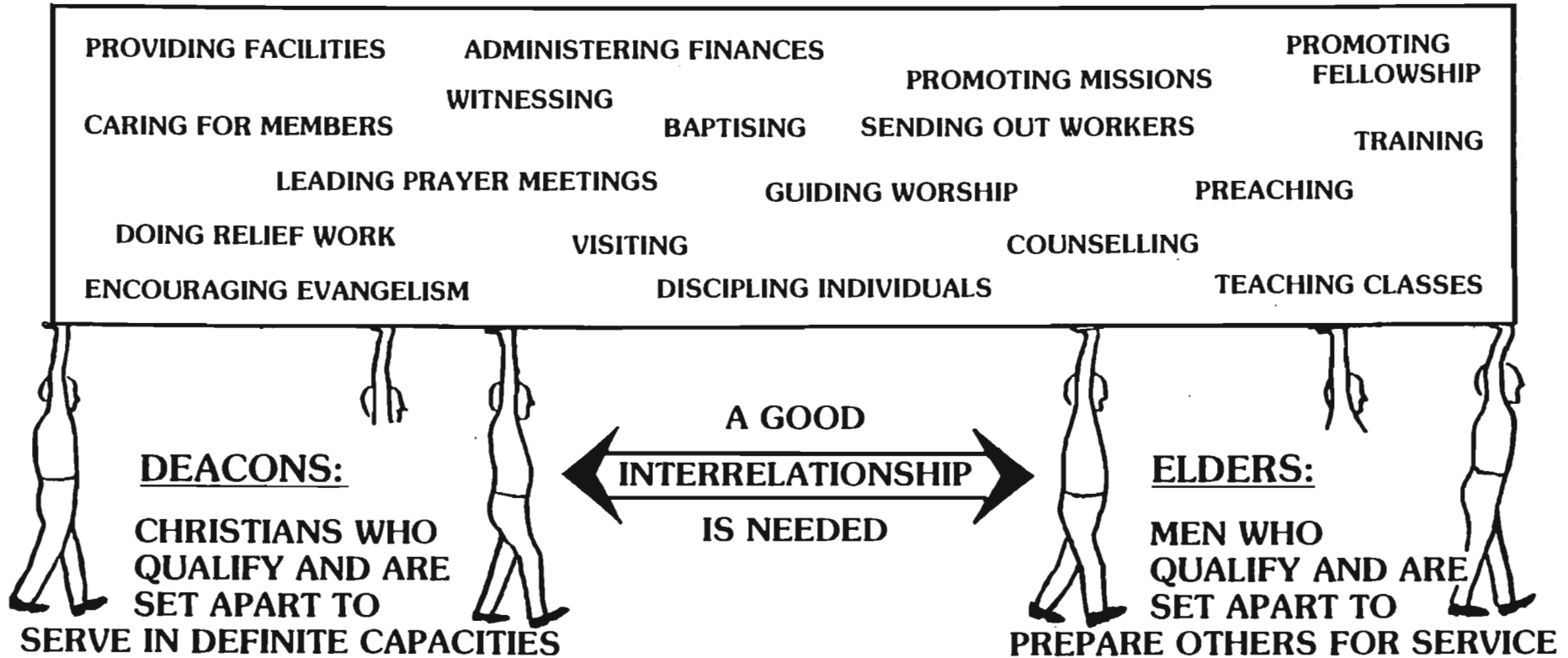
Neither group is above the other, yet we expect elders to take the initiative in the essentials of church life. Their task is a daunting one, so deacons are needed to help carry the load. The chart over the page depicts this.

1

Each of the seven had Greek names indicating that they were a special group appointed to take care of the Grecian-widows rather than an official body of deacons who ministered to the Jerusalem church at large. Then in Acts 11:29-30 elders rather than deacons are described as taking care of relief matters suggesting that no official body of deacons existed at that time to deal with such matters.

DEACONS IN RELATIONSHIP TO ELDERS

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Although all Christians are called to serve one another, deacons are set apart to do so. Like elders they are a distinct body of workers who commit themselves to serving the Lord in their church.

Deacons do well if they serve in definite capacities. It is not good enough to meet with other deacons and pontificate. Inspiration without perspiration paves the way to pontification. Wise is the church, therefore, that creates specific portfolios and then seeks suitable deacons to fill them. Those appointed can then concentrate their efforts and become effective in the Lord's work. They become even more effective when they ask how they can relieve their elders (pastors) of those activities which are deflecting them from their priorities. The more they help their elders (pastors) to shepherd and teach their people, the more effective they all will become.

THE SERVANT SONG

Brother let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on a journey
We are brothers on the road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the nighttime of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak the peace you long to hear

I will weep when you are weeping
When you laugh I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through

CHAPTER IV

PRIORITIZING ACTIVITIES FOR THE EDIFICATION OF CHRISTIANS AT THE LOCAL CHURCH LEVEL

We turn our attention now to the third of the crucial essentials which this thesis stresses: Basic church practices must be carried out when local churches meet.

The ECSA has committed itself to carrying out the basic activities required of it by Scripture, albeit that each activity is in need of strengthening. Local churches are in danger of carrying out these activities routinely, without much meaning infused in each one. They have become perfunctory. As creatures of habit the members of the ECSA are tempted to go through the motions of church life without putting their heart and soul into it. David Foster, a missionary working in the ECSA, has said, 'A greater sense of vitality is needed.' He laments the fact that prayer is simply tacked onto other activities. He adds, 'Exhortation prevails, but not instruction.'¹

This pattern would be reversed if their members became more aware of their position in Christ and then expressed it more positively in their lives (cf. Phil. 2:12-13). Therefore, this chapter places before the ECSA explanations and suggestions about the basic activities which need to be strengthened when the local churches of the denomination meet.

¹
Gleaned from an interview held in Durban on June 3, 1993.

It is vital that Christian people gather together (cf. Heb. 10:25). As Theodore Roosevelt once said, 'You may worship God anywhere, at any time, but the chances are that you will not do so unless you have first learned to worship him somewhere in some particular place, at some particular time.'¹

So we turn our attention now to the most important activities which should characterize each church when it gathers together. Acts 2:41-47 highlights at least seven vital activities which churches need to practice effectively today.

A. BAPTISM AS A VITAL CHURCH PRACTICE (cf. Acts 2:41)

Although missionaries with the Africa Evangelical Fellowship, the mother organization to the ECSA, are divided over which form of baptism is taught in the Bible, the ECSA has adopted the position that 'the mode of Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer once in water' (Article II, K, p. 3). The constitution also states in Article V (p. 10) that the membership shall be made up of 'those who have declared their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have confessed the same in baptism (immersion)'.

Baptism was a common activity in the early church, and should be today. Even though there are differences in conviction about baptism, three great factors should guide in its practice.

¹ Quoted by Billy Graham in his devotional calendar on February 5, 1990.

1. It speaks of **identification** with Christ (Rom. 6:3-5)
2. It speaks of **incorporation** into the body of Christ (Acts 9:18-19)
3. It speaks of **instruction** in the ways of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20)

Baptism is a part of the continuum of discipling. So when someone is baptized he declares his desire to be disciplined. This affords churches with a good opportunity to instruct its people in what it means to obey Christ in everything (Jn. 14:15, 21, 23).

It is important to remember that no verse of Scripture unequivocally promises a special work of God's grace in our lives through water-baptism. As shown below, those passages which seem to teach baptismal regeneration all may be explained in alternative terms, true to the rest of Scripture. We agree that we will experience more of God's grace as we are **obedient** to him and are baptized, but we cannot guarantee on the basis of Scripture that water-baptism itself will bring a special measure of God's grace into a believer's life. If there were such Scriptures then people would be tempted to be baptized over and over again to receive more of God's grace.

It is clear that when we are baptized by the Spirit, that is, when we are saved by God's grace, many supernatural things happen in our lives. However, we must not confuse what happens at our Spirit-baptism (1 Cor. 12:13) with what happens at our water-baptism. Water-baptism demonstrates visibly what has happened to us privately through our Spirit-baptism. It is the sign of God's grace, but not the seal of it. The Bible teaches us that the Spirit seals us, not baptism (Eph. 1:14).

Certainly the act of water-baptism is a **sign** of what has happened to the believer in Christ, but to insist that baptism itself is infused with mysterious, supernatural activities or properties is to go beyond the teaching of Scripture and to create the impression that baptism is an integral part of our salvation.

This means that church leaders may not claim that they are special agents through whom extra measures of God's grace will be poured out in special ways on those whom they baptize. Nor may they claim anything special for the water which they use.¹ Certainly it does not cleanse sinners, nor is there anything mysterious which happens in the very act of baptism.

Admittedly God works in unexpected ways in the lives of individuals. We may even say that he works mysteriously in their lives. But this is something which transpires **directly** between God and the individual, rather than something which moves mysteriously through water-baptism into the life of the individual. The mystery involved is between God and the individual alone. Put briefly, we must not confuse the **mystery** of God's workings in the life of the believer with the **simplicity** of water-baptism itself.

Nevertheless, there are some who teach on the basis of a few verses that water-baptism is intrinsic to our salvation. However, it is important to note the following reasons why this is **not** actually so.

¹
Henry C. Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), p. 368.

1. The overwhelming evidence of the New Testament teaches that we are saved by Christ alone, and not by Christ plus someone else or some other activity. We are reminded of this when we open anywhere to the epistles and see their constant focus on Christ and the salvation he brings us apart from any other agent. This is also confirmed by the experience of the early Christians. So to insist that two or three verses teach that baptism contributes to our salvation is to fly in the face of the great body of New Testament evidence which shows that we are saved by Christ alone. This is why we generally do not hear preachers say that we are alive in Christ because of our baptism. Rather, we are alive because of our faith in him (cf. Gal. 2:20). Better still, we are alive because of his saving grace in our lives (Gal. 4:9a).

2. It is important that we separate those verses which speak about Spirit-baptism from those which speak about water-baptism. It is clear that the Bible gives us teaching about the baptism of the Spirit in verses such as Acts 11:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 12:13. Obviously, both forms of baptism are linked, with water-baptism serving as 'the symbol of which Spirit-baptism is the reality.'¹ When we recognize some of the differences between these two forms of baptism, then we will realise that water-baptism does not save us.² (Here are some

¹John R. W. Stott, The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964), p. 14.

²See Merril C. Tenney, ed., 'Baptism' Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1967), p. 96.

other examples of passages which evidently describe Spirit-baptism: Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.)

3. There are verses which clearly teach us that we are not saved by our works. This surely excludes water-baptism as a means of salvation (cf. Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5; Rom. 4:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9).

4. Clearly some people are baptized but are not regenerate. Some go through a religious rite which they call baptism, but they do not see how it relates to Christ and his claims upon them. As Augustine wrote, 'Many of those within are without; and some of those without are within.'¹ The disciples of Acts 19:1-7 are an example of this. Then others claim to understand what is involved, but they do not evidence a regenerate life marked by Christlikeness. They become a contradiction of 2 Corinthians 5:17.

5. Alternatively, Jesus promised the thief on the cross a place in heaven without requiring that he first pass through the waters of baptism (cf. Lk. 23:42-43).

6. The majority of verses on water-baptism show that it is an **expression** of our salvation and not an intricate part of it. It is **linked to**, but does not **lead to** our salvation. For one thing, if water-baptism was vital to our salvation we would expect to find it in each Great Commission passage, but it is found only in two and then only one of them needs a

1

Quoted by Brian Russell, Baptism--A Sign and Seal of God's Grace (Roodepoort: Emmanuel Baptist Church, n.d.), p. 14.

special explanation. (See Mark 16:16 below.) Similarly other crucial verses which describe what is involved in experiencing salvation do so without mentioning baptism (cf. Jn. 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13; Eph. 2:8-9).

7. Alternative explanations exist for the tricky verses involved.

a. Mark 16:16: Here we have a major textual problem. As part of Mark 16:9-20 this verse is absent from important early manuscripts. Therefore, serious doubts prevail as to whether or not this verse actually belongs to Mark. Furthermore, this whole passage displays 'peculiarities of vocabulary, style and theological content that are unlike the rest of Mark.'¹ Thus it is dangerous to build a doctrine, especially one as important as the doctrine of salvation, on such a doubtful text.

b. Acts 2:38: In this verse Peter answers his listener's question by giving them a list of instructions to follow rather than a doctrinal explanation of baptism. Note Acts 2:41 where they carried out his instructions. They accepted his message first. And what was that message? That Christ was indeed the expected Saviour (2:22-36). There was no mention of baptism in that message. Having accepted Christ they then were baptized. The same thing happened when Paul faced a similar question. See Acts 16:29-34. The fact that Paul made no mention of baptism in his answer (v. 31) helps to confirm

¹ The NIV Study Bible (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1985), p. 1530.

that Peter was simply giving a list of instructions in Acts 2:38.

c. Acts 22:16: At this point Paul gives us a very brief summary of what he had to do at the time of his conversion. For one thing, he had to be baptized. He was also told to wash his sins away. How was this to be done? By calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, described as the Righteous One in verse 14. (In other words, we must not allow the arrangement of commas in verse 16 to confuse us. They were not included in the original text.) The fact that Paul's baptism did not contribute to his salvation is confirmed by Acts 9:17-19 where we read that he was baptized after he put his trust in Christ. It is also supported by Acts 13:38-39 and 16:31 where Paul himself taught (without mentioning baptism) that one is saved through trusting Christ. He encouraged baptism (16:15, 33), but clearly preached that Christ saves, not baptism (1 Cor. 1:17).

d. Colossians 2:12: This has to do with our Spirit-baptism, not our water-baptism. It comes in the context of explanations of what we receive in Christ. For example, the previous verse (v. 11) describes our circumcision. Clearly this does not refer to a literal experience, but to a spiritual one. Likewise with baptism.

e. 1 Peter 3:21: The water mentioned in this verse refers to the waters described in verse 20, that is, to the flood waters of Noah's time. This water symbolizes

the kind of 'baptism that now saves us.' What kind of baptism is that? See the rest of verse 21 for the answer. It is not that which leads to 'the removal of dirt from the body.' but that which leads to our being 'baptized by one Spirit into one body' (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). So this verse also describes our Spirit-baptism and, when seen in this light, dovetails well with verse 18 where we are told that Christ brings us to God. Significantly, water-baptism is not mentioned at this point (v. 18), because it has nothing to do with our coming to God.

We may safely conclude, therefore, that none of these verses prove in a conclusive way that baptism in water is intrinsic to our salvation.

B. TEACHING AS A VITAL CHURCH PRACTICE (cf. Acts 2:42)

One of the aims of the ECSA is 'to defend the faith once delivered and to discourage false doctrine by the propagation of the truth of God, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures...' (Article III, C.). A similar aim states that the ECSA exists 'to edify Christians through the teaching of the Holy Scriptures' (Article III, G.). Therefore, in principle the ECSA is committed to Bible teaching, and even in practice efforts are being made to bring this about. Most notable is the Christian Training College which is simply a night school programme that meets weekly in three centres: Durban, Renishaw and Port Shepstone. Numbers have varied over the years with about thirty to forty students involved most

times. Obviously some teaching also takes place through the preaching which is heard in Sunday services, although most of what is said in these settings is soon forgotten. Moreover, for more than ten years now the ECSA leaders have encouraged some of their members to attend the Durban Bible College on a full-time basis. Each year a small group has done so.

ECSA leaders are agreed in principle that there is no more relevant person than an edified Christian and that effective Bible teaching plays a major role in bringing this about.

James M. Hatch, a very effective professor and counselor at Columbia Bible College and Seminary, contends that the more one knows of the Bible, the more one sees the importance of teaching in God's work. He adds that we could almost sum up God's redemptive programme as the process of God's calling individuals into a relationship with himself so that he might teach them of himself and bring their behaviour into conformity with his own.¹ The Old Testament undergirds this with these statements: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart...These commands are to be upon your hearts...Impress them on your children' (Deut. 6:5-7). The New Testament likewise supports this when it says, 'Go and make disciples (learners) of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:19-20). This

¹
Adapted from James M. Hatch, Teaching--the Heart of God's Redemptive Program (Upper Darby, PA: The Bible Club Movement, n.d.), p. 3.

leads us to the conclusion that if we want to be involved with what God is doing we must be involved with teaching.

Pastors Vernon Govender and Daddy Doorasamy, both of whom serve relatively new churches in the Phoenix area near Durban, point out that special attention needs to be given to the training of local leaders in new churches. They argue that missionaries have been at fault here, because they have started new churches and then upon their imminent departure have sought a young pastor to take over the leadership of the work. They have overlooked the potential leadership found in new churches, and, therefore, not developed it. In other words, more attention must be paid in the ECSA to the matter of teaching, especially teaching of prospective church leaders.

1. What Are the Essentials of Teaching?

Teaching is not talking and listening, nor is it telling the truth. Rather it is helping people to experience and express the truth. It is better described by the word training and is well illustrated by a train where the teacher is likened to the engine and the students are likened to the railway coaches. Just as the engine must take the coaches to new places so teachers are to take their students to new places in their understanding and living.

When applied to the things of God, teaching, or better still, training is the process whereby a Christian takes another person in his behaviour to those God-ordained places which the Christian himself has already reached. To quote

James M. Hatch, Christian training is 'the process by which the behaviour of one person is changed into conformity with a standard exemplified by another.'¹

So the Christian teacher looks for two things in his student:

- a. **Changes**--from a self-centered lifestyle (cf. Col. 2:13)
- b. **Conformity**--to a Christ-centered lifestyle (cf. Rom. 12:2)

2. What Truths Are We Christians to Teach One Another?

In Matthew 28:20 we have Jesus' answer to this question: we are to teach one another to obey everything he has commanded us. This means that we must be schooled in knowing what he has decreed in his Word and then in doing what he expects of us. Telling what Christ taught is important, but helping others to observe that teaching is far more important. In simple but profound terms, we are to edify one another so that we become like Christ in all aspects of our lives (cf. 1 Cor. 10:32-11:1).

As we teach God's people his Word we must be careful to emphasize the fundamentals it teaches. Bible-believing Christians stress and express the Bible's emphases in their beliefs and behaviour. They remember that the main truths of Scripture are the plain truths, and the plain truths are the main truths. Certainly the Bible teaches us many important things, but there are a few great fundamentals that tower

¹
Ibid., p. 6.

above all others which all Christians need to stress in their lives. These great truths may be tabulated as follows:

- a. The glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 3:21)
- b. The centrality of Christ (Col. 1:18)
- c. The indispensability of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18)
- d. The authority of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- e. The urgency of salvation (2 Cor. 6:1-2)
- f. The victory of the believer (Rom. 6:14; Phil. 4:4)
- g. The vitality of the local church (Eph. 4:15-16)

The first three points have to do with God, the last three with man and the middle one with God's communication to man.

Teaching through the books and sections of the Bible remains forever the best way of teaching God's truth, while presenting studies on topics and characters of the Bible is a close second. Using pre-prepared materials and study guides will also lead us into important truths of Scripture. For those who want to go deeper we will find that the curriculae of good Bible colleges provide good ideas of the kinds of subjects that a local church can begin teaching. Then for those who wish to study the Bible in a systematic and disciplined way we should tie them into correspondence and extension courses offered by Bible colleges. Churches do well when they are able to structure some of their teaching activities around these courses, going so far as to offer extra classes or tutorials to help their people with their studies.

A SUGGESTED TEN-YEAR CURRICULUM FOR THE
EDUCATION OF ADULTS IN A LOCAL CHURCH

Survey of Old Testament - Part 1
Survey of Old Testament - Part 2
Survey of New Testament

Genesis
Daniel and Revelation
Matthew
John
Acts
Romans
1 Corinthians (Include a study of tongue-speaking)
Prison Epistles
Hebrews

The Progress of Redemption (Possibly include a look at
Old Testament and New Testament Theology)
Introduction to Doctrine (Basic Christian Beliefs)
Survey of Prophecy

The Life of Christ
Bible Heroes
*Christian Heroes (Include high points of Church History)

Personal (spiritual) Life (Basic steps in Christian
growth)
Family Life
Church Life

The Reliability and Relevance of Scripture
Christian Ethics
*Answers to Difficult Questions

How to Study Your Bible (Include an introduction to
Hermeneutics)
How to Give Away Our Faith (Include personal evangelism
and disciple making)
*How to Teach or Preach the Bible (Include principles on
teaching in the home)

*Introduction to Christian Counseling (Include a study of
peer counseling)
*Introduction to Christian Missions
*Introduction to Missionary Anthropology

These courses may be taught over a ten-year period at
the rate of three courses a year. Those with an asterisk up
front could be regarded as elective courses which may be
substituted with any one of the following:

- Preparation for Eldership Ministries
- Introduction to Different Doctrines
- Cults and Religions

3. How Can We Become Effective in Our Teaching?

Unquestionably the most effective teacher of all time has been the Lord Jesus Christ. His concern was to bring about changes--radical, positive changes--in his disciples, and he did so with astonishing success. More than any other he has given the most constructive teachings and brought about the most positive changes in the lives of people down through the centuries. As the Master-Teacher we are to follow him, not only in his message, but also in his methods.

There were three important components to Jesus' teaching. Each one gives us tremendous insights into how we should go about our teaching ministries. With the first component our focus is upon the teacher, with the second upon the relationships between those in the learning situation, and with the third upon the students involved. When likened to a train we think first of all of the engine, then of the couplings between the engine and all the coaches, and finally of the coaches themselves.

**a. First requirement for effectiveness in teaching:--
Teachers are to lead their students into the truth.**

Trains need engines to lead coaches to their destinations and students need teachers to lead them into the truth. So initially our focus is on the teachers themselves, especially their quality of life--who they are, rather than what they do. In the secular world the starting point is to think about the needs of the students, but in the Bible the focus at first is upon the teachers and their maturity.

immaturity in Christians inhibits the teaching of God's Word more than anything else. There are three important marks of maturity which should characterize Christian teachers today.

--Good teachers become reliant on the Lord.

The Lord Jesus was acutely aware that he needed his Father in all situations. He did nothing of himself and faced everything in dependence upon his Father (Jn. 5:19, 30; 8:28). Likewise, we are to trust him totally.

This is to be seen in our Bible teaching activities whether they be at home or in more formal settings. We must admit that in and of ourselves we are failures as Bible teachers and that we will only succeed in team-teaching situations where we become the Lord's assistants, not his partners, in the teaching which he is doing.

Our reliance on the Lord is also seen in the way we pray. If Christ prayed so should we (cf. Mk. 1:35). When we do not pray it is one way of saying that we are trusting ourselves rather than him for success.

A train engine cannot function without the controlling influence of an operator or engineer. It needs a higher force to direct its activities. Similarly, teachers need God's controlling influence in their lives.

--Good teachers become familiar with the truth.

People were astonished at Jesus' teaching, because he taught as one who had authority (Matt. 7:28-29). He knew what he was talking about, because he was thoroughly familiar with the truth he taught--he was the authority on all that he said

and knew where he was going in his teaching. In a similar way Bible teachers need to become increasingly familiar with the subjects they are teaching.

--Good teachers become conformed to the truth.

Jesus showed his disciples in practical terms the truths he taught them (cf. Jn. 13:3, 5, 12-17). He lived out what he stood for; he practiced what he preached. James Hatch adds, 'God's way of teaching is show and tell.' In like manner Bible teachers are to live out what they teach; they are to become role-models for their students to emulate.

Both railway engines and teachers show the way to go. They go up front; they lead the way. They must go first to where they want their followers to go. Their followers will then take the same tracks they take. If they do not stay on track many of their followers will soon be derailed. It is forever true that when we come to the spiritual matters of life we learn more from what is caught than is taught.

b. Second requirement for effectiveness in teaching:-- Teachers are to establish warm human relationships in each learning situation.

A train needs to be coupled together before it is ready to move ahead. Once this is done the engine is able to pull its coaches in the direction they need to go. So too teachers must be involved with their students in such a way that they will follow them into the truths being taught. Three distinct features should characterize this involvement: sensitivity, familiarity and unity.

--First, good teaching grows out of sensitivity towards students.

According to Mark 10:14-16 the Lord Jesus was very sensitive towards the children who were brought to him. He spoke kindly to them and held them in his arms. They together with their parents were more than ready to learn from him. On the other hand, his disciples were insensitive and unkind toward them (Mk. 10:13). Through their negative attitudes and actions they largely destroyed whatever teaching influence they could have had upon them.

The Scribes and Pharisees were terrible teachers when it came to helping the woman caught in adultery (Jn. 8:2-11). But Jesus was effective in his influence. She saw and felt his sensitivity and was ready to be taught. Jesus then led her into the truth she so desperately needed (Jn. 8:11).

The Scribes and Pharisees on the other hand made a public spectacle of her. They humiliated her. Could they have taught her anything in this way? Never! Was the woman ready to learn anything positive from them? Never! In fact these religious people were simply using her for their own ends. See verse 6. They were terrible teachers at this point. But Jesus was amazing in his influence. He was filled with sensitivity and understanding for the woman. She saw it, and she felt it. Suddenly she was ready to be taught. Jesus then led her into the truth which she so desperately needed (8:11).

--Second, good teaching grows out of familiarity with students.

When people realized that Jesus was familiar with some of the personal details of their lives they became much more interested in hearing from him. Nathanael was surprized that Jesus knew that he was under the fig tree (Jn. 1:47-51), the Samaritan woman was amazed that he knew the details of her life (Jn. 4:17-18, 28-29) and the royal officials were all impressed that Jesus knew specifics about their personal lives (Jn. 4:49-53). This familiarity encouraged people to respond favourably to what he taught (cf. Jn. 4:39-42, 53).

Today's teachers do well if they know about these details.

- Their students' home lives
- Their students' cultural patterns
- Their students' characteristics;
 their strengths and weaknesses

- ..Each is constantly changing
- ..Each has deep-seated needs
- ..Each has a particular course to take in life

--Third, good teaching grows out of unity amongst students.

Learning is inhibited when negative tensions develop between students. They become preoccupied with these matters rather than what is being taught. Like the Lord Jesus good teachers will promote harmony amongst their students (Jn. 13:34-35; 17:20-21) and deal with disharmony as it begins to develop (Mk. 10:41-45; Jn. 20:24-28).

**c. Third requirement for effectiveness in teaching:--
Teachers are to guide their students so that they grapple with the truth themselves so as to grasp it.**

Good teachers do not bash students into the truth nor do they pour knowledge into them. Rather they lead them to those places where they may make new discoveries in God's Word and in his world for themselves.

Just as railway coaches need to operate properly so students need to participate appropriately in the learning process. The word 'participate' is a key word here, because it summarizes what students need to do. Without participation students will not learn. The ECSA leaders have acknowledged this in a significant way in recent times by revising a portion of their constitution to read as follows: 'The ECSA requires...its prospective elders to take a Bible course of at least five years of night classes or its equivalent at a recognized school such as CTC (the Christian Training College) or DBC (Durban Bible College). We recommend that existing elders also take such a course to be efficient in their responsibilities.' (Article V, H, 5, p. 12). In other words, the ECSA leaders want their fellow-leaders to participate in the learning process.

Excellent teachers who relate very well to students will not do any teaching if the students do not play their own part in the learning process as these statistics remind us.

A LEARNER REMEMBERS...

3% of what he hears	40% of what he hears and sees
15% of what he reads	70% of what he says
30% of what he sees	90% of what he says and does.

¹
Taken from Paul Settle, 'Settle Here', The Journal of Pastoral Practice, Vol. II, No. 2, 1978, p. 7.

Of course it is up to teachers to help students play their part in the learning process and, like Christ, they should do so by taking into account at least six crucial principles which are very relevant to students.¹

--Ability is crucial

From Mark 4:33 and John 16:12 we see that learning is dependent upon one's abilities. We do not learn something unless we're able to grasp it. For example, an unsaved person cannot receive the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14), and a babe in Christ cannot grasp the deep truths of God (1 Cor. 3:1-2). It is important, therefore, that teachers provide the level of instruction which their students can handle.

--Material is crucial

In Matthew 5-7 we have a record of one of Jesus' great teaching sessions. Those who heard him learned many new concepts. Why? Because they were exposed to something they did not know. So learning takes place only when we are exposed to new materials, especially when it is interesting, challenging or relevant to us.

--Motivation is crucial

John 1:35-39 describes the reaction of some of John's disciples when they met Jesus. They followed him, because they were motivated to learn more about him. Without motivation learning will stop. Wise are the teachers who stimulate students to learn for more reasons than passing

¹
Hatch, pp. 31-35.

exams. When one learns in order to serve others and to bring salvation in Christ to them, then one's motivation for learning becomes Christ-like and reaches its highest level, because it is directed away from self and toward others (cf. Mk. 10:43-45).

--Understanding is crucial

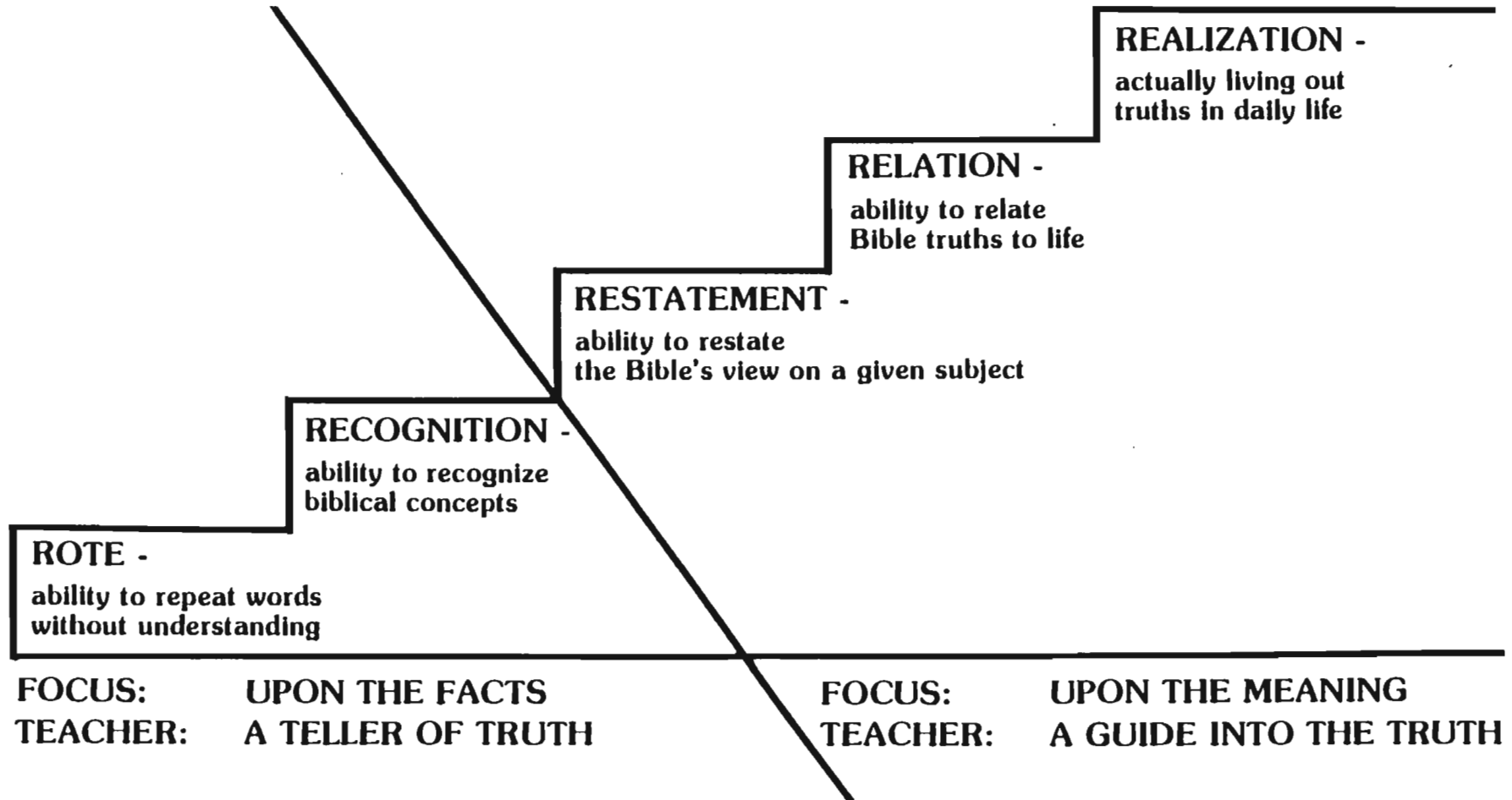
Jesus was pleased when his disciples could see and hear the truths he taught them (Matt. 13:16). They understood him. When there is little or no understanding then learning remains at a low level. That is why educationalists talk about the importance of gestalt or the forming of a picture in one's mind's eye. When the picture clicks into focus and the parts come together to form a unit then understanding takes place at higher levels.

Lawrence Richards has prepared a helpful sketch depicting the importance of understanding in the learning process. He shows that there are at least five levels of learning that one can pass through starting with rote learning. At this level understanding is not required, nor is it required at the next level which he calls recognition learning. Thereafter, however, understanding becomes vital, and it is then that meaningful learning takes place. At the lower levels the teacher simply tells the facts, but at the higher levels the teacher becomes a guide into the truth. See the next page for an adaptation of Richards' sketch.

1

Adapted from Lawrence O. Richards, Creative Bible Teaching (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970), p. 75.

LEARNING LEVELS IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCRIPTURES



--Involvement is crucial

It is interesting to read how Jesus started answering a question by asking a question in Luke 10:25-26. In this way he solicited his listeners' involvement. Only when we are involved with the material for ourselves will we grasp it. Asking questions, including rhetorical ones, is a very effective way of encouraging involvement. So is putting pen to paper or articulating ideas in one's own words.

--Repetition is crucial

From Matthew 16:8-11 we are reminded that repetition plays a vital role in the learning process. We are not talking about vain repetition here, but the kind whereby each student actively seeks to remember the lessons being learned. Most of all students need to repeat in their lives the truths that they learn. Only then has true learning taken place.

Good teachers do not bash students into the truth nor do they pour knowledge into them. Rather they lead them to those places where they may make new discoveries in God's Word and in his world.

C. FELLOWSHIP AS A VITAL CHURCH PRACTICE
(cf. Acts 2:42)

Provided there is no rift in their church, ECSA members appear to enjoy good fellowship together, particularly on special occasions. Anniversary Sundays, Christmas parties and special conferences afford them with such opportunities. Often curry and rice meals are served on these occasions, especially when weddings and funerals are involved.

Missionary David Foster says that this is one of their strengths. He adds, 'Corporate experience is important to them.' Yet, he says, much of their fellowship is superficial. They do not enjoy sufficient corporate oneness. It seems that weeping together and rejoicing together is more of a family affair than a church affair. Obviously church people express their love toward one another in simple and quiet ways, but a much stronger spirit of caring for and sharing with one another could be expressed in ECSA churches.

One of the sad realities of church life is that many people who attend our church services do not settle down in our midst. Others seem to slip through our fingers. Why? Some even become faithful church participants, but they still are plagued by loneliness. Why is this? Many answers could be given, but one of them surely must be that they do not find their friends in our circles, or if they do, they do not share deeply with them. So the need to improve fellowship in our churches is very important.

1. What Do We Mean by Fellowship?

The Greek word for fellowship, koinōnia, carries the idea of sharing in common. One form of this word is found in Luke 5:10 where we read of partners in a fishing business. They shared together. Then in Romans 15:26-27 we read of Christians who made a contribution to their colleagues in Jerusalem. They shared materially, because they had shared spiritually with one another. Thus fellowship is sharing or being in common union (communion) with others. As Romans

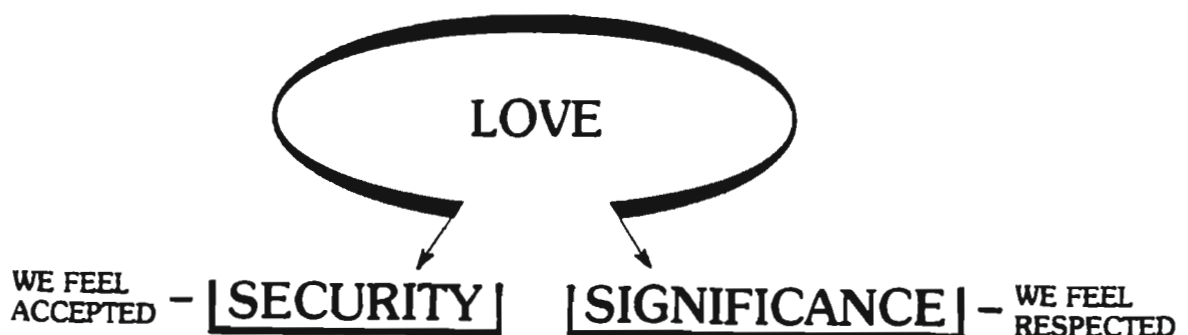
12:15 shows us it is weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice.

1 Peter 4:8-11 reminds us that our giftedness falls into the categories of speaking and serving. Some gifts are verbal and some are non-verbal (cf. Rom. 12:7-8; 1 Cor. 12:28). Those which are non-verbal such as serving, contributing, showing mercy and helping others enable us to understand what fellowship means in practical terms.

2. Why Is Fellowship So Vital?

The greatest command of Scripture is that we should love the Lord our God with all that we are and have (Matt. 22:37-38), and the second greatest is that we should love our neighbours as ourselves (Matt. 22:39). In particular we are to love fellow Christians (Jn. 13:34-35). So from God's point of view the essence of life is to love and to be loved.

Being loved is crucial to our well-being and when we receive it in vivid terms from those who are dearest and nearest to us we will find the security and significance which we need. Without it our lives become twisted and our souls begin to shrivel, but with it we become full and fulfilled as this diagram reminds us.



3. How Should We Promote Our Fellowship?

1 John 1:3 teaches us that Christian fellowship grows out of sharing what we have seen and heard of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Christ is central and the Word of God is foundational to our fellowship then our interaction becomes purposeful. If it were not for Christ and his Word we would not gravitate toward Christians of different ages, personalities and backgrounds as much as we do. Instead our fellowship would become fragmented and concerned mostly with the physical realm of life.

On the other hand, as we grow in the things of the Lord it will not be long before the 'one another' passages of Scripture will characterize our fellowship. Here is a sampling of how the Lord will enable us to relate to one another.

- a. Love one another (1 Pet. 1:22)
- b. Greet one another (Rom. 16:16)
- c. Serve one another (Gal. 5:13)
- d. Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2)
- e. Encourage one another (1 Thes. 4:18)
- f. Build one another up (1 Thes. 5:11)
- g. Pray for one another (James 5:16)
- h. Offer hospitality to one another (1 Pet. 4:9)

The first of these, 'love one another' is the great summary of what is expected of us. As we grow in our love for the Lord we will express it in a practical love for one another (1 Cor. 13:1-13). This means that our fellowship is to go beyond warm, heart-to-heart conversations with other Christians and include sharing with one another in tangible, material ways. The early Christians shared meals together (Acts 2:46). As we do the same thing today we will discover

other ways of sharing together. Our friendship will open the door to fellowship. The early Christians even sold their possessions to give to those who had needs. They 'were together and had everything in common' (Acts 2:44-45). What a wonderful description of fellowship!

It is vital that we promote fellowship at its best, otherwise the devil will keep drawing people away by his counterfeits. Here is a description of one of them.¹

The neighbourhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give his church. It's an imitation, dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality, but it is a permissive, accepting, and inclusive fellowship. It is unshockable. It is democratic. You can tell people secrets and they usually don't tell others or even want to. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers.

As this quote reminds us people need to associate for love and fellowship and those of us who associate in church life have a particular responsibility to show the kind of love which leads to fellowship at its best.

D. COMMUNION AS A VITAL CHURCH PRACTICE (cf. Acts 2:42)

The ECSA believes that the Communion Service 'was established as a means of showing forth in symbol Christ's death for us until he comes again, and the Lord's Table should be open to all believers, living in fellowship with, and obedience to, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Article II, L.). This

¹
Bruce Larsen and Keith Miller, The Edge of Adventure (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1974), p. 156.

service is practiced regularly in the local churches of the denomination.

In ECSA circles the Breaking of Bread Service (also called the Lord's Supper) is regarded as an ordinance which was given to us on the night when Christ was betrayed (Matt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26; Lk. 22:17-20). It involved two symbols: unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. When Jesus said, 'This is my body...this is my blood' he used metaphorical language in the same way as John the Baptist did when he called Jesus the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29, 36). Both the bread and the fruit of the vine are symbolic of what Christ did for us when he died on the cross (1 Cor. 14:26). The Lord's Supper symbolizes the Lord's death.

It is significant that Jesus did not speak of wine but of 'the fruit of the vine' when he established this ordinance. In no way would he have broken the injunctions of passages like Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-7 and Habbakkuk 2:15 which speak of the dangers of alcoholic wine. These Scriptures, amongst others, encourage us to use grape juice rather than alcoholic wine at communion services.

1. Purposes of the Lord's Supper

The overriding purpose of this ordinance is to remind Christians of what Christ did when he died. It is a memorial to his supreme sacrifice. It's an enacted sermon and a vivid illustration picturing his death for us. It brings to remembrance how significant and special he is. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 emphasizes this, while adding secondary reasons for

this ordinance. We can now list the purposes for the Lord's Supper as follows.

- a. To obey his injunctions (vs. 24-25)
- b. To remember him (vs. 24-25)
- c. To review the new covenant God has made with us in Christ (v. 25)
- d. To proclaim his death (v. 26)
- e. To remind us of his return (v. 26)

We need to note that this passage does not promise us, nor does any other, that God will confer special grace upon us when we participate in the Lord's Supper. It is simply an occasion to remember the Lord by taking a backward look in faith (vs. 24-25), an upward look in love (v. 25) and a forward look in hope (v. 26).

2. Conditions for Participating in the Lord's Supper

- a. **Regeneration** - Christ gave this ordinance to his disciples (v. 23)
- b. **Self-examination** - we are to participate with a prepared heart (v. 28)
- c. **Consideration** - we are to wait for and share with one another (v. 33)

By way of summary, then, we may say that the Lord's Supper is first a test of our own lives then a testimony of God's grace.

E. PRAYER AS A VITAL CHURCH PRACTICE (cf. Acts 2:42)

Generally speaking the ECSA churches are not known for their prayer life; nevertheless, there is a growing movement

in the denomination to start prayer meetings which meet early on Sunday mornings in the various churches. Of course the pastors do visit their people in their homes and pray for them, and special times of prayer are held from time to time to pray for the sick and for those who are regarded as demon possessed. Yet, it appears that a spirit of prayer does not prevail in the lives of most of the ECSA members, so major improvements are called for in this area.

Surely one of the great reasons for our ineffectiveness in the work of God is our prayerlessness. What the church needs today are disciples who are so tall that they can reach heaven on their knees.¹ A. J. Gordon has said, 'We can do more than pray after we have prayed, but we cannot do more than pray until we have prayed.'² Then Edward Woods has said, 'Christian work that thinks and plans and bustles and toils, but forgets to pray, is an almost pathetic spectacle.'³ We 'tend to be activists. We would sooner work than think, converse than commune, plan than pray,' adds⁴ Herbert Kane. Andrew Murray has put it this way: 'It is nothing but the sin of prayerlessness which is the cause of

¹
Adapted from an unknown source quoted by International Intercessors in their excerpts from Arwin R. Gesswein, Seven Wonders of Prayer (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951).

²
Quoted by Robert E. Coleman in 'The Secret of Revival', Trinity's Wellspring, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1988.

³
Edward S. Woods, Modern Discipleship (New York: Association Press, n.d.), p. 92.

⁴
J. Herbert Kane, Christian Missions in Biblical Perspectives (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 323.

the lack of a powerful spiritual life.¹ An anonymous writer has put it this way:

The church has many organizers, but few agonizers; many who pay, but few who pray; many resters, but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding. People who are not praying are playing... The ministry of preaching is open to a few. The ministry of praying is open to every child of God... In the matter of effective praying, never have so many left so much to so few.²

As can be seen these words remind us that praying is something which all Christians can do and which when neglected results in our detriment both individual and corporate.

On the other hand, Jesus prayed often. Luke records ten occasions when he prayed (cf. Lk. 6:12; 9:16). Three of his seven sayings on the cross were prayers--the first, the middle and the last sayings (Lk. 23:34; Mk. 15:34; Lk. 23:46). This depicts his whole life which from start to finish was marked by prayer. Furthermore he often taught on the subject (cf. Lk. 10:2; 11:1-13; 18:1). If Jesus needed to pray how much more urgent is it not that we should pray?

Prayer is not an optional extra for the church. Nowhere does a man betray the quality of his spiritual life more clearly than in his praying.³ It was one of the crucial activities to which the early church devoted itself (cf. Acts 2:42; 6:4). The fact that Acts mentions prayer more than

¹ Quoted by E. Matheson, Gathered Gems (London: Epworth Press, 1951), p. 61.

² Adapted by an unknown writer from Leonard Ravenhill, Why Revival Tarries (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1959), pp. 23-25.

³ Kane, p. 315.

thirty times bears testimony to this. Paul is also a good example of this since he laboured in prayer for the churches under his care. His prayers for them were not superficial as we see from this list:

- a. He prayed for love and strengthening (1 Thes. 3:12-13)
- b. He prayed for sanctification (1 Thes. 5:23)
- c. He prayed for God's good pleasure (2 Thes. 3:12-13)
- d. He prayed for consolation (2 Thes. 2:16)
- e. He prayed for love and perseverance (2 Thes. 3:5)
- f. He prayed for corporate perfection (2 Cor. 13:7-9)
- g. He prayed for unity (Rom. 15:5-6)
- h. He prayed for hope (Rom. 15:13)
- i. He prayed for knowledge of God's will (Col. 1:9-14)
- j. He prayed for the full riches of knowledge (Col. 2:1-3)
- k. He prayed for the glory yet to come (Phil. 1:15-21)
- l. He prayed for the indwelling of the triune God (Eph. 3:14-21)
- m. He prayed for perseverance to the end (Phil. 1:9-11)

1. Hindrances to Prayer Which We Must Avoid

- a. Arrogance (Deut. 1:43-45)
- b. Rejecting God's Kingship (1 Sam. 8:18)
- c. Cherishing sin in the heart (Ps. 66:18)
- d. Purposely refusing to help the needy (Prov. 21:12-13)
- e. Failing to treat one's wife with consideration (1 Pet. 3:7)

2. How We Should Pray

Charles Spurgeon has reminded us that 'true prayer is an approach of the soul by the Spirit of God to the throne of God.'¹ So in a real sense when we pray the Spirit prays for us (cf. Rom. 8:26-27). Since the Spirit will pray in accordance with God's will for our lives we should pray for the same thing by praying in accordance with Scripture. This means that we should plead the promises of God. These

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Quoted by International Intercessors (a ministry of World Vision) based on selections by Armin R. Gesswein from Sermons by Charles H. Spurgeon.

promises are the moulds into which we are to pour our prayers.¹ When we tarry at the promise God will meet us there.² said D. L. Moody.

The Scriptures give us additional pointers on how we should pray. A very helpful set of guidelines comes to us from Acts 12:5-7, 12 where we read of how the Jerusalem Church prayed for Peter when he was in prison.

- a. They prayed **collectively** - as a church
- b. They prayed **earnestly** - with all their hearts
- c. They prayed **directly** - to God (not to one another)
- d. They prayed **specifically** - for Peter
- e. They prayed **continually** - into the night

3. What We Should Say When We Pray

The prayer given in Nehemiah 1:5-11 is most helpful.

- a. First, Nehemiah focused upon God's great worthiness (v. 5).
- b. Second, he appealed sincerely for God's help (v. 6).
- c. Third, he repented of sin in his own life, and then in his family, and, finally, in the nation (vs. 6-7).
- d. Fourth, he acknowledged God's promises to his people (vs. 8-9).
- e. Fifth, he reflected on God's past goodness to them (v. 10).
- f. Sixth, he tactfully made his request to the Lord (v. 11).

¹ Quoted by International Intercessors based on their excerpts from Armin R. Gesswein, Seven Wonders of Prayer (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1957).

² Ibid.

4. For Whom We Should Pray

It is obvious that we should pray regularly for our loved ones, yet there are others who also need our prayers. We can make this practical by using the first letter of each day in the week as reminders to pray for the following groups.¹

- a. M - Missionaries (especially those known to us)
- b. T - Teachers (in Christian circles and elsewhere)
- c. W - Workers (in various ministries)
- d. T - 'Taskpartners' (including fellow students)
- e. F - Family (including our wider family circle)
- f. S - Sinners (especially those close to us)
- g. S - Saints (particularly those in our church circle)

F. GIVING AS A VITAL CHURCH PRACTICE

(cf. Acts 2:44-45)

Because giving to the Lord's work is such a private affair it is very difficult to evaluate how well the ECSA members are supporting their churches in financial terms. What is clear, however, is that whenever a worker wants to serve the Lord outside the context of an ECSA local church, then it is nigh on impossible to raise the amount of support needed. Pastor George Rajoo is a case in point. He is one of their most gifted and well trained pastors who has recently made himself available to teach at the Durban Bible College, but he is finding that the financial support needed for such a move is not forthcoming. Even the denomination's executive committee is resistant to helping him in this matter. This is most disturbing, because this body more than any other

¹Adapted from Stephen Olford, Manna in the Morning Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.

should have the well-being of the denomination as a whole on its heart, and surely this should include supporting those who are helping with the training of its up and coming leaders who are studying at the Durban Bible College.

Another example of how funds are not forthcoming in the ECSA is seen in those who make themselves available to start new churches for the ECSA in new areas. Again the other churches as well as the executive are reluctant to make funds available for such a development. Pastor David and Pat Govender are another case in point. They were commissioned by the ECSA to start a new church in the East London area a few years ago. They continue to give themselves to this project, but have had to take secular employment, because their ECSA colleagues have been reluctant to provide them with the financial support they need. When one looks at the building improvements which the various churches are making, one is led to the conclusion that churches and their pastors are much more inclined to keep whatever funds are available to themselves to improve their facilities and pay for other local expenses, rather than make funds available to workers and ministries outside their own local churches.

Therefore, changes are needed in the ECSA's financial situation, and the following principles should be observed when efforts are made to bring this about.

1. Faithfulness In Giving Is Needed

It has been said, 'You can't keep right with God¹ spiritually if you don't keep right with him financially.' Malachi 3:7-12 confirms this. Those who heard Malachi were wrong on two counts as far as giving to the Lord's work was concerned: their internal attitudes were wrong (v. 7), as were their outward actions (v. 8).

a. They needed to bring their **whole tithe** to the Lord (v. 10). So do we!. We first read of a tithe when Abraham gave 'a tenth of everything' to Melchizedek, because he was a priest who served God (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1-10). So in the words of Stephen Olford, 'we see that (proportional) giving is older than the law, was enforced by the law (Lev. 27:30-33), was approved by our Lord (Matt. 23:23), and was included² in the teaching of the apostles (1 Cor. 16:2).'

b. Moreover the Hebrews needed to bring their **offerings** to the Lord (Mal. 3:8). So do we! These are free-will gifts given beyond the tithe. This has led Stephen Olford to add: 'God demands the tithes, whereas He deserves the offerings.'³ We are to give in keeping with our income (1 Cor. 16:2), according to what we have (2 Cor. 8:12) and in line with what we have decided to give (2 Cor. 9:7). Hence there are no final rules and regulations in this matter, but

¹
Quoted by Theodore H. Epp, Christian Giving (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible, 1970), p. 6.

²
Stephen Olford, The Grace of Giving (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), p. 31.

³
Ibid.

whatever we give should be marked in the end by generosity (2 Cor. 9:11).

2. Enthusiasm About Giving Is Needed

About 1986 the annual ECSA Church Conference addressed the whole question of Christian stewardship. Rev. John Harrison was invited to speak to the leaders of the ECSA about promoting greater enthusiasm for giving to the work of the ECSA at both the denominational and local levels. Preachers in local ECSA churches continue to speak on this theme from time to time.

Just as we should be enthusiastic about reading the Bible, praying and witnessing, so too we should be enthusiastic about giving to the Lord's work. 'If the Hebrews, compelled by law, gave one-tenth, how can we, constrained by grace, give one mite less.' If our giving is 'measured and motivated by the cross of Christ' then we will give enthusiastically.¹

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 summaries the spirit in which we should give.

- a. **Give generously** - v. 6 (cf. Prov. 11:24-25)
- b. **Give deliberately** - v. 7a
- c. **Give cheerfully (hilariously)** - v. 7b
- d. **Give increasingly** - vs. 8-11 (cf. Acts 2:44-45)

Enthusiastic giving will lead us into giving beyond a tenth. Sadly some Christians do not see this. They do not feel called into Christian service, so they do not feel responsible to give extra amounts to the Lord's work. But

¹
Ibid., pp. 14, 22-23.

enthusiastic giving will change this and help them to see that some are to give their lives while others are to give their money in Christian service.

While giving is one of the spiritual gifts which can be kept secret it's vital that we feel it. Some people remain too anonymous, like the lady who sent Billy Graham a check, but she did not want to sign it because she wanted to remain anonymous.

3. Discipline In Giving Is Needed

1 Corinthians 16:2 shows the kind of discipline needed.

- a. **Give systematically** - 'On the first day...saving it.'
- b. **Give personally** - 'each one of you'
- c. **Give proportionately** - 'in keeping with his income'

4. Direction In Giving Is Needed

a. **Ultimately, we are to give to the Lord** (2 Cor. 8:5; Phil. 4:18).

b. **Primarily, we are to give to Christian workers** (1 Cor. 9:11, 14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). In the Old Testament priests were supported by the tithe (Num. 18:21, 24). As their New Testament counterpart, Christian workers should be the major recipients of the tithe today. (See a later discussion on how much of this should be given to evangelists and missionaries.)

c. **Secondarily, we are to give to the poor** (Prov. 19:17; Lk. 12:33; Gal. 2:10; James 1:27; 2:15-17). Since

God's greater concern is to bring the message of salvation to people than to provide for the poor, it is best to earmark one's tithe for Christian workers and then to give to the poor out of one's offerings.

d. Occasionally, we are to give towards the provision and maintenance of facilities used for Christian purposes. Like the people of God in the past it is again best to support these needs through special offerings (cf. Ex. 25:1-7; 35:4-9, 20-29).

Ideally Christians should bring their gifts to their local church from where these gifts are then distributed to workers both within and without their church. Some have called this 'storehouse tithing' based on the words of Malachi 3:10. However, storehouse tithing is not always realistic, nor is it mandatory today. Many Christians, have, in fact, bypassed their local church and given directly to missionaries, evangelists and other workers. When they have done so they have not broken the spirit of Malachi 3:10 which was given to a nation with particular rules to follow, many of which do not apply directly to the church today.

When thinking about how much we are to give Christian workers we should be guided by two principles: their needs are to be met (2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:19), and they are to be doubly honoured if they are effectively involved in the life of the church (1 Tim. 5:17-18). Needs will vary from worker to worker depending on the culture in which they move. Some will need a vehicle, and others not. Some will need

sophisticated equipment because of the work they are doing, and others not. Therefore questions should be asked to discover what their needs are. To honour a worker in this context has to do with giving him our financial support. The Greek word for 'honour' (timē) also carries this connotation.

The fact that effective elders are to be doubly honoured indicates that they are not to be poorly paid. A former principal of the Rosebank Bible College in Johannesburg, Dr. Reg Codrington, is of the opinion that pastors should be paid the average of what their lay-leaders are receiving from their places of employment. In this way pastors will be able to conform to the cultural milieu of the people amongst whom they are working. 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 supports his view. It is also clear, on the other hand, that Christian workers themselves should be more than ready to make major financial sacrifices for the spread of the gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 9:6-18).

5. Enrichment from Giving Is Needed

In Acts 20:35 we are reminded that 'it is more blessed to give than receive.' We're given wonderful blessings, especially spiritual ones, when we give as we ought (Deut. 8:17-18; Lk. 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:10-11). This does not mean, however, that we are guaranteed great material blessings. Yes, our needs, not our greeds, will be met (2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:19). But, like Jesus and His disciples we cannot expect to become rich with this world's goods.

6. WORSHIP AS A VITAL CHURCH PRACTICE
(cf. Acts 2:47)

According to the ECSA constitution its first aim is 'to support the public worship of God' (Article III, A, p. 3). As in other churches music seems to be the main vehicle used in the ECSA for the worship of God. It is clear that the local churches enjoy their music if a good musician or two are able to play suitable instruments to accompany the singing which takes place. Worship through prayer, however, is sadly lacking in the ECSA. So is worship through meditation or personal testimony or preaching and teaching. Then in everyday life most ECSA members do not see worship as an integral part of what they do and say. Some have learned to praise the Lord in their daily activities and then again when they meet with other Christians, but for the most part members find this a foreign and almost strange activity. David Foster, who knows the ECSA people well because of his ministry amongst them, says that a worshipful atmosphere is neglected in their circles.

ECSA people need to realize that praise is an important element of worship, as is thanksgiving. Through both of these activities we express our appreciation for God's greatness and goodness, yet there is a difference between them which has led Dr. Hap Struthers, a dean at Columbia Bible College and Seminary, to say that worship is praising God for who he is and thanking him for what he has done. Hence, praise is a part of the wider subject of worship which needs

our careful consideration at this point. The ECSA would do well to be guided by the following principles.

1. What We Mean by Worship?

In 2 Chronicles 20:1-6, 12-19 we are given good insights into what worship is about. We read that God promised Jehoshaphat a great victory over his enemies. He, together with Israel, then worshipped God. As David C. Needham, a professor at Multnomah School of the Bible, has said they believed 'God to the point of responding to him in amazement and wonder.'

Abraham's servant worshipped God when he was led to Rebekah the beautiful girl who was to marry Isaac (Gen. 24:26), the elders of Israel worshipped when they were told of God's plans to free their people from Egyptian slavery (Ex. 4:31), and Job worshipped when he lost all his property and his children (Job 1:20-21). So worship develops in the hearts of those who appreciate who God is and acknowledge that He is at work in their lives even when terrible circumstances occur.

Worship is tied to the concept of worthiness--God's worthiness. It arises from the very depths of our being and is directed toward God as we highlight his amazing worth and astonishing ways of working.

Worship is an important part of glorifying the Lord, but should not be confused with it. To make worship synonymous with glorifying God is to rob it of its distinctive contribution. All that we do is to glorify him (1 Cor. 10:31), but this is not to say that all which we do is

worship. Specifically, worship is a heart-felt communication from someone toward God (sometimes expressed silently) whereby this person gratefully acknowledges or draws attention to God's unsearchable worth and unfathomable ways. Essentially it is a communication. Other activities may be related, such as the act of going to church. They do say something about God's worth, but in an indirect way. Worship is not indirect but direct in its orientation. It is directed toward God from a heart that expresses appreciation for who he is and what he does. Here are some pointed ways of describing worship.

It is simply honor and adoration directed to God... It is ascribing to God his worth, stating and affirming his value.¹

It is the overflow of a heart that has no requests. It is the adoring response of all that the believer is...to all that God is and says and does.²

It is the echo of God's voice, the echo of God's life, as it reverberates from my deepest being back to him again.³

It is something which happens inwardly whenever a man or woman recognizes that God is sovereign and good, and rejoices in knowing such a God and being known by him.⁴

1

John MacArthur, 'The Other Six Days of the Week', Moody Monthly, February, 1987, p. 64.

2

Warren Wiersbe, 'There's No Substitute for Worship', Moody Monthly, February, 1987, p. 65.

3

Taken from a message on tape given by David C. Needham at Multnomah School of the Bible, n.d.

4

Michael Griffiths, Get Your Act Together, Cinderella (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), p. 108.

2. How We Are to Express Our Worship?

In John 4:23-24 Jesus tells us that we are to worship God in spirit and in truth. Since God is spirit our spirit may reach out to him in any place, yet always in keeping with his truth. When his Spirit controls our spirit and when his truth directs our lives we will respond to him in worship. Specifically this results in the following:

a. **Worship in deliberate ways.**--Romans 12:1 urges us to present our bodies to God as living sacrifices. This is our 'spiritual act of worship' or the most basic act of worship we can express when it comes from a heart that honestly means business with God.

Many other deliberate acts of worship should also characterize our lives, especially giving the Lord the credit throughout each day for the many good things which come our way.

b. **Worship along definite lines.**--Since heaven is our home our worship on earth should be like the worship of heaven.

--We are to **recognize** God as the sovereign creator (Rev. 4:10-11).

--We are to **reflect** on the wonder of Calvary (Rev. 5:9-14; 7:13-14).

--We are to **revel** in the day when sin will be removed and God's glory established (Rev. 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 19:1-8).

3. How Does a Spirit of Worship Develop in Us?

God has created us as spiritual beings designed to respond to him. David Needham says that as God reverberates in and through our lives by his Spirit, he creates the sounds of worship in us (Phil. 3:3).

We, on the other hand, need to sit at the feet of Jesus, where we will become amazed by who he is, and enthralled by what he says. Our hearts and lives should then respond to him in daily worship.

4. What Kinds of Dangers in Worship Must We Avoid?

a. **Avoid confining worship to church meetings.**--We Christians talk about 'worship services' or 'praise and worship sessions' or 'starting with a time of worship' as if worship is something which we do once a week at church. But worship knows no special time nor place. As living temples (1 Cor. 6:19) Christians may worship the Lord any time, anywhere. We are to 'continually offer him a sacrifice of praise' (Heb. 13:15).

b. **Avoid meeting primarily for worship.**--When we read Acts 2:42 we see that worship was not first and foremost in the minds of the early Christians when they met. Teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer occupied their attention. We do not read in Scripture that they gathered together especially for worship. This was something they did anyway. The primacy of worship common in churches today was foreign to the early church. Instead Christians met to be edified on the basis of the apostle's teaching. Without doubt

worship was a part of their meetings as it overflowed from hearts and minds filled with the truths and things of God. Through prayer and praise they must have expressed their appreciation for God's greatness and goodness. Yes worship was present, but not primary in their meetings.

Sadly, the church today moves from worship to the Word, but the early church moved from the Word to worship.

c. Avoid becoming unbalanced in worship.--It is gratifying to know that many Christians today are seeking a new and better style of worship in church meetings. Much of our worship has become predictable and comfortable, which for many has also become dead and unattractive. Why should the hymns of centuries past, or outdated language or hot-potato preachy voices be regarded as suitable for today's church? Many rightly contend that older churches are in a rut which admittedly is not much better than a grave with both ends knocked out.

Services which are marked by a hymn sandwich format are very predictable. Printed orders of service entrench us even deeper in our ruts. Even singing the same choruses over and over is very predictable as are many periods of praise and worship. We certainly are creatures of habit.

The solemnity which has characterized worship in the past has been rejected in favour of sounds of joy. Silence is being replaced with shouts, stillness with movement, hymns with new songs and one-way communication from the pulpit with exuberant participation throughout the church (which often sounds like uncontrolled noise to the uninitiated).

Yet contrary to popular opinion the style of worship which some Christians practice is in danger of becoming unbalanced. For example, rejecting hymns in favour of choruses is an over reaction (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Many hits of the past are still hits today. Also there can be far too much raising of hands in meetings. The New Testament contains only one verse which speaks of the raising of hands in church life and then it is associated with prayer, not praise (cf. 1 Tim. 2:8). Of the six verses in Psalms which speak of hand-raising towards God, only two, possibly three, refer to praise situations, while the others reflect cries for help (Ps. 28:2; 63:4; 88:9; 134:2; 141:2; 143:6). Then there is only one reference where nations (and not necessarily a church) are called upon to clap their hands for the Lord (Ps. 47:1).

So a limited amount of hand raising or clapping from time to time need not disturb us. We encourage our children to 'do the actions' when they sing. In principle is there really a difference between adults and children in this matter? Evidently not. Yet we must avoid ostentation in our worship (cf. Matt. 6:2, 5), or distracting others in their worship (cf. Phil. 2:3-4). Becoming man-centered in our response to God is a major danger to avoid. Many of us believe that we have not worshipped until we feel close to the Lord, but worship is not concerned so much with how 'I feel', but with how special he is. Singing the same choruses over and over again (how we love our ruts) may make us feel like we

have worshipped, but often remains far from the real thing. Certainly a hearty time of singing can be most inspirational and influential, but when it leads to group euphoria it becomes questionable. It is quite amazing how sacred concerts draw the crowds, while solid preaching draws only the faithful few. People want to feel moved and feel loved and feel close to God. This takes on a sensual twist when suggestions are made as to how one can be 'intimate with Jesus.' The danger with all this is that it focuses on 'me' and how 'I' feel rather than on him and how majestic and merciful he is.

Most serious of all we must be very cautious of becoming disrespectful in worship. Likening our worship to the noise we make at an exciting sports meeting is a far cry from what God expects of us. Whistling, stamping our feet, shouting, waving flags may demonstrate our excitement about the Lord, but they remain inadequate forms of worship. For one thing, they imply that the Lord is a long way off and that we want him to give us his attention. Furthermore, they border on being discourteous. If we were given an audience with a highly respected king and queen we would not wave and shout and stamp our feet in their presence. We would want them to set the tone for our meeting and hear what they have to say to us. Basically we would be in a quiet frame of mind. When applied to the Lord we should be still and know that he is God (cf. Ps. 46:10). God is looking for substance not style--for hearts that are filled with genuine appreciation for him, and not for emotionally stimulating times which 'make me feel like I have worshipped.'

CHAPTER V
STRATEGIZING FOR MISSION MINISTRIES
IN LOCAL OR FOREIGN SETTINGS

Of the eight essentials which this thesis stresses we turn now to the fourth one which may be stated as follows: Local churches are to convey the gospel to new peoples in new places.

The ECSA has acknowledged in principle the importance of missionary-related activities in the local church. For one thing, a number of the local churches have conducted an annual missionary conference during which time speakers have spoken about missionary ministries and the need for local churches to support such ministries. Some ECSA churches have responded by encouraging their members to give financially to missions and by calling for volunteers to enter into missionary service. Furthermore, one of the churches is seeking to share the gospel on a regular basis in an African setting. It would now like to appoint a full-time African pastor to work in the small church which it has started. If this is done it will be the first ECSA church to make such a move. Beyond this, however, there has not been much missionary involvement emanating from the ECSA.

Consequently this chapter focuses upon an area of church life in the ECSA that remains relatively undeveloped. It addresses a vacuum in the ECSA. While being unable to draw upon statements issued by the ECSA it does present principles and guidelines which the ECSA could utilize to cultivate a healthier involvement in missions.

It is abundantly clear that we Christians do not have a deep concern for the spiritual well-being of those who are alienated from Christ and outside his church. Most of us seem unaware that we are partners with God in his great missionary programme. We feel that the Great Commission was given to those who have been called into mission work. In effect, we say it does not apply to us, at least, not directly. We have lost sight of what Emil Brunner has said: 'The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.'¹

This poor attitude has manifested itself in the lack of participation in missions on the part of churches, and a holier-than-thou independence on the part of mission organizations. An unscriptural coldness has emerged between these two groups. Michael Griffiths, former General Director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, puts it very pointedly when he says,

Most would agree that the relationship between home churches and foreign missions is under strain. They have not divorced each other, but frequently, they seem estranged, formal, and failing to communicate with each other. Like nagging wives, the missionary societies complain that the churches are not supplying them with enough men or enough money. For their part, on the other hand, the churches like disappointed husbands, complain that the missionary societies have become jaded and unattractive.²

¹ Quoted by Herbert Kane in Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), p. 242.

² Michael Griffiths, Who Really Sends the Missionary? (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p. 5.

These comments help us realize that we Christians have gone to extremes and the result is missionless churches and churchless missions.¹

Surely there is a better way to all of this! It seems quite clear that the first step to a solution lies in understanding what is at stake--in being able to answer crucial questions about missions. We turn our attention now to such questions.

A. WHY IS MISSION WORK SO URGENT?

The ECSA constitution states: 'We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, fell through the sin of Adam and incurred the penalty of death (physical and spiritual); and also in the consequent necessity of the new birth through the Lord Jesus Christ (Article II, F, p. 2). In another one of its articles it declares that the Body of Christ's 'supreme mission is her world-wide commission as set forth by Christ and his apostles' (Article II, H). These kinds of convictions have reflected the ECSA's understanding that mission work is important. It is doubtful, however, that the ECSA sees this mission as urgent. If it did, it would surely place more emphasis on it. The tendency is to pay lip service to these ideas, but not to take the appropriate action to do something about them.

Together with the ECSA we are greatly helped in these matters when we remember that the Bible describes God as

¹ George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p. 232.

involving three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And when we think of the Bible's view of humanity we think of two distinct kinds of people: the Christian and the non-Christian. Each of these persons provides a very significant reason why we need to be involved in missions.

1. God's Character Leads Us into Missionary Involvement

Because God is love (1 Jn. 4:16), he is outgoing. He reaches out into our lives to bring us back into fellowship with himself and with one another (1 Jn. 1:3). He took the initiative in this matter when he gave us his Son (Jn. 3:16). Francis Thompson has called him the 'Hound of Heaven', because of his pursuit after man. He is the outgoing God who seeks after us to save us.

The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most vivid demonstration of God's outgoing nature. Christ was forever on the lookout for those who needed him. Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-10), the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:1-42) and the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn. 5:1-15) are just three of the many people whom the Lord Jesus went out of his way to help. His death on our behalf is the supreme demonstration of God's outgoing nature (Rom. 5:8; 8:32). God went out of his way to give us his Son for our highest good.

The Holy Spirit is likewise outgoing in his dealings with people. On the Day of Pentecost when he was first poured out, we see him reaching into the lives of 'God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven' (Acts 2:5). Initially the Holy Spirit's impact was upon Jerusalem (cf. Acts 2:14), but

his influence then spread to Judea and Samaria, especially after Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 8:1). Thus, the Holy Spirit reached the people of Asia first, but the people of Africa soon came into focus when he directed Philip to share the gospel with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Then Europe came into sharp focus when Paul had a vision of a man standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' Again the Holy Spirit was involved in this development, as he continues to be to this day in the spread of the gospel 'to the ends of the earth.'

Clearly our God is outgoing by nature. As his imitators (Eph. 5:1) we too must become outgoing, not in the sense of being loud and conspicuous, but in the sense of reaching out to others to help them find and follow the Lord. Because God is a missionary God, we should be missionary people.

2. Christ's Command Leads Us into Missionary Involvement

Toward the end of each of the four Gospels we have a record of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:45-49; Jn. 20:21-23). Acts starts on this note (Acts 1:8). This commission was given just before Jesus ascended into heaven, and we see from the context in each case, that it was repeated on more than one occasion. This leads us to the conclusion that it was the last, great injunction which Jesus gave his disciples. The all-consuming passion of his heart was that his disciples should go into all the world to make

other disciples. Missions was uppermost in his mind and it should be in ours.

In the final analysis Christ's Commission carries such weight because of the supreme sacrifice he paid and the stupendous victory he had over death. If Jesus had not died and risen again his commission would not mean much to us, but now it comes to us with all the authority of heaven behind it. How dare we disobey it. C. T. Studd, the founder of Worldwide Evangelization for Christ, has put it this way: 'If Jesus Christ be God and he died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.'

The Lord's wish is that no one should perish, but that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9). His every wish should be our concern. In effect we should say, 'Your wish is my command' or 'Your commission is my mission.'

We demonstrate our love for the Lord by the ways in which we obey him (Jn. 14:15, 23; 15:10). So if we love him we will do what he says and participate in the process of bringing others to him. When we hesitate in this matter and do not participate in God's great, worldwide missionary movement, the following questions become a major challenge to us.

--If not you, then who?
--If not here, then where?
--If not now, then when?

We agree with C. T. Studd when he commented, 'My life is the debt I owe to him; I must let God have what he has bought and paid for.'

3. The Holy Spirit's Control Leads Us into Missionary Involvement

The Book of Acts could be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The key verse, Acts 1:8, summarizes much of the Holy Spirit's activities. Besides empowering the disciples for service he also directed them into missionary ministries which would eventually reach to the ends of the earth.

In Acts 4 we read of how the Holy Spirit enabled Peter to share the gospel with Israel's leadership. In verse 12 Peter unequivocally states that 'salvation is found in no one else', since only the Lord Jesus Christ can save us. He took such a stand because of the Holy Spirit's filling (v. 8). Soon thereafter the other disciples also spoke God's word boldly, because of the Holy Spirit's filling (v. 31). Thus we see that the Holy Spirit is ready to control what we say.

In Acts 10 we read of how the Lord convinced Peter that Gentiles, like the Jews, could also be recipients of the Holy Spirit, and thereby the salvation he gives. Like other Jews, Peter's outlook had to change. They had regarded the Gentiles as unclean and, therefore, outside the pale of God's grace, but when God used a vision and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and his family, Peter's perspective changed drastically. He realized that they had also become members of God's family (10:44-48), and he defended his actions by emphasizing the Holy Spirit's role in what took place (11:15-17). Peter concluded his statements by saying, 'Who was I to think that I could oppose God.' Thus we see

that the Holy Spirit is also ready to change and control what we think.

Then in Acts 13:1-5 and 16:6-10 we are given clear descriptions of how the Holy Spirit became directly involved in missionary-sending and preaching in new areas. The Holy Spirit showed Paul and his colleagues where to go. Thus we see that he is ready to control what we do.

When the Holy Spirit controls what we say, think and do he will soon lead us into missionary involvement. Andrew Murray, the first president of the Africa Evangelical Fellowship, reminds us that 'The Spirit has come down from heaven to be the Spirit of missions, to inspire and empower Christ's disciples to witness for him to the uttermost parts of the earth.' Of necessity, the question should now be asked, Does our lack of interest in missions indicate a lack of the Spirit's control in our lives? Surely it does.

4. The Church's Calling Leads Us into Missionary Involvement

In Ephesians 4:1 we are urged to 'live a life worthy of the calling you have received.' As we read on in this chapter we see that God has called us to be Christlike (vs. 2-3) and to do Christ's work (vs. 11-13). The Lord Jesus stressed the same points when he said, 'You are the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world' (Matt. 5:13-16). Just as salt is useless unless it is salty, likewise is the Christian who fails to be what God wants him to be. And just as light is useless unless it shines in dark places, likewise with the Christian who fails to do what God wants him to do.

Thus in broad terms we are to be and do what God has in mind for us.

When we come to the question of what the church is to do in the world we see that it is not to become an island in itself, a secret society nor an exclusive club. It is a community of God's people who care for one another and for those on the outside. It is not like a passenger liner carrying people on a pleasure cruise; but like a freighter carrying workers who are fulfilling their God-given responsibilities.

The church's basic responsibilities toward the world are the same as those which the Lord Jesus pursued. Matthew 9:35-38 summarizes what is involved:

Ministry Matters	{	Leaving (our country, companions and comforts)
		Teaching
		Preaching
		Healing
Motivating Factors	{	Seeing
		Feeling
		Seeking

When thinking of reaping a harvest we think of gathering crops into bundles. This pictures for us the goal of reaping a scriptural harvest: gathering or congregating those who respond to God on his terms. Our ultimate goal in outreach is the establishing of sound-serving local churches.

It is significant that after Jesus gave his twelve disciples instructions on how they were to reap the harvest in Matthew 9:38 he sent them out to minister to those whom they met. See Matthew 10:1-8. In Luke 9:1-6 we see that he sent

them out two by two, while in Luke 10:1-12 we read of the seventy-two whom he also sent out two by two. Then toward the end of his earthly ministry he gave his disciples this profound instruction: 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you' (Jn. 20:21). The disciples were obedient as the book of Acts shows us. They reached out into their world with the gospel, and we are to do the same in our world today.

5. The World's Condition Leads Us into Missionary Involvement

Somehow the seriousness of sin and the awefulness of its consequences does not bother us a great deal. Our awareness of the here and now overrides our consciousness of the hereafter. Many are like the proverbial frog which succumbed to boiling water because it did not realize that its comfortable environment was, in fact, on the boil.

Major General Booth is quoted as saying that if he could have sent some of his men to hell for a few minutes it would have radically influenced their ministries. The same would be true for all of us. However, since this is impossible we would do well to become aware of the answers to several basic questions.¹

a. What does it mean to be lost?--

--The lost person is denied access to heaven (Matt. 7:21-23; 25:11-12).

--The lost person is deprived of all the benefits of salvation in this life (Eph. 2:11-12).

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Taken from Terry Hulbert's unpublished class notes, Columbia Graduate School, 1978.

--The lost person is destined for eternal, conscious torment after death (Matt. 24: 45-51; 25:41, 46; Heb. 10:26-31; Rev. 20:15).

Here are some other Scriptures to consider: Matthew 10:28; 13:41-42; John 3:18; 2 Corinthians 4:3.

b. **Is man lost forever?**--Yes, he is if he is outside of Christ according to passages like Mark 9:42-48 and 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

c. **Is there an opportunity to believe after death?**--No, there is no such opportunity according to passages like Luke 16:19-31 and Hebrews 9:27. The rich man believed God after his death, but it was too late to find life. Moreover, he had a missionary vision after his death, but it was also too late to declare the way to life.

d. **Are the unevangelized lost, including those who do not hear of Christ?**--Yes, the unevangelized are lost according to passages like John 3:3; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 6:23; 10:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:12-13; 1 Timothy 2:5; Revelation 20:15. Christ is the only way to God. The missionary mandate would be meaningless if people were not lost.

e. **Can one who is ignorant of God's way of salvation be saved by living up to the light which he has been given?**--Romans 1:18-3:20 shows us that no one lives up to the light which he has been given. In principle one can be saved by keeping the laws of God (cf. Rom. 2:7), but in practice this never works out, because 'there is no one righteous, not even

one' (Rom. 3:10). The Jews cannot live up to the laws which God has given them (2:17-29), and the Gentiles cannot live up to the light they have received. Their light is found in nature (1:20-23) and in their conscience (2:15).

Of course we do need to face the question about the possibility of someone responding positively to the Lord without actually hearing about Christ--someone who is completely cut off from the gospel as the New Testament presents it. While the Bible does not answer this question directly we can imagine that the Lord would deliberately bring a suitable messenger into such a person's life to explain the gospel clearly to him. Such was the case with the Ethiopian eunuch who was helped by Philip (Acts 8:26-40), and Apollos who was shown the way of God more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-26). The same was true with the disciples of John whom Paul pointed to the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:1-7).

If, on the other hand, someone genuinely seeks the Lord, but still does not hear about salvation in Christ, will such a person be condemned? We must remember that the Lord is not thrown off by such a case. It is nothing new to him. He faced this many times during the Old Testament era. He can easily separate those who genuinely seek after him from those who do not, and then deal with the genuine ones in a suitable manner. We can rest assured that God will be perfectly fair and just in how he handles each case. J. Oswald Sanders expresses this beautifully in the following way:

In the light of Calvary's sublime exhibition of the love of God we can be utterly satisfied that he will do right. And more than that, when from eternity's vantage point we learn what he has done, we will be amazed, not at his severity, but at his mercy.¹

These comments remind us that God gives all a fair chance, although not an equal one to be saved.

f. Are there degrees of punishment for the lost?--

Yes, the Scriptures teach that there are varying degrees of punishment for lost people. For example, God will not allow a child whom we may regard as innocent to suffer the same kind of punishment as a tyrant who has been responsible for the murder of a great number of people. This is confirmed by passages such as Genesis 18:25; Matthew 11:21-24; Luke 12:47-48; Romans 2:5-6; Hebrews 10:28-29; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:11-13.

The ECSA acknowledges the lost state of unbelievers for its constitution states: 'We believe...in the endless suffering of all unbelievers--John 5:28-29...Revelation 21:8' (Article II, M). The details of what this means are not covered by the constitution, since it is expected that the preachers in various churches will enunciate them.

When thinking of the lostness of people outside of Christ the words of Amy Carmichael, well-known missionary to India, continue to challenge us all. She wrote:

The tom-toms thumped straight on all night, and the darkness shuddered round me like a living, feeling thing. I could not go to sleep, so I lay awake and looked; and I saw, as it seemed, this:

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J. Oswald Sanders, How Lost Are the Heathen? (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p. 32.

That I stood on a grassy sward, and at my feet a precipice broke sheer down into infinite space. I looked, but saw no bottom; only cloud shapes, black and furiously coiled, and great shadow-shrouded hollows, and unfathomable depths. Back I drew, dizzy at the depth. Then I saw forms of people moving single file along the grass. They were making for the edge. There was a woman with a baby in her arms and another little child holding on to her dress. She was on the very verge. Then I saw that she was blind. She lifted her foot for the next step...it trod air. She was over, and the children with her. Oh, the cry as they went over.

And over these gaps the people fell in their blindness, quite unwarned; and the green grass seemed blood-red to me, and the gulf yawned like the mouth of hell. Then I saw, like a picture of peace, a group of people under some trees, with their backs turned towards the gulf. They were making daisy chains. Sometimes when a piercing shriek cut the quiet air and reached them it disturbed them, and they thought it rather a vulgar noise. And if one of their number started up and wanted to go and do something to help, then all the others would pull that one down. 'Why should you get so excited about it? You must wait for a definite call to go! You haven't finished your daisy chains yet.'

B. WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIALS OF MISSION WORK?

In its constitution the ECSA states that its second aim is 'to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unconverted everywhere, according to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ' (Article III, B). From this we see that the ECSA realizes that missions involves reaching the unconverted with the gospel of Christ and that proclamation is the method to do so. In essence this is what the missionary does and the ECSA knows it. Therefore, it is alarming to see how the ECSA approaches the question of where missionaries should be placed

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Taken from Things as They Are by Amy Carmichael and reprinted as a pamphlet by Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, n.d.

when they are made available to serve in the ECSA context. Such missionaries become available mostly through the Africa Evangelical Fellowship when they are seconded to the ECSA. In most cases the ECSA leadership wants to assign these missionaries to work in the context of an established church. Seldom do they think of a new area where a new church should be established and then encourage missionaries to go there. If the ECSA really knew what missions was about then this problem would not emerge.

When seeking to understand what factors comprize the essentials of mission work we need to become more aware of the missionary motif found in the Bible, running from Genesis to Revelation, noting especially its progressive development. This development may be likened to that of a seed growing into a full-fledged tree, because missions is introduced in the Old Testament and then fully explained in the New. Like a tree, there are many aspects to missions, but in the final analysis it is quite possible, and in fact essential, to define missions clearly. Such a definition needs to grow out of a composite of the major missionary themes found in passages like these:

--Genesis 1:1, 28 shows that God has world-wide designs.

--Genesis 3:15 shows that God intends to deal with sin.

--Psalm 96:2-4 shows that all peoples need to hear of the Lord's salvation, glory and marvelous deeds.

--Matthew 16:18 shows that Christ came to build his Church.

--Matthew 28:19 shows that we are to make disciples of all peoples (ethnē).

--Acts 1:8 shows that we need the Holy Spirit to witness in all places.

--Acts 20:20-21 shows that we are to preach all of God's truth, in public and private settings, so that our listeners respond to him in repentance and faith.

--Romans 1:5-6 shows that believers are those characterized by the obedience which comes from faith.

--1 Corinthians 2:2 shows that Christ is to be the great focus of our preaching.

--Ephesians 4:11-16 shows that the body of Christ is to become mature as each part does its work, especially through local churches.

In view of the teaching of these verses (and many others) it is now possible to define missions in its essential terms.

THE WHAT	{	Missions is the process whereby God plants
THE HOW		and perfects propagating churches amongst the peoples of the world by the Holy Spirit , working through Christians as they preach and teach the gospel in word and deed , and beseech people to become disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ through repenting from their sin and placing their faith in him, and through observing all his teachings so that they become baptized , mature members of his Church .

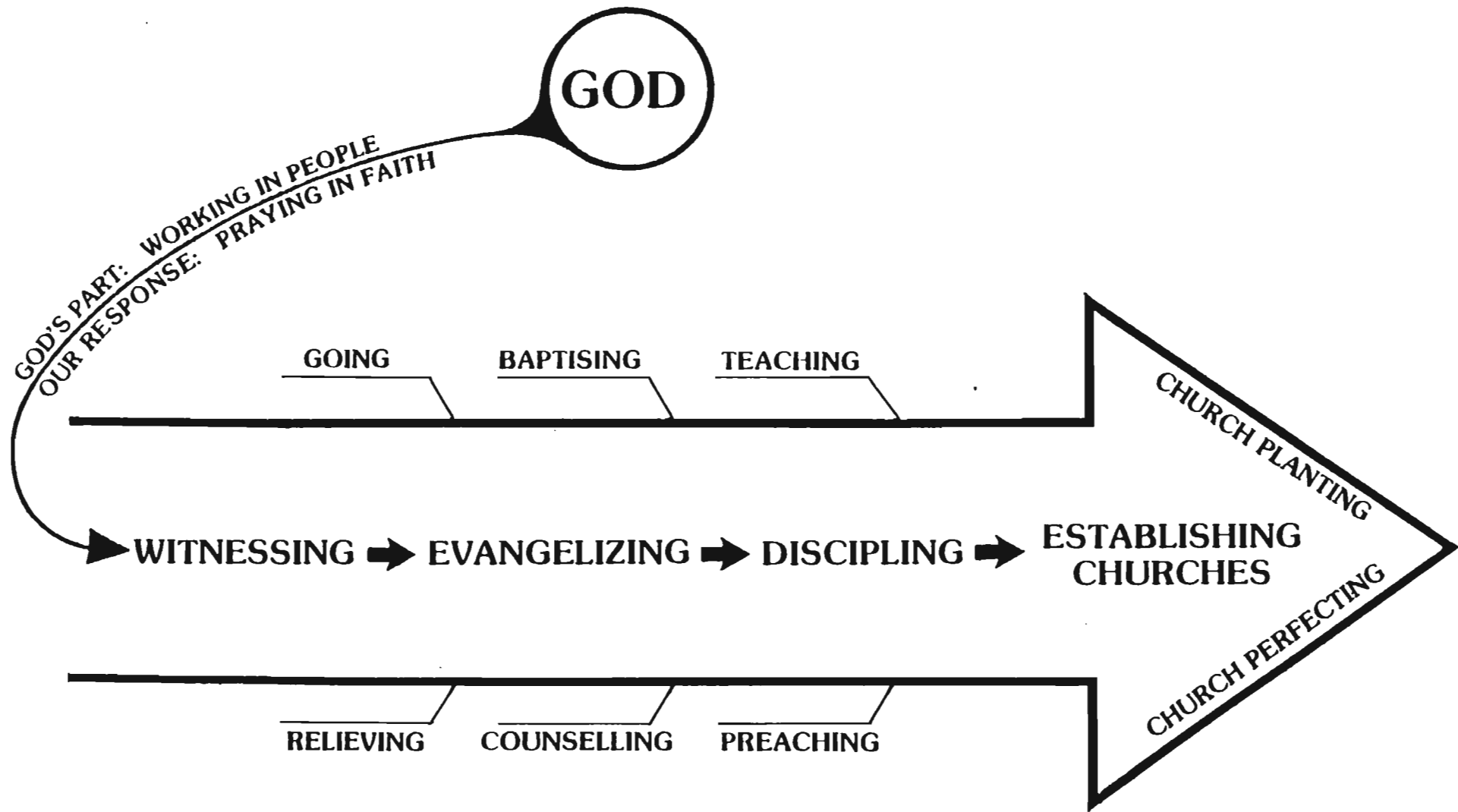
Note the words given in bold print in this definition. They stress the major elements of God's missionary programme. To be true to this programme we must also stress them.

Another set of concepts that we must stress are the twin truths given in this definition. They balance one another and help make up the essentials involved. The most obvious ones are: God and the Christian, planting and perfecting, preaching and beseeching, word and deed, disciples and members, Christ Jesus and Lord, repentance and faith, churches and the Church. Each aspect plays an important part in missions and serves as a complement to its counterpart, which means that we must not neglect nor overemphasize any one aspect to the distortion or denial of its counterpart.

With so many important dimensions of missions before us it is important that we do not allow them to confuse us or to distract us from the great distinctive of mission work: the planting and perfecting of new churches in new places. For mission work to remain true to its calling it must constantly strive towards this goal. Christ came to build his church--he was a true missionary. Dr. Michael Griffiths puts it clearly. '...The main purpose of missionary work is to plant new churches where none exist and perfect existing churches where they do.'¹ When we lose sight of this, our mission's thrust soon becomes blunt. It is as though the point of the missionary arrow has been broken off.

The question now to be faced is, What elements lead to the planting and perfecting of new churches? What procedures should we follow? The sketch on the next page begins to answer this.

¹
Michael Griffiths, What On Earth Are You Doing?
(Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), p. 38.



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRIZE

1. The Indispensable Elements of Mission Work

a. **God's Working.**--As the sketch on the previous page depicts we must start with God when thinking about planting and perfecting new churches. We labour in vain if we try to build his church apart from what he is doing (Ps. 127:1). Consequently it is imperative that we consult with him frequently about the part we should play in his world-wide missionary programme (cf. Eph. 6:19-20). Praying in faith is our basic method of operation in the Lord's work.

b. **Constant Witnessing.**--The Holy Spirit was given so that we could become effective witnesses to the things of God in all parts of the world (Acts 1:8). When we witness we share what we have discovered for ourselves of God's way of life; we express what we have experienced as we 'gossip the gospel' (1 Jn. 1:3).

c. **Effective Evangelizing.**--When we witness our focus is upon what Christ has done for us, and when we evangelize our focus is upon what Christ can do for others, especially those to whom we are talking. Effective evangelism usually involves three phases:¹

--**Presence evangelism** - demonstrating Christ's life through a life witness.

--**Proclamation evangelism** - verbally communicating the offer of salvation as found in Christ.

¹
Terry Hulbert, World Missions Today (Wheaton: ETTA, 1979), p. 31.

--**Persuasion evangelism** - actively seeking a positive response to the gospel (cf. Acts 18:8; 2 Cor. 5:11, 29).

Thus evangelism involves the persuasive proclamation of Christ's offer of salvation, usually in person-to-person situations. A popular way of explaining evangelism is to say that it is 'the offering of the whole Christ for the whole man by the whole church to the whole world.'

d. **Faithful Discipling.**—The Lord Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to make disciples (Matt. 28:19). This involves a broad process whereby people are brought to Christ and then taught to follow him. Yet we also use the term discipling in a narrower sense to refer to the concentrated efforts that many should be making to help other Christians grow in their walk with the Lord. This is especially needful in the lives of new Christians. Our task in discipling others reaches a significant point when they also begin making disciples. We haven't made a mature disciple until we have made a discipler (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2). Dr. Johnny Miller, President of Columbia Bible College and Seminary, underscores the importance of making disciples by asking us this question, 'Why just make a living when you can make a life, and make a difference?'

e. **Church Founding.**—The establishing of well-taught, witnessing churches is crucial. What a wonderful privilege it is to be part of the start of new churches in new places.

¹
Given in 'The President's Letter', Columbia Bible College and Seminary, November, 1991.

Church-planters are the infantry of God's army, states Michael Griffiths. It is to be on the cutting-edge of the church. This is what makes a Christian worker into a missionary and Christian work into missions.

The Book of Acts gives us many crucial insights into what procedures we should follow when pursuing this great goal. Paul's missionary efforts amongst the Corinthians are particularly helpful. See Acts 18:1-18 for details. His initial efforts were to make contact with the people and he did so along two lines. First, he used his need for a livelihood to contact people like Aquila and Priscilla (v. 2). He talked to them about the Lord Jesus. Second, he used his ethnic tie with the Jews to talk to them as well about the Lord Jesus. He did so at the synagogue where he had a platform from which to speak. Through the synagogue he also met God-fearing Gentiles (v. 4). His efforts to reach Corinth increased when his colleagues Silas and Timothy joined him (v. 8). When he faced serious opposition he changed his venue to the home of a sympathetic worshipper of God, Titius Justus (v. 7). Soon many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized (v. 8). After the Lord encouraged him he continued teaching the Word of God to the responsive people in Corinth for a year and a half (v. 11). Of the many who believed we know the names of ten individuals and five households who came to the Lord.

These facts now enable us to describe church planting in non-technical terms. It means teaming up with others when

possible with the view to starting in a town or district where no church exists, making contacts with people, developing friendships, leading some to faith in Christ, instructing converts, baptizing them, bringing them together for church meetings and building them up into a functioning congregation where local leaders are trained and appointed to carry on without the help of the missionary who is then able to move on¹ and start the process all over again in another place.

2. Mission Work in Its Two Phases

It is clear that it is not sufficient to start churches without helping them to become sound-serving churches. In other words, the missionary task in a particular area may come to an end when the churches it has started are able to do two things without the help of the missionary.

a. They produce by God's grace sufficient leaders who are godly in their lifestyle and effective in their leadership so that spiritual **quality growth** is a feature of the people in their churches.

b. They engage by God's grace in outreach activities so that significant **quantity growth** is a feature of their ministries.

The least that the missionary should look for as far as outreach is concerned, is a church which is involved in leading outsiders to the Lord, otherwise the work which he has done will fade. More ambitious forms of outreach involve the founding of daughter churches. Most of all the missionary

¹

Adapted from Griffiths, p. 47.

will want the church which he has founded to cross cultural barriers itself and become involved in an effective programme of church planting and perfecting of its own.

So the missionary is to work for the kind of quality and quantity growth which no longer necessitates his presence in the church with which he is working. Such a church is rooted in Christ. It is marked by spiritual maturity.

But that is not all that the missionary looks for. He also wants to see an indigenous church established--one that is self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. This requires organic growth, or growth in its procedures and structures so that it serves the Lord and its people both effectively and efficiently.

For this to take place in the best possible way the missionary needs to follow indigenous principles from the beginning of his ministry in a given area. If he does not do this but builds a church that tends to rely on his services more than necessary, then he will need to nationalize the church when he thinks that it is time to move on. Such a church often takes longer to become indigenous, and certainly will struggle to find its feet, especially if it is restricted by the cultural baggage which the missionary has introduced into it. For example, he may have brought money into the church or musical instruments or styles of singing, all of which the local people find difficult to reproduce.

Thus missionaries need to help new churches become rooted in Christ and rooted in their environment, to be marked

by spiritual maturity and cultural relevancy, to be Christonomous and autonomous.¹ Churches need to have two addresses: a spiritual one and a geographical one. For example, Paul wrote, 'To all the saints in Christ at Philippi' (Phil. 1:1), and he did the same thing in all his church epistles, excepting for Galatians.

Both church planting and perfecting are needed. Obviously the missionary must start with planting, but it should not take him long before he begins the perfecting process. It is quite possible to help a church become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, but to find that its spiritual calibre is not good. So both planting and perfecting are vital. They are like two thrusts or advance movements which the missionary makes to establish a beachhead against Satan.

Paul, the outstanding missionary, observed this. For example, the way in which he ministered to the Galatian and Ephesian churches shows that he had an additional concern besides church planting. It was church perfecting. He visited Galatian churches on his three great missionary journeys (cf. Acts 14:6; 16:1 and 18:23). He also had contact with the Ephesian church on three different occasions (cf. Acts 18:19; 19:1; 20:17). Without doubt he concentrated on preaching and teaching the Word of God, sometimes for long periods of time (cf. Acts 14:3; 18:11; 19:8-10; 20:31). He also wrote letters to the churches, such as the ones he sent

¹ David J. Hesselgrave, Planting Churches Cross-Culturally (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), p. 366.

to the Galatians and the Ephesians. They are now called books of the Bible. This reminds us that literature has also come to play an important part in the perfecting of churches.

Here is a summary of the procedures which we should follow, like Paul, when perfecting churches.

a. Conduct Face-to-Face Ministries

- Itinerant Preaching
- Localized Teaching

b. Conduct Pen-to-Paper Ministries

- Correspond with Christians
- Provide Literature

This summary highlights for us the second phase of what mission work is all about. It follows on the heels of phase one which concentrates on church planting. In this first phase, missionaries must engage in four kinds of activities if they want to commence a new church. First, they are to witness of the things of Christ to those whom they contact, then they are to evangelize those who are willing to hear their message, then they are to disciple those who receive Christ and, finally, they are to congregate those who are available to form the nucleus of a new church.

On the next page a graphic view is given to highlight these points and to place in bold relief the Bible's description of the two-fold thrust that effective mission work involves.

**MISSION
WORK
IN
ITS
TWO
PHASES**

PHASE I -
CHURCH PLANTING

PHASE II -
CHURCH PERFECTING



- A. WITNESSING
- ↓
- B. EVANGELIZING
- ↓
- C. DISCIPLING
- ↓
- D. CONGREGATING

- A. FACE-TO-FACE MINISTRIES
 - 1. Itinerant Preaching
 - 2. Localized Teaching
- B. PEN-TO-PAPER MINISTRIES
 - 1. Corresponding
 - 2. Providing Literature

3. Complementary Dimensions of Mission Work

Matthew 28:19-20 illustrates the fact that a variety of Christian activities play a very important part in missions. From the Greek version of this passage we learn that Jesus gave his disciples only one command, and that was to make disciples. The other activities of going, baptizing and teaching are complementary to the primary responsibility of making disciples. This would also be true of many other activities included in the missionary enterprise.

It is alarming when complementary activities are made into primary ones. When Christians who should know better (including missionaries) lose sight of the fact that the great distinctive of mission work is church planting and perfecting they tend to prioritize the wrong activities. Here are some of the mission-related activities which are often regarded as primary instead of complementary.

a. **Para-church ministries.**--There is a definite need to specialize in what we do. One person cannot do everything, and as is often said, 'It is usually better to do one job well than many poorly.' Our giftedness will also encourage us to concentrate on our strengths. Furthermore, specific needs in others call for our specialized attention, especially if these needs are very pressing. (It is a very sad thing that local churches do not address many of these needs better than they do.)

Reasons such as these have spawned the emergence of para-church organizations. Invariably they specialize in a particular field of ministry and as such they often make a

significant contribution to the cause of Christ. Such a contribution is much appreciated, but what is questionable is their claim to be of primary importance in God's missionary programme. They may even concentrate on an essential aspect of the missionary enterprise such as on evangelism or discipling or Bible translation, but if they fail to relate themselves to church planting and perfecting their impact is weakened. However, when they see themselves for what they are and then present themselves as such, they can become a great blessing.

We agree with J. Robertson McQuilkin when he contends that 'if a group or individual has a specialized ministry, he must be careful not to give the impression that his ministry is the whole of the church's responsibility.'¹

Michael Griffiths also is helpful in his comments when he says,

...we must never lose sight of the fact that such organizations are only auxiliary, ancillary, secondary and supplementary to the chief task of missions, which is to plant new churches...²

This reminds us that if we are considering service with a para-church agency--many of which are excellent bodies used by God for his glory--we should endeavour to find out if they are free-lance agencies which simply do what is right in their own eyes, or whether they relate to existing local

¹
J. Robertson McQuilkin, Measuring the Church Growth Movement (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), p. 13.

²
Griffiths, pp. 39, 53.

churches in such a way that they contribute directly or indirectly to the planting of new ones.

b. **Christian Relief Work.**--There is no question that the Lord Jesus did something about the physical needs of people as and when he confronted them. We should do likewise. But we must not make relief work a primary responsibility in mission work. The Lord Jesus did not do so. The great burden of his earthly ministry was to call people to become his disciples. He preached about the kingdom of God and the need for people to become part of that kingdom (Matt. 4:17, 23; 6:33; 7:21; Jn. 3:3, 5; Acts 1:3). His constant call was that people should repent of their sin and place their faith in him (Lk. 13:1-5; Jn. 7:37).

When his disciples became indignant because a woman broke an alabaster jar and poured perfume on his head, Jesus defended her actions (Matt. 26:10-11; Mk. 14:6-7). The disciples felt that the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor. But Jesus did not agree with this argument, because he knew that it was more important that God should be honoured than that the poor should be helped. Poverty is most often a surface problem found in the lives of those who do not acknowledge the Lord as they should (James 4:1-4). However, when they do acknowledge him and seek his ways, he promises to provide for them (Prov. 3:5-6; Matt. 7:7-8; 2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:19; 1 Jn. 5:14-15). This reminds us that our primary responsibility is to help people receive Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour, while bringing

relief to the poor is one of our complementary responsibilities (cf. Matt. 6:33).

It is very significant that when Jesus did something about the physical needs of people he focused upon bringing healing to their bodies. Seldom, if ever, did he address their socio-economic-political problems. He certainly did not want to create a political confrontation with the officials.¹ If anything, he bent over backwards to cooperate with them (cf. Matt. 22:21).

Engaging in relief work is an important part of the missionary movement, and it should be. Significantly it is the evangelicals who are doing most of the missionary work of the church today. J. Robertson McQuilkin explains that around seventy-five percent of the missionary task force is being sent abroad by Christians who hold that the Bible is the authoritative and infallible Word of God. He then adds, 'missionary societies with a high view of Scripture are flourishing.'²

While it is commendable that good medical, educational and other relief programmes are being conducted by Bible-believing Christians around the world, more should be done along these lines, but not at the expense of planting and perfecting more churches.³

¹ George W. Peters, A Biblical Theology of Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p. 211.

² McQuilkin, p. 10.

³ Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 231.

Shallow thinking prevails in evangelical circles when it is said that mission work involves the two-fold thrust of evangelism, on the one hand, and relief or social work, on the other. Sometimes we are told that evangelism and relief work are like two arms or legs which enable us to take action in a world which needs our help.

Certainly a two-fold thrust is needed according to Scripture, but social service is not one of them. Rather the two thrusts stressed in the Bible are world evangelization and Christian edification which are another way of talking about church planting and perfecting. These are the two legs which God has given us to walk on. Yes, our legs may need mending and medication, bandages and balm, which picture relief work for us in Christian circles. Or first aid may be needed in those areas where we are sharing the gospel. But in the final analysis our primary responsibility in missions continually remains the planting and perfecting of new churches.

Relief work often serves as a wonderful channel to bring the gospel to those who need it. We should capitalize on it in our ministries, and encourage the support of those organizations which channel their aid through Christians who are concentrating on establishing biblical congregations. This is not to say that we want the emergence of rice Christians, but it is to say that we want to create a hearing for the gospel. Obviously those missionaries who bring relief to needy people will have to work at separating genuine Christians from those who are responding merely for material benefits. In spite of this danger, relief work will ever

remain a wonderful channel to convey the gospel to a world of people who really need it.

c. **Short-term Mission Work.**--It is encouraging to know that various Christians are keen to participate on a short-term basis in mission ministries. They will usually find a welcome waiting them on those fields where they can make a useful contribution to the cause of Christ.

As they make their contribution they should not see themselves as fulfilling the Great Commission, but as helping with this process. To fulfill the Great Commission requires stickability, over a long period of time in many cases, and involves the 'steady slog of preaching, teaching disciples and building' while becoming 'relevant to the situation of people where they are.'¹

The phrase 'short-term mission work' is actually a bit misleading. Mission work is never short-term. Even though it may be possible to plant a church in a relatively short period, it takes a longer time to prepare godly, gifted leaders who can shape their church into a well-taught, witnessing body.

So short-term mission work should not be seen as an adequate means to fulfilling our missionary mandate, and, therefore, should not be given a primary status in our missionary programmes. It is also very costly when extensive overseas traveling is involved, and has the potential of

¹
Griffiths, p. 40.

becoming a major distraction for those who are concentrating on 'getting the job done.'

On the other hand, short-term missions does serve as an excellent training ground for future ministry, is a vivid reminder of the immensity of the missionary task, and is a wonderful means for encouraging short-term workers to become full-fledged missionaries. So if much expense is involved it makes sense to send only those short-term who have the quality of life and gift to stay long term.¹

d. **Cross-cultural Christian Work.**--It is very tempting to think that when one moves outside of one's own cultural milieu to do Christian work one becomes a missionary.

Without doubt mission work usually calls for the crossing of cultural barriers, and this becomes even more needful when one realizes that roughly half of the world does not have near-neighbours who are Christians. These people live in the 'dark half' of the world. Many of them are called 'hidden or unreached people' and most of them are either Chinese, Muslim or Hindu in orientation.

The situation is adversely affected by the fact that in recent years less than 3000 of the total missionary task force of 55,000 has worked amongst the people in the 'dark half' of the world. Another alarming statistic in recent years has been that more than 90% of those who are ordained

1

Michael Griffiths, Get Your Act Together, Cinderella! Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), p. 143.

for the ministry work amongst the English-speaking peoples of
the world.¹

Therefore, cross-cultural mission work is an urgent need. Yet to contend that a missionary is someone who crosses cultural barriers to do Christian work is to say that missionaries are not needed 'back home.' This leads to a very ethnocentric view of missions. It is to say, 'Others need missions, but we don't.' Yet not one of our countries is predominantly Christian. Moreover, the Scriptures are clear that the field is the world (Matt. 13:38), which means that our part of the world is also part of the field. Thus church planting in new places remains a priority need amongst the people of our own culture, and engaging in home missions should not be regarded as second-rate mission work.

We also do well to remember that when the Bible describes missions its focus is upon making disciples and building them up in their faith and not upon crossing into other cultures. The Christian work which some people do in a foreign country would never be called mission work in their home country. Why should that same work be called mission work in a foreign setting? Simply crossing a cultural barrier is not enough. It is not a priority-requirement in missions, but establishing sound, new congregations is. When Christian work ties in with this priority, then it becomes mission work.

¹
J. Robertson McQuilkin, 'The Dark Half of the World', pamphlet published by Columbia Bible College and Seminary, n.d.

e. Departmental Mission Work.--Obviously a mission organization should help its members become involved in meaningful ministries where their gifts and calling are harnessed to the full, and where their contribution enhances the work of God. This leads to organization, specialization and the formation of mission departments. When missionaries find their niche they invariably function much more effectively.

However, it is very sad when those who work in a specialized field or mission department do not work diligently at integrating themselves into the process of church planting and perfecting. They need to see themselves as partners with their colleagues in developing a fellowship of well-taught, witnessing churches. Much of their planning and conversation should revolve around those aspects of their ministry which will bring this about.

When the workers in a mission department or ministry act independently from their colleagues then they have made their particular work primary rather than complementary to the major responsibility of establishing sound-serving churches. If they do not integrate themselves into the mainstream of mission work then their theme song is 'Jesus bids us shine...you in your small corner and I in mine.'

f. Mission Administration Activities.--The Lord's work should be carried out in a decent and orderly manner; hence administration plays a valuable role in missions, but it is a poor state of affairs when administration begins to occupy a major portion of a missionary's time. Committee

work, for example, that takes up many hours of valuable time which could be better spent in making disciples is not a good thing. And dealing with problems such as conflicts or corruption in a church over long periods of time also is not good. Far too much time is spent in fighting far too many fires in some mission situations.

A good way to test one's situation is to see if one has enough time to engage in an effective programme of evangelism or Bible teaching on a regular basis. What a tremendous example administrators would set, if they would join their colleagues often in the ministering of God's Word through evangelistic and teaching activities. In simple terms, administration is to be a servant of ministry, and it is vital that mission administrators represent this image before their colleagues. They need to keep reminding their co-workers that they as administrators are not the most important workers in the mission. Rather it is those who are concentrating on bringing about the expansion and edification of the church.

g. Mission promotional programmes.--Some people have caught the vision for the mission given us. What an inspiration and challenge they have been. Mission representatives, together with those who are endeavouring to raise their support (prayer and financial) have done a great deal to promote the missionary movement. Those who do research into missions, those who sit on mission boards and committees, and those who preach and teach about missions have all made a tremendous contribution to its promotion.

However, one obvious danger which faces those who promote missions is the tendency to focus upon some secondary aspect of the work to the neglect of the primary one. Often we are told that people with all kinds of expertise are needed in missions, and then, almost as an after thought, we are reminded that the ordinary church worker also has an important part to play in missions. We are not often left with the idea that church planters are the primary specialists needed on the field.'

Those who promote missions can also become guilty of 'arm-chair missiology.' That is, they discuss the details of mission work without 'putting their shoulder to the wheel' by becoming involved in evangelism, discipling and church planting themselves. Sadly, some people seem to follow the slogan, 'If you can't do it, then teach it.' They are tempted to turn their complementary role into a primary one.

To conclude this section here is a final question to consider: What will ensure that mission work will remain mission work? Answer: The planting and perfecting of new churches.

C. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CARRYING OUT THE MISSIONARY MANDATE?

While it is agreed in ECSA circles that all Christians have a responsibility to participate in the missionary enterprise, it seems that the ECSA expects others to carry out the missionary mandate. This becomes more obvious when one

thinks of the lack of involvement on the part of ECSA people in sharing the gospel with their near neighbours. It is true that some members will do this in their private capacities as they engage in what has been called 'lifestyle evangelism,' but most churches do not organize themselves to carry the gospel to their neighbours in a deliberate way. Furthermore, very few ECSA members have offered themselves to go to new areas to start new churches and when they have done so they have not been well supported by their fellow members. All this leads one to the conclusion that the ECSA has not grasped the following biblical factors which show who is responsible for carrying out the missionary mandate.

1. The Holy Spirit Executes God's Missionary Programme.

As we have seen already God is a missionary God. The Father has designed missions, the Son has paid for it and the Holy Spirit executes it. God is the one who directs workers into missions. And how does he do it? By the Holy Spirit. This is described in passages like Acts 13:1-4; 16:6-7. In John 7:37-39 the Holy Spirit is likened to water. Water is a living, moving thing. Like water the Holy Spirit enables us to live and flow in the dry and dark places of the world to bring life and light to them.

2. Church Leaders Are Especially Responsible for Carrying Out God's Missionary Programme.

a. Church leaders have the chief responsibility under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to select and send suitable

workers into missions.¹ This precedent was set by the New Testament church (Acts 11:22; 13:3; 15:2-3, 40). Similarly, missionaries should join church leaders in the selection of new workers. Again this was done in the early Church (cf. Acts 11:25-26; 15:39-40; 16:3). Missionaries are the best informed about the kinds of workers needed, but in the end church leaders are in the best position to ascertain the suitability of a worker. Michael Griffiths explains this in a compact way.²

The best method is not to call for volunteers but to set up a draft! The most that an individual can do is express his willingness. Others must determine his worthiness. The individual may be free to go, but only his church knows if he is really fitted to go.

These words are a positive reminder that church leaders have a major part to play in the appointment of new missionaries.

b. Church leaders who are experienced as pastors and Bible teachers have a special responsibility to consider missionary service themselves.³ Saul, Barnabas, Silas and Timothy were some of the best church leaders available, and they went into mission work.

Some of our most suitable and gifted workers should be sent into missions. Barnabas was highly suited to minister to the church in Antioch, and Paul was ideal for the establishment of new churches in Asia and Europe. The same

¹ Griffiths, Who Really Sends the Missionary?, p. 11.

² Ibid., pp. 15-16.

³ Ibid., p. 43.

should be true today. Edward Judson said in the biography he wrote about his famous mission father, Adoniram Judson, that it is a mistake to send a second-rate man to work in the non-Christian world. He stated,

The worst off, need the very best we have. God gave his best, even his only begotten Son in order to redeem a lost world....Christianity will advance over the earth with long swift strides when the churches are ready to send their best men and the best men are ready to go....1

Warren Webster, onetime General Director of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, put it this way,

Mission requires the cream not the dregs.... mission needs experienced professors from our schools...and not just inexperienced graduates....

Mission can utilize some people who do one thing well, but it thrives on those who score high in many areas.2

We are reminded from these quotes that when some of our best church workers go into mission work, we can expect advances in the kingdom of Christ that otherwise would not be there.

1
Edward Judson, The Life of Adoniram Judson
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1883),
p. 19.

2
Warren Webster, 'The Mission of the Church' (Paper presented at the Columbia Consultation of the Relationship between Churches, Bible Schools and Mission Boards, Columbia Graduate School of Bible and Missions, March 20-22, 1974), p. 21.

3. All Christians Are Partners in God's Missionary Programme.

Every Christian has a part to play in the missionary process; each one becomes a witness of Christ's life in his own life. This witness is either good, mediocre or poor.

Most Christians will also have opportunities to do evangelism; they will be in contact with someone whom they can encourage to come to Christ. Many will have the added responsibility to disciple someone in the ways of God, including one's own children and other loved ones. Then some Christians will be given the additional responsibility of establishing new churches.

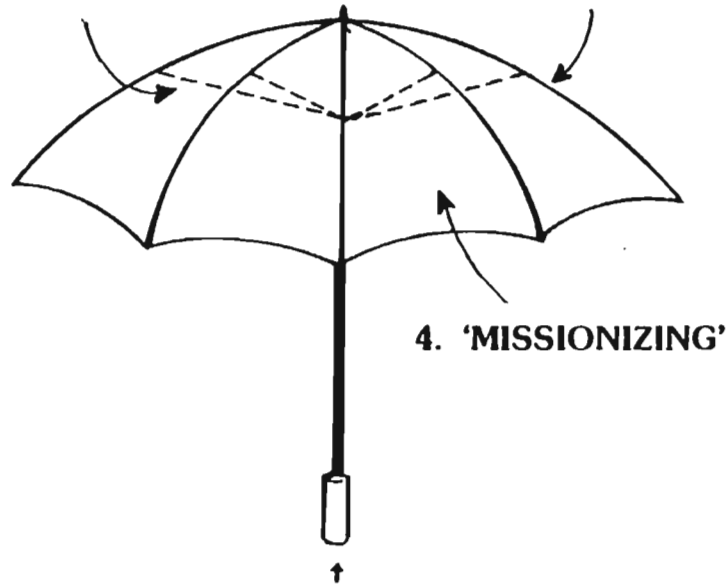
When thinking about witnessing we think about one of the **basic** activities which the Lord has given all Christians to carry out. Evangelizing is to be more **specific**. It involves those activities which most Christians should carry out to convince others that they need to accept Christ. Then when we come to the matter of discipling we come to the **sympathetic** activities which many Christians should carry out to help other Christians become mature in their faith. Finally, when we come to the matter of 'missionizing' we come to the **eclectic** activities which some Christians should pursue to establish new churches in new places.

An important interplay exists between these different kinds of activities. Witnessing supports what we do in the missionary enterprize, evangelising shapes it, discipling stabilizes it, and 'missionizing' synthesizes it. See the next page for a graphic way of describing these points.

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANS IN MISSIONS

2. EVANGELIZING

3. DISCIPLING



1. WITNESSING

1. **WITNESSING** - BASIC ACTIVITIES OF **ALL**
 (THE WALK AND TALK OF EACH CHRISTIAN)

2. **EVANGELIZING** - SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF **MOST**
 (THE PRESENCE, PROCLAMATION AND PERSUASION
 OF CHRISTIANS IN THE LIVES OF NON-CHRISTIANS)

3. **DISCIPLING** - SYMPATHETIC ACTIVITIES OF **MANY**
 (THE DELIBERATE EFFORTS OF BELIEVERS TO HELP
 OTHER BELIEVERS TO BECOME SPIRITUALLY MATURE)

4. **'MISSIONIZING'** - ECLECTIC ACTIVITIES OF **SOME**
 (THE COMBINED ACTIVITIES OF CHRISTIANS
 FOR THE PLANTING AND PERFECTING OF CHURCHES)

GLOSSARY

1. **WITNESSING** supports
what we are to do.
2. **EVANGELIZING** shapes
what we are to do.
3. **DISCIPLING** stabilizes
what we are to do.
4. **'MISSIONIZING'** synthesizes
what we are to do

We Christians are the most privileged people on earth, for we have been blessed with the privileges of heaven (Eph. 1:3). More than that, we have been given the privilege of representing and presenting Christ to the world around us (2 Cor. 5:20-6:1). We are partners with him in his programme of reconciliation.

Sadly, however, many of us do not act as partners. We act like strangers when we do not participate in his work. It is not good enough simply to attend church meetings. Participating in missions is one area where all of us can become involved even if we are very reserved or very busy. All of us can talk often about the Lord's goodness to us and all of us can pray systematically for missionaries. Then nearly all of us can make regular contributions to mission ministries. The key to evangelism and missions can be summed up in one word--involvement--the Lord's and ours.¹

It is true that not all of us are called to become career missionaries. Only some fall into this category. Nevertheless, each one of us should face the question of whether or not the Lord wants us to become a missionary, and when we do so, there are three basic issues which need our attention.

a. First, we must consider the question of our availability.

¹
Ronald Blue, Loving God's World by Taking the Gospel Next Door and Around the World (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1986), p. 7.

One of the best test questions we can ask ourselves in the Christian life is: Am I willing to become a missionary? A similar question is like it: Am I willing for my child to become a missionary? How we answer these questions is an indication of our availability to the Lord.

Having asked these questions once we should repeat them from time to time. The Great Commission always applies to us and the Holy Spirit's promptings should ever be real in our lives (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 5:25). We are to be a living sacrifice, not a dead one (Rom. 12:1-2), which means that every day we should say, 'Here I am, Lord. Help yourself.' How can we do any less? He gave us his all so that we may give our all.

Ultimately, God wants our availability, not our ability, and when we become available we soon become usable. For some of us this will mean a ministry in missions somewhere. We need to join Michael Griffiths in saying, 'Where he sends, I will go; where he leads, I will follow; what he commands, I will do.'¹

b. Second, we must consider the question of our suitability.

It is a wonderful thing when Christians are available to serve the Lord in missions, but they are not always suitable or eligible for such a role.

¹ Michael Griffiths, What On Earth Are You Doing? (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), p. 89.

Some have physical problems or financial commitments which hinder or prevent them from entering a mission ministry. Others have important family responsibilities to consider such as caring for a large family or a dependent parent (cf. 1 Tim. 5:8).

Perhaps the most important factors to consider are one's gifts. The Scriptures make it clear that God gives us different kinds of gifts for different kinds of ministries (1 Cor. 12:27-30). Because mission work is so diversified all the gifts of the Spirit are needed on the field, although those gifts which lead most readily to the planting and perfecting of new churches are the ones most urgently needed.

It is also important that prospective missionaries demonstrate their suitability for mission work by becoming involved in their home churches first. In this setting their skills are discovered and then developed, and it is here that their Christian colleagues are best able to confirm their suitability for ministry in missions. Their Christian work must be appreciated in their home church before they really qualify for mission work in another place. Using the words of Michael Griffiths, missionaries need to declare, 'If you won't miss them, we don't want them.'

c. Third, we must consider the question of our locality.

All places of the world are of concern to the Lord, but we can serve him only in one place, so it is important that we evaluate our place of service from time to time. Are

we serving him in the best possible place? For now most of us need to remain where we are, but we also need to remain open to making changes. The Lord could use any one of the following procedures to relocate us into another position for service.

--We could be sent by our colleagues to a new area for ministry purposes (cf. Acts 13:1-3).

--We could be invited by other Christians to join them in their place of ministry (cf. Acts 11:25-26; 16:36-41).

--We could be pressurized by circumstances beyond our control to change our place of service (cf. Acts 8:1-4).

--We could be restrained and then constrained by the Holy Spirit to minister in new areas (cf. Acts 16:6-19).

Spiritually, people are in a desperate plight. The Lord has moved into our world to do something about it. The question now is, Will we do something about it? While the need of people does not constitute a call, a sense of need¹ certainly may do so.

D. WHEN SHOULD WE BECOME INVOLVED IN THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE?

Most of the ECSA leaders would agree that the Christian's involvement in missions should be an ongoing affair. For one thing, they would acknowledge that we should be praying for missionaries daily, if possible. Also they recognize that lifestyle evangelism should be a daily part of

¹

Martin Goldsmith shared this idea at Rosebank Bible College, August 7, 1975.

our lives. Yet if we look at the slow growth of the ECSA churches we wonder if the majority of ECSA people are not putting off their involvement for some time in the future. A change in their perspective is needed from at least two standpoints as we now shall see.

1. Seeing It from God's Point of View

The Bible says, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts' (Hebs. 3:7-8, 13), 'Now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). God's plan is that people should join Jesus in saying, 'Today salvation has come to this house' (Lk. 19:9).

When Jesus commissioned his twelve disciples to make other disciples he expected them to take action in the immediate future. 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard' is the way Jesus put it in one of his parables (Matt. 21:28). He went on to say, 'It will be good for the servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns' (Matt. 24:46). So from God's point of view now is the time to be involved in all kinds of mission ministries.

2. Seeing It from Our Point of View

We should commence our missionary involvement from the earliest days of our Christian life. Newborn Christians are often encouraged to tell someone about their newfound faith. As they begin to share the things they have seen and heard they begin participating in the missionary enterprise. Then they need to keep going by learning to share more freely with more people. The apostle Paul even started his preaching

ministry almost immediately after he was converted (Acts 9:20, 22, 28-29).

Like Paul, Christians are to make the most of every opportunity (Eph. 5:16). They need to realize that they have 'only one life, will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.' Life is like 'a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes' (James 4:15). Yesterday has gone and tomorrow has yet to come, but today is here for us to invest in God's kingdom. In fact, tomorrow may never come, so it is crucial that we do what we can while we can in the work of God.

Michael Griffiths is again helpful on this score.

If I am interviewing a candidate for the ministry at home or for overseas, I am not so much interested in what he thinks he might become, but rather in what he is already. It is almost pathetic to find people enthusing about working in other countries when they have not yet done anything very much in their own. If a person cannot lead people to Christ in his home country, in his own home language, communicating in the common heritage of language and idiom, how can he hope to communicate in another country?...The man who is not already obeying (Christ's Commission) today is unlikely to obey it tomorrow...It is so easy to dream about future ministry instead of getting on with the job now.¹

These comments encourage us to become involved in God's will and work in the present rather than to daydream about what might take place in the days ahead. Griffiths summarizes this by stating that 'we need to...seek to be now what we want to become tomorrow.'²

¹ Michael Griffiths, Give Up Your Small Ambitions (London: IVP, 1970), pp. 145-146.

² Ibid., p. 150.

E. WHERE ARE WE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN MISSIONS?

Most ECSA people appear to think that mission work is cross-cultural in nature and almost always conducted at a long distance from themselves. Perhaps this explains their casual approach to sharing the gospel with their neighbours. For example, seldom if ever do we hear of ECSA members in dialogue with their Muslim neighbours about the benefits of becoming Christians. Of course, Muslims are established in their faith and remain resistant to adopting the Christian message as their own, yet this should not prevent the Christians from sharing the gospel with them.

On the other hand, it is gratifying to note that in fairly recent years a new church associated with the ECSA has been started in Ladysmith. Then growing out of this work a new ministry has been started at Bergville, although the group which meets there has yet to be recognized as a church by the ECSA. Also in recent years an attempt has been made to start a new church in East London, although the ministry there is still very small. All of these efforts at outreach have largely been the work of ECSA members. They are to be commended for what they have done.

When it comes to mission work in other parts of the world the ECSA is not very involved. There are a few churches which send financial gifts to a few missionaries on a fairly regular basis, but much more could be done along these lines.

Together with other Christians, the ECSA should cultivate a concern for the spiritual well-being of the whole world (cf. Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15). We need to become 'world

Christians.' God so loved the whole world that he gave his only Son as a sacrifice to bring his salvation to whoever in the world believes in him (Jn. 3:16, 36; Rom. 10:11-13). All parts of the world should be included in our concern and no parts should be excluded from our thinking as we pray and plan about where to participate.

This is not to say, however, that our involvement should be without discernment. We need to be guided by principles such as these.

1. Especially Reach Those People Who Are Closest to Us

The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear to his disciples that they were to reach people with the gospel from the centre outwards--they were to start in Jerusalem and reach eventually to the ends of the earth (Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8). Paul started with his fellow Jews (Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:16). Today this means that Christians must start with their own family members, then each Christian family should reach out continually with the gospel from their home base into the lives of those around them. It also means that a steady stream of missionary activity should flow from each local church in ever-widening circles of influence. Our mission field starts at home and eventually extends to the ends of the earth. We are to be a winsome people who are continually seeking to win some to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Especially Reach People in Public and Private Situations

It is impressive to see that Paul ministered both publicly and privately in the lives of people (Acts 20:20).

The Lord Jesus did the same. He ministered privately to his twelve disciples (Matt. 4:18-22) and he went out of his way to reach a lone Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:4-39). Later he ministered to a crowd of five thousand men besides the woman and children who were also present (Jn. 6:1-11). The same should be true today. Sadly, many seem to be happy about having a platform ministry, but spend little time counseling with and talking to individuals in their homes about their spiritual needs.

3. Especially Reach People in Their Cultural Settings

Donald McGavran, the father of the Church Growth Movement, is famous for saying, 'Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers.'¹ (This is sometimes called HUP or the Homogeneous Unit Principle.) This is not meant to say that peoples must remain separate from one another, but it is to say that we are to adapt ourselves to the culture of the people whom we are trying to reach, and that we are not to lead them away from their culture, except in those matters where there is a contradiction with Scripture. We need to speak to them in their own language as far as possible, to move in their environment, to eat their food and so on. We cannot expect to win a hearing amongst them if we are not relevant to them.

Since people like to be with people of their own kind, the missionary needs to focus his attention on a particular

¹ Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 85, 198.

people group that he is able to reach by God's grace with the gospel. In such a setting he will discover a network of contacts which he will be able to pursue with the view to presenting the gospel to pockets of people (especially family groupings). He must not limit himself to reaching people on a one-to-one basis, but should focus on groups, so that whole households come to faith in Christ as was the case with Cornelius (Acts 10:23b-48), and Lydia (Acts 16:14-15), and then the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:25-34).

Although people do not want to give up their culture to become Christians this should not prevent them from mixing with Christians of other cultures. As members of the same family, mature Christians will be interested in one another, will want to have fellowship together and will want to work in joint projects together, particularly in bringing the gospel to those who need it. Experiencing the fatherhood of God (cf. Jn. 1:12) brings about the brotherhood of believers. This means that churches in different cultural settings will mix from time to time and others will melt together in time as their cultural differences dissipate.

4. Especially Reach People in Responsive People Groups

Two questions come to mind at this point.

a. **Has our target group become responsive?**--The responsiveness of a people group to the gospel will wax and wane in keeping with various factors. When a particular group becomes responsive we have a particular responsibility to bring them the gospel. How sad to leave hungry people unfed

when we are in a position to give them food. Therefore, we need to become aware of any changes in a group which make its people more responsive to our message. Also we need to compare one group's response with another's. So by becoming aware of changes and by comparing responses we build up our understanding of the readiness of people within a group to become Christians. This will lead us then to our next question.

b. **Has our task force become selective?**--In the Western world we have idolized democratization. We have taken this to mean that all people are to be treated in the same way. When we look at how God treats people we see that he is fair in his dealings with them, and that he shows no favoritism (Deut. 10:17; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11), but this does not prevent him from being selective toward them (cf. Rom. 9:10-13). He is selective on the basis of their response. The disciples even shook the dust off their feet in protest against those who were unresponsive (Matt. 10:14; Acts 13:51). To those who respond favourably to the light which they have received, more light is given. This kind of response is to influence us as we make plans to reach people with the gospel; it should be a guiding factor in discerning where to serve.

As Donald McGavran reminds us: 'To win the winnable while they are winnable (is) an urgent priority.'¹

Obviously this raises questions about those who are resistant to our message. Donald McGavran sets our minds at

¹
Ibid., p. 259.

ease by stating: '...occupy fields of low receptivity lightly.'¹ Chancellor of Columbia Bible College and Seminary and past missionary to Japan, Robertson McQuilkin goes further to give us some important reasons why resistant fields must not be neglected by the missionary enterprise. He writes,

God the Holy Spirit may know that great responsiveness is soon to appear in a given group. How tragic if none have responded to his call to be there in preparation for the harvest. Again, the Holy Spirit may have, for a particular individual or a particular mission, a lifetime of ministry among an unresponsive people...Forces to cultivate the fields yet unripe are still necessary. Further, we need representative forces in the totally unresponsive fields to serve as outposts to vindicate the name of God, to glean, and to reconnoiter for signs of life and response.²

So we are to concentrate on the responsive peoples of the world, yet not neglect those who are resistant.

5. Especially Reach People in Urban Areas

People are on their way to the cities and towns of the world, therefore, missions should be making a similar move. Far too many of us have a rural mind-set when we think of missions. This must change, because we should now send the majority of our workers to where the people are--to the urban areas of the world.

When missionaries reach an urban area, their ministry to city dwellers needs to be guided by these kinds of principles.

¹

Ibid., pp. 229-230.

²

J. Robertson McQuilkin, Measuring the Church Growth Movement (Chicago: Moody, 1973), pp. 42-43.

a. Minister to the people being reached in the language most familiar to them.

b. Encourage the development of house churches (cf. Acts 2:46).

c. Continually train Christians in how to share their faith and develop programmes of evangelism which are effective.

d. Concentrate on training unpaid leaders, especially in preaching and teaching God's Word.

e. Bring house churches together at an affordable venue for worship, teaching and mission sending.

f. Encourage a spiritual fervour in all that is done (cf. Acts 2:42).

Once again Donald McGavran reminds us that 'discipling urban populations is perhaps the most urgent task confronting the Church.'¹

F. HOW ARE WE TO CARRY OUT OUR MISSION MINISTRIES?

When seeking to answer this question, ECSA churches need to go back to the facts they have heard from missionary speakers over the years about what is involved in carrying out the missionary enterprise. Some churches have now reached the stage where they conduct missionary conferences on a regular basis and give financial support to a few workers each month. Moreover, visitation on the part of church leaders has made a

¹
McGavran, p. 295.

small contribution to sharing biblical concepts in the homes of people nearby who have needed the gospel. Then, in a few cases, outreach points have been established where meetings are held and visitation takes place.

Thus some procedures are being pursued in the ECSA to carry the gospel to non-Christians, but so much more needs to be done. This is where the Africa Evangelical Fellowship, also called the AEF, has an important role to fill. As the founding body for the ECSA, the AEF is in a unique position to help the ECSA become involved in missions in a full-fledged way. Having started the ECSA, the AEF's job remains incomplete until such time as most of the churches in the ECSA participate in missions along the lines described below.

Much of what we have studied in this chapter thus far explains how we, together with the ECSA, should go about carrying out our mission-related activities; however, we need to sharpen our focus now by including other important dimensions in our understanding. These dimensions are like filters which enable us to look at our strategy more clearly.

1. Our Strategy Needs a Spiritual Dimension

We agree with Robertson McQuilkin when he says, 'Prayer and the Word are still the greatest elements in church growth.'¹ If we remain apart from the Lord we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5), and we labour in vain if he does not build his house (Ps. 127:1). Because every good and perfect gift comes

¹
McQuilkin, p. 60.

from above (James 1:17), it is imperative that we remain in Christ and he in us (Jn. 15:4-10). This becomes practical when we constantly utilize prayer and the Bible in our lives and ministries.

When we fail to remain in touch with the Lord we do so to our own peril. Our sense of victory and joy will diminish, and if not arrested it will cause our ministry to vanish. Who wants to continue in a ministry in which they are defeated and not happy? So prayer and God's Word are vital to our own well being and to the effectiveness of our ministries.

Through prayer and Bible study we discover details of how the Lord wants us to go about our particular work in his vineyard. If he does not motivate our activities they will lose their impetus and direction. In mission circles they would eventually evolve into philanthropic work where church planting and perfecting give way, amongst other things, to medical and educational programmes.

2. Our Strategy Also Needs a Structural Dimension

Here we are concerned with adding the broad strokes to the picture, or becoming aware of the basic components of the missionary enterprise. Seven come to mind.

- a. Consider the weather--the purposes and activities of God.
- b. Consider the sowers--the quality of the workers.
- c. Consider the soil--the kind of recipients.
- d. Consider the seed--the content of our message.
- e. Consider the sowing--the methods and styles of communication.

f. Consider the cultivating--the pursuit and counseling of contacts.

g. Consider the reaping--the making of disciples and the establishing of new churches.

3. Our Strategy Also Needs an Essential Dimension

Since missions is a multidimensional movement it is easy to lose sight of its essence, its heart. Running all the way through the various mission activities which we are to carry out there is one common denominator. It is proclaiming Christ. This is the essence of missions. God started this process and continues it through us (Heb. 1:1-2; Col. 1:28; Eph. 3:8).

In actual fact, this process is so important we could say: We have one message and that is Christ, and we have one method and that is proclamation.

4. Our Strategy Also Needs a Continual Dimension

It is often said that the missionary is to work himself out of a job. This is true when local leaders begin emerging in a local church situation. Yet while there are still plenty of people in an area who need to become Christians, and while there are still areas where new churches are needed, there will always be a great need for missionaries. A moratorium on missions is seldom if ever necessary when we maintain our missionary priorities.

Paul the apostle had an ongoing passion to preach the gospel in new areas (Rom. 15:20). He was continually caught

up with the planting of a new church somewhere. Modern missionaries need to do the same.

5. Our Strategy Also Needs a Cultural Dimension

a. **Incarnation is required of the missionary.**--The Lord Jesus incarnated himself when he came into the world to build his Church (Jn. 1:14; Matt. 16:16-18), and in this way has given us the greatest model to emulate in our efforts to plant new churches. To quote the words of Robertson McQuilkin, 'The incarnation is the greatest example of cultural adaptation for the purpose of communication.'¹ Effective missionaries identify with the people whom they are seeking to reach. Paul did this when he became 'all things to all men so that by all possible means (he) might save some' (1 Cor. 9:22).

To become a missionary you must be born again once more. You become a cultural baby. You make noises, but nobody knows what you are trying to say: the speech of others around you is incomprehensible; you are reduced like a baby to inane smiling as the only possible form of communication. The adult human has to humble himself to become incarnate in a new society. But it is very partial identification compared with his, who set us a missionary pattern: 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you...' (Jn. 20:21).²

Certainly this is a challenging and interesting way of describing the incarnation which is required of the missionary.

¹
McQuilkin, p. 64.

²
Michael Griffiths, What on Earth Are You Doing?
(Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), p. 19.

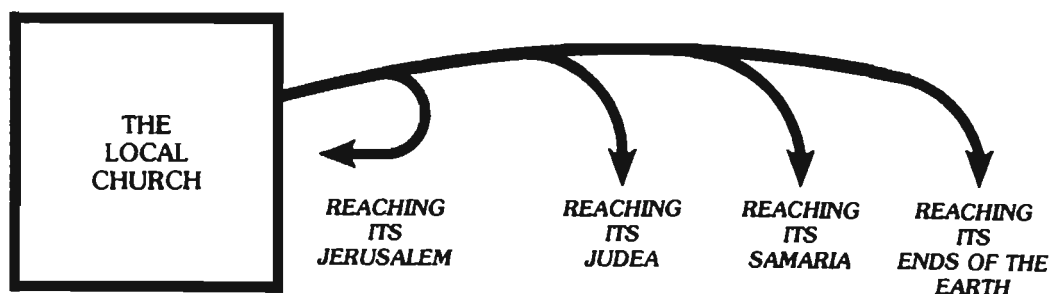
The degree to which missionaries have to enculturate themselves will depend upon the cultural setting in which they find themselves. Acts 1:8 indicates four different cultural settings which we Christians should endeavor to reach with the gospel.

--We are to reach people in our ~~Jerusalem~~--people in our own culture. Personal evangelism is vital here.

--We are also to reach people in our ~~Judea~~--people in our own culture, but at distances far away enough from our church to warrant their becoming members of another church. Planting daughter churches is vital here.

--We are also to reach people in our ~~Samaria~~--people who are culturally different from us, but not radically so. Teamwork is vital here, often within a mission society.

--We are also to reach people to the ends of the ~~earth~~--people in cultures very different from our own. Working in and through reputable mission organizations is vital here.



**THE FOUR CULTURAL SETTINGS
EACH LOCAL CHURCH SHOULD SEEK
TO REACH WITH THE GOSPEL**

b. **Indigeneity is required in each church.**--The church is both supernatural and natural. Because it is supernatural it is sometimes called an organism--it is alive having been made so by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:11). This life which God has given is also supracultural, that is, beyond culture. God's life is not bound by culture and will infuse any culture.

Yet the church is also natural. In this realm it becomes an organization of people and procedures, and it is here that local congregations must become indigeneous.

When this takes place a local church will become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. Then it will share the life of the environment in which it is planted.¹ It will take on the shape of its people and their ways of doing things, and it will stand on its own feet without depending on outside support. Ultimately it is to rely on the Lord and seek his way of doing things. This is the great ideal to which the missionary must constantly strive.

6. Our Strategy Also Needs a Practical Dimension

We do not want to become guilty of 'armchair missiology' where we simply talk about the missionary enterprise without actually becoming involved. Probably the best way to avoid this is to call on those who are already involved in missions to learn from them as to how and where we can be involved.

¹
Church Melvin Hodges, On the Mission Field: The Indigenous (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), p. 7.

Lest we are tempted to eliminate all possibilities of working in and through reputable mission organizations we should be reminded of their significance in light of two lines of argument.

a. **Mission agencies are biblically valid.**--When the Apostle Paul and his colleagues conducted their mission ministries in Asia and Europe their corporate efforts set a precedent for modern missions. In fact, they were modern missions in incipient form. One author described it this way:

Paul's mission band increased in number as the years went by, and from the data we have it seems that Paul himself functioned as a general director and coordinator. He reported back to Antioch from time to time, just as he reported to Jerusalem and other churches. The church in Philippi most likely was a heavy financial supporter of the mission. But the missionary society was not controlled by Antioch, Jerusalem or Philippi, so far as we can determine. The church was the church, and the mission was the mission, right from the beginning.¹

These statements show us that mission agencies have biblical roots which help to validate their existence, although this does not automatically justify all that these agencies say and do.

b. **Mission agencies are historically vital.**--It is clear that missionary activity was extensive during the New Testament era. There was much cooperation on the part of the early disciples to share the gospel and plant new churches. But as the spontaneity of the Christians was crystalized into ecclesiastical orders the missionary movement began to peter out. This unfortunate situation was only reversed with the

¹
C. Peter Wagner, Stop the World I Want to Get On (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1973), p. 48.

emergence of people like William Carey who has become known as the father of modern missions, because of the vital role he played in sparking the inauguration of various voluntary associations for missionary outreach. Peter Wagner's synopsis is most helpful.

Once missionary societies gained strength, wonderful things began to happen. More men and women have been led to Christ and more Christian churches have been planted in the world in the 180 years since William Carey than in the 1800 previous years put together. Missions are not an afterthought to God. They are an integral part of his plan for making disciples of all nations. Missions are not warts on the church, they are legs... Legs move the body, and the body nourishes and sustains the legs. Missions move the church out, and the church in turn sustains missions. As legs are distinct, yet a part of the body, so missions are a part of the church...¹

In these descriptions we are reminded that mission agencies make practical various mission ministries in which workers are able to participate. Without such agencies their involvement would be greatly restricted if not impossible.

Admittedly, it is not always possible or necessary to work with a mission in our programmes of outreach. Some churches are in the privileged position where they can work with a mission in starting a daughter church, but often this is not the case. In these cases workers from a particular church will need to team up to reach a group of people of another culture who need their own church established in their own area. Then in some cases pioneer work needs to be done apart from a mission, because no suitable mission is available to serve as a channel for this purpose.

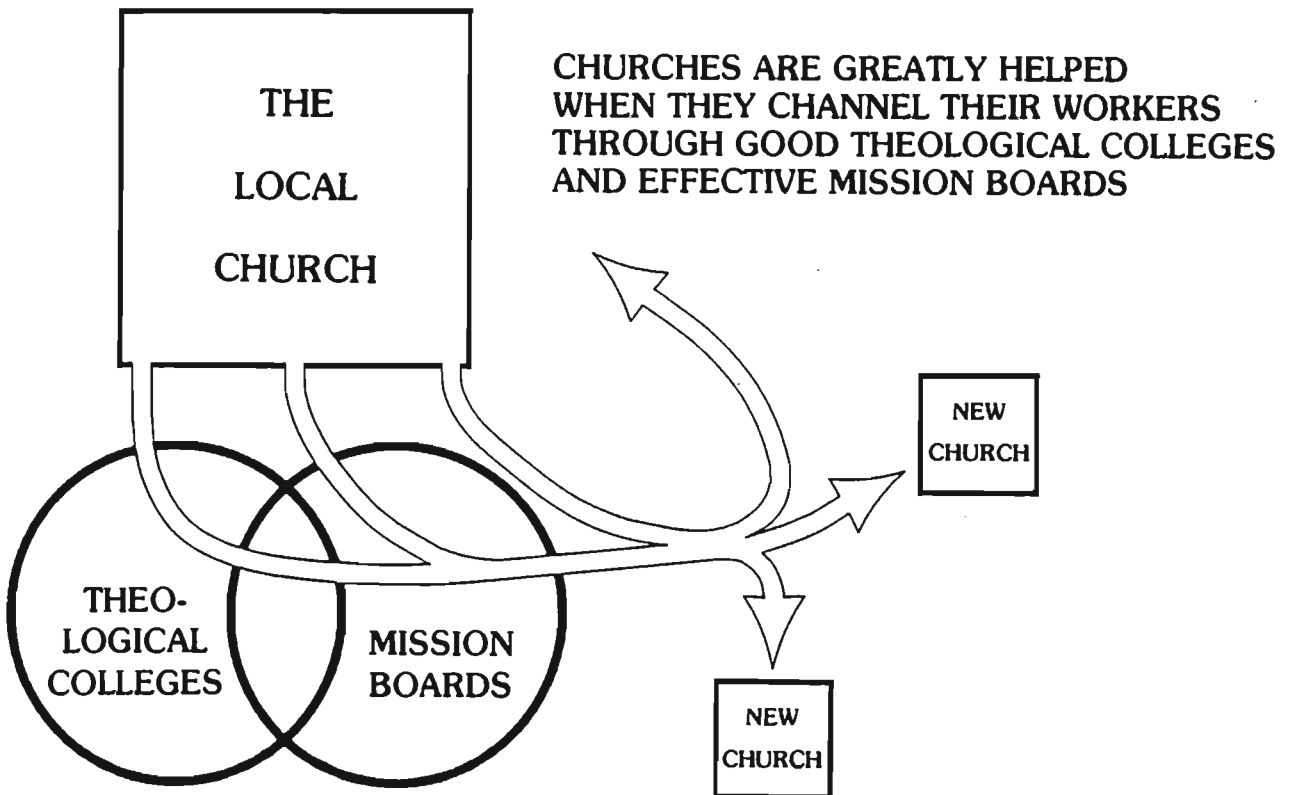
¹

Ibid., pp. 48-49.

This raises an important point. When choosing to work with a mission we must be sure that it is a good one. Besides looking at its doctrinal position and financial policies we should also look at its programme of church planting and perfecting. We simply have to ask for details about where its present missionaries are working to ascertain how serious it is about this.

It is also important to discover how committed a mission is to teamwork--placing its workers in church planting teams. Paul worked in a team. This usually leads to a much more effective impact on an area.

THE CHURCH AND ITS CHANNELS FOR QUALITY AND QUANTITY GROWTH



7. Our Strategy Also Needs a Local Dimension

Missionary movements are to grow out of local churches and result in the establishment of new local churches. God is the initiator and sustainer of this (Heb. 12:2). He prompts and promotes the missionary process at the local level. So our mission ministries are to be God-graced, church-based and world-faced.

This means in practical terms that local churches need to participate in God's worldwide missionary programme along at least six distinct lines.

a. **Each church should be marked by looking.**--Jesus instructed his disciples to look on the fields that are ripe for harvest (Jn. 4:34). He also made the point that the workers are few in number for the harvest (Matt. 9:37). Our eyes need to be opened to see the immense needs on the fields. A vision for missions is urgently needed in every church.

Sadly, however, in most churches missionary interest is only a side-show at best, and at worst it is totally disregarded.

Yet the Scriptures teach that mission involvement is one of the priorities which God has given his church. The evangelization of the world is to be a principal passion rather than a passing interest in each church. This should be reflected, therefore, in what a church stresses and does. The whole congregation needs to be exposed to various aspects of the missionary enterprise on a regular basis and not simply a small group of Christians (often retired people) who meet at a mission-related meeting from time to time. Such small

meetings are better than nothing, but they certainly are not enough.

Church leaders have the responsibility to make missionary interest a priority in their church. If they do not bring this about, who will do so? Those who have done so have found that two kinds of meetings are most fruitful.

- Annual Missionary Conferences
- Monthly Missionary Sundays or Meetings

Gifted speakers should become a feature of many of these meetings together with attractive visual presentations.

b. Each church should be marked by praying.--More than once Paul appealed to his friends in local churches to pray for him (Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:19-20; 1 Thes. 5:25). This is also the appeal of many missionaries today. We all know that they take up front-line positions where major battles rage, and they constantly need God's intervention and undertaking (cf. Phil. 1:19; Col. 2:28-29). It is our responsibility to call on the Lord for this, and we need to do it often.

It is much easier to pray for people whom we can see in our mind's eye, so here are two practical ways of personalizing our prayers.

--Place good-sized photographs in a prominent position within the church's facilities.

--Provide interested families with prayer stands in which photographs can be placed. These stands are then used to pray for Christian workers at mealtimes. (Church workers can be included in this.)

There is great value also in praying for missionaries by name in church services and when done regularly it encourages the whole church to pray for them more often.

c. **Each church should be marked by going.**--In keeping with Matthew 28:19 churches need to cultivate a 'go mind set' rather than a 'come mind set' as far as the world is concerned. Far too often we want people to come to our church meetings, but we are very reluctant to go into their homes, their places of work or their areas of play to bring them the gospel. Yet Jesus wants us to reach our Jerusalem.

It is vital that each church commits itself to finding and using at least one evangelistic method that works. Here are some basic approaches well-worth considering.

- Life-style evangelism
- Visitation evangelism
- Home evangelism

With **life-style evangelism** there is a strong stress upon sharing our personal knowledge of Christ Jesus in our everyday lives, at home, at school, at work, at play, and wherever we are. Besides our casual contacts we should also make deliberate efforts to reach people who need the Lord. Wise is the Christian who concentrates for a time on bringing the gospel to a few people and then does the same with others¹ without neglecting the first ones.

¹
Dr. Joseph Aldrich has popularized this approach, especially in his book entitled Life-Style Evangelism (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1981). Then the Christian Business Men's Committee has also run very successful seminars under the same title to help Christians in this area. Campus Crusade have done the same through their Life Seminars, as have many others.

Visitation evangelism is something which every church should pursue with those non-Christians whom it contacts. People should be visited in their homes and presented with the gospel in a loving and intelligent manner. This can be done systematically yet very informally by those who have a deep desire to help others know Christ in a personal way. Active churches go a step further and train their people in an organized way in this kind of evangelism.¹ In many instances their success rate has been very high.

Home evangelism has become highly successful in a limited number of churches. It makes use of the home of a Christian as a meeting place with non-Christians. Our homes can be a lighthouse in a dark world. Neighbours, colleagues from work and friends are invited. In some cases only young people or young adults are invited. Special events are planned such as a dinner or a barbeque or a dessert and coffee evening or the showing of a Christian video. This is then followed by a discussion on an important Christian subject or by a relevant Bible study. When invitations are sent out they must clearly state that a Bible-related occasion is planned. It is not fair on guests to trick them into something they are not expecting.²

¹ Evangelism Explosion III, emanating from the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Florida, U.S.A., has become well known for this.

² Two helpful books on this subject are: Bob and Betty Jacks with Ron Wormser, Your Home a Lighthouse (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1986) and Derek Cleave, Know How to Use Your Home for Evangelism (London: Scripture Union, 1986). Also see Chapter 11 of Joseph C. Aldrich Life-Style Evangelism (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1981).

d. **Each church needs to be marked by sending.**--It has been well-proven that those churches which are effectively involved in presenting the gospel to people who live nearby, and are seeing conversions, are the ones most likely to produce full-time Christian workers. When no such workers come from a church it is a reflection on that church's poor programme of outreach.

When a church does produce Christian workers, some will want to be involved in missions. Actually, each church needs to pray that the Lord will send workers into his field (Matt. 9:38). What a wonderful privilege this is: to have one's very own harvesters in the field. It does not take much for these workers to be seen as our missionaries doing our work in the world.

Other like-minded missionaries should also be appointed as our representatives on the field. They will broaden our horizons, diversify our involvement and strengthen our hands in the work.

e. **Each church needs to be marked by giving.**--Supporting missionaries goes hand in hand with sending them, because they would not make it to the field otherwise. This reminds us that mission work cannot be conducted in isolation; it is a joint project and a matter of body function (cf. 1 Cor. 12:17-21; Eph. 4:15-16).

Oswald J. Smith, a much-loved pastor at The People's Church, Toronto, Canada, challenges us with these words: 'If God wills the evangelization of the world, and you refuse to

support missions, then you are opposed to the will of God.' We must put our money where our mission is.

The question now comes to mind: How much should we give to the Lord's work? What does it mean to be faithful in our giving? We have already seen that God expects us to give at least a tenth plus offerings out of our total income to his work. This means that we need to give out of what we earn by way of a salary, investments, profits, the selling of property or a business, and so on. Those who live off the income of their business should base their calculations on what it cost their business to support them plus on the financial increase their business makes for a given period. They should give from all their earnings. To be faithful also means that we must base our calculations on our total income before taxes and other expenses are withdrawn. Why should government officials be given precedence over the Lord? And how dare we rob God of what is due to him? (Mal. 3:8-12).

Giving a tenth plus offerings out of our earnings is the least that we can do. It comes nowhere near matching what Christ has done for us (cf. Rom. 1:14; 11:34-36; 2 Cor. 8:9; 9:15). God is no man's debtor (Job 41:11), but we are forever indebted to him. In fact, all that we own should be presented to him (Rom. 12:1-2). We will then need to confer with him about how he wants us to invest his assets. Given his great love for mankind and his desire that all should be saved we can expect that he would want us to be very discerning about satisfying our wants as over against our needs. Without becoming legalistic we should then ask ourselves these kinds

of questions: Does the Lord want me to buy such an expensive vehicle? Do I really need this new piece of equipment? Is it not just an expensive toy? Should I be spending so much on recreation? Then in a more positive vein we should also ask: How much beyond a tenth can I begin giving on a regular basis? What Christian ministry would be a worthy recipient of a one-time gift? What money can I give to the Lord's work that I would otherwise spend on myself?

God wants us to be generous in our giving (2 Cor. 9:5, 10-11). Many Christians do not feel called to preach and teach the Bible, but one thing which they can do is to support his work, and they should do so enthusiastically (2 Cor. 9:6-8), especially those who have a gift for giving (Rom. 12:8).

Missionaries are also to be generous in their outlook. It is very gratifying to see that most of them are, since most of them could earn far more than they receive if they worked in the market place of their home countries. Paul set a great example for the modern missionary in this matter by not seeking money for himself (1 Cor. 9:15-18; Phil. 4:11-13; 1 Tim. 6:6-10; Heb. 13:5). He also taught that Christian workers should remember that while they have nothing they really possess everything (2 Cor. 6:10b). With many missionaries making a great financial contribution to the missionary enterprise today, it is now up to other Christians to make a similar sacrifice and investment in the work of God.

Unfortunately some Christians are shallow in their thinking when it comes to the matter of supporting Christian

workers. They are inclined to say that such workers feel called to live by faith, and, therefore, to a life-style where they do without many of this world's goods. Those who make such statements imply that they themselves do not feel called to this kind of life, and, therefore, are justified in spending what they earn on themselves. This, however, is a very sad misunderstanding. Christian workers basically feel called to reach people with the gospel and not necessarily to do without this world's goods. In most situations they are happy to live a simple life-style, but this is not to say that they want to drive unreliable vehicles or do without adequate housing or good equipment to help them in their work, or to battle paying for their children's education, or to live on the smell of an oil rag when they withdraw from their ministry.

Living by faith is something what all Christians must do (2 Cor. 4:18; 5:9). This means that those who have a small income (such as Christian workers) are to surrender their right to receiving support (cf. 1 Cor. 9:11-15), while those who receive a larger income are to surrender their right to keeping it.

Having established that we are to give generously to the Lord's work, starting with at least a 10% tithe plus offerings on all that we earn, we come now to the question of how much we should give toward each of the church's two basic areas of responsibility, namely, the edification of Christians and the evangelization of non-Christians. Because the Bible does not favour one responsibility over the other, we can

safely conclude that God wants us to give generously to both areas. We can ask ourselves: Who is more important in God's sight, the missionary or the pastor? Surely, neither is more important, and both are equally important in the work of God. This has led many Christians to conclude that fifty percent (50%) of what they give to the Lord's work should go toward their local church's needs and the other fifty percent should go toward mission ministries. Also many churches have concluded that they should operate two funds: a General Fund to meet their local needs and a Missions Fund to participate in God's world-wide missionary programme.

Two successful ways of helping churches to give generously to missions have been developed in recent years.

--First, the Annual Faith-Promise Programme

As indicated by its name this programme calls for faith. Each giver trusts the Lord to provide a specific amount which he or she gives regularly to the Mission Fund. Some Christians even trust the Lord to provide them with an amount which they normally could not afford. It becomes a real venture of faith in their lives.

An annual promise is involved. This promise is made on a special card or slip which is handed in during the Annual Missions Conference or on a special Stewardship Sunday. Some churches prefer for these promises to remain anonymous, while others believe that it is a good thing for people to declare who they are so that they become more faithful in their giving. Naturally these names are not made public nor are

they used to remind people of their promise. It is a matter between them and the Lord.

Offering envelopes are also used to help facilitate giving to the programme. The church provides envelopes which have been especially stamped with a rubber stamp or printed so that those who use them can clearly designate how they want their gifts to be divided between the various funds of the church each week or each month.

Moreover, a new financial goal is adopted each year. Most churches have a very long way to go before they start giving about fifty percent of their income to mission ministries, so an annual missionary goal is a good thing. It will help a church reach towards fulfilling its God-given responsibilities in this area. If a church begins to give more than fifty percent to missions, this is also a good thing, provided its local needs are being met. Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35).

--Second, the Annual Missionary Project

Most missionary programmes will have specific needs toward which churches can give. It may involve Bibles or Christian books or the cost of printing or equipment needs or a vehicle. A church can make a significant contribution to a ministry by adopting such a project and then inviting the people of the church to give toward it over a period of time. Many of these people will become very enthusiastic about missions, especially as they come near to reaching their goal of collecting enough money for a particular project.

When we come to the question of dispersing missionary funds it is most helpful when a strong committee helps spearhead this responsibility. Obviously church boards and congregations should also have a major say in the matter.

Guidelines such as the following can be most helpful at this point.

First, God's workers should be supported before other needs. The fact that the tithe was established to meet the needs of the Levites (Num. 18:21, 24) is a cue for us that the largest portion of what is given to the Lord's work should be earmarked for Christian workers, who are the New Testament equivalent of the Levites. Such items as the provision of buildings for schools, clinics and hospitals are better provided for by special offerings such as those associated with Annual Missionary Projects. This is the way the Children of Israel gave for the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:1-7; 35:4-9, 20-29).

Second, those workers who are members of teams which concentrate on planting and perfecting new churches should receive a large percentage of the support which is given for missions. This helps to keep our priorities straight.

Third, those ministries which stress the proclamation of God's Word should also receive a healthy amount of support. This includes evangelistic work, discipling ministries, Bible teaching, radio and TV programming, translation, the distribution of Christian literature and the printing of Christian materials.

Fourth, in light of Acts 1:8 churches do well when they evaluate how much they are supporting workers in their Jerusalem, their Judea, their Samaria and their ends of the earth. They need a world-wide vision, a cross-cultural involvement and Spirit-led readiness to share the gospel with any group of people anywhere on earth.

Fifth, churches are wise when they make substantial contributions to the needs of missionaries. They can then capitalize on the services of these missionaries more readily when they are on furlough, because they are likely to be more available to spend time in one church than they would be if they had to travel extensively from church to church to raise their support. Paul and Barnabas set a good example in this respect by spending a long time with their sending church in Antioch after their first missionary journey (Acts 14:28).

Churches also need to give practical support to missionary training programmes. A good number of theological schools, Bible institutes and colleges play a vital role in advancing the missionary cause, and, therefore, deserve the much needed support which churches can give them.

Appendix D provides a chart which serves as a guide to evaluate where a church's strengths and weaknesses lie in missionary giving.

f. Each church should be marked by caring.--

First, we should care for missionaries. This means caring for them while they are on the field. Without putting them on a pedestal or pampering them we should genuinely stand

behind them. Most of us seem to follow this rule in respect of missionaries: 'Out of sight; out of mind.'

One of the worst things which a church can do is to cut back on the support which it has been giving a missionary while he or she is still on the field, especially if it is for peripheral reasons like putting carpets in the church building. It is cruel to pull the rug out from under the missionary to put it under one's own feet.

Instead of cutting back on support churches need to think every so often about increasing the amount they are giving their missionaries. If possible they should give increases annually to counter ever-rising inflation costs. While God supplies the lifeblood for the missionary we must supply the life line which keeps him functioning on the field.

Besides praying for missionaries, some of the other ways of caring for them include sending them magazines, church bulletins, letters, gifts to their children for their birthdays or Christmas and missionary parcels. (Check with them first on what they can use in missionary parcels. Certainly do not send them used tea bags!)

It is also important that we care for them when they return home. We must remember that missionaries are bicultural people, because they move within the culture of the people amongst whom they are working and then within their own culture when they return home. When anticipating their return it is important that their supporters try to find out what their most pressing needs may be. They may need housing, a vehicle, medical treatment, clothing, equipment and so on.

Their furlough is not an extended vacation (although a break is usually required of them for a limited period), but it is a time for ministry in supporting churches and others where news must be shared of what is happening on the field. So when we help missionaries at home we help cultivate a vision for missions in various churches.

Eventually missionaries must retire from their field of service, and if they are not able to continue their ministry at home they may need special help by way of housing and medical care. What a wonderful thing it would be if more churches would provide housing for retired workers. A retirement centre for such workers could become a colony of heaven on earth (with a few cranky saints included to remind the rest of the importance of patience).

Second, we should care for the world of people around us. Jesus called us to love our neighbours (Matt. 22:39); in fact, to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44). This means that we are to give of ourselves for the highest good of others. Christ's love compels us to do so (2 Cor. 5:14). When it does we will see the people of the world as he does: 'harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd' and we will have 'compassion on them' (Matt. 9:36). If we have compassion we will take action by working hard at bringing the message of salvation to them. Our lack of action betrays us. It tells us that we do not care very much. It is as though we say, 'Who cares!' But when we ask the question, 'Who cares?' we soon find out that God cares, and if we are anything like him

we will care as well, and soon stretch ourselves to reach all kinds of people with the message that they need Christ Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

J. Oswald Sanders challenges us with these thoughts. He wrote, 'Our responsibility for the salvation of the heathen (is) as great as our ability and opportunity to give them the gospel or to make it possible for the gospel to be brought to them.'¹ This highlights once again the important responsibility that all Christians have been given to carry the gospel to those who have not heard it.

¹ J. Oswald Sanders, How Lost Are the Heathen? (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p. 79.

CHAPTER VI

MOBILIZING MEMBERS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE MINISTRY OF THEIR CHURCHES

We come now to the fifth of the eight essentials advocated by this thesis. It reads as follows: God's people (partners) are to be mobilized along the line of their gifts.

The giftedness of God's people is not a concept which is stressed in the ECSA. If anything it is downplayed, since many of the leaders in the denomination are unfamiliar with a biblical approach to this subject. Missionary David Foster says that the people of the ECSA need to see their giftedness.

Foster also points out that the lack of understanding about gifts in the ECSA is the flip-side of the 'one-man band syndrome' where churches revolve around the gifts and activities of their pastors. A corollary to this is that many of the pastors do not encourage other church leaders, such as elders, to actually conduct communion or baptismal services or to help with the preaching and teaching responsibilities in their churches. There seems to be an unwritten law in each church which stipulates that only pastors or ministers of the gospel may carry out certain key functions in the life of each church. Too often lay people are seen as supporters for the pastors in what they do, rather than as prospective partners in what each church should do. To reverse this trend the ECSA needs to place a greater stress on motivating its members to participate more freely in a full-orbed church programme.

A. UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATION IN THE CHRISTIAN

Knowing how to mobilize God's people is a constant challenge to Christian leaders. It seems to be one of the most difficult things they are called to do. In the ECSA the problem is often compounded when people are offended or when their point of view is rejected. They withdraw and refuse to participate.

Since we are mobilized only when we are motivated, it is important to note at least four levels of motivation found in Christians.

LEVEL 1: We are motivated by a **sense of need** (cf. Ps. 130).

LEVEL 2: We are motivated by **obligation** (cf. Rom. 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 9:16).

LEVEL 3: We are motivated by **personal fulfillment** (cf. Prov. 13:4; 1 Thes. 2:19-20).

LEVEL 4: We are motivated by **love**--love for the Lord, which in turn expresses itself in love for doing his will (2 Cor. 5:14).

It is inadequate when Christians are motivated only by the first two levels. Many do little more than attend one church service a week, and we wonder if they are simply trying to satisfy their sense of spiritual need. Then, sadly, many of us function mainly out of obligation in God's work. Rather we should find our motivation growing out of fulfillment and love. In other words, our motivation should grow out of maturity. Here's a simple summary of what is involved.



One of the best known ways of describing a mature Christian is given in Galatians 5:22-23 where the fruit of the Spirit is listed. Love is given first in this list. When God's love reverberates through us, we will be motivated to express the other attributes listed in this passage. They in turn will help us become mobilized in the work of God.

Put differently, we are motivated and mobilized to do God's will when we experience more of God's fullness. According to Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3:16 God's fullness comes from both the Spirit of God and the Word of God. We respond to the Spirit's ministry through prayer and to the Bible's message through study, both with the view to trusting and obeying the Lord more fully. When we do so, our motivation to do his will soon develops.

We are also motivated by fulfillment, especially the fulfillment of God's purposes which then result in the fulfillment of our needs. To experience this fulfillment it is necessary to serve the Lord particularly in those areas where he has gifted us to do so. These gifts of the Spirit team up with the fruit of the Spirit to bring motivation into our lives. Thus both the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit are vital to our motivation. The first enables us to be and the second enables us to do what God has in mind. They lead to both qualities and abilities in our lives from which comes the motivation to be mobilized in his work.

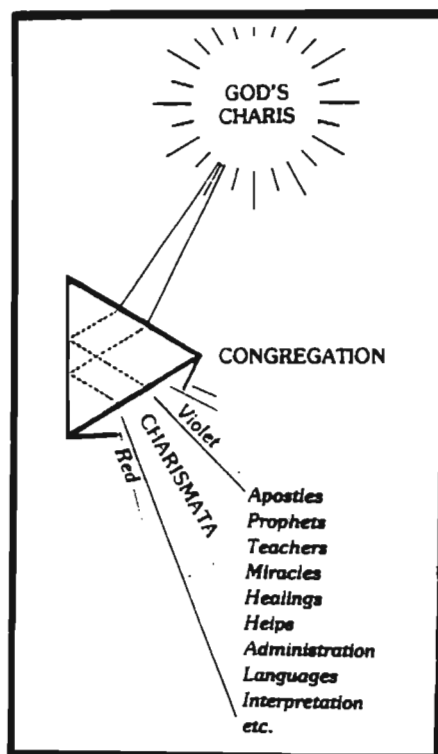
When considering what the Bible says about the gifts of the Spirit we see that they are a particular outpouring of God's grace upon every Christian for the benefit of others.

J. Robertson McQuilkin explains that 'God wraps his gift in the personality of one member then gives the gift of such a person to the church.'

The word grace comes from the Greek charis. Then when we speak of charisma we speak of the results of grace, which is what these gifts are. Charismata is the plural form and means the many results of grace. Thus it is appropriate to call them 'grace-gifts.'

God's grace can be likened to white light falling on a prism and being refracted into a spectrum of grace-gifts in a local church.

GIFTS AS AN
EXPRESSION
OF GOD'S GRACE
IN THE LOCAL CHURCH



¹
J. Robertson McQuilkin, unpublished class notes on Biblical Principles of Christian Work, Columbia Graduate School, 1978, from the section on the Holy Spirit.

²
Michael Griffiths, Serving Grace (MARC Europe and OMF Books, 1986), p. 18.

³
Ibid., p. 20.

The kinds of gifts which God gives us are listed in passages such as these: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:7-11.

B. GUIDELINES FOR UNDERSTANDING AND UTILIZING GIFTS

Since the ECSA has not taken much interest in the subject of spirirtual gifts, a shallow perspective prevails in the minds of many of their members on this subject. They need guidelines such as the following to help reverse this situation.

1. God has not given us a uniform pattern of gifts. Since the Bible's lists are not identical, it seems clear that they are not exhaustive. Nor have any classifications become conclusive. Furthermore, God loves variety and as a generous giver he may freely give many other special abilities to his people, such as celibacy (cf. 1 Cor. 7:7).¹ Then many of the gifts overlap (such as prophecy and encouragement according to 1 Cor. 14:3). This means that we should not describe the gifts in watertight terms, claiming to know, for example, the details of each gift, or exactly which gifts one has been given.

2. Since gifts are the product of God's grace in our lives, our focus and dependence needs to be upon him, the

¹ Others who argue along these lines include F. F. Bruce in '1 and 2 Corinthians', New Century Bible (Basingstoke: Oliphants, 1971), p. 119; John Stott in Baptism and Fullness, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), p. 90; Michael Griffiths in Serving Grace (MARC Europe and OMF Books, 1986), p. 25; John MacArthur in The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. 1 Corinthians (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), p. 291.

giver of these gifts, rather than upon the special abilities which we think he has given us.

3. We cannot prove conclusively from Scripture that any of the gifts have ceased to function.

4. Alternatively, there is no biblical proof that all the gifts have to be present today. The Holy Spirit decides which should be present (1 Cor. 12:11).

5. All Christians possess at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7, 11; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). Therefore, it is not humility to say we have no spiritual gift; it is unbelief.

6. Rightly understood the whole church is a charismatic movement, because each of its members have been gifted for service. To use the phrase 'charismatic movement' in a narrower sense is to imply that some Christians have not received the full blessing of God's grace for service.

7. Christians cheat others by not becoming involved in God's work along the lines of their gifts. Each one is needed for the well-being and growth of the body (1 Cor. 12:19-26; Eph. 4:16).

8. It is true that our spiritual gifts and our natural talents are not the same thing, yet there is no reason to drive a wedge between them. As our creator (Ps. 139:13-17) and our redeemer (Eph. 1:7-8) God weaves both our natural and spiritual lives together so that we may glorify him. In his sovereignty and foreknowledge we would expect him to build into his servants' lives, while still in their mothers' wombs, the natural abilities which when surrendered and transformed

by God's grace would lead to greater effectiveness in his work.

9. All Christians do not possess the same spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:29-30); however, all Christians should possess the same spiritual fruit, namely love and its various expressions (Gal. 5:22-23). Love is 'the most excellent way' (1 Cor. 12:31).

10. We should leave the distribution of the gifts to the Giver of gifts, the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11-18). He gives the gifts at his own discretion for the fulfilling of his purposes. We may even find that gifts which were once dominant in our lives become rather insignificant, because they are no longer as needful in the work which we are now doing.

11. The degree to which the Holy Spirit equips Christians with gifts will differ from person to person (Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 14:18). So we must not think that we are failures if we are not gifted to the same extent as others, and there is no need to compete with others in the expression of our gifts.

12. Each church will also differ from the next in the combination of gifts it has been given.

13. Some gifts are classified as greater gifts (1 Cor. 12:28, 31; 14:1). Many believe these are the apostles, prophets and teachers, together with the evangelists and pastors (Eph. 4:11). Certainly churches should seek the influence of these office gifts, since they are essential to building Christ's church.

14. Churches should desire, or become zealous about the greater gifts (based on zēloutē in the Greek in 1 Cor. 12:31 and 14:1). Individual Christians, however, are not instructed to seek any of the gifts personally. They should be zealous about spiritual things (based on pneumatika, not charismata, in 1 Cor. 14:1), and ultimately should leave the distribution of gifts in the Giver's hands.

15. When appointing church leaders, it is far more important to look for those with suitable spiritual qualifications, than those with significant spiritual gifts. In 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 Paul highlights the spiritual qualities to look for in Christian workers without focusing much on the gifts they need.

16. Some Christians are able to identify some of their spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), but this is not something which Scripture requires of all Christians.

C. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GIFTS

A much stronger emphasis is needed on training suitable people in the ECSA and then trusting them to do the work for which they have been trained. For example, more Sunday School teachers should be trained and then trusted to teach the boys and girls the Bible in Sunday School settings. The same could be said about youth work and visitation and the men of the church. In other words, the discipling of people along the lines of their gifts is much needed in ECSA circles

at this time and will always remain a real need in each of the churches.

Surely one of the major reasons why God has given us his explanations about the gifts is to impress upon us the importance of serving him in our local church situation. We are to be participants, not spectators in his work, so the Bible assures us that we all are gifted for service in the body. Uninvolvement in the Lord's work is inexcusable. We are not all called to do everything, but we are all called to do something. We are God's gift to his church, so we are to give of ourselves to serve him in those areas where we are most gifted.

Actually, we all should be able to state specifically what ministry we are seeking to carry out. If someone should ask us, 'What is your main ministry at this point in your life?' we should all be able to answer their question clearly. It is not enough to say, 'I go to church' or 'I am living the life' or 'I support the pastor.' We all should be doing these things. It is also not good enough to say, 'I look after the church's facilities and grounds', since the Bible says nothing about these matters. And if we believe that our main ministry is giving financially to the Lord's work then the question is, How much beyond ten percent are we giving? We all should give at least ten percent, so those who see this as their main ministry should endeavor to go beyond the ten percent as much as possible.

It is far more important to know what one's ministry is than to know what one's gifts are. While seminars on

discovering one's gifts are helpful, they carry the danger of focusing on 'me and what I have got', instead of on the Giver of gifts and what he wants. We agree with Prof. Neville A. C. Heuer's concern that 'the gifts of the Spirit are emphasised so as to glorify the gifted and not the Giver.'¹ Seminars on the gifts also carry the added danger of placing blinders on Christians who then refrain from participating in certain aspects of the Lord's work, simply because they believe they are not gifted to do so.

Gene Getz reminds us that God's plan is not a multi-gifted man, but a multi-gifted church.² It is a satisfying thing to see God's people realize that they have been especially equipped for service. It is even more satisfying to see them actually serving, and more satisfying still to know that they are satisfied when doing so. Conversely, it is a sad thing when the Lord's work is viewed as the responsibility of the paid professionals. We all suffer when this happens. Ray Stedman describes this problem with this well known illustration.

Christianity (often becomes) nothing but a spectator sport, very much akin to the definition of football--22 men down on the field, desperately in need of rest, and 20 thousand in the grandstands, desperately in need of exercise!³

¹ Neville A. C. Heuer, Let My People Go (Westville: The La Mancha Press, 1981), p. 15.

² Gene Getz, Sharpening the Focus of the Church (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 127.

³ Ray Stedman, Body Life (Glendale: Regal Books, 1972), pp. 78-79.

When pastors are expected to do the work of the church by and large on their own, they find the load unbearable. Many church people feel that they must support their pastor as he gives himself to evangelizing the lost, counseling the down and brokenhearted, ministering to the poor and needy, relieving those who are oppressed and abused, expounding the Scriptures, and challenging the spread of evil in an increasingly humanistic world. Pastors were never meant to carry such a load, and when they attempt to do so they become frustrated, exhausted, and emotionally drained.

Ray Stedman goes on to say that such thinking and involvement is a distortion which leads to an impoverished church. In its debilitated frame of mind it withdraws into isolation. Yet what the church needs more than anything else is a return to the dynamic of the early church. It is high time that we stopped defending those traditions which leave little room for developing a church along New Testament lines. Pastors in particular must restore to the people the ministry for which God has equipped them.¹

Prof. Neville Heuer makes the same point when he quotes the comments of others in the following statements:

I have had it said to me, over and over again, by university principals, psychiatrists, medical doctors, child guidance specialists, industrial psychologists, accountants, social workers and others, that once the sermon is over on Sunday their contact with the church is over. Why? Because their skills are not being utilized! When will the

¹

Ibid.

church realize that ministry cannot be hogged by the few.¹

From these sentiments we detect that part of the problem lies with those who are in church leadership today. They have not shared the ministry with others and the result is that 'for too long the ministry has been vested in an over-worked and often poorly equipped minority who have sacrificed themselves for the sake of Christ to what sometimes degenerates into stamp-licking for things that have nothing to do with their call to ministry.'²

Far too many Christians have left far too much of God's work in the hands of far too few. Problems like this should not arise. God's plan is to supply each church with the gifted people it needs, and the sooner we become available to him, the sooner he will use us in his work. This means that there is no room for a bad church. The more faithful we become, the more effective our churches will be.

Churches need to become specific in the way they help their people become involved in the Lord's work. Wise is the church that has a strategy to follow.³ The basic procedures given below suggest the kind of approach to take.

¹
Heuer, p. 16.

²
Ibid.

³
For an indepth study on this subject see Lawrence O. Richards and Gib Martin, A Theology of Personal Ministry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981).

1. Gifts in God's People Need to be Recognized

- a. A clearer understanding of the gifts should be sought.
- b. Ministry aspirations should be recognized (1 Tim. 3:1).
- c. Personal appraisals should be made (Rom. 12:3).
- d. Local-church opinion should be sought (1 Tim. 4:14).
- e. Active involvement should be encouraged (2 Tim. 1:6).

One missionary couple went about it this way:

--All Christians in their church were given a task to perform. As they participated suitable workers were identified.

--Increased responsibilities were given to those who could handle them.

--Suitable men were asked to preside at various meetings.

--They were then asked to give testimonies.

--Some were asked to give a testimony with a small Bible message included.

--Fewer still were asked to lead a Bible study or preach from time to time.

2. Training for God's People Needs to be Given

- a. Training at the local church level is biblical training (Eph. 4:11-12).

It is important to remember that the early Christian leaders taught God's Word and strengthened his people in local church settings (cf. Acts 11:25-26; 14:21-22). Paul spent eighteen months in Corinth (Acts 18:10), and another three years in Ephesus doing just this (Acts 20:31).

At the local level one is able to reach many more of God's people with the truths of the Bible. Admittedly many of them do not want to be well grounded in Scripture or well

disciplined in the ways of God; nevertheless, the potential exists at the local church level for establishing more Christians in the ways of God than in any other setting.

Without doubt some Christians need the specialized training that is offered in theological colleges or by university faculties wherein they are taught the deeper things of God's Word. Paul offered this kind of training when he met daily in the School of Tyrannus for two years (Acts 19:9-10). He still was closely aligned with the local church, however, for it is there that such training works itself out in practical terms in the lives of most Christians.

- b. Christian workers should concentrate on training others, especially promising workers (2 Tim. 2:2).

The missionary couple mentioned above went about it this way:

- They trained people on a one-to-one basis.
- They handed out notes to their study groups, and ran a good library.
- They helped their people take correspondence courses.
- They ran a night school programme.
- They guided those who needed formal Christian training.

The Time and Talent Form given in Appendix E is another tool which can be used to help God's people become involved in his work. It enables them to show in specific terms where their areas of interest lie, and helps church leaders to know who they can call on for service in their church.

D. THE CHARISMATIC POSITION REEXAMINED

Because of the tremendous growth in numbers which we have seen in so-called charismatic churches in recent years, many Christians have concluded that only when churches become charismatic will they make the impact on their communities which should be made. But is this right? For one thing, should the churches of the ECSA become charismatic?

With the tendency in some ECSA churches to adopt charismatic styles of worship involving loud music associated with hand clapping and hand raising there is the added possibility that some will also take on charismatic doctrines. Would this be right for ECSA churches or not? In Article X of their constitution (p. 20) it is categorically stated that the ECSA 'is not a charismatic body.' But how biblical is this statement and what principles should the ECSA follow to move toward a biblical approach to this subject?

In the full sense of the word, if churches are not charismatic they are not Christian, for God gives his grace to each one of his children so that they are gifted in speaking and serving for the benefit of the whole body of Christ (cf. Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11; Eph. 4:7-8, 11-12; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). Today, however, the term 'charismatic' is used in a narrower sense to describe a whole movement of Christians who stress, amongst other things, both the baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is a pity that we do not call the whole church a charismatic movement, but distinctions do need to be made, so we will join the ranks of others and use these

terms in their narrower sense to refer to those who want to be called by them. Included in our considerations are the so-called Pentecostals who, in essence, are not really different from the Charismatics.

When we take a good look at this movement it becomes clear that there are a number of positive features associated with it which we do well to note for our own benefit.

1. Lessons to be Learned from the Charismatic Movement

a. Without doubt the church at large desperately needs a stronger emphasis on the need to be continually filled with the Spirit of God. Our charismatic friends remind us of this.

b. Christians in local churches need to become much more loving toward one another. Charismatic Christians often are very warm and friendly toward one another. In some circles they also go out of their way to help needy people. This kind of love usually makes a good impact on those who show it and on those who receive it.

c. We do well when, like the Charismatics, we encourage various people to participate in our church meetings. Creating more opportunity for audience response is a good thing and allowing time for 'open ministry' can be very meaningful.

d. Our charismatic colleagues also remind us by their example of the importance of praying more enthusiastically in our circles and of depending more fully on the Lord in all things.

e. We need to learn anew the importance of being willing and ready at all times to witness for the Lord and to participate in his worldwide missionary programme through praying, giving and going. Many people have come to know the Lord personally in charismatic meetings. This is very encouraging and challenging to other Christians who need to have the same kind of influence.

f. In charismatic circles there is a tremendous emphasis on music. Although there are many unfortunate excesses in this area of their church life, the fact still remains that many of our other churches could do with a vast improvement in their music programmes, with the joy of the Lord becoming much more evident in their meetings.

g. Charismatic Christians remind us anew of the importance of small-group meetings in homes, especially for times of Bible study, prayer and fellowship.

These kinds of features in charismatic circles have added to many of the great successes which they have enjoyed in modern times. They do a lot of the right things in the right way. Certainly they show other Christians a clean pair of heels in some crucial aspects of the Lord's work. Yet all is not well in this movement. Major objections should be voiced to help all Christians move closer to the Lord's will in these matters and thereby closer to one another in Christian fellowship.

2. Objections to the Charismatic Position

a. The charismatic position is based largely on experience--both the experiences of those described in Acts and those in modern times who claim to have had special workings of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

b. Charismatics base much of their position on what happened in a transitional period in the church covering a time span of about twenty years.

c. The doctrinal (didactic) portions of Scripture are often overlooked in favour of the historical ones by those who explain the charismatic position.

d. The charismatic view claims, without the support of Scripture, that Spirit-baptism is a post-conversion experience. It fails to take into account that the word 'baptism' is used in connection with our initiation into Christ rather than as a description of a separate spiritual experience.

e. It is often claimed in charismatic circles that tongue-speaking is a valid, even necessary, sign of a Spirit-filled life, but this cannot be verified by Scripture.

f. Implicit in the charismatic movement is the tendency to subordinate Christ to the Holy Spirit in a way which is not in harmony with Scripture.

g. The charismatic position overlooks the inconsistent pattern recorded in Acts as to how the Holy Spirit was given, and bases its views largely on a limited

number of accounts recorded in Acts. (Admittedly they are important ones, but certainly are not the only ones.)

h. It implies that many true Christians have an incomplete faith--that they have not arrived at the full truth yet.

i. It often creates unfortunate splits in the church, and invades Christian organizations, by taking them over or by breaking them up.

j. Charismatics can be criticized for their emotionalism. Certainly they are more demonstrative of their feelings than other Christians are. Often they 'let their hair down' and their feelings show. But their noisiness is discomfoting and their excesses can be very disenchanting, sometimes even discourteous. As Prof. Neville Heuer points out, new functions for the Spirit are being invented when he is seen as the 'slayer.' It would seem that everything possible is being done to develop a 'science-fiction' element in the movement. Prof. Heuer adds, 'One of the chief characteristics of this fantasy is that it snatches at every straw which offers novelty and distorts it until what should be wholesome becomes an unrecognizable esotericism.'¹ He reminds us that mainline churches may have their problems, but charismatic churches are becoming sidelined by their teachings and practices.

We agree with these concerns, since much of what charismatic Christians advocate seems to be for the benefit of

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Heuer, p.15.

the individual. It grows out of their teaching that each Christian should experience the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the gift of speaking in tongues. We turn our attention now to these issues.

3. A Brief Look at the Baptism with the Spirit

The baptism with the Spirit is a point much debated in Christian circles. Some maintain that this baptism is to be a separate experience from our conversion, while others maintain they take place simultaneously. So clarification on the issues involved is needed.

a. All Christians Are Indwelt by the Holy Spirit

1) This is taught **explicitly** by verses such as these: John 3:5-8; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 8:9, 11, 14-16; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Galatians 3:14; 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; Titus 3:5-7. Furthermore, the Scriptures state that those who do not possess the Holy Spirit do not belong to Christ (Rom. 8:9; Jude 19). From the time of Pentecost the Holy Spirit indwelt the disciple; before then he simply was with him (Jn. 14:17).

2) This truth is also taught **implicitly**. When the writers of the New Testament epistles wrote to the early churches they made no distinctions between two types of Christians: those baptized by the Spirit and those not. They took it for granted that God had given their readers the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; 8:16; 1 Thes. 4:8; 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13), including those who were far from victorious (1 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 3:1-2).

b. Baptism Speaks of Our Initial Christian Experience

There are two forms of baptism described in the Bible: water-baptism and Spirit-baptism. Both speak of our initiation into Christ. Water-baptism 'is the symbol¹ of which Spirit-baptism is the reality.'

When we look at the **doctrinal passages** on baptism it is important to note that they usually speak of Spirit-baptism which in turn is always linked with our initiation into Christ and his Church. See Romans 6:1-11; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 4:4-5; Colossians 2:11-12; and 1 Peter 3:18-21.

In a nutshell, then, we are baptized with the Spirit when we are born again by the Spirit--when we are initiated into Christ and his Church. The Christian who looks for the baptism of the Holy Spirit is wasting his time looking for something he already has.

c. The Bible Nowhere Instructs Christians to Be Baptized with the Spirit

There are seven verses where baptism with the Spirit is specifically mentioned: Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13. The first six clearly have to do with Pentecost--a very special event not to be repeated. The sixth verse was also applied to Cornelius from whom we learn that baptism with the Spirit takes place at the commencement of

¹ John Stott, The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964), p. 14.

one's salvation. The seventh verse is 1 Corinthians 12:13 where we are clearly taught that 'all' Christians are baptized with the Spirit.

Some, however, argue from this verse that the Holy Spirit has baptized all of us into Christ's body, but that Christ has not necessarily baptized all of us with his Holy Spirit. However, this is to make a sad mistake, since the Greek phrase is exactly the same in all seven occurrences, excepting that the Spirit is characterized by 'holy' in the first six and as 'one' in the seventh.¹ Therefore, in each case we are focusing upon the baptism with (or in or by) the Spirit, which all genuine Christians have experienced.

Many also argue that Spirit-baptism and filling are two different terms for **one** great blessing which we should experience in a special way after salvation. As we have seen, this denies the Bible's teaching that Spirit-baptism is a vital part of our **initial** salvation experience. Also, we learn from verses like Acts 4:8; 6:3; 7:55; 11:24 that the fullness of the Spirit need not be tied to a dramatic, distinct outpouring. Furthermore, being filled with the Spirit involves being controlled by him, which is not the root idea behind baptism. They are essentially separate experiences.

Admittedly Scripture records one clear case where baptism and fullness were linked--at Pentecost (cf. Acts

¹
Ibid., pp. 15-16.

1:5; 2:4). Yet in the case of the Corinthians, they were baptized with the Spirit even though they were still worldly or not filled with him (1 Cor. 3:1; 12:13). Therefore, we must not confuse baptism with fullness, otherwise we rob them both of their meaning and confuse their distinctive contributions.

We would expect the Bible to stress the necessity of being baptized with the Spirit if, in fact, this is God's way of bringing us into successful Christian living, but it does not do so. Neither Jesus nor any of his disciples ever taught this.

d. Acts Does Not Teach That the Baptism with the Spirit Must Be a Separate Experience from Conversion.

Four chapters in Acts (2, 8, 10, 19) describe unusual receptions of the Holy Spirit over a period of twenty years or so. Apart from chapter 8 they also state that speaking in tongues took place. In two of these cases it is clear that the Holy Spirit came upon people some time after they had exercised saving faith. The first involved the 120 disciples of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and the second the believers in Samaria (Acts 8:14-17). On the other hand, in the case of Cornelius and his colleagues, described in Acts 10:44-48, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them **when** they were converted. Then in Acts 19:1-7 we read of the disciples of John where their conversion and baptism with the Holy

Spirit could have taken place simultaneously or separately.

Therefore, in these four unusual cases we have two where the Holy Spirit was given after conversion (the 120 disciples and the Samaritans), one where he was given at conversion (Cornelius and his colleagues), and one where he was given at conversion, or some time afterwards (John's disciples). This shows that it is impossible to develop a consistent doctrine of the baptism with the Spirit on the basis of Acts, since there was no consistency in when he was given. Furthermore, no consistent pattern prevails in the timing of the other unusual events, such as tongues speaking and laying on of hands. The following chart demonstrates the inconsistent pattern that emerges.

EVENTS INVOLVED	120 DISCIPLES Acts 2	SAMARITANS Acts 8	CORNELIUS Acts 10	JOHN'S DISCIPLES Acts 19
Initial Reception of the Holy Spirit	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Spirit Received After Conversion	✓	✓		?
Tongues Spoken	✓		✓	✓
Wind and Fire Present	✓			
Prayer for the Holy Spirit		✓		
Hands Laid on Recipients		✓		✓

It is significant that **groups** were involved when the Holy Spirit was given dramatically and speaking in tongues took place. (In chapter 8 no tongues are mentioned.) A modern tendency is to stress that **individuals** must be baptized with the Spirit, yet this is different from Acts where the stress was upon groups. The significance of this is that God was authenticating the validity of a group's spiritual response. In each case the out-pouring took place at an important transition in the formation of the church. In the first case, Jews were baptized with the Spirit (2:1-4), in the second, half-Jews (Samaritans) were baptized with the Spirit (8:14-17), in the third case, non-Jews (Gentiles) were baptized with the Spirit (10:44-48; 11:15-18), and finally, a seeking, religious group was baptized with the Spirit (19:1-7).

Through these special out-pourings on special groups, God brought about the development of the church. The Spirit's ministry led to the **unity** of the body. Jews and Gentiles had become one in Christ.

Naturally it would have been very difficult for the Jews to acknowledge that any other group of people could be a part of God's spiritual family besides their own, so God demonstrated in a dramatic way that all peoples who respond with the right kind of faith will be recipients of his Spirit and become members of his family. It is also significant that Peter was involved with the first three groups: the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, showing that each group's response was authentic. Peter

was Jewish in his orientation, even to the point of being known as the apostle to the Jews, yet he did not oppose the outpouring of the Spirit upon non-Jewish groups.

These special out-pourings were transitory. They show us a church in development. Therefore they do not give us a complete understanding of what is involved with the baptism of the Spirit. So we need to turn to the epistles, where the additional light is given.

We should not expect the unusual events that took place at these transition points to repeat themselves. This also applies to many of the other events recorded in the New Testament. For example, which one of us would expect members of the church to drop dead, as Ananias and Sapphira did, because they lied to the Holy Spirit, to church leaders and to their fellow-Christians? Then which one of us contends that the command which Jesus gave to his disciples to preach only to Israel, and not to the Gentiles, is the pattern for missionaries to follow today? (Matt. 10:5-6). This same principle also applies to Old Testament events, for they too are not necessarily models for us to follow today.

When we become preoccupied with the spectacular events of Acts, we are distracted from seeing that it does suggest a normative pattern for the way in which the Holy Spirit is given. (This is then substantiated by the epistles.) In the majority of cases there is no mention of the dramatic, special events which we have considered

thus far. The events on the Day of Pentecost put the two sides of the picture in contrast. At first 120 disciples of Christ were baptized with the Spirit, and they spoke in tongues. Then 3000 converts repented and received the promised Holy Spirit. This group of 3000, together with the other cases listed below, suggests that it is not normal for the Holy Spirit to be given in an unusual way, with other dramatic events present. Consider each case for yourself:¹

- The 3000 who repented and were baptized (2:41)
- Those whom the Lord added day by day (2:47)
- The 5000 men (4:4)
- The many who became disciples (5:14; 6:7)
- The Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-39)
- The great number in Antioch (11:20-21, 24)
- The Greeks and Jews in Iconium and Derbe (14:1, 21)
- The increase of the churches (16:5)
- The Philippian jailor and his household (16:30-34)
- The many who believed in Thessalonica (17:1, 4), in Berea (17:12), in Athens (17:34), in Corinth (18:8), in Ephesus (19:18, 20)
- The spread of God's Word (6:7; 12:24; 13:49; 19:20)

Certainly it is not stressed in Acts that when people were converted they were to seek the baptism of the Spirit or the gift of speaking in tongues.

e. It Is Vital That We Base Our Doctrine on More Than the Book of Acts

As a history of the early church, Acts is descriptive not prescriptive. Certainly there are

¹ Paul's case in Acts 9:1-19 is an interesting one. Unusual events were involved, but it cannot be proven that he was baptized with the Spirit or that he spoke in tongues three days after he met the Lord on the road to Damascus. Yes, he was filled with the Spirit, but this is no proof that he was baptized with the Spirit in a separate event after his conversion. To argue from silence is highly suspect.

doctrinal (didactic) sections in Acts, such as the sermons of the apostles, but the rest is fundamentally narrative. There are great principles described and taught in Acts. We are to observe and learn from them, yet ultimately our doctrine is to grow out of doctrinal passages such as the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels and the writings of the early apostles. Hence our understanding of the baptism with the Spirit should not be developed mainly from Acts.

If we remove Acts, what doctrine of the Holy Spirit would we then have? In simple terms we would see that every Christian is baptized with the Holy Spirit, and that every Christian also needs to experience his on-going filling.

f. We Must Not Base Our Understanding of the Holy Spirit's Ministries upon Experience

Arguments based on personal experiences are often used to explain the baptism of the Spirit. But experience is not our authority in this matter. For one thing, experiences differ from person to person. Even the experiences of those described in Acts are not authoritative, if not substantiated by doctrinal passages.

g. We All Need a Deeper Work of the Holy Spirit

That Christians are to experience the continual filling of the Spirit is clearly taught in the Bible. It is definitely described in Acts 4:31; 6:3, 5; 7:5; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9, 52, and commanded in Ephesians 5:18. The

filling of the Holy Spirit has to do with our experiencing his control in our lives. Each one of us desperately needs this right from the beginning of our salvation. It becomes a reality as we abandon ourselves daily to the Lord and as he works his wonderful will into our lives, especially those truths given in Scripture.

4. A Brief Look at Tongue-Speaking

a. The Basic Positions Taken on Tongue-Speaking

There are four distinct positions taken by Christians regarding the manifestation of tongues (or glōssalalia as they are sometimes called).

1) The 'Can't Be' Position

—Support for This View

Here are some of the basic arguments given to contend that biblical tongues are not present today.

First, the Bible clearly states that tongues will cease in 1 Corinthians 13:8. The crucial question is, When will this happen? The first place to look for an answer is the context in which this phrase is given. In verse 10 we have a clue to note. After talking about the temporary nature of prophecy, tongues and knowledge, Paul says that something which is marked by perfection will come, then that which is temporary and imperfect will disappear. What is this perfection?

Here are the answers often given:

- *The completed Scriptures
- *The mature Church
- *The Rapture
- *The Second Coming of Christ
- *The Millenium
- *The Eternal State

Even though some disagree with writers like John MacArthur when he says that the 'perfection' mentioned in verse 10 refers to the eternal state, and **not** to the Scriptures, they do agree with him when he says that tongues ceased in the Apostolic Age. This view is based on the arguments which follow and the Greek word παύω which indicates that tongues 'will stop by themselves', and not necessarily when something perfect arrives.¹

Second, the apostolic era, involving signs and miracles has come and gone (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).

Third, the need for tongues fell away when the New Testament was completed.

Fourth, history indicates that tongues did cease. There is practically no mention of tongues in the writings of Christians until this century, and when it was mentioned it invariably linked with a group that was regarded as heretical.²

--Objections to This View

While there is good reason to believe that genuine tongues have ceased, do the Scriptures still allow their

¹ John MacArthur, The Charismatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 163-71.

² Ibid., pp. 169-70.

possibility today? Apparently they do! Who are we to say that God cannot give this gift today, especially if the Bible does not categorically prohibit its presence today. The following objections help to substantiate this.

First, since it is quite possible (and even probable) that Paul had the eternal state in mind when he spoke of the perfection yet to come, it is also quite possible that genuine tongues will continue until then.

Second, for the Greek language to say that tongues will stop by themselves is not to say that they did stop once and for all in the days of the early church.

Third, to maintain that knowledge and prophecy, but not tongues, will continue until perfection arrives, is to destroy the continuum of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. He was not trying to distinguish tongues from the other two, but was showing the temporary nature of all three, and that the era of perfection would finally end the temporary and imperfect. Just because tongues are not mentioned in verse 9 does not mean that Paul did not have them in mind when giving his explanations. To insist that he was not thinking of tongues is to argue from silence, and to overlook the main thrust of these verses.

Fourth, why were instructions regarding tongue-speaking given in 1 Corinthians 14, if tongues ceased early in the life of the church? It is dangerous to suggest that doctrinal passages such as 1 Corinthians 14 are not fully applicable today.

2) The 'Could Be' Position

--Support for This View

This position seeks to be open-minded to the presence of tongues today while being careful to apply in a fair and honest manner all the teachings of Scripture on this subject. It is particularly concerned about observing the guidelines laid down in 1 Corinthians 12-14 when tongues are manifested.

--Objections to This View

Probably the primary weakness with those who take this position is that they view tongues like a hawk, being ready to pounce on the contradictions of Scripture that they see. Many do not stress that a deeper work of the Spirit is needed in our lives, and they are slow to encourage the demonstration of spiritual gifts in the body.

3) The 'Should Be' Position

--Support for This View

The focus here is upon those passages where the spiritual gifts are listed (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 27-31; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). It is argued that we should not eliminate some gifts while accepting others. When we reject some because they are sign gifts or miraculous we become inconsistent. In fact, all the gifts are supernatural in nature and are a demonstration (sign) of God's working in our midst. So if we accept the gift of teaching we should also accept tongues. Not everyone

will speak in tongues, but we should expect some to do so. If God is more than willing to give us his Spirit (Lk. 11:13), should we not also expect him to give the gifts of the Spirit, including tongues, for our good?

--Objections to This View

The basic objection is found in 1 Corinthians 12:11 where we are taught that the Spirit gives gifts 'just as he determines.' Who are we to say that he should give the gift of tongues today? Clearly he makes the decision in these matters, and we need to leave it to him to decide who should be gifted in this way, and when it should be expressed. Put simply, we are to leave the gifts to the Giver.

4) The 'Must Be' Position

--Support for This View

This position takes special note of the dynamic impact which the early church made on the world of its time. It highlights the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the past as recorded in Acts, and in the present as experienced by many. The baptism with the Spirit is a vital experience which we all need today, and when it takes place it is most clearly evidenced by speaking in tongues. This is substantiated by Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 19 where we read of various Christians who received the Holy Spirit in a very personal way, and then demonstrated it through tongue-speaking. Likewise, we must experience the

empowering of the Holy Spirit if we wish to live a vital, victorious Christian life, and then express it, amongst other things, by speaking in tongues.

--Objections to This View

The teaching of 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 definitely shows that the 'Must Be' position is wrong. It is clear that not all Christians **must** speak in tongues. Furthermore, how dare we tell the Holy Spirit what he must or must not do?

Broadly speaking the last two positions are taken by those who are called Charismatic Christians, while the first two are taken by those who could be called Conservative Christians.

In very general terms we may summarize these four positions in the following way:

THE CAN'T BE POSITION:	Tongues are eliminated by Scripture.
THE COULD BE POSITION:	Tongues are compared with Scripture.
THE SHOULD BE POSITION:	Tongues are justified by Scripture.
THE MUST BE POSITION:	Tongues are advocated by Scripture.

The 'Could Be' position differs from the other three in that its weaknesses lie with **how** its supporters approach the subject of tongues-speaking rather than with **what** it advocates. Nevertheless its basic teachings seem to be true to Scripture. It should be chosen, therefore, above the other positions. This does not mean, however, that genuine speaking in tongues **is** taking place today, but that it **could be**. To discover if a particular tongue is genuine or not we need to apply the guidelines of Scripture (as is attempted below) in an honest and diligent manner.

A by-product of the 'Could Be' position is that it minimizes our differences when it is applied tactfully. So instead of polarizing at the two opposite ends of the discussion, we can begin finding one another in a spirit of truth and love.

b. Guidelines with Regard to Tongue-Speaking

Key passages, like 1 Corinthians 12-14, give us insights and instructions regarding spiritual gifts, particularly prophecy and tongue-speaking. It seems obvious that this section was given for the purpose of weighing 'carefully what is said' when prophecy and tongue-speaking take place (cf. 14:29). The following points are made to help in this process.

1) Our views about tongue-speaking must be based on the Scriptures, and not on our experience or that of others.

2) Our concern should be to elevate Christ rather than the Holy Spirit in discussions like this. The pre-eminence of Christ must be the one and only outstanding feature of our lives, not the Holy Spirit or some experience. The Holy Spirit was given to draw attention to Christ (Jn. 16:13-14). We are Christians, not 'Spiritians.'

3) It is vital that a spirit of love prevails when spiritual gifts are expressed (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:1-3). If it does not, then our focus should be upon expressing love, not the gifts.

4) Paul states **explicitly** that tongues should serve as a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22). Therefore, we should expect tongues to be given wherever unbelievers are found, and not only at church meetings. When unbelievers do respond positively to the gospel because of a tongue, we have one good reason to regard these tongues as authentic.

5) Paul also indicates **implicitly** why tongues are given. They are of value to the one who has the gift (1 Cor. 14:4), and to the church if interpreted (1 Cor. 14:5). Furthermore, they may lead to worship (1 Cor. 14:16-17).

6) Only two or three should speak in a tongue at a meeting (1 Cor. 14:27).

7) Those who speak in a tongue should do so one at a time (1 Cor. 14:27).

8) An interpreter must be present to give the interpretation (1 Cor. 14:27-28). Evidently it is possible for a person who has spoken in tongues also to give the interpretation of that tongue (1 Cor. 14:13).

9) Biblical tongue-speaking is controllable (1 Cor. 14:28). The mention of tongues comes between the mention of two other gifts which control it. The first 'discerning of spirits' has to do with the origin of tongues, and the second 'interpretation' has to do with the content of tongues. Therefore, while the emotions may be involved, it is not good to say that tongues are

ecstatic--accompanied by enraptured delight--since this implies that the control is minimal or non-existent.

10) No one person should dominate church meetings when others wish to participate (1 Cor. 14:30).

11) All that is done when a church gathers, including tongue-speaking, should lead to edification (1 Cor. 12:7; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26).

12) Peace and order must prevail in church meetings (1 Cor. 14:32-33, 40). They are priorities to be sought above tongues-speaking.

13) Tongues should not destroy the unity of a church. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 teaches that the oneness of Christ's body develops when the gifts are rightly expressed. If a gift like tongues causes disunity, it should be better controlled.

14) It is not biblical to have a tongues experience and then remain carnal or decline in spiritual maturity. Spiritual growth should take place in the lives of tongue-speakers (1 Cor. 12:7).

15) Tongues are not to be a major part of our beliefs and behaviour. If Paul wrote Hebrews then he wrote 100 chapters in the New Testament. He deals with tongues in only one epistle (1 Cor.) and then only one chapter specifically addresses the tongues issue (14), while two mention it in passing (12 and 13).

16) One must not emphasize tongues so that it bypasses the other gifts in importance. It is not a special gift to be sought, but a possible gift to be received.

17) It is wrong to say that all Christians should have a tongues experience (1 Cor. 12:8-11, 29-30). Many great men of God in our time have not spoken in tongues. Spiritual fruit should be common to all (Gal. 5:22-23), not particular gifts. Hence the primary evidence of the Holy Spirit's baptism and fullness is moral, not miraculous.

18) Tongues are not a necessary sign of a Spirit-filled life. In fact, some who are in a poor spiritual condition also speak in tongues (cf. 1 Cor. 3:1-3).

19) Joel 2:27-32 does not find its fulfillment in modern tongue-speaking because it is a description of the end times. These end times follow the spiritual revival of Israel (v. 27). This has not taken place yet. Also, the dramatic events described in verses 30-31 have not found their fulfillment yet, even in the charismatic movement. Peter linked this passage with Pentecost and not with our time (Acts 2:16-21), to show that Pentecost was a forerunner of the kinds of events which we can expect during the end times.

20) It is unnecessary to encourage one another to speak in tongues. The Bible does not say anywhere that we should deliberately seek this gift. Certainly the methods which are often used to help others speak in tongues are highly questionable. (In 1 Corinthians 14:1 Paul encourages the church as a whole to desire spiritual things (pneumatika), especially prophecy. Then in 14:5 he

simply says that he would like them to experience tongue-speaking, but he does not actually instruct them to seek it.)

21) There must be an active seeking of the greater gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28, 31; 14:1 and Eph. 4:11-12). Evidently these were the office-gifts of apostles, prophets and teachers together with evangelists and pastors.

22) We should seek prophecy rather than tongues (1 Cor. 14:1-5, 18-19). In other words, there must be a genuine effort to apply the **thrust** and **context** of 1 Corinthians 12-14, which stresses the greater value of prophecy over tongues to bring about edification to believers. In simple terms, we are to **pursue** prophecy, and **permit** tongues, providing they are biblical.

23) Tongues can even lead unbelievers to conclude that Christians are mad; hence prophecy is preferred over tongues when the church gathers (1 Cor. 14:23-24).

24) In verse after verse Paul shows that tongues are not of great benefit to the church (1 Cor. 14:2, 4, 6, 9, 16, 19, 22, 23, 28). In fact, his highest commendation in verse 5 is a negative one.

25) The debate that revolves around the meaning of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12-14, should not be confused with the distinction Paul makes between prophecy and tongues. He clearly links prophecy with an understandable language (1 Cor. 14:3-9). He showed the greater value of prophecy over tongues to bring about edification, because

the former is readily understandable, and the latter not. Therefore, no matter what one understands by prophecy, one should not contend that prophecy and tongues are of equal value, and, therefore, equally valid. To do so is to run counter to the thrust of Paul's argument.

26) Women must not dominate church meetings, especially by way of tongue-speaking. The immediate context of 1 Corinthians 14:34 indicates that women were not to ask their husbands questions in church meetings (v. 35). The broader teaching is that they were a disturbance in meetings and possibly even at fault by speaking tongues.

27) It is unlikely that Paul had singing in tongues in mind in 1 Corinthians 14:15. The flow of verses 13-16 shows his intention to use both his mind and his spirit at the same time when praying or singing in church. Even if he had genuine singing in tongues in mind, most modern expressions are invalidated when they are not given one at a time or interpreted.

28) It is artificial to argue that the tongues of Acts were a **sign** of God's working, and different from the tongues of 1 Corinthians which were a **gift** of God's grace. The words 'sign' and 'gifts' are used interchangeably in both Acts and 1 Corinthians in reference to the Holy Spirit and to tongues (cf. Acts 2:4, 38-39; 10:45-46; 1 Cor. 14:22).

29) It is most likely that actual human languages rather than heavenly languages are in view when the

Scriptures speak about tongues. Clearly human languages were spoken in Acts 2:5-12. In none of the subsequent passages were tongues redefined as something different from human languages (Acts 11:15, 17; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28; 14:1-10). Then in 1 Corinthians 14:21 Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:11 showing that God spoke to unbelieving Jews through the Assyrian language. In a similar way, human languages would be used as a sign to convince unbelievers of their need for Christ (1 Cor. 14:22). If only heavenly languages are involved unbelievers are less likely to be convinced that a miraculous sign has been given them. 1 Corinthians 14:19 also indicates that tongues will express themselves in words. When Paul speaks of the tongues of angels in 1 Corinthians 13:1 he is saying that even if he were to speak in the tongues of angels, he would be of no value without love. He does not define tongues as equaling heavenly languages in this verse. If, on the other hand, tongues do take on the form of heavenly languages they will not be the same as babble or gibberish.

30) When the length of interpretation is radically different from the length of the tongues spoken, then surely we have the right to question the authenticity of either or both.

31) To say that tongues are needed to bring power into one's life is to claim something which the Scriptures do not teach and to overlook that tongues are given primarily for the benefit of the body (1Cor. 12:7).

32) It does not sit well with Scripture to talk about 'my own tongue or tongues.' Genuine tongues are given by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11). He determines what form they should take. So if a similar pattern emerges in the sounds which one makes when speaking in tongues, then questions should be raised about the genuineness of these tongues.

33) It also does not fit well with the Scriptures to talk about being 'zapped' by the Holy Spirit.

34) Since the Scriptures are silent on the use of tongues as a private, prayer language, it is unnecessary to encourage its practice. Because interpretation is needed, and because tongues were given for the benefit of unbelievers it seems unlikely that genuine tongues are a private affair.

35) The availability of the Bible does raise the question, Is there really a need for tongues in our church? Surely the Bible tells us all we need to know about living the Christian life (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

36) We should be cautious about claiming that tongues experiences are genuine. The fact that many receive tongues when they seek this gift is no proof that they have the real thing. They could be misled. Christian scholars, like Dr. William Samarin of the University of Toronto, have done careful research in this matter from linguistic and medical standpoints. They are convinced that every case of tongue-speaking that they have investigated, can be reproduced naturally. They

maintain that when given the right psychological and environmental conditions, tongue-speaking is possible, in many groups, whether Christian or not. Others, like Dr. Steve Dunn, a medical surgeon, point out that tongue-speaking is sometimes heard when patients are recovering from an anesthetic. Furthermore, it has often been claimed that speaking in tongues is a phenomenon found in association with demons. Non-Christians, like Hindus, also speak in tongues.

37) We should also correct the false teaching on tongues that is being propagated today as Paul did in 1 Corinthians. It's not the scriptural use, but the unscriptural abuse of tongues which concerns us.

38) Tongue-speakers must avoid walking by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

39) It is wrong to forbid speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14:39). Biblical tongues may be received, but not pursued, nor propagated above other gifts. We are to advocate prophecy, allow tongues, and appraise both.

40) Many who claim to speak in tongues have a very close walk with the Lord. It is unkind, therefore, to claim that they are shallow Christians (1 Cor. 13:4).

E. THE ROLE OF WOMEN SPEAKERS IN CHURCH LIFE

While the ECSA has made no official or public statements about women speakers in church meetings, an unwritten law prevails which advocates the notion that men rather than women are to speak in such meetings. But how correct is this? The ECSA needs to answer this question. Hopefully the following explanations will help them do so.

Without doubt this is a difficult subject to handle. If it were possible for us to eliminate the controversial passages in Scripture about the role of women in the church, no doubt many of us would be tempted to do so. However, once we are convinced that God has given us his Word, we will be reluctant to eliminate any of it. In fact, we will acknowledge that God could well have given us some passages for reasons which we do not fully see or clearly understand. And if we wish to be obedient to him, we will not want to duck and dive around what he has decreed simply to avoid unpleasant discussions and debates.

Ultimately the issue at stake in this study is the authority of Scripture. It's not so much a matter of how kind or unkind we are to women, as much as it is a matter of coming under the authority of God's Word or not. Our great motivation should **not** be to set women free or to put them in their rightful place, but to follow God's Word in this matter, knowing that it will bring them much joy and freedom when they also do so.

Moreover, hermeneutics is at stake here. We need to know which principles are relevant in this discussion, and how they should be applied. For example, we must not overlook the significance of culture in helping us to interpret the Bible accurately. In this instance we must recognize that women were restricted by the culture of Bible times. They were forced to be more silent and subservient than they are today. But the crucial question we face is, Can we honestly rely on culture in this particular study to accurately and fully exegete or explain the difficult passages involved?

We must settle this matter on the basis of the teaching of Scripture. We cannot settle it with success stories of women in the ministry, nor can we settle it on the basis of a woman's claim that she has been called into the ministry, nor can we settle it on the basis of cultural patterns in the past. No, we must settle it on the basis of what Scripture teaches us. The Bible alone is our final authority in this matter.

1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 are the two most difficult passages to interpret on this subject. Let's at least agree that these passages are **not** vague. Their statements are plain and clear-cut. Yet they are difficult to interpret, not simply because our hearts are hard, and we constantly want to resist the will of God, but because there are other relevant passages to take into consideration. Our difficulty is compounded by the fact that many Christian women have made very positive spiritual contributions to our

churches, and it is not easy to reconcile these contributions with what seems to be the negative statements of Scripture.

Traditionally three positions have been taken with regard to them.

--**Position 1:** Women are to remain silent when men are present in church meetings.

--**Position 2:** Women may sing and speak in church meetings when men are present providing they do so under male leadership.

--**Position 3:** Today women may serve in exactly the same capacities as men in church life without any differences being made between the sexes.

These positions can be illustrated by the three positions or stages involved in repairing the roof of a house. One must start at ground level where preparations are made, then one must pass through the next stage where one climbs a ladder to reach the roof, and finally one climbs onto the roof. Climbing on the roof is usually a man's job. A woman may climb the ladder to the top to see how he is doing, but should she take over his position on the roof? Likewise with the three positions or stages involved when we come to the question of women speakers participating in church life. Should they take on the same speaking role as men? Put another way, which of these positions is the right one for women to take?

It seems that Position 3 is untenable, because it seeks to make these passages into historical accounts, rather than doctrinal explanations. It is argued that silence was

required of women in New Testament times, because this was one way they showed their submission to men, but today silence is no longer a sign of submission; it is unnecessary, and even unfair, to require this of women.

However, these passages are not descriptive, but didactic. They do not **describe** what **did** take place, as much as **teach** what **is** to take place. To simply write them off on cultural grounds, is to encourage the process of rewriting the whole Bible on the basis of cultural changes and developments. In this way we could create our own Bibles. Unless the Bible itself uses culture to explain its teaching, our final interpretation of a passage must **not** grow out of culture, but out of the unadulterated statements of God's Word.

Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 surely stand for something, otherwise why did he give them to us? They do, at least, place restrictions on the extent to which women may lead and teach the Bible to men in church life.

Yet Paul's comments must be kept in balance with those passages which indicate that women may also expound the Word of God to men, while remaining under the care of male leadership (cf. Acts 18:24-26; 21:9; Rom. 12:3-8; and 1 Cor. 12:7-11). Moreover, passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 must be married to 1 Corinthians 11:5 where Paul suggests that women may speak in church when men are present, but in a spirit of submission (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3-5).

Is it not possible, therefore, that Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 are idiomatic? He does

use **the absolute for the relative** to explain himself here. For example, he uses absolute statements in 1 Timothy 2:14 to claim that Adam was innocent, and that Eve was not. Was that really true? Then in the next verse he generalizes when he says that women will be made safe through childbearing. What about those who may not or cannot bear children? Will they not be made safe? Also, in 1 Corinthians 14:35 Paul says women are to speak to their husbands at home about spiritual matters. What about those who do not have husbands? Clearly Paul is speaking in general terms here. He uses **absolute** statements to emphasize the idea that women should be **relatively** silent at church meetings.

In both passages Paul gives submission as the reason for his supposed harsh stand. Thus, it seems, it was a matter of **position** rather than **function** which Paul had in mind, and then only in the context of an established local church. The **way** in which a Christian woman conducted herself was a concern to him. She was not to come across in an authoritative manner, whether officially or unofficially.

Paul gives two additional explanations as to why women should be relatively silent in meetings, and, significantly, they are not based on the culture of his time. First, he says, Adam was created before Eve (1 Tim. 2:13), and thereby given the responsibility of taking care of the world around him. Eve was then created, not to be his leader, but his helper in these matters. Second, Paul says, Eve was deceived first (v. 14), implying that women are generally more gullible than men, and more easily led astray.

Of the three positions described above, then, Position 2 seems to be the biblical one. It interprets the contrasting evidence best.

It is especially encouraging to know that most Christian women are happy with Position 2, when it is applied consistently. In practice, many women take Position 1, because they prefer to remain silent in church meetings. Of course, they too are not unscriptural.

On the other hand, some women have a deep sense of call to minister God's Word in public, church-related situations, and they are obviously gifted at doing so (cf. Rom. 12:4-7; 1 Cor. 12:8). While much of their ministry is directed toward women, they also have a positive influence upon men. Then, some women prefer to minister to smaller groups, especially with the view to helping other women live successfully in their home situations (cf. Tit. 2:3-5).

Now if we understand Paul's statements to mean that women may speak about the things of God under limited conditions at church meetings, then we should acknowledge that they may just teach men a thing or two about the truth of Scripture, even if they do so unintentionally. Furthermore, what they say may well be authoritative, because Scripture is intrinsically or automatically authoritative. It is like a lion that needs no defense. As soon as it is released, it becomes authoritative. Even when talking about administrative matters women may teach men the truth of Scripture. For example, they may want to see the fellowship side of the

church improve, and appeal for the publication of certain kinds of newsletters. Some of their statements could be based upon the Bible's teaching on fellowship, and in giving them, they could, in fact, teach men something from Scripture.

Therefore, if we believe that the Bible allows women to speak, we should give them the liberty to speak freely, even to teach men the Scriptures, providing they do so under male leadership. To do otherwise, will lead to inconsistencies.

For example, at a church in Pretoria in recent times a lady was invited to speak about the Tabernacle and another to speak about Sunday School teaching. As they did so, they taught the truth of Scripture while men were present. They were allowed to speak, and even teach the men, because they were guests, yet the ladies of the same church were not given the same freedom to speak at open ministry sessions, so they refrained from saying much for fear of overstepping the mark.

Also, two lady missionaries working on the Comore Islands were made to feel very uncomfortable in their mission work in recent years by two or three male missionaries who did not want them to speak much at Christian meetings. Yet when one of the male missionaries went on furlough, they were forced to lead and speak at their church meetings. There were no nationals who could come near to doing so. They tried to overcome their problem by calling their speaking 'sharing' and 'testifying.' Sadly they had been made to feel very uncomfortable by their male colleagues.

It is true that lady missionaries will often perform pastoral functions, but this does not mean that they have been asked to fill the **position** of a pastor (elder) in a particular church. Like their male counterparts, they will need to turn over the leadership of a local church to those men who emerge as the elders of that church (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5).

In home life we see similar principles at work. The husband has been given a leadership position to fill, yet his wife may perform nearly all the same functions he does, especially when he is not around. However, this does not mean that God has given her the same leadership position he has given her husband in their home.

We have already seen in this study that a woman may serve as a deaconess in her church. In this capacity she would need to serve in the life of her church by assisting the pastors (elders) so that the people of the church are led into a closer walk with the Lord. Like her male colleagues, a deaconess's specific duties may involve pastoral matters, such as visiting and Bible teaching, which could also be directed toward some of the men of the church.

When we come to the question of **ordination**, we must ask if this practice is found in Scripture, and what it stands for in our **own** church setting. We should also ask if it is unscriptural in any way.

Surely it must be in some aspects. It certainly has some bad connotations, such as creating a serious dichotomy between the clergy and laity. This has led many to conclude that clergymen are paid to be good and that the rest of God's

people are good for nothing. Moreover, where does Scripture suggest that one should carry the title of Pastor outside of the local church? The Bible shows that a pastor is only such while he serves his church in this capacity. It gives him no freedom to carry this title into other situations. Then, what about such titles as Reverend, Archbishop, Cardinal, the Pope, His Holiness or even His Beatitude? The connotations which they generate are not always good.

In some respects, however, ordination is extra-biblical. (That is, it is neither biblical nor unbiblical.) For example, it serves a useful purpose in indicating which men have been officially recognized as qualifying for a pastoral role in the armed services as chaplains. It may also be used to recognize which of God's people have been set aside for 'the gospel ministry.' But what do we mean by this? Surely women may and should also be involved in ministering the gospel. When they are, we must ask, Where will they do so and how?

If ordination represents no more than the appointment of a suitable Christian worker to a particular ministry, then it may just be possible to ordain women, and even to give them an appropriate title, providing they are not actually appointed to the position of a pastor, and providing that what is done is not in contradiction with other biblical principles, such as the ones given in Psalm 99:3; 111:9 (especially in the KJV), and Matthew 23:9. Nor should any appointment which a woman (or man) accepts create the impression that she is a cut above the rest of God's people.

By way of summary, then, Position 2 explains the following limits placed on women in church life:

--No woman should hold office as an elder/pastor.

--Normally women should not teach the Bible in church-related meetings as much as men do, particularly on a continuing basis, especially when competent men are available to do so.

--The elders should have the final say in what is taught in a church (1 Thes. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17).

In brief, women should carry out the same functions as men in the Lord's work, including preaching and teaching functions. But when doing so they need to respect the fact that no biblical provision has been made for a woman to hold the position of an elder (pastor) in the church.

Thus, taking Position 2 sets us free. It encourages women to participate freely and joyfully in the Lord's work without placing themselves in the dubious position of overlooking the requirements of God's Word in this matter.

The ECSA would do well to familiarize themselves with the Scriptures and issues involved in this matter, and then offer more teaching on the subject. At this stage in its history the ECSA could do with far more Bible input from its ladies. They could and should play a greater role in teaching God's word to men as Priscilla and her husband did when they taught the gifted speaker, Apollos (Acts 18:24-26).

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATING BIBLE TRUTH EFFECTIVELY IN AND THROUGH LOCAL CHURCHES

The sixth essential underscored by this thesis now comes into focus. It reads as follows: Bible truth must be proclaimed effectively through efficient programmes.

Certainly a lot of talk takes place in the ECSA, usually about important, spiritual matters, and especially at Sunday services. But often it is not convincing. What is said through preaching and other means is familiar to the hearers or it is said in such a way that it cannot be easily remembered and applied. Of course, this problem is not exclusive to the ECSA; nevertheless, it is a serious one which needs to be addressed.

To bring about an improvement in this area we need to be convinced that the Bible is both reliable and relevant. When we are, we will appreciate the importance of communicating its message effectively. It is then that both proclamation and programmes will also become important to us. To be sure, proclamation is more important than programmes, since programmes serve as the channel through which proclamation takes place. However, programmes are important, because without them proclamation would be curtailed extensively. We turn our attention now to these two factors.

A. EFFECTIVE PROCLAMATION IS VITAL TO CHURCH LIFE

The quality of proclamation in the ECSA varies from meeting to meeting, so it is impossible to give a consistent evaluation of how effective it is. It is obvious, however, that more attention should be paid to this matter. Given the fact that about half the churches in the ECSA are led by men who are not pastors, the proclamation of God's Word is given by those who are not trained in Christian work, especially in preaching and teaching. Even in those churches where there are trained pastors ministering, their quality of preaching and teaching has much to be desired. Proclamation in the ECSA needs to be marked especially by the effective exposition of Scripture rather than by the personal exhortations of preachers.

When we get down to the essence of our ministry, we only have one message to share and one method to use in Christian work. The message is Christ, and the method is proclamation. According to 2 Cor. 5:17-6:2, the heart of our ministry is proclaiming the message of reconciliation to God through Christ. This is what makes us into his ambassadors.

Proclamation may express itself in different ways. At least six of these ways are timeless forms of proclamation needed in our churches today.

1. Proclaiming Through Modeling

Modeling the Christian life is one of the most important means of communicating the gospel, so much so that if our living does not match our preaching, people will be

turned away from Christ and his Word. What we are speaks louder than what we say.

God has given us role models in the form of Christian leaders (Eph. 4:11), who have learned from other leaders, such as the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:1). But leaders should not be the only ones who demonstrate the Christian life. All Christians are expected to be models of Christ (Eph. 4:1-3).

In some churches the false notion has crept in that pastors and their wives are the only ones who need to live clean, victorious lives. Many people would be unhappy if their pastors were involved in certain kinds of questionable activities, yet they themselves feel free to participate in those activities. On the other hand, the Bible leads all of us to ask this kind of question: 'If my church were as mature as I am, how mature would it be?' If we do not live what we say, then how can we expect what we say to live in others?

2. Proclaiming Through Teaching

Obviously teaching played a vital part in Jesus' ministry (Matt. 4:23; 9:35). Without doubt it is a major form of proclamation, and a crucial means to helping disciples mature in their spiritual lives (Matt. 28:19-20). (For more insights on teaching see Chapter IV, pages 101-116.)

3. Proclaiming Through Music

Music must surely be one of the most pleasant gifts God has given us. Often it touches the lives of people more than any other form of proclamation. It is the language of

the emotions and continually stirs us into action and expression.

a. Christian music's most common forms

- Singing (1 Chron. 15:16)
- Directing (1 Chron. 15:22, 27; Neh. 12:46)
- Playing (1 Sam. 16:18; 2 Chron. 29:26-27)
- Composing (2 Chron. 29:30)

b. Christian music's most important functions

- Music is a **wonderful idiom** for worship (Ps. 150).

Hymns, in particular, help us in this regard, since they direct us to God (cf. Eph. 5:19).

- Music is also a **powerful influence** for change.

Spiritual songs play a key role in this, since they help us to speak to one another about the Christian life and the constructive changes which we need in our lives (cf. Eph. 5:19).

c. Christian music's most useful components

Words are the most useful components in Christian music. Therefore, it is important that they are marked by these features:

- They should be clearly heard and understood.
- They need to be sound in doctrine. Spiritual words are needed (1 Cor. 2:13). Singing the very words of Scripture such as the Psalms, is a good way to bring this about (cf. Col. 3:16).
- They should point us to Christ. (Often the message in music is undermined by loud or

dramatic singing which points us to the singers rather than the Lord.)

--They should stir us to experience the truths of Scripture such as those expressed in this song written about 800 years ago.

Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly, to love thee more dearly,
To follow thee more nearly, day by day.¹

2

4. Proclaiming Through Preaching

This is commonly accepted by Christians as the predominant form of proclamation. Sadly, for many others, it is 'an echo from an abandoned past.' John Stott says, 'There is no means by which the church grows and flourishes more than by preaching.'³ It is vital, therefore, that we encourage effective preaching from our pulpits.

What are the essentials in preaching? Consider the definition which follows.

To preach is to open up the inspired Word with such faithfulness to its text and sensitivity to one's context that God's voice is heard and his people gladly obey him.⁴

1

Taken from Hymns and Psalms (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1983), number 671.

2

Most of the ideas in this section come from a tape recording of John Stott's message entitled 'Biblical Preaching in a Contemporary World' given in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, July 1988.

3

Ibid.

4

Adapted from John Stott.

a. Preachers need two convictions

First, they need to be convinced that the biblical text is inspired. God did not dictate the Scriptures to the human writers, nor did he smother their historical research (cf. Lk. 1:3), their theological emphases, their literary styles, nor their personalities. Rather he wrote in and through the human authors in such a way that what they wrote was what he wanted, even in its details (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:20-21).

Since God has spoken, we too must speak. Pity those preachers who have a low view of Scripture. They cannot expound the Scriptures confidently, because they have no Scripture to expound. They have heeded those who have destroyed their Bible, and thus, their preaching.

Second, preachers need to acknowledge that the biblical text must be opened up. The Bible is partly closed to all of us, especially to those who do not respond to its truths (Matt. 13:10-12). Even Peter said that some of Paul's writings were difficult to understand (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Therefore, God has given us both the text and teachers to teach us out of the text. Good preaching will contain good teaching. John Stott adds, 'The church...flourishes by the Word of God and languishes without it.'¹ We need preachers who will preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2); who will expose the text. When they do so they will point us to Christ, for he is central to the text.

¹
Ibid.

b. Preachers face two obligations:

First, they are to be faithful to the ancient text. This calls for thinking our way back into the situation of the biblical authors--into their history, geography, culture, language and grammar. Technically we call this exegesis. Simply, it is explaining the original meaning of the text.

The author establishes the meaning of a text, not the reader. 'The text means what its author meant' says E. D. Hersh. We disagree, therefore, with those Bible teachers who say, 'A text means what it means to me.' Rather, our commitment must be to go back into the mind of the author. Listen to John Calvin on this.

It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.¹

Second, preachers are to be sensitive to our modern context. There is a great cultural gap between the biblical world and our modern world. People today do not live according to God's standards. It is our privilege to help them do so, and they are more likely to listen to us as we become sensitive to the issues which they face. Our sensitivity will grow as we identify with them.

We should become aware of their personal joys and struggles. Pastoral work plays an important part in this, especially visiting and counseling. So does eating, traveling, training, working, and praying together. Jesus did

1

See John Calvin's preface to his Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979).

this with his twelve disciples. Even playing together will help.

We should also become aware of modern thinking and its outworkings. Reading and discussing the thought patterns of others is most helpful, especially the critiques of insightful Christians who are able to grapple with the issues at stake.

Our proclamation of the truth and identification with life's issues, more than anything else, makes our preaching relevant. In other words, we must constantly ask the question, 'How does the gospel impinge on the situations which we face?' The more we can apply this question and its answers to the lives of the individuals whom we see, the more relevant the Bible will become to them (and so will we). This means that we must seek both the Bible's meaning and its message--what God has in mind for us, and what he is saying to us today. Put simply, we are to remain faithful to the biblical text, and sensitive to our modern context.

c. Preachers have two expectations:

First, they expect God's voice to be heard. God speaks today through what he has spoken in his Word. We need to approach Scripture like Cornelius and his household, who came expecting God to speak to them (Acts 10:24, 33). Like the Bereans we should examine the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11) to see what they say about the issues we face (e.g. Gal. 4:30a). They penetrate into the very depths of our lives (Heb. 4:12), so that we may enter the 'rest' which God has provided for us (Heb. 4:8-11).

Second, preachers expect God's people to obey him. If we are in Christ we will obey him (1 Jn. 2:3-5) and so demonstrate our love for him (Jn. 14:15, 21). Biblical preaching aims for this. John Stott reminds us that 'the pew can seldom rise higher than the pulpit. The pew is a reflection of the pulpit.'¹ The specific response may be different each time, but ultimately the goal is the same: obedience to God's Word, because of our love for him. So let us preach for a verdict; the verdict of loving obedience in all things.

5. Proclaiming Through Observing the Ordinances

It is important to remember that observing the Lord's Supper is one way of proclaiming Christ's death until he returns (1 Cor. 11:26). It is a symbolic reminder of what he did for us. So is baptism. Both are object lessons depicting salvation, reminding us thereby that this is one of the paramount concerns of Scripture. Each pictures salvation in its own distinctive way. The Lord's Supper symbolizes his provision of salvation, while baptism symbolizes our participation in salvation. As we observe these ordinances we proclaim in visual terms the message of salvation: the gospel applied to individuals personally (1 Cor. 15:1-8).

6. Proclaiming Through Writing

Nowhere in Scripture are we actually instructed to write about God's truth, although the example of Luke, John

¹
Stott, recorded message.

and Paul who wrote much of the New Testament reminds us that literature is a powerful means of proclamation. Wise is the church, therefore, that promotes Christian magazines, books, pamphlets and other forms of literature that proclaim God's truth.

B. EFFICIENT PROGRAMMES ARE CRUCIAL TO CHURCH LIFE

Generally speaking the ECSA churches follow a rather routine programme involving a weekly Sunday School followed by a morning service. Some churches also have weekly evening services, while others meet in this way only once a month. Usually midweek services are held, sometimes in the form of cottage meetings. Besides a possible youth meeting on a Friday evening and a ladies' meeting once a month, not much more programming takes place on a regular basis in the ECSA. Some good combined rallies, involving more than one church, together with special meetings are held from time to time. Annual camps for the ladies and young people of the denomination also take place, many of which have been very well received. The men in leadership positions in local churches meet most often in regular council meetings. Also they gather once a year for the Annual Church Conference where guest speakers address them.

More creative thinking could be done about programming in the ECSA. For example, Sunday evenings could be better utilized. More training of the leadership in each church could take place and more systematic visitation could be done.

House churches could be established with elders giving spiritual leadership in such situations. Care Groups could also be added. When this kind of programming takes place greater opportunities for proclamation will emerge.

Our effectiveness in proclamation is often contingent upon our efficiency in programming. Effectiveness is concerned with doing and saying the right things (knowing what to do), while efficiency is concerned with doing and saying the right things in the right way (knowing how to do it). The right programmes conducted in the right way will open the door to effective proclamation. To encourage this process we need to observe the following biblical principles.

1. We Are to Programme Ourselves to Meet Together

A family is a family at all times, even when it does not meet for meals. Likewise with churches. But it is only when a church meets together that its members appreciate its common unity and experience its continuing ministry (cf. Heb. 10:25).

2. We Are to Keep First Things First When We Meet

First and foremost we must hear the Word of God when we meet. The early church was strong in the first place for the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). Timothy was to devote himself to the public reading, preaching and teaching of Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13). And the overall purpose of church meetings is to build up the body by way of strengthening, instructing and encouraging (1 Cor. 14:12, 26, 31). All else

that is done must take second place to hearing and obeying God's Word. This means, for example, that it is more important to hear what God says to us than to sing about what he means to us. It also means that we must always strive towards maintaining our priorities rather than following an agenda set by the society around us. Pursuing our priorities means that we should change those practices which restrict us, such as services marked by a 'hymn sandwich format' or by repetitive chorus singing or by antiquarian liturgies. We should also build in those things which are positive such as scheduling Bible preaching early in some services to allow for worship or questions and discussions or body ministry thereafter.

3. We Are to Encourage Personal Participation in our Meetings

It is true that full-time workers in churches are a great blessing in most cases, but one of the major problems associated with them is that they inhibit the participation of God's people in church meetings. 'One-man ministries' in churches are not scriptural. Nor is the attitude which leaves the ministry to the 'paid professionals.' Instead we are to follow the instructions of passages like 1 Corinthians 14:26-33 which encourages mutual giving and taking in meetings. Small groups lend themselves to this kind of thing, and church members need to find such a group in which they can share their lives with others on a regular basis.

4. We Are to Encourage the Development of Three Kinds of Church Relationships.

It is significant that Jesus ministered repeatedly in three kinds of settings. First, he ministered generally to the masses that congregated around him (Matt. 5:1-2). Second, he ministered specifically to his twelve disciples who walked with him (Matt. 10:1-42). And, third, he ministered to individuals, particularly to a few of his disciples to strengthen them (cf. Matt. 17:1; 26:31-35, 37; Mk. 5:37). We need similar kinds of relationships in our churches today.

We need congregational relationships. This should involve ties with like-minded Christians in a church setting which helps us to grow more like Christ. In large churches congregations will emerge within the wider church family, so that, for example, there is a young adults' congregation or a single parents' congregation or a foreign language congregation or a deaf congregation, etcetera.

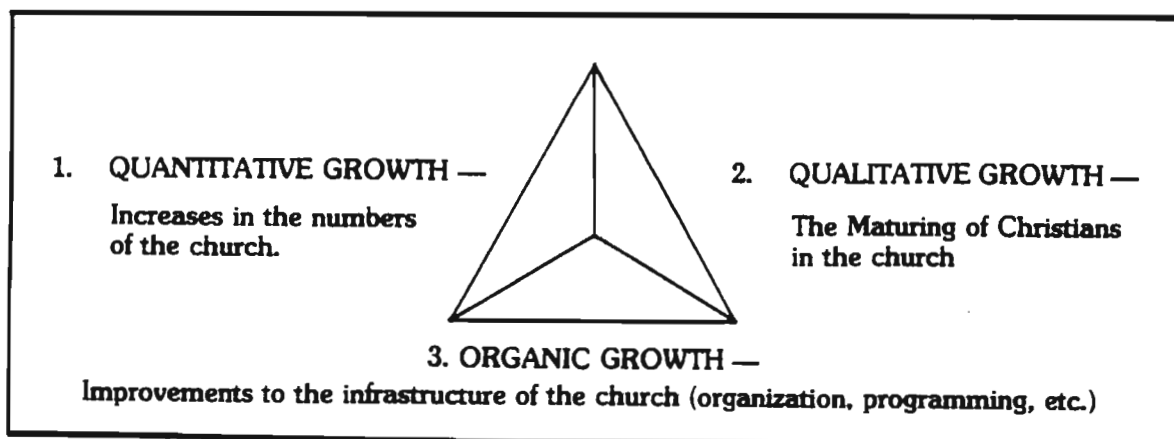
We also need fellowship relationships. This should involve ties with a small group of Christians with whom we can share our thoughts, joys and sorrows. Home Bible studies, house churches and care groups make possible these kinds of ties. The Lord blesses such groups (cf. Matt. 18:20).

We also need discipling relationships. This should include ties with one or two people with whom we meet often to build one another up in the things of God.

One of the major weaknesses in church programming is the failure on the part of leaders to organize discipling ministries on a personal basis. Admittedly discipling grows

out of the many other good things which a church does, but the whole process would be greatly enhanced if much more individual discipling was done. Jesus ministered both publicly and personally. So did Paul and so should we. When we do so we should concentrate our efforts on those who are reliable and capable (2 Tim. 2:2). The heart of Christ's multiplication ministry was the training of a few select men. The same should be true of our ministries.

Obviously church programming should dovetail with the three different kinds of growth needed in our churches and illustrated by this sketch.



As a church grows we face the question of how large it should be allowed to grow. Bearing in mind the need to start new churches in new places and the limitations of facilities, each church will need to answer this question for itself. The Bible is silent on the subject. There are advantages, however, to bigger churches. As Peter Wagner reminds us, "...a large church can do just about everything a small church can do, but not vice versa. A church can be too small for

lots of things.¹ This is true for most churches. So whenever there is room for growth a church should seek it.

Wise is the church that analyses its programming.

Here is an example of how this may be done.

FOCUS: ON CHRISTIANS	Public Situations	Planned-- e.g. preaching/teaching
		Spontaneous-- e.g. testimonies
	Personal Situations	Planned-- e.g. individual discipling
		Spontaneous-- e.g. private conversations

Wise is the church that also plans its programmes properly. The Planning Chart given in Appendix F is geared to help churches actually do this.

Simply listing and categorizing what a church can do is a helpful exercise. Such lists can become 'check lists' whereby churches may evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and be reminded of the new things they can build into their programmes. Appendix G provides such a listing. It also makes possible a listing of those groups or workers who are willing to take responsibility for those activities and ministries which are listed.

¹
Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale: Regal, 1976), p. 88.

CHAPTER VIII

DEVELOPING PEOPLE-ORIENTATION IN LOCAL CHURCHES

At this point we turn our attention to the seventh essential emphasized by this thesis: Needy people are to be reached with the gospel.

There are many people in the ECSA who take a genuine interest in other members of the denomination, especially if they are relatives. This interest becomes obvious when special events such as weddings and funerals take place. The support that the members give one another at times like this is very heartening.

Nevertheless, the people-orientation in the ECSA needs to be strengthened. More organized visitation is needed where small teams of people are sent out to make contact with new people. More effort is needed to train the local leaders in fulfilling their functions as shepherds of their flock and more personal discipling should be done amongst the members of the church.

People are God's great concern. He gave his life for their highest good (Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:10). He even uses his concern for animal life to show his greater concern for people (Jonah 4:11; Matt. 6:26; 10:29-31).

We too should have a great concern for people, especially those who belong to the family of believers (Gal. 6:2, 10; 1 Jn. 3:16). This means that we Christians need a greater orientation toward people in our churches. Sadly we are much more inclined to invest our time and energy in our

church programmes, facilities, or finances than in people. Simply think of how seldom we visit people who are in need or contact other Christians in our own church family. Then think about the many people who come to our church who still remain unknown to us. All this indicates that we need a greater orientation towards people.

A. PEOPLE HAVE DEEP-SEATED NEEDS

As with other groups, the people of the ECSA are more conscious of their physical needs than their spiritual ones. For example, they will go out of their way to visit people who are in hospital, but are much slower at meeting to pray for the spiritual well-being of their neighbours. Nevertheless, they are aware that the physical and spiritual realms of life are interrelated and that helping other people with their physical needs often opens the door to their talking about spiritual matters.

When we ask the people of the ECSA to tell us about the needs which they are now facing, they will most likely talk about their felt needs--their ailments or illnesses, their wants or struggles, their conflicts or shortcomings, and so on. We must start with felt needs like these, and then work deeper towards helping them find answers for their basic needs.

Our basic needs fall into three categories: physical, psychological and spiritual. When people in our churches face **physical** needs we should do something about them. That is

why ministries to widows and orphans are very important (James 1:27). It is also crucial that we help those who are sick or in material need (James 5:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:17-18).

Moreover, local churches should endeavour to help people with their **psychological** needs. Three stand out in this category: love, security and significance. People feel most secure and significant in those churches where they feel genuinely loved (cf. Jn. 13:34). In other words, a vibrant church will make a valuable contribution to the psychological well-being of its members. In a healthy church people will discover not only that God loves them but also that his people love them.

1. The Spiritual Need of Non-Christians

Our most deep-seated needs are spiritual for they make an impact on all our other needs. Three related factors are to be remembered here.

a. **All people are lost outside of Christ and need salvation** (Rom. 1:18; 3:10-12, 23). This does not mean that God will be malicious toward infants or those who are seriously impaired. Surely he will not condemn babies and toddlers to hell if they die before reaching the age of accountability. (He knows when they reach this age). His message of salvation is given on the basis that it can be understood by those who hear it. It is silent about those like infants and the impaired who cannot understand and respond to it. As for the rest of mankind, however, they stand condemned if they remain outside of Christ.

b. **God judges people according to the light which he has given them.**

Three kinds of light have been given.

--**Creation**--there is a God and he is to be trusted (Rom. 1:19-20; Heb. 11:6).

--**Conscience**--we are sinners and stand condemned (Rom. 2:14-15; 3:20).

--**Christ**--he came to save us (Rom. 3:21-22; 1 Tim. 1:15).

c. **Christ is the only way of salvation taught in the Scriptures whereby people may find freedom from sin and its consequences** (Is. 45:22; Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 3:11; 1 Tim. 2:5).

While people without Christ are hopelessly lost (Eph. 2:12-13), God has chosen to reach them through his people (Rom. 10:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:17-6:2). It is urgent, therefore, that we Christians realize that we must give our lives for people who need the Lord. Does this mean, then, that many will be condemned to hell if we fail to proclaim the gospel? Ultimately, the Lord knows the answer to this question, but at least this much is clear: we are guilty for our silence. Each one of us is to play our part in carrying the gospel to a lost and dying world.

2. The Spiritual Needs of Christians

The Christian's greatest needs also lie within the spiritual realm, because they are foundational to all his other needs. Christians are commonly marked by four great problems.

- a. **Ignorance**--they need to know Christ more intimately.
- b. **Impoverishment**--they need to grow like him more consistently.
- c. **Indifference**--they need to glow in him more brightly.
- d. **Ineffectiveness**--they need to show him to others more clearly.

1 Peter 1:18-2:9 highlights these points for us by describing who we are to become in Christ and what we are to do through Christ.

B. PEOPLE NEED TO BE REACHED WHERE THEY ARE FOUND

One of the many positive things about the ECSA is the large network of contacts which exists between family members. Making one favourable contact with someone almost always opens the door to more contacts with other family members. These contacts often lead to invitations to visit people in their homes which in turn opens the door to sharing meals together. People are then able to identify with and take an active interest in one another. Soon they are able to share their skills with one another and whenever problems arise they are able to bear one another's burdens.

One of the amazing features of the gospel is Christ's incarnation--he became one of us (Jn. 1:14). He came to reach us, and he did so by becoming human. If we are going to reach people with the gospel, we too must become one with them--identify with them (1 Cor. 9:22). Of course, this does not mean that we should identify with their sinful behaviour (2

Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:11); rather we should identify with their needs and to some extent with their lifestyle. Jesus did this, and, thereby, became very relevant to the people of his time.

1. Reaching People in Their Cultural Settings

Donald McGavran reminds us that Christians should reach out to Christians in other cultures, recognizing them as brothers and sisters in Christ. When Christians from different cultures meet together from time to time, they find that they have much in common in the Lord.

However, people who do not know the Lord in a personal way are much less threatened by the gospel when their cultural heritage is not endangered. For this reason McGavran reminds us that we need to recognize and respect the homogeneous unit in society from which they come when sharing the gospel with them.¹

God-given love is our greatest transcultural tool. More than anything else it makes us relevant in another culture. Then knowing the language of those whom we are seeking to reach is our next greatest tool. After this we are greatly helped when we understand how their culture answers three basic questions in life.²

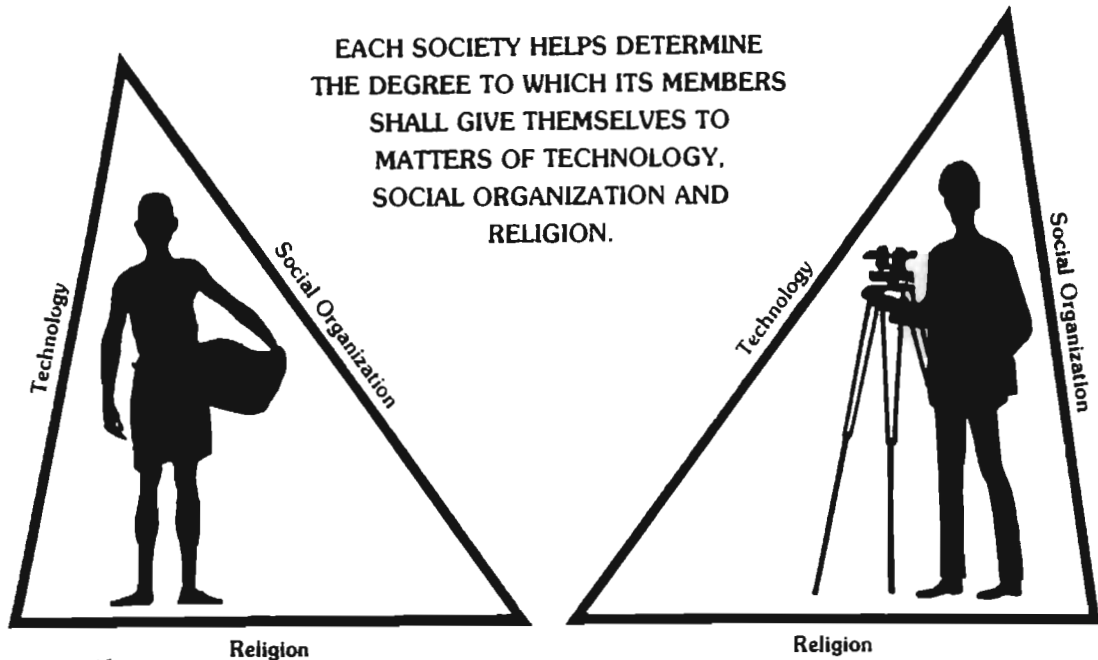
--How should we relate to our physical environment?
Technology and ecology are continually changing in answer to this.

¹ Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 85.

² Cultural anthropology (specifically ethnology) looks at the way cultures answer these three big questions.

--How should we relate to the other members of our cultural group? Social organization is continually changing in answer to this.

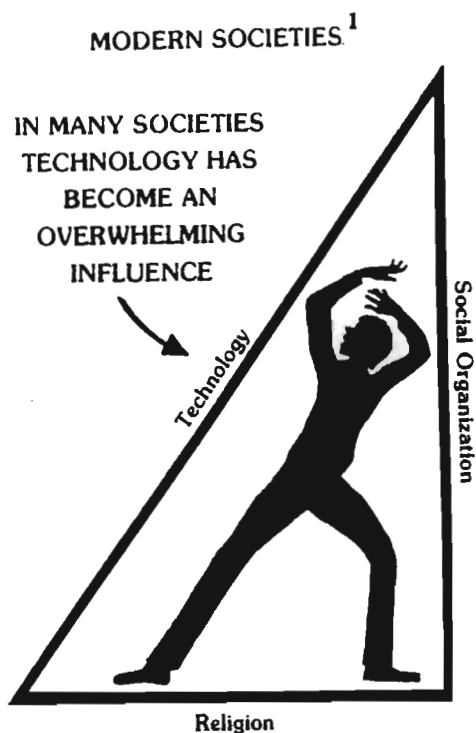
--How should we relate to the supernatural world beyond us? Religion is continually changing in answer to this.



When people in a cultural milieu answer the great questions about how to relate to their habitat, to others in their group and to the supernatural they often become confused, unbalanced and irresponsible. Their perspectives result in their being overpowered by dimensions of their culture. For example, illicit sexual relationships have led to overwhelming problems such as AIDS. In industrialized cultures we find technology overpowering people. For

¹ These diagrams are adapted from James F. Downs, Cultures in Crisis (Beverly Hills, CA: Glencoe Press, 1971), pp. 115, 118.

instance, many become absorbed by materialism. Many personal relationships go by the way because of TV, for example. It is the Christian's privilege to 'put to death' these kinds of things (Col. 3:5) and to help others do likewise. We need loving churches in dying cultures.



As we Christians reach into the lives of others we will need to become aware of their cultural heritage. Failure to do so will lead to what Ralph Winter and others have called 'people blindness.'² This malady is detected by four unpleasant symptoms.

a. **Cultural insults**--faux pas, or social blunders. (Many regard Christ as a stumbling block or an offense. We should not add further stumbling blocks in their way.)

b. **Cultural inflexibility**--resistance to adopting some of the acceptable aspects of another person's lifestyle.

c. **Cultural impositions**--making amoral (neutral) aspects of 'my culture' a part of the gospel (i.e. attaching cultural baggage to the gospel).

¹
Ibid., p. 120.

²
See Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale: Regal Books, 1976), p. 128.

d. **Cultural incompetence**--failure to capitalize on certain aspects of a person's culture to help him or her respond to the gospel.

On the other hand, when we become culturally sensitive, adaptable, uninhibiting and astute, our ministry will be much more effective. As we recognize the cultural distinctives of a group we will be able to capitalize on these distinctives to bring them the gospel. For example, we will use their language to do so.

The Apostle Paul has given us an excellent pattern to follow in 1 Corinthians 9:15-27 when we reach into the lives of others.

First, he was marked by **compulsion** (vs. 16-18)--a compulsion to preach the gospel to others.

Second, he was marked by **identification** (vs. 19-23)--an identification with the lifestyle of others.

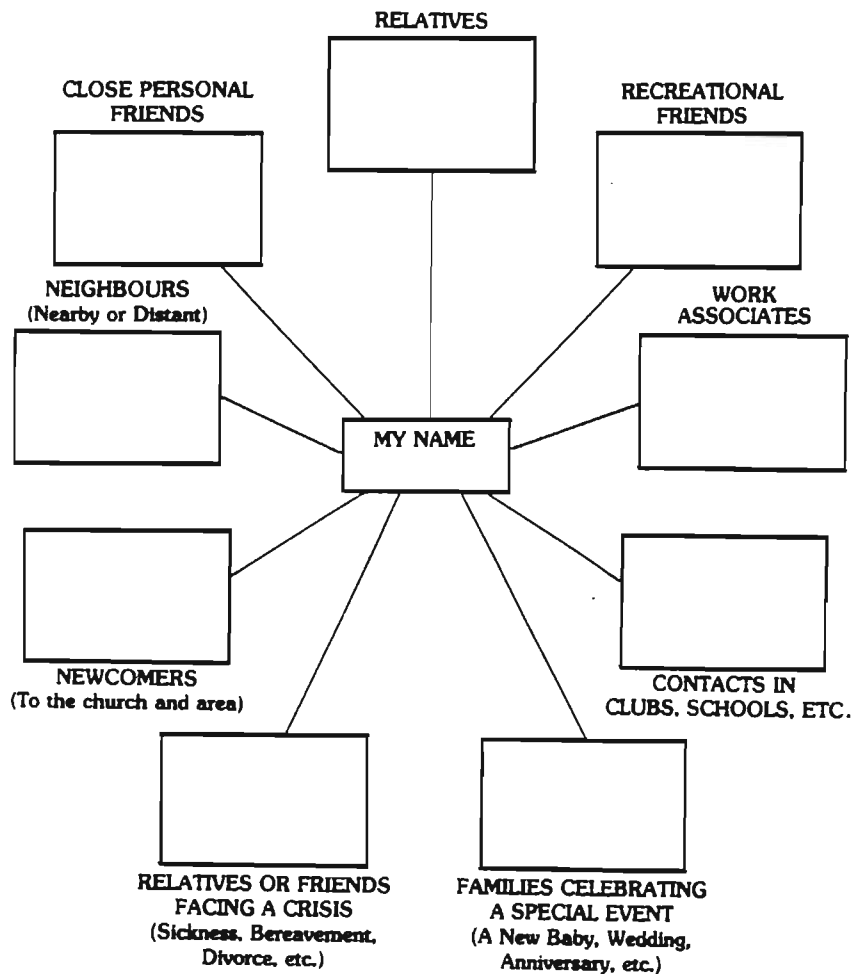
Third, he was marked by **dedication** (vs. 24-27)--a dedication to conduct his ministry successfully.

The same should be true of us in each of these ways.

In 1 John 1:1-3 we have a clear reminder of what it takes to reach people with the gospel. They are to both **see** and **hear** the gospel. When we reach into the lives of people so that we walk together, talk together, eat together, and work together then we can proclaim the gospel with the hope that we will soon fellowship together in the family of God. This means that we will reach people when we both touch and teach them.

2. Reaching People in Their Personal Situations

Seventy to ninety percent of all people become Christians through the influence of their circle of contacts-- friends, neighbors, relatives, and work associates.¹ Wise are the Christians, therefore, who concentrate on one or two people within their circle of contacts with the view to winning their confidence and then their loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Prov. 11:30). The sketch or Contact Profile which follows will give us a clearer idea of which people we could focus upon to reach with the gospel.



¹

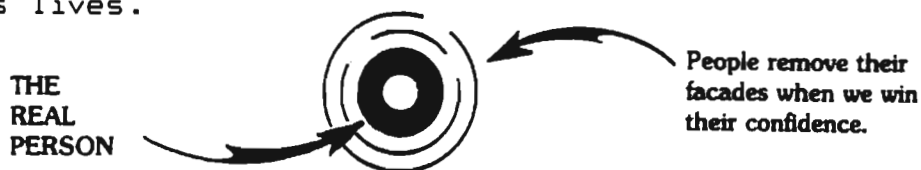
Harry Fowler, Unlocking Your Church Growth Potential (Rocky Mount, NC: Creative Growth Dynamics, 1984), P. 33.

Obviously we all have a personal, private side to our lives, so if we are going to reach people with the truths of the Bible we must reach into this part of their lives as well. To do so we need to approach them in two ways.

a. We should take a genuine interest in those whom we can help.

We do well when we become familiar with their family life. While God has given pastors to the church (Eph. 4:11) to take an active interest in people, all Christians are to do likewise in this matter (Phil. 2:4).

We also do well when we reach into the core of people's lives.



Again we do well when we convince others that we are there to serve them. We must not manipulate people for our purposes, but minister to them for their good.

b. We should provide counseling for those who need special help.

Peer counseling or casual counseling is something which we Christians can do in the everyday course of events. As we do so we need to observe these factors.

--Our three-fold strategy in counseling:

Provide encouragement

--we are emotional beings (Heb. 3:12-13)

Provide enlightenment

--we are rational beings (Eph. 1:18-20)

Provide exhortation

--we are volitional beings (1 Thes. 2:11-12)

--Our basic goal in counseling

Whenever Jesus ministered to people his ultimate concern was to help them spiritually. He constantly invited people to turn to him in humility and faith to receive his kind of life (cf. Jn. 7:37-39). Without the life of Christ within our hearts we remain selfish and sinful; we are spiritually dead and morally corrupt. Out of this corrupt condition will come all kinds of sinful behaviour (cf. Matt. 15:10-11, 15-20). Larry Crabb puts it this way:

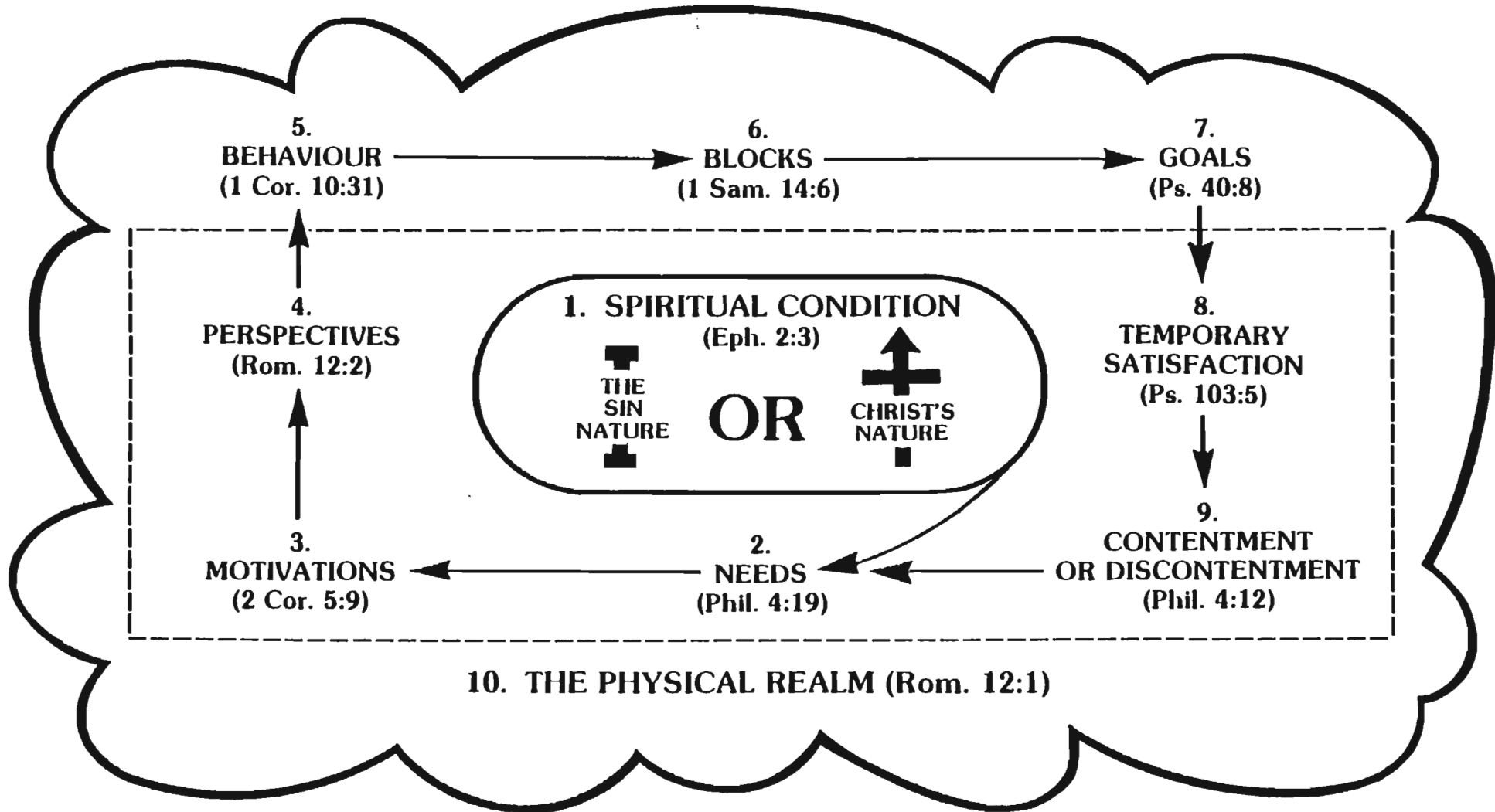
In addition to problems in our world, pain in our lives, and sin in our behaviour, we must acknowledge a fourth problem category: sin in our heart.¹

Lasting change from this condition is possible when people are willing to start from the inside out. Our basic goal in counseling is to help them experience such a change. In other words, we want to be sure that the change in their lives is rooted in a spiritual change: one which involves deep-seated repentance from sin and faith in Christ. The chart which follows on the next page helps to highlight this.

¹

Adapted from Larry Crabb, Inside Out (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1988), p. 181.

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL COUNSELLING PROFILE



CHAPTER IX

DIFFUSING DISTRACTIONS WHICH UNDERMINE PRIORITIES IN LOCAL CHURCHES

We come now to the final of the eight essentials which this thesis emphasizes: Biblical priorities need to be pursued.

When one asks the leaders of the ECSA to list clearly the biblical priorities of their denomination they cannot do it. They may overlap on certain points, yet there is no final consistency in what they say, suggesting that these priorities are not emphasized sufficiently in their churches.

Then when one asks the ECSA leaders to describe their churches, the items which they mention first concern the location, the history, the people, the activities, and perhaps the theological orientation of their churches. Apparently most ECSA churches have not thought through their priorities. If a church's priorities do not easily come to mind then it is clear that its so-called priorities are not really its priorities. It needs to be remembered that when one comes to priorities 'the main thing is to keep the main things the main things.'

Many ECSA members would far rather spend hours in committee meetings talking to one another about the Lord's work, than talking to the Lord about it. Some would rather spend time cooking for a church-related function, than spend time contacting someone who truly needs the gospel. Then there is the tendency to spend far too much money on one's local church's needs, and much too little on mission

ministries? Certainly management, meals and money are needed, but the 'weightier matters' of church life should not be neglected.

A major cause for the oversight of priorities in church life is the inclination to pursue secondary matters. They often become distractions. Unfortunately, there are a host of subtle distractions which will deflect us from our priorities. In this chapter we take a look at some of the most common distractions found in the practical realms of church life. This study is concerned with matters of praxis. Theoretical matters, on the other hand, are not addressed in this chapter, although many distractions could be found in these realms as well. In other words, theological dialogue and its many pursuits can easily lead to distractions if it is not securely anchored in the Scriptures. Dr. David Bosch, until recently the head of the Department of Missiology at the University of South Africa, reminded us of this when he wrote, 'Christians take seriously the epistemological priority of their classical text, the Scriptures,'¹ He would have made his point even stronger if he had called the Scriptures our epistemological **authority** rather than simply our **priority**; nevertheless, he does point us back to the significance of the Scriptures, for it is in them that we have our final court of appeal when it comes to separating our priorities from our distractions.

1

David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), p. 187.

We turn our attention now to some of the most serious, practical distractions we find in church life.

A. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL ACTION

The ECSA has by and large stayed away from social action against the South African government. It has endeavoured to take a neutral stand on political matters. At times individuals within the denomination have expressed themselves about politics, but their ideas have not been mutually shared by the majority of ECSA members nor advocated by its leadership.

It is also true to say that the ECSA is not known for its social service. This is an area where improvements need to be made. Sometimes a church will make an effort to give gifts to needy people at Christmas time, otherwise not much is done to help those in financial straits.

The Scriptures make it clear that Christians are to be liberated, yet not loose in their thinking and living. Christ liberates us from our sinful nature, and then, using his Word, he liberates us from our sinful behaviour. This means that we are to be different from liberal people who tend to minimize three basic problems: lust, coveteousness and pride. True Christians reject these things and seek to minimize many of the hang-ups and heartaches which grow out of them.

It is very disturbing to know that some church-related people have accepted a view of the Bible which makes it easier for liberally-minded people to express themselves. Many of the Bible's absolute statements have been reinterpreted as

relative ones allowing people not to feel guilty or condemned for their beliefs and behaviour. We are told that the Bible's strong stand on various issues is no longer applicable because of the cultural changes which have taken place.

This approach to the Bible is propagated by those churches which do not take **all** of the Bible seriously, because they do not believe that **all** of it was inspired by God when first given. They see much **value** in the teachings of the Bible, but they are not convinced that all of it is **valid** (sound). So the Bible is seen to be the source for positive experiences. It is also seen as a resource for many positive messages. It is used to teach various important lessons about life, especially the importance of love. However, many people fail to stress the negative side of God's Word, particularly that each person stands condemned if still outside of Christ, and that hell is a terrible reality awaiting the majority of people who are alive today.

The nett result of such a liberal approach to the Bible is that many churches do not vigorously pursue the three or four great priorities laid down by Scripture for church life. One example of this is seen when the Bible is used to teach that all of us are God's children. After all, it is argued, we are created in his image, and all are equal before him. Amongst other things, we are told that **all** people are covered by the blood of Christ, and, therefore, are part of his salvation programme.

On the basis of this kind of thinking universalism has taken root. In its mild form universalism is prevalent in

many churches today, where people are led to believe that they are Christians, because they have chosen to call themselves by this name. However, when we look at passages like Matthew 7:21-23; 22:14; 25:11-12; Luke 13:3,25-27; and John 3:16,18,36 it is abundantly clear that not all people are in God's family. The brotherhood of man does not mean that we are all partakers of the Fatherhood of God. We Christians do others a great disservice by not pointing this out to them and by not helping them to call on the Lord for salvation (cf. Rom. 10:9-13).

A major outworking of loose thinking about the Bible and its teachings is the preoccupation in some churches with the socio-economic-political problems of the less fortunate. The agenda followed in these churches is determined to a large extent by the cries and complaints of the poor or abused.

We agree, without question, that the Bible urges us to perform good works in the lives of others, especially those who are genuine Christians (cf. Matt. 25:37-40; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Tit. 2:14; 3:14; 1 Pet. 2:12). But should doing good works become one of our top priorities? Certainly not! The following factors explain why this is so.

- 1. Jesus did not concentrate upon meeting the physical needs of people.** (In John 5:2-8 we read of how Jesus healed only one man out of many.)
- 2. Jesus used physical miracles to promote his spiritual ministry** (Jn. 7:31; 10:37-38; 14:11).

3. Jesus never organized a massive social programme or political movement to combat the social evils of his time (cf. Acts 1:6), and he never became embroiled in political wranglings (Matt. 22:15-22).
4. Jesus told Peter to put his sword away when he tried to do something physical to help him at the time of his arrest (Matt. 6:52).
5. Jesus' death and resurrection are not an answer to the physical needs of people, but to the spiritual ones (Rom. 5:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:24-25).
6. In the final instructions which Jesus gave his disciples he said nothing about addressing the physical needs of people. His great concern was for their spiritual need (Matt. 28:18-20).
7. Like Christ, the disciples' basic ministry was spiritual in nature, rather than physical (Acts 5:12-14, 20). When they did bring physical relief to people they capitalized on the opportunities which developed to preach the gospel to them (Acts 3:1-20).
8. Paul remained content no matter what his physical circumstances involved, because the spiritual dimension of his life dominated the physical (Phil. 4:12-13).
9. Paul did not hit the social evil of slavery head-on. He sent Onesimus back to his master, Philemon, but then appealed to Philemon to accept him as a dear brother (Philemon 16). He also encouraged other slaves to remain as they were, unless, of course, they were able to obtain their freedom legitimately (1 Cor. 7:20-22). Christian

slaves were to work at making the gospel attractive by the way they served, rather than work at obtaining their freedom (Eph. 6:5-8; Tit. 2:9-10). Thus spiritual principles are more basic than physical, personal and social ones, and when applied faithfully they become the very principles which break down serious social problems like slavery.

10. **Together with Jesus, we should see the people of the world as being harassed and helpless.** Why? They are like sheep without a shepherd (cf. Matt. 9:36). Their basic need is a spiritual one.

Sadly, many liberally-minded churches go beyond offering a **social service** to becoming involved in **social action**. Their focus is on social problems as they seek to bring relief to those who suffer because of these problems. Frequently the preaching in these churches is politicized, either in favour of the government or in opposition to it. When this happens we should join Prof. Neville Heuer in asking if the relaxing of caring in favour of becoming a watch-dog in society does not allow the world to become the church's conscience?¹

Strange as it may seem, scholars such as Peter Wagner, who have studied the issues which lead to church growth, have concluded that social action in church life actually hinders church growth. He goes on to say that churches which

¹
Neville A. C. Heuer, Let My People Go (Westville: The La Mancha Press, 1981), p. 39.

'concentrate on developing a philosophy of ministry around social activism tend, in the long run, to lose social strength. This is ironic, since the intentions of socially-oriented pastors are just the opposite: They would love to change the world.'

These conclusions have been substantiated by Dean Kelley, as far as the American church scene is concerned. Writing from a liberal point of view, he has shown, on sociological grounds, why liberal churches do not grow in the long run. He points out that other organizations also facilitate social activities, and people are drawn to them, rather than to churches, since they are much more effective in reaching socially-minded goals.

This does not mean, however, that we Christians should become indifferent toward the physical, personal and social needs of others. The love of Christ should constrain us to help people with their needs when we confront them.

Actually it is very important that we capitalize on the physical, personal and social needs of people to help them spiritually. Our relief ministries should serve as channels for our primary ministries of evangelizing the lost and edifying the saved. People are much more likely to listen to us when we help them with their felt-needs. So Bible-believing churches should not hesitate to do more social work

¹
Wagner, p. 149.

²
Dean Kelley argues along these lines in his book, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

secondarily than most liberal churches do primarily. Like the Lord Jesus, we should deal with the physical needs of people as and when we meet them.

The Lord Jesus, more than anyone else, helps us to remain balanced in these matters. He persistently concentrated on his spiritual ministry, but whenever he confronted **pressing physical needs**, he did something about them (cf. Matt. 14:13-21, 25-31).

He met all other needs, whether they were physical, personal, social or political in nature, with a spiritual message, because it did more than anything else to satisfy those needs (cf. Matt. 5:38-48; 6:25-35). We are to propagate the same message today.

The three or four top priorities which we Bible-believing people pursue in church life grow out of the teachings of Scripture, but liberal 'Christians', on the other hand, tend to pursue those priorities which grow out of the issues facing society. Their agenda is set by their society, because they feel that the Bible must be made relevant to the issues of their day. Their low view of the Bible's inspiration allows them to pick and choose those passages which speak to these issues. In the end they have a different set of priorities for church life from those of us who hold to a high view.

This means that our understanding of the Bible's inspiration has become the continental divide between liberalism and evangelicalism. Both go in different

directions, with liberalism leading in the end to the destruction both of church life and of Christian living.

From this we see that our view of the inspiration of the Scriptures is extremely important. If we are convinced that the Bible was given accurately by God (through human authors), we will want to expound it accurately. If, on the other hand, we see it as the work of religious thinkers of the past, we will feel free to pick and choose those aspects which strike us as being authentic. It is imperative, therefore, that we investigate the substantial evidence which points to the reliability and the relevance of the Bible, thereby establishing in our own minds, that all of the Bible is God's Word, and that all of its teachings need to be followed carefully (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17). We must remember that the Bible is not the product of the church, but that the church is the product of the Bible.

B. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LEADERSHIP SHORTSIGHTEDNESS

One of the apparent problems associated with the ECSA leadership is their intransigence over some issues. It comes to the fore most clearly when there is a conflict between two factions in a local church. Invariably the executive of the denomination will encourage a reconciliation between these factions, which is commendable. But, on the other hand, they do not usually address the deeper problem of stubbornness which is found in those who are in conflict. Furthermore, they will frequently use their constitution rather than the

Scriptures to find a solution to the problems they are addressing.

All church leaders have their blindspots. Much of this is not their own making, because they have not been made sufficiently aware of those principles and practices which bring about dynamic church life.

The result is that many churches are bound by a humdrum routine or an emotional imbalance. For example, the Sunday morning services of some churches may be characterized by 'a hymn and a thing, a hymn and a thing, and a dry sermon.' We often call such churches 'dead churches.' One of the clearest signs that a church is bogged down, if not dead, is that it is not growing.

Traditionalism is a notorious mark of dying churches. Obviously, many traditions are a great blessing in churches. For example, some of the Christmas traditions which churches practice make a wonderful contribution to church life. But there are other traditions which are negative in their influence. So it is vital that we evaluate our traditions against Scripture, and begin to replace those which are negative or neutral in their influence with the kinds of positive procedures which bring about vitality in our churches.

Why should we be bound by clerical titles and robes, by meeting at fixed times for fixed periods, and by routine activities which do not meet needs? Let us join Gene Getz in saying, 'We are neither bound by traditions, nor prone to ignore their value?' We will neither treasure them blindly,

nor trample upon them crassly.¹ Let us not do things the way they have been done before just because they have been done that way before, yet let us not change things just to be different.

Church leaders are in key positions to change the humdrum routine or emotional imbalance of their churches. Sadly, however, they are often a major part of the problem. They do not see that changes are needed. So their own shortsightedness needs to be addressed. For one thing, they need to see that the two kinds of leaders most urgently needed in their churches are Bible teachers and evangelistic workers (cf. Eph. 4:11-12). This means that if a church appoints a pastor who is gifted in Bible teaching they should then work towards appointing a second pastor gifted in evangelism. The two will complement one another. Only then should ministers of music and executive pastors be appointed.

Leaders also need to build a strategy into their thinking about their church. The transferable concepts which follow have proven to be significant principles in such a strategy.²

- 1. Church leaders need to develop a well-defined statement of purpose for their church, and then evaluate on a regular basis how well their church is fulfilling its purposes.**

¹
Gene Getz, 'Traditions to Trample or Treasure?' Moody Monthly, Nov., 1989, p. 14.

²
These concepts are adapted from a taped message by Bill Hybels, senior pastor of the Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, U.S.A.

Leaders should be able to give a succinct answer when asked, 'What are the purposes of your church?' To evaluate how well their church is doing, they could use a scale of 0 to 10 to rate the extent to which they believe their church is reaching each of their goals. They could then be divided into buzz groups to discuss how their church can be helped to better fulfill its purposes. Suggestions could be placed in writing and submitted to appropriate people in the church for their consideration.

2. Church leaders should do everything in their power to improve the preaching-teaching ministries of their church.

Someone, at least, needs to pay the price to become an effective communicator of God's Word in each church. Therefore, church leaders do well when they ask their pastors what they can do to help them in their work, so that their preaching and teaching can become more and more effective.

3. Church leaders need to do everything possible to encourage God-honouring and soul-inspiring public services.

People are drawn to churches which are marked by vitality, and they tend to look for vitality first of all in the public services. Thus it is wise to appoint spiritual people with abilities in the areas of music or drama to organize the flexible parts of Sunday's services, so that God's people are inspired to love him, stirred to worship him and stimulated to serve him.

4. Church leaders should experiment with creative programming.

It is important to remember that the ten words of a dying church are: 'We've never done it that way before. Why start now?' Here are some suggestions on the kinds of creative, but constructive changes which a church could make.

- Lengthen or shorten the time-span of church services and meetings to make them more meaningful.
- Replace mid-week services with home Bible studies, or even house churches.
- Convert Sunday evening services into a Sunday evening Bible Institute.
- Promote personal discipling programmes.
- Initiate special prayer activities (breakfasts, etc.)
- Develop special evangelistic thrusts.
- Conduct special events such as Deeper Life meetings, Bible camps and mission conferences.

5. Church leaders need to help God's people serve Christ's body along the lines of their gifts.

We all will have to give account for the way in which we have served the Lord (1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). It is a serious thing to bury our talents (Matt. 25:24-30). Like Timothy, we should not neglect our gift (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). Instead, we should become the right people in the right positions doing the Lord's work in the right way.

6. Church leaders need to organize discipling through small groups.

The seed of God's Word needs to take root in the soil of our lives. Personal discipling conducted through small group ministries brings this about best and most often. Personal ministries are like preparing the soil for the seed. Many people are not ready to receive more of God's Word in public situations until they have been disciplined in personal ones. The Lord Jesus proved this by the way in which he trained his closest disciples (the Twelve).

7. Church leaders need to follow an open-book policy in church life.

A good church is marked by relational, spiritual and emotional authenticity in its leaders. This means that we should not cover up those problems which irritate us. Undercurrents need to be avoided, and defenses need to be dropped. We should care enough to confront those who are a problem to us, and forgive to the point where the issues which were a problem to us are no longer an issue between us (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-35).

8. Church leaders should encourage excellence in the Lord's work.

God's work deserves peak-efforts, not half-efforts. We should serve him to the fullest of our potential (Ecc. 9:10; Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:23-24). Half-hearted involvement in the Lord's work is wrong, just as it was wrong for his people to bring blemished sacrifices to the temple during Malachi's

time (Mal. 1:6-14). God was infuriated by their slack involvement.

9. Church leaders should instill the principle of evaluation in their churches.

Hebrews 10:24 encourages us to 'consider how we may spur one another on' in the ways of God. Brainstorming will facilitate this, as will a special committee appointed to help the church become a good steward of its potential.

10. Church leaders need to model and teach abandonment.

Queen Esther lived according to the principle of abandonment when she said, 'If I perish, I perish' (Esther 4:16). In the same way, each church needs workers at its core who are abandoned to the Lord, and express it in abandonment to their church. Like the Lord Jesus our hearts need to beat for his church (Eph. 5:2, 25-27), especially the local expression of it where we participate.

C. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PROPERTY AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

In recent years the ECSA leadership has faced a major problem with finances in the denomination: a large amount of money was stolen from the denomination by the Treasurer of that time. He was a sick man who has subsequently died. Every major effort to recover the money has proved fruitless, because this man had no assets to speak of which could be used to pay back the money which he had taken.

Another problem in the ECSA relating to property matters is the inclination to concentrate on putting up facilities before establishing viable congregations to meet in these facilities. Added to this is the inclination in church councils to discuss finance and property matters, while neglecting to address the more difficult matters of how to become more effective in evangelizing non-Christians or how to go about edifying Christians.

Significantly the Bible says nothing about property matters when it discusses church life. It is true that it tells us about the various temples which were built, but they were special constructions to reveal God's presence in the midst of Israel **before** the coming of Christ. After Christ came, God's presence was manifested in believers. We have now become his temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

The Bible's silence on church buildings means that an imbalance prevails in this area of church life. We spend many hours discussing and working with property and financial matters, yet neglect the 'weightier' matters. When asked to describe their church many Christians think of their church's buildings first. Sadly, we have arrived at the point where the word 'church' refers more to our buildings than to our people.

This is not to say that our facilities are unimportant. Without them many of our programmes literally would be washed out. They definitely help us run more efficient activities, and pave the way for the effective proclamation of God's Word.

It is important, therefore, that we diffuse the distractions which our buildings create for us. The early church avoided the problem for more than three centuries by meeting in homes (Acts 2:46; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2)¹. In modern times many church groups are reintroducing the use of homes for some of their activities. Some have even established house churches, which are pastored by a suitable leader or two. These leaders usually function on a part-time basis, and teach the Bible, visit, conduct communion and baptismal services, and minister in general ways to those associated with their house church.

Our facilities and finances certainly need to be organized and administered in such a way that they promote our priorities. Much more care is needed in this area. For example, some churches are able to provide handsome educational facilities for use in their Sunday School programme, yet this facility often remains largely untouched the rest of the week. What a waste! Such a facility could be used for a kindergarten or, better still, for a Christian school, if either is viable. However, the best arrangement may be to construct a multi-purpose hall that is large enough to be used for Sunday School activities, as well as youth work, wedding receptions, seminars, fellowship activities and so on. This kind of hall could be equipped with lightweight partitions attached to the walls which could be swung out to

¹
Also see Kenneth S. Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1953), pp. 94, 204.

form enclosed areas for Sunday School classes. With carpeting added the noise level of each class could be contained.

When we come to the facility which we commonly call the sanctuary, is it necessary to furnish it with pews which are immobile, and is it really necessary in smallish facilities to slope the floor forward, making it difficult to add tables, for example? And why has it been common practice to build elongated facilities with the pulpit at the far end? Is it not better to build square or rectangular structures, and then to place the pulpit next to that wall which brings it nearest to the people? Seating needs to be arranged in a fan formation, not just to fit neatly around the pulpit or lectern, but also to allow for easier participation on the part of the people in the public meetings of the church. Fan-arranged seats also create a friendlier atmosphere.

Concourses are a much neglected part of church structures. Wide hallways and open spaces situated around the main meeting areas are very important when it comes to promoting fellowship in the church. People need to be able to stand around and talk to one another, possibly over a cup of tea or coffee.

Since the Bible is silent about church facilities, we need not feel bound by any one arrangement. There is nothing sacred about any part of a church's facilities; nevertheless, all that is done needs to be glorifying to the Lord and kept in balance with his priorities for the church.

This raises a major question about church finances. Most churches feel free to spend very large amounts of money

on their building programmes, without giving any thought to making similar investments in mission ministries. Where in the Bible does it suggest that we should favour our own building programmes over and above making disciples of all nations? And where does it suggest that pastors should be given more support than missionaries? It is true that a local church building should serve as a lighthouse in its community, but what about the tens of thousands of lighthouses still needed around the world? We need our facilities, but we also need to make similar investments in mission work. If we don't, who will? When our hearts should be deeply stirred by this imbalance, many of us do not even come near to thinking about it. Christian lives and life-styles are sacred, not our church facilities.

D. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PERSONAL INTERESTS

It is interesting to see how modern church life is being reduced to a one hour meeting on Sunday mornings. Even Sunday School is being scheduled to meet during this one hour in many churches. In the ECSA this fact is becoming quite obvious with many of its people attending the morning service only, and seldom if any of its other activities, unless it is a social occasion involving such functions as a Christmas party or a picnic or a meal. This raises the question, Why do people want church services to last only one hour? Is it because their personal interests are threatened by meetings that take longer. And why do they want services to meet early

on a Sunday? Again, is it because church activities are a threat to what they want to do on a Sunday?

Also it is interesting to see how Christian people are prepared to spend their money on themselves while some aspect of the Lord's work suffers for lack of support. Once again, we must ask the question, Is this due to their personal interests superceding the Lord's work?

Surely the most important reasons why churches do not pursue their priorities are found in those of us who participate in church life. We are not zealous enough for the things of God. Our lackadaisical attitudes and actions betray us, and our churches suffer irreparable damage.

Like Paul, we should stretch out to take hold of those things for which Christ took hold of us (Phil. 3:12-14). If many more of us would do so, our churches would begin to flourish rather than flounder. We must strain ahead and not simply coast along in our Christian experience.

Far too often our personal interests militate against the Lord's will for our lives. Such interests may be wholesome in themselves, but they can easily override the priority of seeking first God's kingdom and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33). Our personal interests may reflect what we do best, but they become destructive when they deflect us from seeking God's best. By God's grace, we should not allow our strengths to become our weaknesses.

We need to test ourselves in this area. It can be done easily. Imagine that a very surprizing thing should happen in our lives. Out of the blue we are selected to win

R1,000,000.00 with the stipulation that we spend it on doing what we like best. Furthermore, arrangements are made so that we may have a one year sabbatical from our work. Other competent people will take care of our responsibilities, and our jobs will be waiting for us when we return. So we will have time and money on our hands. Now, two crucial questions need to be answered.

--How are we going to spend the money we receive?

--How are we going to spend the time made available to us?

Our answers to these questions reveal very quickly where our interests and priorities lie. Would the things of God and the work of God come into our plans? How many of us would be prepared to use the money and time to become actively involved in a mission ministry? Not to preach, if that is not our calling, but to do what we can do for his glory. How sad it is when Christians would rather sit in their premises than stand on the promises of God by becoming involved in his will for their lives.

Like children, most adults also have their toys. We all know that in many cases the only difference between an adult's toys and a child's is the price tag. This raises questions about how many expensive toys have been bought by Christians which are not really needed. What about our hobbies, personal computers, 4 x 4 vehicles, bikes, cars, boats, yachts, and airplanes? And what about our food, houses, clothes, swimming pools, saunas, gardens and other comforts? Are they really needed? Then what about our trips?

Are they needed? Or, at least, are they needed to the extent to which we pursue them? In our efforts not to be a killjoy in life, let us not kill the joy of the Lord in our lives.

It is abundantly clear that generous giving to the Lord's work is a much needed ministry. Successful business people have a vital part to play in this. However, modern business life has become a threat to model church life. Business life is voracious in the way it swallows up money and manpower. The investments and movements which many Christians make, favour the business world (and their own pockets), rather than the Lord's work. Their priorities and activities need to be converted (as has happened to their hearts), so that their money-making endeavours prosper the Lord primarily and themselves secondarily.

Instead of giving his people wholesale things, God gives them wholesome experiences. This means that we should fill our lives with many happy memories, rather than with many handy things. Obviously this includes relaxation and recreation in our lives. Jesus realized this and took his disciples aside to rest (Mk. 6:31). As someone has said, 'If we don't come apart and rest awhile, we will soon come apart.' Our Creator has built the principle of rest into the very fibre of our beings (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:8-10) for we cannot survive or serve on a diet of 'all work and no play.' Yet this should not become an excuse to pursue the materialism and hedonism characteristic of so many today.

Here is another test question to consider: How much are we involved in our church's life? Both the content and

extent of our service for Christ in our local church are good indicators of how much we love him. Our church life is not to remain a postscript in our lives. When we are in close contact with him and his Word we will be motivated to love and live for him (2 Cor. 5:14-15). This, in turn, will express itself in our church life, and, like Timothy, we will then take a genuine interest in the spiritual welfare of others (Phil. 2:19-23).

E. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ORGANIZATIONAL PRESSURES

In some ways the ECSA is very regimented. It is often said in ECSA discussions that one must follow the right channels if one wants a decision to be made about a given matter. Usually this involves taking the matter first to one's local church council. Then if it is approved, it may need to be discussed at the regional level at a committee meeting involving representatives from the various churches. If approved once more, the matter may then need to be taken to the ECSA Executive where, in principle, final discussions and decisions take place about the issues at stake.

This regimentation can be very restrictive, however. It may give the appearance that the ECSA is a well organized body, but it often leads to delaying tactics where issues are passed back and forth between committees without matters being settled in a suitable way. This leads to much pontification in ECSA business meetings. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the full-time workers are expected to sit on as many

committees as possible to ensure their support for the activities of each committee.

In other words, the ECSA tends to make heavy weather of its organizational procedures. Improvements are needed in this area. One of the best ways to bring this about is to grasp a fresh vision of the church's nature as described by Scripture.

Each church is first and foremost an organism rather than an organization; it is a moving, living body. Christians tend to overlook this fact. For example, when we are asked how our church is structured we usually think of an administrative structure involving leadership, committees, and an organizational chart. But what really should come to mind are pastoral or cell groupings, specialized ministries, prayer fellowships and so on.

Probably movement is the most telltale sign that an organism or body is alive. This is also what we look for in a church. Each congregation is to be a meaningful movement of God's people, and not a motionless monument made by men's hands. Other similarities between organisms and churches are also instructive as we see from this breakdown.

VITAL PROCESSES OF ORGANISMS	APPLICATION TO LOCAL CHURCHES
1. Nutritional intake	We Christians are to feed on God's Word (Deut. 8:2-3).
2. Absorption of water	We are to seek the filling and flowing influence of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:37-39).
3. Exchange of gases (oxygen for carbon dioxide)	We are to breathe the wholesome atmosphere of a healthy fellowship (Acts 2:42-47).

<p>4. Respiration (the breaking down of nutrients to release energy to survive and to function effectively)</p>	<p>We are to apply God's Word by God's Spirit with the help of God's people and so fulfill his purposes for our lives (James 1:22-25).</p>
<p>5. Excretion (the removal of waste products)</p>	<p>We are to put off our former sinful way of life (Col. 3:5-10).</p>
<p>6. Reproduction</p>	<p>We are to make new disciples in new places (Matt. 28:18).</p>

These organic functions are to dominate in each church. When this is not the case a church will soon become weak and in time will evolve into not much more than a service club.

It is significant that organisms are marked by organization. They are not simply a uniform blob of substance or an unrelated group of things. Instead they comprize related parts which function together in a body to accomplish common objectives. The same is true of the church. It too involves related parts given for the accomplishment of God's purposes (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-31). Like a healthy organism each church is to be characterized by wholesome organization.

Organization, however, needs to be kept in its proper place in each church. In practical terms this means that administration is not to be given precedence over ministry and administrators are not to be made more important than those workers who concentrate on fulfilling the church's priorities. Administration is to be a servant of ministry.

Pastors should function primarily as shepherds rather than leaders in their churches (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1-4). If they

see themselves as shepherds they will focus mostly on the organic side of their church, but if as leaders they will focus rather on the organizational side; as shepherds they will become people-orientated, but as leaders they will become programme-orientated. Their function is to feed the flock rather than set the pace. Certainly leadership is involved, because, like shepherds, pastors are to lead God's people into new pastures, but feeding remains their primary concern, not leading.

Organization tends to be voracious, swallowing up resources (money and manpower) to the detriment of its priorities. When we come to preaching, for example, Wilbur M. Smith addresses the problem this way.

Many sermons leave the impression with me, as I go out the church door, that the (preacher) has had a crowded week and hasn't had time to prepare... (However), if men close the door and pray and sweat with the Word of God, then they can come before men with the power of God. Only then will the quality of evangelical preaching be improved.¹

This means that some aspects of church life need to be **characterized by planned neglect**. In other words, we should plan to neglect secondary aspects of our church life to concentrate on primary ones.

This also means that we should **avoid the tyranny of the urgent**. Too often matters become urgent and we soon forget the important. Many times we are forced to fight fires which are out of control, instead of fanning the flames which need to burn more brightly.

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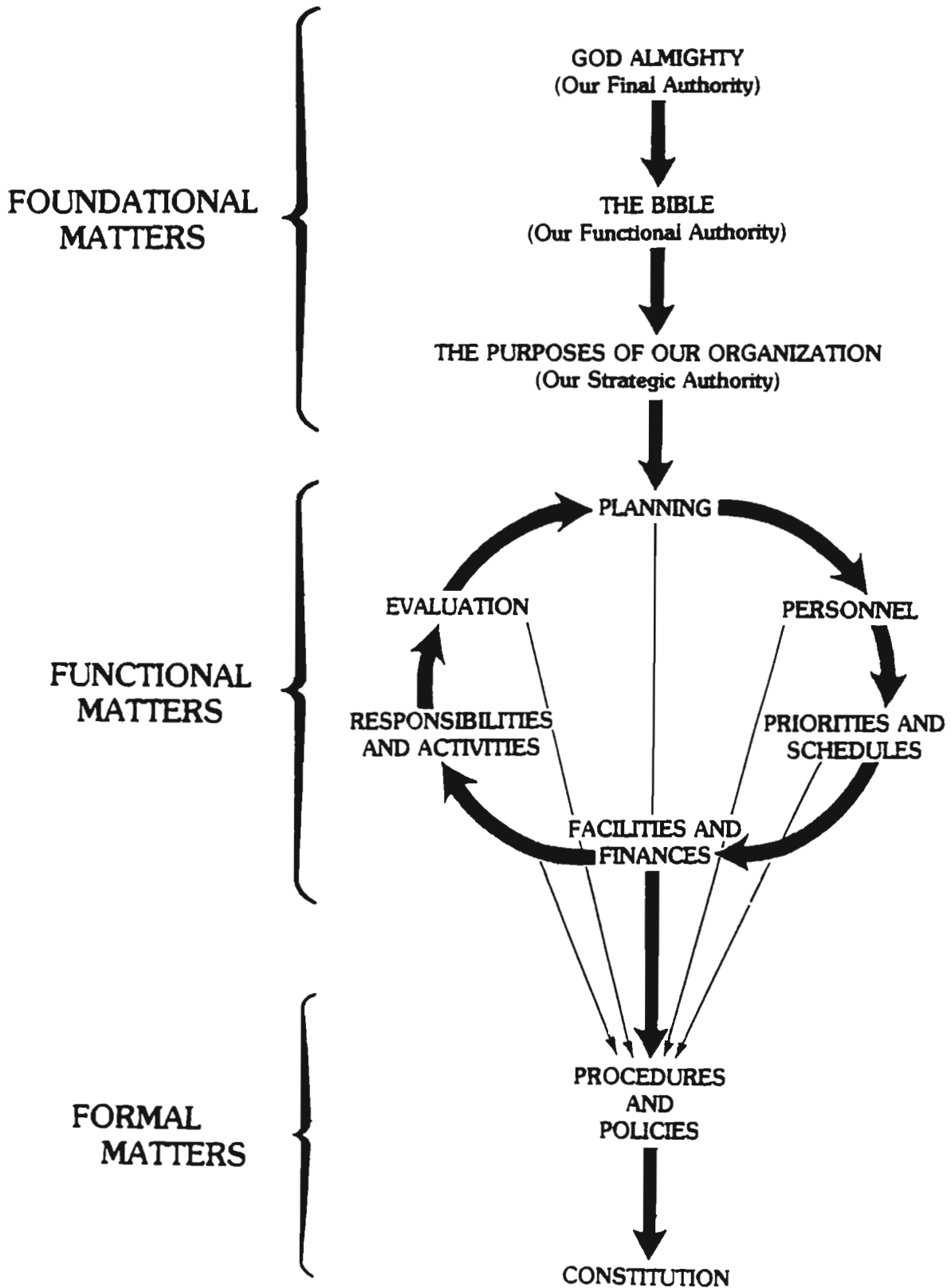
Wilbur M. Smith, 'Yesterday, Today and Forever' Decision Magazine, May, 1971, pp. 12, 14.

Furthermore, we need to **relieve our pressure points**. Unnecessary paper work should be avoided, committee meetings made shorter, better procedures established for doing what must be done, and partners appointed to help carry the load.

Organization certainly needs to be encouraged in each church. It is a sad fact that much of the Lord's work suffers because committees do not meet, decisions are not executed, and priorities are neglected. Christians love to pontificate about what should be done while neglecting their share of the work. On the other hand, God does things decently and orderly (1 Cor. 14:33, 40), and it is important that we become both efficient and effective in his work. So good organization should play an important part, although a secondary one, in our service.

The chart which follows helps us to see the broad elements of Christian administration which we must bring to bear on the ministries we conduct. Then Appendix H proposes ideas on how the local church may be organized formally. It is given in the form of a proposed constitution for the local church.

THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF OUR MINISTRY



F. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INGROWN INDEPENDENCE

There is a spirit of independence in the ECSA which is not good. For example, some leaders would like to see the ECSA establish its own full-time theological training programme, although their manpower and resources are insufficient for this. Currently the ECSA is making good use of the Durban Bible College, a product of The Evangelical Alliance Mission, for the training of its up and coming leaders. In fact, two of the ECSA's best trained men have lectured regularly at the Durban Bible College in recent times. Nevertheless, these good contacts with another body of like-minded Christians has not eliminated the idea within the ECSA that it should establish its own training programme for the preparation of its own workers.

Some of the local churches are also quite independent at times. This is seen most clearly when they reject certain workers with whom they have had a disagreement. At one time these workers were welcomed with open arms, but after the disagreement the situation is reversed and they are rejected. Where this is repeated in a church it soon becomes ingrown.

We must remember, on the other hand, that the Bible is silent about denominationalism, for it gives no instructions about church structures outside of the local church. This leads us to the conclusion that a local church is not out of line with the ethos of Scripture when it remains autonomous. (In mission circles many prefer to use the terms 'indigenous' and 'contextualization' to show that churches need to be

rooted in their local situations.) More accurately churches need to be 'Christonomous' rather than autonomous, that is, sustained and ruled by Christ.

Yet the Bible also describes how church leaders conferred with one another about doctrinal matters at the Jerusalem Council, and at other times (Acts 15:1-35; Gal. 2:1-2, 6-7). Moreover, they took an active interest in the spiritual well-being of other local churches (Acts 11:19-26). They also extended the right hand of fellowship to believers from other churches by showing them hospitality (Gal. 2:9; 3 Jn. 5-8), and they deliberately gave toward the physical needs of believers in other local churches (Acts 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-4).

So the Bible does not promote a crass autonomy. It shows that fellowship between churches is a very valuable exercise. An interdependence between Bible-believing churches is Christlike, because it expresses the spirit of John 13:34-35 and helps these churches maintain their priorities.

We are saddened, therefore, when we encounter churches which are exclusive in negative ways. Admittedly language, cultural and doctrinal differences separate our churches, but negative, unnecessary exclusiveness, is like an ingrown toenail; it hurts. Here are some illustrations of negative exclusiveness:

--Failure to invite suitable missionaries, evangelists and Bible teachers to speak in our churches (cf. Eph. 4:11-12).

--Refusal to hear from compatible preachers who are not a part of our immediate church circle (cf. 3 Jn. 9-10).

- Preparing Bible study materials without paying much attention to materials prepared by other groups.
- Not accepting invitations to preach to groups outside of one's own church circle when available to do so.
- Insisting on one's own doctrinal position without seeking to understand other positions.
- Breaking fellowship with Christians whom we believe have made an unholy alliance (second-degree separation).
- Denouncing certain Christians and groups in public.

G. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY

The spiritual immaturity of people in the ECSA is seen most clearly when personal conflicts take place, especially in the context of church life. The problem becomes very obvious when church leaders are involved. Instead of people conceding defeat or admitting their error, they tend to defend their position relentlessly, sometimes to the point of wanting to take people to court over the affair. The lack of forgiveness is another dimension to this problem.

Spiritual immaturity is probably our major distraction in the church. If the majority of Christians would become zealous for the things of God and participate extensively in their churches along biblical lines, then it would not be difficult for their churches to maintain their priorities.

Maturity in the Christian life is especially characterized by clean living. We are to be holy as the Lord is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16). This does not mean that we are to

out on a pious face, clasp our hands and gaze up into heaven in a pensive way. Rather it means to be set apart--set apart from sin and set apart for God. This is to be true in our daily lives in all things and not only on Sundays when we meet together for our Christian meetings. Many people are happy to rest on Sunday, but they are not happy to pursue holiness each day. Rest without holiness leads to the pursuit of one's own interests (as many do on a Sunday), but rest joined to holiness leads to the pursuit of God's interests. When we actively pursue what interests him, holiness develops in our lives.

The Bible often describes spiritual maturity in terms of a life of purity and a spirit of unity. Both individuals and churches are to be characterized by these qualities. Purity and unity reflect God's character in us, for he is marked by holiness (Rev. 4:8) and oneness (Deut. 6:4; Jn. 17:21). These qualities also enable us to fulfill our Christian responsibilities toward one another (Eph. 4:15-16) and to influence outsiders with the gospel (Jn. 13:34-35; 1 Thes. 4:9-12; 1 Tim. 3:7). When they are missing from our lives and churches 'God's image is distorted, the evangelistic thrust of the church is blunted, and Christians are stunted in spiritual growth.'

Sometimes the situation becomes so serious that we need to follow one of two procedures.

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J. Robertson McQuilkin, unpublished class notes, 'Principles of Christian Work' Columbia Graduate School, 1978.

1. Church Discipline for Sin Is Sometimes Needed

a. Who should be disciplined?

--Those who are guilty of unrepented, overt, moral sin (1 Cor. 5:1-11).

--Those who are guilty of teaching heresy (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Jn. 7-11).

It is likely that all of us are heretical on some points of doctrine, but it is those who **teach** ideas that seriously distort a fundamental of the faith who should be disciplined (Gal. 1:6-9).

b. Why Should Church Discipline be Administered?

The primary purpose of church discipline is to rescue and restore the person who has sinned (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Thes. 3:13-15).

A secondary purpose is that discipline should function as a warning to others (1 Tim. 5:20).

Another secondary motive is that discipline should protect the reputation of Christ and his church (1 Cor. 5:6-6; 2 Jn. 10-11). Our major motive in discipline is love for the sinner and not protection for Christ or his church, otherwise discipline could easily degenerate into an inquisition.

c. How Should Church Discipline be Carried Out?

Only after there has been earnest prayer and self-examination should we feel prepared to approach someone about their sin (cf. Gal. 6:1; Matt. 7:1-5). Thereafter we should follow the pattern outlined in Matthew 18:15-18.

Stage 1: Counsel personally with the one who has sinned (Rom. 15:1-2).

Stage 2: Include one or two others in the counseling (1 Tim. 5:19).

Stage 3: Take the matter to the church. If deemed necessary, fellowship is broken with the sinner (2 Thes. 3:6, 14-15; Tit. 3:10-11). An official decision makes it **church discipline**, otherwise it becomes personal, and, therefore, schismatic in an unscriptural way.

Forgiveness is then needed (cf. Matt. 18:21-35). Otherwise, bitterness will breed bitterness. Alternatively, forgiveness breeds forgiveness. If people refuse to admit their sin, it is then a matter between God and them and no longer between them and us.

2. Reconciliation Between Fellow-Believers Is Also Sometimes Needed.

It is sad but true that Christians sometimes become caught up in conflicts with other Christians. According to the Bible the solution to such problems is found through **cooperation** rather than **confrontation**. These are the kinds of principles it advocates.

--Give gentle answers (Prov. 15:1; 25:15; 1 Tim. 5:1).

--Concede to others but don't compromise (Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:3).

--Be willing to be wronged (Matt. 5:39-40; 1 Cor. 6:7).

--Seek to be reconciled (Matt. 5:23-24).

--Show genuine love to others (Matt. 5:44; 1 Jn. 2:9-10; 4:19-21).

In a nutshell, we are to be characterized by purity and unity simultaneously. Neither of these is to be neglected in our lives and ministries. Yet 'it is much easier to go to a consistent extreme than to stay at the center (sic) of

biblical tension.¹ However, when we look to Christ for truth and grace we will begin stressing both qualities without neglecting one to favour the other (cf. Jn. 1:17); his truth in our lives makes us more righteous and his grace in our lives makes us more gracious. Put simply, we become marked by his purity and unity. Ultimately, he is to be our great focus in church life (cf. Heb. 12:2).

¹
Ibid.

CHAPTER X

ARTICULATING THE GOALS OF NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH LIFE

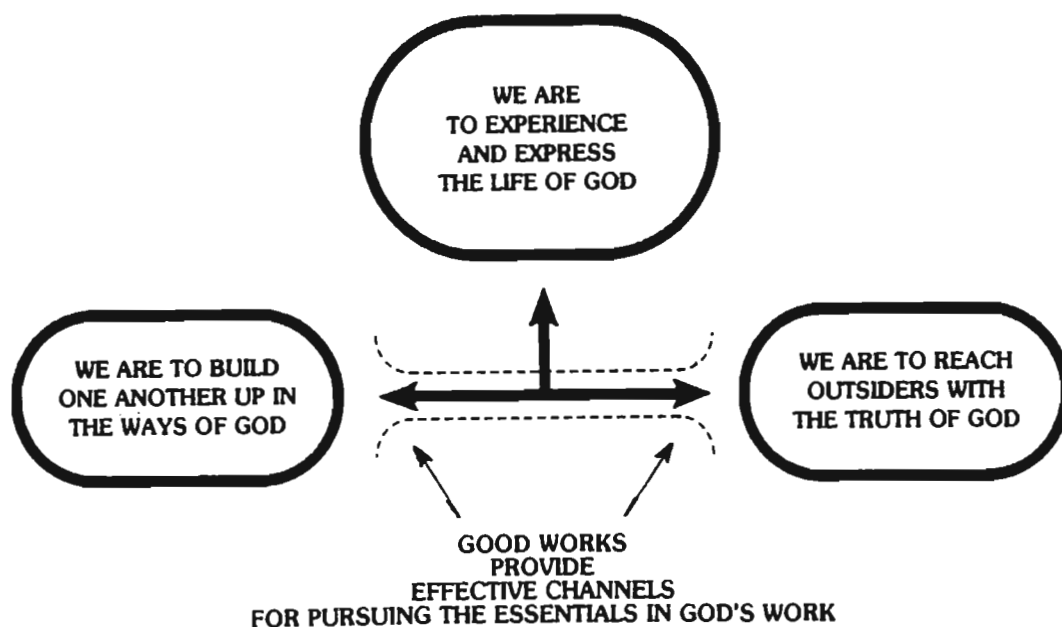
Every church should have a sense of purpose. Ultimately, according to Scripture, there is one supreme purpose for a group of churches such as those found in the ECSA. Most members who comprise the ECSA do not have a clear understanding of what this purpose is. Admittedly, various leaders in the ECSA do have a sense of purpose, but they explain themselves differently in each case. This is largely due to the fact that they emphasize various essentials of church life, many of which certainly need to be stressed, yet a final word on the subject is not found. Put in other terms, the ECSA needs a mission statement to give a united focus to its work. If they were ever to do this, the following crucial factors should be borne in mind.

In this study we have seen that there are eight all-encompassing essentials which should characterize each church. We may summarize them with eight key phrases. Here they are:

- God's Power
- Continual Preparation
- Basic Practices
- Worldwide Propagation
- Gifted Partners
- Effective Proclamation
- Transformed People
- Biblical Priorities

These phrases could serve as simple reminders to the ECSA of what is essential to a church's well-being. They all feed into the great priorities which God has given each church: his life is to be expressed, Christian people are to be edified, and the world is to be evangelized.

In the following sketch we have a graphic way of visualizing these points.



Pastor Raymond Ortlund agrees with these facts by stating that each church has been given three great priorities or commitments. He summarizes them as follows:

1. **Commitment to Christ** (cf. Ps. 42:1; Phil. 1:21; 3:10).
2. **Commitment to the body of Christ** (cf. Jn. 13:35; Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 2 Cor. 12:19).
3. **Commitment to the work of Christ in the world** (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 15:58).

The first of these concerns the kind of people we are to be, and the other two concern the kind of work we are to do. Of course the kind of people we are largely determines the kind of work we do, so it is essential that we keep coming back to the first priority whereby we experience, in ever-increasing ways, the reality of God's love and life in our lives.

¹ See Peter Wagner's concurrence in Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1976), p. 153.

Peter Wagner adds to this by saying, 'Christians must live from the center out, and the center is God.'¹ As we make the Lord our first priority, we will glorify him.

When all these factors combine their forces they lead to one supreme result: God is glorified; he is exalted. This is the ultimate purpose of the church (Rom. 1:5; Eph. 3:21). In fact this is the purpose of everything in the universe (Rom. 11:36; Col.1:18-20). It is also the great purpose for the Christian (1 Cor. 10:31). When all is said and done the one great thing still to be done is to glorify God (Phil. 2:10-11). Many of the epistles end on this note (2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 2 Pet. 3:18; Jude 25) and Revelation starts on it (Rev. 1:6). Our purpose is not simply to experience forgiveness, to find freedom and to have fellowship. If it were, would it not be wise for God to call us home to heaven where these realities are made complete? Instead he has left us here for one great purpose: to glorify him.

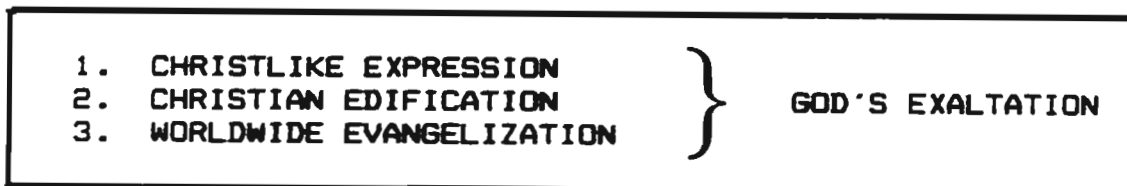
God does not need us to glorify him. It is not as though he says, 'I want to be told that I am good and great.' Rather he is worthy to be glorified and he simply wants us to acknowledge what already should be welling up in our hearts as we relate to him. Writing on this theme the well-known author C. S. Lewis explains himself as follows.

I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless (sometimes even if) shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it. The world rings with praise--lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favourite poet, walkers

¹
Ibid., p. 154.

praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game--praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. I had not noticed how the humblest, and at the same time most balanced and capacious, minds, praised most...I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: 'Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?' The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.¹

These comments should inspire us to exude with enthusiasm for the Lord and his goodness in our lives. Indirectly they remind us of the importance of a good family and church life, for it is there that such an enthusiasm is most developed. If our church life is going to do this for us, it will take place most effectively when it diligently pursues the following goals.



These priorities are well illustrated in the chart which follows at the end of this chapter. The other essential points which have been emphasized throughout this study are also illustrated therein. Together they remind us that each church is to become an alive and growing body of God's people who love and live for him.

We can expect all churches to shine when they pursue these essentials. Even small churches which are forced to

¹
 C. S. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms (United Kingdom: Harcourt, 1961), p. 80.

remain small because they are located in sparsely populated areas can become good churches if they minister effectively to their own people, and become actively involved in missionary ministries around the world. We must remember that 'a small church with large vision is greater than a big church with little vision.'¹

Of course, none of this is divorced from the individual, because the extent to which these facts are true in the lives of individuals, to that extent they will be true in their church's life. Individual Christians become interested in these matters as they walk with the Lord, and then commune with him along the way. Communion comes as we walk and talk with someone whom we love. (Soldiers only walk together but lovers walk and talk together--they commune with one another.) Thus our church's well-being goes back to our individual relationships with the Lord, which should be marked especially by prayer and the study of his Word. What we are in the privacy of our own lives largely determines the kind of ministry our church will have. Billy Graham reminds us that we need fewer words and more Christlike works, less palaver and more pity, less vain repetition and more compassion, less pontification and more devotion.² The more this is true in our own lives the more it will be true in our churches.

¹ Taken from Our Daily Bread, Radio Bible Class, May 1990.

² Adapted from the 1990 calendar produced by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

As we bring this study to a close, here are some stirring reminders of the significance of the church and our relationship to it, especially its local expression where we are able to grow in the things of God and participate in the work of God.

First, we hear from Michael Griffiths, the former General Director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the former Principal of the London Bible College, an expert on church life.

The church is not a third class waiting room where we twiddle our thumbs while we wait for first class accommodation in heaven. It is a dynamic new community, winsome and attractive, and with an eternal significance in the purpose of God. The Bible makes it clear that the church is God's goal for mankind, for the new humanity in its new communities.¹

These statements remind us that God wants to do a new thing amongst us: he wants to give us his new life in all its fullness and he wants to express this life through the vitality of our local churches.

In the second quote we take note of the words of Kenneth Kantzer, Dean Emeritus of the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Senior Editor of Christianity Today.

(The) church, despised and reviled on every hand, belongs to God. He has promised to protect it against every enemy. Even the forces of all hell cannot destroy it. I would rather be stricken dead than be found fighting the church of Jesus Christ which he purchased with his own precious blood out of his infinite love for it and which he has promised to preserve forever... I, therefore,

1

Michael Griffiths, God's Forgetful Pilgrims (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 9.

dare not spurn the church. To spurn Christ's church is to spurn God.¹

Dr. Kantzer's words remind us of the danger of turning our back on the church because of all its weaknesses and problems. By implication he spurs us on to play our part in making our own local church as spiritually vibrant as it can be.

Finally, we are challenged by Bill Hybels, the Senior Pastor of the Willow Creek Community Church, one of America's fastest growing churches of recent times.

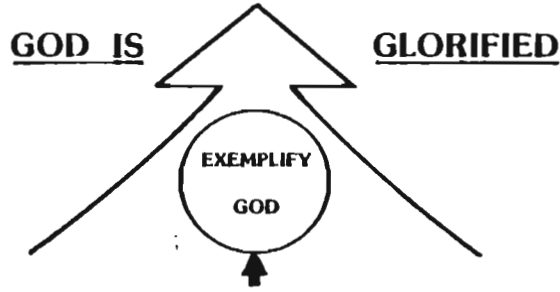
If your heart does not beat for your church, what does it beat for? Jesus' heart beat for his church; ours should do the same.²

This simple challenge reminds us that the church is precious to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it should be to us. If it is not, then there is something wrong with us. The Lord is the only one who can completely change us so that we too will see the church, his body, as remaining eternally precious.

¹ Kenneth Kantzer, unpublished baccalaureate message, Trinity College and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, May 27, 1970.

² Adapted from a taped message given by Bill Bybels at Willow Creek Community Church.

THE CHURCH ALIVE!



KEY PASSAGES

1. EPHESIANS 4:1-16
2. ACTS 2:41-47
3. MATTHEW 9:35-38

THE GATHERED CHURCH
AT WORK

THE SCATTERED CHURCH
AT WORK

CHURCH DISCIPLINE RECONCILIATION

APOSTLES

PROPHETS

EVANGELISTS

PASTOR-TEACHERS

TEACHERS

ENGAGE IN
EDIFYING — EXTOLLING FUNCTIONS

ENGAGE IN
MINISTERING — 'MISSIONIZING' FUNCTIONS

EQUIPPING

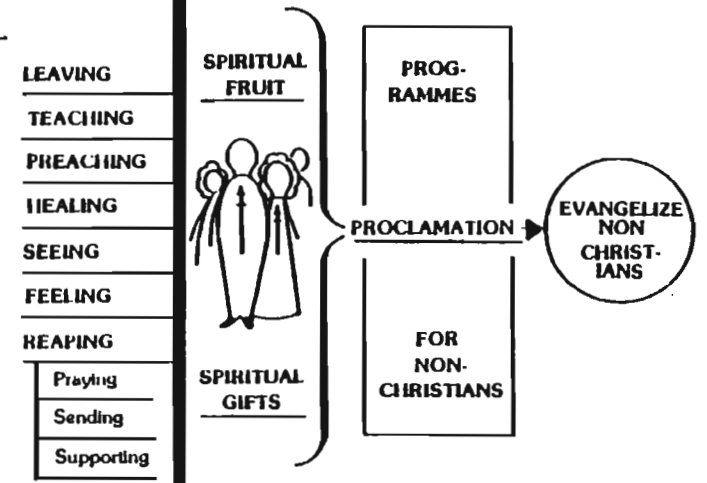
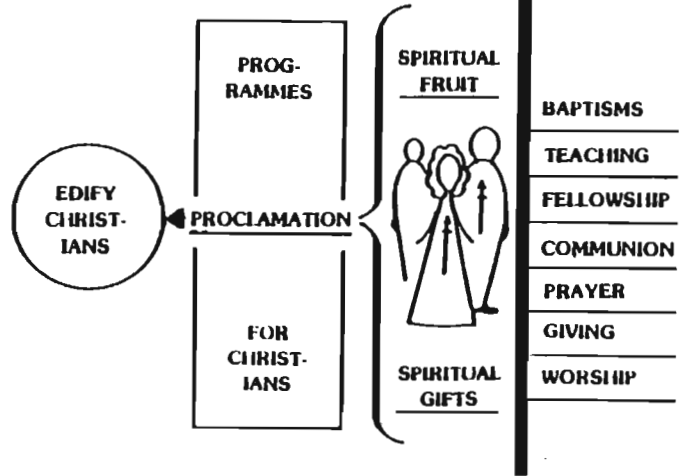
Modelling
Shepherding
Leading

ELDERS

DEACONS

SERVING

In Spiritual Matters
In Practical Matters



APPENDIX A (Motivated on Page 26)

CHURCH LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

We know that you have a love for the Evangelical Church in South Africa (ECSA), and that you would like to see its ministries strengthened and its influence extended. To help us encourage this process could you please respond to the following statements by rating the extent to which you think each statement is true in your local church and then could you do the same for the denomination as a whole?

Next to each statement is a sequence of numbers with 0 = not at all true, while 5 = an accurate statement. The numbers in between (1-4) represent varying degrees of agreement.

When thinking of your local church please circle (○) the numbers which best indicate the truthfulness of the statement involved. Then when thinking of the denomination please place a cross (×) under the number which best indicates the truthfulness of the statement involved.

Example:

Our church is a strong church.

0	1	2	3	4	5
			×	○	

1. Our church leaders have a good grasp of what the Bible teaches about church life.
 - a. They can clearly state what the church is to demonstrate most often.
 - b. They can clearly state what the church's major functions are.
 - c. They can give a biblical definition of the church.
2. Our church leaders have a good grasp of what it takes to establish alive and growing churches.
3. Our church is experiencing a revival these days that likens it to the early (New Testament) church.

	<u>NO</u>			<u>YES</u>		
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5

4. Our leaders are familiar with what brings about revival in our midst.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. A variety of Christian speakers and teachers are heard in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
a. We often hear from missionaries about missionary matters.	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. We often hear from challenging preachers who visit our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. We are influenced by evangelistically-minded people.	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Our pastors are effective in helping our people grow spiritually.	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Elders have a strong spiritual influence in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Deacons (or Council members) also have a positive spiritual influence in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Our church conducts a well-rounded programme of building up Christians and of reaching non-Christians with the gospel.	0	1	2	3	4	5
a. Baptisms are conducted regularly in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Good Bible teaching is a feature of our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Fellowship between Christians in our church is strong.	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Communion services are meaningful in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Prayer is a strong feature of our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Financial giving is good in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
g. Our people often praise the Lord for his goodness.	0	1	2	3	4	5
h. Mission work is promoted often and effectively in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5

i. Our church gives generously (such as 40-50% of its total income) to missionaries and their work.	0	1	2	3	4	5
j. Effective evangelistic programmes are conducted in our church (e.g. weekly visitation, cottage outreach meetings attended mostly by non-Christians, regular evangelistic meetings, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5
k. Our church is directly involved in starting new churches in new places.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Most of our people have a particular job to do in our church and they are doing their job well.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Christian music plays an important role in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
a. Our congregation sings enthusiastically.	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Special items are often heard in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Our church is marked by a variety of programmes and activities which are meeting the needs of the people in the church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
a. Besides Sunday School special programmes are run for children (e.g. Gospel club meetings, holiday Bible clubs, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. A good youth programme is conducted in our church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. The young adults of the church meet often for Bible study and fellowship.	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. The ladies enjoy good meetings together on a regular basis.	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. The men of the church also meet together for prayer and fellowship.	0	1	2	3	4	5

- f. Special care groups meet in our church to support those with special needs (e.g. loneliness, aging, deafness, blindness, rehabilitation).
 - g. Individual counseling plays an important part in our church.
10. Our church is careful to maintain its priorities.
- a. Rather than push the ideas of theological liberalism our church stresses the fundamentals of our faith.
 - b. Most of our people are heavily involved in our church's activities.

0	1	2	3	4	5
0	1	2	3	4	5
0	1	2	3	4	5
0	1	2	3	4	5
0	1	2	3	4	5

As you see it, list the three or four great reasons why God has brought the church into existence.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

List any matters you would like to see changed or strengthened in your church.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please state what position you hold in your church (Councilman, Elder, Pastor, etc.).

.....

It is not necessary for you to give your name. Thank you for your kind help.

QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A PROSPECTIVE ELDER (PASTOR)

NAME OF MAN UNDER CONSIDERATION.....DATE.....

1. Issues regarding his maturity

An elder is to be suitable for the tasks at hand. He is to be a man of God who is grounded in the Word of God, and gifted by the Spirit of God to fill this role. Please answer the following questions to help us discern if this is true of the man named above.

a. Basic Qualifications

1) Do you have good reason to believe that this man is a genuine Christian?.....

2) Do you also feel that this man is above reproach?

If you know of anything that raises questions about his suitability for Christian leadership, please mention it here.....

b. Specific Qualifications

Please rate the extent to which you think the following statements are true with regard to the man in question by circling the appropriate number on a scale of 1-5, where 1 equals 'not at all true,' and 5 equals 'a true statement.'

1) In respect of his personal life					
a) He is well-balanced (temperate)	1	2	3	4	5
b) He is sensible (self-controlled)	1	2	3	4	5
c) He is respectable (orderly)	1	2	3	4	5
d) He is very cautious about drinking alcohol ¹	1	2	3	4	5
e) He is free from the love of money	1	2	3	4	5
f) He is patient rather than quick-tempered	1	2	3	4	5
g) He loves what is good	1	2	3	4	5

h) His conduct is holy (unpolluted)	1	2	3	4	5
i) He is disciplined	1	2	3	4	5
j) He holds firmly to the Word of God	1	2	3	4	5
2) In respect of his family life					
a) He is devoted to his wife (if married) ²	1	2	3	4	5
b) He manages his own children well	1	2	3	4	5
--They obey him	1	2	3	4	5
--They show him proper respect	1	2	3	4	5
--They are characterised by belief ³	1	2	3	4	5
--They are well-behaved rather than guilty of wild living	1	2	3	4	5
3) In respect of his social life					
a) He makes others feel welcome in his home and comfortable in his presence	1	2	3	4	5
b) He deals with others in a gentle rather than a rough (violent) manner	1	2	3	4	5
c) He is cooperative rather than quarrelsome in his discussions with others	1	2	3	4	5
d) He enjoys a good reputation among non-Christians or outsiders	1	2	3	4	5
e) He is considerate rather than overbearing (self-willed) in his dealings with others	1	2	3	4	5
f) He avoids doing things to his own advantage in a dishonest way	1	2	3	4	5
g) He is just (upright) in all relationships	1	2	3	4	5
4) In respect of his church life					
a) He teaches God's Word frequently and effectively	1	2	3	4	5
b) He evidences that he is not a recent convert, but a mature Christian	1	2	3	4	5

2. Issues regarding his ministry

An elder is also to be available for the tasks at hand. He will demonstrate this by his present involvement in church life, and by his aspirations to be involved in pastoral ministries (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1). With regard to the man in question, please answer the following questions to help us ascertain his availability for pastoral work.

- a. Does he evidence a deep, ongoing concern for prayer and the proclamation of God's Word (cf. Acts 6:4)?.....
- b. Can you think of any couples or individuals with whom he has met personally for a time of Bible study?...
.....
- c. Does he conduct effective Bible studies for groups of Christians?.....
- d. Is he involved with counseling, visiting, helping or comforting those associated with the church?.....
.....
- e. Is he helping to correct weaknesses in the life of the church?.....
- f. Is he preparing workers for ministries conducted in or through the church?.....
.....
- g. Does he evidence the ability to administer some aspect of the church's life?.....
.....

Please rate his administrative abilities by circling the appropriate number on a scale of 1-5, where 1 equals 'not at all true', and 5 equals 'a true statement.'

1) In respect of his effectiveness					
a) He plans his work well	1	2	3	4	5
b) He sets high standards for work to be done	1	2	3	4	5
c) He is efficient	1	2	3	4	5
d) He has an ability to make decisions	1	2	3	4	5
e) He demonstrates leadership ability	1	2	3	4	5
f) He is able to complete a programme	1	2	3	4	5
g) He is dependable	1	2	3	4	5
h) He is able to handle finances responsibly	1	2	3	4	5

2) In respect of his personal relationships					
a) He radiates love for others	1	2	3	4	5
b) He is discreet towards the opposite sex	1	2	3	4	5
c) He has a non-critical attitude	1	2	3	4	5
d) He avoids gossip	1	2	3	4	5
3) In respect of his adaptability					
a) He adjusts well to changing situations	1	2	3	4	5
b) He is willing to accept advice and counsel	1	2	3	4	5
c) He is willing to work with and/or under leaders	1	2	3	4	5
d) He copes well with stress	1	2	3	4	5
e) He is willing to follow guidelines	1	2	3	4	5

1

The phrase 'given to drunkenness' (1 Tim. 3:3) comes from the Greek word 'paroinos' which literally means 'beside wine.' The elder is not to be known as one who sits 'beside wine.' Paul is not being legalistic here, but is teaching the principle that an elder is not to be classified as a drinker. A great deal of the wine which was drunk in Paul's time was like our soft drinks today. It was usually two or three parts water to one part wine, and not processed as modern wines are. So generally speaking it was like modern grape juice.

2

When the Bible says that an elder is to be the 'husband of but one wife' (1 Tim. 3:2), it is stressing the need for devotion in marriage. Literally the Greek says he must 'be a one-woman man'--be devoted to her. He must not be polygamous nor adulterous, but a faithful husband. This qualification does not teach that an elder must be married, otherwise the writer would have said that he must 'have a wife.' It does not require a widower to withdraw from an eldership, nor does it prevent him from remarrying on biblical grounds. Also, it does not necessarily eliminate divorcees, although the first qualification may do so. Because he is to be 'above reproach' or 'blameless', he may need to be eliminated if divorced on unscriptural grounds. Sometimes exceptions are made when a man was divorced before he became a Christian.

3

When referring to an elder's children in Titus 1:6, Paul uses an adjective in the Greek to show that they must be 'believing children', and not necessarily believers. In other words, he is not encouraging us to point fingers legalistically at an elder whose children are not yet born again. Rather his children are to be characterized by belief, and seen as responding to the gospel.

APPENDIX C (Motivated on Page 88)

QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A PROSPECTIVE DEACON

NAME OF PERSON UNDER CONSIDERATION.....

The qualifications for deacons are given in 1 Timothy 8:8-13, and together with the word servant (the root idea behind the word deacon), they form the basis for this questionnaire. Please respond prayerfully and honestly to each section.

1. Evidence regarding the **spiritual life** of the person involved.

Do you have good reason to believe that the person named above is a genuine Christian?.....

2. Issues regarding the **character** of the person involved.

a. Specific qualifications to look for in a **man** who is willing to serve as a deacon in the church.

Like elders, deacons are to qualify in the four realms of life in which they move: in their personal, family, church and community lives. They are also to qualify on all points. A consistent low score in any one area could disqualify them.

Please rate the extent to which you think the following statements are true with regard to the man in question, by circling the appropriate number on a scale of 1-5, where 1 equals 'not at all true', and 5 equals 'a true statement.'

a) He is worthy of respect	1	2	3	4	5
b) He is sincere (not double-tongued)	1	2	3	4	5
c) He is not known to be a drinker	1	2	3	4	5
d) He does not seek dishonest gain	1	2	3	4	5
e) He holds and applies the deep truths of God's Word	1	2	3	4	5
f) He has proven himself faithful in following and serving the Lord	1	2	3	4	5
g) He is devoted to his wife (if married)	1	2	3	4	5
h) He manages his children and household well	1	2	3	4	5

b. Specific qualifications to look for in a woman who is willing to serve as a deaconess in the church. (Alternatively apply this to the wives of prospective deacons if you believe 1 Timothy 3:11 applies to them.)

As before, please complete this chart.

a) She is worthy of respect	1	2	3	4	5
b) She does not talk about others in an unkind manner	1	2	3	4	5
c) She is well-balanced (temperate)	1	2	3	4	5
d) She is trustworthy in all things	1	2	3	4	5

3. Questions regarding the service of the person involved.

a. Does this person evidence a servant spirit?.....

.....

b. Do you believe that this person will do more than pontificate at committee meetings, by participating in practical ways in the church's life?.....

.....

.....

.....

c. Please list some areas of ministry in which you believe that this person can be involved in the church.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

BIBLICAL GOALS FOR A CHURCH'S GIVING TO MISSIONS

This chart is geared to help churches allocate their giving to missions in a more biblical way. By calculating where the church is now directing its giving it will be seen where its weaknesses and strengths lie, and then appropriate adjustments can be made.

Giving to the Lord's work should be viewed from at least two different angles as seen below. The percentages given in each column are only suggestive, so churches may need to adjust them to suit their own convictions.

1. IN RESPECT OF THE KINDS OF MINISTRIES AND ACTIVITIES WE SHOULD SUPPORT — THE VOCATIONAL DIMENSION

Church planting and perfecting should receive the highest percentage of support, because they are at the heart of the missionary enterprise.

Local Administrative Costs	Workers in Church Planting (Pioneer evangelism, Follow-up, Congregating, etc.)	Workers in Church Perfecting (Itinerant preaching and teaching, Bible School teaching, Literature ministries, etc.)	Workers in Gospel Ministries with a Specialized Focus (Youth evangelism, Social work, Broadcasting, Ladies work, etc.)	Workers in Relief Ministries (Educational, Medical, Social Work, etc.)	Workers in Support Ministries (Administrators, Pilots, Builders, etc.)	Workers in Training Situations (Bible School staff and students, Internship people, etc.)
No more than 2%	At least 25%	At least 25%	At least 20%	No more than 10%	No more than 8%	If possible 10%

2. IN RESPECT OF WHERE OUR GIVING SHOULD BE DIRECTED — THE GEOGRAPHICAL DIMENSION (cf. Acts 1:8)

The percentage earmarked for our local area (first column) is lower than the others, because many of the other ministries in our church will include outreach activities in their programmes and will be paying for them.

Our Jerusalem (Our local area)	Our Judea (Away from our church)	Our Samaria (Within our national boundaries)	Our Samaria (In an international setting)	Our Ends (Within our national boundaries)	Our Ends (In an international setting)	Additional Workers in a Highly Receptive Setting
About 5%	About 15%	About 15%	About 15%	About 15%	About 15%	About 20%

.....
(Name of Your Church)

TIME AND TALENT FORM

The Bible makes it clear that all Christians possess at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7-11). This means that every believer has been equipped to serve the Lord effectively in at least one capacity within the Church. Many are gifted in more than one way, and, therefore, are able to serve in various capacities.

The list of ministry opportunities which is given here highlights some of the areas in which we continue to need help. We invite you to place a tick (✓) next to those areas where you are willing to serve, or an asterisk (*) next to those ministries for which you would like to be trained. Hopefully you will be able to indicate at least one ministry which appeals to you.

It is quite possible that you will place ticks next to more areas than you should handle. You may then want to pick your priorities by selecting your top three choices and numbering them in order of preference (1, 2, 3). Rather than spread yourself out in such a way that you do nothing well, it is better to concentrate your efforts so that you are effective in one or two areas.

We all need to grow in the Lord. To make this practical we need to stretch ourselves in his work. Therefore, it is good to make yourself available for ministries which you have not attempted before.

We would like to assure you that you are not signing your life away by placing ticks on this form. You still have the liberty to change your mind if you are invited by one of our leaders to serve in a particular area. This form simply functions as a guide, indicating those areas wherein you are currently willing to serve.

YOUR NAME

YOUR ADDRESS

.....

YOUR PHONE NUMBERS.....(HOME).....(WORK)

PLEASE LIST SOME OF YOUR INTERESTS, SKILLS, AND RECREATIONAL
 ACTIVITIES

- Teaching the Bible
 - ..To children
 - ..To young people
 - ..To adults
- Discipling individuals (using prepared materials)
- Distributing literature
- Hosting church groups in your home
- Assisting with nursery or creche duties
- Organizing social events or activities
- Sending out greeting cards or flowers for the church
- Writing informal letters (to those away from the church)
- Leading church services
- Giving a children's talk
- Preaching at services
- Serving as a steward at services
- Meeting regularly with others to pray
- Counseling those who would like to become Christians
- Helping in a social ministry (e.g. collecting items for the needy)
- Organizing evangelistic rallies and guest services
- Giving financially to mission work
- Organizing special annual events (e.g. Christmas functions)
- Singing:
 - ..Solos
 - ..Duets
 - ..In Groups
 - ..In Choir
- Playing a musical instrument
- (Please state which one _____)
- Helping to run a children's ministry
- Participating in youth work
- Organizing a church retreat or camp
- Visiting contacts at a time which suits you
- at a fixed time
- Catering for church functions
- Serving on a finance committee
- Giving to the Lord's work in the church
- Doing odd repairs to church facilities
- Arranging flowers for services
- for special occasions
- Gardening and landscaping church grounds
- Keeping church facilities tidy
- Doing administrative work (typing, etc.)
- ..On a weekly basis
- ..On special occasions or for annual activities
- Helping produce church bulletins and newsletters
- Operating electronic equipment during services (microphones, tapes)

PLANNING CHART

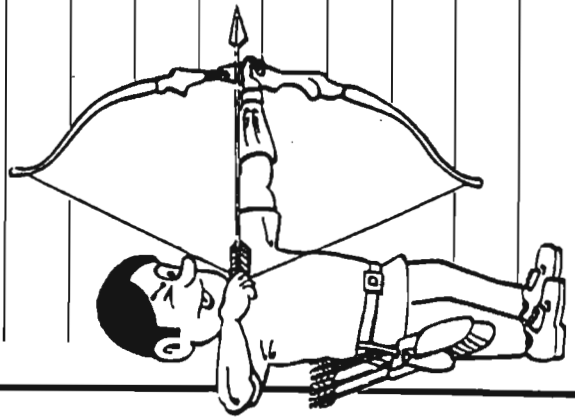
COMMITTEE: _____

PERIOD: _____

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

PLANNED DATES

ESTIMATED COSTS





*Plan your work
 & work your plan*

RESPONSIBILITY CHART FOR A LOCAL CHURCH'S PROGRAMME

Generally speaking God's people want to be a part of a thriving church. This becomes increasingly possible as we Christians become more effectively involved in our churches. The Responsibility Chart which follows has been prepared to help make this practical. Here are some guidelines on how to use it.

1. First, improve the listings so that all ministries and activities of the church are listed in categories.
2. Then delegate major sections or categories to various committees, groups, or individuals, so that they may take responsibility for the areas assigned to them. (See the final page for ideas on the kinds of committees or people who may be appointed to carry these responsibilities.)
3. Once a year ask each committee or group to indicate which of the specific activities listed within their respective areas they are prepared to handle during the year ahead. Then using abbreviations write their names in the right hand column next to those activities they plan to make their responsibility during the year involved. Use dashes (-) to indicate those areas not delegated to any one particular body or person.
4. Finally, include in the right hand column the name of any individual who agrees to serve as a contact person for a particular ministry in the church.

Ultimately a congregation and its leadership are responsible to carry out the various activities of church life. Therefore, they should feel constrained to help carry the load in those areas where committees are unable to do so. Most of all, we need to ask the Lord to provide workers, especially for those ministries which are neglected.

It will be seen that this chart is divided into four major sections. The first three seek both quality and quantity growth in the church, while the fourth seeks organic growth. Because the church is a living organism it has organization to it, but we must not allow this side of things to override the ministry aspects of church life. This means that the activities given in the last section exist, on the whole, for the benefit of the ministries listed in the first three, reminding us that administration is to be the servant of ministry.

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LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRIES

DETAILS	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
<p>1. MINISTRIES WITH CHRISTIANS IN FOCUS (See Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:11-12)</p> <p>a. Teaching (Training) Activities</p> <p>--Annual Bible Conference (linked with camping possibly)</p> <p>--Annual Deeper Life Meetings</p> <p>--Bible Study Programmes</p> <p> ..Bible retreats</p> <p> ..Sunday School</p> <p> *Annual camps *Annual picnic *Purchasing materials and prizes *Visitation</p> <p> ..Instruction-discussion Bible studies</p> <p> *Home Bible studies *Sunday Bible Hour (elective Bible studies) *(Also see Bible Studies under Departments)</p> <p> ..Lecture Bible studies</p> <p> ..Scripture examination programmes</p> <p>--Literature Distribution</p> <p> ..Book table</p> <p> ..Ordering and distributing devotional booklets</p> <p> ..Library activities (including magazine lending)</p> <p> ..Subscription assistance programme</p> <p>--Personal Discipling (one-to-one) Ministries (cf. Youth)</p> <p> ..Discipling through prepared materials</p> <p> ..Follow-up activities (cf. Evangelism and Visitation)</p>	

--Practical Training Programmes

..For Bible teaching

- *Through the Sunday School
- *Through instruction-discussion Bible studies

..For family living
(marriage enrichment, etc.)

..For preaching

..For shepherding ministries
(cf. Shepherding)

..For worship services
(cf. Youth Services)

..For children's and youth ministries

..(Also see Visitation)

--Preparation Activities

..For family dedications and believer's baptisms or christenings and confirmations

..For membership

--Seminars

--Tape Distribution

..Lending Library (including videos)

..Selling of tapes (including music tapes)

--Vacation Bible School

b. Fellowship Activities

--Benevolent Fund
(esp. for needy people in the church)

--Care and Fellowship Groups
(including House Churches)

--Helping Hand Ministries

- ..Giving practical assistance to those facing heavy pressures (shopping, cleaning, repairing, making enquiries, etc.)
- ..Organizing meals (for the aged, bereaved, sick, mothers with new babies, those under pressure)
- ..Helping those who are moving house

--Hospitality Activities

- ..Selecting hosts for church teas and meals
- ..Inviting newcomers to sign Visitor's Book
- ..Promoting visitation within the church family
- ..Organizing rosters and reminders for hosting newcomers

--Inter-Church Activities

- ..Combined services
- ..Pulpit exchanges

--Membership Matters

- ..Formal welcomes
 - *Preparation of Membership Certificates
- ..Maintenance and distribution of membership lists

--Nursery and Crèche Programme

- ..Organizing rosters and reminders for crèche duties

--Social Events

- ..Fun, Food and Fellowship functions
- ..Excursions (e.g. hikes, caravan weekends, etc.)
- ..Picnics
 - *For the Church
 - *(Also see 'Sunday School' under Teaching)

--Sport Activities (e.g. badminton, tennis, etc.)

--Symbolic Expressions of Love

..Organizing corsages for Mother's Day

..Preparing Easter eggs for children and others

..Sending greeting cards, flowers, pot plants, etc.

--Transportation to Church Functions

--Writing Informal Letters
(not to missionaries, but to newcomers and those away from the church)

c. Worship Activities

--Church Services

..Planning details of services

..Children's talks

..Junior Church

..Preaching schedule
(including reminders and thanks to speakers)

..Stewardship duties

*Providing leadership for the stewards

*Organizing rosters and reminders for stewards

--Communion Services

..For the Church

*Preparation of items needed

..For those shut-in

d. Prayer Ministries

- Collecting and Sharing Requests
 - ..Preparing Prayer-Info cards for homes
 - ..Replenishing Share-a-Prayer cards
 - ..Typing prayer bulletins
- Regular Prayer Activities
 - ..At Bible studies
 - *Ladies' or men's Bible studies
 - ..At fellowship groups
 - ..At weekly prayer meetings
 - ..Before services
 - *With the preacher
 - *As a prayer group
 - ..Prayer breakfasts
 - ..Prayer partnerships
- Special Prayer Efforts
 - ..Prayer chains
(cf. Communication Network)
 - ..Prayer days
 - ..Weeks of prayer (from time to time)

e. Shepherding Ministries

(Modeling the Christian life and Christian service are both integral parts of shepherding. The first of these is not covered in this paper. Modeling Christian service, however, is covered by various points listed throughout. Many of these points are of interest to the pastor, but his role essentially involves these activities: **teaching, guarding, serving, organizing and administering**. Some details which need to be listed separately are given below. The first three are expressed usually in public situations, while the rest are expressed most often in personal situations.)

- Preaching
- Instructing or Lecturing from God's Word
- Giving Devotionals
- Offering Study Opportunities (feeding)
- Answering Questions and Warning of Error (guarding)
- Discovering Ways to Help (serving)
- Inviting Participation (organizing)
- Discussing Ministry Involvement (administering)

2. MINISTRIES WITH NON-CHRISTIANS IN FOCUS

a. Witnessing and Evangelistic Thrusts

(sometimes conducted through other depts.)

- Aftercare Activities (immediate follow-up)
- Annual Evangelistic Meetings
 - ..Counseling during after-meetings
- Friendship Evangelism
 - ..Banquets, braais, breakfasts, dinners and home gatherings
- Outdoor Ministries
 - ..Beach evangelism
 - ..Open air meetings (including children's meetings)
- Rallies and Guest Services
- Tract Supplies
- Training of Workers
- Witnessing Activities
- (Also see Visitation)

b. Mission Thrusts

--Annual Missions Weekend or Conference

--Exposure to Missions

..Facts to be presented (curriculum)

..Mission meetings and services

..Mission updates

..Missionary mailings (received)

..Monthly bulletins

..Photo gallery

..Safaries or field trips

..Visual displays
(bulletin boards, overheads, etc.)

--Giving to Mission Ministries

..Banking and bookkeeping

..Distribution guidelines

..Faith Promise programme

..Mailing financial gifts
to workers and ministries

..Special funds and offerings
(e.g. Christmas Fund)

..Support-a-Project programme

*By the church

*By departments (e.g. cake-bakes)

--Hospitality and Housing
for Mission Personnel

--Letter Writing to Missionaries,
Mailing Bulletins, etc.

--Practical Involvement Programmes

..Church planting ministries
(extension work)

' ..Short-term ministries

..Social ministries

- *Centre of Concern, Soup Kitchen, etc.
- *Parcels for the needy

..Work parties and safaries

--Prayer for Mission Ministries

..Requests and thanksgiving
in prayer bulletins

--Preparing Procedures and Policies

--Recruiting workers

..Principles to observe

..Qualifications needed

--Selection of Mission Ministries
and Organizations

..Guidelines for candidates

..Information about missions
and organizations

--Training Programmes
(information, etc.)

3. ACTIVITIES WITH SPECIALISED MINISTRIES IN FOCUS

a. Special Events and Meetings

--Anniversary Service

--Annual Christmas Functions

..Christmas Tree Festival

..Carols by Candlelight Service

...Carol singing (in the community, etc.)

--Annual Easter Services

..Good Friday Service

..Sunrise Service

--Annual Stewardship Service

- Annual Thanksgiving Service
- Annual Watch Night Service
- Baptisms and Dedications
or Christenings and Confirmations
 - ..Assisting baptismal candidates,
caring for gowns, etc.
 - ..Preparation of certificates,
momentos, and programmes
 - ..Preparation of equipment or facilities
- Dramatic Presentations and Concerts
- Film or Video Shows (church-wide)
- Funerals
- Weddings
- (Also see Annual Meetings:
Bible Conferences, Camps, Deeper
Life, Evangelistic, Missions)

b. Music Ministries

- Church Choir
 - ..Auditioning and seeking new members
 - ..Selecting and purchasing new music
- Special Musical Items
- Music for Church Services
 - ..Selecting hymns and songs
to be sung or played
 - ..Informing musicians of hymn numbers, etc.
- Organizing Rosters and Reminders
for Playing Instruments (at
Church Services, Sunday School
and Bible Hour)

c. Departmental Ministries

- Cradle Roll
- Children's Club (up to 9 years)
- Senior Primary Club (10-12 years)
- Junior Youth Fellowship (13-15 years)
- Senior Youth Fellowship (16 and over)
 - ..Annual camp
 - ..Impact meetings (outreach)
 - ..Insight meetings (Bible studies)
 - ..One-on-One ministries
(follow-up and discipling)
 - ..Special projects
(rallies, plays, film-making)
 - ..Socials, excursions and trips
 - ..Youth services
- Young Adults' Fellowship
 - ..Instruction-discussion Bible studies
 - ..Socials, excursions and trips
- Couples' Club
- Ladies' Fellowship
 - ..Bible studies
 - ..Catering
 - *For meals and special occasions
(including showers, weddings, etc.)
 - *For regular tea times
 - +Organizing eats for special occasions
 - +Organizing rosters and
reminders for tea duties
 - ..Monthly meetings
 - *Morning group
 - *Evening group

..Mother-daughter banquets

--Men's Fellowship
(including father-son functions)

--Senior Citizens' Fellowship

..Annual Christmas party

--Single Parents' and Friends' Fellowship

d. Camping Ministries

--Annual Church Camp

--(Also see Departments and
Sunday School Ministries)

e. Counseling Ministries

--Crisis Counseling

--Marriage Preparation

f. Visitation Programmes

--Administrative Matters
(records, maps, phoning)

..Replenishing Acquaintance Cards
(cf. Share-a-Prayer cards)

--Training Programmes

--Visiting Members and Adherents

--Visiting Newcomers and Contacts
(courtesy calling)

..Fixed-schedule visiting

..Flexible-schedule visiting

--Visiting for Outreach and Evangelism

--Visiting for Follow-up

--Visiting Those Requiring a Special Service
(for baptism and dedication
or christening and confirmation
or membership)

--Visiting Those with Special Needs
(the sick, shut-in, bereaved, hurting
or drifting)

--(Also see Sunday School)

g. Historical (Museum) Activities

--Accessions (artifacts and information)

--Hosting Visitors

--Restoration and Improvements
(artifacts, etc.)

--Taking Photographs and
Preparing Church Yearbook

4. ACTIVITIES WITH ORGANIZATION IN FOCUS

a. Directional (Orientational) Activities

--Seeking God's Will on Issues being Faced

--Establishing Doctrinal Positions

..On fundamental issues

..On controversial issues
(cf. Evaluation)

--Clarifying Basic Objectives

b. Planning Activities

--Collating Annual Goals
Established by Committees

--Preparing Agendas

..For congregational meetings

..For Church Council meetings

..For committee meetings (file separately)

..For planning retreats

--Filing Minutes of Meetings

c. Mobilizing Activities

--Recruiting Workers

- ..Discovering interests, gifts, and talents
- ..Publicizing ministry opportunities

--Appointing Honorary (unpaid) Workers

- ..Elders (Pastors)
- ..Church Council members
- ..Committee-related workers
- ..Special non-committee workers

- *Auditors
- *Church Administrator
(sometimes a paid worker)
- *Trustees

--Appointing Paid Pastoral Workers

- ..Elders (Pastors)
- ..Counselors

--Employing Paid Staff Members

- ..Cleaners-Janitors
- ..Gardeners
- ..Office Secretaries

--Establishing New Standing Committees

--Preparing Organizational (Position) Charts

d. Scheduling Activities

--Maintaining a Master Calendar

- Scheduling a Well-Balanced Annual Programme**
(Organizing rosters and giving reminders
is an important part of scheduling.
See details throughout this chart.)

e. Financial Activities for Local Needs
(General Fund Issues)

- Banking and Bookkeeping
 - ..Annual auditing
- Collections (Income)
 - ..Weekly offerings
 - *Counting offerings
 - *Replenishing Sustentation Envelopes
 - ..Special fund raising endeavours (e.g. for buildings, camps or equipment)
- Distributions (Expenditure)
 - ..Budgeting (including salary adjustments)
 - ..Paying of debts

f. Property and Equipment Matters

- Additions to Facilities
- Assisting the Council or Committees in Obtaining Quotes for Projects, Equipment, Furniture, etc.
- Building Maintenance
 - ..Cleaning
 - ..Repairs and minor improvements
- Buying Supplies (for cleaning facilities, for teas)
- Cemetary Arrangements
 - ..Administrative matters
 - *Handling fees
 - *Records and resumés of those buried
 - ..Grave digging
 - ..Improvements to the landscaping, etc.

--Decorating Facilities

- ..Arranging furniture,
pictures, plants, etc.
- ..Guidelines for decorating
on special occasions
- ..Organizing rosters and reminders
for flower duties

--Gardening

- ..Landscaping
(including planting and pruning)
- ..Supervision of workers
 - *Weeding, pruning and cleaning

--Lost and Found Arrangements

--Opening and Locking Facilities

- ..Issuing of keys

--Supervising Seating Arrangements

--Supervising Sports and Games
Equipment

--Supervising the Maintenance
of Church-related Vehicles

--Supervising the Repairing and
Servicing of Church Equipment

--Trustee-related Matters

--Tidying, Removing Unnecessary
Items and Keeping Inventories

--Washing and Ironing of
Tablecloths, Curtains, etc.

g. Administrative Activities

--Developing Responsibility Charts
and Activity Check Lists

--Corresponding on Behalf of the Church

- ..Preparing testimonials

- Duplicating
- Filing Documents,
Important Papers, etc.
 - ..Adapting and developing a filing system
 - ..Removing unnecessary items (annually)
- Keeping Records
(births, deaths, baptisms, etc.)
- Keeping Supplies of Materials
(certificates, booklets, etc.)
- Purchasing Stationery Items
- Organizing the Printing of Materials
- Typing

h. Communication Matters

- Advertising in Newspapers
- Announcements during Sunday Services, etc.
- Art Work
- Bell Ringing
- Bulletins (monthly or weekly)
 - ..Prompt calendar
- Collating Annual Reports
- Communications Network
(cf. Prayer Chains)
- Newsletters
- Notice Boards
- Operating Electronic Equipment
 - ..Microphones
 - ..Overhead projector
 - ..Taping equipment
- Producing Overheads

- Promotional Materials
(brochures introducing the church,
maps, special bulletins, etc.)
- Question-suggestion box
- (Also see Prayer Bulletins and Cards)

i. Evaluation Ministries

- Analysing the Church's Strengths
and Weaknesses
- Giving Advice on the Church's Life
- Helping with Church Discipline
- Organizing the Preparation of
Simple Materials to Explain the
Church's Position on Controversial
Doctrinal Issues
- Requesting Teaching and Preaching
on Important Subjects
- Researching Needs and Preferences
(questionnaires, etc.)

j. Legislative Activities

- Establishing Procedures and Policies
(when necessary)
 - ..Preparing initial drafts
 - ..Ratifying acceptable recommendations
 - ..Collating ratified procedures
and policies
- Amending the Constitution

OFFICIAL WORKERS OFTEN NEEDED IN CHURCHES

1. Church Administrator (possibly called Executive Pastor)
2. Church Chairman (a co-ordinator and motivator)
3. Church Secretary
4. Church Treasurer
5. Church Staff Members
6. Counselors
7. Stewards
8. Trustees
9. Deacons (most of the above may be deacons with portfolios)
10. Elders-Pastors

STANDING COMMITTEES OFTEN NEEDED IN CHURCHES

1. Christian Education Committee (inc. Sunday School leaders)
2. Christian Fellowship Committee
3. Church Camp Committee
4. Evangelism Committee
5. Finance Committee
6. Ladies' Committee
7. Missions Committee
8. Property Committee (May include a Building Committee)
9. Publicity Committee
10. Stewardship Committee
11. Visitation Committee
12. Worship and Music Committee
13. Youth Ministries Committee
14. Church Council (Diaconate, Presbytery, Board or Oversight)

‘ Missionaries, Bible preachers and evangelists are usually guest workers; hence they are not mentioned here.

APPENDIX H (Motivated on Page 329)

A SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION FOR THE
LOCAL CHURCH

CONSTITUTION OF
(Name of Church)

C O N T E N T S

- Article 1. Name
- Article 2. Declaration of Purpose
- Article 3. Statement of Faith
- Article 4. Ordinances
- Article 5. Church Body
- Article 6. Government
- Article 7. Nurturing Programme
- Article 8. Missions Programme
- Article 9. Church General Meetings
- Article 10. Quorum
- Article 11. Finances
- Article 12. Movable and Immovable Property
- Article 13. Trustees
- Article 14. Indemnity
- Article 15. Organizations and Departments
- Article 16. Church Discipline
- Article 17. Affiliation
- Article 18. Dissolution of the Church
- Article 19. Interpretation of the Constitution
- Article 20. Revision of the Constitution

CONSTITUTION FOR (Name of Church)

1. NAME:

Rejoicing that God has called us by his Spirit, we stand together as a corporate body known as (Name of Church), hereafter referred to as 'the church' or 'our church.'

2. DECLARATION OF PURPOSE:

The purpose of our church shall be to glorify God and to make him known along three lines.

2.1 By God's grace we shall seek to pursue and demonstrate biblical purity in our doctrine and living, and biblical unity in our practice (Eph. 4:1-3).

2.2 By God's grace we shall seek to edify fellow Christians in the things of God by way of baptism, teaching, fellowship, worship, prayer, and caring for their temporal needs (Acts 2:41-45).

2.3 By God's grace we shall seek to fulfill the world-wide mission the Lord Jesus Christ has given us as we proclaim the gospel, by way of teaching, preaching, and serving with the view to making disciples and leading them into the fellowship of a local church (Matt. 9:35-38; 28:16-20).

3. STATEMENT OF FAITH:

We declare our adherence to the following crucial doctrines.

3.1 The Bible

We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that its sixty-six books, as originally written, were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error, and that it is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; Jn. 20:31; Ps. 119:105).

3.2 The Triune God

We believe in one God existing in three divine Persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--co-existent, sovereign, eternal, and co-equal in all their attributes and united in all they do (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2).

3.2.1 The Father

We believe in God the Father, the creator, governor and sustainer of the universe, and the initiator of our redemption (Gen. 1:1-2; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 103:19; 136; Dan. 4:34-35; Jn. 3:16).

3.2.2 The Son

We believe in the absolute and essential deity of Jesus Christ, in his eternal existence with the Father in pre-incarnate glory, in his

virgin birth, true humanity, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, triumphant ascension, mediatorial ministry and personal return (Jn. 1:12, 14; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:1-19; Acts 1:9-11).

3.2.3 The Holy Spirit

We believe in the absolute and essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, his illuminating, convicting, regenerating, sanctifying, empowering and comforting work and his abiding presence in the believer whom he constantly points to Christ (2 Cor. 3:17; Jn. 3:5; 15:26; 16:8, 13-14; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:9).

3.3 Satan

We believe that Satan is an evil personality, the originator of sin, the arch-enemy of God, the great deceiver of man, but also is a defeated foe whose destiny is eternal punishment (Gen. 3:1-7; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 20:10).

3.4 Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God, but that he sinned by disobedience, becoming guilty before God and depraved in all areas of his life, thereby incurring physical and spiritual death (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:10-23; 6:23).

3.5 Salvation

We believe that salvation is a free gift of God given by his grace, only to those who exercise repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, being born again by the Holy Spirit, thereby receiving eternal life, and becoming children of God who are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ (Eph. 2:8-9; Jn. 1:12; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:29).

3.6 Christian Living

We believe that all Christians are called to pursue a life of holiness through separation to God, purification from moral evil, and transformation into Christ's likeness by the enabling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; Col. 3:5-10; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:2).

3.7 The Church

We believe that the universal Church includes all who have been regenerated by God as they have responded in repentance and faith to the Lord Jesus, and involves local churches, consisting of believers who exemplify God, edify one another, and evangelize the world by gathering together to be disciplined and by dispersing to minister the gospel to others (Acts 2:41-47; Eph. 4:1-16).

3.8 Ordinances

We believe that the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is a confession of our faith in Christ, and does not convey regenerating grace (Matt. 28:19). The Lord's Supper symbolizes his sacrificial death, and, therefore, is not a provision for sin, nor does it involve any changes in the substance of the bread and wine (Lk. 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

3.9 Missions

We believe that missions is the process whereby God plants and perfects propagating churches amongst the peoples of the world, and that it is our crucial responsibility to promote and participate in evangelizing the lost, discipling believers and establishing new churches worldwide (Matt. 16:18; 28:16-20; Acts 1:8).

3.10 The Future

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ; in the resurrection of the just and unjust; in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed, and in the judgement and conscious, eternal punishment of the unredeemed (1 Thes. 4:16-17; Matt. 5:46; Jn. 5:28-29).

4. ORDINANCES

4.1 Baptism

The pastors or deacons, or anyone authorized by them may administer this ordinance to any believer. It shall be administered upon the request of the believer, and shall take the form of immersion in water, after the pastors or deacons have determined that the believer understands its significance (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 1:13-16; Rom. 6:3-8).

4.2 Communion

The pastors or deacons, or anyone authorized by them may administer this ordinance to all who profess acceptance of Jesus Christ as their own Saviour and Lord. It shall be administered regularly in a spirit of worship involving the two elements, bread and wine, which symbolize the Lord's broken body and shed blood (Lk. 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

5. CHURCH BODY

5.1 Participation in the Church

Those who make up the congregation are encouraged to engage in some definite work in the life of the church so that they grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18), and are marked increasingly by the following activities.

5.1.1 Participants should **study God's Word** regularly and systematically, with others and on their own, in such a way that they understand and

live out its truths in practical terms (2 Tim. 3:14-17).

5.1.2 Participants should **fellowship** with God's people both at church and in one another's homes, so that they share constructively and personally in one another's lives (Acts 2:44-46; Rom. 12:13, 15).

5.1.3 Participants should **worship** the Lord through the regular and special activities of the church, so that their daily living becomes an act of worship (Heb. 10:25).

5.1.4 Participants should **pray** faithfully for the work of God in the church and elsewhere, remembering especially those who come under the influence of the gospel (Eph. 6:18-19).

5.1.5 Participants should **support** the work and witness of the church by giving financially in systematic and sacrificial ways to the Lord as he prospers them (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

5.1.6 Participants should **witness** for Christ and seek to win others to the Lord, recognizing that it is both their special privilege and responsibility to do so (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

5.1.7 Upon their acceptance into the congregation as new members those involved shall **submit a signed copy of a suitable document** which

declares their commitment to the above principles.

5.2 Composition of Membership

5.2.1 Members shall be those believers who covenant together to form the **foundation membership** of the church and signify this by adopting the first official constitution of the church, and by signing a foundation charter.

5.2.2 Members shall be those who give evidence of their **personal salvation** through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have witnessed to this by baptism, subscribe to the terms of this constitution, and have made application on an appropriate form to become members.

5.2.3 Members shall be those who have been accepted by **transfer** to our church from some other church, provided that they comply with the requirements of 6.2.2.

5.3 Classification of Members

5.3.1 Two **categories** of members, comprising local and country members, may be established to facilitate the recognition of a quorum at a Church General Meeting.

5.3.2 **Country members** shall be those who live in areas not readily accessible to the church, and are recognized as such by the Church

Officers. They shall have the same rights and privileges as local members.

5.4 Election of Members

5.4.1 Every **application** for membership of our church shall be submitted to the Church Officers.

5.4.2 The Church Officers shall appoint two members of the church to **interview** the applicant. It shall also be the duty of these members to acquaint the applicant (including those coming on transfer) with the constitution and in particular the Declaration of Church Involvement.

5.4.3 Every application for membership shall be **presented** to a Church General Meeting by the Church Officers, and after the report of the interviewers has been presented, the members present shall vote by ballot on the application for membership. Those voting negatively must identify themselves by signing their ballot paper. Any application which fails to receive an unanimous vote shall be referred to the Church Officers for investigation. If the application is presented to the church again, no person may become a member unless seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members present vote in favour by ballot.

5.4.4. A new member shall be formally **welcomed** into the church at a suitable Sunday worship service.

5.5 Plural Memberships

Applications for plural church memberships may be made to the Church Officers, who, after considering the merits of the case, may make recommendations to the church.

5.6 Removal from Membership

If any member is absent from the services of the church or fails to comply with any of the privileges and obligations of membership for a period of six months without good reason known to the Church Officers, they shall make a thorough enquiry into the matter, and, if possible, include a direct approach to the person involved. In the event of such an enquiry producing no satisfactory result, the name of the member concerned shall be reported to the Church General Meeting for such action as the members present may decide after due consideration.

5.7 Transfer of Membership

Any member in good standing who desires to join another church shall be given a letter of transfer upon application from the church concerned. Where necessary, in order to avoid undesirable delay, transfers or letters of introduction may be sent

forward by the pastors or deacons, who shall report such action at the next meeting of the Church Officers.

6. GOVERNMENT

We acknowledge Jesus Christ as the supreme Head of the Church (Col. 1:18), and undertake to manage our affairs according to biblical teaching and the guidance he gives us. In particular the leadership of the church shall be entrusted to pastors and deacons.

6.1 The Church Officers

6.1.1 The pastors together with the deacons shall **constitute** the Church Officers.

6.1.2 The Church Officers shall be **responsible** for ensuring that the biblical functions of the church are fulfilled, the provisions of this constitution are followed, the decisions of the church are executed, and the activities of the church are co-ordinated. They shall also represent the church in all business transactions and handle such staff appointments as are necessary.

6.1.3 The Senior Pastor, the Church Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall constitute an **executive** which shall act on behalf of the Church Officers if and when necessary. Any action taken shall be reported to the Church Officers at their next meeting.

6.1.4 The Church Officers shall **meet** when necessary, preferably monthly, to carry out their responsibilities, and to hear brief reports from leaders regarding their respective ministries.

6.1.5 A special meeting of the Church Officers may be **called** by the Senior Pastor or the Church Chairman or three of the deacons.

6.2 Pastors

The word 'pastors' shall refer to both full- and part-time officers, and shall be synonymous with the following terms: elder, shepherd, bishop and overseer.

6.2.1 Two **types** of pastors should be appointed: full-time and part-time pastors. Full-time pastors shall be those who invest most of their working hours in pastoral ministries and shall be supported financially by the church. Part-time pastors shall be those who invest a portion of their time in pastoral ministries and generally shall be self-supporting.

6.2.2 All pastors shall be **members** or shall become members of the church.

6.2.3 A man **qualifies** to become a pastor if he complies with the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, is at least twenty-one years of age, and exhibits the ability and

availability to perform pastoral duties in our church.

- 6.2.4 The pastors' **responsibilities** shall involve shepherding the members and regular adherents of the church, and overseeing the affairs of the church. They are to train, protect, serve, organize and administer the church especially by way of teaching, preaching, counseling, visiting, evangelizing, discipling, encouraging and by clearly demonstrating the Christian life.
- 6.2.5 Each pastor shall maintain a meaningful contact with a **specific group** of members and adherents with the view to preparing them for their respective ministries in the church.
- 6.2.6 If necessary, one of the full-time pastors shall be appointed at an Annual or Special General Meeting as the **Senior Pastor** in the church upon the recommendation of the Church Officers who shall nominate one name for this position. The Senior Pastor shall have the right to take the initiative in all the activities of the church, while being careful to share the leadership with the other pastors, and to co-operate with the Church Chairman.
- 6.2.7 The pastors shall ~~meet~~ at their own discretion to deal with their responsibilities.

- 6.2.8 The **number** of pastors shall be determined by the availability of qualified men, and the extent to which the needs of our members and adherents are being met. The Church Officers shall review the situation at least once a year before the Annual General Meeting. The church shall decide when another pastor is needed, normally after hearing the recommendations of the Church Officers.
- 6.2.9 The **nomination** of a man to become a pastor in the church is to be submitted to the Call Committee and may come officially from the Church Officers or in writing from any member who has the right to vote, or from any member on the Call Committee.
- 6.2.10 The **choosing** of a pastor shall be considered in detail by the Call Committee. This committee must ascertain in confidence the suitability of a potential pastor especially by carefully comparing his life with the specific requirements given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and by determining his availability to function as a pastor, particularly if he can only do so on a part-time basis.
- 6.2.11 The **appointment** of a pastor is vested in the membership of the church. It shall take place

when the Call Committee has one name to recommend for each pastoral vacancy. Each recommendation must be approved by seventy-five (75) percent of the Church Officers before it may be taken to an Annual or a Special General Meeting. At such a meeting seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members present must vote in favour before an invitation may be extended to the man in question. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

6.2.12 If the man involved wishes to signify his **acceptance** of the invitation, he is to do so in writing stating his agreement with the constitution, a copy of which shall be given him if necessary.

6.2.13 Pastors shall be **set aside** publicly for their ministry at an appropriate service.

6.2.14 The level of **stipends** paid to pastors is to be such as to enable the recipients and their families to live and participate within the community served by the church with dignity and without hardship. Such stipends are to be reviewed at least annually by the Church Officers.

6.2.15 While the **term of office** for each full-time pastor shall vary, a review of such a pastor's ministry should take place after every five years of his service in the church. This

review should be conducted by both the pastor and the Church Officers at which time both sides may make recommendations regarding their joint ministry in the future.

6.2.16 The **term of office** for a part-time pastor may span four Annual General Meetings. The Church Officers shall review his appointment upon the approach of the fifth Annual General Meeting after his taking office, and if deemed appropriate he may be renominated for a further five-year period. His reappointment shall not become effective unless seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members present at the Annual General Meeting vote in his favour. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

6.2.17 The **termination** of a pastor's ministry in our church should be preceded by a three month's notice in writing by either side, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.

6.2.18 The **suspension** of a pastor's ministry may be brought about because of his default in duty, manner of life or heresy in doctrine. While following 1 Timothy 5:19-20, the Church Officers may effect such a suspension immediately, but their decision shall become final only after a presentation of the evidence to the church, and the favourable

vote of seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members present at an Annual or Special General Meeting. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

6.3 Deacons

6.3.1 To **qualify** as a deacon a person must comply with 1 Timothy 3:8-13, have been a member of the church for at least six months, be twenty-one years of age or older, and be available to serve in this capacity.

6.3.2 Deacons are to **serve** in the context of the church so as to help meet the spiritual and material needs which arise, and to enable the pastors to become more efficient and effective in their ministry.

6.3.3 Normally each deacon shall be **responsible** for fulfilling at least one ministry in the church. However this shall not preclude the appointment of some deacons without a portfolio. The identification of such a ministry or position shall be determined by the church upon the recommendation of the Church Officers, and should include the Church Secretary and Church Treasurer.

6.3.4 The **number** of deacons shall be contingent upon the availability of qualified persons and upon

the number of diaconal ministries or positions identified.

6.3.5 **Nominations** for deacons shall be called for at least three Sundays before any appointment may take place. Any member having the right to vote may submit in writing as many nominations as there are vacancies, provided that every nomination is lodged with the Ministries Committee at least seven days before the Annual or Special General Meeting at which the appointment is to take place. Nominations should be signed by a proposer and seconder, and should state the ministry for which the nominee should stand. The Ministries Committee should make additional nominations to ensure, as far as possible, that there is at least one nomination for each ministry. After having obtained the consent of the nominees, the Ministries Committee is to make public the names of those involved by the Sunday preceding the meeting when the appointments are to be made.

6.3.6 The regular **appointment** of all deacons is vested in the membership of the church, and shall take place at the Annual General Meeting. At such a meeting Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 shall be read, and a description of each diaconal ministry given,

as a solemn reminder of the qualifications required of each deacon. The person receiving the greatest number of votes for a diaconal position shall be appointed providing at least fifty (50) percent of the voting members present vote in favour. In the event that more than two members run for one position, elimination rounds of voting shall take place whereby each name receiving the least number of votes in each round of voting shall be removed from all subsequent lists. All voting shall be by secret ballot. Any complications which may arise shall be dealt with by the Church Officers.

6.3.7 Any **vacancies** for deacons which may arise or be created between Annual General Meetings shall be filled by a Church General Meeting upon the recommendation of the Church Officers.

6.3.8 Deacons shall be **set aside** publicly for their ministry at an appropriate service.

6.3.9 The **term of office** for a deacon shall be from the time of that person's appointment until the next Annual General Meeting, when such a person may become eligible for re-appointment.

6.3.10 The **termination** of a deacon's ministry may be brought about by the Church Officers after

giving the deacon involved and the church a notice to that effect. The church may terminate such a ministry immediately. A deacon who wishes to resign his position should do so by giving a one month's notice in writing to the Church Officers unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.

6.3.11 The **suspension** of a deacon's ministry may be brought about because of his default in duty, manner of life or heresy in doctrine. The Church Officers may effect such a suspension immediately, but their decision shall become final only after the favourable vote of seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members at an Annual or Special General Meeting. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

6.4 The Church Chairman

6.4.1 The Church Chairman is to be **appointed** by the Church Officers from among their number at their first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

6.4.2 His **functions** shall involve presiding at all business meetings of the Church and the Church Officers. If he is not the Senior Pastor, he shall make every effort to work and pray with him, to take the initiative in the affairs of

the church when he is away, or to arrange with others to do so.

6.4.3 His **term of office** shall not exceed five consecutive years. After an interval of one year he shall be eligible for a further term.

6.4.4 He shall have a deliberative, but not a casting **vote**.

6.4.5 In his **absence**, the Church Officers shall appoint a chairman to substitute for him.

6.5 **Committees**

To help them carry out their functions the Church Officers shall appoint whatever committees are necessary, which should include at least the following arrangements.

6.5.1 A **Call Committee** is to be appointed at an Annual or Special General Meeting whenever one or more new pastors are needed. This committee shall comprise at least four Church Officers and four other members from the church. The Church Officers may recommend to the church the names of those from their own number whom they would like to have sit on this committee, and shall decide which of those appointed should be the Chairman.

6.5.2 A **Ministries Committee** shall be a sub-committee of the Church Officers and shall have strong representation from the pastors.

The Church Officers shall appoint its Chairman who shall call regular meetings to encourage and help the members and adherents to find their respective places of service in the church. This committee shall approve all the appointments of the various standing committees, organizations and departments before they may become effective.

6.5.3 **Standing Committees** should be appointed for at least the following areas of ministry: Bible education, benevolent ministries, evangelism, and world missions. If the Chairman of a standing committee is not required to be one of the Church Officers, he or she shall be appointed annually to such a position by the Church Officers. Unless other procedures are ratified by the Church Officers, each Chairman shall work with the Ministries Committee in inviting suitable members and adherents to become members of the Standing Committee involved. Half of those appointed shall retire annually on a rotation basis, but shall be eligible for re-appointment.

7. NURTURING PROGRAMME

7.1 Both men and women who have teaching gifts may be appointed and organized by the Ministries Committee

as they see fit to participate in the ministries of the church.

7.2 As far as possible the Ministries Committee shall take the initiative in introducing new Christians to mature believers who should endeavour to nurture those under their care toward spiritual maturity.

7.3 Whenever doctrinal differences become an issue in the church the pastors or deacons shall endeavour to give the Bible's teaching on the subject, being careful to expose the various aspects involved.

8. MISSIONS PROGRAMME

8.1 The church shall be exposed regularly to the Bible's teaching on evangelism and missions, and to current missionary activity.

8.2 Once a year the church family shall be given the opportunity to indicate in an anonymous manner the amount they would like to give to a missionary fund on a monthly basis for the ensuing year.

8.3 The missionary fund shall be distributed at the discretion of a Missions Committee after receiving the approval of the Church Officers.

8.4 A Missions Committee also shall provide and promote other avenues of missionary involvement in the church

after receiving the approval of the Church Officers to do so.

9. CHURCH GENERAL MEETINGS

9.1 Notice of the Annual General Meeting and Special General Meetings shall be given by mail ten days prior to the meeting and at the services at least on the two Sundays immediately prior to the proposed date of the meeting in question. These notices must contain details of the business to be discussed.

9.2 Any other business meeting may be called by notice given at the services on the one Sunday immediately prior to the proposed date of the meeting in question.

9.3 Through prayer, study and deliberation a consensus should be sought in every matter of church business which shall be decided finally by a majority of the votes cast at a properly called business meeting, unless otherwise stipulated in this constitution, and subject to the following conditions:

9.3.1 If at least ten (10) percent of the members present so request, the voting shall be by secret ballot.

9.3.2 If at least ten (10) percent of the members present so request, any matter brought forward without notice before hand (that is, either by notice of motion or in the announcement of the

meeting) shall be postponed for consideration at a future meeting.

9.3.3 Only bona fide members of the church who are at least eighteen years of age and present at the meeting shall be permitted to vote at a Church General Meeting.

9.3.4 Whenever a person is under consideration at a meeting, that person may be requested to withdraw from the meeting by the Chairman for the duration of the relevant discussion.

9.4 The Annual General Meeting

9.4.1 Each church year shall end on the 30th June, and the Annual General Meeting of members shall be held no later than three months after this date.

9.4.2 Reports on the various activities of the church, its branches and departments shall be given, with audited financial statements for the twelve months ended on the said 30th June.

9.4.3 An auditor or auditors registered under the Auditors and Public Accountants Act shall be appointed at each Annual General Meeting and such auditor or auditors shall not be included amongst the Church Officers.

9.5 Special General Meetings

9.5.1 A Special General Meeting shall be convened by the Church Officers to deal with matters

arising from this constitution, or upon the request of not less than ten (10) percent of the members of the church, provided such a request is submitted in writing to the Church Officers at least seven days before the meeting and clearly states the purpose for which it is desired.

9.5.2 At least one Special General Meeting should be held near the beginning of each calendar year to evaluate past activities and to plan for those of the future.

10. QUORUM

10.1 Fifty (50) percent of the Church Officers present at any of their respective meetings shall constitute a quorum.

10.2 Thirty (30) percent of the voting local membership of the church shall constitute a quorum at all Church General Meetings.

10.3 In the event that a quorum is not present at a Church General Meeting, a subsequent meeting may be called according to the provisions of 9.1 or 9.2, and the members then present shall constitute a quorum.

11. FINANCES

11.1 The church shall be supported by the voluntary giving of tithes and offerings by the members of the church

and congregation, by donations, and by any other means agreed upon by the members at a Church General Meeting, provided such means do not contradict the teaching and spirit of the Bible.

11.2 The Church Officers shall be responsible to give overall leadership to the collecting, safe-keeping and distributing of all monies received, and the keeping of financial records and books for the proper administration of the church.

11.3 Regarding financial transactions the church shall have power to buy, sell, donate, let or hire, exchange, transfer, receive by way of donation or otherwise, movable and immovable property and to invest its funds in Government or Municipal stock, mortgage bonds, or on fixed deposit or otherwise, in Banks, Post Offices, or approved organizations and shall further have power to borrow money with or without security in such manner as the church shall think fit, negotiate loans from Bankers or others by overdraft or otherwise and by passing mortgage and notarial bonds for registration with the proper authorities, and to open and operate upon banking accounts, and to make, draw, accept discount, execute and issue promissory notes, bills of exchange and other negotiable and transferable instruments to guarantee the performance of contracts by any person or duly constituted church having objectives wholly

or partly similar to the objectives of this church and to enter into guarantee or suretyships of every description.

12. MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

12.1 The Church Officers shall have power to acquire or dispose any movable property and any rights or privileges which they may think necessary or convenient for the church's purposes, functions, principles, or objectives, providing they do so in keeping with the teaching and spirit of the Bible, and that all major transactions first receive the approval of the majority of the voting members present at a Church General Meeting.

12.2 All acquisitions of immovable property in any manner shall require the approval of seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members present at an Annual or Special General Meeting.

12.3 Any proposal to sell, donate, exchange, mortgage, hypothecate, or otherwise alienate or encumber any immovable property shall have the prior approval of seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members present at an Annual or Special General Meeting.

12.4 All immovable property shall be registered in the name of (Name of Church).

13. TRUSTEES

13.1 Trustees shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting or when necessary at a Special General Meeting from the members of the church and shall hold office until their successors are appointed at the next Annual General Meeting when they may become eligible for re-appointment.

13.2 The number of trustees shall be determined by the church from time to time.

13.3 The church property, whether movable or immovable and whether already received, purchased, held, hypothecated or mortgaged, shall vest in and be held in trust by the trustees of the church for and on behalf of the church.

13.4 The trustees shall deal with the church property as instructed and authorised by the Church Officers or the church according to the provisions of Articles 12 and 18.3.

14. INDEMNITY

The trustees and all officers of the church shall be fully indemnified against all actions, costs, charges, losses, damages and expenses which they or any of them shall or may incur in the execution of their duties, except such as they shall incur by their own wrongful action done intentionally or by their wilful negligence.

15. ORGANIZATIONS AND DEPARTMENTS

15.1 Each organization and department in the church shall fall under the jurisdiction of the Church Officers.

15.2 Where deemed necessary the Church Officers shall establish by-laws or terms of reference governing the activities of all organizations and departments of the church and shall do so upon the recommendations of the leaders of such organizations and departments.

15.3 All appointments made by the church organizations and departments must be submitted to the Ministries Committee for approval before they may become effective.

15.4 Any of the pastors may sit **ex officio** on any committee of an organization or department in the church, having the right to speak, but not to vote.

16. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

16.1 In the unhappy event of any allegation of unworthy conduct being brought against a member, the Church Officers shall make enquiry into the matter. If they deem it necessary, they may present a report and a recommendation to a Church General Meeting, at which time further action may be determined in a spirit of prayerful consideration.

16.2 In purely personal matters members shall be expected to act in accordance with the Lord's injunction recorded in Matthew 18:15-17.

16.3 The Church Officers shall have discretionary powers in the marriage of a divorcee in the church.

17. AFFILIATION

The church shall be a member of the Evangelical Church in South Africa, provided the application for membership is approved by their Executive, and provided the Executive does not have a harmful influence upon the church.

18. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

18.1 The church may at any time be dissolved by a resolution of a majority of seventy-five (75) percent of the members present and entitled to vote at an Annual or Special General Meeting which has been convened in accordance with Article 9.1, and after three months' notice of motion has been given at a previous Annual or Special General Meeting.

18.2 If upon the dissolution of the church there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the church but shall be given on transfer to the Evangelical Church in South Africa.

18.3 Every member of the church undertakes to contribute to the assets of the church in the event of its being dissolved during the time that such a person is a member, or within one year afterwards, for payment of debts and liabilities of the church contracted before the time at which such a person ceases to be a member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of dissolving the church, and for the adjustment of the rights of contributories amongst themselves, such amount as may be required, not exceeding ten rands (R10,00) in the case of each member.

18.4 The church shall be deemed to have ceased to exist when the dissolution of the church shall have been resolved and all matters relating to such dissolution have been completed and the affairs of the church have been fully wound up by the Church Officers or the trustees, or when the members of the church shall have become totally dispersed.

19. INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

If in any Church General Meeting any doubt shall arise as to the interpretation of any clause of this constitution, the power of deciding the same shall be vested in that meeting.

20. REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

20.1 This constitution may be amended, revised, added to, deleted from at an Annual or Special General Meeting duly convened for the purpose, provided at least a one month's notice of motion, detailing the suggested revisions, has been mailed to all members of the church.

20.2 No change shall be made unless at least seventy-five (75) percent of the voting members present at an Annual or a Special General Meeting vote in favour of the suggested alteration either in its original form or with such amendments as the meeting itself may make. Notwithstanding this, the Declaration of Purpose and the Statement of Faith, given under Articles 2 and 3, may only be amended upon an affirmative vote of ninety (90) percent of the total voting membership of the church. Such voting shall be by secret ballot at an Annual or Special General Meeting, and shall incorporate postal votes.

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