

# **We Can Take The Land**

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## **FORWARD**

We are as astounded as anyone on earth at what we are involved in! There is no claim that we can make to genius. There is certainly no flashy charisma that has been the factor bringing these wonderful congregations to fruition. The best we can say is "what hath God wrought!" (Numbers 23:23)

There are certainly an abundance of books being written concerning the subject of discipleship; and this book will not contain perhaps anything not expressed in some form or another in most of these. Through the burden of one of our number; Ron Simpkins: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us," to put down in written form some of the concepts we teach and practice.

We have been led (stumbled?) into the things we do; and God has been pleased to bless with such dynamic fruitfulness in changed lives and revolutionary fervor. May God be praised and our Lord Jesus Christ be proclaimed throughout the earth as these young fire-brands continue to give themselves to the Holy Spirit for service.

Wayman Mitchell

## **PREFACE**

I clearly remember walking suspiciously into a little white chapel in Flagstaff, Arizona in 1973. A skinny preacher was attempting to lead a rag-tag group of sane and insane through the liturgy that morning. Raised a good Baptist boy, I wasn't impressed. All that I could think of was how soon it would be over so I could get out. Little did I know that I had walked into destiny, and that I would go through all the pain Ron Jones was facing in building a new work. A few short years later I found myself in Payson, Arizona watching the suspicious looks of those who God was sending into that little church. I witnessed a miracle as I praised and challenged and prayed. In spite of all my fears, a few people came, stayed, and were changed.

I would not go through this once, but three times. Each time, repeated in all of its mystery, a church would be born. I often wondered what I was doing wrong; why I had to keep going back to scratch again, but each time the wonder of seeing a church come together reminded me that pioneering is really a great privilege. As I sat in the Colorado Springs conference, listening to Pastor Wayman Mitchell speak, some of the reasons seemed to fall together. I don't claim to be any kind of expert, but as he spoke, I clearly saw that there were things that I had experienced that could help others who were attempting to follow God's call. I spoke with those who had more experience and success than I'd had, and they all agreed that the starting of a church is a miracle.

This book is no attempt to quantify or guide or explain revival. It's a story of experiences that succeed in pioneering a church. The joke of our day is to think we can compartmentalize and computerize the moving of God. Jesus looked for laborers, not statisticians. There are truths, though, that have been hard won, and the key to growth is for these truths to be passed on and accepted. Much of the reason for writing this book was to tell what doesn't work, and hopefully save new pastors some heartache.

Also, this book's purpose is to help the man who attempts to take a church and bring it from birth to the ability to support itself. There is no simple process. Many churches have struggled for years to accomplish this feat. Most of what it takes lies in the realm of the mysterious, and can't be placed in a book.

Ultimately, success or failure lies in the relationship of a man with God, and such intangible forces as the calling of God and the timing of God. There are many basic things, though, and they can be of help to any person attempting to do God's will. Ideas and methods that have proven fruitful are recorded here.

As the Prescott fellowship grows and expands, many will never have the chance to hear some of the classic messages that Brother Mitchell has preached which have helped me so much. Therefore, the idea of putting some of them together in a collection seemed to be a logical step. It's been a tremendous blessing in my life to be friends with some of those who have been most successful in starting churches, and it only made sense to

interview them and allow them a forum to express what they have learned. And so this book came together.

Nothing said here can be of the slightest use unless you have that mysterious quality of calling and fruitfulness already at work in your life. No man can give you that, so I leave that to you and God. I trust that for those who do have it, that some of the thoughts here can stir up the gift within you.

A great debt and a word of appreciation is owed to my wife who has proofed and typed this book, and then gone beyond the duties of marriage to do the art work for the cover. Without Pastor Mitchell's help and direction this book could never have come into being, and we are truly grateful.

I want to thank my three unpaid secretaries also. Cathy Noyes for her typing and Sharon Cowling and Rosalie Styke who labored at proofing and correcting very rough sentence structures. I'm in debt to Joe Weidinger for putting together the interview with Jack, Ron and Harold, and I'm sure he'll never let me forget it.

Some others that joined in late in the process but were a great help were Larry Vogel and Kate Ellis. Thanks needs to be given especially to Grace Chapel in Denver and to all those in the church who helped with work and encouragement in putting the book together.

# Chapter One

## The Pioneer

Before I became a pastor, I was a history teacher. I remember being caught up in the romance of the great pioneers. These men of courage and adventure were glorified above the stature of others. As a child, I cut my teeth on the adventures of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. What a thrill it was when I got my first coon-skin hat and sang with Cousin Melvin, "Davy, Davy Crockett, king of the wild frontier."

In history, much time is spent on the time of beginnings. Columbus, Magellan, De Soto, Drake, the pilgrims, and other discoverers fill us with a sense of adventure. We usually see them, however, through the rose-colored glasses of Walt Disney.

Truth is often filled with a lot more struggle and plain old drudgery than excitement. The reality of the pioneer life dealt more with dirty men who had to fight the elements, fever, savages, and entrenched bureaucracies. It meant lonely nights and the sacrifice of many luxuries. They were not driven by high ideals as much as a compulsion and a personality that didn't seem to fit the world around them. The frontier was less of "Little House on the Prairie," and more of sod huts made out of pieces of earth. Meals were cooked over buffalo chips, and sometimes just bare survival was an effort, but out of it came the greatness of America.

So, too, with God's pioneers. Abraham sacrificed much to found a nation, often giving up palaces to sleep in tents. The prophets seldom fit the mold of the society they lived in, but their restlessness made them into people who God could use. Jesus, the Pioneer of our faith, left the secure path to take the difficult one.

The pioneer has always been called to a rough, challenging, and dangerous adventure. Greatness is built on the backs of those who break ground. Nameless men opened a continent to found the greatest nation on Earth. Benjamin Franklin opened up a world of electricity; Thomas Edison brought us lights; Henry Ford broke ground in industry; and the Wright brothers enabled men to walk trails in the sky. The force of a nation (and

of a movement) lies in its pioneers. These pioneers open trails that others can follow.

The life of the church is not marked in the size of its buildings, but in the thrust of its growth. The early church was an explosion that hit a world locked in a rigid mold. There are not records of large churches or beautiful buildings. Recorded for those three hundred years is the force of a movement, pushing outward at any price. In breaking ground, the original twelve disciples gave their lives to spread the Gospel across every continent of the known world to reach a lost humanity.

The world today may think of Christians as effeminate, hiding behind a barricade of doctrines and chicken salad, but that's not the mark of people God uses. God's people have always been called to take dominion.

Noah makes the astronauts look tame. He prepared the crudest of launch vehicles and went where no man had gone before. Israel was birthed with a mandate to take the land. When Joshua led the nation out, its life was not in the size of its bank account, but in that they set their feet on land God had promised them; it was in the fact that Jericho's walls did fall. Every revival of divine vision was marked by a warrior king who took the land that was there by God's design. And how powerful today is Israel's restoration as a nation that, once again, is out to claim God's land.

Today in the Kingdom of God, this is still true. Jesus spoke of a last-days commission: "The gospel will be taken into all the world, then will the end come." The heroes of the faith were not the denominational leaders, but the Pauls who broke new ground. It should also be that way today.

This shouldn't be a romantic vision. It is a call to sacrifice and work. As I began to talk with those who were God's pioneers, their first responses were filled with memories that brought sarcastic laughs, and stories of hard work and endurance. There was little spoken of the romance that makes fantasies. They spoke of something that, if you survived, was life's greatest challenge. They told me of learning the desperation of prayer. They spoke of the excitement of building a spiritual platform for God to move from. They had the pride of being the father of something that was built on no other man's foundation.

After a few jokes about the difficulty of being a "living sacrifice," they often seemed to look far off and tell of lives that had been changed. They told stories of how their lives were jerked out of the innocence of the "womb" of the mother-church and they were forced to mature; to become men of God. The life of a pioneer is a great call for a person who likes to experience both the good and the bad of life.

This fellowship's story is about the evolution of the early church's spirit in the twentieth century. It tells of the restoration of the dynamics of the New Testament church. God is raising up pioneers again, to take the church through new barriers. He wants us to help open up nations, reestablish gifts of the Spirit, and rediscover the power of releasing men to fulfill their destiny, instead of caging them in some man-made structure. In this revival, there will be many who still do these things. Some principles have come out of this fellowship that can help those who are striving to accomplish that call.

I saw the evolution of the mind of God as I read the story of the birth of the church. When Jesus called the disciples, they had little idea where they were heading. God knew, though, and He walked them into His will. I believe God is doing this again in our day. He is reestablishing the structure and the power of the church. As Peter and the gang sought to serve Christ, they didn't follow some clear-cut agenda, but a spiritual mandate compelled them to move. They tried many things. Some of those, like the early experiment in communal living, were later discarded, but much was kept. The truth was revealed in the process of moving. They knew that Jesus wanted them to go into all the world. He had, by example, shown them the urgency. He took them from city to city, refusing to stay too long in one place because others had not heard the gospel. At first the disciples, like so many who would come later, seemed to ignore the command to reach the world. They confined themselves to Jerusalem, but God had other plans. The Holy Spirit had to overcome human prejudice, lethargy, fear, and inertia. As long as the church was looking for the will of God and was flexible, by vision or persecution, God moved them ever outward.

The force of the New Testament church was its growth. The book of Acts is the record of its expansion. This chronicle tells of Paul the Apostle.

He was a spiritual troublemaker, a denominational headache, and a breaker of rules. More than that, he was a man who was called by God to birth a vision. Paul is the father of all pioneers. He refused to build on other men's work. Others took over the churches that he had started, gaining resources and influence. Paul ended up with only a few men who he worked with. Yet, when we think of the church, we think of Paul. He was truly a rare man because he believed that God could use the small as well as the large. When his ministry was confined to the size of a prison cell, and his witness to the guard chained to him, Paul wrote the letters of encouragement that are now the New Testament.

Acts 19 tells of an explosion that reached out of Ephesus and touched all of Asia. Without any type of media, the church changed the map of the world. Paul had found God's secret. He never invested in real estate, but he invested in men and sent them out to fulfill their destiny. In the annals of the church, the ground breakers have always loomed large.

Names like Judson and Taylor stand out, because they broke the established pattern to win lost souls. Carrie, an English cobbler, burned to take the message to a lost world. The promises are great to the pioneer of the last days. The Reaper will overtake the planter. God will restore what the cankerworm and the caterpillar have eaten. The commission will be fulfilled, but it will be no easier than it was 2000 years ago.

In our day we have many monuments to past revivals. The death of the vitality of the church covers the land marked with self-erected edifices and Doctorate degrees. These things try to mask the dying churches that can no longer break through barriers or the gates of Hell. Jesus warned of those who would be "ever arguing, and yet unable to find truth. " We see the empty shells of Laodicean establishments, and the rising star of the harlot. We also see that God is raising up young men and women who will prophesy and bring out a remnant of people for the risen Lord.

While others are recycling used wine skins, those with faith are building on the vital force of the new birth.

I was feeling God's pressure to get my life right nearly ten years ago. Joe Weidinger and I wandered into a small church called Victory Chapel in



Flagstaff, Arizona. A young man was preaching to almost nobody. He told us that God had sent him there from Prescott, Arizona to build a work. There was something different about Ron Jones that drew us back many times. I remember him saying that if we didn't come he would "preach to the chairs." I believed him. He told us about a tremendous move of God that was happening in a little "cow-town" called Prescott. He promised us that if we signed up, we could be part of it when the same happened in Flagstaff. We knew the fire would fall, and that it would only be a matter of days before the church would be full of worshipping people.

It didn't happen that way. There were still just a handful of us at the end of the year. Hundreds had been saved, but most drifted off.

Later I learned that this is generally the way a church starts. Today there is a powerful work in Flagstaff that has planted churches all over the world, but it started out of struggle and labor.

Jesus, in John 16, told His disciples, "You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you." There is no painless way to give birth. It's hard on the child and on the mother. So, too, with birthing churches.

It was not easy on the Prescott church to start launching churches. The first attempt left a young man, Harold Warner, laying paralyzed in a hospital bed. He had had an automobile accident after he left the first unsuccessful launching. When this happened, the Prescott church was almost torn apart in rebellion. Many people thought Wayman Mitchell had totally missed God and it was time to go back to more traditional forms of church activity. It was only by a violent commitment to what God was saying that they survived that test. Brother Mitchell stood before the congregation in the next Wednesday's service and declared, "For every one the devil attacks, we will send ten more." He called for those who would take Harold and his wife's place. That night a handful of couples came forward to become the first of hundreds who would follow. They had begun to see the seriousness of what God was saying and doing.

Harold soon got out of the hospital and, in a wheelchair, went to Tucson, Arizona. His faith, though, brought no "miracle response," and the first months of his ministry were spent speaking only to his wife and one older Mexican lady.

Slowly at first, more churches began. The first success was in Wickenburg. It started off with a bang and had a group of committed people meeting in an old bar that had been roughly remodeled. When the dust settled, opposition in the city began to arise over the use of gospel rock music and the "offensive practice" of taking the gospel to the streets. Though there was a group of 50 that came together quickly, it would be several years before they could get past that number.

In Flagstaff, we didn't feel like we were part of any great destiny. We were just attempting to reach our city, but in that struggle was the key to God's future plans. Today, those early churches in Tucson, Nogales, Phoenix, Wickenburg and others, too, are all thriving centers of revival. Flagstaff alone has over 16 men in the ministry. The churches they are starting face the same struggle of beginnings.

The church has always been healthiest when its vision was out-ward, and least healthy when its energy was directed only at itself.

When entertainment becomes its goal, it loses its perspective, and that chokes the forces of life that have made it a vibrant influence in the world. The early church heard Jesus' words, and slowly began to reach out. First, from Jerusalem to Samaria to the Jews spread throughout Rome, and then through Paul and Barnabas to a lost Gentile world. They worked together. The Apostles sent a team to help in Samaria when revival broke out. They had no colleges; the Holy Spirit separated men out. When one church had a vision for an area, they sent offerings to men like Paul to help another church get on its feet. They often went as a team to work a city and break ground for the gospel. These simple principles produced great spiritual power. The Apostles did the impossible: they shook cultures, nations, and religious systems.

Since that time, the church has refined its methods. Today there is little that bears resemblance to the simplicity of the early church. We have

streamlined the gospel, developed short-cuts; and that has led to immature fruit which makes it impossible to do the job the church was called to do: of going into the world to preach the Gospel. The gospel is now chained to a system of education that makes sense to the rational human mind, but too often shackles the Holy Spirit. It has become impossible to raise the capital by traditional methods to touch a world of four billion lost souls. God, by His grace, is restoring New Testament simplicity and vitality to His church.

Wayman Mitchell took over a church in Prescott that had just suffered a pastoral failure. For some time God had been pressing him to attempt to bring a church to a greater commitment than the typical Sunday morning crowd. He was not made of the material that would seem to be used to inspire young men. His bright-colored socks, thin ties, Middle-American morality, and commitment to work seemed poorly designed to touch the generation of the early Seventies.

But there was a fire of God and a vision that soon overrode any cultural obstacles. In this fellowship, pastors break all the conventional rules. Okies pastor "Vato Locos," Indians pastor Whites, and Blacks pastor Mexicans. Our churches are "fruit salads" of different people drawn together by God.

As a group of committed people began to join together, Pastor Mitchell had to decide what to do with these aspiring young men. He sent the first few through the traditional route: to Bible college. It only took about six months to see that this was a disaster. They came back with their name extinguished, and the fire of revival banked. In addition to this, several were not the material that fit easily into the educational mold. They were like the ragged crew of cussing, rebellious drop-outs who Jesus used. Thus, out of necessity, a different plan was used. It was a Biblical plan; it was a rebirth of the New Testament pattern. It fulfilled Jesus' words.

*And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Matthew 24:14*

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach*

*all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:18-20*

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15*

*And said unto them, Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:46-47*

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8*

*Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Psalms 2:8*

## **An Interview with Wayman Mitchell**

Pastor Wayman Mitchell has pastored several churches in the past twenty-three years both in and outside of the United States.

His ministry especially began to be set apart by God in 1970 when he took a weak and discouraged church in the small town of Prescott, Arizona. Today the Prescott church is a focal point for a great moving of God. The church has grown to become a vibrant and powerful force in its community, and it has directly mothered forty-six churches. In addition to this by April of 1984 the Prescott church, under Pastor Mitchell's direction, has influenced the starting of 193 churches. These churches have literally reached around the world. There are churches which started with nothing and have grown into vibrant works in Mexico, Canada, Guam, the Phillipines, Japan, Australia, Spain, England, Ireland, Germany and Holland.

Pastor Mitchell has been a great source of encouragement to others who also have a vision to fulfill "the great commission". His ideas have influenced others who are related to Prescott only by links of friendship; men like Mike Neville, in Downey, California, who has seen eight churches started; and Ruben Reyna in Norwalk, California who has seen over twenty-six churches started. What he has to say in the following interview are words that speak to any pastor, but especially those who are involved in the forging out of new works.

**Question:** How did the vision for planting churches get started? Did you have a vision of this before it happened or did you "walk into"it?

**Pastor Mitchell:** It evolved out of the outreach ministry we had started. We saw the need to help churches, but the problem was that the churches we did concerts and outreaches for didn't retain the results we had. We saw the necessity of having churches that were likeminded. As a result of that, we began to see that we needed to plant churches. There was no real church in this area, and there needed to be one. We never had a program, a church growth strategy, or any idea to plant so many churches.

**Question:** What would you emphasize in a book on pioneering?

**Pastor Mitchell:** This is not a methodology. We're not going to get some growth charts and goals and sit down and say, "We're going to have

so many churches. We're going to raise up 'x' amount of laborers, and raise up 'x' amount of money." This is a work of God. It needs to be emphasized that the modern methodology and formula charts that are being imposed upon the church are not biblical at all. You will not find them anywhere in the New Testament.

**Question:** Did you start with basically the same support concepts as are in practice today, or has that also developed over time?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Basically, it has evolved and been refined to where we have definite convictions on how rigid that ought to be.

**Question:** Was the early support more or less?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Basically, early support was as it is right now. The pay scale was adjusted for that period of time. When we sent our first man out, it was at a hundred and a quarter a week. Of course, today you couldn't live on that, but that was kind of a low average wage for Prescott, and they could live on that then.

**Question:** How do you determine what you pay a young man?

**Pastor Mitchell:** It is more or less based on an average wage here in Prescott for a young beginning worker. Our pay scale is probably a little better than that now.

**Question:** What do you tell a young man just before he goes out to start a church? What kind of things would you emphasize?

**Pastor Mitchell:** He needs an understanding that he's not an employee of this church; that we're not employing him. He needs to know he's not doing us any favor by going out and planting a church, but that we are working with a call of God on his life. We are investing in his ministry and giving him the opportunity of a lifetime. We are helping him fulfill his calling.

**Question:** Are there any practical kinds of things that you tell these young men at the beginning that they need to look for?

**Pastor Mitchell:** They shouldn't make any kind of presumptions. The place they are going into is going to be unique. They are going to have to find the mind of God in that city and fulfill it. There is no magic formula.

**Question:** Can just anyone go and start a church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I don't think so. I think, in all of this, we're not dealing with a methodology or a formula. We get an idea that we like some place and we're going to go and start a church. Over-shadowing everything you have to say, "This is a work of God". Unless we're working with God, we're not going to make the grade. I believe there is a divine strategy, a divine plan and a divine sovereignty concerning cities, people, time, methods, and approach. Unless we're able to discover that, and flow with that, we will fail.

**Question:** Can you make a man a preacher?

**Pastor Mitchell:** No! It's a call that comes from God.

**Question:** How would you identify the call?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Well, I'm not sure that it's easy to identify. It's not really a formula. It's something that you feel. People come to me and say, "Do you think I'm called?" This is not for me to say. I don't call people, and if they don't know they're called, I can't convince them that they are or not.

**Question:** Do most men seem to wrestle at some point with their call?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I think all of them wrestle several times with their call. I can tell you when I was called. It was on an Easter Sunday morning, probably in 1955, but I can't prove it. I didn't hear any voices, it was a desire. My wife was at an early morning sunrise service and I was home, praying, before I went to work. As I knelt down, I had such a desire to serve God that I offered my life to God to be a preacher, if He could ever use me. In those days, there wasn't anything like what we are associated with or understand, and there wasn't anybody hardly doing anything. I would say that day was my call. Many discouragements have come, and a voice that says, "Maybe you're not called," but I feel in my heart that I am.

**Question:** Is there a mystery in church planting and ministry?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Absolutely! It is a work of God. Though we work with some basic principles, when all is said and done, it's still a work of God. We look in awe at what has been accomplished through our lives, and those that

we have been involved with. I'm mystified and astounded by the entire thing.

**Question:** How important is pioneering to the fellowship?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Without pioneering, there is no fulfilling of vision. The only way to fulfill the vision of going into all the world is pioneering. Unless that is being done, the local body begins to lose its vision. The vision becomes introverted and becomes growth for growth's sake. Over time it becomes self-defeating. It will become inward, and anything that is self-centered or inward will die.

**Question:** Is pioneering critical to the church and to the life of the church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** It is absolutely essential for new workers to find a place of expression, and to have their vision continue alive and fulfilled. Something that is important in all of human nature is accomplishment, or achievement. Without achievement we stifle and stagnate. There is no purpose for living. Pioneering gives purpose to the Christian life.

**Question:** I've heard you use the term "Numbers, noise and nickels". How does that relate?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Well, this is generally a measuring stick for success. It's taking the methodology of institutionalism — which could be selling Amway, Cadillacs, insurance, or whatever — and imposing it on the church of Jesus Christ. If you do that, you will certainly fail because there is a divine mystery. There is the divine strategy, the supernatural, and it does not work by our schedule. It does not work by our time frame. It does not work by the qualifications we use in the business world.

When I talk about "Numbers, noise and nickels," this is the hype that the world puts out. Much of Christianity has picked it up and has imposed it on the church as a measure of success. There are individuals who have picked up these formulas and techniques from the business world and are putting them together with Christian words. They are building an empire, but it will not stand the test of time because it's not built by God.



**Question:** You have used a term often that seems to be important to our fellowship, "the indigenous church." How does that relate to the objectives for the pioneer church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Indigenous literally means "native", or "from within". It's a principle that is in all of God's creation. From the moment we start to pioneer a work, our aim is to make it self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. This also works back to the mother church. Our entire principle is churches planting churches; not organizations planting churches; not institutions planting churches; not some structure planting churches; but local churches planting churches. We believe the statement in Genesis, "Whose seed is in itself." That principle is in the church, also. A local church has the personnel, the resources, the call, and the responsibility to reproduce itself and plant another seed, which in our terminology is another pioneer church.

**Question:** You have seen a lot of churches begin. As an overview, what would be three things that cause men problems?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Win the victory over money. You have to do that. You're not there for financial or selfish reasons. You are there because of the call of God, and you're paying the price to see that done.

Secondly, you have to have the ability to pick men. The average congregation uses the old Baptist cliché, "Get him in the door and give him a job or a position and he'll stay." That great mistake is made by many people. In fact, when he comes in from another organization and joins to you, you must be very careful about putting him in a position, because generally he has either been thrown out of another church, has caused problems, or has a 'kinky' personality. The ability to pick men is very critical, and if you put people in positions of authority or high exposure, you must be careful.

The third thing deals with your relationships with people. These young pastors make bad mistakes on what their idea of a relationship with people is.

**Question:** What is the mark of most men who do succeed? Are there any character traits or things they do that seem to identify them?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Dedication, relationship, and openness to direction. Do they ask questions? Do they want help? If they're not afraid to call for help or advice, they will generally succeed.

**Question:** If you were starting a new church and you were organizing your day, how would you do it?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I would rise up early. I'd spend some time in private devotions reading scripture. I'd schedule a regular time to pray, even if I had to do it at home, in a building, or on the backside of a hill. If nobody ever joined me for six months, I'd still need to do that. Then I'd need to spend the rest of my morning reading and studying, even if I didn't have to preach a sermon. Just general reading, filling my well and reservoir with information.

**Question:** Is study important for the future?

**Pastor Mitchell:** When I began in Wickenburg, those were days when I didn't have to study. I wasn't even teaching a Bible class. I was ministering three times a week to a very small congregation. The demands of the flow of business and counseling were very negligible, so I had mountains of time on my hands. However, I spent a great deal of the time studying, reading, and researching what I believed. Those are the times when I worked through what I believed and why.

**Question:** Is there a problem with men isolating them-selves from the men over their area and other pastors?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Yes. This is a major problem in a congregation, and it also is a problem in pastors. Isolation and stagnation are things that kill us. We must be in relationships with other people because human beings are cross-pollinated. They are triggered by one another.

**Question:** What do you look for in a city when you send a man out to pioneer?

**Pastor Mitchell:** As a general rule, I'm looking for a place that is growing and one that has a progressive nature. Growing cities have a future to them. New people are moving in who have left their roots. They are establishing new ties, new roots, and a new identity. These are the easiest people to reach. Any city you see that is growing rapidly is a city that you

can easily plant a church in. The people are open and looking. They have left their circle of hardcore friends and relatives.

**Question:** Does the size of the city matter?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I don't think that it is critical. However, the smaller it is the more difficult it becomes. If you go under 12 to 15,000, it's going to be more difficult to establish a church. I would not put a man, unless there were extenuating circumstances, into a church full time in a city of 5,000. There just aren't that many people, and it generally is not a growing and progressive city. Generally, you spend as much money in a smaller city, but you don't get any return.

**Question:** Do you ever force a man to go to a specific city?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Never! Anyone we send out, I ask them where they want to go. However, if you have a man who has never pastored before wanting to go to Africa, you're not going to send him. You don't have to pray about it, you just know that is not the will of God. I'm open to wherever they may feel they want to go. If they have no direction, I'll send them out to look at three or four cities that are open. I let them make their own decision. They can go to anyone of those, or they don't have to go to any of them. I'm open to whatever they say, and I've had men turn down everything I have offered them. I just say, "Fine. No problem." I've even had men who have turned down good works that were established.

**Question:** Are there problems if you force a man to go someplace?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Definitely. When the hard times come, he will always doubt that he went in the will of God. He'll feel that you made him go and it's your fault that he's not making it.

**Question:** How did you know that God wanted you to come to Prescott?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I couldn't prove that God wanted me to come to Prescott. But, I knew the city, it was open, and I was at a point in my life where certain things were happening. I was ready to come, take on a church, and raise my family. Looking back, I know that it was the will of God. He had me ready and guided me in, but at that point I could not prove

that Prescott was where God had called me to. There are very few places people go where there is that divine visitation, where they really know. Out of all the works that we have planted, only with three or four did we have tremendous direction, and a know-ledge beforehand of what was going to be there. One of those was Nogales. I knew that was God. He spoke to me about it. Another was Alamagordo, New Mexico. We aren't running on a 14 cylinder super spiritual program where God gives us angelic visitations and voices about everything we're going to do.

**Question:** What does the wife of a pastor need to develop?

**Pastor Mitchell:** In my conviction and overview, her job is to be a supporter and reinforcer of her husband and what he's called to do. As far as qualities, she needs to be a person who can adjust and be happy with her husband wherever they're living. If she's a high roller and she has high demands, they will never make it in the ministry. Probably one of the most important factors for her is to be able to get along with people. Other qualifications are nil. She doesn't have to be a pianist, a preacher, or a teacher. What she really needs to be is a good wife.

**Question:** You were in some small churches in the early days, weren't you?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Lots of them.

**Question:** From past experience, are there any words of advice that you can give the pastors of small churches?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I was in small churches because I was a small man. Probably the most significant thing was exactly what happened to me. I finally began to see that I was going to have to get the gospel outside those four walls if we were ever going to have any kind of success. And that, more than anything, was the key that moved me into the place where God could do with me what He wanted to do.

**Question:** It seems like, in pioneer churches, a lot of churches get stuck around 30 people. Attendance seems to hang around the high 20's and low 30's. Is there any reason for that?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I would say that generally that is true because that's about all the people the pastor can handle.

**Question:** Is there a difference between a pastor who can pioneer and a pastor who can take over an established church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** There may be, however, I would say that it isn't a critical difference. There are some men who just simply have the kind of personality, vision, and motivation that they don't mind pastoring. I don't mean that it's easy, but there is something about the challenge that they like. There are men like Jack Harris and myself who operate far better in a challenge. As far as my feeling happy, I like to take something that's been destroyed, stifled, or not moving and put it together and heal the people. Then I get them motivated and moving in the right direction. Then I let it go. I would have to say that is a gift. When you talk about pioneering, it's somewhat the same motivation. With some people, the thought of an empty building with no people or music just petrifies them. They have doubts about whether they can operate. That's just their human fear of failure. I have a feeling that almost anyone called to pastor could pioneer a work, though some can do it faster than others. There are undoubtedly people (such as myself, Jack Harris, and Ronnie Jones), who enjoy taking something that has been destroyed, something that has failed, something that is broken, something that the Devil has triumphed in, and turn it into something productive for the Kingdom of God. That attitude has to be a gift from God.

**Question:** Is part of man's fear of pioneering that fear of struggle?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I'm sure it is, but I would say that it's not so much the fear of struggle as just the fear of failure. Behind most human beings is the fear that they are going to fail. Human beings are really just kids in big bodies. Behind all the facade is an awful feeling of incompetence and lack of ability. There are very few people who really feel confident that they can do anything, anywhere, anytime.

**Question:** Have you ever felt like quitting, yourself?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Oh, yeah! As a matter of fact, I did quit one time. I was in Canada and was successful (according to any measure of the world), but I felt totally incompetent and overwhelmed by the inability to

work through the lives of people and bring them into what I felt Christianity was supposed to be. It was frustrating. That's where discouragement comes; it comes from inability to see. It's like Elijah, when he came off the mountaintop and won a tremendous victory. The people said, "The Lord, He is God." The next thing we saw, he was running before Jezebel and hiding under a juniper tree. This is one of the major characteristics of human nature. Whether it's a pastor or regardless of who it is, most people get discouraged and feel like quitting. Whether it's their marriage, their job, where they live, their relationships, their objectives, their projects, whatever it is, human beings are quitters.

**Question:** What kept you going?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I would have to say the call of God and responsibility. I felt that I went into the ministry because that's what God had called me to do. I saw the quackery in the religious world, and said, "You know, Lord, if you can use me, surely I can do as good as that, if not better." That, and the call of God, and the genuine desire to help people kept me going.

**Question:** Are there any things that can help to encourage a pastor when he feels discouraged? It seems that in the process of building something for God, people hit barriers and come against discouragement.

**Pastor Mitchell:** Fellowship will heal a lot of that. A person should just simply circulate with other human beings. Other pastors can help a pastor. One thing that will help a pastor, if he's in the doldrums, is to go out and make a few pastoral calls, talk to people, and begin to wrestle with their problems. Most mental illness happens because people have drawn into themselves and won't circulate with others. Becoming involved with other people's problems and gaining a balance will encourage him. Over and above all of this, it is important for the person to lay hold of the promises of God himself and gain a perspective on what God is wanting to do and what part they play in it. The most important thing is to gain a right relationship and have a perspective on what His call is on your life. That will be uplifting.

**Question:** What would be the essentials in a building? The bare-bone essentials?

Pastor Mitchell: Location, of course, is important. You need to be on a main street where you can be easily located. There have been churches planted where that wasn't so, but I think it's important, if at all feasible.

The second thing that is important is for the zoning to be acceptable. It's becoming a major factor and far more important than it was ten years ago.

The third thing is that the bathroom ought to be well located. Your congregation should be able to get to the bathroom without walking across your platform. In some places, that's not possible. Ronnie Jones in Sierra Vista, started in a Pepsi-Cola stand. The congregation had to walk right past him to get to the bathroom. He survived and had revival, so this isn't absolutely essential.

The fourth thing I would look for is high ceilings and good lighting. You need to have heat, and you need to have some kind of ventilation. When it's summertime, you're going to either have to have a cooling system, or a way to open the windows.

Those are the things I ask about. None of them are overwhelming, and it's probably a composite of all those factors that make a decision. The critical thing to look at is how much remodeling you're going to have to do to acquire these essentials.

**Question:** How important is carpet?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I don't think it's critical. If the sponsoring church can't afford it, fine. If they can afford it, get it.

**Question:** It seems like some pastors take a long time to get their churches open. Does that hurt growth?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I feel it does. Recently we've had some fellows who have gone out, and one of them's still not open. He still won't open for two weeks. I feel that has hurt them, and they lose impetus and momentum.

**Question:** Would it be better to just open anyplace than to wait six months for the ideal building?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Yes. I've told some of them, "If you can't find a building, then rent a hall somewhere and start doing something!"

**Question:** How successful has it been to open in motels, hotels, and such?

**Pastor Mitchell:** In motels, as a general rule, I'd say that a man almost needs to be an experienced pastor. He'll rarely get people to come for a second visit. Generally, people who will come to a motel for a meeting are looking for some kind of charismatic, high-performance ministry. If the man's a pioneer and this is his first church, I'd say that it would be very difficult to open in a motel.

**Question:** How important is it to get outside of the building?

**Pastor Mitchell:** It's critical. It will make or break you. When you say "outside the building," remember that there are many things you can do in a small work. That's going to boil down to having guerilla teams, witnessing on the streets, and making contacts with new people. If the weather's compatible, then it's going to mean showing a film in a park or in an outside building of some kind. It's essential in pioneering work to do this. This is why I hate winter-time, because it limits your ability to do outside work. We go on both colleges here (Yavapi College and Emery Riddle University). This is productive, but we have labored at them for years. There were many years when it wasn't productive, and we had to struggle to even get on campus. But, at least this is something you can do in the wintertime. Those are 'eeders'. We have concerts, films, dramas, musicals, plays in the armory or outside buildings so we can make contact with new people. It's essential that you get outside with some kind of contact in some kind of form. The number of people that come into a church is going to be directly proportional to the number of encounters they have with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether that's from a one-to-one basic (witnessing), or whether that's from a film presentation.

**Question:** I was with you about two years ago, and you mentioned that one of the major problems with young pastors was that they just don't do enough when they open a church. Do you still feel that's problem?



**Pastor Mitchell:** Yes. They can get locked into a film festival, or a concert, or a revival. If the first couple don't click, they give up and say, "That doesn't work here." The problem may have been their advertising, their timing, or their location. It may have been a dozen things, but they give up too easily. It's like a business, or anything else. You have to work at it. In other words, you cannot just hold services on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday, and expect to build a church.

**Question:** So you need a wide variety of activity?

**Pastor Mitchell:** The task of the pastor is to find a forum in that city where he can give expression for the gospel and contact people.

**Question:** When a pastor starts a church and works a job, should he have just as many revivals and movie festivals as a man on full support?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Yes. I think he ought to try to. Of course, if he has two months of revivals, has guerilla teams, concerts, and movies, and he's still unable to get any people into the building, the mother church is going to begin to crank off. They don't want to invest that kind of money until he's discovered how to get people in.

I'll do that. I'll cut a man right off and tell him I'm not paying for any more films. It's not worth my time to get an \$80 film, spend \$50 in advertising, and only have one visitor. When he learns how to get people into the building, we'll try it again.

**Question:** What is a realistic expectation for the size of a church at the end of a year?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I'd say that if the man is running 45-50 people, he is an overwhelming success. There are men who exceed that. We've had men who 'hit the stream', and either through the sovereign visitation of God, or their own outstanding ability as pioneer workers, they have rapidly built a larger number than that. However, I'd say that if a church has 45 people, it's an absolute success.

**Question:** What would you preach about in a new church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I would preach about the basic things: salvation, righteousness, forgiveness. I'd use a simple format that new converts and

simple people could understand. I'd preach basically the same things that I preach now, only I'd revise it to make it palatable to an immature and young congregation. People need to know about love, encouragement, faith, and the simple basics of the gospel.

**Question:** Why are we sending out men working jobs in addition to pastoring churches?

**Pastor Mitchell:** The reason we're doing this is to accelerate our ministry. I have people in my congregation who will never be people I would put on staff, because they don't have the type of personality I can use or I don't want to wait that long for the person to develop. They only develop when they have meaningful activity. One of the keys to discipleship is involvement in a real ministry. There are others down the line who may have good qualifications, but I feel that if we go ahead and put them out, they could be developing while they are supporting themselves with a job.

The second thing is that other churches may put men out just because they wanted to plant churches. They are sincere, and they have the funds to do it, but the problem is that the new pastors have not been involved in actual ministry, so they have not developed. When they go out, they may have wasted thousands of dollars. People are not being reached and they end up having to get a job anyway. At that point they start to learn the basic processes of church planting, building a congregation, personality, and approach. My suggestion to all the fellow-ship was that unless they had an outreach ministry and enough flow (say 150-175 people) to keep someone busy in actual ministry situations (which is generally outreach and follow-up), then they shouldn't waste their money and put a man out and support him full time, even if they have the funds. If we are responsible, we can't continue to do that. We would be wasting money. Although they may have a call of God on their life, they have not developed to the level to justify that kind of expense.

**Question:** When a man arrives in a city, what should be his priorities?

**Pastor Mitchell:** His first priority is to get a job and a place to live. After that's done and he's had a chance to look the city over, then he needs to begin to look for a building. He'll be far more sensitive to where the

building ought to be and to that city, having lived there for two or three months.

**Question:** Are there any special problems when a man's working?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I'm sure that they would feel that their time was absolutely drained. They don't have time to study, they don't have time to do this or do that. In fact, if they don't have any people, there is not that great of a demand anyway, and it's common to feel that it's a hard thing to work a job and build a church. That is hard, but the Kingdom of God is built by work. It's not built by loafers, it's built by workers.

We have one man who was running practically nothing (five or six people), until the hand-writing was on the wall. I told him that if he wasn't running some people by the next conference, I wanted him to come home. Financial realities forced him to go to work.

Immediately, that man's church grew, and he's running 30-35 people. I directly relate it to his job.

**Question:** Do you cut back support on these men working jobs in the same way as those on full support?

**Pastor Mitchell:** No. The support that we primarily cut back is the personal salary of the worker anyway. It isn't the support for revivals, films, or buildings. We're flexible on the building even after a year. In other words, I carry it 90 days at a time. I'll carry it maybe another six months before I really start putting the pressure on him. If he's doing nothing at all, then I want the man to come back and get a job and do something else.

**Question:** When would it be realistic for a man who has got a congregation coming together to drop his job and be a pastor.

**Pastor Mitchell:** I don't think there is any formula for that.

It has to be judged by the individual case. I'd want to know what I felt about the man, what kind of progress he's making, what his attitude is, and how he has come to the point he's at right now. I'd base that decision on the individual person and situation,

**Question:** Can you hurt a man by supporting him too long?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Oh, definitely. I think you can ruin a man by supporting him too long. Money has a way of bringing reality to life, and this is why I advise the men to adhere strictly to the 90 day phase down. Cut it down at 90 days and make them face the facts of life. If at six months they are not showing that they have some tangible people together, you might as well cut them off and tell them to get a job. They're not going to make it in the next six months either.

**Question:** Are there any typical mistakes that young men make with money?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Yes. The problem that burns me up the worst is that they go into pioneer a work, you're sending money to them, and they're making loans out of it. That just burns me up, because they are loaning money that does not belong to them. If they want to loan money, they should loan it out of their own pocket. If they want to give assistance to a needy family, let them give it themselves. A man may loan \$150-\$200 of the church's money, but if they have to give it out of their own pocket, it's usually \$15.

**Question:** Did you ever have any money problems in the ministry?

**Pastor Mitchell:** All my money problems were in not having enough, or having too much and using it irresponsibly.

**Question:** It seems like a lot of churches now are beginning to plant churches that are not directly related to our fellowship. They may hear about what we're doing. Are there any special things that they need to be careful of?

**Pastor Mitchell:** My conviction is that church planting is the natural outflow of discipleship. If you try to start planting churches without having a disciple-ship ministry, you're going to run into all the major problems that Bible schools and institutions run into. What organizations run into is disappointment with people, or disappointment with putting money into a place that's unfruitful. I feel that any church planting ministry needs to be closely allied with a discipleship program. They may put money in people who are desirous and honest-hearted, but they don't really have the qualifications that work out of that mother-daughter church relationship.

In other words, if it's a mother-daughter church, it ought to be based on an indigenous principle out of that church. If it isn't, if they are just going to back a man who may have been a preacher somewhere and he wants to get into the ministry somewhere, there may be relationship problems. There can be misunderstandings and a lack of openness.

**Question:** Is it best, when you plant the first church, to try and keep it close to its mother church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** My feeling is that it's much better to keep it close to the mother church. I wouldn't say that it's impossible; I'm sure that it could be planted in other places, but the thing that really helps is the ability to have guerilla teams, close music program support, and a relationship with the pastor. Facets of operation, where the sponsoring pastor can go and see the actuality of what's happening brings special development that long distance church planting doesn't.

**Question:** Everybody's talking about church planting and church growth. How is what we are doing different than what others are doing?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I'd say the major difference is the discipleship ministry. You'll have to understand one thing; planting a church and keeping it going are two different things. When somebody says, "We've planted 15 churches this year," that doesn't mean that they have 15 churches going, it just means that they have planted 15. Anyone who's ever been into farming knows that to plant and to get a harvest are two different things. Church planting is a popular thing. But, if the Lord tarries another 15 years, you will see many people who got into it because it was high profile, high publicity, and the 'in' thing. These people will be bitterly disappointed 15 years from now. While I'm not against any method or any program, I come out of the institutional world. I know how they operate. Because of the things that we have discovered, I'm totally sold on what we are doing as being the New Testament method.

People like to do what people like to do, and in the church world there are fads that happen, like the Charismatic move. When it was 'in,' everybody cranked on the charismatic thing. Then faith confession was here, and everybody cranked onto that. The Christian world is made of fad

followers, so right now discipleship and church planting have become the 'in' things to do. So many people simply want to crank into what the 'in' thing is, without paying the price, and without going back to basics.

I have a brother who was just here from Australia, where he mothered a church. It caused him considerable disappointment and heartache. Pastors sometimes form wrong opinions about things they thought they tried, because instead they used a formula they got out of a book somewhere.

**Question:** Would the difference in our fellowship be that it's a fathering and not a domination? That there is a releasing principle?

**Pastor Mitchell:** It's absolutely not institutionalism. It comes directly out of a relationship. Of course, that fathering principle is a very profound facet of what we are doing. It's a genuine desire to bring someone to their destiny in the ministry, In a nutshell, discipleship is not a program or a formula, but it is the sincere desire to bring an-other person to the release and the fulfillment of their ministry.

**Question:** Have you had any failures in this?

**Pastor Mitchell:** We've had some failures. (Of course, when you talk about failures, we're talking about them from an earthly viewpoint, and measuring them from our perspective.) But, in the Kingdom of God there is no such thing as a failure, if you're living for God and keeping your heart right. The interesting thing is that three of the failures that I've personally had were here in Prescott. They are back out on the field today, pastoring, and doing very well. Failure, then, is a relative thing. I don't know if those we call failures today will be failures 10 years from now. We say they failed to establish a congregation and support themselves and were brought back. That's the picture we're looking at as a failure. Even if they tried and failed, they are better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all. I would rather have tried and failed than to have sat back being cautious.

**Question:** It seems that when a lot of young pastors get out they are caught by the surprise of how hard it is to start a new church. Is there any reason for that?

**Pastor Mitchell:** They're moving out of a ministry where an audience has been gained for them through another man's ministry. A platform has

been given them that they did not gain, but was flowing out of another man's anointing, another man's ministry. While they may have been given that forum to operate in, they have the mistaken notion that simply because they've been there, it's going to happen automatically for them. However, we have the indigenous principle. Revival flows out of a man, it doesn't flow out of a fire hydrant, an institution, or a building. There's a statement made, "Wheresoever the soles of your feet shall touch, that I've given you for a possession." That's the indigenous principle. Someone has to go and establish dominion in that place, gain revival and establish the Kingdom. Jesus said, "You go into every city; you go and say 'The Kingdom of God has come unto you'." What He was saying was, when you go in there, bring the Kingdom with you and announce to them that the Kingdom came into town when you came in and that you are the focal point for the Kingdom of God.

**Question:** It's pretty obvious what the benefits are of taking an established church that has people who respect the pastor and established finances. What are the benefits to a man in pioneering?

**Pastor Mitchell:** One of the benefits is that it makes him really appreciate people. When a man takes an established work, he often does not appreciate the people he has and takes them for granted. He feels that he ought to have these people, and that he can treat them any way he wants to, and they'll still be there. This becomes very fatal to some pastors. As he begins to abuse, or not appreciate them, he will lose that congregation. It won't happen immediately, if he takes a strong church, but the seeds of that begin to compute out and in a year or two it will become fatal to him.

The second thing that happens is that it works out qualities of character in the man himself. Something that's necessary for all of life in God's creation is the struggle. This brings soundness and wholeness. Struggle is an absolute necessity. Sometimes, a man needs to struggle. There are things in his life that God is trying to work out. God can't bless him with revival, because if He did, the problems would never be corrected. It's the agony, the self-examination, the searching for priorities, and the making of decisions that make the man. That struggle lays the foundation, so that God can lay a ministry in his hands and he will not abuse it.

The worst thing you can do to a child is to give him an inheritance of half a million dollars when he's never worked a day in his life. You've ruined him forever. In the Kingdom of God, the same principle applies. The worst thing God could ever do would be to put revival in the hands of a slob, or a man whose carnal nature is enthroned. If God did, He would ruin him.

**Question:** Are there any habits that men seem to fall into that hurt them?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I'd say the major problem, and it seems to be a recurring problem, deals with prayer. You would think that everyone involved in our fellowship would pray regularly and would be leading their congregation to prayer, when in fact, they're not. I'm astounded to go into some of the smaller, younger churches (they might even have a good outreach ministry), and find they're not praying. A non-praying church will not make it.

**Question:** Do you hold to the 'cushion' doctrine when starting a church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I feel that one of the great mistakes with a young pastor is that when he starts a new work, he will immediately draw in malcontents, misfits, psychos, kinkos and other wandering souls. Some of them may be honestly disheartened and seeking. The pastor has come out of a highly disciplined, highly motivated, clean congregation, and his level of spiritual life is very high. When he goes in and takes that congregation, he wants to, in three weeks, take them to that same level of commitment. He begins to hammer and harangue the wandering souls and ends up driving everyone away before he's been able to win a core to himself. That's probably one of the major mistakes young pastors can make. They try to bring a congregation along too fast.

**Question:** How would you go about getting people committed to a church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** The first thing in getting them committed is to be committed yourself. The people will be no more dedicated than you are. While many pastors preach on commitment, they them-selves are not committed. The real key to Christianity is to set an example. If you want



your congregation to pray, you demonstrate prayer. If you want them to give, you demonstrate giving. If you want them to be faithful to services, you be faithful. If you want them to be witnesses or to be highly visible, you have to be also. The larger the church is, the harder those things become, because of the press of business that comes on you. Any pastor of a larger church cannot let his example totally go, or it will begin to compute back on him. When I'm in town, I'm in the prayer room faithfully. I'm involved anytime we are having a major out-reach that the body is involved in.

Ronnie Jones called me one day and said, "Pastor, these folks are not committed. I can't get these people committed." I said, "Well, Ronnie, one of the problems is that you're not committed. You're not settled in that city. You're just killing time, waiting for the next opportunity to come along, and you're not really there. You're going to have to make those people believe that you are there to stay." That same lack of commitment will compute right back into those people. When you become committed and say, "This is where I'm going to plant my life," those people will do the same thing.

You can't show men a good example by taking two weeks vacation to go fishing, or by splitting off to go to every major football game. You can't take off and then try to get commitment from your church. It won't work if you're on full salary and you go play racquetball two hours every day. Don't expect your people to be committed. They'll not be committed, because they see you. They can't play racquetball during the day, but they can at night. You can't expect them to be committed, except you're committed. There is nothing wrong with a man having a day off. There is nothing wrong with a man having some exercise or a diversion occasionally, but if that becomes a major part of your life, then you will not get committed people.

**Question:** How would you get people to start giving offerings?

**Pastor Mitchell:** When I'm in a service, I try to have something to give. I give offerings to every church I'm in, even in a revival. I'm giving an example to them. When I took six month pledges last Sunday morning, I put my pledge in like every-body else. I put in probably a larger pledge than anybody there, and those kinds of things begin to feed-back in. When an evangelist comes, I don't say, "Well, there are plenty of people here who are going to give." I give to the evangelist. When there is a special offering

taken, I give to the special offering. If there is a person who has a need in the congregation, I respond to that person, not just to the church. I give to them. Even if no one sees that, I think there is an invisible spiritual principle that operates. You can't con God. That principle flows back through the congregation.

For example, I was attending a church when I was in Bible school with an elderly couple. Every Sunday morning they put in an envelope faithful as could be. The wife would brag about how liberal and generous her husband was. Every Sunday morning the husband would put in a \$20 envelope. In those days, \$20 was a lot of money. The only problem was that there wasn't anything in it. The husband was giving nothing. He was conning Momma, but he wasn't conning God.

**Question:** I understand that a man should open a church doing all those things that are foundational, such as praise and giving, but would you have praise in the opening for movies?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I don't know if I would. You can say that this might be compromising or deceptive, but I don't think it is. You don't get a new convert and say, "Here's what the Christian life is: you need to give 10%, you must be totally committed, and you're going to have to die for Jesus." You just don't do that.

It's like catching fish. If you want catfish which aren't very high profile, all you have to do is go get some rotten liver and spit on it with tobacco juice and they'll love it. You won't catch trout that way, though. To catch fish you have to use some wisdom. Jesus said, "Henceforth you shall be fishers of men." A fisherman doesn't just stumble into something. In fishing, what matters is what you do. There are special techniques involved. Whether you're fishing with a schooner, a hook, or a net, there are certain techniques that you have to use to outfox the fish.

Applying that to the Kingdom of God and the principles we need to use, I think that it would be unwise to go into an outreach and crank on a full bore session, especially when it's just you. It would become bizarre and imbalanced. Out of 75 people, maybe 25 are sinners and 50 of them are church people of some kind. You say, "Let's praise the Lord," and you

spend ten minutes praising the Lord. It becomes bizarre and unbalanced, and it leaves a strange feeling, even if you're having a great time. It will make people feel uncomfortable, and they will not come back.

It was in a church in Phoenix, and the pastor was up on the platform. He was on his knees with his head down, and he was like that for probably 15 minutes. He may have been having a great time with God, but it made everybody there feel real odd. It was bizarre. Certainly we need to pray, but that was not the time.

**Question:** In establishing praise, then, it's not how much or how loud, but getting them started that counts?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I would say that it would depend on where you are, how many people you had with you, and what you're doing. If you can get them to start, fine. But, if you try and press it, it's going to be imbalanced. It should always be adjusted to the amount of people you have.

In other words, I'm not going to praise God for 15 minutes if nobody else is. This is the kind of thing that makes or breaks the pastor. Use common sense. If the people are flowing with it, great! Go for it! If they aren't, then it's bizarre and counterproductive.

**Question:** Did you ever have any services where nobody came?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I don't remember a service when nobody was there, mainly because I went into the ministry with a family. We have always had at least a couple of little old ladies or a little old man. I have had services with only 5 or 6 people, but there was always someone. However, at other times it was like nobody was there because the people who came were not functioning.

**Question:** Did you do anything different when there was a smaller crowd than when there was a larger crowd?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I was raised in the generation when Wednesday nights were for prayer meetings. That meant that we came together and had a Bible study for maybe 30 minutes and then said, "Let's pray." Nobody prayed and the attendance on Wednesday in a church running 65-70 on Sunday would be maybe 10 people. It wasn't productive. In thrashing this

around, I began to preach in-stead of having Bible study and I saw the attendance at least triple. I began to discover that people want to be ministered to. If I'd have a good sermon for them, they would come. I had times where It would seem like the service was at half-mast. At times people didn't come. There was a tremendous temptation to say, "I'm going to save this sermon until Sunday, and just wing one tonight."But, the Lord dealt with me and told me. "If you'll be faith ful to deliver what I've given you for those . people, I'll bless you. " Strangely, what happened was that the good ministry they got on Wednesday caused the word to spread and people began to be fed. Wednesday became a prominent part of our ministry. Now Wednesday night service is just as good as Sunday morning or Sunday night.

**Question:** Would one of the keys be to make everything count?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Absolutely. I've functioned when I thought it was a total loss, but I just went ahead and delivered. I'll tell you another little secret. I've started services when it looked like there was practically no one there, and I've been tempted to say, "There's only four people! What's the use of even having services? Why don't we just have a testimony service and go home?" I went ahead and cranked it 'full bore'. Then, right about the time I started to preach, a bunch of people would come in. I would have to say that this was God checking my priorities and consecration. My willingness to go ahead and minister to those people is the thing that built the people up to the point that they wanted to come.

**Question:** When a man opens, he will usually get quite a few religious people to come to the first movies. Often, they come back. Are there any special warnings you have when dealing with these people?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Absolutely do not assault them. Do not make them feel uncomfortable. Don't make any statements about 'religious devils that are binding the service.' Just simply love them, and make them feel absolutely welcome. Even at the worst, none them will ever come again, but they put out a good word about you. That's really important. you will be astounded at how many people they will reach; even though they don't come to your service, they will be a good or bad advertisement for you. We have enough bad advertising without trying.

**Question:** Why do most people come to church?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Loneliness is a major factor in the human personality. People are lonely. They're looking for a friend, someone who cares. Also, people are looking for someone to follow. You can witness any cult, and the key is that people are sheep looking for a shepherd. Whether right or wrong, this is true. It blows our minds that Jim Jones could get anybody to follow him, and yet 918 people followed him into Guyana. Hundreds more today would still defend the man.

What this tells us is that it's natural for human nature to look for someone to follow.

One of the keys to building a congregation is to realize that people are going to follow the pastor. Whether you like this or not, whether you say this is cultism, it's really not; it's just human nature. The Devil exploits this, and people follow into brothels, bars, sports centers, river rafting, and whatever else. They follow people who lead.

To build a church, you have to be able to draw a core of people to yourself. This means that you have to convince them that you know where you're going. Whether you do or don't is immaterial. If a pastor can't convince his people that he knows where he's going, then it doesn't matter whether he does or not. They won't follow him. People are looking for direction. If you can stand up and convince those people you know where you're going, you'll gain a following. A man who can't understand that or cannot draw a group of people to himself will not succeed.

**Question:** Is there a special way to deal with nutty people?

**Pastor Mitchell:** The main thing I'd say is that if you do have to deal with them, do it in a low profile manner. Don't be the heavy dude that makes a public display out of it if at all possible. It's natural for people to love the underdog, and you will be astounded at how many people will recognize, with you, that something needed to be done, but they will be mad at you because they felt that you came down on a guy who was incompetent or whatever. Whatever you do, keep it low profile.

**Question:** What would you call a successful pastor?

**Pastor Mitchell:** You can't measure a pastor by worldly standards. A successful pastor is a man who is doing the will of God. It's that simple. It has nothing to do with the size of his congregation, where he's located, or how much money he's making. It only has to do with whether he's in the will of God or not.

**Question:** Are there any mistakes common to wives of beginning pastors?

**Pastor Mitchell:** I'd say that some of them try to fit into what they feel is expected of them. In other words, they become role players. They cave in to the pressures from other people who think a pastor's wife ought to be this or ought to be that, rather than just simply being themselves. Again, the first priority of a wife is to be the mother and the wife of the family, not the administrator, Sunday School superintendent, song leader, or whatever else.

**Question:** If you were in a city for a while and were having difficulty, what would you do?

**Pastor Mitchell:** The first thing to do would be to lay hold of God. Say, "Lord, this is not my work, this is your work." I'd need to open myself up, ex-pose myself to God, and let God deal with any-thing He desires to deal with. The second thing I'd do would be to begin to pray that God would give me key contacts with people, open doors of opportunity, and make me sensitive enough to recognize them.

The awful thing about ministry is that it does not come in the uniform we expect it to. We can look at a church the size of the Prescott one or the size of the one in Tucson, and we can say, "That's fantastic! Here I am, in a church of 50-85, and when God gives me a ministry like this, I'll be the same way." None of those churches came about that way. They began in embryo form, and somebody simply stepped across a threshold (a very simple little thing actually; God was motivating a pastoral babe or causing a worker to be released), and that developed into the tremendous ministry they now have. We have the mistaken notion that

God's going to say, "Simpkins, this is it!" An angel is going to come down and give you this dynamic outreach method. God's going to ring alarm

bells, sirens are going to go off, and a full blown ministry comes and starts performing, and that's going to bring you the growth. This isn't so at all. There isn't a single thing we have ever ended up in that didn't result from just innocently responding to some kind of need or suggestion by someone. We simply released a person to do something, and it grew into the ministry that it is today.

**Question:** Over lunch one day, I remember you mentioning despising the day of small beginnings. Is this a problem in churches?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Yes it is, because we are in a success-oriented society. The general assumption is that bigness is good, but I have doubts as to whether this is true. When you start to pastor a church and you're already running 500, I seriously doubt you're really meeting the needs of the people who are there. It can be a good church, but think of all the people you're not able to meet the needs of, and of all that's going on that you don't hear about until it's too late. People will have become discouraged. I doubt seriously that a church of 500 is meeting all the needs successfully. That isn't to say that I'm happy with 500; I'd like to be running 5,000 or 10,000. I'd say that 250-350 people is an ideal number. You'll be able to meet the needs of the people, and you'll be in touch with what's happening; you'll be able to minister efficiently. I'm not dogmatic, but I'd just say that, from my perspective and experience, that's how I feel.

What we want is for people to be transformed, not just to be spectators. I doubt seriously that in these big mega-churches people's lives are being transformed.

**Question:** Are there any main problems that come up more frequently than others?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Quite frequently we run into pastors who feel that their people are 'crummy'. They aren't the kind of high quality people the pastor came from. Any new congregation is going to be made up of a wide varlet of people. You have to deal with them and how they are, not how you wish they were. Our business is redemption.

One time a pastor called me and said, "You know, Brother Mitchell, the people I see saved have got terrible problems." That's true, people really do

have bad problems sometimes. Going out from a good, disciplined, high-profile church, new pastors may not find people of the spiritual quality they're used to. A new church has to be brought up to that quality and ministered to. We are in the work of redemption.

Another problem is disorientation. A pastor comes out of a highly disciplined, well-organized and motivated organization, and because he hasn't had to make major decisions before, he may become disoriented. This becomes especially dangerous in a foreign country, where they don't have a reference mark that they can bounce off of. You would be astounded at how much we reference off of other people in life. We don't think we do, but we really do. If you don't think so, get in a cave and try to live for a month. You'll find out. You'll begin to lose all your bearings, and any kind of sense of reality.

Money is always a problem, also. If men would just remember that money is something you have to work for, that it's not a gift, they would solve a lot of their own problems.

Independence and rebellion are things that we all wrestle with constantly. We may get the idea that we don't need people, or that we have to obey the laws of the Kingdom of God.

A hireling attitude is something that is fostered by our generation. It is the attitude that the world owes us something. Pastors may transfer that over to the attitude that the church owes them something, or that their pastor owes them something, or that the Kingdom of God owes them something. In fact, nobody owes them anything. Because of this attitude, they end up ministering not because of a call, a love for people, a love for Christ, or a dedication, but because of what they can get out of it. They don't want to go to a city that's not a 'good' city. They don't want to take a 'crummy' building if that's all that's available. Unless it's a really good building on a really good side of town, they don't want it. They don't want to live in a house that's within their budget. That's a hireling mentality. It's wrong.

When we went to Australia, I could have afforded any kind of house I wanted, but I settled for an old house that had cockroaches and rats. It



wasn't in the slums, but it certainly wasn't what we moved out of. We weren't there to get a nice house, though. We were there, first of all, to build and establish a church. My second consideration was to get my family well located. It was very important for my wife to adjust to that. We turned out the cockroaches, killed the rats, cleaned up the crummy stove, and functioned with it, because it was temporary. We were there eight months. Those are not the critical things in life.

**Question:** Are there any other things a man can supply?

**Pastor Mitchell:** Integrity and an example of a disciplined life are important. I don't get up with rules to follow. It's a lifestyle of discipline that's built into me. Of being open, of being what I am.

Apparently, there are an awful lot of people who are looking for someone they can believe in. They will look past your accent, your bowed legs, your short stature, your ugly face, your bald head; they'll look past all of those things if they can find someone to believe in.

**Question:** I asked my wife last night what the most difficult part of the ministry was. She responded that finding out about people's problems and being continually confronted with them is the hardest thing to deal with.

**Pastor Mitchell:** The problem themselves aren't the major issue, but what gets us are problems we can't solve. We feel hopeless. Here are people who have a problem we can't solve; we simply don't have the answer. Unless God helps them, nothing will be done. We're not into a social club; we're dealing with people who need redemption. They need God. Unless God does something for them, they will have no answer. Generally, they are coming to your church because they've already tried everything else. This is especially true when you get into one of these deep emotional things that you don't have a handle on.

At the last discipleship class, Bill Coolidge said, "What people need more than anything else is time. We need to keep these people coming and keep them saved until God can, within time, work it out." You can't force a stock solution on them! There is deliverance, and that's fine, but not everything in life is a deliverance. Many things take time. Our task is to

keep people coming and keep them saved until God can work their problems out.

***Question:*** What do you look for in a service?

***Pastor Mitchell:*** Our genius mind is not going to change anybody's life. We're not slick. Our words don't have any power to make any impact at all. Our words are totally useless. Unless God does something, nothing will be done. It's not our psychology or word skills that build a church.

Our own words cannot accomplish God's work. Unless God does a miracle, nothing is going to happen. That is why we worship. We establish a divine atmosphere that releases God's ministering presence. I will not go on in a service until I feel that His presence is there. I contend for that.

## **Chapter Two**

# **THE CHURCH**

### **THE MOTHER CHURCH**

In America's space program the heroes sit on top of giant firecrackers ready to be launched into the unknown. The success or failure of that launch lies as much with what has gone before in preparation as with the day of the launch itself. This is true also in the launching of churches. Anyone who has some money can send a person to open a building in a city, but its success or failure will have been determined in the developing of the man as he sat in the congregation in his home church.

The key to birthing a church is in first birthing a man. Church planting in the future will possibly become a catch-word and a popular phrase, but the force of it flows out of the actual birthing of men of vision.

In the miracle of a child's birth, we know that much depends on what is happening in the womb. Unseen to those on the outside, the limitations and abilities of that child are being forged out. This is true with the future pastor. Many a young man is unnoticed sitting in a church, but his future is being determined by those early stages of development in the environment of the church womb. Many a future pastor is genetically scarred by the religious gymnastics of a pseudo-Christian world.

The problem today in Christianity is not that men won't do the will of God, but that they have no example to follow. Paul said, "Imitate me"; Jesus said, "Follow me," and those who did, received a coal off the altar of God. There is much that the church can do to help men fulfill their destiny.

In almost any other fellowship in America, I would have never become a pastor. There would have been no release or challenge to lift me any higher than a Sunday School teacher or a Bible Study leader. Yet, in the

womb of a New Testament church the result is different. I don't believe you can claim the title "New Testament" without a church-planting thrust.

I remember as a young Christian going to the conferences for the developing of workers, and dreading the Friday night service. It was then that they asked those who felt called to preach to stand so the pastors could pray for them. It seemed like everyone but me and two eighty-year-old ladies got up and stood on those nights. I was not highly motivated to go into the ministry. Yet, in the right environment, I was able to develop into someone who God could use.

There is much that the mother church must be responsible for if church planting is to be accomplished with it's full potential and force. You can't just decide one day, "This is a good idea and I think I'll try it." There are some foundations that need to be set forth.

### **Impartation**

Luke 6:40 states, "A disciple when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. "Paul made clear that "What you sow you shall reap." You don't plant watermelons if you want roses. God has made clear from the beginning of time that, "A seed produces after its kind." An effeminate, visionless church cannot turn out New Testament prophets and apostles. The church has streamlined the gospel and begun to mass produce a religious product, but the quality is shoddy and the virtue of heart is missing. One of the key facts of revival is that it's not so much taught as caught. You don't spread a disease that you don't have. Life begets life, and the critical factor is the divine: the mysterious power of a man to pass vision and purpose by the will of God to another man.

I'll never forget, as a young pastor, having Jack Harris come to preach. The meeting was over and we were sitting around the table in the kitchen talking. The conversation was not about football or people, but he was sharing how he was consumed with a vision for a lost world. There was an impartation that a young man could see, feel, and imitate. In Prescott, they didn't just hear about vision, but they saw it and participated in it.

The key to discipleship is not in books or manuals, but in the give and take of men's lives. Impartation calls for the personal touch, and needs honesty and openness; not the usual religious image building. Disciples cannot be mass-produced, but each must be crafted by the interplay of the Holy Spirit, a church, and a leader living in the power of God. I believe that it's God's will that every man should have a living pattern of what an alive church and a real man of God are.

## **Involvement**

The Gospels tell of Jesus sending the disciples forth to actually minister, and of their tremendous joy upon their return. In all of life, experience is the factor that carries the most impact. A car salesman knows that if he can get you to take a ride and smell the unique smell of a new car, the sale is close to completion. Pilot training schools often give a free ride to hook a customer, but the church of Jesus Christ expects you to develop out of an intellectual experience.

One of my greatest disasters in High School was when I tried to rebuild a car engine with no real practical knowledge, and only an "easy-to-read" book. It was easy to read, but impossible to understand, and when I finished, the old "bomb" was still a "bomb."

I know of those who have graduated from Bible school and have never given an altar call or preached a sermon in front of a real church. In the Prescott church, though, those with any kind of desire for ministry soon find themselves with real "hands-on" experience. It's common practice to have the disciples run all the events that take place outside the building. This has often resulted in the young men standing in front of larger crowds than their own pastor does. Subsequently, many things were done less effectively than if Pastor Mitchell had done them himself. It's resulted, however, in what Pastor Jones calls "the taste of blood," that unforgettable feeling of being part of the transformation of a soul which leaves you never quite the same. You must release people to fail. In many churches the pastor feels threatened and won't really allow people an opportunity to minister, and this attitude will stunt the church and the man.

It has been found that in a church of under 150 people it is very difficult to give the actual involvement needed to develop a man to a point where it is productive to put him on full support. In those cases, a church brings the man to a point where he can go into a city and have his outreach and building expenses paid, but he supports his own family by working a job. This is a way of keeping from wasting large sums of money that are thrown away while a man is developing the practical experience of working with people and building a church.

### **Endument**

Acts 9:31 states, "Then had all the churches comfort . . . and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." More than just involvement is important here. There must be an actual, tangible, spiritual dimension. When the disciples went out with nothing, they didn't starve. They had something that they didn't even realize: a touch and favor of God. In a real church there is something tangible which vision and obedience produce and transfer. Moses could take some of the glory that God gave to him and pass it on to Joshua, so that at the River Jordan the water divided for him, just as the Red Sea had for Moses. There are many superstars today who have phenomenal gifts of speaking and believing in operation, but somehow they never touch those who listen with their same fire and ability. Something has been horribly lost in the transference. There is no "quarter portion," let alone a "double portion." One of the greatest testimonies to the vitality of the fellowship is the fact that men go out and succeed, often with greater outward success than their home church.

### **Training**

II Timothy 2:2 tells us, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." In a healthy church there must be an equipping of workers. This doesn't need to happen through some kind of weeknight Bible school, but through God-directed preaching ministry. When a church

switches from preaching the psychological pap of our generation to the straight stuff of the Word of God, a great leap forward will come in the development of workers. The church of our day has somehow divided into the clergy and the laity, giving the impression that most people don't need to be committed or on fire since they are only laymen. In the Arizona fellowship, the purpose is to equip the whole congregation for the work of the ministry. This does not have to be some intense intellectual exercise, but should be first an understanding of setting priorities. The common church of today is not preparing it's people for a cross, but for a trip to Disneyland. No wonder the typical church turns out so few workers when the picture of Christianity is one of baseball games and ice cream eating.

In the training of workers, it is amazing how much time is spent on the needless, or even worse, the counterproductive. Pioneers need a few simple skills, and the winning and keeping of people is foundational to their task. This is much less an exercise in the developing of eggheads with books and papers than the tests of heart and character that come from practical experience. I find it interesting to contemplate what the results of the modern systems of pastoral training would be on the original twelve disciples. I doubt if any but Judas would have passed a Bible college entrance exam. Of course, Paul could have fit in with the spiritual Brahmin, but I'm sure that his work with the Gentiles and new churches would have been delayed while he was studying Hebrew adjectives.

Most men are simple and easily get disoriented in the complexity of goals and motives <sup>of</sup> the modern church. Jesus understood this. In His basic stories and examples, He laid a foundation that proved to be adequate for the early church. From His earliest words to His last, He kept it simple and clear. He talked of the signs of the end and then stated the church's responsibility in a couple of clear goals: "Those that endure to the end shall be saved, " and "Go ye, therefore and teach all nations. " I appreciate the Lord's words to the Disciples in John 15 on the calling of the church. These men had been brought to the razor's edge of development. They had sat under the instruction of the Son of God, yet this is far from a deep theological treatise. "Me vine, you branch," is definitely directed to a simple audience. "Guys," He is saying, "I'm the only possibility of success in this crowd." "If you love me," (I can see them nod their heads, yes, yes) "Then

obey me." There's a message that could help a lot of people today! He looked at the motley assortment of human riff-raff that God had given Him and said, "Now learn to get along, and while you're at it, you'd better bear fruit or it's big trouble." He trained them for a simple, yet difficult task, but made it clear that with Him, they could do it.

## **Sponsorship**

In Acts 13 we're told that the church in Antioch "laid hands on them and sent them out. " Somehow we have lost track today of the vital job each church has of becoming a resource and equipper for the task of world evangelism. The modern day evangelical church has given away much of the source of it's real dignity and meaning. Slowly, all the real functions of importance have been delegated off to headquarters or to para-church structures, and the church is left with little of more importance than the meeting of the ladies' missionary society; not to send out missionaries, God forbid, but to plan the latest garage sale. In many churches the goal is not to multiply and become earth fillers, but to build a tower or some other building in their city and make a great name for themselves.

One of the keys to Paul's phenomenal success is that he received help. This help was not from headquarters, but from the people in the churches whom he had helped. It would seem that, with today's attitudes, many of those who Paul had helped to start would be so busy getting new church camels that they couldn't or wouldn't help in church expansion. Many did help, however, and in the New Testament we read of timely offerings that were invested into new souls. We also read of the sending of men who helped with the work of evangelism and strengthening of the church. This promoted the rapid expansion of the early church.

One of the unique marks of the Prescott church has been its support of the churches it has sent out. The brethren aren't content just to send them out into the cold, but actually help them over the first year, and beyond, in every way they can. This is no small amount of money. It easily reaches twenty to thirty thousand dollars in the United States, and much more abroad. This help does not stop with money, but also includes, if



possible, sending large numbers of people to help the new man out. A man is not sent out to "make it or die." Everything possible is done to make sure that he succeeds. All of this is expensive and time consuming to the mother church, but that's how babies have always been. God's plan was never to build an organization, but a family. The greats of the Bible were not called Presidents, but fathers. This is still the heart that is necessary for successful church planting.

I remember being sent to start a church in Tucson, Arizona where an unexpected opening had come. The church in Flagstaff was heavily expanded already and ill-equipped to take on a heavy new financial burden. I told my pastor, Jack Harris, that we would cut corners if we needed to. I was astounded when he got upset and said, "Simpkins, it's my problem where the money comes from. You just do what's necessary to build a core of people in that city." The miracle of the fellowship is that there are men who want to help others to come into their destiny in God. This is the true mark of faith.

## **Confirmation**

In Acts 15:36, Paul tells Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the

Lord, and see how they do." It goes on to tell us in verse 41, "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." In the church world today, many talk about letting a man be free to find his destiny. What it means is that most men are forgotten about once they go out to pastor, except when it's time to collect tithes from them. Paul had a godly concern for the churches he had had a hand in starting. His desire was not to dominate them, but to help and strengthen them.

A critical activity in the fellowship are the worker conferences. Twice a year the pastors are brought back in to find strengthening and encouragement. These are times when pastors can also bring in workers from their churches, who find tremendous enlargement of vision as they are made a part of something greater than what they see in their home churches. In pastoring and starting churches, one of the most amazing

things to me is how easily I can become disoriented and lose my bearings. When a man is left alone, under demonic assault, he loses the ability to creatively respond to op-position and difficulty. Every six months, as I return to conference for encouragement and uplifting, I'm surprised at just how vital this part of spiritual life is.

One of the deceptions of our day is that it's "fun to learn." This may fool some people, but I spent several years teaching and know the kind of threats and bribes needed to teach the simplest truths. The proof of this lie can be seen by watching somebody learn to drive. Far from big smiles and laughter, terror is written on their face. It's just as big a piece of propaganda to say the "children learn easier than adults." I have two young boys and know as a fact that if I wasn't bigger than they are, and if I didn't use force, few social graces would ever have been learned by them.

It is much the same, I'm afraid, with the building of pastors. Learning means change, and change means stress. This always brings feelings of frustration and defeat. In the building of a church, it's only natural that few men are able to succeed when they are left alone. Most of the success that I have had was built on the continual challenge and support that has come to me from head-ship and conferences. Left to myself, I would take the simple path of giving up.

The church needs to concentrate less on competition and more on fulfilling Christ's heavenly commission. This means that each church becomes not a possession of some pastor, but a resource placed in his hands by God for a period of time to fulfill God's plan and not his own. It's sad that many churches are afraid of each other and talk much about cooperation, but it's the cooperation of thieves who might at any moment walk off with substantial part of another man's congregation. One of the greatest assets in my ministry has been the willingness of men with greater knowledge and experience to come in and help with meetings and discipleship meetings at critical times in the life of the church. How wonderful it is in the times of confusion and doubt to have a pastor tell you, "You're doing fine; we appreciate what's happening."

Our destiny is found out of fellowship. We're only as big as those we join with. As human beings, we seek approval and encouragement. It is vital that a young man find this help and strength in his formative years.

## **Chapter III**

### **The Man**

#### **THE MAN**

In the record of the Word of God, we find that God has set His hand on almost every type of personality; "for there is no respect of persons with God." We can find the melancholy David and the over-optimistic Peter. Thomas wasn't excluded because of his mistrustful nature, nor John the Baptist because of his strange choice of clothes and food. When Jesus chose the twelve disciples, they were from totally different backgrounds. They had a strange assortment of dispositions, but one thing began to mark them all: they were heading toward the same goal. They began to strive to be like Jesus; to become what He had commanded.

The mother church supplies the resources in the starting of a church, but only the man can supply the character. In Biblical lists for picking ministers, by far the major qualification is not the mind, but the character. Following are some of the qualities which set apart those who can stand in the office of pastor.

#### **Steadfastness**

In Titus and in Timothy a list of character traits are given for the choosing of leaders: "Blameless, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, sober, just, holy, temperate. " We could sum these up as "steadfast."

In the 1970's the Jesus People movement broke out. Young people across the nation sprouted up toting backpacks with "Jesus Saves" printed across them. Vans were everywhere with multicolor designs, driven by self-proclaimed evangelists and prophets. Prescott, Arizona was not isolated from this. A beautiful mountain town on the major trade routes of the hippie culture, Prescott attracted many of these wandering wayfarers for the Lord. There they found the touch of revival. The Prescott young people

were playing gospel rock and witnessing with fervor. They found something else, too. These people were working jobs. Many future prophets were surprised to find that Pastor Mitchell expected them to rise before noon and actually be part of the human race, thus supplying for the needs of their families. Many moved on, but to a few this became their making.

I remember sitting with Pastor Mitchell in early 1983 and discussing the character formation of men. He began to share that the primary shaper of the men who are now successful pastors was not goof-off time, but the pressure of work and a church with a schedule that kept them active almost every day of the week. He shared that it wasn't by accident that in the Bible, when a man was called by God, it was almost always from a job.

Much can be seen about who a man is by his relationship to work. Can he keep a job? Does he stay with the same job, or does he get bored easily and jump from place to place? One good judge of character is how a man works his job. The New Testament requires a man to have "a good report from those without, " and that he "supply for the needs of his own household. " It's an obvious truth, often overlooked, that a man who can't work hard on a job, can't work hard as a pastor. Jesus said, "Follow me." He took no excuses; He wanted those who were dependable. One of the easiest things in life to find is an excuse. They sound so good as they roll off our tongues; they fit so reasonably into our view of things, but they do little good in reaching a lost world. The plat-form of an effective church is always a faithful people who can be counted on. It is only reasonable that this would also be what God would need to work with in a man.

In our day many have never been required to stay at a task to learn patience and dependability. We live in a disposable age; in a day of broken relationships. But God still says, "Let your yea be yea." This is not something that can be taught. It can only be tested. As you watch a man in his home, on the job, and in ministry situations, you find out if he has developed real stability. In I Timothy, as Paul talked of appointing pastors, he said, "And let these first be proved. This is still vital to the work of God.

This is especially important in the last days. It's not without reason that so many scriptures warn of the selfishness and fluctuations of the last days: warn of those "tossed about by every wind of doctrine." In an unstable

world, most people are looking for a man who can give them an anchor: one who can exhibit a hope for their life. Though Peter started out as a man of fluctuating passions and emotions, in the test of the cross he saw that God needed more than words, and something in him changed. In the fulfillment of Christ's words, he became a rock.

### **Financial Responsibility**

I Peter 5:2 states, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." Paul tells us that the pastor should be "blameless as the steward of God." Paul, the primary example of the pioneer pastor, showed great restraint in finances. He functioned well with much and with little. He was careful not to allow money to become a stumbling block. He could work a job if he needed to. He also could mobilize a team to effectively reach a city. This ability wouldn't have been learned on the mission field, but in the real world of work and budgets.

The Kingdom functions on money and it's critical that the man of God be wise in this area. Much is learned about a man by watching the way he handles his financial responsibilities.

Inside every man there is a little boy with an almost insatiable desire for games. It is easy to talk about vision, but it is another thing to begin to develop the stability of character that allows us to become a servant. Life is often filled with costless words. During my wild-eyed, liberal days in college, I remember complaining bitterly about the oppression of the poor and the horrible reality of starvation, but I never seemed to be able to find even five spare dollars to help out the needy. I really hoped that the government would do something about it, but I lived only by the institution of "M and D welfare" (Mom and Dad).

Sadly, many young men can only function on words and bail-outs. The maturity of our beliefs is marked by our actual ability to make the hard choices that allow us to live them out. Young men ache to win a lost world, but they are never able to get far enough ahead to help out in the task.

Many good men lack ability in this area. Financial irresponsibility will lead to great problems in a young church, and if it's not brought under control, can also do tremendous harm to the mother church. It is not without reason that Jesus put so much emphasis on man and his money. The list of spiritual greats was whittled down on the testing ground of mammon. Names like Achan, Baalam, Lot, Solomon, and Judas are ranked with traitors because of filthy lucre.

It is a spiritual law that if a man can't handle a small responsibility, he won't do better given larger responsibility. If a man can't handle his own finances, he won't do any better handling the church's. Character is depicted in the difficult choices of raising a family and paying bills. A man who stays out of debt in his personal finances will most likely not surprise his pastor with several thousand dollars worth of unpaid bills. The man who can't deny himself the latest toy will undoubtedly go on wild spending binges in moments of desperation in a beginning work, and later wonder what possessed him to rent the Astrodome to show "Ben Hur" on New Year's. Although it is commendable that they feel badly about it later, it would be better still if they would exhibit simple discipline in the first place.

Much of the testimony of a church in a community is established by its record in meeting its financial obligations. It's much easier to win the battle of finances on a job than to try and learn in the complex pressures of a struggling work. A man who can live within his means at home will show discretion when he is sent out, but "a fool and his money are soon parted," even if it isn't his money, but the hard-earned tithes of his mother church.

## **Communication**

II Timothy 2:15 tells us, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Paul is a great picture of this truth. In the book of Acts we find time and time again the simple fact that Paul, by "arguing persuasively, debating, or reasoning," confounded his enemies and caused many to respond to the revelation of Christ. While Paul made no effort to impress men with his learning, he did something which is much more difficult: he presented the

truth of Christ simply and in a way that could be understood. When looking for a pastor, the simple but succinct mark that Paul gave, "Apt to teach," is still the guide.

The ministry is a job of words. This is not an easy requirement in an illiterate television age. Most young men today, instead of bringing their minds to a razor's edge of communicative skills, have lobotomized their brains with drugs and booze. One of their longest sentences before they were saved was often "Ah, far out." Some effort must be invested if they are to become God's priest, bringing divine truth to men. This doesn't mean that a pastor should become a reincarnation of Charles Spurgeon, but he must be able to communicate divine truth.

I clearly remember the first time I came into Victory Chapel in Flagstaff, Arizona. Though I didn't like or understand much of what was going on, something gripped me about the way Ron Jones spoke. There are many good men who love God and have excellent organizational skills and personal discipline which may even put their pastor to shame, but if they can't speak, they can't preach.

In the book of Matthew, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations. "This is a call to communication. It's more than just a carnally learned task. It involves a spiritual quality referred to as anointing. Many great preachers of the past were brutalizers of the king's English, and still caused heaven to come alive and Christ to be lifted up. Many of the better speakers in our fellowship started out with stammering lips and an ability to make simple truths of scripture seem as clear as mud. The Good News must remain good, and the light of the gospel must come off our lips with at least some of the shine still coming through. Paul understood that this happened by a miracle and prayed in Ephesians 6:10, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, as I ought to speak. "To those God uses, this ability to communicate is a required skill, and a divine endowment.

## **Fruitfulness**



In John 15:8 Jesus told his disciples, "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." In our day there can be too much emphasis put on numbers and who has the biggest, the fastest, the shiniest, and the most talented. Yet there is a simple reality: a pastor is called to help people. In a new church you have to get people through the door in order to help them. In the typical church organization, there is a handful of denominationally branded folk who justify the existence of the church and allow the pastor, if he can survive, to climb the institutional ladder. But in a pioneer church this is not the case. The only semi-permanent humanage is what a pastor brings with him, and the female part of the audience, his wife, is usually ready to bolt for the old home church and friends at the slightest chance. This leaves as a high priority an obvious, but often neglected gift; the ability to win people.

It's easy, in the excitement of a large church, to forget that the life has to come from somewhere. There are many people who can extend a pastor's ministry and cause a church to grow and expand.

These people may not actually be fruitful themselves, but only able to extend the blessing of another person's ministry. A person can often find a useful place and be a great help and still be unable to influence others except by the process of delegation. D.L. Moody said, "You don't take live chicks and place them under a dead hen."

If a man is unable, in the womb of his home church, to lead and to help, then it will only destroy him to send him out to a task he's unprepared for. It's amazing how many people think they would like to pastor even though they don't really like people very much. Even a dog knows who likes him and who doesn't; people can easily tell who has a real interest in their lives. There are a few men who can't get excited about the idea of standing in front of a crowd of people and telling them what they think. In reality though, a new work is not nearly so romantic. Pioneering requires less of bringing masterly discourses on the risen Christ, and more of trying to somehow get these foul-mouthed, selfish people to just come to the church and listen. It's often a real surprise to find out just how much work it takes to make an "ain't" into a "saint." It ultimately comes down to a miracle of God's grace.

Fruitfulness involves certain mysteries of God, heart, and calling. Paul had the ability to go into a city and, out of nothing, cause people to be drawn together and to stand, even in opposition. In the Book of Acts, we can read of Cornelius who, when he decided to get saved, had such influence that he drew all his friends and relatives with him. It is this kind of man who will do well when sponsored.

What a sobering experience it is to open for that first regular service and to stand out on the front porch of the church smiling at all the people driving by, hoping to coax one to stop. The first one or two suspiciously come walking in and you can read in their eyes that "when will everybody show up?" look. You don't have the heart to tell them that they are everybody. What a joke it can be to call on a visitor to open in prayer; to sing your first solo while your wife tries to play the organ for the first time and the congregation watches bewildered, since they've never heard the song before. Then to top all the indignities off, you send your three-year-old down to collect the offering. But it is a miracle when God speaks and a few of those very people come up and tell you how great it was. You know it wasn't the choir, the preaching, or the beautiful building, because there are none; but it was the hand of God honoring the faith of a man that He has called.

David was a king because he drew a rag-tag, committed group of rejects to him, and influenced them to become mighty men. Gideon could be used because he could get men to believe in his vision and attempt the impossible for God. Joseph couldn't be held down, but in any situation he rose to the top because of God's blessing. Peter's leadership wasn't sealed until Pentecost when 3,000 responded. A man called by God will be marked by his ability to cause others to find God and stay with God.

Fruitfulness is something that can be seen in a man's life by the influence he has on the people around him. It's a mystery how some men can seem to do everything exactly right; they have all the talents, abilities, and appearance that should influence men, yet they never catch fire. Then again there will be somebody who does everything wrong yet people flock to him. I know men who could show King Kong and get people saved. It's a gift and favor of God.

I think of a revival that Greg Johnson had with Johnny Metzler in Yuma, Arizona. As Johnny was preaching, two demon bred monster bugs, made mean by the desert sun, came flying in to join the service. It became impossible to preach while these two angels of hell kamakazied the audience. Johnny made a suggestion, "Turn out all the lights and pull a car up with it's lights shining in the front door. Then the bugs will see the lights and fly outside." While the church sang in the dark, two marines walked by and were captivated by the sight of this car shining lights into a dark building with people singing. They slipped in the back to see what was going on. All of a sudden, the lights came back and Metzler picked up where he left off like nothing had happened. The men were trapped, but had no idea how trapped they were because both got saved. Now that's fruitfulness that overcomes every obstacle. There is a mystery to the increase of God.

### **The Wife**

It would be expected that the Apostle Paul, in picking aspiring men of God, would set them down to a multiple choice quiz, or maybe have them write an essay on the problems of cross-cultural evangelism in an urbanized society. Paul was too wise for this and he simply lays it out, "look at their home: Husband of one wife, having faithful children." He writes to Timothy and says, "one who rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" This must have struck the

loose-living Romans, the unclean Greeks, and the religious Jews (who by just speaking a word could be divorced) as hard as it hits our lightly committed age.

The Bible puts a strong obligation on the man when it labels him the head of the house, or the housebond. This indicates that he is the cornerstone of the family. A husband can bring healing to a troubled home or cause the most patient of women to go insane. The responsibility lies with him. Many of those problems that he sees in his wife, and often feels are holding him back from serving God, are in reality a reflection of an area of

need in her life that he's not meeting. The wife becomes a mirror of that man's weakness and strength in meeting people's needs. When the wife and home are happy, then there is a good indication that he'll have the sensitivity to work with others' needs and hurts. If his family looks like a dramatic portrayal of the Vietnam War, then hesitation is indicated before sending him out.

All people need support to function at their best. In the environment of the home church, a family can function adequately and still not be extremely stable. Both the husband and the wife have other friends and places of support to turn to. When they go out to start a church, this will not be true. Their major support will be their own friendship and support for one another. It is not required that a wife be anything more than someone who loves her husband and takes care of her family, but this role is critical. Many girls are afraid of becoming pastors' wives, thinking that it requires some special kind of personality. The weight of the church was never meant to lie on them, but on the husband. They create a refuge from the pressures of ministry and speak needed words of encouragement. A couple who stand together become a powerful source of spiritual dominion..

Though the wife is not the source of ministry, she cannot escape all responsibility in a beginning work. It's important to consider several factors when evaluating a couple. In a small, beginning work the wife will become a pattern to others. This means that she should be submitted to her husband. It does little to inspire devotion in a beginning work when the number one critic is not the devil but the misses. Job's wife was little help with her "curse-God and-die" attitude. Samson's helpmate, Delilah, may have looked good and been fun to talk to but her commitment to Samson's ministry and future was not exactly poetic. The Bible says, "the two shall be one," and this means that unless they both have a good attitude, a schizophrenic situation will reign in the church.

It's important that the wife also has a feeling for the ministry since she will have to face some added responsibilities and possible sacrifices in the early stages of a work. Though a wife doesn't need to be a sparkling conversationalist, or a back-up preacher, the job does require a certain

amount of daily contact with people and she should be able to relate well to people. There will be a certain amount of intrusion upon the home, and she should be able to handle that. Mostly what is needed is a good attitude. A good wife saved Abraham's destiny in a time of his own foolishness, and I'm sure that Rachel did much to cause an old schemer like Jacob to become an "Israel." Peter's wife put up with much to live with the king of "foot in mouth." No one is perfect, and we all learn as we face life's difficult situations. In these situations, one of the greatest assets a man can have is his wife.

### **Self-Motivation**

In I Corinthians 16 Paul concludes by telling them, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong ... I beseech you, brethren, (Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints), That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." Here are people who didn't have to be pushed, but were motivated by God. All through the Bible when God moved, His main desire was for a man who would do something. Even Jacob, who showed less than sterling character in his deception of his blind father, did show a desire for the things of God, and a certain misguided but effective creativity.

Most good men will do what you tell them. It's hard, however, to tell a man in another city what to do. In the work of God there is a critical need for the ability to find things to do. Jonathan climbed a mountain and David killed a giant while everyone else sat around wondering what to do next.

If God is speaking to a man, He can speak to him about ways to extend the outreach of the mother church. In the Prescott church there have been some creative approaches to outreach. Jack Conley had a free car wash and saw people come through by the droves. Each driver had a chance to have their soul washed along with their auto. Joe Callaway used native talents in his Bible study and had everyone bake pies. He then invited people to come and eat for free. Large numbers of people came out and, best of all, several got saved. It's hard for me to see Paul in Athens holding

a bowl of chicken soup and coaxing sinners to get saved. Then, again, if it worked he may have tried it. While these methods may not be the traditional approach, they do mark a heart that has a desire to do something. Anybody can think of something to do when they have a few hundred dollars in the bank, but many a good man is stumped when the bank account is in the red and the obvious isn't possible.

Many people would like to do something for God, if someone would just tell them what to do. A delegated vision, however, is nearly as bad as no vision at all. It will never stand the assault of the enemy. Just being a committed Christian is all most people can handle, but there are a few who are driven to reach out: to try something. These will be marked by their ability to find new places to minister, and the willingness to do the often difficult leg work of setting it up. Many people are looking for a place to minister, but their pride or laziness keeps them from finding their place of expression. When God has his hand on a man he shouldn't require constant pumping up. He should be able to keep himself pumped up.

Jesus made an interesting observation on the Kingdom of God in Luke 5. Here he's talking about new wine and it's explosive characteristics. He goes on to say, "No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith the old is better." In speaking of what God was doing through him, he knew the church wasn't refined, but like raw, rot-guy whiskey was unpredictable and likely to be like a jolt from a shotgun. Those early disciples had all the makings of an explosion which could not be contained in the old wine skins of religion. Later followers refined and smoothed out the rough edges, but lost most of the punch. The mark of God's fresh moving is not finesse, but Sons of Thunder trying to shove a square peg into the round hole of an unresponsive world, and succeeding. In the work of the Kingdom, we find that a pastor is called to accomplish something that would not happen if he were not there. The world left to itself, like a magnet pointing north, makes a beeline toward hell. The purpose of a man of God is to change this tendency, first in his life, and then in the lives of those around him. This calls for a divine spark of creativity and perseverance.

Many are afraid to try anything new because of their fear of failure. We will make mistakes, of course, but God is bigger than our failures. Some

of my best fighting against the devil has been when I, like a Rocky Balboa, have nearly destroyed the devil's fists with my face. What God wants is a man who's willing to do something.

Parrots make interesting pets, but poor conversationalists. Once you have said, "Hi," and they have said, "Hi," back you're pretty well through. It's the same with those who claim to have a call, but can go no further than what they are told to do. Men of this kind can be of great value within the home church, but have little hope to see God's mind in the midst of the forging out of a beginning work.

### **Ability to Take Discipline**

Ephesians 6:6 speaks to the future man of God when it says, "Not with eye-service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. " The Bible is full of the heartbreak of betrayal. How crushing must it have been to Moses when Korah rose up and had to be judged! A vision requires that men be linked together. The largest church in the world is in-significant in terms of a world that is lost. Our full destiny can never be found alone, yet something about our fallen nature makes it hard to be loyal when that is necessary to do the job that God has given us. Since the time that God delegated responsibility to Adam in the garden and he betrayed that trust, men have found themselves turning from their responsibilities to their own self-destruction. The nature of ministry is such that men will make mistakes, but what will make them or break them is when those failures are brought to light. How embarrassing it must have been to Gehazi to be sent to lay a rod on the dead boy only to find that somehow it didn't work for him. His pride must have been hurt when his pastor, Elisha, had to straighten out the mess. Saul was humiliated when Samuel brought him to task in front of Israel, and was less concerned with his violation of God than his own reputation. In these moments our true relationship to God and his men are established.

Today we have a limp-wristed, meek and effeminate picture of Christ as the sugar daddy who came to make everybody happy. However, the most surface reading of scripture begins to reveal someone who was not

hesitant to bring correction. Some of His denunciations must have fallen like the blow of a club on those whom He addressed. We can read of two basic responses. The religious and the proud, though guilty, were full of hate when they saw they were to be exposed. The other group, the disciples, who were probably no less embarrassed, took what they had coming and kept going.

The question is not whether we deserve correction, but what will we do when we receive it. There are many reasons for a man to want to preach the Gospel. Romantic ideas can drive some on, and the love of fame can motivate others. From Paul's writings we can see that some in the New Testament preached just to be seen of men. All of our motives begin to be sorted out in the pressure of correction. It's easy to say that you love me, but the proof of that is in the times when conflicts arise; when trust receives a concerned rebuke.

We live in a day that prostitutes the gifts of others. If you have a talent (or even if you don't) you soon find yourself promoted into a position by those who try to gain your loyalty, but this will never accomplish the will of God. Jesus did not plead and beg with those who followed. He was much too concerned with the truth for that. He knew that the church could only afford one Judas so He went out of His way to judge His men's loyalty. We read often of His stern words at their faithlessness, prayerlessness, selfishness, and wrong motives. Peter did more to take his place as the leader of the church by not pouting at Jesus' accusation that his words were inspired by Satan than by casting out twelve devils.

We live in a day that is success oriented. We'll excuse any sin of the successful as long as they can perform. How different Jesus was. He cared little for talent and intellect. He set up no schools and passed out no study books. He passed by the talented, the rich, and the influential. We see one trait that He held above all others. He said "follow me" and expected a loyalty that never wavered from that simple beginning. In the very nature of the mystery of the Gospel revelation, much of what Jesus did was not understandable to the men who followed. This caused many to leave when He began to bring them together as more than an audience and shape them into God's army. A few, however, were willing to be corrected and



continued on to form a force that the intellect of Greece and the power of Rome could do nothing to stop.

Ours is a vision that breaks with the idea of "self": that idea which builds a name for a man, a denomination, or a church. It is vital that it be entrusted to faithful men: men who can move with the discipline of an army; men who don't have to be begged and pleaded with to do the will of God; men who, when wrong, admit it and make correction to right their wrong. Demus may have been an extremely talented man, but when things got tight, he followed the road that paid the best and deserted Paul for the world. How much more this must have made Paul love John Mark who, at one time, he was forced to chasten so harshly that Paul's best friend split. Yet John didn't pout, but changed and became the only man that the imprisoned Paul could depend on. It's a wise pastor who doesn't always puff up a man and soothe his ruffled ego at the slightest problem.

Everyone likes to dream of being a prophet, but how many stumble in the school of correction. The book of Proverbs again and again speaks of the wise man who seeks instruction, of the faithful wounds of a friend, that to a wise man correction is more valuable than a compliment. A child has a different response. I remember, as a boy, being disciplined by my parents and sitting in a rage in the corner of my room thinking of ways to get even. We can always justify our own mistakes, but how much better it is to have reached a point of development where we can appreciate the honest correction of a concerned pastor. In the life and death spiritual struggle of a pioneer work, one of the greatest needs is an ability to be able to receive the truth.

We, as pastors, need to be careful that we don't create a generation of spiritual prima donnas who think the kingdom is designed for them. The most precious gift that one man can give another is the gift of submission. This includes the right to bring correction. This only counts when a man is going the wrong way and one whom he trusts can say, "This is wrong." How different the history of many great ministries would have been if they had learned God's great truth: that we all need correction on occasion.

## **Ability to See Others Promoted**

Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. " If the only motivation that we have is to get ahead; even if we hide in religious garb, we're clothed with the pride of the devil. The sin of Satan was that of preeminence, and it is still a subtle and dangerous tool. Jesus said the greatest in his Kingdom would be the servant. He didn't say, "Don't run," but He said that in His Kingdom we compete by new rules. Excellence is not what has your name on it, but what is of value to God and others. Thus, Abraham is the father of faith who never had possession of the land, but opened the door for others.

In the competitive, individualistic world we live in, it's often hard to see that the whole is worth more than any part. In the great dream of world evangelism there has to be a giving of self, not a protecting. Denominations and systems that stifle, are birthed out of men who have only one desire: to get to the top and stay there. Jesus set an example for all of us. He did not hold to His position, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men . . . he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

In the battle of Little Big Horn, Custer led his men into a horrible slaughter. It was his desire to receive all the glory to himself and not allow it to be shared with the other generals that he knew were on the way. This was a man who had served brilliantly in the Civil War, in battle after battle, but he is remembered as a man who led his troops to slaughter because he refused to be part of a team. The Kingdom of God is designed to function not upon reputation, but on service. We are not out to build a name for our-selves, but for the glory of God. In God's overall plan, some are better for some tasks and others must support them and wait for their day. Though we must run to obtain, we must realize that we can't run over the backs of our brothers.

The Kingdom is designed not to function on position and reward, but out of relationship and family. We don't envy promotion, but rejoice in it. Jesus said that He would lay his life down for us, and for Him we must sometimes

lay down our aspirations for the good of the whole. This is the life planted, "as a corn of wheat," that will always bring the supernatural fruit of the Kingdom and not the empty victories of the flesh.

Herod climbed to the top on the bloody corpses of his own children and friends to sit for a few years in lonely splendor. Standing before him was one who climbed down, not up. Love for others caused Jesus to count His own life cheap, though it was bigger than the world he stood on. We need to be careful that we don't disciple under Herod instead of Jesus and that we don't envy the drive of the wicked over the service of the cross. The Gospel is still foolish to the world, but wise to God. God still promises that the humble will be exalted. In the annals of the church, the mystery is still present. Those whom we look up to are recorded to be those who didn't dominate, but those who served and loved and gave.

*Interview: Jack Harris / Harold Warner / Ron Jones*

## **INTERVIEWS WITH THREE MEN OF OUR FELLOWSHIP**

Jack Harris is pastoring in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He personally has pioneered 4 churches. He pastored in Flagstaff, Arizona for 6 years, and during this time planted 14 churches. He has been an international speaker and has held crusades in the Phillippines, Mexico and Spain. He has an excellent insight into pioneering churches.

Ron Jones is pastoring in Colorado Springs, Colorado and has been there for six years. In that time he has planted 8 churches with one in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He has personally pioneered 5 churches and has spoken to pastors world wide on pioneering churches. God has given him a practical wisdom on establishing churches.

Harold Warner is pastoring in Tucson, Arizona and has the largest church in our fellowship. He has pastored in Tucson for over 10 years. He has planted 16 churches from Tucson. He is a strong voice in our fellowship and has remarkable insight in the word of God, applying it today in pioneering churches.

## ***HOW IMPORTANT IS THE PIONEER TO OUR FELLOWSHIP?***

**WARNER:** Church pioneering is the cutting edge of all that we do. We are here today because of pioneers. Just like evangelism outside the four walls is the cutting edge of your local congregation, church planting is the cutting edge of our fellowship.

**JONES:** It's everything! Whether he's the man sending out the workers or he's the man going out himself, it's the pioneer spirit that keeps the church in the will of God, and keeps the church in its destiny.

## ***HOW DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE CALLED?***

**JONES:** The way that I knew I was called was that I had a desire to work for God. I don't think that it is our business to call people and tell them constantly that they're called. I think the way you know you're called is that you have a desire. I think it's that basic. That desire determines where you live, what you do with your time. It determines a lot of things. Now if the world and all the carnal and fleshly ambitions and desires override that; then we lose. Our destiny can be lost.

**WARNER:** It's like anything else: you know that you know that you know. When you have to tell a man or convince him that he's called, then there is a good chance that he isn't. We all experience self-doubt, but there is somewhere in the bedrock of that person's life that he knows that he's called. Anybody that's called needs to mark it down that their call will be tested by people, circumstances and everything else. Obviously in my life this is a little more visible. When I had my automobile accident, there was an overnight change in everything and a testing. Two things probably made the difference. I just still believed that somehow God could do something; I had no idea what. If I had to go to vocational rehabilitation and learn how to make wallets, I would have. Number two had to do with Brother Mitchell. I think I got out on a Monday and the first thing he did was to have me preach. I don't know if he was clear in his mind about what was going

to happen, but he threw me right back into involvement. He was placing confidence in me and that made a major difference.

***WHAT PRACTICAL THINGS DO YOU TELL A MAN WHEN HE'S FIRST GOING OUT?***

**HARRIS:** To be gracious to people; not to be overbearing or authoritarian in trying to establish his authority. To keep in contact with us. He's part of a fellowship. He's not an independent.

**JONES:** The thing he has to understand is that he is reaching people that have never been trained or brought up in the faith. He has to love them where they are. The first six months of that ministry is mainly relationship. That means meeting their needs with a lot of feeding and not a whole lot of correction. He will have to leave the level that he is on and go down to the level that those people are on. Have you ever seen grown people talk to babies? They don't talk to a baby like they talk to adults. They talk baby talk; they make complete fools out of themselves. You're tender with people. You take into consideration their feelings. So the name of the game is working with those people where they are, gathering them and bringing them along until they are able to take stronger ministry.

***HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT CITY TO GO TO?***

**WARNER:** In looking for a city there are a number of things. Number one is what is the man's burden? As much as is possible I try to work with a man's burden. Jesus is the Lord of the harvest and I'm not trying to orchestrate that, but I want to work with a man's burden and what he feels. We don't just spin the globe and say "this is where I want to go," but work with a burden that has been nurtured over a period of time. Secondly, is there an open door? There are a lot of things that we have responded to because there has been a definite open door. We have touched people in another city. They are there, and looking for a church; or somehow an

opportunity is opened and there is a definite need that is beckoning us to respond to. Is there another church in that area that can be helpful; that can give oversight and some support? The final thing would be the climate of that city. Is there an openness? This is something that is hard to define in words, but there must be an openness.

**HARRIS:** I've been in various circumstances in church planting. I'm not afraid of big cities like I was when I first started pioneering, and I'm not intimidated by little cities. I prefer a larger city over a small city because of the overall potential. I look for a place like Brother Mitchell does. I look for growth; I look for something that is moving in the community so that there is a change and an influx of people. That's all natural. And then there is a personal witness from God.

### ***DOES THE SIZE OF THE CITY MATTER?***

**HARRIS:** I think the ideal city is in the 30 to 100,000 range. That's a personal preference of mine. The next best would be the 200 to 300,000 range. Anything over that and I think you're going to have to find a way to break it down; you just can't touch the whole thing. When I go into a city I look for population, and I look for a strategic layout. I try to find the identity of a city. I want to see where I can put my church in there; where people will know where I am and I can somehow move that population. You have to be able to get into an area where you can project yourself among that population and where you can make some noise so they know you're there. A good example of this is in St. Louis. Johnson was there and he had several areas he had been looking at. He showed me some I didn't like at all. Then he showed me this Florissant area. It's an area with its own identity that has about 60,000 people in it. It sits right outside of St. Louis. It's actually a suburb city. It's got all kinds of other cities around it, but this is an individual unique city. You could get a building on one of the main streets; a building where people would know you are there, and get some advertising where they could say, "Hey, it's a church over there." They can't do that in a big city.

**WARNER:** Yes, if it's real, real small. What is important is the in-flux of new people and new ideas. You take a city that is a dying city: where there has been no growth. There are no new people and they are not open to a lot. That can be a real hindrance. When Jesus chose his disciples He chose men from Galilee. There was a strategy there because Galilee was called the Galilee of the Nations. This was not the old traditional Judea Jerusalem, so they were people who by their upbringing and culture were open to new ideas and new things. A number of cities we have been into don't have the openness and there has been a real struggle. These cities have a tendency to be religious, closed, cliquish and wicked.

***SHOULD A MAN DO MOST OF HIS ACTIVITIES INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING?***

**WARNER:** There needs to be a balance between inside and out. The key to going outside is the draw them back in. Visibility, impact, and touching people are factors.

**JONES:** He must go outside. That's why he is there. His building isn't going to attract hardly anybody, unless he's going to give away food. They're not likely to come in there unless they're coming to a movie or something. His personality isn't going to pull them in. T.L. Osborn said, "Go out, where the sinners are."

***IS THERE ANY DANGER IN MEN THINKING THEY ARE OWED SUPPORT OR A SALARY?***

**JONES:** When we went out it was an honor. Today, with some, there is more of a professional approach, like you owe me. We were surprised that anybody would give us anything. Anybody who would have invested in us had to have tremendous vision. There is a tendency now for guys to think that we owe them, but it is an honor. They are not working for us, but they are working for God. We are willing to invest in their ministry, and it is an

honor to preach the Gospel. I see organizations all over the world that have men that can't even afford to buy a suit. That can't buy their kids a pair of shoes, because organizations don't care about people. They are the ultimate bureaucracy!

***WHAT KIND OF PRICE OR STRUGGLE IS THERE IN CHURCH PLANTING?***

***HARRIS:*** I preached a sermon recently on self-death. I approached this not from a morbid standpoint, but the Biblical picture of the seed. In the life of the seed is the germ, and it will remain a seed forever unless it dies; unless it falls to the ground. When a seed falls into the ground it gives itself over to forces that are beyond its control. That's what self-death is. The willingness to submit to forces that are beyond our control. As the seed decays, life is released from the germ and so instead of death there is life. There is minor death and decay in the seed itself, but there is a raising of the plant and the fruit. The seed pays a very small price in reality to fulfill its destiny. To illustrate this I used some wheat seeds that were found in the hands of a 4,000 year old mummy. The mummy has withered away, but the seeds are still in the hand, intact. If those seeds had been planted in the right circumstances and allowed to go through their normal processes without being interrupted, one of those seeds would have been able to produce the equivalent of the whole wheat harvest of the world in 20 years. Instead, they lay stagnant for 4,000 years without any change at all. Now think about that in terms of you. Think about being limited to being what you are forever. With that death process your nature is totally altered and you become something that is fruitful, fulfilling, and on-going.

***JONES:*** It's a painful experience because of everything. You're new; you have no credibility in the city; you're not recognized as a church. When I was younger they used to think we were some kind of Christian Mickey Mouse Club. You had a store front building. There is a stigma attached to everything that you're in and doing. Your store front has a stigma. Your services have a stigma. Your way of reaching people, evangelism, praise,



everything. You have to forget all that. That congregation has to be birthed. It's painful to birth things. For birth to come forth, there has to be travail.

***WHY DOES THE OPPOSITION SEEM TO CATCH SO MANY MEN BY SURPRISE?***

**WARNER:** Maybe they haven't been listening. It may be they come out of a successful church and never have made room for failure. Maybe because they've never done anything hard in their whole lives.

**JONES:** The Devil doesn't roll over simply because we've come to town. You shoot at him, and he'll shoot at you. I think that one of the greatest problems I had was presumption. I felt like I could have revival simply because God wanted revival. I didn't realize that revival cost something. There is a price to pay.

***HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IN A CITY?***

**HARRIS:** I try to pray and get a feel for the community and what it's going to respond to: what will be of interest there. I try to get a sensitivity and inspiration for what I should do. Most of the time I try something general like a prophecy film festival that will attract people. In a city like Wickenburg you might be able to show a Christian cowboy movie and they might be interested because it's a western town. Whereas if you were going to Philadelphia, I doubt if anyone would be impressed. You have to find something that appeals to that community.

***HOW CAN A MAN DEVELOP THAT SENSITIVITY?***

**HARRIS:** I think it's a matter of being open, and wanting the will of God. God's responsibility is to speak what he feels like speaking: our

responsibility is to be willing to listen. God has the option of speaking any time He wants to. You and I should have a heart that is prepared to listen when He does speak. For example, how many times am I in prayer meetings going through my regular prayer ritual. We just go in and we're praying for the same people and the same thing. What else are you going to pray for? I don't hear a voice from God every morning. But I will be in there one morning faithfully where I belong and suddenly, God will speak. God talks to me simply because He knows that when I do hear Him, I will respond to the best of my ability.

***WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU'VE BEEN IN A CITY FOR SIX MONTHS AND HAD ALMOST NO PEOPLE?***

**WARNER:** If I'd been there six months and didn't have any people at all, it would be a time to evaluate. Either evaluate whether we should be there or what we are doing there. That would be the time that we should think about getting a job. I would say that you could make a distinction between nobody at all and just a few. We do have some works that really haven't broken lose, but they do have some real quality people that have been birthed there. That is evidence that there is a core to build on.

**HARRIS:** Try something else. I don't think that six months is really long enough to tell if the city is going to respond. If you've been there six months and nothing has happened, then you'd better look at yourself. But, if you have been there and there just hasn't been a major breakthrough, I don't think that is the time to quit. It may be time to think about a job, but it's not time to quit.

***WHAT KIND OF THINGS DID YOU PREACH ON WHEN YOU STARTED NEW CHURCHES?***

**WARNER:** When I first went out I was preaching all kinds of stuff. We've all heard it said that you don't get real heavy. That doesn't mean that

you go a year or so without ever doing anything and then all of a sudden after a year you say "Guys, I've been fooling you. This is what I really believe." I think that as you look in the gospel you find that Jesus never demanded from sinners what he demanded of his own disciples. To sinners the grace of God was the gift of God. To disciples it was meat, or the real substance. A lot of that is knowing where people are and working with them on that basis.

**JONES:** What I preach to begin with is blessing, faith, Christian living, and what a joy it is to be a Christian. How Christ comes into our homes and changes us, makes our marriages work instead of fall apart; makes us into people of dignity, people who have a hope, people who have a future.

### ***HOW LONG WAS IT BEFORE YOU PREACHED ON MONEY?***

**JONES:** As far as money is concerned, I didn't preach a whole sermon on it right away. What I would do is mention the benefits and the blessings; the privilege we have of sharing with our money and how God takes care of us. One of the things that they are going to watch is how we give.

### ***WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A MAN ABOUT TO BE SENT OUT?***

**JONES:** I look for a man who is productive where he is. Whether he is on the job, or wherever he is, he flows out of himself to other people. He ministers life. People don't leave him discouraged, but he leaves them strengthened in their faith because he talks God. I look for a man that has a wife. You can tell a whole lot about a man by looking at his wife: if she loves people, if she's excited about ministry. You can sense a quality of life about her that is conducive to ministry. That would no doubt be a reflection of him. I look for a man who is able to take correction. That proves he's not looking for position, but is motivated by a real love. He is sincere about the

things of God. He's not a joker. He's not hanging out at the racquetball club, but he is a man who loves ministry. He is a man of prayer. I'm watching his heart and his reactions more than I am his actions or what he can do.

**WARNER:** Is he fruitful in my church? Does he relate well with people? Is he able to organize and initiate things without always having to be told? Are his family and his marriage together; Does his wife support him?

### ***ARE THERE SPECIAL PROBLEMS WITH MEN COMING OUT OF A LARGE CHURCH LIKE YOURS?***

**WARNER:** Yes, one would be the feeling of instant success because they have been involved in something that seems to be successful.

The feeling that "I'm from Tucson and that will guarantee me success." Well, it doesn't. Another would be the numbers shock of going from something that is large to something that is really nothing. The other is that now they are on their own and they don't have a big back-up crew; a support crew. In our assembly and in any larger church you have a massive support crew that can make anybody look good. So when you're sent out from that, you have nothing.

### ***WHAT THINGS CAUSE MEN TO FAIL?***

**HARRIS:** The greatest mistake is in the attitude of how you project yourself to people; how you come on to people. Another problem area would be in the maintenance of relationships with your brethren and your headship; exhibiting an independent spirit. In my estimation a third thing is a guy just sitting back waiting for it to happen without putting out any real effort.

**JONES:** They presume that certain things are going to happen, and when they don't go as they planned, they're destroyed. Another reason is

lack of discipline. I encourage men, that no matter what kind of licks they're hitting, to stay on their knees, stay right with God and read the word of God. Many preachers today don't read the word of God. The only time they read is to get a sermon, or they open it up to get a promise every once in a while. But I'm talking about reading the word of God. Discipline. How you relate to people is another factor of failure or success. Do you expect these people to become full-blown, full-grown disciples in three months or do you realize that these people will always have problems, and they need somebody who cares for them where they are. There has to be a lot of love to build a work for God.

**WARNER:** One is the lack of personal discipline and personal initiative. This is clearer to me all the time that if someone is going to pioneer he has to be a go-getter. I'm an organizer. I like to organize and plan. It's very easy for me to so organize things that you could have a lobotomy and still do it. Somewhere a guy has to take a personal initiative. He's pressing buttons. You can look at men that are successful, even young pioneers, and that quality will be in every one of them. A second quality is the hurry-up-itis. This is when they fail to balance visions and expectations with the reality of time and people's growth. A third thing which is related to the first is the lack of strategy. Sometimes they forget everything that they have been taught by the church, or they are sent out of a church where they didn't have the background to even have a strategy.

### ***WHAT THINGS CAUSE MEN TO BE SUCCESSFUL?***

**HARRIS:** You can be successful by being in the will of God, being where God wants you, and viewing people with compassion. I always gripe and moan and bellyache about people, but those who have worked with me long enough know that I go out of my way to redeem the very ones who I complain about. I do like people and they know it. They know that I'm concerned when I'm chewing them out. When I'm acting tough there is something that I project of concern, and I think that is because I really am concerned. That causes them to respect and respond to leadership. We

respond to those who care about us. You cannot imitate that. It has to come from your heart, it's got to be there. It developed in my ministry because I had a pastor like that. It didn't develop just by imitation, but by actually coming around to his viewpoint and believing what he believed because I assented that that was right. I wanted to be like that, but I couldn't just imitate it.

**JONES:** Some bullfighters were discussing how to fight a bull. Each one got up and went through their strategies. Finally one bullfighter got up and said, "I'm not sure how I do it. I just fight the bull." That's how I am with success, it's a mystery. Some things that can be seen in men that do well are heart, faith and faithfulness with money. In "Chariots of Fire", with Eric Liddel, they didn't figure out how he could run with his head thrown back. The guy who played the part had a hard time running like that. One of the things that was pointed out in the movie is that you have to have heart to run. You have to love what you are doing.

If a man's full of unbelief then he will produce what unbelief always produces, which is zero. A winner trusts God. Faithfulness with money is also the mark of a success. He realizes that money is to serve the purposes of God. And if we'll let money be released to the Kingdom of God we will circumvent a lot of problems that people are having. Financial integrity marks a winner.

**WARNER:** I probably stumble here more than any other place. I look at what God's done and I'm amazed. You ask what the key is and I have to say I don't know. But a couple of things are definable. Number one is God's grace. I recently preached a sermon on the intangible factor, which is hard to explain. It's just God. It's Joseph and "the Lord was with him." There is no other way to explain it, but that the Lord was with him. There is an in-tangible dimension of God's grace. The second would be a positive vision and positive outlook. Some have a positive faith which causes them to contend for what God has. They declare, "I believe God can do it in spite of my stupidity." They are able to adapt to all circumstances when they are trying to find direction. They find something that is hitting and they adapt and start flowing with that.

## ***WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT HABITS A MAN CAN CULTIVATE?***

**HARRIS** He shouldn't smoke, he shouldn't drink, and he shouldn't cuss. One new pastor actually told me that pioneering almost made him want to cuss again!

**JONES:** Probably the most important habit he can cultivate is to pray and love God. If he does that he'll come out alright. **WARNER:** One is discipline, especially because a young pioneer pastor has large chunks of time. He must pray and seek God. He is trying to get some kind of direction. He is planning and pursuing strategy and that way he has a goal and is working toward something, rather than just hoping that something is going to happen. He should be disciplining himself in the area of reading and study and personal growth. In a younger work, you do have time to spend with people and visiting people. I remember when we first started I spent a lot of time with the people that just got saved. You didn't have anybody else to work with and anybody else to do it.

### ***... WHAT HABITS HURT?***

**WARNER:** One is a siege mentality. We see the ministry as just one constant crisis and battle and we lose balance and perspective. Here we are in a siege mentality holed up like the battle of the Alamo; we're trying to fight off all these things rather than having something to aim for and to attack through prayer and aggressiveness and strategy. The second thing is isolation. This is especially true if there are battles and set backs, which there are always going to be. We begin to isolate ourselves. We allow our failures and insecurities to isolate us from headship or our fellow pastors. The third thing is that we begin to neglect our wives. We just ignore them and become insensitive to them.

## ***WHAT INSIGHTS CAN YOU GIVE CONCERNING MONEY?***

**HARRIS:** The main thing is that I give. When I preach on money I have no qualms in my conscience at all, because I give. What has concerned me about finances lately is that there are several of our churches that have people but can't generate resources. It's always the same story, "All my people are poor." And ours are rich? It's something in the man. Now I understand that there is a limited amount of resources, and you can't pull Fort Knox out of a small church, but there is a principle in a man and attitude that is poison, of always taking in and never giving out. A lot of guys on support have that attitude and it projects back into their congregation. You see, this is a kingdom principle. The kingdom is built on self-giving and I believe that liberality is one of the key elements in successful churches and successful people. That doesn't mean that they will always be rich or never run tight, but there is a kingdom principle that is released in a congregation that gives and miracles begin to happen.

**WARNER:** Men who are undisciplined in their own personal finances will be undisciplined in the church finances. Men are unrealistic. For whatever reasons, they just think the mother church has all the money in the world and are unrealistic in their planning. Men don't budget. Men don't pay their bills.

### ***WHAT TICKS YOU OFF THE MOST IN DEALING WITH YOUNG MEN?***

**WARNER:** A number of things. There have been times that there just seems like a real lack of appreciation exists. Another area is bad financial decisions where there has never been any honesty. They never have come and said, "Hey, I blew it and this is wrong." They run little scams to cover the facts. It bothers me that guys don't send in their gold sheets. When you're pioneering a church you don't have many people. It doesn't take you that long to do a gold sheet. The reason you don't send it in is because you don't have any money to send in for tithes and that's because you haven't been planning to do that. You've just been hoping that it comes in. Another



thing would be that they plan to have a revival but make no financial preparations. At the last moment they have to call the mother church and say "I need help". Or they do a disservice to somebody who came because they didn't plan or they have bills they haven't paid.

**HARRIS:** They go deer hunting when I'm paying them a salary. They spend support money on bailing other people out. They buy equipment instead of cutting their support back. Sometimes that is a legitimate need and I'll bow to that if they ask my permission, but when they just run these scams on me it really bugs me. We can sacrifice any amount of money and that's what is expected of us. But ask them to sacrifice out of their own money or their own ministry and that's expecting too much of them. And it ticks me when they don't send their tithes in.

### ***WHAT ABOUT THE HUSBAND/WIFE RELATIONSHIP?***

**WARNER:** I believe that a good relationship with his wife is critical. In a ministry she'll make or break him. The wife should be a support to her husband, especially in a new environment. She's able to bring a support to her husband. She should know the difficulties of isolation. We had no understanding of this because it had never been done before. There are some real difficulties involved with isolating a wife. To the male personality geared to achievement, this is not as critical. When your wife is removed from her home, she's removed from her security and to a woman her security is far more important than to a man. When she's removed from her friends and her fellowship there is a danger of isolation. Now the man is consumed with vision and achievement, but she doesn't have that. I didn't realize that when we went out. My wife was really lonely; she didn't have any friends. I was consumed with vision, but she was consumed with friends. For a pastor's wife probably the greatest area that she wrestles with is people problems. People can be extremely cruel to a pastor's wife. The pastor has a hard shell. He just shakes it off and says, "they're devils", but a wife is much more sensitive. So being able to handle people problems is critical. Some of your first converts are going to be women and you can't

be following up on them. A wife that's a people person is a great advantage. I have some sound convictions that she doesn't have to be praying 15 hours a day, but if she's a people person, and able to care and relate to people, it's a tremendous advantage. She needs to learn to love them and commit them to God. She needs to toughen her hide without hardening her heart. It's good for her to see the importance of her role, especially in a pioneer setting. With young converts, she's invaluable.

**HARRIS:** The biggest problem Patty had was living with me. She wasn't ever shook up, but I was always shook up, and of course that reflected in our home. The thing that young pastors deal with, is that they think they are the big heavy spiritual dude when they go out. My attitude was, 'Hey, I'm going to break this thing loose, woman. If you want to go, fine; if you don't, fine.' You keep communicating like that and pretty soon she begins to feel like she's not part of the will of God. The husband has a tendency to blame what he interprets as her carnality as the reason he's not making it, rather than looking at his own carnality. You see a super-spiritual nature is nothing but religious carnality. They look at their wife, who is just the good little woman that she's always been, and they begin to blame her: 'You're what's holding the ministry back.' One day Patty came to grips with God and came to me and said, 'I always thought that I hated the ministry, but it's not the ministry that I hate, it's you.' And that is because I acted like an idiot all the time, and really did abuse her verbally, destroying her self worth. My philosophy on wives is that they just need to be wives and minister to their children and their husbands and be faithful. Some of these girls are scared to death about being pastor's wives because they think they are going to be required to be something they aren't qualified for or aren't comfortable doing. So they feel intimidated, and they look at other girls who are more out going and aggressive and they feel that they can't measure up to that. So they feel they can't pursue ministry with their husbands. When in reality, all we want them to be is a wife and mom. Finances also put a lot of pressures on the woman's security, but all of that can be circumvented if a man will act decent. If she's secure in her love relationship, she'll go through the hard times with him. But if he's out discipling the boys all the time, which is no different than him wanting to go out and play pool when he was a sinner, then he's neglecting his family and that's a problem.

**JONES:** One of the things that the man needs to realize is that even though he is in the ministry he has a responsibility to his wife and to meet her needs. She is a person and she has dignity. She belongs to what God's doing and is not just along for the ride. He had better treat her good, because of all the people on this planet, she's the one who's willing to give her life to him and to go with him. She is truly valuable and he needs to include her. I've seen men go out and not even include their wives in conversation. They're afraid she's going to say something stupid that's going to embarrass him. Well, it may be good for his ego for her to say a lot of stupid things, just to embarrass him. Let me say one thing more about wives. I see wives who don't even try to play an organ. I've seen girls learn to play an organ in no time. The organ is easy to play. These girls can sit behind the organ and begin somewhere, but they don't even begin to make an effort. I know girls who don't want to be around people, and they need to be around people. They need to learn to work with wives who have babies. They need to say positive things and not negative, stupid things, about other women's babies.

**WARNER:** I would like to add that one of the common mistakes made by wives is chronic complaining. "This city is not like the one I came from. These people are not like the people I'm used to." They begin to belly-ache and complain. This isn't a problem the first month. But down the road, especially when the pressures of pioneering come, and maybe you don't see all the results that you want to see, and financial pressures arise, if the home is not strong it begins to make wives belly-ache and complain. Sometimes it turns into resentment of the mother church. Another mistake is the culture shock. Rather than being flexible and adapting they become real narrow. Another thing would be, they quit disciplining their kids.

### **... WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY DOMINION OF A COUPLE?**

**JONES:** Pastor Mitchell said a long time ago that the greatest asset a man has in the ministry is his wife. Well, I didn't realize this. But when I gave up and started loving my wife, she was no longer extra baggage; some

carnal creature who I had to put up with. But she was a vital source of strength to me, and it was amazing how many times she spoke for God and gave me a word in season that was right on. In fact the Lord did speak to me one day and said, 'Together you are an invincible team.' Now we are a great team. Honestly we have a fantastic friendship. The greatest thing that ever happened to our church was that they saw that I loved my wife. It made people want to be married and it made married people want to be happily married. It gave them hope.

### ***HOW CAN YOU TIE IN NEW PEOPLE?***

**WARNER:** Spend time with them. There was nobody else to follow up on converts and so I did it. Begin to instill vision in these people. You can't do that with somebody who's been saved only a day, but begin to instill a vision in them that God can do great things. In the beginning they probably look at that and say this guy is very positive. Another thing that I think is very important, especially in a pioneer work, is to give those converts a broader view. That's why conference or getting together in a situation with other churches in our fellowship is really important. It gives them a broader view than just your deadly dozen. So, for tying people in, patience and persistence really pay off.

**JONES:** First of all, don't answer questions they are not asking. The second thing is to realize that the reason they're coming to that church is relationship; not because they are helping you build your church, or because they have a vision for evangelism or a vision for world ministry. If people feel like they belong and they are respected, then that relationship is what holds them there.

**HARRIS:** God's gifted me to be able to impart vision into other people. The only thing that I can tell you that makes me be effective is that I actually have the vision. You can't give what you don't have. The reason I can preach on commitment and get results is that I'm committed. You have to have what you're giving. A lot of guys mouth all the truths. They have learned it; they know it by heart; they know the principles; they understand

it, but they don't have a heart commitment. Well, I am committed and that commitment is proven in the test of time. There were lots of times where I could have copped out, but I didn't.

***JACK, WHEN I MET YOU, YOU TOOK YOUR PEOPLE TO OTHER CHURCHES A LOT. DOES THAT HELP TIE THEM IN?***

***HARRIS:*** When your church is growing, the worst thing you can do is let it become introverted. The thing we must realize is that we're not capable of supplying everything those people need for growth. You have to recognize ministry in other men and bring them to your church at strategic times.

Secondly, take those people and expose them to other church environments in our fellowship. I took them to churches that were stronger than us, so that they could get a perspective of what we could be. I took them to help labor in churches weaker than us so they could see where we were and how we'd grown so far. There needs to be an even balance.

***WHY DO PEOPLE COME TO A CHURCH?***

***WARNER:*** They come because they're curious. Not everyone comes because they're seeking God. I came because there were some girls that witnessed to me. Probably a major thing is friendship. Studies have been done that show a large percentage come because they knew somebody, they work with somebody, they have a relative or some kind of bond already established. So the friend-ship factor is really, really important. Also, with the lifestyle that many of us come from, we were obviously looking for reality.

***HARRIS:*** I think the thing that people want more than anything else is answer to the dilemma of their own life. They want leadership that can somehow be relevant to their life's conflict. The church isn't a place where

we just draw people in to fulfill our dream. The church is where we minister to them. Then we take our dream which God has given us, a vision that's rooted in the will of God, and direct those people. We show them purpose and meaning for their lives. That's what the church is about.

### ***HOW DO YOU BREAK THROUGH THE BARRIER OF 15 TO 30 PEOPLE?***

**HARRIS:** It's in the man. There is something in the man that has to break through that. A pastor at each level of growth is breaking through a dimension in his self and in his people. When they're not getting above 30, the problem is the pastor. I'll lay it out right there. But when they start getting stalled at 50 or 60, you're dealing, in my personal feeling, with the people. They have to reach a certain commitment level before God's going to give more growth. Now that's assuming that this isn't a long term thing. If it's a long term thing, it could be the pastor not bringing them to that place. But if we are dealing with a normal thing, and a guy seems to be hung at 50 or so, the guy shouldn't despair but realize that God's just trying to work something out in the people. When those people have grown and the pastor's grown with them, then they can accelerate on. But at every level of growth there is a responsibility that the pastor has of growing himself.

**WARNER:** I'm not really sure. Some of the things in our city that have happened have just been the grace of God. There has to be the personal development of the man as both a friend and a leader. There must be a beginning to equip people to begin to minister, to equip other people for vision and for growth, and to begin to develop them to be able to function in positions of responsibility. These are important. As they begin to catch a personal burden, this brings an acceleration. Brother Mitchell said there were three things: first of all there is the man himself, secondly there is the people, and thirdly there is what God's doing.

**JONES:** What's happened at 30 people is that everybody knows everybody's business and they are a neat little family. They have to change the way they are going to view their church. They have to break the family

barrier and become a larger assembly. One of the things that happens, is that if there is any undermining or anybody is having a problem, then everybody knows about it. So, what they have to do is turn their focus from inward to outward. They have to become more involved in evangelism. What they need is to be a team. That pastor needs to make them feel like they are a team, like they're all on the same side. There are barriers, and faith breaks barriers. There are saturation points. I don't know what they are. I don't know what the man's ability is to meet the needs of those people. But he is going to have to read more. He is going to have to discipline himself more. He's going to have to be nice. He's going to have to keep his mouth shut, and not air his opinions on everything that happened last week, live clean, and not hang around those people constantly. I know pastors that are hardly ever with their people whereas some are with them constantly. Familiarity breeds contempt. They begin to see little discrepancies.

### ***HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF QUITTING?***

**WARNER:** I think everybody has felt like quitting, but what am I going to quit to? When I got saved, I didn't condescend to go into the ministry. I was elevated from zero into privilege. Without sounding prideful, God did call me. If He called me, He can help me.

**JONES:** Yes, I have. About every day.

**HARRIS:** Yes. That was after Nogales. When I came home to the first conference after Nogales, it had been an unfruitful time and that was tormenting me. God promised to me, out of the agony of that experience, that He would make me fruitful. The desire of my heart was to be fruitful. I felt like I had failed God and my calling and the church.

***... HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE YOURSELF OR BRING YOURSELF THROUGH THE TIMES YOU FEEL LIKE QUITTING?***

**WARNER:** One of the biggest sources of encouragement is that when you start to reach people you see fruit. You see their lives change. You see the need of their lives and you cry out for God to help you keep going because there are people depending on you. A genuine convert can keep you going for a long time.

**JONES:** What keeps me going is that in my heart 'the love of Christ constrains me.' I can honestly say that I am not motivated by money, or position, or recognition, but Christ and His call, and a care for people and serving people is the motivation of my life. Whether I'm a success or a failure is not the question. The issue is that it is the will of God. That motivates me. Really, I don't think about quitting every day; but I have more than once thought of quitting.

**HARRIS:** The call of God. I fantasize quitting all the time, even to this day. The reason is because I don't like responsibility. A large church is a tremendous responsibility with tremendous demands on you. So I fantasize; I think maybe there would be a better way of life that would be easier for me to cope with. Ministry is hard on me emotionally. Whenever I think about trying to alleviate pressure by getting out of the ministry, I can see myself working on a job. There is nothing wrong with working on a job, but the one area that still depresses me is, when I consider trying to quit, it's almost like I'd thrown my life away. No matter what I did, if I indulged my wildest fantasies to be a movie maker or whatever, I would have an emptiness and hollowness inside. My idea of success is simply to fulfill the will of God in ourselves.

### ***WHAT HAPPENS TO MAN WHO ALLOWS THIS TO CAUSE DOUBTS OF HIS PASTOR?***

**JONES:** I would say it is one of the darkest periods in a man's life. It's such an awesome violation, because there has been such an investment of love and generosity. A man has to realize that the problems are his, not his pastor's. His problem is not his money, his equipment, his city, or his wife,



but his problem is himself. That's the key to revival. When a man gets himself saved, he can get somebody else saved.

### ***HOW IMPORTANT ARE FRIENDS?***

**HARRIS:** There are times when you're trying to find your value and worth, and it seems like no one cares. That's when you find your friends. If it had not been for Brother Mitchell, I would never have survived.

**WARNER:** One of the things that makes us, is our zeal for God and that's the basis for our friendship. Our destiny is found only in fellowship, and when all is said and done that is a very valuable thing.

**JONES:** Friendship is everything. It was a friend who called me when I was out of the will of God. He talked to me and showed me that he cared. It's friendship that will ultimately hold us together; not the fact that we're in the hottest thing happening. What causes me to do the things that I do, is a genuine relationship of love.

### ***THEN IS IT SERIOUS WHEN PASTORS ISOLATE THEMSELVES?***

**JONES:** Yes! It's a serious problem, because they begin to take themselves too seriously. The only people we have are our men. The Devil knows that if he can isolate us from our men then he's won half the battle. It's a strategy to bring discouragement, and disillusionment.

**WARNER:** I've seen instances of isolation coming because of failure. They come to conference; they begin to separate them-selves; they're off in a corner and don't want to fellowship with any one. The other extreme is the isolation because of success. None of us in ourselves are ever going to accomplish the will of God. We are going to accomplish what God calls

us to in fellowship. The beauty of fellowship is that we become what we could never be in ourselves.

I remember going to Australia and getting off the plane in a place that I have never been before, and here are all these people there to meet me. They didn't know me, but they were there like I was somebody important. In relationship, we become what we could never be in ourselves.

### ***WHAT ABOUT MISTAKES?***

**HARRIS:** In reality, some of the biggest men that we have, have probably made some of the biggest mistakes. The measure of a man is not in whether he makes a mistake or not. Mistakes are implied in a fallen nature. The measure of a man is how he handles his mistakes. Does he cover them up? Is he willing to look at them? Some people can make a mistake and instead of coming to grips with it and allowing God to purge it out, they just begrudge everybody because they were corrected, or they hate themselves because they're not perfect. Their egos tell them that they shouldn't have been capable of failing, which is ridiculous.

It's not whether you can knock a man down or not. Every man can be knocked down. The question is can you get back up? Can you function again? Can you come to grips with your mistake and learn from it and be wiser and know not to make the same mistake again?

### ***IS EXPOSURE IMPORTANT?***

**HARRIS:** Yes. That's called repentance. Communication with headship is vital. If you have failure, or even if you sin, you can't just cover it up. It must be exposed. It has to be dealt with.

***WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENT IN PIONEERING IF YOU DID IT AGAIN?***

**HARRIS:** I'd have gone to medical school. Not really! If I could have done anything different, I'd have done everything different. I'd use the knowledge that I have now. Everything that I'm telling you was hard earned, and hard learned. All the mistakes I'm mentioning, I made. That's why I understand them, and if I was going out to pioneer and could take my hindsight and apply it, I would. But then life is something that you learn. It's just like raising kids: you don't know how to raise kids until they're all grown up and you can look back and see all your mistakes.

**JONES:** There are some things that you can't do any different. How can you have the fifth baby any different than you had the first one? There are certain things that are involved. There are some things though, I wouldn't do. I would be easier with the people. I would give them time to grow. I would enjoy it. Maybe I'd enjoy the quiet times and even enjoy the times when I didn't have anything to do. I would be careful of who I brought in. I wouldn't bring just anybody in and let them do a hatchet job on my people. I would do things in more of a rhythm rather than run them to death when they have only been saved three months.

**WARNER:** Any blessing that there has been in Tucson has been in spite of a number of dumb moves. If I was to do it again today, there would be the balance of real strong convictions, but they would be tempered with a grace and an ability to work with people. As a young pioneer pastor, our egos are involved and we really do have something to prove. And when we have something to prove, that somehow blinds us in working with people and dealing with situations because our ego's on the line. Without any reference, any background or any experience, we usually choose for ego and that which is going to reinforce us, rather than what's going to be best for the kingdom and the church. The second thing is that I might have made some changes on the appearance of our building. I don't know if we could have done much with our building. It was so old, but I probably should have been more aware of those things than I was. That's why these things are important, but at the same time they can be overcome. Our building was the strangest thing in the world. We had three different colors of carpet and so it was only grace that anything happened.

## ***WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PIONEERING?***

**WARNER:** The benefits are, that these are your people, and you develop because you work with them, because you travail with them and develop a real burden for them. There is a personal investment in those people that sometimes when you take a church, even though you do care about people, you don't have. It's the same old thing, the children of millionaires usually end up to be real rip offs, because they've never grown to appreciate what they have.

There is a special confidence that comes when a man takes something from nothing and sees it grow before his eyes. It's a confidence that God has used us.

**JONES:** The benefit is that there are people who will forever praise the glory of God. The benefit is that there are lives changed for eternity. There is no greater benefit than people who are saved and serving God.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Task**

#### **THE TASK**

One promise that can be made to the beginning worker is that your task will be nothing like what you expect. I've never met anyone who has gone into the ministry and had it all come out like they dreamed it would. That's why, in the reality of pioneering, a little flexibility goes a long way.

When Ron Jones came to Flagstaff, Arizona, he found a dead church with a handful of somewhat moldy saints who were just trying to hold on until the rapture, and not doing a very good job of it. A woman met him at the door. She had come to bring him the news that God had "written Ichabod" over it. With pounding heart, he called Brother Mitchell to find out what he should do in a cursed town and a cursed church. Brother Mitchell gave him a word that should be the motto of every man of God: "You tell her that when you came to town, God came to town." Most battles of beginning, circle around our faith in this simple truth. The pioneer has the task of opening a bridge for God into a new, and usually bound, territory. This is seldom simple or easy, yet it is critical to the work of God. In World War II it was a small number of men (in comparison to the giant armies involved in that war), who landed on Normandy Beach, but all the war hinged on their penetration. There could be no defeat of Hitler unless they first established a beachhead against the fanatic assault of Hitler's Third Reich. In the Kingdom of God, the starting of a church depends less on numbers, than it does on the taking of territory. Joshua was told that God would give him every place his foot would tread. Jesus told his men, in like manner, "to go into all the world."

The Pioneer is one who goes ahead to open the way for others. In starting a work, the key is not in an explosion with large numbers, but in the power and beauty of small beginnings. We need to hear the prophets cry, "Despise not the day of small beginnings." The heart of every new pastor cries out for a great revival. Often this masks his carnal mind which cannot

see the beauty of what God is doing. We love to read the stories of past revivals and to hear of a church that explodes with growth, but too often the stories mask our hearts and we can't see the beauty of what is happening in our own lives. This causes us to despise the actual moving of God, and this is a serious violation.

God started with one father of faith, gave him a single son, and God started a flow of destiny that would affect law, politics, banking, literature and redemption. When Jesus broke into world history, he did not give himself to the crowds, but to the small core of committed people. Too many beginning pastors miss the one small thing God has given them while they look for larger things.

Jesus found an Andrew, who led to a Peter, who three years later reached thousands.

The force of revival in our fellowship is tremendous, and this can lead to problems when we judge what God's doing in our church. While most groups are declining in membership, we are growing. It's hard for a young man, yearning for revival, to realize the tremendous thing that may be happening with his small but committed group. I remember when I was pastoring in Payson, Arizona. I asked the Assembly of God pastor how it was going. I was shocked when he told me, "Ron, it's going great! Our church has only been here twelve years and we had 75 last Sunday!" I thought I had met a madman until I investigated the statistics. One third of the churches in America have less than 45 people on Sun-day morning. When a church has over 75 people on Sunday morning, it is larger than two-thirds of the churches in the United States. A recent Church of God publication pointed out that some of their fastest growing churches had only grown over a period of years, by what our fellowship would consider a handful.

The problem with being in David's army was that it was filled with mighty men. It must have been easy for them to feel like failures if they had killed regular soldiers and not a giant. Any man who is forging out a group, however small, and is where God has placed him, is a success. He's laying a foundation for a future that only God knows the limits of.

The pioneer is a ground breaker who needs to make sure that he doesn't make the mistake that Israel made. They marched off toward the promised land singing, "victory, victory shall be mine," but soon switched tactics from faith to complaining. It is wonderful to be a part of tremendous revival with multitudes marching down the sawdust trail, but we must see that it's just as precious to be in the will of God in a critical but possibly struggling work. I can remember some wise words spoken to me by Ron Jones. "You can't push revival, you can only push obedience." God sovereignly holds that mysterious factor of divine blessing and favor, but we must be faithful.

This was a hard-won lesson for me. Every pioneer pastor goes out thinking he is going to make phenomenal impact. I recall going to Payson, Arizona, a town of 3,000. I began thinking how good it would look written in my biography about how I humbly rose from such small beginnings. One day it dawned on me that I might never rise out of there, that God loved small cities. Most men face this reality a few months after they open. Things aren't moving like they dreamed, and the question arises: can they still obey and labor with a good heart? When I went to Tucson, the latest craze was Yonggi Cho. Everyone was confessing what number of people God would give them in six months. I remember how badly I felt when some had the faith to confess several hundred and I was only confessing one hundred. At the end of the year, however, we were all about the same, a considerably smaller number than our confessions. In the starting work we should expect great things, but we should be ready to work even if it's only great in quality and not in quantity. You can't make yourself a Samson by wishing, but you can make yourself a Timothy: a faithful man.

Success in pastoring seldom comes to the man who looks for numbers, but comes to a man who looks for people. Too often the beginning pastor forgets what a new convert even looks like. For the last year he may have worked with men well up the discipleship ladder, and now he is confronted with a bunch of religious folks and psychos who, if he took the time to remember, would probably be very much like those he got saved with. One seldom starts with disciples, because they usually have to be made. David's mighty men started as the outcasts of Israel. Prescott's conference speakers once filled the reformatories, county jails and mental wards of

America. Most likely, those first few converts will need quite a bit of work before you proudly march them past the throne of God with dignity.

It's not surprising for the beginning pastor to find his first week to be slightly different from what he expected as he rode off into the sunset from his home church with the last fading cheers still ringing in his ears. He enters reality when he sits in an empty building with the pioneer pastor's "rod of authority" (a toilet plunger), and wonders who did all this kind of work back at home. He walks into his house and finds that his wife has been crying for three days. He finds it hard to believe that a nursery can be louder than a public address system, but he knows it was scientifically proven in his service. And with the wisdom of hind-sight he wishes he'd listened to the advice about putting the bathrooms in the back. He went ahead and put them behind the pulpit only to find his concentration broken several times by the muted calls of nature penetrating the too thin walls of sheet rock.

Conferences, too, take on new meaning to the struggling pastor as he fights off suicidal tendencies as reports of victory come from man after man and he knows that he's the only pastor there failing. Experience, though, can help him to realize that many of the reports leave out revealing truths to sound so powerful. When they tell about the 400 who were saved last month, they often forget to mention that only one ever came back. The church that's running 50 in just 6 months is a great miracle. However, it was somehow overlooked that 45 were under the age of 11. When the pastor tells about how he had to put out extra chairs Sunday he forgot to mention that he only started with four. No young pastor should be overly surprised if he finds that there is one lady who fills four chairs by herself in his beginning core of people, and the man who is called on to take the offering may be there because he has a two day pass from the local mental ward. That kind of struggling start is probably much closer to the normal than anyone would ever guess.

Probably the single most needed trait in the starting work is the heart of a fighter. I don't think that it was by accident that Jesus chose who he chose to make up his first core. Galilee was a place with not many philosophers, but lots of fighters. In that small core we find a zealot,



disciples of John the Baptist (not your weak-wristed stool sitter) and "Sons of Thunder". These men's first responses, in most situations, was to call down the fire or pull out the blade. It's easy to forget that our call is to fight. Though our weapons are not carnal, they are still weapons. When Moses came to Egypt and threw down his rod, Pharaoh didn't just roll over, but he said, "I'll see your one and raise you two." When you open a church you hear the bell ring for the first round. A pastor is fighting to take title deed to hearts and souls. It was never easy for Paul and it most likely will not be easy for us.

President Reagan's favorite joke is of a little boy in a stable digging through a giant pile of horse manure. When he is asked what he is doing, he brightly replies, "There's a pony in here somewhere!" Here is the attitude of an optimist, needed by every beginning worker struggling with the hurt and failures of life. As you look out on what the world has cast off, you must rise up in faith and see the possibility of what God can do.

I'm astounded at Paul as I read about the early churches that he started. The churches must have been embarrassing to him as he made reports back to the home crowd about his first church Galatia turning back. He had to write back to Thessalonica and tell them to take the white robes off, get off the roof and get back on the streets. The church of Corinth was full of rebels who for enough sense to know that the church was the wrong place for fights or drinking parties. Paul trusted God though, and disciplined where he could. He moved on and wasted little time on complaints about how his people were all cretins, but instead thanked God for the honor to preach to anyone. To fight and to have faith are our two greatest resources. If you see no hope, then how can anyone else?

The major battles of the beginning work are often devastating because they come in ways we are unprepared for. They are battles of the mind and of our allegiance. In the home church, we never questioned what was being done. In a new environment, though, we find many forces pulling at our loyalties. Opening the church in Payson, a group of people said they wanted to be part of the fellowship. Within two weeks, those people slipped out of town and left us alone in a city we would never have come to but for them. For several weeks we met with just a couple of people. Then a Christian

who was a millionaire came to visit. He said he really liked the church and that he knew a lot of people who were looking for a church home. There was only one thing, though, the praise would have to stop, because it would offend too many people. I never hesitated to tell him he would have to find somewhere else to go. Later thoughts came to make me wonder why we did do the things we do. Those doubts and confusion had to be fought through. As people begin to come in they begin to pull a man from his roots if he isn't careful, and a large battle of allegiance may have to be fought. Paul had to tell Timothy, "But continue thou in the things which thou has learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou has learned them." This advice is still needed two thousand years later.

One of the most difficult battlegrounds can be guilt. We feel bad about taking money from home, we wonder about the decisions which have been made, and we feel personally responsible for people who are backslidden. If the church is not exploding, we of-ten feel like we have let down those who have trusted us. In the beginning of a work, battles often rage in our emotions. We feel attacks of depression or fear and, instead of relating them to the enemy, we believe we are to blame. It is in these times that the battle is won or lost. It is a battle of faith. It's a battle to call the unseen seen. It's a battle of allegiance that stands with what God has given us and re-digs the wells of our fathers in our city, in spite of the enemy's attacks. It's a spirit that gets mad at Hells assaults and says, "Now Devil, you've gotten me mad and I'm going to take this city for God."

The problem with most men in our generation is that they have never really tried to do anything real hard in their life. The building of a work of God is hard, and the greater the success the harder it can become. God will give us strength if we stand when the battle rages. If we resist the Devil he will flee; it is a promise. If we move confidently back to fight again, the pressure will take the battle to the gate and cause the gates of Hell to finally fall in our city.

There are many things that could be pointed out that can help us in our task but the following are some things of special importance to those looking to establish Kingdom dominion.

## ***WORK HARD***

In starting a work it is a surprise how much work has to be done. A man must move his family into a city and set up his house. The beginning pastor must find a building, open checking accounts, set the building up, discover where the newspaper is, put up posters, and a multitude of other things that are difficult because he is doing them for the first time. Adding to the problem of doing all of this is the fact that no one is standing around yelling at him about getting the work done or even checking up in much detail, except maybe his wife who has a thousand vital errands to run to get their family settled. This makes it easy, in the stress of opening, to let a lot of things slip. Having a lackadaisical attitude, though, at this point is one of the most dangerous mistakes a man can make. In the opening of a church, chances are that the greatest impact will be made in the first few weeks. People will come that may never come back. There is an interest and a curiosity about this new church. God will bring in people who will become that core of beginning workers. So no matter how hard it is, it's vital to do our best and work hard from day one. Though it may seem you can never keep up the pace, you'll find that as you discover how to do things, and get those tied in that God gives, the task will take on a more natural feel. My wife and I just accept that it may take six months to ever get unpacked and moved in, but the church will be ready to roll the day of opening. In the first six to eight weeks of a church a most important stage of a church's life is launched and passed through.

## ***HAVE A PLAN***

Jesus warned about "half-built towers" and wars that can't be finished. Jesus knew where he was going, and he walked forward with unfaltering steps. In planting a church, it's important that the pastor stay ahead of what's happening. In order to do things right, planning is needed. Many a good idea has failed for lack of planning. For example, to pull off an outreach right you need time. Printing flyers and setting up impact teams takes more than a last minute slap-dash effort. It's not only important to start well, but to continue to do well. It is easy, when a church is small, to let things be done without a lot of preparation and thought. Sometimes we

can't help but learn to "shoot from the hip" and pull off some-thing at the last minute, but if it becomes a habit it's a serious mistake. People remember the bad service and the boring sermon long after they've forgotten a good music group or movie. It is better to do a few things well than to do everything poorly. Every service is a divine opportunity to impact people and needs to be thought of that way.

### ***K.I.S.S.***

This means "keep it simple stupid." The world thinks that the more complex something is, the greater it is. Jesus, though, kept the call of the church clear and obvious. The purpose of the church is to reach a lost world and to love each other in the process. A pastor can lose this in the complexity of church business. We find ourselves functioning as counselor, bookkeeper, advertising layout man, speaker, entertainer, janitor, psychologist, theologian, and whatever else needs to be done. It's important that in the middle of all this that we don't forget our simple roots and goals. Everything can be sacrificed except the will of God. It's important that we don't get so caught up in the press of what seems urgent that we lose track of what is vital.

I was challenged as I spoke to a man who's a leader in Campus Crusade for Christ. We were talking about the power of exampleship, and he began to share about how he recently spent the day with the head of the organization, Bill Bright. The surprise was that with all his responsibilities, travel and meetings, Dr. Bright still took time to share Jesus with several people that day. With thousands of people and huge responsibilities, he still remembers the simple roots that birthed it all. We, as pastors, are stewards of a simple vision and need to make sure that we stay with it.

### ***THINK SMALL***

Most men enter the ministry from a large church. They have seldom tried to preach to or deal with a small crowd. It can be a real shock to see a congregation of half a dozen when the Bible study at home had 45 regulars. It's great to dream of big churches, but God usually starts with

"mustard seeds." We need to be excited about a few as well as many. While we're thinking of the hundreds of people we would like to see in our church, the one or two people God wants to use slip by.

In the early days the rush of business keeps a man busy, but as things begin to slow down it's easy to lose the cutting edge and to spend time in a way that's not productive. It's important that a pastor on full support put in an eight hour day. With a full day ahead it's easy to procrastinate. However, revival seldom comes out of one big move. It comes out of a combination of many little moves, and this means keeping active and putting in a full day. Each small activity will be a seed planted that will, in the future, bear fruit. Many small seeds planted will ultimately bring a large crop.

### ***EXCUSES***

Shortly after you arrive in a new city, the Devil will clearly show you why it is impossible for camels to go through eyes of needles and you to have revival. As I have gone to other churches, I have passed through time and time again "the hardest city in the world to have revival in." Some of the more popular excuses are that the town is too big or too small. The town may be bound by a spirit of witchcraft, religion, pride, or maybe just old-fashioned sin. Many a revival has been ruled impossible because there is no park in the middle of town to have outreaches in, or too many churches exist already and there's just nobody left to get saved.

Instead of finding excuses we need to find solutions. There are hundreds of reasons why we think God can't move, but one reason that says he can is called the Bible. Revival is never easy, but it is never impossible either.

### ***MAJOR IN PEOPLE***

In the beginning work there is much time for study and laying foundations for the future, but it must be kept in the forefront that the pastor is there to meet the needs of people. In a small work, time must be invested in the people, and this can't be done in an office. Sermons can do much but

sometimes just a smile and a cup of coffee can do more than all the theology in all the books on Earth. Most people in the early days are looking less for a vision than for a friend, and the successful pastor must be accessible. Strong churches are not made on the basis of theology, but on the basis of family. Strong homes and people who care for one another are vital to the establishing of God's work.

### ***DON'T ELIMINATE ANYONE***

In the opening of a church it's easy to have a preconceived notion of what a good new convert is. We all look for that young, long-haired, strung-out dooper to put on our trophy rack. The only problem with this is that we may overlook critical people God is bringing in. We would run Paul off for being religious, and Nicodemus wouldn't even get a cup of coffee. Many new pastors haven't been around new converts for some time and they often miss God's plan. We can be too smart for our own good. This one's too religious, one's a rebel, another is too old or too young. We eliminate everyone. The effective salesman views every customer as a sale, and the best pastor sees anyone breathing as a possible child of God.

### ***BE FLEXIBLE***

In the early days of a church many strange and interesting varieties of Christians tend to wonder through. It's good to develop a certain sense of humor as you meet them. If someone comes up and gives you a hug, in most cases it will be better to endure it and smile than to make a scene by questioning their masculinity or accusing them of having ulterior motives. Many of them don't know any better and would just as soon act normal, but they have never met a real, sane, normal Christian before. A little grace can go a long way. The greatest asset that a beginning pastor has is a friendly smile and an ability to ignore what isn't important.

### ***AVOID CONFLICT***

It's vital to not fight battles that haven't been started. What can be done in an established church with committed people can't always be done in a new one. Until you've established credibility in a community, it's best not to stir up every devil in town. Though our pride may suffer when we don't pull out our six guns and blast away, our chances of success dramatically increase. In a small town, especially, it's hard to overcome a negative reputation if it's spread by respected people in the community. In the church service there is also a winning of allegiance that is more easily established when conflict is avoided wherever possible.

I remember on time in Payson when a nut had come into a revival service with Ron Jones. Whenever Ron made a good point, this guy would lean over and give his girlfriend a big kiss. I told Ron to nail him and was surprised later to find Ron praying for the guy instead of gutting him. When I asked why, he said, "You don't need a big fight. Those people will leave and never come back." He was right. The problem with gunfights is that innocent bystanders often get killed along with the bad guys.

### ***LAW OF 250***

One man noticed that at a funeral they passed out little cards about the person who had died. Being the curious type, he asked how they could know how many to print up. The owner replied that over time they had found that, on the average, about 250 people showed up at funerals. Later he went to a wedding and found that, on an average, 250 people came to a wedding also. This led to the formation of "The Law of 250". This man figured that in every person's life there are about 250 people who are close enough to show up when they are married or buried. This applies to the pioneer pastor in a very important way. Whenever you make a favorable impression on someone they will pass that on to a couple hundred of their friends. The opposite is true too, though. If a pastor were to offend about two people a week during movies or revivals, in one year the word will have spread to 28,000 people that he was a jerk and that his church was a place to stay away from.

## ***SERVANT***

We often need a new view of the ministry. We need a view of our job as less a place of respect than a place of often menial labor. Jesus didn't invite the disciples into the ivy coated walls of learning, but to the sweat and blister job of harvest in a desert land. The pastor of a large church receives respect and has many hands to help, but this must be forged out. The small church has many needs that are critical and must be taken care of by the pastor. Restrooms must be cleaned, rugs vacuumed, and chairs straightened. This is as much a part of calling as study is. People in the early days will have very little to give, but they will have many needs to be met. As God meets their needs and they begin to develop, one of the ministries' greatest rewards is knowing that we helped.

Don't be worried about being called pastor. If you serve those people, they will follow, and that is our calling. A doctor was just about to graduate from medical school when it dawned on him that he was going to have to work with sick people the rest of his life. He decided he didn't like sick people and switched to Law School. A prospective pastor needs to make sure that he wants to be a servant for the rest of his life.

## ***DESPERATE FOR FRUIT***

As a church begins to form and people begin to come in it's easy to become content. Jesus always attempted to place in people a desire that could overcome this tendency. He spoke of mansions in Heaven and harvests that must be reaped now. He knew that something had to keep us moving. There is no time to become satisfied with what has already been done. A church is one of the most delicate things in God's creation. I've held many dandelions, only to see them disappear in a puff of wind. The ministry must be kept with a fire under it, because if we're not going forward we will be headed backwards.

There is a law of gravity that effects every person. As long as a plane is going forward it can overcome that law of gravity, but when it stops going forward it begins to fall. The church and God's men were meant to keep forging ahead. Jesus said, "to whom much is given, much is required."



## ***DO SOMETHING***

Every beginning pastor has heard that it's his job to find God's will for a city. He has heard that there is no plan to follow or simple method that can be used to have revival, but that it is in him and God meeting to discover what will touch hungry hearts. This leads some to make a serious mistake, because while they wait to hear from God, they do nothing. It was while he was moving that Paul appeared to find most of God's direction. It is vital that a new church does something. This may sound stupid but it is a common problem. The church usually starts out with a well laid-out plan of attack; a few movies are set up or a revival is scheduled, the church begins to make an impact, and then there is a lull and momentum is lost.

You must do something to draw people in. Few people just drop in to catch a church service. Activities alone will accomplish nothing but the spending of money, but prayer alone creates a wonderful environment that nobody enters into. Therefore the two must be combined, and an action has to take place as a point that faith can act on.

## ***LOAD THE FERRIS WHEEL***

In the amusement park you get on the Ferris wheel and spin around a few times. Then some people get off and others get on and you spin some more. They always know that the seats have to be kept full. In a church it's important to keep the seats full, too. This means that there need to be activities happening all the time to bring people in. Roger Fisher called Brother Mitchell up once, worried about how to grow, and he responded, "That's the eternal question, isn't it? The only thing that I know is that you have to have more people coming in than are going out." This is a simple but profound truth.

As a pastor begins to get a few people, he can find if he's not careful that all his time is taken up trying to perfect them. There must always be outreach going on or the seats on the Ferris wheel soon start coming around empty.

## ***NUTS AND PHARISEES***

The pastor needs to have a redemptive attitude that looks to salvage whoever God brings in. There is a danger, though, that a man's time can be completely absorbed by just a couple of people.

This is especially true with people out of a religious background or people who are bizarre. These kinds of people love to absorb all your time and repay you with two tons of problems. They usually have no intention of listening to what you have to suggest. It's vital to make sure that one or two people are not keeping you from the others in the church who need your help.

## ***BEATING A DEAD HORSE***

It's easy to just do what everybody else does. We schedule the same movies and the same revivals. That's fine, as long as it works, but it can be suicide if it's not succeeding. Once you've shown Gospel Blimp and it doesn't work don't do it again. Beware of doing things just to do them and falling into a siege mentality. It must have gotten old going around and around the mountain out in the wilderness, because no one would find out what God was trying to say. If certain approaches aren't working then it's vital to get hold of God and find out what will. It's easier to imitate than it is to be creative, but in most cities you soon find that what worked for others may not work for you. Let God speak, and find the timing and will of God for your city. You must find a way to reach people.

## ***EXCITEMENT***

In talking to pastors the one thing that kept coming up was the need to keep the victory. A pastor can't afford the luxury of discouragement. How you act will soon infect that congregation. This is harder than it would seem in a small church, because you may become so involved in people's lives that your faith will begin to crumble under the weight of their compounded crisis. The pastor seldom can solve more than a few of these impossible dilemmas, but the miracle of the gospel is that if those people continue to

serve God, with His help, the problems will solve themselves. This will only happen, though, if they can see hope radiating from you.

Another major attack on our victory is when people come, seem to be ready to tie in and then get mad over something in the church. This can be a devastating experience in a new work. They may be upset over speaking in tongues, offerings, commitment, or anything else. If we place our hope in people we'll always live in defeat, but if we place our hope in God, He'll raise us above the problems and hassles to a place of confidence in His calling and destiny.

### ***DON'T QUIT***

Presumption is a killer to the new pastor. It's the sin of pride that causes a man to think that everyone but him will have trouble starting a church. There is a little of this in the heart of every man, but God has ways of bringing us to face the truth. Jesus' words in John 16:33 must have set minds and hearts racing as He said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." What excitement must have run through the disciples. They knew Rome was too small to stop them, and they were ready to march anywhere against anything. Yet a few hours later, like a balloon with a leak, all their militancy was gone before the evidence of defeat obvious in the cross. One committed suicide, but the rest hung on to see that the words Jesus spoke were true. Trouble will come to those who stand for God. Mountains do arise, but patience and work have always won through. Jesus has overcome the world.

At times it may seem that everything has fallen apart, but I've found that if I just don't quit God always comes through. After the crucifixion Thomas was a mess. He called everybody a liar, but he did come to church and Jesus verified his call and re-established his faith. Many a man of God has found himself like Elijah under the juniper bush complaining, but if they keep going God sends angels to strengthen and meets them with a revelation of himself.

### ***DRUDGERY***

A major reason for our despair is the lack of romance we find in spiritual battle. Pastor Mitchell nailed this down in one of his sermons when he said, "This is the 'now generation.' This is the generation that's never known want. Sometimes we get a wrong idea about spiritual things because we're a part of a generation that's never known drudgery. Sometimes we send young workers out, and they go out to plant churches, and they have the idea that all you need is the right formula, the right city, and enough money. Then their city is just going to come together like magic. They have the idea that all you have to do is go 'poof', and you're going to send reports back to the home church, saying, 'Pastor we've been out three weeks now and you don't need to send any more money. The church is self-supporting. We've got 185 people! It's wonderful!' This is our mentality. We hate drudgery. However, drudgery is as necessary to call out the treasures of the mind as the harrowing and planting of the earth."

"Sometimes God brings us into situations to teach us the very principle of drudgery which is Heaven-born, and is applied on Earth to give us a correct balance and perspective in life. Someone has said, 'Of all the work that produces results, nine-tenths must be drudgery.' We don't like that! This is the generation of of f the magic formula. It's an awful enlightenment when young pastors and they find that building a church is work. They were waiting for the day when they would be kissed by the mother church and sent out. Then they can get three new suits and cruise with the big boys. Instead, they get out and find out that building churches is work."

As part of the TV generation I thought every problem should be solved in a half hour to an hour. But life soon teaches us another lesson. Most of the things of value come more out of duty than emotion. I learned that much of ministry is doing right in the face of opposition and seeming unfruitfulness day after day, because it's right.

### ***ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD***

Paul said, "If we suffer with Him we will also reign with Him." Dominion comes not out of something so easy as confession, but the hard

school of experience and pain. Jesus talked of crosses and cups to drink, because the job was a real job. Somewhere we must learn that the world is a broken, hurting and cursed place and feel some of the pain that God feels. Paul discovered that weakness bred strength, and that God wouldn't let him win all the battles. This is why it's so vital to remember Paul's great words, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." What happens to you, Paul says, is what you've got coming. Jesus fasted and overcame temptation. Jacob wrestled the angel and limped away with a new name and authority. The prophets seldom spoke from comfortable platforms, and life is made in the struggle. Hell crumbles before a man of God who, like Paul, can't be turned back by opposition or difficulty. The benefits of ministry are found in the struggle out of which comes dominion and authority.

### ***DISCIPLINE SELF***

In the world, most men live by punching a clock, but in the church there is no clock to punch. A man must control his own life and time or else it slips away like sand from an hour glass. Many of the seemingly mysterious failures of ministry are caused by nothing more than laziness. Oracles of God are not born but made. They are shaped in the crucible of study and prayer. As a church is growing, there is a reality to the barriers that seem to hold back the church. In breaking through these, one important area is to bring greater control into a life. Discipline allows us to do more with greater concentration of spiritual force and power.

In the battles of church growth, we all have highs and lows. All men in the Bible had periods of despondency and lost hope, but it is discipline that will bring a man through those crucial hours. God wants to help develop a man into godly habits. If in depression he stops praying, reading, working and gives in to his despair a crop of failure will soon be reaped.

### ***NUMBERS***

Since David counted Israel and was cursed, man has battled with the numbers game. The ego of the beginning pastor is tied to the response of

people. His fear is of coming home with no report of victory, and so he's consumed with the rise and fall of the numbers. Every pastor is concerned about who comes, but this can't become the focus of our victory or defeat. God will bring in what we can handle. He can fill a church in a day or cause it never to rise. As a pastor I must serve because I'm a servant, not because of how many people I have. I recall the first time I saw Ron Jones preach and heard him declare, "If you don't come I'll preach to the chairs." Something in his determination moved me. At an outreach in which we had made a large investment there were few people who came, but Pastor Jones showed no defeat when he said, "God must be into quality tonight and not quantity." Here is the soil of faith and the release of a God that can win by many or few. We must look beyond numbers by faith to God who determines the course of the battle.

### ***TOUGH LOVE***

An unhealthy desire for people can cause us to cheapen our stand on what we have been raised up to believe. No one respects what costs them nothing. America has little time for the church because it's cheapened grace to the point Jesus is pictured as trying to get sinners to please serve Him no matter how they live. In dealing with people there is a delicate balance between being redemptive and chasing people like a guy who's so desperate to be married he always proposes on the first date.

Only God can ultimately tie people in. You can baby people forever and never actually help them. To be real, love must be tough. In the name of helping people we can't make the cross easier or side step a denial of the world. Jesus loved, but it was never cheap, and it never came without cost.

### ***CRISIS***

Naturally pastors like things when they go along smoothly. The problem is that few small churches are ever smooth. Believe it or not this can be good. Out of crisis is when all miracles happen. It was in sinking boats and resurrections that faith grew biggest, and it's in the conflicts of life that God has the greatest chance to be glorified. As a young pastor I despaired at the

continuing problems that seemed to haunt the church. Nothing destroyed my faith more than the problems that seemed to arise right when God seemed to be moving the greatest. Then Ron Jones shared with me that God was using the crisis to tie people in. He pointed out how nothing brings loyalty in people like an impossible situation that somehow, God, you and they get through. Pharaoh had to try to kill the Jews before Moses could step on the stage as God's hero. God often has to let people face life's crisis before they can let God be God and commit themselves to the church of Jesus Christ.

### ***GOD'S COPS***

It's easy to think that as a pastor, we have to straighten out the world. The only problem with this is that we're not equipped for the task. During the Millennium when Jesus rules with a rod of iron, I'm sure many a frustrated moral patroller will finally find happiness. But in the world we live in we are called more to declare the truth than to enforce it. The preacher's job is to lift up Jesus. People must make their own decisions on what they will do with truth, but if you try to run their life and force them to live a certain way only frustration lays ahead. You will soon find you can only help where help is wanted.

Jesus led sheep. He called, and expected them to hear and to follow. He never stooped to being a pig-herder, driving humanity into heaven. Ultimately what people do or don't do comes down to their own choice to serve or not to serve God.

### ***MONEY***

In the struggling work there will be many temptations with money. It's vital to remember that how we handle our financial obligations will affect the whole future of our ministry. No danger in the Bible caused more irreversible downfall of the men of God. Prepare to be tested in your belief in liberality as you face the pressures of bills, blessing evangelists, and relieving pressure on the home church. It's easy to hide things or redirect money, but this has spiritual consequences.

Another major danger to the struggling pastor is seeing people only as dollar bills. As support begins to be cut off and bills begin to mount it is easy to forget that a pastor is a servant to people. A man can begin to lose a vision for souls in his desire to see full offering plates. This will kill fruitfulness as people rapidly detect a wrong attitude. It's better to relieve the pressures of finances by working than it is to try to get blood out of a turnip.

## **WAR**

In all of this is the thought that we are called to a real battle in which all of our actions lead to defeat or victory. I don't like storms and troubles but what I like or don't like makes no difference in the reality of life. God's people are at war, and the Bible everywhere deals with this conflict. The New Testament is full of illustrations of battle. Our call is to put on armor, to fight the good fight, to war a good warfare, to run, box, and wrestle. Even the word of God itself is called a sword. All of the keys in the world can be summed up with the simple thought, just fight. If you have no great techniques or foot work, then just lead with your face and fight. If we fight we may be hit but we'll land a few also and hell must tremble and ultimately fall.



# **DISCIPLESHIP**

## **PRACTICAL THOUGHTS FOR THE BEGINNING WORKER**

**by Wayman Mitchell**

As the fellowship has grown it has become more common to find pastors who do not understand many of the founding principles. Because of this, Brother Mitchell began to do some seminars to help these branch churches. This is a seminar that he did in November of 1983 in Colorado.

### ***PHYSICAL PROPERTY***

One of the most basic and yet important things in the new church is the physical property itself. We all come from different backgrounds, and therefore have different ideas of what is acceptable in building maintenance. Somewhere we get the idea that, as a pastor, we now function on some spiritual plane where, if we just breathe, God will somehow do everything else. The reality is that there are a vast number of things that have a bearing on our ministry and how it affects people. One of these is the physical property that we are in. In going to other churches, I was astounded by how many people gave no thought to lawns, trees, paint, or basic building appearance. In the first church I pastored they had dumped debris, junk, partitions, and old broken chairs into the cellar opening which was right at the entrance to the church. This was appalling to me.

I have a hang up on cleaning. Today in Prescott, if I find a wad of paper or any kind of trash, I stop right there and pick it up and take it to the trash can. This is really important and there are many people that will not attend a church just because of the filth. They will come one time to visit, but will be unable to take the disorderliness and will never return. This

means that it is vital that the church present an orderly and clean environment.

One of the most important things in the church is the sign. There is nothing that I hate worse than a home-made sign. When a man goes out he has orders not to let his brother-in-law practice his artistic skills, even at half the price, on our property. My orders to him are to go to a professional sign painter, tell him what you want and let him lay it out professionally. People will judge your ministry by your sign. I was just back in Illinois ministering for Joe Campbell, and he took me by to see where the old church had been. A Jesus Only group has the building now and, sure enough, they have a cheap looking, home-made sign with hand-made lettering that tells you exactly what is going on in there. When I go to do business in the work world I know that if I go to a place that looks like a shady operation, then I have no way of knowing what kind of service I'm going to get. When you have a good professional job done, then people know with one look that you mean business.

It is important also to decide the colors you want to use. Many people don't realize that red and white are the worst colors that you can get. There are many colors that do not catch the eye at all. It has been discovered that people do react to colors. One of the best combinations of colors that you can get for a sign is black and orange. These colors will catch you immediately, even in a group of signs.

Just as important is the color of the building. I pastored a church at one time with red carpet and blue trim. There is something about red that irritates the human spirit and will affect everything about the service. If you go into a business you can see that they study color scheme; in a fast food place you will see that they use orange and brown. This is because after about thirty minutes they make you uncomfortable and you will eat and leave. You say, 'the Holy Ghost will overcome all this.' The Holy Ghost is having enough trouble fighting human nature as it is, and if you add to the problems of dealing with people, then you are cutting your own throat. You need to make a study of neutral tones and mild colors that help create an atmosphere in which people are open and receptive.

Lighting is extremely important. All of us at times have functioned with less than ideal situations, but we can do much to help control our environment. Lighting will affect the whole service, so it's vital to get a building that is lit as well as it can be. This is especially true around the pulpit. This will help the speaker to see and the people to focus on him. I pastored a church in Australia that was old and the spotlights shone in the eyes of the people as they tried to see the speaker. The first thing I did when I got there was to get a guy on a ladder and have them moved back, because this was an irritant and strain that had a bad effect on the people.

One of the first questions I ask of a new pastor when he calls to tie down a building is, 'How high is the ceiling and what kind of lighting does it have?' In a building with a high ceiling you have an airspace that allows people to gather and not be roasted. You put 75 people in a building that only has an eight foot ceiling and they are asphyxiated by body heat, and it will tremendously affect your services. It is also a fact that if there is incandescent light you will not get enough light and the bulbs will throw off a tremendous amount of heat. The only way you can overcome this is to go to the expense of putting in fluorescent lighting. These are the questions that I ask in order to make a decision on a building.

Another area of concern is the pulpit. The pulpits in use in many churches are atrocious. When you're young and have 20/20 vision you think that it isn't really important, but there are many people who are getting over thirty and to them this is another story. When you start to wear glasses it is much more difficult to read notes. You then need a pulpit of standard height, with a slanting surface that has something on it that isn't slick. In many churches you are forced to do a juggling act with your Bible and notes. It's a very simple and inexpensive thing to put construction paper on the pulpit. This will allow you to keep your notes up at the top of the pulpit and allow you to keep eye contact. Eye contact is a very important part of communication, but any preacher worth his salt will preach from notes. If a preacher doesn't use notes you won't want him back for a second time because he will say the same thing. It is very simple to get a pulpit at a height that allows you to glance down without losing contact with your audience, see your notes and keep a flow going. Attention is kept by eye contact. If a man tries to speak without looking at the audience, he will hold

them for six to seven minutes; at which point they will begin to drift off and fall asleep. If you don't believe this, try preaching to one half of your congregation and only keeping eye contact with them, then look back to the other side. The people will have drifted off.

### ***COMMUNION***

Another thing you need to give consideration to is communion. When you go out to pioneer, you will pick up some religious people who are good people. They'll come in, put in their tithe and become good workers; they've been looking for something like this. Most of them, before very long, will begin to ask you, "When are we going to have communion?"

I was talking to Ray Hendrick in Australia about this. Over there, every Sunday is communion time, even in Pentecostal churches. There is no evangelism and no altar call on Sunday morning because that is communion time. That's the way it is, that's the way it has always been; it is an established ritual. I told Ray, "You'd be wise to have communion before too long. It's not going to make you or break you, and you can have your own convictions about how often it ought to be served. A year from now you can minister your own convictions about it, but for now, it wouldn't be caving in to their religious nature or compromising, to serve communion, preach on the blood of Christ, and send them off happy. They won't ask you about it again for six months." It's only wisdom in a new church.

### ***SUNDAY SCHOOL***

Another thing that is important is Sunday school. It may not seem important to you, especially if you don't have children, but most people in America think that Sunday school is the vehicle for training their children. It really isn't, but they believe it is. You're not going to overcome in an hour of school what is learned in the home the rest of the week, but it is valuable. Most people who visit your church will think it's important for their children to have Christian training. They will size up your church on the basis of whether or not you have a Sunday school. If you have over fifty people in

your congregation you should definitely have a Sunday school, because it will do a number of things for your church:

**FIRST:** It will form a basis for visiting families to identify with your church.

**SECOND:** It will release workers and force them into the word of God, in order to teach whatever age group they are given. This helps them to discipline their minds and, astoundingly, the responsibility will cause them to be more faithful.

**THIRD:** It gives you responsibility for teaching an adult class. The main reason preachers don't want to have an adult Sunday school is because they already have to prepare three sermons a week and they don't want to add one more. This is because they are lazy. However, the additional study in the different fields that a Bible study will lead you into will bring depth to your preaching and will compute back into stronger, better messages in the months and years to come.

**FOURTH:** It gives you a platform to deal with problems in your congregation that you couldn't deal with in a sermon. You will be dealing mostly with the core of the church and you'll be able to cover things in a depth and intensity which you couldn't in a sermon.

**FIFTH:** If you are a wise teacher and you allow interaction, it allows you to involve people at their level, and not at the level you think they are. This allows you to ask questions and receive their response, and that brings an uncovering of human nature. (You will be astounded at how many people have no idea what you are preaching; if you don't believe this, just ask them some questions next Sunday.)

I was amused Sunday morning to see the unfaithful out faithfully. We were involved in a Christmas program on Sunday morning for the toddlers. Mom and Dad followed along because junior was in the Christmas program. If you say, 'I'm not going to do that,' then go ahead and minister to your five and be happy. If you are going to build a large congregation, you are going to have to learn to minister to a large diversity of needs. There are people who will never be fully committed to a church, but those people have an

influence on the community and witness to people. They will talk about your church, and not harm you, if you'll minister to them as they are and hope that some day something will happen that will shake them and allow God to do as He likes. The wise pastor allows them to become a positive force in the community and doesn't run them off.

### ***NEW CONVERTS CLASS***

Another vital force in a beginning work is a new converts class. In Prescott we do this on Sunday morning during the Sunday school hour. In many churches, they do this on a different night. The problem is that these people are already heavily involved in church activities.

When this is done on Sunday morning, several things happen. Instead of doing this yourself, you can allow another ministry to be started. Some pastors feel that these new people are not qualified, but pastors aren't qualified, either. Anyone who has been saved six months is able, and if they're saved and love your church, they won't harm you. You merely use simple materials and help them to answer any questions beyond their ability. This will develop a worker and lay a solid foundation in these new converts.

### ***OVERKILL***

Another great problem in a congregation is a pastor who feels in-secure and is trying to establish his throne. He does what I call overkill. This happens when he feels his authority is threatened, or the well being of his future is in danger. Overkill means to take extreme measures in a minor infraction. It is important that we not die on the wrong battlefield.

We had a young pastor in Australia, and there was a Senator who would come down on the weekends and attend this man's church once or twice a month. This young pastor could not appreciate that this man had been saved for a long period of time. He had many interests, and did help the church by his giving and by acting as a Christian influence in that area. The pastor had a testimony service and said, 'We only want those that are member of this church to testify.' The Senator stood up and the young

pastor told him that he was not a member of the church and they didn't want him to testify, and to sit down. This devastated the Senator. He wasn't a psycho or a demon, he was just a man that had something to say. He couldn't have said anything that was that devastating, but this pastor's ego was threatened because this man didn't attend every service. This was totally unnecessary and whatever influence the Senator had in that community is now negative.

We need to be sure that we're not guilty of this. I have problems in my congregation, and we will always have problems. Pastoring is just moving from one mess to another, but that's what it's all about. The tendency is to thump the pulpit on Sunday morning and think that you can get these problems all straightened out. So you jump on your white horse with your shining armour and charge. This is the worst mistake that you can make. This doesn't mean that I never deal with problems, but I deal with them in a different way. If I do preach about people's problems I first get them laughing, and then pull out the blade, or I wait until God gives me a "release" to minister. People think sometimes that I'm ignorant about what it going on, but the fact is there is very little that is going on in the congregation that I don't know about. The "Spiritual Mafia" will bring it to you. One thing you need to learn is that the facts are not always how they seem. If sister so-and-so comes to you and says this-and-such has happened, and you go run off on your horse and preach on that, or go to those people's house and say, "I've heard about this." then you are a very immature person. You will find that generally their facts were not right, and the situations may not be at all like it was told to you. In fact, the person that brought you the information may be the guilty party. If you are not careful you're going to go out and get yourself caught up in a hornet's nest and come out with a bloody nose.

There are people problems and doctrinal problems that if you address from the pulpit will cause some people to be offended and to become your opponent. People come from different back-grounds, and are not always in agreement with all that we do, but I don't mount the pulpit in 'Holy Anger'. I merely bide my time, waiting for God's opportunity. In a recent case there was a man who didn't believe in tithing. It just so happened that in Sunday school we were looking at giving and worship. I devastated the young man,

but he had no opportunity to say, "This man is shooting at me", because this was a normal part of my study. We are still friends and things are fine. In many cases, if you will just have patience, these people will come to you and ask for your advice. Then you can, with tact, address the problem. My responsibility is to try and salvage these people. Don't be involved in overkill. Don't be shooting flies with cannon balls.

### ***DISCIPLINE***

The next thing a young pastor needs to know is discipline. I'm astounded that some of our new churches don't have regular established prayer meetings. I thought everybody in our fellowship knew that this was an important facet of our ministry. I was praying at a regular time when there wasn't anyone in our churches praying. I have gone to prayer meetings when no one showed, or the only person to come was thirty minutes late. What you are going to have to do is discipline your life! These prayer meetings are a result of your leading and becoming an example. Don't wait for someone to come and say "Let's have a prayer meeting." This is a part of what we believe. If you are going to have God move, you are going to have to lay hold of God. You need both private and corporate prayer. Establish that you are going to be there praying whether or not anyone else shows up. To accomplish a discipline of prayer in your church, you're going to have to preach on it. When I returned to Prescott from Australia, the prayer meetings had dwindled down to "pee-didly-bunk." In the third sermon I preached I said, "Folks, tomorrow morning at 7:00 I want to challenge you to join me here in prayer. I want to challenge you to join me one hour before each service in prayer. I will be here and I want you to join me." This caused it to multiply overnight.

The discipline that you have in prayer is really important. You're going to have to seek God yourself, and you're going to have to set the example in corporate prayer.

### ***AUTHORITY***



The real miracle is that these people keep coming to your church at all. New pastors waste a lot of time trying to prove that they are God's man of faith and power, and that if you dare cross them you will probably drop dead. If they serve people, they will know who the shepherd is. It's sad that a guy gets a set of credentials and then feels that he has to be called Reverend. A man gets hung up on some title and says "don't call me Wayman, call me Pastor." I've been called a lot worse things than Wayman, and if nobody calls me any worse than that I'll be happy forevermore. It doesn't bother me a bit, and I don't have to get up and say, "Folks, I'm the pastor, remember?" That is a bunch of garbage and you'll not find that in scripture, in fact, you'll find the opposite. You are brethren and the only claim that you have is that of function. You are not any better than those people. You are simply the chairman of that congregation with the responsibility to organize, coordinate, serve, and bring these people to fruition.

### ***STREET PREACHING***

Street preaching is a valid ministry that from time to time all of us are involved in. Every city is different in relation to this. Some cities have places that are especially conducive to outreaches and street preaching. It may be a school, a hamburger stand, or a certain part of the city, but I will give you a little word to the wise; When you street preach it has to be with a rhythm. If you allow your people to overdo this in any one place it will destroy your effectiveness. The first outreach will be tremendous, maybe the second and third will be fantastic, but about the fourth time, you'll get the tomatoes and next the eggs. Then it will turn into nothing but an antagonism session. This is something that has been seen time and time again. You will always have some nut who has no platform to speak, and is totally uninhibited. He is in every congregation, and once he gets a group of people standing behind him, he now has a platform. He will do you more harm than good. If you are wise, you will control your street preaching. I'm not talking about people witnessing or passing out tracts, but as you stand and address the public, it must be done with rhythm. This simply means that you do it one week, then don't the next. This allows you to escape the antagonism . There are certain

places that are made for street preaching. In Perth we had the Hay Street Mall, a beautiful place in a large metropolitan area, with the street blocked off, beautiful planters and decorative brick. You could go there and pass out 5,000 fliers before you could even blink an eye. Is one of the most beautiful places for an outreach that I have ever seen. The police will even keep the an eye. drunks and perverts away from you. There was a constant stream of visitors and converts out of that mall, but I know merchants, and if we had overdone it we would have stopped what God was doing.

We had one guy in the church who just had to preach there every week. He was one of those fringe lunatics who has no platform to speak. He wanted to use our covering and go preach. I said, "No!" You can go down every Thursday and pass tracts, but you're only going to have a street meeting once a month." The merchants don't like these meetings but they don't know what to do since it's not illegal. If you press it too hard, somehow they are going to get an ordinance passed and cut out everything.

You may go out in a shopping center and have full liberty right now, but if you turn your nuts loose to put out four tons of before literature three times a week, it's only a some matter of time before they get some kind of law to stop you. In some places, young pastors have so antagonized their community that they can't even have a street meeting anymore. With a little wisdom you can keep a forum for the gospel.

Most shopping malls, if overworked, will begin to harass you with security guards and such. Legally, you can go any place America and pass out literature. This has been won in the Supreme Court, and you have a right to do this. In your local area, however, it will cost you several thousand dollars to establish that, and it really isn't worth it. If you could go into a shopping mall and win 40 or 50 people a day to the Lord, it would be worth your investment of \$10,000 to win the case. The interesting thing about shopping malls is that they change managers, and if you just wait, it will open again. We have seen this happen in Prescott.

On Halloween we had four nuts dress up like demons and go out to a shopping mall and scare some little kid half to death. We had no idea that this was happening until we got word that an elderly lady nearly had a heart attack after they came up and growled at her and told her she was going to

hell. I got a call from the police and had to give orders to the skit team that they were not to go out on the streets without my permission. These are things that your people will do, and they will think they have done a great service to the Kingdom. The merchants rose up and called the police, but we just pulled out. Now, a year later our people can go there and pass out literature with no hassles. It is really not worth the time and money to fight, so just back off, pray about it, and find another place for outreach.

### ***CATERING TO ALL GROUPS***

As you grow you will find a large variety of people that you will be ministering to. In many of our congregations this is a problem. The worst place I ever ran into this was in Australia. Our people got to where they would do anything but tear the windows out of the building when it was time to praise. When a visiting speaker came up they would whistle, stomp, rattle song books, jump up and down, and give catcalls. When I went back last year, I told Mike, "I'm going to quiet your people down." In any congregation there will be exhibitionists who can't relate to or talk to anyone, but in praise they have a wonderful platform where they can exhibit themselves. These are the people who will scream or catcall during the time that we are supposed to be worshipping God. In Prescott we had a woman who used to come to every revival. She was a screamer. We don't want to offend people, and we really do enjoy freedom in the spirit, but this woman would let go with these blood curdling screams. Finally, I made up my mind that I wasn't going to put up with it any longer. I sat a great big usher on each side of her and told them that when she yelled to put their arms on her shoulder and say "Pastor doesn't want any more of that. If you continue we will throw you out." Sure enough, she manifested, but after they spoke to her there was not another sound out of her. You may think she was having some powerful religious experience, but all this really was her flesh rising up.

In Australia, with one sermon on the difference between worship and praise, I solved the whole problem. You may have elderly people in your congregation. If they have nerve problems, a whistle will absolutely destroy them. It's like putting a knife through their head. If you see them put their

hands to their ears, it's not because they're devils. It is simply because their ears are in extreme pain. There are many elderly folks like that. There are young people who will think that it has made their day if they can get by some older person, who they think is a religious devil, and during the praise service, let out a piercing whistle and get them to cover their ears. In my sermon I used the illustration; if you want to thank your wife for cooking you a delicious apple pie, try leaning over her and giving an ear-splitting whistle. We come before God and are going to tell Him how much we love and adore Him, and we let out a whistle. Scripturally, you will find that this will not hold up. I, biblically, took the word and showed that worship is just worth-ship. Worship is "giving God our adoration and adulation for who He is. A close word to praise is prize; giving to God thanksgiving for what he has done, and is doing. Then praise is literally a vocalizing "of our appreciation for who God is; His Person and His Majesty as King of Kings."

Some of the extreme manifestations that we get into are counter-productive. As long as you are ministering to a young group of people, it doesn't really matter. You could do hand springs down the aisle and they would think it was great. As you begin to minister to a larger group of people, though, you will find many who are bothered when people are just exhibiting themselves. If you just minister to hippies, the more bizarre you are the more they like it, but if you want to begin to minister all classes of people, you must realize that there are some things you are not going to be able to do all the time. I'm not talking about making your church into a morgue, but laying a scriptural foundation for your worship and getting them to worship.

### ***VIEWING YOUR CONGREGATION AS A FORCE***

You need to view your congregation correctly. You will either view them as a field in which to reap, or as a force to which you are called to equip and motivate. That will completely change the way you express yourself in the community. If you feel that the action happens by your reaping in that assembly, you will act and preach in a way that will handicap revival. Whereas, if you see that congregation as a force that you are going

to equip and motivate to go out into the field, your attitude toward those people will be revolutionized. You need to feed these people more than you correct them. The average pastor feels that it is his job to straighten his people out, so that is the direction of all of his preaching. This is especially true about straightening out doctrine. The problem is that you can go into any congregation and be astounded at what people really believe. The important thing is that they are effective people who serve God and are soul winners. In the process of time many of them change their doctrine, but they don't change because you convince them. They change because they love you and believe in you. If you are going to believe a certain way then they'll believe it too. You will never straighten anyone out by sitting down with them and saying "You're wrong!" The only way that you will ever change their beliefs is to win them to yourself, and as they believe in you they will become open and change to believe what you believe.

If the average pastor finds that someone has a Jehovah's Witness background, or a Mormon background, he feels that he has to mount his white horse and ride in to do battle. This is the worst mistake you can make. You need to pray for those people rather than attack them. It's an astounding thing, but the people whom I become concerned about and begin to pray for, God will bring to me. Then I can deal with them on the basis of their coming to me with a question or for counselling. This opens a door through which I can naturally move in and deal with their need. Someone has said, "Honey draws more flies than vinegar."

You need to begin to trust that through time and prayer, God will change people when your wisdom won't. You may think that you are slick, but I have news for you, only God can change these people! Paul writes in Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail again until Christ be formed in you." What is he saying? These people had gone astray. He is praying and trusting God to form in them again the right spiritual reference point and posture. You need to learn to do this also.

You need to learn to lead more and drive less. You lead by example. You challenge them to join you. They won't pray because you preach a fantastic sermon on prayer and you yell, "You devils need to begin to pray!" They will nod and say, "That's exactly right," but they won't do it. They will

do what they see you do. People are not good at taking orders at all. We hate taking orders, and rebel against it, but we are fantastic imitators. People do what they see others doing joyfully. They'll do anything you want them to do if you give them an example. If you want to make them Bible students, preach the word of God.

Norman Moon, coming out of a Nazarene background, said that he had never seen a group of men who preached the word of God like the men in our fellowship. The reason they do this is that thirteen years ago they saw another man preach the word of God and now these men preach the word of God. Their disciples imitate them and we have a whole fellowship; when you hear them preach, you will hear the word of God. Not every group of pastors is doing this, and the reason they aren't is that their examples aren't.

People will do what they see you do. If you want them to be liberal, make sure that when offering time comes that you have a buck to put in. When there are pledges taken for outreach, put your pledge in, too. You lead them, and the word will get around that you believe in giving and are doing it. One thing I always try to do, whether I'm preaching a revival or I'm at home, is to have some-thing in my pocket to give. Sometimes I forget, but nevertheless I make a real effort.

### ***PROBLEMS WITH ATTITUDES***

All of us struggle at different times with our attitude. We come Wednesday night and the flu has wiped out half of the congregation, or the deer season/hall the holiday season is here; whatever it is, the saints are not there. You have this fantastic sermon that you were going to preach, but now you're mad because they're gone. You get up and begin to harangue those who are there about the "devils" who didn't come. You need to be wise. They never even missed those folks until you mentioned it, but now that you have, they wonder what's wrong and why nobody's coming to church. You need to understand human nature. If only half the congregation shows up, you need to say, "Praise God! You folks are a fantastic group! Isn't it tremendous what God is doing? We're thrilled at having you here!" When you point out the problem, you not only defeat yourself, but now they

feel bad, or else they're asking questions about if this is a church split or something. Either way you've destroyed the service. If you will just minister what God gave you, you will see that over a short period of time, the wanderers will return and they won't be able to stay away will begin to tell others, "You missed a great sermon!"

You accomplish your purpose, not by haranguing the people who are there about the people who aren't, but by blessing the who do show up. The news will spread that you better not miss Wednesday night [or whatever service] because that is where the action is.

### ***CHAIRS***

Many of you have folding or stacking chairs in your buildings, and it is important how many you put out and how you arrange them. In the Prescott Church, we had a real need [because of the conferences] for extra seating. My greatest fear was that we wouldn't grow into these seats. Most of the churches have moveable chairs, but with pews you can't take them out or close them off. There is a strange phenomenon that I noticed years ago; people have a tendency to scatter if there is an excess of seating, This tremendously affects the entire spirit of the service. I began, years ago, to pull all the chairs into one area so the people wouldn't scatter out. In the Prescott church, if we had a revival that wasn't clicking and the attendance dropped to 300 [which in our church can look like nobody's there] I'd turn off the lights in the outside sections and force people to sit together, in the center. This revolutionized the song service, and affected the retention level of the people.

I read, about five years ago, about an experiment done on communication. It confirmed what I had already discovered by accident.

In this experiment they had four different settings. There was a large building with people scattered all over; there was one group forced to sit in a small area; there was a house meeting where people were allowed to scatter all over the house, and another where people sat very close, some even had to sit on others' laps. The same speaker presented the same controversial message to all the groups and afterward they gave the people

a survey to find the persuasion level. To his astonishment, when the people were forced to come together, they somehow triggered each other to be persuaded. The highest persuasion level of all was when they were crammed into a house. He came to the conclusion that when people are allowed to scatter, they don't participate but become spectators. When brought together, something about human nature and group dynamics causes them to be more easily persuaded, and to affect each other. You may be too spiritual for this, but for the rest of us, let's bring this back to our church. Take out the extra chairs in your church. Depending on what you're running, use only as many chairs as you need, or even ten less. Stack the extras in the back neatly, and then as the congregation comes in they will be forced to pull together. As visitors come in your ushers can set up other chairs. You would be astounded at what happens to people when they see the ushers putting up extra chairs. They don't count, and all they know is that revival has struck. There may not be anyone extra there, but it will appear that way. A person who is ex-cited about what they are doing is of far greater impact than one who is not. When people are pulled together the altar call will be dramatically affected by the group dynamics. You need to learn to deal with human nature as it is.

### ***PULPIT MANNERISMS***

From time to time I find a pastor whose ego depends on the response level of the crowd. They will make a statement like, "Jesus is King, amen?" Four people half-heartedly say "amen," so he screams out, "I said amen!" Then they give him the response he's looking for. People may get in the habit of responding to this, but they won't like it. There is nothing worse than someone in the pulpit trying to intimidate people. There is nothing that upsets me more than to go into a service and find a song leader who thinks he's running some kid's program singing 'ring-around-the-rosey.' If you want men, then sing men's choruses. They can harangue all they want to and try to force people to sing, but I'm not about to sing those stupid songs, I don't care what you think. If you keep pushing and intimidating people, they will find another place to go to church.



Young ministers have a problem in this area. They try to make people respond. You can push until the people, like robots, parrot back their response, but people who are independent-minded self-motivators will not put up with this, and you are defeating your purpose. You will either quit or they will find another place to go to church.

You can go over to New Mexico and preach and the people will interrupt you with spontaneous applause. You have to stop because they are going wild. These people are Latins. Latins are naturally responsive. When I go to Ruben Reyna's church I feel like the greatest preacher that ever lived. I say things that don't seem great to me, but they will break the place up. They are praising God and I have to stop and be quiet while they praise. In Australia the people are different. I can preach the same sermon to the Australians and they will just look at me. The response level is different. Their emotional .and personality traits are different. We had Bill Coolidge, who is probably one of the best communicators in our entire fellowship, come over and lay an egg.' Australian humor is different. He told a joke, and 225 people just turned him off. This totally destroyed him; he didn't know how to handle an audience that didn't have the response buttons that he was used to.

If you are going to view your success on the response of the people, you're going to be a failure. You need to view your success on what God is doing. It's wonderful when people do respond. When I preached the sermon in Colorado Springs on 'The Faith Once Delivered Unto The Saints,' it was clicking. The audience was moving. I could have done hand springs from the rafters and it would have been fantastic, because the people were moving with me. That night I could have said anything, but it's not always like that. I had preached that same message several other times without that response. I don't judge what I'm doing by the response of the audience. Sometimes the greatest response you get at an altar call [where the real business is done] is with a sermon that you think is a total failure.

## ***NEW PASTORS TAKING OVER A CHURCH***

If you take over a church, the greatest capital that you have under God is that man who just left. There are people there who loved him, even if the guy was a scoundrel. You need to build him and give him credit. When people come to you and say, "We really loved so and so," you need to agree and say, "Yes sir, he did a fantastic job, and I'm going to build on what he's done."

Some men feel they have to go in and take the former pastor's name off everything, and change everything that he started. By subtle undermining he makes people think that the other pastor really wasn't as sharp a guy as they thought. All you are doing is destroying your own credibility. Those people are there because they loved him. He started the church, and it's your job not to say one word against him, or allow a word to be said against him.

When you take over a church, you will soon be approached by those who say, "Brother, we're so glad that you're here. We were really having trouble with Brother So and So." They begin to fill your ears with garbage. You need to realize that there is a group of dissidents in every church who will put a knife in your back tomorrow. If they will talk against the last pastor, they will talk against you. You are very unwise if you think that now they will appreciate a real man of God. In fact, you are a fool. The people who are the core of that congregation are those who don't say one bad word about the former pastor even though they may know that he had defects.

We have one congregation where the pastor is really a strange bird. He is a soul winner, though, and those people love him. He makes all kinds of social bloopers. I heard him preach at a convention and my heart hurt for the guy. The people know his problems, but they love this guy, because he loves them. Wisdom is to build on what the man who preceded you has done. The average pastor's ego is so threatened that he feels that he is only going to establish his own ministry by destroying the previous man. What he really destroys is himself. The people won't say anything, but in a crunch they will turn against you because you attacked the man they loved and appreciated.

I have a rule that I established years ago. Don't change anything for a year. You may not like everything, but just ride in on the last pastor's coattails. This isn't a rule that can never be broken, but it is a general principle that can save you much hurt. After a year has passed, and you have won that congregation to yourself, you can do anything you want to do. I recently had to deal with a problem where the men who were in positions were loyal to the previous pastor. Somehow the new pastor felt that he had to remove all those men and put in men who were loyal to him. The problem is that when you do this you make enemies in that congregation. Those enemies will turn on you before it's over.

## **Chapter V**

### **Practical Thoughts**

#### **PRACTICAL THOUGHTS**

In starting a church there are many things that a man is called to face which he has never fully experienced first hand. The following are some thoughts on different things that will be helpful in the establishing of a church.

#### ***AN EXAMPLE OF AN OPENING STRATEGY***

For illustration I will use what I did in opening up in Denver, Colorado in January of 1982. The opening I used was about the same as what I did in the other three churches I started, as well as what most of the churches out of the Flagstaff, Arizona church have done. We opened with the prophetic film series of "Thief in the Night", "Distant Thunder" and "Image of the Beast." We started the movies on a Saturday night. This allowed us to have an impact team on the streets just before the movies. At the end of the three movies I preached for two nights on prophecy. This works well because it's inexpensive and because people see you as they come to the movies and are interested in hearing you speak since you are the pastor. I put up 100 posters one week before the movies started, and put out 7,000 fliers. We ran two newspaper ads on the weekend and had an impact team come in on the Saturday of the movies. We had out about 160 people a night, and saw several saved. Some people rapidly tied in to the church during the services that I preached.

One mistake that many pastors make is to get discouraged if no one comes out to the services right after the first series of movies. It's not uncommon to have almost no response until after the second shot. Most people think they are racing back if they show up in a week. It's vital at this point to not be wiped out by numbers.

Many young pastors slip into depression because of poor response or poor commitments and run off those that God is trying to bring in.

One thing that helps is to have the posters for the next movie already there on the opening night. Many people will see these and plan on coming back to the next movies. Another thing that has proven very helpful is to have some coffee and Kool-Aid for after the service. This gives those who are interested an excuse for staying around and you can then meet these people and make personal contact, explaining who you are and what you are doing.

We then spent two weeks following up on those who got saved and getting ready for the next movies we showed. These movies were "Cross and the Switchblade" and "Road to Armageddon," followed by two nights with Joe Weidinger. We had a short meeting after the movies because revival meetings draw out people who really are interested, and it seems to be easier to tie people into the church in a service than a movie. By having Joe for two days I was able to get him on short notice because he didn't have to miss a Wednesday service. The impact team came the Saturday before and my wife and I put out many of the fliers before the team ever arrived because of the danger of bad weather in the winter. We had the address of those who had come to the first movies and mailed them an invitation back. We got the addresses by simply passing out some paper so those who would like to be contacted could put their address and put it in the offering plate.

For this meeting we only put one very small ad in the paper. In a town like Denver an ad of any size at all costs a great amount of money. Because of this we could only put very small ads in the movie section. Yet, in pastoring in several size communities it appears that a small thirty-five dollar ad in a larger town still reaches more people than the same priced ad, though much larger, in a smaller paper, because there are so many more people.

In these opening meetings it's important to make a good impression. A man needs to think through what he's going to say. He needs to generate a feeling of excitement about what God's going to do. The thing that will attract or repel is how the pastor presents himself. It's helpful to present a

friendly feeling and to avoid, if at all possible, any conflict with people who are visiting. Those who are coming have no impression to draw from except the one you give them.

Two weeks later we showed the movie "Years of the Beast" on two separate nights. We put one ad in the paper and ordered about the same number of posters and flyers as before. In a city like

Denver you can put out an infinite amount of advertising, but in most cities this is not true. Each town must be approached on its own level.

The first city I pioneered a church in was Payson, Arizona, a town of 3,000. A thousand fliers were almost impossible to get out and ten posters blanketed the city. The idea is to make impact on that city and touch those who are responsive, and that varies from town to town. In smaller cities, it's wise to use wisdom in putting out literature. If you try week after week to saturate these spots, the merchants will soon stop you.

The idea behind the opening with three shots is to stir and draw out interested people and get them to come back so you can impact them. In this period of 5-6 weeks I figure to have a small core of people coming that I can then work with. If a man does his major shots and gets no response he needs to seriously pray about what he's doing. Money alone will not tie people in, and unless his mother church is very wealthy, it will not be able to continue to dish out large sums of money over a long period of time. It's essential that opening shots count. The man needs to think through what he's going to do and get some wise counsel.

### ***EQUIPMENT***

In starting a church there are several pieces of equipment that are generally sent with a man:

A projector and take up reel

P.A. and one mike stand with mike (This is to be returned when the p.a. system is upgraded)

Chairs (75-100)

Piano, organ or guitar with amplifier for song service

In addition to these large items, the new pastor needs to be concerned with several other smaller items:

Pulpit

Sign

Offering plates, baskets or Colonel Sander's buckets and envelopes

Convert cards and Gospels of John

The pastor should also in advance check on:

Advertising and posters

Impact teams scheduled if possible Movies ordered

Groups or evangelists confirmed

Once a pastor has arrived he will need to get for the church: An employer Identification, (form SS-4 from IRS) number Workman's compensation

### ***ADVERTISING***

Advertising is a great help in reaching people. This is especially true when it is used with movies. In opening a church a strong impact can be made through good advertising, and will allow a core of people to be drawn in. These people then become the nucleus of workers that can cause the church to continue to reach out. There are many variables in determining an opening strategy. Much depends on the size of the city, amount of finances and size of building, but there are some rough guidelines that can help.

Newspapers can be very effective vehicles of advertising but the price can be prohibitive in a large city. Still, any ad will help, and even a small ad

in a large city will draw people and may be the best a starting church can do.

Posters are also good ways of reaching people, but thought should be given to where they are placed. Look for places with a lot of people passing by. Many specialty stores have very few people coming and going. With posters, it is of very little use to put them up over two weeks in advance. The time with the greatest impact appears to be from about a week before the event.

Flyers are another method of outreach, but they need to be designed well and attractively done. Some thought must be given to putting these out. To give out any large number personally will take time and people. It will be necessary to bring in others from outside to help. Large numbers of flyers can be put out rapidly on cars in parking lots, but the force of them goes way down. As a general rule in advertising one flyer handed to a person with a smile is worth eight left on cars. As a rough rule of thumb in knowing how much to do to get out a desired number of people, a good guess is that one to two percent of the number of flyers you put out will show up for a good drawing movie. This means if you put out 5,000 flyers with an ad in the paper and several posters you can expect around 100 people out. This is a very rough method of judging, and depends on weather, the responsiveness of the community, and many other things, but it can be helpful in making decisions.

The greatest impact from advertising will be with movies, and because of this many pastors will show a movie before a revival and then use the movie as a platform to draw people into the revival services. Advertising puts a church name before the community. Many people are not responsive now, but may be at another time, and will then go to the church whose name is familiar. In every city at any given time there is a constantly changing group of people who are receptive to Christ. Due to crises, problems, hopes and fears, someone who was antagonistic may, overnight, become receptive. It is in a time like that when an ad in the paper or a flyer given can catch the eye and make great impact.

With important outreaches it is vital not to put all your eggs in one basket. This is especially true during the winter (or whenever your season



of bad weather is). If the only way you plan on reaching people is an impact team on Saturday you may be horribly disappointed if a snowstorm comes and the team can't come to town. This will leave you with an outreach costing several hundreds of dollars and no people. This is why it's good to "stack the deck" and have an ad in the paper and some posters and to put out some flyers yourself before the impact team comes.

After a church has been open a while, it may find financial reality makes advertising difficult. At this time some creativity can go a long way. Most T.V. and radio stations will put on free public service announcements. Newspapers often have sections that cost nothing to announce an upcoming event. In printing there can be simple changes that greatly effect the price, such as: size, color, whether printing is on one side or two, or whether pictures are used. No matter how tight finances are, though, you must advertise somehow. It is useless to spend money on a major event without doing something to promote it and draw people in.

Examples of advertising can be received from Tecolote press at P.O. Box 188, Glenwood, New Mexico 88039.

## ***MOVIES***

One of the most effective tools for reaching people is movies. If these are promoted right they will almost always bring people who God can separate out to be part of His church. Every city responds differently to movies. What works in one city has little impact in another and each pastor must find what he feels God would honor. The following have been found to be overall most effective:

A large number of churches start out with what is lightly called "the big three." These are three prophecy movies: Thief in the Night, Distant Thunder, and Image of the Beast. These are probably the best evangelistic films ever made. Another good prophecy movie is Years of the Beast.

An excellent strategy is a movie revival. This is where several movies are shown on the same theme on consecutive nights or over several weekends. People who come to one movie have a tendency to come to the

other movies also and to bring their friends with them. Several ideas that have been used are:

### **Prophecy**

Future Shock  
Future Survival  
Prodigal Planet  
Road to Armageddon  
Russia and the Coming  
Holocaust  
Sound of the Trumpet  
The Final Hour  
The Late Great Planet Earth  
The Return

### **Family**

All the Kings Horses  
Family Gone Wild  
Home Safe  
Strike the Original Match  
Sand Castles  
Revelation New World  
Coming  
Father/Son and a Three Mile  
Run

### **Cult**

The Mystics  
Cult Explosion  
Revival of Evil  
The Enemy  
The God Makers  
Ethnic  
The Cross and the  
Switchblade  
Jesus is the Answer  
Apache Fire  
Night Song  
Blood on the Mountain

### **Other**

Set Free  
Free Forever  
Heaven's Heroes  
Gospel Road  
Any Mark IV movie

There are several movies that bring out good crowds but they are often made up of largely religious people:

The Hiding Place  
Jesus  
Joni  
Any Billy Graham Movie

Daily new movies are coming out that a wise pastor can utilize to gather an audience. Some churches are using with impact movie series on science, family, or other themes, but caution should be exercised in the new work because of the high cost of these films.

### ***IDEAS FOR OUTREACH***

A major key to reaching people is to get outside the building to where people are. Here is a list of some of the things that have been done successfully.

***Movies:*** These can be shown in parks, trailer parks, colleges, homes, backyards, or any rented building.

***Parades:*** Several thousand people can often be impacted in a parade. It's possible to pick any of several types of entries. Floats, drama and music all work well, as does just showing up and speaking to the spectators who are watching.

***Concerts:*** Setting up a band in a park or outside building is an extremely effective tool. Going to rock concerts and witnessing is also a good way to reach young people.

***Marches:*** In several churches they merely gather a group of people and march through a neighborhood singing and giving testimonies.

***Swap meets and fairs:*** These will often let you set up a booth for a small fee that you can witness from.

***Door to door:*** Several churches have found this simple but obvious method to be very effective, especially when they have concentrated in an area that is receptive. This method fits well in the budget of many small churches.

***Guerilla teams:*** Bringing in a group of people from another church is one of the most effective outreaches for exposing young people to people on fire and impacting your community.

***Special attractions:*** Several churches have powerful events that can be used effectively to stir a community. These would include:

Life Musical and Last Supper out of Prescott  
Ese Cholo, a drama out of Ruben Reyna's church  
Several churches have choirs and acting troupes

***Bible studies:*** If a leader is excited these are inexpensive points of outreach, and tools to tie people in with.

***Street preaching:*** Must be done with discretion.

### ***WORKING WITH AN EVANGELIST***

A good revival can have a tremendous impact in the formative stages of a church. An honest beginning pastor understands that there are several stages he is weak in. By bringing in outside ministry, he can fill in some of these gaps and accelerate the growth of his people.

It is also true that different men can bring the same truth and have totally different impact. It's astounding how many times an evangelist can preach on the same thing you did Sunday and yet what he says touches those that you never reached.

In the New Testament, they appeared to use this truth to great advantage. The office of Evangelist is mentioned often and even a surface reading of scripture indicates a large flow of ministry through the churches. There are a few simple but helpful rules in dealing with revivals.

Remember that the full-time evangelist makes his living by holding revivals. They depend upon those men that speak to them to keep their commitments. If a pastor decides to cancel a meeting with less than three weeks' notice he should be willing to pay the evangelist anyway. There is a common dignity that is needed for men to work together, and it would be better to give longer notice if at all possible.

When a church has a meeting, it's important that it is promoted. People seldom just stumble into a revival service. This means that the pastor should plan in his expenses some money for advertising. It's helpful to have some

literature about the services for people to pass out, and ads placed in newspapers or on radio can be of benefit. He should also prepare the people for the meeting, raising their expectation level and getting them to make commitments to the meeting. Probably the most effective single activity that a church can do is to bring a team of people from another church to go out on the streets and make the community aware of the meeting.

Because of the nature of evangelistic work, there are many unexpected expenses and the pastor should give the evangelist, when he arrives, some pocket money. If the revival is to last a full week this should be in the neighborhood of \$50-\$80 (1984 dollars).

You are responsible to get a man to your city. This means that he should be reimbursed for any traveling expenses. The church should pay for bus or airplane expenses. If a man drives, then twenty cents a mile is a reasonable figure for reimbursement.

If you can't afford a meeting, then you need first to contact your mother church and explain to them the need. If you are off support and feel the need to have a meeting but have no sure support for the meeting, but feel that God will supply, common decency would cause you to share this with the man before he comes. Most evangelists are not in the ministry for the money and will be glad to come and work with you, but they need to know under what conditions they are being brought in.

In the past, evangelists were put at peoples' homes or rooms in the back of the church. This does not leave a man free to pray and find the mind of God. It is necessary therefore to put him in a nice motel that will allow him to be comfortable. This does not have to be the best motel in town but it should be livable.

Since the evangelist is supporting his family by preaching, it's important that thought be given to taking a love offering for him. Beginning churches should realize that, in most cases, there will not be enough brought in to meet all the needs. In a small work it may be necessary to lay aside some money in preparation. In a meeting that is running five nights, it's a good

policy to make three nights' special offerings for the evangelist. If the people are made aware that the offering is for the speaker they will be more generous. The other two nights can go the expenses of the revival. There is a loose understanding that for a week's revival running Sunday night to Friday night, a small church will guarantee a man \$400 after expenses.

If a man has another pastor in to preach instead of an evangelist, there is some flexibility, but a reasonable figure to give is \$60 a day. It is understood that if a love offering is taken and comes out to be more than this figure, then the pastor will gladly give this to the man since this is how God supplies for future needs that a man may face.

It's important for a pastor to realize that how he treats those that come to minister in his church will greatly effect the future of the church.

## ***GROUPS***

Music groups are not the magic formula that some imagine. In a large church there are many people to promote and bring in visitors. In a new church there are few or none. This means there must be some kind of promotion done if a group is to make impact. The greatest impact with bands is going to be made outside the church. This can be in a park or auditorium or whatever may be available in your city. In the early days of Prescott, the Armory was a natural gathering place for young people, and as the Prescott church brought in groups they found a great door for touching that city.

Following are some simple guidelines:

You need to do some kind of promotion.

It's important to think through and know what kind of equipment will be needed and have it there before the concert. (mikes, p.a., drums, amps and guitars)

A simple guideline for paying groups is fifteen cents a mile and five dollars a member for food.

Make sure the group you get plays the music you need. Give appropriate warnings to the older folk.

Prepare your people for working the altar.

### ***IMPACT TEAMS***

Impact teams are generally sent at the expense of the sending church. They will have food and such with them. Some consideration should be shown, though, in areas where the churches are all small. It can be very costly for a small church to send workers long distances. Some of the greatest effects from a group coming can be in your own people. It's good then to get them involved with these people and infect them with their zeal and experience. In the churches I pioneered, though it wasn't required, I always fed the people with an inexpensive meal of hot dogs and let them fellowship with my people. It was well worth the small cost. Some practical thoughts are:

If a large group is coming you may need to have maps ready to show them the areas you want them to hit.

You must make sure that you have the literature and tracts needed on the day required.

If they are coming long distances and will spend the night thought should be given to sleeping arrangements.

In the opening services of a church, it's a real help if the team can stay over and establish praise and help to work with people.

### ***A WORD TO THE WIVES***

Many wives are unprepared for the pressures of a new work. In a new work, your home and life tend to become a "fish bowl". The pastor's wife is a powerful example to the women who are getting saved. As she is often the only example of a Christian woman that they have to look at, her impact is much greater than it ever was in the home church, where it was possible

to hide in the crowd. This example-ship does not involve any specific ministry, but the pressure of it can be felt.

Another problem area can be the nursery. Most new converts have not disciplined their children, and it shows. The adults need all the exposure to preaching they can get to learn to discipline them-selves, so that leaves the pastor's wife to handle the nursery. It must be remembered that in many cases the "three and under" age limit has to be ignored because the purpose of a nursery is not just to provide free baby-sitting, it is to keep the crowd under control so the congregation can hear the preacher. Many times my wife spent the service in the nursery baby-sitting unruly six and seven year olds while our own baby sat quietly on someone's lap in the service. If the pastor's wife has to miss out on a large number of the services because of this, her relationship with God can be hindered unless she puts in some extra effort to hear from God on her own. Just remember, it won't go on forever. After a while the children get better behaved and the parents reach a point where they won't backslide if they miss a service to do nursery.

Another problem pastor's wives speak of facing is loneliness. The women in the church naturally look toward her for leadership and council. This is often a major change from the past where the husband bore most of the problems. Now she finds that her friends are gone and those women who she meets are often looking more for answers than friendship. With all the increased pressure, there is no one for her to share her problems with. It is very important for the new pastor's wife to begin to nurture relationships with other pastors' wives in the fellowship. The times of fellowship at conference become a real lifesaver, and being allowed an occasional long-distance phone call is a great help to her.

The pastor's wife can affect the whole spirit of the church. If she has a bad attitude, it will affect the church adversely. If, when her husband brings over a new convert, she screams, "You cook! I'm sick of it!," this will have a negative impact.

It is often true that in the beginning days of a work, the house or apartment is not as nice as the one which was left behind. Financial pressure may begin to build up if the church has any rough spots. The wife needs to realize that this is something that will get better as time goes on



and the church grows. She also needs to trust God to meet the needs of her family even when things are tight. The great danger is for the wife to become a complainer instead of a partner. A good relationship between a man and his wife will go a long way to ease the pressure on both of them.

### ***PRACTICAL THOUGHTS ON MONEY***

The Kingdom of God functions on money. There is much more involved in our relationship to this area of life than we want to admit. Much of the success or failure of a church will hinge on this vital area. The best thing that a man can take with him into the ministry is a good attitude toward giving. It's always been surprising to me how many men are embarrassed to take an offering. In the home church they never learned the blessing of giving and the fact that one of life's greatest blessings is to give. These men will have trouble getting their people to give. A pastor lives off the gifts of God's people and he must have a right attitude that is neither bound by poverty or greed.

Many young men found that it wasn't until they went to get a job that God broke their church open and it began to grow. As they worked to support the work of God it released them to greater blessing. In one church there was an anonymous giver who supported the church by his gifts alone. He finally got married and stopped this, and at that point the church took a real leap. Many pastors report that finances never began to flow until they began to take some of what they had and give it back into their mother church and world evangelism. There was a church in Hobbs, New Mexico that was happy and growing. It was during a building program that an oil man walked in and wrote a check for the entire cost of the new building. Far from its helping the church, it took away their purpose and the church folded shortly afterwards.

A foundation of our fellowship is the "indigenous principle." Each church needs to generate the resources to support itself, and generate from within itself the resources needed to reach out to a lost world.

Here are a few thoughts that might help in this:

***Bind Mammon:*** Mammon is a spirit that will only be conquered in prayer. In every church the pastor faces the battle of believing that God can really bless. As a man speaks about money, he will feel a choking feeling, a tightening of the spirit. This is mammon. It makes you have sympathy on the poverty of your people. It says that they don't have enough to give. To conquer this is first of all a spiritual fight in prayer. In prayer it helps to not only break that spirit on the church but to name individuals that are bound and release them to give.

***Use a Carrot:*** There is an old story of a horse that wouldn't pull the wagon for its master. The man devised a unique approach. He tied a carrot just in front of the horse's head and the horse started to pull to try and get the carrot. People need a reason to give. They need to be presented with God's promise of blessing.

***Brow Beat to a Blessing:*** This sounds harsh, but it's necessary. There is something about people that causes them to destroy them-selves with little encouragement, but to reach for the things in life that are good for them they have to be pressured. A child will lie, hit, and cry with no training, but brushing teeth, cleaning a room and other social graces require pressure. People need to be reminded to give.

***Testify:*** As people are blessed of God, get them to stand up and share what God's done. No one gets saved until someone shares the blessings of salvation and the same is true of giving. As people hear others tell how it worked for them, they feel a strong desire to see God do the same for them.

***Offering as Worship:*** Don't be ashamed of the offering. In a new church it's often best to not preach a whole sermon on money until the church stabilizes. But in every service a man can give a three minute mini-sermon on the blessing of giving. You would be surprised at how much impact these have over time if done with real thought and faith.

***Kingdom First:*** Spiritual responsibilities come before personal. A man needs to be honest in his bills and tithes. This is a spiritual law that God enforces. There is always a testing of our loyalty in this area. Times when it seems we can't afford to do what we said we would, but always

remember we can't afford to tell people God will meet their needs if they give and then we cheat on ours.

***Evangelists:*** How you treat those men who come in to speak for you has spiritual impact. There is something in blessing God's men that brings blessing on a church. God knows that this place will be a resource for his larger work, and he releases liberality and blessing.

***Faith:*** Brother Mitchell said one time, "The Devil's lie is there isn't any money out there." Those people supported all kinds of expensive habits before they got saved. What we want to spend on, we find money to spend for. God has enough money to do the work that he called us to do, and we need to believe that.

***Example:*** The gospel functions on example. People are much better at following an example than taking instruction. If you just obviously give in every offering for church and outreach they can't help but catch the idea.

## ***CHURCH PLANTING PRINCIPLES***

What we have done as a fellowship has not been so much the implementing of a concept as the evolution of a spiritual gamble. In the early days there was not a clear cut plan, but a spiritual pressure to reach out on the basis of New Testament example. The first men who went out were the guinea pigs on which future men would depend. Out of their struggle, failure, and success came the principles which now guide the Prescott Church. Even today, these are not cast in concrete, but are a flexible guideline applied not to an organization but to a family of ministers growing together.

## ***FINANCIAL INTEGRITY***

It is now solid principle that a man in the U.S.A. is financially supported for only a year. At first many were carried for longer than this, but it proved to be self-defeating. A wise man once said, "When the nest is feathered too well, the eaglets do not fly." There is a healthy pressure involved in the minister's realization of dwindling support, that challenges him to produce

and brings pressure to change. This also releases finances for others to go who would otherwise be forced to remain in the mother church for long periods of time.

In line with this principle there is a 25% cut in support every 90 days. In a healthy church the congregation will be able to make up the difference, and in many cases the pastor is able to take larger cuts. Although the pastor's salary is always decreased on schedule, building payments will sometimes be carried a short time longer depending on the man and the situation.

If a man sees in three to six months that his church is not going to supply the necessary finances, he needs to get a job and not just drag out support. There is a danger at this point of a man taking money sent to him for the church and by creative bookkeeping doing some spiritual embezzlement; the results of which can be read about in Acts 5.

It is critical to understand that a man is not an employee, but he is carrying the burden of his own ministry. The death of a movement begins when it starts to develop a bureaucracy that feeds off the folks at home rather than men functioning by spiritual mandate. Important to any lasting obedience to the will of God is the understanding that we are not hirelings and are owed nothing, but have received more than we ever deserved. The mother church does a man a tremendous favor by helping him find God's purpose and plan for his life; he has no right to complain about financial pressure.

It has been proven time and again that in this matter of financial integrity lies the key to success and the completing of the call of God. In this fellowship it is understood that each church is a sovereign force for God, drawn together by God to make an impact on a lost world. This means that there is a serious violation when a man reaches back into the mother church to get extra funds from family or friends.

In every church there are greater opportunities than resources. A pastor allowing a man to develop his ministry in a body is a precious and rare commodity. As a man who trusts you, he is repaid by your spirit of trust and honesty.

It is vital for a young man to understand that ministry starts in the small things of a beginning work. As a man stands for those principles that he has been birthed in, a spiritual dominion is created that is "truth obeyed". A general rule is, "If you're not sure, talk to your pastor; if you're afraid to ask, don't steal it."

These same principles apply in other areas as well. All equipment that is given to a church is given with the understanding that as the church gets better equipment, the old will be returned to the mother church to be recycled by some young aspiring Elijah.

Not only is it important not to take money that has not been offered by the pastor, but it is also critical that a man not violate the time and energies of the people in the mother church. Men linked in vision understand that even as a Christian would not violate another man's wife, he will not violate another man's congregation. This means that you do not get people to work for your church without their pastor's consent. If they happen to show up, you take it upon yourself to send them back happy and more committed to God's placing than when they came. A pastor does not invite others to come for holidays, vacations or weddings, but supports God's mandate for a committed force of people. A militant fellowship cannot always do as it pleases, and as God's authority it is sometimes necessary to act as spiritual MPs and send the troops back to the front lines. In this simple concept lies much of our hope to remain a fellowship and not a group of competing franchises.

Financial responsibility is called stewardship in the Bible. A right mentality caused Barnabas to be called the "Encourager." It made Paul grateful for the support he received, yet able to carry the burden of a pioneer church if God desired. A wrong attitude cursed the children of many great men of God, and it made disciples into lepers, betrayers, and world pleasers. Not only the tongue can hold the power of life and death, but so can the checkbook.

When I was in Flagstaff preparing to go out to pioneer my first church, Larry Neville had just come into the fellowship and had preached in many of the churches. He had a perspective that was different from others and I asked him what he saw that seemed to separate out some men to success.

His reply helped me to understand a great principle. "Ron," he said, "the big difference I see is liberality. I've been to most of the churches and in some they only complain; they don't bless the evangelist or anyone else, and those churches are dead. But other men have a liberal spirit and their churches have revival." He then told me to keep an eye on Jack Harris, that Jack had blessed him more than any of the other churches even though he was in a pioneer church. At the time, Jack was in Farmington, New Mexico, but shortly afterward he was thrust into a major leadership role in the United States and overseas. I hadn't known Jack before then, but soon he became my pastor and I saw first hand the power of liberality.

We can judge our attitude toward mammon by our reaction to these pioneering principles. A rule for the sincere pastor is that he sets himself a specific salary and lives on that, not reaching back in-to the church funds to meet personal needs. It is also important that he write himself a check at the beginning of each week and not take his whole salary at the beginning of the month when the support check comes in.

In the twentieth century the gospel has probably suffered more justified abuse from problems in handling money than any other assault. Honesty in book work makes sure that your gold plated faucets don't show up on the front page of the New York Times someday. A rule that I have found helpful is: if you're afraid to put it in the monthly report in plain English, it's probably a scam.

If we are to establish integrity to pay bills, it is vital to pay bills and tithes first. This means that the pastor only writes the check for his salary after the church expenses have been met. If this means that you are not able to make it on what is left, then you should get a job and not destroy the testimony of that church in that community.

It should be obvious that the money sent to a new church is for paying the expenses of that church and is not for loans to needy families or gas for religious gypsies. Before a man becomes the purchaser of new equipment or an aspiring loan officer in the social gospel, he should get off support. This is the principle desire of the right-hearted man.

It is important to realize that money is not the key to revival. You can pump money on top of money into a church where the man has not developed the spiritual force to build a work and it will make no difference. If a man can't gain an audience his answer will not come by expensive activities. If a man does not succeed, he needs to come back to the mother church and, with a good attitude, get a job.

In the struggle of creating a committed church, we often find that the battle is much harder fought than we expected. This can lead us to put on sackcloth and ashes and let the people back home know how great our suffering is. If you don't want your problems multiplied, avoid this! If you are going to eat worms it is best to make it a private experience.

If, for some reason, you do feel that you have got a raw deal, the person to talk to is your pastor. You will usually discover that this is a place of God's testing; the very place God has designed to "touch your thigh and change your name" as he did with Jacob. If you ask, your pastor can usually point out a few attitude problems that will help you to understand what God is trying to do.

Wives are by nature protective of their own families and at the first pressure will begin to bellyache. It is the responsibility of the husband to shut them up when they begin to badmouth headship, or you will take on the same spirit. It is easy to find excuses, but in them is the seed of failure and self-pity.

Mammon is a spirit of reason, but faith is the possibility of God. The place to win this battle is before you ever go out. It's a wise disciple who has learned to have a liberal heart before he ever takes a church. Probably the greatest asset a man can take into a new church is a track record of seeing God meet his needs. When you've already established that you don't steal God's tithe and that pledges are a sacred oath, then Satan has little foothold to work with.

### *Discipleship*

Men's Discipleship, Denver, Colorado 1983 HOW TO PREPARE A SERMON by Wayman Mitchell

It's always difficult to do a one night shot. There are always folks expecting this twenty-foot tall giant to walk in with fantastic revelation. They see me come in and they can't believe that this is the guy. But I have to use deodorant and brush my teeth and do all the things that they do.

One of the great things that has happened was when Scott Lamb took the church in Cortez from Mark Aulson. During the sermon he stepped backwards and tripped and fell. From that moment on the people loved him. Here was a guy who was on their level.

Brother Foley has been working with us in Prescott for several months. The thing that the people love about Brother Foley is that he is just as human as can be. He makes all kinds of mistakes. He started to preach last night and started on his first point. After it was all announced he said, "Wait a minute, that's my second point." The folks love that kind of man.

One thing that you need to understand is that I'm just like you are. We're going to have a good time tonight. I don't have anything profound at all to talk about tonight. I just want to talk about common things. I've been giving this study for over a year. I first gave it in Australia and had so many people come and say that it had been such a tremendous help to them, that I have done it since then in about four or five different places.

If you have your Bibles, you could turn with me to the book of II Timothy. I want to give you some insight on how to prepare material, gather material, and present a knowledgeable presentation. Whether you will ever be a preacher or not doesn't matter. What I am going to tell you tonight is going to help you. Those of you who have a call to preach will find great help. All of you who are home Bible study leaders will be helped.

I have chosen II Timothy chapter three beginning with verse fourteen to seventeen. The Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy, a young pastor and giving him some instructions and under-girding him in the responsibility that is his.

Whether you are a teacher or just a witness of Christ, you have a responsibility to present the word of God so that men can understand it. In other words our problem is communicating divine truth. We know that the Bible is the word of truth. We know that if men can really hear and



understand the word of God there will be a revolution that will happen and they will be transformed and become new creatures in Jesus Christ. We know that. But our task is to present the word of God in such a way that they will understand it. If you can communicate it on their level, they will understand it, embrace it, and the spirit of God will put it in their hearts. This is easier said than done. You know what you are trying to say, but it doesn't always come out that way in the end. So I want to talk this evening about our equipping in the word of God.

If you are going to be equipped and able to reach people with the gospel, you have to have a personal grasp on the word of God. The verse that we read literally translated is, "so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well-fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work." So the aim is that workers in the Lord's vineyard would be prepared. This is not a free gift. People hear one of our better men preach and they think that God has arbitrarily said, "I'm going to make Jones a great preacher. I think I'll just pour out on Warner a spirit of revelation." You hear these men speak with great authority and tremendous understanding. They preach with revelation. They bless you. They move you, so you say, "I wish I was like that, I wish God would favor me." "How come God doesn't give me that wonderful gift of communication that these men have?" We have the wrong idea. We think that God looks down and sees Gomez and says, "Nope, Mexicans can't communicate." He sees Smith and says, "No, he's from Arkansas." Then he sees Jones and says, "That's it! I like Jones."

We have this idea that men come out of their mother's womb with this ability that God has given them. While others are just slugs who have to labor along. You see, this is not a free gift. In II Timothy 2:15 the Bible says "study". The word means "give diligence". In plain language, that's w-o-r-k. You all know what that is. That's the thing that we don't like to do in this generation. We like the freebies. We like the paycheck, but we don't like to work for it.

The scripture says "give diligence, work to show yourself approved unto God." How? "A workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This gives us some insight. If you're going to be able to rightly divide the word of truth there must be some kind of logical sequence,

so that when men are finished listening to you they can say, "I believe I understood what he said," instead of blinking at you and wondering if you said anything. Rightly dividing the word of truth means that you are able to take the word of God, as God has written it, and to convey divine truth to the human heart in such a way that the understanding of man is affected. The Bible says that if you are going to do that you are going to work for it.

It is not a free gift. I understand that this is a tremendous revelation to some of you sitting here. You have the idea that if you just get filled with the Holy Ghost and speak with other tongues, that all you have to do is get up and open your mouth and God is going to fill it. When you see a man who can communicate the word of God, you see a worker. I know that you don't like that, but it's true.

Proverbs 23:23 says, "*Buy the truth and sell it not, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.*" This tells us that there is a price to be paid for truth. We have this idea that truth is just laying out there in big nuggets that we just have to go out and pick up. All we need to do is get saved and filled with the Holy Ghost, and just wait for God to call us to preach. Then we take our bag, and there, laying on the top of the ground, are big nuggets of truth. Truth is not free. The Bible says, "Buy the truth and sell it not."

Proverbs has an interesting portion of scripture in chapter 2 verses 1-5. "*My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you, so that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart into understanding;* [This is pleading for it. You thought God was throwing out balls of truth, but God says to beg for it.] If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hid treasures; [Silver and treasures are not just laying around on top of the ground, you dig for them.] Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Already some of you are getting a tremendous revelation. Unless you have paid a price for truth, it isn't really yours.

We live in the tape generation. All you have to do is send off and get Brother Smith's latest tape, or Brother Copeland's, or Brother Price's and you can preach these fantastic truths. Truth is something you're going to have to pay for, dear friend. You will dig for it. Until you have paid a price

for it, it's not yours, you have stolen it. The Bible says that if you want REAL TRUTH, not just religious facts, doctrines, precepts or concepts, it will cost. The world is running loose with idiots who have religious knowledge that they are spouting out. They have paid no price for this knowledge and don't understand the ramifications of it. They have never had to live with the consequences of their teachings. In Bible days teachers had to stay in the same city where they taught, to see and live and get to reap the fruits of their words. Today they go on the roast beef circuit, from banquet room to banquet room, from city to city and pass out their "truth," and never have to reap the consequences. In Bible days they couldn't get out of town that fast. They had to stay around and see what the crop that they had planted was when it was reaped.

There is a personal grasp of the word of God. I'm talking about you as an individual. You say, "Pastor, I only have an eleventh grade education." It doesn't matter. Reuben Reyna was illiterate when he was saved. He couldn't read or write, but today he is a fantastic communicator of the word of God. What matters is that you begin to get in tune with God, get your nose in this book, and begin to live the life and get a hold of God.

### ***ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE***

I want to talk to you this evening about this ability to communicate. The Apostle Paul says, "I want you to pray for me that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." Paul understood that this was a supernatural ability. He understood that God had to be involved if any spiritual work was going to be done. He understood that there was a divine endowment that had to come, an ability to communicate so that he could, "open his mouth boldly and make known the gospel of Christ." Now this is our great task; to unfold to people of all levels of life, all cultural backgrounds, whatever social or economic background they are at, the truths of God.

The ability to communicate is part of our equipping. John Wesley took every sermon that he preached and before he ever preached it publicly, had an illiterate maid listen to it and stop him every time he said something she

couldn't understand. He had a desire to communicate to people on their level, to speak the vernacular of the common people of England. History has recorded that this man was one of the greatest evangelists of all times, affecting the English nation and even the world as few men ever have. Here was a man who was brilliant in his understanding and very highly educated, with great theological insight, but this man understood that it didn't matter how much he knew unless he was able to communicate this to people.

To do this there is going to have to be a constant study of the people in the world that you and I live in. Anyone who begins to communicate the word of God must use illustrations. They're going to have to tie on to people in their own setting. Jesus used illustrations all the time. He said things like, "A man went out to sow," "A man does not set down to build a tower but that he starts to calculate the cost." "A man does not go out to war without counting the conflict that he's going into." Jesus spoke about the fish and the net in the sea. He constantly talked in word pictures that opened up to his audience the understanding of Kingdom truth. He began with the known to bring them to the unknown.

To be an effective communicator you're going to have to study people, human nature, and the world you and I live in, and be able to communicate God's truth with illustrations from daily life that can tie divine truth to what they know and understand. One of the laws of teaching is that you begin where people are, with a known, and when you lock in with them there, then you can lead them to an unknown, and teach them a higher precept. You must find what makes people tick.

I don't know where I found this, but it's a classic illustration of human nature. There was a lady who lived in a city where they were not collecting garbage. The garbage is a problem in any household, so this lady, being an excellent student of human nature, would take her garbage each day and wrap it up in a bright Christmas package. She would then put it out on her fence, and before many people passed, somebody would steal her garbage. Everyday she got rid of her garbage this way. This woman was a student of human nature.

If you and I are going to be effective we are going to have to study people, not as we wish they were, but as they really are. The ability to communicate is indispensable to us who want to minister to people. We're going to have to understand language, and what it means. We're going to have to use phrases that people understand in the language that they understand. I remember when I was in Rueben Reyna's church in Whittier, California, I was trying to tie on to the Mexican culture [there were only about five Anglos in a crowd of over seven hundred and fifty]. Brother Art Valenzuela gave a testimony and I thought he said "once I lived with Sancho." I stood up and said "I'm sure glad that old Art finally moved out from Sancho's." They started falling out on the floor. This was the funniest thing they had ever heard. Here was this Anglo up there who didn't even know who Sancho was. Well, Sancho was the guy who stayed home and ripped off the wives from Pancho Via and his men. Art never lived with Sancho, what he had said was, "once I was a Sancho." I missed the whole connection. It's funny, but not when you have a profound scriptural truth to communicate and you miss them completely.

I was in England with Brother Harris recently. He was trying to give those people a Biblical understanding of praise. He went through the whole seminar, only to find that because of the cultural setting the people had completely misinterpreted what he had said. He was saying one thing, but they were hearing something else altogether. He presumed that when he said "praise" they understood what he meant. If you are going to be a successful communicator you will have to speak to them on the level they are on.

I was over in Australia and was communicating to them my feeling that it's just not right for a woman to wear a tool pouch and a hard hat. I'm a macho man and I just feel that men ought to be men and women ought to be women, and you ought to be able to tell the difference. I was belching out against women who act like men and I said, "The thing that bugs me is I was watching TV one time and saw this big dyke jump behind the wheel of this truck in a hard hat and wheel out, and somehow this just isn't right." After the service a man came up to me and asked, "Pastor, what's a dyke?" I told him it was a lesbian, and he just cackled. In Australia a dyke is a toilet. What we mean and what we convey isn't always the same.

You must learn to speak in the vernacular of the people, and plainly convey truth. You can use those forty dollar words, but there aren't three people in two hundred who can understand what you mean. They told me in Australia that Ronnie Burrell had preached one of my sermons. In the sermon I had said that in every congregation there are three kinds of people. There are workers; it doesn't matter what you want done, these people will do it. Then there are shirkers; these people will not work. They have an excuse for everything. Finally, there are the jerkers; when you give an appeal they will come up out of their seat and jerk around for a while and then fall back. When Ronnie Burrell preached the sermon and announced that there are three kinds of people; workers, shirkers, and jerkers, the congregation went wild, they were falling on the floor. This was the funniest thing they had ever heard, because in Australia, jerkers are masturbators. They had missed the whole point. If an angel had flown in, he would have communicated nothing.

### ***METHODS AND TOOLS***

Reservoirs are made in us from which the Holy Spirit brings inspiration. John 14:26 says, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Now the responsibility of the Holy Spirit is to take those things that we have stored up and bring them into proper perspective in divine truth. If there is nothing stored up, there is nothing for him to bring forth. This surprises a lot of people. They think that when a preacher stands up that God just connects the man to a socket and the truth pours out. They don't understand that truth is something that an effective communicator has labored to arrive at. When this truth lives in him, then the Holy Spirit can quicken this and make it live.

If you are going to communicate, you are going to have to become a reservoir of truth. It's like a dam. In our part of the country they build dams from which they irrigate thousands of acres. Down in the Imperial Valley they irrigate from dams. They store up the water and it is there to be released at the right time to bring forth a crop. This is exactly what you and

I have to become, people who store up divine truth. To do this we need to develop some functional tools.

### ***FUNCTIONAL TOOLS***

We need notes. I'm speaking to you tonight from a set of notes. From these two pages I can speak for an hour. I wish that I had the ability to do this once and then never have to refresh my memory again. I wish I could just stand up and punch a button and everything I have said tonight would just roll out, but it won't. I have a mind that is dependent upon some kind of trigger that will bring back to my remembrance what I have put in there. I use notes.

When I go to any conference and hear anybody who is worth their salt speaking, I have a piece of paper out and I'm taking notes. Any worker who will be worth his salt will be a note taker. I've already said some treasures tonight that you could use. You could put your name behind it. Put your background behind it and twist it to fit your personality, and no one would ever know but that it was yours. It will live inside you, and become a nugget and a treasure you can use, but if you didn't write it down, you've

already lost the ability to reproduce what has happened tonight. It is gone forever. The problem is that we are like a bucket with holes in it. We know we liked something, we just can't remember what it was. We leave a meeting and before we take hold of the handle of our car, most of it has already leaked out. That's the way that I am.

If you were watching me on the platform while we were worshiping God, there was a spirit of revelation and blessing, and while we were worshiping, God dropped a revelation on me. I reached down and got my Bible, said, "excuse me, Lord," and wrote down a nugget about something that I've been working on. I wrote it down because I know I won't be able to remember it. I get out of bed sometimes, when I get these wonderful inspirations and write them down. When I was a young worker I would say, "that's fantastic, I'll work on that tomorrow." The next day all I would remember was that it blessed me and made me happy, but I couldn't remember what it was.

I don't know what it is about brushing my plates, but when I take my teeth out and begin brushing them, I get fantastic revelation. I don't know why that is, but I learned long ago, drop it and go write it down. You say, "Does God actually work like that. I thought the only time that the Lord gave inspiration was when you were on your knees and had your nose buried in your Bible. "Oh no!" Some of the most fantastic revelations come at the strangest times. You must become a note taker if you are going to become a proficient communicator. Your mind doesn't have the ability to retain the things that God has given you.

Another thing that you need to do is become a person who collects articles. I carry a calendar with me. In it are all kinds of pieces of paper. In the back of the calendar I write great amounts of stuff. On one side is a sermon that I have never preached, across from that is one that I have already preached. These chicken scratches all turn into fantastic sermons that God will use to save and touch people. I've got calendars that are covered sideways, crossways, and scratched on, that if you saw them you'd say a man could never do anything with them, but I take these calendars and as I pray I often get revelation and I write it down.

I am a prolific reader. I read all kinds of things. When I get on an airplane I pull the magazine out and skim it. I look to see if there is anything worth reading. I don't read everything, I just scan. When I get the newspaper in the morning, I scan it. Time is money. None of us have time to read everything that's ever written, but there is a wealth of material all around us. When I got to the motel the first thing I did was to go over to the television set, get the magazine off of it and begin to go through it. You say, "That's a tourist magazine," but you would be astounded at what I find in all kinds of magazines.

[Brother Mitchell then took a folder full of articles and showed what some of them were like. They came from everything from women's magazines to Time. The folder had envelopes, scraps of paper, newspaper articles and unused sermons.]

You must take notes and gather material. You will never be a real communicator until you learn to do that. When I'm reading books, I realize that they are tools. I will mark in them, staple to them, cut out pages from



them. I will do whatever I need to do to them. When I read a book I will underline it and put highlight marks in it. Often, if a book has a lot of good material I will transfer the material to 3x5 cards later. I have a large file that is simply indexed and I will put the cards in there. Many times when I am writing a sermon and I'm looking for something to make it come alive, I will go to that card file and see if there is anything that will fit.

You need to be a collector of material that will make the sermon live. I haven't had any problem this evening keeping your attention. I have already illustrated to you many of the things that I've conveyed to you tonight.

### ***COMMENTARIES AND WORD STUDIES***

I realize that I am talking to people of varying financial means. I am not saying to you that you are not a valid student of the Word of God if you don't own a large library, but the Bible is a book of words, and you'll never understand it until you become a student of it's words. English is one of the poorest languages on Earth. In the original Greek and Hebrew in which the Bible was written you will often find many different facets of meaning for one English word. When it is in the Greek it unfolds to you tremendous concepts that the Holy Spirit is bringing. When the Apostle Paul or one of the gospel writers wrote these words, they were pregnant with power and meaning, but when we read it in English it is blah.

This means that to understand what God is saying you will need to become a student of the words of God. It will help you greatly to purchase some simple tools.

***I- STRONGS CONCORDANCE:*** It has in it, besides just a concordance, a Bible dictionary. I remember when I first got saved I was asked to speak at a youth chapel, and I hunted for three hours in the afternoon for one passage of scripture because I didn't have a concordance. This book will enable you to find that passage of scripture in a minute that you might spend a week looking for, otherwise. Not only will it help you to find where the scripture is, but it also has in it a dictionary that will tell you what it means. I

went through Bible school and wasn't told what I'm telling you tonight. Next time your wife has a birthday and you want to get her something, get her one of these. This is the first book I would buy.

**2 - VINES EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:** This will give you a little more elaboration than a Strongs. This book will give you some insight into the meanings of words and how they are used.

**3- ALBERT BARNES NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT:** This is a one volume commentary that is the finest you can buy. If my wife was having an anniversary this is what I would get. This has a short commentary on each passage of scripture. It will tell you what the words mean and how they are used, and will give you just a little bit of contextual understanding.

**4- ADAM CLARK'S COMMENTARY:** This is a three volume set. It gives you both the Old and the New Testament. I wouldn't consider buying any other Old Testament commentary until I had one of these. This is the best help that the average person can buy. It will give you an understanding of the words, and also, some historical background. If you are wanting to build a library you will need some variety of translations. There are a multitude of translations. These are not the same as an interpretation. The Living Bible and the Good News Bible are not translations, but interpretations. Never give a new convert one of these. They are what a man says I think this ought to say. There are many translations: Revised Standard, New King James, [an excellent translation that is true to the original in language that you and I can understand.] The Amplified New Testament is an excellent study tool. You can get the New Testament in Twenty-six Translations in paperback; it takes the best translations of any verse of scripture and compares them.

**5- THE DAILY BIBLE STUDY SERIES by William Barclay:**

An excellent commentary for those in the Cadillac set. You can get them in paperback, too. They are an excellent set that will give you historical background on the text. This is for the more serious student.

**6- ENGLISH DICTIONARY:** Everyone should have a dictionary . You'd be astounded how many people don't speak English, including you. In studying and trying to convey truth you will be astounded at how many times you will be required to turn to this book. There are many words that we regularly use that when someone asks us what we mean, we realize that we don't have any idea.

**8 - SOULES DICTIONARY OF SYNONYMS:** This works as a companion to the dictionary. It helps you to find companion words. When I'm making an outline I'm writing words that are simply triggers, words that will convey the thought I'm after. I don't have the vocabulary to do this without help, so I get my book of synonyms and look in there at the words that are similar to the one I have used, but convey the thought more clearly. This helps me to understand and then to communicate.

These are tools that help us to fulfill the call of God.

Here is an example of some sermon notes. These are a reproduction of the notes that Brother Mitchell used in his discipleship class on How To Prepare a Sermon. The discipleship is included in this book. His original notes differ in that he did them in hand writing on three by five note cards and used high lighters to make certain parts stand out.

I. Our Equipping

A Personal Grasp Word of God

1. "See that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work."

a. Not a free Gift (1) II Tim. 2:15

God arbitrarily (2) Prov. 23:23

\*Jones(3) Prov. 2:1-5 [unless you have paid a price for not yours!!!]

\*Harris

\*Warner

## B Ability Communicate

1. "Pray, utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel."  
[England Praise]

a "John Wesley-illiterate maid"

b Presumption

2. Must be a constant study of people and the world we live in

3. Garbage Christmas Paper

a Illustrations-windows (Word Pictures)

b Workers Shirkers Jerkers

c "Sancho"

d Dykes

## II. Methods and Tools

A Reservoirs are made; from which Holy Spirit brings inspiration.

1 John 14:26

2 [Salt River-Davis Irrig.]

B Functional Tools

1. Notes, articles-newspapers, Mags., Card Files, books, Poems

"Time Is Money" / Practice / Preach / Triggers

C Commentaries - Word Studies

1 Bible a book of words

a. "English poorest language on earth" Triggers [Schofield - I Kgs. 21:21 "male"]

2. "Preeminence"

3. "awe"

4. "arrowhead"

## 5. "Dike"

On another card the scriptures used are written out.

### ***LIST OF REQUIRED READING FOR PRESCOTT DISCIPLES***

1. Master Plan of Evangelism by Coleman
2. Evidence That Demands a Verdict by McDowell
3. True Discipleship by McDonald
4. Destined For the Throne by Bilheimer
5. Join This Chariot by Osborn
6. The Problem With Wineskins by Snyder
7. Community of the King by Snyder
8. Escape From the Coming Tribulation by Duty
9. Disciples Are Made Not Born by Henrichson
10. New Signs of the Second Coming
11. New Testament Fire in the Phillipines by Montgomery
12. In the Arena of Faith by Sauer
13. Breaking the Stained Glass Barrier by Womack
14. Healing the Sick by Osborn
15. Your Pastor Your Shepherd by Beall
16. Angels of Light by Freeman
17. You Can Make Disciples by Warr
18. Dry Bones Can Live Again by Coleman
19. The Radical Wesley by Snyder
20. The Total Image by Owens

### ***SOME HELPFUL BOOKS FOR A MINISTERS LIBRARY***

*Suggested by Wayman Mitchell*

#### ***Topics***

Rapture: Pre Trib Rapture by Beechik

Cults: Kingdom of the Cults by Walter Martin

Money: Ten Best Sermons on Giving by Arthur Davenport

Eternal Security: Life in the Son by Robert Shank  
Praise: Let Us Praise by Judson Cornwall  
Healing: Healing the Sick by T.L. Osborn  
Large Commentary: Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching  
Church Structure: The Indigenous Church by Melvin L. Hodges

***Other good books***

How to Sell Yourself by Elmer Wheeler  
Evidence That Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell  
Master Plan of Evangelism by Coleman  
Ever Increasing Faith by Smith Wigglesworth  
Any book by Francis Schaeffer will make you think

***Magazines***

Christianity Today  
Eternity  
Christian Life  
Leadership  
Ministries

***ADDITIONAL BOOKS POPULAR WITH PASTORS***

Another Look At the Rapture  
Babylon Mystery Religion  
The Bible In the Light of Our Redemption (also advanced study)  
Blood Covenant by Kenyan  
Books on Prayer by E.M. Bonds  
Books by Tozer  
Chappel's sermon books  
Fifteen Steps Out  
From The Pinnacle of the Temple  
Hearts of Iron, Feet of Clay  
Knight's Master Book of Illustrations  
Lectures to My Students

Liberating the Church  
A Long Obedience  
Master Plan of Obedience  
Master's Men  
Occult Shock & Psychic Forces  
Problem of Wineskins  
Quality Friendship  
Rebirth of Music  
Soul-winning by Osborn  
Spiritual Leadership  
Spiritual Lessons  
Spiritual Maturity  
Spiritual Power by Basham  
Wellspring of the Pentecostal Movement

*Sermon*

**PRINCIPLES OF MULTIPLICATION**

by Wayman Mitchell

***Deuteronomy 26:1-11***

I was reminded, as I was thinking of this scripture, of the children of Israel. They were down in Egypt, when God brought their deliverance and began to move upon Pharaoh's power and land. "We're going to go into the wilderness and worship God," they said, but Pharaoh answered, "You're not going to do any such thing. If you want to worship, worship here." They said "No! We're going to go three days journey into the wilderness." So Pharaoh said, "Okay, you can go, but you can't take any of the your livestock. Leave all of it here." The people replied, "No, we're going to take all that we own. The livestock must go with us because we need them in worshipping and serving God." Pharaoh said, "Okay, you can go, but you must leave your families here." The people answered, "No deal. We're going to go with our families and our substance."

They pressed on through and the power of God broke the power of Pharaoh, and they went out of Egypt.

As I thought of this, the Lord dealt with me to speak on this, because the devil has done a pscyh job on many believers.

A number of years ago, when I was pastoring my first church, there were no people and no building. I had the feeling that if anybody was to be spiritual, their shoe soles had to be worn out and the seat had to be out of their pants, and they should have just barely enough money to buy beans and a little hamburger to scratch by with. I felt this was true spirituality, but God began to deal with me about some things in the Bible. I discovered that I couldn't defend that doctrine scripturally at all, but that God's will for me was something altogether different. As I laid hold of this and began to practice it, proclaim it, and teach it to the people, it has blessed me. It has blessed every church that I have pastored.



This poverty mentality is in the thinking of a great number of Christian people. They think we are to be a little crew of moth-eaten, brow-beaten, discouraged troopers just holding out to the end. "All we can do is scratch through. Ain't nobody left, just you and me (and you're probably going down). We're just going to be martyrs for Jesus, and that's the way Christianity is meant to be.

The problem is that we're depending on circumstances where we live. That might be our life, but the Bible declares that there is another principle working, even when the situation seems bad. We need to lay hold of that other principle, and begin to believe it and practice it.

I do not believe that we are destined in this age to just hole up somewhere and watch everything go down the tubes. I don't believe that just you and me and a little handful of three or four are going to finally make it through. I believe that we're in one of the greatest movings of the Spirit of God ever. There is a false, but in with the false, there is also a true. God is gathering out a people who are discovering the revelation of the scripture, and they are rising up and beginning to believe God for what their inheritance is in Christ Jesus. I believe that God would have us to know that. Read Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

### ***THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLICATION***

The principle of the Kingdom of God is the tremendous principle of multiplication. We can look back into the Old Testament and see a God-created humanity and a God-created world. The Lord looking upon it, blessed it and released multiplication into all that pertained to it. Genesis 1:26 says, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

In the narration of creation we find that God made the plants with a seed in them that they would reproduce by the multiplication of the seed. God filled the oceans with fish, and in them He put the same principle of multiplication so that within themselves, they would have the capability of

reproduction. In the animals we see this same principle. All of this was for the benefit of His people.

When the flood ended and Noah came out of the ark, Genesis 9 tells that God blessed Noah and said, "Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth. Look at all the herb bearing seed. Look at all the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea. Every one of them I have given you for your blessing and for your expression. The epitome of this principle of multiplication is to be found in you and your household. Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."

This particularly concerns a man called Abraham. In Genesis 15 the Bible says that God brought Abraham forth and said to him, "Look now toward the heaven and tell the stars if you be able to number them. So shall thy seed be." And Abraham believed God and it counted unto him for righteousness. When Isaac was born to Abraham, the same promise was made. God appeared to Isaac saying, "Look now toward the sand on the seashore and count if you can; so shall thy seed be." To Jacob, the son of Isaac, God said, "This same blessing you have inherited. Now be fruitful and multiply. I will multiply your seed as the dust of the earth."

You can follow it clear on through the lineage of David. This same promise is reiterated, coming down from creation by covenant promise, through Abraham.

This is a fundamental principle of the Kingdom of God. The fruit contains the seed and God moves upon the seed in mighty blessing. The seed is called to come forth and to multiply and this is particularly expressed; not only in the things God's people touch, but also in God's people themselves. All that they touch, God promises that He will bless. This for your benefit, and is to find expression through you as the people of God.

Even in adverse conditions, this principle abides. God will make that seed grow, against all the odds. He will bless the seed and bring forth the increase by His glorious power.

We find this in the children of Israel when they were down in Egypt. They went up to the land of Goshen and there they began to be blessed

of God. They were descendants of Abraham and Isaac, heirs of the promise. Jacob and his twelve sons, and their children dwelt in the land of Goshen, and as they multiplied, the Egyptians saw them and became afraid of them. They began to oppress them and lay heavy burdens upon them. They even began to take their male children and slay them. (You remember the narration of Moses.) Yet, in spite of adverse circumstances, this principle of multiplication still operated. God says in His word that the more Egypt oppressed and afflicted them, the more Israel grew and multiplied. Here we find that seventy souls went into Egypt and three million came out, four hundred years later.

In the Old Testament, a woman who couldn't have children was looked upon with reproach and was believed to lack favor with God, because of her barrenness. In every case where they cried out to God and said, "God, take away my reproach from me!" God heard. He answered and healed, and they began to bear children.

In the New Testament, in Galatians chapter three, Paul says these words, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And unto seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed which is Christ ... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." In other words, the same powerful force that was present in the lives of Abraham's descendants and brought multiplication in the physical realm, now moves through Jesus Christ into spiritual children. The same multiplying forces that caused Israel to be a mighty people, now move in us, God's spiritual children.

In Dew. 26 we read this prayer of confession, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous." Here we see this same principle of multiplication in action in the children of Abraham. It comes down into the New Testament church, and Abraham's spiritual children now begin to receive the same potent, powerful, multiplying force. The scripture says, in Acts 12:24, "The word of God grew and multiplied." This multiplying principle went with them and began to work in mighty power, in a great spread of believers in Jesus Christ. The multitudes believed and the number of those who became disciples multiplied

everywhere that the believers went. In Acts 13:44-45 it says, "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy." In Acts 17:4, speaking of the ministry in another city, it says, "And some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks, a great multitude." Here we see the transferal of this multiplication principle as it moves from Abraham and his physical lineage, to the Kingdom of God. What God is actually aiming for is believers who will give their hearts to God through faith in Jesus Christ. The multiplication principle is then released in them, so that wherever they go, whether they're Jews or Greeks, whether they're black or white, whether they're rich or poor, regardless of what nation they're in; the multiplication power is released and explodes in that nation, and multitudes come to the Kingdom of God.

The tremendous thing is that it moves from the arithmetic to the geometric. By arithmetic, I mean; one, two, three, four, five. One gets saved and is added to the church, another gets saved and is added to the church, another . . . Thank God for the additions. One at a time is wonderful, but that will never reach the world's four billion souls. I'm talking about multiplication. I'm talking about the promise of God. I'm talking about the promise that was given to Abraham, that didn't simply stop at physical lineage, but is applied to all who believe in God through Jesus Christ. God told Abraham to look at the stars in the skies, "count them if you can. That's going to be the number of descendants of the lineage of Abraham. I'm not simply going to add, but I'm going to multiply."

"Arithmetically" means a consecutive numerical progression; one, two, three, four, five: but "geometrically" means, two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty two. Before you turn around and blink, you've got thousands on your hands. Acts says that "the word of God grew and multiplied." Churches were established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Every day they were planting a new church. With our peanut brains, we're satisfied if we can get a hundred people together. We say, "Glory to God, this is revival!" That's peanuts in the sight of God. We're not dealing with man, we're dealing with God; not with human capabilities, but with miracles and the Holy Spirit of God. We're not dealing with human energy; we're dealing with seed that has the capability to multiply beyond our understanding.

In three hundred years, this group of eleven disciples and the followers of Jesus (barely numbering 100) had so exploded in the known world that they brought the empire to it's knees and Christianized the entire world.

### ***THE RELEASE***

In Abraham we see the key to the release of all this. God brought him out of his house and said, "I'm going to give you this land and your heirs are going to possess it." Now Abraham was a hundred years old and had no children, so this didn't excite him at all. He said, "God, what are you going to give me, seeing I go childless? You're telling me I'm going to possess the land, but I don't even have any children to leave my property to. What good is it to me if you give me the whole world? I don't have any sons. I'd have to give it to a servant." God told him, in so many words, "Abraham, I didn't bring you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give this promise of inheritance to a servant of your household. Look at the stars in the sky, number them if you can. I'm going to give you this land from the river Euphrates to the river of Egypt. Your sons will go in and possess it. Count the stars for multitudes. These are going to be your physical sons." The scripture says these words, "Abraham believed God." Here is the key.

Abraham believed that God was capable, and that God would indeed perform the multiplication. As he looked up at God, he said, "God, I believe that." God said, Abraham, you're a righteous man, and you're going to see this come to pass because you believed Me."

Romans, chapter four, says of Abraham, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

All this may sound like vague theology, but let's bring it down to where we live. This is talking about people getting saved on your job, in your

neighborhood, your loved ones. You may say, "I don't mind believing God to save people, but you don't know my uncle: you don't know my boss: my neighborhood is just a habitation of devils." The Bible says that Abraham considered not his own body now dead, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb.

I've pastored churches where if anything was going to happen, it would have to be a miracle. I looked within myself and there were no answers there. If God was going to do something, it would take something besides me. I looked at the realities and said, "God, there's no hope." The scripture says that for Abraham there was no hope, the time of life was passed. This wasn't written for Abraham's sake at all. It was written for our benefit and instruction. Abraham, who is the father of us all, set the principle. It was to him that God said, "I'm going to multiply," and it was to us, the heirs of the promise, that God said, "I'm going to multiply beyond the stars of the sky, the sand of the seashore, the dust of the earth."

If you're ever going to see it happen, you're going to have to look to something outside yourself. You don't have the goods. When you finally discover that you don't have the goods, you're ready to throw in the towel. You look out at your eight or ten saints who don't even have enough faith to get out of bed on Sunday morning, and you say, "God, nothing's going to happen around here." The devil looks you in the eye and says, "That's right, nothing!" But you see, we're not talking about human energy. We're not talking about human principles. We're talking about God, who created seed, whose fruit is in itself. God says, "I'm going to touch that seed, and I'm going to cause it to flourish and spring up and multiply."

### ***ABRAHAM'S SEED***

Within the scope of your own ministry and your own understanding, God gets you past the place where you make the confession of failure and unbelief. All Abraham would have had to do, was to say, "God, I don't believe that." God would have said, "Okay, I'll find somebody else. I'll find a rock over here and raise it up." But Abraham said, "God, I believe." God

said, "Abraham, you're a righteous man, and you're gong to see it come to pass because of your faith."

Abraham had released into his life the multiplying principle that God began with the first man. He released it into his life and there are millions of people in the world today who are of the physical lineage of Abraham. More than that, there are multiplied millions today who are of the spiritual lineage of Abraham. Faith releases the multipliers of the Kingdom. Jesus didn't say to the disciples (who were exactly like you and I), "I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go forth and bring forth nothing but despair, hopelessness, and moth-eaten people, hiding behind the church, holding out till the end." Jesus said, "I have chosen you. You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen and ordained you; that you shall go forth and bring forth much fruit." Jesus said, "So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man would go out and sow seed. Some falls into good soil, and some will bring forth thirty, some will bring forth sixty, and some will bring forth an hundred fold." Jesus didn't say "not while you look around well, it isn't time yet. I don't believe anybody's ready to get saved." Jesus said, "say not four months and then cometh the harvest, but lift up your eyes and look." Those people you think are not ready to get saved are ready right now. Too often we are like Abraham could have been. We look at the old shriveled up creaky body, we have a look at Sarah's womb and say, "Nothing's going to happen around here." We say this in our own lives, we say this on our jobs, we say this about our families. But God says that if we have faith, we can release that principle of multiplication. If you meet Christ, you are Abraham's seed and heir, according to the promise.

One time, there was famine in the land. Isaac, who was an heir to Abraham, was headed down to Egypt. As he went down, God spoke to him and said, "Don't go to Egypt. I didn't call you to Egypt. I called you to this land. I'm going to give you this land." Isaac said, "God, there's nothing to eat here. There's nothing growing here. I've got to go to Egypt." God said, "You stay in the land, because I have promised that I would make you fruitful and multiply you. You stay here, and I will bless you." Isaac stayed there and planted his crop in the midst of famine; while people were dying of starvation Isaac planted a crop, and it multiplied a hundred fold. God made him a wealthy man right there in the midst of famine and starvation. Carrie

went into India and had no success in spreading the gospel. One day, after he had suffered a long series of failures, he received word from home. His supervisors timidly wrote him to ask how, under the circumstances, he viewed his prospects in India. His return letter said, "My prospects are as bright as the promises of God." Until that time, he had not seen one single soul brought to salvation. From that very moment on, he commenced to see tens of thousands accept Jesus Christ throughout India. His positive confession of the promises of God, in the face of defeat and failure and despair, released the explosive power of God's multiplying principle in his life, and Abraham's seed began to multiply.

We are the children of our father Abraham, because we have believed in Jesus Christ. The Bible declares that if we're Christ's, then we're Abraham's seed; and heirs, according to the promise. In his time, God's people rose up and began to confess that there is no impossibility unto God. He can save beyond everything that we even think of. He can multiply, because the principle is not in you and I, the principle is in God's seed, Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is capable of multiplying not only arithmetically but geometrically. This means that your family can get saved, and your neighbors can get saved. It means that this church, if God's people will begin to confess faith and believe God, could in six months begin to wonder why on earth we built this building here. Do you believe that? Do you think that's just preacher's talk? I'm just telling you what the Bible says. We're just toiling with onesies and twosies.

I remember when I got out of grade school and went on to junior high, and then finally, that got me up into high school. We graduated from the simple things like addition, into geometry (which I never did catch on to), and then to algebra which I had to take twice. I never did understand it, but simply because I didn't understand it doesn't mean it doesn't work. They have people that not only work geometry but trigonometry and all those things that are up to the tenth power and to the hundredth power and to the power of that power that I couldn't even grasp. But because I can't grasp it doesn't mean it doesn't work. It just simply means that in my peanut brain I am incapable of grasping it. My friend, God, if he can find sons of Abraham who would begin in the face of defeat, in the face of opposition, in the face of failure to quit confessing their fears and start confessing what



God says He can do will bring great multiplication. Abraham considered not his own body (no hope there) neither the womb of Sarah, now dead, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and confessing that which he had promised; God was also capable of performing.

You see I'm talking about your unsaved loved ones. I'm talking about your families. This has practical aspects. This is your neighbor you love, or your friend on the job, or your friend that you were raised with. This is the one that the devil tells you never will be saved or could be saved. I want you to know, friend, that God can save anyone.

This has practical applications. This means that when you and I begin to stand up and start believing God, and begin to bind the powers of the Devil, and releasing the gospel's multiplying power, families start getting healed, people start coming to Christ, souls start getting saved, lives start getting changed, churches start getting multiplied. The Geometric principle of the Kingdom of God begins to be practical in wonderful changed lives coming to Jesus Christ.

## **THE ART OF BUILDING A CONGREGATION**

**by Wayman Mitchell**

One of the great dilemmas we have as a fellowship is that when we send ministers out, sometimes they fail. We wrestle with that dilemma, because as pastors we are trying to make productive people out of non-productive people. Every pastor who is pastoring a church wants to be successful. They want to be able to build a congregation. They want to be able to come to Conference with a good report. Every six months, they face the hour of truth when they have to stand before the people who sent them out and give a report.

I've learned to listen carefully, to see whether they're reporting "bear oil," or actually giving a report. If they haven't built a congregation, their report is "bear oil." If they have been able to build a congregation, they can tell me what God has done.

The pastor holds the key. Sometimes, pastors think there's a devil who has his city bound; that devil is standing there, holding it, and he won't turn it loose. When we get that problem solved, God can do what He wants to do. He's always wanted to move, and He will move; but first He has to find someone to move through.

The Bible points out three specific keys that are important in building a congregation. The first point is people's attitudes towards money. If you have a right attitude towards money, it will help in building a congregation. The second is how pastors view their people, and thirdly, a pastor's ability to pick the right men is very critical.

In the book of Acts, chapter 19, it says, "And it came to pass that while Apollos was a Corinth, Paul, having passed through the up-per coast, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, 'Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' And they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.' And he said

unto them, 'Unto what then, were ye baptized?' And they said, 'Unto John's baptism.' Then said Paul, 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance

repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after Him, that is, on Christ Jesus.' When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

The tenth verse makes a remarkable statement. When Paul was finished with his ministry, God moved through him so that all of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

### ***TIMING***

We're a militant fellowship. We've come to understand that if we're going to win the world, we're going to have to develop a militant mind. We're going to have to build an army for God. This involves discipline, and this involves mustering. This involves an ability to enlist and to discipline and to cause our people to enter the Kingdom of God, as if it were an army. We have responsibility, and there's a discipline to our life. We've got to be "on deck." We've got to answer the roll call. We have to be in our place, and we have to be functioning.

The moment we get people saved, we shove a spiritual M-16 in their hands, send them out to the front lines, and say, "Fire!" The most common mistake that any new pastor makes when he is establishing a new church is the mistake of "too-soon-itis." There is a time when a pastor can cause people to move militantly. The ability to move these people toward that will

determine whether you succeed or fail. There's a word in this passage of scripture that has tremendous power. It is a little four letter word; WHEN. Your ability to understand what that means is important. In that passage, it says that Paul, "went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things of God. And when some were hardened and believed not but spake evil of that to the multitudes, he departed from there." The ability to understand the timing of building a congregation is essential. People say, "What time frame is that?" I don't know what time frame that is. There's no blueprint. There's no manual with a formula to use for going out to pastor a church. Your ability to use correct timing is what will determine your success or failure as a pastor.

It's like boot camp. A number of years ago, I enlisted in the United States Air Force. I was a "green" kid from Prescott, Arizona. I had never been anywhere, never done anything. I was scared to death! I got on a train and went to Texas. When I got to boot camp, they shaved all my hair off, gave me some clothes (four sizes too big), shoved me into the barracks, and the process began. They started the maneuvers. They started the process. They wanted to make me into a man who would obey orders and do whatever I was told. It didn't make any difference what it was. By the end of my training, I could receive commands, carry out those commands, and I had learned to march. They put us through simulated gas at-tacks. There was a firing range, I learned what these things were. I had a machine gun, and I learned how to fire a rifle. That's what boot camp was all about. When "green" recruits get out onto the battle lines they shouldn't freeze with fear. They should have some kind of understanding of what war is all about and be able to function. You don't just take a kid off the farm in Oklahoma and put an M-16 in his hands. If you put him in battle, where grenades are exploding and people are getting their heads blown off all around him, he won't be able to function without first going through training. If you put him out there without boot camp, he'll either freeze and be petrified, or he'll run.

There was a time in El Salvador when extremists were going to overtake the country. The Communists had an army of guerillas. The day of revolution was announced, and they moved to over throw the government. The majority of the revolutionaries were just young kids. I have seen pictures of these kids, fourteen and fifteen years old, with rifles

in their hands. Their names were written on them, and they looked to be very proud of themselves. The problem was that these kids weren't trained. When the bullets started flying and the blood started running, they fled in terror. The up-rising was a failure, and the Communists learned a hard lesson. It's one thing to have your picture taken and put in Time Magazine when there are no bullets flying and you're holding a personalized rifle; but when your buddy's head is blown off and the blood starts running all over, that's a completely different operation. There's a lot of difference between running around with an automatic rifle and seeing blood.

The Apostle Paul understood the business of "too-soon-itis". He understood that there is a strategic moment. He understood the importance of timing.

In the book of Judges, chapter eight, there is a story about Gideon and his firstborn, Jether. "And Gideon said to Jether, his firstborn, 'Up and slay them.' But the youth drew not his sword, for he was but a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, 'Rise thou, and fall upon us. For as a man is, so is his strength.' And Gideon arose and slew Zebah and Zalmunna and took away the ornaments that were about their camels' necks." Gideon's son, Jether was there when Gideon had captured Zebah and Zalmunna. Jether had been strutting around with a sword around his waist, but he didn't know what to do with it. It's a lot different wearing a sword when you have to put blood on it. When he was faced with the heavies, he caved in. He wasn't ready to handle the heavies.

You need to understand something about building a new congregation. Building a new congregation is not like stepping out of Colorado Springs, or out of Prescott, or out of Flagstaff. You'll have an army of "green" recruits, and you won't be able to treat them the way you would treat "old soldiers." If you were in charge of a body of believers who were well-disciplined and well-formulated, you would have a core that you could operate with. You won't be able to treat new converts the same way. They won't answer the same challenges.

There was one fine pastor, and he and his wife went into a city. As they went into that city, they started to build a congregation. He thought he could cause that congregation of new believers to be disciplined and to act

just like the congregation he had left. It was a total failure. He had gone into that city and people got saved, but then he tried to take them out door-to-door, because he heard somewhere that door-to-door evangelism was powerful and successful. He tried to get these brand-new converts out knocking on doors, and they simply could not take it. They strangled. The pastor failed because he was unable to build a core.

You can build a congregation if you understand the word "when." You can get up before your congregation; you can draw a line, you can challenge them and say, "You devils! You don't respond to this outreach! You don't respond to this program!" When the people do not respond, you will form a gap between them and yourself, and the relationship that you could have had with them will be destroyed. Some people can get saved, and the next day they can stand in the city square and start preaching. Not everyone can do that. You've got to understand that. The fact that they might not be able to do that the day after they get saved does not mean that they didn't get saved. It means they're raw recruits and they're not ready to face mortars.

A pastor called me one day and said, "Pastor, I don't understand what's happened! I got up Sunday and challenged the congregation to a three day fast. We've been running 28 solid people, and since then, every single person left the church!" In his eyes, all he wanted was to have a militant team. What he actually had was a group of babies, and they weren't ready for a three day fast. He had basically told them that if they couldn't do without food for three days, they weren't saved, and there was no need for them to waste their time in his church. The fact remains that he had 28 empty seats that were all fasting, but there were no people in them.

We had a young couple in our church in Perth. I observed them for two or three weeks, and they were doing fantastic. All of a sudden, they disappeared. As any good Pastor would, I got on the trail to see what had happened to them. Somebody had done something to that young couple. They were doing fantastic, and when we ran the problem down, we found out that one of our "heavy guns" had taken them out for coffee. They were brand-new converts. The husband and wife were both working, they were involved in a contract to buy a home, and they were locked into a financial

bind. This "heavy gun" took them out for coffee and gave them an ultimatum. If they were going to be Christians, the wife would have to quit her job. They couldn't handle that. You can't do that to new converts.

Some pastors' egos are so big that they view themselves as being able to give ultimatums. If their congregations are not able to receive every ultimatum that they give, their egos are totally deflated.

When King Josiah was ruling Israel, he did very well. Neco, King of Egypt, was traveling through his land, going up to fight the Syrians. As Neco started to pass through the land, Josiah said, "What are you doing coming through here?" Neco said, "I don't want to fight with you. Leave me alone, and let me pass through. I've got a beef with somebody else. I'm going to fight him, and then I'm going to come back through this land. My war is not with you, and I don't need to do battle with you. Just let me pass through." Josiah's ego was so big, because this was his territory, and he was not going to let him pass through at all. He fought with Neco and lost the battle, his kingdom, and his life. He died on a battlefield he didn't even have to fight on.

Most leaders die on battlefields they don't have to fight on. The Apostle Paul understood some things that you and I need to understand. One of the biggest mistakes a new pastor makes is to try to move this congregation into a militant state of mind too soon. He tries to make them soldiers when they haven't even come through boot camp. That doesn't mean that new converts shouldn't witness when they get saved, and that doesn't mean they shouldn't live for God; but you cannot make a hardened soldier out of a new convert right away. It takes time. When you have an established group of people, spiritual growth is far easier and much more accelerated. When you have a brand-new congregation, there are many things you cannot do with them until you've built a solid and strong church. George Washington said, "If you cannot find men as you desire to have them, take men as they are."

There's a vast difference in a general proclamation and building a core. Paul was under no delusion that he was going to convert that synagogue, but he had an audience. He went into the synagogue and preached the Gospel for three months. He knew he wasn't going to convert the whole synagogue, but he had an audience, and he had a strategy. That strategy

was to hold on to that audience until he built a core. If you're going to be a pastor, you're going to have to learn that strategy is the key. You're going to have to learn to maneuver and learn tactics. You'll never be a successful pastor unless you learn to be a strategist. One of the things you must understand is that there is a strategy to building a congregation.

You must learn to be a general. You must learn tactics. If you're just going to take your cannon and walk out into the front lines and raise up and fire, you're going to get gunned down, and your congregation is going to get gunned down. You have to learn to maneuver. You must learn tactics and strategy. Paul knew what he was doing when he went into that synagogue and ministered before them.

The average new congregation doesn't need any "heavy revys" from Flagstaff or Colorado Springs or Prescott. All they need is Band-aids and "happy juice." If you can just get them to make it to the Wednesday night service, slap a Band-aid on them, pump them with some "happy juice" and send them back out again. If they make it to Sunday, slap another Band-aid on them, pump them with some more "happy juice," and they can go their way. They don't need any "heavy revys." You might have some stuff from Kenneth Copeland, and some fantastic stuff may have just come in from Tulsa, but really all people need is Band-aids and "happy juice." The trick is to keep your audience until you can build a core. If you don't keep your audience, it won't matter if you're got the latest revelation. Seats don't get turned on by revelations.

The Apostle Paul, the Bible says, "departed from there and separated the disciples." Don't try to make disciples out of your people until they've become Christians. A new pastor can make the mistake of trying to make disciples out of people who have not yet become Christians.

There's a vast difference in gathering a crowd and building a congregation. There's a difference in an audience and a core. There's a difference. Many pastors have never discovered that. They're still on the entertainment circuit, and they can't understand why they're not successful. They cannot understand why they can't build solid disciples. The reason is that they're only entertaining. They get the latest musician, the latest speaker, the latest thing, the latest fad, and all they're doing is having an



audience. They don't understand the difference between an audience and a congregation. A crowd of people is not a church. Paul understood that. The scripture says that he departed from them and separated the disciples. You can't share some things with a crowd, and there some things you cannot speak to an audience that you could speak to a church.

Peter was with the Lord Jesus, and Peter said, "Are you speaking this to us or are you speaking this to all the people?" Out of that statement, we understand that there are some things that Jesus shared with the disciples, and other things he shared with the general audience. There's a difference between a congregation and a crowd of people. There's a difference between an audience and an assembly. An assembly is a church. That's that group of people that God has assembled from out of the world. The Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, brought them out, and has given them a new life in Christ. They're born again, and can hear things from the Kingdom of God, that an audience cannot hear or understand. Paul said that strong meat belongs to those who are "exercised."

There are demands you can make of your congregation that you cannot make of a larger group of people. You can take people who are Kingdom people, who are core people, who are an assembly, and work with them. You can challenge these people in the areas of discipline, fasting, and other Biblical principles. You cannot work with a large audience this way.

### ***SEPARATING DISCIPLES***

In John, chapter six, when Jesus was before the crowds, it came time for Him to bring it down to the wire. The Bible says that multitudes were following Him, but it came time for Him to separate the disciples from the audience. Jesus said, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, you can have no part of me." The people said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?"

Out of that group of people, Jesus separated the disciples. Finally, it was narrowed down to a few people. Jesus turned to them and said, "Are you

going to go away, also?" They said, "To whom shall we go? Where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

There is a time to separate the disciples. There's a time when you begin to build a core. Don't lose your audience until you've built that core. Do not make disciples out of people until first you have made them Christians. It's only when these people reach a place of wholeness to follow Christ that they'll become disciples.

In the New Testament, Jesus passed by and called Andrew, Matthew, and Peter. As he passed by them, He said, "Follow me." We have the idea that Jesus was just walking down the road one day, and He passed by the seashore and saw these fellows fishing. As He walked by, He said, "Follow me." We think they were just paralyzed, and all of a sudden they just started following Him.

I remember the film "Jesus." It showed Matthew collecting taxes, and when Jesus passed through and said, "Follow me," Matthew was dumb-founded. He was paralyzed. He just followed. That's not the way it happened. That wasn't the first time they had seen Jesus. He was challenging them to discipleship. They already knew who He was. They had heard Him speak, and they were acquainted with who He was and with some of His teachings. This was a strategic moment when Jesus called them to discipleship. When He said, "Follow me," He was saying a dynamic thing. He was challenging them to come out from the larger audience to further their revelation of discipleship.

In the fourth chapter of John, Jesus met the woman at the well. He said, "Woman, if you knew who it was who speaks to you, you would have asked, and He would have given you living waters." The woman said, "Give me this living water." Then Jesus talked to her about salvation. He said, "If you knew the gift of God and who it was you talked with, you'd have asked."

He gave her that gift. She asked for it and received it. When the Disciples came, He didn't talk to them about the gift of salvation. He said something completely different. He said, "My meat is to do the will of God, and to complete the work of Him that sent me." He spoke to the woman

about the gift of salvation, and He taught the disciples about the importance and the priority of doing the will of God. If you're going to be a successful pastor, you're going to have to understand the separation of disciples. There is a strategic timing for separating the disciples.

A number of years ago, Ernie Lister began to build the Gallup church. He asked me to come and speak for him. He had gathered a large group of people. Some were new converts, some had a church background, some were messed up in kinky Charismatic things. The next day we went to have lunch with some of these folks on their ranch. They had the beginnings of a nice hippy commune. These people were attending Ernie's church regularly. There was a roast leg of lamb, "hippy rice," and everything was fine. When we got done eating, Ernie said, "These folks want to ask you some questions ," and disappeared.

Everybody else slid their chairs in, and they said, "We want to know about communes." There I was, trapped.

Ernie had been there about seven months, but he'd left the issue alone. He'd preached Jesus, and he'd gathered an audience.

Out of that afternoon, we salvaged that entire group of people. He set me up, we had this nice leg of lamb, and he left me to do the job while he was off in the front room somewhere. God did a work, though, and every single one of those people were salvaged. He could have said to them, "Well, you devils, go on about your business. We don't want you around here. Communes are of the devil." Instead, he just left it alone and preached the Gospel. He shucked and jived, maneuvered, shot them Band-aids and "happy juice," and when the time came, like a wise General, he sent for somebody who had the answers. He didn't warn me. I didn't know this was coming. God gave an assembly, and it's a powerful assembly today. There's a strategic timing for separating the disciples.

Years ago, Jack Harris was in Prescott. He'd been fairly successful as a pastor, but he was back in Prescott. He was kind of up-set over some things. He was upset and intolerant of people. He had a bruised heart. We went up to Globe, Arizona, because a school teacher kept sending us messages, saying, "Send us a pastor! Start a church! This place is dead! We

need a pastor!" When we went up, there were three or four musicians. They were Baptists who got filled with the Holy Ghost and started talking in other tongues and weren't welcome in their churches anymore. They were in a state of flux, kind of bouncing around.

Jack Harris went and met with these guys and talked with them. I looked the city over with him. When we came back to Prescott, while we were having lunch, I said, "Jack, you ought to go up and start working with this young music group. They're not going anywhere, and they would like to tie in to what we're doing. You ought to start to work with them. God would help you." He said, "I'll go up and work with them, but they'll have to do what I tell them to do. I'm not taking any gaff off them. If they don't do what I say, I'm not interested." I looked at him across the table and said, "Okay buddy. If you want to start in an empty building, fine. You do it. But if you've got sense, you'll maneuver around those kids. You'll be able to win every single one of them, and they'll be part of your ministry." God dealt with him, and he said, "Okay, what I can." He went into that city and he loved those kids. They joined with him, and Globe was rockin' and realin'. A powerful church was built in a very short period of time.

In the early days of my Prescott ministry, there was a young man named Ron Jones who had the "Assembly-of-God Disease" so bad it was dripping off him. Steve Heroux, Kurt McKinney, Ron Burrell, and Walter Portugal were in a rock band called Eden. there's I maneuvered to win them. I didn't go out and say, "Okay, there's the line. If you guys want to be a part of my army, step across it. If you don't, hit the road. You've got to do what I tell you." Instead, I moved in on them and maneuvered around them. I said, "I just want to help you fellows find your own ministry. Anything I can do to help you, let me know." I didn't ask them to put my label on. I didn't ask them to join my church. I didn't ask them to put my brand on or to make me their General. I said, "What can I do to help you reach souls for Jesus Christ?" I maneuvered around them, and Ron Jones got healed of "Assembly-of-God-itis." He is a fine pastor today. All those men from Eden became productive pastors. There is a strategic timing in separating the disciples.

The key to the congregation is not the manipulation of your will. I talked to a fellow one time who was filled with pride. He was a graduate of a Bible college, and he said, "I can sell pork chops to a Jew." "Yes," I said, "you may be able to sell pork chops to a Jew, but after you do he'll hate you. People don't want to be sold something, they want to buy it."

When I was about ten or eleven years old, I went into a department store in Prescott. I went in by myself and a salesman sold me a pair of Abner brogans with big caps on them. They were worn back in the dark ages. I never wore those brogans again. I hated those shoes for as long as I had them, because he had sold them to me. I didn't buy them. I ended up hating the shoes and the store.

### ***BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS***

The key to a congregation is not to manipulate the people to do what you want them to do, but it is to build a relationship. Disciples are people who you have an association with. It takes sincerity and effort to build a relationship. Sometimes we don't want to minister to all the people on a personal level. We want to be a big-shot. We want to stand and give declarations to the people. We want to manipulate them to do our will, and we want to give commands and orders. If you want to build a congregation, build a relationship. Show that you have a sincere desire to help people. People don't want to be involved in a relationship that is going to cost them something, or if it has demands that are going to be made upon them. You must convince them that you have their best interest at heart, and not that you need something from them. If you can convince them that you have their best interest at heart and you genuinely, in Christian grace and love, mean that, you'll have no problem. However, if you tell them that you want something from them, and that this is the only reason you are associating with them, you'll not build a successful congregation.

In the first book of Kings, chapter twelve, it says, "If you be a servant to this people this day and serve them, then will they be your servants forever."

Build a relationship of trust and confidence in your own self. Paul writes in the scriptures, "I seek not yours, but you." The doctrine people have will be the doctrine that you have, because of the relationship they have with you. The main issue is not that you need to clean up their doctrine, but the main issue is that you need to win them to yourself. They'll change their doctrine.

Your congregation doesn't believe what they believe because you're a part of Victory Chapel, or whatever. The reason they believe what they believe is because you believe it. You're not going to sit down with people who you do not have a relationship with and convert them to your doctrine. Every one of you knows this, because you've talked to Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. You can show them your doctrine in the Bible, but you haven't converted them because you have no relationship with them. Your people don't embrace your doctrine just because it's right, they embrace it because you've won them to yourself.

If they have confidence in you, they have an open heart to listen. When it's a shady area of doctrine, they'll believe what you believe. People that come into your congregation don't need their doctrine straightened out. When you've won them to yourself, doctrine is a non-issue; it will straighten itself out.

There are a lot of pastors who fancy themselves as fantastic defenders of the faith. They stand in the garden of their three dozen people with their big flaming sword, just waiting to slice off an ear or cut off a head. If they hear that anyone has some kind of kinky doctrine, they waste an entire sermon trying to straighten them out. You won't straighten them out that way; that's called "killing a fly with a cannon." You can kill a fly with a cannon, but it makes an awful big hole in the wall. Ask one who knows: I've killed some flies with cannons. Win them to yourself instead.

Here you are, praying for sheep. "God give me sheep. Give me people!" Then the minute they come in the door, you meet them with a big killer knife and slit their throat. Then you tell me, "It's a hard city, Brother Mitchell. You don't understand. These devils up here don't want God." They do want God, but the problem is that you don't understand discipleship.

If you can get people to follow you they'll follow Jesus. Discipleship, in a nutshell, is not a method. It's a sincere desire to help someone else rise to achieve their destiny in Christ. All the time people ask me, "Pastor Mitchell, what is your method? Have you ever written a book? Is there some kind of a manual? Isn't there some kind of discipleship course I can take?" I have to say, "No there isn't. If you get down to the nitty-gritty discipleship is not a method, but a sincere desire to help another person fulfill their destiny in Christ." True discipleship requires the formation of a relationship, then the giving of time and effort to that person to fulfill their calling and destiny in Jesus Christ.

Returning to Acts, chapter nineteen, verse ten, it says that Paul's vision was imparted and all of Asia heard the word of the Lord. Would to God that they could say that in your area after you've been there for 18 months or two years. Paul understood things that many people do not understand today. He understood that he was not going to win that entire area in the space of a month. He had a strategy. That strategy was to first build a core, and keep his audience while he did that. He understood something concerning the establishing of people; as he worked with them and began to disciple them, he began to move them into areas of militant relationship. He had a congregation and an assembly from which he imparted his vision, his doctrine, and his revelation. From that group of people they evangelized all of Asia.

## *Sermon*

### **DOUBLE OR NOTHING**

Praise the Lord.

If you have your Bibles, maybe you'd like to open them with me to the Book of Acts, Chapter 15. I want to minister from just two verses in that chapter, if I could.

As I look at Frank and Lucy as they're going out tonight, it is with great joy that we are able to send them. We know that they're not polished ministers, but we love them. They have the capability of ministry and they are going to survive and do a work for God. I have the privilege of ministering in a lot of different places and as I was sitting here on the platform I was thinking of Greg Johnson. I just came from there. He is one of the handsomest guys that ever was, and now he is polished!! He looks like he's been doing this all of his life. He has a thriving, throbbing congregation. Greg is now a powerful minister of God's Word; a leader among God's people. Harold Warner, too, has a throbbing, thriving church. He is building a new building. He has outgrown his facilities, and is now meeting in motel banquet halls. Thinking, too, of Ernie Lister, who is just impeccably dressed every time you see him, I get the privilege of going to see all these guys, and I flash back. I remember when I was sitting there a short while ago, when they all came in to this church. It is hilarious to see them today! Seeing them perform you'd think that they were professionals, and had been trained for this all their lives. Ernie Lister was a refugee from a witch doctor's camp. Harold Warner crawled out of a hospital from a hepatitis bug long enough to get his clothes on, come to church, and get saved. One of the only things Greg Johnson ever did right in his life was come and get saved! Indeed, it is hilarious what God has done with these men, God was only able to move, because of a congregation that put their confidence in them, trusted them, blessed them, and sent them forth in ministries.

I want to minister this evening along the lines of what we're involved in as we launch Frank and Lucy. They are not any different from any couple



we've ever sent out. They are some of the finest people we have. They are among some who we have sent out who have never had the privilege of working on staff, or being Director of the Door. I received reports from Bob Swope this week. He has opened and he's growing, he's thriving, and God's doing a tremendous work. Ray Hendrick is growing and planting churches. He has a large congregation and a new building. He is getting ready to plant another man in January over into California. These are people that were never on the payroll of this church, and yet were faithful to serve God where they could, and God saw their capabilities and their hearts and opened up for them a ministry. We are sending this couple as one of these.

As I minister from this passage of scripture, I'm reminded this evening of a story. A number of weeks ago a man walked into Las Vegas and he had two suitcases in his hands. In one was 750,000 dollars in cash, and the other one was empty. He walked up to one of the gaming tables, laid out the 750,000 dollars, and in one turn of the wheel gambled it all. It was double or nothing. He won 750,000 dollars and did what most people don't have enough sense to do; loaded it all back in the suitcases, caught a taxi and left town. He was heard to remark, "Inflation is eating this stuff up so fast, that I figured I might as well gamble it all, double it, or loose it all anyway." That's an interesting mentality, isn't it? I don't recommend it. Las Vegas puts up three million dollar signs from people who have tried that. One thing that we can pick up out of the man's mentality is that he has correctly seen the signs of his times and the age in which he lives. When he left this was the only opportunity he had, he seized it and he gambled everything, double or nothing. I want to share with you from Acts 15 on the subject, "Double or Nothing." The two verses of scripture we will look at are verses 25 and 26, "It seems good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth." I want to consider for a moment this evening, the calling of God.

### ***THE CALL OF GOD***

The history of the secular world has many illustrations for us. I'd like to share with you several of the finest. Historians tell the story of Pizarro, a Panamanian-Spanish explorer who, with his crew of conquerors, had filled ten long years with the hardships of his first two expeditions. The heat of the deserts, the stinking swamps and jungles, followed by the bitter cold of mountain peaks and constant attacks of savage Indians, had worn the life out of every one of his men. They were brought to a point of decision. Two ships were waiting to take them back to Panama. Pizarro drew his sword and drew a line from the east to the west with great determination. After he had looked at these men, he pointed south where they'd suffered such misery, heartache, death, and destitution, and said, "Friends and comrades, this is the side of death, hardship, hunger, nakedness, bones, and abandonment. The other side is that of pleasure. To the north you may go to be poor, to the south to Peru to be rich. Let every good Spaniard choose which suits him best." One hundred and eighty-three brave men crossed the line. A boat turned immediately towards Panama with the quitters, and Pizarro and his thirteen men turned the other ship to Peru, and changed the course of history. Pizarro understood that part of the word of God which I am going to preach this evening.

You've heard me mention Cortez and the story is worth sharing again. When Cortez landed at Vera Cruz, Mexico in 1615, he began his dramatic conquest of Mexico. He had 700 men under his command. He purposely set fire to the 11 ships that had brought them from Spain, pushed them out into the Gulf of Mexico, and they stood on shore and watched the only means of retreat they had burn. As the last ember sank beneath the waves, they turned and with no sign of regret, marched into the depths of Mexico prepared for whatever they might meet. Cortez, too, changed the course of history.

You and I, as disciples this evening, need to learn a lesson from these accounts. The lesson that we need to learn is that we need to give our all and that when we go to become disciples, we need to destroy our means of retreat. Can you image being these men who were the first to go the new world? I remember seeing this again, I believe, in 1969. The world just simply went ape over these men who landed on the moon. It was a tremendous accomplishment when Neil Armstrong and Edward Aldrin and

the other man traveled there. Neil Armstrong was the first man who ever set foot upon the moon. Can you imagine these men sitting on this capsule at Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the countdown was coming, 'nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, blastoff?' No one had ever done what they were going to do, no one had ever walked on the moon. I know they were brave men. Things went through their minds, just like what goes through the minds of any other people. The Gospel, this evening, is a call to risk. We find, in this passage of scripture a tremendous statement made concerning Paul and Barnabas. These were men who have hazarded their lives. Literally, this means they surrendered, exposed, and endangered their lives. And so the Bible states that they have literally gambled men lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I tell you beloved, when it says that this evening, we're talking about the call of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The call of the Gospel of Jesus Christ isn't to a social club. It's not, this evening a call to some fellowship where everything is comfortable, where everything is promised to us, and our future is absolutely laid out. But we are as Abraham, leaving a promise of God in other countries, and going into the land where He has called us. We are called to risk our lives. We are staking our lives on this Book and the experience that God has given us in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, the Bible is filled with this kind of thing. In Judges 5:18, it tells us of Zebulun and Naphtali. They were a people who jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the fields. It tells of these two tribes, who acted in defense of the land of God and the people of God, and it says they were determined to conquer or to die. Therefore they plunged into the thickest place of the battle. They were not simply content to be a part of the team, to be a part of humanity; but they saw the need and they plunged themselves into the thickest part of the battle. They said, "We're going to win, or we're going to die!" It's written down in history in Judges, 5:18 that these two tribes were gripped by that spirit. We also have the story of Esther. You remember when Esther was bid-den of Mordecai, her uncle, who said, "Esther, the people of God are in danger, and you need to go in before the king and make petition because this wicked Haman has gained a petition that is going to be their death." And Esther said, "The king has not bid-den me." In those days a monarch was a man that you did not approach.

To merely come into his presence was to risk death. But Esther said, "If I perish, I perish!" and so she gave herself and staked her life. She did what these others in the Bible have done. They gambled their lives.

Now, the call of God, is not a call to safety, to a safe harbor, or to a future that is certain. It is not a call, this evening, to having all the factors in our hands; but the Bible says the call of God is a call to risk. Harold Warner preached a masterpiece at a conference or two ago concerning Epaphroditus. And it says of Epaphroditus, "that not regarding his health for the work of Christ, he was near death." This is a gambler's mentality. What this, "not regarding" literally means, is to stake everything on one turn of the dice. God does not call you and I to take our finances to Las Vegas, and to put it on a gaming table, and try to beat the curse. However God calls you and I to stake our lives. The Bible says that Epaphroditus was just such a man. He staked his life, and this word is used in Phillipians 2:25 by Paul to describe a man who was willing to risk his life for the call of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It means a reckless courage that makes him ready to gamble with his life to serve God. As a matter of fact, in the early church they had a group of people who were called 'The Gamblers.' These were people who visited jails and desperate criminals. These were people who ministered to those who had contagious diseases, and who were physically ill. They were people who went into such horrendous places to carry the Gospel, that they called these people 'The Gamblers.' They were men exactly like Paul and Barnabas, who staked their lives. As a matter of fact, at one time in Carthage, Egypt, there was a terrible plague. The officials were throwing the bodies and the carcasses of those who were dying outside the wall, and not burying them at all. Piplium, the over-seer of the Church in Carthage, called the Christians together and rallied them to the task. The people of the church took the bodies of these diseased people and buried them. Then they began to minister to the sick and afflicted. History records that the city of Carthage was saved because Piplium and his group of gamblers risked their lives for the cause of Jesus Christ. You see, The Gospel is a call to risk.

When Frank and Lucy go this evening, they're going to an uncertain future. I could not tell them what's going to happen tomorrow. I can't tell you what's going to happen to you tomorrow. However, I can tell you this; that the Gospel of Christ is a call this evening, and you and I are to lay our

lives out in the uncertainty, and stake it on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I want to share with you again a poem, one of the most precious poems that I have ever read. It just moves me every time I read this.

*Generations have come and gone Drank the cup of life, then fled  
Made their eternal record, then joined the army of the dead.*

*They're gone, oh frightful words where, where they have quietly  
fled?*

*Gone from our sight and memories are millions of forgotten dead.  
Each taste his favorite phantom in his respective age*

*Or in the Light of Eternity Carefully wrote life's sacred page.*

*Time is the momentous hour when eternal character is formed  
or like victor's, are adorned. Ages have rolled their lusty centuries  
along through the visit of time, Til now has come the awful hour*

*when it's your turn to live, and mine. My time, oh dreadful thought!  
My time to act; my moment to live. Great God, in this stupendous*

*hour,*

*infinite inspiration give. Shall I in this fearful hour  
break then, fantastic spell? Or, with the reckless millions  
will ! burden, Heaven or Hell And the volition of my will  
I can reach the realms of light Or I can forge infernal caves  
to bind me in eternal night. I bless dues of mortal sword*

*And my way too, effects another It may turn his scale of destiny in  
this life.*

*And in the other*

*Then awake, awake, awake it's my time and battlefield,*

*I win today or loose forever My fate is fixed beyond repeat.*

My friend, we're called this evening to risk our lives for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You see, we turn on the idiot box and we get this corrupted, perverted Gospel that comes flowing through! That if you'll just receive Jesus, you're going to be a millionaire. Peace and life, and angels of God are going to constantly be your minister. You're never going to have any uncertainty. You're always going to know the will of God perfectly all of

your life. You're never going to have a shortage of money. You'll always have peace, and joy, and blessing. Nothing will ever go wrong. These things are just not true. If you live for Jesus, beloved it's a call to risk everything.

The Prophet Isaiah said in Chapter 28:6, "The Lord of hope shall be for strength for them that turn the battle to the gate." The most defended part of a city was the gate. Therefore, the most dangerous part of the warfare, was the place right by the gate. And here the prophet said, "and God has a special dimension of empowering for those that risk." God has a grace that will come for those who will put their lives on the line. They may never go out and preach the Gospel. They may never be the pastor of a church. They may not be 'high profile,' but they'll labor in a congregation day by day, week by week, and month by month, they'll put their future on the line for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God says in His Word. That there is a special dimension entered, but that special dimension is only entered by risk.

### ***THE HINDERING MENTALITY***

I want to talk for a moment concerning the hindering mentality. It is a 'play-if-safe' mentality that has gripped our generation, and when you and I begin to play-it-safe, something happens to us in-side. There's an indecision and a fear that grips our lives, and self-interest begins to be enthroned. It takes dominion over our spirit and selfishness begins to rule.

I was talking with Brother Neville recently. He said that most of the major business corporations that we know as large and successful operations have failure, after failure, after failure. They are successful not because they succeed at every task that they endeavor to do, but because they take risks. There are a multitude of corporations nobody ever heard of. They never gambled anything. They just dried up and died. In the business world, it's a game of risk. We just got through with presidential elections, which was a charade of actors. The two who won would never say what they really believed. Both of them were afraid to comment before a reporter or an audience, and say, "This is what I believe. Take me or leave me." Thus, both of them waltzed through the presidential elections, and it came out the way it came out. If you're a Republican, you're happy. If

you're a Democrat you're unhappy. Now we live in that kind of generation. Play-it-safe. What we saw elected to our country was a manager. He replaced another manager. Our country does not need a manager, it needs a leader who will stand up and say, "This is the direction we need to go. I need somebody to follow me. By playing-it-safe, in the Christian life, you lose it all.

As we look back to our scripture, we see that it says, "They gambled their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus." Now, I want to tell you this evening, that a church or an individual who always operates within the framework of the norm, that always operates by the known factors is bound to fail. They will never see a miracle, or great blessing, or great success. They'll live all of their life in mediocrity and the chances are that they'll be defeated, time and time again. Beloved, to play-it-safe means that you're going to lose everything that you're after. God did not call you and I to a play-it-safe mentality. There are many preachers who will never preach anything controversial. They have thousands of people filling their buildings who do not know whether they believe black or white. They wouldn't know a revival if they saw one, even if it hit them in the rear end. They're afraid to preach to people. They want to make sure that if anybody had any shade of belief; black, gray, tan, red, pink, whatever it may be, they can all stand together. Unfortunately, many of them will go into eternity without God. You see, God did not call the Church to simply be religious. We have a message. That message polarizes people. That message stirs people's emotions. That message stirs the devil up. That message causes people to decide for it or against it. When I get through preaching this message, I'm going to ask you for a verdict. I'm going to give an alter call, an invitation. I'm going to ask you to act on what I'm preaching. You can accept it or reject it. There are people in here who are lost for eternity. You're not saved. And you'll have an opportunity, tonight, to be saved, or to reject Christ, and go to a devil's hell. However, there are multitudes in this building, tonight, who have been brought to the same place you are, and they're saved tonight because they made a decision. You see we're talking about not playing-it-safe. We're talking about putting the Gospel out and letting people decide for it, or against it. There'll be no salvation, there'll be no deliverance, there'll be no verdict, unless we make the Gospel of Jesus

Christ clearer and make men see that they must decide for or against God. The scripture says, "Remember Lot's wife." Who was Lot's wife? She was a woman that couldn't decide whether she wanted to go with God, or whether she wanted to live in the filth of Sodom.

You see, we're called this evening, to go with God. We're called this evening, not to play-it-safe. That is the hindering mentality. If we're going to wait for perfect people to send out, if we're going to wait for a perfect opportunity in a city, perfect circumstance, until all the factors financially are in, then we are never going to see a miracle. We are never going to see God do a work. We're called, this evening, to go for broke. Our calling is to risk. The hindering mentality says to 'play-it-safe'. The times demand it. We're living in days when you can put savings accounts full of money into the bank and sit there on it and you'll flat go broke with money in the bank. Inflation will eat it completely up, while you're sitting there rejoicing about having a pocket full of money, it will become worthless.

The times demand that you and I take action, and that we be outlandish. The times demand that we go and give our all into the work of Jesus Christ. The satanic strategy demands that you and I go for broke. The Devil is playing for keeps. He doesn't slumber. He doesn't take vacations. He never does miss church. And if you're not sitting in your seat, he'll be there. He means business, he's serious. He is playing for eternity and for eternal souls. He's going all out because he knows he has but a short time. If any of you have ever been in a fist fight, you know that the best way to get soundly thrashed is to keep defending yourself. Your opponent will hang one on you and he'll beat you to a pulp. My daddy said, "Son don't you fight. Don't fight son, but if you have to," he said, "I want you to win. You use clubs, chains, baseball bats, or anything else. Fight like dogs and cats do: scratch, kick, and claw." Now, I always remember what my daddy told me, and when I got saved, I got saved. We got a devil who means business. If you think you're just going to spar around with him a little bit and he's just going to play, I've got news for you, man; he's loaded with brass knuckles, big rocks, and clubs. And if you're just going to kind of mess around, you may as well quit and throw in the towel, because you're whipped before you start. He knows he has but a short time and you're going to have to go for broke or you are



whipped already. This is the kind of church that was spoken of in the Book of Revelation. The one that wraps it all up.

It's upon us that the ends of the world are wrought. We finish the show. This generation is going to see the coming of the Lord Jesus. If we do not avail ourselves of the opportunity, it will be lost forever.

I well remember the story of Ahithophel and Hushai. These were both counselors to King David. Ahithophel defected to Absalom, David's son. When Absalom rose up in insurrection, Hushai secretly sided with David, but David asked him to go back and be a counselor so that he could upset the counsel of Ahithophel. They were in a counsel meeting. David was fleeing for his life to the Jordan River and Absalom said to Ahithophel, "What shall we do? Shall we rush after him now, or shall we wait?" Ahithophel said if you don't get him now while he's in disarray and upset, you'll never catch him. However, then they asked Hushai, he said, "No, that is not good advice that Ahithophel gave because David is like a she-bear robbed of her cubs. If you catch him now, many people will be killed. The throne will be in doubt and discouragement will reign. You need to wait until after he's had a time to cool off a little bit. Then you can catch David where he is unaware, and destroy him. That was the worst counsel that Absalom had ever had, but he took it, and he lost the only opportunity available to overthrow David.

So it is with the Church of Jesus Christ, beloved. We are living in a day when we have to go for broke. That means it's all or nothing. God calls us to risk everything, and if we're just going to play it safe in the church, we're going to lose everything that we have, because we live in desperate days. I have never started to take a step of faith in church planting without having the devil and all Hell break loose every time. The devil says, "Go ahead man, I'm going to break you. You won't have enough money left to even pay the postage to write a letter, much less support a church." But I said, "Devil, you're a liar. God's church will survive, and God's church will reign." And every time the devil tries to bring discouragement about planting one church, I say "Plant two! Hallelujah!!" We live in days, when it's double or nothing, and we must do what God has called us to do.

## ***THE OVERRIDING CONFIDENCE***

I want to talk briefly on the overriding confidence that we have, this evening, from the Word of God. As believers, one thing we know, is that we cannot lose if we get in the game. Hebrews, Chapter 11, should give encouragement to every one of us. In this section are found two groups of people. The first group in the Book of Hebrews are those who stopped the mouths of lions, those who quenched the violence of fire, those who saw the dead raised to life, those who had tremendous victories, however, we also see another group of people among whom some paid with their lives, some were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: They wandered about in sheep skins being destitute, afflicted, tormented. But, thank God, when the chapter ends it shows both companies of these, and they're in a great amphitheater looking down at you and I tonight to see how we're going to play the game and run the race. They all won, those who paid with their lives, those who were destitute and naked and afflicted, those who fought the battles of fire; and those who reigned and ruled! They're all together, all of them are with Him! They are sitting tonight in the great amphitheater looking, hallelujah, at you and I and cheering in the stands and saying, "This is the hour, let's go! You can't lose if you just get in the game. The only ones that lose are the ones that won't play!" There is a cheering crowd in heaven tonight, looking down on a little congregation in Prescott, Arizona and they're tearing the upholstery off the seats of heaven! They are excited because they know that we're in the race! Hallelujah! Praise God! The one factor that makes the difference this evening is the God Factor. The Bible says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

I was in Nogales ministering and Ronnie Burrell, Kim Pensinger and myself were having lunch in a restaurant when a new convert who had just been saved a short while came up. We were talking along the lines of what I'm preaching tonight. This new convert was listening intently because he wanted to know what preachers talk about, and what they do. We could see he was getting pretty excited. Finally, he couldn't stand it any longer and what tremendous wisdom came out of the mouth of a new convert when he said these tremendous words, "A devil may have better tricks, but we have better weapons." I said, "Out of the mouth of a babe comes the wisdom of

God." He knew something that every believer should have confidence in and never lose, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" I have said this before this evening, let me say it again. If we must wait for the acquiring of property, for the raising of budgets, and for the training of qualified workers, we'll never evangelize the world. Our call is to go for broke. It is double or nothing.

I got a call from Don McPherson in Germany, recently, and he shared these facts with me. He's acquainted with a brother and a pastor down in Fourguard, Germany, who were sharing that they have been there for ten years and have three works. The largest of these is running about a hundred and is located in West Germany.

They have several workers there under appointment who either immigrated just like Don did, or got in from the United States as a Christian worker. One of these workers went to renew his Visa and was refused because they were not a qualified church. Now to you who are not learned, that means he was not a German Lutheran.

This man had told him he had been there for ten years, and had he said never had that kind of work problem before. As he told me that, my mind flashed back to sitting in Susan's restaurant the day I met with Don and Liz and in that meeting God raised up a miracle work! In Mexico today we have throbbing and thriving assemblies with tremendous young men preaching the Gospel, if the door closed today, beloved, we would still have workers in Mexico who could carry the vision of what we believe into the interior of Mexico. It may be a day in the very near future when it will be impossible to do what you and I now do. However there are native Mexicans who can do it, all because we acted at an opportune time. We in this congregation have probably invested a hundred and eighty thousand dollars into Mexico. I want you to know that those existing congregations are the reward of your investment. As we acted on time, God has honored our commitment and we have, in Mexico today, a strong church that is a marvel to every religious group that looks at it. I don't say that out of pride, I'm saying that because it's a fact. They're supporting themselves.

Jesus said, "Say not four months, and then cometh harvest." When He spoke that, beloved, he ministered to a little woman that was not qualified.

This little woman had just been picked from the pits of sin. She was a five time loser. She was bruised, had been taken advantage of and she had been used. Her life was a reproach in her city. She was divorced five times, and was living in adultery with a different man then, but Jesus touched her heart. She was moved upon by the grace of God. Such a revolution took place in her life that the whole city came back to see this man, Jesus. She was an unqualified worker. God had just touched that little woman, and healed her soul, when he spoke these words to the disciples "Come ye and said harvest, , but lift up your eyes and look to the fields which are white already, unto harvest." Beloved, I wish we could feel what's in the heart of God tonight for world evangelism. I wish we could feel what God feels for little cities in Arizona, I wish we could feel what God is feeling for little cities around the world. Our hearts could not be satisfied simply to go forward.

I'm reminded of David this evening. David one day as he was in exile, lifted up his voice and said, "Oh would to God that I had a drink out of the well of Bethlehem." Three of his mighty men heard that and they were so loyal to his man and so attached to him that they broke through the camp of the Philistines who were at war. At the risk of their own lives, they dipped out of the water from the well and brought it back to him, putting it in his hand and saying, "David, here is well water from Bethlehem that we heard you cry out for." He poured it out, and said, "God forbid that I would drink water that was at the risk of men's blood." But oh, beloved as we think of that, think of the multitudes that are without the Water of Life. Multitudes who are crying out in desperation. If these men, out of loyalty to a man, would risk their lives simply to bring that water, how much more ought you and I risk who have a Saviour who gave us everything? Our Saviour is the One who left heaven's glory. He is the One who came down to earth. He is the One who suffered and shed His blood and died. He paid the price for our sin and was buried. And He is the One who rose again by the power of God. How much more ought you and I serve Him and love Him and take the Water of Life to those that He loves, and those that He died for, tonight. I would to God that we could see that if God be for us, who can be against us? Jesus was our example this evening. This poem is written as a tremendous tribute to what He has accomplished for us, and it says,

*In sitting there they watched Him there He the made soldiers did,  
There, while they played their  
And died upon His cross to rid God's world of sin.  
He was a gambler, too, my Christ.  
He took His life and through it a world redeemed  
And before the agony was done  
Before the western sun was down, crowning that day with its  
crimson crown  
He knew that He had won.*

## *Sermon*

### **THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR**

by Pastor Mitchell

I was with a leader of a Pentecostal organization having lunch recently, and he began to tell me of the various places he was familiar with. He had been to a place where a senator and a police chief were part of the church, and in another place, a prominent politician was a part of the church. He carried on like that for quite some time. Finally, I could not hold back any longer, and I said, "Brother, the Kingdom of God is not built on those people. Thank God some of them get saved, but not many do." Then I quoted to him I Corinthians 1:26-28, and told him that, if some prominent or wealthy person or actor or movie star gets saved and becomes part of the church, that is not necessarily a label of success or a symbol of our scriptural validity.

I was down in Obrigon, Mexico, some years ago. A section of Obrigon puts Beverly Hills to shame. There are palatial estates; some of them would cover an entire city block. It is something of a dream world. There was a young minister with me, and he said, "Those are the kind of people that we need to get saved, because they could really do something for God." They can, but they rarely do.

Luke 5:1-11, says, "It came to pass, that as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, he said unto Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. "And Simon, answering, said unto him, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net. "And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their

partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him." The thought that I'd like to capture from this, essentially, is the statement "Thou shalt catch men." If this is true, and you and I are going to be successful soul winners, laborers in the Kingdom of God, and bring people to the Kingdom, we need to understand some basic principles concerning the Kingdom of God.

### ***GOD'S WORD***

Evangelism is the most effective tool we can use to catch fish, because each of us here who are genuinely saved are burdened to see people come to Jesus Christ. We want to catch them. I know that there are books and tapes on the market on "The keys to Revival." You might have the feeling that God is hiding the keys, and just about the time we creep up on Him, He sneaks away someplace else and hides them again. We look everywhere for revival, and as soon as we almost discover them, God hides them somewhere else. It's a game of hide-and-seek. It's just like "Mission Impossible." It's only for the special agents. We step into a phone booth, where there's a secret tape recorder underneath the phone, we slip it out, out comes the message, and we no sooner have the message than it destructs so no one else can hear it. Special agents of revival are the only ones who can find out how to have revival.

Revival is no mystery. It is no secret. It is simply a product of man hearing from God. Revival is, very simply, God finding someone to obey His will. Revivals are given by God when His will is done by men. When we are out of the will of God, all the training, expertise, resources, or capabilities we may have will have no effect. When we do not take God at His word or labor according to the word of God, we will not be successful and we will

not catch men. God wants us to understand that He wants to bless us with success when we hear His word and do His will.

John Wesley said he was a failure for thirty years. He was not a failure for lack of opportunity or education, but he didn't know what God's will for his life was. When he discovered it, he became a powerful man that crisscrossed the globe. He said to his preachers, "Your job is not to preach so many sermons and to take care of this or that society, but your business is to save as many souls as you can." That passion for souls gripped his life, thrust him into the masses of society, and caused the world to cheer. John Wesley was a man who was an establisher of the Kingdom of God.

When you and I hear the word of God and obey His word, when we labor according to the will of God, then He will bless us. Revivals are the result of hearing from God, and barrenness is a result of not hearing from God. It is no more complicated than that. When we are out of the will of God, no device, no cunning, no cleverness is going to cause us to be able to escape what God's word says. When God says, "At thy word," we need to understand that He means "At thy word."

The Bible tells us that the word of God spoke and said to King Ahab, "At the pool of Jezreel dogs are going to lick your blood." Ahab thought he could beat the rap. He didn't want to repent or "get right" with God. He went to war with Jehosaphat, and he said "Jehosaphat, change clothes with me. Will you ride in my chariot? Would you mind just doing that for the day?" The scripture says that you cannot outsmart God. You may think we are going to be able to deceive God if we change our garments or our methodology, or that He's going to bring us success, or we can escape obeying the word of God, but God sees far beyond the clothes we wear and the little methods that we use. The scripture says that on the battlefield that day, when Ahab was running for his life, a man drew a bow at a venture. He just took a shot into the air and the arrow found its way through the pieces of Ahab's armor. He died that day, and the word of God was fulfilled.

Success is the result of taking God at His word. Jesus said, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." If you and I are going to have success in catching men, we need to understand some methods of God's word. We



need to understand some basic precepts concerning the revelation of the living God, because, unless we do, we will be as Sisera. The stars in their courses fought against all of God's creation and resisted this man, simply because he was out of the will of God. He was powerful; he had armament, and he had everything going for him, but he was out of the will of God. Success is finding out which way God is moving and going that way.

Moses, when he found the stream of God's blessing (while he was out in the wilderness), said, "God, I want to make sure that I know which way you are moving. I'm not about to go into the promised land, Lord, unless you're going that way." The Lord said, "The angel shall go before you, and shall prepare the way." Moses said, "Lord, if you're going that way, then I'm going that way. If you're <sub>not</sub> going that way, then I'm not going that way."

David prayed to God, and God said, "You'll hear the sound of the going forth in the mulberry tree. When you hear that sound, you'll know that it's time for you to go, and that this is the way that I am moving."

It is a terrible thing to be out of the will of God. When you and I are out of the will of God, laboring out of the will of God, or ministering out of the will of God, then our doctrine, vision, and concept of the Kingdom are out of the will of God. We're going to be as barren as the fishermen who fished and caught nothing, because success is in doing the will of God.

When Elisha was on Mount Horeb, God spoke to him. He said, "What are you doing here, Elisha? Why are you here?" In your labor for the Kingdom of God; in your witness for Jesus Christ, have you ever had God deal with you pungently and potently It's an powerfully and ask you, "What are you doing?" I awesome thing to hear that awful question come to your heart.

In our generation, we are desperately needful to hear the word of God. Except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain. It doesn't matter whether we build a million churches, or whether we continue until this congregation grows to thousands. It doesn't matter, unless God is building this house. We must labor and fulfill His word. Some generation to come, should Jesus tarry, might come along and wonder what kind of strange people inhabited this building that thought it necessary to build all these rooms and expand

and do all this activity. They'll wonder at our vision and wonder at our activity unless we build by the word of God. It'll not stand the test of time; except the Lord build the house, watchmen vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the waketh in vain. The key to revival is "at thy word." If we're going to catch men and be successful and stand the test of time it will be because we build on God's word, "Henceforth, thou shalt catch men."

### ***THE POOR***

An astounding revelation comes from the thought that God has a special concern for the poor of all classes of people that He loves. We know that He loves all the people on Earth. We know that He loves all His heart for the poor. That may bet an astounding revelation to you. I know you've probably heard that if you are really blessed of God, you will be a millionaire; that those are the only kind of people God blesses, because being rich shows you have faith. I'm sorry, but I have another revelation for you and it doesn't quite fit that one. God has a special place in His heart and He is especially concerned for the poor. If we're going to be successful, we need to understand that God has a special place in His heart for the poor. God has given an economic advantage to the poor. He says in His word that those who have substance to lend to the poor are not to take interest of them just because they are poor. They are to have compassion; they are to care for them and not try to scheme or connive.

The Bible says that part of the harvest was specifically left so that poor people could glean the harvest fields. God gave specific directions to His people in the daily affairs of their agricultural state. They were to not pick up every scrap of grain or glean their fields, so the poor could come to those fields and receive a special blessing. The Bible gives special direction, in that part of the purpose of the tithe is to have a resource so the poor could have help meeting their needs, and that they could be ministered to. The reason for this is that God cares for poor people and He has a special place in His heart for those who are without means. The scripture says, "He that giveth to the poor lends to the Lord, and that which he has given God will

pay him again." The Bible says that the gospel is especially for those who are poor.

Jesus found men who had fished all night and had caught nothing. He said, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." They said, "Lord, we've fished all night, and we've caught no fishes." Our generation desperately needs to hear the word of God, and we must launch out into the deep and cast out our nets for the poor.

I remember when we first began to get drug addicts and hippies saved. A number of years ago, a preacher (a professional clergyman) said to me as he looked at all the bedraggled creatures, "Pastor, do they support you?" I could tell what his interest was. His interest was not whether their precious souls would respond to the gospel, or that they had a hunger for God, or that they had been redeemed by grace; his concern was whether they had enough money to make it worth my while to talk to them about the gospel.

We are dreadfully close to making the same mistake. We may fail to understand God's message because we may not want to take time for the lower classes of society. We are desperately close to making the same error that caused revival to go out of other organizations.

They were looking for revival, but their eyes were not upon the poor of society, the destitute inhabitants of our world; they were looking to those who had wealth. That is a fatal mistake, because it is not the will of God. It is not in accord with divine revelation.

In the 80's, the church desperately needs to take a step of faith and launch out into the deep and let down their nets. God always knows where revival is, in any city, in any generation, in any time.

Revival is always among the poor classes of society. This is historically true, not only true by God's word. The lesson our generation needs yet to learn is that, according to the word of God, the very validity of the ministry we have, whether it is the ministry of the gospel or the ministry of divine revelation, is to reach down to the poor and suffering masses of society and lift them to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The only claim we have to validity is that we are preaching the gospel to the poor. Jesus said, "The

Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." Jesus says, in that statement, that this is a sign of the validity; that it is the Messiah's word, the Messiah's gospel. What's going to bring deliverance to the captive, opening of the prison to those who are bound, and the recovering of sight to the blind is that they are preaching the gospel to the poor.

When John the Baptist was in prison, he was concerned because the Kingdom had not come exactly as he thought; he was disturbed in his spirit because he wasn't sure that Jesus really was the Messiah. John's messenger came to Jesus and said, "Are you the Messiah or are you not?" Jesus said, "Go back and tell John the Baptist these words, 'The poor have the gospel preached unto them.'"

The only claim we have to validity as preachers of the gospel is that we have the same concern that God has for the lower classes of society. There, among the needy, the ignorant, the struggling and desperate, we find a place to plant the seed. We begin to labor to relieve their affliction (much of which is caused by spiritual affairs), and we begin to try to help them. If we want to be able to catch men, we need to understand what God's word says, and launch out into the deep of God's will.

Luke's gospel says these words, "He has put down the mighty from their seats and has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty." It was to the lower elements of society in Israel that the gospel came. When the message came to Mary, she was not a member of Beverly Hills' society, but she was a member of a very poor family in a very poor city in a very poor land. Her land was Israel, her city was Nazareth, and she was just a poor handmaiden. It was to Mary that the angels spoke. When the shepherds began to announce the herald of the coming King, of Him who was to be the Saviour of Israel, it did not come to the elite in a palace; it did not come to Pilate or Herod; it did not come to the priesthood. It went out to the hilltops and to poor shepherds in their fields. It was to the common classes of society that the angels appeared and brought the good news. The gospel is to the poor.

Any church that begins to reach to the better classes of society has sealed their fate. They are doomed to extinction. Any church that begins to reach for the better classes of society and begins to feel that their ministry is valid because they are reaching prominent people in the society is doomed to failure. They may have one generation left, if that long, until the thrust and the essence and the power of revival is gone, because God's will is to the poor.

Revival has always lain with the poor, and when we leave the poor we have left revival. The gospel is especially to be preached to the poor without fear and without favor. We are not to find favor. James says that if we have rich people come into our assemblies, we are to show them no favor. We are to treat them exactly like other people. Do not make note of them or put them up as a signal of our validity or success, but treat them like others.

The poor hear much more readily the message of the Bible. James 2:5 says, "The poor of this world are rich in faith." Throughout the scripture, there is the understanding that wealth in material substance is a hindrance to the growth, development, release and exercise of biblical, spiritual faith. Faith is hindered by affluence and material substance. Wealth can be, and most times is, a desperate hindrance to the growth and the preaching and the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The scripture says that God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith. Matthew says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Luke picks it up and presses it a little bit further as he says, "Blessed be the poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." Not many mighty, noble, or wise men are called by God, but He has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. Paul the apostle says, "Look at you! Look at your congregation, Corinthians! Are you built upon the wise, the noble, the wealthy? No! You can look around you and see that that is not so, because this is the plan and the will of God; because the poor hear the gospel far more readily than the rich."

## ***GUARANTEED SUCCESS***

There is a glorious truth with tremendous promise that's found says that apostles in this passage a great multitude insomuch as the net broke, and they enclosed a called for help. The boats were filled and began to sink, because anything that God is doing is going to get a whole lot bigger. If you and I will hear the word of God and obey, and begin to take notice, of what God says in His word, we are guaranteed success. Jesus said, "At they word thou shalt catch men." We need to understand that t when we labor after God's pattern, after God's will, that we are guaranteed the glorious promise that our nets will break and we will not be able to garner the harvest that God gives us.

Judson is a man of great fame. History tells us that he sought out the higher class of the Burmese to evangelize to. He had relatively little fruit, but as he was evangelizing he took with him a poor member of a despised and uneducated tribe called the Caron tribe. This man's name was Cothaboo. He became a thoroughly converted Christian, and began to evangelize his own tribe. While Judson worked with the socially elite, and had virtually no fruit in his ministry, hundreds upon thousands of the Caron tribesmen were brought into the Kingdom of God by Cothaboo and the power of Jesus Christ. The gospel's richest soil is in the poor classes see humanity. God guaranteed that when we obey Him, we will see results in the Kingdom of God.

There was an American Baptist who labored for 25 years in a town called Nellor on the eastern coast of India. In those years of laboring, there had been less than a hundred converts. Then John Cloud, a missionary, went there with his wife. After reading First Corinthians 1:26, they decided that they were not laboring they should have been. They had been trying to reach the elite — they had been trying to reach the upper classes in the Indian society. They moved to another place and began to labor among they began labor there among the despised society in India, hundreds were being added to the Lord each month. That was because God's soil for revival was there.

In Brazil, William Creed found that people in the lower strata of the Brazilian society generally accept the Chrstian message more readily than the more privileged upper class. The Pentecostals have been active and

successful in the highly populated urban centers where there are large numbers of migrating people from rural districts.

I'm not simply talking about having a church where there are a few people saved and a few people going to Heaven and a few people worshipping God. This world needs a revolution. If you and I are to ever see the gospel of Christ penetrate and make a tremendous impact upon the suffering masses of society, we're going to have to understand what this book declares. The gospel must be aimed at the poor. We must never forget that that is the soil that bears the richest rewards. We thank God for all the blessings He's poured upon our labors, and all the ministry that He's given to our efforts, and all the rewards He's given to our bodies as we've tried to evangelize, but all that is insufficient to the suffering multitudes of this Earth. I'm talking about masses beyond comprehension. Billions of people, teeming masses of society, great urban centers of men and women have never heard the name of Jesus. If we are ever going to reach these people, we're going to have to hear what God is saying. That will cause a revolution. Simple ministry and "business as usual" in Christianity is never going to reach the world.

One author said, concerning this, "What we should hope and pray for, what we should expect, is not merely a host of individual churches that are growing and dynamic, but our hope should be to touch off revolutionary spiritual movements that get out of our control and get controlled by the Holy Spirit of the living God." Woodrow Wilson said, "When I look back on the processes of history, when I survey the genesis of America, I see that the nations are renewed from the bottom and not from the top. The genius that springs up from the ranks of unknown men is the genius which renews the youth and energy of the people." Ruth, a poor outcast woman, began her ministry by gleaning for survival. God's blessing came upon this faithful woman whose heart burned after Him. She was blessed to become part of the lineage of the Messiah. Wherever you see revival, you will see churches filled with common people who are reaching out to other common people. The poor, despised, outcast, troubled, broken-hearted, oppressed, bruised, and bound are being brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Some of you may wonder why we never have dignitaries sit up on the platform to look important. The reason is because they don't need to feel important. It has nothing to do with disrespect, but people do not come into this building to see which dignitary is here. They come to hear from God. They come to find a Saviour who will heal their wounded hearts. They come to find life and find the One who can snap the shackles of bondage. They're coming looking for Jesus.

The world will never be evangelized by Johnny Cash, Pat Boone, or Oral Roberts. It will be evangelized by Joe Nobody who sits in a pew and gets on fire for God and begins to go out and reach somebody who's working on a machine or is digging with a pick and shovel or hustling garbage bags or washing dishes in a cafe or being a housewife or a laborer, or a carpenter, or a bricklayer. The world will be evangelized by the common class of society. They will get filled with the Holy Ghost and their hearts will begin to burn for the Kingdom of God, and they will begin to reach out in redeemed relationships and bring souls to Jesus Christ. We live in a generation when around us are abundant opportunities. Fifty per-cent of the communities we live in are made of broken homes. I'm not happy about that, but these are people in need. These are people who somebody has to minister to. These are people who will look you in the eye from across the room or across the chair or across the car and, with tears in their hearts and tears in their eyes, ask if there is any hope for them to have a life of happiness. Somebody has to give them an answer, and that's you and me. If most people were to have a tragedy with their marriages, they would think that they were no longer fit for the Kingdom of God, and that they were some kind of an outcast; they'd believe that they were no longer able to be ones who God could use or help or bless or love or strengthen or uplift. We are moving into an area in the United States where fully half of our population has been scarred and damaged by the awful curse of sin that has reached even into the home. We must minister to these people with help and hope and love and healing and give them stability. We must help them to have hope for a normal life and accept them into our midst.

We're living in an occult-cursed society. The occult is running rampant. People are dabbling into the occult, and once they dabble with it, they can never get loose on their own. They become, bound with the powers of



darkness. They need help from someone who will look down and take time and give love and bring deliverance and salvation to them. We're dealing with a generation that is so scarred by drugs that many times their minds are seriously impaired; for months, years, and, in some cases, permanently. Scarred by the effects of the abuse of their bodies with the chemical agents of our life, these people have to be ministered to. These people are in all classes of society, but they are poor and they are bound. No one has answered for them, save those who are full of the Holy Ghost. The word of God can bring these people to a place of deliverance and healing and blessing, and it is our responsibility to reach down to them and bring them to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We live in the "hip" culture; the "swinging" culture. People are so abused and scarred by immorality and sexual impurity that it scars their souls and minds. Many people at the age of 19 and 20 have taken 40 and 50 years' worth of abuse in their bodies. Somebody has to reach out to them and bring them healing, help, and hope. That is what God has called you and I to do. There are nations around the world without help and without hope. They are crying out for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As I go to different places to preach the gospel, I see the desperation of the circumstances of the world. To see the masses of the world that have no one to care for or minister to them, I cannot help being moved. We minister in the Southwest to large numbers of people who are bilingual and can freely speak the Spanish language. The nation of Mexico lays below us; it is a nation of 66 million people who are wide open to the gospel of Jesus Christ. You must believe that God's gospel is to the poor. Don't say, "Oh, I'm not trained. I'm not qualified. My mission board won't send me, my this or my that." God is not looking for experts, God is looking for somebody who cares and somebody who has a vision for the poor. If you are full of the Holy Ghost, and you will obey God and launch out into the deep, God will make a way.

## **PERFORMANCE VS. PREPARATION**

At discipleship meetings, our cry is, "Tell me something heavy, Pastor!" You don't need anything heavy. What you need is what I'm going to tell you. (Here is a story about a man called Ahimaaz. We find him in II Samuel chapter 18 verses 19-33).

### ***THE CONFLICT***

We need to think for a moment about the conflict every one of us has with performance versus preparation. Almost all of us have participated at some level in sports. We have been involved in baseball games where there was no problem finding folks who wanted to pitch, but nobody wanted to play the field. Why? Because the pitcher is in center stage. Without the rest of the team, though, he would be totally ineffective, and would not be able to play at all. Many have tried to be in center stage, and they've discovered that they alone don't make the contest. They alone don't make the game.

There is a peculiar facet of human nature that likes to perform. We want people looking at us and, let's confess it, we really do like to be seen and heard. This is an affliction that affects the body of Christ, because everybody wants to preach; everybody wants to play, but nobody wants to slug it out in the trenches. They don't want to prepare for their performance. This is one of the major problems we have in trying to develop workers. There is a famous conductor who made the statement that he had problems getting people to play second fiddle. He didn't have any problem getting a first fiddle, and he had no problem getting any of the other players,<sup>1</sup> but second fiddle had no spotlight. All the second fiddle has to do is to stay in the background and harmonize with the melody. It's an integral part of the whole performance, but nobody ever knows who they are. They never get any recognition because they don't perform any solos. There are very few people who are satisfied with the second fiddle position.

A man named Ahimaaz was overwhelmed with a desire to perform. He was in a real-life situation. Absalom had risen up and had led an insurrection against his father the King, and the battle had been won. Absalom had met his fate, and he was buried underneath a rock pile. He met a horrible fate and had been judged by God for the thing that he had done. The battle was over. They had no telephones, no radios, and all the messages of the Kingdom were conducted by heralds. These heralds were runners who ran to various places in the kingdom, bore the tidings, carried the news. A preacher, literally, is a herald of God.

It was time for the herald to bear the tidings and bring the King the news, and Ahimaaz was overwhelmed with a desire to perform. Perhaps he was fleet of foot. Undoubtedly he must have been, or at least he felt he could be first to deliver the message of victory against the enemies of the King, because he said to Joab, "Let me run and bear the King's tidings." Three times he pressured Joab. This was not really his niche; he was a priest. He was no herald of the kingdom, but he had a desire to perform. Finally, Joab relented and let Ahimaaz bear the tidings.

This desire to be noticed and singled out afflicts most human beings. With some, though, it's fatal.

In Ephesians 6:6, there is a warning. ". . . In singleness of heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." In Colossians 3:22 it says, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God." Wanting center stage is a very dangerous motivation of human hearts and lives.

The world system says promotion comes by performance, and these passages of scripture warn against eyeservice. The word eye-service, literally translated, means, "labor that needs an audience." It means saying to everyone, "Come see what I'm doing!" Some of you are already beginning to see this in your own heart, a desire to hear the music play and to step out onto the center stage.

This is the same thing that motivated the two men who came to Jesus and said, "Lord, grant that when you come into your Kingdom that one of us is going to sit on the right hand and the other on the left."

In III John 9, the apostle speaks of a specific man. He says of him, "I write unto the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." The greatest danger that you and I have as disciples is that we may become performance oriented. In other words, we forget that one of the necessary essentials to the ministry is preparation. If we become performance-oriented, that performance is seldom unto God. Our own vanity and showmanship is not pleasing to God, regardless of what man thinks or what the rewards are. We must serve God and be loyal and faithful to Him.

Someone said that one of the basic needs of man is to love and to be loved. Another need is that of reward and recognition. Another is achievement, and another is adventure. The problem that we have is that our reward and recognition is often Earthly-oriented, and so we begin to measure our effectiveness and our future by temporal standards; by what people are thinking of us. We become concerned with the responses we receive, we begin to become performance oriented, and we forget that God is looking o for something far more than the temporary. We become actors on a stage. We learn word skills. We learn how to get a response from people. We learn how to push peoples' buttons to make them feel good. We become comedians, or we began to say things that people want to hear. This is a fatal mistake.

Let's say, for instance, that we have made the decision to achieve a position, whether it's the leader of a group, or the director of our own outreach ministry, or to go out and preach. Whatever we choose to do, as long as we feel that we will gain recognition or reward, we feel like it's something worthwhile. However, if we hear that someone else is appointed over us, or that someone else is recognized before us, we make up our minds that we're never going to be a pastor. We think that our pastor is not going to send us out. We think that we're just going to be one of those "slugs" that stay around the local church. Then we stop going to prayer meetings, outreaches, and the like.

I've known men who, over a period of years, feel like they are going to replace Oral Roberts or Billy Graham. They feel that they are 'Johnny-on-the-spot'. They're in every prayer meeting, they're in every outreach, they are faithful to every service and they'll back every revival. Then, the moment that they're convinced that they're not going to go anywhere, it's no more prayer meetings. It's not enough for them to be part of that valuable and glorious body of Christ, to be part of that second fiddle bunch that causes the harmony to go out in the Kingdom of God, and causes the altars to be filled year after year. No more outreaches, no more revivals. Performance-oriented people forget what it's all about. They forget that they're supposed to be serving God.

Such a man was Ahimaaz. He was a man who wanted to run the race that was not his calling. He was a priest of God. He had an overwhelming desire; he wanted to perform, and be the one that brought the tidings to King David that his kingdom was successful, and had been saved by God, and his enemies had been defeated, and so he urged him three times, because he had an overwhelming desire to perform, to show how far he could run.

### ***THE NEED FOR PREPARATION***

We don't like work, or discipline, or an uncertain time frame. Those are the hardest things in life to deal with. I saw reruns of the World Series on the news, and Pete Rose was ticked! He has an ego that is about as big as this building. He was upset, because he didn't get to play every day. Baseball managers and coaches are in the business of winning, and their reasons for not having Rose play every day was that he wasn't performing up to standards. When you get to be 42 like Rose, you lose a little bit of your athletic edge. However, Rose said, "If they're not going to play me every day then I'm cutting them loose. I'm going to be a free agent. I'm going to go play for somebody who's going to play me every day."

If you can't cut the mustard, you need to find out what the ingredients of the mustard are. Rose's problem was that he only wanted to perform,

didn't want to have to deal with things like work, discipline, and uncertain time frames. You and I have this same problem.

We like to have a definite plan. We want to say, "I'm going to work, and I'm going to discipline myself for this period of time. At the end of that, I'm going to get this reward." We have no problem with that. As long as we know that something will definitely hap-pen, we are okay. The problem is that life isn't like that, and neither is the Kingdom of God. Preparation is essential for God to be able to work with man.

Joab said to Ahimaaz, "Why do you want to run? You don't have any tidings ready!" In other words, what he was saying was, "Why are you wanting to run when you're not prepared to run? This is not your calling, this is not your ability. You do not have your tidings ready, so why do you want to do this?"

The Bible illustrates this need for preparation in a number of incidences. In Luke 1:80, it talks about John the Baptist as "the child (who) grew and waxed strong in spirit and was in the desert until the day of his showing unto Israel." This is a fantastic statement, because it is filled with all the ramifications of what I'm talking about. Here's a man who was filled with the Holy Ghost from birth. There was prophecy that went forth about his future destiny and his calling, and about what he would eventually do for God, but the Bible makes the statement that "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit and was in the desert until the day of his showing to Israel." We don't like that, because it describes John's life as one of isolation. He was out in the desert, with no crowd of people to address, no audience to perform for. He had no one to watch him but God. That was a difficult situation, but it illustrated one of the profound truths of God's 's working with mankind.

II Timothy 2:20-21 says, a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and fit for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." The apostle Paul was writing to Timothy. He was saying that if a man will prepare himself, if a man will purge himself and set himself aside from these things, he'll be a vessel that God will honor. He'll

be a vessel fit for God to use. God is doing His job. He's not taking a vacation, and He's not on strike. He's constantly at work. The problem is down on our level. The problem is, are we doing our part in preparation? In John 16:12, Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." God would love to reveal many more things to us, but the problem is that brains are not able to understand what He's doing.

Ephesians 6:15 says, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Paul is talking about the preparation of the gospel. He draws us a picture of a warrior who's fit for battle. Warriors were shod with shoes that were specially prepared battle, because it is absolutely essential to have good footing. You need to work this into your own life so that you can stand in the midst of the battle for the Kingdom of God. It is essential that you be prepared. Some of the preparations are God's, and some of them must be our own.

II Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." You need to prepare. You need to read the Word. Make it a habit of your life. As the prophet said, "I desired it more than my necessary food." You and I need to give ourselves diligently so that we will be a proficient worker.

### ***GOD'S METHOD***

We don't have Bible schools, because we do not believe that hat Bible schools are God's best training grounds. That doesn't mean that we don't need to study or educate ourselves. That doesn't mean that we don't need to expand our minds. It means that we've found God's method.

I Corinthians 9:27 says, "But I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself may be a castaway." Paul is talking about his whole person. He's talking about morals, food, and other indulgences. He's talking about a whole range of things, about his whole human nature. The carnal nature wants to curse, hate, steal, fornicate, do dope, and overeat. Paul says, "All the things the natural man wants to do, I bring under discipline. I prepare so I won't be castaway.

Jeremiah was anointed of God. God had a fantastic destiny for him. He was called to be a prophet to the nations. Nevertheless, when he was going through God's training program, he began to complain. God was getting him ready to run against horses, but first he had to go through the sewer.

God said to Samuel, "I want you to go anoint me one who will be King. I've rejected Saul. I want you to go to the house of Jesse and anoint his son." Samuel went to Jesse's house and said, "Bring your sons out. God's going to anoint one of them to be King." When Jesse brought his sons out, he saw Eliab who was a handsome man. Samuel grabbed his horn of oil and said, "Surely this is the Lord's anointed!" When he was ready to dash it on him, the Lord said, "No, this is not the one. Don't look on his countenance, or on the height of his stature. Don't look at what pleases your eye, Samuel. Look at how handsome he is. Don't look at how tall and muscular he is, for I've rejected him."

The Lord doesn't see as we see. We look at the outward appearances, but the Lord looks at the heart. I imagine that if we looked at Eliab, he'd have looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger. Samuel was sure that this was the fellow, because he had all the qualifications that Samuel thought were needed to be a hero for God. He was handsome, talented, and he had charisma. God said, though, "I've rejected him." Another son was brought, and another and another, and finally Samuel said, "Don't you have any other sons?"

"I've got one more," Jesse said, "but you don't want him. He's out tending the sheep."

"Bring him!" said Samuel.

The moment he appeared, God said, "That is him. Anoint him." God can and will use anyone, but preparation is a tremendous quality that is indispensable in the Kingdom.

What was the difference between those two men? The difference between the man Samuel

chose and the one God chose was that one had everything we consider to be good qualifications, and the other's qualities had nothing to do with the external or with what could be seen with the eye. It was a condition of his



heart, his relationship with God, and his attitude, that made God choose him. God rejected Eliab and every other brother until He found a shepherd lad. God said, "This man has the right quality of heart."

Ahimaaz had a desire to perform. He was sincere. He wanted to be seen. He wanted to bring the news of the kingdom, to deliver the victorious tidings. When he got to David and delivered his message, David said, "Stand aside," because they were not the tidings that the King wanted to hear at that moment. David wanted to hear what the outcome was of his son and of his state!

It's in the arena of life that the simple things like preparation and performance are worked out. No program will bring you favor with God, because that is between you and Him. I've known many men who were gifted with word skills and who've had qualifications, but in the arena of life the battle became one of performance versus preparation.

Psalm 75:6 says, "Promotion comes neither from the East nor , from the West nor from the South, but God is the judge. He puts down one and sets up another." We need to cultivate relationships with our fellow man, but that is not the bottom line. The essential ingredient is our relationship with God. Out of that relationship with God the true issues of life are settled. Life has a way of ex-posing our motivations; whether they are performance or whether they are preparation.

Luke 2:52 talks about Jesus and says that He was "subject to Joseph and Mary," and that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." This brings into perspective the awesome truth that it is not a single facet of our personality, but entire composite man that must prepare itself before God.

John the Baptist, in Luke 1:80, was in the desert. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his revealing unto Israel." When his day came and his preparation period was over, when he had met God's requirement, the Bible says that he was brought forth. His mission was now complete, and he began to speak: This tremendous statement was made, "and all Israel came out into the

wilderness of Judea to hear him by the river Jordan to be baptized of him repenting of their sins."

John the Baptist was not on television or in the newspaper, but when he moved in God's time and by God's preparation, the entire nation was shaken. The people of Israel left their cities and their homes and came out on a river bank to listen to a man's words. They were baptized in the Jordan river, because a man had met God's requirements for preparation. This was not a seminary type of preparation or a course of study; this was not some kind of simple program that he had gone through, but this was something that had to be between him and God. He and God had come to a mystical, powerful, wonderful relationship. Because of this, he was able to stand upon the world's stage and do what God had called him to do.

Acts 2:47 talks about the apostles praising God and having favor with all the people. The Lord added to the church daily, "such as should be saved." The key to soul-winning, to filling churches and becoming proficient in the Kingdom of God, is preparation. Performance without preparation is an empty shout. It has no impact.

People came from all over to hear the wisdom of King Solomon. They did not come to be entertained or amused, but they came because they were helped by his words. His preparation outweighed his performance.

Abraham Lincoln was invited as an afterthought; as a courtesy. He was to speak at Gettysburg, where 51 thousand soldiers had given their lives. The scheduled speaker for that event to honor the dead was Steven Douglas. Douglas was a silver-tongued orator. He was a man who had fantastic speaking skills. Abraham Lincoln appeared as a humble man; he was a man who was not overwhelmed with his own importance or his own gift of speech. He sat on the platform and listened to Douglas. Douglas spoke for an hour and thirty seven minutes. He was an orator; he drew together all the issues of life and brought them down to one moment. He held the crowd spellbound by his words.

Lincoln said to himself, "They're not going to like what I have to say. They are just not going to like it." Lincoln got up and spoke for less than two minutes, and what he said that day is what you and I have had to memorize

in school. It was the Gettysburg address. When he was finished the crowd couldn't believe that those few words were all that the President of the U.S. had uttered. He sat down and said to his companion, I failed. Secretary of the war Seward said, "This is the most disgraceful speech that I have ever heard," but no one has ever read the words of the silver tongued orator Steven Douglas or remembered that he even spoke. It was the inner quality of that man as he stood to speak less than two minutes history has recorded. Every child in grade school is required to memorize the Gettysburg address. Those words that were spoken that day by a simple man who had been prepared by God. The words that were spoken, dumbfounded the people that he spoke to and are still carried and having impact around the world. It is not what people think of us in our performance as we are center stage, but it's in the arena of life that what I'm talking about works out. Preparation versus performance.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS**

by Wayman Mitchell at Spring Camp Meeting

Please turn to the book of Titus and then to I Timothy, Chapter 3. I'm sure that many of you have either heard of, have read, or have seen the newspapers' coverage of this young quarterback named Art Schlichter who is a former Ohio State All American. Last year this young man was the first quarterback drafted by the NFL. He played for Ohio State University for three years, and in three and a half years he broke every single record and set every state offensive record of Ohio State University.

He became involved with gambling and four bookmakers. He lost \$389,000, which is pretty good bread even in 1983. Finally, he became so involved with these men that to extricate himself he had to call the FBI. He turned informer. All the details are immaterial, but the outcome of the case will undoubtedly be that this young man, so filled with ability, who excelled as a quarterback, and had a whole career ahead of him, will be through. The great potential that he had was lost: disgraced. Think of the inner turmoil he felt; the talent that he had labored for; the dreams that he had held all of his life. They were beginning to be fulfilled. He was the top choice. Enormous earning capacity lay ahead and all the things that would go with a professional football career. The ambitions of that young man are totally destroyed, and he may never play again because of the disqualification from his activities in life.

There are many young pastors and ministers here this afternoon. Among them are those who are aspiring for ministry. Most of you are just now beginning your ministry and are beginning to find out about the reality of ministering to people. Some of you need to pay real heed to the word of God in regards to the lives you're living, because you may very well disregard some of the things that are potent and important in your lives to

bring forth spiritual ministry. Thinking that these are of lesser importance and priority, as this Young man did, can disqualify you completely for the future plan God has for you in ministry, and in the Kingdom of God.

I was thinking, as I considered this, of Jeremiah. God was shaping and forming Jeremiah. He was a man just like you and I whom the Lord had just begun to shape for a task. Things began to cave in on him. He began to feel the pressure, and to complain to God that things were a little rough and the pressure was far too great. Things weren't going exactly the way he thought they ought to, and God said to Jeremiah, "Don't be bound by the present, if you're wearied by running against men, then how can I train you to run against horses."

God has told many of you who are sitting in this building that you can make an impact on your generation, but the question that comes to us from the Epistles of Paul again and again speaks of qualification and disqualification. I'm not talking about man's viewpoints. I'm not talking about performance. I'm talking about God. God makes ministry. When all of our performances before our audiences are done, it's God who makes the final judgment and measures the impact of our lives. He alone either qualifies or disqualifies us.

Now the Apostle Paul writes in Titus, chapter one, verses five to nine; "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a good bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Now turn back with me to I Timothy 3:1-7, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that

ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God)? Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride shall fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and snare of the devil."

Now these are two passages of scripture that speak of qualification and disqualification. I'd like to pursue with you a consideration of these factors, because all of us are being measured by God in this area of our lives. He will either qualify or disqualify us; not only today, not only in our present influence or position, but this an ongoing standard that God lays against our lives. So, there is no point in our ministry where we have gained this and can now say, "I've crossed the line": now I can forget about these things. These are ongoing concepts that God continually measures our lives by: standards that we must measure up to . . .

### ***THE MARITAL STATE***

I want to talk to you first of all about your marital state. Now there is an interesting fact that you're going to find as you look into this with an open mind, and that is, for all of these (bishops, elders, pastors, and deacons) one of the foremost qualifications that God brings is tied to the marital state. Listen to I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6, and I Timothy 3:12, "A bishop then must be blameless the husband of one wife," "Elders are to be blameless the husband of one wife," "Let the deacons be the husband of one wife." Now it's interesting to me that this fact is brought out from the scripture by the Holy Spirit. God is powerfully interested in our marital state, and the apostle Paul writes to us and says, pay attention to your marital state, because whether you qualify or disqualify has to do with your marital state. It has nothing to do with your spiritual gifts; it has nothing to do with your grasp of scripture. These qualifications are not even mentioned in this passage of scripture. It does home in on the marital state, and it uses this term, "blameless". You need to examine that word. It is a position that is not open to attack. Someone has said it means, "Affording nothing of which an adversary can take hold: It is used of wrestling and it means not to be caught anywhere by any antagonist." Now here's a potent conclusion that we are

going to have to come to from the Word of God, and that is that a sound marriage is an indispensable requirement to qualify for the pastoral office. He says nothing about word skills; He says nothing about our political ability; but he does home in on our marital state, and says to you and I that the foremost qualification is a sound marriage.

It's apparent here, as we look at this honestly, that speaking ability, preaching ability, and teaching ability, are not the most critical elements for ministers. It is very apparent that divorce and remarriage are not acceptable in the ministry. Now you can try to twist this and wrangle it: and you can reason and rationalize, and You can do anything you want to, but if we come to the Word of God honestly we will have to say that the qualifications laid out for the New Testament Church states that divorce and remarriage are not acceptable in the ministry. A second thing that we can see from this is that he presumes that they're married. I mean you don't have even to be a Bible scholar to see Paul is talking about the pastoral office and he presumes they are married. Let me go back to the statement I made before that a sound marriage is an indispensable requirement to qualify for the pastoral office. Somehow, there is much more involved than what we see at a casual glance. There's a spiritual dimension that hinges on the marital state. There's a spiritual force released through the marital state into the Kingdom of God for good or for bad and that hinges on our marital state. As we look at this we can measure our own generation. We tend to have the feeling that if we have word skills, if we have gifts, if we have crowd appeal, then somehow we can bypass God's requirements. We can somehow circumvent the clear details of Scripture. Simply because we have the ability to gather a crowd, we can bypass the teaching of the Scriptures. But there is something powerful released in the Kingdom of God through the marital state (either for good or for bad) that has profound effects, and this is why God is putting such emphasis in the Scripture on this. He says that whatever you are in the home will be reproduced in the church, and you must build a family before you can build a church.

There are some dramatic lessons that we have learned from this and I could spend a great deal of time concerning this, but we must build a family before we can build a church. At least we must be building our family while we are building the church. I'm not off into some trip of a family camping

trip. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about something far more profound. As we look at this scripture the Bible says that our marital state is the first qualification and the release for ministry. If we fail there, we begin to reproduce and to feed something in the Kingdom of God that reciprocates in an unpleasant relationship and quality that will come back to us and be counterproductive in the Kingdom of God.

Now this involves headship established and maintained, and when I'm speaking of this I'm not talking about the "macho image". A lot of folks have the idea that once you get the check-book from your wife and in your hands that you've established headship. Most checkbooks should remain in the hands of your wives. When I'm talking about headship, I'm talking not about a position that you have grabbed or wrestled from your wife. I'm talking about a posture that you have taken; that is the headship of the family which is servant hood. You take upon yourself the responsibility to take the posture that is going to bring health and wholeness and correct dominion in your family.

We began to discover some time ago some interesting things. I know that every pastor who has any experience in ministry has been brought into the unfortunate circumstance that you found you joined together in Holy Wedlock a couple that had already been joined together in fornication. We began to discover that there is something destroyed by that wrong relationship. Something spiritual happened to headship and those couples often had major problems relationally. These problems have nothing to do with the husband and wife particularly, but go farther back to where head-ship was violated before the marriage ever came together and the respect was lost. It takes a long period of correct spiritual activity and service to God before the headship is ever regained again and that marriage can go on an even keel.

Secondly in the family, it is important that we not only learn headship, but we learn the sacrifice of self-interest. This is learned in marriage. If you are going to have a marriage that is going to survive, you're going to have to sacrifice self-interest for the good of the whole. You might wonder why I'm bringing this up, I'm saying this because I'm not only talking about the marriage state: but that the marriage state is the training ground for the



headship of the family relationship and the family of God, and unless these lessons are learned, unless they are reproduced and they are correctly balanced in your marriage, then you are not qualified to reproduce those in the body of Jesus Christ. If self-interest rules in a marriage and that marriage has not come to a fine adjustment, then the entire family relationship will be rocky and may explode. A good marriage does not happen unless there's a giving of self, unless there's a sensitivity. All the qualities that are absolutely essential for the maintaining of a marriage are absolutely required for the maintaining of the relationship of the body of Christ. The scripture says that if you have not learned in the family to sacrifice self-interest, you do not have a sound marriage which is the first qualification for the pastoral office. The very thing that will disqualify or cause you a failure in the marriage is also what will disqualify you for the role of headship for the body of Christ. This is not simply because you have a bad image, but this is by far a more profound truth, and by far a deeper problem. It has to do with a spiritual relationship in the body of Christ.

The one characteristic, someone has written, above all others that distinguishes marriages that last from those that don't is the willingness of the husband and wife to testify in each other's behalf. Regrettably we live in a world where every individual is constantly barraged by internal and external accusations. Belittling is part of being a human being. The only effective way to counter these reproaches is to find someone who will assure you and every one who is listening, that you are competent. That he or she does like you and no matter what happens they are on your team. If a husband and wife can depend on one another to testify on their behalf, nothing really bad can happen to them. The man or woman whose partner eagerly testifies against him or her will soon be looking for a replacement. You need to understand that this is how God places restrictions on people for leadership. The same disqualification which will destroy your marriage will also begin to feed into the body of Christ in a profound relationship and unless you have been able to exercise and learn to function with these principles in your life, you will reproduce those same qualities in the body of Jesus Christ, in the congregation that God has placed you in for headship.

Some pastors are marvelous marriage class teachers. I'm not talking about teaching, I'm talking about doing. I know most of you think Sister

Mitchell and my marriage rests in Heaven: that there's nothing that touches earth about our marriage. You think this because you've never seen us say one unkind word; you've never seen us have any kind of a spat. But about eighteen months ago I was under some real pressure and real problems were coming around my ears. I don't know what it was, but I shot my mouth off to my wife and I had just been teaching a wonderful series of marriage classes. I had been sharing from my years of experience and reading in books, and I shot my mouth off. She said to me, 'You need to take some of the advice that you're passing out in marriage class.' I didn't say anything but I thought to myself, "Hey!" And the Lord said, "Amen." (Are you still with me) I'm not talking about classes, I'm talking about the arena of life. It is in the home that all the lessons are learned. This is why that qualification is there, not because we'll be a poor image for the church. That's one of the lesser considerations. There is a far more profound spiritual purpose and reason why we're disqualified, and this is why the Bible says for elders, bishops, pastors, and deacons to have a sound marriage or be disqualified from leadership in the house of God.

### ***THE CHILDREN***

Secondly, I want to talk about the relationship that is mentioned there concerning our children. This is the acid test. I mentioned this at the last conference. I'm becoming increasingly alarmed at the total lack of understanding of the profound ramifications of parents who have children, and are in the pastor's role. I travel all the time, if I've come to your church recently I'm not talking about you, unless it fits. I become increasingly concerned as I view the Doctor Spock generation who are reproducing a strange race of human beings and I am alarmed at the effect this is going to have on the Kingdom of God.

Let's look at Joe and Susan. Joe is six and Susie is four. The service is going on and we're having a wonderful time. Joe is out in the aisle with his pants unzipped urinating in the aisle. Susie is tearing all the pages out of the hymn books preparing to light a bonfire in her pew. Now how are we going to take care of this problem? One family that I saw was going to reason with them. I want you to understand, the parents are saying, the difference

between the punkterior and linear considerations. You don't reason with a six year old. You bring discipline; they understand pain. They don't understand reasons why you don't urinate in the aisle. They don't understand the ramifications. They don't need to understand it at six and four. The only thing they need to understand is that Mom and Dad will have order, and they are not going to allow this kind of activity going on. That Mom and Dad say "no" is all that is needed at the moment. When they get to be sixteen and seventeen you can sit down and reason with them; but not at six. Six year olds and four year olds only function by self interest. The only thing that they want to know is what makes them feel good, what brings them what they want. They totally function with self interest. It's your responsibility in the Kingdom of God to be a parent and to take the measures that let them know that there are actions that they take in life that will bring them great discomfort. That's all they need to know. Later on they can begin to learn the reasons why we don't do certain things.

I want to tell you again, the reason I'm saying this is that I'm alarmed at what I see. The acid test is in the Bible, in the scriptures that we read. This is not Mitchellism, this is scripture. Here is the acid test, a truth that has profound ramifications. One of the qualifications or disqualifications is, "One who rules his own house." I Timothy three, four and five says, "Having his children in subjection with all reverence, for if a man does not know how to rule his own house how shall he take care of the house of God." That's one of the most profound scriptures in all the Bible and until you see the reasoning that moves there you're not qualified to lead in the church. You don't have to be a Bible genius or any analysis expert to see that God links this parental responsibility to pastoring. The Bible says, "For if we don't know how, then how shall we rule the house of God." We immediately have been disqualified according to scripture unless we are going to learn how and come to grips with the reality of the Kingdom of God. "Faithful children," the Bible says, "not accused of riot or unruly."

There's an awesome story in the word of God of Aaron's sons. Aaron's sons are Nadob and Abihu. They had broken the law of God. They were both of adult age and chosen to minister before God. Yet, out of the undisciplined lives they lead they came before the altar of God and offered strange fire. The scripture records that, "There went out fire from the Lord

and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." This should speak a word of warning to every father here. God goes farther and commands Aaron not to mourn or even uncover his head, lest he die. Here we see the son's of Aaron dead because somewhere a father refused to discipline his sons.

The Bible record goes on to tell us of the prophet and judge of Israel, Eli and his sons. The Bible shows us clearly that it is a major mistake to try and shield our children from the responsibilities that they have just like the rest of the human race. This is even more so because God holds you doubly accountable. In Eli's case we see his son's disgracing the testimony and office's of God and God says to Eli, "I hold you accountable. You have not rebuked your sons, and for that reason I'm not only going to judge your sons but because you did not rebuke them and take that responsibility, now I'm going also to bring discipline against you."

There is probably no greater tragedy in the scripture than the story of the sons of David. Two of his sons attempted to rise and take their father's position and throne. Can you contemplate anything more horrible than this? As the two sons both rose up they showed something was in their lives of self-interest and ambition that had never been sublimated to the will of God. These things had not been brought under the discipline of God, and because of that we read of the horrible circumstances of his sons, that brings disgrace to God because the sons had not been properly corrected. You can't come to any other conclusion, I know of the spiritual position of David (I understand all the types and shadows) but we're talking now about David's family and I can't contemplate anything more horrible than to have this thing written down in the history of my children or yours.

There is the story of a man named Amon. Can you imagine such a tragedy in a family that Amon takes his half sister Tamar and lures her into his room and there rapes her? This happens in the family of David. When I read that I say, "Dear God deliver me." I'm talking about your children. Here's Solomon with 700 wives and 100's of concubines. I mean that man had a problem. I don't care how you want to cut it, he had a sex problem. I know that's a profound conclusion, but anybody that has that many wives has a sex problem. We can look through all of these things and see self

seeking, rape and sexual promiscuity. We see this written in the sacred record and it is no wonder that the scripture then turns to you and I who would minister and serve the church of Jesus Christ; bringing people to expression and right relationship with morals and right relationships with the circumstances of life and keeping families in balance and say to you and I that one of the qualifications of ministry is "a man that knows how to rule his own house. For if a man knows not how to rule his own house how shall he rule the church of God."

You see in the church there is more than an example involved. What we're talking about here is a training ground for leadership, and that training ground in leadership is in child rearing. It isn't simply that our children will spend their time in prison. It's more involved than that. The involvement is that in the rearing of our children there is a quality that begins to be worked in our lives that qualifies us in the House of God and qualifies us in the larger family, which is discipline in the family. It is in the family and the raising of the family that we learn the difference between corrective and penal punishment. We learn to discipline in a correct measure so that we're not simply venting our temper and getting our pound of flesh. We learn to discipline our children so that we make them productive, and we bring them to a correct position that is learned in the family. That same principle has to be applied in the far more critical area of life which is the family of God. The family of God has eternal and spiritual ramifications, and it's in the family where we learn the balance of the application of discipline. God knows that in the church of Jesus Christ we're in a generation that desperately needs discipline. I'm not talking about killing people. I'm not talking about a guillotine. I'm not talking about eradicating people. I'm talking about corrective measures that bring healing to the soul and to the heart, and bring productivity and holiness so that these people can function as believers in the family of God. It is in the raising of children that we learn and perfect the corrective over the penal. There is hope, friend. I want to tell you my wife and I raised five children. I want to tell you there is hope. Don't lose heart, hallelujah. Stick to your guns. See, there are some parents that they can't stand the emotional stress in bringing children "into subjection" as the Bible says. This emotional encounter and conflict is more than they can stand, so Joe does what he wants to do and Susie does what

she wants to do. They're not six and four anymore, they're full grown adults, but if you can't bring yourself to face the emotional stress of disciplining children, then my dear friend, that same quality comes into the church of Jesus Christ. You can't have an ongoing and productive congregation of Jesus Christ unless there is a discipline; and it must be enforced. I want to tell you, that brings horrible stress to your emotions. Stress far greater than punishing your child. It is in correct application of discipline in the family that you learn hope. Discipline does bring healing and wholeness and blessing and fullness. Thank God we have our children raised and married, all serving God, and I stand and testify there is hope for you. But you better hear the words of scripture, "How shall he rule the house of God."

### ***CHARACTER TRAITS***

Thirdly I want to talk about character traits. I'm not going to mention all the character traits that are mentioned in the word of God, but one of these is, "Not self-willed." "Self-willed" literally means; cares for nothing or nobody but what pleases himself. In other words this is a person that is contemptuous of others, that cares nothing about others and how they feel or think or what they want. "Not self-willed." That's a qualification that you must have. It's a factor that will disqualify you. Another trait which will disqualify you is temper; "Not an angry man." This means not purposely maintained anger. The man that nourishes his anger against any man is not fit to be an office bearer of the church. This will disqualify you from ministry.

The third trait mentioned is, "Not ready to come to blows." The Bible says, "No striker." You'd think that this would never be found in a manual of instruction for men of God, but it is. You know why it's there, I'll tell you why it's there; I've been saved for many years. We had a fellow come into the office the other day because he was upset that we did a kiddies drama at Christmas time. We had simply presented the Gospel out of Luke with some shepherds and songs. It was totally biblical with no Christmas trees or Santa Clauses. He was upset. He has a cult background. This man came into my office, I was totally unprepared for his outburst. I had about three sessions scheduled that evening before church. He came in and said, "I've

prayed a long time about this and I don't know what you're going to think about this," and he rolled out his thing I took about fifteen minutes and listened to the whole thing. I tried to get a word in edge wise and couldn't get a word in. I tried to come around this way and couldn't get a word in. I tried to go around this way and couldn't get around that way. I tried going straight through. Finally I decided, "I'm not getting through. I'm not going to get a word in." Finally I said, "Son I want to tell you there is more to the thing than you have there, and there is information that you haven't read. I've read Ralph Woodrow's books; the same one you've read but there are some other factors that are involved." I couldn't get a word in. He was breathing hard by this time!

Before I was saved I took care of folks like that. I said, "I'm not talking to you any more! When you're ready to listen then I'll talk to you." You're not going to derail this guy, he's going for the goal. Finally I walked to the door and opened it and said, "OUT!" My old flesh was stirred. I've been saved a long time but I've still got some flesh. I was proud of myself. I didn't like the emotions that I had, but I was proud of myself because I controlled myself. I didn't clinch my fist and take all four front teeth out like I felt like doing. I gently took him by the sleeve and said, "out," and he went his way. That's why this is in there.

The reason that I can preach to you this afternoon with great conviction about being no striker is that I won that battle!

Another character trait mentioned is, "Not greedy of filthy lucre." Barclay says that this is, "The man who does not care how he makes money as long as he makes it." "Well behaved," Barclay says, "The man in whose life all things are harmoniously integrated." Oh what a quality!" Barclay says, "Dignified, not a circus side show." "Not double tongued." This means straight: to not say one thing to one person and something else to another. These are all character traits, and I could go on but I want you to home in on the one quality above all that is mentioned. That quality is "sober, and sober minded." I leave you to your own investigation of Titus 2:1-5 and verses 6-8, and of I Timothy 3:8-13. These give a list of qualifications.

Mark Twain says "common sense is something that you can't teach a man. He either has it or he doesn't have it." Now I would hope that he's wrong, because I meet too many of us in whom that quality is lacking. Common sense will work miracles in your life. It will keep you from thinking of yourself more highly than you ought. I know every once in a while you get this megalomania that seizes you. A disease that's called "congregational potentate" lays hold of you. You have all the answers and all wisdom. You think you can answer all questions and solve all problems; but you can't. I don't even know all the questions let alone all the answers.

I was reading in the Phoenix paper a couple of weeks ago about the conclusion of a trial that they are having down there. Here is a congregation, and in the congregation is a husband and wife that are having family problems. So the pastor and the assistant pastor with one of the congregational leaders and the husband have this wife and they are whipping her with a switch to cure her alcoholism. Can you handle that? I've dealt with lots of alcoholics but I have to confess that it never dawned on me that it could be cured by whip-ping. Can you handle such insanity? Sinners know better than that. But here is a pastor, a congregational leader and a husband who have all presumed headship, but don't have enough common sense to realize that you don't gain spiritual objectives by physical means. You say what's the matter? No common sense was used: no discretion or sensitivity. This not being sober minded.

Another thing that would have helped a couple of them is called, minding your own business, which is an off-shoot of common sense. Proverbs says, "A man who meddles with strife that does not belong to him is as one who takes a dog by the ears." What Proverbs says with a long statement is that you ought to have better sense than to meddle in business that's not your own. Common sense will keep you out of a lot of problems. Isn't it interesting that this appears in a list of pastoral qualifications? I could wax eloquent about this, but we're going to finish this afternoon.

I picked up the newspaper and discovered on the front of the church page in the Arizona Republic a story about our old friend "grinny Gus" down in Charlotte. (Jim Baker) He bought himself a condo for \$360,000. He puts \$22,000 worth of mirrors in so he can see the ocean from any room, even



the bathroom. I mean, you need to see the ocean from the bathroom. He puts in gold plated plumbing. When I read those kind of things I think how common sense would tell you that you can't do those kinds of things as a man of God and get away with it.

I want to say something to you this afternoon and that is that the trust that a congregation gives is a very fragile thing and once that trust is destroyed, it is very difficult, if not impossible to ever regain it. The only armament that I can put in you is common sense will tell you, you can not do that. This is not the man's house; this is a little estate that he's going to have. Why, a child would know better than that, but see the quality that was disregarded was soberness and sober-mindedness. No sensitivity, no discretion, no understanding, no care for how other people will view this was shown. This probably will ruin any impact for the Kingdom of God before it's all finished.

You see, sensitivity will keep you out of a lot of problems. I picked up the newspaper the other day in Flagstaff, Arizona. Here is a woman that was over billed sixteen cents. I mean sixteen cents is a lot of money; it's important. She became enraged over this over charge and this unjust exercise of authority and sued. She lost the case, and up to the present time has spent \$10,000 for justice. You see common sense will teach you not to die on the wrong battle field. Now there is a time to fight for principles, but there is a time when things are not important.

You see common sense, sober-mindedness, soberness, discretion, sensitivity, will let you and I understand how we ought to flow through life. So that we become effective as leaders in the congregation. This is why these qualities of character appear God's outlines for you and I. The Bible declares that overriding the church is that trait that qualifies or disqualifies us.

I was reading with great interest the things that came out of the White House recently from James Watt the Secretary of the Interior. He hates rock musicians and opens his mouth against the Beach Boys. "Those slobs are not playing at our White House." There was such a furor from the American people and the news began to come to the White House. Pretty soon, James Watt emerges from the White House with a plaster of paris

foot with a hole in it. Listen to what I'm saying, this is a master stroke. Nancy comes out and says, "I really don't dislike the Beach Boys, Nancy Reagan likes the Beach Boys, and I like the Beach Boys." Now, I'm sure that inside he still hated rock musicians, in fact I'm positive of that. But you see he had an understanding of people and in a master stroke they defused every rabid newspaper commentator, and television newsmen. It didn't change a bit how he felt, or the fact that the Beach Boys are still slobs. But with a plaster of Paris foot with a hole in it he came out grinning and stood before the camera and defused the whole situation. A man said, "this is not an essential issue. It doesn't matter, who cares? We'll invite them no problem." He used common sense.

This afternoon we've talked about qualifications and disqualifications. These are profound statements from the Word of God. There are men and women sitting here who God has ordained for powerful ministry in the Kingdom of God and some of the things that I've talked to you about are far more profound than you understand. Your marital state and how you raise and deal with your children has great ramifications in the family of God, as do your personal characteristics and how you conduct yourself.

Now the good news of all of this is that God is a God of transformation. I know there are lots of us that are here who are feeling badly, but God has to make us feel badly sometimes before he can make us feel good. There's hope for us. I have not spoken these words so that you will say, "there isn't any reason for me to stay in the ministry. I might as well give up. Those devils of mine are headed for San Quinton." That isn't why I've spoken that. I didn't speak this so that husbands and wives will say, "We might as well throw in the towel because we've got tension between us." I've seldom seen any marriage where there wasn't some kind of tension with two human beings trying to function under the same roof. But I've talked about this so that you and I could understand and realize that the reason the Apostle put this in there was not to disqualify us, but to cause us to come to grips with that. That with God's power to transform, He can help us. That's why these words were written: there's hope for us. God lays down for us a promise that we can have this help available in the areas of our life that qualify or disqualify us.



## CONTENDING

by Wayman Mitchell

Pastor Harris and I were ministering in England. We were in the city near the great and historic Welsh Revival. This was a place that God powerfully poured out His Spirit. We were ministering to people that had roots in, and some of them had even been in the outpourings and spinoffs of that great Revival. We ministered in a land where John Wesley and his evangelists had saturated that nation with the gospel of Christ. They had gone up and down in every area of that land and had preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. We preached in two buildings that the Methodists had built. They were the result of that tremendous Revival. In succeeding generations they were finally abandoned because that Revival had finally died. There were no longer any people in those buildings. They were sold to and occupied by some people affiliated with the Assembly of God. These meetings were in various places, some of them were conventions, and some of them were regular church services. I ministered in one of them in a city called Doncaster. I ministered to an entire congregation of the geriatric set. There were probably only ten people in that congregation of 125 who were under 60. I ministered in a couple of their conventions. I was shaken to my roots. Here was a group people that believed exactly same thing that you and I believe. Their doctrine was correct. Their doctrine does not differ one iota from the doctrine that you and I embrace. I have never been in churches as dead and lacking in spiritual life as when I ministered in those assemblies. They are not like those that name themselves Assembly of God in the United States. This was a group of people that believe the same as we believe, that most Pentecostal churches believe. Doctrine was not their problem but they were as dead as anything I've ever seen. I was aghast! I made up my mind as I saw that, that I would contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, against the trend of our day, to join the struggle, in the defense of the faith. Jude writes in verses 3 & 4,

*"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. " Verses 20-25 say, "But you, beloved, building up your-sieves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some having compassion, making a difference; And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."*

Here is a man of God, led by the Holy Spirit to a church. He's writing to his generation, and he is talking about their faith, once delivered unto the saints.

### ***CONTENDING FOR PREACHING***

The early church contended in several areas. One of these is in preaching the Gospel. The New Testament records that these people were busily engaged in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their message was that God had intervened in time, through Jesus Christ to help a lost humanity; that he had not left man to himself. God himself had come down and was personally involved intervening upon this Earth to help humanity through Jesus Christ.

In Acts 2:22, we find the part of the sermon that is telling us about "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved among you by miracles, wonders and signs." In Acts 10:38, it tells how "God anointed Christ with the Holy Ghost

and with power, doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil." God was with him. In Acts 3:26, it tells us that "God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." All of eternity hinged on this message, and these people went everywhere to proclaim it.

This was the message for all, because mankind was lost without God and without hope. He did not leave mankind without hope. Their message was that God who loved the world had intervened, in the person of Jesus Christ. Their message was that all of eternity hinged upon the proclamation and on the preaching of this gospel and upon Jesus Christ.

Now this was contested in their day and it is contested in our day. There are people who use the name of Jesus Christ. I could walk down the street from here, there would be The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. They have no knowledge of Jesus Christ and neither are they saints. When I'm talking about the con-testing of this message, I am not talking about the contesting of terminology, I am not talking primarily even about the contesting of doctrine. I am talking about the actual preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, in the life-giving Spirit that gives deliverance to the captive.

It talks about "earnestly contending for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints." Paul said, in his testimony, that, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith." He talks another time about fighting with beasts. He wasn't talking about lions. It didn't mean that he got himself a club, and went out to the streets and started batting people around, or that there were people that wanted to fist-fight him. He's talking about fighting those in his generation that were inspired of Satan. Religious guys would contest this preaching of the gospel of Jesus. In their day I'm sure they had the dialoguers, the cool Johnny Carson types. I'm sure they had all the rest of the things, the religious culminations just like we have. Whenever and whatever form it came, I'm sure they were contesting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A lot of people don't like people like you and I. As a matter of fact they really hate preachers like me. I upset them really bad. It isn't what I say, it's what I am. I can preach five minutes and they're ready to fight. There is a

dimension to me that they do not approve of or like. No sooner than I speak something in them begins to churn. It begins to repel. They don't like what I speak. They didn't like Paul either. When he says, "I have fought with a beast at Ephesus, and I have fought a good fight," he was speaking of a part of a church that believed that the gospel ought to be preached.

Three problems are historical in the church. One of these is in Hebrews 2:1. The apostle said, "that we ought to give more earnest heed to things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." This is an interesting play on words. It gives us a picture of a ship that is leaky. What it literally means is that we should give them heed lest we let them leak out. You and I have a fallibility, and there is something about human nature that makes our retention really low. The grace of God is not residual. Our rate of retention is extremely low. We're like a bucket with holes in it. We come to church, we get filled up, we're soused, we're overflowing and we get done with the services and we walk out the door, and things are wonderful. We grin at everybody. We tell people, "I got that old-time religion. Makes me love everybody." We walk out the door, and before we take hold of the door handle of our car, it has already leaked out. You don't need to blink at me. I'm a pastor. There's nothing wrong with the message, the power, or the Holy Spirit. The problem is with the containers. Does that upset you super spiritual folk? There's more to come.

One of the strange problems that we have, happens when we are raised in Gospel preaching. We can see what it does, we can be in those fantastic services, see people moved, watch God do a fantastic work and then walk out and forget that we were ever a part of that. We get off with some kinked person and forget what we've seen. The pastor says to us, "Where have you been?" We say, "I've got this new doctrine." "What happened to you?" "I just don't believe that's the way to do it." "Well, what about all the fruit, the tremendous converts and the assembly?" "Oh well, that's not everything."

## ***CONTENDING FOR HOLINESS***

Jude, verse 4 says that we have another problem, *"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."* These are those that are essentially separating themselves from the Spirit.

Another problem is leadership that's not godly. Leadership must love holiness, purity, and contend for a lifestyle that is different than the world we live in. We're called to live different than the world. We're called to come out of it. We're living in a generation when you can't tell, sometimes, whether the preacher is a he or a she. We're living in a generation when the saints talk like, act like, and (I am persuaded) are exactly like the world. The worst part of this is that we have leaders that will not blow the trumpet in Zion. They will not contend for a lifestyle separated from the world. They will not minister or challenge the people, or preach the word of God to them or tell them to repent and turn to Christ. It's wonderful to see that we have a wonderful new Christian television station in Denver. Now these people are concerned about the films that we're showing down at the local theater, that are raw porno. It always was porno and it hasn't changed. There's not a film in 50 that's worth paying fifty cents for, much less five bucks. These folks are so concerned about that, lo and behold, they begin to show good family films that in the fifties were rejected by the church. They are showing these flicks as good family entertainment. My, how sin has the ability to dull and to deaden our senses. We first abhor, endure, then embrace. Here is a generation that has lost its moorings completely. The leadership is ungodly. The leadership is completely carnal, selfish, makes no stand, and is so insensitive to the iniquities, filth and crap that they show films that the church in the fifties took a stand against. Today we find that Christian leaders are spending God's money to bring movies into the home. Whoever said we needed entertainment? Show me in the scripture where it says we need entertainment. You want some entertainment? Go out and win somebody to Jesus!

Added to this it says that these people "separated themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." They mocked the manifestations of the Spirit, just like on the day of Pentecost. The men watching are looking from a carnal



viewpoint; they are totally insensitive to the works of the Holy Spirit. They mocked the moving of the Holy Spirit, and they mocked those that worshiped God in Spirit.

These are horrifying circumstances that exist in our generation, and I can hardly believe that we're seeing some of the things we're seeing. We need some preachers who will contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

I was horrified, sitting in a restaurant with a church leader. He'd been telling me to try this certain kind of coffee. I said no. He said I had to try it, because it was "outstanding." They served it up in a glass and it had cream on it. I said I wasn't interested in it. Later on, he ordered this certain kind of coffee. They brought the fixin's and two full jiggers of bourbon. It was enough to stagger a mule. I'm talking about a leader in a Pentecostal organization in Europe.

There's another preacher that really does like wine. He has a lot of "stomach trouble," you know. It's socially acceptable. You have to do what the Romans do when you're in Rome. "Become all things to all men," and they really do like women. I get really nervous about preachers who spend too much time talking to women. Women are wonderful. I appreciate women. Every man ought to have one as a mother and one for a wife. But I get extremely nervous about men who are supposed to be a pastor, and spend too much time talking to women (Well pastor you just have a dirty old mind). No, my mind is in good shape. I'm a pastor, and I'm not under any delusions about what the world is filled with. May I say to you as a man of God, that you'd better look well to your lifestyle, and you'd better pay attention to your heart and to your ministry. I become extremely exercised over pastors who spend lots of time talking to women.

There is an organization that was founded on the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They believe exactly what we believe. There is absolutely no spiritual life of any kind. They are as dead as dead can be, and the spiritual state of these churches and the above things that I have related are linked together.

Revelations 3:1 says, ". . . thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Now let it not be said of us that God can look upon us and say that we have a name, that we're alive. Our doctrine talks about life and the gospel, but we're dead. But let it be said of you and I that we earnestly contended for the faith. What we're talking about is rooted directly in the pulpit. The reason most churches are dead is because they have dead preachers. The reason they are immoral is because they have immoral preachers. The reason that churches have any problems roots into the pulpit. The congregation will be exactly what the pulpit is. This does not mean that there will not be outbreaks of various kinds of sin, but I want you to know the congregation will rise no higher than the pulpit.

### ***CONTENDING FOR SOULS***

The second thing these people contended for was a conversion of souls. The early church had some convictions. The early church believed that men were lost. In Acts 2:20-21, there is a sermon recorded where the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and notable day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. They preached that men needed to be saved. The reason that they preached men needed to be saved is because they believed that until men are saved, they are lost. They were not ashamed to proclaim that men and women were sinners without God and without hope. Men and women had no understanding of spiritual things, and until they were born again, they had no hope of eternity with God. Acts 17:31 says that, "God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." They had preached a day of judgment. They left their congregation with a knowledge that God had appointed a day where every man and every woman would face judgment for eternity. Now to you that may seem like condemnation preaching, but you'll never get anybody saved until you first get them lost. God did not call you and I to have people affirmed. He called you and I to have people repent from their sins and turn to Jesus

Christ. There is a vast difference between some kind of ritualistic service and some kind of affirmation program, and real preaching that brings the conviction of the Holy Ghost. Acts 20:21 says, 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God.' Their message was repentance.

The people evangelized. In the book of Jude they are urged to have compassion. These people believed that the saving of souls was a picture. This picture that they saw was a picture of snatching people out of the fire. They visualized men that were not born of the Holy Spirit, that are not born into the kingdom of God, that have not accepted Christ. They viewed them as actually staggering on the brink of Hell. They were urged with compassion to snatch people out of the fire. These people evangelized. Evangelism is not a program to keep the kids off the streets. We don't street preach just because if we don't keep our kids busy they'll end up at the "First Church of the Frigidaire." That's not why we have programs or outreaches or any of it. The reason that we have these things is because we believe in the conversion of souls. We have a compassion for the lost. We believe what's in the word of God. We picture ourselves as snatching souls out of the fire, and to do this we'll have to go outside these four walls. Those people went outside the four walls. We find Paul preaching on Mars hill. We find Paul preaching in the marketplace. We find him preaching by the river-side. We find him preaching in the jail. We find them evangelizing outside the four walls, to bring people the Gospel of Christ, to bring them the conviction of sin, and to save them, literally, from the flames of Hell.

Someone said, "Oh, I don't think you ought to be preaching Hell, you'll make someone nervous." Apparently, the early church didn't have any problem understanding this scripture. They believed that getting saved was like snatching them from the flames of Hell.

Jesus emphasized this. In John 4:21-23, He was outside the four walls and He met a woman. She was an adulteress, and Jesus met her face to face with the fact that she was living in immorality, and it didn't bother Him a bit that this disturbed her. "Oh, pastor, you just need to preach on love." He did love this woman, but He knew this woman was bound for a devil's hell, and it didn't make him a bit nervous to tell her, "Go get your husband."

She said, "I don't have a husband." He said, "That's right. You've had five, and the man you're shacking up with now is not your husband." You didn't think that I knew about things like that, did you? I'm talking about the conversion of souls. Luke 14:23 reports, "And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

We have a record of the day of Pentecost and how, as they gathered, Peter lifted up his voice and began to preach. His message was, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." He talked about the judgment that was coming and it's recorded that 3,000 people got saved. How did they know there were 3,000? They gave an invitation to step forward and identify themselves that they wanted to be saved and counted that many. They evidently believed in invitations and altar calls and thought men were on the brink of Hell and warned them to identify themselves and admit they were unsaved. Our generation wants to have some other kind of thing so that we won't be embarrassed. We have some respectable folks in here, and it's an awful thing to get them down on their knees, How embarrassing!

A number of years ago at Prescott, we got a little girl saved who was 15 years old. Since she was thirteen, she had blown her mind on drugs. Her mom and dad didn't know what was wrong with her. They were prominent members of the First Methodist Church. In fact, Mr. Payson had taught Sunday school over there for ten years and had even preached occasionally, and he says today that he wasn't saved. This little girl was taken to her pastor, and she began to show erratic behavior. They were very concerned for her. They took her to the pastor. The pastor said it was just a fad that she'd grow out of. This little girl was a hard-core addict. She came into church, a little crummy church on the wrong side of town, and got saved. Saved saved, the kind where you can tell they got something. She went home and told her mom and dad, "No more of the Methodist Church! I got saved! Not only that, but I got filled with the Holy Ghost and I'm talking in tongues." It changed her behavior radically. She is a different girl. She loves her mom and dad now. She has a different attitude towards school. She is easy to get along with. Mom and Dad came down to see what was going on in this strange crummy little church.

I remember the first time they came to hear me preach. He's a successful man. He's the golf champion of Prescott, Arizona, the chairman of the Y.M.C.A., on the board of everything in town, he's in every social set, he's Mr. Prescott.

Our services are filled with Indians and Mexicans and some of those awful poor people. The church is just filled with "Okies and Arkies." They came three times. Each time they raised their hands to get saved, but when it came time to come down before the people and pray they just couldn't do it, because of their pride. It would have been really easy for me to say "Mr. and Mrs. Payson, I know how embarrassing it must be for you to have to come down here, so let's just go in the back room and say a little prayer," but I'm from the old school.

I'd preach and then ask for those who wanted Jesus to lift their hands, and up their hands would go. But when it came time to come forward they just sat there. I didn't think they were going to make it. But I was determined that these people were going to come the same way as the Indians, Okies and Arkies. The same way I came.

They came again and by this time they were getting desperate. They lifted their hands and they came forward. I'll never forget it. This man walking down the aisle ram rod straight, probably six foot four inches tall and kneeling down to get gloriously saved. They are still in the church today. I'm not talking this evening about church membership or church affiliation. I'm talking about the conversion of souls. The early church contended that souls be converted unto Christ. They felt that there ought to be a repenting and coming to Christ publically. They preached publically, they gave altar calls, and they responded publically to Jesus as their savior.

I pastored in Canada and Australia. In going to England I contacted the demonic-inspired practice of the inquiry room where folks pray privately so they won't be embarrassed. I was preaching in this one church in 1977 in Australia, when about five people answered the altar call. God was touching this bunch of hippies. There were some others over on the other side and I was there giving a further invitation. I asked some people to come up and pray with them, and when I went back over to pray with them, they were gone! I looked all around and I didn't know that they had an "inquiry room".

I had pastored in Canada, but I had forgotten all about that. It struck me like a bolt of lightning. After the service I asked what had happened to those two hippies. They said, "We've got them back in the inquiry room." "What are they doing back there"? "Well, we are talking with them about Jesus."

I made up my mind right then that we were not going to get any of them out of the delivery room. We're going to keep them right here. The next night I preached. Several got saved, I don't know how many. I was watching and praying out of the corner of my eye. Sure enough, they got them and I said, "Nope, hold on! We're going to keep them right here. Jesus died in public, and I want these people to get saved in public!"

There is something healthy that happens to the body, when the body is involved. When the body needs deliverance, when the soul needs to be saved, when people need to be prayed for, the body needs to be involved. We say "Oh pastor, I've got to get up early for work. I've got a heavy schedule." Hogwash! What you need to do is to sit still, worship God and keep an atmosphere of the Holy Ghost. Let God do His work and let the Holy Spirit atmosphere be in the place and let these people be birthed into the Kingdom, with a glorious atmosphere of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ.

That is getting to be very unpopular in our generation. I believe that this is important. I have watched the old mass public prayer, "Now everybody pray this prayer for everybody here that wants to get saved." Everybody bows their heads and prays this mass sinner's prayer. They pray, but nothing happens. I've watched it. There is no repentance. These folks are sinners, my friend. The flames of Hell are licking on their garments. Their clothes even smell like the flames of Hell. We need to not be embarrassed. We don't need to get them out quick, we need to get them down front and saved. They need to make a clear-cut decision for Christ. Men are lost. They need to be saved. The New Testament believed in a conversion of souls.

### ***CONTENDING FOR GOD'S PRESENCE ACTUALIZED***

The early church contended for the presence of God actualized. We live in a really, really strange day. A whole wave went through the church

a number of years ago, called "intercessory prayer". They passed out pillows to everybody and believe it or not, they would get everybody in this room and they would beat those pillows. They were interceding they claimed. Can you handle that? You pound the pillow and they call this intercessory prayer. I put that in the same category as primal-scream therapy. You can get in a room and scream your head off, and when you get out, all you are going to have is laryngitis. You'll feel exactly the same as you felt when you went in. Anybody with half a mind would understand that anyone with any kind of belief in this physical exercise has lost his moorings.

I was reading about one of these kinky things, and it was talking about "rolfing". You take the flat of your hands and beat each other. The only thing you get out of that is a bruised hand. If you think that is something, you're in worse trouble than I thought you were. You have been conned. I have been saved a long time and have seen all kinds of stuff.

Some churches have a thing called "dancing deliverance". They get the folks wired up and everybody starts dancing and hopping around. They call that "dancing in the Spirit." All they're doing, though, is hopping. I call it the "Hebrew-Hop". In England, I could not get any sound out of the people to praise. I could not get any response of any kind during my sermon, but there was a whole segment of them that hopped. Reuben Renya calls it the "Bunny-Hop". Underlying all this is some kind of belief that spiritual dominion is established by hopping around. There is a whole segment of it in Australia. I've known a brother over there for twenty years. He said, "Don't be surprised I'm into dancing." I said, "Dancing?" When I got saved I didn't go dancing anymore. They sing a song and he hops around. Hop, Hop, Hop. They'll fight you over their doctrine that there is some glorious deliverance that is wrought through dancing, but you'll have a hard time proving it in scripture, and I'm not ignorant of scripture. I know every scripture there is on dancing.

The early church believed in the presence of God actualized. Come back to the Bible and look at something very specific. Look at your text again, "But you beloved, building up yourselves again on your most holy faith. Praying in the Holy Ghost." These people had been filled with the

Holy Ghost, they had spoken with other tongues. They had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. They had that experience. It was part of their historical experience with God. What the writer is contending for here is a regular subsequent experience contended for, and expressed. I'm getting down to some very fundamental truths that probably will determine whether you contend for and keep what God has given you in this insane age in which we live. There is a vocal connection and key to the presence of God realized and actualized, and the utterance that comes out of human lips. What is it that makes the power of the Lord present? We know that God is omnipresent. We know that God is everywhere in and on planet Earth, yet there are times when God moves; times when God's physical presence is actualized. It is realized, and the people know that He has been there. It is actualized. Something actually happens. There is a dimension of Spirit where God visits, frees, delivers, and moves. There is a tangible presence of God. There is a vocal connection and key to that presence of God actualized.

Acts 2:4 says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Something happened to these people. There was a divine presence that came into their lives. That divine presence experienced was keyed to what was coming out of their mouth. Ephesians 5:18 says, "Be not drunk with wine where in is excess, but be filled with the Holy Ghost speaking among yourselves, with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." These are people that have been saved, that have been filled with the Holy Ghost, who have spoken in other tongues, but this is talking about a regular subsequent experience, contended for and expressed. The key to that was the utterance of the lips. Acts 4 says, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they had assembled together." They were all filled. This word is "pleo", which means fulfilled. Note that they were initially baptized, but that this was a fulfilling; this was a subsequent experience. This was a tangible place where God came on the scene as a direct result of what was coming out of their mouths. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word with boldness. There is a powerful element here that is critical. That element is that God linked himself in divine presence to human speech, and that human



speech gives utterance unto the Spirit of the Lord and brings a dimension of God's presence into an assembly, and into an individual life. That is keyed to vocal utterance and not to physical manifestations. There may be physical manifestations. I have seen people actually dance in the Spirit in a congregation. It is a beautiful thing that is spontaneous. It isn't anything that had to be taught; it was Spirit-induced. It isn't something they do every service, but occasionally God moves and they are lost in the Spirit, dancing a beautiful gracious dance. I have seen people fall on the floor. I have seen people drunk in the Spirit. I have seen people laughing in the Spirit. I have seen all these things, but the presence of God actualized is keyed to vocal utterance and not to physical manifestations.

In England there was no response to altar calls, no response to ministry. It was very significant to me that there was no vocal utterance expressed either. The mouth actualizes the presence of God.

Here are two on the road to Emmaus in the book of Luke. They are walking along, and as they are walking along they are talking about things of eternity. They begin to talk about Jesus of Nazareth. As they begin to talk, Jesus comes on the scene. They relate later, "Did not our hearts burn within us?"

Psalms 100:4 says, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise." Psalms 22:3 says, "Thou art Holy, Oh thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." This scripture lets us know that there is a dimension of God that is entered into by the individual and by the assembly gathered together. It brings in a dimension of God's presence actualized. The early church understood this and contended for it. To contend means to contend about a thing as a combatant, intensive, a contest, to join in the defense of the faith. There are people here this evening who have been filled with the Holy Spirit, but it has all "leaked out". That's the way human nature is. Our retention rate is not really good. God's Spirit and presence is not residual. We have this human quality and this human failing that we do not have the ability to retain. We have to continually keep filling it up. That's what Ephesians 5:18 is contending for; "Be not drunk with wine." Don't go down and get a snootfull of scotch whiskey and mix coffee with it and pour

some cream on it to get a buzz. If you want to get a buzz that'll really buzz, get filled with the Holy Ghost.

There are some who have been saved, filled with the Holy Ghost and speak with other tongues, but in their works they deny that God bought them and they're not living right. Right believing will never be a substitute for right living. We're an assembly: a movement that believes in living for God. We don't smoke and we don't chew. We don't drink wine. We don't lay with girls, and we don't cuss. There are a lot of things we don't do.

Your call is to repent. Turn from that lifestyle. Dump that foul religious facade of sweet peaches and cream that is denying the only Lord God, and get clean in the sight of God. We're going to face judgment, friend. This is no game. This is not a religious club. I am not going to end this service by telling you, "May the Lord bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you." I am going to bring you to conviction. Some are embarrassed by the Holy Spirit expressed. You bring your boss here. You've been telling him what a wonderful church this is. He lives on the better side of town. He drives one of those big shiny new cars. You bring him, sit him right next to a black sister, and she's going to get happy. You're going to be embarrassed to death. You're going to be mortified. The preacher's going to come in and he'll be one of those illiterate hippies like Ronnie Jones. Someone is going to get started and they're going to speak in tongues. It's going to be awful. You're embarrassed by the Holy Spirit.

Don't feel sorry for us. We're having a great time. God's in the place. You couldn't buy what's been done already at this conference. I've had half a dozen people come to me and tell me that they have been delivered of long standing fears. They're free. What I believe and contend for is tied to what has happened to these people. What we are and what we do is tied together. What is happening is not disconnected from the fruit coming out. We do what we do because we are contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

## **DIMENSIONS OF PRAYER**

Probably one of the most significant factors about the New Testament is that it provides a record of the emphasis that was put on prayer in the early church, in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His life. If there is any other mark that would be significant in our churches, wherever they may be, it is the mark that these churches are praying churches.

John Lewis is a man who I've known for some time. He had a list of questions about our ministry. One of those questions was, "How do you get your people to pray with such intensity?" This man isn't some fellow from the back side of the desert, but he's a leader. In Queensland, he has an excellent church of about 550. Still, he asked me how we get our people to pray with such intensity, because he'd been in the prayer room in Tucson.

When he had been in Perth, Australia, visiting our Potter's House, he believed that the reason for the intensity was that most of the congregation was young people. When he came to Tucson, though, to a congregation made of both young and old, his mind was blown. He saw the same intensity of prayer that he had seen in Perth. I told him that the reason was that they were just following my example. "They'll pray exactly like you pray," I said. "If you pray unenthused, that's how they'll pray."

"How often do your people pray?" he said. "Every day," I said.

"Every day?" he questioned.

"Yes," I said, "These doors open at six o'clock in the morning every day. One group comes in at that time, and I come in with the rest at seven."

"How do you get the people to pray every day?" he asked. I responded, "You pray, and they'll pray."

He told me that the way they pray in Australia is that they all get around in a circle and listen to each other. One prays, then another, and it's deader than a doornail.

He asked me, "How do you break through that?"

"You're going to have to set the example. You're going to have to refuse to let them pray like that," I told him.

Jesus gave these instructions in Matthew 6:5-8; *"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward."* In other words, this is exhibitionism, and Jesus said that people who pray this way already have received their reward. They feel really holy, and that is all the reward they're going to get. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."

Acts 4:23 says, *"And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God which has made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is. Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against the holy child Jesus, whom thou has anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness*

*of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all."*

### ***PERSONAL PRAYER***

The indictment against our generation is that it is religious, but it is unspiritual. Our generation professes to believe God and His promises, but they never put their faith to work. They never get on their knees and lay hold of God. In Luke 18:1 and 18, Jesus spoke a parable unto His disciples that men should always pray and not faint. Verse 18 says, *"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man shall come, will He find faith upon the earth?"* What He is saying is, "When I come again, am I going to find people praying upon the Earth?" The answer that will have to be given will be no.

No Christian can operate successfully beyond his own personal prayer life. The early church was founded on the understanding of the power of personal prayer. Jesus gives this discourse, "Enter in-to your room and lay hold of God. Do not be as the hypocrites are; the only praying that they do is for public consumption. They have no personal prayer life. They never pray simply to lay hold of God. The only time they pray is to be heard and seen by others. They're hypocrites. They have already received their reward. They're not touching the throne of God, and they'll receive no mighty power from God. God will not answer their prayer."

One young man wanted to be a disciple. He was the kind of fellow who was gripped by that same spirit. It grips many people. He wanted to be seen. He wanted to be known as a disciple. He knew that I came to pray every morning at seven o'clock, and he knew exactly the direction I came from he would come in two or three minutes before I arrived, and he'd be leaving right as I was coming in. If I was ever a couple of minutes late, he'd wait in his car for me to show up. I thought he was a real man of God. It wasn't very long before I found out that the only reason he came was so that he could be seen by me. He hadn't really been praying at all. He should have realized that it didn't make any difference if I saw him every day. I couldn't answer any of his prayers. God answers prayer! He needed to

understand that prayer is not something he should have been doing for me, but prayer is something he should do for himself.

We need prayer to lay hold of God. Jesus said to enter into your closets, into whatever secret places we have. He told us to enter into whatever prayer location we can facilitate, and lay hold of God. Jesus showed us, in the New Testament, that He was inseparably linked to prayer. Wherever you read in the New Testament you'll find this fact. This so impressed the disciples that they came to Jesus and said, "Lord, we see you praying all the time and we understand that you are a man of prayer. Now," they said, "Lord, teach us to pray. We want to know how to pray."

Jesus said to Peter, "The Devil has desired to have you and sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you. "Jesus believed in prayer. He practiced prayer. It was not simply a religious ritual He went through for His disciples to observe, but He believed that prayer was a potent force. He bowed down as a man. He laid hold of God and saw the answers to His prayers. He said to Peter, *"I've prayed for you, Peter, that a power from Heaven would come into your life, that when you fail, your faith doesn't fail. You're going to return to the walk of faith."*

The apostle Paul said, in Romans 1:9, "For God is my Witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." Paul makes specific references to personal prayer in the New Testament, to the people he was writing to. He believed in personal prayer. It was not something for exhibition, it was not something for man's consumption, but it was something that touched God. He exhorted them, reminded them, and prayed for them, and asked them to pray for him. Twenty seven times he specifically mentions that they ought to be involved in personal prayer. Prayer is, as a matter of fact, one of the most exciting facets of the Christian experience.

The apostle James wrote a tremendous statement. Chapters 5:17 and 18 says, *"Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it rained not on the Earth by the space of three years and six months and he prayed again and the Heaven gave rain and the Earth brought forth its fruit."* The reason he wrote that was to show us that Elijah was a man exactly like you and I.

He was a human being. This man practiced prayer. He was a common man like you and I and he stopped the heavens for three and a half years.

The reason that passage is there is that the apostle James is exhorting you and I to believe that God hears and answers prayer, and that a common man can stop the heavens if he touches God.

The Gospel of Mark 11:22 says, *"And Jesus answering, saith unto them, have faith in God. For verily I say unto you that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says. Therefore I say unto you, what things so ever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them."*

One of the most exciting facets of the life of a Christian is that God is in Heaven; He hears and He answers prayer. You and I as individuals with all of our fallibilities, with all of our humanities, are encouraged to say to God, "Oh God! In the name of Jesus! Work a miracle and intercede and intervene and come on the scene! And God, do a work on planet Earth!" This has to do with people, circumstances, sickness, nations, churches, unsaved loved ones; this has to do with all of life. God gives us encouragement that you and I are to believe God that common people can touch God in prayer.

Do you pray? It doesn't do you any good to listen to me preach a sermon about prayer. What I am asking you is, do you pray? Jesus said, "When I come back again, (and we know that day is soon) multitudes of people will be professing to know me. There will be multitudes who will claim faith in God but these people will not be praying and this will be a symbol that they do not really practice and lay hold of God." He said, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith upon the Earth?" It doesn't do any good to say, "I go to a church that prays." That's good. It's better to go to a church that prays than a church that doesn't pray. But what I'm talking about is you praying.

## ***CORPORATE PRAYER***

Secondly, I want to talk about joining together with others. There is a powerful truth here, and that is a consideration that is going to take special effort. It is something that you're going to have to go beyond distraction for. You're going to have to adjust yourself to traveling distances. I'm talking about joining with other people to pray. To do this will take special effort. This is not the same as private personal prayer, but this is something that you have to do in unison with other people. There will be all kinds of people praying and there will be all kinds of distractions. About the time that you think you're ready to touch God, somebody yells, "OHHHH HALLELUJAH LORD!" and you lose your train of thought.

There is an effect that scientists have discovered which is called "synergism." This is a phenomena that they have discovered scientifically. The word "synergism" comes from an ancient Greek word that means "work together." In many areas, the sum total of things working together is greater than each of these things working independently. It's a phenomena. It's something that cannot be explained.

The New Testament Church understood how this relates to prayer. The Bible, in the fourth chapter of Acts, says "The church (or the assembly or the company), lifted up their voices to God with one accord." One translator translates that into "one united prayer to God." This means that when they came together there was a report given. As that report was given, they returned to their own company or their own assembly or their own congregation. As they came, these people were stirred. They were an assembly. They lifted up their voices to God in unison; with one united prayer.

You say, "What was that?" You heard something like that a few minutes ago. That's united prayer. This is something that can be done as a regular practice. This is something that should be done for extended periods of time. It is practiced in this congregation and in this building and on a regular basis.

The New Testament church understood something that our generation does not understand, and most churches and congregations do not understand. There is something that happens when we all lift our voices to God over the same issues and over the same vision. This is one of the



marks of the New Testament church. They realize the value of corporate prayer.

In the book of Acts, 2:42, it says, "And they continued with one accord in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." As they gathered together they unitedly, corporately, lifted their voices to God. They weren't sitting around in a circle listening to somebody say, "Oh God, You are all powerful and You are all mighty," saying "Amen, amen." People must come together who will join their voices together and from their heart and their spirit hold to God with one accord. They must make one prayer unto God for a petition that He would intervene and come on the scene.

In the book of Acts, it tells us about Peter. Peter is taken and slapped in the local jail. They put him behind bars. They wanted to make sure he wouldn't escape, so they handcuffed him to two Roman soldiers; one on either side. They put him inside, in two dungeons and two doors. They put him in the middle. I mean-he was locked away! That dude was on ice! The scripture says, "Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing unto God." While he was there, an angel of the Lord came in and brought the release. The Bible says that when he was released he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many others were gathered together, praying.

I'm talking about people being stirred and moving together with others, understanding that something happens in that. I'm talking about "synergism" and intensity; a stirring. I'm talking about touching Heaven. That happens corporately. It is far greater than the ability of a single person's prayer. Paul made constant reference to prayer because he valued it highly.

In Acts 20:37, it says, "And when he had thus spoken, he knelt down, and prayed with them all." You'll find in the New Testament, over and over again, that one major factor that made their church so unique is that they believed in prayer. They practiced prayer. There are many references to these people as those

who believed in prayer. These are the words of Paul: "Brethren, pray for us. I will that men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands unto God pray

without ceasing." Wherever you find the writings of Paul you'll find over and over again he eludes to the corporate church getting together and petitioning God for the needs of the hour.

Wherever Paul went he established corporate prayer meetings. Even on the river bank he had a corporate prayer meeting. As they gathered there, they saw a woman there named Lydia, who was a seller of purple. After the prayer meeting they went witnessing to her, and her marvelous conversion was made because wherever Paul went he established prayer meetings. He understood the value of corporate prayer.

The first time we went to Australia, we started corporate prayer meetings. We said to Pastor Cowen, "Brother, if you're going to touch God, you're going to have to have prayer meetings. You need to get this convention body praying." We went in every evening before the convention and laid hold of God. There wasn't another living soul that year that prayed with us except Fred Cowen. The next year I went back to the international convention in Australia. I said, "Brother, we're going to have to have prayer meetings." As I went in, my wife, Fred Cowen, and one other couple showed up. That year when I went into the Morly church I said, "Pastor, you're going to have to get your people praying."

He said, "Fine. I'm going to challenge them."

I was in a revival with him. We got his people down on their knees praying, and God started moving on them.

We've gone to the Philippines and seen people who were not praying. They had a religious profession, a religious structure, but they were not praying. We could tell immediately by the lack of intensity in the atmosphere that nobody was praying. One of our jobs is to challenge people. Our team went out in the early morning hour, and challenged them to meet us one hour before the thing started. We gave them an example of prayer.

Brother Veronico Swan, when I talked with him last, said, "One of the beautiful things that God has done, Brother Mitchell, is that wherever your men have been, there are now spontaneous prayer meetings beginning to spring up, and those people are beginning to lay hold of God! The pastors

are leading their people in the example of prayer." Brother Swan is the General Supervisor of the church in the Philippines.

A visiting pastor came to one of our conferences a year or two ago, and as he came he stopped me in the hall. He said, "I want to tell you that I've found the secret of the Arizona fellowship. It's not in methodology, or any kind of technique you have. When I came early this evening, I heard the people praying. I want you to know that is the secret of the revival in Arizona."

The Bible says, "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight." The overall, corporate whole has a far greater effect with God than one singly praying. Thank God for every one that prays privately and that prays in their prayer closet, but there needs to be something added to that. That's corporate prayer. Don't stop praying in this congregation. We need you praying. If I go home to glory in the next thirty seconds, don't stop praying. Prayer is the key to revival.

I know it's inconvenient. I know that when you're young and you're a hippy you don't have any responsibilities. You can come and go at your convenience. You don't have kids hanging around your pant legs having to be changed. But work it out somehow. One night have the husband pray and the next night have the wife pray, but pray. If you and I will obey God in this, the Bible says that God will do something beyond any ability that you and I have.

### ***THE MIRACLE OF PRAYER***

You and I are into a formula generation. We want an easy way out. We don't want to have to work for anything. We don't want to have to put forth any effort. We want to discover a formula where we can find a confession or some kind of a method or some kind of a gimmick or anything but prayer.

Brother Kevin read about Hannah, and how God had answered her prayer, but in the book of Samuel it says "Now Hannah spoke in her heart. Only her lips moved but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk, and she said, 'No, I have poured out my soul before the Lord, I haven't been drinking.'" Eli was coming through and saw this woman who

had tears streaming down her face. She'd just been weeping before her husband, and he said, "Hannah, what's the matter with you? Haven't I been good enough to you?" He said, "Haven't I been better to you than ten thousands sons?" She said, "That doesn't satisfy my heart." She was laying hold of God, with tears streaming down her face, making no sound. She was praying in her heart.

The important thing isn't how you pray; whether you are pounding on the pew or walking up and down, the important thing is that you do pray. I never could figure out how people can pray walking. It's a mystery to me. If you're touching God, though, then walk. I don't care what you do. If you have to lay down, if you have to hide in a corner and cover your head with a bucket, I don't care what you do, but pray. Touch God.

We used to have an old woman down in Wickenburg, and when she was stirred the only thing she could say was "Help us, Lord." Well, if that is all you can say, God hears and answers. Hannah wasn't uttering any words, but she had a hotline to heaven.

I read an article this week about a man who's a star of a new film. He went through The Way International, which is a false cult, and took their "Power for Abundant Living" training course. He learned about "glosolalia" (speaking in tongues). "In reality," he said, "speaking in tongues is an acquired skill. At the time I thought I was undergoing a spiritual experience. You feel good when you do it. There is a physical release, like when you take a glass of wine. You get a certain kind of buzz from it."

Prayer is not something you get a buzz from. His understanding is like a lot of people's. They have the concept of prayer as a physical release, like primal-scream therapy. It doesn't do you any good, but you feel better after you've screamed at the top of your lungs. Any idiot would know that screaming doesn't help you a bit. It won't change how you are. Neither is prayer some kind of therapy where people get together and utter some words just to make them feel good.

The scripture says, 'When they had prayed the place was shaken where they were gathered together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' Something happened out of the dimension of human understanding and

human ability. They prayed and touched God, and God said, "Amen." The place where they were shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Are you satisfied with praying for thirty seconds? I'm talking about laying hold of God in your soul until God moves. Unless God does something in this service, we will have another service and another sermon and we'll go home exactly as we came. It doesn't make any difference who's preaching or who's doing the lesson.

I remember when Larry Montieth came into this church. He was an arrogant, smart-mouthed kid from Los Angeles. He didn't even have any idea why he came there. The music group that came that night was fleshly. They were horrible. But what happened to Larry Montieth that night had nothing to do with what was happening on the platform. Before any invitation was given something got hold of that young man back in his seat and he didn't even wait for any altar call. He stood up and walked down to the front. Somebody saw him and said, "What's happening to this guy? Has he got a nut loose of some kind?" He came down because God got hold of him. God touched him in his heart and convicted him. God said, "You're a louse, Larry. You need to get saved." He didn't even understand anything that was happening. He couldn't tell you one thing that was said, but he came down and gave his heart to Jesus and he is still living for God.

I remember the night that Will and Vera Tarwater came into the service. One of the worst groups we'd ever had was here, and the worst part was that they were doing a repeat program. Every one of us had seen it before. However, what was happening in Will Tarwater's heart had nothing to do with the group. Thank God we are not dependent upon ourselves. When they came in, they felt an awesome presence. They had an awareness of the presence of God. God did a work, and the Tarwaters have been here ever since. Unless God moves, you and I are wasting our time.

Romans 8:26 says, *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities (or our shortcomings), for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered."* As we pray, we are earthly oriented, and our vision and goal and objective often is in the mundane things of Earth. The Holy

Ghost knows how to pray through us and touch a dimension that we have no control over and that we do not understand. I'm talking about God moving in Heaven above and coming down and touching Earth. In prayer, you and I enter our destiny.

Daniel prayed. He had read in the books that the seventy years were accomplished. When he saw that in the books, he went to God in prayer. God answered and Daniel and his people entered into their destiny. He read it in a book but it was prayer that released it and brought it into reality.

In the book of Revelation, John gives us a vision of Heaven. We see the golden vials of incense poured out onto the altar of God. The angel said, "These are the prayers of the believers unto God."

As we lay hold of God through prayer, our destiny is released. We're not talking about something we can accomplish by our-selves, but we're talking about something that God does. The same apostles who prayed that God would thrust out laborers into the harvest fields were the very ones that were thrust out. They entered their destiny as they laid hold of God. They released a dimension that was beyond their ability and beyond their own capacity. God added a dimension to their lives that they themselves could not accomplish. A number of years ago, I was preaching, and there was an earth tremor in the area of Prescott. It shook a trailer off of its foundation. I didn't feel it because I was moving around, but suddenly, the congregation came alive! They didn't know that God did this everywhere. There was an intensity that entered the building that had nothing to do with what I was saying. Folk's hearts began to be open to God. That was a natural thing that God did, but I'm talking about something in the dimension of the spirit. There is an intensity that God can bring that you and I have no control over. He does it in answer to prayer. God brings something down in the realm of reality and moves in the hearts of people.

Hezekiah went before God. His was a hopeless case. He was surrounded by Syrian armies, and there was no way out. They were intending to eradicate; it was going to be genocide. Hezekiah came before God. He touched God. Then 185,000 Syrians were slain by the Angel of the Lord in one night. That opposing army never again rose to power, because God heard and answered one man's prayer.

Peter was in prison between two soldiers, and the Angel of God appeared. He kicked Peter in the side and said, "Get up, Peter." If Peter got away, it would mean the soldiers' lives. They were sleeping, though, and it was time for a Holy Ghost jailbreak. The chains fell of Peter's wrists, and the Angel said, "Put your garment on! Get your clothes on! We're leaving!" He put his clothes on and went outside. He got past the guard at the gate, and past the second one with no problem. He came to the steel gate that went into the city (which was a massive one), and it opened of its own accord. He walked right on through it.

I'm talking about God. I'm not talking about a nice little church program that God ministers through at your convenience so it doesn't run so long that it upsets your football game and your recreation for this afternoon and your dinner plans; I'm talking about God coming on the scene and turning us upside-down in a revolution that does not turn us loose. I'm talking about God in a dimension that is beyond anything we understand or have control over.

In Lewis, Scotland, in 1949, there were two godly, elderly sisters. They could no longer attend church. One was blind, the other was crippled with arthritis. They met with God in their cottage every day, though. These two godly sisters touched the throne of grace. There was a man who was doing mission work at that time; he was holding normal meetings and normal revivals. His name was Dun-can Campbell. He came into Lewis very tired, but they insisted he come immediately to the church and speak because the people were gathered. This man had been in meetings before, and he had ministered normal church services. He had some degree of success, because he was going as an itinerant evangelist from church to church. Against his own physical wishes he went to that church and spoke to three hundred people. He dismissed them for the night, and as they tarried he spoke a few moments to the leaders of the church. When they went outside, all the people in that church were there, but they could not leave. An awareness of the presence of God had come on that place. They could not leave. Not only that, but in that late hour of the night three hundred more had gathered with a hunger for God. Not realizing what had happened, Camp-bell went to a police station and there were three hundred people from the surrounding villages that had gathered. They were desperate for

God, and they had heard that there was a godly con-able at this police station. Campbell went there and found three hundred people on their knees in the police station crying out for mercy to God.

I'm not talking about human genius or human eloquence or human personality. I'm talking about God. People were on their knees in the police station, and they didn't care who saw them. They didn't care who was around. The only thing they cared about was that there was an awareness of God and they wanted to get saved. They were crying out for mercy and looking for anybody who could tell them where God was. A ten day revival and evangelistic tour turned into three years, day and night, of people flocking to churches not only in Lewis but in all the cities round-about. Churches were filled from the evening until five and six the next morning. People hungry for God were crying out, looking for answers and revival beyond anything that man can manipulate.

The Bible says God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can even ask or think. Have faith in God. That isn't some kind of cliché, it isn't some kind of formula. It is talking about laying hold of God in prayer and exercising your faith by getting on your face before God, personally, privately, corporately, and as an assembly, until God does something that you and I cannot do.



## *Sermon*

### **MYSTERIES OF GOD – IMPARTATION OF LIFE**

by Wayman Mitchell

It is very easy for you and I to get the idea that we can build churches by mechanics. If we can just learn the correct technique, the right method, and get a large city, there will be no limit to what we can accomplish. We have the idea that the Kingdom of God is a mystery. There are many enigmas involved with it. Someone has interpreted the word "mystery," as it is used in scripture, to mean, "that which previously was not known, now openly declared and made known by God." Now that is one interpretation of the word mystery, but it doesn't exhaust the terminology. Going beyond that we have to be careful that we do not remove the mysterious or unseen working of God in bringing the Kingdom to expression and fulfillment. Though, we do understand that the Kingdom of God has many facets that were previously hidden, but unto the church have been demonstrated and made known. There are many things in the Kingdom of God that are unseen. We do not understand them because they will not compute. Two and two do not make four in the kingdom of God because God is at work and God is God.

There are three simple principles of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God in I Corinthians 2:1-12. *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before*

*the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."*

### **IMPARTATION**

The first principle I would like to examine with you in the mystery of the Kingdom of God is the principle of impartation. We practice, we know and we understand some of the processes, but we do not fully comprehend this tremendous principle. It is a mystery; a powerful secret of the Kingdom of God and a spiritual phenomena. In the book of Numbers we read these words, "and the Lord God took the spirit that was upon Moses and gave it unto the seventy elders and it came to pass that when the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied and did not cease." Something transpired that day that was not seen by the eye of man but was examined by its effects. The man of God was taken by God and by a process that we do not understand because it is sovereign unto God alone. It was imparted unto those seventy elders including Eldad and Medad who were not with them.

We have the story of Elisha and Elijah. In this story Elisha cried out and said, "What I desire is a double portion of the Spirit that is upon you." You know the story of how Elijah was caught up to Heaven and as the mantle fell back the Spirit of God came upon Elisha, and according to his desire a double portion of that Spirit was imparted unto him. We do not understand that, we simply know that it transpired and we accept it as in the word of God. We're talking about a transferral of grace. In the Kingdom of God somehow, as we live for God, we are filled with the Holy Spirit, so that

what we are, we confer, and we impart. Whatever you are as a Christian you are imparting to others.

The Bible tells us about Joshua and Caleb. These two men did not have a spirit like the other ten spies: they had another spirit. These men were moving towards their destiny in God. These men imparted what they were. Joseph brought his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh before Jacob for a blessing. Jacob was old and his sight had gone from his eyes. He was still alive, but he could not discern Ephraim and Manasseh. Joseph said, "I want you to put a blessing upon them." The eldest would be the one to receive the right hand, which was superior blessing, and the younger, the left. As the old man sat in the presence of God, the Spirit that was within him that had the power to confer grace and to transmit spiritual destiny began to work. His hands crossed and as he began to give the blessing Joseph said, "No father, you've got the wrong one. The youngest is in the place where the oldest should be." Jacob said, "I know it my son." But he went ahead and crossed his hands and he conferred spiritual grace. This is a spiritual phenomena; about a principle of the Kingdom of God. The secret of discipleship lies in this very thing. Discipleship is far more than simply reading a book; it is something more than attending a conference and getting some methodologies. I'm talking about a mystery of God. I'm talking about a spiritual impartation.

In the book of Romans, Paul says, "I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift to the end so that you may be established." Now I understand all of the razzmatazz whereby this scripture has been perverted. However, we needn't be afraid of the tremendous truth that Paul is talking about. He's talking about that phenomenon in the Kingdom which occurs when you and I impart what we are. The secret of the Kingdom of God, the mystery of the Kingdom of God, the secret of making disciples is in spiritual impartation. Paul says, "We were willing to have imparted unto you our own souls." What we're involved in is more than a method. What you and I are involved in is more than a system. We're involved in a contagion. We're involved in an infection of soul and spirit, and what we are, we impart to others. If you keep coming,-you're going to catch it.

A spiritual impartation is not peculiar to this present revival that you and I have enjoyed. We have seen it in times past. In the early fifties in the movement which finally became known as the "latter rain," a spiritual infection and contagion began to spread across America and around the world. There were men and women who were infected by the contagion of the Spirit of God and began to get a burden for souls. They began to go out into the highways and the hedges. It was more than a methodology; Jesus breathed upon them. As He breathed upon them, He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," He was not going through an empty ritual. He was actually conferring upon them a spiritual grace.

Hebrews says, "His ministers are to be a flame of fire, His angels are ministering spirits to them that are to be heirs of salvation." The Bible also says, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire and it sat upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Something happened and the descriptive words of prophecy came to pass. There was a contagion that caused them to know that what they were involved in was going to be a raging inferno. They were going to start a conflagration that was to spread around the world and set fire to the souls of men.

My wife and I were flying out to Australia last November to minister for Brother and Sister Johnson. As we began to fly over the Los Angeles basin, it was turning to dusk. The Pilot announced over the loudspeakers that the terrible fires that had been burning in that region were visible from the windows. You could look out both sides of the windows and for as far as we could see (it was probably thirty to forty miles), there were fires burning. They were out of control, consuming brush and houses. It was a raging infer-no and one spark was igniting another. Here is the exact principle that I'm talking about. The Kingdom of God is based on a spiritual impartation and discipleship is the secret. Discipleship is far more profound than any kind of book that you can read, it is more than a system. It is far more profound than any kind of seminar that you can attend. There is a Spirit to discipleship and that Spirit consists of a burden to help other people come to ministry and to set them on fire for world evangelism. It is a Spirit that is imparted from heart to heart.

## ***FORMATION***

Secondly I want to examine with you for a moment a second principle of the mystery, and that is the mystery of formation. There are two common methods of developing workers that are held in practice. One is delegating, whereby you appoint a certain group of people and that group of people enlist other people, and they enlist other people, and then they enlist other people. This is the delegative form which it is hoped will bring to pass the shaping and training of workers and bring them to formation.

The second method that is used is the informative method. That method says that if we can get them to enough classes, if we can get them to listen to enough teachings, then we will shape and form their lives.

These two methods are commonly practiced. These mistakes are made in the church world to a great extent, and this is why the world is not evangelized today. The Kingdom is propagated by formation, and not by delegation or information.

Jesus came to the Disciples and said, "Come, follow me." What he was literally saying was "Come with me, walk with me, and delight in me." In the book of Matthew it says, "He ordained twelve that they should be with Him." "Follow me," is a tremendous term. In the Greek the word that is used for "followers and follow" is the word "mimetes." It is a word that means "to imitate." You see, you and I are not good at taking orders, but we are very good at imitating others.

I was astounded when I came back into the Prescott church and saw how many were wearing mustaches. It's called "mustache power." Now you didn't notice it because you've been here all the time, but to an outsider who comes back in and suddenly sees that all the disciples are sporting mustaches, it's astounding. Their pastor has a mustache so they grow a mustache. That's all right, in Australia they're pulling their hair above their ears, and shaving off their mustaches.

Now, what we're talking about is a powerful principle, and that principle is 'formation'. It is no easy task. It is not a quick process. It is no magic formula. You can't go to some conference and immediately have formation. We are talking about time, example, association, and delegation. All of these

principles are at work in the process of formation. It's not like punching coins into a pop machine and getting a can. That is not the method of formation I'm talking about. The Book of Acts says, "They marveled because these men were ignorant, unlearned men." In the expression of these men's lives was the expression of that hated Nazarene. These men observed their lives and saw the boldness of Peter and John, and they took knowledge that they had been with Jesus. What they saw, to their astonishment, was that the life of Jesus was being expressed through these two men. The power was in the association that they had with him.

We must have an example if there is going to be a formation of character. In Luke 6:40 Jesus said, "That every disciple when fully formed will be like his master," or his teacher. Thus you will never raise disciples above your level. If you do not pray, they do not pray. If you do not give, they do not give. If you are not faithful, they will not be faithful. If you are not prompt they will not be prompt. If you are not spiritual, they will not be spiritual. All the qualities that you detest in your disciples are probably a reflection of yourself.

I've known many people through the years who have said to me "Pastor, I believe in what God is doing. I'm going to go back into my church and I'm going to get my preacher revived." Well, I've got news for you: that principle is wrong. It is the business of preachers to revive, and if a preacher is not revived there will be no revival. This is true because in the Kingdom of God the principle of formation is that the congregation takes on the personality of the pastor. You see, formation has to do with an example which is consistent over a period of time. There are no short-cuts and no mass production. This is what Bible Schools are all about. Bible Schools are an attempt to "beat the rap" and to put God in a box. They are also an attempt to produce workers quickly. You can't mass produce disciples. They must be formed. Formation takes time. There is no gimmick you can use. Time must pass during the formation of a disciple.

Through the years I've seen people try to form others with delegation. In the appointment of the moment they are going to put someone into a position of responsibility and as they put them in this position they have never been formed to meet, they cannot succeed. You see, delegation is a

process of beginning small, and as the duties are discharged, the forming process transpires in the character by correction, re-delegation, discipline, motivation and by redirection. The process that transpires in delegation can never work by a momentary whim. You and I are involved in the principle of formation.

Last September Jack Harris and I were in Singapore. We spent two and half days there to survey the city. We were passing through going to Spain and we went out to the outskirts of Singapore to the Rangoon Gardens where we happened to catch an orchid show. There were hundreds of gorgeous orchids on display. This was an astounding show. While we were viewing these flowers we noticed that there were orchids of every shape, size, color and leaf formation. My memory was triggered back to something I had read some time ago on the forming of orchids. Orchids are not formed in a moment of time, but orchids, if I remember correctly, are formed sometimes over many years of careful breeding, by cross-pollination in a guarded environment. A breeder will work to get the effects that he wants, and over a long period of time there comes great variety of color and texture. As I saw these orchids I thought about the formative process, and how people are formed into disciples. They are formed over a period of time, by association, example, and by delegation. This is not an immediate process.

Many of these orchids were prize winning flowers. I was looking at the end result and I realized that you and I affect the end result of the product we see before our eyes at this conference. People are the direct result of the contact that is made with their lives. You and I are the product of those who have ministered to us and have affected our lives. The people who are in our congregations are the end result of the direct contact and cross-pollination process in ministry which has been given them to shape and to form their characters. Pastor, this is why you and I must not insulate ourselves from our people. We must realize that if we are simply part of a religious institution where there is no contact, there will be no cross pollination to the people to affect their lives. This is why if you insulate yourselves from your people, you are robbing them of one of the absolute necessities of the formation of a disciple. God has designed this relationship

in a congregation to be the ministry that touches their lives and effects the end results of formation.

As we look into the Word of God we need to understand that we can build great institutions by organization and that we can build great religious assemblies by many methods and many plans. The pyramid system, the Amway system, the super sales processes that sell the sizzle instead of the steak are just a few plans among hundreds. However, disciples are formed by contact. No Bible school, religious institution, plan or method can bring your disciples to your vision. It must be done personally. You must touch their lives and as you touch their lives, you are able to form and shape them. This does not mean we do not do things in an orderly fashion or that we do not have a strategy; but it does mean that those things are insufficient.

### ***THE LIFE OF GOD***

The key to the Kingdom of God is the life of God. The Bible says, "That life was the light of men." A tree cannot be organized. It has life. All that tree needs is light and water and a place to grow. It will grow genetically and bring forth fruit. You do not have to organize it or sit down every day and look at it and say, "Well, let's see what are we going to do about this tree today." There is a life process given by God and set down in the book of Mark 4:26-29.

*"So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."*

When I was a kid, I'd go out and put a seed into the ground, water it, hover over it, and pretty soon, up through the soil would come a sprout. I didn't know how it worked, but I just knew it worked. I used to have a bunch of Banty hens. Banty chickens are notorious. They don't care about hen houses at all. They are only looking for haystacks and woodpiles to hide



in when they lay their eggs. I was a very resourceful young lad, and I used to seek out those Banties to see where they were laying their eggs. Once in a while, when a little chicky was pecking on the shell I'd see if I could help it along a bit, and I marveled at the process of life. I didn't understand it, but I did know that in the process of time, out of those eggs would come a little chicky. Pretty soon, sure enough it was running around with its momma. I didn't understand it. It was life. You and I need to understand that life is the important principle. The nurturing of life is the secret to the growth of any church, regardless of the methodology that you use. What you must do is to find out how to release life and how to nurture that life until it brings forth fruit because life is one of the secrets of the Kingdom of God. The Word of God is living and powerful. Wherever the Word of God is spoken with anointing, there is life. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."

Give me ignorant, floor-stomping young men and women. It would be hilarious if you could step into the church in Perth, West Australia. The congregation whistles, gives catcalls, rattles the chairs, stomps their feet; they enjoy church immensely. They are alive with Holy Spirit life. I've been in many programs where everything was in its place and everybody was impeccably dressed. The program went through perfectly as a marvelous execution of organization, and I sat there struggling to keep my eyes open. There was nothing happening. We know that life involves Jesus Christ because in Him is life and that life is the light of men. Wherever Jesus Christ is exalted; wherever He is presented as the answer to human need; wherever He is faithfully released among the people, life will be flowing. This is because the mere mention of the name of Jesus Christ begins to quicken the heart and the soul of men and women. When we talk about Jesus as the altogether lovely King of Kings and Lord of Lords, something inside humanity comes alive. If you want to follow the laws of life, it means that you just simply take care of that life process and nurture it.

Imagine a shepherd out on the hillside. He has two hundred sheep, but he wants a thousand. He says "A thousand sheep, that's what I want. I'm going to get me a thousand. A thousand is what I want." He spends his time, day by day saying, "A thousand is what want. A thousand is what I want," while the little lambs are dying. The shepherd has a system that says,

"Imagine a thousand, and you're going to have a thousand." You want sheep? Just get you some ewes and some rams and turn them loose and you'll get some little lambs. If you'll take care of those little lambs, those old rams and those ewes, one day you may have a thousand. However, if you don't take care of those little lambs, you will never have a thousand. You can forget about it! The secret of the mystery of the Kingdom of God is the nurturing of life.

We have total dependence upon God. Somehow, in the Kingdom of God, there is a releasing of life in the Holy Ghost, in the Word of God, and in the preaching of Jesus Christ. The answer to all men's needs is the One who loves us beyond all imagination. When that truth is released, life will come forth. It does not matter what kind of a building you have. It doesn't matter what kind of a program you have. Unless you're going to have that truth and somehow get it released, you're not going to have life.

Jack Harris and I went down to San Antonio last April, and it was hilarious. That was the most fun I've had in a long time. I mean that place was rockin'. They didn't have the slightest idea what they were doing. Brother Juan got up for awhile and he led them into the guitar stomping. Then Freddy got up and talked. Then Juan got back up and talked for a while. Somebody else did something else, and I looked over at Jack Harris. He was looking at his watch, worrying, fretting and stewing. I just cackled! When they got ready, they turned it over to us. Now, they are probably doing thirty or forty things wrong. However, they didn't know it. I mean they were having a 'meriachi' Holy Ghost hallelujah break-down, and the church was packed wall-to-wall. We all had a ball because life was in that congregation.

My nature functions by the clock. I am a militant man when it comes to time. I want to start singing at 7:30. I want to begin the service when it comes 8:00. I want to turn it right over to the preacher when it comes time. Not those fellows, they are just having church! They are having a ball! They may start at 7:30; they may not start till 8:00 or 8:30, and when they get ready for you to preach they call you, so there is nothing to do but just relax because only an idiot would step in there and not know that those folks are alive. I mean, they are alive!

The secret of the Kingdom of God is the communication of life. Jesus stood and cried that great last day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a fountain springing up to everlasting life; him that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water!" Jesus said, "When you receive my Spirit, out of you is going to come something that touches life and brings life." The Kingdom of God is for communication of life. However you do that or however you perform that will rest with you, but it is the communication of life.

### ***DEATH TO SELF***

John 12:24 says, "*Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but and if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.*" There is only one way to receive life. We receive life by dying to ourselves. We communicate life by giving of ourselves. I don't care what kind of programs you have, preacher. You can have the hottest music group in town, you can have the most elaborate process of organization. You can have the degrees of Ph.D., D.D., or B.O. and all the rest, but there is only one way to get life and that's death to self. How we would like to escape that! That means that self will only have one way to communicate life, and that is the giving of self. If you want a ministry, it does not matter what kind of building you are in or where you are located. There is nothing wrong with a good building or a good location, but if you want the secret of the Kingdom of God you have to receive life. There is only one place to get it and that is through death to self. There is only one way to give it and that is through communicating of self. You cannot live by the indulgence of your own life and communicate life to others. Wherever you see a revival and a people being changed; wherever you see genuine conversion of people being born again, and you see a genuine transformation in life, you're seeing the impartation of life.

The world is filled with religions. The world is filled with churches that call themselves Christians. The world is filled with programs and all kinds of gimmicks, but there is only one way to communicate life and that is through death to self and the giving of self. Jesus did not start any centers

of learning. He did not start any Bible schools. He started discipleship which was the communication of life. You cannot give away something that you do not possess. There is no classroom that can give away what I am talking about. We want fruit without dying, but there is only one way to get the fruit and that is through the giving of self.

"God, give me something that will flow out of my life and touch somebody's need. God, give me something through which some sinful man and some sinful woman will feel life touching them."

You see, you give your life when you lay down your will to God's will.

This is a poem that I clipped out to read. It is a poem of challenge. It says:

For us swords drawn,  
up to the gates of Heaven.  
Oh, may no cowards spirit  
Seek to leaven the warrior code.  
The calling that is ours,  
forbid that we should sheath our sword in flowers.  
Swords drawn, swords drawn  
Up to the gates of Heaven  
For us swords drawn  
Up to the gates of Heaven.  
Captain beloved, battle wounds were thine.  
Let me not wonder if some hurt be mine.  
Rather my Lord let my wonder be,  
that I may share a battle wound with thee.

## *NUGGETS*

Here are some random thoughts that can be of possible benefit to the pioneering pastor. They are in no special order, but form a kind of checklist of things to make sure that we, as workers, are doing right.

- Don't be negative with the people who are there, just because you're mad at those who didn't show up.
- Work is the key to the beginning of a church.
- Make everything count.
- Rebellion destroys fruitfulness.
- Remember, you aren't doing them a favor by letting them come. You are there to meet needs.
- Don't just get people saved. Tie them into your church.
- Don't allow the luxury of discouragement.
- Don't neglect your wife. She's under as much pressure as you are. Your prayers are directly related to her happiness.
- Let your people see churches doing better and worse than yours.
- Don't do something over and over if it doesn't work.
- Be careful about just starting something. It's much easier to get something going than it is to shut it down.
- Genetics are everything in reproduction. You get what you start with. It's hard to build a committed core of people, but it must be done since that is the pattern for the future growth of the church.
- Don't develop a habit of getting people to respond to you verbally during a sermon just to make you feel good. The amount of noise they make is no gauge of how effective the message is.
- At the first, you are better off to preach short and keep it interesting than to be long-winded and boring. Do you really have that much to say? Some days people are just tired and irritable and, because of that, the services aren't that exciting. This seldom

affects a church but can in a small one. Don't be upset; next service they'll be fine.

- Don't get hung up on noise, numbers or nickels.
- Your people, as a rule, are not nearly as affected by the size of the crowd, problems, or growth as you are. If you make a big deal out of things, they will too. If you act like everything's fine, they'll believe it is.
- If you're not committed, your people won't be committed.
- There is an old law of public speaking: if you have a good beginning and a good ending, you can get away with a less than thrilling middle.
- Have patience. Remember how long it took you to tie in and start to live clean. Most people think that if they come back in a week they're really pushing it. The pastor can get suicidal if they miss the next service.
- If you believe in something it will work.
- There must be more coming in than going out. Have a plan.
- Are you doing something? Discouragement is an attack of the devil.
- Prayer is your most effective spiritual weapon. We need to not just exist, but succeed.
- There is great power in fellowship and godly counsel. You can't just wait for it to come to you; you must seek it.
- We can't create a super church, but we can create super character.
- Nobody wins them all.
- The key is not techniques, but heart.
- Our dignity is not in how fast our church grows, but in who we know: Jesus.
- Don't be ashamed to take in offering.

- Do something; most of the great men in the Bible were those who risked failure, moving in faith into the unseen. God will let you know if it's a bad idea.
- Evangelism is everything in the beginning work.
- Dominion is linked to the flesh being chained to obey the spirit. We must live a disciplined life. Linked to this is keeping Satan out of our thought life to give God a platform to speak to us from.
- Paul didn't worry about how big his church was, he just did the best he could where ever he was.
- Wasted time is the cancer of the ministry. This is not talking about taking a day off, but letting a day just slip by with nothing accomplished.
- Beware of the mentality that says "nothing works here." Something will work, and we need to fear the mentality of a murmurer.
- There is no one key; there are a number of keys. We need a multitude of outreaches in order to stir a city.
- What difference would it make if you just spoke to a few people each day? How much difference would some private prayer make? Just a little more effort might go a long way.
- Always remember it's a miracle when anyone comes in and commits themselves to a real church. You can't do this, only God can.
- We need to hold to our foundations. We're not fulfilling our will, but God's.
- Mistakes will only stop you if you won't face them, repent and change.
- There are no easy cities.
- The mark of revival is worship. A church becomes powerful when a real and genuine praise is established. This is not just noise or mimicking, but a tangible presence of God.

- A pastor is not called to become a professional Christian, but a honest, concerned person.
- When you stop sowing ahead, there will soon arrive a dead spot in the harvest where no crop will be ripe to harvest.
- Many people leave the church to go to another church, not because they have been ripped off, but because they met another pastor who was happy to have them, and showed it.
- Any aspiring pastor or actual minister needs to keep out of debt so he can respond to the will of God.
- At around one year most pastors become discouraged at the development of their people. This is a common problem because it's hard to change, but they will change. Hang in there and give them hope.
- Discipline is not something that can be done in every service.
- In the middle of problems in the church the best thing is usually not to pull out your heavy guns and blast them, but rise above the problems and preach on vision. The problem will be like a sore, much too tender to be poked at.
- Most people just need time to work out their problems.
- The extra time that a new pastor has can well be spent in study, laying up a reservoir of information for the future.
- Pioneering is birthing, and birthing means pain and struggle.
- Don't be surprised if pastoring is the hardest job you've ever done.
- Don't counsel people from other churches.
- We need to appreciate what God has given. Successful pastors look out at their congregations, who are no better than anyone else's, but they see possibilities, not problems, and their people feel that and rise toward his expectation over time.
- View the ministry not as a job or position of management, but as an adventure.



- Put dignity on people.
- Long term stability of the church lays with new converts birthed in that church and in strong families.
- There are two types of people in every church, goers and senders. Not everyone will go.
- Take people to other churches in the fellowship and infect them with praise and worship.
- As of early 1984, two hundred men have gone out and started churches. If they can do it, you can too.
- "You can look at obstacles as stumbling blocks or stepping stones." E.V. Hill
- "Crisis is where people learn to trust you and God." Ron Jones
- "Are you a butcher or a surgeon?" Hank Houghton abrasiveness is what hurts most young pastors.
- You need to be militant and still use wisdom.
- The best time to bring in an evangelist is not usually when you first open, but later, when you have some people to work with. Few people look like good converts at first.
- It does not help the home church for you to save money by doing nothing. What helps is for you to spend money wisely. Do things cheaply, but well. Be creative.
- One big key is being prepared.
- "If you just meet peoples' needs you'll never have a building big enough to hold them." Wayman Mitchell
- "You can't push revival, you can only push obedience." Ron Jones
- "Success or failure hinges on what a husband and wife say around the table and in bed late at night, not what a preacher says in the pulpit." Wayman Mitchell
- We are not called to build ourselves a name, but to be earth-fillers.

- Jay Kirby's advice to new pastors, "Listen to your pastor, it will save you a lot of heartbreak."
- "Don't wait for something to turn up. Go and turn some-thing up."  
D.L. Moody
- "Every healthy body needs a healthy elimination." Wayman Mitchell
- Plant yourself where you are. We don't know the future, but we do know what God wants today.
- Plain old common sense will take you a long way in the will of God.
- Three keys to building a congregation: avoid conflict, win victory in money, and ability to pick men.
- To break through a barrier often requires greater discipline.
- A church is happy when it's looking outward at it's task, not inward at itself.
- You need a faith that's bigger than yourself.
- We want a blue print of the future, but God gives us a call.
- The power of a sermon often lies in it's illustrations.
- You need to hear what God is saying for your city.
- Church growth experts identify three things in a growing church: a positive attitude, leadership, and outreach.
- It's easier to get a bone from a dog by giving him another with more meat, then by taking away the bone he has. In dealing with people, give them Jesus and they'll drop their old bones of sin and religion.
- Every time you meet people you can't be trying to get something out of them.
- We aren't enforcers of the truth, but declarers.
- In the early days the discipline needs to be with the pastor, not forced on the people.
- Money has powerful spiritual impact. What we do with it and how we use it determines our future.

- Men are attracted by vision and a cause.
- "What we need is not so much 'faith,' but the absence of unbelief, which limits God." Ron Jones
- "The problem with living sacrifices is they have a tendency to get up off the altar." Anonymous
- "If I was to start a church, I'd take twelve men and pour my life into them." Billy Graham
- "The church is a reflection of the pastor." Jack Harris
- "God is more concerned with the worker than the work." Wayman Mitchell
- "The problem most young pastors have is keeping the wrong people out of power and getting the right people in." Dr. Rawlings
- "Make them cry and make them laugh." Walt Disney
- "All ministry is the result of faithfulness." Wayman Mitchell
- "If you can't be good, be loud and make it hard for them to fall asleep." Ron Simpkins
- "The reason that churches don't grow is, the pastor is the Kingpin, and he doesn't release and motivate people, but always pulls their strings." Wayman Mitchell
- "When God finds an impossible task, he finds an impossible man and breaks him." Redpath
- "A healthy congregation will spontaneously grow unless you stop them. Out of the healthy life of a congregation people get ex-cited and inspired to work." Wayman Mitchell
- "You have to gather an audience before you make disciples." Wayman Mitchell
- "What keeps us right with God is an attitude that says, "What can I do to help?" When I see a need in a country or a city I ask first, 'God, do you want me to go?' If He says no then I ask, 'What can I do to help?'" Wayman Mitchell



## APPENDIX

### CHURCH PLANTING AND PROVERBS

The Bible is the hand book of the aspiring pastor, but of all the books in the Word of God, Proverbs seems to speak the most directly to the pioneering pastor. The following are some verses that might be of help.

*Proverbs: 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

*2:1-5 “ My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.*

*3:3-4 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.*

*3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

*4:7-8 Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.*

*4:23-26 Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.*

*5:12-14 You will say how I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the bring of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.*

6:24-25 *Keep you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.*

8:13 *To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.*

8:33 *Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. (King James).*

9:9 *Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.*

10:4-5 *Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son. (Especially since winter storms kill outreaches.)*

10:8 *The wise in heart accepts commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.*

10:17 *He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.*

10:24 *... what the righteous desires will be granted.*

10:26 *As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those (pastors) who send him.*

11:1-3 *The Lord abhors dishonest scales (gold sheets), but accurate weights are his delight. When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.*

11:14 *For lack of guidance a nation (church) falls, but many advisers make victory sure.*

11:15 *He who puts up security (with support money) for another will surely suffer . . . Revised Mitchell*

11:24-25 *One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*

11:30 *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.*

12:1 *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.*

12:9 *Better to be a nobody and (not pastor) . . . than pretend to be somebody and have no food.*

12:11 *He who works his land (city) will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.*

12:14 *From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him.*

12:15 *The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.*

12:27 *The lazy man does not roast his game (follow-up on converts) but the diligent man prizes his possessions.*

13:1 *A wise son heeds his (spiritual) father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.*

13:3-4 *He who guards his lips guards his soul, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin. The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desire of the diligent are fully satisfied.*

13:7 *There is that maketh himself rich (denominations), yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. (KJV)*

13:11 *Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.*

13:20 *He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.*

13:24 *He who spares the rod hates his (spiritual) son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.*

14:4 *Where there is no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest. (Simpkins paraphrase - a good church has also got some poop to shovel.)*

14:23 *All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.*

14:28 *A large (congregation) is a (pastors) glory, but without subjects a (pioneer pastor) is ruined.*

14:30 *A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.*

15:1 *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

15:10 *Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; (and chases religious fantasies) he who hates correction will die.*

15:17 *Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fatted calf with hatred.*

15:21-22 *Folly delights a man who lacks judgment, but a man of understanding keeps a straight course. Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.*

15:27 *A greedy man brings trouble to his family . . .*

15:30 *A cheerful look brings joy to the (visitors) heart, and good news gives health to the (mother church.)*

15:33 *The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.*

16:3 *Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.*

16:5 *The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.*

16:8 *Better a little with righteousness than a T.V. program with injustice. (Revised Simpkins Version = R.S.V.)?*

16:9 *In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.*

16:16 *How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver!*



16:18-21 *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the lowly than to share the plunder with the proud. Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction.*

16:23 *A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.*

16:26 *The (pioneer pastor's) appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.*

16:33 *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.*

17:3 *The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.*

17:8 *A bribe (love offering, missionary offering) is a charm to the one who gives it; wherever he turns, he succeeds.*

17:10 *A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.*

17:17 *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

17:21 *To have a fool for a son (disciple) brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool.*

18:9 *One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.*

18:16 *A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers him into the presence of the great.*

18:22 *He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.*

18:24 *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. (KJV)*

19:2-3 *It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way. A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.*

19:11 *A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is his glory to overlook an offence.*

19:14 *Houses and wealth are inherited from (the mother church) but a prudent wife is from the Lord.*

19:19-23 *A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again. Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise. Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. What a man desires if unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar. The fear of the Lord lead to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.*

19:27 *Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.*

20:2-4 *A king's (overseeing pastor's) wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life. It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.*

20:6 *Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?*

20:20 *If a man curses his (pastor and mother church) his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.*

20:21 *An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.*

21:2 *All a man's ways seem right to him, but the Lord weighs the heart.*

21:24 *The proud and arrogant man "Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overwhelming pride.*

22:1 *A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.*

22:4 *Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life.*

22:13 *The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!" or, "I will be murdered in the streets."*

22:29 *Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.*

23:6-7 *Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies; for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. "Eat, drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you.*

23:17 *Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord.*

23:23 *Buy the truth and sell it not; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.*

24:3-4 *By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.*

24:10 *If you falter in time of trouble, how small is your strength!*

24:16 *For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.*

24:21 *Fear the Lord and the (mother-church pastor), my son, and do not join with the rebellious.*

24:33-34 *A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.*

25:11-12 *A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.*

25:14 *Like clouds and wind without rain is a (pastor) who boasts of gifts he does not give.*

25:10 *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. (KJV)*

25:28 *Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.*

26:11-12 *As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

26:17 *Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.*

27:1-2 *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.*

27:6-7 *The kisses of an enemy may be profuse, but faithful are the wounds of a friend. He who is full loathes honey (but empty churches make crummy people look neat).*

27:27 *As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*

27:20-21 *Death and destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man. The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.*

27:23 *Be sure you know the condition of your flocks.*

28:1 *The wicked man flees through no man pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.*

28:13 *He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

28:22-23 *A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him. He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue.*

29:1 *A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed without remedy.*

29:18 *Where there is no vision the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (KJV)*

29:23 *A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.*

29:25 *Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.*

30:8-9 *Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.*

31:30 *Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

## ***BIBLE SCHOOLS***

There is always an interest in the fellowship's rejection of Bible schools as a vehicle for church planting. The following are a few reasons for this:

- Bible schools aren't biblical. They are a medieval institution left over from Catholicism, and are used in imitation of the world.
- Bible schools can't do the job of world evangelism. The world population is growing at a rate of seventy million people a year. That means that every day 194,444 people are added to the population, over and above those who die. The cost of training workers by traditional methods is prohibitive. Even if finances were available, the Bible school method is so slow and inefficient that the church is not even able to keep pace with the rising population, let alone reach the world.
- The Bible school isolates the man of God from practical experience, which is meant to come through the church. For most students, the school begins to take the place of church commitment and worship. This leads to bad habits of discipline and isolates them from the very people they are preparing to minister to.
- All attempts to mass produce disciplines will ultimately fail. Men of God must be handcrafted.
- The requirements of Bible schools eliminate many who God would use. The requirements of money, previous education, and age would have stopped Jesus and the twelve disciples.
- The Bible school system puts the church on a standard of "mind" not "heart," rewarding wrong motives, and creating an elitist mentality of really having paid too high a price to reach the poor.
- Bible schools tend to put those who can't pastor into the role of pastor trainers.
- The system builds into the church a clergy-laity mentality that denies the priesthood of the believer, and develops a mentality that some people need to be really committed and others just need to be saved.

- Bible schools rob the church of the dignity it was meant to have in the preparing of workers and reaching a lost world.
- They violate the indigenous principle.
- Practical experience while pastoring, tied to regular Bible conferences is a more effective use of God's money.
- Bible schools while not evil in themselves are not God's best method.