

**MAYWOOD
MISSIONARY
RETREAT**

At

**Maywood
Christian Camp**

HAMILTON, ALABAMA

May 13-15, 2010

Sponsored by:

**World Evangelism
School of Missions and
Double Springs Church of Christ**

<http://missionaryretreat.net>

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Each missionary in attendance will have at least five minutes to discuss his work. **If your name is not listed to give a report, see Wayne Barrier or Larry Murdock**

What Is the Mission of the Church?

Louis Rushmore

What is the mission of the Lord's church? I always have heard that the mission of the Lord's church is threefold; isn't that what you have always been taught? I have even preached and written that the mission of the church of the Bible is threefold: evangelism, edification and benevolence. However, I was wrong! In the strictest sense, edification and benevolence are not parts of the mission of the church for which Jesus Christ died and over which He is the Head. Does that shock you? Such an assertion may well startle you, but there is no reason for dismay or alarm.

Yet, I would suggest to you that edification, though absolutely necessary for individual Christians and congregations to pursue for themselves and for others as well, is no more the mission of the church than worshipping God in His own appointed way is the *mission* of the church. Must we worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24)? Yes, we must if we intend to be pleasing to God, but simply because worshipping God correctly is obligatory does not make it the mission of the church. Likewise, benevolence, surely authorized and obligatory upon both Christians and congregations (2 Corinthians 9:27; Galatians 6:10), is no more the mission of the church than are Christian living and Christian service in general the mission of the church. Many are the requirements of Christianity by which individual Christians and collectives of Christians in congregations and the brotherhood are bound to obey, but these things are not the mission of the Lord's church. Please do not misunderstand me; I am not minimizing Christian worship, Christian living and Christian service in the least.

First, exactly what does the word, "mission" mean? From the dictionary, we learn that "mission" means an "assignment" or "a specific task with which a person or a group is charged" to do. The word "mission" may have additional meanings, too, but this is what we mean when discussing the mission of the church. Inciden-

tally, the word “mission” does not appear in the Bible. Therefore, when talking about the mission of the church, we defer to the dictionary definition and then look to the New Testament, because that is the law of God binding upon humanity today, for references that correspond to the dictionary definition.

Hence, by asking, “What is the mission of the church?” we mean, “What is the **assignment** or **specific task** that the Lord’s church is expected to perform?” In addition, since naturally we are looking to the New Testament for the answer to this question, we understand Who has made this assignment of a specific task to perform. No assignment or task merely assigned by mortals to themselves is satisfactory to be the mission of the churches of Christ. So, the expanded question is, “What is the mission of the church that our Lord Jesus Christ assigned to it?”

To answer this question adequately as to the mission of the Lord’s church, one must first ascertain what the mission of our Lord was while He was on the earth. That’s easy! Summarized, Jesus Christ said of His purpose on earth, “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). In addition, the apostle John wrote by inspiration about the mission of Christ on earth, “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14). Everything written prophetically about the Messiah or recorded regarding His earthly habitation and ministry fits nicely with the realization that our Lord was on a mission to save mankind from sin and its horrible consequences. Hence, the culmination of the ministry of the Son of God was His vicarious sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, thereupon shedding His innocent blood, that the sins of the world could be forgiven.

It would be reasonable to conclude, then, that the mission of His church would conform to the mission of our Lord Himself. That the mission of Jesus Christ and the mission of the church are one in the same mission we know without any doubt whatsoever; we know such is the case because Jesus Christ so informs us through the accounts of divinely inspired historians. Immediately preceding His Ascension, our dear Lord and Savior gave His followers **only one job** or mission to do; we commonly refer to that charge as the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47).

This was not an occasion on which Jesus Christ spoke about correct worship, Christian living or Christian service. Jesus did not pause prior to His Ascension to direct the apostles' attention to sound doctrine. The New Testament is full of various topics, many of them obligatory upon the child of God, that the Christ did not take time to address immediately preceding His Ascension. That does not minimize Christian worship, Christian living, Christian service or Christian doctrine, but it does emphasize the singular job or mission that Jesus Christ assigned His followers to do.

This means that though Christians and congregations may correctly perform Christian worship, but not evangelize the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then they have **not** performed the mission of the Lord's church. Likewise, Christian living may be exemplary and Christian service may be laudable, but failing to evangelize the world, then Christians and churches fail to perform the mission of the church. Christians and congregations may be correct biblically about Christian doctrine, but if they do not evangelize the world with the Gospel, they do not accomplish the mission of the church. Beyond that, nice, comfortable buildings in which to worship, surrounded by manicured lawns and shrubs, ringed by asphalt parking lots do not equate to seeing to the mission of the Lord's church. These niceties allowed to feed from our treasuries through biblical implication and human inference are not necessarily wrong, but they are not a part of the mission of the church that Jesus Christ assigned His followers.

This mission of the church was first seen in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The mission of the church was announced by Jesus Christ prior to His Ascension. The mission of the church was demonstrated and recorded in the Book of Acts for us to emulate in our own lives. How, then, could good students of the Bible overlook the singular task that our Lord assigned to His followers in His final words before returning to heaven? How could contemporary Christians overlook the singular mission of the church in favor of creature comforts within our meetinghouses and otherwise becoming an introverted people, rather than becoming an extroverted throng carrying the Gospel to every nook of our habitation? How can Christians feel a sense of accomplishment in anything, irrespective of how innocent a thing it may be or how noble an under-

taking, even to practicing well Christian worship, living, service and doctrine, without heartily embracing the singular mission of the Lord's church?

What is the divinely assigned mission or task that Jesus expects the church to perform? Evangelism, of course! Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved..." (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus said that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:47).

Okay, now we know that there is a singular mission for the church of the Bible. That mission is but an extension of the mission of Jesus Christ Himself. However, upon whom specifically does the responsibility for performing the mission of the church fall? Have we appointed the mission of the church to be done by the elders that congregations select to lead them? Have we hired the mission of the church to be done by the preachers and evangelists that we financially support? Just who needs to concern himself or herself with doing the mission of the church of the Bible? Can we pragmatically expect denominational persons to do the mission of the church? Does every child of God bear some responsibility for performing the mission of the church? Is the mission of the church being accomplished satisfactorily today? Why not?

Jesus Christ personally and directly first gave the responsibility for evangelizing the world to eleven surviving apostles. Later, a replacement apostle was added (Acts 1:15-26) to the band of disciples to whom Jesus made the charge before His Ascension. Still later, the apostle Paul was given special responsibilities respecting evangelism among non-Jewish people (Acts 26:16-18). So, the apostles of Jesus Christ certainly were responsible for performing the mission of the church, to evangelize the world, but does that responsibility extend to others as well, maybe even to us today?

From 2 Timothy 2:2 we discern that the mission of the church first given to the apostles directly passed on to their coworkers who were not apostles. Even more than that, the mission of the church passed from the apostles to their coworkers and to others as

well who were able to teach others (who were able to teach others and so forth). “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). “These things” would include the mission of the church besides Christian worship, living, service and doctrine. In the same chapter, Paul called upon Timothy to be “apt to teach,” and by extension, all Christians need to strive to be “apt to teach” (2 Timothy 2:24). Teach what? Yes, Christian worship, living, service and doctrine, but evangelism, too.

The early church lagged in preparation of teachers (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-14), and the church today likewise lags in qualified teachers. What do these teachers need to be teaching? Yes, Christian worship, living, service and doctrine, but evangelism, too. Who should these teachers be teaching? Yes, fellow Christians, but non-Christians, too. Now that we know that the church needs qualified teachers and that part of what they should teach includes the Gospel of Jesus Christ (evangelism), who should these teachers be? Well, teachers should be Christians, but which Christians? That’s like asking, based on Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, on which first day of the week ought we to worship God? Every week has a first day! Which Christians ought to teach, namely teach the Gospel of Christ or do evangelism? Every Christian, of course!

It is true that there are different levels of teachers (Ephesians 4:11), and that as members of the body of Christ, we have different responsibilities (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). While it is a grave responsibility to be a teacher (James 3:1), every Christian ought to aspire to teach (2 Timothy 2:24; Hebrews 5:12-14). Surely, every child of God knows at least how one becomes a Christian, and can relate that to others. Surely, every child of God can at least do passive evangelism by leaving Gospel literature in public places (e.g., restrooms, waiting rooms, motels, with gratuities) or arrange for more qualified teachers to teach the Gospel to family members, coworkers, fellow students and neighbors. Surely, every child of God can make evangelism an ever-present part of his or her daily prayers.

Evangelism is the lifeblood of the Lord’s church. Evangelism ought to be the predominate thought in our minds throughout our

waking moments. Nothing is truly more precious than a single soul, according to Jesus (Matthew 16:26), and we ought to order our lives in keeping with that truism. When we do, then and only then will we truly know what the mission of the church is and whose responsibility it is to evangelize the world with the Gospel of Christ. The singular mission of the Lord's church is evangelism, and your primary responsibility and mine is to tell someone about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Works Cited

Merriam-Webster, I. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 10th ed. Springfield, Merriam-Webster, 1993. CD-ROM. Seattle: Logos, 1996.

Schedule of Activities

Thursday – May 13

- 12:00-2:00 PM Arrival, moving into cabins and visiting
- 2:00-2:15 PM Singing led by **Larry Murdock**, Prayer,
Welcome by Wayne Barrier
- 2:15-2:45 PM **Colin McKee**: The Missionary As a
Peacemaker
- 2:45-3:15 PM **James Jones**: “Why Radio”?
- 3:15-3:45 PM Break
- 3:45-4:15 PM **Don Petty**: Cooperating to Evangelize the
Community
- 4:15-4:45 PM Break
- 4:45-5:15 PM **Mission Work Reports and Announcements**:
Wayne Kilpatrick, Jeremy Barrier, Louis
Rushmore, James Lee, others
- 5:15-5:45 PM **Visiting**
- 5:45-7:15 PM **Supper/Visiting**—Wear attire from your mis-
sion work country!
- 7:15-8:00 PM Singing led by **Jeremy Barrier**
Gordon Hogan: Cooperation—Case Study—
Singapore/Malaysia
- 8:00-8:45 PM **Moderator: Betty Choate Ladies Class-**
Mission Antidotes: Jane Hogan, Ellen McKee,
Janet Barrier, Barbara Jones, Sharon Larson,
Sylvia Petty, JoAn Garganus, others

Friday – May 14

- 7:00-8:00 AM **Breakfast**
- 8:00-8:30 AM Singing led by **Gene Gibson**, prayer,
Don Green: When and When Not to Cooperate

- 8:30-9:00 AM **Jody Apple:** To Be Announced
- 9:00-9:30 AM **Break**
- 9:30-10:00 AM **Randal Matheny:** Striving Side by Side
- 10:00- 10:30AM **Mission Work Reports and Announcements:**
Jerry Bates, Joey Barrier, others
- 10:30-11:00 AM **Break**
- 11:00-11:30 AM **Robert Martin** Sharing Together in Mission
Work
- 11:30-12:00 PM **Visiting**
- 12:00-2:00 PM Lunch, resting, visiting
- 2:00-2:45 PM Singing by **Loy Mitchell,**
Ronnie Crocker Prison Evangelism
- 2:45-3:15 PM **Mission Work Reports and Announcements**
—Don Norwood, Mike Brooks, others
- 3:15-3:45 PM **Break**
- 3:45-4:15 PM To Be Announced
- 4:15-4:45 PM **Don Posey:** Church Relations ~ A Church
Perspective
- 4:45-5:15 PM **Mission Work Reports and Announcements**
—Wayne Barrier, others
- 5:15-5:30 PM **Visiting**
- 5:30-7:00 PM **Supper, visiting**—Wear attire from your
mission work country!
- 7:00-7:45 PM Singing led by **Joey Barrier,** prayer
Loy Mitchell Paul Champion of Evangelism
- 8:00-8:30 PM Entertainment by *The Barriers*

Saturday – May 15

- 6:00-7:30 AM Breakfast at your leisure
- 7:30-8:00 AM Check out of cabins

The Peacemaking Missionary

Colin McKee

This lesson is excerpted from Ken Sande's book, *The Peacemaker*. I think the ideas in his book are apropos for missionaries and for Christians in general. He elucidates principles that will stand us in good in our relationships with fellow workers in whatever realm.

Introduction:

A. God is concerned with PEACE.

1. He is the God of peace (Romans 15:33; Philippians 4:9).
2. Peace is one of His greatest blessings (Galatians 6:16; Psalm 119:165).
3. He commands us to seek peace (Romans 14:19; Colosians 3:15).
4. His people salute each other with "peace" (Jude 6:23; Luke. 24:36; 2 Thessalonians 3:16).

B. There are three dimensions of peace.

1. With God - forgiveness of sins and fellowship.
2. With others - genuine harmony, understanding and good will.
3. With self-contentment, tranquility, security as by product of righteousness.

I. Conflict will occur, but let us have peace (James 3:13-18).

A. Three views of conflict.

1. A hazard we would rather avoid.
2. An obstacle that must be quickly conquered.
3. An opportunity to solve a common problem in a way to glorify God.

B. Three responses to conflict.

1. Escape. The focus is on Me. More interested in avoiding conflict than resolving it. A Christian may think that all conflict is wrong or that Christians should always agree, so may deny, or pretend that the conflict doesn't

exist. One may run away by changing jobs, churches, or quitting a job, or leaving a relationship.

2. Attack. The focus is on YOU. More interested in winning the conflict than preserving the relationship. May resort to assault either verbal or physical, may opt for litigation.
3. Conciliation. The focus is on US. We find mutually agreeable solutions. On a personal level, we may overlook a minor offense, we may discuss an offense with the other party, or we may negotiate in a bargaining process. On an assisted level we may opt for mediation, arbitration, or church involvement.

We should seek peace and unity but not when there is a threat of compromise of the truth. We should learn to work with and accept people who see things differently.

II. There is opportunity even in conflict.

- A. Opportunity to serve like Christ. We can be merciful for God has been to us. We can carry burdens as Paul exhorted (Galatians 6:2). We can encourage others to trust in God.
- B. Opportunity to be more like Christ. Not to become more comfortable, happy. We can be reminded of our own weaknesses and learn to depend more on Him. We can learn that adversity builds character (James 1).
- C. God may be using a conflict for His purposes.
 1. He may remove the conflict after its purpose is accomplished
 2. He may leave it & give strength to handle (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).
 3. We may not recognize God's involvement until later (Psalms 37).
 4. Joseph endured great conflict for God's purpose
 5. Hebrews 12:7-11 applies to conflict also.

III. Paul's formula to address conflict (Philippians 4:2-9, Five Principles).

- A. Rejoice in the Lord (v. 4). We keep God in our focus even in conflict. We should not allow conflict to cause us to forget our great salvation. We can rejoice in the comfort and strength of God's Word.

- B. Let our gentleness be known to all (v. 5). The root word means forbearing, large hearted, lenient, moderate. It is the opposite of irritability, rudeness, abrasiveness. It makes one nice instead of nasty. It reflects Christ in our lives. “A soft answer turns away wrath...”
- C. Replace anxiety with prayer (v 6). To be anxious is to be laden with cares and troubles, squeezed, under pressure. Such feelings multiply in conflict. We need to recall and dwell on God’s great works and goodness and his providential care for us (Psalm 18).
- D. See things as they really are (v 8). Not virtual reality, but actual reality. Don’t focus only on offender’s negative points (Proverbs 11:27). Strive for a balanced view of the other person. Think of what will be lost if the differences are not settled.
- E. Practice what you have learned (v 9). Paul had dealt with conflict (Acts 16:16ff).

IV. Count the cost of conflict.

- A. It may cost much in wasted time and energy expended for nothing good. It may drain one emotionally, and maybe financially. A relationship may be further damaged if the conflict is prolonged. The name of God may be negatively impacted by our actions. Our families may suffer from the bitterness in which I am embroiled.

V. Forget My Rights.

- A. I may want to invoke justice for my rights or what I deem to be right or fair. I must be sure that my rights are approved by heaven, and not just my wants. Mercy may be the best course to pursue like Abraham in his conflict with Lot. I should ask, “Will exercising my rights please God? Will it advance His kingdom? Will it benefit others? Is it essential to my well being?”

Quote: p. 82 bottom

VI. Questions to consider.

- A. In talking about this conflict, have I used gossip, falsehood, slander, or hateful or harmful words? Have I been a backbiter?

- B. Am I guilty of uncontrolled anger, bitterness, malice, stubbornness or have I withheld mercy and forgiveness?
- C. Have I been influenced by pride, love of money, wanting my own good things too much?

VII. Avoid these common mistakes.

- A. "I'm sorry IF I have done anything to upset you."
- B. " PERHAPS I was wrong..."
- C. " I GUESS I was wrong for saying those things."
- D. " I shouldn't have lost my temper, but I was PROVOKED."
- E. " I'm sorry I was ugly, but YOU upset me..."
- F. "I should have been calm, but HE asked for it..."
- G. "I was wrong, but so were YOU."

“Why Radio?”

James E. Jones

INTRODUCTION

1. Welcome Every One.
2. Thanks for the invitation.
3. No doubt your presence here today is an indication of your interest in mission work and helping carry out the Great Commission.

PURPOSE: To inform and encourage.

BODY

I. Why Radio?

- A. A great tool.
- B. Helps prepare the soil.
- C. Only means some have of hearing The Gospel.
 1. Most people of the world do not have
 - a. Television.
 - b. Computers or access to Internet.
 - c. Many of world’s population are illiterate.
 2. Most, however, have radios, some even hand cranked.

II. Scope of the potential.

- A. Latin America.
- B. Asia.
- C. Europe.
- D. Africa .

III. Cost of radio.

- A. Most cost effective among most any means.
- B. On an average, if properly carried out, the cost is approx. \$60.00 or less per conversion.

IV. Results of radio work.

- A. Depend largely on where you broadcast and also the follow up program.
- B. Average approximately 10-12 conversions per day for the past ten to twelve years using the means of radio.

“Cooperating to Evangelize the Community”

Don Petty

Introduction

We have turned our ‘mission work’ - local and abroad - over to the professionals. We no longer even think about reaching the lost in our communities for the most part, let alone make plans to do it.

We have many people trained, and we continue to give certificates to them for completing the personal work programs, but all that certificate does for us is look pretty on our den walls...unless...we get a passion to try to lead someone to the Lord and to a mansion in eternity.

The intent of this talk is to give an intense program to generate unsaved prospects for study of God’s Word. The effort will require diligence, money, energy, commitment, passion, and sacrifice. But, we can do it...when we want to do it.

The Program

Make 1,500 personal contacts in a week with three hundred workers passing out material that could lead the prospect to Christ. That would be 6,000 in a four week month or 24,000 in a year working toward one “Harvest Month” per quarter.

Some qualifying points of the plan:

1. Plan not to go cheap. Plan to spend a lot of money. Souls are worth it.
2. Determine to follow through all the way.
3. Make the overall plan for the entire year, and count the cost at the beginning.
4. Recruit all the workers in advance.
5. Prepare the materials complete from the beginning.
6. Use attractive printing materials, to reflect a serious and important effort.
7. Get the message to the workers effectively, thoroughly, clearly. (Best done by preachers and elders.)

The Execution

How to do it:

1. Gather materials to give to prospects, printed materials and a free Bible (when they come to church).
2. Ask every worker in your congregation to give the materials to a prospect, any prospect, they can encounter.
3. Collect materials in packets, consisting of the following:
 - a. A complete story of the Gospel, such as “A One Study Journey Through the Bible to Salvation.”
 - b. A brief, plan of conversion, such as, “How Can I REALLY Find Christ?”
 - c. A bible correspondence course, Lesson One.
 - d. A Sunday bulletin of your congregation.
 - e. A nicely-printed teaching pamphlet, like, “The Day the Sun Went Out (Forever)”
 - f. An invitation to come eat with the members on a specified date (with a “Bible give away to each guest” note on it).
4. Ensure that the workers know the plan and will take the materials to give away.
5. Prepare the packets using the six pieces of materials above placed in a very nice folder of fine quality.
6. Have work days for workers to print, collate, and stuff the packets with materials.
7. Plan a “Harvest Month” each quarter of the “Harvest Year”, say March, June, September, and December.
8. During the month of February, on every Sunday morning, have the “workers” (300) pick up five packets per Sunday (that is 20 packets per month) and give them all away, to five people per week (20 per month) Note: $300 \times 20 = 6,000$ personal contacts per month, all invited to eat with the church.
9. Set the first Sunday afternoon at lunch time for the meal for the guests ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE “HARVEST MONTH”...or the first Sunday of March, June, September, December.

10. The WORK MONTHS preceding the Harvest Months are Feb, May, Aug, and Nov. Pass out materials every week of the WORK MONTH and EAT THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE HARVEST MONTH.
11. Buy all the materials and Bibles one quarter at a time - stage it all for use on time.
12. Lean each quarter to make necessary changes in the next quarter.
13. Plan and prepare the meal each quarter in preparation for guests. A good congregation cook/chef/planner estimates the 'extra food' to prepare.
14. At the meal have people to give welcome, visit among guests, sing, give 15 - 20 a minute talk, invite to study at a separate place and time.
15. Give every guest their bible (with NO PROTESTANT STUDY SECTION IN IT!)
16. At the close, invite them all back to worship that night and every Sunday.
17. Tell them what the church does in the community (making sure you are obeying Matthew 25).
18. Tell them the programs of Bible teaching, etc. for them and their family.
19. Thank them for coming.
20. Spend time for all to mix and mingle.

Note: I calculated the cost for the four "Harvest Months" at about \$15,000 for each or \$60,000 for the entire "Harvest Year".

Introduction to strangers to give them a packet: "Hi. May I ask you if you are a spiritual person?" However that conversation goes, tell them you would like to give them a packet.

Conclusion

You have the samples of materials in the pages I have handed out. You can try this on any scale you want. I suggest you make it a big enough scale to do some good, and excite the members with evangelism. May I implore you to take this idea back to as many congregations as you can and get our people back out there in the fight!

Cooperation ~ Case Study, Singapore/Malaysia

Gordon Hogan

Introduction:

1. Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken (Ecc. 4:12).

I. Trust.

II. Multiplier.

III. Multiple talents surface.

Conclusion:

1. Successes result.

Striving Side by Side

J. Randal Matheny

Once again we meet here at Maywood to consider an important and urgent theme, mission work cooperation. Important, because it constitutes a principal means of working for the Lord. Urgent, because the harvest awaits the sickle, the sun is lowering in the west and the laborers are few.

From Paul's letter to the Philippians, we want to examine the first chapter for five ideas to encourage us in our cooperation with fellow missionaries, nationals and supporting churches.

This letter has been described in various ways, but seldom is it recognized as a missionary letter not only to converts, but to participants in the mission of God. Paul writes to thank the Philippians for their gifts and support, for their participation in the Gospel. It is that perspective which guides our reading today.

#1. Encourage others with your trials (vv. 12-14).

Our tendency is not to share our burdens and difficulties with others. We seem to have a stoic attitude of bearing up silently under the trials. It's considered impolite to speak of suffering. And he who constantly laments his fate sends people scattering before him as they avoid his wailings.

But it is not the complainer we want to hear. It is the servant in the midst of suffering who has seen the hand of God move to advance the cause of Christ.

12 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that my situation has actually turned out to advance the gospel: 13 The whole imperial guard and everyone else knows that I am in prison for the sake of Christ, 14 and most of the brothers and sisters, having confidence in the Lord because of my imprisonment, now more than ever dare to speak the word fearlessly.

Paul recognizes that his imprisonment has served God's purpose. His consuming passion is the progress of the Gospel. He wants to see the news carried forward. He is willing to put his life

and reputation on the line for that cause. He speaks without hesitation about his situation, because it made his brothers bolder to speak the Gospel. By writing about it to the Philippians, it may have, again, the same effect.

Let us see how God works in our problems and trials to further his mission. And let us not fear to speak to others about what God is accomplishing in our weaknesses.

This is part of our cooperation together, to motivate one another through God's work in us.

#2. Leave the wrongly motivated alone (vv. 15-18).

Not all was peaches and ice cream while Paul was in prison. Some, even in the church, wanted to make it harder on him.

15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. 16 The latter do so from love because they know that I am placed here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former proclaim Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, because they think they can cause trouble for me in my imprisonment. 18 What is the result? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being proclaimed, and in this I rejoice.

Seeing Paul's predicament in prison, some went out and preached, thinking to increase his difficulties. They still preached the same Gospel, but somehow they thought the greater visibility of the faith would intensify Paul's problem. Or perhaps they thought that when he heard of their successes in ministry, it would leave him depressed. Not their message, but their motives were wrong. They had a personal problem with the apostle.

Paul decides to leave them alone, since they are preaching the truth and proclaiming Christ. "The importance of the gospel and its proclamation so outweighed any personal considerations that he would not cloud the issue by insisting on settling personal grievances."¹

His example is worthy of imitation. Though we may be able to perceive that others are preaching with impure or bad motives, if

¹Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Philippians," in Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan 1978): 112.

they are preaching the true Gospel, leave them alone.

One national convert was wise when he recognized that the evangelist who had converted him was moved by false motivations, but he still gave thanks to God for him, because through that person he came to know the Lord.

#3. Pray for one another (vv. 18-20).

Paul frequently asked for the prayers of his converts. He prayed for them and as a fellow follower of Christ felt free to ask them to pray for him. So he's confident of the Philippians' prayers for him as well.

*Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance **through your prayers** and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 20 My confident hope is that I will in no way be ashamed but that with complete boldness, even now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether I live or die.*

Though it might be a wrong impression, it seems that Americans do better at Bible reading and study than Brazilians, but that the latter do better at prayer than the former.

Whether prayer comes naturally or not, Paul sees the prayers of the saints and the help of the Spirit of Christ as being connected. God answers prayer and the power of prayer is not in the praying nor in those who pray but in Him who responds to those prayers, in order to carry through with His will in those whom He has chosen.

#4. Remain for them.

Many who are involved in missions allow personal issues and preferences to dictate their decisions. Financial support, children, parents, careers, these and other considerations top the list of determining factors in moving or remaining, returning to their land of origin or staying on the field.

Paul took a different view of things. He had a single consideration which overshadowed everything else when it came to his decisions.

21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 Now if I am to go on living in the body, this will mean productive work for

*me, yet I don't know which I prefer: 23 I feel torn between the two, because I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far, 24 but it is **more vital for your sake that I remain in the body.** 25 And since I am sure of this, I know that **I will remain and continue with all of you for the sake of your progress and joy in the faith,** 26 so that what you can be proud of may increase because of me in Christ Jesus, when I come back to you.*

As far as many national Christians know, not a few missionaries died when they returned to the U.S., because they failed to communicate after they left. They turned their backs on the field and acted as if they were mercenaries who finished with a job and never concerned themselves again with those among whom they worked.

Paul wanted to leave this world and be with Christ. That choice was, and is, by far, the better option. But he knew the necessary choice was to *remain*.

Listening to some missionaries, to live in America is closer to heaven, if not a piece of it, so perhaps I might be forgiven for using this passage to make a parallel between the U.S. and the mission field. But the choice is between what is best for me and what is best for those among whom we work. What will we decide? How will we choose? Will we let personal issues determine our decisions and damage the progress and joy in the faith of those who may have no other recourse in spiritual matters?

#5. Strive side by side.

God has put us together. In the church we are one, and we are to demonstrate that solidarity, not only in love in our relationships, but in unity in our mission. Paul is concerned that the mission in Philippi is in jeopardy because not all are working together.

*27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ so that - whether I come and see you or whether I remain absent - I should hear that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, by **contending side by side** for the faith of the gospel, 28 and by not being intimidated in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of their destruction, but of your salvation - a sign which is from God. 29 For it has been granted to you not*

only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are encountering the same conflict that you saw me face and now hear that I am facing.

The phrase “contending side by side,” or, as the ESV puts it, “striving side by side,” is a single word in the original Greek language.² It is used one other time, in chapter 4, verse 3, where Paul seeks reconciliation and peace between two sisters in Christ in the Philippian church, whose differences apparently threaten the entire church and its work of proclamation.

*2 I appeal to Euodia and to Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I say also to you, true companion, help them. They have **struggled together** in the gospel ministry along with me and Clement and my other coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.*

Paul said they had “struggled together” with him in the service of the Gospel. But now they were struggling against one another. There can be no struggle side by side, or together, as long as there is struggling or contention between two of God’s children.

The word “striving” or “struggling” comes from a word from which comes our term “athlete.” It means to strive in the games, compete as an athlete.

The work of God’s kingdom is a team sport, if you will, not an individual event. There must be coordination, cooperation, division of labor, mutual encouragement, delegation, attention to team dynamics, motivation.

The original Sao Paulo, Brazil, mission team, which will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its arrival on the field next year, adapted a movie song for its theme song. It expressed this thought of Paul’s in Philippians 1:

*Give God some men who are stout-hearted men,
Who will work for the Lord they adore;
Start Him with ten who are stout-hearted men,
And He’ll soon give us ten thousand more! Oh! ...*

²The term means “to toil together with someone in a struggle, implying opposition and/or competition – ‘to labor alongside of, to toil with.’” Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: UBS, 1989), 515.

*Shoulder to shoulder and bolder and bolder
We pray as we work in Brazil ...
Then, there's nothing in this world can halt or mar His plan;
When, stout-hearted men
Can stick together man to man!*³

Converts and supporters. An example of this cooperation in Philippi was their financial support of Paul. It is significant that the two ladies mentioned in chapter 4 and the other Philippians were likely all converts of his. Paul did not bring financial support to the Philippian church; they sent monetary help to him!

Recent events in Brazil have reproduced this first-century phenomenon. Last year, I came to the U.S. for two months to replace funds. The churches I work with in Sao Jose dos Campos and in Taubate gave me financial help for my trip. This year the Sao Jose church again paid for my airfare so I could come and work to replace funds. Though I was reluctant to accept, they insisted that they be allowed to participate in this effort.

Cooperation involves reciprocity. Be it prayers or financial gifts, missionaries greatly limit themselves when they do not turn to the national brothers and sisters as full partners in the Gospel. Cooperation may often be offered from where we least expect it.

The Nature of Cooperation

Cooperation flows in many directions, in receiving and giving, in helping and being helped, in supporting and being supported, in hold up another's hands and in having those hands held up.

Paul gives us a window in his letter to the Philippians of something of the nature of mission work cooperation. Let us rejoice that God has invited us to be a part of His mission and joined us together as co-workers in the harvest.

The day is late. The harvest lies in the fields. Let us join with our Savior and with one another to work while it is day.

³Lyrics adapted by Howard Norton from the song "Stout-Hearted Men" from the musical production "New Moon," starring Barbra Streisand. Original writer, Sigmund Romberg, 1940. Thanks to Carol Vinzant for the lyrics and information in email 1 April 2010.

Sharing Together in Mission Work

Robert H. Martin

“Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:15-18). In the early church it is easy to see that there was a close relationship between the missionary and those who supported him in reaching the lost. I would also suggest that there is a close relationship between those who can go out and teach the lost and those who do many things to assist those who go out to teach the lost in the local outreach work of the local church. There was a partnership in which the fruit of His labors was shared by all.

This principal is seen in the Old Testament. “But David said, ‘My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike.’ So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day” (1 Samuel 30:23-25). David said to those who went into battle that not only would they share in the spoils of the battle, but also those who stood by the supplies. They both would share alike in the spoils of the battle. This was an ordinance for Israel in future battles that this would be the rule. In Romans 15:4, Paul says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” What a great lesson for us to learn from the Old Testament that we are to share in the Lord work and especially in

reaching the lost at home and in foreign work.

This principal is taught in many passages in the New Testament to guide us in doing mission work successfully. Beginning in that great history of the Lord's church and her doing mission work in Acts 13:1-3 – "Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away." Here we see the evangelistic church at Antioch sharing with Barnabas and Paul in their missionary journey that would take them to Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Attalia. The church at Antioch sent men out from among themselves. The congregation was serious about the joy of saving souls: they fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, and sent them away. Fasting shows they were dedicated and committed to this work. Praying shows that they depended on the Lord for help. Laying hands on them shows that they commissioned them to this work of reaching the lost. This was a congregational effort together with the missionaries they were sending out. In Acts 14:26, 27 we read, "From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." Here we see the missionaries returning from the congregation that had sent them out to report on their work TOGETHER for the Lord. They told how that God has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Paul shows the sharing principal in those who go and those who send in Romans 10:13-15 – "For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" People cannot be

saved without the one who will proclaim or herald the message of the Lord. In verse 15 how shall they preach unless they are sent in fact there must be those who will SEND and those who will GO. There must be congregations who will send and missionaries who will go. In local outreach there will be those who will go out and those who will assist those who go out. How beautiful are those who proclaim the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things to others. How welcome are those who come proclaiming God's Good News to the lost.

Paul lays out some important principals in being workers with God in 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 – “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.” In verse 5, we must understand in order to be the most effective in reaching the lost, that we are all servants by which others believe. In verse 6, some plant, some water, but it is God who gives the increase. In verse 7, “we” are not important, but it is God who gives the increase. In verse 8, we will receive from the Lord the reward for our labor. In verse 9, we are workers together with God in His church. In 2 Corinthians 6:1 Paul reminds the Corinthians and us – “We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.” Do we really understand that we are labors **TOGETHER WITH HIM**? What great honor to be a co-worker with the Lord in His house (the church).

The Lord's church at Philippi had fellowship with Paul as seen in Philippians 1:3-5 – “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.” The background to the planting of the Lord's church in the city of Philippi is found in Acts 16 with the man of Macedonia pleading, “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9). The church of our Lord was planted in the city of Philippi with an unusual background of Jew (Lydia and her household con-

verted) and Gentile (Philippian jailer and his household converted). Paul thanked the Lord for this mission-minded congregation that had fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until the time he was writing this letter. The word **fellowship** means: “Partnership, participation, communion, fellowship.” Mission work is a partnership between those who are sending and those who are going. New Testament mission work is a participating of those who are sending and those who are going.

A Missionary letter to a Mission minded church is seen in Philippians 4:15-18 – “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.” This small church that Paul planted in the city of Philippi was made up of only two families who had fellowship with him as a missionary from the beginning. When Paul had left this infant congregation, they had sent aid to Paul again and again. The church in Philippi had become partners with Paul in carrying the Gospel to others. Paul appreciated the gifts of the Philippi church, but what really made him happier was the fruit that abounded to their credit. How beautifully Paul tells the church at Philippi that their gifts were a sweet-smelling sacrifice that pleased God well and He would bless them, because of their gifts.

WAYS WE CAN SHARE JOY IN MISSION WORK. For congregations who support the missionaries: Stand by the supply line – (1) Keep the congregation informed about souls being saved on the field and congregations being planted and brought to maturity; (2) Printing needed materials such as tracts, Bible correspondence courses, soul winning materials, Bible study/sermon books, songbooks; (3) Sending emails/cards/care packages, talking to the missionary family by phone, and going on the field to help in the work. For the missionary on the field: (1) Knowing that the overseeing congregation is really overseeing the work; (2) Knowing that the supporting congregations are really standing by the

supply line and give them the opportunity to do so by suggesting ways they can help in the work; (3) Encourage the overseeing congregation and supporting congregations to come on the field to help in the work. Encourage them to invest in the work by coming and helping in the work. Be encouraged by those who come on the field to help in the work.

When congregations today are actively involved with their missionary, they will experience joy as they work together in spreading the Gospel, planting congregations, and bringing them to maturity so that they are indigenous churches. Do not rob yourself of this blessed joy of being workers together with the Lord in doing missionary work.

Church Relations: A Church Perspective

Don Posey

1. Introduction
2. A few comments about church support
 - a. It's necessary
 - b. It's scriptural
3. Reporting to supporting churches
 - a. Necessity
 - b. Common faults
4. Communicating with newsletters
 - a. Snail-mail and email
 - b. A few suggestions

Paul Champion of Evangelism

Loy Mitchell

INTRODUCTION

1. When we are first introduced to Paul, he is called “Saul of Tarsus.”
2. He was the son of wealthy Jewish parents who sent him to Jerusalem from Tarsus to study at the feet of Gamaliel, who was considered to be one of the greatest Jewish rabbis.
3. While there he became a ring leader of the opposition to Christianity (Acts 7:58; 22:20).
4. He even went to foreign cities to bind men and women who followed Jesus (Acts 9).
5. However, he met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and was baptized by Ananias (Acts 9; 22:16).
6. Later, he and Barnabas join together on the first missionary trip (Acts 13-14).

BODY

I. THE SECOND MISSIONARY TRIP BEGINS.

- A. *Barnabas and Paul part ways but each chooses another person and both go forth preaching (Acts 15:36-41.)*
- B. *Several doors are closed by God and they come to Troas where they receive a call (Acts 16:1-10).*

II. THE RESULTS OF A SATURDAY MORNING LADIES BIBLE CLASS (ACTS 16:13-15).

- A. Lydia was a business woman.
- B. She was a religious woman.
- C. She was an obedient woman.
- D. She was a grateful woman.

III. THE RESULTS OF A LATE NIGHT WORSHIP SERVICE (ACTS 16:19-34).

- A. The girl with the evil spirit is freed from this spirit (vs. 16-18).

- B. The preachers are falsely accused, beaten and placed in prison (vs. 19-24).
- C. They pray and sing hymns (v. 25).
- D. There is an earthquake and the jailer asks for help (vs. 26-30).
- E. He and his house are taught and converted (vs. 31-34).

IV. THE RESULTS OF A COURTLY INQUISITION (ACTS 26:1-29).

- A. Paul has appealed to Caesarea, but the governor needs some charges to send with him (Acts 25:22-27).
- B. Paul relates how his life was before he met Christ (Acts 26:4-11).
- C. Paul tells of his conversion (vs. 12-18).
- D. Then, he tells of the events since his conversion (vs. 19-23).
- E. Then, Paul makes his appeal to the King (vs. 26-29).

CONCLUSION

1. From the dispute between Paul and Barnabas we learn how to handle conflict (2 Timothy 4:11).
2. When Paul went to Asia Minor, God kept throwing road blocks in his way. God has long-range plans for us.
3. God opened the heart of Lydia (Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21).
4. The conversion of the jailer shows that more than faith only is required (Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3; John 8:32; Acts 2:38; 22:16).
5. We see the folly of procrastination (Acts 24:25; Matthew 13:1-23).

Cooperative Body Parts in a Global Body

Roy Wilson

Topic: Effective cooperation within the Body of Christ promotes success in the mission field.

Christians are body parts who form a greater whole (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Some of us are hands and feet for planting the mission fields of receptive hearts. Other Christians are figurative eyes and ears for monitoring the health of the harvest. Just as the human body survives and grows through the interaction of its organic parts, the Body of Christ achieves growth when its members cooperate one with another!

The biblical analogy of comparing the human body to the church is beautiful and relevant. Each member is directly connected to the head, Christ Jesus, and so all members enjoy fellowship with each other through their relationship with God's Son.

In the human body, its various parts are connected by sinew, a network of nerves, and life-giving blood. However, the Church of Christ is comprised of autonomous congregations whose connections are formed, in part, by a global purpose that we call the Great Commission (Mark 16:15). It is that aspect of Christ's body that I would like for us to focus on as we consider how "body parts" work together to sustain and grow the Church from great distances away.

Effective cooperation to plant and harvest the mission field depends on three vital participants:

1. The missionary who functions as "feet" on the ground.
2. The sponsoring church ("brain") who oversees the mission work.
3. Supporting congregations who provide financial resources ("blood") to keep the work flowing.

The Missionary and Sponsoring Church Relationship

Let's begin down this vein of thought by considering how a sponsoring church can work with its missionary to attain and sustain success in the mission field:

1. Missionaries need to know that they have the backing of their sponsoring church. This requires active involvement by the sponsoring congregation and, ideally, by some of the other churches who financially support the work.

The opposite is also true. The sponsoring church needs to know that the missionary accepts the oversight that they provide, especially in difficult times when it becomes necessary to adjust or redirect a program that has lost its effectiveness.

2. Because the missionary is usually the one who develops and manages an evangelism program, his sponsoring church needs to avoid the temptation of micromanaging. They must exhibit trust in that missionary as the one most competent to manage the work on a daily basis.
3. With that being said, the sponsoring church should not be hesitant to ask questions about the work, or to offer suggestions. The missionary will almost always appreciate the communication. It is, after all, a partnership.
4. This partnership must be united in realizing that the mission and the message are always the same. They should also agree philosophically on appropriate ways to accomplish the mission.
5. It is essential that the sponsoring church regularly send brethren to visit the missionary they sponsor. Not only does this encourage the missionary, it also educates those who monitor the work back at home on the local conditions and situations. If special challenges exist that are not fully appreciated or understood by the sponsoring church, then these trips can be invaluable in addressing the perceptions at hand.

6. Missions programs are influenced by resource availability as well as local opportunities. The missionary capitalizes on these opportunities by (a) preaching to the lost wherever he is located; (b) using a combination of mass evangelism tools appropriate for the targeted culture; and (c) any other means possible, such as campaign evangelism and Bible schools.

No matter the methods, a certain amount of funding is needed to carry them out. This is why sponsoring churches form a cooperative partnership with supporting congregations. Although the underlying purpose for this cooperation is financial, other benefits are also realized.

The Sponsoring and Supporting Church Relationship

A sponsoring church and the missionary can work with supporting congregations to attain and sustain success in the mission field. Effective communication is crucial.

1. Supporting churches should expect frequent reports highlighting recent results and future plans. These can be issued in the form of printed media, email, internet blogs, or web site updates. Typically, the missionary produces and distributes these reports. How often they are sent out is up to the missionary and his sponsoring church, but *quarterly* reports seem to work well in most instances.
2. It is also important that financial statements be made available to contributors. This ensures ethical transparency on how work funds are being used.
3. In addition to the missionary's reports coming from the field, sponsoring churches fortify the existing base of support when they regularly send letters to supporters thanking them for their financial contributions and continued prayers.
4. Supporting churches should not hesitate to contact the missionary or sponsoring church for answers to any questions they may have.

5. If significant adjustments, or complete redirection, to the program become necessary, elders from the sponsoring church have a responsibility to anticipate and address concerns from supporters. A proactive letter from the missionary or sponsoring church that explains the current situation is an effective way to communicate relevant details.
6. Supporting churches often expect to receive personal visits from missionaries to report on the work. This is a reasonable expectation at appropriate time intervals, but repeated visits during the same year are usually not feasible. Excessive travel for the missionary means more time away from his family and children. They must remain his first mission field.

Although not as commonplace, effective visits to supporting churches can also be performed by sponsoring elders or deacons. Supporting churches are to be commended when they receive reports from these brethren instead of the missionary who directs the work. It demonstrates their understanding that (a) funds are used to sustain the work and not the man; (b) the brethren who visit them are personally knowledgeable and involved with the work; and (c) their flexibility in this matter will alleviate some of the busy schedule demands on the missionary.

When Relationships Cease

While the subject is not pleasant to consider, mission programs suffer financially and relationally when a supporting congregation drops its financial assistance. Lost funds must be raised or the program plan adjusted to operate in the black. Because human souls are priceless, no one chooses to downsize the mission goals except as a last resort.

Most supporting churches understand the gravity of dropping their support, but external factors like the economy or internal problems affecting church income can force this difficult decision. In other cases, differences in mission philosophies or waning interest created by weak or nonexistent reporting from the field can

lead to financial shortfall for the mission program.

Regardless of the cause, a supporter's exit strategy should be planned carefully. If possible, benefactors should notify the sponsoring church about plans to reduce or end their financial support as far in advance as possible. A minimum of six month's advanced notice is ideal as it will give the missionary and sponsoring church time to find alternative funds.

On those rare occasions when a sponsoring church determines that it can no longer oversee a viable mission work, the responsible missionary is faced with not one but *three* major challenges: (1) finding a new sponsoring church; (2) retaining the financial backing of other supporters during the transitional period; and (3) replacing lost funds. For both the missionary and his current sponsoring church, it is a time for sensitivity, reassurance, and honest reporting to all of the program's participants.

When financial and planning relationships end, this does not mean that broader relations cease. We, as Christians, are cooperative body parts in a global Body. Prayers for the continued success of brethren with whom we no longer interact on a regular basis are a cherished gift. These prayers are crucial to any work carried out by the Body of Christ. They demonstrate our understanding that God is in control. **A mission work cannot bear fruit unless God gives the increase.**

Cooperative Body Parts

We have just examined the cooperative relationship between a missionary, his sponsoring church, and other supporting congregations. A mission work sustained by these three vital participants relies on dedication, communication and feedback, prayer support, and God's blessings.

If the missionary functions as "feet" on the ground...if the sponsoring church is comparable to a "brain" that oversees the mission effort...if supporting churches provide the financial resources, or "blood," to keep the work flowing...then it is appropriate to compare Christians in foreign cultures to living cells that form each day in the human body. These cells, once established, can coalesce into any organ or body part that benefits the church. Indigenous self-replicating church growth, unrestrained by manmade borders,

is our only realistic hope to save the world.

The Body of Christ is dynamic. It will never die. Its “DNA” (patterns of Christian behavior found in the Bible) is life imitating Christ. When a thumb (any brother you can name) is injured, the entire body knows it.

To view ourselves as cooperative body parts in a global body is both humbling and exhilarating. Humility is an important attitude to carry into another country. It opens doors of opportunity. “Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

Mission Work Cooperation

Kenneth J. Wilkey

What are we discussing? “Mission” is the being sent by Christ to convert our fellow men into His followers. “Work” encompasses all that is done to accomplish the conversion of these lost of our number. “Cooperation” is “as in an act or instance of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit; joint action.”

Cooperative work in missions cannot exist unless the missionaries share a common goal. This goal needs to be specific enough that all may evaluate their activities in the light of achieving this goal. It should be a concrete objective accepted by all. Since I cannot be present to say these things to you, I will request that as you read you please pause now and take time to state what you think that common goal is.

For me it is *to bring into existence a new unit in the ‘family of God’ that is mature enough to replicate itself in fellowship with others of our brotherhood.*

Why a unit (subdivision of the family) in the ‘family of God’ in preference to the terms ‘church,’ ‘flock,’ or ‘part of the kingdom’? One often sees ‘church’ broadly applied and misunderstood. ‘Flock’ may picture a group of helpless sheep not responsible for its own care or safety. ‘Kingdom’ has the benefit of focusing attention on Christ the King, yet ‘citizen’ of a kingdom may not emphasize the warmth of the unity of being one of a family. One possibly might think of ‘them’ as citizens of a kingdom, but will speak of ‘us’ in the family.

Are we missionaries then a *Band of Brothers* going forth to expand the holdings of our family? To our embarrassment we must admit that this desirable description has not fitted us in many places in past time. We have not been cooperative or collaborative in our mission work, even in the same fields.

In part, this has been true because we have not had communication in the planning stages of our mission nor have we had mutual sharing (fellowship) on the field. Often we have ‘done our own thing’, appearing as ‘lone rangers’ riding off ‘in all directions’ without either a “Tonto” to back us up or knowledge of the territo-

ry we have entered. This has placed some in the position of my Uncle Edward Wilkey who went on a moonlit raccoon hunt in southern Illinois with my relatives. When he came to a creek, against their advice, he said he knew he could jump across because he could see the bank on the other side. It looked close enough to him so he jumped into the moonlight shadow of the bank and ended up to his armpits in muddy water with himself a mess.

If we truly are a “family of God,” it is natural for us to learn from older family members. The very least we can do is to listen to what they have done, either good or bad, before we rush forth to prove them wrong.

Stated another way, cooperation is extremely important in missions because there is no “clean slate” (*tabla rasa*) for you to begin “writing on” in most places in the world. Others have gone before and one ignores what has been done before to a danger of our own hurt. Some mission trainers have ignored this and send brethren forth to “start a new church” or to “begin a new work” where a unit of God’s family already exists. Should we be so foolish as to think we can ignore the existing disciples, our will be a new ‘foreign’ work that is not fellowshipped by the broader brotherhood in that region. Our lack of cooperation with these disciples will communicate that we think them inferior to what we come to bring into existence. We reap criticism and competition.

Has not our ignoring each other and competing with one another shown us to be less than mature Christians? Does I *Corinthians* 3:1-3 speaking of *jealousy and strife* describe us better than a unified *Band of Brothers* does? Our goal must be to so honor Christ that we shall be free from our ‘in fighting.’

What happens at times is *understandable* but not *excusable*. For, “it is perfectly natural for one to promote one’s own program.” When the Zebedee family sought to *promote* the interests of John and James, the other ten apostles seemed to feel in doing so they were trying to *demote* them, or to get ahead at a cost to them. Jesus told them, and still tells us, that it is honor enough to be a Servant as He was and is. How much good can come in our cooperative works if we are able to combine all our alphabetic logos into one effort to achieve an agreed goal? That will be a ‘soup’ to nourish everyone.

Working together is imperative because of the cost of *monergism*¹ is too high. To return to our image of one going forth as a “lone ranger” flashing and banging away without regard for others, the price is very high. Solomon advised against this long ago in *Ecclesiastes* 4:9-12. In verse 9 he seems to point to the *synergism*² that comes when we work together. A ready benefit of two being better than one in work is seen in our personal evangelism outreach. When two of us go forth it is not one plus one, but two squared in power. If the reader doubts this, try it out.

Verse 10, roughly stated says, “If we ignore others we cannot complain if we get no help from them.” If we seek no one’s aid, it will be missing when needed. Verse 11 notes the warmth of sharing. If we communicate and cooperate in having a shared dream, join together in a shared struggle, we will experience the joy of a shared victory. Verse 12 emphasizes, to this writer, that it is time for us to become a strong, interwoven, threefold cord. The missionaries are to be joined, one with another, and also we with our God.

What will we leave behind? Shall we leave isolated, helpless disciples in dependent, dysfunctional families that we must hold together? Or be a *Band of Brothers* that is made up of all those we have worked with in our mission nation and those where we came from. Will we be a united, family of God, where the younger members are blessed with all of us as examples of servant leaders. To do this we must dream, plan, and work together. We need to share our victories and failures, while loving and enjoying each others’ company. As the “Company of the Committed” let us do whatever is necessary to reach the lost and leave them our models to follow.

¹ This is not used in any theological way, but with the sense of doing it for or by my one’s self.

² **Synergism**, in general, may be defined as two or more agents working together to produce a result not obtainable by any of the agents independently.

Gospel Gazette Online (www.gospelgazette.com)

Gospel Gazette Online made its debut in January 1999 as a monthly, religious Internet journal. Today, the *Gazette* is read by people all over the world (from all seven continents, including Antarctica). Obviously, *GGO* via the Internet is available even in some places in the world to which one cannot easily go physically with the Gospel of Christ (e.g. Saudi Arabia and Antarctica). Each issue sports articles by Christian men and women on a variety of biblical subjects, questions and answers, plus an audio message. In addition, thousands of articles from past issues appear in the archives and may be selected with the help of the site search engine.

Dozens of brothers and sisters in Christ have lent their studious pens through the pages of *GGO* to an international readership of both Christians and non-Christians. By design, short, teaching articles populate *Gospel Gazette Online*. Thereby, *GGO* purposes to edify both Christians and non-Christians with Bible-based lessons. Response from readers reveals a wide array of religious backgrounds, including members of the church of Christ, denominational bodies and world religions. Most fan mail is positive and encouraging. A couple of the more heartening posts include correspondence about baptisms in Saudi Arabia and the request from a Muslim in Pakistan that I pray for his sick wife. Subsequently, after initial contact through the pages of *GGO*, and later studying with Christians in his country, he put Jesus Christ on in baptism.

Any good that *Gospel Gazette Online* has done or continues to do is owing largely to the many Christian writers whose articles comprise each issue. Periodically, the recipient of lauds from around the globe, if there is anything praiseworthy, let the glory be to God

World Evangelism (www.worldevangelism.org)

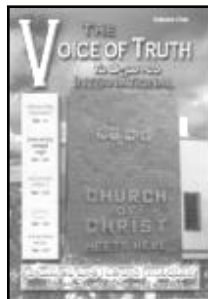
World Evangelism is a work of the churches of Christ that has been reaching the masses of the world effectively for 45 years with the Gospel of Christ. World Evangelism reaches the world with the Gospel through radio, TV, Internet, massive distribution of literature, foreign Bible schools and campaigns abroad. Other areas of World Evangelism include *Global Harvest* magazine and the publication and distribution of thousands of Christian books annually. Together, these efforts result in hundreds of responses **daily** and thousands of conversions **annually**.

The Voice of Truth International

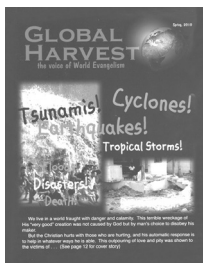
The most visible aspect of the ongoing labors of World Evangelism to brethren in the United States is *The Voice of Truth International* quarterly magazine. However, what it does overseas speaks to its real importance. Tens of thousands of copies of *The Voice of Truth International* are published in four languages (English, Spanish, Tamil and Telugu). Each issue is populated with articles about God, evidences, the Word of God, salvation, the church, the Christian home, Christian living, Bible characters, sermon outlines, etc. to fill the otherwise void abroad for sound biblical, written materials.

The Voice of Truth International is the size and general appearance of the *Readers' Digest* magazine. Of course, the content of *The Voice of Truth International* is biblical in nature, and it is filled with short teaching articles. Each issue is a veritable library, so important in parts of the world where Christians have few study materials to which they can turn either at home or at church.

You can acquire *The Voice of Truth International* for yourself or your congregation through a paid subscription: \$12 for four issues; \$20 for eight issues; \$25 monthly or \$300 annually for a box of 35 copies four times per year. Call World Evangelism for a free sample copy of *The Voice of Truth International* or to start your subscription: (662) 283-1192.



Global Harvest



Global Harvest is a semi-annual magazine published by World Evangelism. Missionary endeavors of various stateside congregations of the churches of Christ in foreign fields appear within its colorful pages, accented with corresponding photographs. By publicizing the good missionary programs of other missionaries and the churches that support them, the World Evangelism Team hopes to do three things: (1) Be a good neighbor and fellow helper of

likeminded brethren in taking the saving Gospel to a sin-sick, lost world, (2) Emphasize what biblically sound missionary work is ongoing, (3) Whereby the churches of Christ can ascertain what still remains to be done in sending/taking the light of God's Word to a sin-darkened world abroad (i.e., in addition, of course, of allowing the Gospel light to shine in our sin-darkened homeland, too).

Missionaries and/or their sponsoring congregations are invited to submit articles and pictures for future editions of *Global Harvest*. Send digital material to choate@worldevangelism.org.

This is a relatively *new* publication, and it is not financially solvent *yet*. The first issue of *Global Harvest* debuted under the initiative of the late J.C. Choate, but future editions were placed on hold due to his illness and subsequent passing. Lately, though, two additional issues have been published. We believe that *Global Harvest* provides an important service to mission-minded congregations and brethren, and if so, we hope that churches and individuals will help financially underwrite it so that it may continue. Gifts, subscriptions and sending some funds especially when a congregation or missionary's works are highlighted (not required, but would be helpful) will help assure continued publication.

Subscriptions to *Global Harvest* are: INDIVIDUAL \$5.00 per issue; \$10.00 for two successive issues; CONGREGATIONAL \$75.00 for 25 copies; \$100.00 for 50 copies. Prepaid orders would be a great help in this initial stage of publication. Send subscriptions, gifts, etc. to World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967; make checks payable to *Global Harvest*.