

Church Planting Institute
Building Bridges Of Communication



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Breaking down walls and **BUILDING BRIDGES**

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**“Concerning Cross-Cultural Issues
in Christian Communication.”**

Effective Christian Cross-Cultural Communication

Many Christians, ministers and churches today, seem blissfully unaware that in order to effectively share the Gospel it is essential to employ principles of cross-cultural communication. Christians comprise a cultural grouping that is distinctively different from all other people-groups. In order to effectively communicate with any, or all non-Christians, there must be a keen awareness of cultural distinctions and a knowledgeable and determined effort to supersede such barriers.

Effective communication is like the building of bridges, structures that link two otherwise separated groups, affording communication, understanding and co-operation. Unfortunately, instead of building bridges of communication, many Christians seem intent upon building walls of separation that effectively divide them from all other communities.

This article is basically about pulling down such walls and using the materials to build bridges. It represents a heart plea to the Christian world to recognise those walls that restrict our communication with the peoples of this world whom Jesus came to “Seek and to Save.” It also seeks to encourage every Christian to get into the bridge building business, reaching across the traditional cultural divides and touching other people’s lives for Christ.

As in every area of Christian life and activity, Jesus Himself is our primary role model. His personal contact with a variety of men and women inevitably reveals His consciousness of the need for sensitive cross - cultural communication. Whenever He speaks to anyone outside the circle of His disciples, He tends to speak in parables. Earthly stories from everyday life that convey spiritual truths in a manner that is easily understood by His audience.

We Christians must also understand that every time we endeavour to communicate effectively with persons outside our “Christian cultural group” it inevitably requires a measure of cross-cultural skill. The life style initiated by our Christian Faith and commitment has placed us into a unique cultural grouping, clearly distinct from all non-Christian, or pre-Christian groups. We view life from a totally different perspective. We subconsciously often adopt a new language, - “Christianese,” a dialect that sounds extremely mysterious with its coded inferences, to the uninitiated ear. We tend to live mostly within a closed circuit community, isolated and insulated from the outside world. I sincerely trust that this teaching will make us all more keenly aware of those religious and cultural distinctives that tend to separate us from our fellow man. May it better enable us to effectively communicate with all men everywhere.

Gerald Rowlands. D.Min.

Chapter One

Walls Or Bridges?

**Every Christian leader is in the “Building Industry.”
They are either building Bridges or Walls.
Make sure that you are a
BRIDGE BUILDER!**

Bridges Provide Access To Otherwise Inaccessible Communities

Cross-cultural communication is like the building of a bridge from one community to another. It is the bridging of enormous gaps that separate a people group from its neighbours. It is a way of providing viable access from one ethnic identity to another.

Jesus Himself is the greatest bridge builder of all time. He successfully bridged the otherwise eternal gap between God and mankind. He forged a redemptive link between Divinity and humanity. He bridged the yawning chasm between Heaven and earth.

Unfortunately, instead of seeking to emulate Him, many churches and believers seem intent on building walls of separation rather than bridges of reconciliation. Many others completely ignore the necessity of cross-cultural awareness and remained blissfully isolated from effective contact with the world outside.

Some Of The Walls We Build

There are many walls that divide the people's of our world. Some of them are politically legitimate, e.g. the walls of nationality and citizenship which divide the citizens of one country from another. These are walls that can be bridged by use of the proper means, such as visitors and residents visas etc.

But there are other walls and divisions that are built through ignorance and prejudice. These are the walls of pride, prejudice, ignorance, and resentment which are often fostered between persons of different race, colour, religion, tribe or ethnic identity. Such walls tend to divide, separate, create misunderstanding, mistrust and fear.

Walls are foreboding and threatening. They deter others from any serious thought of entry. They have a negative impact upon the possibilities of relationships.

These walls should never exist amongst the people of God. They certainly should never exist amongst true Christians, neither between themselves, nor between them and their fellow men. Jesus did not allow anything to separate Him from humanity. Neither religion, creed, race or social station.

The Infamous Berlin Wall

Probably the most notorious wall in history, that typifies the manner in which walls can separate and divide men from their brothers, is the wall that once separated East and West Berlin.

Erected by the Communist East German government in 1961, it successfully divided this famous German city for decades. It was built to restrict East Berliners from travelling to the West. When it was first built it divided many families, creating great heartache, misery and misunderstanding. It clearly typified the kind of barriers that men can forge to keep them separate one from another. How great was the rejoicing when the wall finally came down in 1989, and brothers were able to find each other again.

Although this wall was the most obvious and blatant one, there are many similar walls dividing men today. Though most are invisible, they nevertheless divide the world as effectively as did the Berlin wall. I refer to the walls of cultural, racial, political and religious prejudice that stand between communities today.

**Walls separate, isolate, divide, create misunderstanding,
mistrust, fear, discrimination, and persecution.**

They are built out of ignorance, pride, prejudice, self righteousness, resentment and sin.

Some Of The Walls That Isolate The Church From The Masses

1. Self Righteousness

Isa 64:6

“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (NKJ)

Phil 3:9

“and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;” (NKJ)

Rom 10:3

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” (NKJ)

The righteousness of Christ Himself is imputed to every true believer and this alone assures his legal standing with God. Unfortunately, like the Galatians, (Gal 3: 1-3) many believers revert from the Spirit, to the flesh and seek to establish their own righteousness through religious works and good deeds. This tends to make those believers self-righteous, and religious legalists.

This form of Christian religion is as obnoxious to God as it is abhorrent to non-believers. It creates walls of religious pride, self righteousness, and hypocrisy that stand tall and foreboding between the church and non-Christians.

Such persons frequently have a “holier than you” superior attitude that judges all others as inferior to themselves. It tends to make them appear as a religious elite who look with judgmental disdain on all but their own kind.

2. Religious Elitism

Too many Christians and churches perceive themselves to be an elite company in the earth. From God's perspective this is true, but in the eyes of the world we are all too frequently seen to be very human, vulnerable and self satisfied. Much of our perspective is formed, not by imputed righteousness, but by selfish religious pride. Too often the world's perception of us is of "do gooders" and unfortunately there are many valid reasons why this may be so.

We need to constantly bear in mind that all that we have of godliness and essential goodness, is of God's grace and mercy. A hymn writer once said :-

"Nought have I gotten, but what I received.

Grace has bestowed it since I have believed."

3. Antiquated Religious Traditions

To walk into many churches is like stepping back into the 18th century, or worse. Somehow the idea has evolved that old is better than new, historic is better than modern, and the archaic is better than the contemporary. The style of worship and liturgy of many churches remains largely as it was in the 18th century and they have apparently convinced themselves that this is more sacred and reverent than any contemporary model could be.

Modern minded persons, about to step into the computer driven 21st century, must feel they have stepped into a time warp when they enter many places of Christian worship. Everything is conducted in the formal manner of an age long gone by. The architecture of the building, the religious dress of the priests, the musical instruments used, and the general format of the service, all identify with long past generations and perceptions.

In endeavouring to maintain the "traditions received from their father's," the church at large has become mired in the historic past and failed to keep in step with its own generation. In doing so, the church has built a completely unnecessary wall of misunderstanding that our modern generation cannot, or do not wish to penetrate.

4. Non Contemporary Formats

If a modern business corporation insisted on retaining an 18th century marketing method, that business would rapidly become insolvent. To effectively communicate we must employ the language and perceptions that our target audience understands. We must communicate with them at a level they clearly understand in a manner which grabs their attention. We cannot use the methods of generations past to arrest the attention of our contemporary generation.

5. Introspection And Self Interest

Many churches have become inbred in their perceptions and attitudes. They have grown into introspection, becoming isolated and insulated from their contemporaries. Church buildings have often become ivory towers, splendid in isolation. Many of them stand like white elephants on the deserted streets of main-town, western world. The buildings have become prisons where the Gospel is proclaimed each week to a captive, already convinced, audience.

6. Deep Divisions

The fragmented and splintered condition of the church, its divisions and animosities have been a real deterrent to many thinking people. They stand amazed that Christians, who profess to love one another, are so divided.

The walls of doctrine and denominationalism that have fragmented the Body of Christ, have also deterred many sincere seekers from looking to the church for an answer. Jesus gave top priority to unity as a means of convincing the world that God had truly sent Him.

John 17:21

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (KJV)

7. Non-Strategic Doctrines

One factor that has divided the Body of Christ more than any other, is the tenacious adherence to non-strategic doctrines.

The word doctrine occurs in the military vocabulary as well as the theological. A doctrine in that setting is "an official government policy or strategy," hence a doctrine of war. Within this usage we hear of "strategic policies, and non-strategic policies."

Strategic policy refers to the essential, indispensable aspects of a plan, that are essential to achieving a victory. There are usually non-strategic policies too that are not absolutely essential to the successful outcome of a battle.

Obviously the strategic policies are the more important by far, and should any non strategic concepts in any way threaten to hinder the fulfilment of a strategic one, the lesser must always give way to the greater.

In a similar manner there are strategic and non-strategic biblical doctrines. Strategic doctrines are imperative and essential. They cannot be negotiated nor compromised. We sometimes call these, "the fundamentals of our Faith." They are also the pillars of our Faith, without which our whole canopy of Faith would collapse. These include the truths that enunciate the existence of God, the divinity of Christ, the efficacy of Christ's blood, the inerrancy of the scriptures, etc.

We are all responsible to discern the strategic value of certain doctrines. For example, certain truths concerning the Body of Christ are imperative and non-negotiable. For instance, Jesus prayed,

John 17:20-23

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (NIV)

This is a portion of the High Priestly prayer of Jesus. He earnestly prayed that those whom the Father had given Him, the redeemed, the Body of Christ, should be ONE, even as, (in the same manner as) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, in order that the world may believe that God has truly sent Him.

Now this unity of the Body of believers is a strategic truth, imperative to the purpose of God, that the world may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Therefore, any "doctrine" we may espouse, that hinders the fulfilment of a strategy essential to victory, is a non-strategic, dispensable doctrine. If one's insistence in promoting and propagating such a doctrine, divides the Body of Christ, rendering it incapable of fulfilling God's redemptive purpose, then that person is majoring on minor matters and neglecting the major strategic issues of importance.

Jesus earnestly prayed that we all may be ONE. Therefore any doctrine that frustrates, hinders, or negates that oneness is rebellion against Jesus. Any offender should repent, renounce their selfish insistence and make every effort to assist the uniting of Christ's Body, the Church.

There are many other walls that the Church has built that isolate her and rob her of a powerful impact on society. Oh that we might see these walls torn down and bridges built in their place. We need a battalion of spiritual engineers to dismantle the old walls of religious prejudice and build some new bridges of love, compassion, identification and service. If we tear down the walls and build as many bridges as we had walls, the world could be evangelised in a relatively brief time. Jesus predicted that when the world saw our unity they would believe that God had truly sent Him. Let's demolish the walls and build bridges instead!

BRIDGES OF RECONCILIATION

The functions of bridges are distinctly contrasting to those of walls.

WALLS	BRIDGES
Separate	Connect
Isolate	Integrate
Divide	Unite
Cause misunderstandings	Afford comprehension
Create fears	Foster friendship

THE CONCEPT OF A BRIDGE PRESENTS SEVERAL HELPFUL IMAGES

1. Spanning A Chasm Or Gulf

Making it possible for two previously isolated persons or communities to gain access to each other.

2. Providing Opportunities For Reconciliation

There is far too much estrangement in our world. Nations are estranged from one another. Tribes are estranged through inter-tribal hostilities. Families are broken and divided. There is a tremendous need for reconciliation everywhere. The Church should certainly not add to these hostilities.

The prime reason for these estrangements is man's estrangement from God. Once that is rectified, other estrangements can be healed.

3. Providing A Crossing Point

A bridge indicates the opportunity for a person to cross a great gulf from one state to another altogether different position. From imprisonment to freedom. From unbelief to faith. From Godless living, to God filled living. From estrangement to reconciliation.

4. Makes Reciprocal Arrangements Possible

Once initial contact has been made, opportunities are presented for reciprocal agreements and mutual aid. A bridge offers two way functions. Reciprocity is an inter-relatedness for mutual benefit.

The exchange of something between people, or groups of people, when each person or group gives something to the other.

Prayer is such a bridge by which we give to God praise and petitions and He responds with gracious answers to those prayers. Repentance and restitution may also build a bridge of reconciliation. Forgiveness and mercy form bridges of renewed relationship.

BRIDGES OF COMMUNICATION

Numerous materials are necessary to the building of bridges. These may vary greatly depending upon the location and environment in which they are built. Primitive bridges may be built from logs, ropes, plaited vines etc.

More sophisticated and substantial bridges may be built from concrete, steel, and bricks. Regardless of the materials used, those bridges usually serve the same purposes.

In the area of cross-cultural communications, particularly in the matter of communicating the Gospel to those outside the Kingdom, what are some of the materials we might use?

An Understanding Of The Times

In order to effectively communicate with our contemporary world, we must understand the significance of current perceptions. We cannot expect to live in the past and influence the present. One of the tribes of Israel had a special function in this regard.

1 Chr 12:32

“men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do-- 200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command;” (NIV)

They were effective in their service for God and Israel because of two things.

- a) They understood their times.
- b) They knew what Israel (God’s people) ought to do in those times.

Too many Christians have the idea that to be contemporary is to be carnal. Many church groups have ingested the idea that to be old fashioned is more spiritual than to be modern minded. The tactics of too many churches are inane because they are old fashioned, archaic and obsolete.

The perception that many non-Christians have of Christian activity is of elderly ladies, quietly listening to an old man dressed in black, preaching a dreary, irrelevant sermon in obsolete King James language. Their perception of Christian worship is a darkly dressed group of arch conservative people, singing sixteenth century words to an ancient tune, accompanied by an old pipe organ.

An idea prevails amongst many Christians and church groups that all modern music is inspired by Satan. They imagine that modern musical instruments are the tools of Satan. They foolishly imagine that true spirituality is retaining all the old religious traditions. Such thinking is akin to the erection of walls that unnecessarily separate them from the contemporary world.

Jesus said that the children of this world are frequently wiser (shrewder, more practical in their perceptions) than are the children of the Kingdom.

Luke 16:8

“And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light. (ASV)

The Era Of Post-Modernism

The contemporary Western world, including those nations influenced by the West, are mostly living in the post-modern culture era. Until the 1930's these nations were greatly influenced by modernistic, (enlightened ?) thought. It was a period when men worshipped science, believing that it held all the answers and solutions for the world's progress and betterment. Since then the people has become gravely disillusioned with this concept since men have generally used scientific discovery to destroy life rather than to preserve and improve it.

Modernism Invaded Christendom

Modernism also invaded the world of Christendom too, and it became popular to exalt “scientific thought” against belief in the truth of the Bible. Modernist preachers denounced the miracles of the Bible, introducing pseudo scientific explanations for the “apparent miracles.”

The response of the fundamental Christian scholars lay in an appeal to the science of apologetics, in which a person writes or speaks in a reasoned defence of a belief or cause. The teaching of apologetics has infinitely strengthened the Bible believing position of fundamental Christians, providing a reasoned reply to modernism.

However, the era of modernism has been largely superseded by post-modernism, in which people tend not to ask, “Is it verifiably true?,” but “Does it work, and what good will it do me?” Their interest is not so much in substantiated truth, but in experiential encounters. Post-modernism argues that experience is more important than intellectualism. To the post-modernist, truth is no longer an absolute, but a variable, depending on who, when and where that “truth” is perceived. To them, truth is individual and personal, therefore truth is experience, i.e. if you have experienced it, then you know it is true. Such thinking gave rise to the philosophy, “If it feels good, do it,” a perception that opened doors to all kinds of extreme behaviour and licentiousness.

The Rising Interest In Spirituality

Post modernism also birthed dissatisfaction with materialism and a fresh search for spiritual enlightenment and experience. The idea was revived that true satisfaction and fulfilment lay not in things material, but in things spiritual. Thousands turned to

Eastern religions, trekking through Asia, adopting gurus, experimenting with drugs, and engaging in meditation. A New Age was born in religious perception, as millions of people embraced new toys of supposed spiritual experience. Crystals, beads, aromatherapy, relaxation music and a host of other gimmicks have become big business in the Western world.

The Power Of Personal Testimony

The post-modernist, who is experience oriented, is often eager to hear the personal experience of a Christian. When a person's first hand experience is recounted there are often certain factors that are very hard to deny. It is an excellent idea to write out one's testimony in order to familiarise yourself with important aspects of it. It can then be delivered more convincingly with particular emphasis on aspects that may be especially interesting to the other person. This is particularly true when the background of both persons is somewhat similar. When the Christian witness can say, "Mine was a similar experience. I went through that particular problem. This is what Christ meant to me in that same situation."

What Should The Church Do?

The church must firstly recognise the reality of post-modernistic thought. Whether we approve or not, it is here, and it is dominating the thoughts and actions of millions of people.

Secondly we ought to realise that it indicates a great hunger for spiritual experience and reality. A hunger that the church generally is not catering to. The contemporary church has largely abandoned spiritual experience in favour of intellectual rationale. Christianity has largely become a religion of the intellect, rather than an experience of the heart. Whilst millions are hungry for spiritual experience, many churches are still advocating an intellectual appreciation.

True Christianity is infinitely more than the intellectual acceptance of certain historic happenings. It is far more than a religious philosophy to which we give mental assent. Christianity is a personal, spiritual, life changing experience that happens in response to a commitment to God, by faith in Jesus Christ's atoning work for mankind.

So our God given task is not to introduce people to the church as an institution, but to bring them to a faith encounter with the living Christ. They need more than a doctrine in which to believe, they need a living, personal Saviour to live within them.

Looking For Openings

Although most cultures surround and imprison their the subjects, if we look carefully we can discover entry points through which we can gain access into the lives of its peoples. Though many cultures are like prison strongholds, all of them have vulnerable points through which one can gain entrance if the right tactics are employed.

If we carefully observe the culture of those people we wish to reach, we can usually discover a means of entry to them. These do not eventuate through criticising various aspects of the culture, pointing out its weaknesses and flaws. They do not open up

under the pressure of a direct attack upon them. They usually give way to the patient, persistent, sensitive and loving probing of someone who genuinely wishes to understand and help those persons.

Frontal attacks rarely gain access, we need to employ the art of surrounding the target with genuine, unconditional love. The most resistant heart may eventually give way to gentle insistence, accompanied by faithful prayer and intercession.

Contextualising The Gospel

To contextualise something is to clothe it in a garb appropriate to the society to which it is presented. To present something in a manner that is acceptable to the circumstances, setting, and environment of the situation.

The Apostle Paul was obviously extremely conscious of the wisdom of doing this, viz.

1 Cor 9:19 -23.

“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” (NIV)

The Love Of Christ Motivated Him

2 Cor 5:14

“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.” (NIV)

The Authorised version says,

2 Cor 5:14.

“The Love of Christ constrains -“Sunecho” us.” The word means absorbs, compels, motivates me.

Paul’s realisation that “Christ died for ALL” completely absorbed his interest and attention. It captivated, compelled and motivated him to go to any length, suffer any inconvenience, adopt any measure, that by some means he might win ALL to Christ.

For example, the Gospel should be presented to Jewish persons in a manner that is inoffensive to the ethics of Judaism. The Christian message does not deny the Torah (Law) or the Tenaach, (Jewish Bible) it amplifies and fulfils them. Jesus Himself was an observant Jew. We could confess to a Jewish person our appreciation for Jesus the Jew, and tell them how much we Christians owe to the Jewish people. Our spiritual inheritance comes through them.

Rom 9:4-5

“the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

“Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” (NIV)

When we endeavour to effectively communicate with a Muslim person, we should carefully avoid anything that is offensive to a Muslim. Nothing would be gained from launching an attack upon Islam, pointing out its errors and fallacies, even if we were able to do so. It is so possible to win an argument and lose a contact and opportunity. Much is gained from reaching out in friendship and love.

Unfortunately, many missionary efforts have been initiated in the West and have been contextualised with Western trappings that have been presented as “Christian.” It has therefore appeared that Christianity is a white man’s, Western religion. It has also been further perceived that in order to become a true Christian one must almost inevitably adopt Western culture. Such a concept is far from the truth. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is for all men everywhere. It is international and cosmic in its application. It is abundantly possible for a person to become a bona fide Christian without renouncing or forsaking their nationality identity or native culture, except for those issues that evolve from false religious ideology.

Emphasise Comparisons, Not Contrasts

Obviously there are considerable contrasts between various cultural emphases, ideologies and religions, but there are also many similarities. If we initially emphasise the dissimilarities we run the risk of alienating ourselves from the community we desire to influence. But if we are able to compare the similarities and discover ways in which to commend the other person’s perspective, we build a bridge of mutual esteem that we are able to use for further contact, dialogue and relationship building.

If we are witnessing to a person of another Faith, e.g. a Jew, Muslim, or Buddhist, there are obviously numerous aspects of their belief system with which we could not agree. Nevertheless, if we approach them with the right attitude, there are also numerous things for which we may sincerely commend them too. e.g.

- 1) The person’s sincerity.
- 2) Their commitment.
- 3) Their search for truth.
- 4) Their moral and ethical standards.

There are also various things we may favourably compare with our Christian beliefs. By doing so we establish some common ground. We see each other as fellow pilgrims with some similar purposes. When we look favourably upon our contact, he is more inclined to be open to us.

All of these considerations are intended to build the initial bridge of communication. Opportunities to discover each other. To establish mutual respect. To build mutual credibility. To convey the sincerity of our motive in making contact with this person.

They are all initial stages in a process that will ultimately enable us to share Christ with them.

Every person, regardless of race, religion or culture, is a fellow human being with personal needs and aspirations that only Christ can meet. Every person has a God shaped vacuum in their life that only Christ can adequately fill. If we initially approach this person with genuine interest and concern, we can win the opportunity to speak into their life. By sharing your personal experience of how you came to know God, receive the assurance of His forgiveness, experience His eternal peace, you can create an envy within them. A desire to encounter what you have experienced, to have what you possess.

Understand The Multiple Emphases Of Post-Modernism

Since the post-modernist does not believe that truth is absolute, he may conceive that there are numerous emphases, religions and philosophies, each of which is true to some degree. Their perception is that all religions lead to God. To emphatically claim initially that there is only one true "Faith" may be unacceptable to his perception and may cause unnecessary argument and contention. Every person on earth is, to a large degree, a product of their culture, nurture and environment. In a sense they are "captives" of their cultural and religious heritage. Quite often what they know is all they know. Consequently they will naturally defend and justify their cultural identity. For a relative stranger to criticise and negate their culture is usually to initiate some measure of hostility and misunderstanding. This is certainly not conducive to positive or productive dialogue. It certainly will not help in establishing a good relationship.

It is far better to demonstrate the unconditional love of Christ than to preach about it! It is better to initially build a relationship and affinity. Perhaps even finding some way to sincerely commend them and their belief system, and then proceed to the claim that Jesus is THE way, the truth, and the life. In doing this one can begin by affirming the person irrespective of their culture or religion. This can often be assisted by demonstrating some concept of respect and admiration for the person's culture etc.

I have always been grateful that soon after our arrival in Southern Africa I was able to be-friend a (then) young African preacher. We were then living in an area in which many missionaries lived. I was very shocked one day when my preacher friend remarked that "he could count on one hand the number of missionaries he knew who truly loved the African people." Initially I argued with him protesting that all the missionaries had made great sacrifices to be in Africa, leaving friends, loved ones and their home countries in order to become missionaries. I asked my friend, "By what criteria do you make such a claim?" His reply was, "By the degree by which the missionary recognises and respects the validity of our African culture." His observation was that too many missionaries remained "Westernised", obviously believing that Western Culture is in every way advanced and superior. African culture was only seen to be inferior and therefore all Christians should become Westernised. He illustrated this by showing me how widely the cultures vary in many aspects and how that many sincere missionaries were totally oblivious of those differences. He showed me how easy it is to unconsciously offend a person of another culture by ignoring or rejecting certain values of one's culture.

Once such an offence occurs it may be difficult or even impossible to build a true relationship with that person.

The basic lessons I learned from my African friend have since helped me in many other regions of the world. For example, most Asian people feel the same about their culture. However, they are slow to make this known. They may smile at you outwardly yet inwardly be offended by thoughtless words or actions that convey a lack of real interest and true respect for their native culture. Ambassadors should make a real effort to become acquainted with the cultural implications of their associates. Even the smallest signs of respect for another's culture are respected and appreciated. Learning how to greet people in the language and style of their own culture is one small yet immensely helpful indication of respect. Eating local foods in the local manner and observing local customs is yet another small way.

I was once teaching at a Christian leadership seminar in a predominantly Buddhist nation. During the tea break, between sessions, I slipped out of the hall for a breath of fresh air. I was immediately approached by a fine looking, intelligent, well dressed young man. "Excuse me sir," he said, "Do you speak English? If so, may I talk with you to practice my English?"

I discovered that he was a university student and that English was one of his subjects. We spoke generally for some time, establishing a measure of rapport. I then asked him about his religious beliefs and he told me what I already suspected, that he was a Buddhist. I then began to commend him for the sincerity with which he embraced his faith. I also mentioned that I have studied the tenets of Buddhism and felt there were many aspects that were good. However, I went on to say that although Buddhism afforded much self help in terms of ethical thought and belief, it did not include the required emphasis to bring the intervention of God into a life threatening situation.

I then mentioned something of the authority of the name of Jesus and suggested that he needed to remember this name in case he reached one of life's extremities when he really need help beyond the natural. I shared my testimony about numerous times when I had called out to God in the name of Jesus and asked him if he would do likewise should such a situation arise. He sincerely assured me that he would! My next suggestion was that since he intended to do this when he needed help, why not do it now and be prepared before such trouble might arise? After some consideration he said that he would like to do that. We stood together, on the pavement of a busy Asian city street, while he prayed a prayer for salvation in the name of Jesus. he left me with a decided glow on his face and a wide smile. The whole exercise had taken approximately twenty minutes. I am not suggesting that he was "born again," or dramatically converted from Buddhism to Christianity in those few minutes, but I am encouraged by the thought that he heard the Christian message in a manner that was very understandable and convincing to him. The sensitive manner in which it was presented served as a demonstration of the love of which I spoke. The seed was well sown and gladly received. He experienced a brief encounter with the Holy Spirit. A word from God entered his spirit and the Holy Spirit has something to work on within Him.

Chapter Two

Does God's House Have A Veranda?

John 14:2

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. (NIV)

Many Christians are extremely "heaven oriented." They are also very excited at the prospect of having a "mansion" in heaven. Much of this is due to the unfortunate translation of the Greek word "mone" which is incorrectly rendered "mansions."

The word "mone" occurs only twice in the Bible, both occasions being in this chapter. The first is in

John 14:2

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (KJV)

The second occurrence is in

John 14:23

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (KJV)

Mone simply means, residence or abiding place. There is little justification to imply mansion, especially with the idea of lavish opulence and splendour that the concept of a mansion creates. Some Christians have even had dreams and visions of their "mansion." They have seen themselves enthroned in the most expensive and elaborate mansion imaginable. Unfortunately for them, the translation of mone in V.23. i.e. "abode," is much closer to reality. The glory of heaven will not be seen in the heavenly mansions, but in the heavenly Lord of glory, the Lamb of God whose radiance will eternally illuminate the city of God.

HEAVEN IS NOT OUR PRIMARY GOAL

Despite the emphasis of many Christians, the Bible proves that "going to heaven" is not our primary or most important goal. It is not the main reason why God redeemed us. Our initial redemptive purposes are to be achieved here on earth. They are :-

- 1) To grow up into the likeness of Christ.
- 2) To achieve spiritual maturity.
- 3) To produce fruit that will remain. (John 15:16)

For the moment, let us leave the idea of the Father's house in heaven and turn our attention to the Father's house on earth.

God has a family in heaven and earth

Eph 3:14-15

"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name." (NIV)

Heb 3:6

“But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.” (NIV)

All Christians Are Members Of His Household

Eph 2:19

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,” (NIV)

New Believers Are Adopted Into God's Family

Every new believer is baptised into the Body of Christ, and adopted into His family. They become members of the household of faith and are built up together to become a dwelling in which God lives on earth. (Eph 2:22)

Eph 2:21-22

“In whom all the building ‘fitly framed together’ groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (KJV)

Notice that it is those believers who are “*fitly framed together,*” who continually grow by the addition of new believers. (see Eph 4:16)

It is also those churches that are fitly framed together in which God makes His habitation.

The Church Is God's House On Earth

Eph 2:21-22

“In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (NIV)

In That House There Are Many Rooms. John 14:2. N.I.V.

One of the reasons why a house may have many rooms is because each room is meant to have a specific function. For example, the kitchen, lounge room, bedroom, laundry, all have a distinct and separate functions. Should a stranger visit your home, you would usually entertain him on the Veranda. For instance, if a sales person calls on you, it may seem wisest to speak with them on the Veranda initially. You may afterwards invite him into the lounge. You would never invite a stranger into the bedroom. It has a special function that is not appropriate for a casual visitor.

The church should also have several “rooms.” (I am speaking figuratively now) Each room should have a separate function. There ought to be a room suitable for receiving non-church persons. This should be a non threatening room that makes them feel relaxed and at ease. Perhaps we could call this area the Veranda. A place which is very open and visible. An area into which a stranger will feel free to enter without committing themselves to anything, they don't feel trapped or snared. They can see their way of escape should they feel they need it.

The “Long Houses” Of The Iban People

The “long houses” peculiar to several Asian countries, provide a good illustration of this. Each long house has a common Veranda that stretches the length of the building.

A visitor to any family in the long house must first step up on to the Veranda. It is here that the visitor will be met initially. The first contacts will be made here. It is an area that is open to the outside view, a kind of “middle ground,” where both parties feel relaxed and at ease.

God's Household
God's Veranda The Middle Ground
The non-Christian World

In our paradigm, the middle ground is the area between God's household and the non-Christian world. It is a neutral zone, in which persons from both communities may meet without fear or embarrassment. I like to perceive it as God's Veranda, the middle ground where Jesus pursued most of His evangelistic ministry. An area He wants us to occupy and capture for His purposes.

The Veranda is a common meeting ground where saints and sinners can meet and mingle and both may feel relaxed and happy. What are some of the things that both Christians and non-Christians desire? Some of the common goals they share? Here are a few :-

- Meeting and making new friends
- Unconditional love and acceptance
- Friendship, companionship, brotherhood, social intimacy, mutual esteem, comradeship.
- Social activity and friendly inter-action
- Community togetherness, personal closeness, fellow feeling.
- Community meals. Acts 2:42. “they ate their meals with gladness.”
- Personal recognition and appreciation
- Genuine learning experiences
- Joy filled activities
- Enjoyable and stimulating music
- The meeting of basic personal felt needs
- Spiritual fulfilment and experience

These are a few of the common interests that both Christian and non-Christian people appreciate and enjoy. Can you envisage the potential of Christian instigated activities, enacted on the middle ground of God's Veranda, where some or all of the features are available?

Seizing The Middle Ground

The area between two communities may be seen as “the middle ground.” It is a kind of no man's land, existing between the communities, -owned by neither of them. It is also a common ground, where neither party has any special advantage. Both feel to be on equal terms. Such areas exist between Christian and non-Christian communities

and the church needs to discover these areas and move into them in order to effectively communicate with the Christless world. Jesus was fully aware of these areas. He constantly met and dealt with people on the common areas of middle ground. He preached and ministered mostly in open air, public places and rarely ever had a captive audience in a setting similar to a traditional church. He went out, into the highways and byways, to meet the people on their own territory.

The Woman Of Samaria

Jesus usually contrived to meet people on this middle ground, He met people on their own territory, where they felt most comfortable. He met the woman of Samaria at the well of Sychar at mid day, when everyone one else was indoors to escape the mid day sun. She had obviously visited the well at that time to avoid meeting other people. Jesus respected her desire for privacy by confronting her alone at this place that she frequented very often.

Nicodemus

Jesus met with Nicodemus at night, (John 3:2) when darkness covered their rendezvous. Nicodemus obviously chose this time because, as a Pharisee, seeking to know more about Jesus, he wanted his initial contact to remain a secret. Jesus did not despise this attitude. He shared with Nicodemus His tremendous sermon on the New Birth.

Later we discover that Nicodemus stood up for Jesus and spoke on his behalf. John 7: 50,51.

Still later he brought expensive spices to anoint the body of Jesus. John 19:39.

The initial contact was made under the cover of darkness, but there is nothing to indicate that his subsequent contacts were kept secret.

Methods Change, Objectives Remain The Same

We Christians tend to forget how intimidating and strange a church environment can seem to a non church person. We become so accustomed to the religious routines that we imagine everyone feels the same. We forget that there was a time when we too felt strange in church and amongst Christians.

We should endeavour to understand how bland our church meetings may appear to a person unaccustomed to them. Try to see things through their eyes. We should be sensitive to their situation and endeavour to organise events in which they will feel at ease. Warmth, friendship and informality can help to achieve this.

Evangelistic meetings in particular should be “seeker conscious,” utilising events at which people feel extremely welcome and very comfortable. This usually entails modifying the religious content and emphasising the spiritual. It also means dispensing with old fashioned, obsolete, religious traditions that have become irrelevant to the realities of modern life and perception. Much of the church is stuck in a swamp of antiquated religious tradition, particularly in respect of music, liturgies and worship styles. It has been wrongly perceived that all contemporary music is sacrilegious. That anything with a modern tempo is carnal. Consequently much of our

music and worship is old fashioned and does not communicate with our contemporary generation.

Seeker Sensitive Services

In recent years numerous churches have begun to conduct “Seeker Services.” Church services that are structured to be sensitive to the perspective of non-church persons who are seeking for truth and life. Some of these churches have successfully conducted contemporary programs in which the Gospel has been presented in a manner that has been non-religious and suitable for modern minded persons from all walks of life.

Some of these have involved stage and music presentations that have utilised all kinds of modern media technology.

Obviously it may not be possible, (nor desirable) for smaller churches to try to emulate this model. They may lack the appropriate facilities, the man power, and the finances required to achieve such presentations. This does NOT mean that they still cannot conduct services that are tuned to the perception of non-church persons who are open to receive spiritual truth.

Church services that are intended to reach and influence the non-converted should be structured with the target audience in view. Try to “sit where they sit” and imagine what you would feel comfortable with if you were in their place. What are some of the features we should bear in mind when trying to reach and persuade such persons? The services should be :-

Cultural Authenticity

True Christianity is NOT a Western religion. Its truth is universally appropriate. It should never seem necessary for any person to abandon their cultural identity in order to become a “Christian.” Kingdom culture can enhance the culture of any society. Everyone should have the opportunity to hear the Gospel without having to cross any language or cultural barrier.

Religiously Appropriate

Our presentation of the Christian Gospel should be appropriate to the religious environment of those we are seeking to reach. It is foolish to deliberately and unnecessarily offend the religious ethics of our target population. This will only create animosity and separation from our potential audience. We need to lovingly and graciously penetrate the population, as Jesus did. He said :-

Matt 10:16

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”
(KJV)

SEEKER ORIENTED SERVICES

Should be :-	Rather than :-
Informal	Formal
Joyful	Conservative
Friendly	Institutional
Free	Restrained
Positive	Negative
Relevant	Irrelevant
Contemporary	Archaic

Music Is A Powerful Medium

Every culture group confirms that music is immensely powerful and influential. The place of music in the Bible attests the importance of it in the history of God's covenant peoples. It has frequently been used by God to assist the accomplishment of His purposes. Music was a prominent art in ancient biblical times and in the life and history of Israel and the early church.

Its use at a religious ceremony first occurs in Exodus 15:1-20, when Miriam and her maidens celebrated God's victory over Pharaoh.

The digging of the wells was celebrated in song. Num 21:17,18.

Deborah and Barak celebrated their great victory in song. Judges 5: 1-31.

King David was greeted with joyful songs after his victory over Goliath. 1 Sam 18: 6,7.

Israel's army was led by a choir. 2 Chron 20:21.

The "songs of Zion" were famous. Psa 137:3.

It was only when Israel were in captivity and bondage that they laid aside their harps and refused to sing. Psa 137: 1-3.

The theme of music, with instruments, song and dance, runs through the entire Bible climaxing in Revelation with huge choirs that could not be numbered, singing anthems of praise to Jehovah.

Music is still a tremendously powerful medium today. Millions of people are influenced by various kinds of music. Portable radios and walk-men make music continuously available to the earth's masses. Their ears are sub-consciously adjusted to the subliminal messages of music. But the church has largely failed to properly utilise this powerful medium by refusing to remain contemporary. Someone has asked this pertinent question, "Why should the Devil have all the good music?" Why should we capitulate to the Devil, allowing him almost sole use of this powerfully influential medium? Certainly we do not wish to use his music. God has plenty of His own and

we need to creatively tune into it so that we can reach the masses with this medium that Satan has usurped to his own advantage.

The music world is a “Veranda,” where the world’s millions congregate. We should not leave them to Satan to influence at his will. We ought to climb on to that Veranda and touch the masses with the music of heaven.

Seize The Initiative

The middle ground lies neutral between God’s kingdom and the kingdoms of this world. It can be occupied by either of these peoples. Unfortunately the church has too frequently surrendered and forfeited its access and opportunities to occupy that area, allowing the world to bring its influence right up to the door of the church and effectively imprisoning the Christians within their buildings.

I believe that God wants His church to seize the initiative. Refuse to be isolated in an ivory tower. Go forth from the constricted confines of the institutional church pattern and take the message of the Gospel on to the middle ground where we can meet the people face to face on neutral territory.

We need to meet people where they are. In their offices and executive buildings. In their clubs and places of relaxation. In their social and family circles. Wherever they choose to congregate. Let us not cede that territory to the enemy, but invade and possess it for God and His Kingdom.

God wants to annex the middle ground and build His Veranda there. He wants His people to emerge from hiding in the bed room and begin to display and demonstrate their Kingdom life style on the Veranda where they can be observed and hopefully envied by a non-Christian neighbourhood.

Chapter Three

Jesus, A Cross Cultural Communicator

John 4: 4-34.

When Jesus undertook His “search and rescue mission” to Samaria, He carefully observed all the ground rules of effective cross-cultural communication. He was very aware of the cultural differences and hostility that existed between Jews and Samaritans. In His approach and dialogue He in no way ignored the cultural implications of the meeting. Jesus recognised and respected every persons cultural values.

In all His contacts with those He sought to win, Jesus sensitively applied the basic principles of cross-cultural communication. As an “evangelist”, He was constantly aware of the need to reach across the cultural divides. If He did so, how much more do we? Every encounter we experience as a Christian, is a cross-cultural encounter. Church members today often live in a totally different world to their unsaved associates and therefore find it difficult to communicate effectively with them. We always need to be culture-conscious, understanding the cultural implications of our neighbours situation. Jesus never ignored the cultural identity of people to whom He ministered and neither should we. To do so is to isolate ourselves and severely restrict our ability to effectively communicate to our neighbour.

Definitions:

CULTURE: The common links of history, language, race, customs, religion, traditions and behaviour patterns of an ethnic people group. Comprised largely of their traditions, skills, art, rites and religious perspectives.

CULTURE SHOCK: The surprise, confusion and alienation experienced when confronting a different culture. This can have a powerful sometimes devastating effect on unsuspecting people. However, one can never experience integration and acceptance into another’s cultural community until this is successfully overcome. Alienation from a culture will inevitable cause a lack of acceptance by that community.

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: Effective communication across cultural divides. Jesus demonstrated genuine enculturation through His incarnation. Though Divine in nature He completely identified with mankind in His humanity. He integrated so perfectly into humanity that it required powerful spiritual revelation to enable anyone to recognise that He was not truly human. In a similar manner Christians need to identify with their neighbours in order to influence them and hopefully win them to Christ.

1: Christ’s Divine Constraint.

“He must needs go through Samaria”.

God had appointed an encounter for Him. Since Jesus was in tune with His Father’s will, He inwardly knew that He was supposed to go through Samaria. As we stay in tune with God, we will learn to recognize His gentle leadings that often come as a quiet nudge in our spirit.

2: Jesus Overcame.

A: Geographical distance

His desire to serve God and do the Father's will caused Him to ignore the inconvenience and dangers of travelling a long distance through hostile territory.

B: Cultural differences

The Jews and Samaritans had many cultural differences and there was considerable hostility between their societies. Jesus knew that if He were to effectively influence the person and community to whom God was sending him, He would need to overcome much cultural prejudice.

C: Religious prejudices

It is a sad but true fact that religious beliefs often engender many prejudices and divisions in society. Jesus, an observant Jew and recognized by many of His fellow men as a Rabbi, was well aware of this. Nevertheless, He steadfastly determined to overcome any such prejudice and successfully convey God's heart to this community.

D: Historic ethnic prejudice

Many nations are tragically divided by historic ethnic prejudice. This is dramatically illustrated by the tragic situation that has long prevailed in Yugoslavia, where men and women are still killing each other because of past historic events of deep prejudice that their ethnic communities have suffered.

E: Rationale and logic

It was not logical for Jesus, an observant Jew, to go through Samaria. His fellow Jews generally chose to travel by a much longer, but less dangerous route through the Jordan valley. However, he was perfectly willing to ignore the dictates of logic in order to reach and penetrate an alien community.

3: Some Further Obstacles

Jesus faced innumerable problems in reaching this woman of Samaria.

A: A Woman

The Talmud explicitly forbade public contact with women, even one's wife or daughter. It was regarded as a shameful matter for a Jewish man to be seen in public in the company of a member of the opposite sex. Jesus did not lightly disregard this tradition.

B: Samaritan

The Jews and Samaritans of that day had no "Synchronotai" - dealings, association, or alliance with one another.

C: Possibly Of Loose Reputation

Visiting the well at noonday, when most people were engaged in siesta could have indicated that she was a woman of dubious morals. Prostitutes often frequented the public well to solicit lovers. Jesus commented on the fact that she had been married five times but was presently living with a man who was not her husband. Yet how gently He broached this matter, for He had not come to condemn her, but to save her.

It was a difficult situation for Jesus to be seen speaking with such a woman, yet he risked the criticism and wrath of any spectators, engaging her in lengthy discussion.

4: Jesus' Methodology

A: His Approach Was Friendly, Non-Aggressive, Disarming

Although Jesus knew everything about this woman, including her dubious moral life, He did not approach her in a superior, judgmental, or condemnatory manner. He did not convey any sense of moral or social outrage but presented Himself in an irresistible way.

B: He Did Not Evidence Superiority Or Disdain

The attitude of Jesus, in His approach to her, did not convey the idea that he was vastly superior to her and that she should be ashamed to be in His presence.

C: He Requested Her Assistance

Making Himself vulnerable, placing Himself at her mercy and risking the embarrassing possibility of her rejection. His request was a two fold one. Firstly, it was a genuine request. After a long walk in the heat of the day, He was obviously both tired and thirsty. Secondly He wished to open up a natural topic from which he could proceed to a spiritual truth. This was rather like the tactic He employed through the use of parables which were heavenly stories with earthly meanings.

D: He Uncovered A Mutual Point Of Interest

The appearance of this woman at the well, indicated her need for water, so Jesus told her of His thirst to convey to her that they both had a common need. This manner of approach often sets people at ease because they both recognize that they have some things in common.

E: He Bridged The Cultural Gap Through Incarnational Principles. Phil 2:5-8.

He humbled himself. He laid aside His own desires. He became obedient, submissive to God's Will.

He was absorbed into culture of those to whom sent, just as Paul willingly became all things to all men. 1 Cor 9: 19-23.

F: He Ignored Religious Tradition

It was the Talmud, not the Bible that forbade public conversation with women. The Talmud is a religious commentary written by men and as such is not divinely inspired as is the Bible. So Jesus did not disregard God's Word, but He did ignore the religious traditions of men. So much of modern Christian prejudice does not occur because of Biblical principle but from false religious traditions of men.

G: He Aroused Her Curiosity

Curiosity is an inquisitive urge to investigate something that is unusual and difficult to understand. Once a person's curiosity is aroused, they will usually not rest until it is satisfied. This trait can be used to draw people into an investigation that will not end until they discover spiritual truth.

H: He Exercised A Word Of Knowledge

Through this manifestation of a Word of knowledge, Jesus could see into her past including the five husbands she had married and the fact that she was currently living with a man to whom she was not married. He frequently used such gifts to assist Him in relating to various persons.

I: He Did Not Criticize Or Attack Her Religion

Religion is one of the most powerful subjects upon which to start an argument but arguments rarely ever settle a matter. Someone has said that it is very possible to “win an argument and lose a soul.”

Never set your God against theirs. Try to compare rather religious beliefs rather than contrast them. Avoid religious controversy.

J: He Ignored Her Sarcasm. V.15

Sarcasm is usually intended to mock, belittle, or insult someone. It is usually used by people who are on the defensive and want to hit back. If one is not careful, sarcasm can bring out the worst in a person. A Christian should never resort to sarcasm nor ever allow themselves to be rattled by it.

K: He Did Not Judge Her Moral Condition Or Condemn Her

John 3:17-18

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (NIV)

John 8:10-11

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (KJV)

L: He Made A Transition From Natural To Spiritual

Jesus frequently introduced natural topics from which He could easily bring spiritual truths. Commencing a conversation on a theme with which your listener is familiar is the best way to win their attention. Speak firstly about something about which they are informed and then lead on to matters with which they are not conversant. Use natural events to introduce spiritual truths.

M: He Revealed Himself, (Jesus) To Her

Jesus actually spoke to the woman seven times before He finally revealed to her who He was. (v.26) By this time He had aroused her curiosity, arrested her attention, established a measure of rapport, and undoubtedly gained her confidence. This illustrates the wisdom of not immediately rushing into a discussion of spiritual truth but rather paving the way for such through normal, everyday conversation.

N: He Gently Brought Her To A Confession That He Was Christ, The Messiah

John 4:25-26

25 *The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."*

26 *Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." (NIV)*

John 4:28-30

28 *Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,*

29 *"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"*

30 *They came out of the town and made their way toward him. (NIV)*

Her meeting with Christ and her subsequent conversion created a revival in the community.

John 4:39-42

39 *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."*

40 *So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.*

41 *And because of his words many more became believers.*

42 *They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (NIV)*

5: Things That Excited Her Interest

A: Who Jesus Was?

Revealing the Incomparable Christ.

Many people who are not interested in traditional Christianity or in the church, are fascinated with the person of Jesus. So our purpose should be to introduce people to a real, living person, JESUS CHRIST.

We should avoid promoting religion and simply proclaim Jesus, introducing Him as a friend and Savior who loves them intensely and wants to enrich their life in every aspect.

B: What The Gift Of God Is? Rom 6:23

23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV)*

The Bible speaks of "tasting", i.e, touching, sensing, sampling, coming into contact with, the power (life force) of the world to come.

Heb 6:5

5 *who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, (NIV)*

It is therefore possible, by sharing the goodness of God through His Word, to bring people to an experiential encounter with the 'powers of the coming age.' This can

often happen as you pray with a person. You may ask a person with whom you are sharing, "Do you mind if I pray with you?" Having gained their consent, discreetly lay your hand upon them as a point of communication and fervently pray for them. The power of God will usually come on them and they will consciously be made aware of it. In doing so they will "taste the powers of the coming age", and experience spiritual reality. This can be an extremely convincing factor in your endeavor to share God with them.

C: What Is Living Water? John 7:37-39.

John 7:37-39

37 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.*

38 *Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

39 *By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (NIV)*

Jesus makes it clear that drinking the living water is partaking of the Holy Spirit. Once again the person is being exposed to a spiritual experience of the Spirit's power in a manner that is convincing and unforgettable.

D: Spiritual Worship

John 4:23-24

23 *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*

24 *God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (NIV)*

- a: God is a Spirit.
- b: He is a person.
- c: He has a father nature.
- d: He may be worshipped anywhere.

Jesus again emphasizes the importance of the spiritual dimension in contrast to the natural essence of religious belief. Christianity is not a religious system, it is a spiritual experience. Part of that experience is reconciliation with God in a spiritual dimension. This makes it possible for a person to discover the reality of the true spiritual worship of God.

6: His Ministry Prepared The Way For Subsequent Revival.

John 4:39-42

39 *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."*

40 *So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.*

41 *And because of his words many more became believers.*

42 *They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (NIV)*

Acts 8:5-8

5 *Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.*

6 *When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.*

7 *With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed.*

8 *So there was great joy in that city. (NIV)*

7: This Model Will Work Today

A: It Has A Continuous Contemporary Application

The principles that Jesus employed are appropriate at all times. A sensitive awareness of a person's cultural lifestyle and a sincere endeavor to respect that person, will always pave a way to effective communication.

B: It Is Culturally Authentic

True Christianity can fit into any culture group. The true Gospel espouses the Kingdom Culture, demonstrating its superiority and desirability above all other cultural styles.

C: It Is Universally Applicable. Jesus, -Savior Of The World

Unfortunately many people view Christianity as a Western, white man's religion. This could not be further from the truth.

Christianity was birthed in the Middle East, not in the West. Jesus was a Middle Eastern Jew, NOT a white Anglo Saxon. He is the Savior of the whole world, a redeemer for all peoples.

Chapter Four

Our Greatest Example

1: Jesus Had A Real Love For Sinners

1 Tim 1:15

15. How true it is, and how I long that everyone should know it, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-and I was the greatest of them all. TLB

Jesus constantly demonstrated the genuine nature of His love for sinners. Such love can only be due to the presence of Christ within us. If we ensure that we always remain sensitive to the Christ life within us, we shall see people through His eyes and feel for them with His compassion.

The Gospel narratives of His life make it clear that He enjoyed and expressed a genuine and deep love for those who were the less fortunate of life. He was constantly sought after by people who were the rejects of their society. They obviously knew that He would never refuse them. He had a reputation for loving the unlovable and receiving the outcasts.

2: He Was Genuinely Interested In People

One of the clues that tells us much about Christ, is His attitude towards children and their love for Him. On occasions when His disciples would have discouraged them from coming to Christ, He rebuked the disciples and received the children.

Matt 19:13-14

13 Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (NIV)

Children are often extremely perceptive about people. They sense when those persons are genuinely interested in them and when the apparent interest is merely a pretence.

In a similar fashion, the rejects of society are quick to sense the difference between sincerity and pretence. Many, whom the religious leaders criticized and condemned, were received and justified by Jesus

If we are to be fruitful in the ministry of bringing people to Christ we must develop a genuine interest in our fellow man. Spend time with them. Talk with them. Listen to their tales of woe. Learn to understand appreciate their perspective. Try to enter in to their lives and experience. Endeavor to feel what they feel.

3: He Did Not Condemn People

John 3:17-18

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (NIV)

John 8:10-11

10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

11. "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (NIV)

4: He Always Sought To Commend People

John 4:17

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: (KJV)

Although Jesus knew the turbulent background of this woman's moral life, He seized upon something for which He could honestly commend her. He commended her for telling the truth. There were many things about which He might have rebuked her, but He chose to commend her for acknowledging the truth. This was all part of the process of gaining her interest and confidence in order to bring her to an ultimate knowledge of the truth.

5: He Was Perfectly Natural

Jesus never evidenced any religious affectation or pretence. His approach to non-believers was always very natural. His initial contact was usually on some natural theme with which they were very familiar. Most people are put off by religious affectation. They sense that it is not genuine and real. They relate much more readily to someone they perceive to be on their own wave length. We should always endeavor to be "spiritually natural and naturally spiritual".

6: He Used Every Day Language

Jesus communicated in simple every day language. It is said that the common, average, ordinary people heard Him gladly. They appreciated His simplicity. They understood His meaning. He spoke their language.

Mark 12:37 David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son? **And the common people heard him gladly.** (ASV)

It was also said that He did not teach in the manner employed by the Scribes, the religious teachers of the day.

Mark 1:22 And they were astonished at his teaching: For he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. (ASV)

7: He Was Always Prepared

Jesus was never caught unprepared. Whatever situation or person confronted Him, He always had the right words to say. He apparently seized every opportunity to share His message. We also should always be prepared. ¹ Pet 3:15 *But in your*

hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, (NIV)

8: He Spoke With Kindness, But With Authority

It seems obvious that although Jesus always spoke in a kindly manner, He never compromised the truth. He spoke from a heart of love, but He always spoke the truth and nothing but the truth. His meeting with the woman of Samaria is a fine example of this. His approach to her was friendly and non-condemnatory but when the time was appropriate He gently let her know that He was aware of her stormy marital past and present situation. We are also instructed and encouraged to always speak the truth in love. Eph 4:15-16 *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (KJV)*

9: He Respected Everyone's Person

Jesus frequently angered the Pharisees by consorting and fraternizing with "publicans and sinners". They often rebuked and reprimanded Him because of the dubious company He kept at times. Even when confronted with notable sinners, He never demeaned or belittled them. When the "woman of the city" (Luke 7:37) came to the Pharisee's house to hear Jesus, the Pharisees were scornful of her and spoke of her in a derogative manner, but Jesus commended her for washing His feet with her tears. He forgave her and encouraged her to, "Go in the peace of the Lord".

10: He Never Regarded Any Case As Hopeless

Christ met and mingled with some of the lowest sinners but never regarded any of them as hopeless or beyond the reach of redemption. He extended the hand of friendship to them all and spoke words of love and encouragement to them. We should never shun anyone because they are sinners. We should never hold ourselves aloof from those for whom Christ came and died.

His Approach To People.

1: He Endeavored To Get Them Alone

It is extremely interesting to note that many of Christ's greatest teachings were addressed to an audience of one. The woman of Samaria is one such case, as is Nicodemus, the rich young ruler and many others. Many people become extremely sensitive when the Holy Spirit begins to probe their inner life. This can be embarrassing for them if other people are present to hear and observe this. It may cause the person to be less than completely honest and may inhibit them from making so personal and important a decision. Some persons find it difficult to express interest in spiritual matters if there are skeptics present. Particularly if those skeptics are their peers who may be unsympathetic and scornful of spiritual issues. It is therefore usually better if the person can be dealt with personally and alone. The encounter will often prove more fruitful. Paul obviously used this approach too.

viz, Gal 2:22 I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. (NIV)

2: He Discovered Their Interests

Jesus usually initiated a conversation on a topic with which His contact was familiar. He obviously observed people carefully, and sensitively deduced which things were interesting and important to them. He then tended to open the conversation on those topics. This afforded Him a common ground with them and established a rapport. He then skillfully guided the conversation to a spiritual parallel, thus gaining an immediate interest. This paved the way for deeper truths and for spiritual conclusions.

3: He Identified Himself With Them

“The friend of sinners”. Many Christians seem to find it difficult to relate to non-Christians, particularly those who are perceived to be “sinners”. In their sincere pursuit of Christian growth and development they tend to lose contact with non-Christians. They forget how to relate to them. Some Christians even develop a “holier than you” attitude, afraid to “soil their garments” through contact with non-believers. Unfortunately this attitude is often the result of religious pride which is actually an abomination to God. Jesus demonstrates how to maintain one’s spiritual integrity without isolating one’s self from productive contacts with non-believers. Some religious Pharisees scornfully called Him “a friend of publicans and sinners”. He evidently did not resent this but accepted it gladly. He frequently took sides with sinners, against the religious leaders, much to their obvious consternation.

4: He Always Used A Positive Approach

John 8:10-12 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. 12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.(KJV)

The religious leaders who thrust this woman into the presence of Jesus, placed Him in a delicate and invidious position. It was a blatant attempt to trap Him into saying and doing what would be perceived as the wrong thing. However, He skillfully avoided their trap, turning the tables upon them all. He was faced with two alternatives, to condemn or condone. He could have taken a positive or a negative position. He did not wish to condemn her yet neither could He condone her actions. He chose to take a positive action, an action of compassion, understanding and forgiveness. He skillfully drew her into a place of repentance where He was able to legally offer her forgiveness and pardon. Nevertheless His admonition was, “Go and sin no more”, and indicated that if she would do so, she could truly “go in peace”.

5: He Frequently Used His Personal Testimony

We observe that Jesus frequently said, “You have heard it said, but **I say to you**”. He then proceeded to give His own statement of truth. Paul was also a great advocate of using his personal testimony. So many times, when confronted with an opportunity to speak to some person of authority, he chose to recount his own personal experience. There is a dynamic factor in personal experience, that can scarcely be denied. It has been said that, “He with an experience is never at the mercy of him with an argument.” Although personal experience may be at times subjective, if someone has actually experienced a phenomena, it is almost impossible

to talk them out of it. In this current period of “post modernism”, great value is placed upon personal experience. People do not want a theory, they desire an experience. They do not ask, is it verified truth, but what will it do for me?

6: He Refused To Become Involved In Arguments

Jesus never became embroiled in an argument and we are also exhorted never to do so. *2 Tim 2:23-26* *Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (NIV)*

7. He Patiently Sought To Make The Truth Clear

The teaching approach of Jesus should be a lesson for every minister and Christian. He always began where his listeners were and then progressed towards deeper truth. The difference between Jesus and many modern preachers is that Jesus took profound subjects and made them simple and easily understood, whereas today's preachers tend to make the simplest subjects so complicated that it is difficult to fathom out what they are getting at. Jesus invariably began His talks by referring to a natural, every day subject that everyone understood. He then took His listeners into areas that were more difficult to comprehend. He always began with the *known* and then proceeded to the *unknown*. He carefully and skillfully built up His case with patience and understanding.

8: He Often Repeated The Truth

Truth can bear repetition. Sometimes people need to hear it numerous times before it eventually registers. The truth may be repeated and amplified in a variety of styles. Its implications can be expressed in many different ways. One of the skills that every preacher should learn is how to keep telling the simple Gospel message in a great variety of interesting ways.

9: He Sought To Bring People To A Decision

The teaching of Jesus did not merely intrigue or enthrall His hearers, it challenged and moved them to action. He explained things in such a simple yet dynamic fashion that His listeners were invariably moved to make a decision and take a stand. To acquaint a person with the Gospel and not seek to bring them to a decision is like making a lengthy sales pitch and then failing to make the closure. The client must sign on the dotted line. A Gospel prospect must be faced with a decision and encouraged to make it positively. I am not inferring that every prospect should be pushed into making a decision. To do so can frequently mean that the decision is premature and may not last. The fruit should not be picked until it is obviously ripe. But once it is evidently ripe, no time should be lost. The decision is the critical feature of a Gospel presentation and should be encouraged with great urgency.

10: He Trusted The Holy Spirit To Seal The Transaction

The whole experience of salvation must be accomplished by the Holy Spirit. He is the Divinely appointed agent. The executive of the Godhead, charged with the task of bringing people to a knowledge of God through faith in Jesus Christ. We must

always be aware of and grateful for His presence and influence. He is the activator throughout. He initiates conviction. He reveals Christ. He seals the contract. He grants the assurance. In bringing people to Christ we must always stay in step with the Holy Spirit. neither running before Him nor lagging behind. Bringing a soul in to the experience of salvation depends absolutely on the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Five

You Need To Find Them First

We have seen that the primary mission of Jesus on earth was to “seek and to save those who were lost.” (Luke 19:10) Another way to express this is to find and keep those who were lost.

Jesus Told Us To “Go”

Both aspects of the great commission, (Mark 16:15, and Matthew 28:18) are preceded by the word “go.” The first reference is particularly pertinent,

Mark 16:15-16

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

“He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (NKJ)

Going into all our world must precede the authentic proclamation of the Gospel. Jesus did not say, “stay in the church and preach the Gospel.” He said “Go into all your world” and preach the Gospel. This does not only refer to the geographic world. It is not essentially a traditional missionary model. It also means “Go into all the worlds that are adjacent to your church and community.” Go into the world of the drug addicts and alcoholics. Go into the world of the sad and lonely. The single parents, the bereaved or divorced. These are all communities of needy people that constitute the world of mankind around your parish.

The “Go” Of Disciple Making

Matt 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (NKJ)

Two Important Doors

In successful church based evangelism and church growth, there are two important doors.

1. The Front Door

Which must always be kept open.

- a) So that non-Christians may able to freely enter the church.
- b) So that the Christians can freely go out into their world to seek the lost.

2. The Back Door

Should always be closed so that people do not leave again.

The two questions that every church should ask are :-

How may we keep the front door open as widely as possible?

How may we effectively keep the back door closed?

Since effective church growth depends largely on these two factors, we should concentrate much prayer, planning and strategy on them.

Jesus Commissioned His Disciples To Go Out, Find, And Bring In The Lost

Luke 14:23

“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. (KJV)

**Finding the lost. Luke 15. Where shall we find the lost? Not in the church!
But out in the “highways and hedges” of life.**

- a) **In their homes.**
Can be reached through various house visitations.
- b) **In their places of business.**
Can be reached in their work places through Christian colleagues.
- c) **On public transport facilities.**
On planes, trains, ships, buses.
- d) **In recreational centres.**
Restaurants, golf clubs, health clubs, cinemas, beaches.
- e) **In public places**
Shopping centres

Various Forms Of Evangelism

In order to find people in the highways and hedges, we need to employ various forms of evangelism.

- a) **Presence Evangelism**
Since relatively few people ever go to a church uninvited, the church needs to go to where the people are. Before we can win people we must achieve a proximity to them. If they will not readily come to church, then the church must be prepared to go where the people are.
- b) **Pre-Evangelism**
Pre-Evangelism consists of contacts and activities with a person or group that take place prior to the presentation of the Gospel. They are the encounters and conversations that establish an initial relationship and pave the way for a presentation of the Gospel. They are intended to “break the ice” and to establish a measure of credibility and confidence.

Pre-Evangelism is the patient clearing and tilling of the ground before the seed is sown. Some may feel it to be an unnecessary waste of time, wishing to immediately sow the seed without any preliminaries. But this is like supposing that it is a waste of precious time to lay an adequate foundation before a building is commenced. You may get to erect the building sooner but it is not going to last too long without adequate foundations.
- c) **Friendship Evangelism**
True evangelism is not a method or technique, it is a passion that flows from the heart. People are not won to Christ through clever strategies or glib clichés. They are led to

Jesus by Christians who are sensitive to the Holy Spirit and led by Him, speaking and witnessing to the unconverted as He leads and empowers. Effective soul winning is accomplished by building relationships with persons to whom God leads us.

One of the weaknesses of many modern churches is that they have changed witnessing from relationship, to salesmanship. Genuine soul winning cannot be accomplished except through relationship.

Firstly relationship with God, through the Holy Spirit. A relationship that is built through obedience, faith, prayer, and commitment. A relationship in which Christ truly lives within you. He guides you, inspires you and empowers you. You see through His eyes, feel with His heart, speak His words to people and bring His presence and life into their lives.

Secondly, a relationship is also necessary between you, and the person you would bring to Christ. Such relationships are founded firstly on friendship. You must see people as potential friends. You should reach out to them with gestures of friendship. Learn to smile at people. Begin to greet them. Wish them well. Extend warm, friendly vibes to them. You will rarely ever win or influence a person that you do not first befriend.

Your friendship must be genuine

Offers of friendship must be genuine and sincere. If people discern that you are being pleasant and friendly for your own ends, they will be gravely offended. If they feel that you are really trying to “sell them something,” whether it be a product, or Christianity, they will naturally be insulted. Your interest in people must be unconditional and not merely an interest that only lasts until that person refuses to become another scalp on your belt.

The Bible portrays Jesus as “*A friend who sticks closer than a brother.*” Jesus also stated that we are His friends, if we do what He commands us. (John 15:14)

We are also told that

Prove 18:24

“A man that hath friends must bew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (KJV)

There is a considerable emphasis on friendship and it seems quite obvious that Christians are meant to be friendly. Friendly Christians are like Jesus and friendly Christians are likely to win others to Him.

d) Proclamation or Presentation Evangelism

In which those persons to whom we gain proximity, are presented with a clear Gospel challenge. It is the presentation of the Gospel in the clearest possible manner so that the recipients are informed of the whole truth and implications of the Good News about Jesus.

e) Persuasion Evangelism

That part of the presentation in which the person is actively encouraged and personally persuaded to commit their life to God through faith in Jesus Christ our mediator. The Holy Spirit is actually the One who should apply the persuasion. Without His influence and effort, our attempts at persuasion are powerless and useless. Nevertheless He uses our presence and our words to employ His persuasion. Without Him, we cannot, and without us, He will not!

f) Process Evangelism

Effective evangelism with lasting result, is usually a process, the eventual result of numerous sources of influence upon the person.

1 Cor 3:5-8

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?”

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. (KJV)

The analogy used is an agricultural one indicating that it usually transpires over a period of time and as a result of a process of development. The New Birth, another classic analogy, is also a process in which the seed develops within the womb for nine months prior to birthing. Following this phenomena comes the processes of growth and development in all of which, time is an essential element.

g) Development Evangelism

The process of evangelism does not end once the person has made a commitment to Christ, it continues on into the various stages of development as one grows into Christ in all things. Paul was very conscious of this and expressed his ongoing concern for his converts, “until Christ be fully formed in them.”

Gal 4:19

“My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you-- (ASV)

The true ambassador of Christ is not content to see his converts confessing Christ. He maintains a deep interest in them until he witnesses the maturing of Christ within them.

Always give new believers time and opportunity to grow. They will never become immediately mature. Never judge or criticise them for this. Always endeavour to encourage and assist them to grow.

h) Integration

The Bible tells us that we are baptised, (integrated) into Christ by the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 12:12-13

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (NIV)

This baptism is a spiritual phenomena, whereby we are all initiated into the mystical Body of Christ. But we must also earnestly encourage the new believers to integrate themselves into the physical body of Christ, i.e the Church.

i) Reproduction

In the natural, there are numerous indications of having achieved maturity, one of which is the emerging capacity to reproduce oneself. This is also true in the spiritual realm. One of the evidences of having achieved a level of maturity in Christ is the ability to reproduce, bringing others to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

Church Planting Institute
Building Bridges Of Communication

When Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, found Christ he quickly found his brother Simon,

John 1:40-42

"Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter)." (NIV)

After Phillip had found Jesus, he quickly became active in bringing someone else to Christ.

John 1:43-45

"The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (NIV)

Chapter Six

Now You Must Keep Them

Seeking and finding is only half of the story. The other aspect, which is even more important, is how to conserve and keep the people that God helps you to find. This is the secret of keeping that back door closed so that people do not enter through the front door, and then leave again through the rear door.

Many churches are good at finding and winning people, but are weak in the area of conserving the harvest. Many people stream through the front door, possibly “making a decision for Christ,” but after some weeks or months they leave again to return to their former life.

What are some of the important principles that must be observed in order to ensure that people continue in their new found faith, growing in Christ and fitting into the structure of God’s Kingdom?

TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS THE VITAL KEY!

As in evangelism, so in conserving the results of evangelism, friendship is the vital key. Many church surveys have clearly and consistently shown that most persons who come to Christ do so because a friend invites them. Something like 85% of all newcomers to church, have been brought by a friend. So, friendship is obviously a vital key to winning people to Christ and it is also an essential aspect of seeing them continue in the Faith and in Christian fellowship.

LET’S BE FRIENDLY

Every member of a church should be actively persuaded and encouraged to become a friendly person. Irrespective of natural temperament, by God’s grace and help, we can all show ourselves to be friendly. Should you be a naturally shy and retiring person, there are many others like you who would appreciate and enjoy your presence and company. Friendliness is an attitude that most persons can develop to a greater or lesser degree. the process may go something like this :-

- 1: Hello.** Meet and greet people.
- 2: Explore.** Ask pertinent questions, explore their needs.
- 3: Learn.** Discover all you can about them. Learn to understand them.
- 4: Progress.** Let every encounter further develop relationship.

Once a Christian has brought a friend to Christ, they become the obvious one to encourage them along in their new found Faith. They must use their ties of friendship to nurture their friend in the things of God.

True friendship must contain the following

Fun
Relationship
Inspiration
Encouragement
Nurturing
Development
Support

The Offer Of Friendship Must Be Genuine

It must be unconditional, not “you do this and I’ll be your friend.”

It must be without guile. If a person senses that you have a hidden agenda and ulterior motives, they will soon become disenchanted with your friendship. If they realise that you are more interested in “adding them to your church membership,” than in their personal well being, that person will usually reject your proposal of friendship.

Show Yourselves Friendly

Many of the people that venture into a church are looking for fulfilment and friendship. If they discover it in a church, they are very likely to attach themselves to that church.

Prov 18:24

“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (NKJ)

Every church should therefore encourage its members to be friendly, with each other, and towards persons outside the church. Unfortunately some churches are so religious and formal in their behaviour and activities that their environment is not conducive to warm expressions of friendship. I sincerely believe that the local church ought to be the happiest and friendliest place in town! Any church that is not ought to take immediate and specific steps to remedy that sad situation.

Many Churches Must Embrace Change In This Respect

They must choose in favour of love instead of legalism, and friendliness instead of formality.

As in many other matters, the pastor and associate leaders, should set the example of friendliness. Their overt friendliness should inspire and encourage the members to manifest friendliness too. The pastor’s image and influence in terms of friendliness must set the lead. If the pastoral team are not friendly, it is doubtful that the members will be.

When any new believer discovers a church fellowship filled with friendly people, that becomes a tremendous incentive to join that church. Many new believers forfeit their old friends when they become committed Christians so they urgently need to find new Christian friends to take their place.

There are many programs that may be adopted to help conserve new converts, but none of them will work if they are not applied by genuinely warm, friendly, empathetic Christians.

Encourage Strong Relationships

An initial show of friendliness is not sufficient. Genuine friendliness must inevitably lead to friendships and friendships to deeper relationships. The offer of friendship must extend far beyond the public gatherings. Genuine friendship will form a relationship that offers concern and support in the every day issues and problems of life.

Family Relationships

Amongst the numerous analogies for the church is that of a family, -the family of God. Every church member has a role to fulfil in that family. Listen to the words of Paul :-

1 Tim 4:16-5:2

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

1 Tim 5: 1-2

“Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. (KJV)

Titus 2:1-7

*“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:
That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.
The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,
To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.
In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness,” (KJV)*

What Is “Sound Doctrine?”

In both of these passages, Paul is exhorting younger men to “practise sound doctrine.” In each case he then proceeds to outline the structure of the Body of Christ.

He encourages :-

The older men, to be fathers in the Faith.

The older women to be “mothers.”

To treat the young women as sisters, in all purity.

Treat other young men as brothers.

We see a local fellowship that is comprised of “Fathers, Mothers, Sisters and Brothers in the Faith.” So every new believer should inherit these “relatives” in Christ. Every new convert should have the benefit of spiritual fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers.

Grounded In The Faith

Eph 3:17-19

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”
(KJV)

Col 1:23

“If you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard.”

New believers need to become “rooted and grounded” in their faith. This must be accomplished by teaching and discipling them. It can be done in a “New Believers Class,” a Bible study on the foundations of the Christian Faith, conducted especially for new converts. In these classes believers can be prepared for and experience water baptism, the infilling of the Spirit, how to live the Christian life, etc.

Identify Their Gifts And Get Them Involved

New believers should become involved in the life and service of the church as soon as possible. To accomplish this their potential gifts must be identified and nurtured. Every church should have a means of identifying a person’s giftings. Opportunities should be provided for those gifts to be developed and used. When new believers become involved in the ministry of the church, their own faith will be strengthened.

They Will Also Bless And Edify Others

Nurturing through small group involvement
The early New Testament church met together regularly in small (house) groups. This kind of fellowship, and the relationships it fosters, is essential to the full orb development of new believers.

Small Groups Are Scriptural

Acts 2:46-47

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (KJV)

Small Groups Should Be Supportive

Support for new believers, available in the small group setting, is the most personal kind obtainable. True friendships and close relationships can be forged in this context, in contrast to the large congregation model which is often more formal and less personal. The household setting in which small groups are usually convened is much more conducive to openness, honesty and real spiritual development.

Small Groups Afford Succour

Succour is the advice, help and assistance given to a person who is suffering or experiencing some kind of difficulties. It is usually very practical and is ministered

directly to the point of need. It frequently needs to be rendered regularly often over a long period of time. So it requires someone who can be along-side the person consistently. It would be very difficult for the pastor of a large church to make himself available to an individual in this manner. However, a small group, and individuals within that group, can afford to give more time to an individual.

Genuine Transformation Can Be Achieved

The small group environment is ideal for the development of life transformation. New believers are intimately exposed to the lives of their Christian peers, gaining the advantage of observing and emulating their Kingdom lifestyle. The practice of truth is best achieved in the intimacy of a small group. Mentors can function with their apprentices, holding each other accountable in their walk with God.

The Small Group Is Conducive To :-

Greater openness and honesty.
Deeper levels of sharing.
Personal and friendly support.
Mutual spiritual accountability.

Small Groups Can Practise Evangelism

Small groups, especially house groups, provide one of the best environments for pre-believers. The venue and atmosphere is far less strange and threatening than that of a traditional church. The environment is more informal and non-Christians often feel much more relaxed. The Gospel can be presented to them through the warm friendship of the believers before they are faced with a proclamation.

Intensive Support Groups

These groups are convened especially for people with specific debilitating problems, e.g. alcoholism, drug dependency, single parents, persons with nervous disorders, etc. This group needs very mature leadership, preferably by persons who have experienced one or more of these conditions and has received specialised training in these problems. If possible, that person should be professionally qualified, or have the covering of such a person.

The group must meet regularly and often. Meetings should be informal, intimate and positively supportive. In addition to these gatherings each member of the group must be able to contact other members quickly at any time. Their mutual support of each other must be available at all times and not merely at the convened gatherings.

Chapter Seven

To Seek And To Save

Luke 19:10

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (NIV)

In modern terminology, the earthly mission of Jesus might be termed a "Search and Rescue Mission." Wherever He went He was constantly aware of people and conscious of their deepest needs. The frequency with which He "came across" people, suggests an innate destiny that caused Him, consciously and sub-consciously, to seek out people who needed Him. His meetings with the various characters in the Gospels is obviously more than chance or coincidence. Whenever He met such persons, He inevitably began to initiate a rescue plan, for He had come both to seek and to save those who were lost. His meeting with Zacchaeus is a good example.

Luke 19:1-10

"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (NIV)

Why Jesus Came

This incident indicates numerous aspects of the effective cross-cultural communication principles that Jesus constantly employed in His contact with mankind. It depicts the meeting of two persons from extremely different cultures and life styles, and the effectual communication that transpired between them. It illustrates Christ's constant sensitivity to the cultural barriers that must be overcome in order to positively and effectively communicate the transforming truth of the Gospel.

The first clue is the use of the phrase, "The Son of man," a term that emphasises the humanity of Christ that enabled Him to fully identify with mankind. St. Luke uses this phrase consistently for his is the Gospel that particularly emphasises Christ in His role as the Son of man. We could almost say that verse 10,

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." virtually summarises the main theme of this entire Gospel and clearly conveys the whole purpose of Jesus as Saviour.

Someone has expressed it this way; *"The Son of God, became the son of man, that the sons of men might become the sons of God."*

Vast libraries of books, essays and theses have been published on the subject of the incarnation and its many profound implications. Scholars and theologians throughout the ages have studied and speculated on its mysteries. God's reasons and purposes

have been scrutinised and many theories propounded, but the primary, underlying purpose of God visiting the earth in human form, was clearly to seek and save those who were lost.

Christ Jesus Came Into The World To Save Sinners

1 Tim 1:15

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the worst." (NIV)

In order for Him to accomplish this, it was necessary for Him to assume the life form of those He came to save. This process is known as the incarnation, or "God manifest in flesh," the mysterious means by which the transcendent God achieved immanence and proximity to fallen mankind.

God Became Flesh

John 1:14

"The Word (God) became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (NIV)

In order to redeem mankind, Almighty God laid aside His transcendent glory and poured Himself into the limitations of a human frame. He humbled Himself, from Divinity to humanity, from heaven to earth, from Heavenly glory to earthly shame. He willingly did this that, "In Christ," He might reconcile the world of man to Himself.

The word incarnation comes from the Latin "in-carne" (flesh) signifying the voluntary act of assuming flesh. A theological definition might be, :- "The gracious, voluntary act of the Son of God in assuming a human body and a human nature."

God Was "In Christ"

2 Cor 5:19

"namely, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself," (NAS)

The apostle Paul refers to this mysterious process in his epistle to the Philippians, forcefully reminding us that if God Himself was willing to humble and humiliate Himself in order to identify with man, we should adopt the same humble attitude and do whatever is necessary to effectively communicate with our fellow man regardless of race, religion or social status.

Christ Humbled Himself

Phil 2:5-8

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient (even) unto death, yea, the death of the cross." (ASV)

Paul's reference to the incarnation contains several basic principles that are necessary to successful cross-cultural communication. viz,

- 1) He willingly adopted an attitude of meekness and humility.
- 2) He did not strive to retain the inherent privileges of His original cultural environment.
- 3) He divested Himself, as one putting off a garment, of the indications of His superior station.

A song writer, the late William Booth Clibborn says,

Without reluctance, flesh and blood His substance,
He took the form of man, revealed God's hidden plan.
God, gracious tender, laid aside His splendour,
Stooping to woo, to win, to save my soul.

- 4) He clothed Himself in the likeness of men. He assumed the exact appearance of man. In doing so He humbly adapted Himself to His target environment.
- 5) He meekly assumed the role, appearance, and humble attitude of a servant.
- 6) He humbly accepted the limitations of flesh and blood.
- 7) He willingly embraced death. Death had no legal claim upon Him, but He freely submitted Himself to it.

He exemplified death to His own will. "Not my will but yours be done." Luke 22:42

We Must Humble Ourselves

Paul asserts that since Christ was willing to do all this for us, we as His followers, should gladly adopt the same attitude as He.

- 1) The mercies that God has freely bestowed on us, at such great price to His beloved Son, should constrain us to adopt a similar attitude to that of Jesus. We should be willing to serve others, as He has served us.

Rom 12:1-2

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will." (NIV)

- 2) Christ's love in our hearts, should encourage us to adopt a humble posture towards others, just as Jesus did.
- 3) We should gladly be willing to forfeit any privileges and benefits that may be part of our inherited culture, in order to gain entry to the cultural environment of those we are ordained of God to reach.
- 4) We should endeavour to some degree to respect and honour the cultural aspects of our neighbours society.
- 5) We should always avoid a paternalistic and patronising attitude towards our neighbours culture. Our attitude should rather be that of a "paracletos," -one who stands by their side to help and comfort them.
- 6) We should be willing to "die" to our own ways, especially those of ego, pride, feelings of superiority. We need to "die" to ourselves that we may begin to live unto our neighbour.

- 7) We should willingly accept the limitations and restrictions of our adopted society, rather than anticipating privileged treatment because of our background and station.

Chapter Eight

Bringing A Person To Christ

1. Impress The Universal Need Of Salvation

"For ALL have sinned and come short of God's standard." Rom 3:23.

God does not tell people they are sinners to condemn them, but that He might save them. He does not convict them of their sin because He hates them, but because He LOVES them. He does not convict them because they are His enemies, but because He wants them to be His friends.

2. Introduce The Saviour Personally

As we endeavour to bring people to God we should not introduce them to a doctrine, but to a person. Salvation does not come through knowing the doctrines of Christianity, but through knowing the living Christ. True Christianity is NOT a religion in which one learns the rules and endeavours to obey and follow them to the best of their ability. God's salvation is invested in a person. That person is Jesus. He is the one the sinner must meet and receive.

John 1:12-13

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." (NIV)

3. Initiate The Right Action

Rev 3:20

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (NIV)

The image of Christ, standing before a closed door, patiently knocking and awaiting a response, conveys the situation clearly. When we engage someone in conversation about Christ, He stands before them, patiently seeking entry. Make them aware of this. Tell them clearly that Christ is knocking at the door of their life seeking an opening and entry into their life. Have them imagine this picture and encourage them to respond positively in faith, to the overture of Jesus.

Gently encourage them to open the door. Have them verbally request Jesus into their life. You can lead them in such an invitation. Speak it out clearly and have them repeat the words after you and speak them from their heart. Then encourage them to believe that Jesus always honours His word. If He says, "I will come in," then He will definitely do so. Show them again that to all who receive Him in this manner, He will impart the power to become the children of God.

John 1:12.

"To as many as received Him He gave power to become the sons of God." (NIV)

4. Encourage The Person To Pray Aloud

Prayer is simply talking and conversing with God. We do not need to resort to some special religious language to speak with Him. We simply need to talk, as we would to any friend. This is a good time to start the person praying. A good opportunity to give them their first lesson in prayer. Encourage them to speak to God aloud, in a normal voice, using their every day language and expressions. Let the prayer be from the heart.

5. Get Them To Confess Christ As Soon As Possible. Rom 10:9.

You should also immediately encourage them to tell someone of their experience. This is called “Confessing Christ to others.” It is often the factor that introduces an assurance of salvation into their heart. As they tell someone else that they have received Christ, the confidence is strengthened within their own heart.

Rom 10:8-10

“But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” (NIV)

The Assurance Of Salvation Is Produced By

a) The Word Of God. Reading Or Hearing It

The theme of salvation runs throughout the Bible like a thin red line. It begins in Genesis and continues right through to Revelation. The more we read the Bible, the more opportunity the Holy Spirit has to teach us more about God’s salvation. As He does so, the knowledge and assurance of salvation is strengthened within us.

b) Having Faith In That Word

The Word of God is personalised and activated by faith. As we read and study the Bible, we must allow our faith to have healthy expression. Apply what you read to your own life. Believe that God will fulfil all His promises. The Bible is not intended simply to increase your head knowledge, but to strengthen your heart belief.

c) Making A Confession Of Faith

The Bible frequently speaks about “Confessing with your mouth what you believe in your heart.” There is something about verbal confession that strengthens your faith. Modern counsellors call it, “verbal self talk.” In doing this you are frequently speaking to your own heart, but you should vocalise the words audibly so that your own ears hear a faith expression of God’s Word.

d) Confessing Christ Before Men

Rom 10:10

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” (NIV)

I have frequently known persons who have “received Christ” by faith, but later said, “I have no assurance in my heart that it has truly happened.” The first thing I ask them is, “Have you told someone else about your commitment?” Invariably the answer is “No.” I then encourage them to do so at the earliest opportunity. Usually, when they have done this, they tell me, “Now I have the assurance!” Somehow, the verbal confession that one has trusted Christ for salvation, seems to bring and strengthen a sense of assurance.

Following Up New Believers

Exodus 2:9.

“Nurse me this child and I will pay you wages.”

These words were spoken to Jochebed, Moses’ mother, by the Egyptian princess. However, they have real significance for us too. For if we will undertake to “nurse” a new convert, God will surely reward us.

These words have always been special to me, for when I was a young believer, God spoke them into the heart of an older preacher concerning myself. God actually gave him a vision of me who at that time he had never met. The preacher saw me clearly in that vision and God told him, “Nurse me this child and I will pay you wages.” Shortly after this we met and my friend began to nurse and nourish me in the Faith. In retrospect I realised that this preacher was the best person that I ever met to encourage and help me. We remained friends for many years and he frequently told me that as he watched me growing in Christ, entering the ministry, travelling the world preaching the Gospel, God never failed to pay him his wages. They came in the form of a personal spiritual satisfaction of seeing me mature in Christ and in Christian ministry.

Since then I have had the privilege of nursing many others and have also received a wage from God. It is the wage of inner joy and satisfaction that comes from helping and encouraging new believers to grow.

Paul told his converts, *“you are my joy and my crown.”*

Phil 4:1

“Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!” (NIV)

1) Make Sure They Have An Assurance Of Salvation

Look for evidences of faith assurance in the lives and conduct of the new believer. Ask them directly if they sense the assurance of salvation within. Endeavour by all means to help them reach an assurance. Some people discover it more readily than others. Be patient with the person. Pray with them again. Go over the plan of salvation again. Explain it more clearly and thoroughly until the assurance comes.

2) If The Assurance Is Not There It Could Be Because :-

- a) They have not sincerely repented of and renounced their sin.
- b) They have not properly understood the truth of salvation by grace.
- c) They are not truly trusting God’s Word.
- d) They have not yet confessed Christ as Lord.
- e) They have not yet learned to pray and commune with God.

3) Make Sure They Have A Bible

A personal copy of the Bible is a great help to a new believer. Particularly helpful is a contemporary version in language they can readily understand. Encourage them to read it every day. Tell them where to begin, e.g. the Gospel of John. Explain to them about

“feeding on the Word” rather than merely reading it. Show them how to get something from the Word each day upon which they can feed their soul.

4) Introduce Them To Water Baptism And Holy Spirit Baptism

New converts are usually keen to receive and experience everything that God has for them. It is the best time for growth, when they are young, eager, excited, about their new found faith. Encourage them to reach out for all that God has in store for them.

5) Be A True Christian Friend To Them

The Holy Spirit is called the “paraclete,” the one who comes alongside to assist us. We should be a paraclete to the new believer whom God has trusted to our care. We should be a true friend to them, coming alongside them to help, guide, encourage and exhort them. Jesus Himself will be a friend to them but they also need fellow believers to extend Christ’s friendship to them. You should aim to be a “mentor” to them. A person’s mentor is someone, usually more experienced than themselves, who takes them under their wing, offering good advice and counsel and usually acting as a role model for them. Someone on whom to pattern their life.

6) Encourage Them To Serve God In Some Capacity

The spiritual development of a person is usually greatly enhanced when they begin to serve God in some capacity. Normally the first role of service is that of a witness to others, endeavouring to bring them to Christ also. Success in this role frequently leads to further opportunities to serve God. God begins to open doors of opportunity to those who are proactive in their desire to serve Him.

Chapter Nine

Instigating Changes

Teaching That Does Not Produce Changes Has Failed In Its Purpose.

It should be obvious to any unbiased mind, that if a certain project is not producing effectively, growing considerably, and fully attaining its stated purpose, **SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE CHANGED!**

If a car engine is not running smoothly, accelerating adequately, and pulling strongly. If is obviously using too much oil and too much fuel, it should be examined, a diagnosis made, and some changes effected immediately.

It does not make sense to keep driving a car in which the motor is obviously sick. If the symptoms indicate that all is not well, instigate an examination. Get the motor checked by a qualified mechanic. Have him diagnose the problem and predict the solution.

The solution may be inconvenient. It may be costly. You may resent having to do it, but the hard fact it that it needs to be done. No one will benefit from a refusal or unwillingness to take the necessary action.

The same procedure is often required in a corporate company, a marketing agency, or a church organisation. If the situation is not obviously healthy with signs of effective growth and achievement, we need to ask ourselves Why? Here is a strategy that will help us to find some answers.

Conferring

Honestly

About

New

Growth

Expansion

Strategies.

1. Conferring

In many circumstances it requires some consultation to eventually induce the necessary action. We need to counsel with someone, examine the problems with them, talk it over, discuss the options and make the hard decisions.

Sometimes we are personally blind to the reality. We need to ask for other opinions. Bring in the experts. Examine the situation together, openly and with a determined purpose to rectify the problems.

2. Honestly

Unfortunately many churches are unwilling to face reality. They refuse to examine their situation honestly and realistically. They frequently excuse their sterility with religious clichés and perceptions.

A sympathetic outside opinion can frequently shed fresh light on the issues. Sometimes we are standing too close to see the whole game. We are too emotionally involved in the subjective elements that we can no longer be objective and realistic.

Another mind, another eye, another voice, can widen our perspectives and help us to see things as they really are. Until we are willing to get honest about our situation we will continue to make excuses. Once we are willing to face up to reality honestly, we are half way to the solution.

3. New Ideas

Many church people are sub-consciously opposed to anything new. They tend to shy away from anything that is different from the traditional. New ideas and concepts are anathema.

If business corporations adopted the same mentality, they would soon go bankrupt. We live in a changing world and we need new ideas and concepts to keep abreast of it. Our purposes remain the same. Our methods of achieving them must keep pace with contemporary realities.

If the old concepts are not producing as they should, something needs to change. We need some fresh inspiration. Some new creative ideas. God has not been overtaken and superseded by our technological age. He is way ahead of even tomorrow's intelligence.

4. Prophetic Strategic Perception

Strategists are people who are skilled in prophetic planning. Strategising is the best way to gain a victory and achieve success. It is the ability to discern present and future trends and to plan accordingly.

If our company or church is going to grow, we need to prophetically anticipate the future and make our plans and goals accordingly.

5. Growth And Expansion

The immediate future is both challenging and exciting. Many amazing changes will transpire, but there will also be more problems than ever. Enterprises that are able to move with the flow, will experience unprecedented success, but many organisations will go under because they could neither discern, nor move with the times.

In the midst of all the imminent confusion and consternation, the church is destined to grow as never before. The Kingdom will spread throughout the earth. Just when the secular prophets of doom are forecasting the obsolescence and extinction of Christianity, it will break forth on the right and left, exploding and expanding beyond our present predictions or imagination.

However, to be part of that explosion, many things need to be changed NOW.

The New Is The Old Renewed

Many Christians and churches today are afraid of change and new innovations. However, many of the new things that are coming in are actually old things that are being restored to the church in fulfilment of Bible prophecy. Unfortunately the church has strayed so far from its original pattern that we have largely forgotten what that pattern was and are unable to recognise it when we see it.

God is calling us to repentance from our dead works and religious traditions. he is calling us back to the foundation and the first principles of our Faith.

Rev 2:5

“Remember how far you have fallen. Return to Me and change the way you think and act, and do what you did at first. I will come to you and take your lampstand from its place if you don’t change!”

Acts 3:19-21

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you-- even Jesus.

He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.” (NIV)

The Modern Church

Is not dead, but it is badly crippled, staggering along when it ought to be marching in triumphant unity. *“Awesome, like an army resplendent with banners.”* (S of Sol 6:4)

It is not blind, but it is tragically short sighted, unable to clearly see its ultimate future triumph as the Kingdom that will rule the nations. It is certainly not beyond all help, but it DOES need to radically change.

A TIMELY WORD -CHANGE!

The main, underlying purpose of this Teaching is to encourage and effect needed change in local churches. Namely to change the way in which many things are done. To discard the methods that have proven ineffective and to wholly embrace new methods that actually work and produce lasting results. To lift our vision from ourselves to others. To see the world as God sees it and respond to it as He would do. In order to do this, most church programs need to be radically altered. This manual will reveal some of the ways in which this can be done. The introvert attitude of most churches needs to be urgently replace.

A frightening truth for many churches is:

**If nothing changes,
EVERYTHING WILL
REMAIN THE SAME.**

How many churches can afford for that to happen? The only alternative is CHANGE!

Change is the law of life. Those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. Change means movement and Movement means friction.

**True miracles occur when men use
the intelligence, vision, courage and faith that
God has given them.**