

THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE

BY Clifford A. Rice

About The Author

In 1955 Clifford Rice was called as God's prophet just as Ezekiel was called in Eze. 2:1 and 3:1 - 3. The effect upon his body was identical to that of John in Rev. 10:9 - 10, and the words spoken were as in Eze. Ch. 2 and in Rev. 10:11. This supernatural visitation of the Lord eventually led Brother Rice to leave his successful career. As a heavy construction supervisor, manager and erection engineer he had traveled in many parts of the world working for large international contractors building bridges, buildings, industrial plants and dams. His walk with the Lord has placed him in virtually every phase of ministry, both as layman and pastor and he has been privileged to share the Lord and His message with persons of every kind in every corner of the world.

For eight years Brother Rice served on the board of a local Full Gospel Business Men's chapter where he also held the office of president and vice president. Brother Rice has pioneered two churches and pastored two more and worked on staff in a large church where he was responsible for evangelistic ministries to those on the street, in jails, prisons, nursing homes and rescue missions. During this time he trained many young men and women who are in the ministry today. He sponsored numerous home bible studies both to evangelize and to build the church and wrote a booklet entitled, "Building Through Home Bible Studies." He worked with young people as a youth pastor and youth advisor. A serious bible student who believes the full message of the Word, Brother Rice has traveled throughout the United States, The Philippines, Mexico and India. Through teaching seminars and preaching on many subjects he has been instrumental in starting many churches and Bible Schools.

Brother Rice operates in the Gifts of the Spirit. God does confirm the word preached by healing and miracles. His ongoing ministry has born and is bearing much fruit.

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The Origin

John the Revelator was the last of the original twelve apostles, and many teach that the apostle's ministry was done away with at the time of his demise. I believe there is much evidence to the contrary, and I believe that the need for the apostle today is just as great or greater than it was at that time. It is my personal conviction that the Apostle and Prophet ministries will have their finest hour at the very end of this Age. We will have a further teaching on this subject in another volume.

The Need

I think the first thing we should consider is the need. We know that from the beginning God knew that Jesus Christ would be crucified. He knew that He would offer Jesus Christ as the Lamb upon His own altar for the Sin of the world. The type in the Old Testament, of course, is Abraham and Isaac. Most Bible Teachers will agree that Abraham was a type of God, Isaac a type of Christ. When Abraham offered Isaac, Isaac was, according to the Book of Hebrews, received by Abraham again from the dead in a figure (Heb. 11:17-19). In other words, Abraham received Isaac from the dead. In Abraham's mind, he was offering Isaac's life in obedience to God. There was a statement that Abraham had made in response to Isaac's question – "We have the wood, we have the altar, but where is the lamb?" – Abraham said to Isaac, "God will provide a lamb." God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering (Gen. 22:5-19).

Jesus The Lamb Of God

Well, God did provide the lamb in Jesus Christ. We know that the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, was perfect in all of His ways. He first of all proved His own perfection. He established His own righteousness. He established the righteousness of the Law. He established the righteousness of God before the world. He trained His messengers to spread the Word — He trained twelve and they trained many, who trained many more down through the ages as `sent ones' fully authorized as apostles of Jesus Christ. Neither the devil, the world, nor anyone else can ever say that God did not do things in a righteous manner. So when Jesus Christ finished His ministry on the earth and went back to the Father, He was seated at the right hand of the Father and daily makes intercession for us. In other words, "daily" involves daily living through us, through the Church. The Church is in Christ, and we are either in Christ or we are in Adam. As an individual you must either be in Christ or in Adam. You cannot be both. It is either-or, not both. We really must realize that we are in Christ or out of Christ.

Therefore, God provided reconciliation in Christ unto Himself. We find in the second book of Corinthians some very interesting scripture that tells us literally what God had in mind. There is one thing we must know if we are going to understand the Bible - God NEVER changed His mind! He did not just search this way for a little while and then search another way for a little while, look this way, and then back another way, groping for a solution for problems. That is how some theologians would have us understand it; but I declare unto you that at no time was God ever in doubt as to what He was going to do. God had it figured out from the beginning. God knew that man would fall. God knew that man would use his free choice. God gave man free choice in order that he would have someone who would walk with Him willingly; not under duress, but willingly. If God has your will, He has you. That is a simplification. I once laid this on a theologian in Dallas and said, "It seems to me, brother, that there are two men, there are two ways in the Bible; and, therefore, there are two wills, and it seems that they're summed up in this manner: One man, Adam, said in the garden, "Not thy will, but mine be done." And the other Adam, the second Adam, said, "Not my will but thine be done." This man said, "Brother Rice, that is an oversimplification to the extreme, but it is right on!" I believe that to be the case.

We must realize that if we are to walk with God, we must understand His will and we understand it through the Word. Now it was the will of God, we find in the Bible, that none should perish but that all should come to repentance. The whole world fell in Adam. The whole world was reconciled in Christ. Sometimes, people want to pick and chose who would be reconciled; but that's not God's plan. God never intended there to be any picking and choosing. God gave a blanket amnesty to all the world. He established a system whereby that amnesty offer might be established in the hearts of men.

In Second Corinthians five, the seventeenth verse: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." That word "behold" means "Look there!" It really gets your attention. "BEHOLD!" We don't use that word much in today's language, but it's "Behold, look at the difference in that man! He was this, now he's this! Totally different!" "WOW! Will you look at that!!" is about the best descriptive term we can use. "WOW!" We find now, continuing in verse eighteen: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Do you know that for many years I preached the gospel, and I preached it hard, and I loved people; but I felt I had to enumerate their sins and uncover them before they could come to repentance. That is still the thinking of a large percentage of the evangelical world. They feel they must totally uncover a man and bring him to a very definite sin consciousness before they can get him established in the position where he can accept Jesus Christ. But the Bible says; and one day God brought this to my attention and made me really understand; "to wit, that God was in Christ." It says, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." "Reconciling the world unto Himself," and the reconciliation is "through Christ"; He didn't do it without Christ - it was through Christ - and here is the revelation: "not imputing their trespasses unto them." Hallelujah!

That is good news! When I saw that, it allowed me to remove people from my judgment and allow the grace of God to flow through me without having any concern for the depth of their sin. Their sin and degradation was not the important point now. That was not what I was ministering against. I no longer had to minister against anybody. I now could minister for the Lord unto the people. That makes a tremendous difference in any person's ministry. At that point God began to really use me in a manner that was constructive to the Kingdom of God. It opened new horizons, a new world in the area of ministry. Praise the Lord!

Verse nineteen of II Corinthians, chapter 5, says, "He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The Fall Of Man and The Means Of Restoring Fellowship

In the beginning, God was in one accord with man. God and Adam walked hand in hand. They walked in the garden in the evening. They enjoyed the fellowship that God intended God and man to have. They were not strangers. There was no alienation; nothing between them. When Adam fell, we know that sin entered the world and death by sin. Adam's first-born became a murderer. Adam was driven from the garden. Thorns and thistles began to come up and he had to hoe and chop and weed. To get enough to eat, he had to work hard. Hard work is never going to go away until the Lord comes back, I believe; but it is the will of the Father that man live in harmony with each other and with God. It was always the will of the Father that there be harmony. God instituted the blood sacrifice so that sin was dealt with. In Hebrews it says, "For without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." Sin must be dealt with. Sin always had to be dealt with. God dealt with that sin in the blood sacrifice that He offered in the garden for Adam and Eve.

Some people feel that God might have created leather and used it to make garments, or He might have skinned the sheep and let them run around naked. That's not how it was. God slew the sheep and let the blood cover their sins and let the sheep skin cover their nakedness - their shame.

God wants fellowship with man, and He set up a program to reestablish that fellowship, and it begins as told in Amos. Amos the prophet said in the third verse of the third chapter of the Book of Amos: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" We also know that Jesus spoke of the power of agreement in prayer. There is no prayer like the agreement in prayer. There is no strength in prayer like the agreement in prayer. Amos is talking about agreement. We often interpret that to say, "Well, in order for you and me to be in business together, in order for you and me to walk along and be friends, we must agree." Well, that is true; but what Amos had in mind was "How can a man walk with God unless he agrees with God?" In order for man to walk with each other and in order for man to walk with God, they must agree. To walk with God, we must agree with God about God's love. We must agree with God about the indwelling presence of Christ. We must agree with God about the legal things that God did in Christ. We must understand the reconciliation that God has provided for us in Christ. The one thing that God did was to take away all the guilt complex that we might walk absolutely free and unashamed with God.

God Restores Relationship

The Word says that, "Jesus was offered for our transgressions, raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25), whereby we stand justified before God - sin free, shameless, with no hindering factor whatsoever to keep us from coming boldly to the Throne of Grace to obtain mercy and find help in the time of need.

God wants fellowship, but He wants us to come His way. We need to agree most of all about the authority of the Word of God. This is the area wherein more people get in trouble than any other. We need to come under the authority of God. We need to be of one mind, you see, regarding the things we've just mentioned. We must personally identify with Jesus Christ

God not only did these things at the time of Christ. Here comes some of the difference in the understanding of the ministerial offices. Many people feel that all of this ended at the time of Christ. When Jesus left, the disciples somehow were left here and the Holy Spirit came into the world and somehow they then set up churches and that was the answer. That was never God's answer. I don't mean to belittle any church. Don't misunderstand me at this point. The pulpit-pew relationship, as it exists today, was not God's ultimate solution, but God had a method that He gave to the world, and I want you to discover, with me, what that method was.

Let's turn to Ephesians, the fourth chapter. It was always God's intent to bring harmony into the world. Now our question was a moment ago, "Is the apostle's office valid in today's church?" We have to consider the teachings that are rampant in the church. Most of the church universal, if you will, the church around the world, and we use that term rather loosely; because we are talking about the real Christian, the apostate church, and every area of the church universal at this point. We must look at this thing fairly and honestly. Let us never get to the point where we become prejudiced or biased to the point that we fail to look at things objectively. God wants us in this area of all areas to have a degree of objectivity that approaches the divine. We must literally not hold people in judgment because of their past errors. Understand that. If we're going to effectively minister the Word of God around the world, we must be able to totally release men and women from their past errors. We cannot hold them for their past guilt. Otherwise, we negate the very thing that God did in Christ. "He reconciled the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them," Amen? So, no matter what a man has done in the past or his forbears have done, we cannot hold him guilty. We must absolve him of all guilt in order for us to minister Christ's love. That's exactly what we need to consider if we're going to understand the effective working of the different ministries.

In the Church, described in the Book of Acts, the power of God was continually manifested. The Apostles were led of the Spirit of God, praying, seeking God for guidance and careful not to be led of men's desires nor ruled by men's carnal intellects. Each individual realized that he was accountable to God and responsible for the lost world around him. This was the practice for at least the first century. Eventually cooling in their Apostolic ardor, people began to delegate the responsibility of the individual to the clergy. That soon developed into a powerful clergy. Out of that, in three hundred years, developed a church system and a church government similar to that of the Roman government. That's what exists in certain large churches of today. The orders and methods of conduct of a church are issued from a long way off and come down to the local church. There are churches in America where even the Pastor's messages for Sunday morning are sent to him typewritten and he reads them. I'm sure that we would find very little of the move of the Holy Spirit under that situation. God knows that each church is an individual, just as each person is an individual.

God gave a system into the church that was in contrast to this. Instead of men ruling over each other and giving directives as to how the church should function, God gave offices, He gave ministries, ministry gifts into the church. One thing I want you to look at very carefully and always remember when you consider this situation, to look at the record. Always look at the record. What has come of that type of church government? All you need to do is to observe the fruit that it has borne, and you will find there is very little or none of it that will last. There is no eternal fruit borne. Although some of these organizations are able to bear children into the world, they are like the two women in the Song of Solomon. There is a tremendous dissertation on the beautiful, virtuous woman that resembles the Bride of Christ. Then it says "We have a little sister who has no breasts." And the connotation is that this woman is perfectly capable of bearing children, but totally unable to feed her children. That's the situation in the world today. There are many churches where children can be born into the kingdom, but they must find someplace where they can be fed by the Word of God.

God instituted a method of feeding people that they might grow into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ; that Christ Himself might be developed in them; that they might grow to where the world looking at them could see Christ. There is no other way that the worldly person is going to see Jesus except through the individual from the Christ-centered-in-Christ Church! That's where it has to come from. It has to come from the born-again, spirit-filled, turned-on believer who allows himself to be transformed into the image of Christ. These ministers must realize that they are Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God, and that their primary purpose is to reconcile the world unto God, not to build small kingdoms for themselves and collect taxes from the people so they can pay themselves a good salary.

That's not how God intended it to be. For this reason He said in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, from the seventh verse: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." "That He might fill all things" "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:7-16).

IS THERE A NEED TODAY?

Again, we want to ask, "Is the need the same today?" Now this was written somewhere in 60 or 70 A.D., or maybe a little before. I want to ask the question, and keep it in your mind, "Is the need still the same today as it was at that time? Is the need today the same as it was, or parallel to, the need that existed at the time that Jesus Christ gave birth to the church by laying Himself down, becoming the divine seed that was planted in the Earth that the church might grow out of it? Is the situation today just the same, or is it similar enough that we could say that the church exists?" If it is, then it seems reasonable to assume that all of those ministries should still be existing.

Let's look at the condition of the world today just for a moment. Now in the time of Jesus, we saw a great deal of idolatry. Men worshiped not only idols, but they worshiped religion. The pharisees worshiped the Sabbath above everything else. It didn't matter how much you did, as long as you kept the religious ritual. That wasn't the only time in history that this was true. That case existed way back in ancient Babylon. If you observed the religious rituals faithfully, it didn't matter what you did otherwise, or what you thought, you still had fellowship or acceptance or good standing in the church. The god of materialism was obviously present at that time as evidenced when Jesus used the cord on the fellows in the temple. He did it to drive materialism out of the House of God. The sinfulness of man was surely there. Men were thieves, they were murderers, they were adulterers, they were the same as they were at the time of the cross. They were the same then as they are now. We certainly have plenty of that around. The god of materialism is alive and well in the USA and continental Europe. They have totally divorced themselves from God and divested themselves of all the knowledge of God, and have worshiped the god of materialism. They have very little of the reality of the risen Christ. I talk to many here and there who literally say, "Well, God doesn't exist anymore." or "God isn't the same anymore," or "God may have done those things once, but He doesn't do them now." I will say to you today, categorically, that the blame for all of this must rest upon the church. It is not the Communists, it is not the dictators of the world, who have created the atheist or the agnostic or the infidel.

It is the institutionalized, formalized church of Jesus Christ that says, "Yes, God did something at that day, but He doesn't do it anymore. Yes, I know it is written in the Bible that way, but it really doesn't mean that anymore. God had a purpose at the time of the first church, but He doesn't have that purpose anymore." The world listens to that and their only comment is, "Incredible!, the entire story of Christianity then must be incredible!" Anybody who can read the Bible can read Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever." Therefore, the entire message, the entire plan of God, must be identical to what it was in the beginning; or the total thing must be cast out! You

see, we must accept it forever. To be credible it must be to every individual on the face of the earth, and it must apply to all men and it must apply equally. If it applied in 32 A.D., 60 A.D., 70 A.D., 300 A.D., it must still apply in 1990 A.D. If God did it, it never changed! Praise the Lord!

We must establish the fact that situations haven't changed, the need hasn't changed; in fact, if anything, there is a greater need today than ever. There are more people on the face of the earth today than there have been in all ages prior, from 1900 back. We could increase that because there has been a 700 million increase in population in the last ten years! It is very likely that there are more people today on the earth than there ever were - altogether! Now, to say that God changed His mind when there's more involved now than there ever was at any time in history is totally incredible! We must therefore conclude that the Word of God is true and every man is a liar if he disagrees with it. We say that kindly. We use the word liar because the Bible uses the word liar, but we say it to provoke people to understand that God is just as interested in humanity as He ever was. The scripture, "God so loved the world that He gave Jesus Christ"- gave His Son - He gave Him because of great love. If God had that much love for a few people, how much more love would He have for six billion? There are nearly six billion people on the face of the earth today. Wycliffe Bible Translators say there are probably 40% of them who have never yet had the Bible in their own language.

I have recently heard fine upstanding Pentecostal Preachers, "who, of course, have all the truth" say that there is no real need for God to heal and work miracles, because that is not necessary, today, because we walk in love and we must learn more about love for each other, so the world outside can see that we are Christians known by our love. There should be no doubt in anyone's heart that we are to love each other, but of equal importance should be our love for the unsaved, the sick and helpless, the poor and the weak and lame. How can we say that we have God's love if we can't extend a helping hand to the down and out or the lost and undone of this world. We show true love when we begin to believe what Jesus said in the Great Commission and use our so called faith (which operates by love) to reach out to the lost and those in need throughout the world. If we examine His words in the Great Commission, we will find that there is an apostolic call on everyone of us, but most ignore and refuse to obey that Divine Call.

To the people in the church who say the job is already done and there is no need for the ministry of the apostle and the prophet, and some of them are even coming to the place where they don't feel the need of the evangelist - some churches don't even have an altar call - they never offer a man a chance to accept Jesus Christ - there must be something wrong with that system. I am not simply trying to tear that down. I'm trying to establish just a few points to make

us consider the world's position, the general church position, and God's position relative to His called and anointed ministries.

Today we know that, just as then, there is gross spiritual darkness over much of the earth - "gross spiritual darkness.", If that is true, and it is very evident, then we ask again the question, "Is the office of the apostle valid today?" The Bible says that Jesus gave gifts into the church. In the first chapter of Acts, Luke was writing to Theophilus and said: I write unto you the things which "Jesus began both to do and teach." I find a main thought in the New Testament that stands out very prominently and it is this: "The Church must continue to do what Jesus began both to do and teach." The job is not completed. We must do and teach those things which Jesus began both to do and teach by the word of His mouth, by the example of His life and by the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God.

If we carefully examine the Book of Acts, which is the history of the first church, we find that throughout, in every case, they established the church not by great swelling words of men's wisdom as Paul said, but by the demonstration of the power and the Spirit of God. They had three things. They had the word of God, they had the name of Jesus Christ, and they had the Holy Spirit. That fully equipped them to do the work of the ministry. There was not one of these men who went out who did not have the Holy Spirit, did not have a complete standing on the Word of God, did not know who they were in Christ. They operated in the Name of Jesus because they were fully assured that they had every right legally to operate in that name, for they had been given, an apostolic call with power of attorney to act in Jesus' name, as if He was standing there doing the work. Because of that, they went forth and declared boldly the Word of God, empowered by the Spirit of God. Continually, they went everywhere preaching the Word of God.

They Believed God and always got promised results.

God everywhere confirmed His Word by signs following them. That is what the early church established their claim on. It was not theological arguments, it was not debates, nor anything like that. It was not compromise with the world in order to become popular, or to find common ground. It was a full declaration of the full counsel of God! God Himself honored that. If we want success in today's world we must take responsibility for the Call of God upon our lives and use that pattern and continue with it and bring it to pass for this age. If we do this, we will reap a greater harvest than they ever saw.

SHOULD GOD'S PEOPLE BE DIVIDED?

We're going to get into some things that the apostle does before long, but I want to lay a little bit of a background - a little bit of a foundation - so that we can see what has to happen in order to have success in that ministry. In the Book of Acts we find in the first chapter, the fourteenth verse, it talks about being in one accord. In the second chapter, the first verse, it was one accord again. They came into one accord. I believe they came into one accord as to the purpose and the person of Jesus Christ. There was no hint of compromise nor of a rearrangement of Doctrine to make it agreeable to all. It was simply an acceptance of the Truth of Jesus Christ.

Suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, it says they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter, who had been a total coward, now stood up and began to preach boldly to the same nation that he had been afraid to face on the night preceding the crucifixion of Jesus. He now declared unto that entire nation, "You have murdered the Son of God." Talk about something happening in a man! What happened? A revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. You must realize that there was more than just the initial speaking in tongues. It was a revelation of who and what Jesus was and what He had begun both to do and teach. Peter realized what his position was in Christ, he made a total identification with Jesus in his heart, and he stepped forth and began to preach. The Bible says in the forty-first verse of that chapter that there were three thousand people saved. Read the rest of that chapter, and you find in the forty-sixth and forty-seventh verses that they were in one accord. There were great miracles, great fellowship, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved". We go on down to the fourth chapter and we find five thousand men saved. I assume there were women there, too. They just numbered the men because they had a lot of old covenant thinking, and the only people that counted, in the Old Covenant were the men. It was a man's covenant. Therefore, they only considered men.

They only numbered the men but you may be sure that the women and children were there, so you're looking at more like twenty to thirty thousand people converted, if you carry it through. Then we go over to the thirty-second verse and it says there was a great multitude that believed and "they were of one heart and of one soul". They were of one accord. We go on and on and on through that book and we find that there were great miracles always when people came into one accord around Jesus Christ.

PAUL AN EXAMPLE

Let me assure you that Paul the apostle, when he was walking on the road to Damascus, was a man who sought to do the will of God. He was zealous to do what he termed the will of God. But, he was as contrary to the reality of the will of God as any man could be! Therefore, because of the willingness of his heart, God literally called Paul from a mission of murder, if you will, to a mission of mercy! God turned that man around by what? Did he do it by theological arguments? Paul knew all the theology that was written already. He had it all put together. He had been to every Bible school in the country. He knew all they could teach him. He knew the word. He was a master, he was a doctor in the law. He absolutely had everything you could get him as far as intellectual approaches to God. He had it, and from boyhood he had observed the commandments and all the Feasts of Israel. He had walked with God insofar as the flesh was concerned. Paul was born again and began to know Jesus after the Spirit. From that day there came something on Paul. He was struck down and he saw the Lord. He later said, "I saw the Lord, I saw Him. He was seen of me," he said. He got a revelation of Jesus Christ and who He was, and then suddenly there came a revelation of the Word of God unto Paul. All of the things he had known intellectually suddenly became revelation to him. He began to understand God. He knew all about God. He could write books about God, but there came the day when he knew God! And he suddenly saw the purpose of God in Christ. When he turned around he became another man! He changed his name from Saul to Paul. Instead of being a persecutor, he became the great apostle of the New Testament Church. You find the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts deal with Peter, but from then on the ministry nearly always belongs to Paul.

Paul was the first missionary-evangelist (True Apostle). You see he was the first missionary with any great amount of success. There had only been one missionary really that you could say had done a real job, and that was Phillip in reaching out to the Ethiopian eunuch. He was the only missionary who had really gotten any results prior to that. History tells us, the Bible doesn't, but history tells us, that there was a great move of God in northern Africa at the time that eunuch went down and preached Jesus Christ after Philip had ministered to him. What happened there? Nothing other than the revelation of the Spirit of God came to that Ethiopian eunuch. He was reading the Bible. He was a devout man, and he understood what the scripture taught; but he literally did not understand Jesus Christ! The revelation of Jesus Christ opened his eyes. History tells us that he did a tremendous job in the mission field of north Africa.

We find, then, that Saul became Paul the apostle. The apostle means "sent one", doesn't it? The word "apostle" - apostolos - means "sent forth". In the modern church today we find that there's a practice to have a missionary

conference and people come forward and decide to be missionaries and they send them out to be missionaries. Well, then of course, they go to a school for several years and they must pastor for at least two years, and then they must learn the language, and several other things. They must have a particular area of the earth in mind.

Let's look at what Paul did in contrast to that. He went into the desert alone, and prayerfully studied the scriptures, until he understood that they all revealed Jesus as the Messiah. After three years, he appeared to the other disciples to compare what he knew with what they had learned. Then he started teaching at his place of work until the Holy Ghost called him to begin his travels as an apostle.

One thing he had in his favor - he spoke Greek and he spoke Hebrew. Nobody who was any kind of a gentleman bothered to learn the Roman language. It was called the vulgar language by the more learned people. Latin was called the vulgar language and no one liked to speak it and so the Romans had to speak to these people in their tongue, not in the Roman tongue. Paul went everywhere preaching the gospel. He did not have any support, if you read carefully his accounts. He often went in and he worked with his hands. The Bible said that he resided at Antioch for several years, and he labored there making sails, and tents.

During these ten years, he was perfecting his teaching ministry. He was a tentmaker and a sailmaker. As did every good Jewish boy, he had to learn a trade, as well as going to college. That's a rather admirable practice, incidentally. Nevertheless, Paul went out and reached people on their level. He went down to where they were. He did not go down on the street corner and rent the biggest building in town and just go inside and pray, "Oh, God, send in some people."

Paul realized that his job was not to build a church for himself. His job was to build the Kingdom of God. I want you to grasp something in this. The building for the Kingdom of God - if every man who ever sets out to build, if he will build for the Kingdom of God, God will build his church. You'll never fail if you're building the Kingdom of God. If you're building you a church so that you can have a nice place to pastor all your life, building your own dynasty, you'll fail to reach God's best for you. But if you're building for the Kingdom of God with the thought of world outreach, reaching everybody in the world, making the gospel available to everybody, then God can get into the act. Let me tell you surely, God has a world vision! God's vision is not just for one little locality. Not even one county, not even one state, nor one country, not even one continent. God's vision is for everybody everywhere! Every person on earth is included in God's vision. The Bible says God has made of all men one blood, "one blood," that they might hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul saw this. Paul saw something in Jesus Christ.

He recognized that this is what it's all about.

This is the commission that God gave to Israel in the beginning. God really set them for a light unto the world that all might see the righteousness of God; but they perverted it. They perverted it. Brethren, may I say unto you: The church was set for a light unto the world, and they have perverted it. And it is a tragedy. Again I say to you, let's release them from our judgment. Let's not be bitter about it. Let's just realize it. Let's just realize the truth. See, we do not hold people guilty. We release them. That's godliness. That is godliness operating in and through you; because you have the nature of Christ in you, you are able to act in a Godly, Christlike manner, and release them from your judgment, thus opening the opportunity for real ministry.

I want to tell you today that, without controversy, the ministry of the apostle, the ministry of the prophet, are just as necessary as are the ministry of the pastor, the evangelist, and the teacher in the church. Their ministries are different and I thank God for the awakening that's coming throughout the church of the need for these ministries. When God gets this thing in order, these ministries will function as he intended them; and the last house will be greater than the former. The church of today is the church as far as God's concerned. Up to now it has been laboring throughout the centuries. But today we're at the fullness of time. Because of this, God's church is going to operate according to His plan under His direction for His purpose. That is to establish His kingdom - the kingdom of Jesus Christ - in the earth and to save mankind. To open the door - to present the amnesty offer that God offered in Christ to every creature everywhere; every people, every kindred, every nation, every tongue. That is the plan of God. Therefore, all the ministries are necessary for that purpose.

We won't get into any other ministry except the apostle's other than just a few sentences to describe the relationships of the ministries. There is a close relationship that must exist between all ministries. One ministry cannot exist alone. One ministry cannot stand alone.

All the ministries were given into the church, Universal. They must come out of the church; they must function in the church, and in the world, they must be for the benefit of the Kingdom. They must encourage and strengthen the church. When we speak of "church", we're speaking of the Church of Jesus Christ and the people of that Church of Jesus Christ who are fully cognizant of their place in Christ, who have a full understanding of what God intended to do in and through them in Christ.

We're teaching on the office of the apostle, and the ministry of the apostle, and always there arises the question, "Is it valid today?" Anything that's not valid today, of course, we don't use. The Word of God gives us, in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, an understanding of what gifts were given into the church. It says

in Ephesians 4:11: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." It established His purpose in giving these ministries;"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

The critical scripture becomes verse thirteen, because there is established a time - until; the word says "til," but properly today we would say until "we all come into the unity of the faith." My argument is very clear and easily proven in this area; that we have not come to the unity of the faith in the world today. The church itself has not come into the unity of the faith. Even among full-gospel circles there is a terrible disunity of the faith. Among faith people, there is disunity of the faith. There must come a unity of the faith or else the apostle is still needed.

All these ministries are given at the same time, for the same purpose, for the same period of time. Can you see that? Look at that carefully and analyze those scriptures. Spend some time in those scriptures and let God reveal this to you because He wants us to all come into the unity of the faith; also, to come into the knowledge of the Son of God. You listen to any of the great preachers and they will tell you that one of the greatest arguments that they run into, the greatest area of a need for ministry among pastors, teachers, evangelists, is an understanding of who they are in Christ - an understanding of the legal side of their redemption. Now that's one of the greatest areas of problems in the church today. Men in the ministry don't understand who they are in Christ. Therefore, we have not come to the knowledge of the Son of God universally, have we? And, "unto a perfect man". Now the perfect man, the Bible says in James, doesn't sin with his mouth. You've not known too many like that! This is descriptive of Jesus Christ, of course. "Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". Therefore, we have not come to those areas, and I doubt very much if there will come the total revelation of this area and the total understanding and the total perfection that he is talking about here until the day of the appearing of Jesus Christ! Therefore, I say that all the ministry gifts that Christ gave into the church will have no further function when Jesus himself appears again unto the church. And so let us conclude that argument and establish the fact that we must accept all five of the offices, all the ministerial offices, all the ministry gifts that were given to the church. Praise the Lord.

They were given to bring the world and the church, as many as repent and believe, into one accord with the Word of God. It is the heart cry of God, as established in the last session, that all men come into fellowship with Him. It is the heart cry of God that all men come into fellowship with God - everywhere, all over the earth. In order for our gospel to be credible, it must be to every creature. It must be to the Chinese, it must be to the Japanese, it must be to the Germans, it must be to the English, it must be to the African, it must be to the

South American, it must be to all men everywhere. Otherwise, our gospel lacks credibility. It must be to the many hundreds of tribes throughout Southeast Asia.

THE APOSTLE IS NOT A RULER

Now then how does the apostle fit into this plan? Since he is listed first, does that make him the boss? Is the apostle a higher office than any other office? I've heard men talk a lot about that and that's what makes some young Bible students desire the office of the apostle - because they think it makes them a chief, makes them to be somebody. It is a sad thing that this type of thinking has ever been allowed to creep into your mind. It's bad that it crept in, but it's much worse that you've entertained the thought. It is anti-scriptural for us to desire a position that would make us chief over anyone else. Our Lord addressed that question in the gospels (Matt. 20:21-28).

But first we look again at the worldly church. We said that they patterned their church government after the Roman Empire; and therefore, there are tiers of authority. There are levels of authority. They have established some bishops, some elders. In every case, there is a structured authority that is visible to the world. Everyone wears a little different garb and is readily recognized as a little higher official. It even gets to the point where men bow and kiss their feet and kiss the rings just as the Orientals do in some areas. This is not God's plan. This has never been God's plan! God never intended that we should ever exalt one ministry over another, nor one man over another.

Jesus addressed this question, and I want to take the time to look at Mark's gospel, chapter ten, verses forty two to forty-five. Jesus is addressing the question which they asked, "Who's going to be the leader? Who's going to be the head man in this crowd?" "Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister (or your servant). And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." So let us study the scripture and believe, and practice what God says. In Matthew 20: 25-28 and Luke 22:24-27, we find, in every case, that Jesus says the same thing. You are not to desire the position of ruler over other men. The person who operates in the apostle's ministry can never consider himself a ruler or an authority over those other people.

God has used me in this ministry for some twenty five years, and I have done the work of the apostle without recognition or reward, as I am the servant of Jesus Christ. I have always been careful, when I go into a church, not to come in, and begin to exercise authority over the people. I come to be their servant. Even in churches that I have helped pioneer, I always submit myself to the pastor. The office that God established to be the shepherd in an area is the pastor. There are some good reasons for that, and I want to take just a moment to establish them.

First of all, the pastor is resident with the people. He will have to face them after I am gone. He will have to live with them after the evangelist has departed. The pastor has the responsibility, therefore, unto God for those people. Because of this, he must have the authority to stand as priest and prophet among those people or with those people before God. And he, himself, is not a ruler over the people. You well know that a good pastor becomes a servant of the people. He literally gives himself totally unto God. He gives himself to God to the point that sometimes he totally exhausts his body. But that's how God wills it. This is not always the way it works, but it is the will of God.

That's the ministry God has given. We must each one always be careful that we do not usurp the authority of a pastor or a teacher. If you're a visiting minister of any variety, you must learn, while sharing as a teacher, sharing as an evangelist, sharing as a visiting pastor, always, always, come under the authority that God has established in that house and in that area. That will eliminate all this argument about "Is the apostle the greatest?" The chief apostle of the church is Jesus Christ. There's no argument that he's the greatest. In our imaginations, we can esteem Him as the greatest, can't we? But He himself said, "I came to be a servant of all."

You'll find that in every case Jesus never asserted undue, tyrannical authority. The one thing you'll notice; he always gave a man a choice as to what he would do. Jesus never commanded the fellows who followed Him closely. He never commanded them to do anything. He told them, "Do this, and this will happen." They had a choice to accept or refuse. Why? Because Jesus was developing ministers of ability and strong character.

In the apostolic ministry, one must ever realize that you must teach people to develop the ministry that is in them and the ministries that are around them. One of the first marks of a person with the apostolic calling - you will always find that they are interested more in other peoples' ministries than they are their own. D. L. Moody was a man who was rated as a great evangelist, but he could have been called an apostle to the church. D. L. Moody would take a young, green preacher and put him in the pulpit. He always sought to put someone else in the pulpit to preach instead of himself. Fantastic! And D. L. Moody had tremendous success with God, no question. There are many others. We look at Paul. Paul always established somebody. He pushed other men's ministries. He taught them.

I never desired the word "apostle" to hang on me. If anybody hangs it on me, I tell them as I tell people everywhere, "I'm God's plowboy." I plow the ground He gives me to plow and I plow it the way He tells me and I use the equipment He tells me to use. I'm obedient to the Father. That's all! And so the word "apostle" does not come as a title that men hang on you like Dr. So and So. I tremendously

admired T. L. Osborn just after the doctorate degree was conferred upon him by Oral Roberts University. He said, "I will give whatever honor I can to that. I feel honored that they have chosen to honor me with that. But it will in no way affect my relationship with God nor the ministry God has given me. Understand that. Let's always realize that we stand or fall to God in whatever ministry we are in. We're talking about a ministry that God has honored for a long time. Brother T. L. Osborn has operated as an apostle for twenty-five years, and very few people ever bothered to call him that. But he certainly has operated in that office. There are several others who have operated in that office and God has mightily used them. We speak of the apostle Paul, but I'm satisfied that none of his contemporaries ever addressed Paul as "the honored apostle," the "Right Reverend apostle", the "Great and Glorious and Magnificent apostle of the church" - Never! I am convinced in my own heart that Brother Osborn would have stopped that right at the start of it. If you want God's blessing instead of man's, you will forget that kind of thing.

Don't desire titles, and don't get involved in that type of pride trip, whatever your calling. Don't exalt one man above another. God will make room for the ministry that He has for you. After all, where did the ministry come from? Did you, by any degree of your own personal excellence, your superior knowledge or your position of outstanding birth become anything before God that could justify your having that kind of pride in yourself? "It is God who wills and works, both to will and to do His good pleasure in you." It is God, and God alone, that makes us what we are. In Christ we are what we are. And any glory must go to Jesus Christ! We do not seek to gain glory by conferring titles upon each other.

This is not to be taken as an indictment of anybody. I'm speaking it as a word of caution to the person whom God seeks to use. Let your head not be puffed up! Because, if the devil can't destroy you in the valley of despair, he will surely topple you from the pinnacle of pride. It's a long, hard fall. Don't give place to the devil. Don't give him any room, and he can't reach you, can he? Don't go around saying, "Well, that's apostle So and So, and that's this and that".

The lesson is obvious that Jesus gave us. One ministry is not above another. The ministries are different. One's not higher than another, but they are different from each other in many areas; and yet they're similar to each other in more areas. The ministries are co-equal and the authority of each varies with every situation.

But they all must submit themselves to one another in love. We refuse to harbor the attitude that one ministry is above another. When Paul was saying,

"Seek the best gift", he did not speak of the ministry gifts. Those are called of God. He spoke of the gifts of the Spirit - at least we call them the gifts of the Spirit. Truly, they are properly interpreted as manifestations of the Holy Spirit through the believer. There is nothing wrong with seeking the best of that. There's nothing wrong with diligently pursuing your ministry that God has given you, and then being advanced to some other type of ministry. There's nothing wrong with that either.

In my own ministry, I started out as a personal witness - a soul winner. I believe, that if you're going to be successful in any ministry you must start out as a soul winner. Then, you must continue as a soul winner. Then you must perpetuate your ministry as a soul winner. If there ever comes a day when you conclude your ministry by laying down in death, the greatest glory that I can imagine is winning one last soul before you go to be with the Lord. It's a tremendous privilege to win souls! That's exactly what every ministry is given into the church for. Yes, the teacher is to teach; but he's a soul winner. The evangelist is to preach. He's a soul winner. Above all he's a soul winner. The pastor is to pastor, but he's a soul winner. And the apostle is to win souls. The prophet's ministry, though corrective in the church, is still to be a soul winner. All the ministries are given for one purpose - for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. Then the whole theme is soul winning - world evangelism. What is the work of the ministry but soul-winning, discipling people unto Jesus Christ after they are won to Him.

The church of today has done many things. They have done tremendously well in building fine buildings. They have done tremendously well in building great colleges. They have done tremendously well in building excellent Sunday schools. They have done tremendously well in building great theological seminaries. But, they have left undone the one great thing that Jesus gave them to do before He left the world. He said, "Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." They should have done the first, but they should never have left the other undone!

In the last days, the grand and glorious church that is being birthed right now and preparing to go out and conquer the world for Jesus Christ, is going to do the very thing that Jesus said it must do, in the twenty fourth chapter of Matthew, "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come. So we better get busy. Get at it! Everywhere you go, whatever you call yourself - pastor, prophet, evangelist, apostle, teacher, get out and get at it! That's what the call is. Get out and get at it! Don't fool around wasting time being important.

THE APOSTLE'S MINISTRY TO THE WORLD

First, I said the apostle is a soul winner. "apostle" means a sent one. He's sent. By whom? He's sent by God. The Early Church, when they sent Paul and Barnabas out, said, "it seems good to us, and the Holy Ghost, that these men are sent to do this work." You can send all the people you want to, but if they don't have the call of God on their life, you had just as well let them establish their ministry at home! Don't send them out to get killed in some foreign field, or to get so discouraged that the devil destroys them spiritually. Don't do that. Make sure first that they have the calling of God upon their life. Now I want you to grasp one other truth here. There is a universal call to all mankind to go! The Bible says, "Go ye"! That means "you go"! It doesn't mean just Cliff go, or that one go. But you go, everybody. "Go into all the world!" Oh, my, you don't mean me? Not me! No, it can't be me! Yes, I do mean you! Every one of you! Go YE into all of your world. Preach the gospel. The gospel according to the Bible, not any watered-down variety! The real gospel is what we're talking about and we're well aware of what it amounts to. Thank God there are people who know the gospel of Jesus Christ!

So the call is universal. But now then, your call may be only to the local neighborhood. You don't come to the altar tonight and go to Africa tomorrow in the middle of a guerilla national conflict and start ministering the Word of Life. You might well get a missile of death through your gizzard! And it'll kill you dead! There you'll be, a shipwreck. You'll be saved, but you'll be wasted, too! Why waste good talent like that? What is it? We equip the saints! We equip them for the ministry. That's what Bible schools are about. That's what teaching ministries are about, to equip the saints that they might go forth in a greater ministry with a greater capability and understanding of the Word of God so that they do not become easily victimized by the forces of evil. To become successful as an apostle, it is well to go to the field with an apostle who has a successful ministry and ask him to be your mentor. Amen!

The day after you're saved, or that very day, fine; go home to your house and begin your ministry of reconciliation. What are you now? You're an apostle. You're sent by God to your loved ones. Now, that really is demeaning to the office of the apostle in some men's understanding. I'm going to declare to you that apostle means "sent one", and it starts real small. It starts real small. When you get saved, there is a seed planted in you - the seed of your inheritance. The seed is small at the beginning, but the inheritance is the harvest. If you plant one seed of corn, you normally can expect one or two ears of corn on a stalk. You get three or four hundred kernels of corn. But the whole plant, the ear and all, is in that seed when you planted it. It's all there. Now when God plants that divine seed in you, you have the complete ministry that God ordered for you to have. Now then, you must develop it. That's what Paul meant when he said, "Wait upon

your ministry". Develop those things, Timothy, that you received when we laid our hands upon you and prayed on you by the laying on of hands of the presbytery. He said, "You received the word and then you received the supernatural manifestation of the gift of God. I have mentored you to be an apostle, now, young man, you prove that ministry. You get into it."

Now, then, if you're called to be an evangelist, the best way to prove that the seed is really alive in you is to go right out to one of these hamburger stands and strike up a conversation with somebody that is waiting in line. Do it in a friendly enough manner that they don't shut you off the minute you start. Do it so they can receive. You see, one of the most important tools of the ministry is to learn to present the gospel acceptably – you are an ambassador for God's kingdom. It's one thing to thunder it out at a captive audience. That's tremendous, and we all like that. But you have to first learn how to handle it one on one with a guy that's six inches taller than you; and if you make him mad, he might thump you and you'll roll from here to the door. What are you? You're sent from God as a missionary, as an apostle, if you will, only a very limited apostleship. Understand that! Your apostleship is limited.

John G. Lake was an apostle to Africa, who established a church there that is the greatest church in Africa today – he did not do this on his first day nor his first week. He grew into his ministry. It's a totally black church in South Africa that does more evangelizing and more real work for God than any other church in Africa today. Period. They're fantastic! The work grew, became great and stood. John Lake was an Apostle to Africa, but he had to start, just as you must.

The apostle has to realize that he is sent from God. Now the ministry to the world - you go into an area and you start. What's your mission there? You must establish a work where the other ministries can come and function. That's primarily what you're there for. In the Philippines, India, Mexico, Ukraine, China and the United States, we minister in churches, different buildings, open fields and houses. We minister in a different manner in different places. Right now I'm going to talk about the ministry in undeveloped areas. We go in and we normally like to take a party so that we have some music and we have two or three other teachers. I have often gone by myself. In any case, your ministry is to plow the field, to open the ground, and prepare it for the seed. If you'll consider yourself to be a farmer - and I believe this must be a valid position or Jesus and Paul would not have referred to it so much - if you look carefully at the analogies that the Lord presented, He presented a farming situation, a fishing situation, military situation, or some kind of athletic contest. Paul did the same thing. He followed the pattern that Jesus had laid down.

So when you go into a new area, you must know in your heart that you are sent there by God. If you're all alone, you have a real problem if you don't know

you're sent from God. If you don't know that you're sent from God, you're going to get awful lonesome and you're going to let the devil lie to you and you're going to give up eventually. That's why it's good if you have two people. I prefer to take either a good brother from home, although I often can't find one; or I get a good native of the land. If I have him, he knows the culture and understands the people. I understand God, I understand the Word. Together, we make a team. He is more developed in one area than I am. I am more developed in another area than he is. Therefore, I submit myself to him in those areas where he is developed, and he submits himself to me in those areas where I'm developed. Submitting ourselves one to another in love, and this is a demonstration of God's overall working in the ministry of the believer when you do that. If you go in there in competition, you're going to demonstrate to the world that God's not God, there's no unity in God, and it's all a mess anyway. Forget it! There's been lots of that all around the world, and you run into it everywhere you go. You're going to run into that type of thing in many places, but don't get caught up in it, stay above it.

When I went to the Philippines the first time, we had a meeting and there were several denominations, several free people, and we were trying to figure a method to literally take Northern Luzon for God. Various ones came up with different arguments why they couldn't fellowship with this one or that one, and they didn't want to get involved. I said, "Brethren, there's one thing we need to establish here and now. We must first realize that this is not being done at the will of man. This is being done at the will of God. I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If you want to fight and quarrel with each other, you find somebody else! I will not be involved. I have done all the fighting I intend to do! I am going to preach the Word, and the Word will bring results! I am going to heal the sick and as God leads we will see miracles.

If you'll take that position in every area of ministry, if you will take the position, "I'm going to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," I'm going to preach the Word of God and I'm going to let God's Spirit lead me. We must come into fellowship around the Word of God. We must find areas that we can agree on, and then we must agree! We must continually be in agreement. Otherwise, we sow discord, don't we?

It is important to establish the people that you're with, that are close to you. You must arrive at some area of agreement. I fellowshipped with different church groups, who didn't have the Holy Spirit when we started. They do now! Praise the Lord! Because why? Because God is faithful to honor His Word. I didn't go to them and tell them they weren't saved because they didn't have the Holy Spirit. I didn't tell them they had to talk in tongues. I didn't tell them anything except Jesus is Lord, let's make Him Lord of every area of our lives. Let's let Him be

Lord of our situation. Let's let Him be Lord of everything. First of all, He must be Lord in ME! And then He must be Lord in US! And love must rule between us. In every area we must walk in love that is obvious to the casual observer or the intent observer. They must see the love of God demonstrated in us.

Now that is a critical first step in moving in an area of ministry where there is no established ministry and where you are working in missionary situations. This is what I'm talking about now, largely. But it's true in the United States, too. I fellowship with several types of people. We don't talk about the Holy Spirit, but we talk about the Word! They always ask me to come back when I get a chance. Before long they'll receive the Holy Spirit. They love the Word. They truly do love the Word! They've been hindered by man's doctrines. And that's true in all organized churches of the world. There are areas that have been hindered by men's doctrines.

In a new area, our purpose is to begin a new work. Sometimes this is difficult when all there are, is Nipa huts and everything is dirty by our standards and there's no chairs or anything. There's no building that you can call a church.

You begin to wonder, "Well, what am I going to do here, and how am I going to do it?". I'm going to tell you how you're going to do it if you're wanting to do it right. You're going to let the people that are there decide where the meeting house will be. They must figure it out. You can't begin to comprehend what their culture allows them to do. Don't try to establish your culture upon another people! Never! That is one of the failings of the American missionary. They have gone into areas where the people didn't wear enough clothes to suit the religious preferences of the missionaries customs. The next time you see them, the Christians are burdened down with a suit and a jacket in an area where it would kill you to wear it. But that's the way it is. They go to areas where the customs are to eat certain foods, and, because of their tastes, will not eat them. They immediately offend their hosts and this is the beginning of the loss of their credibility. You must let the people be what they are. Again, for an example we take it from the book of Acts where the council at Jerusalem decided when pressed with the question, "Shall we command them to keep the Law? Shall we make Jews out of them? Shall we Judaize them?" The question then becomes -- in modern day terminology -- "Shall we Christianize them?" Or shall we make them Jesus people?, Christians. The apostles gathered together, and I'm satisfied they heard from God. They said, "There's only these things that we'll command them - abstain from eating of blood, from things strangled, from things sacrificed to idols, and from adultery or fornication. Other than this, we put no commandment on them." That doesn't mean I have to make them dress like me, look like me, talk like me, or learn to pray like I do. If I choose to do these things, I destroy them.

When you come into assembly together, often you'll find people standing for hours. That's not uncommon. Don't sweat it. Don't get nervous about it. Don't get nervous about it if they sit on the ground. Don't get nervous about anything. Another thing that is most critical - don't hold yourself aloof. I'll tell you one thing that makes more people fail in the ministry in foreign countries than any other one thing. The fact that they won't touch the people. They're afraid of getting dirty or of getting some disease. I'm saying this, not to tell you to do some crazy thing by faith - I'm saying it because of the faith that God instilled in me, the God-kind of faith allowed me to do this. We've practiced this as long as I can remember. We preached faith before it became fashionable. We prayed for the sick before it became popular, and God has always honored His Word. He's never changed a thing.

When I first went into the Philippines and left Manila, I left the group of men I was with. One offered me a bottle of vitamins, another offered me a bottle of pills to put in the water, and several other varieties of things. I would have had a small bag full of bottles of things to take. I said to them, "Brethren, you're going into areas that you might need them. You keep them. I preach the Word of Faith. I demonstrate the Word of Faith wherever I go. If I don't have faith to take a drink of water when I'm thirsty, my gospel becomes incredible! Unless I can believe God for a drink of water, I can't believe God for anything! I cannot attain the credibility that I desire with the people". Now I'm talking about the regular drinking water that they drink. I'm not talking about going and drinking out of a frog pond or a cow track or something like that. Don't misunderstand me. If the natives don't drink it, don't you drink it. Don't you go playing some crazy idea that you have faith for something. I admit - I haven't got faith for mosquitoes. I've got faith to raise the dead, I've got faith to pray for the blind and see them healed, I've got faith to pray for anything else and see them get well. But I'll tell you I don't have faith to keep those savage mosquitoes off of me! There's a little bug in the Philippines, and they're in all of Africa and Australia. I call them a "flying denture". They're just teeth and wings, and they just gnaw you something savage. But I don't have faith to keep them off of me, so I use repellent. I had a couple of guys go with me and they took the scripture in the ninety-first Psalm that "He'll keep you from the terror that flies by night." I said, "Praise the Lord, brother, according to your faith let it be unto you." Inside of twenty four hours, after having been bitten on every exposed piece of skin, they're bumming me for my spray. Their faith wasn't what they thought it was, you see. One thing a man must know. When you're walking with God in strange areas, your faith must be something that is born by God from within, and not out of someone's book on faith. You must realize that you are in Christ and you are on God's business. Therefore, you are protected with every protection that He can offer you. But, you must also realize that the devil's out there to find any area that you're weak in the faith. If you exercise faith where you don't have any, you're going to weaken that area where you should have some! Now that's just a little thing to keep in

mind. If the devil can get you to fail in an area that you presumptuously decided, "I'm going to put my faith to work on this", and you fail, and then you do it again in another area, you're going to build a small, tiny seed of "failure syndrome" in you. Don't do that. Don't ever do that! Recognize your own weaknesses. A good general knows his weaknesses as well as his strengths. He must understand his weaknesses as well as his strengths. I know my weaknesses, and I take steps to avoid those areas. Those areas wherein Satan might attack me, I take steps to avoid them. There are areas where I'm strong as a concrete pillar. In those areas, I don't even concern myself with anything, I just go and I don't worry about it.

When the apostle is in an area to establish a new work, if he's going to succeed, he must be able to function in the other ministries. You must be able to teach the Word. You must be able to have the compassion and love that are two of the main attributes of the pastor. And you must teach as wisely as a pastor with the thought in mind of what's going to happen in the future, as a result of what you teach. Keep that in mind. Always remember that what you teach you must be able to face tomorrow. So you must keep it in the realm of scripture. You must not get out on wild tangents. You must have an easily provable doctrine. I always say that any doctrine that you cannot easily establish from scripture, don't put it into your teaching curriculum. Leave it alone until you can easily establish it. And then it's easy for everyone else to establish what you have said. Don't teach things that people have trouble with after you've gone. Don't leave them hanging. The word for that is responsibility for the message! Of all things, the apostolic ministry must be responsible for what you have said. You must take the responsibility for those words that have come out of your mouth that others have put their trust in. Therefore we are careful to stay within the realm of scripture, easily proven areas of scripture.

You're also there to do the work of the evangelist. After all, how do you start a church if you don't go out and evangelize the neighborhood? You must somehow get together a meeting, even if it's only three or four.

I've preached, sometimes, to just a few. In 1956, I was pioneering a church. At that time, I didn't even know anything about the apostle's ministry, I thought apostles were just Paul and those other fellows that were with Jesus. The first week I had my mother-in-law and myself. Then the congregation tripled. My wife and our four children came! I now had a bigger congregation. And from that we began to build. One must not lose heart because he does not have a large crowd. In fact, one other mark of the apostolic ministry is that you'll preach it the same way even if you're there with only one person to hear you as you would if there were ten thousand. Why? The preaching comes from the Holy Spirit that is within you and one truth we must always recognize - the Holy Spirit is the executor of the will of God in the earth. Get that one! He is the executor.

Therefore, being resident within me, He is there and He will respond to every need of every human being that I come in contact with. The Holy Spirit will try to love that person, with God's love, through me. Now it is up to me whether I submit my will to the will of God in every one of those cases. Therefore, the apostle must become submissive to the will of God. Absolutely submissive to where he hears every cry of every man's heart. Praise the Lord! Because he is what? He is there to establish a brand new work for God. If we fail to recognize our responsibility to complete what God has given us to do, we fail in the ministry in this.

When we establish a new pastor in that work, we must not leave him with a set of problems. But if we fail to accept the responsibility for what we've done, we can easily dump the problems on him and run down the road and we are gone and he, inside of two or three weeks or two or three months, is totally shipwrecked and the work is back at the point of beginning and worse. Now the area is burned over.

That has happened in many areas of the world, including the United States. There are many towns that have been burned over by the gospel. The very thing that God created for our good we have used to destroy God's people. That's tragic. The word is responsibility for the ministry and for every word you teach. We must reap a harvest, not just burn the field and move on, leaving barrenness and disillusionment behind us. We only bring reproach upon the Gospel and upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. God gave the ministry to the church, but He also gave the church to the world to reveal His plan for salvation and reveal His wisdom. The church's responsibility is to spread the amnesty offer to the world. Amen!

MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE

The Apostle must be versatile

The apostle and the evangelist both deal more with the world and the church than any other ministries in the five-fold ministry gifts. We're dealing with the subject of going into strange areas, new areas, and establishing new works. We have stated that it is necessary for the apostle to be able to teach, to be able to function as a pastor temporarily, to be able to evangelize, and even act in the ministry of the prophet. For this reason; those gifts, those manifestations of the Holy Spirit that are evident in the prophetic ministry are often evident, they are very valuable at least, in the apostolic ministry; such as the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom and the discerning of spirits. Those particular areas or manifestations of the Holy Spirit are of extreme value in the apostle's ministry. Often, when you're dealing with strange cultures, strange people, in today's economy, many people see the American as a wealthy individual and they seek to find ways to take advantage of them. This is true of several areas of the world and it's just a normal situation where people are poverty stricken, and I mean totally poverty stricken. They see someone come who seems to have a great degree of affluence. They want to benefit from that, often not to do you any harm, but to deceive you that they might profit by it. One needs to be aware of things like that and avoid situations wherein you can get fleeced. God does expect us to be good stewards of His money and of His time and of the effort that we ourselves expend. We must realize that every effort that we expend is chargeable to our account in the overall economy of God! Our time belongs to God. Our talent belongs to God. Let's not waste it. Every day the person in the apostle ministry must continually remain in close contact with God so that he might know the mind of God so that he might function in a manner that will not waste talent or money or time, nor be deceived in any manner that will hurt the ministry, or the reputation of Jesus.

There are several things I'd like to emphasize, in the ministry of the apostle, among the world. Now we're referring to the area of a new work. He must always exercise true authority by becoming a servant to all. Now that sounds a little strange. Most of our concept of authority is one who stands up and commands. Let me assure you that if you are the commanding type, you will fall on your nose inevitably. I was in positions of supervision and management with several large construction firms, and I found in foreign countries where everybody seemed to be having trouble with the native help, I got as much work done as I did in America. With unskilled people, even. It was amazing what we would accomplish. People would ask the formula. I said, "There's only one. The Bible says, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'". I say to you that if you want to function effectively in the ministry of the apostle in a foreign country, always consider how you would feel if your positions were reversed. Put yourself

in the other person's place and consider how you would feel and how these things would act upon you if your position were his and his were yours. It will sober you and it will make you realize that every word you speak can cut or it can soothe. It can hurt or it can heal.

Therefore, we must be very careful about how we talk and how we minister to people. What is the word? The word is love! Not the type of love commonly taught by people who have never sought God for a real baptism in His love so that they are able to love everyone as God loves them, committed to them and putting other's welfare ahead of our own. It is the love law. Christ in you will allow you to operate in love. I cannot tell you of the churches I have visited that are nearly devoid of real love. The people are aloof, often not even looking at a visitor as they pass in the aisles, yet the preacher often preaches, at some length, on loving everybody. It is usually very evident that his message is just so many words with nothing akin to his message alive in his heart or life.

God is love and I say categorically that in this last great move of God, men will not be so outstanding for their great faith as they will be for their great love. They will manifest the character and nature of God the Father. When we're truly in Christ, we will be as Hebrews spoke of Jesus being the "express image of God". That's what the world needs to see! Grasp that if you can. Meditate on that one and allow your consciousness to develop that. The world needs to see Christ, and when they see Christ, they will see the Father. That's just exactly it. Above all, the apostle must be an example of God's great love, a pastor who does not evidence God's love to all the people is not worthy of his office. The badge of God's love must be evident in the life of all ministries, for the only way people can see God's love is through you! If you present a bad image, then their image of God is distorted and it is very hard to win them to Jesus Christ.

THE APOSTLE IS KIND AND CONSIDERATE OF ALL

We must be very careful. Believe this one thing: the apostle must be wise, therefore, in what he does and says. He must exercise worldly wisdom. Godly wisdom and worldly wisdom. He must get along with people very well - both saved and unsaved. He must not make an unsaved person feel unworthy. He must not treat the unsaved as though they were dirty, as though they were unclean. He must see the unsaved as God sees them - a person who has yet one failing, only one. They have not come into relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That's the failing in the sinner that we must recognize.

The only crime that we can address ourselves to is that point wherein they have failed in grasping the amnesty offer that God has presented. It gets right down to where it's very simple. We must love people alike - saved and unsaved. The Bible says that we must love the brethren, but it also says we must "love our neighbor as ourselves" – we must esteem others as equal to or better than ourselves – we must never be self-serving. You see Jesus spoke a great deal about love. He said that because we love our neighbor as ourselves, men will know that we're His disciples. If we love the brethren and we are one with the brethren, then the world can truthfully say that Jesus came out from the Father. Therefore, we are demonstrating the life of Christ. Therefore, we are proving He is risen. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that what He has said is true and will work in my life as it will in the man that's presenting it. That is a good argument, and it will work for anyone.

The apostle, as with all ministries, must have strong character. He must have strength of character. We know that God sets out in the individual, just as any wise parent, to build character in their children. God will build your character if you are weak in certain areas. Be sure that you take along somebody who will bolster your weak areas, and keep you from indulging in any weaknesses of character that you might be involved in if you were alone. That's just insurance! That's why two are better than one, always. Sometimes you may be called upon to minister alone, and so we must always realize that God wants us to have total good character – He wants to trust us with His reputation.

An apostle, to function properly, must be decisive in matters of choosing people. He must be a bit intuitive, if you will use that word. He must see the value of people, see the potential of people, and recognize who God is working through in the congregation even though they are newly-born babes. Often we have to take people who have no prior teaching and establish them as temporary pastors. Now that's a crazy situation, so you must have a person who has favor with God and man.

Now that's a tricky area and it's to be avoided, if possible; but, when necessary, be careful that you have the mind of God as to the person. Then be careful to instruct them not to try to be the big leader. You must pick a person who is meek and lowly of heart. God can use that kind of a person in total ignorance better than He can use a well-educated person who is self-important. The apostle must make decisions and then stand by the decision. I say that the best way to do it is to get all the counsel that is available, take it to God, and then make the decision between you and God. Make the decision alone. God has given you the authority, not a body, not a group of people. God has given you the responsibility; therefore, the authority rests with you and you must make the decision. If you have to temporarily put a person in who is very young and inexperienced, it is necessary to make them understand that they are temporary and they will be assistant to the new person that you bring in who will continue the work or carry on as pastor.

We did that in an area in northern Luzon in a town called Bobon, Burgos. We were in an area where we had a crusade, that generated 600 new converts, and we had a young man with us who was very inexperienced. We didn't realize what reception we would get. We only expected a crowd of about a hundred, and felt that this young man could take care of that. But we had six hundred people, and five-hundred and fifty of them gave their hearts to the Lord!

Well, that poses a real quick problem! If you mishandle the situation, You'll have a full blown disaster is what you've got. Yet, you'll also get a tremendous outpouring of God, too! God knows what's going on. Now that's the thing we need to recognize. Never panic. Realize, "Father, you know what has happened here. This is your situation. These are your people. I am your servant. Therefore, I find in the Word that 'if any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth liberally and upbraideth not'". What does the apostle do? He realizes he has only one source - that is God! Nobody else is his source. God is his lone source. That's good for all Christians to know, but especially when you're operating in that type of ministry. Well, here we are - we needed a building! This is a town where there are buildings. Now we need a building. I asked some of the young men if they knew of any building anywhere. Well there was one building - it was a stone structure, but the roof was caved in. Being in the building business for many years, I know what costs are. I always take the time to find out the costs of cement blocks, dimension lumber, sheet metal, corrugated iron for roofing, and different materials that I know would be used in buildings. I go somewhere and find out what they cost, whether or not I ever intend to use that information. I always write it down and then I have it. It's just something I learned a long time ago, and it works well. In this case, it worked extremely well! Everybody was kind of panicky in our party about what we were going to do. I said, "I'll tell you what we're going to do. I want you all to just get down and get hold of God. I'm going to go sit on that rock over there for a few minutes, and I'm

going to seek the Lord. I'm going to find out what God wants me to do. He'll tell us if we'll be patient because this is His business".

Now, what are we doing? We're throwing our entire case on God, we're demonstrating the providence of God to the less experienced ministers. That's one thing that God expects of us - to be a solid rock that men can rally around, take confidence in, so that they can believe the gospel works in him, why can't it work in me? I always preach that anything God ever did for me or through me or in me, He will do for you, the same way if you will trust Him for it! That is a must. People must come to that realization. It's the apostle's job to convince them of that so that they can stand after you're gone.

Well, I sat there a moment, quiet before the lord, and suddenly I saw the building with the roof fallen in. It was about 125 yards away standing alone. I realized that all it needed was a roof. I then asked if anybody knew who owned the building. Some of the people knew, and told me that the man who owned it had been in the meeting the night before. He was a Seventh Day Adventist. Somehow, I don't know how, he'd gone somewhere and he'd got to be an Adventist. There weren't any around there, but he was. He'd gone to Manila somewhere and gone to a church. He was just a man who loved God. That was the first contact with God that he'd ever had! Well, I said, "Let's go see him, and we'll do this - you will offer him this. We'll put the roof on the building if he'll give us a year's rent free". The roof of the building was about \$300. That's pretty cheap to rent a building all year! There was also a living place there for the young pastor. We went in and saw the man and just presented our case. You know, God gave us favor. He not only gave us the building at the figure I had suggested, but he said that he would provide the wood and all we had to do was buy the roofing metal. He already had the lumber, and would give it to us. Then he gave us two young men to help us. Instead of one year, he gave it to us for two years! Now, God will give us abundantly over that which we ask or think. Amen! If we put our entire trust in God, the providence of God is absolutely beyond our comprehension. But we must put our trust in God, amen?

Another thing we must have if we're going to function in the office of the apostle is extreme confidence in the Holy Ghost, to handle and preserve wholly what we commit to Him. I left that young man there as pastor. I could have worried myself sick and constantly been fretting about how he would function. I had to realize again this is God's business. This is not Cliff Rice's business. This is not anybody's business but God's. Therefore, since it is God's people we're dealing with here and God has sent me as a gift to the church and to the world and sent me into that group and we have given them a pastor even though somewhat inexperienced; nevertheless, since we are operating in God's order, it is God's responsibility to make it function.

All that is, is methodically coming to a conclusion: let God be God! Trust what He says. Depend upon Him! Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit! Then, put your confidence in the working of the Holy Ghost and He will never fail you! He will never let you down! He will perform. He will bring to pass those things which God had in mind. And that young man stayed in that church for about six months. We got another pastor, an experienced pastor, and the work is going, going well. I passed there several times to encourage the pastor and the church. After 15 years they were able to build a church building. It is the nicest building for 75 miles in any direction. They have several satellite churches.

It is hard for some men to keep their influence at a low key. That's a bit of a contradiction because your influence is extremely strong; but the sense of influence that people feel and thus depend upon - let's keep the influence strong, but the degree of dependency very, very low. I've always made it a practice to put a person in a position of responsibility, give him the authority to function and then demand that he use his talents, not mine. Don't depend on me. You use your imagination, your own mind. I'll tell you what we need to do, you develop the methods. I want to review them with you, but that's it.

ESTABLISH THE CHURCH – ESTABLISH YOUR PEOPLE

Now you've established this church, or even before it is established, make your influence strong; but never let people depend on you. You must realize - you will not be there very long. Even a wise pastor does not make his people totally dependent on him. What does he do? He turns them to Jesus Christ. He makes them dependent on the Holy Spirit. He builds their relationship with Father God. Therefore, they are able to function with or without him. And as time goes on and they progress, they soon find that they often wonder where the leader is. They're able to go out and do things that amaze them because they've learned to depend on the one reliable source. That does not negate the role of any of the ministries. They're still functional; but instead of having a church full of babies that can't do anything without the pastor telling them or without the apostle or without the prophet or the evangelist or the teacher telling them, they are people who are gaining maturity in Christ and they realize that it is in Christ they stand, they walk, they live, they move, they have their being. They realize that their source is Father God! The leaders have been perfected, the saints have been edified, and the work of the ministry is being conducted properly. The Holy Spirit is the enabler within them to do the work of the ministry. That's the thing we need to build from early on.

I once had a group of young ministers. I got sixteen drug addicts off the street in one bunch. They all received the Lord, and within a day or two they had the Holy Spirit. They all had big, wild haircuts. Some of the young men and women were living together without marriage. One of the young ladies was about to have a child out of wedlock. They nearly all used drugs and some were pushers, and one was indicted as accessory to murder. Now there's not much going in that situation to recommend them for future ministry, is there? In the world's eyes, you should be well-born, well-trained, never sin, perfect from your childhood, and all of those things. I'd say that's a good thing if you can be; but let's face it folks, a lot of people aren't. God doesn't cut them out. He uses them just like He does the well-born, after they are reborn. Praise the Lord for that! God is not a respecter of persons.

I didn't start picking at their faults. They had so many that I would have had a hard time figuring out where to start! My wife and I took them into our home to minister because you couldn't take them to a church. There wasn't a church that I knew of that would have allowed them to stay. They would have left immediately because they would have become repulsed by the church situation and the hauteur of the people. I began to minister to them the Word of God. Every night I would minister out of the Bible, and then I would minister for two to four hours just answering questions and talking to them about the Lord and demonstrating the power of God. From the first night, we taught them to pray and worship God. Every night before we left them we would join hands and we would lead them in

contact with the Holy Spirit before they left. In a very short while - the young man who lived with the young lady – before our first Bible Study – they decided they ought to get married and they did. Fifteen out of that sixteen are in the ministry today. Praise the Lord! Pastors, assistant pastors and missionaries. That Bible study lasted four years. We met every Monday night, at my house, Tuesday they were free, Wednesday they went to Church, Thursday they met together without me, Friday they went down town, where the teens hung out, and witnessed. They began to walk in their own Book of Acts soon after their conversion. Many of them went to Christ For The Nations Bible School in Dallas, Texas.

That group grew to thirty-five at one time. I daresay we touched a hundred lives that came in because of those getting more and more and more. They're scattered all over the place in various types of ministry. One young man returned to our home town and is currently pastoring the second biggest church in town I preached a meeting a few years ago in Miami, Oklahoma, for one of the boys who's a pastor down there.

They went to Christ For the Nations, they went to Rhema, they went to different places. Thank God they were in the ministry. The first thing, though, that we did - I'm sharing this only to show you that the secret of success is making them dependent on God, not on me! Dependent on God! I taught them from the beginning that they must study the Word. They must come to know Jesus Christ through the Word and then they must depend on Him, not me, because I might not be there tomorrow. God might have something else for me. I stay relatively mobile. We are almost gypsy-like in the way that we move around sometimes. That's God's business, not mine. I'm obedient to Him.

These young people began to pray for each other. I made them do their own praying, made them lay hands on each other when they were sick. God began to heal them. I said, "If you can't get it to work, come. I'll pray with you. It will work. I want you to know it'll work. But I want you to also know that it will work for you the same as it'll work for me because we're serving the same God. The same Jesus bought us both! The same Holy Spirit is within us! Therefore, there is nothing in me that is not in you. You need developing a little more". That's where it is. We need to come to that conclusion that God does not favor one over another. But some are willing to give themselves to the ministry and some are not. That's the basic difference.

DEVELOP YOUR PEOPLE

So, when you're in a foreign field, develop the people. Don't develop your own image. Desecrate your own image. Stomp on it! Don't do anything that the devil can destroy you for, but don't idolize yourself to the people. Don't become anything more than just a simple servant of God. Always, always try to find somebody that God can use and then begin to push them. Push as hard as they can stand. Begin to fill them with the Word. Take extra time and disciple them. When you have an interpreter, spend extra time with them sharing the great truths of the Word of God. Be sure that when you preach that the interpreter does the same bodily actions that you do. If you throw your arm, let him throw his arm. If you kick your foot, have him kick his foot. Always get him doing those things. Loosen him up and get him to demonstrate the Word. In foreign cultures it's often good to be demonstrative because it keeps people interested. You must hold the audience. You must hold their attention. You have to have their attention or you're not effective. If you lose them, and if you're predictable, you tend to bore them. You need to keep them alive. Often they will have walked sometimes twenty or thirty miles to hear you. When they come in and you start talking in a rather slow, monotonous tone, pretty soon they're all asleep. I've often gone in where everybody was so tired they were near death. I had a couple of young preachers with me, one said, "Man you were wild tonight." I said, "Brother, God gave me something to say to these people and it's my job to keep them awake while I do it. There's no sense saying it if they're asleep." So I would even run down through the middle of them and yell, "Awake, thou that sleepest." Don't hesitate to be dramatic. I say do what's necessary to get the job done for God!

We could talk forever on the methods of ministry, but basically we want to stay in an area where we just simply define the role of the apostle. One other thing that an apostle of God must, without fail, do. There's no way that anybody can be successful without hiding the Word in your heart. The Word of God must be hidden in your heart. Diligently study and understand the Word of God. If the Word is in your heart, and alive, you will always have something to share with others, the saved and unsaved, and if you have a bunch of notes prepared to preach from, and you suddenly realize that none of your preparation will fit the crowd the Holy Ghost has material in your heart that will meet the need.

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM GOD

I'm going to share something with you that I don't share often. In fact, I've shared it maybe a dozen times in my life and not for many, many years. The importance of the Word came to me as a young man. I was converted in November of 1954. I received the baptism on New Year's Eve in 1954 at about 8:30 in the evening. They were taking up the offering and God filled me with the Holy Spirit. They had just finished and I stood up and began to speak in tongues. I did not know much about it. In fact I'd been taught that this was of the devil. So for the five weeks that I had been saved, I had been seeking God because I saw some reality in it. I realized when I went to the church where they did this that there was a tremendous reality in that, but I didn't know for sure it was mine until I began to read the Word. I found it by reading the book of Acts.

I read the Gospel of John and found that Jesus had promised it. I saw in Mark where He said that they'd speak with tongues. Then I saw in Acts where they did. I said, "Lord, if this is for me, then let me receive it". So I went to a fellowship meeting and I was filled with the Holy Spirit. No one laid a hand on me or counseled me. The next day I read the Word - this was on a Thursday night. I read the Word Friday and Saturday and I saw where it said, "You speak with tongues; seek that you may prophesy". Well, I said, "Lord, if that's for me, then I want it". And so I did. That Sunday night I got up in church and prophesied. I was so nervous and so upset. A fine man of God, from over around Dallas, an elderly man, told me what it was, and that what I had said came straight from the throne of God. I believed it. I knew God had done it, but you know the shame that comes in a crowd. I was a very shy young man at that time, and it was hard for me. God took that away, thank God, and I haven't met a stranger in many, many years. I thank God for that. Anywhere in the world, there's no strangers, and that's the grace of God working in my life.

There came a time when I began to get confused because I went to every church in town. I didn't know one from another. I thought anybody who stood in the pulpit was a preacher. I had no church affiliation. The little independent church in which I'd gotten saved was shipwrecked. It had gone. The pastor had left town, the church had disbanded, and everybody was cutting at everyone else. So I began to seek the Lord. In April of 1955 I was laying in my bed and I was awakened at 2:00 in the morning and the moon was very bright outside. It was a nice early morning. You could see like it was day. I heard a voice speak to me. It said, "Arise and stand upon thy feet, Oh son of man." I looked around, and boy I'm spooky because this scared me! I didn't have any idea what's going on. And I looked over and there was my wife laying there sound asleep. She hasn't heard a thing! So I slipped out of bed and I tiptoed around the house looking for something and - nothing. So I prayed a few minutes and I went back to bed. I was working every day, and needed my sleep.

The next night at the same time I heard it again, "Arise, and stand upon thy feet, Oh son of man". Again, I looked around. I know something is different. Something's really getting to me now. I looked at Norma and she's sound asleep. I got up and I walked around the house and I prayed a while, but no results. I went back to bed, finally. I didn't go right to sleep. The next night at the same time the same thing, "Arise and stand upon thy feet, O son of man and I will speak unto thee". I got up and I determined that this was God. I didn't realize that God had spoken to Ezekiel in the same manner. I found that out about a week later and it just like to burned a hole in my heart when I saw that. So I got up and then I just went in the other room and I was praising the Lord and walking around real quietly. I was walking around and praising the Lord quietly so as not to disturb my wife or the children. I just kind of went into a different spiritual trance like condition. Suddenly there came to me a round roll about six inches in diameter, a roll of parchment. It was as an ancient book. And He said, "Eat all of it". And I ate it. And it went down and was so sweet, like the sweetest wild honey, and so lovely to eat. But as soon as I ate it, I became bilious in my stomach. I wanted to throw up! When I saw that Ezekiel had done the same thing and it was bitter in his belly. I realized that there was something here. I accepted this much. I accepted it in this way. And then I saw that John in Revelation had the same experience. I saw that God wanted me to devour the book (which I believed to be the Bible). I didn't try to become something great out of that. I, at no time, shared that because when you have an experience like that, men seek to exalt the person and not the Lord - that's been nearly forty-seven years ago now and it's safe to reveal it. Nobody's going to exalt you over something that happened that long ago. You could have lost it easily by now. I haven't, thank God. The thing that stood out to me and became experiential to me - now here's the part that gets to be important - when it became experiential, I began to take no other authority as to my hermeneutics, but the Bible; the Word of God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD

I still went to several churches, but every night before I would go to bed I would always write down what the man had said. I would take a piece of paper, write the scriptures, and write his thoughts. Then I would go home and I would study the Word and pray until I proved or disproved what he said. There were no schools. There were no books that I even had any inkling of. I knew nothing about things like that. There were no schools really that you could go to and receive much. You'd have gotten indoctrinated into something. Thank God I didn't. Many good men have and survived, but thank God I didn't. I thank God I read the Bible several times before I ever read one book about the Bible. I'm saying that because of the importance that I've always put on the Word of God I have no problem trusting God when I'm out in absolutely dismal, lonely, hopeless situations. I know my God shall prevail and as David in I Samuel 30:6, he encouraged himself in the Lord. Many times I've had to encourage myself in the Lord when I had no other friend.

I say to you in any ministry, but especially if you want to function eventually in any ministry that borders on the apostle's ministry, learn to develop your dependence upon God's Word because if anything the apostle must be is a student and a devourer and a disciple and a proclaimer of the Word of God. Grasp that truth and it will stand you in good stead in any ministry in which God uses you. The Word is Life. The Word is Light. The Word is Christ. The Word reveals Christ to me. The Word reveals Christ in me. The Word reveals the outflowing of Christ from me. The Word reveals the function of the Holy Spirit in me. The Word will always stand you in good stead and always, when you are faced with a situation that is hopeless, there will come to you - there will be as in Isaiah 44, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

There's another scripture in Isaiah that says, "There will be a voice behind you in the way saying this is the way, walk ye in it." And that's where the wisdom of God comes to you from - from the Word of God. When you're in a hopeless situation and you're alone and doing a ministry that's very difficult at best and situations look absolutely hopeless. I've often said, "My God, my God, this is too big for me. I can't do it." And God would reveal to me something in the Word. Something in the Word would come forth right there. The Word of the Lord would come into my heart. Again I would be established and strengthened and pursue the purpose that God gave me because, as David, I had hidden the Word in my heart. "I have hidden thy Word in my heart, O Lord, that I might not sin against thee." And I say that the greatest sin known to man is unbelief. I really believe it. Every sin in the Christian stems from unbelief. As the apostle we must learn to have victory over that area. The ministry of the apostle to the world then, in

summation, is to establish the church, establish the church. Establish new works – all based solely on Biblical principles. Many times you will feel all alone and with no one to share your problems. At these times you must assure yourself that what you have learned from the Word of God is just as true as it always was and always will be.

BUILDING BY HOME BIBLE STUDY

I want to share one more experience that shows you some of the things that you can do to establish a new work. A young man whom I knew got saved – his grandmother told me about him and asked if I would hold a Bible study with him, at his house. I asked her to have him call me. I waited about a week for him to call me, and when he didn't, I called him and told him what his grandmother had said. He told me he would like to have a Bible study at his house but didn't know who to invite, I said to him, "Invite your friends." He said, "You know the kind of friends I have." I acknowledged that I did, having worked with the same kind of people for many years. I told him they would not embarrass me, nor would I them. I said, "Bring them, that's the very people I'm looking for." We came to his house the first night; that's where the church was that night. When I got to his house, everybody in his house, but he and his wife had a drink of whiskey or a drink of beer and a cigarette going. It just seemed like I was in the biggest saloon I'd ever been in. There was about a dozen people there and the smoke was thick. I sat down, opened the Bible and began to teach just as if I had expected exactly that. I said absolutely nothing about anything they were doing. I preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the world and I did not enumerate one sin. I did it in a Godly way. In my mind, I released them from their sins first, just as God did at Calvary. He confessed all the sins of the world upon Christ and then the Lamb was offered. All the sins were gone. He didn't hold their transgressions against them. You know what happened? The second week there was almost no booze, only one guy! The third week there was no booze and almost no cigarettes and the next week, nothing - no cigarettes. Praise the Lord. All those guys got saved, got into the church. Praise the Lord it worked out great. But if I had gone in there thundering about sin and sin consciousness I would have never gotten one of them. They were rough men. They were cowboys. I grew up as a cowboy. I know the type, and they don't listen to things like that. So when you go into a strange area, don't go thundering about the sins of the people. That is the way that people teach you to do, but forget it! Go preaching the amnesty offer that God has given! Get them in and get them to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and I tell you truthfully, I've seen great audiences receive Jesus as Lord. Teach them to confess Him as Lord every meal, every time they get up and inside of a few days they're turned on, often without any further teaching they've got a relationship with the Lord. Now you must furnish some kind of written material so that they can continue to learn by themselves.

DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

That's where we sometimes get into some pretty large monetary outlays. We once furnished \$30,000 worth of Bibles to the Philippines. How did that come about? God spoke to my heart and said, "Do it." I said, "Lord, I can't. I don't have any money. I don't have enough money to go home, let alone do this." And he showed me the man to go see in Dallas, Texas. I went to see him. When I got back to the United States I went to Dallas. I had some ministry down there and I was ministering around and when I got to Dallas I went to see him. God miraculously provided that the Bibles be shipped, and the man even paid the shipping costs. Praise the Lord! And they landed there and are in use today.

God expects you to do the impossible! If you're going to walk in the office of the apostle, it's almost synonymous with the office of the impossible! God will do the impossible. He will do it when you step into the gap and say, "I will consider no other evidence but the Word of God alone - alone." This is the evidence. Any other argument is not worthy of consideration. Circumstances cannot deter me from the purpose that God has laid before me. I don't run at things like a wild bull trying to break a hole in it. I sit quietly and I refuse to worry. I say, "Lord, this is your business." I begin a rather simple confession of total worthlessness is about what it amounts to. I call it throwing myself on the mercy of the court. I admit to the Lord that I cannot do it! But I'm looking for how He's going to do it and I know I'm going to be pleased with the way He does it. And He always comes through. He'll do it for you. The apostle must have one source, and that must be God. No matter how men treat you, one way or the other, no matter how men bless you, still your source must be God. Only. And you must always have total confidence in the Holy Spirit. And you must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, for He is the executor of the will of God; and He will perform the will of God as you learn to yield yourself totally to Him.

THE APOSTLE AND THE CHURCH

In this next lesson, we'll be dealing with the ministry of the apostle to the church. We'll intermingle a little bit back and forth because some of the ministry of the apostle to the church also ministers to the world. Basically, we'll deal with the ministry of the apostle to the Church. We have established a need in the world today for the full complement of the five-fold ministry that Jesus gave to the Church when He ascended on high. He gave them to the Church and He gave them to the world in that they were to prepare the saints for the work of the ministry of reconciliation unto the entire world. We have shown that they will be valid, or in effect, until the return of Jesus Christ. There was never a concrete time limit. There's only one time limit, and it was established in Ephesians 4:13; and it says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." It is my considered opinion that the Church has never reached the unity of the faith. They have never come to the fullness of the knowledge of the Son of God. They've never come unto a perfect man. They've never come unto the measure of the fullness of Christ. Therefore, we must conclude that the ministries are still valid, and working, until that accomplishment is fulfilled.

The need is greater now than ever before in history. We established that. There are 5 billion, 700 million people on the earth today, and that is more people than there were at any time altogether prior to about 1930 perhaps. So it would be obvious to even the casual observer that God is more interested in what's going on today than at any other time. God did a perfect work in the establishment of the Church in the Book of Acts. There were foundations laid there that were to be in effect and to grow more effective until the appearing of Jesus Christ. Until the great harvest of the earth! The whole thing is, we are headed for harvest. We must realize that everything we do and everything that God provided, He provided to head us toward the harvest. Now the most important time of the entire year to the farmer is harvest. He works all year without a payday, but harvest is HIS day! If you ever want to see a farmer happy, you catch him at harvest time! All he can talk about is how much grain he's harvesting, and how many bushels per acre, how much it's going to bring him, how many dollars he's going to have, how many things he can buy for the family. The wife is happy. She's thinking of the things she can get for the house. So harvest time is a happy time.

This attitude of the Church bearing a burden of harvest - never, never let that come upon you if you want to be effective in the ministry of the Word of God. It is not a burden. It is a joy to be called to the office of any of the five-fold ministries. While the apostle's ministry is perhaps a little more strenuous than most, nevertheless, it is a tremendous joy to be involved in that type of ministry.

We know that today we see that the world is in far worse condition than it has ever been. The Church has not answered the problem up to now. The Church, SO-called Christian Church, has actually done many things that have hindered the harvest of the world. Now that's a hard statement. But in many areas they have substituted the authority of the Church for the authority of the Word of God. In many instances they have established the Church in the place of the Holy Spirit in dealing with mankind. "Brethren, these things ought not so to be," quoting Paul. I would say that of all the things that we need to learn and get deep in our spirit from the very beginning, we must become totally dependent upon the Word of God and we must become totally dependent upon the leading of the Holy Spirit as to our understanding of the Word and as to the direction in which we go with the Word! Praise the Lord!

I say today, and I want to say without any reservation whatsoever, that the hope of the Church is in the full establishment of the five-fold ministry. Therefore, we need the ministry of the apostle and the prophet. That is contrary to what some would teach us, but believe me we need it. We need to equip the Church that they may go forth and fulfill the ministry of reconciliation to a lost and dying world.

Let's do all within our power to get rid of the false prophets that come to the local church and brag about how many suits they have, what a fine automobile they have, how many houses they have all because they have such faith in their god. The god they serve is the god of Mammon, not the God of the Bible. They bleed the churches for great sums to squander on themselves, with never a sou for the cause of outreach to the world's great unsaved masses. I have even heard some say that they have a right to indulge themselves in the most opulent life style because they have favor with God. It's time to wake up, and when these people call to arrange the robbery of a local church, let the pastor have the good sense to put the run on them. Any false teaching will suffice for these bandits if it will stupefy the leaders of the churches to the point where they can easily fleece the unsuspecting sheep.

We've said that the gospel must be preached by the Church. Jesus said in Matthew 24 that the gospel must be preached by the Church around the world to every kindred, every tongue, every nation, every people, and then – then, and then only, can the end come. So, if you're looking for the return of the Lord and you're hoping for His soon return, then it behooves us to become apostles and be sent out to the world and go forth and preach the Word. That's what will bring it about. Praise the Lord. When the gospel is preached totally and completely around the world, brethren, Jesus said He will come. Many people watch for many things, but I watch more for what God's doing than what the devil's doing. What the devil's doing he's going to do! There's plenty of evidence of what he's doing. But I believe God's got a better answer! God's got the answer that will

help the world. All of the doom and gloom that we understand really has no value other than to realize that the time is coming; and so then the Word says that we lift up our heads and rejoice, for our redemption draweth near - the redemption of our bodies, hallelujah!

We want to begin and address the apostle's ministry that is largely to the Church. We've talked about some of the things that the apostle does to the world where the ministry is pointed out toward the world. That was mainly what we would call an evangelistic thrust. We'll deal with some of that again. We don't want to abandon that because, I say to you that if you want to be successful in any ministry, you must maintain an evangelistic thrust! Paul told Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist." He didn't mean to go organize meetings. He meant, "Timothy, don't ever forget that your first call is a soul winner." Never forget that your first call, no matter what office you stand in - Timothy was standing in the office of a pastor and was referred to as an apostle - but, nevertheless, he said, "Timothy, don't ever forget what God first called you to do - win souls, win souls." Every minister, every Christian individually. That's the secret of success in any ministry - continue to win souls.

We'll get into the book of Acts, and we'll begin in the fifth chapter. I want to establish some of the things that the apostle did. This might get a bit historic, but we need to comprehend the history of these things so that we might understand what we are to do; and we'll compare it with today's life. As we show what the apostles did then, we will attempt to show the same office, the same ministry is necessary from the apostle today. In the infancy of the Church, the apostles actually acted as pastors. We find in Acts 2:42, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." But they continued steadfastly in "the apostles' doctrine." In other words, the apostles were teaching them the rudiments of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were teaching them the foundation. The Bible later refers to the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Referring mostly to the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles. And then the apostles continued to act as temporary pastors. You see at that point they had not yet established pastors. I'm satisfied that the office was provided for because when Jesus ascended on high these gifts were given to the Church. So these first men were beginning to act in that capacity, weren't they? Temporarily. So we need to realize that this is the way it works today.

When an apostle goes into an area. he's rarely thought of as an apostle. People have magnified the office of the apostle so completely out of context; completely out of reality. They have tried to make the apostle some great ruler of the Church - comparable to a Protestant pope, if you would. God never intended that an apostle be something like a great bishop who ruled with an iron hand over everybody and gave directives that went from him clear down to the Church and

then all through the whole United States or through the world. What one man said in one place was the rule and everyone obeyed - this is not what God intended! No man can assume the position of the Holy Spirit.

The apostles came together and they decided different issues and that word went out; but they went personally and preached it and then others heard them and, they went and preached it. At no time did the apostle exercise supreme authority over anybody. That's a worldly concept. Jesus said that "He that would be chief among you, let him be your servant". Don't seek the office of the apostle in order to be somebody more important than somebody else. Do not seek the office of the prophet for that purpose. You will profane the office if you do! We must always consider the excellence of the ministry! It must be pure and unprofaned by our actions. In every area, we must maintain the integrity of the ministry. If we don't, who will? And if we don't, the whole Church will suffer because of our actions. So we need to always recognize that we are answerable to God and God knows every action, every thought, and God never set anyone up to be a dictator nor to rule over any other man! God never, hear me clearly on this, God never set up any man to rule over another man's conscience! Now that's one error that many propound in the New Testament Church. They fail to realize that total concept was finished in Christ.

In the Old Testament, a person could think as he wanted to as long as his actions were all right. He could covet secretly, but if he openly coveted he was guilty. He could hate secretly as long as he laid no hand on his enemy, there was no wrong. He could lust secretly, and there was no evil because nobody knew it but him. But now, under the New Testament and the love law and the new covenant God has brought, this is not so. Under the Old Covenant, he could take his offering to the priest and the priest interceded for him with God. He could transfer his responsibility to the priest. Actually he transferred his responsibility to the innocent lamb, or the innocent bird - whatever he brought as an offering, as a blood offering. But in the New Testament and under the New Covenant, God actually did what He did with Adam. He actually made man, each one individually, responsible to God Himself! Not only for our actions, but for our thoughts. And Jesus said that clearly when He said, "If a man looketh upon a woman to lust after her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If a man hate his brother without a cause, he is guilty of his murder". See? There's a difference. We are therefore totally responsible for every action, and every thought. We are responsible for every word that comes out of our mouth. Therefore, when you are operating in any office of the five-fold ministry - though I'm dealing with the apostle, I hate to make this exclusive to the apostle because it is true of everyone; but let us say that it is more true of the apostle because of the innocence of the people he's dealing with - we must constantly guard our conversation so that we do not say things that are damaging to the character and nature of God.

That's one of the things that is so tragic about the Church today. They have assassinated God's character by denying the very benefits of the cross of Christ. They accept salvation, but they have not accepted healing in the atonement. They've not accepted the indwelling of Jesus Christ to the point that a man can live free from sin, to the point that actually it is Christ who lives in you! These are scriptural positions. These are provisions of the atonement.

The total identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ making us a totally new man. "Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are of God." The saddest thing that has been propagated throughout the world by the Church is the denial of these things in saying that yes, we're all sinners saved by grace. I tell you truthfully, I was a sinner. That's history. I was saved by grace. That's history. "God's grace works in me." That's present, that's factual, that's experiential, "God's grace works in me", see, and "It is God that wills and works in me to do His good pleasure." That's all there is to it. We must come to conclusions in those areas. As you operate in the office of the apostle, you must realize that every word you say can have an effect on someone. Learn to guard your conversation. "He that orders his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God, saith the Lord."

People gave great heed, it says, to the apostles' teaching and doctrine. The apostles acted as pastors temporarily. We find as we go on through the book that they established pastors in the work. They went on and would start a work. They would establish somebody in the office of pastor and then they would travel on and do it again. The apostle was a traveler. Throughout the book he was a traveler. They taught with the anointing of the Holy Ghost. They preached Jesus Christ. Acts 4:33, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." They preached Jesus Christ! I say to you today that your message must be Jesus Christ. Your message must be the gospel of Jesus Christ. When I speak of the gospel, I preach the complete gospel from the fall through the regeneration through identification with Jesus Christ in His death, in His payment for sin, in His resurrection, His ascension to the Father, His placing His blood of the atonement upon the Mercy Seat, His cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and His return to Earth and being seen alive by great numbers of people, thus proving that Father God had accepted the sacrifice of Himself for the means of the potential reconciliation unto God, for all mankind. Therefore, we rule and reign in life by Him! That's the gospel! We don't water it down. We make it effective so that people might truly identify with the risen Christ. We don't preach a fleshly gospel. We don't work on people's emotions. I saw a preacher one time take a belt off and whip the pulpit as he was describing the whipping of Jesus before Pilate. Well, that does have an emotional effect. But I want you to realize something. Men and women of God, if you make conversions on emotional impact, they'll last about as long as it takes to change the emotional status of the person that made them. I tell you truthfully I'd rather

have a man coldly and calculatedly make up his mind to serve God, than all the emotion that can be generated. And I'm an emotional man. I love emotion. But let us not make emotion the basis for decision. Praise God!

BRING PEOPLE INTO ONE ACCORD

There were great signs and wonders performed at their hands when the people were in one accord - Acts 5:12. The preaching and teaching brought the people into one accord, didn't it? And our preaching and teaching needs to bring not discord, but accord. We need to preach and teach in a manner that puts the people in one accord with the gospel of Jesus Christ. They need to come into unity around the personality of Jesus Christ. They need to come into unity as to the authority of God and God's word. When they come into unity, that type of unity does not promote or allow compromise; it simply brings submission to God in every area of life! That's what it's all about. When you, as an apostle, or any other ministry, bring a group of people into one accord around Jesus Christ, brethren, I'm going to tell you that great signs and wonders will be accomplished!

I'd like to share a little story. I've dealt with several groups that we've had - young students especially. I want to tell you about one group in particular. We had a group of about thirty young people. I want you to realize that I'm a young people, too. But these people were younger than I am, so they were quite young. They were about twenty - eighteen to twenty-five. Well, we taught them dependence upon the Lord. I want you to understand this, because this is an apostolic approach to the Word. It will benefit you if you are called to be a pastor. All ministry has the same rules, so realize this is important to you. We taught them from the outset that they must become dependent upon God, not on me. I would preach the Word, I would teach the Word; but I would not allow any dependence on me. I encouraged them from the very beginning to pray for each other. One night, we were just finishing our Bible lesson. There must have been forty or fifty people there. A young man said, "Brother Rice, Brother Rice, this young lady wants to receive the Holy Spirit". I said, "Then lead her to the Holy Spirit. You're a man of God just like me," His eyes widened up and the unspoken question was, "Am I really?"

He had never thought of himself as a man of God, but our job is to convince other people that they are just as capable as we are. Don't ever be guilty of setting yourself up to where it must come through me - I hear from God, but you cannot. The message must be, 'I hear from God, but you can too!' This young man looked at me. I said, "Go ahead", and just turned away from him. In two minutes that young lady was talking in tongues and just full of the Holy Spirit and got so happy you couldn't believe it! Why? I could have crippled or made that young man's ministry right there. That young man is a very successful young man in the ministry today. He has ministered in Spain, Morocco, and many other parts of the world.

We had another case - talk about signs and wonders that will come when people get in one accord! I want to stress this one accord thing, because I find that every great thing happened in the book of Acts when the people were in one accord. Always keep that in mind. I stress the scripture, in Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" We must be in agreement with God. We must be in agreement with each other. Around the Word of God! Not just agreeable - we must not compromise truth to be in agreement. We must come into agreement around the Word of God if we want to see God move, and that's all we should be interested in. Amen?

We were gathered one evening, in this group that we had, praying. I was discipling young ministers. A young man was there who had not been with us too long, but he was deeply grieved. I said, "Brother, you have a problem with somebody in your family". He said, "My heart's broken because my mother and father and my sister will not serve God. They just won't accept the Lord. I've talked to them, but they just won't come". I said, "Where are they?" He said that they were in Albany, Oregon. That was 300 miles from where we were. I said, "Brother, listen". And I quoted the eighteenth chapter of Matthew where it says, "If two or more agree as touching anything in this earth, it shall be done". Now then, we came into one accord around God's Word and I began to pray. I try to be a vessel for the Holy Spirit. In myself, I am not a great man. That's not my position at all! But I began to speak the Word of the Lord, and I called those people unto salvation. Do you know what happened? That was on a Monday night. The following Sunday night those people walked into an Assembly of God Church in Albany, Oregon, and all three of them gave their heart to Jesus! Fantastic! Amen? Why? Because we came into one accord, and we simply cried out to God with the heartbeat of one of our people. We all joined in that heartbeat, and God heard it and moved in a mighty way. Those people were called unto salvation! Needless to say, our young man was very happy, and confessed the power of God. God answered as we all came into one accord, one mind. We had one purpose. Your job in the apostolic calling, and in every other calling, is bring your people into one accord around the Word of God. Let us always seek to establish our people in Christ

AUTHORITY MUST COME FROM GOD

The apostles publicly affirmed God's authority over the Church. They said to the highest religious authorities – now please understand this – these were not secular authorities, but were religious authorities; although they did say the same things to the secular authorities. "We ought to obey God rather than men."

We must have the answer of a good conscience toward God, no matter what anyone else thinks about it; if you want success with God. If you want to operate in the apostle's ministry, you must be able to stand alone when you know you've heard from God. That does not make you The Lone Ranger! You must listen to counsel. But you must make your decisions – hear me now – you must make your decisions between you and God! Hear every counsel you can that pertains to the matter, but then go and make your decision – you and God alone. Then stand upon it! And let history judge your case. It will be favorable every time if you've done your job right, praise the Lord! Do not, as many do, claim authority that God has not established in your ministry; do not become a usurper, but don't give in to improper pressure.

I say to you that we must again establish God's authority over the Church. That is the apostle's calling for today! The apostle and the prophet must establish the authority of God over the church again. We must speak those things that God has said. Let me share with you one thing you must realize: some of the things that you must speak in order to establish the authority of God over the Church will not be popular! Did you know what got Paul in jail all the time? Do you know what got him stoned? Do you know what got him thrown out of the city? Do you know what got Peter in jail? What was it? Preaching the pure, uncompromised Word of God! That Jesus Christ was life itself - "In Him we live and move and have our being." All true and valid spiritual authority comes from God. In Him! Life exists in Him! My life is only in Him. Paul said, "The life I now live, I now live by the faith of the Son of God. I was, and am crucified with Christ". I am dead, he said. The old man, Paul, was dead. That guy, that old Saul, is gone - he's dead! And I now live in Christ.

And that's the message that we must get through to the Church in this world if we are to see a successful Church. It is your job and my job to establish these things. As I say, the worst enemies of the truth of the gospel of Christ will be those religious authorities that are already operating in the world. Now I know that's not a popular statement, but I have shared with you how that the decadence and the apostasy of the church is the reason for the scorn that people show toward Jesus Christ!

Listen, the Jew knows historically what Jesus Christ did! There are history books that tell what He did. They know of His good works. They know He was a good man. They even accepted Him as a prophet! They did not accept Him as

the Messiah. They knew the love that He showed. They could read. They're not ignorant of that. They know of the love and of the greatness of the man; but they don't see the parallel in the Christian Church. There must be a parallel to the life of Christ in the Christian. We call ourselves Christians - Jesus People. We are, but we must reveal that same Christ unto the rest of the world and the day that somebody comes along and preaches Jesus to the Jew and can reveal Him, he'll have an impact! Amen? Around the world! If we can reveal the living Christ, reveal through our life that He is alive – by doing what He did – then we have an impact on any culture, any group of people in the world. And that's the ministry of the apostle! To reveal Jesus Christ. You are sent from God! Sent from God! Sent by God! Sent to do God's kingdom business! If you're only sent to your next-door neighbor, that's the beginning of an apostolic ministry, praise the Lord! Don't magnify yourself. I've said that enough. I think you've gotten that part of the message. I believe that we want to keep that in our heart always, don't magnify yourself - magnify the Lord! Don't exalt the ministry - exalt the Lord! God will exalt you all you need and more than you can stand probably. And the devil is clever at exalting you above that which you can stand. He's good at that.

The apostle and the prophet must declare to the Church today the same message that they declared back in the time of the first Church. That is, the gospel of Jesus Christ! If you will preach Jesus the way they preached Him then, get people to cry out to Him the way they cried out then, get them to accept Him the way they did then, get them to believe on Him the way they did then, you will get the same results that they had then! And that's a fact!

The day that you begin to put self aside and let God be God in every area of your life and exalt Him in every thing He does, that's the day that God begins to do business at your house! He begins to do business from your address. You need to begin to think of yourself as a kingdom person. If you want to operate in the apostolic ministry, then think of yourself as a kingdom person. Many apostles are pastors today. Did you know that? See, the apostle even often stays in a pastoral position, but his main thrust of ministry is spreading the kingdom - establishing new churches. Going out, reaching out, reaching out, reaching out! An apostolic ministry is revealed when you see that they are sending missionaries out of a church, when you see that they're supporting missionaries. That's apostolic thinking, see. When they begin to sponsor evangelistic crusades here and there - that's apostolic thinking. They are seeing the need to propagate the thing that's going on here in another area. They are realizing that the principle of the kingdom is multiplication and spreading of the Truth.

YOU MUST HEAR FROM GOD

We need to keep in mind that you must hear from God. You must develop a communication line between you and God. You must hear from God. Not moved by just enthusiasm, nor moved by emotional appeal, nor any other thing - you must hear from God. That is up to you - you must learn to listen to the voice of the Lord! You must learn to listen to the voice of the Spirit to you. It must be a personal thing. Then, we must always have Jesus Christ as our sole source of inspiration. We must be inspired by Jesus Christ.

If you're going to effectively function in the apostolic ministry, you must not only be inspired yourself, but you must be able to inspire other people! You must be able to generate enthusiasm among people to get busy to do things for God. It's like a one cylinder engine - you are the sparkplug! If you fail, that engine cannot run. It cannot go on. That's one advantage in having two or three or four people in your party - you get more spark plugs. A two cylinder engine can sometimes run on one cylinder. A four cylinder engine has no problem running on three. It doesn't run as smoothly, but it'll run and be effective. Always realize that if you're the only person there, failure can never be a consideration. Always remember that - failure can never be a consideration. I want to encourage you in this, because you cannot fail if you are totally submissive to the Lord. God never sponsored one flop - ever! God never set up a method of operation that was doomed to failure!

Everything God does is success. So if you're walking with God, you are a success. When I'm in a foreign field, I often can't talk to anybody. One of the greatest things I miss is just being able to sit down with somebody who thinks like I do and just simply share a few feelings about the Word or something else. That is loneliness in a crowd. If I allow those kind of feelings to dominate me, I can guarantee you that I will fail because I am allowing my flesh room. And I am giving place to the devil.

When I'm in a foreign field – I love my family and I love my wife, and I love my children and I love my grandchildren -- but many times I'm away from them for three months at a time, and I tell you truthfully if I allowed myself to mope, I could get just as blue and depressed as anyone else. But God revealed to me – He gave me a revelation of what a man must do to succeed – and I literally refuse any thoughts, I think of them – but the moment that it begins to tug at me emotionally to the point that I become morbid, I put it from my mind! I must discipline myself. Listen! If you are to succeed in the apostle's ministry, sometimes you will be lonely.

Therefore, you must learn to encourage yourself in the Lord alone. You must always be able to encourage yourself in Jesus Christ. You must become inspired by His life, by His example, by His ministry, by His death, by His payment for your

sin, by His resurrection, by His victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave, by His ascension to the throne, by His personality, by His manhood, by His total perfection, by His relationship with God, by His ability to listen to the Father, by His ability to hear from the Father, by His ability to walk all by Himself and still remain inviolate.

Brethren, I tell you truthfully, if you can inspire yourself by Jesus Christ, then you have the qualities that it takes to be an apostle to a foreign land. Now that is not necessarily true if you're an apostle here in America. There's always somebody close by that you can fellowship. Everybody understands your language. There's a fellowship that you can have even with worldly people - just sitting down and talking about the weather or the latest news - it's something that you can relate to that you can just share - open up and share. But in a foreign land you can't do that! Nobody understands what you're saying, and you have to carefully choose your words with even the ones who speak English to fit their capability of understanding your English. So it becomes a certain amount of self discipline that must be part of your life.

Every one of these men - Paul the apostle, and I use him as my chief example, because he is described, and his missionary journeys are described in the book of Acts and they were the most effective because he was an apostle to the Gentiles. He was THE apostle to the Gentiles. Paul was sent to the Gentile nations. He and Barnabas first came to the Jews and then he said that it was necessary that we first come to you, but then we must turn away and go now. And they went to the Gentiles. They went to nations where the speech was difficult for them. They went to areas where the customs were somewhat different from what their own were, where the food was different.

Where did these men get their inspiration? That's why Paul constantly said, "I am crucified with Christ. The Saul, the tentmaker, the sailmaker, the renowned scholar is dead. All that lives in me is Christ". That's what he said. And then even he, with all of his great achievements, he said, "Oh, that I might apprehend that which I am apprehended for! Oh that I might attain to the glory of the resurrection of the Lord! Oh, that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection!". And I think Paul knew Him if anybody did. But yet he saw that there were so much greater things for Him to know. That alone can keep us inspired to where we put all other things aside and let them fall off as dross, amen?

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR MINISTRY AND ALL PEOPLE

The responsibility lies where? You are responsible to God for yourself. Nobody will carry it for you. Always remember that. That's true in any ministry. You are responsible to God for yourself. You're responsible to the people for yourself. You're responsible to yourself for yourself. You're responsible to the Church. You're responsible to the people behind you who are praying for you, supporting you. You're responsible to them for yourself. You can never say, "I would have but" – No, that'll never work. You must say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me", and then proceed to do them. You see your faith becomes not conversational now. It becomes actual. The first church went everywhere preaching the Word and with God confirming the Word with signs following. There's a tremendous failing in the Church today.

Men want to have the signs with the Word following. They're so intent on getting folks healed and things like that and confessing something into being something it's not, that they fail to realize that they're missing the reality and the blessedness of walking in Christ! There is a blessedness of association, blessedness of identification, and then God will confirm the Word with signs following. I never look for folks to heal, they just come along! And God heals then! I don't have to look for somebody. I'm not trying to build a reputation so that I might be accepted and get more people to come. No! If you walk in Christ, I'll tell you can get a bungalow in the mountains, a cabin, and folks will beat a path to your door. They'll beat a path to your door, because the Holy Spirit will reveal it to them, if you are walking in the Lord. Paul was locked up in chains, and folks came from everywhere to see him and talk to him. He didn't go around blowing his own horn, did he? So don't do that! Let's walk in Christ as Paul did.

I say to you today that everything that the apostle did in the early Church is still his job to do today. If you desire the apostleship, then let's begin to be a servant to everybody. I don't mean just physical servant, but learn to put them ahead of yourself. Literally seek other men's good rather than your own. Advance other people's ministry other than your own. You will find that God will advance yours.

Look Ahead

I would remind you again to constantly remember that for every word and every action there is a law of physics that says that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. It is a certainty that everything you do sets in motion a chain of events. Once started you cannot stop it. So, be careful what you start. Make what you start what you want to, and would be happy to, finish. Always realize that a good beginning makes a good ending. A bad beginning can develop into a good ending, but it always requires a great deal more work, a great deal more effort, and a great deal more sacrifice. So always try to, especially in the beginning of a new work, try to, in everything you do, everything you teach, make sure that you can live with it tomorrow, next week, next year. Make sure that it is pointing the person toward the Lord Jesus Christ. For in Him, that person also lives and moves and has his being.

Learn to Delegate

Let's look at how the apostles handled themselves. There are several areas here. We said that they were pastors. They were operating as pastors. They did this even to the point that they handled the finances in the beginning. But that became a burden. The food, the finances, and the administrative matters became a burden; and they did the only thing that any wise person will do - they delegated the administration of these matters to others. In Acts 6:2-3, Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose certain ones to take care of all the mundane activities. They did not desire to be super stars. They did not desire that everyone look to them for every answer to every question. With one or two people you might manage that fairly successfully as long as you're in the company of those two people. But you must surely realize that as more and more people become dependent upon you, soon the burden and the weight of those things get so heavy that you will fail to seek God. You will fail to give yourself to the Word. You will fail to spend the time in prayer. Therefore, you will fail in the ministry. Learn early on to delegate. Learn to completely delegate. Learn to pick out people who can be trusted. We should be a good judge of character. God can give you that ability to judge character. We need to develop that.

The apostles attitude was they didn't want to be superstars. This was not a one-man show. It was not a twelve-man show. It was a shared effort! Always convince your people that you want them to share your effort. The further you decrease your own ministry - as John the Baptist said, "I must decrease, and

Jesus must increase." That's exactly how it is. As you decrease your own visible effects, the greater the understanding of the Lord - the greater Jesus Christ will increase in their lives. They, too, will learn to depend upon Him, and learn to depend upon the Holy Ghost for decision-making capability. If you allow them to depend on you, you take the place of the Holy Spirit in their lives. But if you insist that they depend upon God themselves, then you replace yourself with God. You must direct them to the Lord. That is your ministry. That's exactly where it is. Out of that you will build leaders.

Building leaders is the apostle's business. Of all things, that may be the most important thing that he does. He builds leaders. He always sees the potential for leadership, then he will delegate authority commensurate with the ability that is revealed in the person. I believe that's a gift of God that goes with the ministry, but it can be acquired. You can set your heart to do that.

It stands you in good stead if you're a pastor. It stands you in good stead if you're an evangelist. It stands you in good stead if you're a teacher. With this ability, you can always find good assistants. A man who picks a good assistant is a wise man. And then a man who allows a good assistant to assist, he's a wiser man. And a man who allows a good assistant to assist him without assisting the assistant, he becomes a brilliant man! Once you give a person an area of authority, do not muddle in it and mess it up. And that's exactly what these men did. They said, "you look out among you. You people choose people." Now, what is that saying? Take a person of good report. Take a person who is well thought of, who people know. You pick out somebody whom you would trust. That's what he's saying. And then we will lay our hands on them, and we will anoint them for the office to take care of this business, the administrative affairs of the church.

The apostles absolutely got out of the picture, but they didn't just throw the responsibility to the wind. They didn't just walk away and say, Hey, you guys do something about this. We've got a problem with these Grecian widows. The Grecians, they're upset. You guys handle that. No, they didn't do that. They established a policy. That is leadership's position. They established a policy, but the implementation of that policy was left to the people themselves. They established a system that would work, and then they got out of the way and let it work. Now that is an important lesson in leadership, especially as an apostle or as a pastor. It is absolutely essential that you learn to do that if you want to succeed.

DON'T BECOME A JACK OF ALL TRADES MINISTER

I don't know if any of you have ever sat under a ministry where the person in charge had to do everything. I know pastors who cannot relinquish leadership. They start out small, maybe they play a guitar well. I've seen them also play the accordion, even the trumpet. I've seen them take the leadership of the music. And then, because they were the pastor, they also did the preaching. Then they taught the Bible class. Before long, they were so burdened with the several things – then they did all the administration of the church – finally becoming persuaded nothing can work without them, and they get tired and frustrated. Next, they don't see God working the way they feel He should; so they become tired, discouraged and disillusioned, and even begin to attack the people. That is an error that is easy to fall into. But if you, from the beginning, will begin to seek out, any and all talent among your people, you'll find someone who may not be the very best, or even as good as you think you are, and begin to develop and encourage them, you'll find they can get the job done – you won't be so tired, those whom you have delegated a part of the ministry to will be happy and fulfilled.

Let's say that you're pioneering a church and you need somebody to lead the singing. Well, you've got somebody out there who is shy and not too good at it. You need to ask yourself, "Is there potential there?". I want to tell you that in a pioneer work, you're not so apt to need the professional quality of song and music that people think they have to have. It's like kids who get married and have to have everything that mom and dad have the next week; but mom and dad took thirty years to get it! It's the same way here. We see many young people go out and try to establish a church and think that they have to have everything that the biggest church in town has, or everything that Christ For the Nations has, and there's no place greater for worship. You think you died and went to heaven when you get in their worship service. Well, those things come after years and years of work. They develop. Any church, where the music is superb, didn't start out that way did it? Somebody had sense enough to pick some people and stay with them while they learned to do those things that make it superb – while they learned to flow together in the Spirit.

The responsibility for the music's content rests finally with the minister that God has set over the church. He can delegate somebody the responsibility for it and then leave them with it. You can walk in and offer advice, but you be careful how you do it. Don't hurt feelings. That's important. If you're going to be a leader, one thing that has to be uppermost in your mind all the time is, "When I say something, how does it affect the people to whom I am saying it? Do I walk away from them leaving them hurt and their pride injured? Am I destroying or am I constructing?" That's an important thing that we must learn. The apostle ministry must be a ministry of encouragement to people who are just beginning to get their wings and trying to fly!

THE APOSTLE TRAINS YOUNG MINISTERS

When we set out to train a preacher - I've had many young preachers follow along with me – we like to train them in places like street missions. There's no harder place to preach than a street mission or a prison. That's a hard place to preach because you don't get much response. You don't see much reward. So it's discouraging after awhile if you allow it to be. I always tell them that you never know what effect you had at this time until we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. It'll all be revealed there. Until then you don't know what you've done – these people are very good at hiding any trace of emotion. You might have been a raging success. Who are you to decide? It's God that giveth the increase, you don't! You preach the word. You come prayed up, don't come canned up, come prayed up and ready to do the will of God!

Submit to the will of God yourself and you will say and do things for which you will never see one responsive flicker in an eyelid. Nevertheless, when you stand before God in that final day, you will see the fruit of your labor. Encourage yourself in that! That's where the real apostle is. He must be able to do that. He must see everything he does in the light of eternity. Everything we do is for eternity, and we must realize that those things we do have an eternal effect and we must consider it in that light without necessarily having visible results. I don't think that Paul was too thrilled when they had to let him down over the wall and he had to run like a rabbit to get out of town. I don't think he was overly enthused when they rocked him to sleep outside the city and left him for dead. He wasn't enthusiastic at that particular point - he didn't see too much fruit of his labor! But I want you to see something.

He said at the end of his life, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of life." Oh, glory to God! We must continually keep in mind that we are working toward an eternal goal and everything you do you must have the effect of the gospel upon those people you walk by. Those people you minister to, you must consider the effect of the gospel - the everlasting effect - and not at all consider how it affects you as a person. You must become selfless, not selfish. We must become selfless. Jesus Christ totally divorced Himself from consideration of self. We, too, must do the same thing, because what we do we do for eternity. I tell you truthfully, it will amaze you after awhile.

TRUE AUTHORITY COMES ONLY FROM GOD

I've had guys I've ministered to come back years later. One young man came to me - I had taught a Sunday School class twenty-five years before, with this young man attending. The young man came to me about seven years ago and said, "Oh, Mr. Rice, it's good to see you". I did remember him and his sister. They were in my class for about a year or a year and a half. Those young people were staunchly serving God. The thing that threw me the most was that they said that your teaching and the establishment of the authority of God and God's Word in our hearts is what kept us all these years. They're strong in the Lord! That's tremendous! I'm satisfied that Paul could, when he was chained and sitting there in prison - he didn't sit and mope around saying Oh, poor me. He thought, Oh, bless God, that Timothy is out there preaching the Word. Silas and Barnabas are still going on strong. The church is moving! And he was praying for them all the time. He was a conqueror while in chains! A conqueror, and we must have a conqueror's attitude toward life itself. Glory to God! But the responsibility for your attitude is yours, amen! There's nobody else you can lay it on. It must be yours.

Now then these men delegated this authority to the people. They maintained the love, the respect, and the support of the people by consideration of their position and by not being authoritative or autocratic, dictatorial. They did not indulge in that attitude that says that the reason it's right is because I'm the boss. That'll get you in trouble every day. That'll break your church. That'll destroy your work. Any time you take that attitude, you had just as well forget any cooperation from anybody. The person who figures that he doesn't need cooperation is really kidding himself. You need cooperation. Develop a cooperative spirit. As the apostle, you need a cooperative spirit. You need to learn to cooperate, and to teach others to cooperate rather than to compete.

You watch the really great men of God that you know. You will find them always cooperative. They have a position in ministry and they fill it. They don't push themselves and always want their own way. They share the ministry. They respect other ministers and ministries. They're always respectful of any ministry that comes along. And they're always seeking to bring out the best in others. That's the mark of the apostle. By this attitude, the apostles maintained the one accord, the unity of the people. They did nothing to destroy that unity. They would have had they been dictatorial. There are people who will follow a dictator and really desire to be dictated to. Don't indulge yourself, because those same people will cause you to bring division between them and people who cannot stand to be dictated to. Realize that you control the unity of your people by your ministry. It is very important to minister unity rather than discord.

At this time there was no long-winded dissertation on submission of the people to the leadership. People who have to talk at great length about

submission to me as leader don't have the authority that God gives. If I have to continually stress and impress upon you the amount of authority that I have, I tell you truthfully that I don't have any.

I have watched men in all walks of life who had to prove they're the boss. Once you prove you're the boss, that's about all you're ever going to prove to anybody. Once you've proven that you're right because you're the boss, you've proven all you're going to prove. I told a man one time when I was with the Austin Company out of Cleveland, Ohio, an engineering firm building a great building - he said, "I'm gonna prove who's boss." I said, "I don't have to prove who's boss. I can take this gold hat and throw it off into the bay and put a five-gallon bucket on my head and walk down through the building and everybody will know I'm the boss. I don't have to prove it." I don't have to prove it because I understand authority. I understand where it comes from. You must understand authority and that all authority comes from God. God gives you authority to do what He calls you to do.

As the apostle, you have to use authority. Let me guarantee you that you must not become dictatorial. Those men of real authority rarely raise their voice, rarely speak harshly, and never ever embarrass a subordinate. There's always a way to deal with someone besides that. God will show you if you'll just be patient and put the person in your place, and you in his.

Here's another attribute of leadership. The apostles had a proper respect for the people's ability and their needs. They demonstrated that in Acts 6:3. They said, "You look out somebody, you seek out among you, you pick some people, seven men of honest report." That means they're reported to be honest among the three or four thousand or the twenty thousand people who were standing there. Thirty thousand, maybe. There was a large crowd. "Out of that, you guys pick seven men who are of outstanding character and of honest report; but you choose them. You choose. We don't want to because we don't know them. You know them. If you choose them, they'll be of you, and you'll trust them." And that's the wisdom of seeking out someone in a group. This is a difficult area when you have to seek somebody out in a brand new group that you don't know. I'm satisfied that Peter and the other eleven did not know the seven men at that particular moment. They could have picked some cronies, some good friends, to handle things. That would not have done what God was trying to demonstrate to us here as leadership. We have to realize that in order for people to accept people, they should come from the people. Our government is, was at one time, based on representative government. There's a few king-makers around that changed some of the things today, and it's a sad thing. But it's still a representative government. We need to recognize that if you have the people

choose - if there are fifty people, have them pick out one or two or three people whom they can respect. Have them serve as administrators. They said, "Whom we may appoint over this business."

Now they didn't give up the authority that was vested in them. They said we are still in the position of leadership, but we want to lead fairly and equitably. Can you see that? So that we may give ourselves to the prayer and seeking of the Word. They needed to stay in spiritual fellowship. I stressed that a while ago. When you begin to get too busy with mundane matters, you will lose your spirituality. You will lose it! When I'm in The Philippines, I say to those people around me, "I will do what you say." They pick where I go. They pick the method of transportation. They fix the schedule. They set up the times. They do the advance work and make the arrangements for me to come. I do as little as I possibly can in those areas. And there is a reason for that. It's not that I'm lazy. I'm not a lazy man. I've been a hard-working, ambitious man all my life, and will be until the day I die. My father was 87 years old when he was killed falling out of a tree that he was pruning, and he was a hard-working man to that day, not a lazy bone in him. But if you do it yourself, pretty soon everybody becomes dependent on you!

I push other people so that they can learn to function, so that they can continue to do this after I'm gone. My ministry is not to just dominate the Philippines nor to stand tall to anyone. My ministry first, last, and always is to build leadership over there so that they can continue to do the work of the ministry. What is it? God gave gifts unto the Church for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. That is all. That all goes into the perfecting of the saints! Teaching them and not just teaching them in word, but teaching them by having them do it. Give them the responsibility. Nothing brings out the greatness of a man like responsibility! You give a person responsibility for a certain thing and they will perform it. But if you stand around and tell them what you want all the time and how to do it, they'll do a slipshod job and they'll never be able to do it right because they're frustrated all the time. Turn it loose. Let them have it. Let them do it!

IN ALL THINGS, MAKE YOUR WORD YOUR BOND

The one thing I do - and I want you to get this if you never hear another thing – keep your word to the letter – and I know that all men don't operate this way. I'm writing this to Bible students. People who yet have their ministries ahead of them. Those who are established in another way can continue as they are. But I want you to know that when you say that you will be a certain place at five minutes of ten, at six minutes to ten, you be there! Be prompt, be punctual, be truthful. People depend on what others say so keep your word to the letter. If you aren't sure you can perform it, don't say it.

There's another saying that is a Christian method for lying. It's the most practical religious method for lying that I've ever heard, and it says, "I will be there, God willing." A lot of people say, "Well, I'll be to church next week, God willing." I say, "Well, then I won't look for you, because I know you don't mean it. You're going to say that God had something else for you to do when I talk to you again." I don't mind telling them, because I want to break them of that habit. Don't ever get that habit, "I'll be there, God willing." No, you'll either be there or you won't. You know the will of God! You are responsible for the words that come out of your mouth.

Can you agree to that? I thank God - there are people in the Philippines that say, "Well, it doesn't look like Brother Rice is coming." The man who is my direct subordinate in that area says - several times I'm getting right to the wire and it's time for me to show up – He says, "Listen, Brother Rice has never broken his word one time. Everywhere he ever said he would be, he was there! There's another bus tonight, and he'll be on it." Sure enough, I was. That builds credibility into the ministry like nothing else will. Your own truthfulness. I know men who have had great ministries, but pretty soon they say to their wife, "Well, I'll be back in two hours." Four hours later they're not back. It's better not to say anything if you're not coming back, but if you say, "I'll be back," then come back. A better way to say it is, "Well, I'll be back when I get back." That might make her mad at the beginning, but it won't hurt her as much as it you lied to her and told her later.

I'm talking about credibility! Build personal credibility! Let the words of your mouth be established and you honor your word. I guarantee you one thing - if you will honor your word and honor God's Word, then God can honor His Word by your word. God will honor your word if you will honor it. But if you don't honor your own word, how on earth can God honor your word? It's impossible! And yet men continually say things and they don't mean them. Or they say that they'll be there and then not show. There's a lot of planning goes into something you've scheduled. I've seen people, important people, just not show. "Oh, well, I had something come up." There's no excuse for that. Now I realize that you can be

forgiven for things like that. I'm not talking about unforgiveness now and don't you let any of it get in your heart if somebody does you that way. I'm talking about responsibility, credibility, integrity before God and man. You build whatever credibility your ministry has. Start in the infancy of your ministry and build credibility, first by being credible yourself. That's one of the things that will keep your people with you. It'll keep people cooperative, and it will inspire your people to be credible.

I've known men who had a habit of being on the job an hour or two, even three hours early. Pretty soon their key people start coming in - one, two, three hours early. They set an example. You set an example for your subordinates. You set an example for the people in your congregation. You set an example for the church you're trying to build. What is it? You are responsible to God and to man, praise the Lord! I keep harping on that and I drag that in every now and then because, with all the other things we know about the apostle, you can know everything and if you're not credible, you had just as well forget it if you're not responsible. You'd just as well forget it! Go home, stay there! Wait on God! Don't let anybody depend on you until you can convince yourself that you have to be dependable. How does that sound? Pretty hard, praise the Lord!

COOPERATING WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

The apostles followed and complemented the evangelist's ministry. That's another work of the apostle, eighth chapter of Acts. We read from about the fourth verse down through the eighteenth or twentieth. Acts 8:14-17 says: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them – only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

I've gone into areas – Bible schools – where they had not received the Holy Spirit. One place in particular where it had been seven or eight years since anybody had received the Holy Spirit. Now that's tragic. And nobody had ever come around there. We went in and we preached one hour, and everybody received the Holy Spirit - everybody. And the teachers were renewed in the Spirit. We went back the next year, and we laid hands on another class and they received the Holy Spirit. We go to churches, and often they just receive the Holy Spirit. I just say, "Receive the Holy Spirit", and that fast they receive the Holy Spirit. They very nearly always seem to fall rather easily. They just fall on the ground. Nobody catches them or anything. Some of the more sophisticated churches catch them because they've seen people do that. But the more primitive ones don't know that you're supposed to catch them. I've had people fall and fall right over an altar bench. I had a woman fall full face forward and land right on her nose on an altar bench right on the edge. Never hurt her, never marked her at all! God had to be in that, it would have hurt otherwise. You try it sometime if you want a sore nose! But when God's in it, it's fantastic! I believe in catching them, because a lot of people are more prone to fall. Often they can get hurt. I'm just saying what happens. So they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

The thing that I wanted to stress here is that they followed and complemented the evangelist's ministry. They didn't take over what Philip was doing. When Philip was finished, God moved old Philip, didn't He? Moved him down to that one Ethiopian eunuch and spread an evangelistic crusade into Africa through that one man. They went down through Samaria. They had heard of the word being sent forth. They realized that Philip in no way could handle this whole thing by himself. That's the thing they saw, and they saw the need and they responded to the need. They sent Peter and John to establish these people in the faith. They followed up the people. First of all, they participated in the ministry and then they followed up the work that the evangelist had done, Acts 8:25. "And they, when they had testified and preached the Word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." Now, what did they do? They went around to the villages of the Samaritans and they established the

Church by preaching and teaching the word.

There's a reason for that. Then it says after that they returned home. They went on back to the house. Well, the apostles, as we know, were traveling people. We know, too, in every case throughout the book of Acts, the apostles were on the move. They did the same things that are revealed here in this eighth chapter. They went and established meetings. Paul many times went and held meetings in a house. He just went to the house and said, "Invite your friends." I'm satisfied here's how he did it. He walked in and said, Hi, Bill, or Joshua, or whatever the man's name was. They had religious names in those days, you know that. He'd visit with the man and would say, "I want to share the truth that God has revealed to me." The man would invite his friends in; sometimes, I'm satisfied, at Paul's instigation. Paul did not remain passive in his ministry. He constantly, and in as friendly a manner as he possibly could, he encouraged the man to invite his neighbors in so that they, too, might hear the word of God. And then he would minister the word of God in a manner that he would open the scriptures to them and bring what we refer to as the Pauline revelation of Jesus Christ - of the actual identification of Jesus Christ. To most of these people, Jesus was simply a historic figure.

IGNORANCE OF JESUS CHRIST IS WIDE SPREAD even in our very religious world

Now understand that there is a close parallel in the world today. Jesus is no more than a historical figure. I have talked to children, young people who are fifteen, sixteen years old before they realize that Jesus Christ was anything but a baby. Now that's amazing - here in America! I have talked to people who, when they think of Christ, think of a figure on a cross. A crucifix. Sometimes we preach, "Will the real Jesus please stand up." There are so many different kinds. There's the Christ of religion, different religions. Every one has their own. Think about that! Everyone has their own. They have their own concept of who and what Jesus was. They limited Him in certain areas. They gave Him great powers in others.

But Paul preached the Christ of the Bible! The risen Christ! There's only one Jesus Christ, there's only one! That's the one Paul preached. He preached the gospel and the revelation of Jesus Christ that he had received. We call it the Pauline Revelation, but to them it was the first realization that Jesus actually was the Messiah and actually was the Lamb of God revealed throughout the Old Testament – He actually was the Passover – He actually was the atonement; He actually was the Feast of Pentecost – He actually was the Bread that came down from Heaven – He actually was the two loaves at Pentecost - He actually was the wave offering – He actually was all of those types and shadows that were in the Old Testament – He actually was the mercy seat – He actually was the blood. Oh, hallelujah! When they began to realize that, then they saw that this same Christ took upon Himself, actually epitomized, totally typified, totally revealed the Great Day of Atonement in Himself, both the scapegoat and the sin offering - He was it! When Paul revealed this to them, man! Wow! People would say - they would respond to that. They would respond to what? The gospel!

From the mouth of the apostle they received the gospel. As these groups would grow, there came the need for pastors, there came the need for teachers, resident in that community. Therefore, Paul would establish those and then move on again. He planted churches, and he encouraged them. He constantly encouraged them. I don't think you'll find Paul going around beating somebody down. He operated just like Jesus did lifting people, lifting people, lifting people. Our ministry is not one of discouragement. Our ministry is not one of despair. Our ministry is not one of mashing people into their place, making them conform, making them get just really right on, perfect in their religiosity before we allow them to minister. We must be absolutely certain of them before they're allowed to even speak out loud - No, No, No. He had confidence in the ability of the Holy Ghost, to keep that which he had committed unto God. In every thing we do, we must encourage people to let Jesus Christ express Himself through them by the Holy Ghost.

I'm going to have to say that the apostle is still the same thing, today. He has to do a lot of traveling. Paul said, "We have no certain dwelling place." Well, that's often the truth. You're moving so much. You're going here, there, and everywhere. You're in a different bed every night. In the Philippines, I rarely spend two nights in the same bed, often don't have a bed. In America, I often spend two or three. And that's it. There are some certain physical sacrifices, and you need to toughen up just a little bit. Let's get out of the habit that we have to have things our own way.

The apostolic ministry will demand of you that you lose all consideration of self and take what's offered. Take what's there. Never complain. Never suggest anything better. Simply take what's put before you. Accept what men do for you. It's generally their best. Trust it to be that way, and just accept it.

I often think of one time I had to preach a meeting. I was in the hottest place I'd ever seen. The flies were so bad, and the mosquitoes so bad I couldn't believe it, I could hardly see the light through them. They came and showed me my room, and it wasn't any bigger than a piano. There was a bed there that was a full foot shorter than I am. They said, "This is your room." I had no place to lay anything, no place to put anything. I stuck my suitcase under the bed; and I'd have to dig it out, put it on the bed, and stand there with a curtain pushing back to have room to stand. I finally got them to bring me a mosquito net. I spent four days there, preached five hours every day, and then held crusades at night. But I tell you something - we saw the church encouraged that was there in the town. The two nights downtown - one night we had six hundred come for salvation, the next night four hundred. We saw healings like you wouldn't believe. I left there nearly dead from the heat. I was preaching with my head about fourteen inches away from a tin roof. The building was low. You talk about suffering in the flesh! I could have complained, but I did not, because I knew God had me there to do a job! And it worked, praise the Lord! You can ask for better conditions, and you can believe that you are a King's kid and should live like a king. If you do feel that way, forget it. Don't ever call yourself an apostle, forget it! Don't go to the mission field. Forget it! Don't go overseas. Stay here where it's comfortable. If you can toughen up and fill the bill and divest yourself of selfish thoughts, selfish considerations, then you're a candidate for the apostle's ministry.

THE APOSTLE IS A MAN IN CHRIST

This is certainly not a complete treatment of the apostle's ministry - but what we're endeavoring to do is let you see that there is one real outstanding mark of the apostle. You can have it. The outstanding thing is allowing Christ to live in you. And You lose yourself in Him. That's the outstanding thing, that's the prime requisite for a success in that ministry. It will make you successful where everything else fails. We have named several other things that are advantageous to you to acquire certain skills, including business skills. It's good to be a businessman - good to have a good grasp of financial matters. Learn to manage your own finances. Learn to raise your own finances. Learn to count the cost. Learn to be conservative in your spending. Learn to realize that every dollar you have, God wants a dollar's worth for it. These are just practical things, but they all contribute to the success, your success, in the apostle's ministry. We love the prosperity message. We preach it, not as some do, but scripturally sound. I preach it in the foreign lands where people have nothing. I preach prosperity; but I preach it as prosperity toward God, and then trusting God to meet every need in your life. And I tell you truthfully, I never concern myself with finances. I often don't have any, but I always know if God puts it in my heart to do something, the money will come. It often comes the last hour before I'm due, but I just keep marching. I keep marching in the direction I'm called. It's up to God to provide it.

If He called me and sent me, then I didn't go at my own charge. That means literally I've got a charge account that's in Heaven. God's got the supply. Isn't that true? Is it His ministry or is it mine? It's His! We must understand that it is His, and that we are in Christ. It is important that we make certain confessions as to who we are in Christ. It's good to maintain a good confession and I think it's advantageous for the believer to, especially in their younger ministry, to write down a series of confessions that are literally Word - not some idea, but Word. The word of God. Confess the word of God that pertains to you as a person in Christ. There comes a day when you realize that the ministry works because of what you are, not what you say you are! Of course, the reason for confession is to develop what you are into what you say you are. We need to develop to the point that the reality of the living Christ is within! When we come to that realization, it takes away this area of constantly confessing something to get something, constantly verbalizing something, constantly reprimanding each other for a word that you might say.

I DON'T HAVE TO DEFEND THE HOLY GHOST OR THE WORD
God will do that for me, I need only declare His Truth

I don't get into that at all! I literally believe that I am what God says I am. That, I'm convinced of, and it's solid. Therefore, I believe that since God's nature is within me, all I have to do is relax and act natural. It was my nature once to operate in Adam. And I acted naturally. Now I'm in Christ, and so therefore I act naturally. I let that come out from me at all times. It's just a natural thing, and it can be that for everybody. It's not something that I have a corner on. I've not perfected it, but I will say it will work for you. It will allow your mind to dwell on greater things of God instead of constantly convincing yourself of something. Do you understand? I say to you, "Take the word and meditate the word until that word becomes born in your heart and becomes a reality within you." Reach an absolute conclusion that the Word is true, and it is given to you, personally. Then it will work for you. You can confess it with your mouth from now on and confessing it rapidly has little or no value. It is when you confess it and sit in profound silence with that piece of truth ringing in your heart and in your mind and in your spirit until you get the revelation from God. WOW, that's really what I am. That's really where it is. It is in Christ.

When you come to that, then it begins to be effective and you don't need a lot of this so-called positive confession. I'm not taking away from that at all. I'm simply stating that there's a far greater way to operate, and it ceases to be in the area of trying to twist God's arm or manipulate God to do something. It just simply means coming to the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. Letting Christ stand up in you! You know when Jesus stood up in the boat the storm ceased when He spoke! Let Him stand up in you, and the storms of life will cease to buffet you. Think about that, alright? It will assist you greatly when you're all by yourself and still have to perform in the office of a minister of God.

The apostle's job in the book of Acts was to establish churches and establish the truth by teaching the Word. In today's church, it is still the same thing. We know the church is far cry from what God ordained in the Bible. We must always take the book of Acts as our pattern. I said this two or three times, but I am going to say it again that the first church stood on the Word. They had the Word of God. They understood, then they operated in the authority of the name of Jesus. They took that legal right of power of attorney to operate in and for doing kingdom business in the name of Jesus Christ. A power of attorney is only effective as long as a man lives. So every time they did it, they proved that Jesus was alive! Every time they did something in Jesus' name, they proved to the world that Jesus was alive. Every time you lay your hands on somebody and see them healed, you're proving to the world Jesus is alive! Every time there's any kind of a miracle, you have stood where God has stood! Therefore, you are demonstrating, "Yes, my God is alive. Yours may be dead and ineffective, but

mine's alive." Hallelujah! You don't have to argue doctrine with people. I want to share about a meeting I was in a place called Capasayan, Gatarran, in Cagayan province on Luzon Island in The Philippines. I was in a meeting of about 600 people. They were very, very fundamental, very basic, very little understanding of the Word. I got there two days after the meeting started. It was about a four- or five-day meeting. I knew God wanted us to go. It took all one day and most of one night. It was a terrible trip to get there; A savage trip. We arrived, and they asked me at eleven o'clock at night to preach at five o'clock the next morning, which was Easter. I had no concept - I never intended to preach a sunrise service. But God gave me something to preach.

MINISTERS CAN BE OPEN SCOFFERS

At lunch, I began to hear from these other ministers who were there that God was not doing anything supernatural anymore. Well, that offended me, but I knew that the worst thing I could do was get offended. Pay careful attention to this, because there's a tremendous lesson in this for you if you'll pay attention to it and grasp it. If I got offended and began to defend God and began to defend the Word, and began to defend my concept of what ought to go on, I would have offended the brethren and I would have literally destroyed my effect on the meeting because I would have split it down the middle. The whole thing would have fallen. That is not a Godly thing to do!

God did not call me to go in there and destroy these people. He called me to go and preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified and demonstrate the Spirit and the power of God! That's exactly what I did. I've used Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, where he said, "I came not with great swelling words of men's wisdom, but by the demonstration and the power of the Spirit of God. So I preached salvation - fantastic response. Holy Spirit - fantastic response. I laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. In the afternoon session, God showed me, "There are a lot of folks here that need healed."

Well, these brethren had decided that healing was not for today. "Once in a while God might, might not - depended on how God felt about it. I've heard a lot of that in my life - been in several churches where that's the way it was. Maybe God will heal you and maybe He won't. You can never tell what God's going to do. He's kind of whimsical, and He might just operate in any old fashion, because, after all you might have some kind of reason why He won't heal you." Now that's baloney! No matter how thin you slice it, it still tastes and smells just like baloney. Remember that, you'll never get it to taste or smell any other way. Baloney's baloney! Now I can't go up there and just start hammering these folks. It would take me two or three days of hard preaching and careful, patient teaching to get people to come to an understanding about healing to where they could doctrinally accept it.

I didn't have time to promote doctrine at this time. I must have a demonstration from God. It's God's business to protect His Word. It's God's business to defend the Holy Spirit, not mine! It's God's business to defend the veracity of His character. I must proclaim it, but He must defend it! He must demonstrate what happens. The demonstration of what? The Spirit and the power of God, not the demonstration of Cliff Rice's ability, because, I had none! How many of you ever healed anybody? I never did! This is what the apostle must convince himself must happen. This must be your life. This must be your total concept that God will honor what you say and do. There's where you have to come to. You have to realize you're working for God. You're not working for

yourself. You are incapable of doing anything supernatural by your own power, but in Christ, and by yielding yourself completely to Him, you can do all things that He did. When you say something, if you've honored your own word and honored God's Word, then God will honor your word. If you're walking in God, then God will perform according to His Word. He will watch over it to bring it to pass. That's scripture.

I'm not talking about some idea I have. That is scripture! I said to the people, "Now folks, I know there are many of you sick. I've watched you." It was a big place, and it was full. People were standing outside, hanging in the windows. It was a very primitive building. They never heard of a rug on the floor - I never saw one. Chairs were not that good - just wooden benches. But the place was full of people hanging clear out to the road in front, a dirt road. So I said, "God wants to heal some people here today." I didn't have to look back at the two dozen ministers. I could feel the eyebrows raising behind me. You know how sometimes you can feel more than - you see through the back of your head, did you ever have that? It'll work. Well, I could see the devil starting to rise up. Now these men were not servants of the devil. As far as their capability, they were serving God. Let's understand that. Let's not impugn the other man's motives.

Get that one. If you never hear another thing, never impugn another man's motive unjustly. Just because he disagrees from your favorite doctrine, or just because he has not come to the level that you feel you are, don't impugn his motives. His motives, almost invariably, will be pure. He has a heart to find God, but he's disappointed in the fact that he has never come to an understanding. Can you see the value of that? Always be considerate of people who do not agree with you. Lead them into agreement. In patience instructing those that oppose themselves. See, they're opposing themselves.

God showed me this, so I said, "I tell you what I want you to do, folks. You've seen people saved the last couple of meetings. You've seen people saved and you've seen people receive the Holy Spirit. Now I want to ask you if you believe that I saved anybody." 'Oh, no!' Did I fill anybody with the Holy Ghost? I can tell you truthfully that I never saved anybody in my life. I never filled anybody with the Holy Spirit in my life. And I never, in all my life, have ever healed anybody. Never! But I work for one who will, and who does. My Father said that if I preached the Word, that He would reveal Jesus to the people and they would desire Him and accept Him and be saved. Now you've done that. That's worked. Now the Bible said that if you'll ask God, He will fill you with the Holy Spirit. Who filled you? God did! The Bible says that they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. How many folks here feel that God would lie to you?" Well, you know that nobody's going to admit that in an open meeting, even though they secretly believe it in their hearts, and many do! Realize that many Christians have been lied to so much by their parents and by preachers that they really feel that God would lie to them too. They don't have any confidence in God. Our job is to

build confidence in God in the hearts of the people. Never forget that - never! Always say good things about God! Always lift Him and make it so that people will constantly come into a deeper realization of God's total stability of character, God's total veracity, absolute impeccable honesty. Instill those things in people's hearts.

I read James 5:14 where it says, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, they anoint them with oil". They pray the prayer of faith. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and God will raise them up." I said, "What we're going to do here today is something in just simple obedience to God." God never asked anybody to do anything that he couldn't do. God never asked a man anywhere, you look in the Bible carefully, and you'll find that God never asked anybody to do something that they couldn't easily do. We always think that we have to work miracles. I used to think that was it. I had to hype myself up to get it to happen. I don't have to do that. I just have to walk in God. He brings it to pass! Keep that in mind. You have to walk in God. Don't think that's the simplest thing you ever did, because it does require something out of you.

When Moses stood there at the Red Sea, he did not part the Red Sea. Moses stuck his rod out over the sea. He just stuck that stick out over the sea. And the only place he got in trouble with God was when He took the same stick and instead of just talking to the rock He slapped the stick on the rock instead of just speaking the word as God told him. I'd like to have about a week to go into that one, but I'm not going to. Suffice it to say that if we will be careful to do what God tells us to do, and do it His way, we will walk in victory as He brings His Word to pass.

I said, "Now then, let's do something. You believe what the Bible says, so let's just be obedient to the Lord. Just obedient. We don't have to do anything great. Let's just act in obedience. But let's expect God to do what He says He'll do. Now you come, you obey God by coming up here. I will obey God by putting the oil on you. I will pray the prayer of faith. The Bible says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick" and who's going to raise them up - me? No, "God will raise them up." And if you've committed sin, you're forgiven. I said that's how the Word works. Well, you know the people just sat there and, "Yeah, that sounds easy. That's not so tough." And even these preachers were sitting there in wonderment. I'd catch their eyes once in a while. They'd never heard it like that, see. Normally, the great, dynamic man of God demonstrates his power and ability and God rarely gets into the act. God will exalt Himself if you'll allow Him to. That's our business - not exalt ourselves, but exalt God. Maybe fifty or sixty people came with varying ailments, and every one in obedience to God, responded to the word of God. I, in simple obedience to God, prayed the prayer of faith. I said, "The Bible says that these signs shall follow them that believe." I explained that to them. I said, "I happen to believe what the Bible says, so let's

just try and see what God wants to do." God exalted Himself. He defended Himself and He proved Himself to the hearts of these unbelievers who were flanking me. He proved Himself to them that He is still God and still in business and still very much alive and well. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. And He will honor His Word if we will dare to exalt His Word. That's exactly our job, okay? That afternoon, God made believers out of open scoffers – He did it by honoring His Word.

NEW AREA - NEW CHURCH

I want to cover going into a new area to build a church. There are some tremendous things that we need to learn. While we like to relegate that type of thing totally to the ministry of the evangelist, yet that's not so. Often the evangelist comes in response to somebody who maybe set things up and did the ground- work. Charles Finney, a great evangelist, always had somebody ahead of him doing the work. Billy Graham, every place he ever goes he refuses to go without about three months of preparation by some people that never see the limelight. Interesting, isn't it? I would call those men - they have an apostolic calling. They do a good job as far as evangelistic crusades are concerned, alright?

Let's look at that a little bit. Let's say that you're going into an area to open a new ministry - an area that has not been opened. There are several ways of doing it. I'm going to share a few things that I feel are successful methods. There are as many methods, I suppose, as there are people. But I think that perhaps the best method - I've done this, and I've written a booklet on this that I mailed out with my newsletter to the ministers in our Fellowship to encourage them. I have spent hours and hours and hours trying to counsel people to encourage them in the methods of starting new works that will work - very simple methods. It does require some work. If you want to hear a real definition of ministry, it's spelled W O R K! Real ministry requires real work. There's no easy way. It's tough, it's hard. If you thought your job was hard, try really ministering the word of God effectively. It gets to be a job, but it's a labor of love that'll get you so excited you just wish there was 24 hours more every day instead of less.

Let's start by going into a new town, any town, anywhere, any country. Let's take America, because that's where we are. You can go into an area and you're going to meet somebody if you're in town two days. You're going to have to have gasoline, you're going to have a place to eat, you're going to have several things - you're going to meet somebody. That's an inevitable fact. What are you? You're a soul winner. Settle that in your heart first. You'll never succeed unless you settle it that you're a soul winner. Alright, so what's a soul winner do? He wins souls. How does he win souls? He begins to strike up conversations. You cannot win souls very well unless you're willing to talk to somebody. It's very difficult. I don't even know any way of doing it without talking. The Bible says something about committing to us the foolishness of preaching - the foolishness of preaching. Well, we seem foolish sometimes when we talk. But, nevertheless, the effect is tremendous. We realize that we must talk. You can talk to the fellow who pumps the gas. You've got him locked in to a situation for about five minutes, you see. You've got him locked in. You can go and talk to the person in the cafe. Pick a cafe that's not too busy. Talk to a man or a woman. If you can, talk to a waitress. If you can't, talk to somebody sitting in a seat, but find

somebody. Go down to the store and just be friendly. People will talk to you. They'll talk to you if you're friendly.

The first thing you do is just exactly like Paul the apostle did. I got this from his methods that I analyzed from the Word. One place he went into a town and worked as a sailmaker, and he talked. People came to hear him while he was working. Other places he came and he ministered in houses. But how did he get in the house? He approached the owner and he talked to him. He got an invitation to come to the house. I'll tell you one thing - you need to wrangle that invitation. Don't wait for somebody to just volunteer. You're the expert, you're the professional. You're the person whom God has commissioned to do that work. Then you get the invitation. Tell them I'd like to come and just share the scriptures with you and your family. If you have friends or neighbors and would like to invite in, please feel free to do so. I'll tell you what I'll do - I'm free Monday night. Monday night's a good night - nobody goes anywhere on Monday night. So I've always favored Monday night as an opener. You can always get a Monday night thing going. All you've actually done is talk to one person. You haven't gone around and gone door to door yet. That may come later, but initially you've talked to one person. Now you've got the nucleus of a Bible study. If you will faithfully present the simple truths of God in simplicity. I heard William Branham say that one time and that struck a chord in my heart - teach, or present God in simplicity. We need to preach God in simplicity. Don't make it some great involved thing. Make it easy! Make it simple. God wants to do business on a very low key. You begin to teach the word, teach it faithfully, and truthfully.

You begin to teach the word, but you also answer questions. Be responsive. Never walk over anyone's question. Be responsive to them. Treat every question as important or valid. Spend as much time as is necessary. Then pray for everyone there. To be a successful apostle, in this field, you must be an intercessor. You must actually give yourself to intercessory prayer. What did Paul say? "Pray without ceasing." He was saying, "I continually hold you before the Lord. Why? Because I want you to succeed!" I continually hold the ministry that I'm in before the Lord because I want to be a success. When you've got a Bible study established, you've got five nights a week that you're not doing too much - or six or seven. You've got seven days a week. I have had as many as five Bible studies per week. Then preach on Sunday and during the week. You can do whatever you're willing to work toward. What's your vision? Is it for the whole town or for just one little group? Get another group going in another area of town - not next door. Far enough away. The person in whose house you're meeting will normally be kind of the leader, won't they? But you do the teaching. This is important. One of the greatest things you can do is to encourage them to meet once a week without you in addition to what you're doing. So that they can on a

totally peer level, they can share the Word of God with each other. You're not there so that your presence will tend to squelch anything. The minute any discussion comes, they look to you if you're there. But if you're not there, they have to look to each other. They have to scratch their heads. They have to come up with questions if they can't answer them. Next time they come together, have them bring these questions to you. You then explain it. But you have allowed them to become dependent on God. Right there you are starting them to become dependent on God.

Start another Bible study. After you have say three and you've got twelve or fourteen people in there, and these are adult people, you've got more congregation than a lot of churches have. Did you know that? I've been in lots of churches where there weren't that many people. But if you've got five of them going, you've got sixty people. If you've only got ten per study, you've got fifty. Now it's getting time so that once a week or once every two weeks you could begin to bring them all together and encourage them. Get them to fellowshiping each other. Get the ladies to have a potluck dinner. When they begin to do that, you are establishing your church. Eventually this can lead, and should in about a month or so, to bringing that whole bunch into a church situation. You need to honor the leaders that have been with you. Let them continue in their Bible study at home if they want to. Continue to encourage them to get centered in the church. You are the teacher of the Word of God. You know that you know the Word and obviously the new convert doesn't know. But he needs to know.

After you get the church going, and you want to build membership in your church, you can still, if you've got two nights in service, you can still have one night a week in a Bible study. In about five or six weeks, you can bring that Bible study into the church again. You can continually build membership. Any church can build their membership this same way. The people will be talking to their friends and relatives, thus doing the evangelizing.

CHURCH BUILDING BY EVANGELISM

The other method, of course, that's most widely used, is the evangelistic crusade. The evangelistic crusade out of a mother church is a very effective church builder. It's a very effective church starter. When you go into a neighboring town and you take people from your church, you take qualified people, you get the apostle and the apostolic pastor - his job, is to arrange for the crusade. He must arrange for the music. He must arrange for the singing. He must arrange for the ushers. He must arrange for the greeters. He must arrange for the follow-up. The most important portion is the follow-up. He must arrange for the advertising, if you're going to use it - and you should. He must arrange for any cooperation of any people that he has in that area - if he has a Bible study in that area or he has a small church, he must arrange for them to get involved. Seat the local people up front where folks can see them so that they can begin to relate to that little church body. When you get the evangelistic crusade arranged, a wise pastor will usually get an evangelist in; somebody who is not necessarily a big name, but who is capable in the evangelistic message. There's a real art in preaching evangelistically for results. I won't go into that.

But now then - the follow-up. Never forget, the responsibility for the success of this entire campaign rests on you. That's the thing I'm trying to get across. After an evangelistic campaign, if you have an evangelist come in, you should get name cards for the people who respond. Get names and addresses and Phone numbers. This is normally done at the end of the meeting, at the altar. No later than one or two days after they have made that commitment, have a letter at their house expressing your appreciation for the stand they have taken for Jesus Christ. Exalt the Lord in your letter. Write a very friendly letter, a very helpful letter. Then express to them that in a day or two someone will call Upon them to see if they can be of any help to them and leave it at that. When somebody calls on them, the people who call on them should be experienced personal workers. That again is yet your responsibility. If you have to, go with them until you train people. You don't just start out with people like this. Somebody must train them. So you go with them and train them by doing. That's one of the things that the apostle has to take upon himself and the apostolic pastor must take upon himself - to train his people or have people capable of training people. Can you see that?

The next step, of course, is to bring them into the church, bring them into Bible studies, get them into the Word and have booklets that will take them through the Bible.

We need to go on. We'll state that the apostle in today's economy and today's world is really no different than it was back then. Paul was a great man historically; but when he was present, they said that his presence was weak and contemptuous. Wow! That's awful. I don't believe that's quite a fair assessment.

Obviously, there were victories. There were great victories in his life. I tell you truthfully there were times when Paul actually had no recognition from anyone and he said, "We the apostles are chosen last." And he named the things that he had given up and denied in order to be the thing that God wanted him to be. So the ministry is not without its sacrifices. But it gets in your blood, and you wouldn't do it any other way. When you're doing the will of God and you know it, you wouldn't have it any other way. If somebody told you the fullness of what God would have for you today, you might back away - you couldn't handle the fullest extent of it. But if you take it one day at a time, it'll just get better and better and more glorious and more enjoyable and more exciting all the time. That's one great thing about serving God - there is excitement. There are tremendously exciting events in your ministry ahead. Look for them, but always look for God to perform great things. Just look for God to perform greater things than you've ever seen. Step in and do the will of God and always expect God to exalt Himself! Always expect Him to perform His Word. Don't ever doubt in your heart. Drive doubt from you heart as if it were a very unwelcome, unfriendly person sitting right at your dining table. Drive it from there. Don't let it stay. Always maintain your trust in the Lord. Always remember that God will do anything for you that He has ever done for anyone anywhere.

TRUE APOSTLES SHOULD DECIDE DOCTRINAL MATTERS

Always from a scriptural point of view

The apostles decided doctrinal matters. I must say that they decided them peacefully. There came the time where the discussion came up as to whether or not they should be preaching circumcision and the Law to the Gentiles. They decided that there was no reason to lay upon the Gentiles, a burden that neither they nor their fathers could bear, but to simply warn them to abstain from fornication, and the eating of blood and things strangled. There are groups today who would put commandments on people such as dress codes. I've been in churches where you wouldn't take off your coat and try to preach. It would be a terrible thing to try to do. Yet today, we do it rather frequently when it's hot. I was in a church one time, and I knew that God had told me I was to preach there, one night even though I wasn't scheduled to do so. I wasn't wearing a coat and tie so I wasn't asked to the platform. I preached from the congregation rather than from the pulpit.

I've been in several places where the customs are strange. There used to be a custom in the Pentecostal circles where a woman didn't dare wear anything red. Any kind of enhancement of her natural beauty by any type of makeup was a terrible sin, and they always likened her to Jezebel. There are people still doing that today. Do we enforce that type of thing upon people? No! No way! One of the greatest mistakes that missionaries make, and I shared this earlier - they try to enforce our customs upon the people. We're not there to enforce our customs. We're there to preach Jesus Christ. You must let people be what they are. If you don't like their hairstyle, God might get you into a whole church full where you don't like the hairstyle. Don't try to enforce your opinions on them. The apostles came together and they carefully considered this, because this is a grave doctrinal matter, and it would be wiser, instead of people writing books critical of each other and saying things in their magazines critical of each other; it would be better today if they would call a meeting of those men who are so thoroughly recognized and let them sit down and say, "Brethren, we must provide a united front to the world." For if we don't, we fail in an area in the seventeenth chapter of John, where Jesus is saying, "That they 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."

The reason that I did not want to upset this thing in Capasayan in Gatarran, relative to the healing ministry - I could have defended the Word. I could have been a defender of the faith and stood tall to a few who liked a Saul instead of a David. I would have destroyed many in my actions. Jesus is saying here that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. That is the real crime today is that the church is not one. I'm not teaching ecumenism - don't you ever think I am! I'm saying we need agreement with the Word of God. Throw away every other type

of teaching, but let's come into agreement around the Word of God. Jesus said the world has a right to say that the Father didn't even send me if you guys can't be of one mind. Wow! Did you know that he said, "By this shall all men know that you're my disciples, that you have love one to another." Love does not destroy the brethren, does it? And if I do not love, then the world is right in judging that I'm not a disciple. If I am not one with my brother in the Word, if we publicly air our differences - and brethren we will have differences - but let us come into agreement that we do not assassinate each other to the world. Never, never, never! Hear me! I'd like to say "never" four hundred times to emphasize it - Never!! Never let anything come out of your mouth derogatory against anybody that has any sphere of influence that is attempting to preach the Word of God. It's important that we realize that the world sees us as one. Though we may see things slightly differently in different areas of doctrine. That's not wrong by any stretch. But we don't castigate each other, throw one another out of the body of Christ, and say that one serves demons when actually you can see the Spirit of God operating in their ministry in various ways. But if you don't agree with me, you must be demon-possessed. If you don't see this thing like I do, if you don't preach like I do, you aren't hearing from God.

What did I say that meat was, that we were slicing a while ago? Baloney! Baloney! Still smells and tastes like it, doesn't it? Still got that flavor in your teeth. Why should we be in agreement? You can't blame the world for not believing that Jesus came out from the Father, because the Church has destroyed the image of Jesus Christ that God gave to the world. God wanted the express image of God to be revealed in Christ. It was in Him. The express image of Christ should be in us. We must present a oneness to the world. As you pray daily, pray, "Oh, God, let your servants, your ministers, your apostles, your prophets, your pastors, your teachers, your evangelists, and your laymen not criticize each other to the world that the world might believe that Jesus came out from the Father." Keep that in your heart, because the responsibility is ours. We'll never escape it. It's ours. The responsibility is ours. What the world says about Jesus Christ, you and I determine. Brethren, the responsibility is ours. If you don't agree, if you absolutely cannot agree, shut your mouth. You've not sinned, have you? It's not wrong to disagree. Some people are of another persuasion. But, shut your mouth.

There are many, many things that we could yet say relative to the ministry of the apostle. I would ask you as a sincere Bible student just to get a grasp of how Paul felt about different things, read I Corinthians, chapter nine. The thought is that Paul did whatever was necessary to further the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Second Corinthians eleven and twelve Paul declared his ministry and his sacrifice for the gospel's sake. In chapter twelve, he speaks of revelation from God. Without the Pauline Revelation the Church is powerless and knows Christ only in the flesh. Paul brought the revelation of the spirit world, and the things

Jesus did in the spirit world and thus he said, "We no longer know Him after the flesh, but we do know Him after the spirit." So we don't focus ourselves upon the physical suffering, but we recognize the spiritual suffering and we recognize the momentous things where God reached down and met the world in Christ. Oh, praise the Lord! Your job, as an apostle of God, is to help others to understand the true revelation of God in Christ, and let the world know that they might enjoy the blessings - that they might be inspired by Him that they might, too, become recipients of God's grace which is shed abroad so totally without favor. Totally free, praise the Lord! It's open to all. Your job - go tell them, go tell them. Be an apostle. Be a sent one. Sent forth, sent forth to the world. Let the world start at your back door. Let the world start over the back fence. Everybody you meet, let your apostolic ministry start there.

We've covered a lot of the apostle's ministry and I want to impress most of all that the apostle is not some lofty, exalted being that everyone looks up to and says, "My that is the epitome of dignity and the personification of perfect life for a man to live." Of all the things that it is not, it is not an easy call.

The apostle is a builder. The apostle is a pioneer. The apostle goes into areas that have never been touched. We have used the apostle Paul for our example in every case. I personally tried to pattern my missionary ministry after the Apostle Paul. I believe that if the church would scrap an awful lot of their missionary concepts and go back to the Bible instead of trying to educate people to know the languages and to understand all the cross-cultural things and just major in the heart of the missionary that is sent out. If they would major in the divine character of Jesus Christ and the total love for our fellow man and teach people to see people as God sees them. I go everywhere in the world, and I have yet to find a place where I saw a cultural problem - a cross-cultural shock of any kind! Maybe I'm too ignorant to understand that. If so, I thank God that I am. It doesn't hinder me by not knowing. Isn't that a blessing? They say that ignorance is bliss, and I think that's true in this case! I don't mean to put anybody down. I'm not here to say that everybody's wrong and I'm right or anything else. I'm just trying to say that God wants results. God is interested in people and God gave us a law to live by. It is the love law. If our love is pure for the people for the people to whom we minister, then we won't have a cultural problem.

I really believe in my heart that we have put too much emphasis on the intellectual side of the gospel. We've got a world full of that type of missionary. We've got a world full of that type of preacher. We've got a world full of that type of evangelist. What the world needs is people who will see one individual in the middle of it. Send him off to talk to one Ethiopian slave! Well, now what's going on here, huh? History teaches us that years later people went down into Africa and there was throughout north Africa a tremendous move of God. It was all generated by that one Ethiopian eunuch and what he had to say because Philip

had taken the time from the great move of God. Philip saw humanity as God sees us - one individual at a time! Hallelujah! Oh, that we can grasp that principle. Never, never discount the value of one single soul! How do you know that the next fella you're talking to might not be another Billy Graham. I've talked to several, got them out of the streets, drug addicts and other things. They're great, great men of God today - preachers who are winning thousands and ministering in churches that are really moving on for God. Why? Because we valued the single soul.

The apostle must not only build, but he also has to be ever ready to strengthen and even rebuild what he has built. Just because you erect a building - you know a building needs maintenance, doesn't it? An apostle has to be a builder. He must be willing to build one brick at a time. He must be ready to strengthen that building at any time. Whenever you start a work, and this work is here in the United States, in the next town, in the next county, in the next state, it works all over the world. It's the same principle. When you build, the apostle may move on, but he keeps contact. Not the thumb of authority or the thumb of power to push people and keep them under his dominion; but his heart must always be with the people he ministers to everywhere in the world. If there is a weakness or a threat that comes to that group, he must be ready to go and strengthen or rebuild what he has built.

There is no room for retreat. I say this in the apostolic ministry, but I say it in every ministry - there's no room to retreat. Always, we must press the battle to the enemy's gate. We must always seek to maintain the ground we have won and then gain new ground. When the Holy Spirit came into the earth at the day of Pentecost, there was an invasion in planet earth from an extra-terrestrial force, shall we say. The Kingdom of God was now planted in the earth in the hearts of men, wasn't it - on the day of Pentecost. If you will, it was a beachhead in an all-out war against the dominion of Satan in the earth. Therefore, our project from that day on has been to reinforce and expand that beachhead. When an army lands in a field in an invasion, they pour everything into one area. Then they consolidate that and then keep pressing out. They keep expanding, expanding! That's what invasion is all about.

We, as God's people, are invaders in Planet Earth. That may sound a little foolish, but you think of it that way. It gives you some incentive to push the battle to the enemy's gates. We're not here just to passively endure! Let us disabuse ourselves of the concept that we are here to endure until the rapture. That we are simply to occupy space. That we are saved to escape Hell. That we are saved simply to fill a church. That we are saved to simply enjoy a good life. That we are here to be prosperous. Hogwash! We're here to do the will of God. You are saved to serve! Now if these other things happen to be fringe benefits, praise the Lord! But let us not lose sight of our initial objective. Our initial objective is to

enforce the victory that Jesus Christ won at calvary. Amen? Jesus won victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave and all the powers of Satan through the death, burial, and resurrection and return to Earth to prove to His followers, and all others, that Father God had accepted and approved of The Sacrifice. His victory was won. We are here to walk in that victory and to enforce it throughout the earth. Expand that victory into the hearts of man everywhere you go.

The apostle is an example - should be an example - in everything. One thing that God would expect us to do - if we preach that God will heal the sick, then wherever we go, we should heal the sick. If we preach that God will prosper a man, then everywhere we go we must show that we can be prosperous. I'm not talking, now, necessarily about financial prosperity. Having a billion dollars in each pocket isn't prosperity by any stretch of the imagination. That's not prosperity! I'm talking prosperity toward God. The Bible says clearly the one place that it really talks about prosperity, "I would that ye prosper and be in health, even as your soul doth prosper." God is interested in you being prosperous toward Him so that He can in turn prosper you. But your prosperity, if it's just limited to financial, monetary, or even physical, any worldly man can have the same thing. That's not prosperity. I have a prosperous attitude. I, like Paul, know how to be abased and how to abound! I know how to have all the money that a guy ever needed, and I also know how to have absolutely nothing. But I know how to rejoice in both situations. And I know how to say, "Praise God, I don't care." I'll tell you honestly, I don't let my billfold nor my bank account decide what I'm going to do for God - Ever! Every campaign I've ever gone on, I never had the money yet to go. Never! But I made my plans. I took the steps. I'd send all the money I had to do whatever I needed to do. I always had enough. One time I was going to The Philippines. I had \$800, and I needed about \$3,000. I said to my wife and to my board, "You know, we don't have the money. I've got just enough to make me nervous. I've got \$800, and that's just enough to get me in trouble." I'd find myself looking at that and trying to figure a way to make it more. I said, "There's only one solution to that. Give away every bit of it! Then I'll either stand or fall on what God can do!" I'm serious. I said, "I know several struggling young ministers who need money." We sent \$100 to eight different ministries. We ran out of money totally. "Now", I said, "we have nothing to worry about." I sat there and wrote the checks right there, and put them in the mail. I said, "Now, praise God, God has to come through! And if God's in it, He's going to come through some way."

I thank God that the most precious thing that I know is that I trust Him. I trust Him. I know I can put my trust in God. I've always admired men of great character. When I saw the total, perfect character of the man Christ Jesus, that attracted me more I guess than any other one thing. Today, it gives me the grace and the power and the strength to endure when everything looks hopeless. I say often when my wife and my board ask me what am I going to do - I say, "I'm going

to trust God!" "Yeah, but I mean what are you going to do?" I say, "I'm going to trust God!" "Well, I mean about the money." "I'm going to trust God! I'm not going to worry one minute about it! It'll be here. There's no either or - it's going to happen. Now how it will happen I haven't got a clue. If I sit and worry about it, it will hinder God from moving in my life. So I'm going to go on just like I had all the money in the world. And I do, and it works, and it's always worked. God has never failed, and He never will!" As I say, the apostle must be an example. When you set out to preach something, you must be an example of that word that you preach. You must be able - the word that you preach must be workable! The intellectual side of the message seems to come out like this: "God is omnipotent. God is omniscient. God is omnipresent." Now those are three big words and some people know what they mean, some don't. I say that I know another big word just about the same size, but I like it better because everybody can get something from it - the word is cafeteria! Everybody can get something there, see? Let's keep it down where it's practical! I believe of all things - Paul was one of the best educated men in the world at his time. But I see a streak of practicality in the apostle Paul that is almost unparalleled in the ministry today. I strive to keep practical in everything that I do, and believe in - I know that everything we do is spiritual. Everything that we do for God must be spiritual. But I'm going to tell you something. If you really get to where you understand the spiritual side, you will realize how greatly practical God is. The initial charge to the apostle was to preach the gospel, wasn't it? Jesus told the apostles - here's the first thing He said in chapter 28 of Matthew, the sixteenth verse: "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." There were only eleven of them at this time, but these were the future apostles. Down in the eighteenth verse, it says, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'" Now in Mark, the sixteenth chapter, he reiterated that. It's recounted in another manner. Mark says in the fifteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter, "And he said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'" And He said, "These signs will follow". He said in other words you will demonstrate the power, the Spirit and the power of the gospel wherever you go!

Now, folks, what does it take to demonstrate the Spirit and power of God? Do you have to be some super type? Is it limited to only a few? Are there only four or five apostles in the world at a time? Are there only eight or nine? Are there only how many? How many? There are as many as God calls! All the word apostle means is "one sent forth". However, the office of the apostle does require some, as we stressed in our previous sessions, preparation. The ministry of the apostle requires capability, doesn't it? You must be fairly capable to be a pioneer pastor, if you're nothing else. You must have the ability to be a pioneer pastor. You must have the ability to preach evangelistically. You must understand the

business workings and understand governments enough so that you can set up church systems so that they will endure. There are several things that the office of the apostle requires; but to demonstrate the Word of God, all that it requires is that you believe it.

Long before I knew anything about even what the word apostle meant, long before I knew anything about that, I did know that the word of God was true and that it worked for me. When I got saved, I knew this was the Word of God. I know that within a matter of about five weeks after I received this, I was speaking in tongues, I was praying for the sick, seeing them healed, I was prophesying - all because I saw it in the Word. I wasn't even in a church where they taught it! But I saw it in the Word, and I began to do it! I began to get a lot of flack from people; but as far as I was concerned, what this book said, the only textbook worthy of note - I shouldn't say it quite like that - but the final answer to every question raised in every religious textbook you know of, the final answer is here. Your guideline, your roadmap, your how-to instruction book, is here. This is it! If it's in here, it'll work for you. If it's in here, God will bring it to pass! If it's in somebody's life story of their experience, you have no guarantee of it! You can read about Smith Wigglesworth, John G. Lake, all the great men of the past and the great men of the present, and there are some, and it's worthy to read about them; but you cannot take what's written about them as any criteria for what you should do. All they'll do is make you envious and feel a little bit inferior. It's good to know what they say, but after you've heard what they said, then it's good to come back to the textbook and read it and look into it. Look into the perfect law of liberty as James said, and see it as a mirror image of yourself! That's exactly what God meant it to be! He meant this to be a mirror into which you could look and see a reflection of yourself in that "These signs shall follow them that believe." These signs shall follow Cliff Rice because he believes. Did you ever read it that way? Begin to read it and put your name in there. In my name Cliff Rice shall cast out devils! Cliff Rice shall speak with new tongues. Cliff Rice will take up serpents. If Cliff Rice drinks any deadly thing, it shall not hurt him. Cliff Rice shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. Put your name in there and read it that way a few times. That's your personal instruction book! Right here! It'll work for you.

Anything in that book, can come to pass, for you, by believing it, and then taking a step out and begin to use it. It won't work if you're sitting at home reading somebody's testimony. That isn't how it's done. It won't work if you are just sitting in church every week. It won't work if all you're doing is reading everything you can get hold of about faith. You can listen to tapes night and day - still won't work! Won't work! Only one thing will make it work. I never heard a tape or read a book about the Bible until I had read the Bible several times. I never heard a teaching tape until about 1975 - the first tapes I ever heard. Never listened to them - still don't very much. When I'm driving somewhere I'll listen to a few tapes, but that's about the size of it. I'm not a tapeworm. I'm not decrying the

use of tapes. There's some valuable information on tapes.

I believe there is a better way. I'm going to say to you that the thing that'll make you stand when you're all alone in an absolutely impossible situation in the most uncomfortable conditions that ever existed is what you know out of this Bible. What you have right here in your heart that came out of your Bible. Amen? It's the Word living in your heart that will make you stand or fall when the going gets tough. Praise the Lord! That goes for all types of ministries. Many, many pastors, if they would lay aside their books on how to pastor and go to the Master and model and mold their ministry after the model of the Master Jesus Christ, would increase their understanding and effectiveness. Mold their ministry after the model of the Master! Boy, oh boy! Get the miraculous back into their life! Expect God to work miraculously every day. Something's going to change! Something will change. It'll bring new life. It'll make it exciting. Your life in God is an exciting affair if you'll just keep following the direction book! Get out and get hold of people. It only works on people! It won't work on chairs, it won't work on podiums, it won't work on anything else. It works on people, only people! Let's become people oriented! Let's become interested in people and God can truly make something great out of you! He wants to.

I'm getting away a little bit from what I'm teaching here. I hope you'll forgive me. But I believe that the principles that we're discussing here are so simple that most people miss them. I think we strive to look at the greatness. I've talked to many men who are so dignified and so respectful and they stand and they talk to me and they ask me about my ministry. They almost act as if they're awe stricken by me. I'm going to tell you something. I'm just a plain country cowboy, who puts my britches on one leg at a time! Every day. And that's all, and everyone else is the same way. They don't do anything different. They're nothing to be exalted. I'm going to say clearly - It is Christ in me that does the work.

Many times I come into the pulpit and I have not a clue what I am going to say. Does that sound very intellectual? Sounds almost ridiculous, doesn't it? And it is! But I trust God. I trust Him. This is His ministry. Let your ministry be God's ministry! Realize that what you are is God's direct representative to the people that are there. Now if God doesn't know their hearts and their needs, there's no sense in you trying to figure it out! Can you believe that? But God does know their hearts. Wherever you go in the world, God knows the heart of every person you'll ever minister to in this earth! Just relax, and let the Christ in you function. I'm not saying don't do your homework. Now please don't accuse me of putting a premium on ignorance. I'm saying that you live in that Word night and day and that Word will come out as God wants it to come out. It'll do the job He wants it to do and it'll meet the need of people wherever you go. Now that's exactly where it is.

The charge to the apostles was to preach the gospel. The charge to the Church - preach the gospel. The charge that the apostles laid down, I'm satisfied, is to go into all the world and preach the gospel. If we read the book of Acts, we find that the Church did go everywhere preaching the Word, didn't they? Now the gospel has to be preached to every nation, every people, every kindred, every tribe, every tongue. Now you read Revelation 7:9, and it says just that! John saw a great multitude standing before the throne and he said they were of every tongue, every nation, every kindred, every tribe, all kinds of folks from everywhere in the world. There is nobody - you hear ne again - nobody is going to be left out! Nobody is going to be left out! Everybody must hear the word. It must be preached in every nation for a witness, and then shall the end come. That's Matthew 24:14.

These are important scriptures to know. Write them down. For those who believe, it will be a witness unto eternal life. For those who believe you. For those who don't believe, it'll be a witness against them unto eternal separation from God. Now that's all there is to it. It's a fact. But there must be a witness. No man will ever be able to stand before God and say, "I didn't hear, I didn't know, I didn't understand." They have to hear. You and I have to tell them. You must get out and tell them. You - everyone! You - everybody, must go and become a witness. The gospel is the gospel of the Kingdom of God. We're not talking about some watered-down thing. The gospel that the apostles preached was the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel that the apostles of God are sending out today is the gospel of the kingdom. A kingdom must have a king. This gospel of the kingdom must establish Jesus as King - Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There must be a king for a kingdom. The true gospel will reveal the kingly nature of King Jesus. Amen? It truly will! Paul was a proper example of the apostle for the church age. Paul always considered himself a servant of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:1 deals with that: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God". Perhaps we'll deal with that area a little while.

First of all, Paul always considered himself a servant of Jesus Christ. He was called to be an apostle - called of God, wasn't he? The scriptures are Acts 9:15 he was called to be an apostle. Acts 9:15 says, "But the Lord said unto him, 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.'" You see, he was called to all the world. That's what He said. Paul is called to preach the gospel to all the world. I want to read Acts 13:2. I want to just establish this a little bit. I don't want you to think that God just takes any old guy and just sends him off somewhere. Acts 13:2 says, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, 'Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.'" He means to take them out of the group and send them forth. Continuing in verse 3, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their

hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost...". You have to go where the Holy Ghost sends you. The whole secret is learning to listen to God so that you know when the Holy Ghost is moving you to do something.

I want to give you the academic side of this, but if I do that and leave out the practicality, then I feel that I've failed. I really feel the practical side is more important than the academic. We need to understand both. Academically, you are called. Academically, we must hear from the Holy Ghost. Well if that's all anybody ever told you, you'd go around trying to hear something all the time - listening. Maybe you'll hear! I don't know. I've heard the voice of God. God has spoken to me audibly several times, but I don't go around listening for that. It came when I wasn't expecting anything. It came in answer to definite need and definite prayer and definite direction that came with it." Normally I know in my spirit because I have prayed seriously and God has laid some group of people on my heart - or some type of people even. And I'll pray and then maybe a year or two, three, five, will go by. But suddenly I see exactly what God wanted me to do back there in the days when I was burdened by that prayer. Suddenly I am led into situations that are beginning to develop that are bringing to pass certain things.

I'm going to say clearly that everybody that ever desires to be anything in the ministry should develop an intercessory-prayer ministry. Begin to pray for people. An hour or two a day wouldn't hurt you at all. What happens when you begin to pray as an intercessor? You develop the love for those you pray for. You're developing the character and nature of God when you pray for other people. When you pray for people in Africa, when you pray for people in India, when you pray for people in Virginia Beach, you're developing the love nature inside yourself. Christ is growing bigger in you all the time. The seed of your inheritance is expanding. You may not feel your coat getting tight on you because of the expansion, but I'm going to tell you something. There is a capacity to love being built in you. Every time you get a chance, you start using it. If you see anybody in need, you stop and respond to it. That's the beginning of being led of the Spirit. Not just having some ooky-spooky something going on out there and you're kind of stumbling along tripping over stuff listening to it. Not at all! The Spirit of God is in you, resident, but He's here as the executor of God's will. He's here to respond to the need in people everywhere you go. That's exactly what He wants to develop in you - the love nature. God is love. God is love, and with that love nature He will perfect it in you to the point that you become a love creature and you can walk up to a stranger and they will talk to you because they feel something totally different. There's something totally different in you than there is in other people. If you want to be led of the Spirit, learn to love God's people. You'll get led so much you won't have time to do anything, hardly. Praise the Lord!

Paul was separated unto the gospel of God. The separation is a singular fact that must become large in your heart. You must realize that no matter whether you're out working as an engineer, a day laborer, a typist, a clerk in a store, or anything else, you have one purpose and that is "I am a gospel-man. I am a Christian, I am a Christ-oriented man or woman, and my business - my sole business is preaching the gospel, and building His Kingdom. Now I do some things manually or mentally to support my family, but I must keep in mind that I am, first, a man of the gospel. I am separated from the world unto the gospel. I am a soldier in the army of Jesus Christ. I am called to be an ambassador for Christ, and because of this, I am a different person. I mingle with the world" and I don't feel like I'm getting dirty if I sit around among them either. It doesn't bother me at all. They don't bother me. They're not going to get on me. I'll guarantee you it's not going to get on me. I just don't let what people are doing bother me. I am a light on a hill, see? Can you see that? Get that in your hearts. Get that settled, and God will - as you do that - cause you to begin the going forth to do greater things in the future. But without that love nature, you're going to fall short of God's best for you. Without that separation unto the gospel, you're going to fall short somewhere down the road.

If you will separate yourself unto the gospel of God and recognize no matter what else is going on - I am a gospel man! That's what I am, see? I'm a little different from the average cut of the cloth, see? Because God has separated me unto himself! Now that makes you a different person, amen? Now you're called of God. Some are called to be an apostle. Some of you may be, I don't know, but I'm going to tell you something. I'm satisfied that the day of the apostolic ministry is coming into its own. The apostle and the prophet are going to be the leaders and they're going to be just lay people that God calls, seemingly from nowhere, but men and women that God has prepared their hearts. They will reveal Jesus Christ to the world. That is the ministry of the apostle in essence. And that's what we're going to be doing. That is preaching the gospel! We will be the spearhead of the gospel movement that will cover the earth just prior to the return of the Lord.

