

the
attitude
of
servant
Philippians 2:5-11



*See message inside:
"Servant Ministers," pp. 10-13*

Editorials . . .

Pressing Forward

This issue of the paper highlights several areas of ministry in which the church is making some impressive and substantial progress: namely, the Tract Ministry, Media Ministries, and the vision to expand our International Ministries Center for additional office and supply space, and to facilitate our envisioned Bible college. We appreciate all the efforts being made by our leaders to push forward these ministries. Our expectations are soaring high.

Retreats

We are receiving encouraging reports in regard to some outstanding retreats, revivals, and other state and regional activities. There have been several saved, healed, and delivered in these meetings. Praise the Lord! Along this line, our director of Women's Ministries, Kim Erwin, informs us that more than a hundred ladies are expected to attend Ladies Retreat in Sevierville, TN (February 24-26, 2017), and at least sixty are expected for the Pacific Coast retreat in Acton, CA (February 17-19, 2017).

Focusing on lost souls and “other sheep”

*“Enlarging the place of [your] tent . . .
stretch forth the curtains of [your] habitations”*

(Is. 54.2)

Rick Ferrell, overseer of Tennessee, has challenged us in his message (pp. 10-13,15) to apply the principles of the apostle Paul in our outreach efforts, namely, to become *“all things to all men, that [we] might by all means save some.”* Lest any misunderstand, Bishop Ferrell emphasizes throughout the message that we can accommodate ourselves to various ethnic backgrounds and cultures without compromising holiness standards or “watering down” the Word of God.

Dates for School of Ministry

San Jose, CA April 1-7, 2017

Rialto, CA April 9-14, 2017

Cleveland, TN

First Week: May 7-12, 2017 Second Week: May 14-19, 2017

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“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”
(1 Cor. 9.19)

Media Ministries: Immeasurable Possibilities

Since we launched this great Restoration Movement in 2004, we have known that Media Ministries would have to become a vital part of the church's ministry to reach the world with the "all things" message. Indeed, it is perhaps not too much to say that Media Ministries is an indispensable "help" in teaching and training our ministers, and to fulfill the global mission of the church.

Realizing this, we initiated a Media Ministries department in the church in 2009. The first director, E.A. McDonald, did some initial work, including setting up a website. Then in 2011 Todd McDonald was appointed as director and launched a radio program, and also made some improvements on the website. Since 2013, Scott E. Neill has served as the director and has made improvements including live streaming on the internet, and producing DVDs of the messages and programs in the General Assemblies and also of important classes taught in the School of Ministry.

Still, these directors had to work with "one hand tied behind them," so to speak, because they were preoccupied with the responsibilities of other appointments--General Treasurer, Sunday School Services director, World Mission director, etc. Accordingly, we have never come close to realizing the full potential of Media Ministries.

This brings us to where we are today. The Presiding Bishop met with the leadership of the church---particularly the members of the Executive Council, Assembly Business Committee, and Doctrine Committee---in a weekend retreat in December 2016 to discuss among other things updating and re-launching the Media Ministries. We invited Anton Burnette, a minister well acquainted with Zion Assembly, to make a special presentation in this meeting. Brother Burnette specializes in Media Ministries and is especially skilled in setting up and developing websites. To say the least, the leadership of the church was enlightened and inspired by his two-hour presentation, and agreed that we should acquire his services to work with the Presiding Bishop and Brother Neill to update and renovate the website, and to work on other areas of our Media Ministries in order to maximize the potential of this vitally important "help" in the church. Accordingly, Brother Burnette was immediately hired, and his work is already speaking for itself. Log on to our website and see for yourself: www.zionassemblychurchofgod.com

An overview of Brother Burnette's presentation to the leaders of the church in December is on the next page.

Brother Burnette has a lovely and dedicated family. He and his wife, Grace, have been married for 20 years; they have six children---America, Donnie, Victoria, Jonathan, Jacob, and Sophia. He began preaching as a teenager, and has served in several ministry positions---evenagelist, pastor, school administrator, and teacher. He is a veteran having served in the US Marine Corps, and has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion and a Master of Business Administration degree.



Internet Outreach

Anton Burnette
Cleveland, TN



I have been a friend of the Presiding Bishop for a number of years. He took time to speak to me about issues related to the ministry and the nature of the church when I was a young pastor. Our friendship and my respect for Brother Phillips has grown since our first meeting. After being exposed to the literature of Zion Assembly and having attending the General Assembly, I realized that there is a great void between Zion Assembly's message and its means and methods of getting that message out to the masses of people who need to hear it. That's where Bishop Phillips thought I could help the church---namely, getting the message out through the internet and media ministries.

It is not difficult to determine why the internet should be utilized. The average person now spends more time online than with TV and all other media (newspapers, magazines, etc.) combined. We only have to look around to see how often society has become plugged into online platforms. The Internet is where many people get their news and communicate with family and friends. It also has become the starting point and main source that people go to for Bible study.

Recognizing that many are searching for the truth online, I know Zion Assembly needs to do more in regards to its internet outreach. From my discussions with Brother Phillips and Brother Scott Neill (Media Ministries director), a comprehensive plan was birthed to equip Zion Assembly with online services that will allow the church to reach the largest audience possible.

In studying Bishop Phillips' *Let Us Rise and Build*, I found several instances where the Presiding Bishop had already stated the need, and mentioned the opportunities available:

“ . . . cyber technologies can be especially instrumental in opening the way for us to evangelize the world and establish churches . . . We have learned in the past two years also that internet ministries are a much more fluid and effective way to spread the Gospel and establish churches than traditional radio and television programs”
(*Ninth Annual Address*, 2012, pp. 325-326).

“In order to accelerate our outreach efforts and to help fulfill our worldwide mission, we want to use every means available, including the latest technological advancements” (*Sixth Annual Address*, 2009, p.188).

Strategy

The strategy we are utilizing is message-based. Our aim is to use several methods through many channels to direct content consumers to an optimized website, and to herald a clear call to action. In a nutshell, we are going to use *VOZ* articles, School of Ministry videos and other sources in the church and make them available at no cost to visitors through our new website, and also through social media---Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, etc. .

Against the Current

Today churches and religious organizations are running to the middle---towards being generic. They are renaming their churches with random words: “Ramp,” “Spark,” “Compassion”, etc. They are afraid of doctrinal distinctives and shy away from broadcasting biblical truths that they believe are controversial. Quite the opposite of this, Zion Assembly highlights its distinctives and uniqueness for the benefit of the lost as well as Christians.

“Our life and future growth will depend a great deal on our uniqueness. What is different about Zion Assembly? What do we have that is appealing and attractive? In considering these questions, there are two groups that we should have in mind---believers [‘other sheep’] and sinners” (*Let Us Rise Up and Build*, Sixth Annual Address, 2009, p. 182).

Internet outreach is an addition and a support to all other outreach ministries. Its main goal is to introduce Zion Assembly and its important teachings to as many people as possible. For in doing so, we believe it will help to grow local congregations, establish new churches, enlarge Sunday Schools, and support all of the other ministries in the church.

Introducing Our . . .

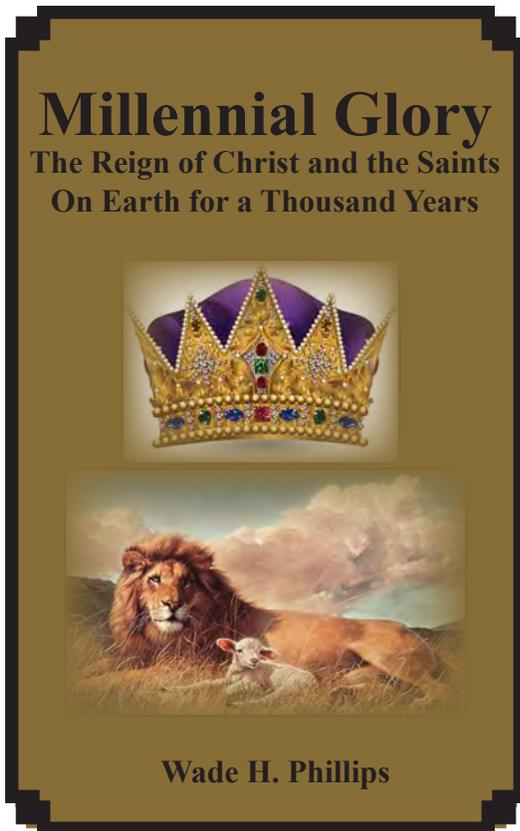
Tract Ministry

We have envisioned for several years now getting a tract ministry started in the church. That vision became a reality in November 2016. The Presiding Bishop launched the enterprise with a pamphlet entitled, ***“Millennial Glory: The Reign of Christ and the Saints on Earth for a Thousand Years.”*** This booklet is 22 pages in length and covers all of the major aspects of the coming Kingdom of God on earth (see p. 7).

Millennial Glory is the first of a projected series of tracts on end-time events. It will be followed by tracts or pamphlets on the ***Rapture, Great Tribulation, The Antichrist, The False Prophet, Battle of Armageddon,*** and ***Second Coming of Christ.***

These tracts, pamphlets, and booklets will be designed for our pastors and ministers to use for Bible studies in our churches, as well as for outreach ministries and for public consumption. We have chosen this series to begin our tract ministry because the subjects are timely and, seemingly, on everyone’s mind.

The tract ministry will also publish leaflets, pamphlets, and small booklets on basic salvation themes--***The New Birth, Sanctification, Holiness, Baptism with the Holy Ghost, Spiritual Gifts,*** etc., and also church related themes: ***The Bible Church, The ‘Invisible Church’ Myth, The Error of Denominationalism, The Ministry of the Church, The Divine Ordinances: Baptism, Lord’s Supper, Footwashing, The General Assembly,*** etc.



The Tract Ministry is underwritten by the International Treasury. This means that it is necessary that a minimal charge be made to defray the costs of printing the tracts and pamphlets, plus postage. Accordingly, the cost of ***Millennial Glory*** is \$1.00 per pamphlet or \$20 per 25.

Millennial Glory

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Universal Health Plan

Enhanced Illumination and Communication with God

Precious Inheritance

Our Vision for a Bible College

Appealing to the Goodwill of God's People Everywhere

Zion Assembly's progressive move to build a Bible college is being undertaken on the basis of faith and a firm confidence in the goodwill and liberal giving of God's people. We are appealing therefore to the members and friends of Zion Assembly---and to good people everywhere who know the value of higher education---to assist us in fulfilling this noble vision.



A Unique School

Zion Assembly's Bible college will be unique for three basic reasons: 1) Zion Assembly itself is a unique fellowship of Spirit-baptized-believers---unique in its interpretation of the government, polity, and discipline of the church revealed in the Bible; 2) Zion Assembly is committed to teach and train God-called ministers and mission workers to proclaim the Joyful News of salvation into all the world, and to disciple believers in the "all things whatsoever" message that Christ commanded (Mt. 2.19-20; Acts 20.27; Mt. 4.4); 3) Zion Assembly has a prophetic mission to plant churches in every nation on earth, and to call and gather together God's people in one visible body of Christ (Jn. 10.16; 11.49-52; 17.20-23; Eph. 2.11-19; 3.6; 4. 11-16); so that all believers might walk by the same rule of faith; teach the same thing; and work together under one government and discipline to fulfil God's eternal purpose in the church. (Acts 2.42; 15-16; Rom. 15.6; 1 Cor. 1.10; Eph. 1.4-10; 4.11-16; Phil. 3.16; et al.).

Pressing Forward Together to . . .

Fulfill the Noble Vision

The vision to expand our International Ministries Center in Cleveland for a Bible college, and to provide additional space for our international offices and operations was cast in 2011 by the Presiding Bishop and endorsed by the General Assembly. The move forward to fulfill this vision was, however, set aside in 2016 in order to seize the opportunity that opened for us to purchase the property that adjoins our international properties. (We did this in a special-called meeting in February 2016 and purchased the property with a loan from the bank). This encumbered us with an additional \$160,000 financial burden, which we agreed to pay-off before breaking ground for the new project.

In order to meet this expectation, we presented a three-point financial plan at the General Assembly in 2016 to pay off our current indebtedness, namely: **1) to receive offerings and new pledges** (which we did in that Assembly); **2) to encourage everyone to pay-off unpaid pledges**: for some have not yet paid pledges made in 2012-2105; and **3) to use the Bible College brochure to solicit donations** from “non-members and friends of the church, and from good people everywhere.”

We appreciate so much those who pledged again in the last Assembly toward this noble endeavor. Our people are wonderful! But its important to follow through and pay pledges. Many have already paid their pledge, and others have partially paid. However, there are still several who have not paid their pledges. Also, at this point, we have not received any pledge money due from old pledges. In addition, I don't know of anyone who has used the brochures and succeeded to raise additional funds for the new expansion. But I know this plan will work if we catch the vision---for “inspiration creates vision, and vision ignites the zeal, and zeal gets the work done!” (old Bible School saying).

I mentioned at the Assembly the success that I had had personally in using the brochures, namely, raising \$2500 from three non-members and business people in town. Well, I worked at it a little again this year, and recently succeeded to raise another \$2000. So I know there are funds out there if we catch the vision and make the effort. Let me encourage everyone to get involved in raising funds to ***Fulfill the Noble Vision!*** Contact business people in town, as well as friends and relatives, and encourage them to become part of getting a Bible college started. Make use of the brochures, and pledge, solicit, and work!

Note: Brochures are available free of charge by contacting the International Offices. Just let us know how many you want. And join us in prayer that the Lord will bless our collective efforts in this grand endeavor.



Servant Ministers

Becoming All Things to All Men

Breaking through Cultural Barriers

Rick Ferrell
Overseer, Tennessee

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you” (1 Cor. 9.19-23).

There is a wealth of knowledge in the writings of the apostle Paul and the example that he left for us to follow. Apart from Christ, he was doubtlessly the greatest soul-winner and missionary that ever lived. One of the first things to learn from him is that we must go to the people; we will not attract sinners and the unchurched simply because we open the doors of our buildings on Sunday. In fact, people are staying away from churches today in record numbers. Why is this?

Research over the past decade shows that Americans in general are turned off to both the message and messengers of organized religion. They complain that the churches seem to be narcissistic and self-serving. Leaders often leave behind shattered lives in the wake of their scandals and compromised leadership. There has been a flood of this kind of behavior since the 1980s---Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggert, the scandals of child molestation in the Roman Catholic Church, et al. The result is that confidence in organized Christianity has dramatically eroded. In 1975 the public image of churches was highly rated; a Gallup poll showed that 68% of the people looked up to the churches. That percentage dropped in 2012 to a staggering 44%.

The question of relevance should be considered. One denomination surveyed a southern city where it wanted to plant a church. The survey centered on a single question: Why don’t you attend church? Seventy-four percent of those surveyed indicated they felt there was no value in attending church. Thirty-four percent believed the church had no relevance to the way they lived. While the church does not exist to accommodate secular definitions of relevance, we must face up to the dilemma framed in the lyrics of an old song: “Why spend our time answering questions no one’s asking?”

The question of the “generation gap” should be considered. Are we doing our homework among the youth in this generation so we can gain a fair hearing for the Gospel. We must understand that it is possible to be culturally relevant without compromising the Gospel or the commandments of Christ. This is precisely the apostle’s point in our text passage. Cultural relevance and biblical soundness are not mutually exclusive principles. It has been said, “The only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper.” In any case, it has been my experience that most people are hesitant toward change. For change takes us out of our comfort zone; it doesn’t allow us to relax, upsets our traditional way of doing things. Many feel like a certain deacon in a small Midwestern church who said, “Change is sin, and we just don’t do that around here.”

Certainly the moral climate has seen a radical change since the 1960s. Who could have imagined fifty years ago that laws would be passed to justify abortion on demand, legalize homosexual marriages, and support many other perversions openly celebrated on television and in theaters. Yet this is the world in which we find ourselves today. It is the world into which the Lord has us for such a time as this. The question, then, is what are we going to do with it? We have been called to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of this generation. And if we are going to do this, and do it effectively, we must follow the apostle Paul’s example---to become “all things to all men.” We cannot allow culture to prevent us from ministering to the lost---to those who “sit in darkness!”

I am well aware that this may make some uncomfortable. I am also aware that it is very easy to be misunderstood when talking about something like cultural relevance. So I want you to be assured that we are not talking about political correctness, or about watering-down the Gospel, or anything of that nature. Indeed, I believe it is important for us to realize that some things must never change in Zion Assembly, including:

1) Jesus

“*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever*” (Heb. 13:8). In a world of constant change, it is good to know that Jesus Christ is always the same; that He is always here for us; that He will always love us; that His sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection from the dead will always be sufficient. Jesus’ sameness is a comfort in this day, and gives us a rock solid foundation for our faith.

2) The Bible

“*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever*” (Is. 40:8). “*Being born again, not of corruptible [perishable] seed, but of incorruptible [imperishable], by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*” (1 Pet. 1:23). The Word of God stands for all time as a revelation from God’s mouth to our ears. It will never change, and it will never take second place in Zion Assembly. The Word of God is where we get our directives for worship, lifestyle choices, practical instruction, and for our salvation.

3) Divine Principles and Doctrine

Titus 1:9 is instructive for those who hold leadership positions in the church, namely, that we must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that we can encourage others by sound doctrine, and refute those who oppose it. The doctrinal truth taught in the Bible does not change, and anyone who tries to change it or water it down in the pulpit or church classroom should be confronted, and removed from a position of leadership if he/she refuses the counsel of the elders of the church. God’s truth and the divine principles do not and will not change.

At the same time, there are many things that must change.

1) The spirit of human progress in the world inevitably brings about change---politically, socially, and commercially---and often it is positive change. In the last one hundred and fifty years or so, human ingenuity has invented the automobile, telephone, electric lights, etc. all of which have transformed our way of life. And today we live in a technologically advanced age---computers, wireless communication, medical improvements, etc.---for which we are grateful.

2) We change as we grow older. Hopefully, we get wiser, more mature, and develop better discernment. We also change physically, don’t we? Someone has said, “There are four signs of approaching age: baldness, bifocals, bridges, & bulges!”

3) The ethnic makeup of our culture is changing. The Caucasian population is at zero population growth, while African-American, Hispanic, and Asian populations in America are experiencing double digit increases. In fact, by 2050 (if the Lord tarries) less than half of the population will be Caucasian. The concept of multiculturalism is increasingly significant in our language, customs, values, relationships, and social processes. Unfortunately, most churches do not keep pace with social changes. More than 40 years ago Martin Luther King noted that eleven o’clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week. His observation is still accurate. How will we reach out to minister to the different ethnic groups in our culture?

Thus, while our view of Jesus, the Bible, and Divine principles must not change, many other things must necessarily change if we expect to be relevant and effective in ministry, including:

- Worship styles, outreach methods, and teaching styles. These must be adapted to reach those who are un-churched, as well as to disciple believers.
- Jesus preached from a boat on the Sea of Galilee, creating a natural amphitheatre, and thus necessarily had to raise the volume of His voice; whereas, I use a lapel mike.
- Paul wrote on papyri with quill and ink; but this week I used a laptop and printer, and performed a lot of research using my cell phone.
- The early church studied from scrolls and parchments; whereas, we have dozens of translations bound together in our choice of bindings and colors; and we have Bibles on computer where we can look up scriptural passages in milliseconds. Again, with one free app from iTunes or Google Play on our phone, we can have at our fingertip a

library of resources, which a warehouse would be required otherwise to house the thousands of material volumes.

- Paul wore a *toga* (a robe) while he was preaching, aren't you glad we don't today! The church cannot minister to the people of 2017 with methodology designed to reach the people of the 1950s. We are living in a different day that requires updated and accommodating methods.

A pastor went to see one of his new members in the hospital. The hospital patient had recently arrived from China and could not speak English. When the pastor arrived at the hospital, he took hold of the man's hand and had prayer with him. As he finished his prayer, the patient began to shout something in Chinese. The pastor didn't understand what he was saying, and the man continued in vain to try to communicate to him. But the pastor could not understand Chinese. Within a few moments the patient made one last attempt, gasped for air, and then died. The pastor was called to preach the man's funeral. During visitation, the pastor repeated the phrase the man had been shouting to one of the man's relatives, desiring to know what the man's last words were. The relative listened and then gave the interpretation: "Move over, you're standing on my oxygen tube, I can't breathe!"

I think an analogy can be drawn between this story and some churches. Like the pastor, we fail to effectively communicate, and wind up sucking the life out of the people to whom God has called us to minister. But God wants to breathe new life into spiritually dead souls. He wants us to minister with creativity and power. He doesn't want us to be stuck in tradition, but rather to become "*all things to all men, that by all means, we might save some.*"

Now lest you think I am against tradition, let me state categorically that I am not. What I am against is "traditionalism." Tradition does indeed value the past and the way God has moved in history, but is also willing to embrace moves of God in the future. Traditionalism, on the other hand, embraces only what has gone before; and therefore tends to put God in a box. It fixes itself in a certain position and unwittingly tells the Lord what is and what is not acceptable.

When I read through the Bible, I find verses that tell me about a "new song", "a new heaven and new earth", "new wine", "new life", "new covenant", "new creation", "new man", and a "new commandment". Our God is a God of change, and He calls His church to change with Him to minister more effectively to the lost and His "scattered sheep."

THE CHALLENGE

The church must always adapt its ministry and methods to the culture in which it ministers if it expects to succeed. This is the challenge before us! We must minister to our culture without compromising our message. Now let's try to tie this all together into a comprehensive philosophy of outreach and ministry.

1) We must have a biblical worldview

A worldview is simply the lenses through which we see our world. Whether you realize it or not, we all have a worldview. What we need to do is make sure our worldview is in line with the Bible. Paul said, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3.28). If we are going to see people through Jesus' eyes, if we are to have His worldview, we will not base our attitude and ministry on a person's skin color, nationality, language, or his social status. We will love and treat everyone as the special creation of God that they are: and we must embrace them as equals.

2) We Must Be Willing to Embrace New Methodologies

The Pharisees approached Jesus and wondered why His disciples weren't fasting---why they weren't keeping this aspect of the Law. Jesus responded, "*No man sews a piece of new cloth [a patch of unshrunk cloth] on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up takes away from the old, and the rent [tear] is made worse. And no one puts [pours] new wine into old bottles [wineskins]: else the new wine [will] burst the skins [bottles], and the wine is spilled and the bottles will be marred [ruined]. But new wine must be put in new bottles*" (Mk. 2.21-22).

These two parables of the old garment and old wineskins illustrate the incompatibility of the old system of Jewish law and tradition over against Gospel of Christ. Jesus was always being questioned about the different methods He used: for He embraced what was new and effective for ministry. He was the Master of presenting truth in the language of the

culture around Him. He used objects, seeds, soil, situational parables, coins, camels, and fig trees---all things with which his audiences could readily identify. Should we not follow our Lord's example? Should we not adopt every means available to us to have a more effective ministry---dramas, skits, videos, DVDs, music, stories, etc. to make our message relevant and convicting.

3) We Must Be Creative in Worship

“PRAISE ye the Lord, Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of the saints” (Ps. 149.1) “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5.9) .

God wants His church to sing a new song. He wants us to creatively worship Him in our services. This in no way means that we cannot continue praising God with grand old hymns: but neither does it mean we can shut out the new songs God is calling His people to sing. Simply put, it is not an either or situation; it may be both.

4) Practice the Art of Becoming

“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some; And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.”

We must be willing to put ourselves in the shoes of those to whom we are ministering---to empathize and take to us their need as our own. To follow Paul's example is not easy; in fact, it does not come naturally, it only comes supernaturally. We can only adapt to and minister effectively, when we make an absolute commitment to do it. Again, we are not suggesting compromising biblical truth, but rather that we learn to be flexible in our approach to both evangelism and ministry within the church.

Paul says that he was “free from all men;” that is, he was not obligated to conform to any man's ideas and opinions. He had been set free in Christ and was obligated only to conform to Christ and His law. But Paul surrendered himself, actually made himself a servant to all men! Why? So that he might win more men to Christ.

Now because he went along with the opinions and customs of others does not mean he was compromising his convictions nor that he was two-faced: for he was careful not to transgress the law of Christ. It means simply that he used wisdom in order to get close enough to men to gain their confidence and trust: for he knew they would then pay attention to his witness for Christ.

Jesus ate with sinners. Peter went to the house of Cornelius. Paul stood before Felix, Festus and Agrippa on his journey to Rome. Why? Not to give a defense of himself but only to boast of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Paul became as a Jew to the Jews, that is, to those who were under the law. When Paul was ministering to the Jews, he went along with their customs and laws just as long as nothing violated his walk in Christ. His standard was Christ, not the law. But he placed himself under the law when ministering to the Jews in order to get next to them and win their confidence and trust, so he could witness to them.

2. Paul became a non-religionist to those who were “without the law.” But note a critical fact: he does not mean he became lawless and immoral. He still obeyed the law of God, that is, he remained always under the law to Christ. Paul lived as a Gentile when among them in order to get next to them and win them to Christ.

3. Paul became weak to the weak Christians; that is, he went along with their petty rules and regulations. He refrained from doing some things that were perfectly legitimate in order not to offend the weaker ones. He conformed to their ideas and opinions in order to have an open door to help them grow up in Christ. He laid his personal liberty and rights aside in order to reach the new and weak Christians. He would not dare become a stumbling block to them, nor cause them to shut him out of their lives by offending them and thereby lose the opportunity to help them. He became as one of them in order to win them.

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Devotional Reflections



**“Beulah Land, I’m longing for you.
And someday on thee I’ll stand.
There my home shall be eternal.
Beulah Land, sweet Beulah Land.”**

“Sweet Beulah Land”

Words and Music by Squire Parson, 1973

Zachary Snyder

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

Psalm 116:15

Recently this song kept coming to mind, rolling over my spirit like waves of the ocean. Its words comforted me and its message gave me hope and courage. For I had just received word that my precious grandmother, Doris Villers, was not expected to live many more days, and would soon be making her exit from this world to the next. I have become aware that nothing can prepare those on this side of death for the deep sorrow that comes upon those who are being separated from a loved one in this life. Yet, at the same time, there is a certain peace and even excitement for the saint of God: for he/she knows that the gates of the Celestial City will soon be opened and the Lord will be there to say, “Well done.”

Scripture speaks of the death of the saint in the most joyful terms because death is the completion of a life that has been lived for Christ, and the saint is poised to pass through the portals of glory! The apostles declared that words cannot express what awaits the child of God in heaven. Mortal words cannot convey the simplest details of its beauty. But if we stay faithful, thank God, our limited comprehension will be quickened with infinite understanding.

Squire Parsons, the author *Sweet Beulah Land*, says that the inspiration for the song came years after hearing his father sing the old hymn, “Is Not This The Land of Beulah?” Squire said his father’s face shined with the glory of the Lord as he sang that old hymn. While reflected on that warm remembrance of his father, he testified: “One morning, years later, as I drove to my teaching job, my mind drifted back to that service and our little church. I was humming the old song as I topped one of the beautiful West Virginia mountains and faced a brilliant sun in all of its glory. All of a sudden, as I continued to think of that scene in our little church, I began to sing, but this time it was a different song, one I had never heard or sung before.” At that moment the Lord gave to Squire the words to the chorus of *Sweet Beulah Land*. (Lindsay Terry, “Stories Behind 50 Southern Gospel Favorites, Volume 1, 2002),

Certainly, heaven should be on the minds of believers most of the time, and each day the thoughts of heaven should become sweeter and more inviting. For heaven is our eternal dwelling place. The second verse of *Sweet Beulah Land* really spells this out clearly: “I’m looking now, just across the river to where my faith shall end in sight. There’s just a few more days to labor then I will take my heavenly flight.”

Until the next time, keep on singing the Gospel!

Servant Ministers

Continued from page 13

4. Paul clearly states his purpose for conforming to the customs and opinions of men: *"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."* Paul is declaring that he went to the extreme when necessary in order to reach people for Christ. What mattered in life was not him and his rights, but the Gospel. The Gospel was the consuming passion of his life. Why? He wanted to do whatever he could to win people to Christ. And this he learned from Christ, *"For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me"* (Rom. 15.3).

CONCLUSION

- In 1865 an editorial in the Boston Post read, "Well-informed people know it is impossible to transmit their voices over wires, and even if it were possible, the thing would not have practical value."
- In 1897 Lord Kelvin said, "Radio has no future."
- Thomas Watson, Chairman of IBM in 1943 said, "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."
- Ken Olson, President of Digital Equipment Corporation stated in 1977, "There is no reason why anyone would want a computer in their home."
- When the railroads were first introduced to the U.S., some folks feared that they'd be the downfall of the nation. Here's an excerpt from a letter to then President Jackson dated Jan. 31, 1829: "As you may know Mr. President, 'railroad' carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by 'engine' which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock and frightening women and children. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed."
- Grady Nut once said, "A man bought a new radio, brought it home, placed it on the refrigerator, plugged it in, turned it to WSM in Nashville TN (home of the Grand Ole Opry). Then he pulled all the knobs off: he had already tuned in all he ever wanted or expected to hear."

While I'm sure these were all fine men, they certainly were not visionaries nor understood the changes that were transforming the world. As the church, let us not make the same mistake that they did. Our culture is radically changing before our very eyes. Let's be ready therefore to meet the challenges with the Gospel of Christ. Stay open to newness, stay open to change to effectively minister the unchanging Gospel of Christ!



Internet Outreach

Continued from page 5

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The Lighter Side

Julie Steele

For the second week in a row, my son and I were the only ones who showed up for his soccer team's practice. Frustrated, I told him, "Please tell your coach that we keep coming for practice but no one is ever here."

My son rolled his eyes and said, "He'll just tell me the same thing he did before."

"Which was?"

"That practice is now on Wednesdays, not Tuesdays."

Annette Olsen, Layton, Utah

Harvard, Here I Come!

"How was your first day of school?" I asked my kindergartner.

"Fine," she said. "They want me to come back tomorrow."

Shirley Sprague, Concord, California

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