

## Paul's Concept of Establishing

Transcript of a tape by Jeff Reed, Director of BILD International  
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In the second session this morning, we will go back to the New Testament and get a picture of some of the foundational principles that are needed to undergird any mission strategy that we are involved in. But before we do that, I want to make a couple of qualifiers.

### *Qualifier: A Commitment and Passion for Missions*

I believe in missions and I believe in evangelism—both. As I talk about some of the ineffectiveness in missions, some of the restructuring that we are encouraging, and comment about bringing a majority of the missionaries home over the next ten year period—towards AD 2000—people can get the impression that what I am really saying is that we don't need to be involved in missions. I am convinced that for a local church to be vital and alive, it must be involved on the frontlines of missionary activity. For a church to be vital and alive, it must be involved on the frontlines of evangelism in its own local community and surrounding communities. And, as we major on the idea of *establishing churches*, intrinsic within that idea are evangelism and the missionary enterprise. You can not be involved in establishing churches without being involved in evangelism and the missionary enterprise. So, if it sounds like we're saying, "let's pull all the missionaries home and not be involved in missions," that's not at all what we are talking about. What we are saying is this: As we wind down the colonial era, we think there is a lot of missionary activity that is not only dysfunctional but is unbiblical. That is what we are addressing. And then, as we move toward and into a new millennium, we must harness our resources in such a way that the Church—local churches and groups of local churches—can be much more effective, much more biblical, and

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much more one-minded in frontline mission activity and even evangelism within our own areas. So, please keep that in mind that behind some of the radical restructuring that we are talking about, there is a passion for missions.

I think we have demonstrated that in our own situation over the last five years. While continuing to pastor and be involved in training leaders in our own local situation, I have been to India five times, Eastern Europe once, and the Austria area several times. Over the next two to two-and-a-half years, we have strategies for being in the Soviet Union, Colombia, India again, Nigeria, North Burma, Vienna, and Eastern Europe. We are committed to missions. But, we are critical of some of the strategies in missions that are dysfunctional and in many cases unbiblical. We think that churches cannot continue to relegate their central responsibility of training leaders and of being involved in missionary activity to institutions and to more colonial-minded mission organizations. That's basically what we are talking about.

Over the next forty-five minutes, I want to take you through a study of some core principles that set what I believe to be Paul's agenda for the missionary enterprise. That agenda will work itself out in every generation and in every culture in a different way. You see, we are not saying this is the blueprint, but we are saying that Paul gave us some patterns, some prototypes, and some principles that are to undergird our strategies as we move from century to century.

It seems that the book of Acts was left open-ended in Acts 28. It's as if Luke believed that they were just finishing the end of the first phase of the expansion of the church. Then it was up to us. We were given just enough within the book of Acts to give us the principles or philosophy that we would need to undergird our strategies from generation to generation to keep them consistent with God's agenda and at the same time to allow all the flexibility that we would need to adapt to each culture.

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What we want to try to do today is to go back and look at the first century and give you a feel of Paul's role and some of those core strategies and principles. Then we will bring those into the present, and we will suggest some strategies that some of you can become involved in, whether you participate with us in BILD or not, that will move you into a position of being more consistent with these biblical foundations and, we believe, far more effective in the next generation both in training leaders and in the missionary enterprise.

I want to make two fundamental statements, which I will come back to at the end of the message. The first is that leadership training is always a matter of establishing churches. The second is that missionary activity is always a matter of establishing churches. When you understand these basic concepts, they will shape your entire agenda of leadership training and missionary activity. We are not calling for church-based leadership training programs because we believe every church needs a church-based leadership training program but because we believe it is intrinsic to establishing churches. World evangelization—in either the shallowest or the deepest sense of the definition—is always a matter of establishing churches. If we lose sight of that we change our definitions and our goal, we undermine our effectiveness, and we move away from some very important biblical patterns.

### *Paul's Role*

Now, what about Paul? How did he understand his role and purpose? What kind of process was he involved in? And, out of that process, what was normative? If you begin asking those questions, you can see some things start to surface. One of the passages that is very, very helpful in these matters is Ephesians 3:8-10. There, Paul describes the big picture of the church and how the church fits into the unfolding plan of God. Christ is the cornerstone, and the foundation is laid by the apostles and prophets. In addition, he is describing the mystery of the church—the Jews and Gentiles becoming one and the church becoming the center of God's plan. Ephesians 3:8-10:

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To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. (NASB)

So Paul had a two-fold job description. The first was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. We see him doing that throughout his missionary journeys, and he always considered how to use the churches as bases for the gospel to go further, i.e. "... to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ." The second part of his job description was to bring to light "the administration of the mystery"—the plan, the house order, or the management of the church.

As we move through Paul's letters, we see in his early letters that he majored much more on the gospel and initially establishing the churches in the gospel. In his later letters, he brought to light how the communities of faith should function harmoniously so that they would be long-term witnesses within their own communities. In Titus 1:5, a verse from the pastoral epistles (which are his last three letters), he told Titus, that he left him on the island of Crete that he might *set in order* what remains in the churches. That is, "what is not yet fully established, what is deficient" within the churches. One of these things was to appoint leaders, and the leaders needed to have certain kinds of qualities. And, the community needed to function in relation to one-another as a household with certain kinds of qualities. Because, if they did, they would be lights within their own communities, and they would adorn the gospel of God.

He started off with the preaching of the gospel, but he understood that part of his job description was to bring to light the administration of the mystery. He wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:15, "I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in a household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." Therefore, he talked about leadership; he talked about

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elders and deacons; and, again, he talked about how the household should relate as a community of faith, in order to be fully established.

### *Paul's Concept of Establishing*

One of the concepts that helps us understand Paul's ministry is the idea of *establishing*. The New American Standard consistently uses the word *establishing* in a number of passages in relation to Paul. After Paul went into an area and led people to Christ (in whatever manner he chose—sometimes on a riverbank, sometimes stirring up things in a synagogue, etc.), he gathered that cluster of believers together, began instructing them, and organized them into a local church, including appointing leaders. He did that very early and very quickly within the churches, but would continue to build after that. In fact, in many of the situations, he left very quickly, particularly on his first missionary journey. At the conclusion of that first journey, he went back to Antioch and reported what had been done. Then, he decided that he would go back and strengthen the churches or *establish* the churches. Acts 15 demonstrates this pattern very clearly. Near the end of the chapter, in verse 36, Luke writes, "After some days, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.'"

Paul led them to Christ, gathered them into community, instructed them intensely, appointed leaders, left the scene, and after a while he said, "Let's consider how they are doing. Let's go back and visit them and see how they are." At the end of chapter 15, after he got into a ruckus with Barnabas, verse 14 says, "And he was travelling through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches." That's the word *establishing*. He went around establishing the churches.

The particular word that is used here is sometimes translated "strengthening," sometimes "confirming," and a lot of times it is translated "establishing." It is a word that Paul uses often. I wish that it were translated consistently so that it could be clearly seen throughout these different passages.

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On one of Paul's journeys, he came across Timothy, who had a good reputation in the community, and Paul wanted Timothy to go with him. So Timothy went with him, and what were they doing? Continuing to establish the churches. Notice 16:5, "So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily."

Assume that you were given the responsibility of preaching the gospel and taking the gospel farther and farther. You were also given the responsibility of bring to light the administration—how things would be done. How would you go about doing it, especially if you needed to do it aggressively, in a fairly short period of time?

Lets look at what Paul's strategy was. Paul had been given a job description, and in the book of Acts, he is involved in that process—we can see how he understood that responsibility. Let's see if we can find any kind of consistent strategy that is going on here. Notice, by the way, that Paul was probably inaugurating this work out of the church at Antioch about 15 years after he had become a Christian and after a solid year of work within the Antioch church. So there is a sense of urgency about Paul's strategy, but there is also a sense of timing, that here was a mature leader who was in a position to be involved in this kind of work.

So what did he do? How did he go about doing it? He understood that the gospel had to go further and he understood that he was responsible for explaining the plan to the churches—how they should function as communities of faith, in order that they would continue and flourish within their own situations. What process was he involved in? I think that if you examine the epistles—and I will refer to a few references as we go along—you will see that the strategy is very consistent all the way through.

### *Paul's Strategy*

First of all, Paul would go in and proclaim the gospel. He used any means possible to stir up enough attention to get a beachhead of Christians. Once he had a beachhead of Christians, he did not consider that the town was reached at that particular point, if everyone had just heard the content of the gospel. He understood that he was just getting his foot in the door, and

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he was there for the long haul. He established a beachhead of Christians, and then he began to instruct them. He gathered them together in a community, strengthening them in their faith, and appointed elders in every church to oversee the community. They needed mature, godly leaders. A number of these leaders did not have a full theological repertoire to pull from. They maybe had some background in the Scriptures, but he was looking at character qualities, certain kinds of men that would be leading. So he appointed elders to oversee each community, and then he continued the process of establishing the churches by letter, by visits, and (we need to add here) by prayer, training key men to assist him in the process.

He worked with these churches, went around and strengthened them, then encouraged them to become one-minded with him in the progress of the gospel. He encouraged them to mature as communities of faith. He encouraged them to adorn the gospel within their own communities by their maturity, their relationships, their lives, the quality of their church community lives, and to be making an impact in their own communities. But also, he encouraged them to be fellow participants with him in the progress of the gospel. He collected leaders to be part of a team with him as this movement continued to grow. He didn't stay in any particular church, he moved on. But, when problems came within those churches, he would send someone from his team back, sometimes with a letter, which is how we got all of his letters.

His letters were his tools in establishing the churches. They weren't designed to give systematic theology to the churches; they were functional in nature. They were his tools for establishing the churches. The men on his teams, the Timothys and the Tituses, were tools for establishing the churches. For the gospel to continue to progress with any stability, with any kind of depth, with any kind of foundation, these churches had to be flourishing and a base for the progress of the gospel. Sometimes he found it necessary to visit the churches himself. Sometimes he even threatened them. Read the end of some of his letters where he says, "Look, some of you are saying that I'm a scrawny little twerp and I can't see straight, or clearly. But I tell you, if you don't respond to this letter that I'm sending with one of my key men, I'll be there in person and then we'll talk about

Rom 1:11  
16:25

1 Thes 3:2

1 Thes 3:13

2 Thess 3:3

2 Peter 1:12

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this.” Why did he take that kind of stance? He took that kind of stance, because he was serious about the progress of the gospel. He knew that these churches had to be established. And he knew that the gospel of God would not be adorned within a particular community unless these communities were thriving and growing as pictures of Christ to that community—a collective picture of Christ to that community. All of the letters were tools to establish the churches.

Subsequently, in phase four, he used these churches, as a base for taking the gospel to new frontiers, encouraging the churches to participate with him in the furtherance of the gospel. The Philippian churches are an excellent example of this. He always praised the churches at the beginning of his letters, regardless of what kinds of messes that they were in, because grace was at the foundation of everything that he was doing, and then, with some churches, he would come on in a heavy-hitting fashion. But he praises the Philippian church and writes to them evidently with the intent of getting them to deal with the subtle disunity within their church. Why? Because, if they had this subtle disunity and they weren't living humbly in their relationships with one another, they couldn't with one mind strive together for the progress of the gospel. That's his reasoning in the book. See chapter 1:27-30.

Earlier in the book he praised them because they had been fellow participants in the progress of the gospel with him. Sometimes they sent people like Epaphroditus to encourage him. Sometimes they sent money. It was a task-oriented thing, again, to meet a particular need and agenda. In Philippians 4:15, he told them that no one else had really participated in his support in the way that they had as a church. They were committed to partnering with him in the progress of the gospel.

You see, the letters were always tools for establishing churches. So, when Paul talks about evangelism and the missionary enterprise, he is motivated by establishing those churches at that time.

In fact, sometimes Paul even left a wide open door for the gospel—left it open, walked away from it—because some of the churches needed work. Now, how in the world are we going to keep on schedule with reaching the



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world by the year 2000 if we leave wide open doors for the gospel to establish churches that are floundering? But Paul did just that in 2 Cor. 2:12-14.

He came into Troas and there was a wide open door for the gospel. Sometimes you get the sense that Paul would go into an area and he would say, "Boy, here's an open door for the gospel. Actually it's a wall, but I'm sure there's a hole or a door here somewhere." So he kicks it open and moves through it and it's a wide open door for the gospel. But in this particular text, 2 Cor. 2:12-14, he says that the door was flung wide open for the gospel. I mean, it wasn't a matter of trying to find a way to get the gospel there. Evidently he had some very significant presenting opportunities, but he was very troubled in his spirit. It says in the text, he had no rest because he hadn't heard from Titus, his brother, who was bringing news of how the Corinthian church was doing.

So, he left the wide open door for the gospel and went to deal with the church. Why? Not because he was more concerned about the churches than the gospel, or about the health of a church than missions. Nothing like that. But he had a whole plan. He was one-minded about that plan. He knew that he had established a beachhead of Christians and that God had a plan for them to go into their own community and have an impact on their own community. He knew that he had to stick with that plan, that the churches needed to be central. He also knew that if he kept going further and further out with the gospel and he did not have strong established churches, his whole base would be eroded. If his base was eroded, the gospel would not progress and ultimately he would have to take the gospel to them again. And, he would not have the additional help and reinforcement or the models that were needed.

I'm convinced that Paul understood that missions is a matter of establishing churches. He didn't decide that he would set up a leadership training program and that he would invite Timothy into it. And, he didn't think about what kinds of things would be encouraging to Timothy. I don't think Paul set up an organized program for training leaders. He had a job on his hands of establishing the churches and he couldn't do it alone.

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So the Spirit of God worked in him to produce a whole set of letters that became tools for us for establishing churches. He used the men in training to establish those churches and all kinds of support relationships and networks of men and women to support those teams in helping them establish the churches.

### *The Pauline Letters*

Let's look at Paul's letters for just a moment. It is interesting—as you study his letters, if you look at them from the eyes of Paul and the first century situation, and if you look at them as tools that Paul used to establish the churches, it changes your whole orientation toward them.

At this particular time in our culture, Christianity is very individualistic in nature. We understand the great commission to be a multiplication of individuals—we each figure out our own strategy with our own disciples and how we're going to get the job done. But, as it unfolded in Acts, the great commission was not at all the idea of the multiplication of individuals, although communities are always made up of individuals. It was a multiplication of believing communities. It was a multiplication of churches. Even baptism was not so much an individual experience, but it visualized identifying with Christ and a community of believers, and you were brought into that community. There was a harmony and an order to that community that was built on a family structure—an extended family structure.

In our culture, we see things on much, much more of an individual basis. We come to these letters and we sort of go down them as individuals. We don't think *community* and *collective* as we move through them. We think what does this tell me about my own individual Christian experience, my own individual Christian strategy. But, the letters were always addressed to churches or to two men, Timothy and Titus, who were part of his team. The purpose of both of those letters was to tell them how to establish the churches and how to set them in order. When we recognize that these were tools that Paul used to get churches established, it reshapes how we think about them.

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At our church, we studied the letters in three different groups and found a couple of amazing patterns that began to emerge. I don't think Paul gave us a formula that says, do this first, do this second, and do this third, when it comes to establishing churches. I don't think it's that simple. If we looked at the Acts patterns that way, we would freeze ourselves in the culture at that particular time. If we made that kind of mistake, we would become the whole center of reaching the world, all by ourselves. The other side would be to say, this is kind of the way they did it in the first century, and we can get a few lessons, but we don't really need to seriously study the New Testament principles and patterns that undergird many of the examples.

Even though it's not a formula orientation to establishing churches, as you go back and study Paul's letters, it is really interesting to recognize what Paul was doing and how beautifully and simply it unfolded. When you look at Paul's early letters: Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans, the dominant concern all the way through those letters was to establish the churches in the gospel.

What would you do? If you had fifteen clusters of Christians, what would be your first job? Say they all received the gospel close to the same time, what would you do with them? Your first concern would have to be to preserve the fruit. You would need to get them established in the gospel, understanding the gospel and its implications.

*Paul's Early Letters.* Right away in the book of Galatians, Paul says, "who bewitched you that you have so quickly departed from the gospel itself?" In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes and defends the ministry of the gospel, and he talks about all their fighting and petty divisions. This one church had nearly all the possible problems that could wreck the unity of a church, and they were all implications of not understanding the gospel correctly. In Thessalonians, Paul addresses standing firm in the gospel, and in

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Romans, Paul finishes off with a complete treatise of the gospel. Paul understood that he had to establish the new churches in the gospel.

A narrow understanding of the gospel can result in several things: Our objective can become people simply hearing the words of the gospel, encountering the words, which, at the very best, was only intended to be an initial foot in the door to establishing a beachhead of believers. In addition, if we don't understand the gospel fully, it could change our ministries and narrow our ministries within a community/ For example, we might just knock on a door and give them the gospel content.

The gospel is far more holistic than that. It transforms our whole lives and beings. It causes us to relate holistically with another person in the life of our community so that he can hear the words of the gospel, encounter the person of Christ within the community of faith, and see Christ lived out in real relationships.

Paul established the churches in the gospel. A lot of the problems that we have today in our ministry strategies, our mission strategies, and our evangelism strategies, relate to churches not being well established in the gospel. We have a debate going on right now within Christianity, over even defining the gospel. Our churches have to be established, and Paul did that tenaciously, early on in his letters.

*Paul's Middle Letters:* In his middle letters, Paul shifted his concern, even his style of writing. The middle letters were written from his desire to further establish the churches he had founded. He wanted them to understand their place in the magnificent, unfolding plan of God, so that as churches they might grasp the significance of their calling and experience an unleashing of Christ's power within their midst, with one mind participating in the progress of the gospel, with Paul.

First, you see that Paul had to get them together and get them established as a community—strong and established in the gospel.

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Then, you see all the different kinds of problems that he had to work with, working the sin patterns and habits out of their lives, as they began to become established in the gospel. Then he starts to give them a vision for where they are going. God has this magnificent salvation history plan. The church is now at the center of that plan. The gospel needs to go out all over the world in a holistic way so that the world encounters Christ, in community after community all over the world—not just encountering the surface of His words, which are central, but they have a context as well.

Paul told them they needed to understand what it is that God is doing in His great plan and how to participate in it. If we are one-minded as a community of faith and begin to grasp the significance of our calling—which is missions next door and overseas, as a community—His power will be seen. By the way, the world can't reconstruct that. It can design all kinds of organizations and institutions, but it can't reconstruct the kind of community that Christ is talking about. He told his disciples that when that love is expressed, the world will know who He is.

Paul is trying to get across to them the idea that once they grasp that, together in community and rise above the disunity and are one-minded in their purpose and intention, the power of Christ will be unleashed. So, he is working with them to understand the plan of God, to be one-minded about it in a general sense, and to be one-minded in their participation in it. In our culture, we can't even decide on whether the plan should be individualistic or community-orientated. But that was what Paul was doing within those letters.

In the final set of letters, Paul is on his way out. He knows that he is about ready to finish the course. So what is he going to do with the churches? How is he going to fully establish them? He established them in the gospel, then he moved on to getting them into a one-minded, vision-orientated orientation. He wants to fully establish them so that they will remain strong against all the onslaughts. So what does he do? He tells

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them—in 1 and 2 Timothy—that there is a way to order their communities. And, it was not legalistic.

To order their communities, they needed to fully establish their churches. In his last letter, Paul talked about the significance of well-trained, faithful leaders. He told Timothy that if he didn't pass on the deposit to the next generation, the churches would be eroded. They needed qualified, well-trained leaders. Paul also told Timothy to train other faithful men, the way he trained him, in service, and to pass the torch to these faithful men. Paul worked with Timothy in ministry together for about a fifteen-year period. He probably passed the torch to Timothy when Timothy was about the same age that I am—probably in his late thirties. He was with Paul for a fifteen-year period. But, it wasn't fifteen years of training and then ministry. They were in it together. Timothy was entrusted with more and more ministry responsibilities and eventually the torch was passed. For this thing to last, Paul knew it was necessary to well order the communities, to carefully train the leaders, and to pass on the torch.

As he ordered the communities, Paul worked with a household concept. The community of faith is made up of households. From the households that are managed well and Christ-like, he selected leaders to shepherd the whole household. The family is a household within a larger household, or the church is a larger household made up of a number of households.

Then he gave some principles on how we should function; some of them are fairly specific. He wasn't talking about a well-run organization; he was talking about a household. I suggest to you, that at any time in history and in any culture, people are going to understand the concept of the family unit and the extended family unit or community. The beauty of the simplicity of the multiplication of churches plan—the multiplication of communities—will work any time, any place, and in any culture. That is why we envision for you in your material the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century multiplication of churches. It is a simple, beautiful plan that needs to be centered on the multiplication of churches, regardless of any other para-church structures. They all need to serve the establishing of churches. If churches are established, the gospel will continue to be a

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strong light, indefinitely, within the community and continue to be a base for penetrating other nations and communities beyond.

What if we have not done a good job of establishing our churches and training leaders, and if that light begins to erode? Looking at Paul's strategy, what should we do? Would we say we have ten years left, let's finish the job anyway? Or would we say, wait a minute, if we have significant erosion in our churches, let's go back and put a significant amount of effort into establishing those churches and training leaders, bringing them to a one-minded vision of having an impact on their own area and surrounding areas.

In light of this, I am not suggesting that we shouldn't go to hidden peoples, today. But, I think 80% of our job ought to be taking a look at some of the mess that we have created by working in institutional structures, rather than local churches being at the center of our strategies. In various parts of the world, such as northern India, there are some churches that have some New Testament life to them. These fresh works are like little sprouts that are growing up outside the dead colonial compounds and institutions. And they are all over the Two-Thirds World. We must come along and really cultivate those and give them any kind of service and assistance they need to grow into a full vision.

### *Conclusion*

These are some of the principles that we see in the New Testament. We have supplied a sheet for you to evaluate how well your own church is established, by looking at the criteria from the three sets of Paul's letters. We have turned Paul's intention of establishing churches into a set of questions. So, we can evaluate if we, as a community, are established in the gospel; if we have a one-minded vision; if we are a well ordered community. How are we doing? How well established are we?

You may say, in these regards we're not really in that big of a mess. But I would suggest to you, to read the page carefully, and ask yourself these questions, evaluating the church as we wind down the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Is the fruit being preserved? Are churches being established and multiplying?

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Are adequate numbers of leaders being raised up to nurture the churches as well as being sent from the churches? If not, then we really have some big, big problems on our hands. Some of these we need to step back from. And that's all I am suggesting—step back from them, make some hard choices, and orient ourselves to being more in line and more consistent with the kind of philosophy and strategy that Paul gave to us.

Take a couple of these questions, for example. A few years ago, there was an article that appeared in *Christianity Today* saying that 16,400 Africans are supposedly coming to Christ every day. You talk about evangelism; you talk about revival! One of the biggest questions we have to ask is this: what is that scene going to look like in 25 years? With some of these principles in action, churches can have a tremendous impact for Christ. But, if we don't implement Paul's instructions and we just export things that are not particularly biblical, from our own country, the fruit won't be preserved. A careful study of this African situation (and some of these statistics are for our sake, here, they are not really helping anyone else) shows that only about 760 of these experiences are actual conversions related to evangelical groups. Following the normal patterns in Africa, only a fraction of those believers will ever become solidly established in their faith. Similar examples can be found throughout the Two-Thirds World. Two or three weeks down the road, five or ten years down the road, what is the scene going to look like? We have a lot of data on what other similar scenes looks like.

How about leadership training? There has been a tremendous explosion of new Christians in Brazil. At one time, Lois McKinney estimated that there are ten million evangelicals in Brazil. By her estimate, she says that 1 in 50, that is 200,000 of that number, are or should be leaders of their congregations. At least 50% of those leaders, 100,000 of them, are untrained. Seminaries and Bible Institutes are graduating no more than 2,500 students annually. At that rate, it would take 40 years to train the leaders the Brazilian Church needs today. Think of that.

But, simply going back to some of these patterns—helping people stand on their feet—unleashes the church. This will get the job done far more



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effectively than trying to control it, institutionalise it, and organize it. Regardless of how you come down on some of these arguments, I think you can see the practical need that is there, and how these biblical principles would move us towards unleashing the church. Some amazing things have happened in the last 200 years in missions, but I also think a strong, strong case can be made for the fact that we're off center on some crucial biblical patterns. We've redefined some very important words such as *evangelize* and even the gospel in many cases. We have strategies that are far more institutional, organizational, and Western than biblical. Those things need to be called into question. You see, leadership training is always a matter of establishing churches. Mission, the missionary enterprise, is always a matter of establishing churches. Once we have that concept down, we'll be much more effective over the long haul in carrying out the task that God has given us to do—of assisting Christ in building His church in our generation.

